



Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

Teacher:- Venerable Geshe Jampa Tenzin

Title:- Lob.jong Mind Training

Venue: D.B.C. Dunedin

Thursday 7 April 2011

I remind you again of the right motivation while listening to this teaching so that you may become a Buddha and be of immense benefit to sentient beings.

Tonight we are talking about lob.jong, Mind Training. All Buddhist practice and teachings are mind training in that they shape our thinking for the better. The term lob.jong has been given to a section of the lam rim, Stages of the Path. Mind training was particularly popular and widely prevalent during the time of Kadampa masters.

There are two main approaches: six cause and one effect, and equalizing and exchanging self-centeredness for concern for others. During the time of the Kadampa lamas the first approach was taught widely and publicly and the second was taught covertly to only a select group of people and individuals. These two approaches to developing Bodhicitta or universal compassion were integrated into one cohesive body of teaching on mind training by Lama Je Tsong Khapa. The body of teaching and the practice that was founded by him is the same as that prevalent in all other Tibetan Buddhist orders, Nyingma, Sakya and Kagyu. Lama Je Tsong Khapa's teaching incorporates all various strands of the Tibetan tradition; the Kadampa masters, the 6 yogas of Naropa and tantric teachings including the Sakya practice of a deity called Hevajra.

Central to the practice of tantra is the right view which is instrumental for all tantric practices of projection, dissolution and so on. Lama Je Tsong Khapa's system incorporates the right view emanating from other traditions. He refined those views coming from various sources with reference to logic and authentic scriptural citations. The Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism practices a form of philosophical view that is predominantly sourced from Shantirakshita who was thought to be of the Svatantrika school. The Sakya tradition is sourced from Choekyong which is his Tibetan, protector of the Dharma, and he is said to belong to the Mind Only school.

Lama Je Tsong Khapa had a special connection with Manjushri who gave him many personal teachings, collected under the name of Emanated Scripture in which lie refined explanations on sutra and tantra. It won't be possible to talk about all of these. These air-whispered magical scriptures came from Lama Je Tsong Khapa down through the masters and it is now in the hands of the present Dalai Lama, the 14th. His Holiness is said to have had a dream experience of his junior tutor who was up until then the magical scripture holder. He dreamt that the junior tutor gave him the extensive lam rim; not the normal extensive lam rim, but with a special reference to the magical scripture.

Mind training is all about expanding our heart and making it more accommodating rather than shutting out others, excluding them and their interests. We do that by way of developing Bodhicitta. Before I talk about how we develop Bodhicitta, as is the practice of the teaching, I will talk about the many benefits of developing and having this mind.

What is Bodhicitta? Bodhicitta is said to be an awareness that is determined to help place all sentient beings in the highest state of enlightenment, for which sake the mind realizes that it needs to be enlightened to have all the know-how to do this. This mind has the twin aspiration of service to others and aspiration to omniscience. This is called Bodhicitta, a two-pronged aspiration. You seek the fulfillment of others' interest which is their lasting happiness. One seeks also one's own consummate state of perfection of Buddhahood. Of the two

aspirations mind training particularly focuses on the first, service to others and cultivation of others' interest.

Tonight I will briefly enumerate and elaborate on the benefits of Bodhicitta, how to develop it and sustaining this mind. There are 10 benefits if you developing Bodhicitta. Although there are 10 benefits, it is not as if there are no more than 10. All the innumerable benefits and advantages a person who has developed Bodhicitta can derive are subsumed by these 10. All virtues are virtues of Bodhicitta because all virtues that anybody develops for themselves and for others are said to be triggered or activated by Dharmakaya, the wisdom truth body of the Buddha. These virtues are all subsumed under Bodhicitta and it is only Bodhicitta that helps bring about the Dharmakaya of the Buddha, there is no other direct cause.

Benefits of Bodhicitta

1. The first benefit of Bodhicitta is that it is the only doorway to enter Mahayana, there is no other way.
2. As soon as you develop Bodhicitta you become a Bodhisattva, or a child of Buddha.
3. As soon as you become a Bodhisattva there and then by the power of the Mahayana heritage you can eclipse the power of arahats of the Pratyikabuddhas and Shravakas, who are otherwise very much senior and highly realized beings.
4. As soon as you develop Bodhicitta you become naturally – without seeking – a supreme object of veneration and offering by others.
5. With Bodhicitta you gather an immense amount of merit through very simple deeds and actions.
6. Bodhicitta helps free the mind of mental obscuration, defilements and contaminants.
7. You go through the Bodhisattva training on the five Mahayana paths which are punctuated by 10 Bodhisattva grounds, speedily. Bodhicitta helps to fulfill your training quickly.
8. You won't come under the adverse influence of humans and non-human beings.
9. All your wishes will come true.
10. You become a sublime source from which emanates the temporal and ultimate happiness of all beings.

Let me briefly elaborate on these 10.

1. Bodhicitta helps you go through the Mahayana door. That means that Bodhicitta is the benchmark by which you become a Mahayana practitioner. Without Bodhicitta, even if you may feel you do profound Mahayana practice like highest yoga tantra, it won't become a Mahayana practice. In India there was a tantric practitioner with powerful concentration who could do visualization and whose deity was Hevajra. He had vision and concentration but his Bodhicitta was behind. By practicing tantra that would otherwise achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime he only achieved the state of a Stream-enterer Arya status. Similarly Atisha, the great Indian master, before he met his Indonesian guru Dharmakirti, is said to have had strong concentration. When he thought he had developed sound, piercing concentration, he thought; now if I practice tantra, the concentration will serve me well. His guru Rahulagupta who could read his mind, appeared before him and said, 'you may wish to practice tantra on the basis of your concentration but without Bodhicitta you will not get anywhere.' He was strongly advised to seek and develop Bodhicitta. Atisha decided to abandon his plan to enter tantra through the sheer force of concentration and he decided that the need to develop Bodhicitta had become very urgent. The tradition was only alive in the Indonesian master and he sailed with merchants to Indonesia over a 13 month period on the high seas. Once he reached there he spent 12 years in daily contact with him. Atisha had nearly 150 teachers from whom he learnt all about sutra and tantra. Of these he considered Dharmakirti of the Golden Isles as the fore-most of all these gurus. It is not that Bodhicitta is vital to practicing tantra and sutra, in fact all these are a vehicle to practicing Bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the final outcome for which then you do all other practice. It is not the other way round. When you practice lam rim there are 3 paths. The entire body of practice on the paths of the practitioners of small and middling capacities is an essential means to help to develop Bodhicitta, to nudge the person towards it. When

they practice tantra, this is nothing special. It is a way of adhering to the precepts of bod Bodhicitta. Everything boils down to cultivating and reinforcing Bodhicitta. The first benefit of Bodhicitta is it helps you enter the Mahayana family and it is the only gateway.

2. The second benefit is one becomes a Bodhisattva, an offspring or child of the Buddhas. As soon as you develop it you become a Bodhisattva and all of the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas become delighted at the prospect of a promising new sibling, another child in the family. It is said that whenever anywhere a being develops Bodhicitta regardless of their species life form they become a Bodhisattva and the sheer force of this mind makes that particular world system shake a little bit, causing a tremor. It also shakes the seat of Buddhas for such is the force of Bodhicitta. No other form of spiritual realization has the capacity to shape the world and shake the seat of the Buddhas.
3. With Bodhicitta you eclipse experienced, wise Buddhist practitioners. For example, when a child is born to a royal family, the child – without experience or learning – but by dint of the blue blood in the veins, the child eclipses all ministers. In the same way it happens to the Bodhisattva.
4. You become a sublime object of veneration. Not that you develop Bodhicitta so that you become a object of offering, veneration and respect, but you naturally become one. The Bodhisattva world will venerate and respect you and make offerings of different kinds and one becomes an object of respect by the Buddhas who hold one in high esteem. Buddha highlights this point by making analogies. People in ancient times venerated the sun and moon. There were people who worshipped the moon, some the full moon in its more glorious form and not the new moon. But Buddha said the glorious brightness of the moon did not happen overnight but started with the crescent young moon and this is more important to worship than the expanded form. Like that it is more important to pay attention to the cause, the Bodhisattva that leads to the full expansion of a Buddha. In this way Buddha explained that it was more important to pay respect to a Bodhisattva than to Buddhas. This point, paying attention to the cause or seed, and nurturing that, was picked up by the Chandrakirti who illuminated the profound view of emptiness. He composed Madyamikaavatara. Unlike other masters of his time or before him, whenever they composed a work, homage was paid to an enlightened being but he did not pick any one person but paid homage to compassion because Bodhicitta ultimately comes from compassion. In the same way in the beginning of any mind training text homage is paid to compassion and Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion. Here Avalokiteshvara does not refer to a white, one-face, four-armed person, but the underlying Avalokiteshvara. What you see out there is the surface Avalokiteshvara. The interior and underlying Avalokiteshvara refers to universal compassion.
5. Bodhicitta helps gather the necessary amount of merit rather effortlessly as if one had the elixir of alchemy. Whatever the substance the alchemist can transmute base metal into gold without going through a long drawn-out process. In the same way Bodhicitta transmutes ordinary virtues into potent means and seeds to attain Buddhahood. When driven by selfless pure Bodhicitta let alone when you do something positive, even when you do something normally considered highly negative such as killing, it would become a potent virtue as it was driven by Bodhicitta for the greater cause. There is an account from the life of the Buddha. Bodhicitta is so powerful and so utterly selfless and thinks of nothing but others' interest regardless of what that person does to the one. Shantideva said, 'Whether someone does something nice to a Bodhisattva or does negative deeds to the a Bodhisattva, they would equally benefit from the Bodhisattva.' Whatever you do for or against a Bodhisattva, you will end up winning; it is a win-win situation. Bodhisattvas never have favoritism towards those who favour them nor ill will to others who harm them; they have only good will to all. There is an account of how even if you harm a Bodhisattva, that harm will benefit you in the long term as if by magic. This is because only unbiased altruism flows from a Bodhisattva no matter whether someone venerates or harms a Bodhisattva.
6. Bodhicitta helps swiftly purify the mind of the contaminants or pollutants of negative thoughts. No other purification practice works as powerfully and effectively as Bodhicitta. Here is the story of Asanga who needed to see Maitreya Buddha to help him understand Prajnaparamita. Asanga had read it, understood the words but not what it was all about. For that he needed to see Maitreya so he meditated on him over 4 phases of 3 years and he came out after 12 years but he still hadn't seen Maitreya. He had real concentration and meditated on him and still could not seem him. On the way home he found this ill dog with maggots and he developed compassion and wanted to save the dog and the maggots. He cut off a piece of his thigh to feed to the maggots. He also stuck his tongue out to lick

the maggots off the dog so he would not hurt them. As he poked out his tongue he didn't feel anything there so he opened his eyes and there in front of him was Maitreya. Asanga was rather indignant saying, "You are a hard-hearted person, making me do all this before showing yourself to me". But Asanga had to go through what he did to purify his mind before he could see Maitreya. Dantopa's life is another example. He was Atisha's foremost disciple and on his deathbed he was surrounded by other masters who asked him not to leave. So he said, "Turn to the scriptures and rely on them as your guru and rely on Bodhicitta". This too highlights the significance of Bodhicitta.

7. Speedy progression through the stages, won't be affected by any evil influence.
8. All that you wish for will come to fruition etc.

All these can be elaborated more with examples and anecdotes but you can read them in lam rim texts. The Indian master Shantideva said, 'Bodhicitta is the cream of the ocean of milk of Buddhist teaching'. If you stir this ocean you will end up with the cream which is Bodhicitta. He also said, "If the enlightened heads of Buddhas come together and then think what is the best thing we can do that will help all beings, they will not find anything but Bodhicitta. However hard Buddhas may rake their brains, what is the best thing that is the solution to the ills of existence, is Bodhicitta." If there is one practice you want to do it should be Bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is a pristine, altruistic mind which is utterly selfless in its thinking only considering others' interest. We all need to value Bodhicitta and do things that help us develop it and reinforce it once developed. If only we had Bodhicitta, right view and realizations of tantra, we will naturally come along. If one has no Bodhicitta and one were to practice self-generation and were to do all kinds of powerful breathing exercises to channel energy into various spots to generate various experiences, it would be as if one is doing some gymnastics.