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suffering, as seen or understood by the noble beings, therefore it is called a noble truth. However even though noble beings see the body as a foe or an enemy, the body still needs to be protected. When we reflect further, we realise that we experience so much suffering physically, such as sickness and other shortcomings like feeling lazy and lethargic, because we have this contaminated body. All those downfalls come about because of having a contaminated body. Even though we can see it as a foe there is still a greater purpose in protecting and nourishing our body.

The purpose for protecting such a body is because one can engage in various practices such as observing morality; having practised morality one can then further train in meditation and develop wisdom. Therefore by protecting this body we are able to use it to engage in practices whereby we accumulate great extensive merit. Therefore the longer we have the body the greater purpose we can achieve.

When the body is regarded as an enemy because of its faults then the doubt may arise that there is no reason to sustain this contaminated body. Also, after having engaged in lengthy meditation on the impermanence of the body the view that there is no point in sustaining such a body may arise. To remove such doubts, which would be the extreme of neglecting the body, the purpose of sustaining the body is mentioned here.

Another way to view the contaminated body is that although it is something that is to be abandoned it can temporarily be used for one's practice. Ultimately the body has to be abandoned because it is in the nature of samsara, and anything in the nature of samsara has to be abandoned if we wish to achieve liberation and enlightenment. So in that sense it is ultimately an object of abandonment, however temporarily it is something to be nourished, because we need to have this body in order to engage in practice. So we can serve a great purpose by sustaining and maintaining such a body.

### ***1.1.1.2. Eliminating strong attachment to the body***

Assertion: If the body is to be protected then one should pamper it with food and clothing and so forth.

Answer: There are no faults in that.

***When human suffering is produced [27]  
By the body, and pleasure by other (factors),  
Why are you devoted to  
This hull, a container of suffering?***

When we hear a part of the teaching saying the body should be nourished and protected, it may lead to the view, 'Oh then in that case I can pamper it by wearing nice clothes, eating nice delicious foods and so forth', and then indulging the body in it that way.

The explanation of the verse is that the sufferings experienced in relation to the body, the sufferings of hunger and thirst, the sufferings of feeling of cold, etc., are actually produced by the body itself. Furthermore the pleasures that are experienced in relation to the body such as the pleasure and contentment of having eaten a hearty meal, the pleasure that is experienced from having quenched one's thirst by drinking, the pleasure of feeling

warmth when one wears clothes and so forth, actually come from external factors.

We need to realise that one should actually use the body and exert oneself to accumulate virtue, rather than becoming completely attached to the body itself. The main point here is that it is the body itself which produces sufferings, and unless we ultimately get rid of the causes to have such a contaminated body, those sufferings will be experienced over and over again.

The text relates an analogy that Geshe-la thinks is a good analogy to illustrate this point. At one time a man riding a chariot met a beautiful girl, who was actually an emanation of an ogress. He gave her a ride and as they were riding along in the forest there appeared in front of them a really ugly ogress in a very fearsome aspect, which was actually another manifestation of the pretty girl. Wanting to destroy that ogress the charioteer took out his sword but as soon as his sword cut through it, two ogresses appeared, and then as he destroyed the two ogresses they appeared as four. So they were multiplying. At that point he heard a voice from the gods saying, 'Rather than trying to destroy all the ogresses out there in front of you, if you were to destroy the ogress in the aspect of a beautiful woman which is riding with you it would be equivalent of vanquishing all of the ogresses. Having heard that, he got rid of the beautiful lady riding with him in his chariot. Having destroyed the main source of all the manifestations, all the ogresses were overcome.

This analogy is used to illustrate the fact that until we overcome the main source of the sufferings we experience in relation to the body, we will continuously and repeatedly experience the various types of sufferings. The main source of suffering is the contaminated body itself, so therefore until we abandon the contaminated body we will definitely have to experience the different types of sufferings over and over again. The text indicates that the method of abandoning the contaminated body is by continually and repeatedly meditating on impermanence and the nature of suffering of the contaminated body. That will then get rid of the attachment, which is the main cause for the contaminated body. So by removing the causes one can abandon the contaminated body itself.

Until and unless we overcome attachment to our contaminated body we will have to experience these sufferings repeatedly. So when we look into how to overcome attachment to the body we look into what causes attachment to the body. On further analysis, when we relate this to the teachings then we need to realise that it is the ignorance of grasping at a true existence of the body that is the main source. That ignorance of grasping at a true existence is only overcome with the wisdom realising selflessness and emptiness. Therefore in a broader sense one must strive to gain the realisations of selflessness and emptiness in order to overcome grasping to the body.

As we expand our understanding and knowledge of the Dharma with a topic like suffering, then we use our

understandings of other topics of the Dharma, such as the twelve interdependent links. Through ignorance one creates karma, that karma is left as an imprint on the consciousness, which becomes the causes for further rebirth. By understanding how the twelve interdependent links bring us into the cycle of samsara then we can contemplate or meditate on the reverse: the wisdom realising selflessness or emptiness overcomes the particular ignorance of grasping at a truly existent self is by. Ignorance ceases when one gains the realisation of realising emptiness, which is an antidote for overcoming ignorance. When ignorance ceases then compositional factors, which are the second link cease. Thus no more further imprints can be left upon the consciousness to take further rebirth into cycle existence. In that way the conditions to be reborn in cyclic existence cease. So, in this way one can expand one's knowledge in a broader sense beyond the immediate topics.

### ***1.1.2. Explaining extensively how to meditate on suffering***

This is further subdivided into seven.

- 1.1.2.1. Considering how this body mainly has suffering
- 1.1.2.2. Considering how suffering comes easily without the need for great effort
- 1.1.2.3. Considering how the body does not transcend its suffering nature
- 1.1.2.4. Considering how suffering causes harm
- 1.1.2.5. Considering how very powerful suffering or pain is
- 1.1.2.6. Considering how the sensation of pleasure is like a visitor to the body
- 1.1.2.7. It is therefore proper to develop aversion to the suffering nature of the body.

As one gains further understanding and a real sense of how the body is in the nature of suffering, then that becomes an impetus for developing a real sense of renunciation.

As we relate this to our own body, and see how it is in the nature of suffering and how it really brings about all the different sufferings upon oneself, then that understanding can be used as a basis for understanding the suffering of others. And when we relate suffering to others, that helps us to develop a true sense of love and compassion towards other sentient beings.

#### ***1.1.2.1. Considering how this body mainly has suffering***

This subdivision is subdivided into two.

- 1.1.2.1.1. The actual explanation
- 1.1.2.1.2. Considering how suffering follows one though one wants pleasure and does not want suffering

##### **1.1.2.1.1. THE ACTUAL EXPLANATION**

*When humans do not have  
As much pleasure as pain,  
Should so much pain  
Be considered negligible?* [28]

This verse is intended to overcome a further doubt which is that pain occurs only because of the body, and since it can be alleviated it is weak. As suffering is weak,

pleasure is greater, so therefore one does not fear pain. This means that one might have the false view that when things are fine one is experiencing more pleasure than pain, and even when one does experience pain there is the idea that it can be overcome. Then one might have this doubt that even if there is some pain it is tolerable, and wonder whether there is a need to make an effort to get rid of it.

As an explanation of this verse the text gives an example of how, for example, a person called Devadatta experiences the pleasure of sitting on a comfortable cushion, enjoying many sensual pleasures. While engaged in that very pleasurable state, a wasp stings him. All the senses are then completely focused onto that pain and any sense of pleasure and enjoyment completely vanishes from that moment. He would think about his suffering and feel aversion towards that.

If we relate that example to ourselves we can definitely relate it to the times where everything seems to be going along well, then suddenly there is some mishap or tragic experience. At that moment all the pleasure that we have felt earlier completely vanishes to the same degree as the intense pain or suffering being experienced.

Using that example, one considers how the contaminated body is actually the source of so much pain and suffering, and how the pain is much greater than the fleeting pleasures that are experienced. When that is the actual reality for humans, how could one still neglect the fact of pain because of the earlier doubt that one need not fear pain because it can be overcome? Having considered how pain dominates the human existence more than pleasure, and how when there is pleasure it can be immediately overridden by slightest unpleasant feeling, can pain or suffering still be considered as being negligible? One should not neglect the fact of the body is a true source of pain, and should engage in methods to overcome or abandon the contaminated body.

The verse emphasises how we are dominated by suffering, and that it is a false view that that we can survive on pleasure and pleasurable experiences. If we fail to understand that the very nature of our existence is based on suffering then that would be an obstacle to overcoming the contaminated body. To counter that, one develops a sense of understanding that the very nature of our contaminated bodies is suffering, and that engaging in virtue and abandoning negativity is the means to overcome and abandon the contaminated body.

##### **1.1.2.1.2. CONSIDERING HOW SUFFERING FOLLOWS ONE THOUGH ONE WANTS PLEASURE AND DOES NOT WANT SUFFERING**

*Ordinary people are bent on pleasure; [29]  
Those who have pleasure are hard to find.  
Thus it is as if transitory  
Beings are pursued by suffering.*

What is being explained here is that even though ordinary beings are obsessed with engaging in pleasure, the reality is that very few experience real pleasure. The very pursuit of pleasure is in fact a cause to experience more suffering. Therefore that is an indication that those

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who have pleasure are hard to find, because the pursuit and experience of pleasure become the cause for suffering.

'It is as if transitory beings are pursued by suffering' indicates that in the very process of trying to gain pleasure they are creating more causes to experience suffering. Therefore the suffering perpetuates itself more and more. It is as though transitory beings are pursued by suffering. The example given here is that it is like being followed by a shadow. Wherever you go the shadow follows, and just like a shadow suffering follows beings wherever they are.

If we look into our own experience in life, how many times have we been disappointed, because we haven't had that real happiness when we have thought, 'If I just have this then I would be really happy' or 'If I just obtained this object or situation I would be very happy'? We have actually experienced more problems afterwards. It is indicated here in the teachings that the very pursuit of happiness or pleasure becomes the means for experiencing more unhappiness and dissatisfaction. As it is explained with the analogy of the shadow we cannot outrun our shadow. If we try to run away from the shadow it just follows us wherever we go. Likewise, for as long as we have this contaminated body it will perpetually experience suffering over and over again, because of the basis that we have.

Therefore for as long as we have a contaminated body we are carrying our own burden of suffering with us, and the more we contemplate how the very physical contaminated body that we have serves as a basis for us to experience suffering, then the more strong attachment to the body will be lessened.

As long as we have a body there will be a shadow of the body, and likewise as long as we have a contaminated body we will have the sufferings which are related to it. Shantideva explained that even though beings wish for happiness, they destroy their own happiness by pursuing the causes of their suffering. Even though they do not wish for suffering they continuously run towards it, creating the cause for their own suffering and that is very pitiful.

It is necessary to contemplate and think about the meaning of these teachings over and over again. The more we familiarise our mind with the meanings of the topics the more one gains an inner understanding. Even if we cannot develop an uncontrived renunciation right away we can still leave very strong imprints on our mind to develop renunciation in the future. Meanwhile our strong sense of grasping to our external bodies and the external objects can be reduced, and thus the mind becomes more in tune with the Dharma.

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