

Handout for Class 5 On Practice

Ven. Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche. Translated by Lama Yeshe Gyamtso. This is an excerpt from a great teaching found in the magazine Shenpen Osel. You can get a copy (or subscribe for four quarterly issues) at: Shenpen Osel, 4322 Burke Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98103

Using your practice in this life to confront and remedy your particular makeup of kleshas (disturbing emotions) is very helpful in the bardo and in general. We see that some people practice meditation for a relatively short time and find that their minds are effectively pacified and tamed by their practice, whereas other people can practice meditation for a much longer time without deriving much benefit.

When we look at the difference between these two types of practitioners, we may say that the samadhi or meditation that they are practicing is fundamentally the same. The difference between them lies not so much in the technique of meditation used as it does in the intention or focus with which the meditation is performed.

In the case of a very effective practice of meditation, the person is applying the meditation to their actual kleshas, the actual problems they face. If someone has that intention, the intention that their meditation practice serve as a remedy to particular kleshas, then the meditation practice will serve as that remedy and, therefore, will be effective. If on the other hand, someone practices a fundamentally similar meditation, but with a very vague motivation, without focusing on particular things that need to be worked through or relinquished, then the meditation itself will be less effective.

It is important, therefore, to remember that meditation, and indeed all dharma practice, becomes most effective when you particularly and consciously apply it as a remedy to particular problems or particular kleshas. This is beneficial in general, and especially when these kleshas arise in the bardo.

Aspiration and Dedication of Merit Prayers

A common aspiration prayer of the Mahayana tradition is called The Four Immeasurables, which is often recited at the beginning of Mahayana Buddhist practice sessions:

The Four Immeasurables

May all beings be happy and have the causes of happiness.

May they be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow.

May they have that great happiness which is sorrowlessness.

May they come to rest in the great equanimity, which is free from attachments and aversions.

Buddhists traditionally end their practice sessions with a prayer of dedication. Here is an English translation of one such common prayer:

Dedication of Merit

Through this virtue, may all beings gather the accumulations of merit and wisdom, and
May they attain the two supreme bodies of the Buddha, which arise from merit and wisdom.