

Bringing Suffering and Happiness to the Path.

Dharma roadside dialogue series

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I was asked by a French viewer to talk about a text that was composed at the end of the 19th century, early 20th, by a great Nyingma master whose name is Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpe Nyima. He was a very popular yet very humble person, a great scholar. The 13th Dalai Lama said, “Nobody writes like him in Tibet,” and so on. He wrote a book that has been translated in French, though unfortunately not in English, but I found an English translation of it, and you can find it on my website below this month’s audio recordings, in both English and Tibetan if you are interested.

In Tibetan this text is called *Kyi Duk Lam Kyer*. *Kyi* means happiness, ease, *duk* means unhappiness, or suffering, *lam* means the path, and *kyer* means to bring into something, to drive into something. So the title means: how to bring to the path any circumstances of our life, whether they are happy or unhappy. That’s the general idea of this text.

It begins with a homage that the author, Dodrupchen Rinpoche pays to Chenrezig, Avalokitesvara. In other words, Bodhicitta in that sense of Enlightened compassion:

*“I pay homage to Noble Avalokitesvara, recalling his qualities.
Forever joyful at the happiness of others, and plunged into sorrow whenever they suffer,
You have fully realized Great Compassion, with all its qualities,
And abide, without a care for your own happiness or suffering.”*

Through this homage Dodrupchen describes the qualities of a bodhisattva, Chenrezig being the embodiment, we could say, of the archetype of the bodhisattva. And so how can we describe him?

“Forever joyful at the happiness of others, rejoicing that other people are happy and free from suffering, and plunged into sorrow whenever they suffer,” but also very concerned by their suffering.

“You have fully realized the Great Compassion.”

What is the Great Compassion? The Great Compassion is that of bodhisattvas who abide on the levels of awakening, bhūmis in Sanskrit. That means they have reached an irreversible experience of emptiness and they know the illusory nature of all phenomena. They know that all phenomena arise from mind, they know that if this is understood, this is enlightenment, if it’s not seen or perceived or realized, it manifests as suffering, and conditioned existence. So knowing this, the bodhisattva reached a Great Compassion.

Great Compassion is different from “common” compassion. We may all have a sense of compassion when we see other people suffering; we would love to see them free from suffering, but this compassion is operating within the framework of dualistic perception. So even if we have compassion, we see the suffering of beings as truly existent, we see them experiencing a truly existent suffering from which we want to liberate. The bodhisattva has the same view of the suffering of beings, but it’s deeper in the sense that he or she understands that this suffering only comes as suffering because beings believe in the reality of what they experience. And that the true cause of the suffering is the ignorance of reality.

And so, when you are such a bodhisattva, you work on both levels, you alleviate the suffering and bring comfort and security in ways that are perceptible for beings and acceptable to them, but also try progressively to educate them so that through the path of meditation they come to what will be lasting relief. This comes from understanding the true nature of mind and gaining access to the wisdom of emptiness. So that’s what Chenrezig has, this kind of compassion; that’s why it’s called the Great Compassion.

Dodrupchen Rinpoche follows with a statement of the intent for the composition of this book:

“I’m going to put down here a partial instruction that is concise and easy to remember and practice, on how to use both happiness and suffering as the path to enlightenment. This is indispensable for leading a spiritual life, a most needed tool of the Noble Ones, and quite the most priceless teaching in the world.”

That’s the sales pitch. Why do I do this? Because it’s concise, you can really easily keep it in mind, and hopefully you can put it into practice. And it’s very, very priceless because it can be applied in any circumstance of your life, you don’t need a special environment. You don’t need to be in a monastery, you don’t need to be a renunciate, you don’t need to be living in a quiet environment, a clean environment; wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever you go through, that will become the very fuel for your practice and nourish your realization of compassion, and eventually wisdom, the wisdom of emptiness. For this it’s very precious. And in general, all of the mind-training teachings that pertain to this mind-training style are working with this same idea. I find this one very interesting because it’s very, very concise.

My friend, who requested the discussion on this topic said, like, “I’ve almost memorized the entire text.” He has memorized the entire text in French, and that’s very good, because he can recite it to himself whenever he goes through difficult times in his life; it comes up in his mind, it’s a reminder. You know, if you have 600 pages you have to remember, that’s not going to be that easy, but if you have this little text I made, it’s two pages. Even I can remember with my old deficient memory;~}

So, that’s his intent. And he says there are two parts. We have to first work with suffering, then see how we can work with happiness. And in both cases we will approach them from a relative reality angle, how we can work from the point of view of relative reality, and another angle, which will be

that of ultimate reality, how we can work with it from the essential aspect of the situation. And that will apply to both suffering and happiness, how this text is presented.

At this point I would like to quote Dzongsar Kyentse Rinpoche who said, “There is only one problem, which is the absence of mindfulness. **And there is only one solution, which is mindfulness.**” So that’s the preliminary, that’s the first thing. If we are living in a haze of mindlessness, nothing can be done, because we are following the natural inclinations of our habits and tendencies and our emotional neurotic patterns; there is no way out of this, we are just deluded. So we need to find a way to cultivate mindfulness. Through study and through reflection we come to appreciate mindfulness and see how important and how beneficial it is. And then through meditation we begin to progressively put it into practice until we gain some sort of habit, and then hopefully some sort of mastery. So that’s the **first thing**. If we don’t have this, nothing can be done.

The second point after mindfulness that we need to have, according to Dodrupchen Rinpoche, is **dropping the attitude of being entirely unwilling to suffer**. Dropping entirely the attitude that consists of, “I don’t want to suffer, no matter what. I don’t want to have to deal with it.” Convenience as a god, therefore the denial of reality as it’s angels. And so that’s the second thing we need to have, we need to find a bravery that consists of being ready to work with what’s real. When you take refuge, when you commit to the path leading to Buddha the enlightened state, in the ceremony itself there are three aspects. One is the request, you’re requesting refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Secondly there is the granting of the refuge vows related to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. And the thirdly there are precepts, or commitments that you vow to keep.

The precept in relation to Buddha is very clear. You take the Buddha as your only refuge. In the traditional explanation that is what you say, that you will not take refuge in gods of nature or spirits or whatever, but in our culture what does it mean? It means that you’re not going to try to cut a deal so that you don’t have to deal with reality. Whatever you collide with, you’re going to work with it in the light of the sanity of enlightenment. So basically you keep in mind, no matter what happens, the sanity of Buddha, the enlightened state, and it’s in this framework that I’m going to deal with everything. Happy, not happy. And I’m not going to cut a deal and take refuge in oxycontin or side-painkillers of any sort that render my mind oblivious from any reality, by providing some sort of artificial paradise of “that’s fine.” “I feel bad but if I shop I feel much better.” That is taking refuge in side-refuges. They are not reliable. They can give you a provisory protection, for example side-refuges are your parents when you’re young. Or your family. Or any elder who is some sort of parental figure for you. Of course they give you certain protection, but they are not giving you an ultimate protection. They have to work on their own problems themselves. We know only decades later that our parents were neurotic;~} But in the meantime they are, as a French writer said, provisory gods. They sort of fulfill his function.

So we need to take refuge in the Buddha in the sense that we have to find the bravery to work with reality, and not let ourselves fall into, succumb to, the temptation of an “easy” agreement on the side.

Because if we do so we actually will cultivate an addiction to always go for the easy. It doesn't really deliver, maybe just for a short time it does somehow. We cultivate this tendency, so in our mind we are creating this habit. To some extent, physically you can see that the neural pathways are reorganized for that. Our brain becomes wired to go for the easy. Don't work with reality, that's too much, you can't do that, there's a pill for that so you don't need to work with reality. So we don't want to cultivate this habit because it's a mind tendency, but it also becomes almost a physical tendency. Like in the case of addiction you have a physical aspect to addiction and then you have the mental aspect to addiction.

So these are the two preliminary conditions. First and foremost, work on mindfulness. Second, don't take a side-way, don't try to cut a deal. Work directly with reality and with the input of the sanity of enlightenment that comes to you by way of Dharma. Dharma that is offered to you by the Sangha, the men and women who are the holders of these teachings.

So now let's begin with suffering, because it's easier;~} How to use suffering as a path to enlightenment. So, as I said earlier, through relative truth and absolute truth; let's begin with relative truth, because it's easier. We drop the attitude of being entirely unwilling to suffer, that's one thing, and then consequently we cultivate the attitude of being joyful when suffering arrives. So you're not avoiding suffering, that's one thing, and then the second thing is like, hoo, here comes my daily cup of learning. Here comes the opportunity for me to learn something about myself. To learn something about my limitations and learn something about my qualities and enhance myself a little bit every day.

So how do we do that? There are several strategies. **The first one is to use suffering to train into renunciation.** And when I say renunciation please don't run away. I'm not saying that renunciation means you have to live miserably in a dark hole and eat moldy bread. Renunciation here in Tibetan is nge jung. Nge jung is to be sick and tired with all the suffering that comes from ignorance and the complications of a neurotic mind. That's what renunciation is all about. "I'm done with that, I'm done with being cowardly, unaware, mindless, running after an easy path and ending up with a problem because this was a very bad idea from the first moment but I thought it was a good idea. With a little experience we realize that we've been down this rabbit hole so many times, and we're really tired.

Yesterday I watched Pinocchio, the movie with Roberto Benigni who plays Geppetto. And Pinocchio is like me, a stubborn little wooden-headed boy who wants to explore the world and do as he pleases. And he gets repeatedly fooled by the fox and the cat who take his money. Then after many, many stories we meet them again, and they look miserable; the fox lost a leg and the cat is blind, and they try the same tricks on him, promising that if he gives them money they will plant it in the field and grow more money, and then Pinocchio looks at them and says, like, "Been there done that. I'm not going to fall for that. Good luck, bye for now." And he goes away. So that's

renunciation. He has reached this wisdom by making a lot of mistakes, and learning from his mistakes.

Suffering will help us in training in renunciation. Why am I now in this predicament? Not because this person or that situation made it, but because I was an active part of building up this very construed and complicated and crazy scenario and I'm trapped in it. The classic texts say you are like a caterpillar that has spun around itself a thread of silk and tangled itself in its own spit.

So that's renunciation. This becomes obvious when we are in a difficult situation; because when we are happy we don't think about that. When I'm happy...it's because I'm smart, duh. We don't think more about this. Or else we're in pain, and at first we think it's because of this or because of that person, but if you think a little bit more, then you realize you're part of it; you've been part of it right from the beginning. So you can't just exonerate yourself and blame everyone else but not "me." I'm clean. No. No, you come to realize that you're part of this. You wanted something, then you did something wrong or wrongly, and so forth, and now you have to pay the consequences.

So, at first we can use suffering to train in renunciation. Secondly we can use suffering to train in taking refuge. So that's sort of what I said earlier; when you realize that you are not dealing with reality, all this kind of crap will happen again and again. So we really have to catch the bull by the horns, really work with it, you know, you grab the bull by the horns. And then, how can I come to the point of mastery? Well, the Dharma is definitely pointing out the way, showing us different methods that we can learn from, so we can rely upon this, take refuge in these valuable teachings; studying, reflecting and meditating.

And how can we get access to the Dharma? Well, we have to ask men and women of experience who are the holders of the teachings, and they can share with you and help you to understand it, and then put it into practice. So the suffering becomes an incentive to move towards enlightenment, using the Dharma and the support of the Sangha. Again, if you are in the comfort of the devas, you don't need the Dharma. It seems like, what for? You know, the Buddha, blissed out 24/7, that's it. Unless you really have something that wakes you up and you realize that your happiness is impermanent and doesn't bring everything. Like Jim Carey said quite rightly, "I wish everybody could be rich and famous so that they come to understand that it's leading nowhere."

So any discomfort in our life, particularly of a certain intensity, will, if we have mindfulness and some connection with the Dharma, some sort of karmic seeds connecting us with the Dharma, will lead us toward enlightenment, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Another strategy is that we can **use suffering to overcome arrogance**. Arrogance is a big one. Gendun Rinpoche was always saying that if you take down arrogance, everything else will bite the dust. Get rid of arrogance and you get rid of greed and desire and jealousy and anger and so on,

because these articulate around the sense that I'm superior and therefore I deserve the best; I am the best. The Louis the XIV syndrome. I'm the King, so everything must be according to me. You know, Louis XIV invented etiquette, the rules of behavior in the Palace of Versailles. And everybody was subject to these rules except him, because he was the XIV, "whatever."

When you are suffering you realize that you are like everybody else. That actually there are things that you can not avoid, even if you thought you were the Sun King, you were the God somehow of your neighborhood. It brings a sense of humility, it humbles you down; suffering humbles you down. And then that, hopefully again through mindfulness, and if you're willing to look at things really, will help you to take down this arrogance and help you to cultivate a sense of humility. From which point everything is workable. From the standpoint of arrogance nothing is workable, rather than the attitude that everything must come to you because you deserve it, and if it doesn't, whoever creates an obstacle must be destroyed.

Another strategy is that we can **use suffering to purify harmful actions**. In Tibetan there is a difference between mi gewa and dikpa. Mi gewa literally means non-virtuous, unskillful. Dikpa means intentionally bad. So maybe it's the difference between doing something wrong but you didn't know it, and intentionally doing something wrong. There's a big difference between the two somehow. One there is the intention to do it no matter what, because, you know, you "deserve" it. It has to be done for your own sake and your own benefit. The other one is you're just stupid. You just react, you know, it's good, you want it, you take it. If it's bad you don't want it, but you never had the intention to hurt anybody. The other one, the dikpa aspect, is knowing it's going to cause pain and not caring. "I want it."

And so when you come to suffering, again if you're mindful and you want to know, you can see that this is coming from previous actions. Nothing appears randomly. You begin to understand that by looking at the very suffering you go through that you must have created by some behavior of a sort, whether it is through your body, your speech, or your mind, in previous occasions, and that now what you have is the backlash of this. And if you are a little bit intelligent, and it's a given that you don't want to suffer, you might think that maybe you should change your behavior. Maybe I should stop being so stupid or being so immoral, because whether I'm aware of it or not, in the end I have to reap what I sow, I have to bear the consequences of my actions.

So it's sort of like, it's an incentive to cultivate right-livelihood. Right speech, right action. Right thought. Right consideration, all of these right things that we find in the eight-fold noble path instructions, right? So one way to use suffering is as an incentive to change one's lifestyle and behavior.

The following strategy is kind of like the luminous side of the previous one, it's **using suffering to find joy in positive action**. How do we find joy in positive action? There are two ways. We can find joy in thinking about the result, the outcome of such a positive action. Positive action is

something that is done through body, speech, or mind that generates more wisdom and more compassion in everybody. The negative action is something that sort of deepens ignorance and shrinks compassion and benevolence in oneself or everybody else, and brings us into a more defensive position where we are more aggressive and so on. There is a joy in doing good things because it's lighter. You know, Dr. Martin Luther King said, "I take the side of the truth, of honesty, because the weight of lies is too heavy."

It's heavy to lie to people, you have to remember the lie, you have to remember what lie you said to what person, I couldn't remember that, my memory's not good enough, you know, and then you're in trouble, because people will say, "What, you didn't say that last time, you said something different." It's much easier just to be frank. You don't have to remember, there's no data to remember, it's just straight-forward. You're honest, and it's light. And it's really lighter to be generous than it is to be stingy. You know, you're only stingy because you're afraid. You're afraid you will not have enough. And that's heavy. You want to have a light mind, because it's actually good. Even in a selfish perspective, ethics are cool, it's just easy; you don't have to keep a very heavy load. So you find joy in positive action because you think about the outcome, it's going to be good, but also, it's kind of a two-fold benefit, as you do it you feel good. You feel good doing it.

One epithet for the Buddha is Sugata in Sanskrit. Su is the short for sukha, ease, well-being, and gata means gone, so if you want to translate this it is, "gone to bliss." Actually, a slightly more expanded translation could be, "pleasantly gone to pleasantness." It means that the result is pleasant, but also the way is pleasant. When you're confronted with complications, like maybe people slander you or don't believe you or you have all sorts of difficulty, and everything is heavy, you have to remember that this is the weight of karma, of former actions. And if I do not want to carry this ball and chain with me forever, I have to lighten up my life.

And of course there is a little price to pay, because we have to work with the stock of negativity that we have accumulated; there will be a little delay between the moment when we decide to be a "good" boy or girl, and the moment when we are going to be happy with it. There is an inertia that needs to be processed. Patience. If there is no patience there is no virtue said Atisha, right? Nothing is possible if there is no patience, in the sense of forbearance or perseverance. So. Find joy in positive action.

Another strategy is that we can **use suffering to train in compassion**. When you suffer you come to understand the compathos, the similar suffering that others are undergoing. Of course we don't "know" other people's suffering really, but we can see the ballpark, we can feel the similarity. You're not arrogant anymore, you have been humbled by suffering. You can also use this humility to feel more like a brother or sister to those that are suffering, you understand them and you have this compassion and want to offer relief. What can you do to help? Suffering softens your heart. You're less of an arrogant prick, excuse my French. You've been through that and you know it's painful and you understand and have an intimate perspective of suffering because of your experience.

And the final point from this list. **Use suffering to cherish others more than yourself.** In the practice of mind-training we are taught to practice in two movements. The first one is to balance, the second one is to exchange. The first point is to balance means you care about others as much as you care about yourself, and you care about yourself as much as you care about others. It's not like you want to have everything for you, or you stupidly say, "I don't need anything, you take it all." No. First, make sure that 50/50 is happening and that everyone gets their fair share of what they need. It's like leveling the ground. Once you have leveled the ground and in this process you have uncovered your arrogance, uncovered your attachment to your own satisfaction and your ego-centric concerns and so on, and then the negativity, and trying to push away problems and grabbing all the goodies from others for yourself, you've seen that. And you've transformed it, by giving it up and adopting a new attitude. And in this process you create the driving force, what we call merit, that is an important aspect because it creates the dynamic on the path to enlightenment and this merit becomes the basis for wisdom to blossom. Ideally we cultivate both, we cultivate this driving force, this energy into transformation and positive action, and we also cultivate wisdom as we do this.

When we have balance we care equally for oneself and others. In the process through the accumulation of merit and the simultaneous cultivation of wisdom you come to realize that self is an illusion. Whether it is the self of the individual or the self of phenomena, you come to realize that this appears but has no substantial reality. We are mesmerized by what is just an appearance. We take it for real and then we develop strategies on the basis of something that actually doesn't have any root; it's like building a strategy on the basis of rumors. It's just leading to bad things. More ignorance, more aggression.

So when you begin to see that, through study, reflection, but more importantly through meditation, you begin to see that the self of the individual is mostly a combination of different elements, the aggregates, the skandhas, that give the impression of the self without having any solid entity whatsoever because they are in constant flux and reorganization, and they only appear as one because they are reflected by another. It's kind of a mirror effect that seems to confirm everybody by showing a reflection of them in a mirror that doesn't exist. It's a complicated game of interdependent origination, but we begin to see that intellectually, it's quite easy to see this intellectually if you think about it, experientially it's a little difficult because we have the reluctance of letting go of habits, but it's also reachable. I mean, within one lifetime, if you work on it for a couple of years, you can really come to this experience.

So actually it's like, "Why do I have to overcare about myself? It's more important to take care of those that are prisoners of this illusion that I'm liberating myself from progressively. I have more freedom than they do, and their suffering is more intense than mine because they don't have the freedom I have, they don't have the tools I have to work with." So you give them an extra share. You know? You give them an extra share of the pie; of the goodness and whatever they might need. So that would be an extension and that would be cherishing others more than yourself because you

realize that there is no self to be cherished or worshiped. And always in a reasonable measure; don't be excessive. Do whatever is possible where you are now, and as you see that your capacity expands, and this mastery is stabilized, then do a little bit more, and a little bit more, and so on and so forth. So this is how to deal with suffering using the relative truth approach.

Now we will see, well, it's a little more complicated, but we will look at how we can do it through absolute truth. Here Dodrupchen Rinpoche says, "*By means of reasoning (logical reasoning, that means study and reflection) such as the refutation of production from the four extremes, the mind is drawn towards emptiness...*" So the refutation of production from the four extremes refers here to Nagarjuna's tetralemma where we either exaggerate or minimize. Exaggerating will be, "All phenomena have a substantial reality. Minimizing or discrediting will be saying like, "Nothing exists, who cares." That's an exaggeration. The first one is an exaggeration, the second one is a minimization. Okay? So you can, through study and reflection, logical reasoning, come to realize that position number one is not tenable. And then position number two is not tenable. And then you can come to the idea that, "Oh, they might be both." Two wrongs don't make a right. If proposition one has been refuted or debunked, and position two has been debunked, you can't make with these two debunked propositions a third proposition that will be valid. So, proposition three is debunked. And then you move to "it's something else," yes, but what? And when you try to define this something else, you always come back to proposition one, or proposition two, or proposition three. Because there is no alternative in the logical thinking of how things are.

So when you really come to think about these four extreme positions with study and reflection, and so on, you come to realize that the nature of reality is beyond this. Your mind is drawn towards emptiness...but not the emptiness of proposition two, which is nihilism. Proposition two is like "nothing exists." Emptiness, when we come to a moment of meditation and we come to experience what is called "innate wisdom," is the union of emptiness and luminosity, that is awareness. We come to realize that mind is the union of emptiness and awareness. We come to realize, and if you want to know more about this, I really invite you to read *Boundless Wisdom* of Shamar Rinpoche, which is actually the topic we are studying in our Tuesday book group these days, innate wisdom. We come to realize that mind is empty, that phenomena are the radiance of this empty mind, and that thoughts are the waves of this empty mind. And this empty mind is indissociable from an inner awareness, awareness of itself. That's the reality of mind that we discover through the practice of the path of mahamudra, and in particular, the aspect of uncommon vipassana.

We move beyond concepts and words and definitions, we move beyond the frame of the four extreme positions that intellectually we have refuted or debunked, but we gain certainty which is experiential, and maybe we don't have words to describe it. But when we have this, as Dodrupchen Rinpoche said:

"The mind being drawn towards emptiness, which is the natural condition of things, a supreme state of peace, and there it rests. In this state, let alone harmful circumstances or suffering, not even their names can be found."

There's no more suffering; suffering is a label. A subject naming an object. But when you transcend this duality of subject/object in the experience of innate wisdom of mahamudra then this doesn't apply, we understand that this suffering is merely a nominal convention. A nominal convention, even when you come out of this state, even when you are not absorbed in the contemplation through the meditation; your life is not like before. You've been transformed by this experience.

And when suffering arose in your mind and you would react with dread and lack of confidence, this doesn't happen anymore. There is a confidence, there is a fearlessness that comes from the experience you have made of the nature of mind. And so dread and lack of confidence have no ground anymore to arise. Now you can overcome it by viewing it as unreal, and nothing but a label, nothing but a nominal convention. And he concludes this little segment by saying, "I have not gone into detail here." He's just gliding on the surface, and he's actually giving us the essence; as Shamar Rinpoche says in *Boundless Wisdom*, "Now the only thing you have to do, if you are in pain, is look at 'who' is in pain." Who is in pain? Does it have a name, a shape, a form, some definitive characteristics? Then when you come to see not, you have an experience of the innate essence of mind which is emptiness and it's innate nature of awareness. You see that, and that is the liberating factor.

In *Mind-Training in Seven Points*, it states emptiness is the unsurpassable protector, or the four kayas, because it will describe emptiness through the four kayas; the four kayas are the unsurpassable protection. So that's how Dodrupchen Rinpoche described working with suffering, bringing suffering into the path by means of ultimate reality.

Okay. Now we're going to go over happiness. It's gonna be easy. How to deal with happiness to bring it into the path? First, through relative truth. Dodrupchen Rinpoche here says:

"Whenever happiness and the various things that cause happiness appear, if we slip under their power, then we will grow increasingly conceited, smug and lazy, which will block our spiritual path and progress. In fact it's difficult not to be carried away by happiness, as Padampa Sangye (founder of the Chöd tradition) pointed out: We human beings can cope with a lot of suffering, But very little happiness."

So, when we are enjoying happiness, that's wonderful. But don't cultivate a habit or an addiction to it. You know, the Four Seals of Dharma says "All contacts are painful," or "All contacts may become painful," and they become painful because we attribute to them an essential reality they lack, and if it's pleasant, we, attributing an essential reality, want to own the object that seems to be the source of our pleasure. And we hold it, and as it disappears because everything is impermanent, then we suffer. This is a suffering coming from change, from unaccepted change. So when you have a happy situation be aware of that; it's going to change. Enjoy it while you can. Don't create an addiction. That's how you work with happiness and bring it to the path. First thing: don't create an addiction. Welcome it, let it go when it goes. And don't be afraid of what might replace it that might not be as blissful as what you had. Even if it's good you compare it to what you had before.

Especially when you're aging, "In my days things were much better." Haven't you heard that? Maybe even said that? "In the good ole days." It's just the same ole same ole, it's good, it's just different. But we have a nostalgia that comes from holding. So, let it, let it go. Basically that's the mantra.

Once you can do that you're in a good position to do something out of these happy circumstances, because you accept to let it go, and as you say, "It's impermanent, it's going to change, there's no way it's going to stay forever like this, that's fine, that's part of the nature of reality, everything is impermanent," where does it come from? Where do these good moments come from? Not from me being smart, today. Definitely not. But it comes from positive action, so you connect with what we have seen earlier; there is a joy in a constructive lifestyle, in a right-livelihood. There is joy in that. There is a joy in doing it and there is a joy in the result. So what I'm enjoying now is a result of former good actions. And so I should use this opportunity to nourish the stream of positivity by continuing expanding right-livelihood. Because I have more freedom, more space, I'm not harassed, I don't have to struggle for my life, it's basically easy...I can use this to do more with it. I can use the assets that I enjoy now as an investment. And when you're investing you are not investing in a neurotic way, thinking you have to do more each day and have more to give tomorrow. No. This is not like a short term investment, this is not Wall Street. "You know, crypto-currency, I'll be a billionaire!" No.

You have space and leisure, use it. And how do you use it? By enjoying it, and also sharing it. So if you have, you know, if you have plenty, if you have more than you need, don't build a wall, build a bigger table. Just invite, and then help other people, and share what you have; be generous. It feels good for you, it feels good for them, and it creates a stronger and deeper stream of positivity that you will enjoy in future circumstances in the future of your life, or future lifetimes. You don't do this for that; you don't have this sort of return on investment type of mind. Just do it because it's good and it's positive. And when you have leisure, it is the time to practice. That means cultivate, cultivate your discernment, cultivate your kindness, your friendliness toward all sentient beings. Because you can do it! It's not when you die that suddenly you remember there is a thing called Dharma, there is a thing called meditation that could help me; what can I do now? Well, now what you can do is use to the best what you have prepared.

It's like being at school and it's lunchtime, you can only eat what's in your lunchbox. If you didn't prepare your lunchbox in the morning, you don't have anything for lunch! Maybe you have good friends and they will share their lunchbox, but you are actually relying on their preparation. So one way to use happiness to turn it into the path of enlightenment is to use it as a free space for preparation, as you are not under duress so you can cultivate, you can try things, and try to cultivate discernment or through the practice of calm abiding to be able to have a little distance from whatever my mind produces so I'm not constantly overwhelmed, and this kind of thing. So this would be extremely important when the moment comes where these happy circumstances change, and then you're confronted with more of the difficult situations, and then you'll have a lunchbox! You have so much in your lunchbox, so you'll be equipped; that's the general idea.

Now how can we bring happiness to the path using the absolute dimension angle. Here, Dodrupchen Rinpoche said to apply the same thing he said about suffering; you're not looking at who is suffering, you are looking at who is ecstatic. Who's happy? You realize that all of this is just the empty radiance of mind that is empty and self-aware. And through the enjoyment of happiness that you look at, you find the essence of mind, just like you found it through the observation of the suffering that mind was experiencing. And so you don't suffer from the weight of suffering that you hate, and you don't create an addiction for the object that seemingly was the cause or the source of your happiness; because you see that they are both the expression of mind, they are just nominal conventions. Good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, all of these are just mind's creations. And they have no ground, really. At least intellectually we cannot wrap our minds around it, we really have to experience it through meditation, which is why we have to use the "good" times to see it.

So in conclusion, what is this training bringing to us? Well, if we cannot practice when we are suffering, because of all the anxiety we go through, and we cannot practice when we are happy because of our attachment to happiness, then that rules out any chance of our practicing Dharma at all. So that is why there is nothing more crucial than this training in turning happiness and suffering into the path. And if you do have this training, no matter where you live, in a solitary place or in the middle of the city, whatever the people around you are like, good or bad, whether you're rich or poor, happy or distressed, whatever you have to listen to, praise or condemnation, good words or bad, you never feel the slightest fear that it could bring you down in any way, because you know how to work with it. You're not helpless.

No wonder this training is called the lion-like yoga; the lion is fearless, supposedly, the lion only fears the lioness...they don't say that here, I added this;~} The lion-like yoga. Whatever you do, your mind will be happy, peaceful, spacious and relaxed. If you have this spacious and relaxed mind, then you can look at it, then you can discover the nature of it...innate wisdom. Despite the fluctuation of the environmental conditions, because you are even-minded through all of this and aiming at looking at the nature of mind, it's all good. Your whole attitude will be pure and everything will turn out excellently. Your body might be living in this impure world of ours, but your mind will experience a splendor of unimaginable bliss, like the bodhisattvas in the pureland. It will be just as a precious Kadampa master used to say, and this is something to remember: "Keep happiness under control, put an end to suffering. With happiness under control and suffering brought to an end, when you are alone, this training will be your best friend. When you are sick, it will be your nurse." And that's the end of this beautiful text.