

Encouraging Ourselves – Handout for Sunday, July 7

July 6 & 7, 2024 at Kunzang Palchen Ling & Livestreamed

10:30 am – noon & 2:00 – 3:30 pm



The eternal knot (དཔལ་རྟེན) symbolizes interdependence and the endless wisdom and compassion of the Buddhas.

Teaching description: It can be hard to find time to practice. Sometimes we lose touch with our motivation. At these times, it can help to remember why we began practicing in the first place. Setting the right intention, cultivating good habits, and relying on inspiring examples are some ways to encourage ourselves to continue moving in the right direction. We will ruminate on and discuss these topics this weekend.

Outline:

- 1) Setting the right intention
- 2) Cultivating good habits
- 3) Relying on inspiring examples
- 4) Overcoming obstacles

Breakdown:

- 1) Setting the right intention
 - a. Establishing an accurate understanding of our situation and that of all beings
 - b. Giving rise to the wish to help beings = Compassion, Bodhicitta & Meditation
- 2) Cultivating good habits
 - a. Wisely steering oneself in how to think and act
- 3) Relying on inspiring examples
 - a. Garnering wisdom from instructive stories and teachers
- 4) Overcoming obstacles
 - a. Learning how to overcome obstacles to practice

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“...we are born as a human being, which is pretty good, and if before we die we are not able to progress any further, then is not very good, not [a] very meaningful life. But even if we don't progress, as such, but if we did not degenerate, then we should consider [it] not too bad.

My ambition is: From birth to death, I want to improve by 1%, that is my ambition. And to improve in everything, improve in knowledge, improve in experience, improve in wisdom, improve in realization, in everything. **Then, in 100 lives, I will be Buddha.** You know?! So, that would be quite a shortcut, and in 100 lives I can be Buddha, and each life will be 1% better. Then, I go for it; I go for it.

So, my humble definition of a meaningful life is: We become 1% more kind, 1% more compassionate, 1% more wise, 1% more enlightened, 1% deeper realization, so everything [increased by] 1%. Then, if that is the case, I will call that a meaningful life.”

- *from the video, A Meaningful Life, by HE Tai Situ Rinpoche*

Wheel of Self-Propelled Improvement



Our best can always get better!

Happy with the improvement I see

Continuing to develop

Taking Hold of Bodhichitta

Through these actions now performed
And all the virtues I have gained,
May all the pain of every living being
Be wholly scattered and destroyed!

For all those ailing in the world,
Until their every sickness has been healed,
May I myself become for them
The doctor, nurse, the medicine itself.

Raining down a flood of food and drink,
May I dispel the ills of thirst and famine.
And in the aeons marked by scarcity and want,
May I myself appear as drink and sustenance.

For sentient beings, poor and destitute,
May I become a treasure ever-plentiful,
And lie before them closely in their reach,
A varied source of all that they might need.

May I be a guard for those who are protector-less,
A guide for those who journey on the road.
For those who wish to cross the water,
May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.

Thus for everything that lives,
As far as are the limits of the sky,
May I be constantly their source of livelihood
Until they pass beyond all sorrow.

— Shantideva (abridged from *The Way of the Bodhisattva*)

Even if others cut off my head when I haven't done the slightest wrong,
Taking upon myself their misdeeds through the power of compassion
Is the bodhisattvas' practice.

(Verse 13, *The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*)

The Blissful Path to the Ocean of Bodhicitta
A Brief Prayer of Aspiration for Mind Training
by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

By the truth of the perfect mind of awakening
Generated by the supreme noble Lord Avalokiteśvara
And all the buddhas and bodhisattvas,
May the supreme mind of bodhicitta be born
In me and in all other beings, as limitless as space.

May the causes and effects of beings' suffering—
Their involvement with the five poisons,
And painful experiences in the six classes,
All ripen on me! To them all, as limitless as space,
I offer the six perfections in my own mind,
And sources of virtue, free from the five poisons.

May all the realms of saṃsāra's six classes be emptied,
And may everyone attain the level of Avalokiteśvara,
In his six sublime families and with six types of wisdom.

May all disease, famine, belligerence, wrong views,
Impairments, transgressions, downfalls, harmful actions,
Self-cherishing, obstacles, harmful influences and impediments,
All ripen on me and me alone!
And to all these beings, who are as limitless as space
I dedicate long-life, glory, wealth, happiness, power,
Experience, realisation, and knowing, loving wisdom.
May they all, through supreme enlightened actions,
Attain the level of the most splendid Noble One!

In short, may all the causes and effects
Of egotism and self-cherishing ripen on me!
And may all beings gain a wealth of benefit and happiness,
And realise the meaning of emptiness and compassion!

May all beings, especially those who harm me, or who have developed a negative connection
Through seeing, hearing, thinking of, or encountering me,
Purify their obscurations, enter the path to enlightenment,
And attain awakening straightaway!

May I take the place of those experiencing the cause and effect
Of unbearable, extremely negative acts,
And may they all purify obscurations
And be born in realms of perfect bliss!

For the sake of all, but especially those who harm me,
May I remain only in the lower realms,

And may all beings, my very own mothers,
Escape samsara's ocean to reach liberation's shore.

The only basis for bodhicitta—
Kind enemies and harmful forces—
For your sake, I shall gladly give away
My body and my life—may you be benefitted!

When I attain complete enlightenment,
May you become the first in my circle,
And, just like the five original disciples,
Attain omniscience there and then!

From now until I attain enlightenment,
May I never be apart from you who do me harm,
And with calm, untroubled view and conduct,
May we set out together on the path to enlightenment.

May those who see me, hear me or think of me,
And also those who merely hear my name,
Or are simply touched by the same breath of wind,
Discard their obscurations and enter the way to peace!

All beings are my own parents, as limitless as space,
So how could I ever feel hostility towards them?
Wishing only to repay their kindness, and acting gently,
May I bring them, all at once, to enlightenment!

May beings never be harmed on my account,
Whether directly or indirectly,
And, through bringing them only benefit and happiness,
May I lead them all to the state of perfect bliss!

In each and every instant, may all limitless beings,
With skill in the means of liberation and the force of compassion,
Become just like Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī,
And Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of Secrets.

May those who suffer and are difficult to tame,
Receive special loving care and guidance,
And may the compassionate prayers and aspirations
Of the Supreme Sage and the Lotus Born come true!

In the wisdom space of the equality of self and other,
Through the dawning of emptiness and compassion's power,
Just so the benefit of others may be secured,
May this prayer of aspiration swiftly be fulfilled!

Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2015. With thanks to Po-yu Sung for providing the Tibetan text and a draft translation.