The Importance of Studying the Buddhadharma

by Khenpo Appey Rinpoche
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2006
Homage to the Omniscient One!

On Listening Respectfully to the Teachings of Lord Buddha, who is the Sole Benefactor of all Sentient Beings of the Three Realms.

The purpose of the matchless Buddha’s attaining the omniscient wisdom through practicing the great compassion for many countless aeons, was to open the eye of wisdom of beings by preaching the path of temporary and ultimate happiness, to those sightless people who have not seen the path of benefit and happiness. However beings of these times do not have the fortune to see Lord Buddha directly. Yet for those beings who by merely having faith towards the dharma taught by the Buddha, if they listen to His teachings respectfully, having acquired the wisdom eye; and also diligently work to enter the authentic path; and thereafter sincerely strive to lead others on that path then all these are unsurpassable activities.

In many sutras it is stated, with the support of logical reasons, that expounding and listening to four words of the teaching of the
Buddha is far more meritorious than making an offering to the Triple Gem of the entire world filled with seven different types of precious jewels. This is because making offerings of material wealth is the cause of samsaric prosperity, while expounding and listening to the teaching is the cause of the Dharma of the Exalted Ones. As a further example the Sadharmapundarika (Sutra) says,

*If a person who reveres, honors, pays homage to and makes offerings to the Tathagatas filling the three thousand world system and residing for the length of time of as many aeons as the sand of the River Ganges and moreover reveres etc the stupa of those Tathagatas who have gone to parinirvana and generates merit is compared to someone who enters well into the Dharma, and utters the well spoken Dharma such as ‘all phenomena are impermanent, or are suffering or emptiness or are devoid of self-nature’, Ananda, then the latter is more meritorious than the first.*

Ananda, it is like this because acts of giving other than this are accompanied by defilements and afflictions and are the cause of one wandering in samsara; while, Ananda, the treasure of precious Dharma, which has been practiced for uncountable millions of aeons without material things, is unsurpassable. With it the continuum of samsara is cut. Ananda, when they hear this precious and unsurpassable Dharma, beings who are subjected to birth will be totally liberated from birth; beings who are subjected to sickness, death, anguish, wailing lament, misery, mental unhappiness and mental turmoil will be totally liberated from all of those, including from sickness up to mental turmoil. Ananda, having seen the basis of the meaning of this, both the one who respectfully expounds the Dharma, and the one who respectfully listens to the Dharma, generate many merits, thus I say. Ananda one who respectfully expounds the Dharma to a Bikshu who is seeking for Dharma, and the
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Bikshu who also respectfully listens to the Dharma, Ananda, both these two generate immense, immeasurable and uncountable merits.

Whether one can abandon samsara or not solely depends upon whether one has heard the Buddhadharma or not. Confirming this, Acharya Aryadeva said,

Samsara is not endless because it is hard to find the one who listens, the Dharma to which one listens, and the teacher who teaches the Dharma.

This means that the human life with leisure and endowments, the Buddhadharma to which one listens, and a Dharma Master who teaches, are all hard to find. If one is able to listen to the Dharma with these three characteristics, then one can abandon samsara; and therefore samsara is not without end. If all these three characteristics are not present, then one cannot abandon samsara, and therefore samsara is endless. This is further illustrated from another Sutra,

For the exhausted, the road is long,
For the sleepless, the night is long,
Likewise, for the child like beings
Devoid of Dharma knowledge,
Samsara is long.

Only the Buddhadharma is confirmed to be the path, which abandons samsara. This is because, although there are other teachings that explain samsara should be viewed as suffering, that know attachment as a fault, that discard bad Karma, that practice austerities and in which adepts receive various vows etc.; these methods alone cannot harm the root of samsara, so these teachings cannot reverse samsara. The root of the samsara is self-
grasping and the antidote for that is the wisdom of apprehending selflessness. The selflessness to be understood by that wisdom is expounded only by Buddha. Moreover, the profound methods to obtain liberation and omniscience are also taught by Buddha alone. Therefore, Acharya Vasubhandhu said,

_Buddha's doctrine is hard to find
Without it there is no liberation.
Thus, aspiring for liberation,
One should devotedly listen to it._

Further, in order to show briefly the manifested realisation of the path of three Yanas, Vasubhandu said in the Abhidharma,

_One who has developed moral discipline, hearing and contemplation, should undertake the practice of meditation._

In this way the Mahayana path must be completed with these four characteristics: moral discipline, which is the cause of not being distracted; hearing, which is the cause of not being ignorant; contemplation, which is the cause of ascertainment; and meditation, which is the cause of parting from defilements.

From Sutralankara it is also said,

_If meaning is comprehended merely by hearing,
Meditation will become purposeless._
_If you enter in to meditation without even hearing
Buddha's shastra will become purposeless._

As is clearly stated in the Sutralankara, both hearing and meditation are important. Otherwise, if one could comprehend the meaning merely by hearing, there would be no purpose for meditation; and similarly if only meditation without hearing was sufficient, then there will be fault of Buddha's teachings having no significance.
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Also in the Vinaya teachings it is said that one should not meditate in isolation unless one holds the Tripitaka. Further, the Pramana philosophy states,

*Attainment should be preceded by entrance (to the Dharma),
Entrance should be preceded by comprehension*

That is in order to obtain the fruit, its cause, which is entering into the path, has to come first; and entering the path has to be preceded by knowing the path.

The enlightenment of a Shravaka can be obtained with minimal hearing, but to obtain perfect enlightenment one needs to have vast hearing. That is why it is shown in the Sutras that the unsurpassable Tathagata Samyak Sambuddha is dependent on vast hearing. In the Boddhicharyavatara it is said,

*There is nothing that a Bodhisattva should not be trained in.*

Some say, that even though listening to the Dharma is required to teach others, for one's own practice, listening to the Dharma is not required. Making this kinds of statement impedes others immeasurably, blocking them from the entrance to the Buddha's Shastra. This is so because, without hearing it, one can not even know the Buddha's Dharma in the first place, so what would it be that one is practicing? Without knowing the essential points, even if, one exerts oneself in the task of physical and verbal virtue by way of imitating others, it is hard to yield a great result or fulfill a great purpose. In Bodhicaryavatara it is said,

*Just as a person afflicted or shaken with disease,
Is rendered with no strength,
Likewise, if (some one's) mind is agitated by ignorance,
(he or she) will become powerless in Dharma activities*. 
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Some even say that, meditation itself is adequate and that there is no need to listen to the Dharma at all. The person who makes such a statement indicates that he or she does not comprehend the fact that hearing and contemplation of Dharma are the causes of meditation. Since, result devoid of cause is not possible, the three: Hearing, Contemplation and Meditation referred to as the Three Wisdoms do not arise without each relying on the preceding ones.

As it is said in the Bavana-krama of Kamalashila,

If some one asks what is the assemblage of Enlightened Insight;  
Thoroughly searching for manifold hearing of Dharma,  
Contemplating appropriately etc.

Many so-called learned masters of the modern age, claim that it is adequate to learn Sutra merely by going through it, without even the need of relying on a spiritual teacher. This is a wrong assumption, because without seeking the spiritual guidance of a learned master, it is difficult to comprehend the meaning of the profound view of the Tathagata.

In Sutra Samucaya, it is said,

The victorious one who possess supreme qualities said,  
It is by relying upon spiritual masters,  
That one would comprehend Buddha Dharma.

Further to this, in many Sutras it is directed that, one must rely upon Spiritual Masters by knowing the advantages and disadvantages of seeking Spiritual Masters. Otherwise, one will contradict the statements: ‘even at the cost of life, one must not forsake Spiritual Masters’, and ‘one should respect the Spiritual Masters from whom one receives spiritual
teachings, in the same manner as one pays obeisance to Tathagathas’. Further the teachings expounded by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would also become purposeless.

Because, it is said,

*Taking Austerity as the essence, is the tradition of Janism;*
*taking Recitation, as the essence is the tradition of Hinduism,*
*and taking meditation preceded by listening to the Dharma as the essence, is the tradition of Buddha.*

Moreover for those individuals who believe that their wishes can be fulfilled merely by chanting and recitation, it is proper that they should come to understand the essence of the method to make human life purposeful. They should know that emphasizing on austerities is the Jain tradition; emphasizing on recitation of Veda, is the Brahmin tradition; and emphasizing on meditation preceded by hearing and contemplation, and having the base of morality, is the Buddhist tradition.

The main objective of human activities is to obtain happiness and pleasure and avoid harm and suffering. This objective can only be met in a very slight way by other means. However, by the Buddha's teaching all the flow of suffering without exception can be cut and one can also accomplish permanent happiness.

Shantideva prayed for the Holy Dharma to remain long in this way,

*May the doctrine of Buddha,*
*The source of all happiness and*
*The only medicine for the suffering of sentient beings,*
*Long remain, through the presence of*
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Benefactors making offerings and
Devotees paying reverence.

In this verse Shantideva is making the prayer that the holy teaching expounded by the Buddha will remain in this world, as it is the unsurpassable path through which all sentient beings obtain the temporary happiness of the higher realms and the permanent benefit of perfect liberation.

The Sutra known as Paltreng Sengei Dra states that all the prayers are combined in to one. If one should ask what is that prayer, it is

*May I hold the Holy Dharma.*

In the sutra known as Namkha Zod, the Lord Buddha addressed Maitreya thus:

*The four activities of the Bodhisattvas are: dispelling all the sufferings and maras; suppressing the harmful forces in harmony with the Dharma; thoroughly ripening sentient beings and thoroughly holding and propagating the Holy Dharma. All these four activities can be essentialised into one, which is ‘thoroughly hold and propagate the Holy Dharma’.*

The great Bodhisattva known as ‘Adorned with Merit’ reported thus to the Lord Buddha,

*I perceive the roots of all the virtues, other than holding and propagating the Holy Dharma, as only the size of a sesame seed; But I perceive the root of virtue of holding and propagating the Holy Dharma as vast as all of space in the ten directions.*

In this way many sutras describe that measureless merit will arise from holding and propagating the Holy Dharma.
Further Buddha said to his disciples,

*After my Parinirvana this Holy Dharma will become your teacher. That is why you should hold it without losing the words or the meaning.*

Buddha further said to Ananda,

*Ananda! you must make sure that this Holy Dharma will remain for a long time, and that it thoroughly benefits humans and celestial beings.*

The merit gained by one sentient being generating the enlightenment thought in order to attain supreme enlightenment is higher in quality and greater in volume than that from creating a stupa to house Buddha’s relics made entirely of precious jewels, high enough to touch Akanishta and wide enough to contain the three thousand worlds; and moreover for endless aeons making offerings to that stupa with all available offering substances. This is because the former will enable the holy dharma to continue for a long time and thus the lineage of the Buddha will not be broken. The quotation from the Four Hundred Verses supports this:

*The stupa which is of the nature of precious jewels
Created higher than any world you can imagine,
The person who has tamed one sentient being
Is said to be more supreme than that.*

If one should ask what is it that should be held thus and with what methods it should be held, the Abhidharma gives the following answer,

*Buddha’s two Holy Dharmas are the teachings and the realization. The only way to hold that Dharma is by expounding the teaching and by practicing.*
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The Buddha’s Dharma refers to the Tripitaka, which is the Teaching, and the Three Trainings which are the Dharma of Realization. Teaching the Dharma without errors, and meditating on the Dharma of Realization in the correct manner are the methods with which those two Dharmas should be held.

If one does not take refuge in the Triple Gem one cannot bring an end to the suffering of samsara. However taking the refuge vow cannot, by itself, accomplish the goal; the precepts of the refuge also need to be protected and observed. Associating with Noble Beings, listening to the Holy Teachings and practicing in accordance to the Dharma are the precepts of refuge that need to be complied with. The one who teaches and practices the Buddhadharma, as it has been expounded by Buddha, is a Noble Being. The Tripitaka which is confirmed to be truly the Buddha’s words and the Shastras composed by Acharya Nagarjuna, Asangha, Vasubandhu, Shantideva and Chandrakirti, as Buddha intended, are the doctrine of the Buddha. ‘Practicing in accordance with Dharma’ means that the teachings and all the practices should be done according to the Buddha’s doctrine.

The benefits of hearing dharma are explained in the sutra requested by Vishnu,

\textit{Noble son! For one who has hearing, wisdom will arise; for the one who has wisdom defilements will be thoroughly pacified; for the one without defilements the mara do not find any opening.}

It is explained in detail in this way.

In a Sutra it is said that there are five benefits of hearing the Holy Dharma. They are:
Being able to hear what one has not heard before; becoming well trained with what one has heard; removing doubt; being able to distinguish between right and wrong views and being able to comprehend the meaning of the Holy Dharma with the help of wisdom.

If I were to explain all the five cited here, the explanation would be too lengthy. Therefore, I will clarify only the first one. The meaning of the first one is that one will be able to hear about the ‘five aggregates’, the ‘eighteen spheres of perception’, the ‘twelve sources of perception’, the ‘two truths’, the ‘four truths’, ‘samsara and liberation’, the ‘paths of three yanas’ and the faults that can be abandoned by those paths, and the temporary and the permanent results. You will hear all of these for the first time, never having heard them before.

Further another Sutra gives another set of four benefits of hearing the Dharma in the following way: First it is said,

*By hearing one will understand the Dharma.*

This is because by hearing the doctrine one would know that the Three Trainings are the dharma as spoken by Buddha; and one would know that the paths, which are expounded by other Masters, are not the genuine Dharma.

Second it is said,

*By hearing one abandons non-virtue.*

After having listened to the Dharma one would take the vow, and having taken the vow one will abandon non-virtue.

Third it is said,

*By hearing one will abandon all the purposeless things.*
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This is because having received the mind training through hearing one would abandon the gross defilements and through this one would know that all the sensual pleasures that worldly beings are attached to are known as purposeless.

Fourth it is said,

By hearing one achieves Parinirvana.

This is because by hearing one obtains the training in wisdom and abandons the subtle defilements.

Acharya Vasubhandu, after having spoken at length of the benefits of listening to the Dharma, further said,

The purpose of listening to the Holy Dharma has no limit and what I have stated is only a part of it.

There is that purpose because all the paths and results of the three Yanas occur on the basis of listening to the Dharma.

Further, many disadvantages of not hearing the teachings are described in the Sutras.

The temporary disadvantage is:

Although human beings have two feet,
They are no different from cattle,
They are foolish and this foolishness has to be abandoned.

And further,

Those on this earth without the wealth of hearing,
One should consider as blind.
This blindness has to be abandoned.

And again,

Even though without hump and dew lope,
Human beings are like cows with upper teeth.
And so on. In this way those humans, who are deprived of hearing the Dharma are looked down upon by the learned ones.

In the Vinaya Sutra it is said that

*The one who is like a lion should not respect the one who is like a wolf.*

This has the same meaning as the above quotes.

The permanent disadvantage of not hearing the teachings is that one is not able to pacify defilements and sufferings, and one will not attain liberation. This is because, as it says in the Abhidharmakosa,

*Without the thoroughly discriminating Dharma there is no method with which one can totally uproot the defilements. Due to defilements the worldly beings wander in the ocean of cyclic existence. Therefore the Buddha has expounded the doctrine, which possesses the thoroughly discriminating wisdom.*

As it is said if one has not heard the holy dharma, one will not obtain the liberation which pacifies the defilements and suffering.

In the Karuna Pundarika sutra it is said,

*Ananda, many sentient beings may become completely degenerate due to not hearing a dharma jewel treasure of this kind.*

In particular dialectic schools produce scholars of Buddhist doctrines and are the source of many good qualities. Further, if there are no such schools, there is the fault that without the hearing and explaining of dharma the continuity of scholars will be broken, and without scholars who know the dharma, even though there may be many scriptural texts, the Buddha’s doctrine
will be demolished. Thus it is said in the Illumination of the Sage’s Intent. Further in one Sutra it states,

*The coming of the Buddha in this world*
*Is as rare as the appearance of a person on a deserted road.*
*The human body is obtained with great difficulty.*
*Alas! Having devotion to the Dharma and*
*Having the opportunity to listen to the Dharma*
*Are difficult to find*
*Even for hundreds of kalpas.*

It is appropriate to encourage people to listen to the Dharma by explaining that it is extremely difficult to obtain the causes and conditions of hearing the teachings.

In the Shiksasamuccaya, Shantideva taught five verses for encouraging people to listen to the Dharma respectfully. These verses indicate two ways to encourage beings:

The first is encouraging people by explaining to them the disadvantages of not listening to the Dharma. These are that by not hearing the teaching of Buddha the defilements of the mind cannot be pacified, and due to this one would have the sufferings of being burnt in the ravines of the hell realms, which one would never be able to tolerate. The suffering would be immense and not only immense for one time, but one will be tormented by this kind of suffering again and again. Thus one should direct beings to be delighted to listen to the Dharma by keeping this in mind.

The second is encouraging people by showing the advantage of listening to the Dharma. Having listened to Buddha’s doctrine, if one pursues the practice of mediation then one entirely abandons all non-virtues, which are the cause of the suffering of all births in
the lower realms; and one obtains the happiness of humans and the gods of the higher realms. You will obtain the bliss of liberation which will never decline, the inexhaustible bliss of the Bodhisattvas and all the unmatched perfections of the Buddha.

Therefore if today you obtain the meaningful, rare to obtain, jewel-like Dharma all the Gods, Humans, Nagas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Yakchas, Garudas, Demi-Gods, Kimnaras and Demons will become happy, inspired and faithful. So, because of that very reason, all are asked to come for teachings in this way.

In the Vinaya Sutra it is said,

\[
\begin{align*}
I & \text{ would explain the Buddha's doctrine,} \\
& \text{Which is the cause of the happiness} \\
& \text{And which thoroughly pacifies the defilements} \\
& \text{To the Gods, Nagas, Demi-Gods, Kimnaras and Shakra etc.} \\
& \text{Who performed the supreme activities of Dharma.} \\
& \text{Therefore you must come here to listen to the Holy Dharma.}
\end{align*}
\]

Further it says,

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Therefore you must respect with devotion} \\
& \text{The precious treasure of the Buddha’s Teachings} \\
& \text{Which has immense qualities,} \\
& \text{And which fulfills the purposes of others.} \\
& \text{Since nothing can be heard that is superior to this,} \\
& \text{One must listen to the doctrine of the Buddha,} \\
& \text{Having tamed the sense faculties as one tames the wild horse.}
\end{align*}
\]

In brief, knowing that the Buddha’s doctrine is very difficult to find, that it has a grand purpose and that it is not going to remain for long, it is appropriate, for all those who have devotion, to listen and practice.
Moreover, when the Victorious One’s doctrine is on the brink of extinction, it is particularly essential and greatly meritorious to hold and preserve the Holy Teachings.

In the Sutra of Avalokiteshvara it says,

\begin{verbatim}
When it is on the brink of extinction,  
To hold and propagate  
The doctrine of the Saviour of the World  
Both day and night,  
Is more meritorious  
Than to revere hundreds of thousands of Buddhas,  
Who are as many as the grains of sand in the River Ganges  
For countless aeons.
\end{verbatim}

Some say that if someone hinders the teaching of, or the listening to, the Mahayana Dharma, that person will remain in lower transmigrations for a long time.

As it is said in Bodhicaryavatara,

\begin{verbatim}
Whoever even for a single moment  
Creates obstacles to the Mahayana Teachings,  
Is thereby weakening the fulfilling of the purposes of sentient beings,  
And therefore the lower transmigrations of that person will have no limit.
\end{verbatim}

In the Sutra known as Rabtu shi ba rNampar Ngepa Cho'trul gyi mdo it is said,

\begin{verbatim}
One who creates an obstacle to the Bodhisattva’s virtuous act of giving a handful of food to an animal, will create a greater non virtue than one who kills all sentient beings and snatches their possessions. This is because the former creates an obstacle to a virtuous deed that will cause the future appearance of a Buddha.’
\end{verbatim}
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In the Sutra called Chos Thamsched 'byungwa med-pa bstenpa, in the doctrine of the Thatagata who is known as Ri Rab ltar mngon par 'phag pa'i it is said,

There was a Bikshu named spyod pa'i blo dros who was endowed with moral discipline, five clairvoyances, complete with retinues, and who resided in seclusion and exerted himself in the practice. At the same time there was a Bikshu called chos smra ba spyod pa rnam dag who wandered in the cities and markets and towns and in the palace of the king giving teachings. The first Bikshu said to him, ‘Since Buddha has praised seclusion you should not go to town and markets. Instead you should practice meditation in an isolated place.’ Even after he told him not to go to town, he saw him in the town, associating with ordinary vulgar friends, so disrespect towards that Bikshu arose in his mind. He said ‘This bikshu has broken his vows and is interested in worldly things.’ In this way the first Bikshu stopped the other from the task of giving teachings. By the negative power of that act, Bikshu spyod pa'i blo dros died and was born and suffered in unceasing hell in as many as ninety nine thousand million aeons. The Bikshu spyod pa'i rnam dag during that time was myself and spyod pa'i blo dros who gave teaching then was Buddha Achala. Thus Buddha said.

Since everyone has the same motivation whether sitting together to discuss about setting up a philosophical Institute, or other ways of supporting Dharma study; or contributing financial aid for the Dharma practice; they will all gain the same merit as those who are directly involved. Confirming this, Vasubandhu said,

Since in war etc all have the same purpose, whether they are directly or indirectly involved they will all have the same non-virtue as the actual killer.
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In many Sutras it is said that by requesting the spiritual Masters to give teachings one will acquire the same merit that one would get by making supplication to the Buddhas to turn the wheel of Dharma, as in the Seven Limb Practice.

Also if you encourage others to listen to the Dharma then you will obtain the root virtue of those others performing Dharma. If without jealousy you rejoice in others teaching and listening to the Dharma and if you say ‘Well done’ to others’ actions, then you will obtain the merits of rejoicing as in the Seven Limb Practice.

In the bdud rtsi brjod pa Mahayana Sutra it is said,

\[
\text{There won't be disease, epidemics, contagious sickness and chaos in the country where this kind of Sutra is held and propagated, or where somebody dwells and transmit the teachings, or where various teachings are inscribed on scrolls.}
\]

In other Sutras it is said,

\[
\text{There won't be starvation, wars and harms created by evil spirits, and there will be perfect wealth and good harvests in any place where the Kings etc venerate the Sutras. Those places will always be protected by the Four Guardian Deities and Indra and Brahma.'}
\]

Even these days there are many Bikshus and worldly beings who have renounced cyclic existence, taken vows, discarded their homes and are engaging in the path of liberation and omniscience. They are the field of accumulating merit for those who practice rejoicing and making prostrations to them. Therefore really it is not necessary for me to encourage people to listen to and practice the Dharma.
Nevertheless, I have taken pains to extract a few scriptural quotations from the Sutras in order to persuade those lay householders, who although they have faith in Buddha, do not have knowledge about Buddha's teaching, and are not engaging in Dharma practice; or even if they are engaging in Dharma practice, are doing so incorrectly.

By this teaching I wish to tell them that if they listen well to the Dharma they will gain understanding, and as a result they will have delight in engaging in the practice, and thereby all their purposes will be accomplished. In this way I have presented a few scriptural quotations from Sutras and Shastras so that devotees can more readily understand them.

Even if one obtains the wealth of the world, this is not considered as the best wealth. However, hearing one verse of Buddhadharma will become the excellent wealth because it can grant permanent happiness to oneself and to others. It is of course missing a great opportunity if one fails to gain one's own dividend of wealth, food and status etc. However it is even more unfortunate to miss the opportunity, either as a monk, who has less work and fewer purposes, or as a lay person, to gain one's own dividend of hearing, contemplation and meditation. This is because then one will not be able to attain the perfect Buddhahood, which spontaneously accomplishes one's own purpose and the purpose of others.

When you obtained human birth, meet with Buddha’s Dharma, and have faith in Dharma then you have the rare opportunity to practice the Dharma, which is difficult to obtain. So at this time you must abandon samsara. Having all these opportunities, why
is it that you do not have the thought of abandoning samsara? Why do you not have the thought of attaining Buddhahood? And why do you not have a thought of listening, contemplating and meditating on the Dharma? You should carefully check the reasons for this.

One of the reasons given is that householders have a lot of their own works, and that is why they do not have the time to practice. If that is claimed, then for this, Buddha has especially taught the short Sutras for lay people who have many things to do, and for the Bikshus who mainly engage in the practice of meditation. So they should study whatever Buddha has expounded for them.

At least one should try to know and understand the following with clear ascertainment: what is the cause of attaining Buddhahood; what is the path which facilitates one to attain enlightenment; what are the characteristics of the resultant Buddhahood; what are the subjects that beginners should practice; and what are the indispensable Dharmas and how should they be practiced. After understanding all of these one should practice as much as one can. Otherwise, if one wastes this perfect opportunity of practicing the very essential Dharma, and if therefore one departs to the next birth naked and empty handed, one will certainly experience intense regret. In the Karuna Pundarika sutra it says,

> Ananda! don't forget to be vigilant! If you forget to be conscientious, later you will definitely regret it.

Another reason for not practicing the Dharma is that one regards it as unimportant. Thus one has the idea that the householders’ works are important and one thinks that it is alright if one does not practice Dharma despite its benefits. However, that evaluation
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is false. Most worldly activities cause you and others to suffer in this and future lives. Even if such activities help to some extent, their benefit is trivial. Buddha’s teaching will always help, and it will never harm. The benefits that you get from the Buddha’s teaching are permanent.

Arya Nagarjuna said,

*If a fire breaks out on your head*
*And burns your head and clothing,*
*Do not pause to extinguishing it!*
*Rather exert effort to stop future rebirth.*
*There is no purpose superior to this.*

Actually, when fire has broken out and ones head and ones clothes are smoldering, then in general one does stop other things one is doing, and tries to extinguish that fire. Nevertheless, the learned ones by ignoring the fire, and not even looking at their bodies and wealth, should instead exert effort to abandon samsara, because, as it is said, there is no task superior to abandoning samsara.

Few people say that understanding Dharma is good. Parents and relatives, who love and care for you, sometimes object to your involvement in Dharma activities. Recognizing that these are obstacles to Dharma practice, one should try to dispel them. The best method to do this is to have unwavering and steadfast faith in the Dharma. Shantideva said,

*You take birth alone, and you die alone.*
*Since, others will never take your share of suffering*
*What benefit can one expect from relatives*
*Who cause obstacles to the virtuous deeds?*
In this way your dear ones get in the way of your dharma practice. So do not come under the power of others.

Manjushri said,

*Neither parents, nor relatives can be a Refuge for you.*
*They discard you and go wherever they wish.*

All the lay householders are always engrossed with worldly activities for the purpose of this life. There are none who engage in hearing, contemplation and meditation. Always comparing themselves with others they are content with their worldly activities. One should think about this. While it is alright to imitate others, there are many different types of examples to follow. There are many who indulge in extremely dreadful action. Therefore one should look for good examples. From the Sutras it is also recommended that one should take vows as did the Tathagatas of the past, and one should dedicate like Manjushri did in the past. Performing deeds after carefully analyzing for oneself, is the correct guideline of the learned ones. Performing an action by listening and watching others is the procedure of the unwise. Therefore, one should be able to make decisions as to what one deems as good, by investigating with proper reasoning.

If with disheartened mind one thinks ‘a person like me cannot engage in study’, that thought will block the door of study. As Shantideva said,

*Discarding effort due to disheartened mind,*
*There cannot be any liberation.*
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Thus one cannot improve from the state one is in, if due to a disheartened mind one does not make an effort. Therefore in a Sutra it is said,

*Having interest, effort and conscientiousness, with these three one can accomplish all activities. Thus one should be assertive, confident and efficient in relation to the task of study.*

As is said in the Bhadrapani Sutra,

*One should think that if even fleas and flies can attain enlightenment, why, being a human being, should I diminish my effort to obtain Bodhi even at the cost of my life.*

This quotation tells us that even animals can obtain enlightenment, and that therefore belonging to the human race, knowing virtue and non-virtue, being conscientious, one has no reason not to be determined to attain enlightenment. As it is said in Bodhicaryavatara,

*There is nothing which does not become easier When one becomes accustomed to it.*

Whatever the subject of study may be, when we become accustomed to it, it will become easier and it will produce delight in our mind. Not only will it produce delight, but with familiarity we will also accomplish any task with ease. Of course, it is possible that one may not understand the meaning of what one is taught straight away. But this should not be the cause for you to withdraw, thinking that you have engaged in a purposeless thing. The study of the Dharma is not the same as other studies. In the case of other studies if you don’t learn it, then you have not gained the result. But in the case of Dharma study, even if you have not learned it, it will ensure your future understanding and it will
place latencies in your mind continuum for attaining Buddhahood. Thus it has served an immense purpose.

Therefore, Vasubandhu said,

*Even one who does not comprehend the meaning should respectfully listen to the Buddhadharma, because merely by listening with devotion one will gain immense merit and enhance ones wisdom. Not to mention if one understands the meaning.*

In one of the Sutras it is said,

*A being who makes an effort to listen and take hold of the meaning of one verse from my doctrine will without doubt gain the state of Bodhi. There is not a single being who will not attain enlightenment by hearing this teaching.*

There are individuals who seek results just by listening and performing minimal practices. That kind of attitude in the initial stage is the cause of quickly discarding the task. Therefore, from the beginning, whatever troubles one encounters when engaging in hearing and contemplation, one should put on an armor of determination, thinking that one will make the action purposeful by tolerating it. It is said in Sikchasamuchaya,

*One should search for knowledge with patience.*

In yet another Sutra it is said,

*In order to hold Dharma one should have patience towards scolding, slandering and harsh and reprimanding words.*

In terms of time, one should hear the Dharma from this time forth until enlightenment is attained. In the Sutra known as *Lodros mi zad pas bstan-pa* it is said,

*The Four Insatiables will procure an accumulation of wisdom for Bodhisattvas.*
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The Four Insatiables are: being insatiable in hearing; being insatiable in expounding the teachings; being insatiable in investigation; being insatiable in knowledge. These Four Insatiables are the source of procuring the wisdom of accumulation for the Bodhisattvas.

Maitreya said in Prajñaparamita,

\[\text{At the time of thorough purification at the third Bhumi, one should never be content with the knowledge one has.}\]

Searching for Dharma, without ever thinking that the Dharma one has heard already is enough, is the excellent ornament to beautify the exalted Bodhisattvas. It is described in many Sutras that when Lord Buddha manifested as a Bodhisattva in order to accumulate the treasure of Holy Dharma, that just for one or two words of Dharma he practiced austerities such as sacrificing his own body and kingdom etc. for many countless aeons.

Therefore Master Pawo prayed that he would not become discouraged even if he had to cross the trench of fire, for the sake of listening to the Dharma. As it is said in the in the Seventy Verses of Inspirational Prayer,

\[\text{With any opportunity to listen to even one word that contains the teaching, it is advisable to cross over the blazing fire of endlessly flowing lava, you should rejoice and not be indolent.}\]

The main reason why one has no interest to practice the Dharma is attachment to this life. One should abandon that attachment through recollecting death. A human life span is short and there is no certainty of the time of death. When one becomes subject to death, the wealth that one has amassed through hardship, ones
relatives, friends, one’s name and fame etc will not follow one. One will go to the lower realms carrying the non-virtue one has accumulated for one’s relatives and friends.

If the thought of dying arises within your mind continuum, then there will be no difficulty in engaging in Dharma practice. On top of that one must eschew clinging to any part of samsara. If you are attached to samsara then whatever hearing and contemplation you may perform, it will not be the path that leads you to liberation. Instead it will become the cause of samsara. Therefore, one should shun attachment by bringing to mind the disadvantages and faults of samsara. If one is attached to one’s own purpose, then even if one does engage in the Dharma practice, that practice will fall into the path of Hinayana and therefore one does not attain full enlightenment.

Therefore with loving kindness, compassion and altruistic thought one should shun attachment to one’s own purpose. In brief, having eschewed those three attachments one should make every effort to attain enlightenment for all sentient beings. For that very purpose one must ensure that one is motivated with the Mahayana Enlightenment Thought when listening to the Holy Dharma. In order to encourage beings to listen to the Dharma with Mahayana motivation, it is stated in the sutras,

One or another kind of merit will be acquired by individual Bodhisattvas by listening to one or another kind of Dharma.

Therefore it is certain that one will acquire merits. In a shastra known as sNyoms ’Jug Rab gSal,

Having confirmed that worldly activities have no essence, one should strive to learn the meanings of the teachings.
The Sutra known as *mDo sDe pedma dKarpo* states

> By having shunned all attachments, listen to this kind of doctrine, for it is very hard to find the inclination and opportunity to listen to the Dharma.

Finally, if somebody should ask ‘what is the method for not wasting having heard the Dharma?’ In the Sutra known as *Nam mKa’ mZod kyi mDo* it is said,

> No virtue or non-virtue accumulated earlier will go astray;
> No virtue accumulated through making offerings to the Tathagatas will go astray;
> No virtue accumulated through altruistic thought will go astray; No virtue accumulated through primarily practicing will go astray.

Ands it is said by Rendawa,

> In order to make meaningful the dharma to which you have listened, you, the young intelligent ones, should go to the remote forest.

By having heard the dharma, you understand what needs to be understood, you abandon the things that need to be abandoned, and you cultivate the things that need to be cultivated; so it is certain that you will obtain that which needs to be obtained.

These are the reasons that indicate that study is meaningful. Therefore it is sensible to make an effort.

Shubam!
Whatever merits may be gained from the conceiving, writing, translating, publishing and distributing these Noble Dharma Words we dedicate for the long life of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, and so that all his aspirations for beings may be fulfilled. And we also dedicate so that these words may inspire untold numbers of beings to realize the importance of studying the Dharma, and that they may have the conditions to do so.
བོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དུས་དཔེ་བསྟོན་པ།

བོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དུས་

གཞོན་པས་བཟང་པོ་བཞི་སྤིན་གྲོགས་སྐྱེས་བོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དུས་དཔེ་བསྟོན་པ་ལས་བོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དུས་དཔེ་བསྟོན་པ་སྐྱེ་བ་སྟེ།
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བོད་དོན་བཅོམ་བཟས་ལེགས་པར་

བོད་ཀྱི་ལེགས་པ་ལ་བྱིན་པོ་ནི་

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 ltdam 'dus 'buddhay tu 'byung ba 'stus la 'khyil byed 'jug na 'phags 'phrul
 nä 'byung ba 'byams 'byed 'buddhay 'buddhay tu 'byung ba 'stus la 'khyil byed 'jug na 'phags 'phrul
gsang sman 'byin 'bu shes 'byas nang 'byams 'byed 'jug na 'phags 'phrul
 rgya 'bden 'od rinpoche 'byin 'bu shes 'byas nang 'byams 'byed 'jug na 'phags 'phrul

# The Importance of Studying the Budhadharma

The study of the Budhadharma is of great importance in the path to enlightenment. It is through understanding the teachings of the Buddha that one can attain the state of nirvana, free from the cycle of samsara.

The Budhadharma is a comprehensive system of teachings that encompasses the loftiest philosophical and spiritual insights. It is a path to enlightenment that is open to all, regardless of one's background or social status.

The teachings of the Budhadharma are not just for the monks and nuns of the monasteries, but for all people, including laypeople and practitioners of all religions.

In this context, the term "Budhadharma" refers to the teachings of the Buddha, which include the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the numerous sutras and tantras that constitute the core of Buddhist tradition.

The study of the Budhadharma is not only important for personal development and spiritual growth, but it also has a crucial role in the development of society. By practicing the teachings of the Budhadharma, individuals can contribute to the betterment of society and the well-being of all beings.

Indeed, the study of the Budhadharma is a path to understanding the nature of reality and the true nature of existence. It is a path to liberation from the sufferings of samsara and the attainment of ultimate happiness.

In conclusion, the study of the Budhadharma is a profound and valuable endeavor that has the potential to transform one's life and contribute to the betterment of society. It is an invitation to all to join in the pursuit of enlightenment and the realization of our true potential.
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དོན་སེམས་དཔང་དགོས་དང་དགོས་པོར་བཤད་པ་ནི་ཁོ་མ་ནག་རྟོམས་

ཐེག་ཆེན་པོ་སྐད་དག་ཐ་བ་བཤད་གཞི་བསལ་བ་ནི་ཨོ་རི་མོ་ད་རི།

མིང་གི་ག་གུ་ལམ་གམ་པ་གསར་་ཆུས་ལས་ནས་པར་་ཆིི་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་ད། དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

འཐེག་ཆེན་པོ་སོགས་གཞི་ཐོབ་ད་བོད་ཀྱིིས་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

དབུས་ཀྱིིས་ག་གུ་ལམ་གམ་པ་གསར་་ཆུས་ལས་ནས་པར་་ཆིི་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

དབུས་ཀྱིིས་ག་གུ་ལམ་གམ་པ་གསར་་ཆུས་ལས་ནས་པར་་ཆིི་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་ང་ཐོན་པ་དེ་དགེ་ེད་པ་

མཐའ་ཁོ་མ་ནག་རྟོམས་པའི་མིང་ལ་སྦྱོང་བ་

བོད་ཀྱིིས་རྩོམ་བཞི་བཤད་གཞི་བསལ་བ་ནི་ཨོ་རི་མོ་ད་རི།
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The importance of studying the Dharma is profound. Understanding the teachings is essential for spiritual growth and wisdom. By engaging in the study of the Dharma, one can develop a deeper understanding of the nature of reality and the path to liberation. The Dharma is not just a set of rules or rituals; it is a comprehensive guide to the deeper aspects of life, providing answers to the most profound questions about existence. Through the study of the Dharma, individuals can gain insight into their own minds and hearts, and cultivate compassion and wisdom. This knowledge is crucial for living a meaningful and fulfilling life, and for helping others to do the same. The path of practice, guided by the Dharma, leads to the realization of enlightenment and the end of suffering.
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 كذلك, "ব্যজ্ঞানের বুদ্ধধর্মের শিক্ষার গুরুত্ব"

বুদ্ধধর্মের শিক্ষার গুরুত্ব

সাধনাযুক্ত শিক্ষার শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব

সাধনাযুক্ত শিক্ষার শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব

যদি তোমরা বুদ্ধধর্মের শিক্ষার গুরুত্ব বুঝতে পারেন, তাহলে তোমরা তাদের বুদ্ধধর্মের শিক্ষার প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
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དགེ་འབྲིང་པོ་ལྡན་ལ་བོད་རིགས་ཐང་ལེགས་རིགས་རང་ལྔ་བོད་རིགས་གཞུང་
མཚོན་པར་ཞི་བོད་རིགས་ཐང་ལེགས་རིགས་རང་ལྔ་བོད་རིགས་གཞུང་
གཞུང་ལ་བོད་རིགས་ཐང་ལེགས་རིགས་རང་ལྔ་བོད་རིགས་གཞུང་
གཞུང་ལ་བོད་རིགས་ཐང་ལེགས་རིགས་རང་ལྔ་བོད་རིགས་གཞུང་


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དགེ་བོའི་བོད་ཡིག་དང་བོད་ཆོས་ཐུན་པོའི་སོགས་གཞག་པ་ནས་

ཧེ་ོང་དགོན་དགོན་ཆི་ང་བོད་ཡིག་གཞག་པའི་ཕྲིམ་བོད་དང་

དཔོན་ལྡན་གཞག་དགོན་ཆི་ང་བོད་ཡིག་གཞག་པའི་ཕྲིམ་བོད་དང་

ཞེས་ཐུན་པོ་དག་པའི་ཕྲིམ་པའི་ཕྲིམ་བོད་དང་

དགེ་བོའི་བོད་ཡིག་དང་བོད་ཆོས་ཐུན་པོའི་སོགས་གཞག་པ་ནས་

དགེ་བོའི་བོད་ཡིག་དང་བོད་ཆོས་ཐུན་པོའི་སོགས་གཞག་པ་ནས་

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The importance of studying the Buddhadharma cannot be overstated. It is through understanding the teachings of the Buddha that we can gain insight into the nature of reality and the causes of suffering. By studying the Dharma, we can develop a deeper understanding of the impermanence of all things and the interdependence of all phenomena. Through this understanding, we can cultivate wisdom, compassion, and loving-kindness, which are the heart of the Buddhist path.

Studying the Dharma is not just about memorizing scriptures or reciting mantras. It is about developing a true and direct understanding of the teachings. This requires effort, dedication, and a genuine motivation to transform our own mental states. Through the study of the Dharma, we can cultivate a calm mind, which is the foundation of all other good qualities.

In contemporary times, it is even more important to study the Dharma because many of the problems that we face today are rooted in our own mind. By developing a deeper understanding of our own mind, we can develop the skill to overcome our own obstacles and create a path of benefit for others.

In conclusion, studying the Dharma is not just a personal endeavor, but it is a spiritual practice that contributes to the well-being of all sentient beings. It is through the study of the Dharma that we can develop the wisdom and compassion necessary to realize the ultimate goal of enlightenment.
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