

Making Ordinary Life Actions Meaningful

While going for tea after the teachings I was putting on my watch and I told Ven Yangchen that when you do this you can visualize yourself as the guru deity and put on, offer ornaments to the guru deity. So this is not publicizing that I am practicing, but is a suggestion of how to make life meaningful, how to make your belongings meaningful and use them to collect extensive merits. This is just one example, one advantage, it helps to think when you offer to the guru deity that it's not yours, it is the guru's, so that helps you not to cling on to it as if it is yours.

At a tea shop I bought some pistachio nuts. If you visualize yourself as the guru deity and then take each nut in your mouth it becomes like a fire puja (*jinsek* in Tibetan), which means 'offering burning' practice. So with each nut you throw in your mouth and eat you collect the most extensive merits, more than having made offerings to numberless buddhas, Dharma, Sangha, statues and scriptures, all the holy objects in the ten directions.

Similarly when you go to eat in a restaurant, think you are offering to the guru deity, think that this food is not for you. This helps to prevent the thought of possession, this is mine. So this helps you to practice the bodhisattva vows. It is also an antidote to attachment. When you practice like this there is peace and happiness in your heart. Otherwise every single thing, whatever you do through attachment based on ignorance becomes negative karma.

Similarly when you go shopping, watch your motivation, prepare your motivation. When you are in the shop either fulfill the wishes of the guru or shop to benefit and serve other sentient beings. Think that the ultimate purpose is to fulfill the guru's advice. So you buy these things to survive and to fulfill the wishes of the guru or benefit sentient beings. In this way shopping becomes the antidote to attachment, becomes virtuous activity, Dharma, and you collect extensive merit.

Also in the street that same day as we were waiting for a taxi, as it took some time to get a taxi to go back, the thought came that it's good to practice rejoicing when the taxi comes and other people get into it. It's good to practice rejoicing that this other person got happiness, what they need. This is an excellent practice and helps negative emotional mind, anger, upsetness not to arise. This way you keep the mind in virtue, Dharma, because you are sincerely wishing happiness to others. So this is very pure Dharma and also keeps your mind in a state of happiness.

Wishing happiness for others opens the door of all happiness. Whether wishing happiness to one insect or one person or many. In Lama Choepa it says "The mind that cherishes all mother beings and would secure them in bliss is the gateway leading to infinite virtue." So this is from Buddha's Mahayana teaching. So this means it becomes a cause for enlightenment. If you want to be like His Holiness says, if you want to be intelligently selfish, in this case the common result of one time rejoicing in this life is that in hundred thousands of future lives you will have no difficulty finding a taxi, you will immediately find a vehicle when you are traveling. Even if it is difficult for other people, for you it will be easy to find [a taxi/vehicle], that rejoicing creates the karma for that. Your rejoicing, doing something

good such as this practice of thinking of the karmic result which is happiness for yourself. You doing this is called intelligently selfish, because at least from this you get the karmic result of happiness in your future life, and at least it becomes Dharma, virtue.

Scribe Ven Yangchen, New York, USA. Sept and Oct 2007. Lightly edited by Claire Isitt.