

The Important of Compassion and Wisdom in Our Daily Life

by Geshe Tenzin Zopa of Losang Dragpa Center in the occasion of 1st year anniversary of Chief Reverend Damananda, Brickfield, 22nd August 2007

Good evening everybody, especially my sincere and whole heartedly respect to Chief Reverend, and heartfelt sincere respect to all Venerables and all fellow Dharma Brothers and Sisters. Before I start my talk tonight, I would like to express my deep respect to recall the great kindness, the most compassionate who owned the wisdom eyes to brighten the darkness of ignorance especially in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and many other various places - the most respected Venerable Chief Damananda. Due to the kindness of him, all of us here together to share the most powerful antidote to eradicate the cause of suffering such as ignorance, to be able to discuss and try to achieve some solution within each and every individual of us here. This come together from the past collective karma and also due to the blessing of Buddha, and especially due to the blessing of the late Chief Reverend Venerable Damananda, and the present Chief Reverend Ratana, I again would like to express my sincere heartfelt thank and great respect to all of you.

As Shakyamuni Buddha stated, if I chant in Tibetan, it said

“Dig-pa chi-yang mi-chia-sing;
gye-wa phun-sum tsok-ba shok;
rang-gyi sem-ni yong-su da;
de-ni sang-gye ten-pa yin.”

Never commit any negative deed, or evil deed. Ever cultivate virtue or good deed, subduing one’s mind, this is the teaching of Buddha.

There is various traditions and schools of Buddha’s teaching which has taught to living beings who is able to receive different teaching base on different ability from our past karma, and the ability of the strength of mind and wisdom, therefore the various level of teaching exist such as Therevadan, Mahayana and Vajrayana teaching. All their essence and benefit - the goal is one - which is to achieve peerless happiness, and to be free from samsara. And in general in our normal life to cultivate good heart, to be a good person, to be kind, compassionate and wise person; then by engaging into different level of Path and Ground base on one’s ability, and gradually by eradicating delusion and defilement, and to obtain the nirvana state.

Due to this reason, I would like to stress here that **Buddha dharma is in the manner of three points:**

- 1) overall it is a **religion**,
- 2) which qualify by **philosophy**, and
- 3) which is also qualify by being a **science**, and

which is to apply in our daily life therefore it becomes our **lifestyle** also.

So **Buddha dharma is not something merely respected by blind faith.** Buddha dharma has the reason and benefit that it can be actualized the fruit, and it makes sense even by applying it in such ordinary state like us. And it can be able to eradicate suffering and causes of suffering, then obtain the state of cessation by cultivating the right advice of Buddha, which is the Path and Ground. That's why Buddha Shakyamuni in the first turning of the wheel, He has to stress the teaching of **The Four Noble Truths, which is the common teaching to Theravadan practitioner, Mahayana practitioner, and even Vajrayana practitioner.** Without the foundation, and without the effort taking the essential practice such as The Four Noble Truth into our daily life, there is no way that we can obtain fully enlightenment, and not even able to obtain the freeing state of cessation of suffering. So therefore in order to live a life cultivating the essence of Buddha teaching which is The Four Noble Truths, we have to live a life in the manner of wisdom and method. Therefore wisdom and method is so important in our life, without one of it no way we can obtain liberation state. Whatever manner of practice one does, without applying wisdom and method, there is no way that we can cross the ocean of samsara.

So when we talk about wisdom and method, what is the method? What is the wisdom? Method can refer to as compassion, loving kindness, good heart, and most inspiring attitude we call it bodhicitta or great inspiration mind. Without practicing loving kindness and compassion, there is no way we can eradicate the defilement, including delusion which obstruct the cessation of freeing from suffering. Because without cultivating merit of method which is so important as a support for wisdom to actualize to eradicate the negation – which is the self grasping and self cherishing mind that which suppose to be negated by applying the right antidote, the wisdom realizing selflessness - with the cultivation of renunciation and loving kindness compassion, so then only at least able to abandon the self-grasping mind and self-cherishing mind. **Without cultivating true love, there is no way one can able to sacrifice being selfish,** no way that we can eradicate the self cherishing mind. **Without cultivating compassion, no way we can able to achieve the purpose of practicing Dharma which is for others.** So this simple example, we can see how important of loving and compassion, loving heart and compassionate heart, loving attitude and compassionate attitude.

The antidote which is the wisdom - the mind realizing selflessness - without applying that as the direct antidote, no way we can eradicate the self grasping attitude, including the root of self grasping attitude which is ignorance. Therefore **how to actualize this wisdom? We need the help of loving kindness** and compassion for the purpose of actualizing wisdom and eradicating suffering within oneself by renouncing the suffering of lower realm, and the suffering in this very rebirth and the experience of the tremendous suffering within the cyclic

existence, only by then one is able to obtain the purpose of love and compassion, which is the wisdom eradicating suffering and causes of suffering.

When we talk about true love, which express from Buddha's teaching, the object of love is in two categories: Oneself and others -

- 1) When the attitude of love reflects to oneself, it becomes renunciation;
- 2) When the object of love refer to others than oneself, it becomes compassion.

So without renouncing suffering, there is no way one can be inspired to be free from there. Therefore Buddha's teaching stress that it is important for us to cultivate, or at least remind us the very nature of our own existence is in samsara, which is just in the manner of suffering. The reason why it is stress that it is in the manner of suffering is because it is totally contaminated by the contaminated aggregates, it is totally polluted by the contaminated aggregates.

What it means by contaminated? Contaminated in the sense that **as long as its existence by the force of condition of ignorance and negative karma, it is called contaminated.** Our existence - oneself and outer object - of the five aggregates in this samsara, as long as it is in samsaric nature - an object from which bring suffering, from which it can get into the causes of suffering - such as beautiful objects, it becomes a condition for the cause of suffering. The reason is it reflects the beauty in the manner of attachment, it brings desire within our mind, it will increase the grasping mind related to the object. As long as such an existence, it is contaminated. It is because the cause itself is contaminated, the cause itself is ignorance, so in order to eradicate the ignorance, first of all we have to understand the nature of the result is in the manner of suffering. Then from there we can be able to reflect the cause is negative.

How the cause is negative? Because it is negative in the sense that it is **ignorance, it doesn't realize the actual fact of existence, it doesn't realize the actual fact of the condition itself causing only bring the result of suffering.** That's why we call it ignorance. So even though right now we are not in the hell realm, preta realm, animal realm, but the fact is we are equally similarly experiencing the exact same suffering of hell realm, preta realm and animal realm. The reason is we have the fruitful cause to experience the result. In order to purify, in order to eradicate the cause of suffering which we may have accumulated in the past live times or even earlier this life or even just the very moment before, in another word in order to apply the antidote wisdom which is the only direct antidote to cease or pacify or negate that negative cause which will only bring suffering result, such as ignorance and self grasping mind, therefore we need to cultivate wisdom, which is selflessness – the emptiness of self.

So by realizing that even though we have not born in such a state in lower realm, but it is similar that we possess the cause and it is similar that we will experience the suffering. It is just the matter of time. So from there we find the third level of The Four Noble Truths, which is to search the Paths. First of all is it possible for us to be free from the suffering or not? By realizing there is a cessation, and how to cultivate the cessation, only by practicing dharma and antidote - which is the Path and Ground, the Method and Wisdom again - then at least by cultivating Path and Ground, such as cultivating method and wisdom, practicing loving kindness and compassion, and having the thought to be free from lower realm, cultivating the thought of empty of self existence, or empty of self truly existence, then there is opportunity for us to be at least free from lower realm.

Then we should ask question to ourselves, just being free from lower realm such as hell, hungry ghost and animal realm, is it sufficient or not? It is not sufficient. As long as we reborn in this cyclic existence, it is only in the manner of suffering. Therefore we have to proceed to the direction to be free from entire suffering. This mean to be free from samsara, to be free from pervasive suffering, to be free from cyclic existence, to be free from this contaminated existence, or contaminated person, but is this possible or not? Yes, it is possible. It is possible in the mean of by practicing dharma. First we have to actualize renunciation toward cyclic existence, we have to gain the realization of renunciation by renouncing taking rebirth in the cyclic existence. We need to gain the renunciation of taking this contaminated aggregates, renouncing taking rebirth in this cyclic existence by seeing its faults, it is negative, it is only suffering. Then by applying the method - loving kindness and compassion, being a good person - then cultivate the right view such as emptiness to eradicate the negation which is again the grasping mind, the self cherishing mind, the ignorance, as long as circling in cyclic existence by the force of ignorance and delusion, the only way to rid of it is by purifying ignorance and delusion, and for that we have to cultivate the antidote which is only wisdom - which is selflessness, which is emptiness, free from selfish, free from self truly existence.

In between these we might ask a question, **“Why those great being take rebirth again in cyclic existence?”**. **The answer is that they take rebirth in the sense through their wish and prayer, not through the force of ignorance and delusion.** That is the answer. So whether it is possible for us to be free from entire suffering or not, it is definitely possible to be free from entire suffering. The only method is to pacify the causes of suffering which is ignorance and self grasping mind, or self cherishing mind. So the result, which state do we achieve? We achieve the state of nirvana, which is free from suffering, which is oneself freeing from the contaminated aggregates. Does that mean it is enough purpose for being a disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha? Still it is not enough. Just being free from oneself, that is one. But there are numberless others who also trapped in the same situation, totally dominated by ignorance and negative karma and delusion, and never realize the true existence of who they are, which is completely possessing or trapped in the situation of contaminated which is only

suffering. So here also it is very necessary for us to cultivate method and wisdom.

Now in order to actualize the purpose of benefiting others and benefiting yourself, to liberate others and yourself from entire suffering and samsara, first we need to gain renunciation. So what is the state of renunciation? What is the different of renunciation other than the past two different type of renunciation - one is renouncing lower realm suffering and rebirth, and the second is to be free and renounce in taking rebirth in samsara in overall. But here the great inspiring renunciation, or the great vehicle renunciation, is to renounce by not only seeing oneself trapped in samsara, also all other living beings who equal trapped in samsara, and to cultivating path, practice method and wisdom for the purpose of eradicating every single living being's samsara, and that is the practice of great vehicle, also the renunciation of renouncing the other's existence in samsara and oneself's existence in samsara.

What is the fruit/ result that one is able to obtain by gaining that renunciation? By gaining the greater renunciation? It is to obtain the peerless happiness - which is only happiness. By eradicating the entire defilement and delusion, the defilement which is the self-cherishing mind toward the person, and self-cherishing mind toward phenomena, this will only bring the purpose of great renunciation, this mean to obtain Buddhahood, to become Buddha. One can only obtain fully enlightenment, omniscient by eradicating the entire defilement including the self grasping toward phenomena. In order to do that, we have to cultivate method.

What is the method? It is loving kindness and compassion, here also added the practice of bodhicitta – the mind inspire to obtain Buddhahood just for the benefit of all other living beings, the full liberation which is the state of full enlightenment. By applying the direct antidote to eradicate the self-grasping mind toward phenomena, the right antidote which is called emptiness - freeing from the two extremes – nihilism and eternalism, the emptiness which free from the two extremes - so whether it is possible to actualize that antidote into our mental stream or not? It is possible. How to actualize that? It should have method and sequence to actualize the greatest wisdom – the wisdom realizing the lack of true existence.

So the first method is to apply the selflessness of oneself or the selflessness of person, and that only is able to introduce to us to cultivate in the practice of negating the two extremes. After negating the two extremes, one can able to get into the Middle Path or the middle view which is the lack of inherent existence, or we call lack of truly existence from its own side, we also call voidness in person, and voidness in phenomena. It is far more extensive the awakening mind than just eradicating the self cherishing mind of oneself, or the self grasping attitude for the person. How to go about it even if we apply the method to eradicate the self grasping attitude to the person and the practice of eradicating the two extremes?

We should analyze in each and every phenomena, starting from our own aggregates – such as form, feeling etc., including the mental aggregates, we should analyze whether that existence is truly existence as we project? We project it exists in the manner of its own side, it is nothing relate with condition. This is the best method to analyze within each and every single phenomena, starting from our own aggregates, to find out the true face and true nature of existence. Because our ordinary minds cling it exists from its own side, in fact it exists in the manner from merely imputed. When we talk about it exists in the manner of merely imputed, how about from the object side, is there any single atom truly exist or not? In fact it doesn't exist truly from its own characteristic but it exists. It exists in the manner of merely imputed. But still it needs a right base to be imputed, so what is the right base? The right cause and right conditions, then label the individual designation.

We might think that how this meditation on wisdom is able to eradicate the samsara as well as defilement? It is because it hits, it disturbs the ignorance mind which never see the true face of existence. Ignorance in the sense of ignorant in seeing the fact of existence, and by clinging in that mistaken projection, that's how created negative karma. That's how suffering result in samsara comes about. Therefore meditation is important, cultivation is important, and to understand the technique is also important.

Mindfulness, in our day to day life, not to fall under the control of delusion is important, that's why wisdom and method is important, without these two wings there is no way we can cross the ocean of samsara.

*Draft prepared by Ven.Osel of Losang Dragpa Center, 24th August 2007.
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