

On the Benefits of Life-Saving Practice, Part II

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If you want to accumulate the cause of long life, then you are going to need to help and benefit others. Everybody please try. Everybody please recognize what you are doing. You need to look at your own feet. Where are you stepping? Is that a step of virtue or a step of non-virtue? Is that a step that is going to bring you long life, or is that a step that is going to bring you short life? You are all smart, you are not dumb, you can look and see for yourself where you are stepping. If you are going to choose a place to step, you should choose to step on the path of all the buddhas, on the path of all the lineage masters. Follow in their footsteps, that is the right place to step. Look at Chatral Rinpoche—he passed away not so long ago, but look at how long he lived. He was more than 100. He was always doing this practice of saving life and ransoming those who were set to be killed or slaughtered. Over the course of his life, he saved, I am sure, billions upon billions. He was not rich or powerful, and although he was an extremely high lama in terms of his practice and his realization, he was not high or great or pompous or overblown in his presentation of himself. He always lived extremely simply. He put all of his efforts towards creating virtue. And one of the forms of virtue he was always creating continuously, every year, almost every day it seemed like, was to ransom the lives of those set to be killed, and to do these life-saving practices continuously.

Do you think that you are going to find a better way to extend your life than Chatral Rinpoche found to extend his? Think about it. You are all smart guys, but you are not that smart. What you are doing, you need to examine that. If you want to have a long life, you can. If you want to have a long life, you can create the causes of that yourself by creating virtue. But it means that you have to give up your non-virtue and actually start creating virtue. It doesn't mean that you just start *talking* about creating virtue; it means that you actually have to start *creating* virtue. You can talk about creating virtue all you like, and the only thing it is going to benefit is your mouth, and the only benefit is that your mouth is going to get tired. If you need a long life, you don't need to talk about it. You need to actually create virtue. If you want to have a long life free of sickness, if you want to have body and mind that function well, your faculties clear, your body strong, whatever you want to have, including success in all your endeavors, you must accumulate merit. The practice of saving life is the number one way to accumulate merit.

“They say,” “they say” — *they* are the great lineage masters, not this funky old man. *They* say that that is the best way. So if you can try that, if you can try to do those kinds of

practices, that is wonderful. I'm not a scholar. I don't know, don't ask me; but you can ask Chatral Rinpoche's disciples and ask about his life story, everybody knows! He was famous for doing this life-saving practice. You can hear the accounts from those who knew him personally and learn about how he lived so long, and created so much virtue, always doing this practice. Then you can understand for yourself how precious and valuable the chance to do this practice is. Then more people might actually come to the practice, that would be wonderful. It is not just Lama Drimed's responsibility to save all the fishies in the ocean—everybody can come and participate. You don't need to be afraid! You don't need to be afraid and keep your hand back, nobody is going to bite your hand if you are putting fishies in the ocean! Nobody is going to bite your hand if you are offering a little money so that the fish release can happen every month. You can come, you can do that, you can participate. How come we are always afraid of creating virtue, and we are fearless heroes when it comes to creating non-virtue? That is how much dumb we are. Please, don't be dumb like that. Watch your own feet. Watch your own step.

We all love a long life—and not only long life, but we want to be rich, we want to be pretty, we want to be handsome, we want to have a strong body, and a clean mind and everything wonderful. We want all of those things, but we don't want to make the causes for them. We want to make the causes for the opposite. Stand up, okay? If you want all those good things, you have to make good causes. You can't make bad causes, and then when bad causes bring bad results go running to your mommy: "Mommy, mommy! My bad causes brought a bad result! Mommy, mommy!" It is not going to work. If you want good results, you have to make good causes. You have plenty of opportunities. Look and see, these long life practices, these life-saving practices, they are done all over the world, not just here. In India and Bodhgaya, all over Asia, in Malaysia, Singapore, everywhere. Everywhere these practices slowly, slowly are starting to be done more and more. If you have a little money and you spend a little of that money for the benefit of saving beings' lives, then that result will benefit you. You will get a hundred times or a thousand times the strength of that blessing that comes back to you.

So, don't be arrogant, don't think you don't need it, don't think that it is just some Tibetan trip or some Tibetan custom. It isn't. It is a powerful method for creating merit, and it is an opportunity that we have. If we waste that opportunity, we are stupid. If you waste that opportunity thinking that it is just some Tibetan trip, that is your own dumb trip. That is your own dumb wrong step. Don't be dumb. Don't step the wrong way. Step the right way. Watch your own feet. When you step the wrong way into non-virtue, that harms this life and the next. For millions and millions of lifetimes, we have destroyed ourselves and destroyed the causes of our own liberation.

I think now enough is enough of negativity. I think, stage by stage, we need to practice what is positive and virtuous. When we do this long life practice, when we save the lives of other beings, that is a powerful way that we are stepping in the right direction. Don't be sort of dumb, don't be sort of arrogant. Instead, be very smart and be very humble. This isn't somebody else's problem. This isn't somebody else's responsibility. You shouldn't think, "Oh somebody wants me to give money to the fish release." No, no, no. Do you need merit? If you need merit then you can offer some money to the fish release. It is that simple. It has nothing to do with anybody else. If you need merit, you give your money to the fish release, and for the fish, their lives are saved, merit is created, and you receive the benefit of that. Nobody else is involved. You don't have to point the finger at anybody else and say she or he made me do it. You don't have to point the finger at anybody else and say he or she told me not to do it either. It is not anybody else's business. Your karma, your merit, your non-virtue—that is *your* business. You have plenty there to keep you busy. Keep your nose right in that; you don't need to put your nose in anybody else's business.

If you don't want to be sick, you don't want to have problems, you don't want to have a short life; if you want to have a long life and everything wonderful, listen to what the wisdom beings all have to say. They are giving you the opportunity through all of these practices to create merit. It is as if you are saving your own life, actually, through benefitting other beings. Then you save your own life, you don't get sick, you don't have any problems. Why? That is the power of virtue, that is the blessing of virtue. For some reason we don't want that. We want all the blessings of virtue, but we don't want to actually make virtue. Please, enough is enough; stop with that and just make virtue, nicely, humbly, quietly. If you go and do fish release, you don't need to take out a big advertisement in the newspaper. If you go and do fish release, you don't need to announce it everywhere. If you go and do fish release, you don't need to be like Donald Trump where everybody knows his name and his face is all over the television. You don't need to be Donald Trump about your fish release, okay? You do fish release quietly, nicely, that is the important thing. Then dedicate the merit.

Here I am hanging out, enjoying myself in my beautiful heaven in Half Moon Bay. Everyone is coming and bringing me food and so on and so forth. People come and they say, how are you, I hope you live long, I hope you are in good health, blah, blah, blah. People come and they tell me, "You need to have a long life! I hope you have a long life!" Actually that is very nice, thank you; but Buddhism says, if I need a long life then I have to be generous, I have to make offerings to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. I have to do life-saving practices and other kinds of practices. Actually, it is all on my own head.

Thank you, everyone, for your good wishes; but if I need long life, then I needed to have created good karma in this life. For me, my chance is finished, it is already over. I am right at death's door. For you, you are all young, everything is perfect, your body and mind, everything functions properly, you have the chance to create your own causes for long life, for good health, for happiness, and so forth. It is completely up to you, so watch your own feet. The rest, I don't know; I don't know how to teach nicely, I don't know how to explain nicely, all I can tell you is my own experience and repeat some of the words of my precious gurus. Please everyone, be harmonious and don't be political. Please everyone, help each other.

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral