

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Karmic results of the 2012 shooting in a Colorado movie theatre

(video extract: [KOPAN 20141130 s1400 LZR XXT Karmic results of 2012 Colorado shooting](#))

In America, for example, in recent years it happened, even within one year it happened, young boys... They had a meeting and they talked for months and months and years and years about whether to have guns, whether to not have guns, all that. They think you must have a gun. Many people think they must have a gun because if somebody shoots at you, you must have a gun. So then everybody has a gun. Then young children... With that as a condition, then young children kill many people. Young boys kill many people, school boys. So that has happened sometimes, even just in the United States. People get a big shock, a big surprise. It is a big shock, a big surprise, that a young boy killed many people. It has happened from time to time. Maybe sometimes it may become also an inspiration for some young people. “Oh, somebody killed...,” sometimes there might be the danger also that it becomes a kind of wrong inspiration that then they too should do like that.

In recent time, in recent years, last year or the year before, one man suddenly killed... In what park? The place?

In a movie place, one man killed many people, in Colorado.¹ They checked whether this person normally had a crazy life. They believed like that, but they checked the life of that person and that person was what we call normal, doing a job, leading a normal life, what everybody does, nothing strange. They found he was normal. They found he was normal, completely normal, nothing strange, they found he was normal, like themselves, only that day suddenly he changed and suddenly he killed many people in the movie place. So they were very surprised, very surprised. Normally they think that he should have been someone whose mind is a little bit crazy. It is easy to think like that.

Who is the CN man? What is his name?

Student: Anderson Cooper.

Anderson Cooper, now [he is on CNN] less often but before he was shown so much on CN. He was kind of the main person, I don't know, but he comes a lot on CN TV.

(Rinpoche has been saying “on CN” so someone corrects him.)

¹ Wikipedia: On July 20, 2012, a mass shooting occurred inside a Century movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight screening of the film *The Dark Knight Rises*. A gunman, dressed in tactical clothing, set off tear gas grenades and shot into the audience with multiple firearms, killing 12 people and injuring 70 others. The sole suspect, James Eagan Holmes, was arrested outside the cinema minutes later. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Aurora_shooting)

CNN. He knew... I mean, I don't know whether he asked, whether he asked holy beings like His Holiness the Dalai Lama [about why the shooting happened]. In the world of course you can ask them. Now in the world you can ask them, but I don't know, I don't think [he asked them], although there are many great holy beings and omniscient ones. He knows that people don't have the answer for that. He knows that but he is curious so he wanted to ask why it happened. He knows there is no answer from the people, but he mentioned that on TV. He wanted to ask that but he knows there is no answer.

Those things, maybe not today, but those things... The negative karma of killing [involves]: (1) the base or object, which is a sentient being, (2) the motivation, which is that of killing out of ignorance, anger, or attachment, and that transforms the action of killing into nonvirtue, (3) the action of killing, (4) then the goal, which is that the other person is killed before you, dies before you. That was done in the past, so that negative karma has four suffering results.

Ripened aspect result

The ripened aspect result is rebirth in the lower realms, in the hell, hungry ghost, or animal [realm], depending on how heavy is the negative karma.

Then there are three suffering results that you experience in the human realm, [such as] creating the result similar to..., *che pa gyu tün gyi dre bu*,² creating the result similar to the cause.

Experiencing a result similar to the cause

First I will explain *nyong wa gyu thün gyi dre bu*,³ experiencing a result similar to the cause. Those people who got killed by him [Holmes] in the movie place, they are experiencing *nyong wa gyu thün gyi dre bu*, experiencing a result similar to the cause of the negative karma of killing others in the past. From the four [results], there are three that occur in the human realm, so this is experiencing a result similar to the cause, the previous cause of killing other sentient beings.

Those people didn't get to purify that negative karma. They could have been free from that and they wouldn't have had to suffer if they had purified before their negative karma of killing other sentient beings. From the three that is experiencing the result which is to be killed by others. They wouldn't have had to experience that if they had purified it, if they had met Buddha-Dharma, if they had practiced, even if just purification had been done well, they could have been free from that suffering result.

² *byed pa rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu*

³ *myong ba rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu*

Creating a result similar to the cause

The person who did the killing [Holmes] is, *che pa gyu tün gyi dre bu*, ‘creating a result similar to the cause.’ He is creating a result similar to the cause; the cause is the past negative karma of that person of having killed other sentient beings in a past life, anyway in the past. The past can be this life or also past lives. It can be a recent past life or it can be many eons, a hundred, million, billion, zillion, or trillion eons. It could be like that. The person who did the killing wouldn’t have to do that if he had purified that karma. That past negative karma of killing others, if he had purified that, if he had done the practice of purification, he would have purified it and would not have had to experience that suffering result. He wouldn’t have had to do that. Suddenly that karmic result, creating a result similar to the cause, that one among many karmas became the more powerful to be experienced, like among many seeds that are planted whichever is the most powerful, that one grows. Similarly, there are numberless karmas but among them that karma became very powerful and then was experienced, then suddenly he killed all those people. Oh, that happened. You can say it is almost like he had no choice, he was kind of controlled by karma, delusion and karma. Karma is motivated by delusion, so he was controlled by delusion. So he is totally an object of compassion as well as the other people that were killed. He is totally an object of compassion as he had no freedom, he was completely overwhelmed by delusion and karma, the action was motivated by delusion, so he experienced that in this life and so he did that.

In this life whenever we have enjoyments, comfort, experience happiness or we have problems and troubles, all these are results. All these are causative phenomena. They are not independent phenomena, they are causative phenomena. They are dependent arisings, so they all have a cause that was created in the past. Because you have created the cause of those happinesses, those comforts and luxury, that happiness, then it happens. Then because you created all those causes of problems, so then problems happen, you experience them in this life. Because you didn’t do purification purifying the cause well, you didn’t do purification well, effectively, with the remedy of the four powers, you didn’t do that, you didn’t do confession with those four, so then that is why you experience those many problems in your life. Also you create karma in this life.

There is a method for both sides [for the killer and the killed] so that they don’t have to experience that. There is a method but they haven’t met the Buddha-Dharma, they don’t know the practice so then this is what happened. From the side of the man [Holmes], he created *che pa gyu tün gyi dre bu*, the result which is similar to the cause, ‘creating a result similar to the cause,’ and the people who were killed experienced *nyong wa gyu thün gyi dre bu*, ‘experiencing the result similar to the cause,’ the previous cause.

Possessed result

So that is similar for earthquakes, those elements, the dangers of earth, fire, water, air, earthquakes. It is the same thing, those are the possessed result.⁴ The third one, the possessed result, has to do with the place. If the place where you live is very dusty, a very dusty place, that is the possessed result of killing. As for medicine, it is the correct medicine but it has side effects for you. It does not have them for everybody, but you have side effects from that medicine even though it is the correct medicine for your sickness. Also there are side effects from the food that you eat. The possessed result, *dag pai dre bu*, is that there is food, there is medicine, there is everything, but you have side effects.

Experiencing a result similar to the cause (continued)

By killing one sentient being the result is that for five hundred lifetimes you get killed. The story in America that I mentioned is similar. That story comes in there. Suddenly, without any... You haven't met that person in this life before (*before* means not in a past life but that in this life you haven't met him), but as soon as that person sees you he shoots you. As soon as the person sees you he shoots you, or he doesn't like you. Those are results, they have causes. They are not uncausative, they have a cause created in a past life. You created the cause – you killed that person's past life. You killed them, so as a result this time that person as soon as he sees you he shoots you or whatever. So there is always a cause, even if there is no story in this life of having met the person [previously]. It is like that.

Results of taking the vow to not kill

Now, if you take a vow, a precept, to not kill... By killing this insect, the result of that negative karma is that you will be killed, unless you purify it, for five hundred lifetimes. That is just from that one action, just ONE action, negative karma, one. You have to understand, you have to think more. I emphasize that this is from *one* negative karma, *one* insect. You have to know that. Oh. So if you take the vow not to kill... You have a choice to kill that insect now or to not kill it. You have a choice but you prefer not to kill it, so then you don't have to suffer from that negative karma – for five hundred lifetimes being killed by the reincarnation of that sentient being you don't have to suffer that.

By taking the precept to not kill you have a long life. You have a long life, a long life not just only in this life but life to life for hundreds, thousands, life to life. Even if it is just one sentient being but by not killing it, by taking a vow, wow, wow, wow, for so many hundreds of thousands [of lives] you have a long life, you are healthy, and your wishes are successful. You are healthy. Oh, it will be like that.

Colophon: Lightly edited by Ven. Tenzin Palmo (Marketa Bartosova), December 2014. Further editing by Joan Nicell, FPMT Education Services, December 2014.

⁴ The possessed result (*bdag po'i 'bras bu*) is also called the environmental result.