

Trillions of Dollars for Learning about Dharma

My most dear kind wish-fulfilling ones,

If it was possible I should offer you each trillions of dollars for learning about Buddhism. This means your mind is open for real happiness, to be free from the gross suffering in the three lower realms and even not to be satisfied with the temporary happiness of the three upper realms. Most importantly once you can meet and practice Dharma this frees you from samsaric happiness which is only suffering, and Dharma can give you full enlightenment, peerless happiness. Learning Dharma and practicing it is so important for yourself as well as others, countless others: as once you can achieve enlightenment you can free countless living beings, all living beings, from the oceans of suffering. So you can see there is nothing more important than this, to learn Dharma and practice.

Dharma is more important than money and all the rest of the worldly things that people believe are important for one's happiness. One shouldn't use this perfect human rebirth just for making money, as a servant to money. One needs to work for the happiness of future lives and enlightenment. We need some money but money only comes from past virtuous actions, good karma, that we have created in the past. Like good crops come because you plant the right kinds of seeds. People in the world who have no understanding of Dharma think material things come from money, think external comforts come from money, so they think that money is the most important thing.

Another strange thing is generally people don't learn about death: life comes to an end, and it is important to understand why this is so. Also to know how the mind is different from the body: the mind is colorless and has no shape and perceives objects. The Buddha said the definition of the mind is that it is clear and able to perceive objects. There are many people who can remember past lives, their own and others. There is no one who has discovered there is only one life, no reincarnation.

Then there are many problems of the elements - flooding, fires and hurricanes, happening again and again. Then children shooting people, senseless killing of people. People can't understand why so much senseless killing happens these days.

All these misunderstandings come because people don't understand karma, how things come from the mind.

The most important essential practice is that of compassion, this is the essence of Buddhism, compassion to all beings who are numberless. Compassion brings happiness to you and stops you from harming others. Compassion is the source of the happiness of numberless beings and brings one to peerless happiness and enlightenment.

Thank you - please continue to study,

Sincerely
Lama Zopa

Colophon: Letter written to students doing retreat at Kopan. Scribe Ven Roger Kunsang, Oct 2013, Kachoe Dechen Ling, USA. Lightly edited by Claire Isitt, May 2014.