

Teaching Outline from Lama Khedup Teaching

(Transcripts – From Voice to Note)

June 2025

Venue : Gompa (1st Floor) TCCL Melaka

CULTIVATING BODHICITTHA

Cultivating Bodhicitta Through Equanimity

Lamala related the seven-points of cause-and-effect method to cultivate bodhicitta.

Lamala further shared, before we can recognize all beings as our mothers, we must first develop the thought of equanimity.



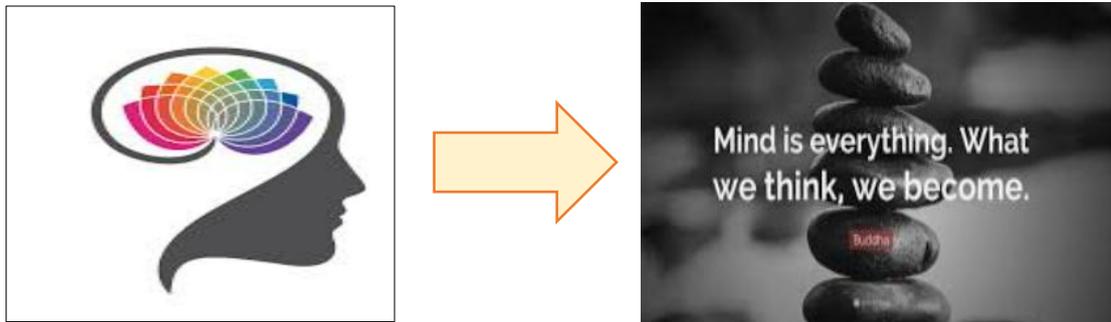
The equanimity or impartiality basically is giving up our hatred for enemies and clinging with friends, and having an even-minded attitude or thought towards all sentient beings, free of attachment to those who are close to us and aversion for those

Generally, all beings appear to us as friends, enemies, or neutral, and clinging to those (appearance), we develop hatred for enemies, attachment for friends, and indifference for those who are neutral.

However, those who now appear to be enemies have been our parents many times in our former lives. They have cared for us with love, worked for our welfare and protected us from all harms. Those who appear to be friends have been our greatest enemy in our former lives, killing and harming us many times. and those who appear to be neutral have been our friends and enemies in many of the previous lives. With anger they harmed us and with compassion they helped and protected countless times.

Therefore, all those beings, to whom should I be attached? for whom should I be hatred? without discriminating with attachment and hatred, we should now think of them all as our friends.

The essence of the mahayana motivation is Compassion, which is like water-it cannot settle on uneven ground. Similarly, compassion cannot arise in a mind that is uneven or biased. Just as water remains only on flat ground, compassion requires.



Transforming our mind is not easy. Sometimes we might think the So-and-so call is really bad. I could not possibly develop even-mindedness, or liking towards that person. But when this happens, we should turn the thoughts and ask ourself, what about me? Am I not bad like that person?

Often, both sides hold similar views of each other. When we analyse deeply, it becomes difficult to say who is truly right. This reflection helps us gradually reduce our dislike for others.

Forgiveness may not come instantly. But with consistent practice over time, our minds can become more neutral. Even if we don't fully forgive, we may find that negative thoughts arise less frequently and pass more quickly.

Practice Emptiness, Achieve Equanimity

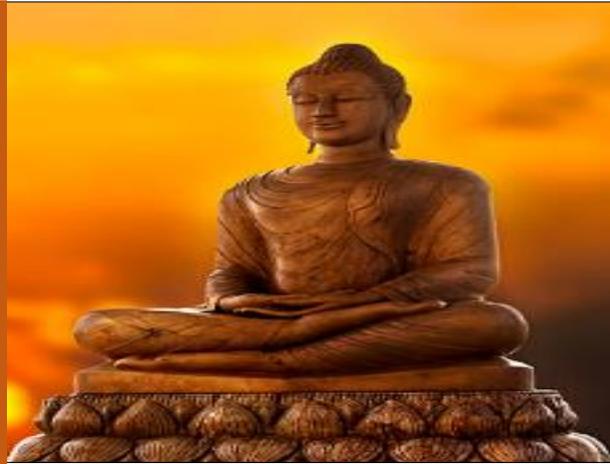
Another method for cultivating equanimity is through the understanding of emptiness. If you've studied emptiness, you can reflect that people do not exist inherently as "enemies," "friends," or "strangers." These are labels created by our own minds. In truth, beings do not exist from their own side in the way we perceive them.

Our likes and dislikes are shaped by our uneven minds. Recognizing this can help us dissolve rigid perceptions and cultivate a more balanced view.



What is the Seven-Point Cause and Effect Method?

- 1) Recognizing all beings as mothers
- 2) Remembering their kindness
- 3) Repaying their kindness
- 4) Affectionate love
- 5) Great compassion
- 6) Extraordinary intention
- 7) Bodhicitta



Among the seven points, the first six are causes which give birth to the result. Bodhicitta. The way these realizations come step by step is that bodhicitta, the thought of attaining enlightenment in order to benefit all beings arises from the preceding extraordinary intention or a sense of responsibility, the feeling of responsibility to benefit all the sentient beings. For this intention to come about we must have a powerful wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering, that is the great compassion. For this to arise we must have developed affectionate love towards all beings. In order to generate this love for all, we must develop a deep sense of closeness towards all sentient beings, and the way to do this is by recognizing all beings as mothers, recognizing their kindness and developing the wish to repay their kindness.

Before meditating on these points, it's essential to establish equanimity. This doesn't happen overnight and it requires consistent practice. Some may see results in a month, others in a year or more. It depends on each individual's effort and karma.

Steps in Cultivating Bodhicitta:-

1) Recognizing All Beings as One's Mother

In the teachings on developing bodhicitta, the first step:

Recognizing all sentient beings as one's mother is considered both essential and deeply challenging. It's said that this recognition takes a long time to develop, but it is absolutely crucial. Without it, the subsequent steps remembering their kindness, repaying that kindness, and generating compassion cannot be fully realized. The entire path hinges on this foundational insight.

Countless Mothers, Countless Rebirths

Given the beginningless nature of mind, we must accept that we have taken countless rebirths. And in each of those lives, we required a mother. If we've been reborn a hundred times, we've had a hundred mothers. A thousand rebirths mean a thousand mothers. Since our rebirths are countless, so too are our mothers.



Often, we think of our mother as only the one who gave birth to us in this life. But in truth, every sentient being has been our mother at some point. When we reflect deeply on this, we realize that the number of beings who have mothered us exceeds the number of sentient beings currently in existence.

We've taken rebirth in every realm: human, god, demigod, animal, hungry ghost, and hell. In each life, someone nurtured us. Therefore, every sentient being has been our mother not just once, but countless times.

A Mountain of Bones

Some teachings say that if we gathered all the bones from our past human lives, they would form a mountain taller than the highest peak. This imagery reminds us of the vastness of our rebirths and the immeasurable kindness we've received.

So we begin with our current mother, reflecting that she has been our mother countless times before. From there, we extend this recognition to all beings. This is the first and most difficult step in cultivating bodhicitta. But it is also the most transformative.

2) Remembering Mothers' Kindness (Unconditional Love)

Once we begin to internalize the idea that our mother in this life has been our mother countless times before, we naturally extend this understanding to others. Our father, too, has been our mother countless times. So have our friends. Even our enemies; those we may struggle to accept; have been our mothers in previous lives, nurturing us with love and care. Mother's loves always unconditional to us.

Recognizing that all beings have been our mothers is not enough. We must also reflect deeply on their kindness.

Take your mother in this life as an example. From the moment of conception, she carried you in her womb for nine months, carefully monitoring what she ate and drank, always thinking of your safety. She endured discomfort and pain, all for your sake.

After birth, she fed you, bathed you, dressed you in soft clothes, and made funny faces to make you smile. She worried constantly about your health and safety, often losing sleep out of concern for you. She held your hand as you learned to walk, taught you to speak, and guided you through life until you became independent.

This level of care and love is not unique to your current mother. All sentient beings who have been your mother in past lives have shown the same kindness. Even animals; birds feeding their chicks, dogs protecting their puppies; demonstrate this maternal instinct.

When we reflect on this deeply, we begin to see that every being has shown us immense kindness. This forms the bridge to the second point in the seven-point cause and effect method: remembering the kindness of all mother sentient beings.

3) Repaying Mothers' Kindness



Once we recognize and remember the kindness of all beings, the natural response is a heartfelt wish to repay it. This is the third step in the practice.

We generate a sincere intention: -

“May I repay the kindness of all my mother’s by helping them attain happiness and freedom from suffering.”

This thought becomes the seed of bodhicitta; the mind of awakening. It motivates us to walk the path not just for ourselves, but for the benefit of all beings.

Once we’ve recognized that all sentient beings have been our mothers and remembered their immense kindness, the natural next step is to develop a sincere wish to repay that kindness. This isn’t a fleeting thought; it’s a deep commitment that must be cultivated through repeated meditation over many years.

We immerse ourselves in this intention, becoming one with it. The more we reflect on the kindness of all beings, the more this wishes to repay them arises spontaneously. It becomes part of our being.

4) Developing Affectionate Love



This is not ordinary love. It's the kind of deep, unconditional affection a mother feels when she gazes at her only child. She sees the child as beautiful, precious, and glowing, and her love is pure and unwavering.

We aim to generate this same kind of affectionate love toward all sentient beings. When we've truly internalized the previous steps and recognizing beings as our mothers, remembering their kindness, and wishing to repay it. This love arises naturally. It doesn't require extra effort; it flows from the force of our previous contemplations.

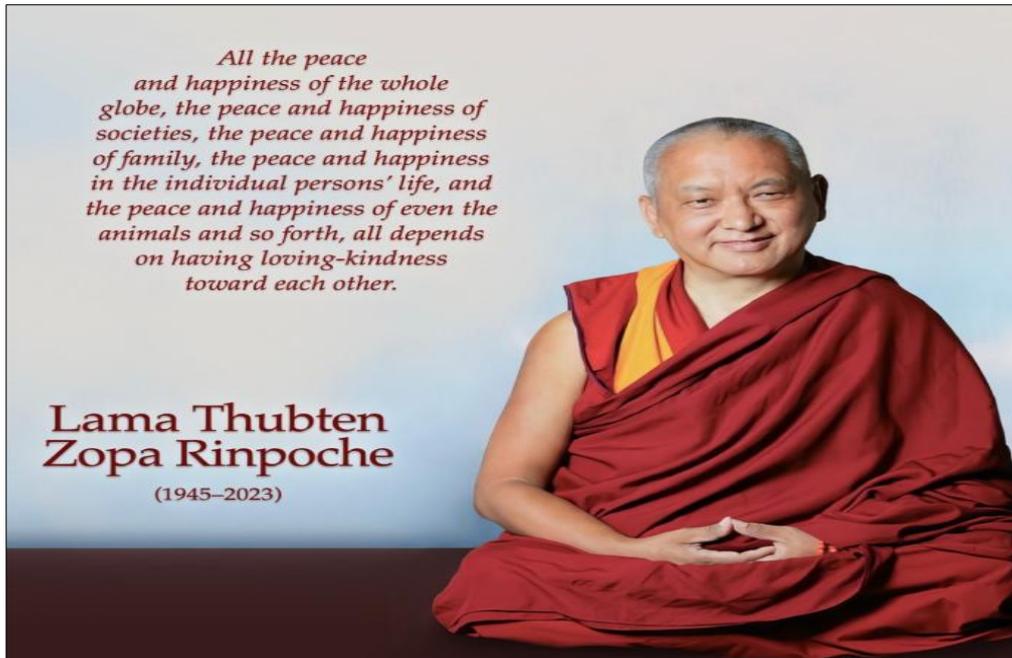
We also reflect on the fact that although all beings wish to be happy, they are deprived of true, uncontaminated happiness. This reflection strengthens our wish that all beings possess happiness and its causes, and that they abide in lasting joy. We also generate the heartfelt aspiration to be the one who brings them that happiness.

Sometimes we may feel we lack the ability to do so. In such cases, we can request blessings from our guru, especially during practices like the Four Immeasurables or Medicine Buddha prayers.



But to receive blessings, our mind must be like a clean, unbroken vessel. If the container is impure or cracked, the nectar of blessings cannot be held. Practicing according to the guru's advice and the Buddha's teachings purifies our vessel, allowing blessings to flow naturally.

5) Generating Great Compassion



Affectionate love is often misunderstood. In worldly relationships, love can be transactional based on expectations or attachments. But the love of a mother is selfless. She doesn't expect anything in return from her child. Her care is unconditional.

Great compassion is similar. It's not just feeling sorry for others. It's a powerful wish to free all beings from suffering. This compassion is the heart of the Buddha's teachings and is emphasized in many texts, including:

The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment by Lama Atisha and Entering the Middle Way by Chandrakirti who begins his work by paying homage to great compassion.

Great compassion is essential at every stage of the path:

- At the beginning, it is the seed that allows us to enter the Mahayana path.
- In the middle, it sustains our practice of the six perfections.
- At the end, it ripens into Buddhahood and enables the Buddha's enlightened activities.

Practicing Compassion Through Animal Liberation



To cultivate great compassion, we can reflect on the suffering of beings; especially those in extreme conditions. For example, observing how animals are slaughtered can evoke deep compassion. Seeing their pain and helplessness reminds us of the urgency to help.

One powerful practice is animal liberation. We rescue animals that are about to be killed ie. fish in markets, chickens in cages, or insects caught by fishermen and release them. This act of saving lives is a direct expression of compassion.

Even small actions, like saving an insect or releasing a fish, can be deeply meaningful. In places like Nepal, it's common to see animals displayed for sale and slaughter. Buying and freeing them is compassion.

In Buddhist ethics, intention plays a crucial role. Simply eating meat doesn't necessarily constitute killing, unless:

1. You intend for the animal to be killed
2. You request the killing
3. You rejoice in the act

If you buy meat that was already prepared without your involvement, the karmic weight is different than if you directly caused the death.

Similarly, in animal liberation, the purity of your motivation matters. If you act with genuine compassion and wisdom, the merit is greater. If the act is done for show, or without care for the animal's survival, the benefit is reduced.

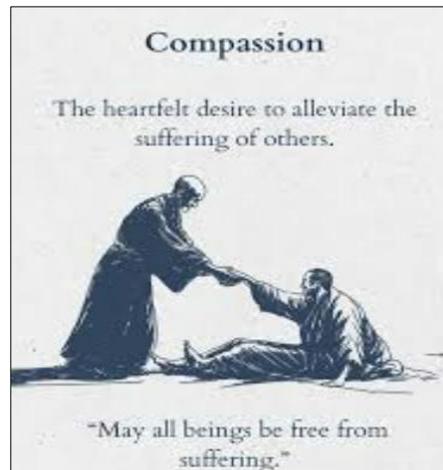
Reflecting on the Suffering of Sentient Beings

To deepen our compassion, we meditate on the suffering of beings in all realms:

- Hell beings endure extreme heat and cold.
- Hungry ghosts suffer from intense hunger and thirst.
- Animals live in ignorance and fear.
- Humans face emotional pain, illness, and death.

We can also contemplate specific examples; like the suffering of beings in rural areas, or those trapped in cycles of violence and poverty. These reflections help us connect personally to the reality of suffering and strengthen our resolve to help.

Cultivating Compassion



Compassion can be cultivated by observing suffering in all its forms; not just in abstract realms, but in the world around us. For example:

- Animals used for labour endure physical strain and emotional neglect.
- Elderly people dying alone may suffer deeply from isolation and pain.
- Communities in famine-stricken regions of Africa face hunger, disease, and lack of medical care.

These are real, visible forms of suffering. While the hell realms may be difficult to imagine, these worldly examples serve as powerful analogies. Extreme heat in deserts like the Sahara, or freezing cold in the north pole, can mirror the torment of hellish conditions. People die from thirst, exposure, and starvation.

By meditating on these examples, we generate compassion. We visualize their pain, feel their suffering, and cultivate the wish to relieve it. This is how we train our minds in compassion.

Releasing Animals Responsibly

Lamala reminded that when releasing animals, consider:

- Their ability to survive in the new environment
- The impact on local ecosystems
- Avoiding harm to others' property or crops



For example, releasing birds that have been domesticated may not be safe. They may lack survival skills. Releasing animals into someone's farm or garden may cause damage and create conflict among the community especially to the farmers. Use wisdom and compassion together. The goal is to save lives, not to shift suffering elsewhere.

The Sign of Great Compassion



How do we know when we've truly generated great compassion?

It's when we feel the same intense wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering as a mother feels for her only child. When a child is drowning, bystanders may feel sorrow—but a mother will leap into the river without hesitation. Her compassion is immediate, unconditional, and selfless.

When we feel that same spontaneous, unwavering urge to help every being in suffering without calculation or delay; that is the sign of great compassion.

6) Cultivating Extraordinary Intention

This leads us to the sixth step in the seven-point cause and effect method: extraordinary intention.

This is the deep resolve that I alone will take responsibility for freeing all beings from suffering and bringing them to happiness. It's not just a wish. It's a vow, a commitment born from compassion.

Just as a lifeguard sees someone drowning and feels the duty to save them, we too must feel that we are the ones who must act. This intention is extraordinary because it surpasses ordinary goals. It's not just about personal liberation, as in the path of the hearers or solitary realizers. It's about universal liberation.

We think:-

“This is the essence of universal responsibility. It's the foundation of bodhicitta and the Mahayana path.”

Compassion Beyond Religion

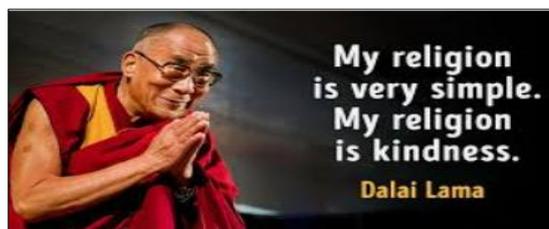
Not everyone is Buddhist. In the West, many identify as freethinkers. But they too are human beings with hearts that long for love and compassion. That's why teachings on universal responsibility and loving-kindness are being shared in secular formats and through education, mindfulness programs, and humanitarian efforts.

Compassion is not confined to religion. It is a human truth. And by cultivating it, we build bridges across cultures, beliefs, and boundaries.

In many modern curriculums; especially those designed for secular or diverse audiences; teachers promote values like love, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, and contentment without using explicitly Buddhist terminology. This approach makes these teachings accessible to everyone, regardless of their religious background.

You don't need to mention “Buddhism” or “Buddha” when sharing these values in your workplace or with friends. Words like kind heart, good heart, loving kindness, and compassion are universally understood and appreciated.

“My religion is kindness.” — His Holiness the Dalai Lama



This way, even those who don't identify as Buddhist can benefit and transform through these practices. The goal is not to convert, but to cultivate goodness.

7) Final – Developing Bodhicitta

It is on the basis of extraordinary intention that Bodhicitta, the thought of Enlightenment arises. When one has a strong determination to lead all sentient beings in the state of enlightenment by oneself, one is still felt or aware that in actual sense one lacks the ability to do this. On consideration, one realizes that one will have the ability if one attains a state that is endowed with all qualities and completely free from any fault or obstruction. That is the state one wishes to reach in order to help all numberless sentient beings, which is Buddhahood. In this state one really can help all sentient beings effectively even a ray of light emanating from one's body is able to benefit numberless beings. This is where Bodhicitta beginning in our mind.

The path to Buddhahood is illuminated by the cultivation of bodhicitta, the awakened mind dedicated to the liberation of all beings. This profound result arises from six preceding steps, which serve as essential causes. Each point nurturing the conditions for bodhicitta to blossom. Once bodhicitta is realized, it becomes the driving force that propels one toward full enlightenment, not for personal gain, but to benefit all sentient beings without exception.

In practice, this path calls for unwavering dedication: every spiritual effort, no matter how small, should be offered for the awakening of others.

Daily reflection and a long-term commitment to this altruistic intention are vital, reinforcing the transformative power of compassion and wisdom on the journey to Buddhahood.

Conclusion

In Vajrayana Buddhism, the guru holds a sacred and exalted role, often regarded as Vajradhara. The embodiment of ultimate truth and the source of all blessings. Yet, this profound view is not easily grasped in daily life, especially when the guru/ teacher appears in a humble or ordinary form.

Similarly, the practice of seeing all beings, including animals and strangers, as our mothers. An essential step in cultivating universal compassion can feel deeply counterintuitive.

These realizations require great effort and sustained meditation. The mind must be gradually trained through a blend of reasoning and reflection, supported by scriptural quotations and the wisdom of accomplished gurus.



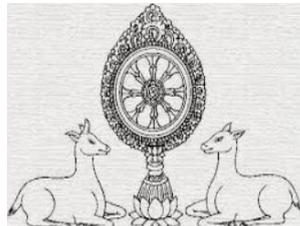
In essence, the guru is the bridge between confusion and awakening. Without their guidance, the path can feel abstract or overwhelming. With their presence, it becomes alive, personal, and transformative.



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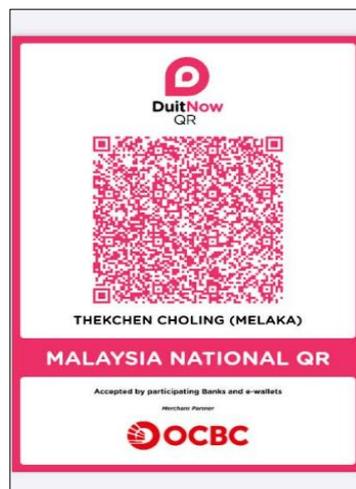


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