

KHENPO'S
TALKS

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

COMPASSION AND HAPPINESS
THE VIEW OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM



KHENPO 
SODARGYE

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**Compassion and Happiness:
The View of Tibetan Buddhism**

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Khenpo Sodargye

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COMPASSION AND HAPPINESS:
THE VIEW OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

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HOST

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the University of Melbourne for this special seminar, "Compassion and Happiness: The View of Tibetan Buddhism." We are honored to have the distinguished Khenpo Sodargye Rinpoche as our speaker today. At this time, please rise and join me in giving him a warm round of applause as we welcome him.

It is now my pleasure to invite Lydia Brown, President of the University of Melbourne Buddhist Studies Society, to deliver a welcome address.

DR. LYDIA BROWN

On behalf of the University of Melbourne, it is my great pleasure to welcome the venerable Khenpo Sodargye to our campus.

Khenpo Sodargye is a globally influential figure in Tibetan Buddhism. He serves as the chief monk at the Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy in Sichuan, China—the world’s largest Buddhist academy. Khenpo Sodargye has dedicated himself to translating Tibetan Buddhist texts into Chinese and has published more than 100 books on Buddhism, including his recent bestseller, *Living Through Suffering*. Through his translations and scholarly work, he has made profound Buddhist wisdom accessible to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people in China and around the world. In doing so, he has touched countless hearts and helped foster a path of peace and happiness in people’s lives.

A cornerstone of Khenpo Sodargye’s recent work has been his engagement with leading universities worldwide, including Peking University, Columbia, and Harvard. Through these dialogues, he has engaged with prominent academics on pressing

issues of our time, such as sustainable development, the science of spirituality, and the pursuit of a meaningful life.

Through these efforts, Khenpo Sodargye has become a leading voice in modern Buddhism, teaching a practice that is relevant to people in both contemporary Asia and the West. His work advocates for building connections across cultures and disciplines to promote the happiness and flourishing of individuals and society as a whole.

Today, Khenpo Sodargye will speak to us on the topic of compassion and happiness. On behalf of the University of Melbourne and the University of Melbourne Buddhist Studies Society, I warmly welcome Khenpo Sodargye and thank him for being here with us.

KHENPO SODARGYE RINPOCHE

First and foremost, I would like to thank President Lydia Brown and everyone here today. Through a fortunate convergence of circumstances, we have this precious opportunity to gather for meaningful dialogue.

Today's lecture will be delivered primarily in Chinese with English interpretation. While I could have spoken in Tibetan, since our audience today includes many Westerners and Han Chinese, we've chosen this format to ensure everyone can follow along comfortably.

I am a Buddhist from Serta, a beautiful Tibetan region near the Himalayas, situated at approximately 4,000 meters above sea level. Yesterday, I calculated that Serta lies about 9,466 kilometers from Melbourne. For someone like me who lives on the plateau, traveling here feels like crossing a vast ocean to reach a distant island.

Despite the apparent differences between East and West, or between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres—whether in culture, customs, or appearance—I believe we share something

fundamental: the universal desire for happiness. I trust that everyone here today, regardless of background, seeks physical and mental well-being, material stability, and spiritual fulfillment. With this common ground as our foundation, I am confident that today's exchange will prove meaningful for all of us.

Today, we will explore the Tibetan Buddhist perspective on compassion and happiness. Some of you may not identify as Buddhists, but this doesn't matter. Why? Because we all share the same fundamental aspiration—the pursuit of happiness—and I believe Buddhism offers valuable insights for fulfilling this universal desire. Can those who don't follow Buddhist teachings still benefit from them? Absolutely.

Buddhism can be understood as a comprehensive discipline. For practitioners, it represents the path to enlightenment; for scholars, it offers profound intellectual inquiry; and for artists, it provides transcendent inspiration. Across all walks of life, its teachings nourish both mind and spirit.

I have always believed that Buddhism embodies human wisdom and represents the finest of human culture. It serves as a profound spiritual medicine that can be embraced in many ways. Like a powerful remedy, it can be taken as daily sustenance, as nourishment for growth, or as a cure for suffering. Though its

applications vary, everyone can benefit from its insights, as it addresses universal human needs.

This is why I frequently speak at schools, corporations, and other secular venues—to share Buddhist wisdom. My intention is not to promote Buddhism as a religion, but rather to offer essential concepts and teachings that can benefit everyone, regardless of their spiritual background.

At the heart of these teachings lie fundamental human values that transcend the boundaries between East and West. We all share the same basic aspiration: the pursuit of happiness and well-being. This universal truth guides my approach wherever I speak. I see no need to repackage or water down Buddhist wisdom; instead, I present it authentically, trusting that genuine insights about life will resonate with people everywhere. When we understand the true nature of reality, we empower ourselves to reach our highest potential and live with greater purpose and clarity. This understanding belongs not to any single tradition—it is the birthright of all humanity.

SAFEGUARDING ENDANGERED CULTURAL HERITAGE

In our contemporary era, science and technology advance at breathtaking speed, bringing countless conveniences to our daily lives. Yet simultaneously, much of our precious traditional culture is quietly slipping into oblivion.

I recall an American luminary who once observed: “With today’s highly advanced science and technology, people across the world have become as close as neighbors. Yet the moral ideal of brotherhood remains elusive.” This lament came from an era far less interconnected than our own, when transportation and communication systems were vastly more limited. Today, technology has indeed reached every corner of the globe, enabling conversations across continents as if we stood side by side—a remarkable achievement. Yet beneath this progress lies a subtle concern: many invaluable cultures, philosophies, and wisdom traditions from our collective history are gradually fading away, like footprints erased by the tide of modernity.

In these circumstances, it is essential that young people pursue scientific knowledge while simultaneously preserving traditional culture. Traditional culture represents a reservoir of spiritual wealth that embodies humanity’s accumulated wisdom. It

may well be the nourishment our world needs most—a legacy that transcends temporal boundaries and can guide future generations toward harmony and deeper understanding.



COMPASSION: THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS

1 The Blessings of Compassion

The compassion I speak of differs fundamentally from the love commonly discussed in everyday life. Common love tends to be self-centered, often coming with expectations—we give with strings attached or offer help with hidden motives. Compassion, particularly in the Buddhist tradition, represents something far nobler: a state of unconditional care and dedication, free from self-interest.

When our hearts lack compassion and remain ruled by selfishness, even our pursuit of happiness becomes entangled with suffering. Where ego dominates, attachment leads to clinging, and clinging inevitably brings pain.

This insight extends beyond Buddhist philosophy. Consider what would happen if everyone acted purely from self-interest. The prospect is deeply troubling. Those driven by ego will endlessly compete for resources, yet the Earth's bounty is finite—it cannot satisfy unlimited greed. Even if one generation achieves abundance, the cost to future generations becomes insurmountable. To care only for ourselves while ignoring others plants the seeds of collective destruction.

Why do so many people today struggle with fear, worry, and anxiety? Once again, selfishness lies at the root. When we're preoccupied with self-preservation, we view others—especially perceived “rivals”—with suspicion or disdain. By contrast, cultivating compassion and genuine concern for others dissolves these barriers. In a compassionate heart, every encounter becomes a source of joy, as relationships transform from battlegrounds of competition into opportunities for mutual support.

As Shakespeare wisely observed,

The quality of mercy is not strained.

... It is twice blest;

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

This truth resonates universally, as we can all witness in our daily lives. How, then, do we develop such compassion? Just as physical strength grows through training, the compassionate mind develops through spiritual practice. While our body's capabilities are limited by flesh and bone, the mind's potential is boundless. With deliberate cultivation, it can evolve into infinite loving-kindness.

2 Smiles from Compassion

When I first visited Australia, people often asked about my impressions. I would tell them, “In many ways, this land is like paradise on earth. While not the world’s wealthiest nation, its people possess a profound sense of inner contentment and tranquility.”

However, I must add a gentle caveat: don’t become too comfortable just yet! Despite all your material comforts, your inner joy might still lag behind that of a poor Tibetan. I say this not to boast, but to share what I’ve witnessed over decades in the Land of Tibet: the radiant inner happiness of its people, even amid material hardship and adversity. This resilience and joy, I believe, stems from the seeds of compassion that Buddhist teachings have planted in Tibetan culture—a spiritual cultivation that has taken deep root and flourished, transforming lives from within.

In Tibetan regions, those imbued with compassion generally fall into two groups. The first consists of individuals who may not have received extensive formal education and therefore might not engage deeply with advanced philosophical doctrines. Yet, because Buddhism has been woven into Tibetan life for

centuries, they naturally embody compassion from childhood, sincerely aspiring to benefit all sentient beings.

Many Tibetans, when lighting butter lamps, make heartfelt vows like: “May this lamp’s light kindle wisdom and compassion while dispelling darkness and selfishness from all hearts.” When turning prayer wheels, they pray: “May loving-kindness ripple outward endlessly, spreading throughout the world and flowing from generation to generation.” While I cannot claim this is universal among all Tibetans, it remains a deeply rooted practice for a significant portion of the population.

In Tibetan regions, visitors from metropolitan areas often take photographs of Tibetans turning prayer wheels—a practice that is indeed worthy of appreciation. Yet I sometimes wonder: if we had a “camera” capable of capturing the intangible—one with ultra-high resolution for the spiritual realm—how wonderful it would be to reveal the profound compassion residing in Tibetan hearts.

Many have witnessed Tibetan pilgrims journeying to sacred sites like Lhasa, prostrating every three steps while making great vows for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is not empty ritual, but a living expression of compassion in daily life.

There exists another group who come to deeply appreciate the importance of compassion and master its cultivation through studying Buddhist philosophy or engaging in meditative practice. These individuals are able to use profound reasoning to uncover the great love inherent within the human heart—a selfless, boundless compassion that dwells within us all, waiting to be realized.

Ultimately, whether compassion emerges from cultural inheritance or deliberate cultivation, its essence remains the same: a heart free from division, radiating loving-kindness. This is the profound truth that transcends all external forms—a reality deserving of reverence within every human heart.

3 The Pith Instruction for Cultivating Compassion

In the annals of Tibetan Buddhist history, there lived a renowned geshe named Potowa. When a woman approached him asking how to cultivate compassion, Geshe Potowa replied: “As you cherish your own son, so cherish all sentient beings. This is the path to cultivating compassion.”

To cultivate compassion, we begin by reflecting on those dearest to us, then gradually extending that same care to all beings.

While this may seem arduous—and indeed challenges us initially—the mind possesses remarkable malleability. Like the body strengthened through exercise, the mind can be transformed through intentional cultivation.

Over time, compassion can grow to embrace all sentient beings, nurturing unconditional love for every person and creature, as tender as our feelings for our own child or dearest friend. This expansion of the heart isn't merely an aspiration—it is an attainable reality.

The emotions and beliefs that shape our daily lives are far more fluid than we we may assume. Modern neuroscience has revealed the brain's neuroplasticity—its capacity for structural and functional transformation through learning and experience. Similarly, the mind can be cultivated toward virtue, a process validated not merely by faith but by observable human experience.

This is no fantasy; it is grounded in real-world experience. Both laypersons and monastics, believers and non-believers alike, have diminished self-attachment and cultivated altruism through systematic compassion practice. Such transformation can unfold within surprisingly brief periods.

Imagine a world rooted in compassion: family conflicts—those quiet, persistent “domestic civil wars” —would naturally dissolve. Have you witnessed such strife in your own circles? I know individuals whose lives remain severed from peace by these very tensions.

At their core, most human conflicts stem from selfishness. Cultivating compassion softens the heart, dissolving ego and nurturing selflessness. In any circumstance, a compassionate mind becomes a wellspring of lasting joy—accessible to all who tend it.



TWO DIMENSIONS OF HAPPINESS

Conceptions of happiness vary profoundly across humanity. For some, it resides in material abundance; for others, in romantic fulfillment. Some seek it through sensory pleasures—drinking, smoking, or substance use—while a tragic few believe it lies beyond the threshold of life itself.

The eminent French physicist and philosopher Blaise Pascal once wrote: “All men seek happiness. This is without exception... This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.” This underscores a universal truth: however divergent our paths, all are rooted in the pursuit of happiness. Every choice humanity makes ultimately stems from this fundamental desire.

What, then, is this elusive happiness we seek? Henri Bergson, the 1927 Nobel laureate in Literature, noted that humanity’s great thinkers have offered countless definitions of happiness, each shaped by their unique perspectives. These wise scholars, he observed, have resisted any rigid codification.

Buddhism, however, offers crystalline clarity: happiness exists in two forms. The first is temporary—the fleeting joys of sensory

pleasure and material gain. The second is ultimate—the unshakable peace of liberation, transcending both impermanence and the grasping self. These two dimensions—transient and timeless—illuminate the path from cyclical suffering to authentic freedom.

In Buddhist teaching, temporary happiness refers to the fleeting satisfaction that arises from external conditions—sensory pleasures or the temporary relief from pain. This joy depends entirely on impermanent circumstances; when its external foundations crumble, the happiness vanishes with them.

Consider those who take pride in their youth, declaring, “I am young and beautiful.” Inevitably, the passage of time brings aging and suffering, for no one can escape the universal law of impermanence. Others boast of great wealth, only to be devastated when fortunes decline. Social status proves equally ephemeral—the winds of change can reduce prominence to obscurity, leaving only despair. Some seek happiness in alcohol, confronting voidness when sober; others rely on companionship, succumbing to anxiety when separated.

Today, many mistake these fleeting pleasures for genuine happiness. Yet such gratification is as transitory as a flash of lightning or a smartphone battery that drains in moments—offering brief

comfort but ultimately leaving one unfulfilled. I've met wealthy people from mainland China who buy high-rise apartments, believing that the higher the floor, the greater their happiness. Tragically, those same high windows sometimes become escape routes for those in despair.

Seeking lasting contentment in external things is a futile endeavor, like pushing a boulder uphill only to watch it roll back down. Many believe happiness comes from family, wealth, loved ones, or beautiful possessions—convinced these make them fortunate. But when they lose these things or face obstacles in pursuing them, suffering inevitably follows. Unfortunately, most people fail to recognize this fundamental truth.

Genuine happiness springs from cultivating inner compassion and altruism through meditation and spiritual realization. This happiness remains steady regardless of external circumstances—whether people or possessions come or go, the joy persists. This stable state of mind is what we truly need to cultivate.

Ultimate happiness is a form of joy that is both enduring and unshakeable. It remains steadfast through all of life's changes—whether we face triumph or defeat, prosperity or decline, youth or old age, wealth or poverty—maintaining an abiding sense of joy.

This happiness cannot be purchased or acquired through material means; it must be cultivated from within, through spiritual practice and insight.

My teacher, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, wrote in his later years: “As I grow older, my happiness only deepens. Whether in life or death, I abide in spiritual practice, profoundly joyful.” This is a state of realization that many cannot yet imagine. Even those who enjoy success today may find themselves consumed by worry tomorrow.

Speaking personally, while I have not attained my teacher’s level of realization, I remember my early years as a monk when I was preoccupied with concerns about reputation and gain. Through consistent practice over time, I’ve developed greater detachment, and my mind now rests in deeper peace and contentment.

I believe we should all cultivate compassion and the understanding of emptiness through personal practice. Even setting aside the benefits to all beings and the world, this brings immeasurable value to our own lives and well-being. Such spiritual realization offers rewards that far surpass any luxury car or grand mansion.

In essence, the effort to fulfill ourselves through countless external pursuits is both exhausting and ultimately meaningless. I sincerely hope that in this brief and transient life, more people will come to expand their hearts and awaken to a deeper awareness—transforming those around them into beloved companions, and perceiving the world free from division and discord. Such a state of being embodies the truest and most meaningful form of happiness we can experience.

Not everyone may be ready to fully embrace this kind of loving-kindness and compassion. Yet even so, through the quiet, gradual transmission of love—drop by drop, moment by moment—we can contribute something deeply meaningful to the whole of humanity.

Let us hold onto the hope that humanity will not remain trapped in selfish attachment, for such self-centeredness only narrows our inner and outer worlds. Even in an age blessed with advanced transportation and communication, if we remain imprisoned in self-centeredness, none of us will truly flourish or discover authentic happiness.

Finally, I wish to share a verse that rests close to my heart, composed by the great Indian master Shantideva. Let us together invoke this noble aspiration: may the precious and supreme

bodhicitta arise where it has not yet taken birth; where it has already arisen, may it never decline, but continue to grow ever stronger, and flourish without end.

Allow me now to recite it in Tibetan:

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་མཚོག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །

changchub semchok rinpoché

May bodhicitta, precious and sublime,

མ་སྐྱེས་པ་ནམས་སྐྱེ་གུར་ཅིག །

makyepa nam kyékyur chik

Arise where it has not yet arisen;

སྐྱེས་པ་ཉམས་པ་མེད་པར་ཡང་། །།

kyepa nyampa mepar yang

And where it has arisen, may it never fail,

གོང་ནས་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ་བར་ཤོག །

kongné kongtu phelwar sho

***But rather grow and flourish, ever-increasing
forever.***



QUESTION AND ANSWER

HOST We will now open the floor for questions. Who would like to begin? Let's start with the lady in the front, please.

QUESTION 1 If one cultivates compassion toward all beings and phenomena, does this not give rise to attachment? And when those beings perish or those phenomena cease to exist, will this not inevitably lead to suffering?

KHENPO SODARGYE Suffering does not arise from compassion, for every positive and virtuous thought carries unimaginable power behind it. We often believe that depending on others for protection is the only way to feel secure—a mindset that is both naive and fragile. Since arriving here, I've noticed that many of your homes lack security bars or fences, yet everyone feels perfectly safe. This serves as a compelling example: where altruism flourishes, the world naturally responds with kindness, and inner happiness continuously grows. Just recently, a British newspaper reported that performing an act of kindness sustains happiness for up to 24 days—powerful evidence of compassion's lasting effects.

QUESTION 2 Within the human heart, both compassion and hatred coexist. Which reflects the mind's true nature?

KHENPO SODARGYE The ancient Indian scholar Dharmakirti analyzed this deeply: negative states like hatred and jealousy are fleeting, while great compassion is the mind's inherent essence. Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated compassion through countless lifetimes and eons, ultimately achieving boundless enlightenment—a living testament to compassion's primacy.

Hatred cannot endure; it flares for a time and then subsides to the ordinary state. But once compassion is awakened, it is irreversible. Even the hardest heart can be transformed through spiritual practice, even becoming a sage. Therefore, compassion is the true nature of human beings.

QUESTION 3 What are the most effective ways to support a loved one suffering from physical pain?

KHENPO SODARGYE From a Buddhist perspective, physical suffering often stems from karmic causes, past or present. While medical care is essential, family support holds profound healing power. For those with faith, invoking spiritual forces through prayer and intention can complement treatment.

QUESTION 4 How much can material progress and spiritual education help alleviate modern stress and suffering?

KHENPO SODARGYE Material progress is vital for basic well-being, but once fundamental needs are met, cultivating contentment becomes paramount. Buddhist teachings remind us that unchecked greed leads to suffering and mental strain.

For example, owning multiple cars may symbolize prosperity, but also brings more worries—fuel, maintenance, parking. Each material gain can amplify spiritual burden. Thus, beyond material accumulation, spiritual development offers a deeper remedy for modern distress.

QUESTION 5 Buddhism emphasizes that all beings are fundamentally equal. Should this understanding of equality be integrated when practicing loving-kindness?

KHENPO SODARGYE Absolutely. It is an undeniable truth that all human lives are fundamentally equal. Moreover, animal lives are no different from human lives, for they too experience suffering and joy. Therefore, cultivating compassion for all sentient beings is entirely reasonable and justified.

Conversely, any claim that human lives are unequal, or that humans and animals differ in their fundamental worth—suggesting that some lives may be disregarded or trampled upon—is utterly untenable and lacks any rational foundation.

QUESTION 6 You smiled so serenely at one point. What were you smiling about? Was it just a simple smile?

KHENPO SODARGYE The reason I smiled during the talk was quite coincidental. As I was speaking, I noticed a young man in this row over here had fallen asleep. That made me smile. A little later, in the middle section, a middle aged man nodded off. Then, looking over to that side, I saw an elderly person was also asleep. So I found it rather amusing—what a curious coincidence!

QUESTION 7 In Western culture, it seems common for people to experience a certain degree of self-hatred. I wonder how one can cultivate self-love and allow oneself to experience joy in such circumstances.

KHENPO SODARGYE From childhood to old age, from dawn to dusk, whether we're studying, working, or engaged in any other activity, we act primarily for ourselves—all motivated by

self-love. It would be quite difficult to find instances where we don't love ourselves.

QUESTION 8 In this chaotic world filled with wars, natural disasters, and terrorism, how can we protect ourselves and others?

KHENPO SODARGYE Nowadays, warfare and terrorist attacks do exist. However, from an overall perspective, the 21st century is relatively peaceful compared to previous eras. In the 19th and 20th centuries, virtually all nations relied on weapons and violence to assert their authority and protect their interests. Now, we can say that humanity has taken significant steps forward on the path of progress.

As for how we should respond, I recall Dr. Arnold Toynbee's observation that humanity in the 21st century would do well to follow Mahayana Buddhism and Confucian-Mencian thought. If we can spread love and compassion across different social groups and communities, many instances of terrorism and warfare would naturally dissolve. Even if conflicts arise in isolated areas, their harm would be considerably limited.

For personal protection, love is paramount. Personally, I believe cultivating compassion offers the best protection. Beyond that, we need no other amulets or protective measures.

QUESTION 9 These days, more and more people are getting divorced. Regarding marriage, I'd like to ask, for us young people, what is the right mindset to hold with one's partner before getting married, so that the marriage can be truly sound and last with enduring sweetness?

KHENPO SODARGYE I may be the least qualified person here to answer this question, but I'll still try to offer a few theoretical, contemplative reflections.

You've raised a genuinely pressing concern. Recent reports from mainland China indicate that one city has reached a divorce rate of 49.8%. Though unverified, such statistics reflect a profound collective anxiety about modern relationships.

I've noticed many couples make arrangements in advance—deciding whose name the house and car will be registered under. From day one there's a guardedness, a defensive posture that perhaps betrays a lack of trust.

At a Tibetan wedding I attended, the bride and groom collected gifts separately from their own families. When I asked why,

they said, "It will be simpler if we divorce." The groom added, "If we separate later, it'll be more convenient." "But it's your first day!" I blurted out. They replied, "This is normal now. In cities, people do it this way. There might be financial disputes later, so it's better to keep things separate from the start."

So what mindset might better guide young people? Buddhist teaching emphasizes impermanence: everything, including relationships, is transient and subject to change. Emotions are especially unstable. If, one day, affection fades, at least refrain from blame or harm.

My teacher, who passed away ten years ago, visited Guilin in 1995. A woman came to him in tears: "My family is about to divorce—what should I do?" He answered, almost cheerfully, "Then divorce. That's fine." She left dissatisfied, feeling her question hadn't been properly addressed. Yet the teaching illustrates a fundamental truth: what gathers must eventually disperse. Every meeting is a prelude to parting. For laypeople, divorce may feel momentous; from a wider view, even divorce need not be a source of suffering. Perhaps this understanding is what matters most.

QUESTION 10 Was Buddha’s enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, upon seeing the morning star, the exact moment he attained Buddhahood? When did this occur?

KHENPO SODARGYE Yes, the moment Buddha saw the morning star and achieved enlightenment was precisely when he attained Buddhahood. In that profound realization, he comprehended the true nature of all phenomena.

Regarding the historical timing, scholarly opinions differ. Some scholars place it nearly three millennia ago, while others suggest approximately 2,500 years ago. According to contemporary Theravada Buddhist tradition, this momentous event occurred over 2,500 years ago.

QUESTION 11 How should we approach and help cancer patients?

KHENPO SODARGYE Whether caring for cancer patients, those battling illness, or anyone in vulnerable circumstances, extending compassion and care is not optional—it’s an ethical imperative.

Your nation excels in this regard, with advanced medical infrastructure and exemplary patient care standards. On an individual level, we should all reach out to those in distress, whether

they're navigating illness or facing other life challenges. Buddhist scriptures tell us that even the Buddha, teacher of the three realms, personally cared for the sick, setting an enduring example of compassion in action.

Whenever we encounter those in need, let us approach them with genuine compassion and offer help to the best of our ability.

QUESTION 12 What principles should guide parents in raising their children?

KHENPO SODARGYE For young people, cultivating a compassionate heart is education's cornerstone.

While life offers diverse experiences, the formative years up to age 16 leave the deepest mark on one's character. Here, parents serve as primary educators. By introducing compassion through various means during childhood, they plant seeds of loving-kindness that will germinate and bloom, exerting profound influence throughout their children's lives.

Fundamentally, parents must first recognize the paramount importance of nurturing compassion. When they value this

quality—or better yet, embody it in their own lives—their children will naturally be inspired and shaped by this example, as surely as tides follow the moon.

QUESTION 13 Sometimes kind people suffer mistreatment. Doesn't cultivating compassion make us vulnerable to harm?

KHENPO SODARGYE Kind-hearted people are sometimes perceived as vulnerable to mistreatment. However, this perception overstates the case—even those with fierce tempers can suffer injustice.

In truth, cultivating compassion is a source of strength, not a liability. Far from causing harm, it brings numerous advantages, both immediate and long-term. When facing mistreatment or unfair actions from others, we should use wisdom to respond appropriately and act with discernment. A compassionate spirit helps us maintain inner peace and a clear conscience, knowing our actions are guided by virtue rather than vengeance.

Host

Thank you all for these thoughtful and important questions. Most importantly, we extend our deepest gratitude to Khenpo for his enlightening lecture and generous responses. Thank you to everyone for joining us today.

Dedication

May the merit resulting from this piece of work contribute
in the greatest possible measure to the long life of all great
masters, to the flourishing of the Buddhadharma,
and to the welfare of all sentient beings.

It is always our wish to present a work of the highest quality to the readers so that anyone who reads this text would find inspiration. So we would very much appreciate your comments, feedback or suggestions for how this text might be improved and made more valuable. You are also greatly welcomed if you want to make a contribution to any of our other projects of translation. Please email us at: *translation@khenposodargye.org*

