

How to Be A Real Professional - Why We Need Dharma

In our daily life you can see very clearly, it's very logical that even if one does not believe in reincarnation, karma, even if one is not Buddhist, a believer in Buddha Dharma Sangha, you can still understand very clearly through analysis, through your own experiences, that if you live your life cherishing oneself that doesn't bring peace and happiness in one's life, within one's own heart. There's always tension in the heart, the more tension the more one cherishes the I. Thinking only of oneself, "my happiness, when can I be happy," thinking only like that you can't have real happiness, peace. However many different places you go to in the world, whether you live in the city or you think it would be better to go to the mountains, so you go to live in mountains - it's the same problem there. Your heart has the same problem, tension, tiredness. There's no real rest, even if you physically go on vacation, maybe to Tahiti!

Tibetans or Chinese pray to be born in Amitabha Pure Land, Dewachen, or Vajrayogini Pure Land. But I heard in the West that people pray from a young age to be in Tahiti! I think I must have some karma, I've been there already two times! We have one small meditation center there in Tahiti called Naropa Centre. It has been existing there for a long time, for many years, I think maybe more than seven years. There are many small islands, and hills. Mostly it's water, ocean, very blue, like the colour of turquoise. When I was there the first time I wrote to our Sangha, the Western monks. We have Western monks in the monastery in France called Nalanda - our master Lama Yeshe called it Nalanda. So I wrote to them that I'm in hell! I don't remember exactly what I said, but I said in hell!

It depends on with what motivation, with what attitude you live there. If you're living there having entertainment, enjoyment with the motivation of non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment, and especially non-self-centered mind, of course there's no question - if you live there or if you have enjoyments with that attitude, non-anger, non-attachment, with a pure motivation, pure attitude, then there is no risk. There is no danger. With this motivation, if you're having enjoyment, it all becomes Dharma. It all becomes meditation. You are living in Tahiti, a place which is described as the best tourist place, and it all becomes Dharma, it all becomes meditation. You only create the cause to achieve happiness, happiness in future lives. Especially of course if it is unstained by the self-cherishing thought, all the enjoyment of whatever you do there becomes not only pure Dharma, but it becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. Without self-cherishing thought, if the attitude is cherishing others, benefiting others, then whatever activities you do, whatever enjoyments you have, all those enjoyments are enjoyments for others, for other sentient beings' happiness. All those become the cause of the highest success in life, full enlightenment, the cessation of all mistakes of mind, gross and subtle defilements, and the completion of all qualities.

But if you go there and the motivation is just self-cherishing, enjoying with only the self-cherishing thought, nothing else, only 'my happiness', not even the happiness of future lives, not ultimate happiness, liberation from the whole entire suffering of samsara and its cause, instead just this life's happiness, nothing else, so with the attitude just seeking the happiness of this life, clinging only to the happiness of this life, just this very short term happiness, the attitude is just attachment, simply pure attachment. Then with that attitude all the activities that one does twenty-four hours a day, eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, riding over the waves, lying down on the beach, all the rest - I don't need to go through all the rest! Everything becomes negative karma. Every single thing that is done with body, speech, and mind becomes negative karma which results only in suffering, no happiness, let aside finding satisfaction, finding fulfillment in life. There is no peace and happiness at all with

this attitude, this grasping mind, attachment. No way, it's impossible to find satisfaction with that, by following desire.

You achieve satisfaction in life only when the mind stops following desire. Whenever that happens, wherever, it doesn't have to be on the meditation cushion, it can be anywhere, in the workplace or even in the bathroom, wherever. Wherever you are, the minute you split from desire, separate the mind from desire, stop following desire, the minute you let go, then at that time you find satisfaction. So that is the Dharma. That is meditation, that is the real Dharma, pure Dharma. Whenever and wherever it happens, outside, inside, even in prison, wherever that Dharma happens, then there's peace and happiness in one's heart, real inner peace, satisfaction in the heart.

I would like to mention one thing. It's not sufficient in our life, our profession, whatever it is - business or engineering or whatever, being a physician, a doctor, a professional having studied at university, a professional having studied at college how to do things in life, studied how to be a secretary, or how to be a director and run a company or how to be an accountant, all these things, how to clean, how to cook, all these things learnt at school or college or whatever. So what you learn, this profession is only external, how to do things externally. That's not enough. That's not sufficient. If you really want happiness, if you're really looking for peace and happiness, inner happiness, that's not sufficient. You need to be professional inside. You need to be professional mentally, you need inner professionalism. So a person may have all this education from college, university, how to do this, how to do that, how to be a business person and so forth, but if they are missing the inner profession then what is missing is mentally how to live life, how to do everything. The real profession is missing. That is the positive attitude, living life with this peaceful, happy, healthy mind, non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment, and especially with the thought of cherishing others, the ultimate good heart, the thought of cherishing others, unstained by the self-cherishing thought, the selfish mind. Without this inner professionalism, this inner qualification, without this, then what happens? Even if you succeed in the external world, in business or whatever, even though you may be externally successful your mind is not becoming happier and happier, it doesn't become more and more peaceful, more and more satisfied, more and more fulfilled - that doesn't happen. There's more and more problems, more and more unhappiness.

For example, if you have achieved reputation in this world, everyone knows you, young and old, everyone talks about you: by working so hard for so many years, bearing so many hardships, so many worries, fears for so many years. After so many years of working so hard, even though you achieve the goal of worldly reputation, everybody knows you, everyone talks about you, likes you - but in your heart there's a lot of worry, there's a lot of fear. You might lose your reputation! Anytime, something can happen to make you lose your reputation, get a bad name, or somebody can become higher, more famous than you. It's the same with wealth, somebody becomes wealthier than you, or your wealth, your power reduces. You have so many worries, fears that your power, your wealth might go down, and that you won't be more important than others. So much worry, fear, your mind, heart, filled with this, all this suffering, this worldly concern, concerned with this life, the pleasures, the comfort, having reputation, having more wealth than others, more power than others, so like that.

I have a friend who is very famous, and I heard through other friends that this is what that person is worried about in daily life, even though they have achieved so much, even though they are so famous in the world. So you may have the external profession, you achieve that goal, but the mind, the heart is empty. The heart is empty and filled with misery, filled with sufferings, problems, so

much dissatisfaction, the major suffering, dissatisfaction, always wanting more and better. There's no end for that. Then relationship problems, then so many other problems, like other people taking away your possessions. By having wealth, you become concerned about people taking it away in so many different ways, through taxation or whatever. So without this inner professionalism, the inner profession of the healthy mind, the pure mind which is Dharma, the real Dharma, so without this, no matter how much you're externally professional, life problems go on more and more.

During traveling, I think from India to the United States I saw a movie on the airplane about a very rich person in England who had a huge building. So that person, he started his business by selling cars. Then he became very wealthy; he owned all these properties. But his mind is so dissatisfied, he had so much unhappiness. His building has many rooms, so one night he sleeps in one room, then another night goes to sleep in another room. He checked where his unhappiness came from. He thought he didn't have that unhappiness before, it came since he had the car business, he thought it started from there! So he had a bodyguard buy many toy cars, and he put all these toy cars outside and he put petrol, kerosene on them and then he burned all the toy cars because he thought the car business was the root of his problems. That the car business is where his unhappiness came from. So this was his own way to stop suffering, I guess. Something like that. Also I think maybe he ate hardly any food, and drank sixty bottles of alcohol, because of unhappiness. That is because he had an external profession but he didn't have inner professionalism, living life with the positive mind, the healthy mind, that which is Dharma.

Anger, attachment is not healthy mind. In Tibetan they are called 'nyon mongpa', so I translate that as obscuring, disturbing, negative attitude. This gives a full description of what 'nyong mongpa' means. Disturbing is the function of delusion. But I added the word 'obscuring'. Obscuring, disturbing, negative attitude. So if it's obscuring, disturbing, it is a negative attitude. Its function is to obscure the mind, obscure the mental continuity of the person. Instead of clearing away, instead of enlightening, instead of awakening, if it's obscuring and disturbing, then that has to be a negative mind. That receives the name 'negative mind'. That mind cannot receive the name 'positive', that which is bringing peace and happiness, that which is awakening, not obscuring, bringing peace instead of disturbing, that is the healthy mind. That is Dharma. That is only Dharma.

These negative minds, for example anger, desire, produce many problems in life. So many of the problems in our life are caused by desire; problems and harm come to you from anger, and give harm to others, and that anger is due to desire. By meditating on impermanence, death, not only that death is going to happen at some time, but especially that the time of death is uncertain, by making the mind familiar with that you always have this mindfulness of impermanence, death, that this lifespan is very short. So instead of thinking, "I'm going to live very long," that concept of permanence that "I'm going to live for a very long time" that rises even on the same day that you're going to die, the same day that you're going to have a car accident, or airplane crash or heart attack or whatever, a situation in which one is going to die. Even on the day that one is going to die this concept that "I'm going to live for many years" is there in the morning when you get up. It's there even five minutes before your heart attack, before you die. Just five minutes before the car accident in which one is going to die, this concept that "I'm going to live for many years" is there. So it's not true, it cheats, it's defeating. It blocks, it hinders you from thinking of Dharma. From your side you have to make preparation for a free death, for a happy death. [This thought of permanence] blocks you from making preparations for a good rebirth in your next life, so that right after this life you have a good rebirth, are born in the pure land of the Buddha where you can become enlightened, become a great bodhisattva. To have a happier life or a better rebirth with more opportunity to

practice Dharma, to meet the teachings of the Buddha. Even just simply to have a good rebirth, a happy life - it blocks you from making preparation for that by practicing Dharma, and it blocks you from practicing Dharma to actualize the path, to cease the delusions, karma and from liberating yourself from the oceans of samsaric suffering, from achieving ultimate happiness. It blocks that. It blocks you from actualizing bodhicitta, from having realizations of the Mahayana path, it blocks you from achieving enlightenment, it blocks oneself from enlightening numberless other sentient beings, to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering, and bring them to full enlightenment. So it's not true. That concept is not true. It deceives you, it cheats you, if you believe in that. Then suddenly one day, death comes.

Even today, one student died in California - Ross Brooke, who is the one of the benefactors of the land for Vajrapani Center, which was the very first meditation center in the United States, Vajrapani Institute in Santa Cruz. So one of the benefactors who offered the land died today. Not only that, the nun, Venerable Kim, her mother died this morning. Then there's so many in this world, just even today so many who died at home, in the hospital, in the car. There's one girl in Singapore, one student, she had an operation for nine hours, I think she still didn't wake up, she opened her eyes but is not really functioning. So like that. So for Ross Brooke, Ven Roger heard suddenly, just two days ago that he had to go to hospital and then today he died. We just suddenly heard like that. Up to now we have been hearing about what's happening to other people, that such-and-such died, this one died, that one died. So many died from cancer, other things. Then one day it becomes one's own turn. Then others one day, sooner or later, hear your name with the word 'dead', 'died' joined after your name. For example, let's say Zopa. After the name 'Zopa', then add the word 'died.' So up to now we hear about others, but sooner or later others will hear your name joined with the word 'died.' So sooner or later, that definitely happens. Sooner or later, one day, dead - daytime or nighttime, one day that happens. You want to go shopping for food for this week, and then death happens, you are unable to return back home. Death happens like that. Or you're cooking food and before you put it on the plate to eat it, death happens. Or you start to write a letter, and before it is finished, death happened. Or you start to write a book, then before finishing the book, death happens. You go traveling, on pilgrimage or vacation, then death happens before coming back. Even while one starts to eat food, before finishing the food on the plate, the soup in the bowl, before finishing that death happens. You go to the bathroom, but before returning back to your room, death happens. So it's definite that one day you'll be doing something, and death will happen. It's for sure. That day is going to come sooner or later. One day your body will be called 'corpse.' Corpse. Even normal family members, very close friends, they will not come near or they won't touch it. Our body will be covered with cloth. One's own body, this body will be on the fire. They will see the skull, see some part of the bones. Or the body will be in the coffin buried in the ground, the graveyard, some flowers put around, and your family members crying, the loved one's family members crying. There's nothing that can be done - you know that you're going to die now. Now death is happening, and you know that you're going to leave, you're going to separate, you have no choice, there's nothing you can do. No choice, you have to separate from all these loved ones, family, friends, you have to separate from them. And from all these possessions, Mercedes car or limousine. Whatever possessions you have, you know that everything has to be left.

At that time the only thing that can help is Dharma, if you practiced Dharma in life. That helps, the virtue. How much good heart you practiced in daily life, it helps at that time. How much patience you practiced in daily life, it helps at that time. How much kindness you practiced to others, it helps at that time. Dharma is the only thing which at that time can help you not to suffer, to have a happy mind. For the best practitioner of Dharma, they experience unbelievable happiness, joy at the time

of death. They can go to a pure land where one can become enlightened. By being born there, then one develops attainment, then one is able to offer deep benefit to other sentient beings, to reincarnate with free will, with total freedom to come back into the world only to benefit sentient beings, to come back with total freedom into the suffering world to liberate beings. As it's mentioned in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, you are so happy, for example as if you haven't met your parents for so many years and are now so happy to be meeting your parents. Or as if you are going for a holiday after working so hard for so long without a holiday and now you are going for holiday, so are incredibly happy. For the best Dharma practitioner, that's the happiness they experience at the time of death.

Then the middle Dharma practitioner's death is full of confidence in the heart, when you die there is full confidence that you will have a good rebirth. Full confidence and a happy mind.

For the last one, the lowest Dharma practitioner's death, there is no fear, even though it is not clear where one is going to reincarnate, still there's no fear that you will be reborn in the lower realms. Kyabje Choden Rinpoche, during the lam-rim teachings at Land of Medicine Buddha, (one of our centers in California) explained when Rinpoche was talking about maybe refuge? Refuge or impermanence and death, I'm not sure. Rinpoche said that the last Dharma practitioner's death is, "Oh, I don't have to worry about it, I don't have to be scared of death because I have Buddha, Dharma, Sangha that I can rely on, I can trust in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, so I don't have to be afraid of death." So that's very good. That instruction, that advice, that's the last Dharma practitioner's way of dying. There's the highest one, the middle one, and then the lowest one. So when we die, even though we may not be the best Dharma practitioner, or even the middle one, if even that doesn't happen, at least we can be the last one. Remember Buddha, Dharma, Sangha at the time of death and then think "I have an object of refuge, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, that I can trust". Then it stops the fear of death, it stops the fear of reincarnating in the lower realms.

So what I was saying, actually here my thoughts went off track, went out of the path, went out of the road! So I was going to say this. By meditating, remembering impermanence and death - no question if one has the realization of impermanence and death, having the spontaneous arising in your heart that I won't live long, "I may die this month, this week. I may die tomorrow, even today." Life appearing to you as very short, thinking "I'm not going to live very long". So of course whoever has the realization of impermanence and death spontaneously arising every day and night, no question, of course that is the best. However by meditating on impermanence and death, even just this cuts desire, clinging to the four desirable objects, this life's comfort, then there's no clinging to that, there's no attachment clinging to this life's happiness, to receiving material things. And there's no attachment clinging to this life's happiness of good reputation, of many people saying good about you. There's no clinging to that. And there's no attachment clinging to this life's happiness of praise, of a person saying nice things to you about your qualities. By meditating on impermanence and death there's no attachment and clinging to these four desirable things. So because there's no attachment to the four desirable objects, then when you don't receive these four desirable objects there's no dislike. There's no anger arising. By meditating on impermanence and death, remembering that, you don't see the point of being attached to these things, so your mind is free, you are free from this confusing mind, this painful mind, desire. There's no clinging to these things. So there's no dislike when these things don't happen, there's no dislike, anger arising, unhappy mind. If somebody disturbs you, somebody doesn't allow these things to happen, the unhappy mind, anger doesn't arise.

As Nagarjuna explained, for that meditator who meditates on this human body, which is so precious, qualified with eight freedoms and ten richnesses, and that with this human body you can achieve any great meaning you want, any happiness, and it's difficult to find again; and then meditates on the nature of life, impermanence and death, so by having these realizations then for your mind the pleasure or comfort of this life and not having that pleasure or comfort, receiving material things or not receiving material things, having reputation or not having reputation, receiving praise or not receiving praise, or you can say receiving praise or criticism. When you don't have attachment to praise, then when somebody criticizes you, it doesn't bother you, doesn't hurt you. If you have attachment to praise, then when somebody criticizes you it hurts you. There's dislike. If there's attachment to that, then when somebody criticizes you, it hurts. So here as Nagarjuna explained the four desirable objects and four undesirable objects are equalized. They are equalized for your mind. They don't affect your mind. It doesn't bring your life up and down. There is stability. There's stability in your life, there's no ups and downs. In life whatever's happening, desirable objects, undesirable objects, four desirable things, four undesirable things, whichever's happening in your life, whatever situation happens, it doesn't affect your mind. Continuously your mind is at peace, you have inner happiness, peace. Continuously your mind is in Dharma. Continuous peace and happiness, why? Your mind is continuously in Dharma. Dharma unstained by attachment, clinging to this life. So in Tibetan [Dharma is] called "chos". Often His Holiness says the mind that is fixed up, the mind that is made better, healthy, positive, pure mind, that's "chos". Incredible, unbelievable peace and happiness, like when you read Milarepa's life story, Milarepa has all this incredible peace and happiness basically because his mind is in Dharma, equalized. These four desirable things, the four disliked things, any bias is equalized. So in this way able to live life, day and night continuously, equal - life in Dharma is equal. [tse ten duwa nyampa]

This is the real Dharma, pure Dharma. So whenever we want to practice Dharma, it has to be like this. Practicing Dharma means this. Especially for Sangha this should be their main practice in life as much as possible. This helps to be able to live in vows and to continue life as Sangha, continue life in ordination. As it helps to live in pure vows this is very, very fundamental, essential, like fuel for light or like fuel for a car, this practice, making your mind free, making your mind really happy and healthy, free from desire clinging to this life which all problems, all confusion come from and which causes so many problems to other sentient beings, causes so many problems to others. So like the roots of the tree spread out, it's from desire clinging to this life that problems spread out.

So now going back where I came from! You have all these external professions, how to do this, how to do that from school, college, university, but without inner professionalism, how to live life, how to do everything mentally, how to do everything, business, professional activity, whatever you do, with pure attitude, positive mind, non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment, especially with the non-selfish mind. So without that, knowing internally how to live life, how to do everything, without Dharma - if that mind which does all this activity, all the external professions is without Dharma, then along with that so many problems come. Because without Dharma, what comes? Anger, ignorance, attachment, selfish mind. So of course problems will arise. How could you have any happiness, inner happiness? Even just in this life - we're not talking about future life, rebirth in the lower realms, we're not talking about that. Just in your day to day life, this life, how can you enjoy? How can you achieve satisfaction? There is no way to achieve satisfaction and happiness. So because your attitude is that, your attitude is only external professionalism, so many problems come. It brings so many problems in life. So that's clear. So that's what I am saying. Even if one is not Buddhist, doesn't believe in reincarnation, karma, all these things, still it's a psychological thing. You need a healthy mind. Even if one is not chanting mantras, doing prostrations, this and that, but just

because you want happiness, inner peace, you don't want problems in life. Nobody wants problems in life! So then you need take care of the mind, you need to take care of your mind. So your mind has to be Dharma, no choice. No question. Psychologically your mind has to be Dharma, non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment. Best of course is to not even have the self-cherishing thought, instead have the thought to benefit others, cherish others.

Many people have wealth, reputation, friends, everything, so why do they commit suicide, why do so many people kill themselves? There's so many people, so many among famous people, among worldly people. It's not a question of not having food to eat. It's not that. So many people [kill themselves] because of dissatisfied mind, because of problems, dissatisfied mind. Problems came from selfish mind. Ignorance, anger, attachment - because of them problems come, because the mind is not Dharma. So the problem comes, and they don't know what to do, how to deal with it. So then they just, in one second, commit suicide. They go to a high bridge, like the high bridge in San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, or the bridge in Sydney in Australia. In each country there are certain places where they jump, where they commit suicide. Because the mind is not Dharma, the mind living life, doing all these activities is not Dharma, so problems come. Many problems come, things you don't know how to handle, relationship problems and so forth. Then because one doesn't know how to handle them you get overwhelmed by problems, so just in a second the suicidal thought arises. Just in a second. Nobody kills you, nobody in the world is trying to kill you, you kill yourself.

So you can see that there are two things in how to live life: external professionalism and the other very important, the most important way to live life - Dharma. Living life with Dharma, the mind becoming Dharma.

Also, as His Holiness explained, even if the eye, ear, nose, tongue sense find their best objects (the best object of the eye sense is form, sound for the ear sense), find all their most desired objects: if the sixth consciousness is not happy, then you can't really enjoy life. For example, even though that person is eating thousands of dollars' worth of food, or staying in a five star or six star or seven star hotel, so the bodily senses have found their desired object, but mentally there's a problem, relationship problem, whatever, dissatisfaction in the mind. So even though the food costs thousands of dollars you can't enjoy it. It's the same with everything. So the only way to make the sixth consciousness, the mental consciousness happy, is through Dharma practice.

As I mentioned before, when there's desire problems, so many uncontrolled desire problems, thinking, meditating on impermanence and death, reflecting on the shortcomings, the problems of desire, how it is harmful to oneself, how it is harmful to sentient beings, how desire is deceiving, cheating you all the time, deceiving other sentient beings, by thinking about the shortcomings of desire, the day to day harm in this life and the long term harm in all future lives, the harm that it gave from beginningless rebirth, and the harm to other sentient beings. How each time we allow desire to arise, we engage in that activity, desire leaves a negative imprint on the mental continuum. So we have more and more negative imprints on the mental continuum, then that makes it so difficult in the future. Because we plant so many seeds of desire on our mental continuum it makes it so difficult in the future to be free from that, and instead it makes us so happy in the future to engage in the actions of desire, all those various actions of desire. You get so happy to engage in that, so it makes the future very difficult. Even if one is seeking liberation, seeking liberation from samsara or ultimate liberation, the sorrowless state, even if one is seeking that, even if one wishes to practice you can't practice. You want to practice, you want to have realization, but can't. Unable to

practice, unable to meditate, because you are so overwhelmed by desire, so controlled by desire. Like a waterfall, like a tsunami. Like the tsunami in Indonesia, India, in the United States, in New Orleans. So desire is exactly like that, like the New Orleans tsunami, covered in water.

So we can use this life's experience of how desire makes it so difficult to practice Dharma. That's an excellent example, your own experiences, all your difficulties, and that of others. How if you don't practice Dharma, don't protect your mind from delusions, then every time we allow desire to rise it plants seeds, imprints of desire and that leads to us repeating the same attitude, the same conduct. So that makes the future so difficult, brings so much suffering. There are many other meditations which are explained in the texts, for example looking at the object as ugly, there are many things, however, I think this one about leaving the negative imprint on the mind, planting the seed of desire again, that is the most terrifying one. That is worse than hell. Leaving an imprint on the mental continuum of this delusion and the habituation of your conduct so that you engage in it again, and again it leaves an imprint on the mind. So I think this is much worse than hell. Hell is for a certain length of time, you experience hell for a certain length of time and then when the karma finishes you don't experience it. But this, you allow it to arise, you let yourself be controlled by desire, allow it to arise without practicing Dharma, without applying Buddhist psychology, meditating on lam-rim or thought transformation, without protecting one's own mind - so desire arises again, so then again you engage in negative conduct, and then that causes you to be reborn in the lower realms, and brings all the problems in this life. And not only that, it doesn't stop there. You reincarnate in the lower realms and experience those sufferings again and again. And you also experience problems the next time that due to another good karma you're born as a human being, in that life you experience many problems. With desire you engage in killing or stealing or sexual misconduct or telling lies, slandering. Even though due to another good karma you're reborn as a human being in the future, in that life you experience many problems, the result of that karma, the result of those negative actions done out of desire. Then again in that life there is a past seed of desire, an imprint, then the conduct, habituation from the past, so again you do the same thing, engage in those negative karmas again.

Those actions, those completed negative karmas have four suffering results: the ripening aspect result of rebirth in the lower realm, then the other sufferings when due to another good karma you are born as a human being, again in that life you experience the sufferings of that negative karma, whether it's sexual misconduct or telling lies or stealing or killing, that completed negative karma has four suffering results, the ripening aspect result of rebirth in the lower realms, then the result to do with the environment, you will experience a very harmful environment, unpleasant, contagious disease or fear of wars, earthquakes and famines, tsunamis, tornado. Not tomato, tornado! So many problems in your environment. Then there's also so much harm from others - what you did in the past, you receive similar harm from others. Then again you do the same thing, you engage in the same conduct, the same negative karma. So from desire, from this delusion, this one complete negative karma that is done has the four suffering results, and this goes on and on and on. So there's creating the result similar to the cause, you do the same thing again in your next life because of habituation, because of the negative imprint. So it is endless, from this one negative karma done from desire you receive endless suffering. Therefore, thinking of the shortcomings of desire like that, how it is worse than being reborn in hell, if you think of the long term harm, how if you don't do anything, if you don't practice Dharma, if you don't practice meditation, not just what is called meditation but lam-rim, bodhicitta, renunciation, right view, thought transformation to do with bodhicitta, with emptiness, practicing the good heart, patience: without that and without actualizing the path to liberation, to enlightenment, which removes the seed of the delusions, the seed of desire,

such as the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness which directly removes these seeds, we need to achieve this path so that we can end our suffering of samsara. This is how we can end our suffering, by ceasing the cause of suffering, karma and delusion, including the seed of delusion.

Therefore, we need to learn - in order to practice, we need to practice listening, reflecting, and meditating. We have to understand. To learn as much as possible. To learn Buddhadharma as much as possible, that brings just incredible benefit, unbelievable benefit. Just by hearing Buddha's teachings, it causes higher rebirth. Even though you don't understand, just listening causes good rebirth in the next life. For example, I think it might be in Tibet, not sure, there were three monks who had one dog. So the monks were reciting prayers and the dog was staying with them, so the dog heard! There is no way the dog understood the meaning of the teachings, what the monks were reciting. Anyway, just by hearing, when the dog died it was reborn in the deva realm. Just hearing Buddhadharma makes you be reborn in a higher rebirth. Buddha recited teachings when there were 500 swans in a field, and just by hearing the Dharma, after all the 500 swans died they were all born as human beings. Not only human beings, but they all became Sangha, all took ordination. Not only did they take ordination, but they achieved the arya path, the exalted path. There are five paths to achieve liberation. Just in their next life all those 500 swans were born human beings, they all became monks, they achieved the ripening path, the path of meditation, the resultant path in just the next life. Therefore, as far as Buddhadharma it's like this; even just by listening, even if you don't understand at all, like philosophical teachings, something hard to understand like the subject of emptiness, just by hearing you get skies of benefit. Each word that you hear leaves a positive imprint on the mental continuum, so either later in this life or in the next life this imprint gets actualized, gets manifested, so in the next life you meet the Dharma, and it is much easier, a hundred thousand times easier to understand the words and meaning. Then from that you are able to practice and gain realization. Then the realization of the path ceases the defilements, the gross and subtle defilements. Then you are able to achieve not only liberation, but able to achieve full enlightenment.

I would like to mention that here, in Portland, International Office has started here. Yangsi Rinpoche has started teaching here and is in the process of creating a university for studying Buddhist philosophy integrated with meditation. The special thing about it is that from the beginning Yangsi Rinpoche intended it to be not just scholars, just learning the words, but integrated with meditation, people have to meditate, which is unique. In the universities or monasteries they're learning words, philosophy, but here it is combined with meditation, integrating with meditation, integrating with lam rim, so this is like apple pie. It's like hot apple pie, topped with cream! Just joking!

So as I was saying before, Dharma is needed. Needed not only for Buddhists, but for anyone who wants happiness, who does not want problems. Only by letting go of anger and practicing patience is there peace and happiness for oneself: there's more success in life by practicing patience instead of anger. With anger, you become an enemy to others, you become an enemy even to your friends, your loved ones. You become an enemy to them and they become an enemy to you. After you get angry with them, before they were your friend but then they become your enemy. Anger means that so many other sentient beings, so many other people in this world become your enemy.

So in order not to experience problems in life, in order to not create problems in life, you need to let go of desire. So that is Dharma. Practicing patience is Dharma, letting go of anger is Dharma. So all these positive minds, generating compassion, loving kindness, all of this is Dharma It's the best Dharma.

Nobody wants relationship problems. To avoid relationship problems depends on contentment, letting go of desire, renouncing desire. So when you let go of desire, there is Dharma. Dharma is needed in the young and old. If you're not Buddhist, you need Dharma. There's no other way to have happiness in life without Dharma. Without knowing Buddhism, it looks like there's something to reject, but if one comes to know Dharma, when you come to know Buddhism, if one comes to know what is Buddha, what is Dharma, what is Sangha, if one comes to know what is karma, it all becomes universal. When you come to know Dharma, when you come to know Buddhism, you see it's universal. Not only for human beings, even for animals, anyone who needs happiness needs to practice Dharma, the positive attitude, positive action, so that's Dharma. Happiness only comes from pure mind, positive mind and action. Nagarjuna explained that from ignorance, anger, attachment, the action which arises is non-virtue and the result is all the suffering migrating beings, the lower realms, rebirth in the lower realms with all their sufferings. The actions born from non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment are virtue, and from that all the happy transmigratory beings arise. From that you get higher rebirth and all that happiness.

Normal activity, eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, like I said before, many hours doing your job, if these activities are done with bodhicitta, the thought of achieving enlightenment for sentient beings, then all of those activities become the cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. That means all those activities become the cause of happiness for all sentient beings. Eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing your job, many hours doing your job and so forth, if all this is done not with the thought to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings but to achieve liberation from samsara, cyclic existence, to achieve the sorrowless state, liberation from samsara only for oneself, then these activities only become the cause of that, to achieve liberation for oneself. Then if these activities are done with the motivation to receive happiness in future lives, not to achieve enlightenment nor to achieve liberation from samsara for oneself, but just to achieve happiness in future lives, then it becomes only the cause of happiness in future lives. Now if all these activities are done only with attachment clinging to this life's happiness, then that is non-virtue, and all those actions become negative karma. All those twenty-four hours' of activities, many hours doing your job, many hours sleeping, if all of that is done with attachment clinging to this life's happiness that is non-virtue and all those actions become non-virtue. The result is only suffering, rebirth in the lower realms, rebirth in hell, hungry ghost, animal realm, depending on how heavy the negative action is.

So as I mentioned before, you need the professional mind, healthy mind, Dharma, along with the external professionalism, the external profession. So then I was talking only about the problems of this life without Dharma. Now on top of those problems one experiences rebirth in the lower realms, all those sufferings of the lower realms. Then even if one receives human rebirth later, one will have to experience many problems in that life. This is the effect of your actions on your next life. Even with meditation and doing prayers, if they are done with any of those virtuous motivations, then that action becomes the cause of happiness, the cause of that level of happiness. If they are done with attachment, clinging only to this life, then even those actions become non-virtue, and there's no happy result from that. So it depends on the motivation. Whether actions become virtue or non-virtue depends on whether the motivation is virtuous or non-virtuous. Even though reciting mantras, prayers, due to the words of truth, even though they help to heal sicknesses or to have long life, to have wealth, even though it helps to have that success, that doesn't necessarily mean that person's actions of doing meditation, prayers, becomes virtue. For example when you are sick and you take medicine it helps to heal sicknesses, but that doesn't mean your action of taking medicine is virtue. Similarly, even though the subject you recite is Dharma, that doesn't mean that

the action is Dharma. Even if one meditates on the deity, it doesn't mean that just because you are meditating on the deity that it becomes virtue, Dharma. It depends on your motivation. If your motivation doesn't have renunciation of samsara, even the renunciation of this life, has no bodhicitta, no right view and there's not even renunciation of this life, then even visualizing the deity becomes non-virtue.

Like the example in Pembo - there were two monks who did three-year Yamantaka retreat. One person died earlier, and then one evening while the other person who was still doing retreat was doing Sur (the food smell offering to the intermediate state beings), a very terrifying preta with many arms and heads, hands and legs appeared. The monk asked him "Who are you?" The preta said, "I'm your friend who was doing retreat before." So they were doing Yamantaka retreat, but he did Yamantaka retreat without right view, without bodhicitta, without renunciation. Without even renunciation to this life. So very simply that means it's done with attachment clinging to this life. That's why the person was born as a spirit. Even though he did long retreat, chanted mantra and so on, he was still born as a spirit, preta, in his next life. So we have to understand these things. Even though the prayers that they recited were the very highest tantric teachings, because his motivation didn't have lam-rim, not even renunciation of this life, was attachment clinging to that life, which is non-virtuous thought, so then his meditation became non-virtue, so the result was rebirth as a preta, with many arms, heads, and hands.

So similarly if you have the attitude that you want to kill somebody and you chant a wrathful deity's mantra - the deity is an enlightened being, like Yamantaka or any of the wrathful deities, but if you chant the mantra in order to harm somebody, with the thought to harm others, how can that be virtue? You decide - with the thought to harm others, with ill will, how can that become virtue? So those are examples. These are not actions mixed with white and black, not that. It's the same thing when we make charity to other sentient beings. If your motivation is just to get power, to receive praise, reputation from others, how you are so kind so generous, blah, blah, to receive praise and reputation from others, or to get wealth and power in this life, then again making charity, even though it stops the suffering, hunger, thirst of the other person that doesn't mean the action becomes virtue. It doesn't become virtue. It is done with the non-virtuous thought, so it becomes non-virtue. But with statues, no question about the actual Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, even statues, stupas, scriptures, when you set them up, do prostrations, make offerings with ignorance or anger or attachment clinging to this life, with non-virtuous thought, still these actions become virtue. It's not pure Dharma. It is Dharma but not pure Dharma. They immediately become the cause of enlightenment, the cause to achieve liberation from samsara, happiness of future lives. They become Dharma not from the side of your motivation, but from the power of the holy object. These actions become Dharma due to the power of the holy object. However if the motivation is non-virtue, it can have its own effect, negative effect.

It is explained by the great master Shantideva in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way Of Life*, that if one doesn't exchange oneself for others one cannot achieve enlightenment. Even in samsara there's no happiness, let aside in future lives - that means let aside future lives' happiness. Even the works of this life can't succeed. There's a quotation and the commentary on that, and if we analyze in our life we can find many examples. You're looking for happiness in this life, many successes, good relationship, good, long term job and many things, but you did something wrong, with selfish mind, with attachment, with anger - then you lose your job if you found a good job, or cannot find a job for a long time. You are unable to have success in life, and that is the result of past life karma of covetousness. Like some people cannot find a job for years, two or three years, I hear

this. Having so much difficulty in life is the result of negative actions such as covetousness. And covetousness was generated due to self-cherishing thought. The selfish mind wants this and that, so many things. Selfish mind makes life so expensive! Selfish mind relates to self-cherishing thought, then there's attachment, wanting so many billions of things, want this and that, then debts. Attachment makes those debts. The self-cherishing thought builds debts, those debts that you can't pay even in this life.

Relationship problems are also the result of the past karma of sexual misconduct. Family members, the other companion, they have wishes opposite to yours, so then you don't have harmony with the family or the people in the office. Their wishes are against yours, so then quarrels and fights and many problems start from that. So that is experiencing the result similar to the cause of the past negative karma of sexual misconduct. The same as being abused by others - why does this person abuse you? They have a reason, there is a reason for that - the reason you created before. On TV, they always talk so much about this, this is a huge subject. For all this there is a reason. Because in the past, as a result of your past activity, past negative karma of sexual misconduct one is abused by others, one is treated similarly to how you treated others, treated that person in the past. Because of past negative karma that is done with self-cherishing thought. Then the other person wants to leave you, so you have divorce or separation. So this is the result of the past negative karma of slandering - instead of practicing to bring unity among others, you caused disunity, separation, by slandering in the past, done with self-cherishing thought. So there is separation even in your relationship with your family. So basically it's caused by, it's the result of the self-cherishing thought. That negative karma was created due to self-cherishing thought, selfish mind. All these failures in life, difficulties, whatever's happening you can always relate to the ego, the self-cherishing thought, something done either earlier in this life or past lives. Then there's also the conditions. Due to self-cherishing thought you show anger, or with some dissatisfied mind do something which makes the other person unhappy. Repeating again and again what makes the other person unhappy, so you see that's what self-cherishing thought does. Not thinking of the other person's needs or happiness, only thinking of your own needs. So then you make the other person unhappy. That's why in *Bodhicharyavatara*, Shantideva says even the works of this life don't succeed. There's the past karma, and then in this life there's also the conditions, doing something wrong. Therefore one must change one's own attitude, cherish others. Let go of I and cherish others.

Also the bodhisattva Shantideva mentioned the need to cherish others. All the happiness in the world comes from cherishing others, all the suffering in the world, whether it's global, whether it's an individual person's problem, whether it's a country's problems, all these come from cherishing I, the self-cherishing thought. Then Shantideva explains that child (a child means somebody who thinks and who behaves in a nonsensical way) - we say childish, "He or she is childish." Who thinks or does something which is nonsense. So here, 'child' is labeled on one who is seeking happiness for oneself, cherishing the 'I', so that's called 'child.' There's no use, it's nonsense. Those who cherish the I and work only for themselves are called 'child', because the way they think or their actual conduct is childish, you see. We can think also this way: what is this 'I' that is cherished by one's mind? What is that 'I' which I cherish, think is so important, so precious? What is that I? Usually that is the 'I' that you cherish with your mind, that is the 'I' that you believe is in this body, that there's 'I' in this body. When you don't analyze it appears and you believe it is there, inside this body, not in the legs, not in the head, somewhere down below the neck, above the belly, somewhere in the chest. When you don't examine it really looks as if it is there, you really believe it is there. But when you look for it, you cannot find it. You cannot find that 'I'. Neither inside this body nor on the aggregates, the collection of the five aggregates of the body, speech, and mind, you cannot find it.

That 'I' you cannot find from the tip of the hair down to the toes, you cannot find it anywhere, you can't find it either inside the body or anywhere. If you look for it, you cannot find it anywhere. So that is proved, it's total nonsense, there's no such 'I'. It exists nowhere. It's only when you don't examine, when you're not meditating, that to your hallucinating mind it appears as if it is there, as if it can be found. But if you look for it, you cannot find it. What you discover is that it is totally non-existent, right there where it is appearing, it is totally non-existent right there. This is what you discover through analysis. So therefore, what are you cherishing? That 'I', what are you cherishing? That 'I' doesn't exist. So what are you cherishing? What you're cherishing is not the 'I' which exists, what exists is the merely labeled 'I', merely imputed by your mind because there's a base, the association of the body-mind, this base exists. So the mind simply made up the label 'I' and believed in that. So when we cherish 'I', we're not cherishing the merely labeled 'I'. You have to understand that when we cherish 'I', we're not cherishing the merely labeled 'I'. No, we're not cherishing the merely labeled I. The 'I' which exists is that merely labeled 'I', merely imputed by your mind. What exists is that, that 'I' which experiences happiness, suffering, which can remove the cause of suffering and practice the cause of happiness, remove the cause of samsara, achieve liberation, achieve enlightenment, the merely labeled 'I'. Which does all these activities, the merely labeled 'I'. But when I cherish 'I', I don't think, "Oh, I cherish this merely labeled 'I'." No, I don't do that. So we're not cherishing the merely labeled 'I'. The 'I' we cherish is something which doesn't exist anywhere. This false 'I' that appears above the collection of the aggregates, this base. Or we can say in just a gross way, thinking what we normally think, it is inside this body. We don't believe that 'I' is outside this body, we think 'I' is inside this body, somewhere in the chest, down below the neck, before the belly. We don't think of the 'I' in the belly, except when you do the Six Yogas of Naropa meditation with the channels, except when you do chakra meditation, at that time you go in and up and down. At that time you believe there's the real 'I' in the navel chakra, there's real 'I' in the heart chakra, there's real 'I' on a particular spot. That's one example of 'gak cha', the object to be refuted. You don't think "merely labeled I". There's a real 'I' on that spot. So that's one example of the object to be refuted.

So you can see how childish it is. There is no such 'I' there, yet you cherish this as the most important of all sentient beings. This 'I' is the most important among all sentient beings, more important than the buddhas, more important than all sentient beings including bodhisattvas. It's a total hallucination. There isn't such an 'I' there to cherish, it's totally non-existent. What we cherish is totally non-existent, that 'I' believed to be in this body, on the aggregates. It's silly, there's nothing to cherish. The object is not there, this emotional 'I', the psychological term, the truly existent 'I'. So here you can see exactly what Shantideva said, it's childish. Someone who has self-cherishing thought is called a child. Doing everything for that 'I', which is not there. Doing everything, all the worry, fears, I'm going to be sick, I'm going to die. Having so many checkups before you even get sick, all this checking the whole body, thinking the 'I' that's inside this body is going to get sick, going to die. All activities are done, the many hours of your job, done for that 'I'. Not for the merely labeled 'I', which exists, but for this 'I' which doesn't exist. Doing everything – killing, cheating people, telling lies to people, all to get happiness for this 'I'. By cherishing this 'I', this most important one, then you do everything for this, which isn't there. You can see even more that being called childish fits very well. So in our daily life that is one important meditation, analyzing the self-cherishing thought and the object. This is completely false, the way of living the life with self-cherishing thought.

The other thing, as I often say, is there is not one single reason to prove that I am more important than this animal, I am more important than this person. This is without talking about numberless

animals, numberless sentient beings. Just thinking “I am more important than this person” or “I am more important than all others, all sentient beings.” There’s not one single logic to prove that I’m more important than this person, than this animal, that my needs are more important than the needs of this animal or this person. That is just dictatorship. That selfish mind, “I am more important, my needs are more important” is just dictatorship. That’s real dictatorship. There’s no logical reason to prove I am more important, so it’s just dictatorship.

So, the essence of thought transformation - I didn’t get to go through the commentary of the *Eight Verses*, just talking blah, blah, blah, you know! I wanted to explain the stanzas, but that would take much time, so anyway just the essence. I’ll use an example - there can be many other similar examples. Normally I give an example, from our daily life, another person wants to put this vase there. You want to put the vase here. So then because of cherishing the 'I', which is not there, that emotional 'I' or that truly existent 'I', then you want your happiness, so you want to have the vase here. Or because of attachment. So you want to have it here, the other person wants the vase there. So then you fight! The other person didn’t listen so then you get angry and then you forget harmony with the other person. So it creates the whole phenomena, the other person gets angry, you get angry, then you don’t talk to each other for months and years. Sometimes it can happen like that. Instead you simply think that by putting this vase there, as the other person wanted, then the other person gets happiness. If you accept what the other person wanted, if you think of the other person’s happiness, then you put it there, and that person gets happy. It makes the other person happy. And because you see the other person is happy, is happy with you, then that makes you happy. It makes you happy because the other person is happy with you. This is a simple example. From thinking of the other person’s happiness, putting the vase there, it brings success. The happiness of the other person and your happiness: you’ve got two successes - the person is happy with you, so that makes you happy. So you have harmony. You live happily in the family, in society, with your neighbor, or make it bigger, you live happily with people in the country, in the world, you live happily with everyone. If you argue, you follow your self-cherishing thought and disregard the other person’s happiness, then that makes the other person’s mind unhappy. Then the other person is unhappy, so then you’re not very happy, because the other person is not happy with you, is upset with you. So how can you be happy? It disturbs your mind. So by following self-cherishing thought it brings unhappiness to the other person and also doesn’t make you happy. The other person complains, is angry, it affects you, makes you unhappy. So that’s the result of following self-cherishing thought.

Our life is full of these examples. In *Guru Puja [Lama Choepa]*, there’s one prayer that I find very, very effective, in the section with the mother. I find this verse very beneficial, I think it’s a very incredible teaching. Please grant me blessings, these pitiful transmigratory beings are my mother, reflecting again and again that they have been my mother and on their kindness, how they’ve been my mother and kind to me, reflecting again and again, like the mother who loves her beloved child, so for oneself to love, to have compassion towards all sentient beings. Like the mother has compassion towards her most beloved child, like that may I be able to generate compassion; generate genuine, uncreated compassion (which means the actual realization) towards all sentient beings. Please grant me blessings that I see no difference between me and others. Between myself and others there is no difference at all, we equally do not desire even the smallest suffering and have no satisfaction, happiness. Therefore grant me blessings to generate joy when others are happy. So asking to grant blessings for us to be able to have joy when others are happy. This is a very important practice in our daily life. When we see that others have found happiness or are having enjoyment, whatever happiness, instead of being unhappy, jealous of all this, generate joy. That is

the same even with relationship problems. If you are able to practice this joy that the other person has found happiness, enjoyment, you have no problems in daily life.

So now I want to give one very important quotation from *Guru Puja [Lama Choepa]* about the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought and the benefits of cherishing others. Please grant me blessings to cherish the mothers, the sentient beings who have been one's mother, who are one's mother, to cherishing the mothers with the thought to bring them happiness. To be able to see that the thought to bring sentient beings to happiness is the door from which limitless, infinite qualities arise. So asking blessing to see that the thought of bringing sentient beings to happiness is the door to infinite qualities. Even though sentient beings become your enemy - not only people in the family, not only in your country, not only in this world, but all human beings in different universes, all human beings become enemy to you, all hell beings, all hungry ghosts, animals, all the hungry ghosts, all the sura, asuras, everyone becomes an enemy, all sentient beings become enemy to you, so asking to grant blessings that even though everyone becomes an enemy against you, may you be able to cherish them. May I be able to cherish everyone, numberless beings who become against you, may I be able to cherish everyone more than my own life. Cherish them, feel that they are more precious than one's own life.

So now I'll put it this way. Your loving kindness, your bodhicitta, towards even one sentient being, to achieve enlightenment for that one sentient being, bodhicitta, that is the source, the door for all happiness, for you to achieve infinite qualities. It becomes the door for you to achieve all infinite qualities, all happiness, all temporary, ultimate happiness, liberation, enlightenment, all the realizations. And your loving kindness, your bodhicitta, from that you achieve all happiness, all the realizations of the path to enlightenment, liberation - you achieve everything, the cessation of all defilements and the realization of all qualities. From your loving kindness or bodhicitta, from that you are able to liberate numberless hell beings from the oceans of hell beings' sufferings, from all the sufferings of samsara and bring them to enlightenment. From your bodhicitta, your loving kindness, you are able to liberate numberless ants (even though it's just one type of animal yet there are numberless ants) you are able to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. From your bodhicitta, due to one person's bodhicitta, developing loving kindness, bodhicitta, able to bring numberless fish which live in water, the ocean, which are numberless, able to liberate them from the ocean of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. So for each type of animal there are numberless animals, so like that, so for all the flies you are able to liberate them from the ocean of samsaric suffering, bring them to enlightenment. All those tiny insects on the ground, in the trees, wherever, you, one person's loving kindness, bodhicitta is able to free them from samsaric sufferings, able to bring them to enlightenment. So if you think like this, so extensively for each type of animal, which is numberless, it's amazing! Then numberless hungry ghosts, numberless human beings, sura, asura, you, one person's loving kindness, bodhicitta, is able to bring all those to full enlightenment, liberate them from oceans of samsaric suffering, bring them to enlightenment. So here you can see you're able to cause all the realizations on the path to enlightenment, all those qualities, all the happiness, from you, one person developing loving kindness, bodhicitta. Therefore, in this quotation from *Guru Puja* we're requesting blessings to see that the thought to bring sentient beings happiness is the door to infinite qualities. So can think like that.

So in the example I gave before, no question about bringing that sentient being to liberation and enlightenment, the happiness of future lives, the thought simply arises to cause just happiness in this life to one sentient being. Even just one small comfort, like that example I gave. For example,

somebody has no money for food, so then you share your food. During traveling somebody, some old person or young person or mother who has children needs help and you think of that person's happiness and then help them. You want to cause even temporary comfort, pleasure, and the thought of wanting to cause that becomes the door to receive infinite qualities and all happiness, and for you to cause happiness to numberless sentient beings up to enlightenment. The thought to cause happiness to others is so precious. Benefits like limitless sky come from the thought to cause happiness to others, what you can offer to numberless sentient beings. Therefore, this person becomes so precious for you, unbelievably precious, because by generating loving kindness and causing happiness to that person, generating compassion to that person, you receive all the qualities up to enlightenment, all the bodhisattva's qualities, all the buddhas' qualities, holy body, holy speech, holy mind, the limitless skies of qualities of Buddha's holy body, one receives all that. All the qualities of Dharma, Sangha, all of those you receive by generating compassion or loving kindness to that person. So this person is giving you all this attainment, happiness up to enlightenment. So they are so precious. So like that, every single sentient being is so precious, giving all happiness for oneself, all the attainments.

If you don't cherish that one person, that one sentient being, that animal or that one sentient being, you cannot achieve enlightenment. If you leave out the enemy, the person whom you don't like, you hate, or the person who hates you, who criticizes you, who's mean to you - if you renounce this person, don't cherish this person, there's no enlightenment. You can't achieve loving kindness, compassionate thought, bodhicitta. If you renounce this one sentient being you can't achieve the Mahayana path, all those bodhisattvas' qualities, all the buddhas' qualities, being able to perfectly benefit sentient beings. If you cherish even one sentient being, whether it's an animal or whether it's a human being, if you cherish this person, there is enlightenment. You can achieve the whole Mahayana path to enlightenment if you cherish this one sentient being. If you don't cherish them, you cannot. There is no enlightenment for you. So that's clear.

So now who's more important? This person is more important than you. See? Here the issue is that cherishing 'I' is only opening the door for suffering, as mentioned in the quotation before. Now here, if you cherish the other person, other sentient being, there's enlightenment, you can achieve enlightenment, open the door for all qualities, you can achieve all happiness. You can achieve that and you can cause the same to sentient beings. So therefore this person, this one sentient being is so precious, the most precious one in one's life. So what is called 'I' - that is to be let go forever. And what is called 'other', even one sentient being, that is to be cherished forever. So they become the most precious, the most kind in one's life.

For example Asanga tried to achieve Maitreya Buddha for twelve years, and didn't achieve. Then only when he saw a wounded dog, then he generated unbelievable compassion. The lower part of the dog was all filled with worms, so then he put the worms on his own flesh cut from his thigh, picking the worms up with the tip of his tongue so that they didn't get killed. So Asanga generated unbelievable compassion on seeing this wounded dog. So he purified all the defilements which blocked him from seeing Maitreya Buddha. That is Maitreya Buddha, but you see a wounded dog. By generating unbearable compassion, giving himself up to take care of this dog, then Asanga purified all that negative karma, those defilements which interfered with him being able to see Maitreya Buddha, the defilements which projected an ordinary being, a wounded dog. So once those were purified, then he saw Maitreya Buddha. Then he received teachings, then Asanga wrote commentaries, the five treatises of Maitreya, which have been studied, practiced, meditated on up till now, leading to so many, numberless beings becoming enlightened, generating bodhicitta. So from

cherishing, generating unbearable compassion to one sentient being, this wounded dog, you can see the benefit, unbelievable benefit for sentient beings, besides for Asanga himself. He became enlightened.

Similarly, Getsul Tsimbuwa, as is mentioned in the Vajrayogini commentary. His guru Nagpachowa was on his way to Odi, where he would do the last practice of tantra, conduct. So there was a big river and next to the river there was one woman who was filled with leprosy disease with pus, blood coming out, totally ugly. So this lady asked the great yogi Nagpachowa, "Please take me to the other side of the river." Nagpachowa didn't take her! He left. Then his disciple the monk (I think that Nagpachowa was a layman), so then his disciple Getsul Tsimbawa came along after some time. Then the lady asked Getsul Tsimbuwa "Please carry me to the other side of the river." Getsul Tsimbuwa felt unbearable compassion for her. Then without any hesitation, without thinking "That's a woman" or "That's leprosy, a contagious disease", without any hesitation, with unbearable compassion, he sacrificed himself to carry her across the river. Actually that woman is a deity, an enlightened being, Dorje Palmo. But Getsul Tsimbuwa could not see an enlightened being before, only saw an ordinary lady filled with leprosy, sicknesses, completely ugly. Because he generated unbearable compassion, so much compassion, and sacrificed himself to take care of her, carry her on his back, then the negative karma, the impure mind projecting this ordinary being onto an enlightened being was purified during that time, even without crossing completely to the other side of river, just half way through. Then he saw the deity. Then the deity, Dorje Palmo, took him to the Tharpa Khachoe pure land. So if you're born in Tharpa Khachoe pure land you definitely become enlightened in that life. So with the same body Dorje Palmo took him to that pure land, so immediately he became enlightened there. So the reason I'm telling this story is that when you generate compassion to one sentient being, what incredible benefit, quick enlightenment, like Getsul Tsimbuwa. Quick enlightenment. As in the quotation before, the thought to bring sentient beings happiness is the door to opening infinite qualities. Therefore the conclusion is that every sentient being is most precious, most kind. That's the conclusion. Any friend, enemy, stranger, any sentient being.

The idea is that we try to live daily life with this understanding, with this awareness. Then naturally when we think like this, respect comes. Even for animals, even for flies, no question for human beings, respect comes. With this understanding that they're so precious, respect comes. They're so precious, the most kind in this life. Then what you do is you cannot harm them. There's no way to harm them, only to benefit, serve them. Only to serve, and this is the best life. Why? Because this is the most precious one in your life; therefore, to serve with even a small pleasure, even a small comfort, even small help, whatever you can offer is incredibly satisfying, incredibly fulfilling for the mind. So you have the most enjoyable life, most happy life, even if you offer a small service, small comfort. So for this reason we need to achieve enlightenment, so for that we need to actualize the path, for that we need to listen, reflect, do meditation, and also we need to serve others. So for that we need long life, so therefore I'm going to take the White Tara long life initiation.

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