



The Path to Happiness

His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche



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<https://sakyatradition.org>

Email : info@sakyatradition.org

Wechat ID : sakyatradition

Weibo : sakyatradition

IG: the_sakya_tradition

Facebook: TheSakya

Soundcloud: the-sakya-tradition

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSakyaTradition>

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By the merit of this work, may Their Holiness the Sakya Trichen and Sakya Trizin enjoy perfect health and very long lives, and continue to turn the wheel of Dharma.

Editorial Preface

From conception until the end of our lives, we are in constant pursuit of happiness. This instinct is not just human; it's a fundamental aspect of all sentient beings.

In our quest for happiness, we exhaust various means, dedicating our lives to chasing after certain people, objects, matters, or emotions, mistakenly believing that these are the keys to happiness. Yet, do we truly understand what genuine happiness is? Are we heading in the right direction? Are we using the right methods?

You might not believe it, but happiness is actually simple. As long as we employ the right approach, it is readily available, as revealed in this wonderful teaching.



The Path to Happiness

Good evening to everyone. Tonight I will speak about the path to happiness. I understand the path here to mean the internal path, not the external one. “Internal” refers to the mind, and following the internal path means developing and improving the mind.

A mind with negative thoughts such as anger and jealousy will cause more suffering for ourselves and others, and a mind with positive thoughts will bring happiness. Just as a cup cannot contain hot water and cold water at the same time, the mind cannot develop positive and negative thoughts at the same time. Therefore, if we wish to develop positive mind, then first we need to identify what are the positive thought and what are the negative ones. After knowing these two, we will know what is to be adopted and what is to be abandoned.

Positive thoughts are based on non-violence, peace, and harmony. These attitudes are the basis for developing positive

mind. Negative thoughts such as anger and jealousy make us unhappy and make others unhappy, too. This is why we should start controlling our anger and jealousy and other negative thoughts, starting with our own family members.

In Tibetan, there's a saying that if our inner family is not auspicious then we will never have external auspiciousness, or fulfill our external aims. If there is a lot of arguing and fighting among family members, your family will not be prosperous or happy. Things will go from bad to worse. You can examine this yourself and see that there is no benefit in arguing or fighting with family members, that it only causes unhappiness and mental suffering. In fact, showing anger to family members is more harmful than showing anger to other people, such as acquaintances or people we don't know. This is because we associate with family every day. If there is anger, we will have opportunities to be angry every day. It can become habitual, and we will commit more and more negative deeds and cause more and more suffering. This is why it is very important to control anger starting with our family members. To do this, we should have respect for them and generate loving-kindness and compassion towards them.

In our teachings, it's said that we should take ourselves as an example for how to treat others. When we receive harmful

actions from others—physical beatings, verbal scoldings, and other harsh words or unpleasant speech—it makes us unhappy. Similarly, if we use harsh words or unpleasant speech, or if we scold others or beat them, they will have the same unhappy feelings and experience suffering.

Generally speaking, these problems are caused by ego. If we think we are always right and others are always wrong, this creates problems with others. Of course, sometimes our ideas *are* right, and then we should respect others and discuss it with them to find the right solution.

As I said, positive thoughts arise from loving-kindness and compassion. These have many different levels and kinds. Someone can have loving-kind or compassion towards a hundred people, a thousand people, one hundred thousand people, a million people, and so on. Even those who don't follow any religion can have loving-kindness and compassion towards certain beings or towards a limited number of beings. They might have the good wish to help poor children, build schools for them, give them food and drink, etc. But in the teachings, when we say loving-kindness and compassion, we mean extending these things towards all beings without any exception or discrimination. We call this limitless loving-kindness and compassion.

To learn limitless loving-kindness and compassion, we practice, taking ourselves as the example. Showing loving-kindness and compassion to others causes them to feel happiness and joy—to feel respected, protected, and secure. Furthermore, according to the teachings, helping others is the cause of one's own happiness, while wishing only to gain happiness for oneself is the cause of our suffering. Just as we wish to gain happiness, every sentient being has the same wish. Just as we have the wish to overcome suffering, every sentient being has the same wish. We have a common goal, and ignoring others' welfare for the sake of our own is not right or proper.

To understand this, we should focus on the similarities among all beings. If we focus on the differences, then we will feel more distant from them. As humans, we all have similar features. All human beings have one face, two hands, etc. The most important, however, is not our similar appearance but our similar wish: We all wish to gain happiness and overcome suffering. Focusing on the similarities makes us feel close to others, and this makes it easy to develop loving-kindness and compassion towards them. Such positive thoughts make us and make others happy. No one can find fault in these positive thoughts, which are the key to success, harmony, peace, and happiness.

Without infinite loving-kindness and compassion, it is not possible to practice the Dharma, taught by the Buddha so that we can gain real and ultimate happiness. Real happiness is not the same as worldly happiness. Genuine and worldly happiness differ from the points of view of their cause, nature, and duration.

Regarding the cause, worldly happiness can be produced by negative actions from anger and attachment. For example, if a worldly person kills their enemy, they will feel a kind of worldly happiness. But this kind of happiness is not real happiness because it is caused by a negative deed. Happiness that comes from scoring points over others or beating them is not real happiness. It is the same with attachment. Worldly happiness can arise from meeting with the right people, from friends, the food that we like, a house or a car that we want. Because we have attachment to these things, we feel happiness when we get them. But this is a temporary joy, not lasting joy. Temporary joy is like eating delicious food that is actually poisonous. Later on, it will cause us to experience strong pain or even to die. Attachment can cause us to experience worldly happiness but long-term suffering.

Worldly happiness is caused by negative deeds on the basis of the negative emotions of anger, attachment, and so on, while

genuine happiness is always caused by infinite loving-kindness, compassion, and the positive actions done on their basis, whether physical or verbal.

From the point of view of their natures, worldly happiness is not genuine. It is the reality of the suffering of change. It may seem like happiness, but in reality, it is just another form of suffering. Take the example of meeting a new friend. In the beginning, you feel happiness. After some time, disagreements arise, even arguments. Thus we can see that meeting new friends is not real or lasting happiness. If it were the source of real happiness, then the more you stay with your friends, the more happiness you will experience. But it is not like that. Another example is moving from a small or shabby house to a fine and expensive one. If this were the cause of real happiness, then the longer you stayed in the new house, the more happiness you would experience. But it is not like this. The longer you stay, the more the happiness fades and problems arise. Such apparent happiness is really just the suffering of change.

From the duration point of view, temporal happiness doesn't last. Genuine happiness is permanent. It is caused by positive thoughts—in particular, by infinite loving-kindness and compassion—and is free from all types of suffering, including the suffering of change. You will never experience a reversal from the state of ultimate happiness.

To summarize so far, the path to happiness means positive thoughts like loving-kindness and compassion for the sake all beings. And happiness means genuine happiness, not worldly happiness. If we really wish to create happiness and peace and harmony, then we should focus on the similarities between beings, thinking that all human beings are one big family. There are many different kinds of animals in the cat family, for example, such as tigers, lions, leopards, and so on. But they are all cats. Similarly, human beings belong to different cultures and races, and they speak different languages, etc. But we are all one family. Thinking this way will enable us to feel closer to others and respect them, and with those feelings, we can act to help them and make them happy. If we make loving-kindness and compassion our habits—if we familiarize our minds with them—then we can really help others, and we can achieve our ultimate aim which is happiness that is beyond worldly happiness.

Although we can buy external things from shops, we cannot buy inner peace and harmony, and we cannot buy ultimate happiness. For this, we have to put forth effort and generate loving-kindness and compassion. Then we will experience inner peace and harmony, and we can share peace and harmony with others, with all sentient beings including our family members, and peace and harmony will prevail in the world and beyond.

The Buddha's teachings train us in having a positive mind. The teachings show us how to abandon or control our anger, jealousy, and other negative thoughts, and they teach why we should take care of others and how to do that. The teachings are precious and profound because they make us into good persons with the wish to help others. So we can say and truly believe that Dharma teaching is the path to happiness.

But to gain benefit from the Dharma, we must do genuine Dharma practice, which comes from the mind—not just the body and speech. If we do proper physical and verbal Dharma practices but our minds have the wrong intention, it is not genuine Dharma practice. Nowadays, we sometimes see people giving food and clothes to the poor people, yet taking selfies while they do it and posting them on Facebook to show off, to make a name or reputation for themselves. This is not a good intention. Giving done with the intention of gaining praise from others is not a pure intention but conditional, wanting something in return.

Instead, we should practice giving and other good deeds with a pure mind, without any conditions or expectation of receiving something in return. If our minds are pure then our actions will be pure, and we can help others in a pure and genuine way, and this is the real way we can help others gain happiness. Through

this, we will also feel happy. This is the path to happiness for oneself and others, and its basis is a positive mind and actions performed from positive thoughts.

With this, I conclude my short talk. I wish that all of you and all sentient beings will practice having positive minds, and through this, attain short-term and ultimate happiness. I hope we can all understand the meaning and implement it in our daily lives, so that we will all enjoy happiness.



- His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, is the eldest son of His Holiness the Sakya Trichen (the 41st Sakya Trizin). Renowned for his erudition and the clarity of his teachings, His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin is regarded as one of the most highly qualified lineage holders in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He belongs to the noble Khön family, whose successive generations have provided an unbroken lineage of outstanding Buddhist masters.

Since his youth, His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin has received an ocean of sutra and tantra teachings, empowerments, transmissions, and pith instructions from His Holiness the Sakya Trichen, as well as many other learned and accomplished masters. After years of rigorous philosophy studies at Sakya College in India, he was awarded the kachupa degree. And starting from the age of twelve, he has completed numerous meditation retreats, including the Hevajra retreat. With utmost humility, he travels extensively to bestow teachings and empowerments at the request of students across the globe.



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