

# Eight Verses for Training the Mind

by Kadampa Geshe Langritangpa

## Week 5

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### Re-cap on last session

- Verse 5 working with people who insult you, harm, etc.
- Importance of an enemy – especially to practise patience
- Working with envy – your own & being a target for others
- Verse 6 even more difficult
- Working with disappointment, being let down, etc. by those who are close to you, etc.
- Experience of your world falling apart, etc.
- Seeing this as an initiation – new way of being
- Forgiveness & accepting life is as it is
- Life is King
- The bodhisattva never gives up!

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## Verse 7

*In brief, directly or indirectly,  
May I give all help and joy to my mothers,  
And may I take all their harm and pain  
Secretly upon myself.*

- Firstly 'mothers' refers to all sentient beings
- Could translate as cherish all sentient beings
- This particular verse describes the practice of Tonglen - sending and receiving
- Tonglen - forms. Usually in the practice you visualise all beings, and you cultivate a cherishing attitude towards them all – you to develop love for them
- You reflect that they all want to be happy & are striving for happiness and well-being
- Because of their ignorance, they suffer in many ways

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## Tonglen practice

- “Like prisoners unable to escape from a jail. They revolve in samsara. What a pity.”
- In the Tonglen practice, you see their suffering as a thick black cloud of smoke rising of the world, rising of beings
- You breathe in that black smoke with the in breath right into your heart
- The black smoke of suffering ignites in your heart you are aspiration to bodhicitta
- You see this as a light in the heart - or possibly as a jewel
- And then as you breathe out, you breathe out light
- usually it is white light that it could be coloured light
- The light is full of tenderness, love, happiness, merit and abundance

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## White light pours all over all beings

- You see it falling on beings soothing their sorrows and granting peace, satisfaction, even a great bliss itself
- You just keep doing this, breathing in the black smoke and breathing out the white light
- You can bring to mind specific people e.g., your parents, friends, and especially those people who you know to be ill, who are suffering
- Can also bring to mind people we have grievances with
- Or people you feel aversion for
- you just keep the breathing in and out. Taking in the darkness and breathing out the white light of well-being
- The white light pours all over the beings
- You do this again and again

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## Develop a profound empathy

- Strangely, if you get into the practice, and really connect with bodhicitta, the more you taking the more you can give
- The bodhicitta shines more brightly, the more you taking the black smoke
- You can imagine not just light falling on beings that that you are giving them gifts, giving them what they need, e.g. riches, wealth, food, clothing, and even Nirvana itself
- In this way through the practice you develop a profound empathy for others
- You are taking on their pain and giving them happiness
- It is a very powerful practice as well is being very subtle

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## Practicing all the time

- Sometimes it seems that maybe not very much is happening in the meditation, but you may find there are effects at other times outside the meditation
- You might just be walking down the street and you start noticing people in a deeper way
- You might find yourself in a difficult situation, you connect with the practice, and this brings you into a deep empathy with those involved
- In the 'Seven-Point Mind Training' Geshe Chekawa you actually use this to transform personal difficulties, physical, mental, spiritual difficulties
- It is recommended you do this practice when you are ill or when you're in pain
- Helps you to stop focusing on your own difficulties by identifying with others in pain

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## Everybody suffers

- It suggested to do this by thinking of others who have the same difficulty, as you breathing in all their difficulties and breathing out the white light
- You can do this with almost anything: e.g. the klesas of craving, or hatred
- You breathe in everybody's craving, everybody's hatred
- You then breathed out white lights removing the craving or hatred of others
- This helps you to realise that everybody suffers from these things
- This helps to break down excessive self cherishing
- And of course you're trying to bring this out in your daily life

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## Directly & indirectly

- The verse says ***"In brief, directly or indirectly,"***
- This suggests that we are not only working directly at indirectly to remove suffering and pain, in all beings
- It is not possible to alleviate the suffering of all beings, in a sense the bodhisattva ideal is impossible
- You can't alleviate the suffering of all beings yourself
- You can help a bit and you can help some directly, to some extent
- So **indirectly** is very important
- Need to see yourself, see a practice, your life, as a small but highly significant contribution to all the good being done in the world
- Not just the good other Buddhists are doing, but all the good done by everyone

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## Indirectly helping

- This is what rejoicing in merit in the Puja is about
- You are rejoicing in all the good done by all beings
- Whether it is going to lead to ordinary happiness or to the ultimate happiness of Nirvana
- Often it is recommended after the Tonglen practice that you do the rejoicing in merits to help you tune into all the good that is being done in the world
- When you doing Tonglen it sometimes necessary to remember you are not the only person doing this practice
- Aligning yourself with the good that has been done though out history
- Bhante's vision of history

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## A Vision of History

- Lecture at an Order Convention in 1978
- He describes a kind of battle between the spiritual communities & the group
- Mentioned all sorts of spiritual groups including Christian and even Manichaeism - little known about them but hugely influential in Central Asia, Persia and China
  - [A dualistic philosophy dividing the world between good and evil principles or regarding matter as intrinsically evil and mind as intrinsically good (Webster's)]
- He said the group doesn't play by the same rules as the spiritual community
- The group is willing to use violence to destroy the sangha

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## Part of something bigger

- He also said that the Order, the Sangha that we are involved in is part of something bigger, part of a very big Movement
- A movement of the desire to have spiritual community
- You need to relate your practice to that, see it as something much bigger
- Perhaps we need to identify ourselves with the great cultural heroes throughout time and space
- Today we practice in many different ways but important not to forget the Dharma worker
- Many things that benefit the world but need a kind of core – the Dharma

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## Dr Ambedkar

- He did much to help the poor & outcasts
- He was concerned with all sorts of improvements
  - Material, social, political, educational, cultural
- But from the beginning he understood for last change had to be a profound moral shift
- He believed a society flounders without a deep spiritual, ethical foundation
- He was highly critical of materialism
- We have unprecedented wealth, leisure, etc. but when the bubble bursts what do we fall back on
- As we have seen in recent times people do not always come together in a crisis e.g. the Balkans
- As Buddhist we have our part to play
- Need to practice deeply & profoundly

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## Metaphysical meaning

- Helping others indirectly has a metaphysical meaning
- Bodhicitta is something around us that we contact
- Manifests wherever there is kindness and intelligence
- We can contribute to this. We can help make it grow
- Shantideva in his Bodhicaryavatara says that we can make the bodhicitta grow and thrive in many
- Could also say grow and thrive in the world
- We could dedicate merits to the bodhicitta growing in thriving in the world
- The point is the good we do is never wasted is never lost. It might be rejected by others
- Externals might be destroyed. Your centre might be closed down; the WBO; TBMSG might disappear, but that all happens in time
- But the good we do is not lost

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## We are always affecting things

- There are waves, currents, ripples passing through passing through life generated from our good acts and a good acts of others
- Something we do not appreciate what understand about Buddhism's use of the word Dharma
- There is in Buddhism this notion that Dharma is this cosmological principle, not just teachings and practices
- The idea is that your good acts is seen some wide tuning in, contributing to the nature of things
- It sometimes said that the metta Bhavana, which we often approach as an internal practice, even a psychological practice to prepare for life, which is important of course

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## A Tantric practice

- Actually, traditionally, The sitting in metta, developing metta is actually affecting the world as you sit .
- It is a magical act
- This is how the Buddha taught the Karanyametta sutta
- It was so that the monks could have a positive effect on the deities that were disturbing their practices
- **Metta bhavana is a Tantric practice**
- If you really dwelling in loving kindness you are affecting and really touching people when you are liberating that emotion into the world
- No good acts are wasted
- Whatever might be going on. Whatever might be destroyed might rise and pass away, your good acts are always contributing to bodhicitta

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