

## **Now is the Time to Fuel Bodhicitta!**

### **Topography of the Path**

One of the things we have been doing here is the Bodhisattva path. I think in this context it's so appropriate to go over or get into this teaching of lojong. I'm sure many of you have studied this. This is called mind transformation or sometimes called thought transformation or mind training. There are many ways to translate it. How many of you are familiar with this teaching? In a sense this looks like, not esoteric. It's obvious like a duh kind of thing. But if really we try to put it into practice, push your buttons. Then you will realize there are so many buttons that you have. This is a very concise way, the essence of the practice in your lifetime, right now and, also at the time of death. Those are two ways to talk about it. I feel this is really a good reminder and study for me too. Even though I have been inspired by this kind of teaching for a long time, I'm still working on it. So, it's good for me too.

In the lojong text, there are many specific texts which talk about this specific teaching, mind transformation, transforming adversity onto the path. That's one way to say it. One is this mind training text. It says, "in brief the essence of the guideline instruction is applying the five forces." These five forces or five strengths we're going to go into one by one, five strengths, five forces in this lifetime and also at the time of death, how we die. Right now we have this opportunity. We have to practice right now. This is the time, especially this is it! If we miss this one, we don't know when death comes. Then this teaching was not really applied to our mindstream in the sense that we are wasting our precious human life. So, we really need to put this into our practice.

Let's go one by one. I'm going to list the five. First is motivation or intention. This is the foundation. The second one is translated white seed, basically virtuous, auspicious seeds we need to plant. The third one is destruction, that's one way to translate, kind of eliminating all at once, very strongly, destruction. We're going to talk about what we need to destroy. The fourth one is aspiration and prayers. That's so important. Also, what that means, what we pray. The fifth one is familiarization or habituation. We have habits, right? We are creating new kinds of habits. That's the place that pushes lots of buttons.

We're going to do one by one. In terms of order, there are many ways to place the order. This is the order I studied so I'm just going to share it with you.

In terms of lifetime transformation, the five forces, the first is motivation and intention. I'm sure you've been practicing that as soon as you get up. You set your motivation, no? The bottom line is we need to come back to the real basics which may not really be basic. It's very advanced for many of us.

What do you think? What is the bottom line in terms of intention or the foundation of this lifetime practice? We're talking about practice and life, life's journey and the spiritual journey, same. As a dharma practitioner, spiritual practitioner, this is the emphasis of the Kadampas. I was so inspired by those Kadampa Geshes.

Anyway, we are talking about this intention. The bottom line is not harming. At least if I cannot help bring the medicine to one person at this moment then do not harm the body, speech and mind, not only physical. That's the bottom line. As soon as we get up, three things maybe you can practice. As soon as I get up say, may I not harm today in body, speech and mind. May I have a kind heart. At least I think about it although not always successful. Then, may I be able to benefit others, that's the bodhicitta. May I be able to benefit as much as I can.

Right now, I am in this small room, kind of stuck in here. But then we can practice! There are lots of things we can practice. We do not have to just physically go out. It's so holy and I respect those physically helping now. At this time some of us are not able to do it. But we are able to do it through this intention

So that's the first one. The second one is to benefit others as much as possible. Speak kindly to your roommate. Have a good heart approach. Whatever we do, we offer to enlightened beings and also sentient beings. I am drinking this tea. May this help to eliminate the thirst of all sentient beings wherever they are. Intention is so important, of course, to have the determination to increase bodhicitta.

The third one is this moment to moment practice which I was just sharing with you. Really, we need to nourish this bodhicitta which I have a very strong feeling about. I think it's all about bodhicitta, no? I think really, we should not lose, never ever lose bodhicitta. So, we nurture the bodhicitta more and more. Even more now, I feel like this is the time to nurture, put the feel into bodhicitta. Then we stabilize bodhicitta. Put it into the mindstream so it's not going to just disappear, during the day, no matter how we are or how "they" are or how the world is going. That's important. Also, we can practice anywhere, no, bodhicitta? We can practice in the bathroom.

Real dharma practice is to change your mind. That's how I view and also how Buddha taught. That's how I believe and how my teacher taught me. It's not about sitting on the cushion in a holy place, put out incense and ring a bell and this, this, this. I mean that's one part of it but if motivation is not there in our tradition, it is not considered to be powerful. We need to really integrate. Our mind has to become dharma and dharma has to become our mind. Those two things, integration.

Also, as soon as mental affliction arises, we need to catch it. You guys start to be a little more skillful in terms of catching your delusions? I'm still working on it. But then if something comes, frustration, I can see it, you know, like a wave. "Oh it's coming." In terms of strong affliction, as a practitioner we need to catch it. And preferably we need to see the true nature of it, energy, and underneath the energy, what's there. It's a strong sensation, right? For example, anger or desire, strong sensations. Then see if we can use that, rest in that. How does that feel like in my body?

Use your body, speech and mind to increase bodhicitta, act out bodhicitta. Then dharma becomes a priority in your life. If we practice this way there is no doubt, no questions or doubt about dharma. "Okay, I'm going to switch to a different dharma." Some people do that. "Oh, this is not my kind of dharma." No, dharma is dharma, same. It's all about transforming your mind.

So that's the first one, in the morning when you wake up. Then also during the day you practice intention and motivation for bodhicitta. Then in the evening we review how we did. Do you review your day? I'm sure you have some good habits. I'm not so good at that. When I was young I tried. One Geshe, geshe means geshema, spiritual friend not a geshe who graduated with some kind of education. Originally Kadampa, Atisha Kadampa, those are the spiritual friends called Geshe. One of the Geshe used black and white stones. Have you heard that story? In the evening before he went to bed he counted his body, speech and mind. If it was virtuous, then a white stone. If it was a negative action, then black stone. Then how much black and white to check himself. My father did Japanese chess called IGO and used black and white stones. I used to steal from his room. He had lots of black and white, I used. Of course, most of them were black. But at least it was mindful, it reminded me, "oh, okay today I did black. But just one white one, good job."

Reviewing is very important. Then determination, I never give up Bodhicitta. "This is the most important thing in my life no matter what, how difficult it is." Like this,

how difficult it is now. "I'm not going to lose it." That kind of determination, this is a lifeline, my survival.

So, that's the first one – intention, motivation.