

Explanation on Immeasurable Loving Kindness by H.E. Garchen Rinpoche, 31-8-2020

Question: Could you please give a detailed explanation/guidance on how to meditate on immeasurable love?

Garchen Rinpoche: What is loving kindness? When one has dualistic grasping toward one's close ones – one's children and spouse, they love you, and you love them. When you love them, you will remember them when you face just a bit of difficulty. Similarly, there is no one who has not been our parents or children. We should consider our most beloved one as an example to understand that there is no one who has not been like them over our countless past lives. When we think like that, then based on the understanding at that point, a bit of loving kindness will arise for these beings. Then, when we think about the number of sentient beings – we can see that they are countless and immeasurable, like the dust particles in a sunray. When such loving kindness arises within, then upon seeing or hearing whatever problems that occur, we will think, "Oh, how terrible!" We will feel as if the whole world is our own family. Then immeasurable loving kindness will arise. Immeasurable loving kindness means to have loving kindness for the whole world. Then this must be habituated again and again.

Initially, one has to foster small measures of loving kindness. One should meditate on love for one's very kind mother: "If I didn't have a mother, I wouldn't have a human body." And teachers: "Since I have teachers, I gained knowledge; and if I didn't have a teacher, I would be ignorant. If I didn't have a teacher, I wouldn't have any knowledge." Then loving kindness arises toward all teachers. When one think that all teachers are good, this is loving kindness. In the same way, think, "What if there were no country?" There are good and bad countries, countries with freedom and without, there are many different kinds of countries. But if people do not have a country, they would not be able to fend for themselves. Water, electricity, roads come from the country. The electricity comes from the country, the water comes from the country, schools come from the country, the shops come from the country. All our activities are reliant on the country. Because of the countries, we can get medical treatment and make our living all over the world. If you feel that the country is very problematic, think instead that the country is very good. When one thinks that it is good, this is loving kindness.

When one has trained in such manner, one can see how this loving kindness is and who has it – that all animals, such as ants have been born like that due to the karma of ego-grasping and a lack of loving kindness. When one lacks loving kindness, the mind becomes very small. When one has loving kindness, the mind becomes big. The body of a human or a god comes from loving kindness. Merit comes from loving kindness; what we call "merit" is actually loving kindness. One should understand this and cultivate loving kindness again and again in one's mind. Especially when one is driving on a road, one should ask oneself whose kindness it is? It is from the kindness of the country. The car is from the kindness of the country. One should cultivate loving kindness by contemplating like this.

When one does this continuously, what feeling arises? Loving kindness toward everyone, a feeling as if they were one's family arises. One will not think that that person is a stranger, that is my friend, that is my enemy, but one will have natural loving kindness for everyone, be gently toward all things, and will have gentle conduct. This means that immeasurable loving kindness has arisen. At that time one can see others' suffering, and that is immeasurable compassion. When one thinks of anyone who experiences suffering, compassion arises. Then immeasurable compassion arises. With immeasurable loving kindness one will have immeasurable compassion, and based on immeasurable compassion, immeasurable empathetic joy and impartiality will naturally arise. That is how one should meditate.

If you give rise to immeasurable loving kindness before meditation, then you will be able to meditate easily. If immeasurable loving kindness has not arisen, it will not be easy to meditate. When you meditate, you should look at the mind. When you look at the mind, then no matter how many different thoughts arise, any harm they inflict is temporary, and what must be recognized is the cognizer that is aware of the thoughts. That is superior insight (vipasyana). That is the awareness that knows the nature of thoughts. And this awareness must not fall under the power of attachment and not fall under the power of aversion. Whatever thoughts that arise regarding the past or future, don't fall under the power of attachment and aversion, hope and fear. Think that your mind must become pure, and if you can cultivate patience with all the thoughts, no matter how many appear, they cannot harm you at all. For example, if you meditate when you are suffering, the suffering will fade away. When you feel happy, the happiness will fade away. Similarly, all suffering is impermanent, it is illusory, and it disappears. What is real is the awareness that knows the mind. It always arises, and when a person dies in the end, this awareness doesn't die.

At times when there are no thoughts at all, one can see the actual nature, and this mind, this awareness is like space, free from any thoughts. Sometimes this happens, and one becomes very happy. When there are no thoughts at all, there is only the awareness, and that is what is called "meditation." When one clings to thoughts with attachment and aversion during meditation, the mind becomes polluted and unclear. Then the consciousness becomes unclear. No matter how many thoughts arise, one must not get overpowered by them. Especially when strong mental afflictions arise, one must sustain the awareness. The awareness should look at the mental affliction itself. For example, if we are angry at someone, don't look at the person, but at the anger itself. The anger is the enemy; it is anger that brings us to hell, right? So, when anger itself is examined, at the moment of anger there is no thought at all; and it completely overwhelms us. Then we get angry at the other person; but if we stop looking at the other person and look back at the anger itself, and then meditate only on the anger, then the mind becomes very clear. Then the anger disappears, and the nature of the anger itself changes into wisdom, the mirror-like wisdom. The mind becomes clear like a mirror. Then one thinks, "Oh, it seems like I should give rise to anger, because the anger benefits me, it interrupts the thoughts." When this feeling and experience arises, the mental afflictions are transformed into wisdom.

Then by using each mental affliction as a helpful support in this way, one can get to the awareness. With the awareness, one can destroy all the small thoughts and eliminate the

feelings. So, when thoughts and feelings arise, if one immediately sustains the awareness, then the feelings will fade away. When the feelings fade away in this way, then the thoughts will collapse and become purified. When feelings arise, they obscure the thoughts, and the mind becomes like an ice block. When one can break down the feelings, then we should always break down the feelings. In brief, there should be no difference between happiness and suffering. We should break down the happiness,¹ and we should break down the suffering. When we have broken down both the happiness and the suffering, there will be no difference between happiness and suffering, no difference between happiness and suffering, and the meditation will have become the best. This is what Milarepa said. We must give up happiness. We also must give up the suffering. When we can give up happiness, we can also give up suffering, right? If one cannot give up happiness, one cannot give up suffering. It is based on happiness that suffering occurs.

Translated by Solvej Hyveled Nielsen and edited by Boyce Teoh.

¹ This refers to temporary happiness.