

**The Far-reaching Attitude of Generosity – Part 2 of 2 and
How to Enhance the Practice of the Six Far-reaching Attitudes** (lightly edited transcript)
by Ven. Thubten Chodron© at Dharma Friendship Foundation, Seattle. 10 Nov 93

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In the last session, we talked about the far-reaching attitude of generosity. Generosity is the wish to give. There are three kinds of generosity:

- 1) Material generosity – giving our body, possessions, money.
- 2) Generosity of giving protection to those who are in danger, or stressed, or freaked out.
- 3) Generosity of Dharma – teaching the Dharma, counseling or giving advice to people, helping them out using Dharma methods.

We covered these three basic subdivisions of the far-reaching attitude of generosity. In this session, I want to talk a little more about the giving of the body, possessions and our root of virtue or positive potential. Shantideva, in his text called *Larbdo* (not *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*), discussed each of these in terms of the four points: giving, protecting, keeping pure and enhancing. I will go through each of these.

The giving of body, possessions or root of virtue according to the four points: giving, protecting, keeping pure, enhancing

Generosity of body

i) Giving

This refers to giving the body. There is a famous story from the Jataka tales regarding the giving of body. The Buddha was a prince in a previous life. One day while he was walking in the forest, he saw a mother tiger who had four cubs. The cubs were starving because the mother herself was starving and couldn't feed them. The prince donated his body for the mother tiger to eat so that she would have milk to feed her cubs. This is said to happen in a place that is now called *Namo Buddha*, not too far from Katmandu in Nepal. Many people visit this place to pray. We can all go there on a pilgrimage one day.

Nowadays we can donate parts of our body. We can give our blood. We can give a kidney. We can give corneas. We can give various parts of our body and it doesn't necessitate giving up our life. We can do these kinds of giving. The actual giving of the body that entails giving up our life – we are only allowed to do this when we are *arya bodhisattvas*. In other words, only when we are *bodhisattvas* on the path of seeing and have a direct perception of emptiness can we do it. When we have the direct perception of emptiness, we will be able to control our rebirth. You will have sufficient wisdom so that giving up your life will not be harmful for your practice.

Until we get to that level, what we should do is generate the wish to give our body. We can also do the *tonglen* meditation, which involves taking on the suffering of others and giving our body, possessions and positive potential to them. By cultivating our mind in this way and generating the wisdom aspect of our mind, then one day we'll actually be able to do it.

The arya bodhisattvas who can actually give their body are completely delighted to do so. In fact they say that a bodhisattva is very excited when they hear that somebody needs something, because they get to practice generosity. For us, the opposite happens. [laughter] When we hear somebody needs something, we go, "Oh no, I have to do something." The practice of giving the body which entails giving up one's life is only appropriate for people who are at that level of mind to do it safely. If we have not reached that level of mind, we should not do it. In the meantime we can donate our blood, or kidney, or other things like that. It can still be very helpful for other people.

ii) Protecting

Unless we are at the level where we can give our body without harming our practice, we should protect our body. In other words, do not abuse the body. We should make sure that we only give it when it is beneficial and when our mind is ready to give. We should protect our body from harm and keep it safe and healthy, because it is on the basis of this human body that we can practice the path and attain enlightenment. Even though we are trying to lessen our attachment to our body and not cling to the body, we should not go to the extreme of torturing the body and hating the body. This is not beneficial for our spiritual path at all. We have to take care of our body with a proper motivation – not with a motivation of attachment, but with a motivation to use it for our spiritual practice so that we can gain the realizations and be of greater service to others.

This is an important motivation to keep in mind when you are getting dressed, combing your hair or putting on your clothes. Instead of thinking, "Oh I hope I look good. I hope I smell good," we think that we want to take care of our body because we are using it for the benefit of others.

It is helpful to have this attitude too when you go to the doctor. Instead of going to the doctor with a mind overcome with fear, thinking, "Oh God something is wrong with me," we see it as, "My body actually belongs to other sentient beings because I am using it for their welfare. I have a responsibility to take care of it for their benefit. Therefore I am going to do the best I can." If you focus on this kind of motivation, then all the fear and nervousness goes away. We are not grasping on to this body as ours. We are seeing ourselves as a caretaker of something that is used to benefit others. We don't often think of our body as a vehicle for benefiting others, do we? We usually think of our body in terms of how we can get the most pleasure from it. It involves a complete change of motivation, but if we can habituate ourselves with that attitude, it would be very good.

iii) Keeping it pure

Whether we give our body to others or whether we use our body for the benefit of others, we should keep it pure. This means that we do all our actions with a proper attitude, with the motivation of bodhicitta. We do not use or give our body with pride or with the expectation of receiving something from it. We use or give our body only for the benefit of others. We use it to engage in virtue and not engage in any harmful actions.

iv) Enhancing or Increasing

This means to do virtuous actions so that in our next life, we can have a precious human rebirth, especially one with the eight qualities. Remember we went through these eight qualities a long time ago – having good social position, economic means, power and respect in society. We want to have these eight qualities not because they are desirable in a worldly way, but because then we can use them to benefit others. They enhance our precious human life. Here, we use our body to create merit and then dedicate the merit to have a precious human life in the future to use for the benefit of others and to practice the path. Also, we dedicate for the long term goal of being able to practice the generosity of the body to become enlightened in order to be able to benefit sentient beings. In that way we rejoice and never regret when we give, and consistently dedicate the merit for the benefit of others.

Is it clear to you how those four things – giving, protecting, keeping pure and enhancing – are different aspects of the generosity of the body?

Generosity of material possessions

i) Giving

The generosity of material possessions includes giving money or things that you have around the house. 'Giving' here means giving our possessions, increasing the wish to give and especially giving things we like. Don't give things because you want to buy more. Don't give the things you don't like. Try and train

your mind to give the things that you like. I was reading an article in *Turning Wheel* by one woman not too long ago. She was talking about how she makes it a point every week or every two weeks to give away something of hers that she likes. I thought deeply about that. How about making a conscious effort every week or every two weeks to look around your house for something you like and give it to somebody? Is this pushing some buttons?

I thought what a wonderful practice it would be to train the mind not to be attached to things and to take delight in giving. If there are things around our house that we really enjoy, wouldn't it be nice to share that happiness with somebody else by giving it to them? Consistently training ourselves to give in that way and sharing the happiness with somebody. Shall we try it out for a month? Try giving something that is yours that you like. As you give it, try to let the mind be happy to give. Instead of trying to *make* the mind happy to give and getting all tied up in knots, *allow* the mind to be happy to give.

ii) Protecting

'Protecting' here refers to protecting our possessions and not giving them when doing so would be harmful. We do not give our possessions away if doing so would hurt somebody else or if our possessions would be wasted. If the person we are giving the thing to wouldn't appreciate it or wouldn't value it, then don't give. We protect the possessions until a time when the giving can be really valuable. For example, you wanted to give away five hundred dollars. You wouldn't give it to a three-year-old, because they wouldn't know how to use it. They would probably drool on it. The money would be destroyed and go to waste. In that case it's better to protect the money and give it at a later time when it could be used by someone in a wise way and wouldn't be wasted.

iii) Keeping it pure

When we use our possessions or give them away, we make sure that we do it with the bodhicitta motivation, the altruistic intention. Again, we do it without pride and without expectation. Also, when we give our possessions, we make sure that they are not going to be misused. We don't engage in destructive actions when we give our possessions. Therefore we keep the possessions pure whether we are giving them away or keeping them, not involving them in any kind of destructive actions. For example, we do not give money to somebody who is going to use it to buy firearms. We also do not keep the money for ourselves in order to buy firearms. We use the money or give it to others for something that is beneficial.

By the way, along this line, many people appreciated our making the conference tickets available to people with low income and students. This is one way for our group to practice the giving of possessions. Another way is when we offer retreat scholarships to people who cannot afford it, to come on retreats. Then we as a group accumulate that karma of the giving of possessions.

iv) Enhancing

When we give our possessions or when we use them with the attitude of bodhicitta, dedicate the positive potential from this so in the future we will have possessions to support us in our Dharma practice. If you are born in a lifetime where you don't have enough possessions it becomes an obstacle to Dharma practice. If you don't have enough food and you don't have a place to live, it is difficult to practice.

Here with our generosity of Dharma we dedicate for the benefit of all sentient beings, for the enlightenment of all sentient beings, for future lives so that we will have the possessions to support us in our Dharma practice and to make charity to Dharma friends on the path. I think it is very important that those of us who live in a society with so much abundance, share our wealth with other Dharma practitioners who don't have that kind of abundance. An example is when our group sent Dharma books to more than seventy different places in Africa, ex-Soviet Union and Latin America. This is the generosity of the Dharma. We give to the people who don't have the resources to have Dharma books. By the way, we have received some letters from these places saying how happy they are. Really try to share your resources with other Dharma practitioners. It might include helping the Tibetans or helping people who want to study or go for retreats, or whatever.

Generosity of root virtue

i) Giving

Our root virtue refers to the positive potential or the good karma we have accumulated from the virtuous actions that we do. 'Giving' means to be generous with our root virtue. Instead of dedicating, "Please

may I meet this incredible person and have a great relationship,” we give our root of virtue to other people so that it becomes something beneficial for all sentient beings.

‘Giving’ refers to dedicating or giving our positive potential from the depth of our heart. It means having an attitude that is completely willing to give the positive potential that I have accumulated to others, even if it means I don’t experience the result of it. That is actually impossible. We can never transfer karma. Karma isn’t like money. I can’t make out a bank draft and transfer the money from my account to your account. We will experience the result of our karma nonetheless, but it’s important not to be attached to the good karma that we have.

I stress this because sometimes you can see this happening in Asian countries. The people are very aware of the importance of creating good karma. The good karma almost becomes spiritual money to them and they get very, very attached to it. Everybody eagerly lines up to make food offering to the monastics to try to accumulate a lot of good karma. They may even elbow somebody else out of the way, “I am going to offer the tea because I want the good karma of offering the tea. You can’t do that.” There is some kind of unhealthy competition and people are seeing the good karma as spiritual money. The ‘giving’ here is really to protect us from having the attitude of seeing the creation of good karma as the creation of spiritual money. Is that clear? Is that making sense?

[Audience: Inaudible]

If we go out of our way to create good karma either with powerful objects or on special [merit-multiplying] days, and then we dedicate all that good karma for the benefit of others, then it’s extremely beneficial. If we give with a very selfish mind, with the attitude of wanting to have the most good karma with the least amount of effort, then we are being extremely limited. That’s why the giving of the roots of virtue is very important. It frees us from thinking, “Well, I am going to do this for the benefit of my own future life.” It is an interesting situation with Westerners. Westerners often don’t believe in future lives. It’s easier for them to say, “I am doing this for the enlightenment of all sentient beings”. [laughter]

[Audience:] How does dedication of merit benefit others if we can’t transfer it to their account?

Well, there are several ways. First of all, when we are making the dedication, it creates a good energy that can act as a support for other people’s virtuous karma to ripen. A second way: somebody may be reborn, say, as a spirit or some other being. They know that we are dedicating for them and they rejoice at it. When they rejoice, they get some positive energy and that helps them create some positive potential as well.

[Audience:] If the beings know that the karma is not transferable, why would they rejoice at our dedicating the merit to them?

Someone did a kind action or generated a good attitude and he said, “I want to give my positive karma to somebody else. I want it to ripen with them.” You heard that and you felt happy about them generating that attitude. You rejoiced at their virtuous action. By rejoicing, you create good karma.

[In response to audience:] If they know that you are dedicating for them it makes their mind happy, and that helps them to get through a difficult situation. For example, I got a thank-you note from Cindy today. When Owen’s father died, they [Cindy and Owen] called me. I did some puja and I told them about this. And Cindy wrote and said, “Losing your parent is really difficult, but it’s easier when you know that other people are making prayers for them.” It helped them with the grieving process. It is the same with Lorie. I talked with her tonight and I told her we would make a dedication for her. She said, “Oh, thank you very much!” It gave her a sense of support and the energy of the spiritual community behind her. Such actions do help people. It doesn’t mean that we go around bragging to people, “Oh I dedicated for you.” Only in situations where it’s helpful for them to know, do we do so.

ii) Protecting

We have to protect the root of our virtue so that it isn’t destroyed by anger and wrong views. If we get angry and we haven’t dedicated the positive potential, then our merit can be destroyed. Even if we have dedicated the merit, getting angry subsequently can lessen the intensity of the result or postpone the ripening of the result. We have to try to protect it. By knowing that, it gives us some energy not to get angry. Somebody did something to you and it’s driving you nuts. You started to get angry but the thought

suddenly pops into your mind, “Hey if I get angry, I am going to be destroying all this positive potential that I worked so hard to create in the first place. Is getting mad at this idiot worth it? Well, no! I am not going to let it harm me twice.” [laughter] It becomes double trouble because not only is somebody hurting us, if we get angry at them, we are also making a big problem for ourselves. It’s not worth getting angry. Protecting my positive potential and rejoicing at that is much more important. In that way we shift our attention to something else.

iii) Keeping it pure

Then we keep it pure by continuously doing virtuous actions. We make sure that our virtuous actions are unsullied by bad motivations such as wishing for the happiness of this life. Since we are doing a bodhisattva practice here, doing virtuous actions simply with the motivation of benefiting future lives is also not appropriate. We want to keep our virtuous actions pure by making sure that the motivation behind them is pure.

That is why it is so important that the first thing to do in the morning when we wake up is to generate a broad, general virtuous motivation: “I am doing everything today for the benefit of sentient beings”. That will cover all the actions for the day, and it is also good to pay special attention to generate it again and again as you do different actions during the day. But at the least, if you had set your motivation clear in the morning like that and dedicated it at night, then there is always something underlying it. Not only do we generate this good motivation on a day-by-day basis, in some ways we can also do it on an action-by-action basis. It’s also helpful, especially if we have taken the bodhisattva vows, to make the determination that I want everything I do in my whole lifetime to be for the benefit of others. In other words I dedicate my whole lifetime to benefiting others in whatever way I can through my practice and my actions.

That’s how we keep the root of virtue pure. If we do virtuous actions simply for the happiness of this life then the result we get is only the happiness of this life. With that, the karma is finished. It’s over and done with. When I lived in Singapore people would come and make offerings at the temple, and they would pray, “Please may my son marry a nice girl.” “Please help us to win the lottery.” I’ve had people stopping me and asking me for lottery numbers. [laughter] I said, “I don’t give lottery numbers. I don’t know anything about this.”

“Oh, but you are a ‘Venerable’. You should have special ability. Tell me what number or ticket I should buy.” [laughter]

Making offerings creates virtue. But if we make offerings with this kind of motivation then it’s wasting the opportunity.

iv) Enhancing or Increasing

Increasing the root of virtue is to dedicate all the virtuous actions for the temporal and ultimate benefit of sentient beings. The ultimate benefit for sentient beings is their liberation and enlightenment. The temporal benefit is to have food, clothing, medicine, shelter, friends, education and all those things that make for a happy life.

[Audience:] How does imagining someone purifying help that person?

Well like I said before, it sets up a good energy and this can help their good karma to ripen. You can’t purify their bad karma. Only they themselves can purify it, but by your imagining this, it sets up a kind of positive energy whereby their good karma can ripen. If they are in a state where they can see you doing this, they might say, “Well, she is purifying my negative karma. I should think about it.”

How to enhance the practice of the far-reaching attitudes

There are also some tips for how to enhance the practice of the far-reaching attitudes. Now we are getting to the tips. [laughter] They didn’t use that word in the scriptures but it’s what it boils down to.

Set a proper motivation

When you are practicing generosity, make sure that the motivation is correct. That is why before we make offerings on the altar, we generate a positive motivation. Before you do any action, whether you

are handing somebody something or doing a small favor, continuously generate that motivation so that your action is imbued with compassion. If you do an action for the benefit of one person, it creates that much positive potential. If you do it for the benefit of all sentient beings, it creates a much greater magnitude of positive potential. Thus generating the bodhicitta motivation enhances the power of the action. This is how the bodhicitta helps to purify and accumulate positive potential quickly. Since the action is aimed at all sentient beings, not merely at one sentient being, any action that we do with bodhicitta becomes a very powerful force.

[Audience:] They say it is good to imagine specific people when we make dedication. Why is that?

We do that because it makes the dedication much more powerful for ourselves. Just saying “I dedicate for all sentient beings” can, in some way, become a little trite to our minds. If we think of specific sentient beings, for example, our friends, but don’t stop with them and go on to different categories of sentient beings, then it makes it more specific and much more real. It’s the same when we are doing the *tonglen*. We don’t just say, “Well I take on the negative karma of all sentient beings.” Rather, we go group by group, person by person. This makes it very vivid and real so that what we are doing really sinks into us. It becomes very personal.

To relate this to my experience in China: I handed out Buddha pictures to people who were visiting the temple. As a result, the police bothered me and some people I was traveling with got upset with me. This experience had had a strong impact on me. Now when I do purification, I think very specifically about those people – the police who bothered me, the people who got upset with me, the bureaucrats who bothered others who handed out Buddha pictures. I dedicate specifically for them. They really stand out as a group for me now. It has made my practice much more real than just thinking ‘all sentient beings’. It is like, “I am dedicating even to all these specific people who have done harmful actions.” I also think of all these people who, before and during the cultural revolution, destroyed the Dharma, burned scriptures, made monks and nuns disrobe, imprisoned people for practicing, etc. I have been thinking very specifically about those people, purifying them and dedicating to them.

If you have a negative experience in your daily life, for example, somebody crashes into your car or scolds you, it’s really good to dedicate specifically to those people. Then you can see why it becomes a bodhisattva practice. You get a taste of what bodhisattva practice is because it basically involves not holding grudges and being unbiased. It’s a good training for us.

[Audience:] How do we make the connection between giving a box of raisins to homeless person and all sentient beings?

Before we give the box of raisins, we say to ourselves, “I am giving this to create the positive potential that I can then dedicate to the attainment of enlightenment. By my getting closer to enlightenment, I will have much more ability to benefit others than giving a box of raisins.” You think, “Right now, I am just giving a box of raisins to this person. But one day I would like to be able to give everything that anyone could possibly need to all sentient beings.” Right now we don’t have the capability, so we imagine doing it. We are making the prayer and aspiration to be able to do it in a much broader way. It will ripen in that way and one day we will be able to do it.

[Audience: Inaudible]

It is good to imagine specific people and things when we are dedicating, but think of as many specific people and things as possible. That makes things much more alive for us. When you make dedication, dedicate first for the enlightenment of all sentient beings before you dedicate for the specific people and things. If you make dedication only for certain things to happen and you did not make dedication for enlightenment, then it won’t go towards your enlightenment.

For example, I offer an apple to the Buddha and I say, “I offer this apple to the Buddha so that Carrie can live in a nice house.” I am dedicating it for Carrie. I create merit by offering that apple and I dedicate it so Carrie can live in a nice house. By the power of my motivation and my dedication, the best result we are ever going to get for that offering is Carrie living in a nice house.

Alternatively, I give the apple to the Buddha and I say (and I have also set the same motivation before I give the apple), “I give this apple to the Buddha and I dedicate it for the enlightenment of all sentient beings and for my enlightenment. In addition, I dedicate especially that Carrie can live in a nice house.” In this case, the merit doesn’t get exhausted since it’s been dedicated to enlightenment. And then you dedicate for the subsidiary things too, which are like the steps in the process (of sentient beings becoming enlightened).

The emptiness of the circle of three

Some more tips on how to enhance our practice of the far-reaching attitudes. Specifically here, we are talking about enhancing our practice of the far-reaching attitude of generosity. This is to do what they call the meditation on the emptiness of the circle of three. Sometimes this is translated as ‘the emptiness of the three circles’. That’s a mistranslation. It’s ‘the emptiness of the circle of three’. What is the ‘circle of three’? In an action of giving, there are the giver, the recipient and the action of giving or the object that’s given. There are these three things....

[Teachings lost due to change of tape.]

[Audience: Inaudible]

They are interdependent. To recognize that there is not this big *me* here that is doing this action, even though I feel like there is a *me* here. Why do I say that *I* am here? Why do I say *I* am giving? The mind is doing one action and the body is doing another action, and it’s only on the basis of what the mind and body are doing, that I can say that *I* am giving, or even that I exist. We begin to realize the dependent nature of the self, the dependent nature of the function of what the body and mind are doing, that make us the giver.

Intelligence

Another tip is to do the far-reaching attitudes with intelligence, which means:

- a) having the correct motivation
- b) do not cling to the action as inherently existent
- c) do not expect to enjoy the result of your virtuous action, but rather dedicate it so that we are not clinging on to just getting good results for ourselves. This point is very important because otherwise we become impatient in our Dharma practice, “I have been offering seven bowls of water on my altar for a whole year! How come I am not rich yet?” “When is the result of my positive karma coming?” “I have been going to Lamrim class for three weeks. How come I am not enlightened yet?” That happens on the fourth week. [laughter] Not to have this mind that is expecting results from the good karma, but to just be content to create the causes. One of my friends made a very good analogy. She said, “When you plant a flower seed in the ground you don’t stand over the seed in the ground and say, ‘Come on! When are you ripening?’” You simply plant the seed, create the circumstances and then wait. It will ripen when things are ready.

Questions and Answers

[Audience:] Why do we offer the seven bowls of water?

I don’t know why it’s seven. It could be one. It could be eight. Buddhists always like the number seven. Don’t ask me why. I have asked others but I haven’t found the answer yet. We offer water because it’s something that is generally plentifully available. Therefore, we are not terribly attached to it and we can give it with real bodhicitta. In other words, we can give it without any miserliness or clinging. It becomes a very pure offering. Also, it is easy for people to offer water because it is plentifully available. You don’t need to be rich to do it.

It’s a very nice habit to get into doing every morning, offering the water in the morning and taking it down at night. It’s one of the activities that frames your day, just like making three prostrations in the morning when you get up and three prostrations before you go to bed at night, and generating a good motivation in the morning and dedicating the merit in the evening. All these things frame your day’s activities.

You offer the bowls of water in a certain way because you don't want to put empty bowls on your altar. When the bowls are empty, always put them upside down. When somebody invites you over to dinner, they will not give you an empty plate. In the same way, we don't put empty bowls [right side up] on the altar.

To make the water offering, first you clean your bowls out and stack them up. You pour a little bit of water into the top bowl. Pick up the [top] bowl and pour out almost all the water [into the next bowl in the stack], leaving just a little bit of water [in the top bowl], and you put that [top] bowl down on your shrine. Then you take the next one and pour out almost all the water, leaving just a little bit, and place it next to the first bowl. In this way, you set up all the bowls in line on the shrine, each with a little bit of water so they are not empty bowls. Then you go back to the first bowl and fill up each of the bowls in turn.

When you take down the water in the evening, you put it outside on the flowers or the bushes. You pour it into some place where people don't walk on it. Don't throw it down the toilet.

[Audience: Inaudible]

The giving of love is included in the generosity of giving protecting from fear. We are putting them in a safe place and taking care of them. It is also the giving of love in the sense of encouraging people, giving them good feedback, giving them affection when they need it, giving them support, giving them love. These are different from being attached to them.

[Audience: Inaudible]

Definitely. You can see karma functioning very well here. When you are friendly to other people, people automatically respond in kind. It is the same with the giving of love. It becomes much easier to then be the recipient of love. But the important thing is not to expect anything in return when we give love, but to derive pleasure just from the very act of giving.

I think in many ways, parents' love for their children is this kind of giving. This is why they always use the example of the mother so much in the scriptures. (Now we have to make it gender neutral and include the kindness of the father too!) The parents just give and give and give and the kids don't know. Yeshe (Sarah's kid) doesn't know what sacrifices Sarah makes – she had to take leave to take care of Yeshe because she is crying. In some ways it's a very thankless job. A parent gives without thinking so much about the results. The parental love just needs to be purified of the attachment. That kind of generosity is really important.

I think in America, love has almost become like a property now. It's like, "Well I am in this relationship because I want my needs met. If my needs don't get met, I am going to get out of this relationship. I am not going to love you anymore if I am not getting something in return." You see this so much in the way people talk about relationships these days, as if love is a commodity and we are in a transaction, "You owe me so much love. If I am going to love you, your responsibility is this much, and you had better give it to me or the deal's off."

[Audience: Inaudible]

I thought Mark Hart made an excellent point in his presentation on Saturday when he said, "Why is it when we go beyond some societal norms, people say it's co-dependency?" I thought that was an excellent point. People are becoming quite miserly about their love, aren't they? It is like, "I am not going to do this because then we are co-dependent." I think somehow we have to be very careful with this movement that is going on in America about setting boundaries and things like that. We don't want to use it as a way of becoming extremely self-centered and miserly.

[Audience: Inaudible]

That's why it is very important for us to attain enlightenment. If we attain enlightenment or if we get further along the bodhisattva path, then we will be able to teach the children, which will enable them to escape from samara and not be condemned to this whole cycle of death, rebirth and suffering.

In particular, if we have a very strong karmic relationship with somebody, then it is all the more important to become a Buddha. The further advanced we are, the more we can help them because of the strength of that relationship. If we care about them and recognize our limitations, then it inspires us to practice for their benefit.

Let's sit quietly for a few minutes.

This teaching is based on the *Lamrim* or *The Gradual Path to Enlightenment*. Please refer to the following web-page for its outline and other transcripts or to listen to the audio recording of these talks: <http://www.thubtenchodron.org/GradualPathToEnlightenment/outline.html>