Why Practice Buddhism?

Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The aim of the Education Department of FPMT International Office is to serve Dharma centers and for homestudy.

FPMT Drama centers and for homestudy.

FPMT Drama centers and for homestudy.

If we can be of service to you, please contact us at:

education@fpmt.org

www.fpmt.org/shop
Why Practice Buddhism?

Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition is an organization devoted to the transmission of Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values worldwide through teaching, meditation, and community service. We provide integrated education through which people's minds and hearts can be transformed into those of infinite wisdom and compassion.

Our organization is based on the Buddhist tradition of Lama Tsongkhapa of Tibet, as taught by our founder, Lama Thubten Yeshe, and our spiritual director, Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

FPMT, Inc.
info@fpmt.org
www.fpmt.org
Introduction

This booklet contains the transcript of Lama Zopa Rinpoche speaking to the Mongolian people during a radio broadcast in June 2004. Before the broadcast started, Ven. Sarah Thresher asked his permission to record the teaching, which he generously gave, and then they laughed for over a minute, then chanted this brief teaching which includes the entire path to enlightenment.

The audio CD of this teaching, The Singing Lam-rim, is available from The Foundation Store (www.fpmt.org/shop) or by writing to materials@fpmt.org.

This booklet contains the transcript of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's talk.
Why Practice Buddhism

A Teaching from Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Why Practice Buddhism?

Because what we are all seeking is happiness and what none of us want is suffering. Therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness. What we commonly believe that suffering is connected to external situations, actually these are just the conditions for suffering. Similarly, the actual cause of happiness is not outside, it is within. Life brings happiness or unhappiness depending on how we interpret an event. Because when we are all seeking is happiness and what none of us want is suffering.

Therefore, the path to enlightenment is very scientific. Buddhism teaches that happiness is not attainable from external situations. The conditions for happiness are connected to personal situations, and that is not just the conditions for suffering. Therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness. The actual cause of happiness is within, therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness. Therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness.

Who Is Buddha and How Is Buddha Guiding Me?

Generally, in a country and in the world, there is somebody amongst all the others who has the greatest compassion, and is the one that Buddha is guiding. In the same way, many great pandits analysed the Buddha's teachings, and saw many, many great examples of the Buddha's teachings. The physical examples of the Buddha's teachings are given here.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha very kindly made 500 prayers and vowed to descend to this world to benefit us in this 100-age quarrelling time who were left out by other buddhas. He made a vow to practice patience and perseverance for three countless great eons. Buddha completed the two types of merit, virtue and wisdom, and achieved enlightenment. He then revealed the teachings of the four Noble Truths — that show the path to liberation, the path to full enlightenment, and the tantric path which brings enlightenment very quickly — even in one lifetime.

Therefore, the path to enlightenment is very scientific. Buddhism teaches that happiness is not attainable from external situations. The conditions for happiness are connected to personal situations, and that is not just the conditions for suffering. Therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness. The actual cause of happiness is within, therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness. Therefore, we need to abandon the real cause of suffering and create the unmistaken cause of happiness.
Why Practice Buddhism?

A person is the source of all your happiness now and in the future, right up to the peerless happiness, the complete bliss of full enlightenment. And it is also the source of peace and happiness for others, starting from your family and going out to all living beings.

When you think of the benefits of patience, which are as vast as the sky, you get a very deep feeling for the kindness of the person who is angry towards you. You see how precious that... positiveway, it is so beneficial to develop your mind in the path to liberation and enlightenment — particularly patience.

The positive thought seeing that person as kind immediately brings inner peace and happiness, and because you don’t get angry and harm the person in return it brings peace to others. The person you previously called an enemy then becomes your most kind friend. By practicing patience you are able to bring so much peace and happiness to all sentient beings. This comes from your positive thought. So you can see how your suffering and happiness as well as that of others come from your mind.

When you look at the person who is angry with you as being negative and bad, label it as harm, and then believe that label you create suffering for yourself and others. This way of thinking causes suffering to you and others, and from the anger comes unhappiness for yourself, for others and on a larger scale for all living beings.

When your mind is transformed into the peaceful, happy mind of patience, that brings happiness to yourself and to all living beings. This is practicing Buddhism. This is practicing what the Buddha taught. Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world. There are many recent examples of this happening.

If there were loving kindness, compassion, the thought of benefitting others and contentment in the hearts of everyone in the world, there would be no need for weapons or guns at all, and no reason to have armies. How incredible the country and the world would be! Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world.

When you look at the person who is angry with you as being negative and bad, label it as harm, and then believe that label you create suffering for yourself and others. This way of thinking causes suffering to you and others, and from the anger comes unhappiness for yourself, for others and on a larger scale for all living beings.

When your mind is transformed into the peaceful, happy mind of patience, that brings happiness to yourself and to all living beings. This is practicing Buddhism. This is practicing what the Buddha taught. Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world. There are many recent examples of this happening.

If there were loving kindness, compassion, the thought of benefitting others and contentment in the hearts of everyone in the world, there would be no need for weapons or guns at all, and no reason to have armies. How incredible the country and the world would be! Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world.

When you look at the person who is angry with you as being negative and bad, label it as harm, and then believe that label you create suffering for yourself and others. This way of thinking causes suffering to you and others, and from the anger comes unhappiness for yourself, for others and on a larger scale for all living beings.

When your mind is transformed into the peaceful, happy mind of patience, that brings happiness to yourself and to all living beings. This is practicing Buddhism. This is practicing what the Buddha taught. Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world. There are many recent examples of this happening.

If there were loving kindness, compassion, the thought of benefitting others and contentment in the hearts of everyone in the world, there would be no need for weapons or guns at all, and no reason to have armies. How incredible the country and the world would be! Without the practice of Buddhism, this paramita of patience, one person can destroy a whole country and even the whole world. There are many recent examples of this happening.
It is the same if you can let go of desire. When there is strong desire, only seeking the pleasure of this life for yourself it brings so many problems and so much suffering. You become an alcoholic, and make life totally useless and meaningless. At this time we have received a most precious human body that can be used for the elimination of delusions and the realization of wisdom, in order to attain liberation and enlightenment. But even more importantly, we can achieve the peerless happiness of full enlightenment, which is the total cessation of all the mistakes of the mind and the achievement of all the qualities and realizations. By achieving enlightenment, we can serve others by causing numberless beings to gain the happiness of this life, the happiness of future lives, the total cessation of suffering — liberation, and more importantly, the peerless happiness of full enlightenment.

Alcoholics cannot even do the works for this life. They can’t even do their job properly and they cause so much suffering to their family — to the husband, wife, and children — instead of bringing them happiness and peace. They make the family poor instead of bringing wealth.

So it is clear how all the problems of this life that harm you and harm others come from the mind — from the dissatisfied mind of desire. Therefore, if you can be educated in how to be content and have a satisfied mind, your whole life can be filled with much inner peace and happiness, and there will be no need for court cases and no need for prison. You can say goodbye to depression, loneliness, and suicide!

The dissatisfied mind, discontent and desire bring relationship problems one after another for the whole life. You get swamped in relationship problems, like a person drowning in mud who...
Why Practice Buddhism?

So you can see how all your own peace and happiness and that of others, as well as all the problems in your own life and those of others, come from your own mind. Peace and happiness come from a content, satisfied mind — from a mind that has let go of the dissatisfied mind of desire. Peace and happiness come from the mind that is not confused and troubled by many negative karmas. When you engage in negative karmas and make yourself unhappy in this life and then also in the next life, that will make many problems and causes problems to the family, the country, the world and all living beings, from life to life.

Therefore, letting go of desire and making yourself free from all the confusion and problems that cause you to engage in so many different negative karmas in this life and then to be born again as a hell being, hungry ghost or animal — is giving independence to yourself. This is the way to fill yourself from deep down in your heart with so much peace, satisfaction and joy. This is renunciation, the very fundamental practice of Buddhism.

Also, if your attitude in life is self-cherishing and ego, that opens the door to so many undesirable things and causes so many problems to your companion, family, friends and to the world and all living beings. A selfish person thinks only of their own needs and happiness and has no concern for the needs and happiness of others. The stronger the self-cherishing thought the easier it is to create problems in life. Wherever a person with strong self-cherishing goes — to the countryside or to the city, to the east or to the west — they always find problems. Whoever that person stays with, they will always find difficulty. Even if the other person starts off as a friend, sooner or later they become enemies. Even if they start as friends sooner or later they become enemies due to the selfish attitude of the other person.

Self-cherishing is the greatest obstacle to achieving happiness in this life, so there is no question that it prevents us from achieving happiness in future lives, liberation and enlightenment.

The great bodhisattva Shantideva said: “If one does not exchange oneself for others, one cannot achieve enlightenment (peerless happiness). Leave aside the happiness of future lives, even the happiness of this life won’t succeed.

“If the attitude is self-cherishing, even if someone is doing a job, working for others, they will steal and cheat and lie and be careless and lazy, which will lead to worry, fear, court cases and debts. Nobody likes a person whose attitude to life is one of self-cherishing. When that person has problems no one helps. A person who has a good heart, always putting others first, cherishing others and living their life to benefit others has so much success in their life. That person brings so much happiness in their life both now and in the future — like the sun shining. Even at the end of their life there will be so much peace and happiness in their home now and in the future. People will be happy for them and Iraq and will come to help. There is no problem in the community to the world and all living beings’s happiness is in the community to the world and all living beings.

If the attitude is self-cherishing, even if someone is doing a job, their body won’t work. If their body won’t work, their happiness won’t arise. If their happiness won’t arise, you will be miserable. So always know that you will be happy if you help your friends and others. Your friends and others will help you if you help them. So, if you are self-cherishing and always trying to benefit yourself, you won’t be successful.

Therefore, becoming a person who cherishes others and cherishing others is the greatest benefit you can have in your life. And all living beings, from the sky to the ocean, our family and all the living beings in our world, all the living beings in the universe cherish and benefit others, they will have the greatest benefit in this life and in all the lives to come. Therefore, cherishing others is the greatest benefit you can have in your life and all the lives to come.