



Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

Teacher:- Venerable Geshe Jampa Tenzin

Title:- Lob.jong Mind Training

Venue: D.B.C. Dunedin

Thursday 5 May 2011

Please participate in this discourse with the highest Bodhicitta motivation of gradually making it to Buddhahood so that you can be of immense benefit in a timeless way.

Tonight it is time for us to talk about lob.jong, Mind Training. I laid out 7 major sections. Of these 7 we started to talk about the second one, training to develop Bodhicitta. When you train to develop Bodhicitta you do so to develop Conventional and Ultimate Bodhicitta. Currently we are dealing with Conventional Bodhicitta. What is Bodhicitta? Bodhicitta is a mind determined to achieve Buddhahood for others' sake. Therefore it has two prongs or two aspirations: aspiration to Buddhahood and aspiration to serving others. Bodhicitta naturally aims at Buddhahood but for whose sake? Completely for others' sake.

The first aspiration is for consummate laden state, for the mind to become pure, consummate, it has to understand the nature of all things, including mind itself. We do that by training the mind in right wisdom, understanding emptiness. It is crucial to this. The second aspiration, to serve others, is trained by developing universal compassion. For us to have precise idea and sense of complete Buddhahood, or consummate state of Buddhahood, we need to understand the stanza from Shantideva text Mulamadiamika: 'To come to the end of karma and delusion which arise from deluded ideas or concepts you need to pacify elaborations by concept of true existence with the mind or wisdom consciousness.' Or in another way: 'to put an end to concepts you need to pacify concepts in the state of Dharmadatu, emptiness of inherent existence.' Unless we have a good grasp of what this stanza says we won't be able to have a good understanding what Buddhahood is all about.

I will talk in detail about the first aspiration of Bodhicitta and later on when we talk about the right view of emptiness. When we train in the second aspiration, seeking others' purpose or aspiration to serving others, we do so by way of selfless compassion and special resolve. When we talk about compassion, it has two aspects: focussing on the dire predicaments or situations where sentient beings are caught in; secondly, compassion sees suffering sentient beings as highly endearing and adorable, much like a clucky mother is attached to her child. When we seek to develop compassion based on the predicament of suffering sentient beings, we do that by training our mind in the discourses or paths of initial practitioner who mainly focuses on the suffering in the three lower realms that are highly unbearable. This understanding then gets extended to all ordinary beings that are in the same boat and thus one begins to relate to others' pain. When we learn to develop a sense of adorable attitude and affectionate love we do that through two approaches: 6-cause-1-effect approach and equalising and exchanging self for others approach.

Here we are talking about mind training. This is done mainly through the second approach of developing an affectionate love for beings. It is not as if we have left aside the first approach which is implicit in the second. When we train our mind in the second approach we do that with the understanding that the person who is practicing this has already immersed their mind in the first four steps of the 6-cause-1-effect approach up to seeing all sentient beings as highly lovable and adorable etc. Once you have got there, then you begin to develop equanimity that is the second approach.

However, before we start practicing or developing equanimity in equalising and exchanging self for others, we need to have gone through the first four steps of the first approach:

1. To know all sentient beings have been our mothers.
2. We need to remember and infer the immense kindness when they were our mothers.

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3. If you feel grateful and connected then you will want to repay their kindness.

These three are built on the equanimity that comes under the 6-cause-1-effect approach which is what I want to talk about tonight. According to the scriptures how to develop equanimity, you visualise your enemy, your dearest person and a neutral person before you. As soon as you have three people before you, instinctively when you look at the enemy you can't help developing hostility and anger. When you see your dearest person there is an overflow of attachment. When you look at the neutral person you have an even attitude, neither hate or hostility nor attachment. When you ask, why do I have three distinct feelings for the three different people visualised before me. Careful reflections reveal that the feelings are a temporary reaction based on experiences with them. It all boils down to whether or not I have received something harmful or beneficial or neither from them. Holding animosity, anger and hostility towards the enemy is not helpful for one's practice and one's own well-being. We need to rid the mind of it. How? We can do that by thinking about the long term loving relationship one has had with this enemy because the given thing is all sentient beings have been one's mother countless times. Thus the enemy, too, has been one's mother, except one has forgotten and one has received pain and suffering from the enemy. We have forgotten their immense kindnesses as our mothers. If that is honest practice then naturally the sense of gratitude would just simply wipe out any hostility that you feel.

If you feel attached to your dearest person, why? It is because you have been helped, given food, money, shelter, recognition etc. by the dearest person. If that is the ground, then you could equally develop hostility towards the dearest person too because in the annals of existence we have had a number of hostile relationship with them. At time they were one's worst enemy who inflicted maximum pain, costing your life, destroying your property. This understanding will reduce attachment and gradually wipe it out.

When you consider the neutral person, although you have an indifferent attitude, but they have not always been nice all along. They have played the role of one's mother countless times and the role of one's enemy a great number of times. Exactly the same way as one has to the other two types of people one has distinct feelings there is no reason why one could not have the same regarding the neutral person. Somebody who has been your enemy in the past or in this lifetime, they are your enemy regardless of your life. Same as someone who was an enemy early or late in life, there is no difference in the role of enemy by two different people at two different times.

In this way we need to reduce attachment to the dearest person of this lifetime knowing that this person has not always been like this at all times. Like that the enemy of this lifetime has harmed me. Thus let this knowledge of harm inflicted defuses attachment and then it lets develop equal feeling for the dearest person as well as for the enemy. In the beginning you specifically target three people and learn to see there is no reason at all apart from myopic view of temporary benefit of harm of this life, when they have practically done the same thing over different life times. Strong emotions are defused regarding the three people. When you really have real equanimity with regard to the three people then extend this to people in the neighbourhood and keep increasing. See that you have the same feeling of equanimity to all humans in the world. Once you succeed at this then extend this to all sentient beings in *samsara* throughout the universe. This is how you train equanimity towards all beings. It is difficult to develop even-mindedness or equanimity. It is easy to talk about but hard to have and develop. Thus it is worth spending time on it as it is the root of Bodhicitta. Past meditators have not found it easy to develop this and spent a lot of time and gradually succeeded in developing this. As a result of spending time developing equanimity with regard to all beings, even at the end of such a prolonged practice, if you find that you tend to consider as neutral, someone not strongly involved with or unfriendly, even with one person you feel somewhat distant or slightly hostile, you have not succeeded at all. To develop equanimity it has to be absolutely inclusive of all beings.

Understanding this and that there have been past lifetimes and there are future lifetimes, is crucial. This fact is important and unfortunately lifetimes cannot be demonstrated in a physical way but only by inference and logic. There is only one logical proof: that there are past and future lifetimes is dependent on the continuity of

one's mind. Our mind is only born from a prior similar type and that only a prior similar type can give rise to a later similar event. Consciousness necessarily comes only from a prior moment of consciousness and it produces a later moment of consciousness. This can be demonstrated with our physical body that momentarily changes but has a continuing substantial type. This means only the matter of physical body can keep the material continuity. The physical body cannot come out of consciousness nor non-associated compositional factors which are impermanent things like time. Time is neither consciousness nor matter but still existent. Our body for example cannot issue from these things. Between mind and body, mind is said to have a more stable base whilst the body has a less stable base. But how mind needs mind which is always changing but still continues to grow is hard to relate to. For example, the body needs its own similar type is a concept difficult to handle. Mind is said to be stable and because the mind has the capacity to grow and grow and reach no end. For example, working on developing compassion, the more it is developed the more there is room to have more compassion. It is infinite and the mind can cope with that. An example of an unstable base is water that can receive heat. If it is boiled it comes to an end and dries up. That is an example how things are finite and not infinite like the mind.

Given that mind can only come from mind then consider the first moment of a mind of a person just conceived. Where was its last moment before conception? It was in the last lifetime. Unless it had previous lifetimes we cannot account for where the first moment of mind conceived in the womb has come from. It must have come from its past, and where was its past? It was in the last life. There is a person who possesses that mind or the person is labelled onto the conceived mind, the mind conceived in the mind that has a person, the person needs a mother for it to be conceived. That is how the role of mother comes into being. If one has been conceived in this way 100 times then one would have needed 100 mothers, we are said to have had beginning-less uncountable lifetimes in the past to the point of the number of us being reborn would exceed the number of sentient beings that exist now. Unless every being plays the role of the mother many times one cannot account for the number of lives every being has had.

If one develops a qualm that it is not possible that all beings have been one's mother even many or countless times, then it can be put to rest by two points: 1. Buddha with omniscient, enlightened consciousness, when looking into his own past, could not find a point when it started. If we have had beginning-less existences it would be just a huge number, whereas the number of sentient beings is very great but finite. Why? There comes a time when all beings become Buddhas. Another point is we have not been reborn in human existence in all lifetimes which is considered precious and rare. We have been reborn in many different species, like a sheep so many times. Each time we needed a ewe to be our mother. If one was reborn a sheep x number of times then you would have needed x number of ewes to play the role of the mother. If someone says if somebody has been my mother, I should know? For example, if one's mother has died, where has she gone? No idea. Would that person recognise the mother being reborn as a puppy in the neighbourhood? No one would point to the puppy saying 'there is my mother.' This clearly shows that this is not the case.

If after all this one has difficulties with the concept that all beings have been one's mother one can ask, 'are you such a wonderful person that you don't need a mother?' of course one does and points to one's mother. A particular being in a particular life becomes your mother, what about the other great number of lifetimes? This helps us to come to accept the fact the role of sentient beings as our mothers.

The mother of this life time has been your mother for many past lifetimes given that one has had literally countless lifetimes so she must have been one's mother more than once, in fact countless times. Once you develop the knowledge that your mother is a sentient being she has been many times my mother and so kind in all lives. When you develop this certainty, you can extend this knowledge to the father of this life, your father has also been your mother, gender identity changes all the time and therefore the father of this life has been your mother so many times, and as a mother he has done exactly the same things as the mother of this life. Then you could say my uncle and aunt will have been like my mother of this lifetime. In this way you feel comfortable with the role of your family relations in this life. In another lifetime you have a different set of

relations and they too have played the role of the mother. This is a step by step way of dealing with the issue of all beings having been one's mother. And this is the hardest thing to come to terms with.

All lamas and meditators have shared this experience and in this practice they have two topics the most challenging: One is seeing that your guru is a Buddha for you – this is the hardest thing to realise because we find it really hard to say how as a human he could be a Buddha because we have so many excuses. The second one is all sentient beings have been our mother – this is mind boggling issue. However, these two are critical because if you don't realise that your guru is a Buddha, then if you see your guru as a human and then it is highly detrimental for your growth because the guru is the foundation of all successful spiritual development and growth. Without that no development takes place. If you don't see that all beings have been your mother then there is no sense of developing a closeness and sense of endearment for them. This is a Mahayana foundation and without these two no result and no realisations will happen.

I like you to take some moments to consider why all sentient beings have been your mother throughout beginning-less time and I would urge you to think about this time and again maybe 2-3 minutes a day.