

Advice from the heart of Ven. Geshe Sangey Thinley

at Jam Tse Dhargyey Ling on Sunday 4th August 2013 kindly translated by Anton Weiersmuller

On this day, we gathered in the Gompa to do a Chenrezig Puja with Geshe-la, as he was leaving the next day for India to be with Geshe Sonam Rinchen. We did not have a translator arranged, and did not plan on having a teaching. After the Puja, as we had a guest translator visiting: Anton Weiersmuller, Geshe-la spontaneously gave this advice to us all:

Explanation of the mantra Om Mani Padme Hung

Broken down into syllables

The first Syllable is '**OM**'. We have the 3: Body, Speech and Mind, and what this Om does, is give a transformative power to change the ordinary actions of our body, speech and mind, into the body, speech and mind of the Buddha's and Enlightened Ones.

The second one is '**Mani**', and Mani is Sanskrit. When it is translated into Tibetan, it is translated as 'Norbu', which means 'Wish-granting Jewel'. When one has this jewel, it will give you all the material wealth you could wish for. This is used as an example of Bodhichitta – to generate the mind of Bodhichitta, loving kindness and compassion, it can act as a wish-fulfilling jewel and fulfill all your wishes and benefit others.

The next one is '**Padme**', and 'Padme' is also Sanskrit. It means a Lotus Flower, and is an example of the Wisdom Mind. A lotus flower may grow in a lake or in mud, however when it blooms, it is pristine and free of stains and is beautiful and can be used as an example of Wisdom as if one generates a mind of wisdom understanding Emptiness, then using this mind one can attain the state of Buddhahood.

Our goal is to transform the actions of our own ordinary body, speech and mind into the body speech and mind of a Buddha with 'Om', right? Well how does one actually go about achieving this?

One goes about by developing both the Method and the Wisdom.

'**Method**' is the mind of Bodhichitta, this loving kindness and compassion, wishing to be of benefit to others and the Wisdom that realizing emptiness is '**Wisdom**', and it is through the combination of both of these one can use to attain the state of Buddhahood.

Here we are talking about everything in the context of Buddhism, Buddha-dharma, but even for non-Buddhist, one can see that even if they practice loving kindness and compassion that they will obtain not only temporary happiness now, but also in the future, a result of happiness in future lives.

Even though Buddha Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha lived thousands of years ago, we still pay homage to him, and his teachings are still around. Why is this, and why is there still benefit in listening to and practicing his teachings? It is because he developed this mind of Bodhichitta, the wish to be of benefit to all sentient beings.

And we can see other examples of this, for example someone like Mahatma Gandhi from India. People have great respect for him – and why is this? It is because he practiced great compassion and that's why he is so respected and revered.

And we can look at an example like South Africa's Nelson Mandela. Currently he is unwell and in the process of dying, and everyone is quite sad and disturbed by this. We look at why that is – it isn't because he has super model looks, no – it's because of his kindness and compassion, and what he did for others – this is the reason people feel like this and respect him, not for his good looks!

And it's the same for the rest of us, if we practice this way, and generate loving kindness and compassion and a good heart, then we too will be respected by others and our lives will go well. Whatever we need, will come, and this is the way.

The reverse example is someone like Adolf Hitler, who created a lot of wars and harm to others, and when he passed away, no one was really disturbed by his passing. And why was this? As he had this negative and destructive mind, the mind that wished to harm others.

Of course this is the same for us. If we are kind and compassionate, most people will like us. If we have a negative mind with the wish to harm others, then people will want to avoid us.

You might see examples in this world of people who do have good hearts, and good minds, and sometimes people still don't like them. Why this happens is because in a previous life that we may not be aware of, they have done negative actions resulting in a negative result in this lifetime.

Really great that we came here today to do this Chenrezig Puja. The reason is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama right now is in retreat in Ladakh doing a three week Chenrezig Retreat. So it is really beneficial to do this practice at this time.

It is really good if we can recite this '**Om Mani Padme Hung**' mantra (Mani Mantra) and develop this loving kindness within ourselves. There is great benefit in doing this practice, especially at this time.

As we were talking about just before we need both Method and Wisdom to develop on the path and achieve Buddhahood. The main benefit of reciting the Mani Mantra is it helps us develop this Bodhichitta part of the path. And then reciting the **Heart Sutra** mantra helps us develop the Wisdom part of the path. We need both method and wisdom together to obtain enlightenment, for this reason

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has requested that we recite both the Om Mani Padme Hung and the Heart Sutra Mantra to combine these two aspects.

We like this mind of Bodhichitta and this Wisdom mind, so its not like he is asking us to do something we don't want. It's very good to do this, as it helps us to develop this compassion and wisdom.

To just develop compassion is not complete; one has to develop wisdom too. If you just have a kind heart, it is good, but you won't get the complete result. The same if you just have wisdom without compassion. One really needs to develop both to achieve the ultimate result.

We are fortunate now to have achieved this precious human rebirth right? This is a result of the merit we have generated in the past; we now have this precious human rebirth and have this opportunity to practice the dharma.

The Heart Sutra has now been translated into English. It is really good to get it and read it and contemplate its meaning. Generally it is very beneficial to read this, and also recite the Heart Sutra mantra:

'OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA'

The focus of the mantra is the wisdom recognizing emptiness.

Through the kindness and skill of Shakyamuni Buddha it is possible to teach these profound teachings in a very easy and understandable way.

So if you explain the concept of the profound emptiness, it's can be very difficult and some people find it very difficult to understand, but this mantra is a very simple and clear way to develop an understanding, one doesn't need extensive teachings on this.

The mantra is in Sanskrit, and when you translate it into Tibetan 'gate gate' means 'gone gone beyond'. Geshe-la says, "Go where?"

It's not going beyond the shops – or going anywhere, it is going beyond what we call Samsara to the state of Buddhahood.

And how is this done? This is done through the understanding of Emptiness. There is no other way, but through this understanding.

If somebody just says 'go go' to you, you will say, well where are we going? But this is not about ordinary Samsara; this is about going beyond and reaching the state of Buddhahood. This is the benefit of the Mind of Emptiness.

The Dalai Lama said that Shakyamuni Buddha was incredibly clever to be able to teach such profound concepts in such a clear and easy to understand way, that this emptiness takes you beyond Samsara to the state of Enlightenment.

And then one might think – Buddha is advising us to go – go beyond, but why would I want to do that? When we really take a look at Samsara, it is a place of suffering, we are just swept back and forth in waves, and there is no stability. This needs to be understood.

The way to go beyond Samsara is through this Method and Wisdom practice and path. Geshe-la says that it is good that you all came here today and good that he had this opportunity to explain this method and wisdom to you briefly, as it is very important.

When HH the Dalai Lama was in Sera Monastery for his birthday recently, (2013) all these people came and offered gifts to him and he said that he really didn't want all these gifts. He said that if people could generate the Mind of Compassion and Good Heart this would make him really happy, and is the gift that he really would want.

So it's the same with us, if we could generate this Mind of Bodhichitta it would make everyone happy, it would make Geshe-la happy as well.

So like that, if parents have a child and the child studies well and generate a good compassionate heart, the parents become happy. However if the child doesn't do so well and does bad things, harming others, then the parents become unhappy. So we can see therefore how important it is to generate this kind-heartedness, but we have to work it at. It doesn't come without effort, it doesn't suddenly just appear. One has to study and work on it.

Some people here might like to meditate and this is really good. It's not necessary to do long periods of meditation, it's not so important. What is important however is to generate this loving kindness and compassion and generate a positive motivation, a good motivation. This is what will make the meditation go well. It's like a person right, if a person doesn't have a head then they are not going to do too well, they are going to have problems. It's a bit like that with meditation, if the meditation doesn't have a good motivation, which is like the head, then the one cannot expect it to go well.

In the Lam Rim it also says that if you want to do all this practice, meditation and study – if you want to get results, realizations and understanding from these efforts, then the key to this is that one needs to rely on a virtuous or spiritual friend. Through the blessings of this faith and reliance on the spiritual friend, blessings or understandings will come to one's mind. If one doesn't have this, no matter how much one studies or practices, one cannot expect to achieve any level of understanding without the reliance of a spiritual or virtuous friend or guide. This has been stated many times in the texts and the Lam Rim.

Pabongka Rinpoche's 'Lam Rim' text, translated as 'Liberation in the Palm of your Hand', is a great text, where everything has been explained very clearly in an extensive way and there is a very good English translation, so one can read and study this to gain a deeper understanding. This Lam Rim text is very good as it takes all these profound subjects and brings them all together in one place, so everything is there from the reliance on a spiritual friend, to Bodhichitta, etc. – everything is there and it is very good.

Geshe-la says, check for yourselves.

What is it that will bring you happiness in this life?

What is it that will bring you happiness in the future?

It is really important to check this and understand.

Special Notes:

At the time of this teaching, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has entered a 21-day Chenrezig retreat in Ladakh. He requested that we recite 1000 '**Om Mani Padme Hung**' Mantras each day and either recite the Heart Sutra or the Heart Sutra Mantras: '**Gaté Gaté Paragaté Parasamgaté Bodhi Svaha**'

Both our Spiritual Director Ven. Lhagon Rinpoche and our Spiritual Teacher Ven. Geshe Sangey Thinley requested that we fulfill His Holiness the Dalai Lama's request.