

His Eminence Nubpa Rinpoche's New Year Message



Happy New Year! As 2024 begins, various disasters occur in this world—natural disasters such as flooding, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, as well as human disasters such as warfare. The corona-pandemic has basically almost ended, but for the past few years, we all have been enduring much hardship because of that. In the meantime, there are places in this world where wars break out. We all want peace, isn't it? I think that in this human world, the occurrence of these various disasters does not arise accidentally but out of karma (causality), collective karma that people made collectively. Some are the result of individual karma. Thus, we have to be aware of karma causality when we do things, not simply just do what we want. If we do not accept the suffering fruit, we must cut the suffering causes. Everything is the manifestation of causality. There is this famous saying "Do no evil, perform all good, and purify one's mind. This is the teaching of the buddhas." All happiness we obtain in this life comes from our previous virtuous deeds whereas all

sufferings and disasters we encounter in this life come from our own non-virtuous deeds. Those evil spirits, the root of all evil is our mental afflictions driven by the three poisons—anger, attachment, and ignorance—within our mind. When the mind is tainted with these poisons, all the deeds that we carry out are non-virtue which bring suffering.

On the other hand, if our mind is endowed with loving-kindness, compassion, whatever we do is virtue which brings happiness. Thus, we should increase virtues through cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion. This is important. Loving-kindness and compassion can be trained every moment within the mind of each of us. How? We regard all sentient beings as our mothers who are very kind and good. This way, we treat everyone with kindness. It is then not possible for us to generate any hatred, jealousy, and so on. Otherwise, if we do not pay attention to reduce our afflictions, for example when one is young, one quarrels and fights with others; then when one grows up and becomes a leader, one opens wars with other countries. All comes from the mind of hatred, desire, ignorance, jealousy etc. Thus, to turn it around, we have to nurture loving-kindness and compassion. Nowadays, the Dalai Lama promotes a lot developing our universal and innate loving-kindness and compassion, like the natural loving-kindness that a mother gives naturally to her child. It does not come from outside somewhere but within each of us. We have to protect it, nurture it, and blossom it. Say, if there is loving-kindness within a family, happiness is there in the family. If everybody in a region practices loving-kindness, it brings happiness in that region. It applies similarly to a country, a continent, and the world and universe. Therefore, in the beginning of year 2024, I encourage everybody to nurture our universal and innate loving-kindness; expand it, and blossom it. Only this way can our world be safer and more peaceful. May you all be happy. May all be perfectly accomplished.

H.E. Nubpa Rinpoche's commentary on *A Precious Garland of the Supreme Path by Gampopa*

Section 1 Ten Causes of Loss

A Dharma practitioner who has the support of a precious human body wishing to attain liberation and the state of omniscience, should from the beginning constantly recollect the ten causes of loss (waste of opportunity).

1. It is a loss if this rare and pure human body, which is very difficult to obtain, is used to engage in wrongdoings (non-virtuous deeds*).

Here it's about the precious human birth with freedom and endowment as well as to be able to encounter the precious Dharma, which is really a karmic ripening that is very difficult to gain. It requires a huge accumulation of many virtuous conditions. Therefore, Gampopa started by mentioning the importance of having acquired this very-difficult-to-obtain precious human body vessel, we need to diligently fully utilize it to arrive on the shore of liberation. We need to keep in mind that having this precious human body is precious in the sense that it allows you to have leisure and freedom to use your body, speech and mind to engage in virtues such as studying and practicing the Dharma in order to seek liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The only possible cause for obtaining this precious human body, which is the basis for the practice of Dharma, is upholding pure moral conduct. Without preserving genuine morality, there is no way to acquire it. People who engage in non-virtuous

deeds harm themselves and others. Until those wrongdoings are relinquished, they will never attain liberation from suffering or even liberation from the lower realms of existence, let alone omniscience, and will have no ability to benefit others. Therefore, abstain from any non-virtuous deed. The reason is that every phenomenon without exception is manifested according to causes and conditions, that is, the law of cause and effect or causality. The Buddha advised us to refrain from harmful deeds and engage in virtuous deeds because the law of causality is infallible; even the Buddha cannot change it.

To have encountered the profound Dharma but treat it as a subject of academic research is a mistake. The objective of studying the Dharma is to purify our mental afflictions within our mindstream, just like providing you with the weapons and strategies to defeat your enemies within. You need to use these weapons and strategies in battle with our afflictions; if not, even the most powerful weapon becomes useless. The Buddha has given us the method and the path to help all sentient beings to liberate themselves from the cyclic existence. We need to integrate what the Buddha taught into our body, speech, and mind in order to uphold our moral conduct and bring about changes in ourselves.

Those who have entered the Buddhist path should know that the Dharma is not just some intellectual knowledge to pursue or a worldly religion. Buddha Shakyamuni, our Sublime Guide, has engaged in bodhisattva practices, such as the Six Paramitas, for three great kalpas to cut ignorance which is the root of all suffering in cyclic existence and to attain the unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment. Thereafter, he accomplished the enlightened activities of spreading the innate primordial wisdom within us that he had realized, in order to truly benefit all mother sentient beings.

* Regarding what the ten non-virtues are and their effects, similar to their causes, *The Precious Garland (Ratnavali or Ratnamala)* by Nagarjuna says: *By taking life, we will be short-lived. Through stealing, we will lack possessions. Through adultery, we will face rivals. Through speaking falsely, we'll face slander. Divisive talk will separate us from our friends. Harsh speech will mean hearing unpleasant words. Gossip will cause our speech to lack nobility. Covetousness will destroy our hopes. Malice will bring us many fears. And wrong view will bring inferior beliefs.*