

A Gift of Liberation

Course Six—Preparing for Our Teacher

Homework, Class Two: Coffee Meditation

1) Pabongka Rinpoche, at the beginning of his discussion of the fourth of the seven components for collecting good karma and negating bad karma, makes the intriguing statement that “this practice of appreciating ourselves and others is a bit difficult for us, because it is a practice of the bodhisattvas.” Later in the same section he describes just how bodhisattvas appreciate others, and perhaps this gives us a clue to the first statement. Just how are bodhisattvas said to appreciate others? Include, in your answer, a metaphor.

2) In teachings by Lamas, we often hear the statement that we can obtain 10% of the good karma that another person has accomplished, just by appreciating and being happy about what they have done. Not a few of us have wondered how this exact number was arrived at. Explain how Pabongka Rinpoche leads into this idea, which helps us understand how the number of 10% came about.

3) Pabongka Rinpoche makes a comparison between all the good karmic seeds that a normal person manages to plant in their entire life, and the karma created by a certain kind of person in a single day. Identify this person, and explain why the Rinpoche is making this comparison.

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4) Strangely for a Lama who warns us against gossiping, Pabongka Rinpoche actually encourages us at a certain point to “swap stories.” Why does he do so?

5) Pabongka Rinpoche says that we have to learn to appreciate both the good that we are doing, and the good that other people do. He states that we can be happy about the things we are doing now, or use a special method to appreciate what we’ve done in the past. Describe this method briefly.

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:

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes early in the day, and 15 minutes later in the day, identify one good habit or quality about yourself. Then fantasize about who you were and what you were like, perhaps in a previous life, in a similar way to cause yourself to be this way now. And then fantasize briefly on how the current seeds planted by being like this now may lead you to be—what kind of person, and where in the world—doing the same things multiplied many times, perhaps in future life. Please write here the two times that you started these meditations.