



ACADEMY OF ANCESTRAL WISDOM

**SUPERIOR COURSE  
IN THEURGY - 7**



**What is Karma - Part 1**

# Lesson 282

Ven. Master T. A-O Domingo Días Porta

With the Buddhist Practitioner Lobsang Tonden

Very well, welcome. We're going to start with this course on what is *karma*. Karma, how it works, how to purify it, what karma is not. And, well, to get right into the topic, I'd like to talk about some important background that we can take into account when we talk about the topic. And one of the important aspects is that... We've already done it a little, but I just want to mention it, it's meditation, which is very useful, because well, I suppose most of you have done some meditation. But well, I just want to give a little... well, as a review, of what meditation is, the posture, especially the posture, because there are different forms of meditation. But well, the posture of meditation, as I put here on the slide, can be in different ways.

We can be sitting in the lotus position as it is shown there, the first one, we have it here on this side all the way at the top. The second, the half lotus position. The lotus position is with the soles of the feet facing up; the half-lotus position is with the left leg down and the right leg up. It is always the one I personally use, the full lotus too, but the half-lotus is more comfortable, that is, faster to adopt. The Burmese style position, they call it from Burma, is with the left leg behind, the right leg forward.

The purpose of these positions is not exotic at all, but rather practical, it is simply... Adopting this position... We make a triangle, if you look closely, the knees and buttocks make a triangle, and it helps to have a better posture, so that we are more upright. Then comes the position that we can sit in as if we were sitting on a zafu. *Zafu* is a cushion, a meditation cushion. The position that Zen Buddhism also uses a lot, which is on a stool, you put your legs underneath the stool, and you sit on the stool, or the sitting position on a chair.

I recommend that if you are going to meditate, you do short meditations, for example 5 minutes, 10 minutes. Those meditations are better short and effective than a long meditation with many distractions.

In any case, we are going to get distracted because our mind is like a... like we were on a highway and there was a toll booth. Can you notice? Sometimes you are watching the highway and many cars go by, many cars, so we are observing. We are observers and thoughts go by like cars. No problem, they are going to be there. Not wanting to have thoughts, wanting to put the mind, as they say, blank does not have much benefit. To begin with, it is practically impossible because the mind is active all the time.

My master says: when we are focusing on concentration meditation, instead of distracting ourselves with many things, we are distracted by just one, which would be in this case, what we did: we distract ourselves, or concentrate, it is the most correct way of saying it, on breathing.

So, if we are on this highway, cars pass one after another and there would be no problem if we saw the car and it passed. The car is not permanent, the car passes, it is temporary. The problem is that we see what color the car is, what license plate, what number plate has, how many doors it has, how many people are in the car, what they are doing, what they are eating, we get in the car, and we go with them on a trip, and when we realize it, we are already at the next toll booth. We return our attention to breathing. That is a bit of an analogy, passing many cars on the highway, and those are the thoughts. But thoughts are like impermanent clouds, they pass.

So, we adopt any of these postures; you can be sitting in a chair. Meditation is a mental activity, of course we adopt the posture to facilitate our mind to be able to meditate. In general, the most important thing is to have a straight or upright back without it being rigid, just in a naturally upright way. And as almost always, when we



straighten our back, we tend to put pressure on our neck, because we do as it is here in the image. We lower the chin slightly to stretch the neck muscles a little. The hands can be on the knees so as not to get distracted, or in the meditation posture, as shown here in this photograph of the monk with his hands resting on his lap. You can also place the tip of the tongue to the palate to avoid salivating and getting distracted.

And, as I was saying, the eyes can be slightly half-open so as not to lose contact with the outside, because the purpose is also to take the meditation to the outside. But if we get distracted we can close them; that is no problem.

Well, before going into the subject of karma, as I mentioned, we are going to analyze some important points.

CÓMO  
ESCUCHAR LAS  
ENSEÑANZAS

*EVITAR SER COMO  
LOS 3 RECIPIENTES:*

- BOCA ABAJO.
- BOCA ARRIBA

PERO SIN FONDO.

- BOCA ARRIBA

PERO SUCIO.





**How to listen to the teachings?** Let's listen to the teachings, that is an important point. When we listen to the teachings, perhaps within Buddhism, we talk about different *yanas*; *yana* means vehicle. There is the *shravakayana*, the vehicle of the listeners; the *bodhisattvayana*, or the vehicle of the *bodhisattvas*; the *vajrayana*, the vehicle of the tantra ray.

They are all the vehicles that the Buddha taught, linked to each other. Vehicles means a tool for mental transformation, of internal relationship. So, I sometimes tell you, when we speak in any teaching, it is important sometimes... We receive a lot of information, and it is a shame

that we have a lot of information, but, of all that information, how much do we keep? Our minds sometimes don't have the capacity, including ourselves... to retain everything. So, it's important to take small meditation spaces, breaks, or rest periods between sessions so that our minds can also relax and not be, as I say, in the different *yanas*, not fall into the "*bewilder-yana*", where we'll just take on a lot of information and not have anything... In other words, we'll keep very little.

To do this, we begin as we did with the introduction of how to listen to the teachings, because our mind is like a container, yes, our mind is like a container. We must avoid the three types of containers that we talked about. This is spoken about by a master, several masters, among them, for example-- whoever wants to study a little more— a master called Patrul Rinpoche. He has a very well-known work called *The Words of the Perfect Master*, a [...]. The *Words of the Perfect Master*, he speaks [...] text, he begins by saying, well, we must avoid our mind being like these three containers, as I put here.

The first container is when our mind is upside down. I cannot turn the cup over because I have some drink here, but if I turn the cup over, it is upside down. I want to pour water into the cup, into the container and what is going to happen, what is going to happen to the water? It is all going to spill, it is not going to enter because it is upside down. And even if I have the most delicious, pure drink, a nectar, an elixir, if I have the container upside down and I pour this liquid on the container, it is all going to spill, and it is not going to enter. Why? Because it is upside down. This means, when our mind is totally closed.

I don't know if it has happened to you. It has surely happened to us in our personal experience, or when we talk to others and our mind... can be closed for different reasons. One may be due to stubbornness, another may be due to confusion, another may be due to lack of interest, then, it is closed, it is upside down. And well, even though we may have access to something that may be useful to us, since that container is upside down, well, what happens? The liquid does not enter. So, avoiding our mind being upside down is the first... That it is right side up, that it is receptive. Receptive does not mean that we have to accept everything, I will talk about this later; receptive means that it is open to listening.

The second point is avoiding the container being right side up, but with a hole, that it has no bottom. What happens with this? Well, it is logical, you pour the liquid and everything that goes in comes out. Has it happened to you, that you go to teachings, or some class or some presentation and suddenly you say, “Oh, it was very interesting, but look, I don't even remember what he talked about, after leaving the conference.” Or, “I remember a few words. The truth is that I don't remember well what he talked about.” That is the bottomless container. We are there present, but our mind, the information enters and comes out like an upside-down container. So, avoid that also.

And avoid the third: a container that is upside-down, is not perforated, has a bottom, a top, however, it is dirty inside. So, I have here, I want to put this pure water inside this container, but here it is dirty. No matter how pure the water is, at the moment I pass it here, this pure water is already going to get dirty because the container is dirty. So, this means that we often hear things with preconceived ideas. And well, we don't understand the meaning, but we want to adapt them to our own ideas. Or we want to mix them and we make a kind of mix that doesn't make any sense to us.

So, when both things can be serious. I'll give you this example: it's like someone goes to see a soccer game with a baseball jersey and believing that the rules of baseball are the ones that are going to apply to soccer. What happens? We go to the stadium very excitedly with our baseball jersey, and there is a soccer game. So, we're going to be confused, we're not going to understand. Both are sports that have their rules, they have their presentation, they have their way of being played. But as we go with the baseball jersey to see a soccer game, well, we're going to mix, we're not going to understand, and we're going to feel disappointed and deceived because it wasn't what we expected.

But why is this? Because we go with a container, so to speak, dirty, because we go with an idea, with a different or mistaken concept than the one we are going to see in reality. So, that is why it is important to avoid the container upside down, [...] that it is closed. It is important to avoid the container right side up, but without a bottom, that means paying attention, taking notes if you like, recording, taking photos of the screen. I can send you the presentation later for whoever wants to review. The truth is, the presentation is very simple, I try not to put much because... Rather, some readings, just the important points, and well, avoid the dirty container in order to have a benefit from what we hear, right?

So, this is what I would invite you to before, well, the restart, both today and tomorrow as in any type of teaching that we hear. Very well...

Well, let's move on. To talk about *karma* we have to have a context of where these teachings come from. They are teachings that really explore reality, the principle of cause and effect. *Karma* has been talked about in different ways in different cultures. Here I am going to address it in the way it is presented in the *Buddha-dharma* or the teachings of the Buddha, the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. And, well, what does *dharma* or *Buddha-dharma* mean? Why study the section on *karma* or *dharma*? In other words, *dharma* means teachings of mental transformation, a methodology to transform our interior, our perception, to overcome dissatisfaction; that is *dharma*. In Tibetan it is said [...], it means that which sustains us.

## DEFINICIÓN DE BUDA-DHARMA

“Enseñanzas para la transformación de la mente. Una metodología para superar la insatisfacción”.

“Sostener”, metodología que nos soporta o sostiene para no continuar siguiendo ciegamente nuestra visión equivocada de nosotros mismos y del mundo que nos rodea.



*Dharma* is a Sanskrit word, if we were to translate it into Spanish it would be: teachings of internal transformation. So, *Buddha-dharma* means: the teachings of internal transformation that the Buddha shared. The Buddha did not create them, the Buddha did not invent *karma*, just as Isaac Newton did not invent the law of gravity. Isaac Newton simply observed, and through this observation, he described what was happening in reality.

So, the Buddha is the same; he observed how reality operates. How the principle of cause and effect operates for the mind, for our perception, and he explained it and expounded it. That is, it is not that the Buddha has invented anything or revealed anything, it is something that he, or through observation, like us [...] a normal individual like us or an individual, so to speak, common and ordinary like us, made an effort to see reality. To see, observe how suffering exists, its causes, and overcome it.

And in that sense I tell you well... And he said, We are all potential Buddhas.” Yes, the state of enlightenment or awakening is something that we all have, it is a potential that we all have. The difference that I always tell them is that the Buddha said, “I —his determination—... do not get up from here until I have a direct experience of reality.” And in my case— I do not know about yours— but in my case, my determination is: I do not get up from here until I get hungry, or until I get sleepy, or until the program I want to watch starts. That is, that would be the difference in terms of determination and the causes that we have created.



So, *dharma*, *Buddha-dharma*, teaching of internal transformation called [...] Tibetan, that which sustains. What does it sustain us from? This methodology does not sustain us from continuing to blindly believe in our mistaken, confused vision of reality, of ourselves and of reality. Because as the Buddha says, “We believe to be something that we are not.” Not because we are bad people, simply because... I cannot say that someone is a bad person because they do not know physics and mathematics, they simply do not know that.

So, for example, I'm going to explain this a little bit more now. The wisdom that we have to develop, is that we have to focus on how things exist. An example that I can give you is: we would like things to last forever, that things were permanent, when in reality they are changing, transitory, not permanent. This is what Buddhism calls ignorance or confusion; that is what the Buddha called ignorance and confusion.

So, knowing the teachings, the *dharma*, helps us to precisely correct that confusion that we have about ourselves and about reality. So, that is why it is so important to know them. It is a path of, we can say, **unlearning**, deep-rooted habits that we have, in order to see reality, to be able to see how we ourselves exist, how others exist, how we are interconnected. Finally, the Buddha did not seek, with his teachings, he does not seek followers. He sought colleagues, people who reached the same state that he reached and that is why he taught. He explains to us how, because well, just as I cannot... you cannot learn a language through me, or I cannot learn it for you. The Buddha cannot walk the path for us. He tells us what the path is like and how to traverse it.

“I, in my experience”, tells us, “I took these steps to get to this result, if you take them, you can also get to that result.” And one of the first steps to follow, is precisely to observe or live according to the principle of cause and effect or *karma*. That will help us not only to avoid harming ourselves and others, but to be able to benefit ourselves and others, and thus be able to create the causes of happiness and stop creating the causes of suffering. That is why it is so important.

Because in the end, if there is something that unites all beings, it is not our race, it is not our culture, it is not our skin color, it is not our studies, it is not our beliefs. What really unites all beings, without exception, is the fact that we want to be happy and avoid suffering, right? That is what unites all beings, makes us equal, makes all beings equal. Because there are many... There are, for example, at the level of science, we could say that... well, when a few years ago they discovered what the human genome is, and the genetic difference between humans is practically —between human races—... it is practically super minimal, almost non-existent, so, that gives us the conclusion that there are no different races, there is only one race, the human race.

That small difference is what makes the external physiological differences; it is a minimal percentage. In that sense of science, well, all human beings would be equal. Religions, for example, the Abrahamic, theistic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, would say that well, we are all created by GOD or Jehovah or Allah, and

therefore being children of Him, of this Creator, we are all equal; that would be their explanation. The explanation, for example, in the political area, for example, I don't know, Communism, maybe would say that we are all equal in rights or whatever. Or Democracy would say that we all have the same right to vote.

In the case, for example, of Buddhism, we would say... These are other ways of saying it, in the case of the law, for example, the secular law of the countries, they say that we are all citizens, we all have the same rights and obligations. But in the case of Buddhism, I would say that in reality what makes us all equal is not everyone, that is, everything else is perhaps valid according to each person's beliefs. But for Buddhism it says: no, what really makes us equal, makes us all equal, is the fact that we all want to be happy and stop suffering. That makes us all brothers and sisters and for that we do not need laws, or beliefs, or religion, or sophisticated philosophies; it is something that we can experience empirically.

If I ask you, who wants to be happy and stop suffering? And we ask out there, everyone will tell us, "I want to be happy and stop suffering." We are simply confused about what causes happiness and what causes suffering. That is why we are here, to begin to explore the causes of happiness and promote them, and to begin to stop creating the causes of suffering. That is why we are here.

Well, something very important, the Buddha said... Or as it says down here, "Do not accept my teaching out of respect, tradition, or faith; analyze it and see if it makes sense." That is very important advice. He gave it twenty-six centuries ago. It is like a prospector, a person who searches for gold. Have you seen those movies from the forties and fifties? The Gold Rush, in California, for example, people went and searched for gold, gold nuggets in the rivers. And they found things that shined, but as the saying goes, "Not everything that shines is gold." You see then, it doesn't even shine. So, what did a prospector do when he found a gold nugget? What he did was, he took it, he observed it, he saw the malleability and the characteristics that it had, and he saw if it was really gold or not gold.



So, that's why, when I was talking about the right-side up container, it doesn't mean that we should put everything that is told to us in it, especially now that the supermarket, as I call it, the spiritual supermarket is very large and everyone can write something on the Internet, even on topics that may apparently sound interesting.

And life is actually short, our life is short, it is not one life..., if we are fortunate enough to live a long life like Master Domingo or other people who have had long lives. There are people who live very few years, we don't know when death will come. So, we have to be cautious about what we want to study and practice, because life really is short, and we spend a lot of time... And, in itself, life is short, and we spend a lot of time doing activities that we have to do because if not, we don't survive. Such as, for example, shaving our beards - in the case of men - or working or having a certain type of social life, which is something normal, but, nevertheless, it takes time from our existence.

Thus, life, the time that we have is limited. Therefore, it is important, to analyze the Teaching, but to analyze it in a way that says, is this useful to me or not? There are times when... The Buddha said, "My teaching has to be analyzed and take what is useful to you." There are people who say— it makes me laugh because they say— "No, the Buddha said to take what is useful to me. So, I like this, I don't like this; I take this that I like, and this that I don't like I won't pay attention to it." I mean, you can take what... It's not what you like, it's what is useful. For example, if the Buddha is telling you, you have to avoid negative actions because they harm you in the future and others. "Oh no! I don't like this."

So, "... the Buddha said that since we have the freedom to accept our Teaching, I don't like this." I mean, the fact that you don't like it, doesn't mean that it's not true. It's something very important to understand.

Here it is not about whether I like it or not, what we have to analyze is: “is it useful and real or is it not useful or not real?” That is the important thing, is it useful or not? Yes, because we can read an extensive article on why vultures do not have teeth, and what benefit would that bring?

So, it is not so much that... For example, there are times when they say, the Buddha talks about the potential for enlightenment that we all have, the great potential for empathy, love and compassion towards others that we can all develop. “I like that!” people say. And then they say, but the Buddha also talks about how we can also have a very negative potential if we do not take care of our mind. Our mind can be, it can do terrible things if it is an uncontrolled mind, because it is full of conflicting emotions, it can be poisoned by conflicting emotions. “Ah!, I don't like that, I don't like that...” Well, it's not about whether we like it or not, you know? It's about seeing if it's true or not, because it's not about continuing to deceive ourselves, it's about seeing how we can advance in any aspect of our life and, above all, we're talking about our internal development.

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