

Eight Verses for Training the Mind

by Kadampa Geshe Langritangpa

Week 6

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Re-cap on last session

- Verse 7 – Tonglen – practice of sending & receiving
- Using the breath to breathe all suffering as a thick black cloud & breathe out the white light that provides happiness, freedom from suffering, Nirvana
- Practicing all the time – in difficult situations – outside of sitting
- Directly & indirectly – connecting with all the good done in the world
- Indirectly – a ‘Vision of History’ – seeing ones practice as part of movement that has been going on a very long time
- Dr. Ambedkar – a spiritual core at the heart of society for it to survive
- Metaphysical meaning – all the good we do has an effect

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Verse 7 (cont)

And may I take all their harm and pain

Secretly upon myself.

- Why secretly?
- you do not make a big deal about practising bodhicitta
- we need to be natural and unpretentious
- A bodhisattva just silently, quietly getting on with it.
- The bodhisattva probably doesn't know that he is even bodhisattva.
- It probably doesn't even think like that.
- he has completely forgotten himself and it is a big surprise when he finds the bodhicitta or when he sees that it is there.
- So we're talking about practice that is unpretentious

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Kadampas keen on simplicity

- Kadampa lamas unpretentious, with emphasis on simplicity & humility
- In Sangha if you take on responsibility you just contributing to the life of the bodhicitta, the Sangha

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Verse 8

- The 8 Worldly concern or winds
 - Praise & blame
 - Gain & loss
 - Fame & infamy
 - Pleasure & pain
- To begin with it's going to be virtually impossible to keep the Eight Worldly Concerns out of our bodhisattva practice.
- They will enter of course.
- If we care deeply about the bodhisattva path they will enter in.
- But we can be aware of them and cultivate the view that we will undermine.

5

Vision that all things are illusion

- You need to see everything an illusion.
- This verse gives us very briefly the profound view behind this teaching.
 - The view of the emptiness of the own being, the self nature of all things, of all people, of ourselves.
 - Everything needs to be viewed as a magical illusion as maya. As maya's dance.
 - Everything appears, there is definitely appearance.
 - But that appearance dissolve a way.
 - That appearances like a dream or a memory.
 - So you need to reflect and meditate on this.
 - You need to meditate on the magical display of things.

6

Absolute & relative bodhicitta

- Verse 8 gives us the view of the ultimate, the absolute bodhicitta.
- Verse 7 is about the relative bodhicitta.
 - The relative bodhicitta is the compassionate response and the ultimate or absolute bodhicitta being the wisdom response.
- In these eight verses we are given a vision of a being completely involved in the activity of contributing, of liberating, self and others.
- He is passionate about that.
- But who knows at the same time that it will all pass away.
- That everything is insubstantial like a dream.
- Everything is like a magical illusion.

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Hard to imagine such a being

- What we are asked of in the bodhisattva tradition is to be such a being.
- We don't have to be incredibly metaphysical about this.
- Quite simply we need to live a life devoted to the Dharma, for the benefit of others, but at the same time, in the midst of it always keeping impermanence in mind. Always.

8

Things rise & fall

- In Bhante's talk the vision of history it was a vision of the rise and fall of spiritual communities.
- He deliberately mentioned Manichaeism, because it was a thriving spiritual community.
 - They were all vegetarians, artists, very cultured, non-violent people, a very rich tradition but it was all destroyed.
 - All we have left his fragments of Manichaeism.
 - It was completely decimated by a combination of Zoroastrianism and Islam.
- Buddhist history, the great Buddhist civilisations, China, Korea, Tibet, Central Asia, Indonesia, India all had incredible amazing cultures that they all came to an end.
- But they rise and they fall.
- And it will be the same with us.

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early days of the Dharma in West

- We have to remember that we are in the very, very, very early days of the transmission of the Dharma in the West, in the modern world.
- Things will come and go.
- They will arise and they will pass away. We need to become fully aware of this.
- That without becoming cynical, or being hopeless, or passive because you know whatever the ravages of time will do your skilful action, your contribution to bodhicitta never loses its effect.
- It is never lost. It is never wasted. It will arise again.
- Maybe not immediately but we can see that we are doing all this now for our spiritual children and a spiritual grandchildren in the future.
- We really need to have this new of things.

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Locked into the present

- So often we are just locked into the present moment. So locked into the people around us.
- Locked into this time this place.
- But we need to think of who comes after us; after we have long gone.
- What will be their legacy?
- What will we pass on to them?
- Will the bodhicitta is a teaching, as the practice be alive for people in the future?
- We need to practice like that.

11

Develop both bodhicittas

- Need to sit loosely to what we do whilst caring very deeply about what we do.
- We need to generate both bodhicittas.
- The verses are an aspiration to develop bodhicitta
- They refer to both bodhicittas "may I develop both bodhicittas";
- the bodhicitta of compassion
- And the bodhicitta of the realisation of emptiness.
- Sunyata, karuna, garbha - remember.
 - The essence of emptiness-compassion.

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8 Verses are precepts

- And as such are to be memorised and said over, & over again
- Brought to bear in all sorts of situations
- Originally not framed as a aspiration but and injunction – I will cherish all beings
- They are also mind training
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- There is a lot in them
- May find them hard – a bit much
- But good to enter the mind of the Bodhisattva – if only briefly

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The essence of the 8 verses

- You could strip them down to get the essence of them:
 - May I cherish all beings
 - May I cherish others as supreme
 - May I watch my mind
 - When I see ill-natured people may I treasure them as a treasure trove
 - May I accept defeat and offer victory
 - When I'm done great harm by someone I had trusted may I see them as an excellent spiritual friend
 - May I give all help and joy and may I take all harm and pain
 - May I see all things as illusions

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