

# Eight Verses for Training the Mind

by Kadampa Geshe Langritangpa

## Week 3

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### Re-cap on last session

- Looked at what is 'the highest good'
- Buddha's compassion – maturing and ripening beings
- Wish fulfilling jewel – our spiritual potential – greatest need
- How to develop 'cherishing' – understand our own humanity
- With other beings no wish fulfilling jewel – so higher
- Verse 2 – very challenging verse
- Atma-mana – pride and conceit
- Inferior – difficult word
- Issues of self-worth – see others as the honoured guest
- Everything that lives is holy
- Counter-acting pride and conceit
  - Everyone has Buddha nature
  - Gratitude to others

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### Verse 3

***In all my actions may I watch my mind,  
And as soon as disturbing emotions arise,  
May I forcefully stop them at once,  
Since they hurt both me and others.***

- First two verses give a positive vision of cherishing others
  - They undermine the deep atma-klesas
    - atma-sneha and atma-mana
- But other klesa will arise as you aim to cherish others
- Here the secondary klesas are called 'disturbing emotions'
- Can be experienced in meditation
- All going well then suddenly an eruption of 'klesa'

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### Klesas

- The root meaning of klesa – something that afflicts, disturbs, creates turbulence, pain, suffering in the mind
- Can be recognised by their disturbing influence on the mind
- They stir things up; disintegrates, divides the mind – they are 'forces of disintegration'
- So klesas are very unhelpful, they are damaging
- They obstruct you from maturing, ripening both yourself and others
- As we start to cherish others we start to stir things up
- Klesas arise
- Often experience this in meditation – clear, bright mind, then suddenly there are the klesas! It is like an internal rebellion

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- Langritangpa advice whenever they arise is to simply stop them – just like that! (27:33)
- Forceful stopping – use your power or your loving attention so strong that klesa just stop - dissolves
- Can we just stop the klesas?  
No!
- The language of stopping is probably unhelpful
- Try and understand what lies behind – otherwise stopping will lead to repression/ suppression

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## Working with klesas

- This verse describes mindfulness practice – *apramada*  
Or vigilance  
*“In all my actions may I watch my mind”*
- It is about developing a warrior-like alertness in relation to the contents of your mind
- It is a bright awareness
- So *“In all my actions may I watch my mind”*
- “in all my actions” – you continue to act – but watch the mind
- The watching is more like a sensing, noticing disturbances

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- Some klesas are very subtle so we train ourselves to look for that turbulence or disturbance that signals the presence of a klesa
- Also need to gain a feeling for the calm, loving mind
- With a calm, loving mind will see how klesa disturbs you
- Sometimes klesa seems attractive – an attractive person – excited!
- But also disturbed, stirred up, loss of stillness
- Try to discover what is missing from our experience
- What solution would more truly meet our needs?
- Not all disturbance comes from klesas e.g. *hri* & *appatrapya* – painful but clean, leading to integration with your values

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## Just stop them!

- This is Langritangpa's advice
- But we don't have to see this a sheer force of will
- We can take this to mean the power of loving-kindness
- Attention you have that helps you focus on bodhicitta
- This is about being in touch with your deep spiritual orientation
- If you are in touch with these then your bright, powerful, awareness just burns up the klesa
- Awareness in this sense is very powerful!
- Sometime not so simple – some klesas are very persistent – need lots of work
- need to resort to the classical practices of confession, ethics, etc.
- Might need to discover what is behind them

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## Some klesas worse than others

- Some klesas more serious than others
- Mahayana considers the most serious is hatred
  - MY sutra “The Definitive Vinaya” lists and classifies klesas.
  - Says craving is subtle and difficult to remove
  - But is not so serious – just leads to rebirth!
  - Hatred is easy to remove but very, very serious
  - It cuts you off from the bodhicitta
  - You disrupt your connection to others
  - You cannot ignore craving it too can cause disruptions with others e.g. taking someone’s lover
  - Ignorance is also serious – thinking we do good we often cause harm
- All klesas have to be dealt with

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## Refinement and difficulties

- As we practice we get more refined, more sensitive
- Danger then is we avoid any kind of difficulty
- Practice can become a refined hedonism – pseudo-spiritual-aestheticism (Bhante)
  - Not a genuinely spiritual, but aestheticism in the sense you think you are very precious about your mental states.
  - Can end up being protective
- Hakqi very critical of some types of meditation what he called – ‘dead seating’
- He said “the lotus born in the fire is far superior than the lotus born in the water”.
- We should practice your meditation in your life not just on your cushion
- When confronted by difficulties we can really practice

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## Verse 4

***When I see ill-natured people,  
Overwhelmed by wrong deeds and pain,  
May I cherish them as something rare,  
As though I had found a treasure-trove.***

- Who are ill-nature people?
- Unpleasant people in general: greedy, angry, violent, stupid, dull, etc.
- Text for monks and hermits who come out of retreat then meet the world – a bit of a shock
- Some texts mentions the sick, those in pain – ancient Tibet as having those with contagious diseases
- These people are a treasure trove – their helps us with our practices.

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## Difficult people help us practice

- Why is that?
- They give us an opportunity to notice our ego reaction and then let go of it!
- May seem far-fetched but we should take this seriously!
- So when someone grates on you, or irritates you, look for what you can learn – about yourself.
- We need to stop the critical mind, let go of finding fault in others but look to our own minds.
- After all, it is OUR reaction!
- Make use of the opportunity that is presenting itself.
- Also – these people are '***Overwhelmed by wrong deeds and pain***'.
- Their ill nature may well have its origin in their own suffering and a more appropriate response would be one of metta, compassion and understanding.

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## Atisha look for difficulties

- Something to get used to with Atisha look for difficulties
- Maybe don't need to look for them in our lives but not be afraid of working with them
- Atisha had his tea boy (on first trip to Tibet) didn't need him on second – Tibetan were difficult enough!
- Develop kalyanamitratā – start with easy people move on to more difficult people – even people we don't like

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## How difficult a person?

- Sometimes someone is just too difficult for us to deal with – we just get drained – loose perspective, etc.
- Sometimes in the Sangha there is someone who is causing a disturbance – e.g. someone in a community, chapter, study group. If not dealt with others may leave
- What to do?
- First need to remember we are dealing with *lojong* mind training – it is not strategies for dealing with people or situations
- We need to right resources - the right attitude
- So we are not overwhelmed by the difficulty
- Not a doormat for people to walk over

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## Do not loose your mindfulness

- Whatever happens must not loose your mindfulness
- Shantideva in Bodhicaryavatara:  
"I will preserve my own happiness and well-being"
- We need the resources to deal with difficult people
- Protected by our practice – good mental state
- Know what is going on – no good being kind & naive
- Stay awake and observe what is really going on – not what you think is going on
- Need to know our own limitations – we are not a Vimalakirti
- Also need to know the limitations of others
  - Sometimes trying to help someone in a situation that cannot hold them

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## More than Kindness

- Sometimes when dealing with difficult people need to be cunning!
- Staying one step ahead
- Dhardo Rimpoche good example; had to deal with all sorts of difficult people
- Could up against difficult people in projects – so maybe good place to practice
- So do not avoid difficulties – use them to practice with!
  
- In Geshe Chakawa's 7 Point Mind Training there is quite a lot there about working in difficult situations
- One simple practice when we experience difficulties is to breath with those in the same difficulty

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