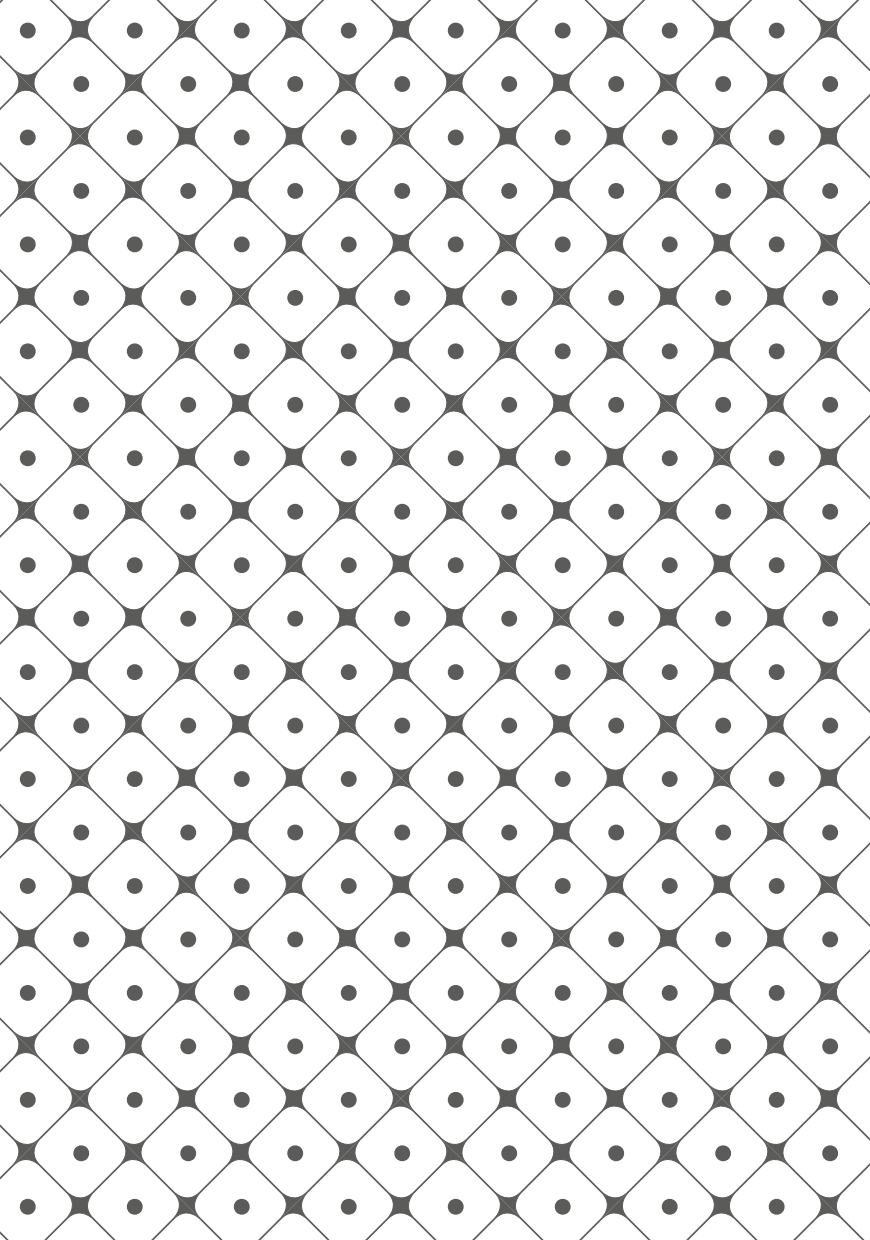
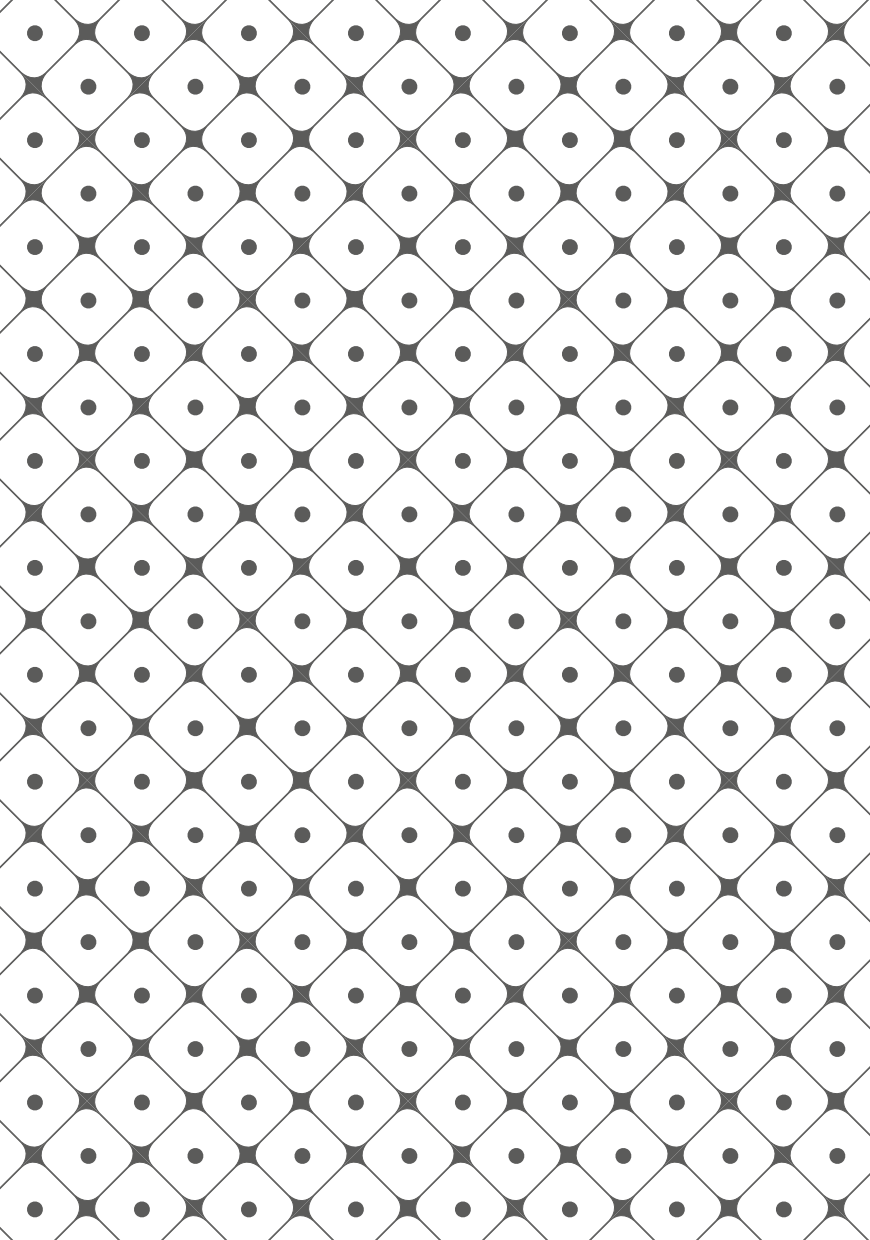


JOYFUL PARENTS, SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN



LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE





**JOYFUL PARENTS,
SUCCESSFUL
CHILDREN**

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LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE
EDITED BY VENERABLE JOAN NICELL



Amitabha
Buddhist Centre
阿彌陀佛佛教中心



DEDICATION



Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.



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◇ PUBLISHER'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ◇

Parenting is one of the most challenging undertakings in life for which nothing quite prepares us. At the same time, nurturing, guiding and raising children can be deeply joyful and fulfilling.

As Buddhist parents, we have a special and very important responsibility to ensure that our offspring not only receive a good worldly education but are also educated to be good-hearted human beings.

This book contains perfect advice from Lama Zopa Rinpoche. It not only provides the Dharma context for how our children should be brought up but also contains many helpful suggestions of how we can introduce simple Dharma practices to our children.

We wish to thank Ven. Joan Nicell and vbook; Nick Ribush of Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, Tom Truty of FPMT Education Services and Laura Miller of *Mandala* for providing additional editorial materials; and Lobsang Drolkar and Soh Seok Keim for their support and assistance.

Ng Swee Kim
Publications Group
Amitabha Buddhist Centre
April 2015

◇ EDITOR'S PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ◇

In this little book, Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche speaks about the need for Buddhist parents to make a plan for raising their children. This plan involves giving meaning to the decision to bring children into the world, and after having given birth to them, ensuring that they do everything within their power to make their children's lives as meaningful as possible. Otherwise, as Rinpoche says, "Being born in a Buddhist family will be no different from being born in a non-Buddhist family."

Rinpoche then explains exactly how parents should go about doing this—by teaching their children how to generate a good heart and the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace (kindness, rejoicing, patience, forgiveness, apologising,

contentment and courage) and by guiding them in virtuous actions while they are still young.

The main body of the book comes from two talks given at Institut Vajra Yogini in Lavour, France, on 15 and 23 May 2009 respectively. The context of these talks was a month-long retreat related to Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig in Tibetan) who is revered as the embodiment of compassion.

Students present at the retreat, as well as those participating in the retreat from their homes around the world, were encouraged to count their recitations of the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM, with the aim of reaching a combined total of 100 million mantras. Almost every day of the retreat, Rinpoche would join one or more sessions and give an explanation of some part of the practice.

On one of these occasions, Rinpoche was inspired by the words “mother and father sentient beings” in the following request to Avalokiteshvara to talk about how Buddhist parents can best raise their children:

*Arya Avalokiteshvara, treasure of
compassion,
Together with your retinue, please pay
attention to me.*

*Please quickly free me and all mother and
father sentient beings
Of the six realms from the ocean of
cyclic existence.
Please enable profound and extensive
peerless bodhicitta
To quickly grow in our mindstreams.*

*With the water of your compassion, please
quickly cleanse
Our delusions and actions accumulated
since beginningless time,
And with your compassionate hand,
Lead me and all migrating beings to the
blissful pure land.¹*

By keeping in mind that their child is one of the numberless sentient beings—for whom they, as Buddhists, develop bodhicitta at the beginning of every practice—parents can avoid raising their children with the painful mind of attachment that thinks only of *my* child. By understanding that they receive every happiness, past, present and future, up to enlightenment from their child, parents will be able to rejoice in their opportunity to be of use to at least one sentient being. As Rinpoche says, “Since you spend so many years of your life with your children, it is important to make them the focus of your Dharma practice and meditation.”

Just as parents can use their children to develop bodhicitta, so too can people use their partners, parents, other people in their care and even their pets, to develop this altruistic wish to achieve enlightenment.

In these talks, Rinpoche emphasises the responsibility that Buddhist parents have to educate their children in good qualities and behaviour while they are still young; that is, when

they are still willing to listen and do what their parents ask them to! Parents should also set a good example and practise the qualities Rinpoche outlines as essential for achieving every type of happiness, both short- and long-term.

In addition, parents need to teach their children how to do simple Dharma practices like prostrating and giving offerings to holy objects. Even if children do not continue to do these practices when they grow older, because actions bring results, sooner or later, they will reap the results.

Rinpoche sums up his advice saying, “Since as Buddhist parents, you can do so much to help your children, it would be a great pity and also very sad and strange, if you don’t teach your children the things that you have faith in and have found to be of benefit to your own life.”

In this edition, the original compilation has been supplemented with material drawn from several other occasions during which Rinpoche elaborated on the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace:

- *Everybody Needs Universal Compassion and Wisdom Education*: An interview about Universal Education for Compassion and Wisdom (UECW) given at Root Institute, Bodhgaya, India, December 2011; posted on the website of FPMT, *Mandala*, July-September 2012.
- *Antidotes to Recession*: Advice on how to deal with the 2009 global economic recession; posted on the website of Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive (LYWA), June 2011.
- *Advice to a Study Group*: A letter to an FPMT study group; posted on the website of LYWA, July 2009.
- *Seven Key Attitudes: Very Basic Dharma Practice*: A talk given at the CPMT meeting held at Institut Vajra Yogini, Lavour, France, 30 April 2009; transcribed by Ven. Thubten Munsel and edited by Claire Isitt.

- *Six Essential Guidelines for a Better Life*: A talk given at Root Institute, 4 January 2009; transcribed and edited by Ven. Ailsa Cameron.
- *Three Principles of the Path*: A teaching given at Tse Chen Ling, San Francisco, USA, 26 February 2001; transcribed by Ven. Thubten Munsel.

Chapter seven of this edition has been compiled from a teaching given on 29 September 2014 during a one-month retreat in Bendigo, Australia, hosted by the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Atisha Centre and Thubten Shedrup Ling Monastery.

This book, as is the case for all things, is the result of the coming together of many causes and conditions. First of all, my deep, heartfelt and never-ending gratitude to Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche for his endless dedication to inspiring me and his many students around the world to transform every aspect of our lives—in this case raising children—into Dharma practice.

I would also like to thank Jon Landaw, editor and author, and Mariana Orozco Jutorán, Senior Lecturer for the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the Autonomous University in Barcelona, Spain, and avid supporter of Universal Education for Compassion and Wisdom, for reviewing my original compilation and making valuable suggestions about the content and structure. Many thanks to Ng Swee Kim of Amitabha Buddhist Centre in Singapore for asking me to review this text prior to publishing it, thereby giving me an opportunity to once again rejoice in these teachings. For this revised version, my gratitude goes to Ven. Ailsa Cameron, senior editor for LYWA, for reviewing and editing the manuscript and generously sharing her expertise in editing Rinpoche's teachings. Thanks also to Sandra Smith, editor for LYWA, for reviewing the final version and offering valuable suggestions. And finally, hats off to Nicholas Ribush, intrepid editor, director and fundraiser for LYWA and the force behind

making Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche's prolific teachings readily and widely available online and in print.

May Rinpoche's advice to parents cause them to transform their own lives and those of their children into a source of peace and happiness for all beings.

Joan Nicell
Kopan Monastery, Nepal
March 2015

Notes:

¹ *A Sadhana of the Compassion Buddha, Arya Avalokiteshvara*, FPMT Education Services, 2009.



1

◇ RAISING CHILDREN ◇
WITH BODHICITTA

You and every single sentient being—all the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras, suras and intermediate state beings—are like one big family. This is because every one of them has been your mother not just one time but numberless times throughout beginningless lives.

Every sentient being has given you a body numberless times, not just a human body but also the bodies of different kinds of animals, hungry ghosts and so on. Each time you were born from a womb or an egg, they gave you a body. Just taking into consideration the times you were born with a human body, every sentient being has given birth to you numberless times.

Then as your human mother, they were kind to you in four ways: they protected your life from hundreds of dangers every day; they educated you in the ways of the world; they bore many hardships for your well-being; and they created a great amount of negative karma for the sake of your happiness. Every sentient being—every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura and every sura—has done this for you when, as human beings, they were your mother. Similarly, when you were born as an animal, your mother was kind to you; for example, when you were born as a bird, day after day, your mother went to look for food and killed many insects and worms to feed to you.

It is truly unbelievable how these mothers of old protected you, bore so many hardships for you and created so much negative karma for you. Can you even begin to imagine their kindness? But, unfortunately, almost every single one of their actions became negative because it was done out of attachment.

To avoid this happening, the best way to take care of children is to think of them simply as a sentient being rather than as *my* child.

For example, when you generate bodhicitta for all sentient beings at the beginning of a spiritual practice, such as reading a prayer, doing a session of a retreat or even just reciting a mantra such as OM MANI PADME HUM, you do it for the benefit of *all* sentient beings—the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras, suras and intermediate state beings. If you do these activities for every single sentient being including every single insect, it goes without saying that you also do them for your own children. If you think in this way, you will have the same motivation to care for your children as you would any sentient being.

Because your children are sentient beings, you have received every happiness experienced throughout beginningless lives from them. You also receive all your present happiness from them and you receive all the happiness of future

lives from them (not just the happiness of one future life but the happiness of *all* future lives). In addition, you receive liberation from samsara from them and you also receive the realisations of the entire path up to enlightenment from them. By understanding and recognising this, you will see that your children are the most precious and kindest people in your life.

So when you begin a practice with the motivation of bodhicitta, the thought to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings, recall that your child is one of those sentient beings and do the practice with that awareness. Similarly, when you conclude a practice with the dedication to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, remember that your child is one of those sentient beings.

Of course, all other sentient beings are exactly the same as your children in being precious and kind, but because you, as a parent, have a particular karmic connection with and are responsible for the specific sentient beings that are your children, you should always pay

special attention to the fact that your children are included among those sentient beings.

By thinking in this way, you will have a totally different attitude toward your children; there will not be the slightest negative thought caused by the eight worldly concerns,¹ and instead you will take care of them motivated by the positive thought of cherishing a sentient being.

On the other hand, if you allow yourself to come under the influence of the eight worldly concerns, when your children do something to please you, something that you like, you will happily take care of them. However, when they do something that is contrary to your wishes, something that upsets you or makes you angry, you may even be tempted to give them up entirely. This change in your attitude towards them happens because you are attached to your own happiness and want to avoid suffering and problems.

**With bodhicitta, you feel that
your children are the most precious and
the kindest beings in your life.**

If you have this attitude, you will take care of them with a healthy positive mind rather than with a negative emotional mind and the pain of attachment.

As a parent, you can make yourself happy by thinking:

How wonderful that my life can be beneficial for even one sentient being.

How wonderful that I can take care of even one sentient being.

How wonderful that my limbs can be useful for looking after and bringing happiness to even one sentient being.

Especially when you encounter difficulties—when your children do not listen to you, when you cannot control them and when you feel disappointed with them—it is good to rejoice in these ways. If you can do this, there will be no difficulties in your heart. With a sincere wish to help your children, you won't have that annoyed and exhausted mind that wishes to

give them up. Motivated by bodhicitta, you will be able to rejoice in having the opportunity to help them.

Likewise, the motivation for doing a job that involves taking care of other people's children or the elderly should be exactly the same as the one you have for looking after your own child. The thought, "This person is the most precious and the most kind," is the best attitude to have when you are doing this kind of work.

With the motivation of bodhicitta, every hardship that you undergo and every single service that you do for others will purify negative karma collected throughout beginningless lives. Your job will also become a means for you to collect extensive merit and a chance to practise all six perfections or paramitas: giving, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration and wisdom.

To practise the perfection of wisdom, for example, you can think that you, the caregiver, the action of taking care of the other person and the person you are taking care

of are all empty of true existence and merely labelled by the mind. Motivated by bodhicitta, everything you do to take care of someone else becomes a cause of enlightenment and a quick path to enlightenment.

In a Buddhist text, it is mentioned that even though Maitreya Buddha generated compassion and bodhicitta much earlier than did Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha achieved enlightenment first because his compassion was much stronger. His strong compassion enabled him to collect much more extensive merit and purify far greater negative karma accumulated in the past. For example, when in one life as brothers, they encountered a family of five tigers dying of starvation, Maitreya Buddha did not offer his body to them whereas Guru Shakyamuni Buddha did.

In the same way, if you are able to generate strong compassion for your children, and instead of being driven by attachment to them, you use them to practise Dharma, your children will give you enlightenment.

Also, if motivated by compassion, you do a job that entails taking care of other people's children or the elderly, you will receive realisations and enlightenment from those people. Similarly, even if you just look after a pet with this motivation, you will receive enlightenment quickly from that sentient being.



Notes:

1 Wishing to experience happiness and to avoid suffering; to gain material things and to avoid losing them; to be praised and to avoid criticism; to have a good reputation and to avoid a bad one.

◇ MAKING A RELATIONSHIP ◇
MEANINGFUL

You, as a parent, need to learn how to take care of your children properly. Since you spend so many years of your life with them, it is important to make them the focus of your Dharma practice and meditation. But by saying this, I am not suggesting that everyone has children! My point is that if you are planning to have children, you should be really careful, and before having children, learn how to make their lives as beneficial as possible. Of course, there is still no guarantee that everything will work out; your children will have their own individual karma. But, because children spend so much time with their parents, you can potentially have an enormous influence on them. Therefore, parents have a huge responsibility. Unfortunately, most

people don't think about this and so don't plan what they are going to do with that new life after giving birth to a child. Instead, they tend to think that having children is going to be pure bliss, without a single problem, like a wonderful dream come true.

The same is true of relationships. People think, "To be with them is all I need in life." They never think about the possible problems, and instead, see a life filled with beauty and bliss. They think, "If I could only be with this person, I could kiss the rest of the world good-bye. Whatever happens after that, even if the world were to be destroyed by fire, it wouldn't matter." It is very interesting to investigate how the mind thinks, and in particular, 'the trip' that attachment takes us on. Attachment sees only beauty, only bliss. It considers that particular person to be absolutely wonderful and the most important and best thing in life.

Even before you meet someone, you hope to encounter such a person and imagine how the relationship will be, including the holidays

you will go on together. Mentally you make up stories or daydream about how nice it will be.

Then at the beginning of an actual relationship, there is a lot of excitement. You are attracted to each other and meet for an hour or so here and there, perhaps in a park or at a restaurant. You meet more and more often and come to think, "How wonderful it would be if we could live together." Eventually, you either get married or move in together. But only then do you begin to really see the other person. As the days pass, you gradually begin to get angry when the other person behaves in ways or says things that you don't like. You begin to notice many previously unnoticed things about them, such as the unpleasant smell of their body and excrement. Gradually you come to see many faults. You begin to see the selfish mind of the other person, that they don't want to do what you want them to do and that they only want to do whatever they want. Your unhappiness starts to grow and then gets stronger and stronger.

Whereas at the beginning, there were no problems and you were completely absorbed in bliss, now that bliss is like a cloud or a rainbow disappearing from the sky. First, there is just a trace left and then it is completely gone. The days pass and there are more and more problems. Eventually, your heartfelt wish comes to be expressed in the thought, “When can I be rid of them?” At this point, your way of thinking is completely opposite to what it was at the beginning of the relationship. Now what you wish and pray for from the bottom of your heart is to be free from this person! That becomes the most important thing in your life—to be rid of them is what would make you the happiest person alive. Day and night, while you are at work and when you return home, you continually ask yourself, “When am I going to be free?” You look for a way to make this happen and as a result, there is more and more fighting and quarrelling. Your life becomes filled with tears and misery. You blame each other,

saying, “You did this” and “You did that.” Finally, either you leave them or the other person leaves you. And then what you want is to never see that person again! While at one time, the best thing imaginable was to be with that person forever, now the best thing would be to never encounter them ever again.

One time I was in Singapore and an Indian couple came to visit me. They told me that they couldn't wait for their daughter to get married and asked me to pray for this to happen quickly. I advised them to be careful, to take their time and to not rush, but I didn't go into any detail about the possible problems that could arise. They seemed to have no idea what marriage implied; it was as if they were completely hallucinating. For them, their daughter's marriage was the most important thing in their lives and they seemed oblivious to the fact that marriage is not always sun-shining bliss. This showed me that not only young people but also their parents never actually think about what can

happen; everyone just takes it for granted that couples will always have a good life together. Even though everyone sees and hears about the problems that occur in relationships, people never think that this will happen to them. However, sooner or later, there will be problems; for example, some couples end up fighting over money and other possessions to the point of ending up suing each other.

When the experience of being together starts to become unpleasant, you see more and more problems, and at the same time, your attachment diminishes more and more until the excitement is completely gone. But even before that relationship is over, you get into another relationship with the thought, “This person loves me more than my present partner.” You start the same mental story all over again, “This person is fantastic; they only love me. If we could be together, there won’t be any problems, only bliss. This time there won’t be any darkness, just sun-shining happiness.” Then, the same story starts all over again. You move in

together and gradually the other person learns more about what you are like, and you also begin to see things that you didn't notice before. You find more and more faults in each other and gradually lose interest in each other. Once again the relationship ends. Then again you meet someone new and think, "This person loves me so much more."

If on top of everything else you have children, this can create additional problems as then all the attention tends to become focused on them. If that happens, you can easily come to feel that your partner doesn't love you anymore.

For all these reasons, you should consider having a relationship to be an opportunity to practise Dharma and to free yourself from worldly thoughts, just like having children.

In particular, you should make sure that being together with someone becomes a cause of enlightenment by keeping in mind the motivation of bodhicitta.

You should cherish, serve and dedicate your life to your partner in the same way that you aspire to do for all sentient beings.

You can use your relationship to practise morality by, for example, observing the five lay vows of abstaining from killing, stealing, adultery, lying and mind-altering substances. Likewise, having a partner provides an opportunity for you to practise the other five perfections of giving, patience, perseverance, concentration and wisdom. If you can do this, they will give you enlightenment just like your children.

You can also think about your partner in exactly the same way as your children, “I have received every happiness experienced throughout beginningless lives from this person.” Just that kindness is unimaginable, but on top of that, you also receive all your future happiness from them. In addition, you also receive liberation from every suffering, which is much more precious, from them. Then, you also receive enlightenment, which is even more

precious, from that person. Thinking in this way, the conclusion is that your partner is the most precious, most dear and most kind person in your entire life.

You should also keep in mind that in past lives, your present partner was your mother and at that time was kind to you in the four ways. By recognising the vast kindness you've received from them, you will come to see yourself as their servant. Thinking in this way, your living together will become an opportunity to practise Dharma. With the attitude that the other person is most precious and kind, every single action you do will become a means of collecting extensive merit. If you also act with bodhicitta, you will collect limitless skies of merit and your actions will become the cause to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. By thinking, "I am going to offer service to this person who is a most precious sentient being," you will collect a huge amount of merit every day and also purify defilements collected throughout

beginningless lives. Since you will constantly create the cause for the biggest success—full enlightenment for all sentient beings, your life will be filled with happiness and hope.

When trying to understand the things that happen in a relationship, you need to take past karma into account. Everything that you expect to happen doesn't necessarily happen because the way things go depends on the karma that you and your partner created in the past. If you always remember to relate events to karma by thinking, "This is my karma" and "This is their karma," a potential problem doesn't even become a problem because you accept the situation. It does not bother you and there is peace in your heart. But if you don't think of or don't accept karma, you will feel as though you are crushed beneath heavy mountains of problems. However, it's your own faulty way of thinking that makes you feel like that.

If you remember karma, then even if one day your partner leaves you, there will be no problem at all. You will respect their decision by seeing

how they are the most precious, dearest and kindest sentient being from whom you receive all your past, present and future happiness. Thinking like this, you won't have any clinging or attachment, and even if your partner decides to leave you, you will be able to mentally offer them whatever is best for them. If a relationship begins with this way of thinking, it will also end well. On the other hand, if the motivation at the beginning is faulty, then at the end when separation occurs, there will be intense suffering even to the point of contemplating suicide.

If you are able to make use of all your relationships to practise Dharma, you will lead a very healthy life. Whether you have a partner or children, whether you are taking care of other people's children, the elderly or your own parents, you should practise seeing yourself as their servant and the sentient beings you are taking care of as your lord or boss. Then serve them by working to free them from suffering and to bring them happiness. This is the attitude of a bodhisattva towards all sentient beings.

By thinking in the ways that I have explained here, you will be able to fully enjoy life. You will find satisfaction and fulfillment and you will experience inner peace and happiness. Otherwise, no matter the excitement and no matter how many good things happen to you, your heart will always be empty and you will be miserable. .



3
◇ GENERATING ◇
THE GOOD HEART

Solving the problems of the world—population increase, climate change, financial crises and so on—depends mainly on education. While adults also need to be educated in the prevention and resolution of these problems, special attention needs to be paid to educating the young. The main focus of such an education should be to teach children how to be better human beings. They need to learn how to develop human values like kindness and compassion.

**Young people are the future of the world.
How much happiness and peace, and likewise,
how much fear and danger future generations
will experience depends on how children
are educated right now.**

A more peaceful world depends on children practising the good heart—helping others and not harming them. This is the most important education you can give children and the very first thing to teach them.

Initially, it is very important to make a plan for your children's lives to be beneficial, both for their own sake and for the rest of the world. People who are starting a new business, for example, begin by developing a plan to make it the most profitable possible. Similarly, even before you bring children into the world, you should make a plan given that a sentient being's life is much more important than a business!

Every day, you, as a Buddhist parent, make prayers, recite mantras and so forth, for the benefit of all sentient beings—the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras, suras and intermediate state beings. Since your children are also included in those sentient beings, you must think about how to make their lives the most beneficial possible. This is because, among the numberless sentient

beings, you have a special responsibility for your children's lives. You must therefore make a plan to ensure that their lives are meaningful and not passed in suffering, at the very least for themselves but ideally, also for the entire family, society, country and world.

You have a huge responsibility for the kind of people your children will grow up to be. Because you spend so much time with them, your attitude and behaviour can have a lasting influence on them.

Of course, there is no guarantee they will do everything you tell them to do; they also have their own individual karma. Having created strong karma in their past lives, your children's lives may well turn out to be completely different to the way you brought them up. But because what happens to them also depends on other causes and conditions, you are responsible for helping them as much as you possibly can. Therefore, you need to have a clear plan as to

how to educate them. If instead, you miss out on directing your children's lives in a positive way, their futures will be very unsure and the opportunity you had to help them will be lost. Although many good things could have happened to your children because you lacked a clear idea about parenting, their lives might become filled with constant suffering and problems.

A good parenting plan comes from having a healthy, positive motivation for bringing up your children, one that is based on a good heart rather than on attachment.

If you have a good heart and a good attitude toward life, and consequently try to do positive things to help others in your daily life, it will have a strong impact on your children. It will be of great benefit to them and they will grow up with a healthy mind—a positive, pure Dharma mind. With this type of mind, they won't harm themselves, nor will they harm other sentient beings: their families, neighbours, fellow countrymen and the people of

the world, not to mention animals. Not only that, their healthy minds will also make it possible for them to bring peace and happiness to others.

Children learn from their parents, so if they see you trying to benefit others, they will receive a positive message from your example. Then, when your children have their own children, they will pass on that same education by also living their lives with a good heart and helping others. Your children will be an example for their own children, that is, for your grandchildren. Like this, parents can help to transmit from generation to generation the importance of a good heart, of not causing harm to others and of doing as many positive actions as possible. If you do this, the result will not only be an enjoyable family life for you and your children, but it will also bring much happiness and peace to the sentient beings of this world, life after life. Therefore, your role as a parent is extremely important and entails a truly big responsibility.



4

◇ TEACHING THE SEVEN ◇ FOUNDATIONS

In addition to the good heart, there are seven basic qualities in which to educate children, which I call “Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace.” These Seven are based on a set of 16 Dharma rules¹ compiled long ago for the whole country of Tibet by one of the Dharma kings, Songtsen Gampo, considered to be an embodiment of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. The purpose of these rules or guidelines is to ensure that everyone’s life becomes more sane and meaningful, and a source of peace and happiness for others. By following them, people will make efforts to avoid negative karma and ensure that everything they do becomes good karma. Since children from their own side also need to create positive karma in order to experience happiness

and success, they need to be taught at least the Seven Foundations.

Just as a beggar on the street is not nourished by someone else eating delicious food in an expensive restaurant, your children will not experience happiness as a result of the good karma you create; instead, they have to create good karma themselves.

1. KINDNESS

The first of the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace is kindness. You should encourage your children to practise kindness in their daily lives, not just with fellow human beings (including their enemies), but also with animals and insects. By thinking about others' happiness and practising kindness all the time, day and night, they will bring peace to all sentient beings. Also in their own heart, there will be peace no matter what the situation, even when things are difficult. Wherever they are, every day, week and month, they will make others happy.

When they see that their positive actions, their acts of kindness, make others happy, this will, in turn, make your children happy, right now in this very life. But the acts of kindness that they do in this life will also have a long-term effect on their future lives. With every positive action, they create the cause for their own wishes for peace and happiness, both temporal and ultimate, to be fulfilled.

The result of even just one act of kindness is happiness. This is because good and bad deeds—positive and negative karma—definitely bring the experience of happiness and suffering respectively. Another characteristic of karma—the law of actions and their consequences—is that karma expands over time.

**Because of this, even one small act of kindness
done with a good heart, a sincere concern
for the happiness of another sentient being,
results in experiencing happiness in hundreds,
and even thousands of future lives.**

Contrarily, by harming someone even slightly, there will be the unwanted consequence of experiencing problems and unhappiness for hundreds and even thousands of lifetimes. Therefore, the very first thing to teach your children is kindness. Their kindness will make them happy, which will make you happy, and then you will make others happy!

2. REJOICING

The second Foundation for Happiness and Peace to teach your children is that of rejoicing. When good things happen to other people, such as having an attractive body, a good friend, a nice house, a new car, a good education, or a job or business that is going well, it is important for your children to learn to feel happy about it. Instead of being jealous and envious and wanting what others have—an unhappy state of mind that creates obstacles to their own and others' wishes being fulfilled—you should teach your children to always rejoice when other sentient beings are happy. Delighting

in others' good fortune—like a mother who is delighted when her cherished child experiences good things—will keep their minds happy and give them real inner peace. It will bring them a healthy mind and their lives will be full of ups rather than downs, and they will be protected from depression.

By practising rejoicing, being glad when good things happen to others, your children will create good karma all the time.

Whether they accept the workings of karma or not, by rejoicing in goodness, they will have virtuous thoughts. From them will come happiness and success in this life and in future lives. For hundreds and thousands of lifetimes, they will experience the positive result of rejoicing even just one time. Rejoicing in their own and other's goodness is therefore the easiest way to collect extensive merit, the cause of happiness.

Rejoicing takes place in the mind, so it can be done while walking, while eating, even while lying

down. You can teach your children to rejoice anywhere, any time, so they can practise feeling glad many times a day. With a happy mind, they will communicate well with others and will therefore have good relationships and connections with others. They will then be able to help them and make them happy. Rejoicing is a very wholesome practice and makes life meaningful. It is also one of the very best psychologies and therapies as it keeps the mind happy.

For all these reasons, it is extremely important to teach your children to rejoice in the good qualities and good fortune of others.

3. PATIENCE

The third Foundation for Happiness and Peace that children need to be taught is patience. If children are free from anger, they won't harm themselves or other sentient beings, including animals, so they won't create negative karma. On the other hand, if they have a tendency to get angry, that anger will always disturb their minds and make them unhappy, and it will also disturb the people around

them. From one act of anger, they will experience suffering not only in the lower realms, where there is unbelievable misery, but also later on in the human realm. This is because when, due to the ripening of a good karma, they once again obtain a human rebirth, they will continue to experience the results of their previous anger, such as having an ugly body and encountering many problems and obstacles. Like this, they can experience the suffering results of one act of anger for hundreds or even thousands of lifetimes.

Anger—the opposite of patience—also destroys merit, the cause of every type of happiness. It destroys the happiness of this life and the happiness of future lives, including good rebirth. It also destroys the merit needed to achieve ultimate happiness—liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering. And it also destroys the merit that is the cause of enlightenment. So anger is only harmful; it causes unbelievable harm to oneself and to other sentient beings.

Learning patience now will also help your children avoid being angry people in their future

lives. It will leave positive imprints on their minds that will bring the effect of their having more patience, as a result of which they will stop harming others. In this way, they will bring peace and happiness to this world now and to sentient beings life after life. In the historical accounts of the world, there are many examples of people in powerful positions who did not practise patience and so killed and tortured even millions of innocent people. By teaching your children patience, others, starting from the members of your own family, won't receive harm from them and instead will receive peace. If instead, they tend to get angry with others, motivated by that bad mind, they will harm other people verbally, by saying hurtful things, or physically, by striking them and so on. Those people in turn will likely harm them back.

By teaching your children to practise patience and avoid harming others, and on top of that, to benefit them, people will enjoy being around them and their relationships will be harmonious and lasting.

For all these reasons, you, as a parent, need to develop patience yourself and then teach your children how to be more patient.

4. FORGIVENESS

As a parent, you should also teach your children that when someone harms, disrespects or even abuses them, the best response is forgiveness.

**Forgiveness is extremely important—
it opens the hearts of both those who forgive
and those who are forgiven.**

Rather than holding a grudge, if children are able to forgive others, there will be peace in their hearts, as well as in the hearts of those who harm them. Without learning forgiveness, the meaning of their lives and the purpose of their being born human—to bring peace to themselves, to their families and to other people in the world—will be lost.

Also, if instead of forgiving those who harm them your children return the harm,

not only will the person who harmed them want to harm them back, so too will that person's family and friends. And due to that negative karma of retaliating, in the future, your children will be harmed and even killed for five hundred lifetimes by that same person in different forms. In this way, the suffering will go on and on without end. On the other hand, by forgiving those who harm them, your children won't harm others, nor will you, the other members of your family and your friends. Therefore, so many people will be saved from creating negative karma.

I once saw an interview on television with a woman in the United States whose young daughter had been kidnapped, raped and killed by a man. Even though she wasn't a Buddhist, she said that she didn't want to kill the man and instead forgave him. This amazing ability to forgive him came from her incredibly good heart. Another man who had been shot six times also said, when interviewed, that he didn't want to kill the man who had shot him.

He didn't even want that man to go to prison! He too didn't seem to be a Buddhist but he had a very good heart and was very kind. Because of their good hearts, these two people were able to experience so much mental peace and happiness in this very life. You should try to be like them and also teach your children how to be like them.

5. APOLOGISING

Another Foundation for Happiness and Peace to teach your children is the importance of apologising when they do something that harms other people, such as insulting them or speaking angrily to them. If your children immediately apologise for their mistakes, it will bring peace in their own hearts and also in the hearts of the people they harmed. As a result, those people won't hold a grudge against your children, won't close their hearts to them or stop speaking to them, nor will there be an uncomfortable feeling between them.

By apologising sincerely, your children will continue to have a good relationship with the people they have mistakenly harmed. Clearing things up in this way will bring happiness to everyone concerned.

As a result, peace will spread from one person to another and your children will be making a contribution to world peace.

6. CONTENTMENT

Another quality that is absolutely essential for children to develop is contentment. Many problems occur in the world because people are dissatisfied and follow their desires. Even very wealthy people, millionaires and billionaires who have enough money to last them and their families for lifetimes, end up in prison after they are caught embezzling funds that they do not need or cheating others out of their money. In fact, the news is filled with stories of people who, driven by greed, get involved in illegal activities that cause much

suffering and unhappiness to others, as well as eventually to themselves.

When young people in particular lack contentment, there is a high risk of them drinking alcohol and taking drugs. Once they are trapped in addiction, they are unable to live a normal life and even to hold down a job, let alone practise Dharma. Eventually, the addiction can totally destroy their entire lives.

Contentment, on the other hand, will protect them from developing bad habits that ruin and waste their lives, prevent them from being useful to others, and cause them to create a lot of pain for their families.

Since learning how to give up attachment and desire is very important, you need to teach your children how to be content and satisfied.

7. COURAGE

The last of the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace that you should teach your children

is courage. Often people have the tendency to put themselves down, thinking, “I’m hopeless. I can’t do anything.” By seeing themselves as having no good qualities, they become depressed and unable to do anything for anyone. With courage—the thought “I can do it”—your children will be able to lift their minds up and successfully accomplish both worldly and Dharma activities.

Courage will give them the mental strength needed to develop their qualities and the confidence that they can help others and lead them to happiness. It also enables them to bear the hardships involved in giving up the selfish mind.

Courage is particularly important in the West, where there are so many people who, due to thinking that their lives are meaningless, become depressed and even end up committing suicide. For these reasons, it is very important for your children to possess courage.

As a parent, you should consider the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace as a guideline for educating your children, as well as for your own practice. These seven qualities give a very clear idea of how to raise children and how you can help them. By developing them, instead of causing harm to themselves and others, from life to life, your children will bring benefit to themselves, their families, their neighbours and to the other sentient beings of this world. With these Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace, your children will be happy and do many good things for others, thereby all the time creating the cause to be happy in the future. Even if they only develop the first of the Seven, kindness, and then treat everyone they meet with kindness, the effect on themselves and on other people will be truly amazing.

I want to emphasise my main point once again: if you choose to have children, you must have a plan as to how to make being a parent beneficial for the world and for sentient beings. Even if you cannot teach your children all Seven

Foundations for Happiness and Peace, you must educate them in as many of them as possible. Also, as a parent, you need to practise these qualities yourself in order to set a good example for your children. In this way, your children will learn from you and will be much more likely to develop these qualities themselves. In short, your job as a parent is to educate your children to be good human beings who don't do any harm and who only bring benefit and happiness to themselves, to others and to the world.



Notes:

1 The 16 Dharma rules or the 16 Human Dharmas can be found in Appendix 1.

5

◇ MAKING THE WORRY ◇ WORTHWHILE

Every time your children do something positive, however much you suffered because of and for them, it all becomes worthwhile. First of all, for about nine months, the mother carried them in her womb, willingly bearing all sorts of difficulties for them. Then, after the birth, you, as a parent, made so many sacrifices, bore so many difficulties and worked so hard to make money to take care of your children. But even long before that, you spent so many years getting an education—going from kindergarten to primary school to high school and perhaps even on to college or university—so that you could get a degree and find a job to make enough money to buy or build a house for your future children. Like this, you sacrificed so many years of your lives for your

children. Just living with children brings so much exhaustion, worry and fear.

But now, every time your children do something positive, all the hardships are made worthwhile.

Like the expression, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” if your children have a good heart and do even one act of kindness a day, this will keep difficulties away for you. All those years of suffering, all the worry and fear, will have brought a good result and you will be able to rejoice in the efforts you made to educate them. Otherwise, your life as a parent will not become Dharma, and instead, you will act only out of attachment to your children. In spite of your exhaustion and hard work, they won’t be content and their lives will be spent in suffering. Things will be difficult for everyone and there will be many problems for your entire family. Life will pass only in suffering and then death will happen. This is how things work in samsara.

Having children is a huge responsibility; it is no easy matter at all.

You are not only responsible for your children's happiness during their lifetime, you are also responsible for providing them with an education that will help them at the time of death, the most crucial moment of life.

Therefore, it is not enough to give your children the sense pleasures and physical comforts of daily life. Rather, the most important thing is to think about what will be of most benefit to them when they are face-to-face with death.

Everyone has to die. It is not that some people in this world will live forever while others will die. Even the Buddha himself showed the aspect of passing into the sorrowless state. He showed this aspect even though he had attained liberation from the oceans of samsaric sufferings by ceasing their causes, karma and delusions.

He showed this aspect even though he had totally removed the cause of afflictions and their negative imprints by actualising the remedy, the path. He showed this aspect even though he had attained full enlightenment through ceasing even the subtle obscurations by completing the whole Mahayana path. And he showed this aspect even though he had actualised the two kayas, the dharmakaya and rupakaya, by completing the two types of merit—the merit of wisdom and the merit of virtue. Even though the Buddha had achieved all this, when he passed away, his holy body was burnt by fire during its cremation in Kushinagar, India. Similarly, all the other enlightened beings, those who correctly practised the path that the Buddha had revealed and thereby achieved enlightenment, also had to leave their holy bodies behind, such that now only their relics remain.

So your children will also have to die, and after their death, there are only two possibilities—to be reborn in the lower realms or in the higher realms—and which it will be

depends entirely on their karma. You can see for yourself whether they collect more negative karma or more positive karma in a day. In general, non-virtuous actions tend to be more complete than virtuous actions in terms of the motivation, actual action and conclusion, and are therefore more powerful. Virtuous actions, on the other hand, tend to be done without having a motivation of bodhicitta or some other Dharma mind at the beginning; in the middle, the actual action itself is not done perfectly or else is very weak; and at the end, either a dedication is not done at all or else it is not done well.

There are also many obstacles to creating and preserving virtue. For example, ill will reduces the power of virtue, making it weak. Even though virtuous actions are done, if they are not dedicated to achieving enlightenment for sentient beings, the merit can be destroyed in a finger snap by the arising of heresy or anger. And even if they have been dedicated to enlightenment but have not been sealed with

emptiness, the merit is weakened by heresy and anger. You have to keep this in mind and be very careful in your daily lives not to allow the little virtue you collect here and there, in fact quite rarely, to be destroyed.

To sum up: First of all, it is extremely difficult for actions to become virtue. Then, even if they do become virtue, there are many obstacles to their lasting a long time, and finally, it is quite rare for them to be done perfectly and to become powerful. For these reasons, it is extremely important to help your children while they are still young to get used to putting effort into creating virtue.



6

◇ HELPING CHILDREN ◇ COLLECT MERIT

Years ago, I visited a distant relative and her husband at their home in Darjeeling. Their children were quite young at the time, but every morning, after they had washed and dressed and were ready to go to school, the whole family would go together to their shrine room, which was very beautiful, and do three prostrations in front of an altar on which were many statues. They did this every day before leaving for school. As I often like to mention, the benefit of doing even one prostration to a statue of the Buddha is unbelievable. It creates the karma to be reborn as a wheel-turning king as many times as the number of atoms of the earth that your body covers as you prostrate. To obtain this type of rebirth requires infinite, inconceivable merit.

In the case of those children in Darjeeling, there were many holy objects on the altar and they did three prostrations to them, so can you imagine how much merit they collected. By doing three prostrations, they created three causes of enlightenment. In addition, depending on how many statues there were, they created that much more merit. If there were a thousand statues and they prostrated just once to all of them, they would have created a thousand causes of enlightenment. If your children were to do the same, it would give them so much hope as every day they would create the causes for happiness and success in this life and in their future lives, as well as the causes for liberation and enlightenment. Therefore, you have a very special opportunity to help your children by teaching them to prostrate to holy objects.

There are many other things you can teach your children that will be very beneficial to them. For example, it is good to have an altar in your home with many pictures, thankas, statues of buddhas and deities. In addition, each

of your children can have their own special statue, perhaps of Tara or Chenrezig. Then every day—in the morning and perhaps also in the evening but at least once a day—your children can offer a candy or a biscuit on a nice plate to their own statue as well as to all the other pictures, thangkas and statues. If they can't do more, they should at least say OM AH HUM to bless the candy or biscuit and transform it into oceans of nectar before offering it. You can also make prayers together such as:

By this merit, may I never cause harm to any sentient being and may I cause all sentient beings to have every happiness up to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Or:

By this merit, may I, like the Buddha, be able to liberate numberless sentient beings from suffering and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

By dedicating in this way, your children will not only collect the extensive merit of making offerings to holy objects, but also the merit that they create will become extremely powerful.

If your children don't create good karma from their own side, how can you expect them to have happy lives? Without merit, without good karma, it is impossible for them to be happy and successful.

No matter how many university degrees someone has these days, there is no guarantee that they will find a job and be happy. On the other hand, there are many people who live a happy and satisfied life, who experience inner peace, even though they don't have a university degree. For these reasons, you must focus on using skilful means to help your children create merit. You must put effort into this so that, sooner or later, they will come to have an easy life, free from problems. By creating merit, they will have every success in life, including finding a job.

I have given you a few examples but there are many more things that you, as a Buddhist parent, can do to help your children. I have already mentioned the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace that you should teach them, but you can also teach them all 16 qualities or 16 Dharmas set out by Songtsen Gampo. In addition to providing this kind of education, if you also pray for your children, your prayers will be very powerful due to your strong karmic connection with them. However, at the same time as praying for them, you should also skilfully guide them to do many small practices that create merit in their daily lives, such as making charity to other sentient beings, including animals, insects and so forth.

I want to clarify that when I suggest that at the same time as educating your children, you should pray for them, I don't mean that you should pray for them to be successful in passing their exams! That is a tiny prayer; it doesn't create the cause for them to experience happiness life after life, nor

does it create the cause for their liberation and enlightenment. Of course, you can pray for their long lives, for them to be healthy, for all their wishes that accord with the Dharma to succeed, for their actions not to become negative karma and for them to not cause harm to themselves and others, but in particular, you can also pray:

May my children develop the same qualities as Tara (or Chenrezig, Manjushri, Medicine Buddha or Lama Tsongkhapa) in this very lifetime and be able to do perfect work for sentient beings, freeing them from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bringing them to full enlightenment as quickly as possible.

This prayer is short but it includes all the realisations.

Another prayer that you can do for your children is the one to meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, which possess special qualities:

Due to all the merit collected in the three times by myself, all buddhas and bodhisattvas and all sentient beings, may I and all sentient beings, without the delay of even one second, be able to meet the pure wisdom teachings of the victorious one, Lama Tsongkhapa, who was endowed with pure morality and the brave attitude, who did extensive deeds for all sentient beings and who accomplished the yoga of the two stages—the essence of which is the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and emptiness.

Or you can pray for them to be guided by Lama Tsongkhapa now and in the future:

*In all our lives, through the
victorious one, Lama Tsongkhapa,
Acting in person as the
Mahayana guru,
May we never turn aside for
even an instant
From the excellent path praised by
the victorious ones.*

This is a prayer that I often recite when I meet with people. I also chant aloud the various powerful mantras¹ that purify even the heaviest negative karmas, those ‘without break,’ which cause one to be reborn in the lowest hell and experience the heaviest of sufferings for the longest time.² I also recite Maitreya Buddha’s mantra and pray that when Maitreya Buddha comes to this world, they may become his disciples, receive teachings directly from him and obtain a predication of their enlightenment during the time of Maitreya Buddha’s teachings.

Another prayer that is very good to recite is the one from the Cittamani Tara practice:

*Please bless me to devote myself in
thought and action*

*To the virtuous teacher, the very source
of all goodness.*

*By training in the path that pleases
all the conquerors*

May I reach unsurpassed enlightenment.

You can pray to Tara together with your children in the same way that you normally pray to her. I am just giving you some ideas and then you can elaborate on them. There are many, many things that you can do to educate your children and give meaning to their having been born into a Buddhist family.

Also, as a Buddhist, you should give the pets, such as dogs and cats that are in your care, a very special life. By 'special,' I don't mean special food or special clothing! I mean that you should chant the powerful mantras to them that purify their negative karma, so that they are never again born in the lower realms and achieve enlightenment quickly. You should chant these mantras to them every day and also recite aloud the prayers I mentioned before, as well as various lam-rim prayers to them.

If you have a stupa, you should also take your pet around it. At my house in Aptos, California, I had a stupa specially made, containing a lot of tsa-tsas, around which to lead a dog that a Mexican woman had saved from being put

to sleep and then had given to me. However, you can also arrange as many holy objects as possible, such as tsa-tsas, statues and stupas, on different levels on a table and take your animals around it. In this way, the negative karma that they have collected over many eons get purified. Even one circumambulation around a stupa or statue containing the four dharmakaya relic mantras has the amazing benefit of purifying the negative karma to be reborn in the eight hot hells. So depending on how many times you take the animal around the table, that many eons of negative karma get purified and that many causes of enlightenment are created.

I want to make it clear once again that just by hearing mantras or prayers, even though they don't understand a single word, just by being taken around holy objects, your pets' negative karma gets purified and when they die, they will be reborn in the higher realms. It also creates the causes, many times over, for their liberation and enlightenment.

There should be these special advantages for an animal that is in the care of a Buddhist. Since you have this opportunity to help them obtain a higher rebirth, meet the Dharma and a virtuous friend, and achieve liberation from samsara and enlightenment, it would be a great pity not to benefit the animals that you keep as pets for your own happiness.

Since Buddhists should give even the animals in their care a special life, there is no question that they should do this for their children. However, while I know of some Buddhist parents who try to set an example for their children and explain the Dharma to them, I know many others who do not. Instead they let their children do whatever they want. This is a pity because when children are young, before they grow up and leave home, there are so many opportunities to help them collect merit and to give them an education that will plant the seeds of enlightenment in their minds.

Of course, there is no guarantee that you will succeed in helping your children because, as I

mentioned before, children have their own karma that they bring with them from past lives. Some children will turn out well, and as teenagers, will be disciplined, compassionate and content. Others, because of the influence of the world and their friends, will become distant from the Dharma and will have a totally different life from what their parents hoped for them.

Regardless, as a Buddhist parent, you have the responsibility to give your children some special benefit; otherwise, their being born in a Buddhist family will be no different from being born in a non-Buddhist family.

While your children are young, to not use the opportunity to plant the seeds of good habits would be very unfortunate. By saying this, I am not implying that you should force your children to adopt your lifestyle. Rather, I just want to emphasise that it is important to help them abandon the causes of suffering and create the causes of happiness—not only

this life's happiness but also the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment. If they learn some Dharma practices, recite some mantras and so on when they are young, even if they don't continue with these when they get older, all the merit they collected earlier on will still cause them to meet and practise the Dharma in future lives and will bring them happiness for many lifetimes. Because it is not easy to help your children when they become teenagers and don't want to listen to you anymore, you should try to benefit them as much as possible while they are young.

In conclusion, there are many ways that you can make your children's lives meaningful so that at the very least they do not cause harm to themselves and so that, if possible, they also bring happiness and benefit to other sentient beings and to the world. Since as a Buddhist parent you can do so much to help your children, it would be a great pity and also very sad and strange, if you don't teach your

children the things that you have faith in and have found to be of benefit to your own life.³



Notes:

- 1 Refer to Appendix 2 for the 10 powerful mantras.
- 2 The five negative karmas without break are killing your father, killing your mother, killing an arhat (someone who has become free from the cycle of existence), causing a buddha to bleed and creating a schism in the sangha (a group of at least four fully ordained monks). These actions are 'without break' in the sense that having done any of them, after death, one is reborn in the worst of the hell realms without the break of an intervening life.
- 3 More practices for children can be found in Appendix 3.

7

◇ LIVING AN INNER LIFE ◇

There are two kinds of learning. Learning external things is to study and train in school or university to become a secretary, a cook, a manager of a company and so forth. There are many such external things that you can learn to do well. Then there is learning internal things, which involves the mind. If you relate doing your job to the inner kind of learning, to Dharma, to the lam-rim, it will make your actions positive and virtuous, and a cause of happiness.

Your mind is what makes your actions of body, speech and mind become Dharma or virtue, and a cause of happiness. A healthy mind makes your actions healthy, which brings the result of happiness and a healthy

life. A healthy life means not only this life but all the lives until you stop reincarnating in the six suffering realms and experiencing all the unbelievable sufferings again and again, until you cease the causes of samsara, delusions and karma. In short, a healthy mind is an ethical mind, which leads to an ethical life.

The world suffers because people don't live an ethical life and don't have a healthy mind. All the global problems, country problems, society problems, family problems and individual problems come from an unhealthy mind. They are caused by a non-virtuous, unethical, disturbed and obscured mind.

External things—how to cook, clean, be a manager and so forth—can be learnt at school, but without an inner education, without knowing Dharma and without practising Dharma, none of them becomes a cause of happiness. That is the reality: nothing at all becomes a cause of happiness.

No matter how much money you spend on university, all you learn is the way to do things externally. But the way to do things internally is more important because even if you learn the best way to do things externally, your actions don't become a cause of happiness for yourself now, nor from life to life.

Learning how to do things externally is meant to make you happy in this life. It is about making money and from that money getting happiness. But without learning the way to do things internally, your actions of body, speech and mind never become Dharma, a cause of happiness. They only become non-virtue, at least generally speaking. Even if you live for a hundred years, it will always be like that. Even if you live for a thousand years, it will always be like that. Even if you live for a million years, it will always be like that.

Therefore, the way to do things is the inner way, which is not about looking for and being attached to the happiness of this life. It is about

having a happy mind, free from the hundreds and thousands of problems that come from attachment to this life. Then you have inner happiness. With a mind free from attachment to this life, you look for the happiness of not just one future life but of all future lives.

For however long it takes you to meet Dharma, to actualise the path and to remove delusions and karma, until then, you will have to be reborn in the six realms, one after the other, and suffer there. Thinking of that motivates you to seek the happiness of future lives. If you have that motivation, everything becomes Dharma. With this most important inner learning, all the things you learn in school or university, whether cleaning, cooking or managing a company, become Dharma: a cause of happiness in future lives for you. That is the graduated path of a lower capable being and the very first Dharma.

People who don't know what Dharma is think that it means going to a temple and praying or meditating with closed eyes. If you only sit with closed eyes or just read prayers, it is difficult to see

how practising Dharma stops the problems of this life. But if you know exactly what real Dharma is, you will know that it stops the problems caused by attachment, anger and ignorance.

Then, by knowing the shortcomings of samsara, you understand that even samsaric pleasures are only suffering in nature, and therefore, the pleasure can't continue and can't increase. That pleasure is not like Dharma happiness, which can continue and increase and is completed when enlightenment is achieved. Since the causes of samsaric pleasures are delusions and karma, they cannot continue and increase. When you realise how samsara is only suffering in nature, you look for liberation from it, for nirvana. Then that becomes your motivation for living your life, for doing everything—cleaning, cooking and being a manager.

That is the second Dharma, which is higher, better and purer than the first Dharma. This second motivation brings more happiness than the first one; it brings ultimate happiness forever. The first Dharma does not bring ultimate

happiness; it brings samsaric happiness, which is the suffering of change. This is the second way to do things internally. With that mind, all the actions of your body, speech and mind become causes of liberation. Everything you do becomes a cause of ultimate happiness.

The third way to do things internally is to renounce the self-cherishing thought, which opens the door for problems, obstacles, misfortune and bad energy. Leaving behind the self-cherishing thought, you cherish others. The goal to achieve now is the total elimination of all obscurations and the completion of all realisations for the sake of sentient beings—the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras and suras. Even though they didn't ask you to help them, you feel responsible for them because you cherish them. This wish to help everyone—all the numberless sentient beings without anyone being left out—by freeing them from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bringing them to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment is the most

amazing attitude. Then to be able to do that, you yourself have to achieve enlightenment.

This is the third way to do things internally. With that motivation, all your actions of body, speech and mind—whether cooking, cleaning or being a manager of a company, and even breathing in and out, talking or taking one step—are done for every sentient being. Everything you do is for everybody's happiness, for everybody's enlightenment. Then, even if you recite just one OM MANI PADME HUM, you collect skies of merit. And if you have bodhicitta, you collect more than skies of merit.

Pabongka Dechen Nyinpo's *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* mentions that even without the realisation of bodhicitta, offering one light while thinking to enlighten sentient beings becomes like offering one hundred thousand lights. And making charity of one dollar or one rupee to a beggar becomes like giving them one hundred thousand dollars or rupees. That is how much merit you get.

That is what is mentioned there, but if you do everything with bodhicitta, thinking to achieve enlightenment to free every single one of the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment, then by making even one step on your way somewhere, drinking even one sip of tea or water or eating even one spoonful of food, you collect merit as limitless as the sky.

Can you imagine what this third way of doing things internally is like? It brings the happiest life. If you meet Dharma, if you know Dharma, if you practise Dharma, you will have the happiest life. You can solve all your problems. You can become free from samsara. You can create the causes of happiness, practise the path, generate bodhicitta and achieve enlightenment. Can you imagine it? In this world, there are many people who are very intelligent and very wealthy but don't have faith and don't have the karma to meet, learn and practise Dharma. Most people don't have that

karma, so there are very few real Buddhists. Even among the people who meet and learn Dharma, those who practise it are very few. It is a question of luck. It is unbelievably rare.

With this third way of doing things, of living an inner life, every single action you do, such as eating, walking or talking, becomes a cause of happiness for numberless sentient beings. It also becomes a cause for you to achieve enlightenment so that you can free them from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment. That is most unbelievable.

Many people in the West think it is necessary to go to school to learn how to do things. While that is true regarding what to do externally to have a profession, in school you are not taught how to live your life so that it doesn't become a cause of suffering but becomes a cause of happiness. Even if someone were to speak about it there, the school committee might not accept it and might dismiss that person. This is because you cannot teach whatever you like in a school; you have to follow the rules.

But even if the way to do things internally cannot be taught precisely in school, you, as a parent, especially at home, should guide your children. This means that you have to guide yourself first, as only by becoming an example can you teach your children.

That would be the best. However, even if you can't teach them precisely the way to live their life and do things internally, you can teach them to think of others first. If they can think of others' happiness first, then they will be happy. You should always emphasise the need to serve others and to have compassion and loving kindness for others. You should practise compassion and teach it to your children. If you are an example to your children and can inspire them in that way, they will grow up well and will have a healthy life. Then, even if they can't be of benefit to others, due to having a compassionate mind, they won't harm them.

When teaching your children about the way to do things internally, you don't even have

to bring up the question of Dharma practice, especially if they are not interested in Dharma. Instead, you should emphasise that the way to live their lives is by benefiting others, both human beings and animals, as much as possible. You should practise this yourself; that is the best way of teaching and guiding your children. In this way, whatever your children decide to learn, it will be to benefit sentient beings and to serve the world. That is the best education. Then, even if they can't think of all sentient beings, at least they will want to serve other people in this world in the best way possible.

By teaching them this, your children will be inspired and will develop the courage to lead a meaningful life. Otherwise, even if just for a second they don't see the purpose of life, they might think that by committing suicide, the suffering will end.

As a parent, if you guide your children like this, they will always benefit other sentient beings, whether friends, enemies or strangers, with their body, speech and mind. They

will cherish them as much as possible with compassion and loving kindness. Then, even if they don't want others to care for and help them, because their actions benefit others, that will be the result, without choice, of the karma they have created. Even if they don't like it, others will naturally serve them, take care of them and help them. This will happen even if they are not looking for it and are acting purely for others.

Then your children will be of benefit to the world or at least they won't be harmful to the world. Otherwise, if you don't give them an inner education about how to live their lives, even though you make so much effort and dedicate your life to your children, in the future, it will not be of much use. On the other hand, by cherishing others, even animals and insects, with the motivation of doing everything purely for others, you and your children will have the happiest life. Not only will you both create good karma, the result of which is happiness, but because karma expands, you will experience the result of even one good karma for a hundred lifetimes, for five

hundred lifetimes, for a thousand lifetimes. You need to understand that that is what happens as a result of cherishing others.

The commentary to Aryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas* says that if you cheat one sentient being one time, you will be cheated by sentient beings for a thousand lifetimes. Like that, whether you expect it or not, the result of the karma of helping one sentient being one time is that you will receive happiness for a thousand lifetimes. If you and your children benefit others every day, all your wishes will be fulfilled. Whatever happiness you wish for will come in this life and even more happiness will come in future lives. If you wish for something, it will come easily from life to life. This also means that Dharma realisations will come and you will achieve enlightenment quickly.

Enlightenment, the greatest success, also happens due to cherishing others. That is real success. People think success is having money but the real success is having a good heart cherishing others. It is having loving kindness

for human beings and animals. We should always remember that that is the cause of success. That is the most important education in the world. If everybody in the world had a good heart and loving kindness, they would stop harming others and there would be peace and happiness. Harming others harms yourself because it becomes the cause to receive harm in the future.

So success is not about having money; success is about having a good heart. That is the main education you should give your children.



◇ APPENDIX 1 ◇
THE 16 HUMAN DHARMAS

1. Create powerful causes for happiness by holding the Three Rare Sublime Ones supreme, make offerings to them and so forth.
2. Seek and practise a pure method that offers protection from suffering.
3. Repay the kindness of parents by respectfully taking care of them.
4. Recognise those with positive qualities and knowledge as eminent, and honour them as foremost.
5. Serve and honour those who are senior to you in status or in age.
6. Let your loyalty to friends and relatives be enduring; never cast aside the closeness you feel for them in favour of the fickle pursuit of new friendships.

7. As much as you are able, do what is useful for your compatriots, neighbours and the destitute.
8. Have a sincere and stable attitude, not going along with everything that others might say.
9. Emulate the conduct of those of good character.
10. Know how to enjoy food and wealth without being too extreme.
11. Do not forget those who have been kind to you, and in return, do what benefits them according to your capacity.
12. Avoid being dishonest in the use of weights and measures and so forth.
13. Free of feeling close to some and distant from others, be even-minded to all and give up the jealousy that finds the good fortune of others unbearable.
14. Do not fall under the influence of someone who acts with a pretentious or concealing mind or who is a bad friend.
15. Be gentle in your speech and wise in saying that which is suitable to others' minds.
16. Bear hardships in spiritual and secular

matters with a mind that takes great responsibility while remaining expansive and at ease.

This presentation of the 16 Human Dharmas was made by Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche in Autumn 2012, in Aptos, California, based on Tibetan texts, with minor edits by Ven. Stephen Carlier, Jonathan Landaw and Karuna Cayton.

Notes:

¹ The Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom (FDCW) has published a book inspired by the 16 Human Dharmas called the *16 Guidelines for Life: The Basics* (available from Wisdom Books, www.wisdom-books.com and FPMT Foundation Store, www.shop.fpmt.org) and runs an internationally successful 16 Guidelines workshop programme. FDCW is currently developing a new learning programme based on the Seven Foundations for Happiness and Peace. For more information visit www.compassionandwisdom.org.

◇ **APPENDIX 2** ◇
THE 10 POWERFUL
MANTRAS

(1) Mantra of Chenrezig

- Long Mantra

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / NAMA ARYA JNANA
SAGARA / VAIROCHANA VYUHA RAJAYA /
TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE SAMYAK SAM
BUDDHAYA / NAMA SARVA TATHAGATABHYA /
ARHATEBHYA / SAMYAK SAM BUDDHEBHYA /
NAMA ARYA AVALOKITESHVARAYA / BODHI
SATTVAYA / MAHA SATTVAYA / MAHA KARUNI
KAYA / TADYATHA / OM DARA DARA / DIRI DIRI /
DURU DURU / ITTI VATE / CHALE CHALE /
PRACHALE PRACHALE / KUSUME KUSUME VARE /
ILI MILI CHITI JVALA APANAYE SVAHA

- Short Mantra

OM MANI PADME HUM

(2) Mantra of Namgyalma¹

OM BHRUM SVAHA / OM AMRITA AYUR DA
DAI SVAHA

At the conclusion, recite:

OM AMITE / AMITODA BHAVE / AMITE
VIKRANTE / AMITA GATRE / AMITO GAMINI /
AMITA AYUR DADE / GAGANA KIRTI KARE
SARVA KLESHA KSHAYAM KARI YE SVAHA

(3) Mantra of Milarepa

OM AH GURU HASA VAJRA SARVA SIDDHI
PHALA HUM

(4) Mantra of Kunrig (the deity who liberates
from the lower realms)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE / SARVA DURGATE PARI
SHODHANI RAJAYA / TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE
SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TADYATHA /
OM SHODHANI / SHODHANI / SARVA PAPAM

VISHODHANI / SHUDHE VISHUDHE / SARVA
KARMA AVARANA VISHODHANI SVAHA

(5) Mantra of Medicine Buddha
TADYATHA / OM BHAISHAJYE BHAISHAJYE
MAHA BHAISHAJYE [BHAISHAJYE] RAJA
SAMUDGATE SVAHA

(6) Zung of the Exalted Completely Pure
Stainless Light (1)

NAMA SAPTANAM / SAMYAKSAM BUDDHA
KOTINAN PARISHUDDHE MANASI / ABHYA
CHITA PATISHTHA TUNAN / NAMO BHAGAVATE
AMRITA AYU SHASYA / TATHAGATASYA /
OM SARVA TATHAGATA SHUDDHI / AYUR
VISHODHANI / SAMHARA SAMHARA / SARVA
TATHAGATA VIRYA BALENA PRATI SAMHARA
AYU SARA SARA / SARVA TATHAGATA SAMAYA /
BODHI BODHI / BUDDHA BUDDHYA / BODHAYA
BODHAYA / MAMA SARVA PAPAM AVARANA
VISHUDDHE / VIGATA MALAM / CHHARA SU
BUDDHYA BUDDHE HURU HURU SVAHA

(7) Zung of the Exalted Completely
Pure Stainless Light (2)

NAMA NAWA NAWA TEENAN THATHAAGATA
GANGA NAM DIVA LUKAA NAN / KOTINI YUTA
SHATA SAHA SRAA NAN / OM VOVORI / TSARI
NI* TSARI / MORI GOLI TSALA WAARI SVAHA

*indicates a higher tone

(8) Mantra of Stainless Pinnacle

OM NAMA STRAIYA DHVIKANAM / SARVA
TATHAGATA HRI DAYA GARBHE JVALA JVALA /
DHARMADHATU GARBHE / SAMBHARA MAMA
AYU SAMSHODHAYA MAMA SARVA PAPAM /
SARVA TATHAGATA SAMANTOSHNISHA VIMALE
VISHUDDHE / HUM HUM HUM HUM / AM VAM
SAM JA SVAHA

(9) Mantra of Lotus Pinnacle of Amoghapasha
(Stainless Pinnacle Lotus)

OM PADMO USHNISHA VIMALE HUM PHAT

(10) Mantra of Buddha Mitrugpa

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / OM KAMKANI

KAMKANI / ROCHANI ROCHANI / TROTANI
TROTANI / TRASANI TRASANI PRATIHANA
PRATIHANA / SARVA KARMA PARAM PARA NI
ME SARVA SATTVA NANCHI SVAHA

Source: With kind permission of FPMT Education Department, April 2015.

Notes:

1 A long version of the Namgyalma mantra can be found here: http://cdn.fpmt.org/wp-content/uploads/education/teachings/texts/mantras/Namgyalma_mantras.pdf?4e84cd

◇ APPENDIX 3 ◇
A PRACTICE FOR
CHILDREN

*Rinpoche suggested this outline for daily practice
to a group of children in Australia*

As a motivation, think:

By the kindness of all sentient beings and the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, I have not died yet. I am so fortunate to be a human being again today and to be able to practise Dharma. What I am going to do from now on, especially today, is to not harm others and to give only happiness to all living beings. The only way for me to live my life in this way is to keep my mind in loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta all the time. With this attitude, whatever I do becomes a cause of happiness

for all sentient beings and this causes me to have a happy, fulfilling life.

I am responsible for each and every sentient being's happiness and peace. How? Without compassion, I give harm to others directly and indirectly from life to life, besides harming myself. Due to compassion, I stop harming others and instead benefit them. All other living beings receive so much peace and happiness from this, so that is why I have this responsibility.

Therefore, please, kind compassionate Lord Buddha, please help me to bring each and every sentient being to enlightenment.

Then you imagine that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is very happy and loves you so much and emanates beams of light, which completely eliminate and purify all your obscurations and negative karmas (from which come all the things you don't like), and you receive all the buddhas' wisdom, compassion and power within you.

Recite Buddha's mantra, TADYATHA OM MUNE MUNE MAHA MUNEYE SVAHA. Recite this three times, five times or more.

Then you can pray to Chenrezig, the Buddha who is the essence of all Buddha's compassion:

Please help me to be able to benefit all sentient beings from now on as you did, Compassionate Buddha, by giving me all your qualities, especially compassion.

Then Compassionate Buddha, Chenrezig, is so happy with you and loves you so much. He grants you all his qualities, especially Buddha's compassion and blessings in the form of light beams, which you receive while you recite the mantra, OM MANI PADME HUM. Recite this three times, five times or more.

Next make requests to Manjushri, who is the essence of all Buddha's wisdom:

Please help me to be able to benefit all sentient beings from now on as you did, Buddha of Wisdom, by giving me all your qualities, especially wisdom.

Then Manjushri is so happy with you and loves you so much and grants you all his qualities, especially Buddha's wisdom and blessings in the form of light beams that you receive while reciting the mantra: OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHIH. Recite this three times, five times or more.

Then after that, pray to Vajrapani, the essence of all Buddha's power:

Please help me to be able to benefit all sentient beings from now on as you did, Buddha of Power, by giving me all your qualities, especially power.

Then Vajrapani is so happy with you and loves you so much, grants you all his

qualities, especially Buddha's power and blessings in the form of light beams that you receive while reciting the mantra, OM VAJRAPANI HUM. Recite this three times, five times or more.

Then pray to Tara, who is the essence of all Buddha's action (or success), to give all happiness, including enlightenment, to you and all sentient beings:

Please help me to be able to benefit all sentient beings from now on as you did, Buddha of Action, by giving me all your qualities, especially action (success).

Then Tara is so happy with you and loves you so much, grants you all her qualities, especially Buddha's action or success and blessings in the form of light beams that you receive while reciting the mantra, OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA. Recite this three times, five times or more.

To dedicate these requests, recite the following:

May the good heart, cherishing others, be generated within my mind and in the minds of every living being. May that which has already developed increase forever more.

Due to all my positive actions, all those I have done right now, whatever I have done in the past and whatever I will do in the future, and also all the good actions done by others in the past, present and future, may I be most beneficial like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, Compassion Buddha (Chenrezig), Manjushri and Tara for all living beings, achieve enlightenment and lead each and every living being to that enlightenment by myself alone.

Due to all the merits of the three times created by myself, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, which are like a dream, may I lead all sentient beings, who are like a dream, to enlightenment, which is like a dream, by myself alone.

Due to all my merits—the positive actions I have done—in the past, present and also those

which are done by others, may every living being have a good heart. May there be world happiness and peace.

Source: Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive: *Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Online Advice Book*, posted December 2005.

APPENDIX 4
◇ LETTER TO STUDENTS OF ◇
THE MAITREYA SCHOOL

In March 2015, Lama Zopa Rinpoche dictated this letter to the students of Maitreya School, Root Institute's free school benefiting local impoverished children in Bodhgaya, India. Rinpoche wrote the letter after the school master explained that the main problem the children faced was parents drinking and fighting. Rinpoche asked that this letter be translated into Hindi, framed, put on the wall, read and explained often to the students.

My most dear, precious, kind, wish-fulfilling children,

I understand there is much suffering and problems at home: parents that drink so much

alcohol without control and then fight all the time. That makes you all so sad. It can be also very, very scary. And it is not just one time, two times, three times; it is often. It might be like that for you.

Their problem is not only that they don't have external, outside-world, general-world education, but that they don't have inner education. The Sanskrit word for this is 'Dharma.' And not just understanding Dharma, but practice and attainment, especially the attainments of patience, contentment, compassion and so forth. They do not have these qualities. They didn't get to achieve these qualities and that's because they never learned, because nobody explained.

We can see with the eyes their life problems—so much suffering and no happiness. This is a very good example for us. As you are young, you have to grow up in a positive way, not a negative way. It is so much suffering for them, but for you, seeing their life—the unbelievable suffering, fear and

chaos—is great education. For you, it is great inspiration not to live your life like them. If you live life like them, soon you will grow up and will have to have a family, you will have children and so your life will be unbelievable suffering—fighting like them and drinking alcohol. Having a family is supposed to be a happiness, but with life so uncontrolled, there's much fighting, sadness, fear and so many other negative things. There are even things couples don't have to fight about but because of drinking, even if there is not so much reason to fight, they find small reasons to fight about and harm each other. All this happens every day. Not only you the wife or you the husband suffer, but it also brings so much suffering to your family, your children. Your life will become like this or worse.

Therefore, your life is in your hands; it's up to your mind. If you develop compassion for others and wisdom, especially Dharma wisdom—inner wisdom, inner education—then as much as you develop those, you will

have so much happiness. Even though your parents suffered so much, you will grow up with so much happiness. When you have a family and children, you will all have so much happiness. You won't bring suffering to your family. By developing compassion to others and wisdom, this inner wisdom, you will bring so much happiness to yourself, your husband, your wife, your children. Then your children will become a great example to their children. They will know what brings suffering so they will not bring suffering to their children; they will bring happiness. Each generation becomes a great example of how to bring peace and happiness.

I want Maitreya School to help to bring peace and happiness, to bring wisdom light to life, not bring darkness, but to bring the sun—wisdom light—and as a result, bring peace and happiness. That is my real aim for the school. It is not just a school. Even in the Western world, there are kindergartens, colleges, universities where you can learn

so many things but the mind never changes. The mind, which produces happiness and suffering, never changes, and the mind is used only to produce suffering, not to produce happiness. That happens because developing compassion, the good heart and wisdom is limited.

Even though you are children, it is so important to practise kindness, day and night, not to harm others and on top of that, to benefit others. Even if you can't benefit, at least pray and dedicate your merits for others to have happiness, harmony and the success of their wishes according to Dharma. This way, nothing becomes negative karma, negative action, but instead, it becomes the cause of peerless happiness, total cessation of obscurations and the completion of realisations.

Try beginning in childhood to practise the good heart, to be kind to others—and not only to people—but even to insects and animals. This way, you become a good human being by not harming others and only bringing greater

and greater peace and happiness not only to yourself but also to your family, society, country and world. And you bring the same to the six types of living beings—hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, suras and asuras—and intermediate state beings. Not only do you bring temporary happiness but you bring ultimate happiness, like the sun shining. Show respect, treat others like yourself or more important than yourself. Of course, you need compassion and wisdom. Otherwise, even if others have eyes, you make them blind. In other words, you cause suffering to others.

Thank you very much, with much love and prayer.

My sincere advice is to pray to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He is Buddha in an ordinary human form that appears to us. Pray from the heart that your parents have peace, harmony and no more fighting. Pray that they get Dharma happiness, the peerless happiness, cessation of obscurations and

the completion of all the realisations. Even praying sincerely to His Holiness can help. Don't just pray only one time. No, pray every day. You need to pray all the time.

Colophon:

Transcribed by Ven. Sarah Thresher, Root Institute, March 2015. Edited by *Mandala* for inclusion on fpmt.org. From FPMT News, 3 April 2015. Reproduced with kind permission of *Mandala*.

◇ APPENDIX 5 ◇
A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN ◇

Rinpoche dictated this prayer and short commentary as a response to a centre's request for a prayer for children to recite at an inter-religious event in Colombia.

There are seven fundamental methods to bring success for oneself and for the world. Each child can pray for happiness for themselves and also for the world. The first fundamental is kindness, to practise kindness day and night. You could say something like this:

May the precious, wonderful, dear children, who are full of potential, be able to eliminate their own problems and the problems of the world, of all living beings. May they

bring all the happiness of this life and all the future lives, as well as the ultimate everlasting happiness to all sentient beings. May they complete the cessation of all the sufferings and the causes of suffering—the actions that create negative karma and the wrong concepts, the obscurations and the disturbing attitudes.

May they complete the true path, the ultimate wisdom directly seeing the ultimate nature of the 'I' and of all phenomena, and the peerless and perfect happiness. May they complete the qualities of the cessation of the wrong concepts and hallucinations, and may they complete the qualities of understanding in themselves. May the precious children, who are beautiful, enchanting like a flower about to blossom, offer all the temporary and ultimate happiness to the world and to all living beings.

That is the description. Now comes the prayer:

*May we practise kindness day and night,
forever, not only towards friends, but also to*

strangers and especially to the enemy; not only towards human beings but also to animals and other beings who want happiness and don't want to suffer.

May we constantly enjoy our lives by rejoicing. May we constantly enjoy happiness by rejoicing in all the positive things that bring benefit to others and to ourselves. And may we especially rejoice when we see all the good things that happen to others.

In the world, we feel jealous and unhappy when good things happen to others. If somebody has any happiness, we feel jealous instead of rejoicing. So we can use this method of rejoicing to become sick of jealousy and to destroy it. Rejoicing is very good education; this is the education that we need. The world suffers so much—there are economic problems, wars and famine. These happen because we didn't create good karma. Instead of rejoicing, we feel sad when good things happen to others. Rejoicing is missing from children's education.

Our problems don't come from outside. They come from the mind.

May we develop patience to achieve all happiness, temporal and ultimate, and to bring that happiness to others; not only to our family but to all sentient beings.

May we develop all the 16 human qualities, an understanding which makes our lives different.

May we become skilled in not harming sentient beings and may we become only the source of happiness for sentient beings, like sunshine.

May we practise contentment.

This is very important because so many people do illegal things; they go to prison and give many problems to the government. Even rich people destroy their lives due to lack of contentment and it's the same for poor people. Because of lack of contentment, young people take drugs, they don't find jobs, they destroy their lives with alcohol, so many things. By not

having contentment and satisfaction, there are so many problems in their relationships. They kill, steal and so forth. This is another important thing that children need to learn.

May we learn contentment and satisfaction. May we learn to enjoy contentment, which brings great freedom into our lives and brings us so much happiness. May we be an example to the world.

May we practise these good qualities and when somebody abuses or harms us, may we immediately forgive them. In daily life, when we make mistakes and harm others, may we immediately ask for forgiveness.

This is very important because it brings so much happiness and harmony to our lives—to our families, to the world and to all sentient beings. What we do in this life—if we are happy and if our conduct is positive—that becomes the cause for us to have a good mind and good conduct in future lives, so we don't cause harm to sentient beings.

May we be able to develop courage, to be an inspiring example and to be of benefit in so many ways for the happiness of others, not only for ourselves.

One person with a negative mind can destroy the world and harm so many millions of people. This has happened in the world so many times. A child who develops a positive mind is like the sun shining, eliminating the darkness in the world for all to enjoy. Therefore, a child who develops these qualities brings great benefit to the world, to millions and millions of sentient beings.

Source: From Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive: *Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Online Advice Book*, posted May 2013.



◇ ABOUT THE AUTHOR ◇

Lama Zopa Rinpoche is one of the most internationally renowned masters of Tibetan Buddhism, working and teaching ceaselessly on almost every continent.

He is the spiritual director and co-founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international network of Buddhist projects, including monasteries in six countries and meditation centres in over thirty; health and nutrition clinics and clinics specialising in the treatment of leprosy and polio; as well as hospices, schools, publishing activities and prison outreach projects worldwide.



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◇ AMITABHA ◇
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Amitabha Buddhist Centre (ABC) is a non-profitable Buddhist organisation, which was officially established on 1 January 1989.

We are affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international organisation with over 150 centres and projects worldwide. Headquartered in the United States, the FPMT follows the Tibetan Buddhist lineage of Lama Tsong Khapa. Founded by Lama Thubten Yeshe and under the guidance of its spiritual director, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the FPMT is devoted to preserving and transmitting the Mahayana Buddhist tradition worldwide through teaching, meditation and community service.

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WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA TEACHINGS

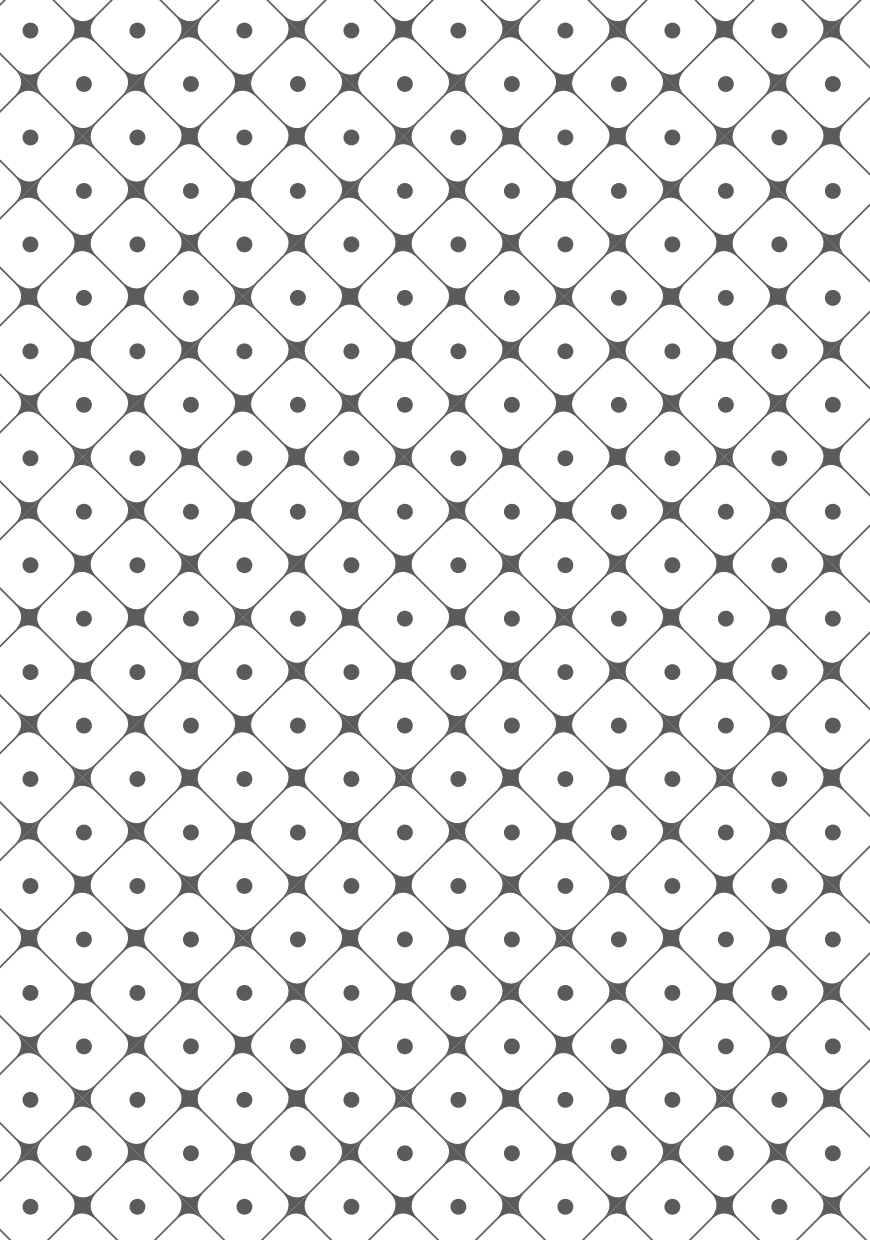


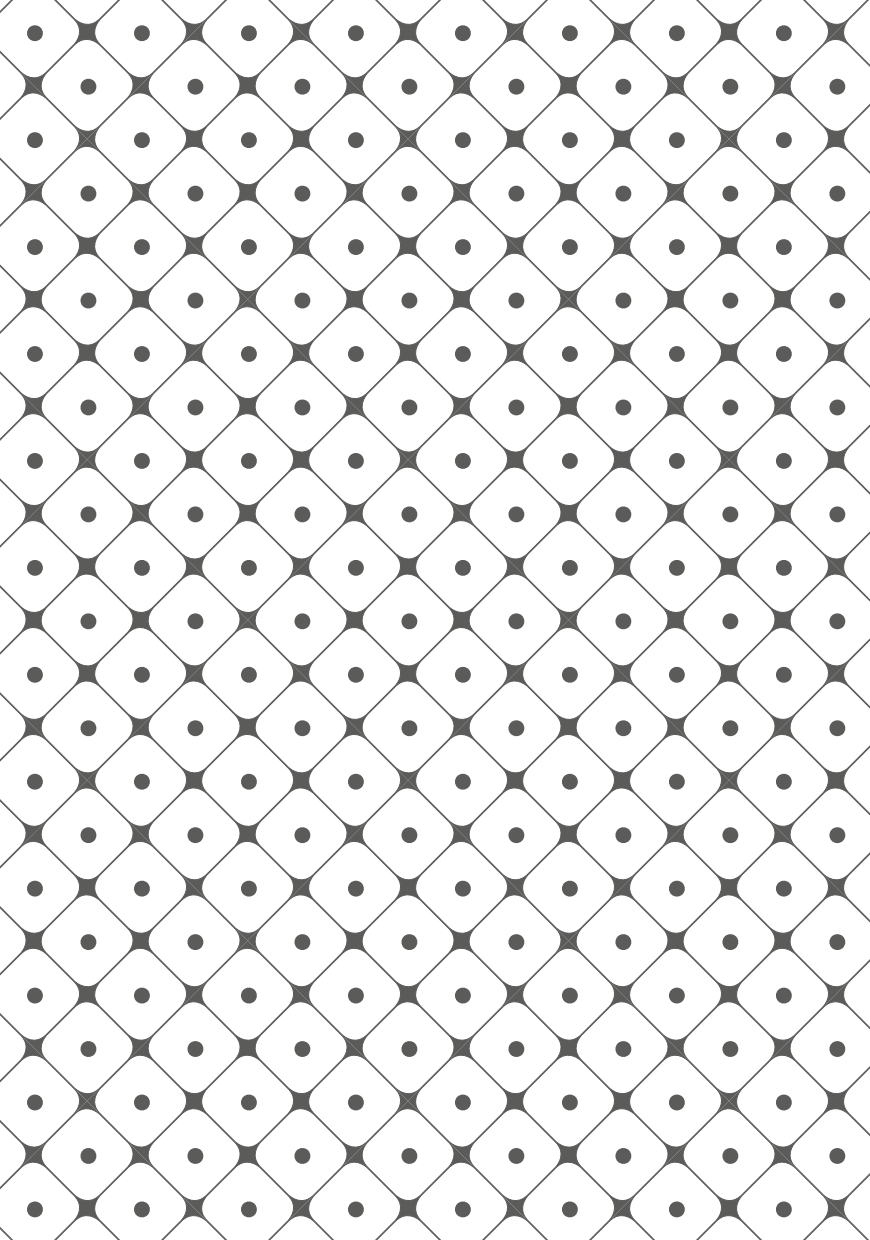
The Buddhadharmā is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings, the names of your teachers or holy images is most precious and should be treated with respect.

To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other things, step over or sit upon them. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings and wrapped in cloth when being carried around.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in with the garbage but burned in a special way. Briefly, do not incinerate such materials with other trash but alone on their own, and as they burn, recite the mantra OM AH HUM. As the smoke rises, visualise that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six saṃsāric realms, purifying their minds, alleviating their suffering and bringing them all happiness up to and including enlightenment.

Thank you very much.





So success is not about having money;
success is about having a good heart.

That is the main education
you should give your children.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche



Amitabha
Buddhist Centre