

Transcript of the oral commentary by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on Dharmarakshita's *Wheel-Weapon Mind Training*

Root verses: Excerpt from *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind*, translation Geshe Lhundub Sopa with Michael Sweet and Leonard Zwillig. © Wisdom Publications with permission granted for use in the FPMT Basic Program by Wisdom Publications.

Lesson 11

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Q & A & Discussion: Ordinary bodhisattvas taking rebirth due to karma and delusions. Is there craving and grasping in the continuum of a superior. Are the bodies of bodhisattva superiors true suffering? What is a mental body? The root text: Verses 28—30. Verse 28: Setting aside the Dharma. Verse 29: Disrespecting the textual and realisational Dharma. Verse 30: Delighting in the afflictions.

ORDINARY BODHISATTVAS TAKING REBIRTH DUE TO KARMA AND DELUSIONS

Question: Bodhisattvas are disenchanted with taking rebirth in cyclic existence through karma and delusions. But there are ordinary bodhisattvas who do take rebirth through karma and delusions. Under what circumstances does this happen?

Khen Rinpoche: Why are you asking this question?

Student 1: I am curious because I cannot find the answer.

Khen Rinpoche: You must have a reason. Why are you wondering about this?

Student 1: Because to me, there is a contradiction. Bodhisattvas are disenchanted with taking rebirth through karma and delusions but there are ordinary bodhisattvas who take rebirth in that way. That is my qualm.

Khen Rinpoche: Can anybody answer this question? He thinks that there is a contradiction. Bodhisattvas already have renunciation so why do they take rebirth in samsara again due to karma and affliction?

Student 2: They take rebirth because they have not realised emptiness directly. That is why they still have the ignorance of the twelve links. Do all ordinary bodhisattvas go to the pure land?

Khen Rinpoche: Student 1's qualm is that bodhisattvas have already renounced samsara so why are they still taking rebirth in samsara?

Student 2: I think the bodhisattva has even stronger compassion so he does not primarily focus on realising emptiness in order to be liberated. Rather he focusses

more on cultivating the bodhisattva path.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you saying that therefore he has to take rebirth in samsara due to karma and delusions? Is that your reason? So your last statement should be like this: Therefore, the ordinary bodhisattvas have to take rebirth in samsara due to karma and delusions.

Student 2: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Your statement doesn't fit.

Does the bodhisattva take rebirth intentionally and by choice due to karma and delusions?

Student 2: No.

Khen Rinpoche: The consequence of your answer is that motivated by great compassion, the bodhisattva purposely takes rebirth due to karma and afflictions in samsara because he wants to benefit sentient beings in samsara

Khen Rinpoche: What Student 1 has asked is a very simple question but you must know how to answer it. You must understand what he is asking. He is asking why the ordinary bodhisattva who already has renunciation takes rebirth in samsara due to karma and delusions? He thinks this is contradictory.

(Khen Rinpoche selects a student to answer this question).

Student 3: I think it is because they still do not have total control over their rebirth, therefore it is possible that they will still take rebirth. We all don't like to get sick, but because we have no control over this, we still get sick. I think it is similar to that. The ordinary bodhisattvas still have ignorance so they will still take uncontrolled rebirth.

Khen Rinpoche: If one has ignorance, does it necessarily follow that one will take rebirth?

Student 3: It does not necessarily follow but it could happen.

Khen Rinpoche: You still have to answer the question, "Why does the ordinary bodhisattvas still take rebirth due to karma and affliction?"

Student 3: Because they still have grasping.

Khen Rinpoche: You must know what you are saying. Just now you said it is because they have ignorance.

Student 3: They still have craving and grasping so at that time of death, craving and grasping could still happen for them to ripen their previous karma that they have created to take rebirth in samsara.

Khen Rinpoche: What is the reason for them to have craving and grasping?

Student 3: Because they have not overcome craving and grasping!

Khen Rinpoche: You are not answering the question. You are repeating the same thing.

Student 3: I thought it is because they still have the dependent link ...

Khen Rinpoche: Why do they still have these links?

Student 3: Because they still grasp on to true existence, i.e., they still have the apprehension of true existence and from there, they develop craving and grasping.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you saying that because he still has the apprehension of true existence, therefore he has craving and grasping?

Student 3: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Is that the correct reason?

Student 3: I thought they are the causes that will cause karma to ripen.

Khen Rinpoche: Is that the correct reason?

Student 3: I don't know. I thought that was the reason.

Khen Rinpoche: There is no pervasion. When one has the apprehension of true existence, does one necessarily have craving and grasping?

Student 3: Not necessarily.

Khen Rinpoche: If it is not necessarily so, then you cannot say that because there is apprehension of true existence, you have craving and grasping. Earlier on, you said because there is the apprehension of true existence, and with that as the reason, therefore there is craving and grasping.

Are the others getting what I'm talking about? You must listen to what he says and what I'm saying. This is also part of learning on how to ask questions. It is just one question. Somebody answers but it does not stop there.

Student 3: I don't know what other reason there can be.

Khen Rinpoche: The question that Student 1 posed was that while the bodhisattvas have disenchantment with samsara and have renunciation, yet on the other hand, ordinary bodhisattvas take rebirth in cyclic existence due to karma and afflictions. Is there a contradiction? If the answer is no, how do you explain that there is no contradiction?

Student 3: Even though the bodhisattvas are disenchanted with samsara, some ordinary bodhisattvas still do not have control over their rebirth because they still

have craving and grasping. That is why the karma can still ripen for them to take rebirth in samsara.

Khen Rinpoche: Quite OK. But answer this: why do these ordinary bodhisattvas have craving and grasping?

Student 3: Is it because before that they have feeling?

Khen Rinpoche: Then before feeling, what do they have?

Student 3: Contact.

Khen Rinpoche: Before contact, what do they have?

Student 3: Before contact comes the six sources, name and form and consciousness. Before that, they have karma. Then ignorance.

Khen Rinpoche: After ignorance, what do they have?

Student 3: Karma and compositional factors.

Khen Rinpoche: Before ignorance, what do they have?

Student 3: The apprehension of true existence.

Khen Rinpoche: OK. Never mind.

Precisely because these ordinary bodhisattvas have attained the path, so they necessarily have renunciation. They have projecting karma that was accumulated from the past. With many such projecting karmas, they have no choice but to take rebirth in cyclic existence due to the force of the projecting karma they have accumulated before. They don't have a choice. They have no control. So although they have generated renunciation, they have not yet abandoned projecting karma.

IS THERE CRAVING & GRASPING IN THE CONTINUUM OF A SUPERIOR

Now a question for you all: Is there craving and grasping in the continuum of someone who has realised emptiness directly?

(Khen Rinpoche selects a student to answer this question).

Student 4: Yes, they still have craving and grasping.

Khen Rinpoche: Give an example that they have this and explain more.

Student 4: On the second ground, they have not abandoned the afflictions yet.

Khen Rinpoche: Then on the third ground?

Student 4: On the third ground, yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Fourth ground?

Student 4: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Fifth ground?

Student 4: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Sixth ground?

Student 4: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Seventh ground?

Student 4: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Eighth ground? Ninth ground? Tenth ground?

Student 4: On the pure grounds—the eighth, ninth and tenth grounds—he won't have craving and grasping.

Khen Rinpoche: Why?

Student 4: Because he has abandoned the afflictions.

Khen Rinpoche: OK. Good.

If there is the apprehension of true existence in one's mind, does one necessarily have craving and grasping?

Student 4: You are talking about the pure grounds?

Khen Rinpoche: If there is the apprehension of true existence, does one necessarily have craving and grasping?

Student 4: Not necessarily.

Khen Rinpoche: Posit an illustration.

Student 4: The tenth ground bodhisattva.

Khen Rinpoche: Does the bodhisattva on the tenth ground possess the apprehension of true existence?

Student 4: No.

Khen Rinpoche: Then why do you posit that as an illustration of somebody who has

the apprehension of true existence but not necessarily craving and grasping? There is no need to talk about that because the tenth ground bodhisattva does not have the apprehension of true existence.

Student 4: Did you say, “appearance” or “apprehension”? Yes, if one has the apprehension of true existence, it necessarily means that one will have craving and grasping. The example is myself.

Khen Rinpoche: If there is craving and grasping, is it not the case that you will definitely take rebirth in cyclic existence?

Student 4: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Do bodhisattva superiors take rebirth in cyclic existence? Is their rebirth in cyclic existence due to a karmic seed that is nourished by craving and grasping?

Student 4: At which ground?

Khen Rinpoche: You can say first ground, second ground and so forth. I give you up to the seventh ground. You can choose whichever ground you like.

Student 4: If you are asking whether at the seventh ground, the bodhisattva superior takes rebirth due to craving and grasping, the answer is yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Isn't there then the fallacy of bodhisattva superiors taking rebirth due to karma and afflictions?

Student 4: On the eighth ground, he only achieves liberation. So before the eighth ground, i.e., on the seventh ground, he still has afflictions.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you saying that bodhisattva superiors—for example, those on the first, second and third grounds—take rebirth in cyclic existence due to karma and afflictions? Are you saying that?

Student 4: I have to say that.

Khen Rinpoche: As such, then we cannot talk about such bodhisattva superiors possessing mental bodies.

Student 4: Actually I have a qualm. In the First Basic Program, in the buddhanature module, Rinpoche said that they have a mental body on the eighth, ninth and tenth grounds, not on the first to the seventh grounds. But in this Second Basic Program, in the module on *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*, you said that the mental body starts from the first ground onwards.

Khen Rinpoche: So you think they do not have a mental body?

ARE THE BODIES OF BODHISATTVA SUPERIORS TRUE SUFFERING?

In short, you are saying that the bodhisattva superiors—for example, those who are on the first, second grounds and so forth—do not have a mental body. They have a contaminated body. Therefore, they have true suffering. As such, the bodies of such bodhisattva superiors would be true suffering.

Student 4: I would have to say yes because they have not reached the eighth ground.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you saying that from the first until the seventh ground, the bodhisattva's body is still the same as our body? There is no difference and it is still true suffering.

Does anybody agree or disagree with that? (Khen Rinpoche selects a student to answer this question).

If you disagree with him and if it is not correct, then you make the correction.

Student 5: I disagree with him because it would mean that the bodhisattva still possesses the twelve links that are in the class of afflictions. This means that as they are progressing on the path to abandon the twelve links, at the same time, they are still producing the twelve links and this means that they will never be able to be free of these twelve links.

Khen Rinpoche: You are not really answering the question.

What you are saying has nothing to do with his view. If his view is wrong, you must correct it. What logic do you have to show that his view is not correct?

Student 5: My logic is that the bodhisattva will continue to produce the twelve links of the class of afflictions. This means that he will continue to produce the twelve links even as he is continuing to abandon the twelve links.

Khen Rinpoche: Student 4 is not talking about producing the karma. He is talking about taking rebirth due to the twelve links.

Student 5: That means that he will not have the direct realisation of emptiness to stop that production.

Khen Rinpoche: But you know that the bodhisattva superior is not creating new karma. Are you still saying that the bodhisattva superior will still take rebirth in samsara due to karma and afflictions. Do you accept that?

Student 5: No, because he will have the direct realisation of emptiness and will not accumulate further the twelve links that are the class of afflictions.

Khen Rinpoche: Now you accept that.

Student 5: This means that he will not be producing the twelve links and he will also

not be taking rebirth due to those twelve links because he has the direct realisation of emptiness that is powerful enough to stop the projecting karma from manifesting or ripening.

Khen Rinpoche: Are you saying that once you realise emptiness directly, you will not take rebirth in cyclic existence due to karma and afflictions?

Student 5: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: Essentially, what you are saying is that once you realise emptiness directly, you necessarily do not have craving and grasping.

Student 5: Of the twelve links in the class of afflictions, yes.

Khen Rinpoche: *Student 4 is saying the opposite of that.*

Student 5: Therefore, he has the mental body that is produced by the twelve links of the class of knowledge obscurations, by the levels of predisposition and so on.

Khen Rinpoche: What Student 4 is saying is that even though you have realised emptiness directly, you still have craving and grasping. As such, those individuals will still take rebirth in samsara due to craving and grasping, i.e., essentially karma and afflictions. Your position is the complete opposite.

Student 5: Even though he may have ignorance as well as its imprints in his continuum, he does not newly produce a set of twelve links anymore.

Khen Rinpoche: The basis of debate is not that point. What you are saying is that once you realise emptiness directly, you do not have craving and grasping, that definitely, you will not take rebirth due to craving and grasping.

Khen Rinpoche: *What Student 4 said is wrong. What you are saying is also wrong.*

Is what Student 5 said correct or incorrect? If it is not correct, then give an example.

Student 6: An example of someone who directly realises emptiness but still have craving and grasping is a stream-enterer or once-returner who needs to take rebirth in the desire realm.

Khen Rinpoche: *Good. Then how about what Student 4 said?*

Student 6 (addressing Student 4): You are saying that the first to the seventh ground is still true suffering. Do you accept that the first ground bodhisattva can manifest 100 bodies and that the second ground bodhisattva can manifest even more bodies? Does that mean that they are manifesting more true suffering?

Khen Rinpoche: *Good. Good. So when the bodhisattvas reach the first ground, they can manifest 1000 bodies. This would mean that he is producing 1000 suffering bodies!*

Student 4: Yes. On the first ground, they manifest 100 bodies. On the second ground, they manifest 1000 bodies,

Khen Rinpoche: He (Student 6) is asking you, “Why are they producing more suffering bodies?”

Student 4: For them, their concern is not suffering. For them, their concern is helping others. The motivation for them is to help others.

Khen Rinpoche: They are still suffering.

Student 4: They may have suffering but for them, their aim is to help others.

My thesis is that before they reach the eight ground or the pure ground, they still have ignorance.

Khen Rinpoche: We accept that there is still ignorance. There is no question about that. Nobody is debating about that.

Student 4: Then what is your qualm? (Laughter from the class).

Khen Rinpoche: The qualm is that after you reach the first ground, you are producing more suffering bodies. Then at the second ground, there is double (the amount of suffering bodies).

Student 4: I think there is no pervasion. It is like someone who prays to go to hell to help those in the hell realms. That doesn’t mean that he will suffer in the hell realms.

Khen Rinpoche: The bodhisattva emanates and goes to hell but he doesn’t suffer. It follows that the bodhisattva’s body is not true suffering. There is no pain and therefore there is no true suffering.

It is mentioned in the teachings on the perfection of generosity that if you are not a bodhisattva superior, you are not encouraged or allowed to give your body away. Once you become a bodhisattva superior, you can give your body away then.

It is said that the more the bodhisattvas give away, the more happiness they feel. With each additional body part they give away, they experience that much more happiness in return.

What does that prove? It proves that their body is not true suffering. That is the point.

Student 4: It proves that their compassion for others is greater than their self-interest. So even when they are tortured, they will not feel the suffering. In their mind-stream, they will not feel the true suffering. They will not feel the pain because their aim is to help others.

Khen Rinpoche: The supreme-mundane-qualities level of the path of preparation immediately precedes the attainment of the path of seeing. This level of the path of

preparation progresses onto the path of seeing in the same continuous meditative equipoise.

What is the difference between the body of the bodhisattva on the supreme-mundane-qualities level of the path of preparation and the next moment when he enters the path of seeing? What is the body of the bodhisattva when he is already on the path of seeing?

Student 4: It is the same physical body.

Khen Rinpoche: With that same body, the bodhisattva on the path of preparation enters the path of seeing. Does that mean he becomes enlightened in the same body?

Student 4: I get your logic. You cannot depend on the sutric path alone to attain enlightenment.

Khen Rinpoche: Let's come back to the seventh ground. At the last moment on the seventh ground and at the first moment on the eighth ground, you asserted earlier that there is a mental body at that time. Is it the same body or is there any difference in the body?

Student 4: I would have to say no. From the tantric point of view, the sutric path will not be able to get one to enlightenment.

Khen Rinpoche: There is a verse in Maitreya's *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* that says that the bodhisattva superiors do not have the sufferings of sickness, aging and death. That means that the bodhisattva superiors do not have true suffering.

Once the first ground is achieved, the bodhisattva superior acquires a mental body. Since bodhisattva superiors do not have true suffering, as such, when they give away their bodies, they don't feel pain.

WHAT IS A MENTAL BODY?

Student 6: Can I just clarify one point? Is the mental body the illusory body? Are they the same thing? I think on the tantric path, it is an illusory body.

Khen Rinpoche: No, they are not the same.

The achievement of the illusory body has to be preceded by actualising clear light. It is from within the clear light that one arises as the illusory body. Such a presentation of clear light and illusory body is not found in sutra. There isn't even the presentation of the extremely subtle mind in sutra.

Yet it is difficult for us to imagine what a mental body is. What exactly is a mental body? Among the qualms collated after the last exam, one of the questions relate to the mental body. We have to answer the question, "What is the substantial cause of the mental body?" This is difficult.

According to sutra, the causes of the two bodies are essentially the collection of wisdom that results in the truth body and the collection of merit that results in the form body. In sutra, there is no better explanation than that.

The explanation according to tantra is much more profound. According to highest yoga tantra:

- The substantial cause for the truth body is the extremely subtle mind and the cooperative condition for the truth body is the extremely subtle wind.
- The substantial cause for the form body is the extremely subtle wind and the cooperative condition for the form body is the extremely subtle mind.

This explanation of the causes of the two bodies in tantra makes more sense.

According to sutra, the collection of merit is the cause for the form body. They have no better explanation than that. In order to answer the question, "What is the substantial cause of a mental body?" It is not stated in the texts. It is not obvious. Based on the sutric explanation of the substantial cause of the form body, if we reason further, perhaps we can say that it is the powerful accumulation of the collection of merit of that bodhisattva on the path of preparation that acts as the cause for the mental body of the first ground.

Do you think we can see the bodhisattva superior's mental body? Does it look like our body?

Student 6: I have a feeling it is similar to the body of an intermediate state being. It is an energy body. My feeling is that it is probably has to do with the winds. It is similar to the body of the intermediate state being and also the dream body.

When you achieve the illusory body, you don't lose your own body, do you? I don't know how it works. If you are a yogi meditating and you achieve the illusory body, does it mean that you disappear and you don't have your own body anymore? You don't because you have not actually achieved enlightenment yet. You still have use for this body so you probably can possess both bodies at the same time.

Student 1: Just now it was said that it was the accumulation of merit on the path of preparation that is the substantial cause for the mental body of a bodhisattva on the first ground.

Won't the cause be a contaminated one because it is not conjoined with the wisdom directly realising emptiness? It seems to me it is accumulated on the basis of an ordinary being. So how can something that is accumulated as an ordinary being be a cause for something that is the mental body of a superior? There seems to be a contradiction here. The merit accumulated is ordinary merit as the bodhisattva has not directly realised emptiness.

As for my first qualm, now I remember why I asked my question. The answer was the ordinary bodhisattvas have no choice but they have to take rebirth. So why don't they go to a pure land first? Through the power of prayer, they can take rebirth there. It is very safe.

SETTING ASIDE THE DHARMA

Verse 28

When my intellect is blind toward all that is worth knowing, it is the weapon of my own evil deeds turned upon me for claiming as the Dharma what ought to be put aside. From now on I shall cultivate the wisdom that comes from study, examination, and meditation.¹

When we hear the teachings, we don't remember the words. When we reflect on the teachings, we don't understand their meaning. When we meditate on the teachings, we don't get any realisations. Sometimes, we feel that we are not so intelligent and not so wise when compared with others. But even siblings do not necessarily have the same level of intelligence. There may be people who are related, sharing the same parents, yet somehow, there are some who are more intelligent than others.

In Dharmakirti's *Pramanavartika (Commentary on Valid Cognition)*, he said that the parents' egg and sperm are not the substantial causes of one's mind or consciousness. For if they were, it would follow that siblings would have the same level of intelligence and the same kind of mental characteristics. You have to posit that the substantial cause for consciousness has to be a former moment of consciousness. This is how we establish past and future lives.

It is quite clear that siblings don't have the same level of intelligence. Everybody is different. Sometimes people wonder, "Why am I not intelligent? Why am I not as smart as so-and-so?" The Buddhist explanation is that it is basically due to karma, i.e., one did not create the cause in the past. It could be that in our past lives, we only engaged in non-Dharma activities, entertaining non-Dharmic thoughts and so forth. Even when we met the Dharma in past lives, we didn't take the opportunity to study it. We didn't cherish it because we thought that it is something that we can put aside. Yes, we did meet the Dharma but we didn't do anything about it. That is the reason why in the present time,

- when we hear the teachings, we don't remember the words
- when we reflect on the teachings we don't understand their meanings
- when we try to internalise the teachings, we don't gain any realisations

In our present life, if we find ourselves in such a situation when we don't understand the teachings no matter what we do, then we have to understand that it is the result of certain causes and conditions, i.e., basically not having heard and reflect on the teachings in our previous lives.

So we should tell ourselves that if we do not put in effort in this life, if we do not work hard at learning and reflecting on the teachings, then it is not going to be any better in our future lives. In fact, we may end up even more dull-witted than before.

Not being able to understand the teachings in this life should not be a reason to stop

¹ Ven. Gyurme: In the Tibetan text, "study, examination, and meditation" reads as "hearing and so forth."

learning. In fact, it should be a reason for us to strive and work even harder to learn and to reflect on the teachings in order to plant positive imprints in our mind. The advice here is that through hearing, reflection and meditation, we strive to generate the wisdom arisen from hearing, the wisdom arisen from reflection and the wisdom arise from meditation respectively.

All of us make the same mistakes. Whenever we don't understand any of the teachings, we just give up. That is a huge mistake because if we give up, it doesn't mean that things will get better on their own. No! Things will never improve. In fact, we may become even more dull-witted.

There will always be something that we do not understand but that should not be a reason for us to stop trying. We must work hard and put in the effort to learn and reflect. Only then can things get better in our future lives. If we really strive and work hard, definitely, we will make some progress in this life. If there is progress in this life, then there is real hope for our future lives to be better. But if we stop and give up, then definitely there will not be any progress in this life. If there is no progress in this life, how can there be progress in future lives?

These pieces of advice are really very helpful. The advice we have seen so far is essentially asking us to take responsibility from our side and reflect on our own karma and its effects. Whenever the going gets tough in whatever we do, the point here is to reflect on karma and its effect and then to keep on working at it.

DISRESPECTING TEXTUAL AND REALISATIONAL DHARMA

Verse 29

When I am overcome by sleep while practicing Dharma, it is the weapon of my own evil deeds turned upon me for piling up obscurations to the holy Dharma. From now on I shall undergo hardship for the sake of the Dharma.

Sometimes when we attend pujas or prayer sessions, before the puja, we are not sleepy. But once the puja starts, around ten or fifteen minutes into it, suddenly we just feel uncontrollably sleepy. Or before doing our daily recitations or prayers, we may be wide-awake but once we start our prayers, we feel very sleepy. Or when people come to class to listen to the Dharma, they feel sleepy. Yet somehow, people don't feel sleepy when they are watching a show. This is what happens to us.

Sometimes no matter how hard we try to stay awake, somehow we are overwhelmed by sleepiness. It is uncontrollable. This is due to the force of our obscurations (or negativities) and is said to be the karmic result of having accumulated obscurations in relation to the holy Dharma. For example, we don't show proper respect to Dharma texts. We put them on the bare ground or a low place, walk over them or place things on them. We do not regard Dharma texts with reverence and respect, viewing them as an ordinary article.

Then there is also the accumulation of negativities in relation to the realisational Dharma. How does one do that? One criticises, despises or put down an individual

who possess the realisational Dharma in his or her mental continuum.

The advice is that, “From now on I shall undergo hardship for the sake of the Dharma.” From now on, we will not disrespect Dharma texts and we will not put down, revile, despise or criticise the individual who possesses the realisational Dharma in her mind.

DELIGHTING IN THE AFFLICTIONS

Verse 30

When I delight in the afflictions and am greatly distracted, it is the weapon of my own evil deeds turned upon me for not meditating upon impermanence and the shortcomings of cyclic existence. From now on I shall increase my dissatisfaction for cyclic existence.

These are the examples of taking “delight in the afflictions”:

- Taking delight in attachment refers to being wholly involved in doing things to acquire material wealth, power, reputation and followers motivated by attachment.
- Taking delight in anger refers to enjoying looking down or putting down others and so forth.
- Taking delight in ignorance refers perhaps to being very fond of sleeping.

Being “greatly distracted” means that one has no mental space for Dharma as one’s emphasis and one’s goal is focussed on just this life. Day and night, one focusses on the affairs and happiness of this life to the point that one does not have any space nor time to practise Dharma.

The teachings tells us that when we are in such a situation—taking delight in the afflictions, being greatly distracted and completely preoccupied with the affairs of this life, thinking that they are most important in one’s life—that is the result of not having thought or reflected on death and impermanence and the faults of cyclic existence in our past lives.

The solution is that from now on, we have to increase our dissatisfaction for cyclic existence. We have to strengthen our renunciation of cyclic existence by thinking about impermanence and the faults of cyclic existence.

Reflecting and meditating well on impermanence and the faults of cyclic existence is extremely important in particular for beginners. Reflecting and meditating on impermanence is critical and is very, very important. Although meditation on impermanence itself will not eliminate our anger and attachment completely, it is very effective in reducing the power and strength of our afflictions.

On top of that, if we can reflect on the shortcomings and faults of cyclic existence, of course, it will be even more beneficial and effective in reducing the power and the strength of our afflictions. This is extremely important and we should pay attention to this. We shouldn’t look down on these practices.

EXAM RESULTS OF MODULE 6

Khen Rinpoche: I have passed the exam paper back to you all. Well done. Whoever wrote an essay, well done! Some people wrote quite a lot, others less but that is OK.

We graded them A, B, C and D. If you were to ask what is A, B, C or D, then A is apple, B is boy. Then C is cat and D is dog. OK. Now you know what ABCD means. Anyway, it is just giving a label. My point is that if you have done your job, I am happy.

Whether you wrote ten pages or two pages, you put your hard work in there. That is my point. Whether you get good marks or not so good mark is not the point. You put your heart in your studies and you wrote what you know. That is important.

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