

## 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 Zwilling. © Wisdom Publications with permission granted for use in the FPMT Basic Program by Wisdom Publications.

### Lesson 22

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Taking on the suffering of others. The root text: Verses 104—105. Verse 104: Meaning of dependent arising. Verse 105: Life has no inner core.

#### TAKING ON THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS

*Student 1:* Last week, Khen Rinpoche asked us a question and I didn't understand the answer. My question is: Is it possible to take on the suffering of others and to top up their merit. I understand that this practice is instrumental in developing bodhicitta but does it really work?

*Khen Rinpoche:* That was my question. What is your answer?

*Student 1:* I think that it is not possible. I think that the suffering of people comes from their own karma. So giving them our merit is good for developing bodhicitta but does it really work?

*Khen Rinpoche:* You should ask a different question instead of asking me my own question! Maybe someone can give their idea. Then after that, I will talk. The senior students, come and give an answer to that question. Let us hear your view on this subject.

*Student 2:* On the one hand, we are always told that we have to experience whatever karma we ourselves have created. This is similar to the point that he (Student 1) has brought up.

But I believe—just on a belief level, without any reason—that someone who is spiritually highly accomplished like our lamas *are* able to take on our sufferings. The reason I say this is because I remembered when Geshe Lama Konchog passed away, he had manifested suffering from stomach cancer. It is hard to reconcile how someone who is so pure could still have this remnant karma of experiencing illness. Lama Konchog was very well known for his practice of Medicine Buddha. I believe that for someone who is spiritually accomplished, which oneself currently is not, then something happens. I don't know what happens but something happens.

Related to this question, I actually wanted to ask about *tonglen*. If we are not quite ready yet—we don't have the strong compassion and bodhicitta to take on the suffering of others because our self-cherishing is so strong and somehow there is an irrational part of our mind that thinks, "If I take on this suffering, will it really happen to me?"—can we just do half-tonglen for the time being? For instance, just doing the giving part—giving our good health, our merit to the person who needs it—until our mind is strong enough for us to do the taking part?

*Khen Rinpoche: My question is: You may give but others do not receive what you are giving. Then what is the point? That is the question at hand.*

*Student 2:* But if you have a very powerful karmic connection with that person, for example, the relationship we have with our parents, when we do prayers for them, they will receive the benefit of those prayers.

Is it related to this or are we just talking specifically of tonglen? (Addressing Student 1). If we are talking about doing prayers and so forth for our parents, because of our strong karmic connection, they do receive the merits of doing those practices. If not, what is the point of doing pujas?

Also, if we pray for the long life of our gurus, because of the power of this guru-disciple relationship, Lama Zopa had said many times before that there is definitely some benefit. Not because of the power of one's prayers per se but because of the power of the nature of the relationship. The prayers do have power but at our level, when we do them, they are not very powerful. But definitely because of the karmic connection, there is certainly some kind of effect.

Khen Rinpoche, can you please answer my question as to whether we can do half-tonglen until we are ready?

*Khen Rinpoche:* For the word *tong*, when you add the word *pa* behind it, it becomes empty.

*Student 3:* I disagree with Student 2 because one of the characteristics of karma is that you do not receive the results of what you did not create. There is a verse that says that the Buddha does not wash away sins with water. The Buddha had so much merit and he could have given that merit to anyone but we are still suffering. So the buddhas didn't take anything away and they didn't give us their merit.

At end of the day, you have to explain how dedication works. If not, then you will have a problem between dedications and auspiciousness verses.

At the end of the day, I don't think that we actually give away our merit per se. Maybe it is more like creating the condition for the other person's own positive karma to ripen. Likewise, the taking part of tonglen causes our own negative karma to ripen so that we could purify them more quickly or we create more merit because of that act of taking. Maybe that is why suffering manifests when one takes on the suffering of others. It is not due to one really taking on the suffering of other people per se.

*Student 4:* In *Liberation in the Palm of Your hand*, there is a famous story of a lama who is a great practitioner. He was teaching in a hall. Outside the hall, a dog was beaten by someone. At that time, this lama was actually practising tonglen and he absorbed the pain of the dog. This is what I understood from that story.

So my question is: How does tonglen benefit someone who is dying or is very sick? Let's say that we have a karmic connection with this particular patient. If we are practising tonglen beside this person, I think that at that moment, this person will definitely feel the loving kindness and the positive energy you are exuding. It will definitely give some calmness to that person.

I agree with Student 3 who said that we are ripening the person's positive karma. Especially during the time when a person is passing away, if we are able to practise tonglen, that will help the dying person to have a virtuous mind. With that virtuous state of mind, definitely it will induce his positive karma to ripen.

Secondly, how would tonglen benefit a particular person when we are using it to practise bodhicitta? If we are using tonglen to practise bodhicitta with a particular person, at that time of our practice and in the long run, it will help us to achieve enlightenment. Even if in this lifetime it does not benefit the person, definitely in future lifetimes, it will create a connection for us to benefit that person in another time.

*Khen Rinpoche (addressing Student 1): You got your answer?*

*Student 1:* I would like to hear your answer.

*Khen Rinpoche:* I have no answer.

Recently I mentioned some of the prayers that bodhisattvas make. Because of their bodhicitta, they have so much courage and determination to benefit sentient beings.

Even for the sake of one sentient being, they are willing to stay in the hell realms for a very long period of time just to benefit that sentient being. They make extensive prayers to achieve that but these prayers somehow don't work. They want to go to the lower realms to benefit even one sentient being. They pray to be able to achieve that but somehow they will never ever be reborn in the lower realms. Instead the force of their courage and determination to benefit sentient beings enable them to achieve enlightenment much more quickly.

Because of their courage and determination to benefit sentient beings, everything the bodhisattvas do for sentient beings, including all the merit that they have accumulated, they always dedicate them for the happiness of all sentient beings. When they make such prayers from the depths of their heart all the time, obviously it is going to make a difference in that they will achieve enlightenment more quickly.

So it is clear that through the practices of taking on the suffering of others and giving one's happiness and virtue to them, one can achieve enlightenment faster. Likewise,

one achieves enlightenment much more quickly when one dedicates sincerely all one's roots of virtue to other sentient beings. This much is clear.

If you look at Amitabha's pure land, Sukhavati, that is actually the result of Amitabha's bodhicitta that he generated while he was on the path. He dedicated all the merit that he had accumulated for the creation of that pure land. Sentient beings can also pray to be reborn in Amitabha's pure land, to create the cause to be reborn there. The fact that sentient beings can be reborn in Amitabha's pure land is the result of the dedication prayers made by Amitabha himself when he was on the path before he was enlightened.

In Lama Tsongkhapa's treatise, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, in the section on karma, he mentioned that from the side of the Buddha, he had created the cause for sentient beings to experience the results of whatever prayers they make. From sentient beings' own side, they have to create some of the causes in order to experience their effects. Therefore, dedicating one's merit to sentient beings and doing the practice of tonglen help one to achieve enlightenment more quickly. That being the case, needless to say, this will all be of great benefit to sentient beings.

With regard to the practice of taking on the suffering of others and whether that will actually happen in reality or not, if we talk about the bodhisattvas, because of their bodhicitta and the force of their courage and determination, they really mean it!

When they make prayers of wanting to go to the lowest of the hells to benefit even just one sentient being, they will do it. They make many of these prayers all the time from their heart but actually they won't end up there. In fact, because they make such prayers out of their very strong bodhicitta, it makes them achieve enlightenment even quicker.

So I think one would not experience the actual taking on of the sufferings of others even if one does the practice by visualising taking on their sufferings. Otherwise, we would have a difficult time reconciling this with the workings of karma as it is said that we cannot experience the result of actions that we didn't create. What I have said is an answer in general.

With a good motivation and attitude of benefitting the other person, when one shows a pleasant demeanour and speak in a polite and pleasant manner to another person, the other person appreciates this. If just a pleasant demeanour and pleasant words can have such a positive effect on another person, maybe one can also say that by having a good heart, a good motivation, a good attitude, and exuding positive energy from one's own side, can also have a positive effect on another person. They will definitely be the conditions for another person to transform their mind and generate a good heart.

I really wonder whether the dedication of merit means taking our merit as if it is something tangible, giving it to another person with the other person receiving it. Although it is difficult to explain, in general, it is certain that one can feel and experience the power of a positive intention and the power of prayers. With a

virtuous intention and a good heart, sincerely making prayers to benefit others, we can feel that they do have an effect on the beneficiary. They work but how they work is a big question but I don't think they work in the sense that the merit is being transferred to another person. I don't think so.

Our sincere and virtuous prayers to benefit another person act as the conditions for that person to generate virtuous thoughts. Maybe we can say that. Even if we cannot accept the idea of taking on the suffering of others, if we just want to do the giving part, there is no loss but only profit. If we can really dedicate our merit for the happiness of others sincerely from the heart with the intention to make this aspirational prayer, "Due to my merit, may this happen," then there is only benefit and no loss. We can send our good wishes and dedication by praying, for example, "Whatever happiness I have now, such as good health and enjoyments, may others also experience the same kind of happiness." Or when we are experiencing a particular problem or suffering, we can also wish from the heart, "May others not experience what I am experiencing."

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## MEANING OF DEPENDENT ARISING

Verse 104

Now hear this! Everything is dependently co-arisen. Being dependently co-arisen, they are not independent. Changing this way and that, they are false appearances and illusions; they are images that appear like a whirling firebrand.

The 'I' is the object of observation of self-grasping. Self-cherishing arises from that self-grasping. Similarly, all other phenomena are dependently arisen.

The Tibetan word *tendrel* literally means dependently related. When translated as dependently arisen, it means that all phenomena are dependently arisen. What does this mean? What are its implications? It means that all phenomena are mere appearances. This is the power of the words, dependently arisen, as it is implying that all phenomena are mere appearances and it means that all phenomena are empty of a self or empty of independent establishment. The words, dependently arisen, lead to the understanding that there isn't any phenomenon that can exist without depending on something else. This means that all phenomena are empty of self-establishment or independent establishment.

This is the power of the words, dependently arisen. They mean that phenomena are empty of self-establishment or empty of independent establishment. Everything is dependently established, dependently arisen. So all phenomena are just mere appearances. They do not exist as independently created or independently established phenomena.

*"Appearance eliminates the extreme of existence"*

Lama Tsongkhapa's *The Three Principles of the Path* states, "Furthermore, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence." This is according to the view of the Consequence Middle Way School (CMWS), the Prasangikas.

**The Particular Special Quality of the Prasangika View**

- [13] Furthermore, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence  
 And emptiness eliminates the extreme of non-existence.  
 If you realize how emptiness manifests in the manner of cause and  
 effect  
 Then you are not captivated by wrong notions holding extreme  
 views.

The words, dependently arisen, means that there is no independent existence. Whatever exists exists as dependently arisen and is a mere appearance. As such, the words, dependently arisen, “eliminates the extreme of existence” in that it clears away the possibility of phenomena existing from their own side. Lama Tsongkhapa is eliminating existence from its own side.

In *The Three Principles of the Path*, two extremes are mentioned—the extreme of existence and the extreme of non-existence.

How do appearances clear away the extreme of existence? This is what we are talking about here. Everything that exists is dependently arisen. The words, dependently arisen, means that nothing exists on its own independent of other factors. There is no such self-establishment or independent establishment.

Dependently arisen means empty of independent establishment. This means phenomena exist but they exist as dependently arisen. Phenomena are mere appearances. If phenomena are mere appearances, this means that phenomena do not exist from their own side. They do not exist in and of themselves. This is how “appearance eliminates the extreme of existence.”

This is why the words, dependent arising (also translated as dependent origination), are used and are emphasised in Lama Tsongkhapa’s presentation of the ultimate nature of reality. Instead of using the word, emptiness, from the very beginning, he stressed approaching the topic of emptiness through the understanding of dependent arising. This is because if we were to start off with just focussing on emptiness, many people will make the mistake of thinking that emptiness means non-existence, that nothing exists. This is why Lama Tsongkhapa emphasised seeking the view through dependent arising.

*“Emptiness eliminates the extreme of non-existence”*

The same verse in *The Three Principles of the Path* also states, “Emptiness eliminates the extreme of non-existence.” The word, emptiness, means the absence or the lack of self-establishment or independent establishment. If ‘empty’ means being empty of independent establishment—that is there isn’t any phenomenon in existence that can exist independently without depending on any other factor—what this implies is that everything that exists is dependently established, i.e., that there is dependent establishment. So there is something there. Phenomena do exist. They exist as dependently established. This is why the correct understanding of emptiness “eliminates the extreme of non-existence” or the extreme of annihilation (or nihilism). It prevents one from generating the wrong view of emptiness to mean that there is nothing there at all.

So this is the meaning of dependent arising. The word, *tendrel*, dependently arisen, means what I have just said.

#### *Different levels of dependent arising*

There are different levels of meaning behind the word, *tendrel*, or dependent arising. There are coarse levels of meaning and there are subtle levels of meaning.

- The coarse meaning of dependent arising is found in the explanations of the Hinayana tenets, the Great Exposition School (GES) and the Sutra School (SS). They explain dependent arising or dependent origination in terms of dependence on a cause.
- The explanation of dependent arising becomes subtler and more profound when we look at the presentation of the Mahayana tenets. There is the explanation of dependent arising in terms of dependence on parts—the concept of the whole being dependent on its parts, how parts come together to constitute a whole and so forth.
- The most profound explanation of dependent arising is found in the CMWS in that phenomena exist in mere name, i.e., they are dependently designated. Phenomena depend on their basis of designation, are dependently designated and exist in mere name.

Dependent arising means that there is no self-institution. The meaning of dependent arising cannot accommodate the meaning of self-institution. The most subtle meaning of dependent arising is that nothing can exist in and of itself. There is no self-establishment; things are not self-instituted. This applies to everything that exists, including ourselves, the 'I', the self or the person.

But if we were to look at our own experience, how do we think about ourselves? How do we exist? We have the appearance and the belief that we, the 'I', the self, the person, is able to stand on its own two feet, is created in and of itself. There is something there that is independent of anything else. This is the self-instituted 'I'. While in reality there isn't such a phenomenon, nevertheless we have that experience, believing that the 'I' is self-instituted, that it exists in and of itself.

#### *Looking for the imputed object*

Now we need to check whether we really exist in that way or not. For example, just looking at ourselves, we are human beings. Why do we consider ourselves to be human beings? The words, human being, are related to the human body that we have. On the basis of having a human body with this particular makeup of human flesh, skin, blood and so forth, i.e., this basis of designation, therefore, we designate ourselves to be human beings. But when we look for the human being in this body, where is this human being? Obviously it is not the blood, not the flesh, not the bones and not the skin.

We talk about the 'I', the person. In this lifetime, we are human beings. But this identity as a human being, this specific 'I', this specific person, is only limited to this lifetime because it exists in relation to the human body that we have. Based on this human body, we designate 'human being' and we have this identity as a human being.

But when this lifetime comes to an end, this specific identity as a human being ceases to exist.

Does the part of us that is a human being go on to the next life? That is why we need to differentiate between the specific identity of one particular lifetime and the person that pervades all the lifetime, i.e., the person that has existed from beginningless lifetimes. Can you see the difference?

There is an 'I' that goes to the hell realms and there is an 'I' that goes on to enlightenment. The specific identity related to a specific lifetime—such as 'I' being a human being, being a specific person at a specific time related to this human body—ceases to exist when the specific lifetime comes to an end.

For example, let's take the situation that you are in now. You are now sitting here and listening to the teachings. There is an 'I' that is listening to the Dharma but this 'I' will cease to exist later on when you are not listening to the Dharma, when the class comes to an end.

The discussion here pertains to the fact that the 'I', the person and everything else—nothing is established from its own side. If you look for the 'I' of this life, the person in this body, you will not be able to find it. The blood is not the 'I'. The flesh is not the 'I'. The bones are not the 'I'. The skin is not the 'I'. None of these things is the 'I'.

This is very interesting. If you look for the 'I' within its basis of designation, the body and mind, you cannot find the 'I' there. You cannot find any part of it that is the 'I'. Nor will you be able to find an 'I' that exists *outside* of the body and mind, that is of a different entity from the body and mind. So it is not this and it is not that.

Although you cannot find the person, the 'I' within the body and mind or outside of the body and mind, yet we cannot say that the 'I' does not exist. If we were to say that, that would go against common knowledge and worldly convention. The 'I' does exist but it is *not* the body and mind nor is it different from the body and mind.

Although you cannot find the 'I' within the basis of designation nor is there an 'I' that is separate from the body and mind, yet you know that there is an 'I'. Obviously there is a person there. The person definitely exists. Therefore, the conclusion from the presentation of the CMWS is that while the 'I' does not exist from its own side, the 'I' does exist. How does it exist? It exists in mere name, as something that is dependently designated, i.e., designated in dependence upon the basis of designation.

If you really think about this, this is about the only answer that you can come up with. This is the reality. No matter how you think about this, your answer will not transcend this. This is what you would have to say. But this is the most difficult point and the most difficult thing to understand and to realise—this uncommon position of the CMWS that nothing exists from its own side, that nothing exists from the side of the basis of designation:

- If you look within the basis of designation, you will not be able to find the imputed object.
- Nor can you find it outside of the basis of designation.



- Yet the thing exists. How does it exist?
- It exists in mere name and is dependently designated in relation to the basis of designation.

All the other Buddhist tenets—starting from the Autonomy Middle Way School (AMWS), the Mind Only School (MOS), the Sutra School (SS) and the Great Exposition School (GES)—say that there is definitely something that you can point to that is the ‘I’. Anything that exists, including the ‘I’, must exist by way of its own character. There is something there from its own side. Basically what they are trying to say is that if you look for the imputed object, you will be able to find it among the basis of designation. There is something among the basis of designation that you can point to. This is what everybody else says and believes in.

But the Prasangikas, the CMWS, assert, “No, it is not like that.” They show through their own reasoning why this cannot be the case.

When you hear the word, selflessness, you need to understand what does not exist. Selflessness is the lack of a self. What it means is that the self that is apprehended by the apprehension of a self, that self does not exist.

We have this apprehension of a self, self-grasping. The object of this mind is the self. We must think of the meaning of the word, self, in its philosophical context, not the English term. Selflessness means that the self that is apprehended by self-grasping does not exist. For example, there is an apprehension of a self of person. What is this mind apprehending? This mind is grasping at an inherently existent person. This inherently existent person that is being grasped by self-grasping does not exist.

We use these terms—the self, the person, the ‘I’. It is obvious that the self exists, the person exists, the ‘I’ exists. It is important to understand that we exist and not to confuse this and mix this up with what we think is the meaning of selflessness.

Usually, when people hear the word, selflessness, they think that the self doesn’t exist, the person doesn’t exist, the ‘I’ doesn’t exist. But that is not what it means. The self exists, the person exists, the ‘I’ exists. The self in the word, selflessness, refers to the self or ‘I’ that is grasped by our ignorance, ignorance being the apprehension of a self, i.e., self-grasping. It is holding on to something and that thing that is held on to or grasped by ignorance is the self in the word, selflessness. That self does *not* exist. This is what selflessness means. In general, it doesn’t mean that there is no self, no person, no ‘I’. The object of observation of self-grasping does exist. This is something we must be clear about.

What is the object of observation of ignorance? There is this mind—the apprehension of a self. What is it focussing on? The object of observation is the ‘I’ that exists. The conventionally existent ‘I’ does exist. Ignorance focusses on the conventionally existent ‘I’, but it apprehends the conventionally existent ‘I’ to be inherently existent, i.e., existing from its own side, when that ‘I’ does *not* exist in that way.

*Another approach—the difference between self-cherishing and self-grasping*

We need to think about the difference between self-cherishing and self-grasping. The object of observation of self-grasping is the 'I' that exists but it apprehends that 'I' to be inherently existent, to exist by way of its own character or existing from its own side. This is self-grasping.

When one realises emptiness directly, from the perspective of that consciousness, it realises that there is no inherently existent 'I', i.e., it realises the emptiness of an inherently existent 'I'. That realisation also induces the understanding that the 'I' does exist conventionally.

You will recall from our earlier discussions that those practitioners who have achieved liberation from cyclic existence and have become arhats have eliminated their self-grasping. But they still have self-cherishing. Without self-grasping, as such, the arhat doesn't have the self-cherishing that apprehends the inherently existent self as the basis, holding that self to be the most important thing in the world.

The arhat has no more self-grasping, but he still has self-cherishing. So what is the basis for his self-cherishing? He is focussing on the conventionally existent 'I', the 'I' that does exist and considers that 'I' to be the most important thing in the world, more important than everybody else. If you think about it in this way, then you can have an idea of how arhats can still have self-cherishing.

Because nothing is self-instituted, therefore phenomena do undergo change like the verse says, "Changing this way and that."

The talk of the town now is the haze.<sup>1</sup> How does the haze appear to us? It appears as if it will never ever go away as it has been there for such a long time. This is what we believe. But weather conditions do change. Because of a change in wind direction, the haze goes away, the situation improves and we see the clear sky again.

Then how do that nice weather and clear sky appear to us? Again they appear as if there is something there from their own side. They appear as if they will always be like that. Whatever appears to us always appears as if it will always be like that, that there is something right there from its own side.

Air pollution and clear weather happen because of the sky that makes them possible. That sky, that space is the basis. What is being obscured? It is the sky.

What is it that is clear? Again it is the sky itself.

What makes nice weather or a clear sky possible is the nature of the sky itself. By nature the sky is clear. It is empty. It is a vacuity. This is the analogy. Likewise, phenomena do not exist inherently.

- Because phenomena are empty of existing inherently, therefore, change is possible.
- Because things don't exist in and of themselves, therefore change is possible.

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<sup>1</sup> This is referring to the haze caused by the burning of peat fires in Indonesia.

- Because phenomena are dependently arisen, they are empty of existing inherently.
- Because things do not exist inherently, therefore there are a whole variety of appearances.

“They are images that appear like a whirling firebrand”: If you take a stick, light it up and twirl it around very quickly, it looks as if there is this “whirling firebrand.” It looks like there is a spinning wheel that is on fire. Although in reality there isn’t any spinning firebrand, nevertheless there is such an appearance. Likewise, although phenomena do not exist from their own side, phenomena *appear* to be truly existent. Just as there is no spinning firebrand, nevertheless, there is an appearance of a spinning firebrand. Phenomena exist but as a mere appearance.

### LIFE HAS NO INNER CORE

Verse 105

Like the plantain tree, life has no inner core. Like a bubble, a lifetime has no inner core. Like a mist, it dissipates upon close examination. Like a mirage, it is beautiful from afar. Like a reflection in a mirror, it seems as if it were really true. Like clouds and fog, it seems as if it were really stable.

“The plantain tree” looks very sturdy from the outside, as if it has a very solid core. It looks as if it will last forever. But you chop it down, it is actually hollow. There is nothing inside. Likewise, although our life-force appears to be very stable, as if we will live for a very long time, actually this is not the case. It is just a matter of some conditions coming together and we are dead.

Our life-force is also similar to “a bubble.” A bubble looks very nice and it seems as if it can remain for a long time. But actually that is not the case.

These analogies serve to illustrate the fact that there is nothing concrete about our existence, including the self, the person and the ‘I’. Although they appear to be truly existent and we believe them to be so, in reality, that is not the case.

If you observe “a mist” or a fog from afar, it looks as if there is something there, but when you are in the midst of the mist or fog, you won’t see them. Likewise, when we look at how the self, the person, the ‘I’ appear to us—if we just look at it from the level of mere appearance without further analysis or investigation—there is this appearance of something there, something real. But if we were to check in detail and analyse further—what is this ‘I’ and where is it?—definitely, we won’t find it. What we believe to be so solid earlier dissipates. We lose that sense of concrete identity. When we look for the ‘I’, it cannot be found.

“A mirage” is created under certain weather conditions. Under extreme heat, sometimes we get this appearance of a body of water. While there isn’t any body of water there, nevertheless there is this appearance of a body of water. Like a mirage, all phenomena arise from causes and conditions. We then affix to them descriptions such as beautiful and attractive. Yes, there are attractive, pleasant and beautiful

objects and phenomena, but they are not inherently beautiful. They are not beautiful from their own side. Rather the existence of a beautiful object is only dependent on causes and conditions. Like a mirage that does not exist in the way it appears, likewise, although there are phenomena that appear to us to be beautiful, these are just mere appearances. There is no real inherently existent beauty in them.

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### **EXAMINATION FOR THIS MODULE**

*Khen Rinpoche: If you want the exam after the new year, please put up your hand. Do you want the exam this Sunday or after the new year?*

*For those who really want to study, the best time is after new year.*

*If you don't want to study, then it is this Sunday.*

*(Majority of students vote for after new year).*

*You win. It is very good that you want to take the exam after the new year. That is wonderful.*

*The whole point is that you want to study. It is not postponing the exam to a later date. I don't think so. That is very good. So we will do it after the new year.*

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