

KHENPO'S  
TALKS

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

# LIVING WITH LOVE



KHENPO  
SODARGYE

KHENPO'S TALKS

# Living with Love

National University of Lesotho, Lesotho

November 02, 2015

Khenpo Sodargye

2026 EDITION



**L**ove is an immensely powerful force—essential to everyone, at every stage of life, no matter our circumstances. This simple word, “love,” may seem easy to grasp, yet it is indispensable throughout our lives. Children long for the love of their parents; young adults seek it from friends and family; older people yearn for it from their descendants. At the same time, we all have a responsibility to give love: to cherish life, care for our families, love our country and our planet, and extend compassion to all humanity.

# CONTENTS

<b>Host</b>	1
<b>Khenpo Sodargye Rinpoche</b>	2
Harnessing the Power of Love: Change Begins Within	2
The Lesson of the Old Shirt: Finding Value Through Resilience . . . . .	7
The African Heritage: Champions Who Light Up the World . . . . .	9
Cultivating Love: An Infinite Source of Energy . . .	12
<b>Question and Answer</b>	14

# Host

Today is a remarkable occasion, as we welcome the venerable Sodargye Khenpo Rinpoche. As a highly respected teacher at the renowned Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy, Khenpo Rinpoche is a leading figure in Tibetan Buddhism. He is recognized not only as a Tibetan lama and Buddhist teacher but also as a prolific author, translator, and modern Buddhist thinker whose reputation extends across both East and West.

Khenpo Rinpoche has spoken at universities and colleges around the world, and he is celebrated for his unique ability to bridge traditional Buddhist teachings with contemporary global issues and everyday living. We feel deeply grateful for his presence today and look forward to a talk that will inspire reflection and meaningful dialogue.

# KHENPO SODARGYE RINPOCHE

It is wonderful to be here speaking with all of you. This is my first visit to Lesotho, and I imagine it may also be the first time for many of you to see someone in monastic robes. Today I will share some thoughts on love, and then we will have a short question-and-answer session. After that, the Amitofo Care Center (ACC) has prepared an exciting performance for us. Every part of today's event is meaningful, and I hope you will cherish and make the most of our time together. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the principal of ACC, Venerable Hui Li, as well as leaders and professors from the National University of Lesotho for their support and warm welcome.

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF LOVE: CHANGE BEGINS WITHIN

Love is an immensely powerful force—essential to everyone, at every stage of life, no matter our circumstances. This simple word, “love,” may seem easy to grasp, yet it is indispensable

throughout our lives. Children long for the love of their parents; young adults seek it from friends and family; older people yearn for it from their descendants. At the same time, we all have a responsibility to give love: to cherish life, care for our families, love our country and our planet, and extend compassion to all humanity.

To cultivate love and tap into its profound potential, we begin by turning inward—fostering resilience, inner fortitude, and a clear understanding of ourselves. While inspiring words carry weight, they alone fall short; it is through weaving our intentions into the fabric of daily living that our hopes take root and flourish.

A timeless story captures this essence. Nestled within London's Westminster Abbey, amid the grand tombs of kings, queens, and famous figures like Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, and Charles Dickens, lies a simple, unmarked tombstone. It bore the following inscription: "When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wiser, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country. But it, too, seemed immovable. As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I

settled for changing only my family, those closest to me, but alas, they would have none of it. And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize: If I had only changed myself first, then by example I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better my country and, who knows, I may have even changed the world.”

This narrative gently reminds us that genuine transformation begins within. To all young adults, especially the ones gathered here: you are the future of your families, your nation, and the world. I encourage each of you to cultivate courage, unwavering confidence, and a bold, long-term vision to serve your community and country. The first step is to enrich yourselves—embrace advanced global technologies and scientific advancements, while also honoring your cherished cultural traditions and the shared heritage of humankind. Along this journey, we may encounter hurdles like illness or financial strain. Yet, with perseverance, we press on, echoing the ancient wisdom, “A noble person worries about virtue, not about poverty.” In other words, a wisdom mind prioritizes moral growth and meaningful knowledge over material pursuits. With this mindset, they can overcome any hardship, including poverty.

Before coming to Lesotho, I had heard of the economic challenges many African countries face. Yet, upon stepping here, I was struck by how much better things are now compared to what they were in my own youth. I see many of you dressed well. During my time as a student in normal school, our class of over thirty students included a few—like myself—who wore patched-up clothes. I never shared my family’s struggles with the teachers or classmates, as it filled me with embarrassment. Sometimes, on Sundays, I would go out to trade ghee and milk dregs for old clothes with villagers or other students, feeling discomfited if spotted by peers. Those student days brimmed with innocence, simplicity, and joy, even as I navigated various difficulties. I sense that many of you may face similar trials now or in the future. I urge you to cultivate resilience and move forward with determination along your chosen path.



## THE LESSON OF THE OLD SHIRT: FINDING VALUE THROUGH RESILIENCEN

You may be familiar with the legendary basketball superstar Michael Jordan. A motivational tale about him, widely shared online, offers wisdom—whether entirely factual or not, its core message resonates deeply. At age thirteen, Jordan’s father handed him an old shirt one day and asked, “How much do you think this shirt is worth?” “About one dollar,” Jordan replied. His father then proposed a challenge: sell it for two dollars. Though doubtful, Jordan cleaned and pressed the shirt, then promoted it at a subway station for six hours until he succeeded.

Days later, his father gave him another old shirt, this time asking for twenty dollars. Jordan came up with a creative idea. He asked his cousin, who was good at drawing, to decorate the shirt with a cute Donald Duck and a playful Mickey Mouse. He then sold the shirt outside a private school, where a student bought it for twenty dollars.

Not long after, his father handed him a third shirt, suggesting, “Can you sell this one for two hundred dollars?” Embracing the task, Jordan waited patiently. Months later, when the celebrated

actress Farrah Fawcett of the hit TV series *Charlie's Angels* visited New York, Jordan managed to get her autograph on the shirt. Actioning it off, he fetched \$1,200.

When he returned home, his father was delighted and said, "If a simple old shirt, worth just one dollar, can hold such value, consider the untapped potential in each of us. No matter our circumstances, we should never lose faith in life." These words left a lasting impression on Jordan, who went on to become a global icon.

Many of you, particularly in your student years, may encounter challenges and feel tempted to give up. In difficult times, it is important to do your best and persist in overcoming obstacles. Education opens doors to a brighter future—for you, your family, and the world. As students, please strive to learn deeply and broadly, as the knowledge you gain will prove invaluable at every stage of life.

## THE AFRICAN HERITAGE: CHAMPIONS WHO LIGHT UP THE WORLD

I enjoy reading biographies of notable people of African descent—so many could be considered as champions of the world in their respective fields. Some have devoted themselves to advancing peace, equality, and human rights, leaving an indelible mark on the global stage. Through the efforts of people like them, long-standing wrongs such as racial discrimination and inequality have been brought to light.

Consider, for instance, Martin Luther King Jr. He delivered the iconic “I Have a Dream” speech and was a passionate advocate for racial equality, earning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Then there is Nelson Mandela, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. Before that, he endured twenty-seven years of imprisonment for opposing apartheid and racism in South Africa. Yet, he never gave up. After his release, he continued to promote peace and reconciliation, having a transformative influence on his nation and beyond. I have read his biography—his enduring resolve continues to touch me.

In addition to these visionaries, countless others of African heritage have enriched the world, bringing delight across cultures.

Among them are the acclaimed entertainer Michael Jackson, the soccer icon Pelé, the boxing great Muhammad Ali, and the literary luminary Toni Morrison, recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, known for classics like *The Bluest Eye* and for editing *The Black Book*.

I must admit, I have never been much of a sports enthusiast—I have never played soccer and still struggle to understand its finer points. As for boxing, my own “fighting” back in school was a far cry from the professional ring; among five or six kids, I might have been the “champion.” But compared to the skilled young performers from ACC, I would stand no chance. After my talk, you will witness their remarkable kung fu demonstrations with sticks, swords, and more—a vibrant and unforgettable display.



## CULTIVATING LOVE: AN INFINITE SOURCE OF ENERGY

Love is a powerful and transformative force that everyone in this world can benefit from cultivating. Even within scientific circles, the essential role of love is widely acknowledged. A widely shared letter ascribed to Albert Einstein speaks to love's universal essence. Though its origins are debated, the sentiment endures: for our species to thrive, to uncover life's purpose, and to safeguard our world and its inhabitants, love offers the singular, hopeful path.

While interpretations of love may vary, the pursuit of science often seeks to advance the well-being of humanity, reflecting love in action. Science encompasses biological, physical, and spiritual realms, with religious traditions forming a vital part of spiritual science.

Regardless of one's personal convictions, it is valuable to approach varied religious traditions with an open mind. During my visits to academic institutions and research centers across the globe, I have noted how many have integrated meditation practices from traditions like Buddhism or Christianity. These practices have helped individuals achieve a deep sense

of inner peace and contentment that transcends what material possessions alone can offer.

As a Buddhist practitioner with decades of study and practice, I would like to emphasize that Buddhist teachings do not contradict science or any other noble belief system. Buddhism seeks to help all sentient beings—including animals—achieve both temporary and ultimate happiness. I encourage everyone to explore the teachings of various religions with an open and relaxed mind, and to consider taming your mind through meditation. Such practices can enhance both professional effectiveness and overall quality of life. For those who are not interested in any religion, it is essential to approach your studies and daily life with a joyful and positive mindset.

In essence, by extending kindness to others and maintaining a positive outlook—even amidst setbacks, without becoming entangled in afflictive emotions like anger—we can transform our world for the better.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**QUESTION 1** Could you explain how to meditate properly?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** When meditating, sit cross-legged in the lotus posture with your hands resting in the mudra of evenness. Keep your eyes slightly open, gazing at the tip of your nose. Relax your shoulders, straighten your spine, tilt your neck slightly forward, relax your jaw, and press your tongue gently against your palate. Clear your mind of all thoughts and simply observe your mind. When conceptual thoughts arise, do not follow them—let them go and return to a state of rest. Repeat this process as needed. This method is now practiced in many Western universities. Let us meditate together for one minute.

**QUESTION 2** Can you expand on the definition of love?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Love can be understood in many ways, but generally, it falls into two categories: great love and ordinary love. Great love extends beyond friends and family to include enemies and all humanity. This kind of compassion is profound

and difficult for most people to achieve. Ordinary love, on the other hand, is often based on attraction or affection for someone, which can bring temporary happiness but will also result in a great deal of suffering. As the saying goes: “The deeper the love, the deeper the hate.”

**QUESTION 3** I have a suggestion rather than a question. We study various religions here, including Buddhism. Is there potential for exchange programs between your academy and our university?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** This is an excellent suggestion. Although my visit here is brief, I have already gained valuable insights into your local religion and customs, which I find enriching. If our students could come here, your university could introduce them to the local culture, and they could share their knowledge of Buddhism in return. We live in an era of openness and abundant information, very different from the past. Strengthening exchanges and learning from one another are essential.

**QUESTION 4** I feel that the more educated I become, the more problems I face, such as unemployment. Does education solve problems or create them?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Your reasoning deserves closer examination. As students, your main priority should be to acquire as much knowledge as possible. Every country has its own circumstances, yet the challenge of ensuring quality education is nearly universal. It appears that countries worldwide are grappling with various financial and unemployment issues. Even more concerning, an ethical crisis also seems to be emerging.

On my recent trip to Europe, I learned that France's unemployment rate remained high and showed a slight increase, while the situation in China was also facing challenges. Lesotho is likely no exception. Education does not cause unemployment—it creates opportunities. What you learn in university, particularly languages like Chinese and English, will be helpful one day. Therefore, I suggest that you make the most of your current learning opportunities.

**QUESTION 5** What is your dream? Have you achieved it?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Everyone has dreams, and each person's motivations and capacities to pursue them may vary. My initial dream was to become a monk, and I have achieved that goal. Now, after visiting here, I see great value in establishing orphanages and schools. My current aspiration is to gain immense power to help more people—this is the dream I am now pursuing.

I encourage every student here to have dreams and grand aspirations, not just for personal gain, but to enrich the entire community. Ground your motivations in service for others: consider the responsibilities you can take on for your family, society, and the wider world.

**QUESTION 6** What kind of people do you consider the most remarkable?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** The most remarkable people are those who dedicate their lives to the well-being of others. History is filled with such selfless individuals who have made a profound impact through their compassion and service.

## 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*



For Non-Commercial Use Only