



A Gift of Liberation
Course Six—Preparing for Our Teacher
Homework Master, Class Four: Shaping Gold and Silver

1) Why does Pabongka Rinpoche compare good deeds to gold or silver?

[The Rinpoche says that we can use this final one of the seven limbs—dedication—to “direct” the good seeds we create towards particular goals that we have. In this sense, a simple karmic seed is like a lump of gold or silver, and then we “shape” it, he says, into whatever exquisite form we desire—as though we were crafting a Buddha statue.]

2) What mild complaint about his life does Pabongka Rinpoche make concerning the act of dedicating good karmas—and how does it apply to us?

[The Rinpoche bemoans the fact that he *only* must have dedicated the good seeds in his past lives to endless opportunities to study and teach the Buddhist path, since he and his followers are now able to do this continuously in their monasteries. But he says that he wishes he had dedicated a few more good seeds to being able to practice quietly alone, in an isolated retreat spot.

The lesson we ourselves can learn here is to take full advantage of opportunities we get to do our own silent retreats, even just for a weekend—at places like our New Diamond Mountain Meditation Resort!]

3) The act of dedicating our good seeds is meant to protect them. From what? (In answering, refer to a famous Buddhist classic.)

[The Rinpoche quotes *A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*, which will be familiar to many of us from ACI courses 10 through 12. Here it states that—

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unless we “bank” or protect our good seeds by dedicating them immediately to some higher purpose—then we stand in danger of losing them. This is because the emotion of strong anger has the capacity to destroy these good seeds before they ripen.]

4) What, according to Pabongka Rinpoche, is a way of taking our practice of dedicating good seeds to a new level?

[The Rinpoche quotes a section of Lord Maitreya’s *Ornament of Realizations* which refers specifically to the practice of dedication as performed by a person who is on the Path of Habituation.

This of course is immediately following our direct perception of emptiness on the Path of Seeing. This unique and uniquely high insight confers upon us the ability to dedicate a good deed while at the same time staying completely aware that the deed we are dedicating, and the purpose towards which we are dedicating it, and even we ourselves as we perform the dedication are all coming from past seeds, and are thus empty of being themselves in themselves.]

5) What is an easy way—which involves lines outside a nursing home—of dedicating our good seeds to saving the world?

[It’s not difficult to dedicate our good deeds to total enlightenment—to saving the world—if we simply examine the implications of any good deed we ever do with wisdom. Say that we are looking for a partner, and decide to try the Diamond Cutter system of *planting* them, rather than *finding* them.

In this case we don’t go on the internet to find a good dating website—nor do we brave a nightclub or yoga class to locate them. Rather, we pay regular visits to a lonely person at a nursing home.

These visits plant the seeds which turn into our new partner. Our friends of course ask us how we finally “found” a partner, and of course we share with them our new knowledge of karmic seeds.

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Our friends begin to imitate us, and soon a virus has spread across the whole world: there are long lines outside of nursing homes, and lonely people have become a rare and valued commodity.

If we think about the implications here, we can quickly realize that simply following the Dharma and reaping its rewards is in itself an act which impacts the entire world.]

6) What is another way of increasing the power of a good karmic seed—to ripen stronger and faster into the goals that we seek—which involves an onlooker?

[The Rinpoche notes that we multiply the power of a karmic seed simply by calling upon the Holy Beings of the universe to witness our sincere act of dedication, and our prayers for what this seed will grow into.

It is an especially wonderful feeling to think of how countless Buddhas are enjoying looking on with pride as we do our Coffee Meditation!]

7) What are three special goals towards which we can dedicate our good deeds and seeds?

[These three are:

(a) To the spreading of the teachings—and as our Rinpoche is careful to note, this “spreading” is not so much between places as between hearts.

(b) To being taken into the care of spiritual Teachers, for all of our lives to come.

(c) As a trigger for our coming enlightenment.]

Coffee shop assignment: Please meet with at least one other person—or better, a group of people—whom you didn’t know well before this teaching; do your homework together and discuss together any questions you have. Please write here where, when, and with whom you did your homework:

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Meditation assignment: Modern physicists express a theory which says that the “clumping” of cosmic dust into all the billions of stars and planets of our universe after the Big Bang has come from tiny patterns within a piece of infinitely tiny and massive matter, at the beginning of time. The tiny good seeds which we plant every day have more power than this to create entire universes in our days to come. Please do 15 minutes of meditation in the morning reviewing small good deeds that you are doing, and trying to imagine their effects, magnified to galactic dimensions—as they will surely be. Repeat in the evening.

Please write here the two times that you started these meditations.