

This is an outline of the points Arjia Rinpoche covered in his teaching on April 13, 2008. Rinpoche was in the middle of Section II when time ran out.

Please listen to the audio file for the full teaching which includes details, examples, and stories.

I. Why is it difficult to find human rebirth again?

Answer: To obtain a human life of leisure and opportunity, there are difficulties in terms of the causes, the effects and the examples.

1. In terms of the causes there need be three conditions: having a foundation of pure ethical discipline, augmenting it with the six perfections, and making a stainless aspirational prayer.
2. In terms of the effects: those countless beings living in miserable realms (who are unlike us) have almost no chance to be reborn in a human realm, and compared to the beings in the happy realms (who are more like us) a special life of leisure is very rare.
3. In terms of the examples:

Nagarjuna said:

*Since it is even more difficult to obtain a human life from an animal life
Than for a sea turtle's head to enter
The aperture of a yoke floating upon the great ocean,
O King, lord of humankind, make this life fruitful by practicing the sublime teaching.*

*One who is born as a human,
And then becomes involved in wrongdoing
Is even more foolish than one who fills
A golden vessel adorned with jewels with vomit.*

After we have reflected on the difficulty to obtain a human life of leisure and opportunity in this way, then develop the desire to take full advantage of such a life. Think, "If I use this life for wrongdoing, it is extremely wasteful. In light of this, I will spend my time practicing the sublime teaching."

II. Why is the human body more important than precious gems?

Answer: If we practice, then in this life we can generate compassion, and it will result in the welfare of others, and we will finally achieve enlightenment.

III. When and how we [the mind] should take its essence (essential qualities)?

Answer: Here are needs and abilities.

- A. The need to practice the Dharma: because all living beings only want happiness and do not want suffering and because achieving happiness and alleviating suffering depend

only on practicing the Dharma;

- B. The ability to practice: because we are endowed with the external condition--a teacher--and the internal condition--leisure and opportunity;
- C. The need to practice in this lifetime: because if we do not practice, it will be very difficult to obtain leisure and opportunity again for many lifetimes;
- D. The need to practice right now: because there is no certainty when we will die.