



佛法与家庭生活

Buddha Dharma and Family Life

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鸣 谢

Acknowledgment

尊贵的萨迦·赤千法王（第 42 任萨迦·赤津法王大宝金刚仁波切）于 2015 年在以色列的“以色列佛法之友”给予此开示。萨迦大悲遍空寺整理编辑英文版，并于 2018 年初版。“萨迦传承”翻译小组修定和增加了英文再版注解以及汉译。感恩所有直接或间接参与初版和此版的整理编辑的每一位所作贡献，使更多人得以与此珍贵的开示结缘并能获得暂时与终极的利益。

以此功德，愿尊贵的第 42 任萨迦·赤津法王健康长寿、长久住世、法轮长转。

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By the merit of this work, may His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin enjoy perfect health and have extremely long life, and continue to turn the wheel of Dharma.

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前言

每一个有情众生，从微小的昆虫到人类，无不同样地希求获得幸福^[1]；每一个有情众生无不同样地希求克服痛苦和烦恼。幸福是我们共同的目标，然而大多数人并不知道何为真正的幸福之因，也不知道何为痛苦的真正原因。正因为如此虽然世人追求幸福，反而制造了痛苦，他们追求幸福之果，却在摧毁幸福之因（意即：行为和目的南辕北辙）。这就是为何“首先要了解‘何为获得真正幸福的正确方法’、以及（对应的）‘何为错误方法’十分重要”。

释迦牟尼佛已为我们展示了正确的和错误的道路。了解佛陀的教导，会对我们的福祉产生很大的影响。当然，修行不应仅出于一己私利，更要饶益其他有情众生。佛陀的教诲之所以关乎每个人的幸福，是因为佛陀授予这些教导并非为了他自己，而是为了一切众生的福祉和利乐。

注释：

[1] 幸福: "Happiness" 这个字实际包含了很多意向，比如：幸福（一种状态）、幸福感（一种感受或评价）、快乐（一种感受或心态）。这里为了方便读者，简单译为“幸福”，请读者依据原文自己去体会和把握它的准确涵义。

佛陀教导的目的

佛陀曾教诫：“我为我怙主，也为我敌人。”这意味着你真正的避难所和保护是你的修行。

释迦牟尼佛曾示现过无数殊胜的佛行事业，但其中最重要的是转法轮，即教导众生远离痛苦和不满，先得到暂时的幸福，直至最终获得终极^[2]的幸福。佛陀教导的目的是为了帮助我们调伏自心，帮助有情（不仅仅是人类而是一切有情）克服痛苦，获得幸福。

遵循佛陀的教诲，你可以实现愿望——克服痛苦和得到幸福。佛陀并不以示现神通来指引我们。佛言：“诸佛非以水洗罪，非以手除众生苦，非移自证于余者，示法性谛令解脱。”如果你沿着佛陀指示的道路走下去，就可以脱离轮回的苦海。否则你将会深陷轮回之中，不仅现在，而且未来，也都将感受无尽的痛苦。

佛陀曾说：“吾为汝说解脱道，当知解脱靠自己。”这意味着哪怕佛陀已为我们明示正确的道路，但能否从教言中受益取决于自己。倘若我们根据佛陀教授的宝贵而且甚深的教言，精进地闻思修，我们便可从轮回中获得解脱。

佛陀曾教诫：“我为我怙主，也为我敌人。”这意味着你真正的避难所和保护是你的修行。虽然听闻了佛陀宝贵的甚深教法，若不依教奉行，你也依然得不到（想要的）结果。

能否脱离轮回，取决于自己的修行，所以有人说“我为我怙主”。但有人说“也为我敌人”。因为最大的敌人不在外面，而在你自己的内心——以愤怒等负面情绪的形式存在于你的内心。

举例而言，想象一下，如果其他所有众生都变成了你的敌人，同时向你发起进攻，尽管（外在的敌人）会对你影响很大，但受影响的程度也并未达到身处恶趣所感受到的那种极度痛苦的程度^[3]。因此，我们大部分的痛苦皆源自内心的嗔恨，而非外面的敌人，因而“最坏的敌人就在你自己心里”。



注释：

[2] "Ultimate" 的佛学术语是“究竟”，但是本文内容利益广大读者包括非学佛者，编者采用“终极”。

[3] 可参见寂天菩萨《入菩萨行论》第四品：“纵天阿修罗，皆与我为敌，彼亦无能力，引我入狱火。强势烦恼敌，刹时引入狱，纵使须弥山，亦无灰烬余。吾心烦恼敌，时若无始长，余他世间敌，无能长如彼。顺心恭敬敌，皆将行利乐，但若奉烦恼，徒受伤害苦。不断长为敌，滋祸唯一因，若恒住我心，轮回怎无惧。”

以何方式实践佛法

重要的是要知道你应该修行的原因：这是因为通过练习佛法，你不仅为你自己，更为所有的有情众生获得了巨大的利益。

闻思修以及实践佛陀的教导是很重要的。在佛法练习中，需要具备五种观念：

第一，将佛视为一位高明的医生。

第二，将佛的教法视为良药。

第三，将自己看作病人。

第四，将像愤怒、贪执、嫉妒、无知^[4]和骄傲这样的染污，视为你的疾病。

第五，接受和遵循教导就像药物或治疗。

以上这些观念是非常重要的。

当然，尽管你咨询了最好的医生，接受了最好的医疗护理，并在最好的医疗机构接受治疗，但如果你不遵医嘱按时服药，



那么哪怕医生医术高明，你的疾病也是不能痊愈的。仅靠药物和医生并不能治愈疾病。为了治疗疾病，病人需要做出努力，按正确的剂量和时间服药，遵从医生嘱咐。这种努力的主要源动力并非他人，而是你自己。

同样道理，当实修佛法时，依教奉行很重要。佛陀的教导与你的心有很强的因果关系——实修教法是因，调伏自心并建立正知正念则是果。修行与心有很强的因果关系。意识到这种关联是很重要的。

佛陀传法是为了帮助一切有情超越轮回，引导众生走向解脱和觉悟。但在此过程中，我们现世的福祉也会受益匪浅。作为佛教徒，我们不应只着眼于改善此生的生活。尽管如此，如法修行不仅能自然而然地利益今生，同时也能为来世带来利益。因为佛陀教导的目的就是为了调伏我们的自心和帮助一切有情众生。以积极心态和利他心去帮助其他有情众生，很自然地，自身也会感

受好的结果。良善、正面的行为，绝不可能产生不好的业力结果。

重要的是要知道你应该修行的原因：这是因为通过练习佛法，你不仅为你自己，更为所有的有情众生获得了巨大的利益。为什么你要帮助他人、寻求利益他人，以及维护他人的福祉和利乐？你应该设法让他人受益，这有两个原因：其一，我们都有同样的目标，那就是：希望获得真正的幸福、远离痛苦。为了实现这一共同目标，(大家)应该一起努力。你不应只为自己寻求幸福。仅关注自身幸福而忽略他人是不正确的。你必须代表一切有情众生得到幸福、远离痛苦而努力。由于这一共同的目标，我们需要努力让他人受益。

其二，出自经典的开示——伟大的上师寂天菩萨曾经说过：“所有世间乐，悉从利他生；所有世间苦，咸由自利成。”这说明了：利他的心是幸福之因；自利的心乃痛苦之源。正因如此，我们应该关注他人，非仅仅关注自己。



注释：

[4] 无知：“ignorance”的佛学术语是“无明”，但是本文内容利益广大读者包括非学佛者，编者采用“无知”。

世俗的幸福与终极的幸福

专注于获得终极幸福——因为你一旦获得终极的幸福，自然会拥有世间的幸福，你会在世间感受到幸福。

你需要达成哪种幸福？当佛教徒谈及“幸福”时，我们指的是幸福的终极状态——成佛的境界。那种幸福远胜于我们平常体验的世俗幸福。所以，你应当致力于获取这种终极的幸福，在此过程中，你也会同时获得世俗的幸福。了知世俗和终极幸福之间的差别是非常重要的。

这两种幸福有三个显著的差别：一、缘起；二、本质；三、持续时间。

缘起（因）

世俗幸福的例子，包括：有个美丽的家园、成名、致富、变得有权力。通常，在追求世俗幸福时，各种负面的情绪会随之而来，比如自私、嫉妒、愤怒和缺乏悲心。此外，在追求世俗幸福的同时，你还可能会做出一些不好的行为，比如欺骗他人。所以，世俗的幸福之因往往包含了造作恶业的行为。与此相反，终极的幸福之因总是善行，尤其是那些清净的善行。

本质

世俗的幸福实质上是一种痛苦，我们称之为“变苦”。比方说，一个穷人突然中了彩票，搬进了美丽、奢华、条件很好的房子里。刚开始，他们会感到喜悦^[5]，但房子并非幸福真正的源泉——若是如此，他们（应该）居住得越久越开心才对。但事实上，他们在这房子里居住得越久，幸福的感觉却越来越少，他们会开始经历各种各样的痛苦以及抱怨。

物质上的东西并不是幸福的真正原因，它们不会带来真正的幸福，有很多穷人比富裕的人更幸福。许多富人经历着由各种形式的问题、压力和挑战所带来的精神痛苦。富人往往没有时间休息，在巨大的压力下不停地工作，难以成眠。这就表明物质世界并非是我们现在生活中实现幸福的途径。

许多穷人，甚至无家可归者，都很幸福，没有多少要担心的。一个人的幸福不是用财富定义的，世界上最幸福的人不一定是最富有的人。同样，最幸福的人也不是最有权势或最有名望的人。这说明名望、权势和财富都不是真正幸福的最终原因。

幸福的真正原因是做善行。幸福取决于你的心——你如何（以何种心态）面对和处理问题。例如，试想两个不同的人都在努力解决同样的问题，一个人以适当的方式处理问题，而另一个人无法处理问题。不能正确处理问题的人会感到更多的痛苦，即使他们面临相同的挑战。这意味着你的幸福取决于你如何处理问题——也就是说，取决于你的精神状态。正如我们所看到的，物质的发展不是幸福的原因。在过去的数十年中，物质有了极大的

发展，但今天的人们并不比几十年前更幸福，或者痛苦更少。事实上，我们现在面对着很多来自内、外部的新问题。现在有许多新出现的疾病是多年前闻所未闻的，尽管医学已有了巨大进步。

我们要做的最重要的事情是改善我们的内心世界，而不单单是关注外部世界。改善外境虽然可以让我们生活得更舒适，但为了生活得更幸福，我们反而需要去发展我们的心智^[6]。

时长

世间的幸福是无常的（终将失去或变化，带来痛苦），唯有终极的幸福（因彻证了不生不灭的胜义）才能超越所有的痛苦。终极幸福是完美的、名副其实的。就期限而言，终极的幸福远超世俗的幸福。尽管此生我们都竭尽所能地追求世间的幸福，然而生命短暂易逝，终难长久。世上有几十亿人，毫无疑问，每个人都会死。在这个世界上出生的人迟早都会死，死亡是不可避免的。生命短暂，寿量有限。我们都会在不同年纪死去。有些胎死腹中，有些早早夭折，有些凋零于花季，还有些生命终止于二十多、三十多或是四十多岁等。在这个世界上没有确定的寿命，无论是人类还是动物。

此生幸福很短暂，（通常）我们的寿命最多不过百年。只有少数人能活过百岁，但大部分人都活不到一百岁。（即使）那些活到百岁者，（也）没有一个人从未经历过任何痛苦、从出生到死亡都只有幸福的。举例来说，如果你活了一百岁，假如去分析你的人生阶段并把它们归为幸福或痛苦，你可能会发现：在大多数情况下你并不感到幸福。你可能会在三四十年间感到幸福，而

在大约六七十年时间里，你会经历痛苦。尽管你表面上微笑，但在内心深处可能有各种问题。

因此，世间幸福持续的时间非常短暂，一般而言只有几十年，最多不超过一百年。但是，一旦你获得终极的幸福，这种幸福状态将永远不会改变，你将永远身处终极幸福之中。因此，世间的幸福与终极的幸福相比，二者有天壤之别。专注于获得终极幸福——因为你一旦获得终极的幸福，自然会拥有世间的幸福，你会在世间感受到幸福。

训练自心，以良好的心态去处理问题是非常重要的。你可以采取很多的行动，但我们将此分成三个主要类别：一、身体行动；二、语言行动；三、心理活动。三者之中，最主要是心理活动。身、语的活动都受心的支配。没有心，就不会有身、语的行动。比如，尸体没有肢体动作和语言表达，因为心识已不在。有时候，即使一个人举止得体，但如果你心存恶念，比如说想要欺骗他人，那么，不管外在行为表现得再好，实际上恶念只能带来恶果。

所以，对于我们而言，心存善念至关重要。所谓善念即希望帮助他人、利益他人、维护他人福祉。佛陀的教导是让我们调伏自心，去除愤怒、贪执、嫉妒、傲慢^[7]。如果你能去除这些负面的情绪，自然地可以不再遭受痛苦。你所遭受的痛苦皆源于恶行，而这些恶行，皆由负面的情绪与染污所引起。这些负面的情绪来自无知^[8]，即自私的想法^[9]。一旦有了自私的想法，则你的想法便自然地分执两方，即自他二方。当你开始以二元的角度看待事情，便会倾向于自方——贪执自方、憎恨他方。因自私的想法而生起痴、嗔、贪，它们被称为“三毒”^[10]，这三种负面情

绪进而产生了其他的负面情绪，比如傲慢、吝啬、嫉妒等。举个例子，当你不喜欢某人，而他恰恰某些方面比你优秀，那么你便会心生嫉妒。所以说，自私的想法是轮回诸苦之根。

注释：

[5] “joy” 根据原文表达，此处翻译成“喜悦”，事实上喜悦也可视作幸福感的一个体现。

[6] “mind” 是心，也是心智。轮回涅槃，心是唯一作者。

[7] “anger” 的佛学术语是“嗔怒、嗔”，但是本文内容利益广大读者包括非学佛者，因此，根据法王所要表达语境而翻译两个不同的词。法王在解说“负面的情绪”时，引用的“anger”，编者译为“愤怒”，一种负面的情绪，可能带有嗔怒。“嗔怒”有怨恨、希望对方受苦或毁灭的意思，乃“三毒”之一。

“jealousy” 的佛学术语是“妒”，本文编者采用“嫉妒”。理由同上。

“attachment”的佛学术语是“贪”——被喜欢的想法冲动对境所牵引。本文编者采用“贪执”。理由同上。

“pride”的佛学术语是“慢”，本文编者采用“傲慢”。理由同上。

[8] “ignorance”的佛学术语是“无明”。“无知”，因为“不知道”自心的负面情绪，而随着这些负面情绪制造恶行。在佛学的角度，三毒之一是“无明、痴”，即是缺少明性、缺少觉知。理由同上。

[9] “selfish thought”一词，直译为“自私的想法”，佛法角度其意常指“我执”。由于一念失觉而有所怀疑，想去确定，由于想要确定，而制造了“我”。对“我”这个概念的认同和强化即“自私”。由自私进一步延伸，产生自他二执，有了“我”就有区别于“我”的“他”，之后分别爱憎，于所爱生“贪”，于所憎生“嗔”，自心高举生“慢”，自所执着，不欲他有，或不愿他人胜己，生“嫉”，于己不舍生“吝”，于自、于体不明生“疑”，以上为失念后陷入散乱而生的烦恼；失念后陷入昏沉则生“痴”，若不对治昏沉而怠惰则加深愚痴……如此深陷轮回幻相，痛苦烦恼不已。上述过程，不同的“乘”有不同角度的诠释，这里编者采取了适合大众理解的方式，仅供参考，建议读者根据法王的开示自行思考理解。

[10] “The three poisonous thoughts”一词是指三种负面的情绪：贪著（佛学术语：贪）、嗔怒（佛学术语：嗔）、无知（佛学术语：无明、痴）。这三种负面情绪是不净轮回的根源，能污染人心、引生自他痛苦烦恼，故称之为“毒”。



家庭关系中的幸福与痛苦之因

践行积极的思想，首先从自己的家庭开始。你需要和家人拥有良好的关系，特别是对父母与孩子。

首先了解痛苦和幸福的真正原因很重要。例如，如果医生尝试治病，必须做的第一件事是诊断出病人正患什么病。在不知道病情的情况下，医生怎么能给病人开处方治病呢？因此为了治病，医生首先要确诊，这样他或她才能给出正确的疗病方案。同样道理，首先你要了解幸福以及痛苦的原因，如果知道了造成痛苦的原因，是自私的念头以及其它负面情绪，那么你可以试着抛弃这些念头，以消除痛苦。

嗔恨心是可以从你的内心中消除之物，因为嗔恨不是内心本质的一部分。内心的本质从无始以来都是纯洁的，它永远不会被负面的情绪所染污。正如，当有一处污渍在你的衣服上，你可以用正确的溶剂去除它。这些污渍并不是衣服本质的一部分，它们是暂时的，可以通过洗衣剂和清水去除。同样，嗔恨也并非内心本具，它是暂时的，可去除的。但为了净除垢染，你需要采用正确的方法和纠正措施。最关键的是必须要知道你能消除这些垢染。为此，你必须采用正确的纠正措施。正确的纠正措施是践行积极

的思想，比如慈心和悲心。

践行积极的思想，首先从自己的家庭开始。你需要和家人拥有良好的关系，特别是对父母与孩子。虽然养育孩子是一项困难的工作，但是你的父母竭尽全力帮助你，为此你欠下他们养育巨债。此外，如果你身为父母，你应以极大的爱心照顾孩子并用积极的方式关怀他们。要做到这一点，父母有极大的责任培育他们的孩子。同样，与其他家庭成员有良好的关系也是十分重要的。

为了在家庭成员之间建立良好的关系，不自私是很重要的。如果你是自私的，那么你只希望以自己的方式做事，而忽视他人的想法，从而会给整个家庭制造麻烦。重要的是不要以为自己总是正确的。如果你有这样强烈的自私想法，那么你不那么容易拥有幸福快乐的人生，最终也会陷入艰难的处境中。尊重家庭成员是很重要的一一不仅是你的孩子，还有你的伴侣。互相尊重、诚信、彼此信任很重要一一有时你必须信任别人，有时别人必须信任你，这些是在家庭关系中起关键作用的基本因素。



— 全文完 —

Buddhism and Family Life

H.H. the 42nd Sakya Trizin Ratna Vajra Rinpoche

Second Edition

“The Sakya Tradition” Translation Team

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PREFACE

Every sentient being, from tiny insects to human beings, has the same wish to gain happiness. Every sentient being has the same wish to overcome suffering and trouble. We all have the common goal for happiness. Yet most people don't know the cause of real happiness, and neither do they know the real cause of suffering. Because of this, while they might wish to gain happiness, instead they cause suffering. Seeking happiness they instead destroy the cause of their own happiness. Despite the best intentions, they act against their own wishes. This is why it is important to first understand the right way and the wrong way of gaining genuine happiness.

Lord Buddha has shown us the right and the wrong paths. Knowing Buddha's teachings can have a very strong effect on your welfare. Your practice should not be only for your own sake, but for the sake of all sentient beings as well. Buddha's teachings affect everyone's welfare because Buddha gave these teachings not for himself but for the welfare and well-being of all sentient beings.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS

The Buddha also said, "You are your own savior; you are your own enemy." This means that your real refuge and protection is your practice.

Lord Buddha performed numerous noble activities, but the most important one was to turn the wheel of Dharma, that is, to guide sentient beings from suffering and dissatisfaction first to temporary happiness, and finally to ultimate happiness. The purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to help us tame our minds, to help sentient beings—not only human beings but all sentient beings—overcome suffering and gain happiness.

By following the Buddha's teachings, you can fulfill your wishes to overcome suffering and achieve happiness. The Buddha does not guide us by performing miracles. He said he could not wash away our negative karma, nor could he remove our suffering with his own hands. He said he could not directly transfer his wisdom and knowledge to others. Instead, the Buddha helps us by showing the right path. If you follow that path, you can be liberated from the suffering of saṃsāra. If you do not follow it, then you will remain in saṃsāra where you will experience infinite suffering both now and in the future.

The Buddha said, “I have shown you the path; whether you gain liberation from saṃsāra or not depends on you.” This means the Buddha has shown us the right path, but whether we benefit from his teachings depends on ourselves. If we study, contemplate, meditate, and practice according to the precious and profound teachings of Lord Buddha, then we can gain liberation from saṃsāra.

The Buddha also said, “You are your own savior; you are your own enemy.” This means that your real refuge and protection is your practice and this is why you are your own real savior. Though you can learn the precious and profound teachings, if you don’t follow them and practice accordingly, you won’t get the results.

Whether or not you gain liberation from saṃsāra depends on your own practice. Therefore it is said, “You are your own savior.” But it is also said, “You are your own enemy,” because your worst enemy is not outside of you. It is within you—within your own mind in the form of negative thoughts such as anger.

For example, imagine if all other beings were to become your enemies, attacking you all at the same time. Though it would affect you greatly, the effect would not be as extreme as the suffering of the lower realms ⁽⁶⁾. Most of our suffering is produced by our own anger, not by an external enemy. This is why it is said, “The worst enemy lies within your own mind.”



Notes:

(1) Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra, Chapter 4: "If all gods and humans were my enemies, even they would be unable to bring me to the fire of the hell realm. When encountered, it consumes even the ashes of Mount Meru. Mental afflictions, the mighty enemies, instantly throw me there. Nor do all other enemies (of mine) have such a long span of life as that of these my kleśa foes, beginningless, endless and extremely lengthy. All others work towards one's well-being when properly served but these kleśas when served are extremely harmful in their consequence. How can I take delight in the cycle of existence when constant, long-lasting enemies (my kleśas), who are the sole causes of the currents and floods of adversities, fearlessly dwell in my heart?"

THE WAYS TO PRACTICE BUDDHA DHARMA

It is important to know the reason why you should practice: It is because through practice you gain great benefit not only for yourself, but for all sentient beings.

It is important to study, contemplate, meditate, and practice the Buddha's teachings. In Dharma practice you need five perceptions. First, you should perceive the Buddha as a skillful doctor, and secondly his teachings as medicine. Third, see yourself as the patient, and fourth, defilements such as anger, attachment, jealousy, ignorance, and pride as your sickness. Fifth, receiving and following the teachings is like the medicine or therapy. These perceptions are very important.

Even if you consult the best doctor, receive the best medical care, and are treated at the best medical facility, if you don't follow the doctor's advice or take your medicine at the right time, then no matter how skillful the doctor is, your sickness will not be cured. Medicine and doctors alone cannot cure sickness. In order to cure sickness, patients need to make the effort and take the right dose of medicine at the right time and follow the doctor's advice. The primary source of this effort is not others but yourself.

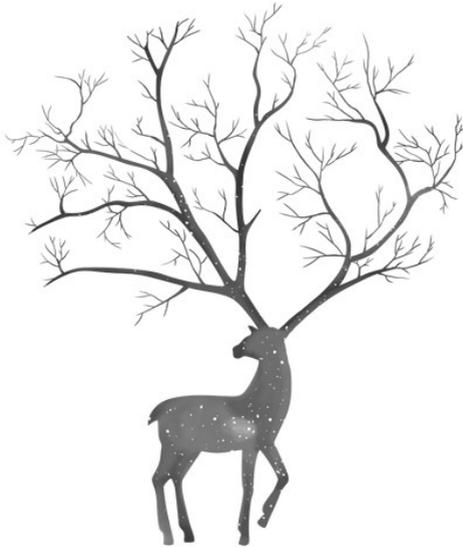
Similarly, when you practice the Buddha's teachings, it is important to follow the Buddha's advice. The teaching of the Buddha has a strong cause-and-effect relationship with your mind. The practice of the teaching is the cause, whereas the effect is the taming of your mind and the development of positive thoughts. Dharma practice and the mind have a strong cause-and-effect relationship. It is important to be aware of this connection.

The purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to help all sentient beings overcome saṃsāra. The Buddha's teachings are meant to guide everyone toward liberation and enlightenment. But during this process, your well-being in this life can also benefit enormously. As Buddhists, our focus is not merely on improving this present life. Nevertheless, practicing Dharma properly will naturally improve this life in addition to all subsequent lives. This follows from the fact that the purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to tame our minds and to help all sentient beings. By helping sentient beings with a positive mind and altruistic thoughts, you naturally experience a good result. It is not possible to generate a bad karmic result from good and positive action.

It is important to know the reason why you should practice: It is because through practice you gain great benefit not only for yourself, but for all sentient beings. Why should you help others, seek to benefit others, and look after others' welfare and well-being? There are two reasons you should seek to benefit others. One is that we all have the same goal: to gain genuine happiness and escape suffering. In order to accomplish this common goal, a common effort should be made.

You should not aim to gain happiness for yourself alone. It is not right to focus solely on your own well-being and ignore others. You must work on behalf of all sentient beings to gain happiness and remove suffering. Due to this common goal, we need to benefit others.

The second reason we should benefit others is stated in the teaching. The great master Śāntideva said, “All of our happiness is caused by wishing others to be happy. All of our suffering is caused by wishing ourselves to be happy.” This means altruistic thought is the cause of happiness and selfish thought is the cause of suffering. Because of this, you should focus on others and not just on yourself.



MUNDANE HAPPINESS

VERSUS ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

Focus on attaining ultimate happiness, because once you attain ultimate happiness, automatically you will also experience mundane happiness; you will feel happy in the mundane world.

What kind of happiness do you need to achieve? When Buddhists say “happiness”, we are talking about the ultimate state of happiness—the state of Buddhahood. That happiness is greatly superior to mundane happiness, which is the type we ordinarily experience. So, you should focus on achieving ultimate happiness. In the process of gaining ultimate happiness, you will also attain mundane happiness. It is important to know the difference between mundane happiness and ultimate happiness.

These two types of happiness are very different from three perspectives: 1) cause, 2) nature, and 3) duration.

Cause

Examples of mundane happiness include having a beautiful home, becoming famous, becoming wealthy, and becoming powerful. Typically, when seeking mundane happiness, negative anger, and lack of compassion. Additionally, when seeking mundane happiness you may perform negative actions such as deceiving others. So the cause of mundane happiness often includes negative actions. In contrast, the cause of ultimate happiness is always virtuous deeds, especially uncontaminated virtuous deeds.

Nature

Mundane happiness is actually a kind of suffering, known as the suffering of change. For example, consider a poor person who suddenly wins the lottery and moves into a beautiful, luxurious house in great condition. In the beginning, they will feel joy, but the new house is not a true cause of happiness for them. If the house were a real cause of genuine happiness, then the more they stay in that house, the happier they should feel. But actually, the longer they stay the less happy they will be, and they will start to experience various kinds of suffering and complaints.

Material things are not the real cause of happiness. They won't produce genuine happiness. There are many poor people who experience more happiness than others who are rich. Many rich people experience mental suffering in the forms of problems, pressure, and challenges. Rich people often do not have time to rest; they struggle to sleep as they are continuously working under immense stress. This shows that the material

world is not the way to achieve happiness in our present life.

Many poor people, even homeless people, are happy and do not have much to worry about. A person's happiness is not defined by wealth. The happiest person in the world is not necessarily the richest person in the world. Likewise, the happiest person is neither the most powerful nor the most famous person. This means fame, power, and wealth are not the ultimate causes of genuine happiness.

The genuine cause of happiness is performing wholesome deeds. Happiness depends on your mind—how you face and approach problems. For example, consider two different people struggling with the same problem. One handles the problem in a proper way, whereas the other is unable to handle the problem. The person who cannot handle the problem properly will feel more suffering, even though they both face the same challenge. This means that your happiness depends on how you handle problems—that is, on your mental state. As we have seen, material development is not the cause of happiness. In the last few decades there has been great material progress, but it is not true that people nowadays are happier or have less suffering than they did decades ago. In fact, we now face many new external and internal problems. There are now many new emerging diseases that were unheard of years ago, despite there being tremendous developments in medicine.

The most important thing for us to do is to improve our internal world, and not simply focus on the external world. Though we might live more comfortably by developing our external world, to live more happily we need to develop our mind instead.

Duration

Mundane happiness is subject to change, while ultimate happiness permanently overcomes all kinds of suffering. Ultimate happiness is perfect and genuine. In terms of duration, ultimate happiness is superior to mundane happiness. Though we all make efforts to gain mundane happiness in this life, this life is very short and will not remain forever. There are billions of people living in this world, and there is no doubt that every single person will die. Everyone born in this world will die sooner or later; death is unavoidable. Life is short; one's life span is finite. We all die at different ages. Some people die in their mother's womb, some right after birth, some as teenagers, or later through their twenties, thirties, forties, and so on. In this world there is no certain life span for either human beings or for animals.

The happiness of this life is very short; our maximum life span is not more than about a hundred years. Only a few people live for more than a hundred years, but the great majority live less than that. Among those who live to be a hundred, there is not a single person who has never experienced any suffering and experienced only happiness from birth till death. For example, if you live for a hundred years, if you analyze your life phases and group them into happiness or suffering, you might find that most of the time you do not feel happy. You might feel happy for thirty to forty years, and for about sixty years, experience suffering. Though you might smile externally, deep down in your mind you may have all kinds of problems.

So the duration of mundane happiness is very short. It typically lasts for several decades and at most less than a hundred years. But once you achieve ultimate happiness, that state of happiness will never change. You will experience ultimate happiness forever. Thus there is a big contrast between mundane happiness and ultimate happiness. Focus on attaining ultimate happiness, because once you attain ultimate happiness, automatically you will also experience mundane happiness; you will feel happy in the mundane world.

It is very important to train the mind to handle situations in a good way. There are many actions you may undertake, but we can group them into three major categories: 1) physical action, 2) verbal action, and 3) mental action. Out of these three, the primary type of action is mental action. Both physical and verbal actions follow what happens in the mind. Without the mind, there can be no physical or verbal actions. For example, a dead body performs no physical or verbal actions, because it has no mind. Sometimes even if you act in a good manner, if you have bad intentions such as wishing to deceive others, then though your action outwardly appears good, in reality it is negative due to your negative intention.

Therefore it is very important to have a positive mind—a mind that wishes to help, benefit, and care for others' welfare and well-being. It is very important for us to hold such a mind.

The Buddha's teachings are supposed to tame your mind—to remove your anger, attachment, jealousy, and pride. If you can remove these negative thoughts, then naturally you will not experience suffering. All your suffering is caused by your

negative actions and all negative actions are motivated by negative thoughts and defilements. These negative thoughts originate from ignorance, meaning selfish thought.

When you have a selfish thought, then naturally you are thinking about two sides: your own side and the other's side. When you have these two sides, then you have attachment toward your own side. You like your own side, but hate the other's side. From this selfish thought, ignorance, anger, and attachment arise. These three are called the three poisonous thoughts. These three negative thoughts then further produce other negative thoughts such as pride, stinginess, and jealousy. For instance, when you do not like someone, and if this person is better at something than you are, you feel jealousy. Hence, selfish thought is the root of all suffering in saṃsāra.



THE CAUSES OF HAPPINESS & SUFFERING IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

To practice positive thoughts, first begin with thoughts toward your own family.

It is important first to know that the real causes of suffering and happiness. For example, if a doctor is trying to cure a disease, the very first thing the doctor must do is to diagnose what illness the patient is experiencing. Without knowing the sickness, how could the doctor prescribe treatment to cure the patient? In order to cure the sickness, the doctor first has to identify the sickness, and only then can he or she prescribe the correct treatment for the illness. Similarly, first you need to know the causes of happiness and suffering. If you know that the cause of suffering is selfish thought and other negative attitudes, then you can try to abandon these thoughts in order to eliminate suffering.

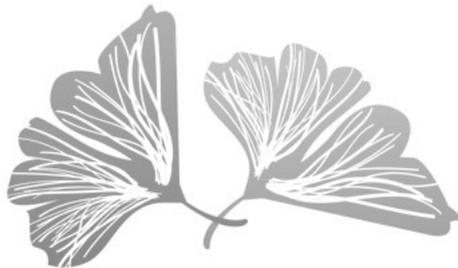
Anger is something you can remove from your mind, because anger is not a part of the nature of the mind. The nature of the mind is pure from beginningless time; it is never permanently stained by negative thoughts. For instance, when there is a dirty stain on your clothing, you can use the right solvent to remove the stain. These stains are not part of the nature of the cloth;

they are temporary and can be removed by detergent and water. Likewise, anger is not part of the nature of the mind; it is temporary and can be eliminated. But in order to eliminate defilements you need to adopt the right methods and remedies. It is essential to know that you can remove the defilements, and in order to do so you have to employ the right remedy. The right remedy is to practice positive thoughts such as loving-kindness and compassion.

To practice positive thoughts, first begin with thoughts toward your own family. You need to have good relationships with your family members, especially between parents and children. Though parenting is a difficult job, your parents did their best to help you and you owe them an enormous debt of gratitude. Also, if you are a parent, you should look after your children with great love and care in a positive way. To do this, parents have a large responsibility to nurture their children. Also, it is important to have good relationships with other family members.

In order to have good relationships among family members, it is important not to be selfish. If you are selfish, then you wish only to do things in your own way and ignore others' ideas, thus making trouble for the entire family. It is important not to think that you're always correct. If you have such strong, selfish thoughts, it is not easy to have a happy life and you will end up in difficult situations. It is important to respect your family members—not only your children but also your partner. It is important to respect, trust, and believe in each other. Sometimes you will have to trust them,

and sometimes they will have to trust you. These are the fundamental factors that play a key role in family relationships.



-The End-



■ His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, belongs to the prestigious Khön family, whose successive generations have provided an unbroken lineage of outstanding masters, is the eldest son of His Holiness the Sakya Trichen (the 41st Sakya Trizin). Since young, he received many Dharma teachings, empowerments, pith instructions, oral transmissions, and etc. from H.H. the Sakya Trichen and many of the foremost masters and scholars of this age. When he was 12, he completed the Vajrapani retreat, and in 2005 gave the first *Lam Dre*—“Path with the Result” teaching, the highest teachings within the Sakya Order. Renowned for his erudition and the clarity of his teachings, H.H. the 42nd Sakya Trizin Ratna Vajra Rinpoche is considered as one of the most highly qualified lineage masters of Tibetan Buddhism.

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