



疾病转为道用

Taking Sickness into the Path

萨迦·赤千法王（第 41 任萨迦·赤津）■ 著

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“萨迦传承”翻译小组 汉译

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鸣 谢

Acknowledgment

尊贵的萨迦·赤千法王（第 41 任萨迦·赤津法王）于 2019 年 5 月 18 日在美国马里兰州的国立 4H 会议中心由萨迦圆满中心所主办的法会上，给予了此开示。“萨迦传承”整理编辑英文版于 2019 年出版。“萨迦传承”翻译小组汉译。感恩直接或间接参与此开示整理和编辑的每一位。这使更多人得以与此至为珍贵的开示结上缘份，并能获得暂时与终极的利益。

以此功德，愿尊贵的第 41 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 41st Sakya Trizin enjoy perfect health and extremely long life, and continue to turn the wheel of Dharma.

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精神生活非常重要

今天我们再次聚集此处，我也想再次给予我极热烈的问候与欢迎。

今天是个非常吉祥的日子，三重殊胜的日子——国际卫赛节。在这样的日子里，不论我们做什么（善法），都是极大的功德。我们作为人，生活中有诸多所需。我们需要许多东西，但最重要的是精神之路，因为所有其他事物都只是暂时的。精神之路是一路走下去的，不仅在今生，而且在来世、再一生……以后的生生世世都是如此，一直贯穿下去。是故，精神生活非常重要。



人身极珍贵

经教中说，有情皆具佛性。从某种意义上说，心的真正本性是纯净的，它从开始以来，从未被遮障所染污^[1]，这就是佛。众生之心的真正本性与佛之智慧的真正本性之间，并无二致。当然，所有众生与佛之间有极大的不同，但是在他们的真正本性上却是有关联的，它们没有任何区别。众生与佛陀的区别是：虽然我们拥有本质清净的佛性，但它完全被蔽障——烦恼障和所知障——所覆盖。所以只要有遮蔽存在，我们就永远无法显现真实的佛性。我们沉陷轮回中，我们感受如此多的痛苦。所以在轮回中，不论身在何处，善趣抑或恶趣，只要在轮回中，就是痛苦。火的本性是热的，不论它是小火还是大火。同理，轮回的本性就是痛苦。因此，我们必须克服轮回的痛苦，克服轮回痛苦的唯一方法就是践行佛法。唯有践行佛法方能克服轮回的痛苦。

尽管每个有情众生都拥有佛性——小至细菌、昆虫到人类，每个有情众生都有佛性，但人却有最好的机会^[2]。因为人有语言能力，能够明白，也有智力，因此人心比（轮回中）其他（道）生命（的心）有力量得多。故而，人的生命是非常重要的、最重要的。

此人身不容易获得。虽然人类有很多，但与其他生命相比，人类数量极少。要计算多少人住在一个国家是很容易的，但是要计算多少昆虫在哪怕一小块地方也是不可能的。所以当你与其他生命比较起来，人类是极少数数量，因此人身非常难以获得。

为了得到人身，需要积累大福德、发大愿、大的善行，尤其是纯洁的道德行为的德行，没有好的道德举止无法获得人身。人身极珍贵，特别是具足一切必备条件的人身，从很多观点来看是非常难以获得的。

注释：

[1]前文说心的真正本性“从未被遮障所染”，后文又说众生的佛性“被烦恼障和所知障的遮蔽所彻底覆盖”，就好像本质来说太阳非常巨大，没有任何乌云足以遮蔽太阳，太阳从未被任何乌云所遮蔽过，但太阳离人远、乌云离人近，所以乌云可以遮住人的眼睛，使人看不到太阳。又如无色水晶，放在哪个背景就显现背景的颜色，一方面这水晶本身始终无色透明，并不会被背景颜色所影响；另一方面，由于它是无色透明的，所以观察者透过水晶看到的都是背景的颜色。又如浊水，看起来是浑浊不清的，但实际水是水、泥沙是泥沙，水和泥沙的这种混合物看起来再浑浊也不影响水本身的清澈透明的性质。

注释:

[2] 一般情况下，得人身的三个必要条件:

(一) 得人身之主要的因: 1、具有属于世间的清净见解，也就是指相信轮回、相信因果，深信这些道理并在相续中生起定解。2、受持属于世间的清净戒律，也就是断十种恶，行十种善。即: 不杀生: 断除杀生，爱护生命; 不偷盗: 断除不与取，行持布施; 不邪淫: 断除邪淫，护持戒律; 不妄语: 断除妄语，说谛实语; 不两舌: 断除离间语，化解怨恨; 不恶语: 断除恶语，说悦耳语; 不绮语: 断除绮语，精进念诵; 不贪心: 断除贪心，当持舍心; 不害心: 断除害心，修饶益心; 不邪见: 断除邪见，当依正见。

(二) 得人身之重要的缘: 具有布施等殊胜的缘，也就是具有广大的布施等善根。

(三) 有殊胜愿力的承接: 具备了得人身的因和缘之后，还要将持戒的功德; 所做的善根和福德进行回向并发愿: 愿我们来世能够得到人身，能够得到暇满的人身。如果没有这样殊胜愿力的承接，来世就很难投生为人，尤其是很难得到暇满的人身。



我们自己制造了业

具有人身之时，生命中要实践的最重要之事就是因果法则，因为佛陀说过，我们在人生中所遭遇的一切：快乐、痛苦、任何事情……并非意味着它们是无因而生的，亦非意味着它们是错乱的因而生的。每件事一定有它自己独特的原因，这就是“业”。有许多不同的宗教信仰，有些认为是造物主创造了一切，诸如此类的观点。但根据佛教来说，并不存在这样的造物主，这个“造物主”就是我们。我们自己制造了业，业显现、成熟于正当^[3]理由为因果。此后我们便感受所拥有的这种生活，因此业力是非常重要的。业力很重要，这也是为何整个世界被称为“业力之地”。

如果你没有造这个业，你将不会遇到这个结果。不论你造作了何种业，即使百千年后业亦不会消失，它仍然会成熟于造作者身上。我们祈求不要有疾病、不要有厄运等，仅仅祈祷是没有用的。祈祷也有威力、也有帮助。但单靠祈祷将无法得到所有的答案——若能加上自身的努力——若自己能创造好的业，则必将带来好的命运，因此在业上努力非常重要。

注释：

[3]所谓“错误的因”和“正当的因”，说的的是“种瓜得豆，种豆得瓜”这种谬见和“种瓜得瓜，种豆得豆”这种正见。“错误的因”还有更多含义，比如：有的认为造物主创造了世界、决定一切；有的认为杀生祭祀可以成为神仙；有的认为自焚可以得到解脱……这都是因与果之间并不对应的例子。又如：要得到幸福就需要强化欲望、摧毁敌人等等。

“我”在哪里？

业力是如何产生的呢？基本上，它源于无知——不了知心的真正本性。不去探知心的真实本性，反而没有任何逻辑上的理由执著一个“我”。若有“我”，则应是姓名或身或心。姓名本身是空的，任何时候都能取任何姓名；身体意味着很多部件，从头到脚趾有如此众多不同的部分，如果你拿出任何一个部分，哪个部分都不是“我”，每个部分都是不同的，每个部分都有自己的方式、名称和功能；心也是一样，它随时变化，过去心已终止，未来心未生，现在心又在随时变化中。一个随时变化的事物不可能是“我”。那么除了身、心外，“我”在哪里？

甚至在我们的通常用法中，我们说“我的身体”、“我的财产”、“我的房子”、“我的车子”等。当你说“我的车”时，车子属于你，但车子本身并不是你。同样，我们说“我的身体”，也就表明身体属于你，而身体并不是你。同理，我们说“我的心”，当说“我的心”时，心也是“属于”你。但是现在，拥有你的财产、身体和心的人，若你试着去研究，你是找不到的，何处你都找不到。

因此，我们不去认清心的真实本性，反而毫无任何逻辑理由

地坚执有个“我”，是因为我们有无始以来直至今日逐步建立的坚固的习惯性倾向。所以基于此，便自动地有了“我”和“我的”等等，但是没有真的“我”和真的“我的”，随后我们便开始造“业”力。我们不去看心的真实本性，反而执著有个“我”。当你有了“自己”就自动地有了“别人”，如同左和右，若有右边就必须有左边，不可能仅仅只有“右边”。同样，当有了自己就有了他人。当有了自和他，就会有对自方的贪执和对他方的嗔恚。如此，一切来自于无知，即因智慧乏少而不了知实相，不去看心的本性而去执著有“我”，这是最大的无知。从此无知中生出欲望——贪执自方，嗔恚他方。如此一来便形成了三个主要的烦恼，从这些烦恼又形成了傲慢、悭吝、嫉妒等。然后你有了这些，由此开始制造了业，如身、语、意的行动。

因此，当我们采取了行动，就如同在肥沃的土地中播下种子，由因会产生果。我们放任身的行动，如杀生、偷盗、邪淫；语的行动，如妄语、两舌、恶口、绮语；意的行动，如嗔恚、贪婪和邪见。我们致力于这些负面的行为，随后负面性所产生的结果就是我们所经历的所有负面的事情，如短命、疾病、贫穷、无法满愿、失败和不成功等。这些负面的事情都源于放纵不善的行为。

如何将疼痛和疾病转为道用

今天的主题是实际上是“如何将疼痛和疾病转为道用”。当你沉溺于负面行为、非善行，结果就会产生并且你会体验到它。那时我们当然无法做任何事情。不论我们的生命中发生什么，我们都应该努力调整，自己应该尽量不要恐慌，尽量放松，这是最重要的事情。

如果你身体不适，病得很重，患有极难忍受的痛苦，那么你应该想到生病是一种正面、积极的事，而非给你带来负担，因通过生病和痛苦的经历，你在消除你负面的业。所以当你消除了今生负面的业，则来世会更加光明，你将不需要堕入恶趣。即便今生非常幸福快乐，倘若来世堕入恶趣，则会有无量的痛苦。恶趣的痛苦，即便是最微弱的恶趣苦用人间最剧烈的痛苦也是无法相比的。在《亲友书》中说，若被矛袭击身体三百次，当然这是非常、非常残忍，非常痛苦的，但是据说这种痛苦也仅是恶趣中最微弱的痛苦^[4]。因此，通过忍受痛苦，通过经历痛苦将那些让我们投生恶趣的负面的业消除。这是件好事，由此你应该欢喜。而且，我们所有的修行也是在净化我们的负面的行为。

所以有疼痛和疾病便是这种实践。这是一种修持，因为修行

意味着净化，而有病也是净化。因此，与其将来在恶道中受苦还不如今生受苦，有病和疼痛将是一件积极的事。若您没有生病，那当然也是件好事。因为当我们身体和心健康时，就会做善良的行为、可以修行；而修行将会累积福德，累积了福德，你将在法道上前行得更远。如此，你能将疾病转为道用。

否则，当我们生病，当我们疼痛时，若因身体病了的同时而有更多心理负担，那么便是双倍的痛苦。即使身体生病了，但心中并不把它当成一回事，则会好很多，轻松很多。如此一来，既然万法唯心，心若能放松则会变得容易些。故而心是最重要的，必须控制心。不然，若心也在受苦，本来身体就在受苦了，在此之上，心也痛苦的话，痛苦就翻倍了。即使身体生病，若心能放轻松，心以积极的方式去思考，则会变得更容易。



在任何情况下，若你是个好的修行人，那么无论生活中发生什么，一切都变成了修行——疾病、痛苦、灾难，无论什么——一切都变成了一种修行。（你的）修行将会在此道路上走得更远，这样，你就会更容易走上这条路。

毕竟，心是最重要的东西。若你的心快乐，则不论你在何处都会快乐；若心不快乐，即便你身处于最美丽的地方、最悦意的处所也仍是不快乐的。所以说一切在于心。若心中觉得“一些非常可怕的事情正在发生”，就只能将事情变得更糟；而如果心不将这当回事，那就会变得容易。所以，主要的事情就是将一切事情转为道用——好或坏的——一切事情转为道。无论我们的生活中发生什么，都应该将它转为道用，一个好的修行人使一切趋入道。

现在，我的讲话就到这里，如果你们有问题，我会很高兴回答。



注释：

[4]《亲友书》——“于此一日中感受，三百短矛猛刺苦，彼较地狱最微苦，难忍之分亦不及”。

答疑

问 1: 我想知道您是否能解释一下, 您将如何把疼痛, 也就是您身体的感觉和感受……融入到您之前所说的 (“疾病转为道用”) 修行中去?

回答: 如前所述, 当你感受巨大的痛苦时, 通常我们视之为负担。因此, 与其将剧苦视为负担, 我们不如将它视为正在(经历)遣除恶业(的过程)。“通过身体上的苦痛, 令我们的恶业得以清净。当我的恶业清净了, 所期待的未来就会安乐幸福。”如此一来, 当心更加光明的时候, 痛苦就会减弱。因此, 如是思维将会更有助益。

问 2: 尊者, 这里有一个问题: 是否有任何具体的禅观方法, 当然有您明天将传授给我们的药师佛(法门), 除此之外是否有其他的观想、读诵或手印, 任何有帮助的方法?

回答: 是的, 有很多很多的观想。比如, 明天我们药师佛的灌顶时, 药师佛甘露降下, 洗净一切疾病和垢秽, 这种观想也是合理的, 这是从方便的角度而言的。

从智慧的角度来说, 事实上并没有痛苦, 没有感受痛苦的人、

没有痛苦本身，也没有制造痛苦的人。何处也没有这样的痛苦。因此，若你能观想在空性中，一切都会消失。

问 3：非常感谢您今天赐予的灌顶^[9]。我的问题是：当我们去闻法以及接受了灌顶后，通常会有修行的要求，包括持咒、以及能结合我们日常生活的训练，我注意到您说这无需承诺。但有时候，直言不讳地说，对于哪种训练适合我的日常工作和职责，我深感困惑。是要祈祷莲师还是药师佛？是否要完成加行的修持？我不想将修行视为彼此矛盾，但是有时候却感到很困惑。我想知道您对此的看法。

回答：实际上，具有无量智慧的世尊佛陀，为了帮助不同层次的众生，化现为众多不同的身相——寂静相、忿怒相、单身相、双身相等等。有许多不同的修法和灌顶。你无法修持所有的法——一个人不可能修持所有的本尊。你可以接受很多灌顶作为加持，从而提升你的修行，但你无法修持所有的本尊。你应该修持我们称为“具缘本尊”，与你具缘的本尊，可以由你的上师直接告诉你，或凭自己去发现。找到自己的本尊的方法之一，就是看谁最吸引你，哪位本尊令你感到最完美^[10]、最具吸引力、最容易修持，那便是你的具缘本尊。因此，你可以将其作为你的主尊。

问 4：尊者，我们还有一个延展来的问题，我们知道现在正在谈论一个具体的修法，以我个人为例，当我们持诵咒语的时候，有时候会自然设定一个数字，一个要达成的目标，比方

说持咒一万遍或者一千遍。我们如何在心中树立起不以数字为驱动（的正念），并且可以持续修持下去而不被某个数字或某个目标所牵绊？

回答：是的，数字事实上并不重要。数量不重要，质量才重要。我们知道很多人会计数，你也可以计数，但这并不是最重要的。最重要的是修行的质量。直至你在现实或梦境中获得了一些圆满了本尊成就的有把握的验相，那才是验相。

问 5: 谢谢，我这还有一个问题。我们这些幸运者拥有身体健康、大体上健康或至少有稳定的心态，但我们要如何去帮助那些无法自助的人呢？特别是那些身体无法活动，或精神状况不允许他们将痛苦视为加持的人。我知道显而易见我们可以为他们祈祷，但我想知道，我们是否有更多世俗层面的事情可以做，从而帮助到他们？

回答：是的，祈祷总是有帮助的。你也可以给他们建议——你可以和他们交谈，你可以通过交谈让他们感到安心，通过给予他们话语也给他们带来安慰。当有人生病了，你对他说：“你的病是非常可怕、非常痛苦的。它是如此可怕，它太可怕了。”说这样的话只能让病情每况愈下，更加糟糕。但如果你可以说：“你的病苦会好的，身体会没问题的，会很快有所好转的，你应该将它视为加持。”那么，这可能就会成为加持。当然，你还可以为他们祈祷。

问 6：尊者，慈悲心对正在经历痛苦的人有何作用？

答：是的，慈悲心是最为重要的。没有慈悲，（对于正在经历痛苦的人）你无法给予他们安慰，你无法与他们交谈，你什么都无法给予他们。因此，慈悲心是最重要的。

注释：

[5] 在此之前，萨迦·赤千法王刚刚赐予了长寿佛灌顶。

[6]sumptuous 直译为“华丽”，这里取其本质，意译为“完美”。



— 全文完 —

Taking Sickness into the Path

H.H. the Sakya Trichen (the 41st Sakya Trizin)

“The Sakya Tradition” Translation Team

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Spiritual Life Is Very Important

So once again we are gathered here today, and I would like to extend my very warm greetings and warm welcome again.

Today is a very auspicious day—the triple holy day—the International Vesak.⁽¹⁾ On such a day, whatever we do, it has great merit. As human beings, we have many requirements in our lives. We need many things, but the most important thing is the spiritual path because all the other things are only temporary. The spiritual path is not only for this life, but the next life and next life and next life. It goes all the way through. So therefore, spiritual life is very important.

Notes:

(1) Vesak commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and passing (parinirvana) of Buddha Shakyamuni, also known as Siddhartha Gautama.

Human Life Is Very Precious

According to the Buddha's teachings, every sentient being possesses buddha nature. In a sense, the true nature of our mind is pure—right from the beginning—and it is never stained with obscurations. It is the Buddha. There is no difference between the true nature of a sentient being's mind and the true nature of Buddha's wisdom. There is, of course, a vast difference between sentient beings and Buddha, but as far as their true nature is concerned, there is no difference. The difference between sentient beings and Buddha, is that although we possess buddha nature, as the true nature of our mind is pure, it is completely covered with obscurations—the obscuration of defilements and obscuration of phenomena. So as long as we have obscurations, we could never manifest the true nature of Buddha; we are caught up in samsara and we experience so much suffering. In samsara, no matter where you are—either in lower realms or higher realms—as long as it is samsara, it is suffering. The nature of the fire is hot, whether it is a small fire or big fire. Similarly, the nature of samsara is suffering. So therefore, we need to overcome the suffering of samsara. The only way to overcome the suffering of samsara is to practice the Dharma. Only through practice of the Dharma can one overcome the suffering of samsara.



Every sentient being possesses buddha nature, from tiny ones such as germs and insects to human beings; everyone possesses buddha nature. But human beings have the best chance because human beings are able to speak and understand and also have intelligence. So the human mind is much more powerful than any other living being. Therefore, having this human life is very important, the most important.

This human life is not easy to gain. Although there are many human beings, when you compare with other living beings, human beings are few in number. It is easy to count how many people are living in the country, but it is impossible to count how many insects are living even in a small place. Therefore, when you compare with other living beings, human life is very few in number. So human life is very difficult to obtain.

In order to obtain human life, we need to accumulate great merit, great prayers, and great virtuous deeds—especially virtuous deeds of pure, good moral conduct. Without good moral conduct you cannot gain human life. Human life is very precious; especially, human life endowed with all the prerequisites is very difficult to obtain from many points of view.⁽²⁾

Notes:

(2) A precious human birth has eighteen prerequisites: eight freedoms from restless states of existence where there is no opportunity to practice Dharma, and ten obtainments. Of the eight freedoms, the first four are freedom from the nonhuman states of birth as (1) a hell being; (2) a hungry ghost; (3) an animal; or (4) a long-lived god. The second four are, as a human, freedom from being born (5) among barbarians; (6) as one with wrong views; (7) at a time when no buddha has appeared in this world; and (8) as a fool who, due to incomplete sense faculties or especially a foolish mind, cannot comprehend or practice the Dharma.

Of the ten obtainments, the first five are acquired by oneself: (1) birth as a human; (2) birth in a centrally located place such as Bodh Gaya, India, where the buddhas attain enlightenment, or in a country where there exists the fourfold assembly of bhikshus, bhiksunis, upasakas, and upasikas; (3) having intact faculties; (4) having sincere faith in the three pitakas and especially the vinaya; and (5) having not committed heinous actions. The second five are acquired from others: (6) birth during an aeon in which a buddha has appeared; (7) a buddha has taught the Dharma; (8) the teachings remain a living tradition; (9) there are followers practicing the teachings; and (10) sincere compassion from others, such as those who, with right livelihood, support practitioners with alms.

We Create Karma

So while we have human life, the most important practice is to observe the law of karma, because Buddha said that everything we encounter in our life—happiness, suffering, everything—does not arise due to no cause and does not arise from the wrong cause. Each and everything must have its own unique causes, and that is karma. There are many different beliefs. Some say that there is creator who created everything and so on. But according to Buddhism, there is no creator as such. The creator is ourselves. We create karma, and karma reflects and ripens on due cause; then we experience whichever kind of life we have. Karma is very important because the whole world is called the “land of karma.”

If you did not commit this karma, you will not meet the result. Whatever karma you have created, even after hundreds of years, it will not fade away; it will ripen still in whoever did its causes. We pray not to have sickness, not to have bad luck and so on, but just praying will not work. Prayer is also powerful. Prayer is also helpful. But prayer alone will not get all the answers—if we put our own effort—if we create good karma, then that will definitely bring good fortune. So therefore it is very important to work on our karma.

Where Is the Self ?

How is karma created? Basically, it is due to ignorance— not knowing the true nature of the mind. Instead of seeing the true nature of the mind, we cling to a self, without any logical reasons. If there is a self, it has to be either a name, body, or mind. Name is empty by itself; any name could be given at any time. Body means many things, from head to toe, there are so many different parts. So if you take each part, there is not a self. Each part is different: each part has its own way, its own name, and its own function. And then as to the mind: the mind is momentarily changing. Past mind is already ceased; future mind is yet to arise; present mind is also momentarily changing. Something that is changing momentarily also could not be the self. So apart from the body and mind, where is the self?

Even in our ordinary usage, we say “my body”, “my possessions”, “my house”, “my car”, etc. So when you say “my car,” the car belongs to you, but the car itself is not you. Similarly, we say “my body,” that means the body belongs to you, but the body is not you. Similarly, we say “my mind”; when you say “my mind,” that mind also belongs to you. But now, if you try to investigate who owns your possessions, your body, or your mind, you cannot find anywhere.

So instead of seeing the true nature of the mind, we cling to a self without any logical reasons, because we have the strong

habitual tendency that has built up from beginningless time until now. Due to this, automatically we think there is “I” and “mine,” but there is no real “I” and “mine.” As a result, then we create karma. So instead of seeing the true nature of the mind, we cling to a self. When you have the self, then you have others automatically. Just like the right and left: if there is a right side, there has to be a left side; you cannot have the right side alone. Similarly, when you have the self, there are others. When you have self and others, then there is attachment to one’s own side and anger towards others. In this way, it all comes from ignorance, not knowing reality. Due to the lack of wisdom, instead of seeing our true nature, we cling to a self. That is the biggest ignorance. From this ignorance then arises desire—desire for one’s own side and anger towards others. In this way, we form the three main defilements⁽³⁾ and then from these form pride, stinginess, and jealousy, etc. And then when you have these, out of these, then we create karmas like physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions.

So, when we commit actions, then it is just like planting seed on a fertile ground that in due cause will yield results. And then we indulge in physical actions such as killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; verbal actions such as lying, creating schism, harsh speech, and idle talk; and mental actions such as hatred, covetousness, and wrong views.⁽⁴⁾ So, when we commit these negative deeds, they then produce results, which is all the negative things that we experience, such as having a short life, sickness, poverty, not being able to fulfil your wishes, failures, and being unsuccessful, etc. All these negative things arise from indulging in non-virtuous deeds.

Notes:

(3) These three are ignorance, attachment, and aversion.

(4) These negative deeds listed above are called the ten nonvirtues.

How to Take Pain and Sickness into the Path

Today's topic is actually how to take pain and sickness into the path. So when you indulge in negative or non-virtuous deeds, then the result arises and you experience it. Then of course, we cannot do anything. Whatever happens in our life, one should try to adjust and one should try not to panic and try to be relaxed. That is the most important thing.

If you are physically sick, very sick with very unbearable pain, then instead of burdening your mind, you should think that having sickness is a good or positive thing. Because by having sickness and by having painful experiences, you are shedding your negative karmas. So, when you are shedding your negative karmas in this life, your next life will be brighter, you will not need to fall down into the lower realms. Even if this life of yours is very happy, if you fall down into the lower realms in your next life, there will be enormous suffering. Even the slightest suffering of the lower realms cannot be represented by the enormous sufferings experienced here. It is said in *Suhrillekha*⁽⁵⁾ that being struck on your body three hundred times with a spear is very cruel and painful, but it is only slight suffering compared to the suffering of the lower realms.

So by having or experiencing pain, this will shed the negative karma that will cause us to be born in the lower realms. It is a good thing, so one should be happy. And all the practices that we do are also to purify our negative deeds.

So having pain and sickness is a practice. In this way, it is a practice, because practice means purification and having sickness is also like purification. Therefore, instead of suffering in the lower realms in the future, if you suffer in this life and have sickness and pain, it will be a positive thing. If you are not sick, of course it is a very good thing, because when your body and mind are healthy, then you can do virtuous deeds, you can do practice, and when you do practice, you will accumulate merit. When you accumulate merit, then you will be able to proceed further on the path. So in this way, you can take disease and sickness into the path.

Otherwise, when we are sick and when we have pain, if you have more burdens while you are physically sick, if you also take it as a burden mentally, then it is double suffering. Even though you are physically sick, but if mentally you take it lightly, then it is much better and much lighter. In this way, since everything is mind, if the mind takes it lightly then it becomes easier. The mind is the most important thing and the mind must be controlled. Otherwise, physically you are suffering already, and on the top of that, if your mind also suffers, then your suffering is doubled. Even though you are physically sick, if your mind takes it lightly and you think in a positive way, then it becomes much easier.

In any case, if you are a good practitioner, then whatever

happens in your life, everything becomes a practice—sickness, pain, disasters, whatever. The practice will proceed further on the path. In this way, it will make it much easier for you to be on the path.

After all, mind is the most important thing. If your mind is happy, then no matter where you are, you will be happy. If your mind is not happy, then even if you are in the most beautiful place and the nicest place, you will not be happy. So, everything is mind. If your mind thinks some very terrible thing is happening, then it is much worse; but if your mind takes it lightly, then it becomes much easier. So, the main thing is that you take everything into the path—good or bad. Whatever happens in our lives, we should take it into the path. Good practitioners take everything into the path.

So now, instead of me talking, if you have questions, I will be happy to answer.

Notes:

(5) Suhr̥llekha (Sanskrit), Letter to a Friend, a treatise or commentary on the words of the Buddha by Nagarjuna.

Questions & Answers

Q: I would like to know if you could explain how you would incorporate, for example, pain, which is the sensation and feeling in your body—how would you incorporate that into your practice, as you said earlier?

A: Yes. As I said, when you have very big pain, normally we take it as a burden. So instead of taking it as a burden, we take it as shedding negative karma. “By physical suffering, my negative karma is purified. When my negative karma is purified, I will be happy in the future that I am looking forward to.” In this way pain becomes lesser while your mind is brighter. So, in this way, it will be much more helpful.

Q: Your Holiness, we received one question: Are there any specific meditations—of course Medicine Buddha which Your Holiness will bestow upon us tomorrow—are there any other visualizations, reading, or postures, anything to be done for pain?

A: Yes, there are many meditations. For example, tomorrow we will have the Medicine Buddha initiation with the Medicine Buddha nectar coming down, and washing all the sickness and all the impurities. This kind of meditation is also possible. This is the method side.

Wisdom side is that—in reality—there is no pain, there is no oneself who is suffering the pain, there is no pain itself, there is no one who has created the pain. There is no such pain anywhere. In this way, if you contemplate emptiness or shunyata, then it all dissolves.

Q: Thank you very much for today's *wang* (empowerment).⁽⁶⁾ My question is: when we go to these teachings and we receive these empowerments, there is a practice that goes with the mantra and a practice that we can incorporate in our lives, and I know you said that there is no commitment. But sometimes, at least for myself, there is confusion as to which practice do I fit into my day, with working and responsibilities. Do I finish my Guru Rinpoche practice? Do I do the Medicine Buddha practice? Do I complete ngondro (preliminary practices)? I don't want to look at practice as conflicting, but sometimes I feel that. And I'd like to have your input on my question.

A: Actually, the great lord Buddha—who possesses infinite wisdom, in order to help all the different levels of sentient beings—has manifested in many different forms: peaceful form, wrathful form, single form, elaborate form, etc. There are so many different practices and initiations. You cannot practice all of them. It is impossible for an individual to practice all the deities.

You can receive many initiations as blessings to enhance your practice, but you cannot practice them all. Practice what we call one's karmic link deity, the deity with whom you have the karmic link that either is given by your guru or is found out by yourself.

One way to find out one's own deity is whoever you are most attracted to—whichever deity that you feel most close, most attracted to, and easiest to practice, that is your karmic link deity. So that one you can take as your main deity.

Q: Your Holiness, I have one follow-up question. If we know that we are speaking about one particular practice: for my example, if we are chanting a mantra, sometimes it is natural that we set a number, a goal to achieve, let's say ten thousand or a hundred thousand to practice. How do we train our mind such that we don't become number driven and we are able to continuously practice without being attached to a certain number or certain goal?

A: Yes. Number is actually not the important thing. The important thing is not the quantity; quality is the important thing. Many people count the numbers and you also count the numbers, but that is not the most important thing. The most important thing is the quality of the practice. Until you have some definite signs either in reality or in your dreams that you have accomplished the deity, only then is that considered as a sign.

Q: Thank you. I do have another question. For those of us who are lucky enough to have a healthy body and at least a somewhat stable mind, how do we help those who are not able to help themselves, and specifically people who are physically incapable of moving or people who have a mental condition that does not allow them to see that suffering can be a blessing? I think it is obvious that we pray for them, but I just wonder if there is anything else that we can do on a mundane level to assist those suffering.

Yes, praying is always helpful. Mainly you can advise them also—you can talk to them, you can give them comfort; by talking to them, by giving words, also gives them comfort. When someone is sick, if you tell them “your sickness is very terrible and very painful, it is so awful, it is horrible,” saying such will then of course make it much worse. But if you say that “your pain is alright, it will be alright, it will get better, it will soon be better, you should take it as a blessing,” then it may be less painful. Then also of course, you can pray for them.

Q: Your Holiness, what is the role of compassion thought, like what is its role in the suffering of others?

A: Yes, compassion is the most important thing. Without compassion, you cannot even give comfort, you cannot talk to them, you cannot give them anything. So, compassion is the most important thing.

Notes:

(6) Earlier on the same day as this teaching, His Holiness bestowed a long-life empowerment.

-The End-



■ His Holiness the Sakya Trichen is the 41st Sakya Patriarch of Sakya Order throne holder of the Khön Lineage. His Holiness is widely recognized as the emanation of Mañjuśrī, is a very well respected and accomplished great master. His Holiness is the teacher of many eminent and accomplished Buddhist masters, and is acknowledged as the “King of Vajrayana Masters”. His Holiness manifests profound wisdom and compassion, and his teachings benefit countless students all around the world.

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