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# Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



## ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུང་སྟེ།

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22 November 1994

Establish the bodhicitta motivation.

### The Six Types Of Suffering Or Faults Of Cyclic Existence (Cont.)

As long as we are bound to this form of life which constitutes the contaminated aggregates, then it is inevitable that we shall experience the various forms of suffering. As discussed last week (being born as a human being because of being bound to contaminated aggregates,) there are six types of suffering experienced in this human life. Of these six types of faults of cyclic existence, the first is the fault of uncertainty, which we have finished. Due to the fault of uncertainty we constantly experience change in our relationships with others (friend, enemy or stranger), our social status, and our wealth. There is no certainty in cyclic existence.

As discussed last time if you refer to the text *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* there are examples in form of stories which you should read.

One contemplates the faults of cyclic existence to generate a sense of renunciation towards that existence. Therefore we should not only theoretically study the faults of cyclic existence, we must actually contemplate to see the fault of uncertainty and the other faults.

### 422.211.2: The Fault Of Lack Of Satisfaction<sup>1</sup>

## ངོ་མཁུ་པ་མེད་པའི་ཉེས་པ།

The same applies to this second fault - the fault of the lack of satisfaction. Lack of satisfaction means that no matter how much, or for how long, we enjoy pleasure in cyclic existence, our desire will never be fulfilled. This realm is called desire realm or desire existence, since beings in this realm are very fond of desire objects which are mainly the five sense objects - form, sound, smell, taste, touch. When it says there is no satisfaction, it means that these sense objects are not going to fully satisfy or content our mind. In the text it says beings in the desire realm are like the deer who is attached to pleasant sound, and bees attracted to honey<sup>2</sup> Although

beings in the desire realm are attracted to such sensual objects, these sense objects are like salty water. No matter how much you drink, it does not quench your thirst, rather it makes you want to drink more.

If we contemplate this, we see there is no object in this existence which is a source of satisfaction. So we see this is as a fault of cyclic existence and through seeing this fault we generate renunciation of cyclic existence. It is best to generate this renunciation in this lifetime. If it is not generated in this lifetime, at least it may implant a seed in our mind and thus be a cause to achieve renunciation in a future life.

Thus any practice or meditation we do in this life has an effect. It makes a difference to our spiritual practice, if not in this life then maybe in future lives, because there is not just one cycle of life but there are countless cycles. Therefore what we do now is very important. Even though we may not gain true realisation now despite all our efforts, in future with little or even no effort a very spiritual quality, such as realisation of emptiness, or the generation of bodhicitta will blossom like a flower.

### Contentment As A Cause Of Happiness And Renunciation

The implication of this is to be contented with what we have. The reason why the mind always remains unsatisfied is because of lack of contentment. If we acquire one hundred dollars we want one thousand dollars and having obtained that thousand dollars we want even more. Although wealth increases there is no increase in satisfaction or contentment in the mind. Therefore even though wealth increases we still remain poor in our minds and this can be the cause of great suffering and misery in one's life. There are some people who have to suffer loneliness throughout their lifetime. But if we examine their life they might have met many friends in past, and even married several times, but they have no one to completely trust. So they suffer. If we examine who is to blame, it is not others who have they have met and then left in the past. Rather the blame lies with the desire of that lonely person. Obviously because of desire he or she is not satisfied with one friend. So the relationship does not last long, and they then seek

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1 *Liberation..* p479 The title used in the text is "The bane of being unsatisfied."

2 *Liberation..* p479 "Butterflies are fatally attracted to visual form, deer

to sound, bees to smell, and elephants to physical sensations."

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another one.

At one level the fault of lack of satisfaction as a fault of cyclic existence is an important subject to contemplate in order to generate renunciation, which is the driving force to lead us to the spiritual path. But at another level such contemplation shows us how to bring more satisfaction into our daily life, because we learn that satisfaction must come from our own mind, and that it is not necessarily from external objects. Without contenting our mind we will never find satisfaction because external pleasures are like salty water. The more we utilise them, the more desire grows in our mind for these objects. There are some who are extremely rich financially. They have house after house filled with valuable items, but mentally they still lack satisfaction with their wealth. On top of this they have trouble finding one single person who they can fully trust, and to whom they can show their feelings. Therefore in spite of their wealth they live their life alone, without any meaning or satisfaction. Whereas there are others without a great deal of wealth, but who have a few friends with whom they are content. So they enjoy meaningful relationships with them. They may not have a great deal of wealth, but mentally they are very satisfied and very happy.

As mentioned before we can contemplate this subject, and develop more understanding of exactly what satisfaction means, because it is a very important cause for happiness in daily life. Such contemplation can help in daily life. As we see the fault of desiring sense objects, then we can cultivate renunciation towards these objects.

### **Wealth is Contentment, Not External Possessions**

In one sutra it is said<sup>3</sup>

Even if one possess all wealth in godly or human realms, with lack of contentment your mind will still not be satisfied.

Therefore contentment or satisfaction does not depend so much on possessions, goods or external objects. It comes from one's own mind.

The real meaning of contentment is having less desire. Having less desire does not necessarily mean that you must dispossess yourself of all your wealth or that you must possess little wealth. This is not necessarily the meaning of contentment. Nor does having contentment necessarily mean that if someone possesses enormous wealth that they are by definition greedy or discontented. Nor does it mean that someone without wealth will necessarily be content. Rather contentment means being satisfied with whatever you possess in friends and wealth. When you are mentally satisfied with whatever you possess, that is fulfilling the purpose of being rich. A rich person is one who is mentally content, even if they

do not possess enormous material wealth.

### **Inner Wealth As A State Of Contentment**

If we continuously increase our desire it is very difficult to calm our mind and find rest. Conversely if our mind is contented then there is nothing which can bother it. Therefore there is within a true peace and tranquillity. As mentioned before contentment is not dependent upon external possessions or objects. We can be content with our own spiritual knowledge, our practice of moral ethics, our practice of meditation or of wisdom knowledge.

In reality the measure of whether one is truly rich or not, is whether one is mentally contented with their life. In the story from ancient India, a beggar found a priceless jewel. As he looked around to offer this jewel, he ended up offering it to the king who was in fact the richest person in the country. After accepting this offering the king was amazed and asked 'Why do you offer this to me?'. The beggar replied 'Because you are the poorest. You are never contented or satisfied'. Even though he had wealth he was still discontented.

We can develop contentment about our external possessions regardless of their quality or quantity. Our mind says, 'This is fine, it will do', and so we feel content. But if our mind is not satisfied, that object is not enough, so we shall want something more, and it must be better than before. By having this unfulfilled desire we become restless and it bothers us immensely. Therefore we can talk of contentment in terms of external objects.

If we do not possess any external objects worthy of satisfaction then we can turn inwards and find we have the inner wealth of our practice of morality, concentration and wisdom. In particular the sangha must value that inner wealth more than external wealth. Right from the beginning, sangha took celibate vow to follow the footsteps of Lord Buddha, which is to lead a spiritual life. Following the example of Lord Buddha, from that day onwards you took sangha robes which is an external example of following Lord Buddha's example. Therefore if strong desire for external wealth develops along with engagement in tasks to achieve that external wealth, then even to the eyes of an outsider such tasks do not suit you. Whereas pursuing inner wealth is a task that suits oneself and in particular suits the sangha. Therefore it is an essential practice, especially for sangha, to realise that by taking the celibate's vow you have assumed a different form of life from that you lived formerly. It is important to encourage oneself by thinking from the bottom of one's heart that 'I should turn myself completely from desire'. Instead of pursuing desire objects you pursue inner wealth and see its true value. Then just as rich lay people utilise their time to gather outer wealth, you utilise your time to gather inner wealth.

We should also examine ourselves so we make more spiritual progress now than before we committed ourselves to spiritual path. In what way should we

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<sup>3</sup> Liberation.. p479 The great play sutra:

O king, if a man were to receive all celestial pleasures, all human pleasures, it would not be enough: he would seek even more.

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develop ourselves on the spiritual path? It is by bringing more positive qualities in our conduct of body, speech and mind. That is our practice.

end of discourse

Geshe-la says that Caroline English died last Saturday. We shall do some Chenrezig mantras after reciting the Heart Sutra.

A close friend requested a puja to be done here. Geshe-la thought that Friday night would be suitable but her friend cannot come. They are however organising a puja outside. Anyone who wants can go to that second puja. Geshela cannot go. Tog Me and Anila Kaye can go if they are free. On behalf of Tara Institute send a letter to her parents in England and tell them that we have dedicated prayers to her, and let them know that she used to practise Tara a lot, so there is no need to worry too much about her. Those who are doing the Nyung Nä will not be able to go.

Geshe-la again thanks you for doing the written test. He is pleased with your answers.

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29 November 1994

Try to reinforce your motivation of bodhicitta by thinking that you are listening to teachings on the Lam Rim and that by following this practice you will attain the perfect state of enlightenment for all sentient beings.

## Faults Of Cyclic Existence (cont.)

### Generating Renunciation And The Aspiration For Liberation

In the stages of the path of the person of middle scope the main practice is to overcome attachment towards the pleasures of cyclic existence, by generating some feeling of disgust towards the pleasures of cyclic existence. In this way one cultivates an aspiration for liberation from cyclic existence, and to be successful in this practice one has to see every fault of cyclic existence.

We have been discussing a classification based on six faults of cyclic existence. We have so far discussed the first two faults of cyclic existence - the faults of uncertainty and lack of satisfaction. It is important that as one develops theoretical knowledge of cyclic existence, one becomes more truly aware of the existence of these faults in daily life. Not just theoretical understanding is needed. If we absorb this understanding into our hearts, it will have some effect on our perception of the real situations of cyclic existence that we experience in our daily life, such as the uncertainty of friendships, relationships or wealth. A lot of us continually undergo suffering, some sort of misery or carry some sadness in the mind because of separation from a friend you like, or not finding the one you want. Experiencing such situations brings misery and suffering in our life. However if we take these teachings on the faults of cyclic existence to heart then experiencing such situations will generate feelings of disgust towards cyclic existence. We understand how unreliable or uncertain are our relationships, our positions, and our wealth or financial status. As a result we realise that within cyclic existence there is nothing which is sustaining. There are many things which are seemingly a source of pleasure and happiness, but in the end are of no benefit.

Therefore for the spiritual practitioner these very adverse situations of cyclic existence strengthen their belief and commitment to follow the spiritual path. As a result of facing such difficulties they decide to lead a celibate life and can even attain full enlightenment in this very

lifetime. Therefore if we put this teaching into practice, then even the very adverse circumstances which we face instead of simply causing, serving as a cause for suffering, they can be a cause to enhance our spiritual potential. They can generate a sense of renunciation and thereby a genuine aspiration to liberation.

So it is important when we learn about faults of cyclic existence that we assess the benefits of our learning in terms of it helping or encouraging us to overcome attachment to the temporary pleasures of this life. In other words learning of faults of cyclic existence counteracts attachment to this life. If we overcome attachment to this life then naturally we can seek the goal of a future life, and then the spiritual goal of liberation.

It is best is to understand this teaching in the context of one's own life experience then it is not something very difficult to comprehend. After all, we are always thinking about our life and its problems. So if we should use that interest in meditating, contemplating or reflecting on one's own current or past situation, we should try to see that situation from the point of view of the teachings on the faults of cyclic existence i.e. the faults of uncertainty and never being fully satisfied. As a result we shall clearly understand from the teaching how we undergo suffering as a result of having attachment to one's body, possessions and friends. This shows that all the suffering we experience now and in the past is because of not being able to overcome or break attachment to the various objects of cyclic existence.

We have to consider in what way this meditation on the faults of cyclic existence will change our life. It is supposed to bring more happiness into our life. This happiness is either physical or mental and if we examine them, we see that the mental happiness is more important than the physical happiness. For example think of someone deprived of all physical pleasures that can be obtained; deprived of food and drink, with not even enough resources to have a meal a day. Nevertheless he or she can mentally live a happy, contented life. For that person the lack of enough material support is not a concern. Although that person lacks material comfort, they still have mental comfort. On the other hand someone having all the material

comforts imaginable may still be very restless mentally. So for that person the material comfort does not bring happiness or comfort at all.

Therefore the experience of our mind is very important, because without happiness in the mind nothing else can offer happiness. If we absorb this teaching into our practice it can help to bring more peace, satisfaction and happiness in our lives because it can influence our way of thinking. Consider our thinking about relationships. If the relationship is very healthy it is important not to have very strong attachment to it, and also to remember that it is subject to change. With this awareness of uncertainty and the lack of satisfaction, then when later confronted with change your attachment will be reduced at that time. However if you hold that relationship with strong attachment it is hard to overcome desire or attachment to that relationship, even when something goes wrong in the relationship. Despite the barrier that emerges when the relationship breaks up, there is still attachment in one's mind and so one mentally views the other person as before. This can bring a lot of suffering to the mind. This suffering, then, is the direct outcome of the disease of desire or attachment.

### 422.211.3: Fault Of Repeatedly Leaving The Body<sup>1</sup>

ལུས་ཡང་ནས་ཡང་དུ་འདོར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

When the time of death comes we have no choice - we must leave this body. Even if we wanted we cannot have the same body all the time. As we go through the cycle of birth and death we must change body again and again. This is regarded as a type of fault of the suffering of cyclic existence.

We stop the teaching here and, as usual, we will recite the Heart Sutra.

### Living In Relationships Without Attachment

Student 1: Does living in relationships without attachment mean to become very aloof or distant? It can seem to the other that you do not care. This aloofness may cause even more problems in the relationship rather than less. How is this dilemma resolved?

Geshe-la: It is extremely difficult to completely overcome attachment. We must be careful in our practice of overcoming attachment because attachment must be removed from our mind. Sometimes deep down in our mind there is still attachment which is untouched but outwardly, physically we try to isolate or distance ourselves from the other person in such a way that it causes annoyance. This causes problems in relationships, and is also dishonest because it is pretending that you do not have attachment. Having less attachment does not mean showing less care or love to another person.

Therefore the best thing which can strengthen a relationship and cause mutual benefit is to develop love for one another.

Some have problems because the person with whom they are having relationship is too attached, and they find this difficult. Whereas others say they enjoy relationship with a given person because there is not much attachment to the other person.

We must also be careful with our mannerisms. For example someone offers you a meal, and instead of saying 'No thank you I am full' you make a horrified gesture or just grunt. It is not good manners to react like this to the hospitality of others and is very annoying. Such little things can cause problems.

### Meditating Upon One's Own Suffering

Student 2: Some people say that it is very depressing to meditate upon ones suffering. What is a good way to meditate on one's suffering?

Geshela: The way of meditating that is suitable depends upon scope of mind of the practitioner. As you said, for some people, especially the beginner, recollecting the various problems undergone in the past or even current problems is very difficult and painful. Some people cannot cope with the experience and that is not good. For others with a background in spiritual knowledge, reflecting upon past or present suffering can strengthen conviction and generate renunciation, and by reflecting on the suffering of other sentient beings you can generate compassion towards them.

In general when we meditate on the truth of suffering we think of future suffering - the suffering which you have the potential to experience in the future. If you reflect on those future sufferings, you realise you cannot tolerate them, so you generate a strong wish to avoid it. Out of this strong wish to be free you then look for a cause to overcome that suffering. So such a meditation is very effective in encouraging our spiritual practice.

Also you contemplate the suffering of other beings and cultivate compassion or a thought of helping them out of their suffering. It is not just reflecting upon your own or the suffering of others which can enhance your spiritual potential, but rather the way in which we reflect upon that suffering. If we observe our own or the suffering of others from the point of view of the law of karma we shall cultivate spiritual knowledge out of that reflection. By understanding law of karma everything we see with our eyes can be integrated as part of our spiritual practice. Otherwise after going to the zoo and seeing miserable and tortured animals locked in cages, they come home and feel the same. They feel disturbed and they lose the meaning of their own lives. So in that case observing suffering has not helped at all. Whereas if we go to the zoo with an understanding of the law of karma, when we come home we think how wonderful it is that we are born as a human being with good living

<sup>1</sup> Liberation In The Palm.. p. 480. The title used in the text is "The bane of repeatedly leaving bodies."

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conditions. Through our knowledge of the law of karma we recognise that this results from causes which have been created in the past. But also there is no certainty that in the future you will not be one of those animals. Therefore you can develop your spiritual practice and potential by reflecting on what we see in life.

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## ལྷ་ཡང་རྣམ་ལུགས་སྐྱེ་བའི་ལྷ་ཡང་བཅུངས།

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6 December 1994

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Just make sure that you establish the motivation of bodhicitta by generating the thought that "I am listening to and practicing the stages of the path in order to attain full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings."

### 422.211.3: The Fault Of Having To Change Over The Body Again And Again

ལྷ་ཡང་རྣམ་ལུགས་སྐྱེ་བའི་ལྷ་ཡང་བཅུངས།

Last week we finished at the fault of cyclic existence of having to change bodies over again and again. What does this mean? It means you cannot always have the same body, and that any type of body you assume cannot be fully trusted.

We keep changing our body and as said in Nagajuna's Letter to a friend<sup>1</sup>:-

No matter what type of body you find in cyclic existence there is no real benefit of it to oneself.

You might have found the body of life as a very powerful godly king like Brahma or Indra countless times, but of what use are those at the moment.

You might also have been born as godly beings of sun and moon - beings capable of illuminating light from your body to all three continents. But soon after one falls into very dark realms where you cannot even see one's own hand.

This shows how we assume various forms of body, and that none of these bodies are of any benefit ultimately. Just as samsaric bodies lack purpose or meaning,

similarly samsaric wealth and pleasures also lack the essence of meaning. In fact there is not any one valuable form of wealth in either the human or godly realms which we have not had in the past.

In the past we took life as very high godly beings. Our wealth was such that the house in which we lived was made of precious jewels; the place where we sat was of diamond or vajra stones. Needless to say, despite this wealth of godly beings or humans that we have obtained in the past, where we now sit is just on ordinary cushions on ordinary ground. All the wealth we once possessed has not been with us for a long time, and has not benefited us in the long run.

In the past we have also experienced all the pleasures and joys of samsara. For example when in the past when we were born in the godly realms we experienced such pleasures as playing with the breasts and waists of beautiful goddesses. However when that life was over we were born in the hell realms where we were surrounded by fearful, ferocious hell beings whose only task was to cause us pain by, for example, cutting off our limbs from our body.

Therefore in cyclic existence there is no essence. There is nothing which is reliable and trustworthy in the various forms of life in terms of the body type we find; the possessions we own; or the experiences we have. Nothing can be trusted.

### 422.211.4: Fault Of Being Conceived And Born Over And Over Again<sup>2</sup>

ལང་ཡང་ཉིང་མཚམས་སྐྱེ་བའི་ལྷ་ཡང་བཅུངས།

This means that there is no freedom when the time of death comes, and soon after it comes, one has to take rebirth in various forms of life without any freedom or choice. Since beginningless time we have continuously taken rebirth in various forms of life. Yet this chain of our life stream, this stream of life and death has not stopped. As Nagajuna said:

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<sup>2</sup> Liberation.. p482 The title used in the text is "The bane of being conceived and born over and over again."

<sup>3</sup> Liberation.. p483 The translation used in the text is  
When you were dogs and pigs,

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<sup>1</sup> Liberation.. p481 The translation used in the text is

Gain the enormous bliss and pleasure  
of the god realms, gain the bliss  
free of attachment of Brahma himself,  
and later you will fuel the fires  
of the Hell Without Respite,  
where the suffering is unbroken and constant.  
When you were sun or moon gods,  
the light from your bodies  
shone on all the world.  
Later you went to pitch-black darkness  
where you could not see the movements of your own hands.

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If we were to count or imagine how much food we ate in the past when born as an animal, then that pile of food we ate in the past would more than equal Mt Meru, the king of all mountains. Think of the quantity of water we drank as an animal. It cannot equal all the oceans.

This infers that in our contemplations we should think back and see that the various forms of life we have taken is beyond count. It is as if we have been doing the same work for a very long time. If we also think forward to the future, there is even more of the continuum of the stream of life to go through. Think of having done the same work for a long time, with no rest or time to ourselves. Then looking to the future we see we must do the same thing with no rest in sight. Just as we tend to get sick of work, in the same way we are conceived in cyclic existence and are being born over and over again. Even though we have already taken infinite lives so far, still the continuum of lifetimes has not shortened. There is even more to go. This contemplation will help to develop a renunciation of cyclic existence.

#### 422.211.5: Fault Of Becoming High And Low Over And Over Again<sup>4</sup>

ཡང་ཡང་མཐོ་དམན་དུ་འགྱུར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

This indicates that any status that has been achieved is not lasting. It is part of the nature of cyclic existence that after being raised up, we fall down to a very low status and visa versa. We can think of four end results of conditional phenomena. These four are said In the text these four are described thus:<sup>5</sup>

The end result of collecting is losing,  
The end result of raising high is falling down,  
The end result of meeting is separation,  
The end result of birth is death.

We shall stop the teaching here. Next week Geshe-la suggests we do the meditation on seven fold cause and effect of bodhicitta. There will not be anyone to lead the meditation so everyone must prepare to do it for themselves.

For example: begin with immeasurable equanimity which makes your mind completely even. Then we follow the seven fold cause and effect:

- Recognising all beings as one's mother,
- Recognising their kindness,
- Repaying their kindness,
- Loving kindness,
- Great compassion
- Superior intention
- Bodhicitta.

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the amount of all the filth you ate  
would be much greater  
than Meru, king of mountains."  
then,  
Each of you has drunk more milk  
than the four oceans, and yet  
because you are a samsaric being  
-an ordinary being of the common herd-  
you will be drinking even more.

<sup>4</sup> Liberation.. p484 The title used in the text is "The bane of moving from high to low over and over again."



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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།

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13 Decamber 1994

For just a few minutes let us meditate on the precious mind of bodhicitta. This meditation is to cultivate bodhicitta in your mind if not yet cultivated, and to increase it if it already exists.

After giving great thought to the benefits of generating bodhicitta, one should examine whether one possesses that bodhicitta. Possessing that precious mind gives one a great sense of joy and delight. Even if one does not have actual bodhicitta but sees the potential in the form of some other quality of mind which can become that bodhicitta, then one should rejoice in that quality as well.

**The Purpose Of Dharma Practice - Cultivating The Good Heart**

We must be clear about the purpose for which the practice of dharma is undertaken. It is to cultivate the good heart if it has not yet arisen or to make an effort to cultivate that good heart if it does not yet exist. As Buddha said:

Even if you examine over hundreds of aeons,  
what is the most beneficial for the others, it is  
the good heart or a beneficial attitude towards  
others.

Bodhicitta, or the altruistic mind to enlightenment, is the fullest growth of good heart. So therefore as practitioners of dharma, we should always have the realisation that the good heart (or this benevolent thought which can be generated in yourself), can be the source of benefit and happiness for all other beings. Especially if you are following the mahayana path, you should regard this quality of good heart as the most valuable jewel which you possess. Therefore you should think it is your responsibility to safeguard it and to increase that quality of good heart in the mind.

As you have been putting a great deal of effort into practising dharma, like receiving teachings and so on, the most important thing to remember is the actual goal or essence of following the spiritual path. If we apply the practice of study and of dharma to actualise this essential purpose of dharma then naturally we shall be fulfilling our spiritual goal or purpose. As a result of that our lives will be very meaningful and happy. In addition we share this peace and happiness with those those others with whom we associate.

As mentioned earlier, the essential purpose of dharma is to calm our own mind and cultivate a good heart within. If you do not have such good heart or show any care or kindness to others, especially to those with whom you associate this will bring unnecessary problems and misery in your life as well as to those others. If we examine our minds we see that most of the time our mind becomes upset or worried is because of being very selfish and not having kind thoughts toward our friends for instance. On the other hand if we always show care and good heart to those surrounding us, then our attitude will be the same as that of very kind parents towards their children. Such parents rejoice with a sense of pleasure and delight when their children do well.

If we lack such caring thoughts towards surrounding people, then instead of sharing our good thoughts with them, we feel jealous if they are successful or feel competitive towards them. Giving way to such thoughts of jealousy and competitiveness only brings discomfort and unease in our mind which makes us very restless and unhappy. So we can see that the main source of our own day-to-day experience of dissatisfaction is our lack of love and compassion to others.

**Thoughts For The End Of The Year**

Geshe-la says it is really great that you have all exerted so much effort in attending teachings and meditations. If we have to synthesise the main purpose of the effort we put in, it is to develop good heart and to subdue our mind. If as a result of undertaking the Lam Rim teachings we notice our mind is becoming subdued, or if we see that we have cultivated more kind thoughts toward others, then we can say we have achieved the purpose or fruit of dharma. The purpose of calming the mind and generating good heart is achieved by practising the three higher trainings;- higher morality, concentration and the wisdom realising emptiness. Therefore in practising dharma we are not only talking about passing time in this life, but are aware that life goes on.

Geshe-la takes this opportunity to thank you for making the effort to come to these Lam Rim teachings throughout the year. It is important that you think of all the merit you have accumulated from your effort. Just try to feel very positive and rejoice in the fact that you

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have made the effort throughout the year. If you rejoice in your own merit, then it will multiply.

Also Geshe-la thanks those of you who have taken Monday Night talks. Also some of you have taken responsibility for the children's Sunday School which was also very successful. It seems that the children also enjoyed it a lot.

Geshe Doga really appreciates those who give their time to also give meditation talks outside the centre. To all of you Geshe-la gives thanks for sacrificing your own time and comfort to benefit others. In terms of one's own spiritual practice there is nothing better than helping others through action. When we talk of love and compassion we can do this in quiet meditation by thinking of their needs and then generating the thought to fulfil those needs. This is helpful. But the actual test of the love and compassion which we generate in meditation is when we face actually face others in very desperate situations. In these situations it is not easy because you have to sacrifice your own comfort, undergo hardships and be tolerant. Geshe-la feels that those who lead Monday nights, Sunday classes or other teachings have made some sacrifice. By their efforts the children and others have benefited. Even if only one single being benefits, that is the purpose of dharma.

This practice of helping others is admired equally by both spiritual practitioners and non believers of religious traditions. Such attitudes are universally respected. Therefore the benefit of showing love and helping others is not necessarily religious. Keeping this in mind Geshe-la requests you to continue your contributions to the benefit of others in future.

Geshe-la is going to recite some prayers that this good heart and bodhicitta be generated in the minds of all beings. You should also make the prayer 'May I generate pure bodhicitta in my mind. Just as this year has been successful for attending teachings and practices, may the coming year be the same.'

Since this is the last Tuesday night of the year Geshe-la wishes you Merry Christmas and sends hundreds of thousands of Tashi Deleks and love to you. The twenty seventh of December is Lama Tsong Khapa day which will be celebrated with a special Guru Puja. Geshe-la also wishes to remind you that there will be four sessions of Tara meditation beginning on January eighteenth. It will be very beneficial if as many people as possible can attend those teachings. You should also feel free to use the gompa when there is no other function happening. Come here if you like to use it for your meditation practice, or do that with a few friends who want to do the same thing.

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**Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.**

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*The original typescript is prepared from Alan Molloy's original transcript, which has been checked against Damien Busby's notes. Adair Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.*

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