

CREATING THE CAUSES  
*of* HAPPINESS

LAM-RIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 1991 ■ VOLUME TWO

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

# CREATING THE CAUSES OF HAPPINESS

*Lam-rim Teachings from Kopan, 1991*  
*Volume Two*

**Lama Zopa Rinpoche**

Archive #872  
Lightly edited by  
Gordon McDougall & Sandra Smith



*May whoever sees, touches, reads, remembers, or talks or thinks about these books never be reborn in unfortunate circumstances, receive only rebirths in situations conducive to the perfect practice of Dharma, meet only perfectly qualified spiritual guides, quickly develop bodhicitta and immediately attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.*

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## Introducing the Kopan Teachings Series



~[Switzerland, 1990](#)

This is the second volume in a new series presenting previously unpublished teachings from Lama Zopa Rinpoche's 24th Kopan lam-rim course in 1991. This new series will consist of four volumes starting with the first volume entitled *Practicing the Unmistaken Path* and now this, the second volume, *Creating the Causes of Happiness*. These are lightly edited teachings that we hope will convey the feeling of receiving the teachings while attending Kopan's one-month course in Nepal. For more information about attending the yearly lam-rim courses at Kopan Monastery please visit [KopanMonastery.com](http://KopanMonastery.com)

You can also find many other Kopan teaching course transcripts for reading online or for downloading as a pdf for offline study published on our website at [LamaYeshe.com](http://LamaYeshe.com).

-LYWA Director Nicholas Ribush

## How the Kopan Courses Began



*[Kopan Monastery, Nepal, 1973](#)*

(Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave this teaching in Singapore on January 17, 2009)

You may not have heard of the great lama Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen [1713–93, tutor of the 8th Dalai Lama] but like the sun illuminating the world, he was well known in Tibet and offered unbelievable benefit to sentient beings and the Buddhadharma. Even now his teachings benefit the world. I have spoken before about how the Kopan meditation courses started but actually, it was Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen’s teachings that inspired them.

The Kopan courses also came from Lama Yeshe, who was kinder than the numberless buddhas of the past, present and future. Why was Lama kinder than the buddhas, whose only purpose in achieving enlightenment was to liberate us sentient beings from the ocean of samsaric suffering and its cause, delusion and karma, and bring us to enlightenment?

Even though all these buddhas exist, we don’t have the karma to see them. For example, from my side, I can’t see the numberless past, present and future buddhas or deities in their pure aspect because my mind is blanketed by impure karma. Therefore I can’t

receive direct guidance from them. However, by their manifesting according to my level of mind in human form as Lama Yeshe, in an ordinary aspect showing mistakes and faults that my obscured mind can perceive, I can receive their guidance directly.

We can't receive teachings, oral transmissions, jenangs, blessings, initiations or advice directly from the buddhas but we can from our guru; we can't discuss our difficulties with Maitreya Buddha, Tara, Manjushri, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, but when they manifest in human form as our guru, we can. When Guru Shakyamuni Buddha manifests in the father-mother aspect of Vajradhara and reveals tantric teachings, we cannot receive those directly, but when he manifests in an ordinary form that we can see according to our ordinary mind, we can receive the teachings given by Tara, Yamantaka, Guhyasamaja Chakrasamvara and so forth. Therefore, the guru is inexpressibly kinder than the numberless past, present and future buddhas—unbelievably kind to manifest in an ordinary aspect.

During His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings on mahamudra at the first Enlightened Experience Celebration [1982], he explained the meaning of "ordinary aspect" in a way that was very effective for the mind. It means showing delusions, samsaric suffering, mistaken actions and so forth; this is the form that we can see and receive guidance from. The text His Holiness taught was the First Panchen Lama Losang Chökyi Gyältsän's auto-commentary to his root text on mahamudra. In Tibet, the Dalai Lama was considered to be a manifestation of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion, the Panchen Lama was regarded as a manifestation of Amitabha Buddha, and the Tibetan people were said to be special objects to be subdued by Chenrezig and Amitabha. The Chinese people also have a strong connection with Amitabha. In that, they are extremely fortunate.

At this Dharma Celebration we also received many initiations and teachings from His Holiness Song Rinpoche, starting with the chöd initiation and commentary because it's considered inauspicious to do it last. Lama also wanted to show that the Gelug tradition contains the chöd practice. Then Rinpoche gave the Guhyasamaja and Heruka Body Mandala initiations and commentaries and a Vajrayogini initiation.

Anyway, getting back to what I was saying, since we don't have pure karma, we can see the guru only in an ordinary form. We cannot communicate with or receive direct guidance from any form purer than that.

One highly attained Tibetan geshe practitioner mentioned in his lam-rim teachings that one way to meditate on guru devotion is to imagine having fallen into a deep pit full of red-hot coals and desperately wanting to get out. The people above have thrown down a rope; if you hang onto it with total trust and complete reliance, you'll be able to get out. In this analogy, the pit is samsara, the people throwing down the rope are the three-time buddhas, and the rope is the guru in ordinary aspect.

When we do this meditation we should consider our gurus as the rope and single-pointedly put our complete trust in them. If we do that we can get out. If we don't hold the rope firmly, if we don't devote to the guru with complete reliance, but instead have



doubt and keep examining him with a superstitious mind, then even though numberless buddhas are trying to help us, we can't be guided. Even though all the buddhas have compassion and loving-kindness for us and constantly want to liberate us from samsara, if we don't have devotion for our guru there's no way they can help us out. So that's a great way to practice guru devotion meditation.

However, I should finish the story of the Kopan courses. It seems that Lama Yeshe and I had very strong karma with teaching Dharma to Westerners. We taught them for many years and then our connections gradually extended to Hong Kong and Singapore. Taiwan and Malaysia came much later. All this started with our first Western student, Zina Rachevsky.

People called her Princess Rachevsky because her father was somehow connected with Russian royalty but he fled the revolution for Paris, where Zina was born [in 1931]. She led a varied life all over the world, sometimes rich, sometimes poor; for a while she was a model, perhaps in Hollywood, although I'm not sure about that.

In the early 1960s the hippie era exploded into existence and Zina came across the writings of the German author, Lama Govinda, who in Tibet had met the great yogi Domo Geshe Rinpoche, the former life of the one who passed away in the United States in 2001. The former Domo Geshe Rinpoche built the Domo Dungkar Gumpa in southern Tibet, where I became a monk; I didn't become a monk in Solu Khumbu. This great yogi lived in forests and caves until a wealthy family invited him to come and live in their shrine room. After a year he asked the family if they would build a monastery, and that's how the Domo Gumpa began. That monastery also had many branches in India and Tibet, especially in the Darjeeling area.

Lama Govinda wrote several books, including *The Way of the White Clouds*, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* and books on Buddhist psychology. In those early hippie days there were very few Tibetan Buddhist books in Western languages. In English there were [Evans-Wentz's] *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, for example, and later there was a very good book by an English writer who lived in Thailand [John Blofeld's *The Wheel of Life: The Autobiography of a Western Buddhist*]. Zina read about Domo Geshe Rinpoche in *The Way of the White Clouds*.

The hippies were rebelling against Western society and searching for alternatives, a new way of life, something more spiritual, you might even say the truth, the Dharma, and many came to India and Nepal. However, what happens and whom you meet when you come to the East is totally up to your karma. You might be looking for something meaningful but what you find is up to karma.

Many of those people were taking drugs, but in some cases drugs could have been the Buddha's skillful means to help break those people's concepts. They had such unbelievably fixed minds, fixed ideas—strong, unchangeable beliefs that there was just this one life; no understanding that the mind can exist without the body. Their thinking was unbelievably gross. People like this needed something external to break their

concepts and enable them to see things more deeply. Drugs gave them many experiences such as the mind being able to travel without the body, which shocked and surprised them, because it was completely opposite to what was taught and believed in the West.

This led many people to come to the East, looking for something to give meaning to their lives. They gave up ideas of wealth and a materialistic life and went to India. First they were more likely to meet Hindu gurus, and if they had no karma to meet Buddhism they either stayed with them or drifted into something else. But if they did have the karma, they would eventually come into contact with Buddhadharmā, and of course, some actually met the Buddhadharmā from the beginning.

Roger, for example, first went to Rishikesh. He stayed there for a while but met a sadhu who told him to go to Kopan. It's interesting how individuals' karma plays out. Roger's swami told him to go to Kopan, which is very unusual—most teachers try to get people to follow their own tradition, not send them somewhere else. Of course, we don't know who that swami really was!

Buxa [Duar], where many of the Tibetan refugee monks stayed when they first came out of Tibet, used to be a prison when the British ruled India. Gandhi-ji and Nehru were held there for a while. At one time there were 1,500 monks at Buxa. Some of them stayed ten or eleven years; I was there for eight. Monks who wanted to study went to Buxa; those who wanted to work were sent out to build roads near the Tibetan border or other places.

Because I had TB, I often had to go to Darjeeling for treatment and I used to stay in Domo Geshe's monastery in Ghoom, near the Ghoom railway station. I also lived there for a long time with Lama and the monk who took care of me in Tibet, who was originally from Domo Dungkar Gompa.

One day one of the young monks saw Zina outside and, thinking she might be my friend, brought her to our room. He opened the door and said, "Here's your friend," and in came the blond-haired Zina, wearing a Tibetan dress and a sweater that she'd probably bought at the Darjeeling railway station.

My teacher from Tibet brought us a big kettle of Tibetan tea and poured Zina a huge mug. She drank it all but that's the only time she drank Tibetan tea. I never saw her drink it again!

She asked Lama some questions, he answered, and I tried to translate as best I could with my broken English—well, it's still broken! For the next month she came for teachings by car from Darjeeling every morning at nine or ten, with her baby daughter and a Nepalese nanny in tow, and then asked us to move to her house.

There were a couple of movie theaters in Darjeeling and she lived near the upper one in a very big house that I think had once been owned by a previous maharaja. A rich Indian family lived upstairs and she lived below. Lama and I lived in a tiny one-room glass house in the garden that previous residents had probably used for taking tea. Lama's bed

was on one side, mine on the other and there was a small table between us. The only other things in there were a chair and some drawers. It was small but very pleasant.

We stayed there for nine months and every morning Zina came for teachings. She'd get up early looking like a sixty-year-old woman, spend a couple of hours in the bathroom, and come out looking like a sixteen-year-old girl! Although she came for teachings she'd spend much of the time telling us stories of her adventures in various parts of the world.

Then she went to Sri Lanka for a year and came back with the idea of starting a Mahayana center there. She wanted us to go back with her, but to do that we needed travel documents and permission from the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government. We went from Buxa to Calcutta to meet her and stayed at the Theravada guesthouse there. At that time relations between India and the Soviet Union were not good and although Zina was not a spy, she acted like one. Wherever we went we were trailed by Indian agents!

In Dharamsala we requested His Holiness to ordain Zina but he didn't have time so he asked Lati Rinpoche to do it, which he did at what is now Tushita Meditation Centre. Just before that time, our root guru, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, who had lived there seven years, had moved down near the Tibetan Library and the place was a bit empty, like a haunted house. Then we went to Delhi to go to Sri Lanka, but some difficulties arose and Lama decided that we should go to Nepal instead.

We stayed at Chini Lama's place for the next year or so. I think he was Chinese but the story I heard was that he had been sent by the Tibetan government to take care of the Boudha stupa because of its strong connection with Tibet. Many years ago a woman had undertaken the task of building this stupa but passed away when it was only about half done; however, her four sons undertook the job of completing it. One prayed to become a Dharma king to spread the teachings in Tibet; another to become a minister to help the king; the next to become an abbot to pass on the lineage of the vows; and the fourth prayed to become a powerful yogi to pacify any obstacles that arose in the dissemination of Dharma throughout Tibet. What happened? In their next lives their prayers came true.

When the first monastery was being built at Samye in southern Tibet, whatever the people built by day, spirits tore down at night. This happened many times. So the king, Trisong Detsen, invited the powerful yogi Padmasambhava from India to subdue these spirits. He manifested as a deity, hooked and subdued the spirits, and made them vow not to harm but to protect the Buddhadharma in Tibet. He did this not only around Samye but wherever in Tibet they were.

As a result, Buddhism was sustained in Tibet for many centuries. The main goal of the government and the people was always to preserve and spread the Dharma. Consequently Tibet gave rise to many bodhisattvas and enlightened beings. And when the communist Chinese colonized Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many great, learned lamas were able to leave Tibet, reestablish monasteries, educate thousands of monks and produce many qualified teachers. Every year, those qualified teachers go to different countries, especially the West, to teach the Dharma to hundreds of thousands of people

all over the world. Even in the FPMT, there are many people who can teach Dharma and introduce it to others. So this benefit received by everybody, including us, is due to the kindness of Padmasambhava, who purified Tibet, allowing the Dharma to be established and last such a long time, and the power of the Boudha stupa and the prayers made to it.

So, Zina read Lama Govinda, came to India looking for Domo Geshe Rinpoche, was directed to the Ghoom Monastery and met a monk who thought she was my friend and brought her to us. Thus we started teaching Dharma to Westerners. So in one way you can say that all this started—Kopan courses, our spreading Dharma in the West, the FPMT—because of Zina and our having met her.

One day while Lama and I were staying in Boudha, a Sherpa family came to see us. The father was Ang Nyima, a well-known dealer of statues and thangkhas, a kind of guru of Kathmandu business. He had about twenty students selling statues and thangkhas, one of whom was a relative of mine. This man had come to see us because he used to go to Lawudo to receive initiations from the previous Lawudo Lama, the one who was said to be my previous life, lived in a cave doing practice, and was reputed to be a great yogi practitioner.

Ang Nyima gave me Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen's great lo-jong text, Lo-jong Chen-mo[also called Losang Gongyen], which is basically a lam-rim text but greatly elaborated in the lo-jong section. He also offered Lama Yeshe the Heruka Body Mandala commentary written by Dagpo Rinpoche, Pabongka Rinpoche's root guru, and ever since then Lama was always reading the completion stage of that practice.

I spent the next few years reading the Lo-jong Chen-mo. I took it with me when I went to Lawudo to build the monastery, and instead of watching the workers as I was supposed to do I'd spend most of the day in the cave, reading texts. It was only when I went out to pee that I'd see them, standing around talking instead of working. But I never said anything.

Every evening I had to pay the workers but it felt very strange because usually people came into the cave to make offerings. This time they were coming in for me to give them money. I had to figure out what they were owed and pay them. After that I would go into the kitchen where my sister would be making food, sit down and calculate how much money we'd spent, how much was left and so forth. This was a little difficult for me because I'd never been to school or learned math.

Before being given this book I'd been memorizing texts, usually the ones we studied for debate, but I hadn't received teachings on or studied the lam-rim. The first lam-rim teaching I received was Liberation In the Palm of Your Hand from my root guru, HH Trijang Rinpoche. After that I was very inspired to teach Dharma.

Around 1970 we went to Bodhgaya to receive a Yamantaka commentary from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's senior tutor, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche. At that time there was a Scottish Zen monk there giving a one-week meditation course, so we went along with Zina. She liked to see lots of lamas to ask them questions or just talk, so because of her

we got to meet several lamas of other traditions, like Kalu Rinpoche, Chetsang Rinpoche, the Karmapa and others. Lama would tell her what to ask and she would then ask them that question.

Another day Lama, Zina and I went to an ashram where a Japanese Zen monk was leading the meditation. At the end of the hour I couldn't see any difference between the meditation he was leading and deep sleep! He told us to stop all thought; that's what happens in deep sleep. I couldn't see any difference.

At this point Zina asked Lama at least twice to conduct a meditation course at Kopan but Lama refused. However, I had the inspiration to do it. Later on she asked me and I asked Lama what he thought. Lama said that if I thought it beneficial I should go ahead. So I led a five-day course [March 1971] and several Western people came.

There was a two-page handout outlining the meditation subjects: one or two lines on the perfect human rebirth, five lines on the suffering of the lower realms, a few lines on karma...something to serve as a basis for the teaching. On the fifth day, out of the kindness of Lama Yeshe and Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen, I talked about bodhicitta.

One English guy who was there didn't want me to stop teaching so he took the clock off my table. After teaching, Zina and I would go to eat in Lama's room. I think that very first course was the only one Zina attended. She was completely astonished at the teachings. I can't imitate the way she expressed herself but she was very happy, sort of completely amazed. As a result, the second course happened [March 1972]. Actually, it all came from Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's teachings, the Lo-jong Chen-mo, The Great Thought Transformation text.

Up to the seventh Kopan course [November 1974], people used to say to me, "Oh, the course went so well, it was so wonderful," they used to tell me this and that, but in my heart I never used to think it was me; I always felt that it was all Lama Yeshe. After the seventh course, I don't know what happened, but that feeling disappeared. From the first course to the seventh I always felt in my heart that the teachings I was giving were actually Lama's. After that, the feeling went.

Archive # 1748

Edited by Nicholas Ribush

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## Lecture 11



1989

### *THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION*

*Do not commit any nonvirtuous actions,  
Perform only virtuous actions,  
Subdue your own mind,  
This is the teaching of the Buddha.*

With many other religions, there are a lot of traditional things with much emphasis on the outside act—it has to be this, it has to be that—and outside changes. Just analyzing, just comparing, here there is such a strong emphasis on the mind, on subduing the mind. That has a lot of its own traditional things, but the real essence is the emphasis on the mind, keeping the mind free from every single, harmful, thought, from wrong concepts, from ignorance, anger, attachment and so forth.

As I mentioned yesterday and at other times, there are so many different mistakes of the mind that have to be removed by actualizing the graduated path. This also includes mistakes of the mind that can't be removed by the sutra path, the Paramitayana path, but can only be removed by tantra, the path of Secret Mantra. In that way, we can achieve our ultimate aim, which is to free everyone from all the obscurations and sufferings and lead them to peerless happiness, full enlightenment. We can achieve this aim, this ultimate aim of life, this very ultimate aim of life—to benefit everyone, to bring them to peerless happiness, full enlightenment. This means not just to bring others to some temporary happiness, not just that, and not just to bring them to ultimate liberation which is just the cessation of the suffering and causes. It's not just that; it's to bring them to great liberation, which is the cessation of even the subtle mistakes of the mind, even the subtle obscurations, even from the imprints left by the concept of true existence, these disturbing thoughts.

Among those other religions, some relate to the mind and some hardly at all. Some do have some relationship with the mind, to subdue the mind, to pacify the mind, to diminish the delusions, and some don't. So, it depends, I guess, on the founder of the religion, what purpose the practices are made for, why the philosophy is made, with what kind of motivation. I think it's related to the motivation, whether the practice is given, the philosophy is made for self-interest, for personal happiness, or whether it is done to purely benefit other sentient beings. The emphasis comes differently, mainly to save them from suffering. So, even among the other religions, if you compare them, you can find that some relate to a certain extent to the mind and some hardly at all.

I think there is the problem when there's no emphasis on compassion for all sentient beings, if what is mentioned is not concerned with other sentient beings but only worshipping. When compassion, concern for other sentient beings, is left out, I think that's the biggest problem. That's why it's difficult to bring harmony, to bring peace, to our own personal life, in the family, in society, in the country, in the world. When the emphasis on having a good heart is not there, then it's a big problem, I think.

Subduing the mind, practicing a good heart, is needed very much, even for somebody who wants to be a very materialistic person, who believes in nothing other than what you can see with your eyes, the material, substantial things that you see with your eyes, the external phenomena. Even for somebody who never wants to accept any faith or any religion, that person still needs happiness. If he doesn't subdue his mind, doesn't practice a good heart, then many people can give him problems. He does many things wrong toward others because of the motivation, because of not subduing the mind, his life is motivated by the self-cherishing thought. He doesn't care about others' happiness, only

about his own happiness, doing whatever he wants unless he has no choice—because of the police or because there are guns or bombs giving him no choice, so he can't do it. That's different because there's some outside force. But he won't voluntarily not harm others, without the need of those kinds of forces that stop people from doing negative, harmful actions toward others. He won't voluntarily from his own side benefit others, not harm others, without the need of those kinds of forces stopping those harmful actions toward others for the happiness for the self, for power and so forth.

When the self-cherishing thought is very strong, it doesn't matter how many forces there are, how many police, how many bombs, how many weapons are around, our self-cherishing thought makes us go through that, even if it puts our own life in danger; it doesn't even care about those things. This is meant to be for the happiness for the self, so somehow it becomes a little bit strange. For the happiness of this life, our self-cherishing forces us to give up our own life, and so in this life we have no opportunity to experience happiness, because our life is gone.

Even if we wish to have success, happiness, a peaceful mind, we need to cherish other sentient beings, we need to have compassion, loving kindness for other sentient beings. We need to benefit others with a sincere heart. Fundamentally there's no harm to others, so there's no reason why others will give harm to us. We don't create the reason, the purpose, we don't create the karma. We don't create the karma. In other words, the reason why others have to treat us badly, why others harm us, is because we have created the reason for others to give us harm. Basically it's like this.

When we don't create the reason, when we don't harm others, there's happiness, peace, in this life and in future lives. As I mentioned yesterday, in this way there's success up to enlightenment. There's success in everyday life in practicing, in subduing our own mind, watching our own mind, looking after our own mind, which means looking after ourselves. Whenever there's danger of harmful thoughts arising, then we can apply the meditations we have learned, especially the meditations of the graduated path to enlightenment, which have incredible, practical power to immediately solve the problems. Immediately, there's no space in the mind for those harmful thoughts or the disturbing thoughts to arise. Suddenly, even though they might start to arise, they are stopped.

This means living our day-to-day life with compassion, with the thought of universal responsibility, feeling we are responsible for obtaining the happiness for all sentient beings and we are responsible for freeing everyone from all the problems and causes. This includes not only our friends, but also strangers and especially enemies.

As I also mentioned yesterday in the part on how we can gradually fix up our own mind by the means of subduing the mind, the essence is the determination to be free from samsara. This means cutting off attachment, applying the meditations on bodhicitta, which cut off the self-cherishing thought, egoism, then applying the meditations on emptiness, the awareness of emptiness, cutting off the concept of the hallucinated mind, the concept of true existence. Then, on that basis there's the path of Secret Mantra, the



various methods, looking at everything as pure. We stop the impure appearances of ourselves and others, we stop this impure concept and impure appearances, and look at everything as pure. This is more the transcendent method. That is the fundamental method of tantra. On the basis of this there are many other more specific methods relating to tantra which are deeper and more profound, more secret, more profound. There are all these paths. There are so many means to gradually subdue our own mind.

In Buddhism, the main emphasis is not on worshiping. Even if we don't worship at all, the main emphasis is to practice compassion for other sentient beings, to cherish other sentient beings, to be of service for other sentient beings. If that is the main emphasis, the main aim of our life, the main practice, *that* is the best worshiping. That is the best worshiping, that is the best offering. That's what pleases all the buddhas, that's what pleases all the bodhisattvas, because all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, all the omniscient ones, are only thinking of benefiting sentient beings. For so many innumerable numbers of eons, they accumulated merit, they practiced charity, giving up their bodies, their limbs and their lives numberless times for other sentient beings.

### *THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION: STORIES FROM THE BUDDHA'S PAST LIVES*

The Buddha gave his holy body to a whole family of starving tigers, and to spirits and to so many sentient beings; he gave his limbs, his eyes, his whole body, for so many lifetimes.

During one of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's previous lifetimes, when he was a bodhisattva, following the bodhisattvas deeds before becoming enlightened, while he was still following the path, during this past life, he gave all his limbs as a charity to other sentient beings. These parts of the body he left there and, seeing his body with no limbs, the people in the city thought, "What is the use of this?" So they threw this part [the torso] onto the dump, where they throw garbage. According to the West, that's where they also throw all the household furniture, TVs and so forth. Anyway, I'm joking. The people of the city threw the main body there. What's the use? Then, even what was left over, this limbless body, even that made charity for the ants, so it helped many hundreds of thousands of ants.

Even under one tree, he made charity of his own limbs, of his own body, his own life, for other sentient beings, innumerable numbers of times. Like this he accumulated merit, he practiced charity. This is besides being born as a king, and then being born as a Dharma king, he was able to make so much charity, to bring wealth to poor people—to rich or poor, whoever needed it. He gave up his whole family; he made charity of his whole family to others. His son and daughters, the whole family, he made charity to other sentient beings. It's not that he couldn't afford to take care of his family! He couldn't afford to take care of his baby so he had to give it to others, it's not that. It's not because of that reason but because of other sentient beings' need. Not because of personal comfort or personal gain.

The Jataka Tales are full of life stories of the time before the Buddha became enlightened, when he was living the bodhisattva life, practicing the path to enlightenment. So many lifetimes he practiced, he accumulated merit by practicing morality and then practicing patience.

I don't remember the whole story clearly—some of you might know it—but the whole essence is this. There's a story about the bodhisattva expressing his patience. I think there was a king's wife, I don't know, who for some reason went in the jungle. I think the reason was something related with that, then the king came to look for her. Maybe they had a fight or something, I don't remember. Anyway, I think it was something related to that. I've forgotten the story. However, this king was looking for her in the jungle and met this bodhisattva meditating in a hermitage. I think it's basically related to that, to the wife.

He asked the bodhisattva, "What are you doing?" and the bodhisattva replied "I'm practicing patience." Then, the king cut one limb off and asked, "What are you doing?" and again the bodhisattva replied "I'm practicing patience." Then he cut another limb off. It's not the bodhisattva cutting off the king's limbs, it's the king cutting off the bodhisattva's limbs. It's not that the bodhisattva cut the king's limbs off and then replied he was practicing patience. Not like that! Each time like this, all the four limbs were cut off by the king, and after each time the king asked him what he was doing and the bodhisattva replied he was practicing patience, just sitting there, still, without an emotional reaction toward the king, toward the one who had given him harm.

Like this, he practiced patience. For many lifetimes he accumulated so much merit through the practice of patience, as well as concentration, wisdom and so forth. For so many lifetimes, for so many eons he accumulated so much merit, the merit of method and merit of wisdom like this, in order to develop compassion, in order to complete the mind training in compassion for all sentient beings. He did this in order to complete the realization of wisdom, the omniscient mind and in order to develop perfect power, without the slightest mistake, to be able to do work for other sentient beings perfectly. For that reason, for an innumerable numbers of eons, such as the innumerable numbers of three great eons, he practiced, he accumulated merit, following the path with much hardship.

Now you can understand the idea, how in Buddhism practicing compassion for other sentient beings in everyday life—the mind doing service for other sentient beings, cherishing other sentient beings—is the best offering. It's the best practice, the best offering, the best worship. That is the main goal; that is the main thing. Now you can understand by knowing the life stories of the Buddha, by knowing what the term "bodhisattva" means, how before he became the Buddha, he actualized the Paramitayana path, the Mahayana path.

## WHAT A BODHISATTVA IS

As I mentioned, there are five paths and ten bhumis. The door of the Mahayana path to full enlightenment *is* bodhicitta, altruism, renouncing ourselves and cherishing other sentient beings. It's the wish to do perfect work for all sentient beings, to achieve enlightenment to guide all sentient beings. The realization of bodhicitta is when that feeling arises spontaneously, the mind feels this way spontaneously, day and night, all the time. When our mind is in this experience, when it's transformed into this, when it's in this continual experience, then we become what is called a bodhisattva. Only then do we become a Mahayanist, an actual Mahayanist.

Just because a person recites the Mahayana prayers, just because he recites mantras or does a sadhana, visualizing deities, enlightened beings, those secret aspect buddhas, just because he does sadhanas that contain the tantric path, that alone doesn't mean the person is a Mahayanist. He is not if his mind is not in that experience, renouncing himself and cherishing only other sentient beings, having this altruism, this wish to achieve enlightenment to be able to do perfect work for all sentient beings. If the person's mind is not in that experience, even if the words he recites are very high tantric teachings, even if his meditation is a very high tantric practice, since the person is not a bodhisattva, he is not Mahayanist.

The meditator who enters this path, the Mahayana path, the path of the Great Vehicle, then proceeds through the five paths and the ten bhumis according to sutra. If he is practicing tantra, Highest Yoga Tantra, there are the five paths, but he doesn't have to proceed through the ten bhumis, accumulating merit for three countless great eons, as explained in the Paramitayana path.

You can understand from this what the term "bodhisattva" means. Even the bodhisattva who first enters into the path of the Great Vehicle, the Mahayana path, even that practitioner's attitude is to completely renounce himself and only cherish other sentient beings. This is true for even the new bodhisattva who has just entered the path, who has just actualized bodhicitta.

Therefore, even if we don't have time to do those practices or offerings to the Triple Gem, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—and of course it's best if we are able to practice everything—but even if we are unable to do it, as we live our everyday life the practice we must do is this one. The best one is to cherish others, to treat others as more precious than ourselves. Even if we can't respect others, treat others, serve others, with the attitude that they are more precious than we ourselves are, *at least* we should see others as being as important as ourselves. They should be equal. Others are also as precious as we ourselves are. At least we should have the thought of equanimity, and with the thought of equanimity then we serve others. We respect, serve, help, benefit others.

Now you can see. By knowing what "bodhisattva" means, what "buddha" means, by knowing their life stories, their practices, you can see what pleases the buddhas and

bodhisattvas. Even just one story of Shakyamuni Buddha, this one particular being, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, his life story, even if it's just by that, you can see that what makes the buddhas most happy, what makes them most pleased is caring for sentient beings, even if it's one pitiful person, one human being, that needs to be taken care of.

Even if it's one animal, even if it's one insect that is guideless, due to ignorance not knowing the Dharma, not knowing what is the right path and the wrong path; due to ignorance not knowing the ultimate nature of the I, of phenomena; due to not knowing the Dharma, due to ignorance they have created the karma, nonvirtuous actions. Their actions become nonvirtue without choice, and without choice they receive this suffering body, this pitiful, suffering body.

Falling down in the oceans of samsaric sufferings, sunk in the oceans of samsaric sufferings, they are completely guideless, with no refuge. There's nobody they can ask for help. They cannot speak. If they could speak, they would express their sufferings, all their problems, then they could make human beings understand. Then they could fight for animal rights! Just as there are human rights, then the animals could fight for their animal rights.

However, whether it's a human being or an insect, a buddha will cherish him. Whether it's one pitiful human being. A pitiful human being doesn't have to be poor, a beggar. He doesn't have to be only a beggar; he can be a millionaire. It doesn't depend on having external wealth; it's not only defined by not having wealth, it depends on how much suffering there is in the life.

Whether it's one human being or one insect, to cherish, to take care, to use our own life for the happiness of that one sentient being and to cause them happiness is said in the teachings by Maitreya Buddha to be much more meaningful than making offerings to all the three-times' ten-directions' buddhas, which means numberless buddhas. Offering service and obtaining happiness for this one sentient being, whether it's one human being or whether it's one insect, is much more meaningful than offering to all the ten-direction buddhas.

As I mentioned before, you can understand that by knowing what a bodhisattva is, that this is the thing that they like. That is the thing that they think of day and night, all the time. That is what these bodhisattvas, these saints, these holy beings, are concerned about day and night, all the time. This is the thing that they live for; this is the purpose of their life. It's only other sentient beings. It's to pacify suffering, to obtain happiness for each sentient being. This is why the Buddha accumulated merit for three countless great eons in the past, and why all the buddhas, including Shakyamuni Buddha, became enlightened—only for the sake of each sentient being, for each of these human beings, each of these hell beings, each of these preta beings, each of these animal beings, each of these devas.

## *THE NEED TO STUDY THE MIND*

So now you can understand why Maitreya Buddha said in the teachings called *Do de gyan* [1] that serving even one sentient being is more meaningful than making offerings to all the ten-directions' buddhas. You can get the idea.

If our mind is very cruel, very harmful toward other sentient beings, while on the other hand we make offerings and worship the saints, the bodhisattvas and buddhas, that doesn't please them. That doesn't become the cause of pleasing them. I think this is why, in the commentary of the six preparatory practices, when we make offerings to the Three Jewels, the second one, purifying and cleaning the place and the third one, setting up the altar, it says we should perform these offerings beautifully, without conceit.

“Without conceit” is explained as what we offer needs to be pure, unstained by the five wrong livelihoods. Basically that means offerings received by harming others; what we are offering has been received by harming other sentient beings. The basic reason this explanation is given, probably, is not because the Three Jewels will receive harm from them. It's not because of that, not because the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha will get sick from the offerings. I think it might explain what pure offerings are to show us what pleases the buddhas and bodhisattvas and what doesn't please the buddhas and bodhisattvas. This way it helps to stop harming others, or even if we are giving harm to another sentient being, to give less harm. Probably it might be a method that, even if we harm others, we give less harm. The main focus is not that the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha will get sick or something, but the main focus is the sentient beings, because they want happiness and they don't want suffering. The main focus is sentient beings; the main concentration is that. That's what I think.

Now you can see how important the teachings of the Buddha are. They're not just rules; they are what we need for our own happiness and especially for the happiness of all sentient beings. There's no way to have success and happiness without being able to benefit others. Depending on how much we do for others, our own life has that much happiness and peace. [We must benefit others] whether it's one person, a family, a group, society or a country. “Subdue your own mind. This is the teaching of the Buddha.” That is extremely profound. That is the heart advice.

First, remember again how we have universal responsibility. We ourselves are responsible for freeing everyone from all the sufferings and for obtaining happiness for all sentient beings. Think, “For this reason I need to achieve full enlightenment in order to do perfect work for all sentient beings and to bring them peerless happiness, full enlightenment. Therefore, I'm going to listen to the teaching as a means of doing service for all sentient beings.”

Even for this, I asked the nurses who work in hospitals, those student nurses who are looking after dying people, and they say that, because of their faith, people who have religion have something to rely upon, so when death comes they are generally more

relaxed and happier than people who don't have any religion, who don't follow any faith. There's the common experience like this, that there are benefits even at the time of death. Even for those who don't accept any spiritual path it's possible to see that without practicing a good heart toward others, you won't have a good life; you won't have a peaceful, happy, successful life. That's very logical. This is a day-to-day example. We can give this day-to-day example. It is very logical.

The other thing is about the mind. The blockage is because of not having studied well, not having developed the education of the mind, because of that. I think that is the main blockage. First of all, not knowing what the mind is. That is the main blockage. Not knowing what the mind is blocks our understanding of reincarnation. We don't know what the mind is, so we can't understand reincarnation, we don't believe in reincarnation. We don't understand action and result, karma—that we can do some nonvirtuous action in this life but if the result is not experienced in this life then we have to experience it in some future life. We can't understand these things and because we are unable to understand these things, we don't see the purpose of religion, why there needs to be religion.

Also if somebody gives us harm, we feel we should harm him back. Since there's a blockage in the understanding of karma, we can't understand that when somebody gives us harm we should *not* harm him back, and instead of returning harm, we should help that person. In return, we should help, we should benefit that person, or at least not harm him in return. We can't understand this. This is basically because of our blockage in understanding reincarnation and karma, because of not knowing what the mind is.

So, in our day-to-day life practice, this is a very practical thing to do. This is so practical because we are creating the cause of our own peace and happiness, now and in the future lives, up to enlightenment, and we're not creating obstacles for our success this way. If we give harm in return, we're creating obstacles to our own happiness, peace and success, in this life and future lives. Besides that, others receive harm from us, which they don't like, which they do not want, which is the opposite of that, which is undesirable for them, which is suffering for them. Since it's undesirable, it's suffering for them.

As I often mention, because there's a blockage in our understanding, because we don't know the nature of the mind and other things, such as reincarnation, karma and so forth, we can't understand that this person or this country, is giving us harm because in a past life we have given others harm. There's no way we can understand these things, the actual evolution, the reasons why others give harm to us.

So, the same thing, giving harm back with a negative mind doesn't become the solution for success; it becomes only an obstacle because it makes us receive harm from others again, to receive harm so many times. This is because karma is not only definite, bringing its own result—to receive harm—but also it's expandable, so that for one harm that we give others, we receive harm many thousands of times. We receive harm from others many thousands of times from one karmic act, from one action, from one time of giving

harm to others. It's like planting one grain of rice, then we get many grains of rice. By planting one corn seed, we get many hundreds of corn plants. By planting one tiny seed in the ground we get a huge tree, with billions of branches and so many billions of seeds. All this comes from that one tiny seed that we planted.

Similarly, but much more so, inner karma is much more expandable. [The corn seed] is an external phenomenon, an external thing, but now with inner karma, from one harmful action the resultant harm is much more expandable than with outside phenomena. And the same thing, when we do one small good action, one beneficial action, one virtuous action toward others, the result is happiness, so much more happiness, because the resultant happiness increases so much more than outside phenomena.

Without knowing the mind, there's no way to have this understanding. It's completely blocked, so there's no way to protect ourselves, to really look after ourselves. There's no way to really protect ourselves, now and in the future. There's no way that this life can become useful for all our future lives. There's no way that today's life becomes beneficial for tomorrow's happiness, to be able to prepare us for tomorrow's happiness; that in this year's life we prepare for next year's happiness and success.

Like that, this year, this life prepares for the happiness of our future lives, becoming useful rather than becoming a disturbance, harming our thousands and thousands of future lives. When we harm others we harm ourselves for many thousands of lives. It's said in Nagarjuna's teachings, *Friendly Letter*, that by cheating one sentient being, we ourselves are cheated for a thousand lifetimes by other sentient beings. In this way, this life becomes harmful to our many other, thousands and billions of lifetimes, becoming harmful rather than becoming beneficial and supporting, creating the cause of all those future lives' happiness.

So, when somebody gives us harm, to harm him back with a negative mind is completely the wrong solution, the wrong idea. To benefit him in return is the best but even if that's not possible, at least to not harm him.

One way to open the mind of the person who is a materialist, a "material fanatic," is to discuss the mind. Especially discuss about the mind. That seems the most important point in order to break the limited concept, the limited view of life, which only harms them, which stops their happiness and stops them creating the cause of happiness, which doesn't give them the freedom to achieve liberation, to be forever free from the whole, entire suffering and its causes and to achieve full enlightenment.

### *RINPOCHE'S AMDO TRIP*

When we were traveling in Tibet the second time with a small group, I went to look for a text, the commentary of the practice on the most secret Compassion Buddha, Gyalwa Gyatso. I looked in Amdo, in the lower place of Tibet.

A little bit after Mao passed away, during the time of the second Prime Minister, people were given some freedom. This was their second philosophy. Their second Prime Minister said the first philosophy that Mao had, destroying all the religion, the monasteries and all these things, was wrong. There was some freedom, some freedom was given. The people of Amdo are extremely devoted, extremely devoted and very dedicated, very brave. They practice Dharma in a very determined, very strong, very clear way. They live their life in Dharma practice, very dedicated. I heard, within three years in this country, in Amdo, they built thirty-one monasteries, thirty-three or thirty-one monasteries. There is one monastery which, I think maybe they said had five hundred monks, I'm not sure. I read the life-story of the lama who founded this monastery. He's unbelievable. Even from the time of his birth his story's unbelievable, with all the signs that happened. It seems he's an incarnation of the Compassion Buddha, Avalokiteshvara. There were unbelievable, amazing, wonderful signs. Incredible things happened, even from the time of his birth.

But I forgot. I don't remember anything. I read the story and it was very amazing, but I've forgotten it. This lama's practice and his life story is incredibly inspiring, even from birth, from conception or coming out of his mother's womb.

However, that part is not the main point. We were in a small minibus. I think we got the car from the Tourist Office in Lhasa. Where the tourists go, they send a driver and car with them. So we rented this, I think, minibus, and the driver was a young Chinese boy, a communist Chinese. I was very curious to discuss the mind with a communist. I had the idea it would be useful for learned lamas or geshees and scientists from communist China to discuss the mind by using logic. I thought maybe such a meeting might be quite interesting. There were a few of us in the car and I asked an American monk, John, to ask the driver. No, I think the first driver was asking. There was somebody sitting in the car, next to the driver. Who was that? Huh? [Rinpoche has an inaudible discussion with a couple of people.] Now I remember. I'm forgetting.

There was a Chinese man who spoke very good English. We asked later how he learned such clear English and he said he learned from Voice of America, from the radio. I think he translates for the tourists. So, he was the translator, not the driver? So he was asking the person sitting next to him—I don't know who was there, maybe a lay person—whether he was married or not. Oh, I see, probably, it was Bill. Somebody, anyway. He asked this man whether he was married or not. Then, it started like that.

Then the talk came around to being a monk and I think the same question was put back to him, whether he was married or not. I don't remember a hundred percent but I think he said he didn't like it. Then I asked John to ask a question, whether he liked monks or not and he said he didn't. I don't think he meant himself becoming a monk, I think, generally he didn't like religion. That's what I think he was expressing.

Then I asked John to ask him, "What is the cause of human rebirth?" I don't remember what he said but then the talk went to the mind. What is the mind? Something like that. So like this, John and the student talked to each other.



Then finally, in the end, what came out was that he differentiated, he thought there was a soul that goes somewhere, I think, that there's a soul and a mind. It seems this is the very inside of his heart. This is something kind of very inside, maybe not what they normally say, but it's very inside. It seems he felt there's something, there's soul and mind. He said soul, and I think the other one is the mind. I think probably this is a question about what the very inside of him is and he naturally expressed that. This, of course, is not what they teach as a communist, but this is more related to religion.

After some time, some questions, he finally said he didn't know about the mind. He came to that conclusion. He couldn't explain. The discussion was continued up to that point.

So, it's very interesting. When people don't analyze the mind, when they don't really think about it, there seem to be all these very concrete ideas, these philosophies. But if we really analyze the mind well, that really opens the heart, it really opens us for spiritual development, for all these other phenomena that we are not aware of. It opens the door for all those other phenomena, which is a very important education. It's very important for our own happiness, especially ultimate happiness.

### *THE NATURE OF THE BODY AND MIND*

The base on which the I is merely imputed is the association of the body and mind. There is the body, which has color and shape, which is the substantial, and then there is the mind.

As far as the body is concerned, there is the gross body, the subtle body and the extremely subtle body. There are three like this. The subtle body is the essence of the body, the liquid, the very fine liquid of the body that makes the body develop. That is the subtle body. Then there's the extremely subtle body, which goes from one life to another life, because that is the vehicle of the mind. The extremely subtle body has the extremely subtle wind, and that goes from one life to another life and that is the vehicle of the extremely subtle consciousness.

For the mind, there's the gross mind, the subtle mind and the extremely subtle mind. There are three things like this. I think maybe I'll stop here.

Now, maybe I'll mention what the first one is.

With the mind, there is the gross mind and the subtle mind that arises when we die. Normally, when a person dies, there are twenty-five absorptions, the absorptions of form, sound, smell, taste, tangible, and then the five objects of the senses, the five senses, then the five skandhas [2] —the skandha of form, feeling, cognition, compounding aggregates, and consciousness—and then the four elements—the earth element, the water element, the wind element and the fire element. There are four elements within us. These are the things that absorb, then the base-time five wisdoms absorb.

After these things happen there are the three appearances: the appearance of the white path, the appearance of the increasing red path and the near attainment dark path. So the thoughts that arise during the time of these three appearances are the subtle mind and then the extremely subtle mind is what is left when all those other things have stopped. What is left is only the extremely subtle consciousness, and this is what is called the extremely subtle mind of death.

This is the very last moment of a person's life. In reality the person is not dead in the sense of the consciousness having separated from the body. Even during this time, even if the whole thing is not functioning, the subtle consciousness is there. The consciousness hasn't left the body. After this, the consciousness leaves the body. So there is this whole evolution.

With the subtle mind of death, the clear light, at the time of death, after everything has stopped then this very subtle mind becomes actualized. This is only what is left after everything has stopped. This happens to everyone at the time of death. It doesn't depend on a meditation practice; this happens by karma, as a part of nature. Such nature is created in a similar way.

Even just the head, without thinking of the rest of the body, just thinking about how it looks in the head. How does it look inside the head? There is the brain, like there's a huge tree growing there, I mean a huge tree. All these details are inside, such an evolution, such a phenomenon. Such an evolution, such a phenomenon that we have here inside us now, covered by the skin and skull. The skull is put on the top, then it is tied with skin. So all these details, this nature of the body is by karma, by action, is produced by our own mind. All these have a creator, which is our own mind.

The nature of the mind is formless, colorless and shapeless. It's different from the body, completely the opposite of the body. Colorless, formless, shapeless. The general definition of the phenomenon of the mind, what is called *she-pa*, knowing or cognition. So, there is the body and there is the mind or cognition, knowing, whose basic definition is, on the basis of being colorless, formless and shapeless, that which is clear and able to perceive an object. The example is a mirror, how objects are able to appear clearly to a mirror. There is a clear reflection in the mirror. Similarly, the mind is this phenomenon that is colorless, shapeless and formless, and which has the function of knowing an object. Because its function is knowing objects, it is named according to the function it does, then the name is given to the subject.

A restaurant that makes pizza is called a pizza restaurant. Anyway, not exact, probably! It's named according to the function it does. What this phenomena does is to know an object, so the name is given to the subject, that phenomena.

To this mind, the subject, which is formless, colorless and shapeless, objects such as the five sense objects and so forth appear clearly to that phenomena, which is knowing and so in that way is able to see the object. So, the mind, whose nature is clear, perceives the object, like this.

That is a general definition of what it is, first of all. Then there are many other details within that.

### *REINCARNATION CAN'T BE DISPROVED*

Because we don't remember, because our mind doesn't see future lives and doesn't remember past lives, that's why [we believe] past and future lives don't exist. This is one reason. We think, "Because my mind cannot see it, therefore it doesn't exist." This reason can *only* be applied when the mind becomes an omniscient mind. When our mind becomes an omniscient mind, completely pure from all the two obscurations, then, only *then*, can we use this reasoning to prove whether things exist or not. Otherwise, that reason does not cover. Otherwise, it becomes a mistake to use the evidence of our own mind to prove whether things exist or not. If we don't have the capacity of mind, then we can't use it as a reason that things don't exist. Until our own mind becomes an omniscient mind, it's very hard to use our own mind, our own capacity as a reason, generally, that things exist or not, because we don't even see things that other people, other sentient beings, can see. Other sentient beings who have a higher capacity, who have that education, who have that understanding, can see things we can't.

There are many things we don't remember that we did. Before mentioning that, just because of the reason that it exists only if my mind can see it, only then should we believe it—if we use this reasoning then whatever we can't see we must disprove, such as people or material things, whatever, mountains, houses, ants, flies, lice, things that are behind us that we can't see. While we're facing this way, we can't see what's at the back side at the same time. We can't even see our own back side, even the back side of our head. All these things that we can't see—using this reasoning—therefore don't exist. It's the same thing here. We also don't see it, so why we should believe it? Why should we believe what somebody tells us is behind us, saying it's, this, this, this, this, this, describing to us, why should we believe it? Why should we rely upon somebody explaining to us?

Then, because we can't see it, all that education that we don't have now would also become nonexistent. As far as our reasoning goes, we use that as a reason whether things exist or not—we think because our mind cannot see it, therefore it can't exist. Mistakes such as this arise.

In regards to not seeing or not understanding, there are many things that we did in this life, from our childhood, that we have forgotten. Sometimes we don't remember whether we talked to a person or even what we did this morning. Sometimes we don't remember. From our childhood, because it is more distant, there are many things that we don't remember. This happens. Using this criterion, that we must see something for it to exist, we have to accept that these things we've forgotten never existed. Our mind cannot see it, so it didn't happen. We have to accept like this.

It's the same thing in regards to not remembering or not seeing something. There are many things that we have seen that we have now forgotten, so this is the same. Most of us don't remember how we came out of our mother's womb. We don't remember. We can't remember what it was like when we were in our mother's womb for nine months. We don't see that now. Similarly, we don't remember past lives. The more distant it is, the less likely we are to remember.

Most of us ordinary people don't remember such things because of the big change of death and rebirth, mainly by ignorance, and also partially due to the pollutions in the womb. Because of that we also can't remember. The main thing is ignorance and there are other conditions that block us from remembering.

So, I think I'll think stop here.

In order to judge every single existence, whether it exists or not, we can do that only by having an omniscient mind. It's not just a simple thing, like whether there's tea or not in the mug. I'm not saying that in order to judge [everything] we have to have an omniscient mind.

That's all.

## Lecture 12



[Kopan Monastery 1987](#)

### *THE SUFFERING OF CHANGE*

As the Omniscient One, the kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, advised, the very essence of life is to not harm others. We ourselves wish for happiness and don't want suffering, problems, no matter whether we are a religious person or a nonreligious one, whoever we are—even as a human being or a nonhuman being, a creature or whatever. Whoever we are, there is that wish. It's there concerning ourselves and concerning others; all others also want happiness and do not want problems. Nobody wants to experience undesirable things, to experience lack of success, failure. Therefore,

the very essence of life is to not commit an unwholesome action, which means doing harmful actions toward other sentient beings, which also become harmful actions toward ourselves.

The Buddha is not rejecting enjoyment; he is not saying that we should not enjoy life, that we shouldn't have any enjoyment at all. The Omniscient One is not refusing or rejecting our enjoyment or happiness in life, our comfort in the life.

What the Buddha is saying is this. Clinging to hallucinated pleasure is a suffering feeling, a problem, a discomfort that is so small it becomes unnoticeable and so we label it "pleasure" or "comfort." After it appears as that and we put the label on it that this is pleasure, then it appears as pleasure, but it's not real pleasure. There is no real happiness there. The feeling on which we label "pleasure" is not the cessation of the whole, entire suffering, true suffering, karma and disturbing thoughts, with the seed of the disturbing thoughts. It's not a feeling that is a complete cessation of these things. In that case there would be no basis for the feeling that is still suffering; there would be no such thing there. That would be ultimate happiness, pure happiness.

We samsaric beings are caught up in suffering and we are not yet free from these aggregates, the association of body and mind that is defiled and forever circling, joining from one life to another in samsara. We are not free from the aggregates that are a container of the whole, entire problems. We have been caught up in this from beginningless rebirths until now, in this samsara, with these aggregates, so our pleasure depends on external objects. Dependent on true suffering, these feelings are simply temporary comfort or pleasure, labeled or merely imputed on a feeling where the suffering of suffering is temporarily unnoticeable. For the duration that the suffering feeling is unnoticeable, we label it "pleasure." When that small discomfort increases, when it becomes noticeable, then more and more noticeable, it becomes the suffering of suffering. As we continue the action, which compounds the discomfort more and more, what appears to our mind as pleasure decreases more and more.

Since I mentioned this, since I brought up this point, maybe I'll say a little bit to clarify it more.

Whatever sense pleasure, whatever external sense object we meet, even what ordinary beings think of as the highest pleasure, even what is called pleasure and believed to be the greatest pleasure, if we examine it in our own heart, there's something not completely, not fully satisfied there inside the heart. There's something missing, if we really examine the very inside of the heart. Even though externally there's some excitement, if we really examine well the very inside of the heart, there's something missing there, there's a hole. There's something missing there. We are not fully satisfied, even with those pleasures that are regarded as the highest by the ordinary beings.

For example, after we meet a friend and do the action of being together, the more that action continues—sometimes even by the second day—we have lost interest. Even by the second day, there's no excitement. Or even after one hour. Actually, even after we

actually met. According to the expectation, before meeting for many years, for a long time, according to the expectation, the action of meeting and being together should compound more and more, compounding more and more comfort, compounding more and more happiness. One week being together brings more happiness, then one month being together brings much more happiness, and then one year being together brings much greater happiness. There should be no comparison with the happiness at the beginning; it should be incredible after a year of being together. It should continue like that. The greater the number of years together, the more the happiness, the comfort, should increase. After a few years there should be the most unbelievable happiness. The action of meeting and being together should compound in that way.

However, the more we continue the action of meeting and being together, the less happiness there is. The interest becomes less, less, less, and it becomes more and more boring. More and more boring. More and more boring, then sooner or later the mind comes to look for a new one. Sooner or later. Sooner or later, dissatisfied with this one, the thought comes to look for a new one.

With a state of mind like this, the action of meeting and being together compounds more and more problems, more and more unhappiness. This state of mind becomes more pain or more suffering. That's what it produces.

Then it's the same thing with meeting another one. We look for another one and then again the same thing happens. At the beginning there's great excitement, great excitement that we have never experienced before, in this life or in other lives. Either in this life or other lives. For us, it seems the very first time, because we don't think or don't know about reincarnation and karma—that everyone has been our mother, father, wife or husband; that everyone has been our child; everyone has been our enemy, friend, everything, numberless times, not just one time but numberless times. Each person has been like this. Since we don't know and don't think about it, but just by following the hallucinated mind, ignorance, which is not seeing or remembering past relationships, past experience, this seems the very first time.

Again it's the same thing. At the beginning, there's incredible expectation and we can't stand it; we can't wait. For years we work very hard to meet this person, with all the material expenses and everything. However, when we actually succeed in meeting and then being together more, we learn more and more about that person's mind, how it is and so forth. At the beginning we don't know what the person's mind is; at the beginning we don't know who the person is, so there is a whole world that our own mind has created of that person.

After some time of actually being together, however, of continuing meeting, we find out that person's mind is actually like a garbage can. Like a garbage can, inside there's all kinds of junk, with leftover ice creams and leftover pizzas. Anyway I'm joking. It's full of junk, a garbage can filled with many interesting things, many precious things.

When we find this out, since in our own heart there's no compassion, the only reason is because we want personal happiness, this life's happiness, that makes life so painful. We are only interested in this life's happiness and that means only attachment, only self-interest or self-happiness. Since the motivation is only that, attachment, since there is no other motivation, there's no compassion, that's what makes life so painful.

### *THE NEED FOR COMPASSION*

Basically, anyway, since I brought up this matter, in this relationship, again what makes life so painful is because there's no compassion in our heart toward the other person and the motivation is only attachment. By following desire, we can never find satisfaction; by following *that* mind, that motivation, the attachment seeking only happiness for ourselves, seeking only the happiness of this life.

There are three types of eight worldly dharmas: black eight worldly dharmas, mixed eight worldly dharmas and white eight worldly dharmas. This attachment, clinging only to our own happiness of this life, is the black eight worldly dharmas. There are four objects that we like: comfort and receiving material things, hearing interesting sounds, liking reputation and then praise. Receiving material things includes receiving the desirable objects such as meeting, receiving friends. Being attached to these four desirable objects and then being unhappy when we don't have them:, not receiving material objects, desirable objects, not receiving comfort, interesting sounds, reputation and praise. So, the eight worldly dharmas are being happy because we receive these four desirable things and unhappy because we don't receive them. These are the eight worldly dharma or eight worldly concerns.

What makes life so painful is because there's a mistake in the motivation. There's a mistake in the purpose of life; there's a mistake in the motivation. Because there are more wrong concepts, more mistakes in the motivation, life is more painful. The less mistakes there are in the motivation, in the purpose of life, the less pain there is in life—less problems, less fighting, less disharmony and so forth.

From the very beginning, our motivation has been the black eight worldly dharmas, attachment seeking happiness for the self, for this life's happiness. The purpose of living, the motivation, is following the self-cherishing thought, and because of that, we follow the black worldly dharmas, the attachment clinging to our own happiness and comfort of this life. Following the black eight worldly dharmas, this attachment, is what makes life dissatisfied, what makes life so painful. That's what makes life so dissatisfied, so dissatisfied, meaning we are unable to keep relationships. Even with one person, no matter how long we are together, we are still unable to find satisfaction. Instead of becoming happier and happier, more and more harmonious, more and more peaceful, having a more and more meaningful life, it turns the other way, with more and more unhappiness. How much we try to change the object, how much we try to change our friends, one after another, no matter how many times we change, still we can't find satisfaction. Still we are so unhappy.



In other words, in some ways we become like this, we can't find the answer to life. Somehow, life becomes something that we can't find an answer to. We can't find an answer, a solution to that suffering, to that great mental dissatisfaction, that big hole in the heart, in the mind, the big dissatisfaction that we have lived with, day and night, while we are doing business or whatever.

Therefore, here again compassion becomes so important, so extremely important. This is the answer to life. The one thing is compassion; the one most important, fundamental answer is compassion. First, there is practicing compassion from our own side. Without compassion life has no meaning; it's only suffering. There's no happiness, no matter where we go: this way, this way, this way. But with compassion in our own mind, without needing to go anywhere, our own mind gives us happiness; our own mind makes both our life and other people's lives beneficial.

When there's loving kindness and compassion, when we live our life with universal responsibility, the purpose of our own life is to free everyone, every being, from all problems and their causes, and to obtain happiness, especially ultimate happiness, that which never degenerates, that which never decreases.

As I mentioned already a few times at the beginning of the course, we should live our life with the idea, with the attitude, with the recognition that we are a servant to others. We are a servant to all sentient beings. We are a servant to obtain happiness for them; we are an enjoyment to be used by them. We are here to be used by other sentient beings. Since the purpose of our life is not for ourselves, our life belongs to others. Our life is for others.

With this attitude, whether we work at a meditation center, whether we work for the family, whether we work for the government, wherever we work, whatever work we do, there's great happiness, great satisfaction. Whether we do social work or work in a hospital, as a doctor or a nurse, wherever we are working, if we are able to live life with this attitude every day, then there's incredible peace. No ego problems come.

So many of life's unnecessary problems are caused by the ego, because we follow the ego, we follow the self-cherishing thought. By following the ego, we don't fit in with others. Our attitude doesn't fit in with other sentient beings. So many of our day-to-day problems are created immediately, right in that hour, right in that minute—disharmony, quarreling, killing each other. Because of our ego, so many people come to dislike us, so many people complain about us. Instead of so many people praising us, loving us and being happy to see us when we come around, everybody turns their back when we come around. They show their back instead of showing their front, instead of showing their face. I'm not sure what I'm saying. Anyway, the point is they don't want to look at us, they don't want to see us, so they turn their back. They pretend they don't see us.

### *THE SHORTCOMINGS OF FOLLOWING SELF-CHERISHING*

Even though there might be no problems at all, no difficulties, no quarrels, no disharmony, even though our relationship with others is so peaceful, immediately when we follow the ego we create problems right now. We create problems immediately—disharmony, quarreling, all these things. With body, speech and mind, we hurt others and create so many heavy negative karmas or negative actions, which brings the result of rebirth in the lower realms. Then, we have to experience the sufferings of the lower realms and in the future, after some time, when that karma has finished, even when we are born as a human being, there are many other problems in life that we have to experience.

As I mentioned yesterday, karma is expandable. The inner evolution, action and result, karma, is expandable. So, it's not just one human life of experiencing problems but we have to experience the result of that one karma for many human lifetimes. This is true for any of the ten nonvirtuous actions that are done, the harm that is given to others.

Some years ago, when I was at Manjushri Institute, at Cumbria in England, [3] I met a person, somebody who was attending the teachings, who just came from the outside. He was quite an old person. I don't think he had any children and his wife had some disease in the ovaries. She had an operation, but it was unsuccessful so she had pain. He told me he couldn't have sex with her anymore because of the pain in her ovaries so he no longer had any purpose to live with her. I think they had lived together for many years. It was not just that they met a few months before; it was not like that. They had lived for many years together. But she had this disease, she had an operation and it didn't succeed, so she had pain. I thought that was kind of sad. Now she was no use for him. There was no purpose to live together, he said. I thought that was kind of sad. What he was saying was she was now no use for him; that's what he meant.

That life problem is an example. Simply because of that difficulty, he could no longer see the purpose of living together and then they had a big problem. On one hand there's no problem, it's just the mind, because of the way he thought, just for his own comfort. The problem was because of the way he thought, how the purpose of life, of being together with her, was just for that, just for his own comfort. Just to have sex. But if he had changed his attitude a little bit, there would have been no problem in the life. If he had thought in a slightly different way, within his mind, there would have been no problem, thinking that she needs happiness and she also doesn't want suffering, that she needs help. He could have thought that he was there to help her, taking universal responsibility, not even for all sentient beings but just for that one sentient being. Even if he couldn't do it for all sentient beings, but just for that one sentient being.

### *THE BENEFITS OF REMEMBERING IMPERMANENCE AND DEATH*

Taking universal responsibility is the meaning of our own life. With loving kindness, thinking how kind and how precious our partner is, we think to repay the kindness. We're

here to repay the kindness. If we generate compassion and loving kindness, then there's a purpose to be together, to free her from difficulties and to cause her happiness. This way, by being concerned for her, there's a purpose. Then we can see a purpose. But when the object of life, the aim of life, is only for our own purpose, for our own happiness of this life, where there's our own self-interest; when we think that way it becomes a big problem. When we think that way, we find a problem; but when we think the other way, thinking about others, when we generate those other thoughts, we don't see a problem in life.

Problems in life come from what kinds of concepts we have. With one concept we have problems in life; with another concept there are no problems in life. In that same day, that same hour, that same minute, this all depends on which kind of concept we follow. So you can see that whatever problem we have, even death and rebirth, even those things—everything—definitely comes from our own mind. There can never be a problem that is not dependent on our own mind, that came only from outside. There's no such thing.

Basically, the problem is not knowing what the meaning of life is. Basically, this is the problem, not having Dharma wisdom, not knowing the meaning of life, the purpose of life. Not knowing is one mistake and knowing but not having thought about it is another, a second mistake, not remembering, not having thought about it.

Even concerning having harmonious relationships, it's also beneficial to remember impermanence and death. What brings life so much pain for ourselves and for others' lives, so much disaster or so much pain, is following the dissatisfied mind, desire, attachment. This is the immediate cause of the pain of life, the nearest one. When we look at everything, when we reflect on the other person, on our own life, how it is in the nature of impermanence, problems are cut off immediately. We need to see that these things are changing every second. Even within one second they don't last, they decay; they can be stopped any time. Thinking this way immediately makes the mind not follow the dissatisfied mind, desire. It immediately cuts off desire, the dissatisfied mind, attachment. Also, thinking of the impermanence of the other person cuts attachment. By reflecting on impermanence it cuts off the dissatisfied mind, attachment, which is like the sky filled with fog—not frogs, the animal! Not the sky filled with frogs. Fog, the sky filled with fog.

When the mind is completely occupied, completely overtaken by the dissatisfied mind, by strong attachment, it doesn't leave space for compassion. There's no space. The self-cherishing thought has completely taken over the mind, and then this second great dissatisfied mind, attachment, takes over, so there's no space to feel concern for the other person, to feel the other person's need, to have concern for the other person's happiness, to cherish the other person. There's no space for these positive thoughts, no space for compassion to arise for that other person. The mind is completely overtaken by the self-cherishing thought, by this great dissatisfied mind, attachment. We are only thinking of *my* happiness, *my* happiness, *my* happiness, like reciting a mantra, except we don't use a mala to count. We don't use a mala to count how many times we think "*my* happiness, *my*

happiness, *my* happiness,” but it’s like reciting a mantra, or like a computer or something, like a calculator.

Reflecting on impermanence and death is the solution. It’s extremely powerful. It’s easy to understand, but it’s extremely powerful. It immediately stops the problem. [Rinpoche snaps his fingers.] It cuts off the dissatisfied mind, attachment. It gives our mind a rest; it’s a holiday for our mind from those great dissatisfactory minds, attachment and so forth, from all those other disturbing thoughts, all those other emotional, painful minds. It gives our mind a rest, a holiday, which is the most important thing. When that happens, as I mentioned at other times, then physical rest also comes, a healthy body comes.

It gives a lot of space for those other positive minds to arise. This way, it also makes us understand the other person more. By making our own mind clear, we understand the other person’s needs better, and how kind and precious the other person is. We understand how all our comfort and things came from this person, from this person’s effort and support. Even just talking about the kindness of this life, let alone thinking about all the past lives’ kindness of this person, there are many ways our life has been made easier because of this person.

It especially helps us practice Dharma, practice patience and so forth; it helps us develop our own mind. To develop our own mind, there are many ways we can think of the kindness of the other person, even it’s not the father or mother of this life. It means seeing how our parents are kind. In the West and in Tibet there are examples of respecting the parents, thinking of the kindness of the parents. This itself becomes part of the education that is taught. Especially in Dharma, normally this is a common thing that we hear or talk about. It’s common in the culture, and especially in the Dharma there’s no question to reflect on how all sentient beings—our current parents and then all sentient beings—have been our mother, and how all sentient beings are so precious, so kind. That becomes the foundation to develop bodhicitta. We reflect on how all sentient beings have been so kind to us and therefore how they are so precious, how our own three-times’ happiness comes from them.

### *THE PROBLEMS OF NOT UNDERSTANDING THE MIND*

In the West, especially whenever there’s something physically or mentally wrong, it’s common for the daughter or son to blame the parents. This is part of the culture, the education. I have often met people who had problems, so they went to a psychiatrist or a psychologist who explained their problems came from not being well cared for by their parents when they were young. When they were children, babies, the parents didn’t take care of them well, which caused some mental or physical problem. Like this, everything is put on the parents. Even though the daughter or son might have had a very harmonious, a very peaceful relationship with their parents before, after seeing a psychologist or psychiatrist when they go back home they get angry with their parents. They become upset with their parents and the parents get upset with them, so there’s no solution. So one conclusion is that there an extra problem created but no solution. After seeing a

psychiatrist or psychologist, this extra emotional problem happens, creating dislike, hatred toward the parents, toward other sentient beings.

I think one main thing, this disrespect, not thinking of the kindness of the parents, seems to come from the education received in childhood. Basically, all that is because of not having developed the education of mind. Instead of thinking of each other and of the kindness of others, instead of developing a good heart toward each other, serving the parents, helping the parents, the basic problem is the lack of development of the education of mind, not knowing about reincarnation, about karma, action and result, and these things. Not having developed the education of mind, these parts of the education don't come.

Yesterday, I brought up the story of the communist Chinese translator who came in the car. The conclusion that came from that was that he said finally he didn't know whether there was a soul or a mind. I think he meant soul. He pointed to the soul here and then mind here, which I think he meant brain, or something like that. What finally came out, from his heart, from the very inside, what he thought when we talked about the mind, he said he didn't know. The point is this. Remembering past and future lives, those who can remember their own past and future lives, is there anybody who cannot accept this? Is there anybody who finds difficulty with that?

*Student:* To remember one's own past lives?

*Rinpoche:* No, no. No, what I'm saying is, those people who remember their past and future lives, those people who can remember, so do you agree? That's my question.

*Student:* [inaudible comment]...remembering future lives?

*Rinpoche:* It means seeing the future lives as past.

*Student:* [inaudible comment]

*Rinpoche:* Yeah. Those who can see. Those who can remember their past lives and those who can remember future lives. Those who can see future lives. Do you agree that their experience is true?

*Student:* It's a possible position to have.

*Rinpoche:* It's possible position, possible also to have?

*Student:* Do you agree there are future lives?

*Rinpoche:* Do I agree? Do I agree with future lives? That's a different question. That's a different question. I'll check about it. Whether I want to be friend with my future life or not. Do you mean the existence of past and future lives, or what do you mean?

*Student:* Do you agree with future lives? Because I don't see how you can see your future lives.

*Rinpoche:* But I didn't see, no, I can't say. The existence of future lives, the existence of future lives.

*Student:* Do you think there's anybody who can see my future life? I mean, my future life is already ripened out or something.

*Rinpoche:* So you mean, if everybody says there are future lives then there are future lives?

*Student:* [inaudible comments]

*Rinpoche:* But there is. For example, leaving out future lives. If you eat food, if you have lunch, you won't be hungry later. If you eat food now, if you eat lunch, you won't be hungry, but if you don't eat, you might be hungry later. So you can see that. It's up to you whether you eat lunch and stop being hungry later. Whether you want to be hungry or not is in your hands. Whether you want to be hungry or not hungry, you decide whether to eat lunch or not. Isn't that in your hands or not?

*Student:* [inaudible comment]

*Rinpoche:* So then?

*Student:* But then you must know about what actions will bring which result. You must have already seen the result.

*Rinpoche:* Yeah, even for that I'm using some examples. Well, if you have lunch now, if I allow you to have lunch now. Anyway, the example I gave, it's the same. If you don't eat lunch now, you might get hungry later in the afternoon; but if you eat now, you won't be hungry. It's in your hands; you have a choice. Similarly, if you become enlightened in this life, then in a future life you don't need to die and be reborn. You don't need to go through this if you become enlightened in this life. If that doesn't happen then you have to go through a future life. What kind of future life you will have, where your consciousness migrates to, that's in your hands.

For example, to receive a perfect human rebirth again, to have a better practice, to make more progress, to have a more beneficial life for other sentient beings, if you create the cause of that in this life then that will happen. But if you don't create the cause in this life, then the result won't happen. Whether you create the cause or not is in your hands. It's like that. It's similar to lunch.

*Student:* In this life, the omniscient mind of the Buddha can see past and future lives?

*Rinpoche:* Yeah, that's right. Right.

*Student:* What is my choice? The omniscient mind of the Buddha in every moment knows my future and my past and my present, and if in one hour my future can be different than now, is that right?

*Rinpoche:* Your future can be different?

*Student:* [inaudible]

*Rinpoche:* Your future life is a causative phenomenon. Since it's a causative phenomenon, it's in that nature, changing in every second.

*Student:* So does that mean that the omniscient mind can't see the future?

*Rinpoche:* Yeah?

*Student:* Does that mean then that the omniscient mind cannot see the future, because if the choices that determine the future are changing at the present moment, doesn't that mean that omniscient mind, therefore, cannot see the future?

*Rinpoche:* The future is changing now?

*Student:* Right now I have a choice. I can sit here or I can leave, that's my choice. So the fact that the omniscient mind can see that choice I'm going to make, based upon my past causes, doesn't that mean that I don't have a choice?

*Rinpoche:* Because based on the past, you mean?

*Student:* That's what I mean.

### *THE GOAL OF LIFE*

Now, I'll put one question. Even if it's dependent on the past, if you succeed, it's okay, isn't it? Isn't that the main goal? Whether it's dependent on the past or not, if you succeed, as long as you succeed, then it's okay, whether it's dependent on the past or not. So, that's all. It doesn't matter whether it's dependent on the past.

The main concentration should be to succeed. That's the main aim, if you think about it. If you relate to the concept that if that happens depends on virtuous action in the past, that gives you freedom, that is bad. If you look at this, if you make up this concept, it's just torturing yourself, because that doesn't help, that doesn't help at all. The main thing is that even though happiness depends on virtue and suffering depends on nonvirtue, our main aim is to succeed, to make the life most beneficial for ourselves and others, and from those two, to be most beneficial for other sentient beings. In this way, everything becomes most beneficial for us. This is the most important thing. Basically, this should

be the main concentration; this should be where we put the most effort. This is the main aim to be achieved.

We really have to think about what we want to achieve. That's the main thing. With anything we do, we should try to make it beneficial, so that it becomes the cause for that, the cause for a good result for all sentient beings who are numberless, equaling the infinite sky, equaling the infinite space; to be the cause of happiness for everyone and to especially bring them ultimate happiness, full enlightenment. That is the main goal of the life.

As I mentioned yesterday, if we're able to live our life working for one sentient being, serving one sentient being's happiness, working for one sentient being's happiness, this is much more meaningful than [offering to all the buddhas] equaling the number of the atoms of this earth. Serving one sentient being, working for one sentient being, to eliminate problems, to obtain happiness for that sentient being, is much more meaningful than offering to all the buddhas equaling the number of atoms of this earth.

As long as we live our life with this motivation, as long as we live our life in that way, for others, there is no greater enjoyment in the life than this. There is no more happiness than this. There's no greater enjoyment than this in life. Living our life for others, working for others, even if it's only one sentient being, there's no other happier life than this.

Our aim should be keeping other sentient beings in our heart, by seeing how precious they are and keeping that in the heart. To eliminate their suffering, to obtain happiness for them—keeping that as a main aim in the heart. With that aim, with that motivation, then we live our life. That itself gives great satisfaction in life. That itself is the opposite of egotism, the self-cherishing thought. This one is not following the dissatisfied mind, attachment. Living our life like this, with such a motivation or aim in our heart, this gives great satisfaction in our heart, great peace in our heart.

The conclusion that I was going to say before is we should try our best. Since everyone does not have the same level of merit, the same capacity, the same intelligence, not everyone can live the ascetic life, not everyone in that lifestyle can achieve realizations. Since everyone can't live the ordained life, whichever life that you take, within that lifestyle you have to try your best to practice. Within whatever different lifestyle you now have, try to practice the best you can.

### *Q&A: REINCARNATION*

The conclusion is that there's nobody who disagrees with those experiences. There are people who remember their past and future lives. Is there anybody who disagrees? Yeah, go on.

*Student:* I don't believe in reincarnation.



*Rinpoche:* Yeah. Welcome. Then, all those people who say they remember past and future lives? All those who explain about their past lives or who talk about their future lives, whatever, you don't think there's any truth in all those things?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* What's the reason?

*Student:* I think the mind is a powerful thing. From their own experiences, people are able to create other experiences that they believe happened, but that didn't really happen.

*Rinpoche:* Did you say horrible thing or powerful thing?

*Group:* Powerful thing.

*Rinpoche:* Oh, I thought horrible thing. I even heard it two or three times, the mind is horrible. It's powerful so then they make their own faith?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* What about your mind?

*Student:* Ah! It's different.

*Rinpoche:* What about your concept that there is no past or future life? What about that?

*Student:* There's no past or future lives. [inaudible]...the structure that creates a mind within which, right now, I'm just atoms. My mind is working and when I die the energy goes out of my mind and I'm gone.

*Rinpoche:* The mind is a lot of atoms that are integrated, put together, so that's the mind? Then?

*Student:* Aside from that there is no mind. There is no mind, there's only actually body, the mind...[inaudible].

*Rinpoche:* I see. So you don't have mind? Anybody else who doesn't have mind? Is there any friend who doesn't have mind? You have no mind?

*Another student:* I do, but I don't know what I have.

*Rinpoche:* So for you, instead of body, speech and mind, there is only body and speech?

*Student:* Speech is a function of the body, the mind is a function of the body, there's only two. If there is a mind, the mind is a part of the body. I think it's a mistake to think of the mind as separate from the body.

*Rinpoche:* So now you're saying the body is your mind?

*Student:* No, the mind is a part of the body, just like the eye.

*Rinpoche:* The mind is a part of the body? So the body is not mind?

*Student:* The body is not the mind.

*Rinpoche:* You say mind is a part of the body?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* Okay. So which part of the body?

*Student:* The part of the body that controls the body. It makes the body's parts work together. It creates thoughts; it's the thinking part of the body.

*Rinpoche:* Thinking? So does your whole body think or just some part of the body think?

*Student:* Yes, just in the brain, there are electrical synapses, called thoughts. You have a system, the heart pumps blood into the brain, that helps the brain, the brain does a function with blood, it has electrical synapses, that creates thought. It's all just something like a machine.

*Rinpoche:* So, there's like electricity inside the body? You mean the mind is like electricity in the body? Huh? What? Impulses? In the brain. So that is it, that's what the mind does? What's the impulse of the brain? The sensation.

*Student:* The sensation?

*Rinpoche:* The sensation. Is that what you're talking about? Is that what, what's impulse, sensation?

*Ven. Roger:* Impulse means some kind of chemical reaction.

*Rinpoche:* Vibration?

*Student:* Yeah, it's like, I don't know. I'm not exactly sure how it works. Supposedly there's electricity in the brain, that's what creates thought and memory. It's like little electrical, it's called synapse.

*Rinpoche:* Okay, now. Now first, we're going to continue this. First of all, past and future lives don't exist. Is that your experience?

*Student:* I can't remember any past lives.

*Rinpoche:* No, no. Past and future lives don't exist. Is that what you have realized?

*Student:* I wouldn't say that I've realized it.

*Rinpoche:* Is that your experience? That there's no past and future lives?

*Student:* Yeah, that's my experience.

*Rinpoche:* How did you experience it?

*Student:* All my experiences are within this life.

*Rinpoche:* So, you have experienced this non-existing of past and future lives? You have experienced it, right? You have experienced it, but you haven't realized it.

*Student:* Right. Are you saying realized?

*Rinpoche:* Not now. Since you haven't realized it, what's the logic that you have experienced it? You have experienced that there are no past or future lives, so what's the logic for that? What's the reason for that?

*Student:* I have only experiences from this life. I have no evidence to suggest different lives. Therefore, I'm suggesting...

*Rinpoche:* Suggest. You're not suggesting. No, go on. What?

*Student:* I don't have any memories of other lives. Also, there's no evidence that when you die the synapses go anywhere. Nobody's ever been able to measure a transfer of mind power...[inaudible]

*Rinpoche:* Now, because you don't remember past or future lives, what you remember is only this life, therefore, it's your experience that there's no past or future lives, right?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* So, now it's exactly the same thing with all those people who are able to remember past and future lives, all those other meditators, all those lamas, all those other reincarnate lamas, as well as the many other people in the West—in cities or villages, young children or old people, many people have remembered, describing their past life's village and parents, everything, so clearly. This is also their experience. What about that? This is also their experience. Their minds see this.

*Student:* Well, all I can say, I think the mind is powerful—not horrible—and, for example, people have different perceptions of what they've done even in this life. I'm able to convince myself that a certain event happened, and other people who were there at

the same time, say “No, no, no, you didn’t do that.” I mean how people are able to write books. They can create characters and they can create lives that are convincing. You can create lives within your own head, of your experiences and believe that these things happened. Also I’ve noticed that when people talk about past lives, it’s usually something glamorous, like “I was a king, I was a warrior.” They don’t say, “I was a clerk in 1950,” or something like that.

*Rinpoche:* So you said that because what you remember is only this life, there are no past or future lives? Similarly, I’m saying that there are many who can remember past and future lives—meditators, incarnate lamas or many other people, young or old—who could remember, who could explain very clearly, and even able to show the place and the parents, everything, able to tell the stories. This is the same thing; this is their experience. Their mind is able to see. So, what about that?

*Student:* Well, as you said yesterday, until we’re omniscient we can’t know, and I don’t think that those people are omniscient, so how can they know that they are right? Then I say that experience is fallible. How do we know that their experiences aren’t fallible? That those aren’t creations of mind that didn’t really happen? And then I say, so who am I going to trust? Their experiences or my experiences? For one thing I trust my experiences and you’ll notice there are logical reasons why their experiences can be explained, whereas I don’t think there is a logical explanation, an acceptable, logical explanation for transfer of the mind from body to body, or of six realms or things like that.

*Rinpoche:* Then, another question. What you said was that mind is an impulse of the brain. Electrical impulses are what? The brain? So these electrical impulses that are created by the brain, these are thoughts? Right? Is that correct? So anyway, whatever you’re saying, is this your own realization or somebody else’s explanation you believe? Is this something that you realized without anybody explaining to you?

*Student:* It was explained to me just as reincarnation was explained. Both things are explained to me, and I picked which one I thought was more realistic.

*Rinpoche:* So, your belief in this is because somebody taught you, because somebody introduced you to what is the mind, right?

*Student:* Yes, but also I found science to be generally trustable. What science says usually works so far, so I’m going to trust them on this one, too.

*Rinpoche:* Can scientists make mistakes?

*Student:* They always make mistakes but...

*Rinpoche:* There were many mistakes, then what? There were many mistakes, but what?

*Student:* Certain things like Newton's laws. Newton had a set of laws and for centuries they were always accepted as correct, then Einstein disagreed with Newton's laws, but Newton's laws still worked for things on this earth, they're just not ultimately correct. Though Newton's laws were fallible in a way, they still form a basis that works, they can explain things. Science makes small mistakes and builds upon those mistakes, always increasing our knowledge.

*Rinpoche:* They make a mistake but they develop it, right? That's what you're saying?

*Student:* Right. That's why I don't want to say I've realized that reincarnation could be a mistake.

*Rinpoche:* What you said, the conclusion is what you explained, your description of the mind is simply what you believed, what somebody taught you, right? That's all, isn't it? So that's all that it is? So what is the logic that it's true?

*Student:* What is the logic that it's true? The logic of what?

*Rinpoche:* This first explanation of what the mind is, what you heard. You say you believe in this, right? So what is the logic that it's true?

*Student:* A lot of things like, we have the airplane and all these things that work on scientific principles.

*Rinpoche:* But you said scientists can make mistakes. Then how do you trust in this?

*Student:* Well, I make mistakes and I trust myself. I think you learn from your mistakes.

*Rinpoche:* That's a very cute answer. I think we all do that, right? That is one question to think about. So this first explanation about what makes the mind, why do you believe that is true? Then the other question is, anything that is not your experience, all that is wrong? But there are many experiences you don't have that other people have, right?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* Okay, that's good; that's auspicious. That there are other people who have experiences that you don't have. So you agree to that?

*Student:* Yes, yes.

*Rinpoche:* So, do you agree that other people know more about their own minds than you?

*Student:* Yes.

*Rinpoche:* Do you accept that other people can have experiences through meditation practice, that they can develop clairvoyance?

*Student:* No.

*Rinpoche:* So you don't accept other people can have clairvoyance?

*Student:* No.

*Rinpoche:* Aren't there things you did in your past, in this life, that you don't remember?

*Student:* Yes.

*Rinpoche:* There are? So did those things happen or not, the things that you don't remember?

*Student:* I don't know. I don't know for sure whether they happened or not.

*Rinpoche:* Do you remember every single thing? Do you remember when your life began?

*Student:* No.

*Rinpoche:* You don't remember? Okay, now. Did the beginning of your life exist or not?

*Student:* Yes.

*Rinpoche:* But you don't remember? So, because you don't remember, the beginning of this life is not your experience?

*Student:* Correct.

*Rinpoche:* Since it's not your experience, it didn't exist.

*Student:* No, it did exist.

*Rinpoche:* Even though it's not your experience.

*Student:* Correct.

*Rinpoche:* So, you don't accept clairvoyance, right? You don't accept other people having clairvoyance, right?

*Student:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* So, you don't accept that other people can see the beginning of your life? The beginning of this life of yours? You don't accept that other people have the capacity to see the beginning of this life. Do you accept or not?

*Student:* I don't accept that people can see the beginning of this life, of my life.

*Rinpoche:* So, nobody can see the beginning of your this life?

*Student:* Right. I think that my life began at conception, and nobody is able to see what's going on inside the womb. My life began at conception, no one could see exactly the sperm meet the egg. Nobody's able to see the beginning of this life.

*Rinpoche:* No one saw what? The sperm and egg getting together? No one saw? But I thought you have complete faith in scientists' explanations.

*Student:* I have conditional faith in science.

*Rinpoche:* You have faith in some things but not in others. And this one you don't believe in?

*Student:* No, I believe that when the sperm and the egg came together, it gave me my life. But I was born on February 13, 1971, like my parents said, and other people who were present said, "You were a little kid, when you were one, you did this." A lot of people are able to say that and know that I don't remember.

*Rinpoche:* Do you believe what parents say?

*Student:* Most of it.

*Rinpoche:* Do you believe your birth date?

*Student:* Yes.

*Rinpoche:* Why?

*Student:* Most of the things my parents have said have been trustful. They don't have a tendency to lie, so they have no reason to lie about my birth date, so I accept it.

*Rinpoche:* There's no reason why they should tell lies about your birth date? Ah lay. So now, those many meditators, those many other lamas who can remember their past and future lives, and also can see others', they all tell lies?

*Student:* No, I just think they have a great imagination.

*Rinpoche:* So they're just telling what's in their imagination? They're just telling their visualization, right? It's imagination. So it's not true?

*Student:* I don't think so.

*Rinpoche:* So, they're all [imagining it.] They don't have compassion.

*Student:* No, I'm sure many of them do have compassion and some don't. I don't see what compassion has to do with it. I think a lot of them probably do have compassion and a lot of them don't.

*Rinpoche:* So all of these, do they have compassion or not?

*Student:* It depends on the individual.

*Rinpoche:* So those individuals who have compassion, who tell us about past and future lives, and others, do you think that's possible or not? Somebody who has compassion but is able to tell about their past and future lives?

*Student:* I think that's possible.

*Rinpoche:* So you think your parents didn't lie to you about your birth date and so forth—that there's no reason why they should tell a lie, right? But all these meditators who have developed their minds as well as those common people and the other lamas, those who can remember, who can see things, they have a purpose to tell lies?

*Student:* They're not telling lies. In my definition of lying, there has to be a motivation to tell a falsehood. I think that they really do believe that they saw present and future lives, they're not lying, they're simply mistaken. They do believe that they saw their present and future lives, so they're not lying, they really think that happened. I just think they're mistaken.

*Rinpoche:* So they're not lying? So it's true?

*Student:* No. Like if I say tomorrow there's a holiday in Kathmandu, and I really believe it because someone told me, and it turned out to be wrong, I wasn't lying, I was just mistaken. Same thing.

*Rinpoche:* But aren't they telling lies with ignorance?

*Student:* Yes. Well, no, they're not telling a lie with ignorance. I don't think they're omniscient so I don't think it's possible to tell a lie with ignorance. You can be ignorant but you can't tell a lie with ignorance.

*Rinpoche:* So anyway, what they're telling is not lying. But not true also.

*Student:* Right.



*Rinpoche:* So there's a third thing for you. For you a third thing exists that is not a lie and not true.

*Student:* That's right.

*Rinpoche:* Generally, anything that exists is either a flower or not. What's your name?

*Student:* Andrew.

*Rinpoche:* Generally, anything that exists has to be Andrew or not. Do you agree?

*Andrew:* Right, right, yes, I agree. I agree.

*Rinpoche:* So you agree, you accept that if anything exists it has to be Andrew or not.

*Andrew:* Yes, I agree.

*Rinpoche:* So there's no third thing, right? It's the same thing. If it's not telling a lie then it has to be true. If it's not telling a lie, then it has to be true. If it's telling a lie then it's not true. There's no third thing. It's the same.

*Andrew:* No, see, the truth, the opposite of truth is not lie, the opposite of truth is...[gap in recording] That's what I call a lie.

*Rinpoche:* So if someone tells something with a good motivation, there's no lie?

*Andrew:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* If someone kills with a good motivation, there's no killing?

*Andrew:* No, that's still killing.

*Rinpoche:* Anyway, we'll stop there. Thank you very much.

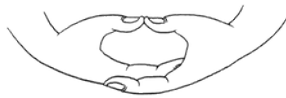
## Lecture 13



*CIN Chenrezig Institute 1994*

### *PRACTICING DHARMA TO BENEFIT SENTIENT BEINGS*

*Refrain from making any unwholesome action,  
Enjoy the life by creating complete wholesome action  
Subdue one's own mind,  
This is the teaching of Buddha.*



Again meditate how all causative phenomena, all things, are changing within every second, and that these things can be stopped at any time, including your own life, your own body, your possessions, the surrounding people—friends, enemies, strangers and so forth.



Besides this, all existence—the I, action, object—all existence is completely empty. While it exists, all of existence is completely empty from its own side. Please concentrate on this.



[Rinpoche chants the Lion-Face Dakini prayer, then the group chants the lineage lamas' prayer.]

I mentioned before about the great meaning of the [refuge] verse, how the first two lines are taking refuge and the last two lines are generating bodhicitta.

Here, there are not just the two causes of refuge but also the additional cause, compassion for all sentient beings, the wish to free all sentient beings from all the obscurations and the samsaric sufferings and to do that by ourselves. This is the third cause along with the determination to be free ourselves from the whole entire samsara, the suffering realm, the defiled aggregates that join one life to another life, and faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, by understanding their qualities. By understanding whatever we can about their great qualities, although there is so much we can't be aware of.

The whole path comes in two: wisdom and method. When we have actualized the entire path, which is our own mind, which completely eliminates the whole, entire obscurations, the stains of mind, when this path becomes our own mind, that is what makes our own mental continuum the omniscient mind, the fully-enlightened mind. The mind become the dharmakaya and at that time the body becomes the completely pure holy body, the body of the form. These two are inseparable.

Then, without any mistakes, without the slightest mistake, without any difficulties, we are able to do unimaginable work for sentient beings, for even one sentient being, until that one sentient being becomes enlightened. We can do unimaginable works for even that one sentient being. So like this we can work for all sentient beings, to free them from the sufferings and to bring them in happiness.

As I mentioned before, there are the conventional Buddha and the absolute Buddha. Those who have some understanding of the qualities and those who don't, there's the opportunity to gradually come to understand the qualities, particularly when it comes to that subject. And then briefly, as I explained before, about the whole path and how it functions to remove all the delusions. That's the function of refuge, how the Dharma guides us and all sentient beings. And like this, how the Buddha guides us and all sentient beings by revealing that unmistakable path, both the method and wisdom aspects. The Dharma wisdom is the wisdom realizing emptiness and the method is developed on the basis of compassion, the root, such as great compassion and so forth.

The way the Sangha guide us is to help us and all sentient beings practice, to free us from samsara, by being examples, an inspiration for us. In that way, they're helping us to accumulate merit, to purify and to actualize the path, the actual refuge, within our own mind. In brief that's how the Sangha guide. By relying upon the Sangha we allow them to guide us out of the whole, entire suffering of samsara, and all the mistakes of the mind by developing faith in their qualities, then relying upon them. That is taking refuge.

As I explained before, think, "In order to benefit all migratory beings, may I achieve full enlightenment." Remember the meaning of "migratory being" and the whole, entire cause of suffering, and all the results of sufferings, true suffering, all the various types of general suffering of samsara as well as the particular sufferings of each realm that other sentient beings are experiencing. In that way generate compassion, then bodhicitta, the altruistic mind to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Dedicate the merits of listening to the Dharma, from your side, and explaining it, from mine. Dedicate the merits of listening to Dharma and so forth, and all the other merits.

### *THE NATURE OF THE MIND*

*Rinpoche:* So, where are you? Okay. I thought you disappeared. Did you have any dreams last night?

*Andrew:* I don't remember.

*Rinpoche:* Does that mean you didn't have any because you don't remember? Is that your experience?

Okay. So first, with regards to the mind, what is the mind? What is the mind, that you explained yesterday, something to do with the impulse of the brain, right?

The first time you started to believe in this explanation, when you started to believe in this, was it because of your own wisdom, your understanding, or what? Was it because you didn't have any other explanation for what mind is?

*Andrew:* I believe it's because it fitted in with other things I've been told previously. I have faith in science, I believe things explained by science and I was told this is what the brain is, some scientific evidence, so I believed it.

*Rinpoche:* It's not because you didn't have any other explanation before that and because this was the first explanation of what the mind is, or mainly because of science?

*Andrew:* I don't remember. I think that it may have been the first explanation that I had of mind. I don't remember when I exactly started believing it. I would say that surely when I was a kid, I had thoughts about what the mind was, but I never really thought about it. I believe that was the first explanation that satisfied my mind.

*Rinpoche:* Uh, huh. So the reason that you believe in this is because there was no other explanation of mind before that. Right? There was no other explanation of mind you heard before that, right? That was one reason, right?

*Andrew:* Correct.

*Rinpoche:* Okay. Not so much because of science, but because you didn't have any other explanation of mind before that, is that right?

*Andrew:* I also found it satisfactory.

*Rinpoche:* Ah lay. I see. And do you think that this explanation that you thought was satisfactory was a hundred percent correct?

*Andrew:* No.

*Rinpoche:* Huh? Yesterday, you said yes.

*Andrew:* I think it's probably ninety-five percent correct, yes.

*Rinpoche:* Then maybe tomorrow it's eighty percent correct! Maybe after the course, one percent. I'm joking. No, I'm joking. Yeah?

*Andrew:* As I said, science is fallible, but scientists are always making and correcting their mistakes and there's a lot left to be discovered about the brain. So I believe that extra five percent will eventually be discovered.

### *WESTERN SCIENCE IS ABOUT EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT*

*Another student:* In the future scientists will find out more about the brain, and then maybe the other five percent will be discovered.

*Rinpoche:* That was my main question, but the other question is this. Did it come from your own wisdom to believe in that? Your own wisdom in the sense of not just labeled wisdom, but wisdom in the sense of actually believing it exists, actually believing things exist like that in reality. That kind of wisdom. That wisdom. There can be what is called wisdom but also what is maybe wrong understanding. The person might believe it is so, but it's not like that. That's not wisdom. It's a wrong concept but a person might think that it's wisdom. There are many examples like that.

Basically, this is the first time to hear something and because you've never had any other explanations you've had no chance to analyze, to compare. This is the first time. That's one reason why you believe in it.

Secondly, in the West, in Western culture, I'm not sure, but I guess that for the majority of the people, the main refuge, the main thing they rely on, that they learn from, is the

scientist. They decide whether something's correct or not correct depending on what the scientists say. What you learn or what you believe, what becomes the culture, depends on what the scientists say. As you said, with very high technological development, there are many facts, as you said yesterday, remember? I mean those incredible things. Anyway that thought came.

When America was fighting in Iraq, it sent missiles, the ones you can shoot from far away to exactly the right place. Where the weapons are, the bombs, the main place, is very far away but they can hit a very small target. There are many, many technological developments, with the elements and so forth, with different atoms, by putting them all together, producing the different effects. All these things, all these are external developments. All this is external development. There are many proofs. That's why there can be technological development. If there are many things and then also... [Someone sneezes very loudly] That's a very interesting sound. The eight objects of worldly dharma. I'm joking.

When she was sneezing I was going to mention about health. Even in regards to health, it's maybe still not fully perfect, but there are many facts, proof. That doesn't mean everything is always correct, because there's still development. Medicine and science are both developing, for example, the understanding of cancer and AIDS is expanding. There were some reports in newspapers, in Australia. Anyway, that was one topic that I wanted to raise.

The interesting part is, if we know the different definitions of mind, if we know the different explanations, then we can compare. Then we can really experiment with life, with death and life experience. We can compare the philosophy made up by somebody with life experience. Not somebody who is famous, who has made it up, but our particular, individual life experience. That's one thing.

Through our own mental development, the development of the mind, we see more phenomena, such as remembering past and future lives. Then we realize their ultimate nature, how all these things are empty. There are so many phenomena we are not aware of, both of the mind and external phenomena. There are so many things that we are not aware of, that we cannot see. Through the development of the mind, our understanding gets expanded, becoming wider and wider and deeper and deeper. This is something that we actually realize, but then if scientists say it doesn't exist, it becomes contradictory to our experience. That philosophy becomes contradictory to our experience, to our own personal actual experience of life, that our wisdom has discovered.

Such a philosophy has been made up, not with clairvoyance, not with the omniscient mind, not with the valid mind. It has not come from the valid mind, such as clairvoyance, the omniscient mind, seeing clearly a hundred percent the understanding of the nature of phenomena or evolution. It's not like that, but hypothesizing that this might be this and in that way making up a philosophy.

When it's contradictory to the actual life experience, then that philosophy becomes wrong. Our unhallucinated valid mind sees that we have two friends but the Buddha says we only have one. The Buddha says that in our view we have only one friend, but our valid mind sees that we have two friends or a hundred friends. Our valid mind sees we have a hundred friends at Kopan. But the Buddha says, in our view, we have only one friend. Even if the Buddha said that—and the Buddha wouldn't say that because of his omniscient mind—but even if the Buddha said that, if it is the opposite to our own experience, it would be wrong, even if the Buddha said that. Understand?

### *ATTAINING CLAIRVOYANCE*

The other thing is, there's philosophy and there's life experience. Many people are born with great power, great mental capacity, and many people develop their mind in this life. When there's more clarity in the mind, we remember more things; when the mind is more kind of foggy, more disturbed, when the mind is more polluted, more unclear, at those times there's less memory. Even the very nearest things, such as the names of the people and familiar objects, we suddenly don't remember.

But in time, through either practice or when certain conditions come together, the mind becomes freer from the preoccupation with strong attachment to sense objects, or from anger and so forth. When the mind is freer, more liberated from those distractions, calmer, finer, then things become easier to remember. It's easy to remember things. Also during those states, when the mind is a little bit free from those distractions, there is more space and so it's easy to feel compassion, if we meditate on compassion, or it's easy to feel impermanence if we meditate on that. Also the ultimate nature, and it's easy to feel devotion by thinking of the qualities of the holy object.

It's like when you stir the water, mud comes up and it becomes very unclear; you can't see through it. But when you don't stir it up, if you leave the water tranquil, calm, without disturbing it, then the water becomes very clear, you can see through it. It's the same thing with the mind, it's exactly like that. Depending on what you do with the mind, sometimes it's clear, sometimes it's not clear.

There are many people who can remember; there are many people who are born with that power. There are children and old people. And then through development of the mind, through certain practices, through particular meditations as well as certain deity practices that help us see past and future lives, that help them appear in our mind. There are practices like that. There are ordinary forms of clairvoyance that we can achieve through meditation and through mantra practices and so forth.

It's said in the teachings that the most definite clairvoyance, the most trustworthy, reliable clairvoyance, is obtained through calm abiding meditation, which has nine stages. For the mental development of concentration we have to go through nine stages, each stage meaning fewer and fewer obstacles, less and less scattering thought and less and less unclear, sinking thought. Not unclear sinking thought but sinking. Not sinking songs, but sinking thought. First the gross ones get stopped, then the subtle ones get stopped.

Then, after the subtle sinking thought, the subtle attachment-scattering thought, when those are completely stopped, only then, only then do we have perfect meditation. Only then do we have perfect one-pointed concentration, without any obstacles, only that time.

Then, after this definitely happens on the ninth stage, we experience the special, extraordinary, extremely refined, rapturous ecstasy of body and mind. No comparison to LSD! Anyway, I'm joking. There's no comparison to those other ordinary experiences, what is called happiness.

When we have achieved the special, extremely refined, rapturous ecstasy of body and mind, then, generally speaking, after this experience we have achieved calm abiding, we have achieved calm abiding meditation. After achieving this, if we let go, the mind follows all the virtuous objects. It's able to follow many, many virtuous paths. Then, if we place the mind, if we keep the mind on one object, it's like an immovable mountain, like a great immovable mountain. If we put the mind on one object, it stays on that object forever, as long as we plan. As long as we plan, it stays on that object one-pointedly, the concentration abides. The mind is able to stay focused on the object one-pointedly forever, as long as we have planned, like an immovable rocky mountain. But if we let it go then it follows all the virtuous paths.

So it has unbelievable benefits. For the meditators who achieve this, the state itself is kind of like liberation. Of course, it's not ultimate liberation, but it's some kind of liberation. There's incredible, unbelievable freedom. There are no hardships in the body or in the mind, to practice Dharma. We are free from hardships. There are no difficulties to do any of the virtuous practices, and there are no hardships for the body and mind. The body is so extremely light, like cotton. It's one of the best ways to be healthy.

After we have achieved this calm abiding meditation, it's said that we have the most reliable clairvoyance. That's why Lama Atisha explained in *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* that in order to work for other sentient beings, we should practice calm abiding, this meditation, and then achieve clairvoyance, especially through the Six Yogas of Naropa. [4]

Before mentioning that, I'll say that this happens even with the sutra path, the Paramitayana path, the path of the gone beyond. As I mentioned in one of the beginning days, there are five Mahayana paths and ten bhumis, which start from the right-seeing path, for the duration of the right-seeing path and the path of meditation. There are ten bhumis. After completing these, the meditator becomes enlightened. When he achieves the first bhumi, that meditator, that absolute Sangha, whether he's lay or ordained, the arya bodhisattva who has achieved the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness has achieved the first bhumi. When this happens he is able to see back a hundred lifetimes. He has the mental capacity to be able to see a hundred lifetimes in the past and a hundred lifetimes in the future, both his own and others.

When the meditator's mind reaches the second bhumi, he is able to see a thousand or two thousand, I'm not sure, lifetimes in the past, and that many lives in the future. Then, the



first bhumi meditator is also able to go to hundreds of different pure lands, pure realms, the paradises of different buddhas and receive teachings, as well as at the same time being able to give hundreds of different teachings to other sentient beings. This absolute Sangha, the one who has achieved the first bhumi, has different qualities. There are about ten or eleven mentioned. When he reaches the second bhumi, the qualities are increased much more, a thousand or two thousand. They are increased much more, and it goes like this up to ten, where these qualities get increased more and more.

As well as this, in tantra, clairvoyance is achieved through the completion stage practice of the Six Yogas of Naropa. After a certain progress is made, there are those meditators who start to have clairvoyance, especially those meditators who have actualized the primordial mind, the extremely subtle mind, the clear light, those meditators who achieved the clear light, the illusory body and the unification [of the two.] The higher they achieve, I think, the more mental capacity there is to see.

These yogis can tell their own life and the lives of others. For example, our incomparably kind Lama Yeshe, who is now reincarnated in Spain, the boy lama. When Lama Yeshe was visiting one of the Muslim places, where there are pyramids. [*Students: Egypt.*] So Egypt. When Lama went to visit there, he remembered that so long ago, in one of his lives, he was there. He remembered. Many of my teachers, my gurus, it seems they're able to tell others' lives. All of them, even to the common ordinary view, have achieved this very high stage of tantra, the completion stage. They have these experiences. It's not that they say, "I have this experience, I have achieved this realization." It's not that they advertise, "I have this realization, that realization." Usually the practice is that, even though they have realizations and knowledge equaling the sky, they still act in their outside conduct as an ordinary person. They respect everyone; they are very humble. This is how the practice is in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. No matter how many of the highest realizations they achieve, they keep it secret, invisible. They practice the opposite to pride, humility.

These very high meditators have achieved the clear light and illusory body; they have actualized the extremely subtle consciousness, the subtle mind, the clear light and then the illusory body which means the astral body. There could be an astral body that is free and one that is not free. The astral body that is free comes through meditation. The astral body that is not free is probably the intermediate state body. That could be called an astral body, although there are other astral bodies, perhaps when you become a spirit. There are people who in the daytime look like human beings but at nighttime maybe become spirits. They maybe have meetings with the spirits or become slave to other spirits, having to collect flesh or to collect human breath. They have to collect things to give somebody who controls them, like a king in the human realm, someone in authority. The spirits seem that way. Generally, for the spirits there's also a similar way of running things, where there's a kind of powerful one and then the others have to become servants to that one and have to bring it things.

Anyway, there are many stories. Not only in the East, there might be a lot in the West. They are called living hungry ghosts. In the daytime, what appears is a human body, it is a human being, but at night it's able to go to other people to give harm.

Anyway, the conclusion is, the more subtle body can be two types, that which is free and that which is not free, and after having achieved the clear light, this subtle body, this illusory body, this wind body, this astral body is the free one.

### *THE GENERATION AND COMPLETION STAGES OF HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA*

This happens when a meditator achieves very high realizations within Highest Yoga Tantra. First of all, there are two stages, the generation stage and the completion stage. The generation stage has gross generation stage and subtle generation stage. With the gross generation stage, the meditator is able to meditate one-pointedly without distraction, and his mind is able to focus on himself as the deity, and visualize the mandala, the place, as pure, by stopping ordinary impure concepts. He is able to stop the ordinary appearance of himself, then generate himself in the pure form, with pure appearance, pure thought, divine thought, in the particular deity that he will become enlightened as, the particular buddha that he practices.

He is able to concentrate very clearly on the whole thing. Dividing the twenty-four hours of a day into six parts, if you are able to concentrate very clearly on the whole thing for that period of time, then that is the definition of having achieved the gross generation stage. In the Highest Yoga Tantra path, this is the first one, the gross generation stage.

With the subtle stage the meditator is able to visualize himself as the deity and the entire mandala in a drop the size of a mustard seed. He is able to see all that very clearly. He can visualize himself as the deity and the entire mandala, like before, but so tiny, so tiny, in a drop the size of mustard seed. He can visualize everything. Again, when he is able to concentrate one-pointedly, very clearly, like before, for a long time—the length of time might be same as in the gross stage, I don't remember a hundred percent—that is the definition of having achieved the subtle generation stage.

This becomes the preparation for the completion stage. The gross generation stage realization becomes the preparation for the subtle generation stage and the subtle generation stage realization becomes the preparation for the completion stage.

During the completion stage, according to those meditators who have experienced those paths, when the meditator has achieved the clear light and illusory body, and the unification of these two, the path of unification, there is an illusory body without depending on this ordinary body. There's a subtle body in the form of the deity, a subtle wind in the form of the deity, so the practice is done without depending on this ordinary, gross body, which also appears as the deity.

During the generation stage, the meditator is able to visualize the whole mandala and his own deity into the space the size of a mustard seed. He is able to meditate on everything, on the whole mandala and deity—everything—no matter how extensive it is. Here, when the meditator achieves the clear light, the illusory body and the unification, according to the experience of the experienced meditators, according to what they say, he is able to transform the subtle wind, the wind body, in the deity, into mandalas equaling the number of atoms of a mountain. Even before becoming enlightened, even during this path he is able to do that. The more he develops, the more he is able to transform the subtle wind into more and more mandalas.

By developing, by doing practices like this, when we become enlightened there's only the extremely subtle mind. At that time there's no gross mind; the gross mind has completely ceased before that. The gross mind has completely stopped before that. There are the gross, subtle and extremely subtle minds, so the gross mind has stopped before that and even what is called the subtle mind has stopped. Now what is there is only the extremely subtle mind, the clear light, the completely pure, the extremely subtle mind. Also, the vehicle of that mind is not the gross body, not the concrete gross body like this, it's the extremely subtle body, wind.

However, this point is the most secret point about tantra, the ultimate secret point, so probably I mentioned in the past many times anyway. Already lots of secrets have been revealed.

Since there's no gross body, there's no resistance. The gross body has resistance; there are limitations to covering the object, but with that one there's no resistance at all. The mind is completely free from all the stains, completely free from the obscurations, both gross and subtle obscurations, therefore the mind sees every single existence directly, past, present and future. Wherever there is awareness, the omniscient mind sees all existence. All existence is covered by the omniscient mind. It's covered by the completely pure holy mind, the omniscient mind.

I'm explaining this part just to develop the basis for understanding karma and reincarnation. That is also the basis for generating compassion in depth, extensive compassion for all sentient beings. With an understanding of reincarnation and karma, we see the suffering and its cause with depth, from beginningless rebirths. We see that the continuation of other sentient beings' suffering and the causes did not have a beginning. It helps to develop very deep compassion, and then that leads to bodhicitta, and bodhicitta leads to enlightenment. From that, we are able to gradually bring all sentient beings to enlightenment.

### *LAMA YESHE'S ASTRAL TRAVELS*

Lama Yeshe used to tell some of us the story of a monk called Lama Gyupa who took care of the offerings and the altar at Tushita, the retreat center in Dharamsala. When there was a puja to do, he set up the altar and made the tormas, the offering cakes. He arranged the pujas. It was his job to take care of the altars there, making the offering, doing the

water bowls, cleaning and so forth. He completed the great retreat, the three-year Highest Yoga Tantra deity retreat, which has 100,000 fire pujas of the main deity. He did the retreat there, at Tushita.

One evening in conversation Lama told us that, for example, if he had wanted, without the need of his gross body, with his subtle body, he could have gone into Lama Gyupa's room during the night and killed him. With his subtle body, with his astral body, he could have gone into his room and killed him.

These great meditators who have achieved the clear light and illusory body, without the need of the gross body, can come into our room and see what we're doing. With their subtle body those yogis can see what we're doing.

Also, one morning at Thubten Wongmo's house at Tushita, there was a fire next to the house. A big fire came. Lama was having breakfast. [Rinpoche asks Ven. Wongmo] How far was it to your house? The fire and to Lama's room? Huh? a hundred feet? What? [Ven. Wongmo: Thirty meters.] Thirty minutes? Anyway, there's some distance anyway. What? Thirty meters, ah lay. Oh, I thought thirty minutes.

Thirty meters, about that. So Lama was having breakfast on the roof when a big fire happened next to her house, very close to her house. Quite close to her house. Between Lama Yeshe's house. I was just there, not doing anything, but the cooks were running down and putting water on it. Right? They put water on it? What did they do? Eh? No, I think you were there. Ah lay.

Anyway, the cooks and everybody else were quite worried but Lama was very relaxed, completely relaxed, very relaxed—not worried at all. He brought up a story that happened during Lama Tsongkhapa's time. When was that? The fourteenth century? Anyway, before we were born! Before all of us were born. We were something else.

Anyway, Lama was completely relaxed, completely relaxed, He said, "It doesn't matter." He said nothing will happen. And then he brought up a story from Lama Tsongkhapa's time. There are four Tibetan Mahayana sects in Tibet. This Gelug, the virtuous tradition, was started by Lama Tsongkhapa. Of course, the basic teaching came from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, through Maitreya, Manjushri, Asanga, Nagarjuna and so forth, all the pandits, the yogis and so forth. It's not that Lama Tsongkhapa taught something that the Buddha did not teach, that the Buddha did not reveal. It's not saying that.

However, during Lama Tsongkhapa's time a monastery caught fire. Whatever he was doing, Lama Tsongkhapa just relaxed there and with his subtle wind, the subtle body, the astral body, he stopped the fire that was burning the monastery down. The fire completely stopped.

Lama was completely relaxed, enjoying his breakfast, sitting on a chair on the roof, completely relaxed, not a single worry, and he brought up this story. Then the fire near Wongmo's house didn't last much longer. It immediately stopped.

Usually, these high lamas don't say, "I have clairvoyance" but if you are having a conversation with them, asking their advice, if you check in the conversation, there are predictions, what's going to happen in the future and so forth. There's a word I don't remember. Casual, casual? What's it mean? Huh? What? It means, as usual having a conversation—casually, yeah. With many gurus, if we analyze what's said in the conversation, we can tell that they can see our own life.

### *REINCARNATION STORIES*

I thought to read a story from a newspaper.

I kept pictures of people, children who remember past lives. I kept one photo for some years but now it's lost. In Punjab, a young daughter was born who was able to remember and explain everything about her past life: her parents, the place, everything. She took her parents of this life, and she guided them to her past life's parents' house, and all together they took a picture. I have a picture, with her and this life's parents and her past life's parents. This daughter, I think maybe she was eight years old or something, and she was holding a toy in her hand. Later, there was extremely clear evidence. She said she liked the past life's parents more than this life's parents.

It was near Dharamsala, so His Holiness sent a government person to see her, to find out about the story. I don't know how, but I got the picture. It's very interesting. Of course, the past life's parents were a little bit older.

[Break in taping. Rinpoche seems to be talking about the practice of the consciousness entering a dead body.] I think the main aim is that. Because when your body becomes too old and cannot function well, then the young body that is dead, the young person, the youthful body, a person who has a youthful body and has died, then your consciousness can enter that body to work for other sentient beings with the young body. The main aim is to benefit other sentient beings with the young, healthy body.

What happened, the situation with these two girls, looks similar to this.

Later, there was danger of misusing this practice for one's own power. For example, you could enter your consciousness into a king's body in order to gain the king's power and so forth. There was danger of using it with a wrong motivation to gain power for yourself and so forth. So the Dharma King of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo or Trisong Detsen—I'm not sure which one, maybe Songtsen Gampo—stopped this. He made a rule that nobody could practice this. So there's no lineage of this practice now. It's stopped. It is called transferring consciousness into a dead body.

I'm going to read something. What's his name? [*Students: Andrew.*] Whether Andrew believes it or not. Anyway, these are stories, whether you believe it or not.

“Psychic researchers announced that a child born in rural India is the reincarnation of Civil War General Robert E. Lee. Little Chindar Sharma, now two years old, reportedly speaks in a slow Southern drawl.” I don’t know what it means, Southern drawl. “Reportedly speaks in a slow Southern drawl and responds only when called ‘General.’ And snaps to attention any time he hears the Confederate anthem, Dixie.”

And it is says, “This is the most convincing case of reincarnation I have ever seen, said Seigard Heln, a West German psychiatrist.”

There’s a whole book in the library about reincarnation. A professor from Wisconsin traveled East and West, to many, many countries, and he collected all the information. He went into villages, talking to young and old people who could remember past lives. He collected their stories. Probably this may be his thesis, I’m not sure. There’s a whole book about stories like this. [5]

[Someone asks an inaudible question.]

Huh? Andrew? So now, what you were saying yesterday was that all those who remember past and future lives, it’s just their visualization. [Andrew: Imagination.] Imagination. Visualization, imagination. Just imagine, right? So therefore, that is false, right? What they say is false? [Andrew: Right.]

This book about His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s reincarnation, how he was analyzed, found. I don’t think you may have seen this book. But there’s a very extensive story about how many high lamas went to check, went to look for reincarnation, and how they found His Holiness. They checked many different ways. There’s a special lake that predicts things, like seeing something on TV. There’s a lake where the protector is situated and it predicts whatever question is asked. You ask a question and look in the lake, like TV, and you can see very clearly. This is Tibetan TV. Without any electricity. Without any machine, just water. Just water and the higher being who is free from samsara, the protector.

One lama went there and stayed seven days, checking every day. Then he saw everything: the family, the house, everything. He checked for seven days then went to the home in Amdo. This lama went in disguise. He has passed away and is reincarnated in Dharamsala, Ketsang Rinpoche. He went in disguise, carrying His Holiness [the thirteenth] Dalai Lama’s sticks, or malas. Then the incarnation, the little boy, when he saw this disguised lama, he immediately mentioned his name and took the mala, took his things. He was able to remember certain names from his past life. There’s a whole book about that.

Then also my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, remembered his past life was lived in Ganden Monastery in Lhasa. When he was a child, before he went to the monastery, he remembered what Ganden monastery looked like.

There are many stories in Tibet. There was a Tibetan government official, I think Denma Rinpoche, a very high lama. I don't remember, I got confused with the two lamas. Tenkye Rinpoche or Denma Rinpoche. Anyway, one of the lamas. For some reason, whatever it was, there was a particular governor who kind of made the rule that if this lama passed away, nobody could recognize the incarnation. This one governor made a rule. So what happened is, this lama passed away and reincarnated to him. That person who made the rule, said he cannot be recognized, so the lama reincarnated to him and was recognized. Tenkye Rinpoche or Denma Rinpoche, one of the lamas, I don't remember.

### *LAMA YESHE AND ÖSEL RINPOCHE*

It was the same thing with Lama Yeshe. Three or four years [before he died] I think maybe at Dharamsala or maybe here at Kopan, he mentioned to an American nun that he was going to be reborn to Maria, the Spanish lady. He told this nun that he was going to reincarnate to her. He told her, this nun, and he reincarnated as he himself had said.

So, all these are just not factual stories?

*Andrew:* They're not what?

*Rinpoche:* Not factual story? Nothing happened?

*Andrew:* I think that, for example, you're talking about the Dalai Lama's rebirth and, as far as I heard of it, the [lama] had a dream and he had dreamed...[inaudible]. He could have made that up, he could have believed he saw that...

*Rinpoche:* What about his remembering his past?

*Andrew:* [inaudible]...items that he was supposed to recognize and he said, "This is mine, this is mine." But I would expect a two-year-old child to say, if you showed him something, I think that he might say, "Yes, this is mine."

*Rinpoche:* What?

*Andrew:* I think there's explanations for it.

*Rinpoche:* What? You mean, a two-year child would say anything that you see is mine?

*Andrew:* Yes. Yes.

*Rinpoche:* The lama wasn't offering them. He just came to the house, like that, and then the boy took the mala and mentioned the name of the lama.

*Andrew:* Well, another thing is I'd have to be there to see it.

Rinpoche: But what about Lama Yeshe?

Andrew: [inaudible]...I think that, for one thing, people have a very strong connection to Lama Yeshe and when he died, they wanted to see him again.

Rinpoche: When he died what?

Andrew: After Lama Yeshe died, all his students wanted to see him again, so when they see Lama Ösel they might be tempted to interpret things he does as things that Lama Yeshe did and ignore other things he does that don't have anything to do with what Lama Yeshe might have done.

Also, it comes to another thing, it's very easy to see things that you want to believe. Or if you think someone likes you, you pay attention to all the things they do that you think show that they like you and ignore everything else. And you might totally think...[inaudible] because you want them to like you. I'm okay, I'm okay, and then the next time that student saw Lama Ösel he did the same thing. Little kids are subject to a lot of movements...[inaudible] even for her to say, it's maybe because she wants to see signs of Lama Yeshe, and interprets what Lama Ösel does as Lama Yeshe.

Also, if Lama Ösel is raised constantly with the knowledge, he's being told about Lama Yeshe, I'm sure, or people are mentioning this, he's got this atmosphere all around him...[inaudible] pressure who he's supposed to be, what he's supposed to be doing.

Rinpoche: You mean he might be taught how to act as Lama Yeshe did?

Andrew: He could learn to act like Lama Yeshe.

Rinpoche: You mean he was taught how to act like Lama Yeshe? Is that right?

Andrew: Not intentionally.

Rinpoche: I didn't teach him how to act as Lama Yeshe. There's no teaching. For example, in regards to the wishes, not just acting, not just dancing, even there are many characters, even when he was two years old, three years old, the food he liked and the style that he eats, even the food and the style that he eats, that's exactly as Lama Yeshe.

Andrew: Right, but you notice those things.

Rinpoche: Anyway, it's my experience that he's not taught. It's my understanding that it hasn't been taught, so what do you say on that point?

Andrew: For example, you'd say that he likes the same food as Lama Yeshe, did you say?

Rinpoche: Generally, ordinary example, ordinary identifications, what food he likes, what food he doesn't like, the style of eating, everything, according to the past life. For



example, oranges. In the past life when Lama Yeshe ate oranges, he just sucked the juice and left the stuff on the plate. Lama Yeshe did that, do you remember? Those who are close to Lama Yeshe would remember this. So, Lama Ösel did exactly the same when he was very small.

However much you say, this and that, it's my understanding it was not taught. If that is true for me, whatever you say, anyway, but for me, this is a hundred percent proved, it's true for me. Nothing of this is taught. This is my understanding. Do you accept my understanding or not? You accept your understanding. Anyway, that's what I'm saying and finish. So do you accept my understanding or not?

*Andrew:* I think your understanding is a misunderstanding.

*Rinpoche:* No, yeah, why is it a misunderstanding?

*Andrew:* I think that you want to believe that that's Lama Yeshe.

*Rinpoche:* No, I did analysis, I did many analyses. It's not that I just want to find one child call Lama Yeshe, it's not that. That's cheating. There's many analyses. I'm not that foolish. I'm foolish but not that foolish. You have to be very careful. There are many analyses that have to be done, many different ways the analysis has to be done.

*Andrew:* I think that...[inaudible] a child does so many actions.

*Rinpoche:* So anyway, now, the conclusion. So now, okay, one life, but you haven't discovered one life. You haven't realized one life.

*Andrew:* No.

*Rinpoche:* You haven't realized one life? Right?

*Andrew:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* You haven't realized, so therefore you can't say there's no reincarnation. You can't say there's no past or future life. How can you say without realizing?

*Andrew:* I can't say that I've realized it but I'm convinced of it. That's the difference.

*Rinpoche:* Convinced because?

*Andrew:* Because it's logical.

*Rinpoche:* How is it logical?

*Andrew:* Through the process of thought.

*Rinpoche:* What's the main logic?

*Andrew:* The main logic? The main logic for me is, when I was a kid they started teaching me stuff like two plus two equals four and that was right and then I [learnt] more and more things like...[inaudible].

*Rinpoche:* Okay, now I'll give an example. Okay, for example, do you remember any friend who cheated you?

*Andrew:* Yeah.

*Rinpoche:* Okay. Didn't those friends also tell you the truth?

*Andrew:* Ah, yes.

*Rinpoche:* So, there is a possibility somebody can tell the truth and also a lie, right? Because somebody tells the truth you should believe everything that person says? Because there are facts, the truth happened, what the person said. So you should believe everything the person says.

*Andrew:* No, I don't think you should ever believe everything someone says.

*Rinpoche:* Why not? You should believe because this person said many truths also.

*Andrew:* Right, and...[inaudible] talking about something you have no knowledge of, it's better to believe them, but you should...[inaudible] from your own experience, analyze what somebody tells you. I don't think I would, I hope I would never accept anything somebody told me without thinking about it at least a little bit. Even if my mother told me something she read in the newspaper that I found ridiculous, I wouldn't believe it. Even though I trust my mother in most things.

*Rinpoche:* I'm your mother! Therefore, you don't believe, a person, a friend who tells you some truths. It doesn't mean that you should believe everything that person says, right?

*Andrew:* Right.

*Rinpoche:* Okay, now, it's the same thing with what scientists explain. Even though there are many facts, airplanes, and so forth—what am I saying? I'm lost.

It's the same thing. With scientists, even though there are many facts, they make many mistakes. You yourself have mentioned that many times. There's no reason to believe everything the scientists say just because they say it. There's nothing to believe. You have to analyze that, right? You have to analyze *on* that. You have to analyze the same thing on this definition of your mind. Anyway, I'm joking. Definition of mind, the impulse of the brain, whatever you explained.

Now the main point. We don't do other things. Now this explanation of mind, what is mind, what the scientists explain now, now I have one question. Now this question, this explanation of mind, do you think it will change a lot? After some time, as the scientists develop more about subject of mind?

*Andrew:* No, I think it will change some.

*Rinpoche:* Some? So something will change about it? So all that is not true. So what you explained about the definition of mind yesterday, all that is not true?

*Andrew:* It's not necessarily true.

*Rinpoche:* So in your explanation of mind, there is some true and some not true?

*Andrew:* Possibly.

*Rinpoche:* So it's not sure? So that part is not sure? So that definition of mind you gave yesterday is not sure, right? So you need to learn more? So you need to analyze?

*Andrew:* That's why I'm at Kopan.

*Rinpoche:* Yes, Kopan, but I think, anyway that's what I'm joking. So I think these points are very important. The question I put is very important to think about. Because in science there have been many changes of definitions. In Buddhism, these definitions don't change. The Omniscient One, who completed the path, practicing for so many lifetimes and having achieved the omniscient mind, he then gave explanations once and *these* don't change. From the first time they were explained, there's no change to that, such as the explanation of the four noble truths, that doesn't change, the explanation of the path, there's no change. It's one time.

What the Buddha taught has been verified by many pandits, many yogis. They analyzed, they experimented; it's not blind faith. They didn't just practice blind faith. The study these boys [at Kopan] are doing, the debating, this special form of study is to analyze what is correct. Rather than just memorizing text with the explanation straight, you go through, you study in the form of debate, checking every single definition; why *this*? why *that*? It's like a rocket or an airplane, trying to understand every single purpose of every piece of a machine. Why? Trying to learn every single piece of a machine, what's needed, and then the functions of each one. So this way, you have the full idea. You have the full idea of the path, without missing anything, all the details, like somebody who knows about the whole airplane, the whole mechanism, every single piece, and how it's put together, how it functions, each one like that.

Debating is really to do analysis, rather than having blind faith. You do analysis, then try to prove if it's correct or not. Then when it is proved to your mind that this is completely a hundred percent correct, no mistakes, you don't receive any harm. As I mentioned the other day about the three ways of not receiving harm: from direct valid perception, from

an inferential valid mind and from a valid quotation. It should be pure, correct, and then you don't receive harm from any of these. So like that, you see.

So, these pandits, these yogis, analyzed what the Buddha taught and then they put it into practice. They also achieved all the realizations, they had all the experiences. There are numberless ones like this, in India, in different countries, then in Tibet with the Tibetan lamas. Even the recent meditators have had all the experiences. For example, we can still visit many caves in Nepal and Tibet where Milarepa practiced, this one who achieved enlightenment in his lifetime, seeing where he achieved the different realizations of the path. The caves are named according to what Milarepa achieved, what realizations he achieved. There are different caves where he realized emptiness, the Six Yogas of Naropa, *tum-mo* [6] and so forth. Even if we can't see the actual past yogis who achieved enlightenment, we can go to the holy places where they practiced, these pilgrimage places, to take blessings. People also do practice there, do retreat, to receive blessings to develop the mind.

Anyway, we'll stop there.

Anyway, it's useful to do analysis, okay?

It seems you have great intelligence, so I think it's very important that you use that intelligence to make it very beneficial in the right way, in the correct way, beneficial for the world, for sentient beings. Then that will be beneficial for you yourself. To make beneficial intelligence, meaningful intelligence.

The conclusion is this. Since what the [scientists] say is not all true, then there's nobody you can trust in the world. You can trust only yourself. You can only believe yourself. There's nobody left in the world to believe. That's what happens. Other than you, other than this mind, you cannot believe. In this world all you can believe, all you can trust, is only yourself. Sort of like that, anyway.

Even that is not sure, because your understanding depends on what other people teach you. So again, even that is not sure.

Anyway, thank you so much.

## Lecture 14

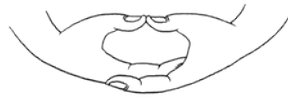


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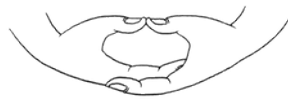
*SAMSARA AND NIRVANA ARE COMPLETELY EMPTY*

*Refrain from making any unwholesome action,  
Enjoy the life by creating complete wholesome action  
Subdue one's own mind,  
This is the teaching of Buddha.*

As the Buddha advised, the solution for happiness, for peace of mind, the solution to cut off problems, the solution to end the whole, entire suffering and it causes, the solution to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings, is by ceasing all the mistakes of mind. For this we need to meditate, to look at causative phenomena, according to their nature, seeing how their nature is impermanence. Our own life, ourselves, our own body, our possessions, the surrounding people—friends, enemies, strangers—and so forth, all these causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence; they're changing, decaying within every second. They do not last even each second. These things can be stopped any time. Because these things are existing now doesn't mean that they will exist forever, every day.



And besides this, while all these things exist, while all of existence exists, they are empty from their own side.



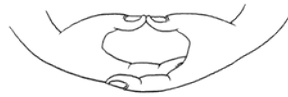
I, action, object, permanent phenomena, impermanent phenomena—all these things that are called, all these things are named, are labeled, are names. The name has to come from the mind. The name has to come from the mind. Therefore, nothing exists from its own side. There's nothing from its own side. On top of that, all these things exist being merely imputed by the mind.

Because nothing exists from its own side, everything exists being merely imputed by the mind. This is the way things exist in reality. Therefore, nothing exists [inherently], there is not the slightest atom of inherent existence. Nothing exists inherently in the slightest, even an atom, even that much, the slightest, nothing exists from its own side.

So, everything is completely empty. The I is empty, action is empty, objects are empty; everything is completely empty.

But even though this is reality, they appear to our hallucinated mind as if they exist from their own side. Therefore, all existence is like a dream, like a dream. Life is like a dream. Existence is like a dream. Self, action, object, here, including the building, what appears a solid building, all the sense objects that appear real, concrete, from their own side, all these are completely false, empty. But while all existent phenomena are empty, completely empty, they appear as if they exist from their own side. *Everything*, including life, including the whole life, the life now present, this moment, including life, then all the rest of existence—it's all like a dream, like an illusion. All of existence is not an illusion, but it's like an illusion. All existence is *not* a dream but it's like a dream. There are differences, we have to know.

Therefore, it's nonsense, it doesn't make sense to follow the thought of ignorance, anger, attachment. There's no basis, no reason, at all. Reason means valid reason, not illogical reason—there's no valid reason at all for the three poisonous minds to arise, and therefore, there's no reason at all to cling to the I, the phenomenon, the subject, that experiences happiness and suffering, that creates happiness and suffering. It's also empty. In reality, the I, the self, is also empty. It's empty from its own side. So, there's nothing to cherish, there's nothing to cling onto. There's nothing to grab onto. There's nothing to cling onto. There's nothing to cherish.



Even that is a complete hallucination—that this self is so precious, so important, so precious. We apprehend that there is a real self-existing I—in the sense of existing from its own side—and then we believe it and then feel that this I is so precious, so important. All that part is a hallucination.



So concentrate on this a little bit, that the I is empty.



[Rinpoche chants in Tibetan.]

The I is completely empty of existing from its own side; the action is completely empty of existing from its own side; the object is completely empty of existing from its own side, as are all the sense objects: form, sound, smell and so forth. The five aggregates, the general aggregates, are completely empty from their own side. Each of the aggregates is completely empty from its own side. The form aggregate is completely empty from its own side; the feeling aggregate is completely empty from its own side; the compositional factors aggregate is completely empty from its own side; the discriminations aggregate is completely empty from its own side; the consciousness aggregate is completely empty from its own side.

That means all the senses, that which perceives objects, are completely empty. The consciousness, the mind, that perceives objects is completely empty from its own side. Even the object, form, is completely empty from its own side. Sound is completely empty from its own side; smell is completely empty from its own side; taste is completely empty from its own side. Sweet and sour, hot and so forth—taste, real concrete taste from its own side—that's completely empty, false. Tangible objects—rough, soft, something hard from the side of the floor, from the side of the cushion—all are completely empty from their own side.

Samsara is completely empty from its own side; nirvana, liberation, is completely empty from its own side. Happiness is completely empty from its own side. Suffering is completely empty from its own side. Problems are completely empty from their own side. The cause of the suffering is completely empty from its own side. And the cause of happiness, virtue, is also completely empty from its own side. Enlightenment is completely empty from its own side. Hell is completely empty from its own side.

That means everything that appears real from its own side is completely empty from its own side.

### *THE MEANING OF THE HEART SUTRA MANTRA*

The very essence, the very heart, is the *Heart Sutra*, the teaching for the person of highest intelligence. The mantra is TADYATHA GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA. Within the *Heart Sutra* teachings, there are teachings for the person of lower intelligence, of middle intelligence and of highest intelligence, and this mantra is for the person of highest intelligence.

TADYATHA means how we proceed to liberation, to the cessation of suffering and its causes, or to full enlightenment, to great liberation. If the wisdom realizing emptiness is combined, is developed with the realization of bodhicitta, that means we have entered the Mahayana path, and can proceed along the five Mahayana paths to full enlightenment. If it's wisdom alone—developing the wisdom realizing emptiness with the cooperative condition the renunciation of samsara but not combined with bodhicitta—then the path we follow will only lead us toward the liberation for the self. This is what TADYATHA shows.

GATE means to go beyond and the two GATEs mean to go beyond from the path of merit and the path of preparation or conjunction. Then PARAGATE means to go completely beyond from the right-seeing path and PARASAMGATE to go completely beyond from the path of meditation. BODHI is enlightenment. It can also be related to the Lesser Vehicle path, where it just means liberation, whereas in the Mahayana it's related to full enlightenment, to the Buddha, to the fully actualized omniscient mind which is able to directly see all of existence, all of the two truths, the truth for the all-obscuring mind and the truth for the absolute mind. These two truths contain all of existence.

So, BODHI, enlightenment. Before taking refuge in BODHI I need to take refuge in the handkerchief. The tissue paper, I need to take refuge to the tissue paper.

In Tibetan, the translation of BODHI is *jang chub*, relating to the Mahayana path, meaning the mind that has ceased all the gross disturbing-thought obscurations and subtle obscurations to knowledge and, because of that, the mind is qualified, enriched, with all the qualities, all the realizations.



In some texts there is an OM after the TADYATHA, in some texts there's no OM. If there's an OM, then, by proceeding along these five paths, especially within the tantra path, it actualizes the remedy by completely purifying the ordinary body, ordinary speech and ordinary mind, transforming them into the completely pure vajra holy body, completely pure vajra holy speech and completely pure vajra holy mind. This is signified by the OM. The OM consists of three syllables, three sounds, AH, O and MA. OM is the integration of these three sounds: AH, O and MA becomes OM. According to the Sanskrit, the creation of these three sounds, it is integrated and becomes OM, which signifies the impure body, speech and mind that we have now, and then the completely pure vajra holy body, holy speech and holy mind, that we will achieve in the future by purifying, ceasing, our ordinary body, speech and mind. We do this by actualizing the remedy, these five Mahayana paths, which contains all of tantra, including the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra, generation stage and completion stage. There are two different ways to count but generally the completion stage has five stages: the isolation of body, speech and mind and then the illusory body and the unification.

The meaning of SVAHA is that the base of all these realizations is established within our own heart or mind. In other words, the root of the whole path to enlightenment, the realization of guru devotion, seeing from our own side the virtuous friend as an enlightened being. Starting from this, which is the root of the path, from there up to enlightenment. So that contains the whole of the lam-rim, all the graduated path to enlightenment: the graduated path of the lower capable being in general, the graduated path of the middle capable being in general and the graduated path of the higher capable being. That one, the graduated path of the higher capable being, doesn't have "in general.". SVAHA establishes the base in our own mind. It starts from there, so it establishes it from the beginning of the path, from guru devotion, from there up to enlightenment.

So TADYATHA, relating to the Lesser Vehicle path, shows how to achieve liberation for the self; relating to the Mahayana path, it shows how to proceed to achieve full enlightenment.

This shows how somebody who has realized emptiness should proceed along the path to full enlightenment.

[Rinpoche chants Lion-face Dakini practice, then the prayer preliminary to teaching.]

### *WHY WE ARE AFRAID TO DIE*

First of all, if there is only one life then why do we have to be afraid of death? The majority of people, even the creatures, are afraid of death. Why are the majority of the people scared to die? The majority of people should be happy to die. If there is only one life it should be the opposite, the majority of the people should be happy to die. Whenever it happens. Well, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] after this, there's nothing. After this, nothing. [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] So, what's there to be afraid of? What do people think about it? Andrew, yeah, go on.

*Andrew:* If you have only one life, of course you're afraid to die because...

*Rinpoche:* What?

*Andrew:* If you only have one life, of course you're afraid because when you die it's over.

*Rinpoche:* I was coughing so I didn't hear. Sorry.

*Andrew:* If you have only one life, when you die, your existence is over so you're afraid of that, because that is all you have.

*Rinpoche:* This is all what you have? Then?

*Andrew:* Then you should make the most of this life, and you're afraid to die, that's the end of your life, that's the end of you. You should be afraid of death because it's the end of your existence.

*Rinpoche:* So it doesn't matter. It's okay.

*Andrew:* I don't want to die.

*Rinpoche:* How long do you want to live? How long do you want to have your existence?

*Andrew:* Ideally I would like to live forever.

*Rinpoche:* Then, you were going to say something?

*Another student:* What about self-killing?

*Rinpoche:* Self-killing, yeah. Self-killing, yeah. Then what were you going to say? Yeah?

*Another student:* Death is an unknown, and there aren't many people who can tell us that much. It's an unknown, so it's a scary feeling.

*Rinpoche:* Yeah, yeah. I think that's a common experience. What's your name, please?

*Lydia:* Lydia.

*Rinpoche:* What Lydia said is a common experience. I think that is very common thing.

*Student:* It's also instinct, because every animal has instinct to preserve life.

*Rinpoche:* To preserve life? Do the animals commit suicide? [Inaudible comments from students] They suicide themselves? Huh? What? What? Mosquitoes, do they commit suicide? They couldn't find any blood and then they commit suicide. Maybe they take

tablets or something. Maybe they should sneak into the bathroom or somewhere and take dying tablets. Stealing from people.

What animals commit suicide? [*Students: Whales.*] Hmm. They commit suicide themselves? How do they do it?

*Student:* They swim up onto the beaches so that they can't swim back. That's what whales do, big fish.

*Rinpoche:* They jump over the boat? What? What?

*Student:* They swim out of the sea onto the beach and then they can't swim back.

*Rinpoche:* But do they know? They do it intentionally? They intentionally commit suicide, like people?

*Student:* We don't know.

*Student:* They'll put them back in the ocean and they'll swim back to that place and die. And there is no explanation for it, but they are, in effect, killing themselves.

*Rinpoche:* Sorry, could you repeat that?

*Student:* Okay. Someone mentioned that the whales go up on the beach, and that they die, and you asked, 'Do they do this on purpose or is it just an accident?' Sometimes they get together and put them back out into the ocean, and they will all come back.

*Rinpoche:* Oh, you mean a group of whales takes one whale, no, I got this imagination. No, please repeat. I didn't hear properly. So just one? One whale alone?

*Student:* No, sometimes it's one whale. Often times it's groups of maybe ten, fifteen. One whale, they all come through and land on a beach, and when this first was observed, tried to rescue the whales.

*Rinpoche:* The people? Tried to put back in the water and they come back? Oh, I see! Now I understand completely.

I think it's not necessarily that they're doing it intentionally, like human beings, thinking, "I want to kill myself because I have this relationship problem," or "I can't find a job," or "Nobody likes me; nobody loves me, I'm alone." Huh?

*Student:* You could find similar reasons for whales, though. If you had to swim in a polluted ocean like the North Sea, that would depress you if you were a whale.

*Another student:* No proper food, oil...[inaudible]

*Another student:* Maybe they don't know about karma.

*Another student:* It's like birds migrating from north to south to get away from the winter, and then the whales migrating. The sensory gets mixed up, it just keeps going, it's instinct, it's not thinking, "I want to kill myself," but all they know is they have to go. It's instinct.

*Rinpoche:* My feeling is more of that. What's your name?

*Student:* My name? Stephen.

*Rinpoche:* As the Stephen label said—I'm joking, anyway. I'm joking. As Stephen said, I wouldn't think myself that, like a human being, with all these labels to commit suicide, to kill oneself. But I think it's due to karma. No, it's their time to die. And the conditions for death are there. There are different ways to die, to be killed by another animal, to be eaten by another animal, or you just die. So some of them have conditions for death according to karma, according to their past karma, just being where there's no water and they die. There are different conditions of death according to their karma. Now it's the time, the karma is ripened, so when the karma is ripened to die, and to experience such condition of death, then that's what forces them to do that. It's similar, it's the same for people who commit suicide. It's the same, karma.

### *SPIRIT HARM AND PUJAS*

When there's something wrong that we have done in this life due to past karma; when there's something heavy, wrong, done in this life. When we have committed some negative karma out of a selfish attitude and a negative motivation, related to attachment. So when something is done, something heavy is done, then what happens is, due to this, this negative karma from some wrong action that is done, that upsets other beings.

There are other beings, nonhuman beings such as nagas or such. They are worldly beings, nonhuman beings; they are outside beings who give harm. Because the person has done some heavy mischievous action, some heavy unrighteous action, they find a way to give harm. When the person is creating much good karma, increasing his power, his fortune, others, even human beings, are unable to harm that person, or can give less harm. Even human beings. When the person does some heavy unrighteous action out of the self-cherishing thought and one of the poisonous minds—it's usually attachment—when there's a lot of cause created from the person's side, others, outside beings—people or even nonhuman beings, spirits and so forth, other worldly beings—they are able to give harm. Sometimes due to the person's mischievous actions, they get disturbed, unhappy.

There is a relationship between the person's mind and actions, and outside things. Then together, when this kind of thing happens, the person can become completely crazy. That is one thing. There are many mental problems and physical problems; many things happen like this. It's a very common experience. Of course, basically, all problems come from karma, from the person's mind, from disturbing thoughts, the self-cherishing

thought, these things, but there are also things such as sickness and many, many life problems like disharmony, related also outside conditions.

[These can be helped] by doing pujas, by checking what kind of other conditions caused this problem, this disease, or this disharmony. There are many catastrophes happening in life. One after another people get sick or problems happen constantly, one after another. Many people turn against you or suddenly things just turn out wrong. So many things. So much failure. Nothing succeeds; everything goes wrong, everything becomes wrong, business and jobs, anything. Things like that.

It's a very common experience that doing pujas helps. First, besides all the karma and delusion from the individual's side, you check what comes from outside, the beings who are related to that problem, who give harm. The Buddha gave different advice to do different meditations and pujas relating to those different beings who give harm.

First, you give them presents. If it's a sick person, then you make a substitute of that person, a figure of that person, and then with various types of food or whatever, you visualize a whole kind of city, like a city with stores, food and materials. You make it extensive, like oceans, like a city. You visualize this and then you make charity to those spirits, to those other different worldly beings. By describing how beautiful and well decorated all this is, how many presents, materials and food there are, how extensive it is, by telling it like this, somehow for those spirits or those worldly beings, it appears that way, due to their karma.

First you make charity for them, then you give them teachings. You give teachings to not harm other beings. Just like the example of planting a chili seed and then getting a chili plant, hot, and by planting a sweet seed getting a sweet fruit, such as raisins or whatever. Exactly like that, by planting different seeds you get different fruit. If you do negative karma, nonvirtuous action, then you experience a suffering result and by doing a wholesome action, a virtuous action, then you experience a happy result. Therefore, if you give harm to others, you'll experience suffering. That's how it is if somebody gives you harm, similar harm. So you use that as an example to show them not to give harm to others.

So after giving material presents and making that substitute person, the sick person, you then give teaching to them.

There are many different types of meditation. This is a very common experience. It also depends on the person who does the puja, who does the meditation; it depends on how much quality that person has, how much compassion the person has and also whether there's a realization of emptiness or not. The most powerful, the most effective one is somebody who has bodhicitta and the wisdom realizing emptiness; that is the most qualified one. With bodhicitta then the result is quick and there is great effect. There's great, immediate effect. Those other beings stop giving harm immediately; the person is healed immediately or stops experiencing the problems.

No question, of course, someone who has experience of completion stage tantra realizations, no question, that's the highest among sentient beings, the best person to do public service, healing and all those things.

Others cannot harm a person who has realized emptiness, and especially who has bodhicitta. They have to listen to that person, because of the realization, the great compassion for the spirits, for everyone, for all sentient beings. They all respect that person because of the power of the realization. Also the teachings, the puja, the words are the Buddha's; they are the Buddha's words, the Buddha's teachings, so that also has power. Also mantras, even from that side it has power.

This is a common experience in the East and also in the West with those especially effective meditators, lamas, who do pujas or meditations. For example, it's happened many times that the doctors say a person is going to die soon, that same day, but then by having done some small puja, making charity to the spirits, things like that, to those other beings who are related to the problem, immediately the person recovers. This is a common experience for those who do these pujas or meditations.

### *STORIES ABOUT SPIRITS AND PUJAS*

Geshe Lama Konchog hasn't come to give teachings yet but his life is especially full of these stories, how when he was living in those high mountains in Nepal, in Tsum and different places, by doing pujas for a person who was seriously sick, that person recovered. His life is full of such experiences.

Just yesterday or the day before yesterday, we were discussing this. I think a child of a Tibetan family in Switzerland was about to die. The doctor said he was going to die soon and there was no hope. A relative of the family rang a geshe called Geshe Donyö who was related to the family. I don't think he was used to doing those various pujas in the public service or dealing with those things that help with different problems. He's a learned geshe, learned in regards to the actual path to enlightenment, but not familiar with all these different things, doing public service, healing and all those sorts of different things.

Geshe Lama Konchog was in France, so Geshe Donyö rang Geshe Lama Konchog to check what could be done. There are two geshe in France. The geshe at the lay center, Vajrayogini Center, is called Geshe Tengye and the geshe at the monastery for Western Sangha, Nalanda, is called Geshe Jampa Tegchok. Nalanda is the main center where a large number of Western Sangha study and Geshe Tegchok is a very good, very qualified teacher.

Geshe Lama Konchog told them to do this very short meditation, this very short puja, giving four tormas cakes, made out of flour, four tormas or four cakes. One is for the landlords, the beings who are situated in that area; then there one for the *de-gye*, the ten guardians and one for the pretas, the hungry ghosts and one for the *yakshas* or *rakshas*. I'm not sure of the Sanskrit, but in Tibetan it's *jung-bo*. So there are different types of

those worldly beings. You make charity to each one, with light and food for them and things like that. These meditations, these practices are the Buddha's techniques that are taught to benefit other sentient beings.

So Geshe Lama Konchog told these two geshe that if you do this small puja called *chag-sum* that's enough. Just by doing it, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] it will be enough. Then these two geshe did this puja immediately.

Just before, the mother had been ringing her husband who had gone somewhere. She had tears coming, crying, saying that the baby was dying. Then somehow, when the husband returned home, the baby was playing outside in the field. It was outside of the house, playing. I just remembered this because yesterday or the day before yesterday, Geshe-la explained what happened during his recent trip to the West. Just in conversation he remembered the situation and so he talked about it.

This is a very, very common experience. The reason why these beings exist is because of these pujas. If they are done by qualified masters, then they work. And all these things are also dependent arising, depending on cause and conditions. So that's the proof that these beings exist. This is very, very common.

There was a lady in Spain who got cancer or heart disease. I don't remember. Maybe it was cancer but I don't remember; I got mixed up. There was another patient there, another lady, whose heart was so swollen, it had become too big, that the doctors said it was very, very risky. There's a geshe at one of our centers in Spain, Nagarjuna Center in Barcelona I think. That center has a Dharma teacher, a very good geshe, very learned. He also does very effective public service, stopping people's problems and things like that. But he, himself, is a very good practitioner, and learned in Dharma. "Learned geshe" means one who has finished studying, who has taken the degree at Sera Monastery. Sera, Ganden and Drepung were the biggest universities in Tibet and they have been established similarly in India.

This geshe checked, he did a divination, and told this lady to recite a few hundred thousand Guru Shakyamuni Buddha mantras, TADYATHA OM MUNE MUNE MAHA MUNEYE SVAHA. I think Geshe-la told her to do four or five hundred thousand, but she did one or two hundred thousand, then the heart became smaller, just by reciting the mantra. Just doing a very simple practice, visualizing Shakyamuni Buddha and purifying, just doing a simple meditation, the heart became so much smaller.

There was a case of a lady who had either cancer or a heart problem. A geshe asked her, "Did you make *pipi* in the beach?" You know, "Did you make *pipi* in the water at the beach?" She said "Yes, I did *pipi*." Sometimes there are cases that, by polluting certain places where those other beings are situated, they become upset and then the person gets sick. These things are common. This is very common. It's basically to do with nagas, so there are meditations, pujas to do at the place where they're situated, where the person disturbed them, where the person polluted the environment. Beings are situated there and they get disturbed, they receive harm. This is where you do the puja. They have also

received pollution, they have been injured, diseased, so you purify them, you give them presents and purify them, making them healthy. When they are cured by making them happy, the person recovers. If you find the right place where the person did the pollution and disturbed them—you have to do the puja at the right place—then the person recovers quickly.

There are many of these common experiences and there are many methods taught by Buddha to deal with them.

I forgot why I was mentioning this!

### *SUICIDE*

Oh, ah lay, yeah, that's right, committing suicide.

So, I think there's this self-cherishing thought creating attachment and those things, and due to the negative motivation maybe some nonvirtuous action is done, and then those other beings find a way to harm you. Because of the heavy, negative karma, then your fortune, your power is decreased, then those beings are able to find ways of harming you and they also get disturbed. Those outside, worldly beings associate with the delusions, the negative karma. Then, what happens is, because of some problem, the thought comes into the person's mind that there is nothing else to do, he has nothing else he can think about, he has no space for other things, only to kill himself. There is no space for other thoughts. The only thing he can think is the best thing is to kill himself. That kind of thought comes very strongly.

Even though normally he might think it's completely crazy to commit suicide, to kill oneself, but due to this negative karma happening, some nonvirtuous action happening, then somehow relating to those outside beings, then associating together, somehow it makes a very fixed idea. It's like a crazy, wild person, a completely crazy person. It's a complete hallucination. It's related like that. There is nothing else he can think about, only this. There's no space for other things. And then he just does it. The mind becomes very stubborn, the mind becomes very stubborn.

He is experiencing the karma; the karma has ripened. The mental state is like that. Before experiencing the karma, he probably thought it's crazy to commit suicide; he could never believe he could do it. He thinks it's completely crazy. But when the karma, when the cause is created, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] and when it's experienced, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] the mental state becomes like this. That is because the cause has been created but it didn't get completely purified. It didn't get completely purified so this thing happens as a result of the negative karma.

There was a student in Switzerland. I think he was a Western student who was also able to speak the Tibetan language. He heard the Dharma at different times, on courses. I'm not sure how much time he spent time in the East, but maybe he heard more Dharma in the West, from time to time.



He had plans to do a long retreat. He had all these positive ideas, but somehow his girlfriend left him. One day his girlfriend left him and then he hanged himself in his house and died. I think he had wishes to practice, to do retreat, there were all these positive ideas—"I should be doing this, I will do this, I will do that"—but somehow he became more involved in other things. All those positive things were there, but somehow, I guess, while he had his life, he had the time, he was busy with other things, and somehow he didn't get to practice much during that time, even though he had some basic idea of what had to be practiced.

So, first some karma is created, some heavy nonvirtuous action happens, out of the self-cherishing thought, attachment, these things. Then the result is some depression happens, some upsetness, some problem happens. During that time this relationship is also with outside beings who harm, and then this thought, then this mental state becomes fixed. There's no space for other things. When the karma is experienced, it becomes like that. It creates its own world. That mental state creates its own world.

### *PERFECT HUMAN REBIRTH: THIS BODY IS SO PRECIOUS*

Committing suicide is regarded as heavy karma. One reason it's very harmful, the first reason, is because at this time we have received a human body, a precious human body. First of all the mind has all the potential to achieve the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment, everything—we can achieve all that and we can do any service for, cause any happiness for sentient beings. We ourselves can achieve any happiness we wish and also we can cause other sentient beings equaling the infinite sky, infinite space, to obtain happiness—temporary happiness, ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara and peerless happiness, full enlightenment. We can even cause that one for other sentient beings.

First of all, the mind has the full potential to do this, but we can't do it without a human body, without this precious human body, which gives us the opportunity to listen and to be able to speak, to communicate. With this body we are able to understand the meaning. Because we have taken this body, we are able to understand the meaning of the words. On top of that, we are also able to communicate. The main thing is to be able to understand the meaning of the words, especially Dharma, the teachings of the right path that can cease the whole, entire suffering and causes. We can understand the meaning of the teachings by having this human body.

If we don't have this human body, even though the mind has the potential, there's no opportunity. It's extremely rare and difficult. For example, the mind has the full potential but the body is a pig; it's a pig body or a crocodile body or an octopus body. An elephant's or even a goat's, a chicken's, even an animal that people keep. If our body is something else like this, first of all I'm not sure if we are even able to hear the Dharma or not, even the words, or even the sound of the Dharma. I'm not sure; it's extremely difficult to hear the sound of the Dharma.

Then, the most important thing is we can't understand the meaning. There's no way to understand. However many billions of eons we explain to a goat, or we explain to a duck or to the dog that we keep—to those dogs that we have here—however many billions of eons we explain what is the meaning of nonvirtue, what is the meaning of virtue. What is the cause of happiness, what is the cause of suffering. What is the definition of virtue, nonvirtue. The cause of happiness is virtue, the cause of suffering is nonvirtue. However many billions of eons we explain that to them, there's no way they can understand the meaning. There's no way they can understand the meaning. And in the same way, we can explain the meaning of virtue, the action, the intention, that brings the result of happiness, that is done with a positive motivation. The first thing is that which brings the result of happiness and the second thing is it is done out of a positive attitude. That's the definition of virtue: the action which is the intention, which is our own mind, karma, the action, the intention, which is our own mind. However many millions of eons we explain this to these dogs outside, there is no way they can understand the meaning.

How can we help others? How can we help others' minds? The best help to others is helping the mind, helping them transform their harmful mind into beneficial, virtuous thoughts, to change the mind. By changing the mind, then they can change their actions, then this way, only this way, they can create the cause of happiness and they can eliminate the cause of suffering. Through this they can be liberated from samsara; they can achieve liberation. Then they can also achieve full enlightenment by ceasing all the obscurations, by actualizing the path.

There's no way to really help, to give real benefit to others, without benefiting their mind. But although the mind has all this potential, on top of that, only if this consciousness takes a human body, has a human body, that human body gives us the opportunity not only to hear the Dharma but also to be able to understand the meaning and to communicate. We are able to practice, able to experiment, able to achieve realizations.

Therefore, the human body is so precious, unbelievably precious. It's more precious than this earth full of diamonds, than this earth full of dollars, however many atoms there are in the whole, entire earth, even that many dollars. Even that much—what is it called? "I trust in God."

Even the whole sky filled with billions of dollars, diamonds and gold, even with wish-granting jewels—jewels that by praying we can get any material possession, any enjoyment we want—even the whole sky filled with wish-granting jewels compared to this precious human body is nothing. When we compare the value of that much wealth and the value of this precious human body, all that is nothing compared to the value of this precious human body.

Without this precious human body, even if we owned that much wealth, we couldn't benefit from it; we couldn't achieve whatever happiness we wanted, including enlightenment. There's no way to do this. And especially for other sentient beings. Without this precious human body, even if we owned that much wealth, we couldn't cause all the happiness for all sentient beings. We couldn't do that.

But, even if we didn't have the tiniest amount of gold, diamonds, these possessions, if we have this precious human body, we can practice the Dharma and develop the mind. If we have this precious human body we can do all this. We can cause any happiness for other sentient beings, including peerless happiness, full enlightenment. Therefore, this human body is unbelievably precious.

As you've already gone through the meditations on the eight freedoms and ten riches, that's the answer—its usefulness and how difficult it is to receive again. These are the meditations. [7] These are the reasons why we should live, why human life is so precious, why life, this body is so precious.

Therefore, if we commit suicide, we stop all these opportunities. We stop for ourselves all these opportunities for happiness through developing the mind. It doesn't happen. We ourselves have stopped it, interfered with it. And especially, to do work for every sentient being, for sentient beings equaling the infinite sky, those who need us to help them cause temporary happiness and ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara, and to lead them to full enlightenment. All these happinesses we can cause, but with suicide we interfere with this. We have stopped the development of the mind that having a human body allows us. Suicide becomes a great interference that stops all those numberless sentient beings receiving benefit from us; it stops us from developing our mind and from practicing the Dharma with this human body.

### *PO-WA AND THE END OF LIFE*

The other thing is, in the *po-wa*, the practice of transferring the consciousness, if you don't become enlightened in this life, then the quick way to become enlightened is to practice the tantric method of transferring the consciousness to the pure land of a buddha, the pure field of a buddha such as Amitabha or Shambhala, to the different buddhas' pure lands. There's a meditation practice where you practice for one whole night or three nights, until you get the sign which means you have trained.

It's important to only practice *po-wa*, transferring the consciousness to a pure land, by yourself through your meditation at the correct time. You can't just do it at any time, just because you have some problem, because there's a relationship problem or because your friend no longer loves you. You can't do *po-wa* for that. Because you couldn't find a job, then you do *po-wa*. Not like this. Not like this.

First of all you must know the signs of death. There's the inner sign and the outer sign of death, the inner sign and the secret sign of death. Then there are dreams in which there are signs of death. There are ways of checking the signs of death. The most definite one is checking how the breath comes through the nostrils. That's the most definite way of checking how many years before death is going to happen. When the death is going to happen, the breath coming from the nose is the most definite way to check. You do this especially at the beginning of each month, probably the first three days. In the early

morning of the third day, I think, something like that. There's a whole explanation on how to find out after how many years or how many months you are going to die.

Even if the sign of death has happened, even if the dreams have happened, it still doesn't mean you can do po-wa. First you do all the necessary meditations, the pujas, to prolong life, such as taking long-life initiations, making *tsa-tsas*, [8] making the paintings or statues of the long-life deities, the enlightened beings, who are especially to grant long life for other sentient beings. Then there are the meditations, the purification practices such as Vajrasattva, the Thirty-five Buddhas, with the prostrations and so forth, and Samayavajra, Dorje Khadro fire puja and so forth. There are various practices to purify and various practices to accumulate merit, such as mandala offerings. The most powerful purification, the best way of accumulating merit is following the advice of the virtuous friend, doing service, then practicing bodhicitta and meditating on emptiness. You need to do those powerful means of purifying heavy negative karmas, which purify the cause of the negative karma that causes untimely death as well as practicing methods that accumulate so much merit. You need to attempt to prolong your life through meditation. There are many different techniques.

Having done all these things, betraying death and so forth, if there are still the signs of death happening, then that means now it's time to die. Now it's time to die. First you try all the other methods. Then if you're going to wait until death comes, you might die with very heavy pain or you might die in such incredible conditions, where you have no opportunity to meditate, such as in an incredible disaster or with heavy pain or a loss of memory. You might die in some bad state where there's no opportunity to meditate at that time, to do po-wa, transferring the consciousness. Therefore, rather than waiting until death comes, once you know that now death is going to come after a year or six months, it's advised to use po-wa. After having done all the necessary things to prolong life, if still the signs of death continuously come—which means now you're going to die, now there's no hope, now it's time to experience death—within six months, approximately, then you can use po-wa, the actual action of transferring the consciousness to the pure land of a buddha.

There are many of these pure realms, like Amitabha or Kalachakra or the pure lands of Shambhala, of Tara Cittamani, Vajrayogini and so forth. According to the advice of my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, in these pure realms there is the opportunity for you to become enlightened.

Po-wa, transferring the consciousness, is called the “[practice of] the evil being” because it's a method for any evil being like us to quickly become enlightened, with force. Even if you have trained by doing the retreat, you can't use it any time, such as when you are depressed. It doesn't mean you can use when you have problems in life. You can only use it before death, one year or especially six months, around that time—that is the time you can transfer the consciousness to the pure land by doing po-wa. It's like that. Otherwise, it's said in the teachings that if you do po-wa at the wrong time, you create the karma of having killed the deity. That's in the po-wa root text, I think.

I need to finish this discussion I began.

I think, for many people, even though their philosophy according to their culture which is influenced by science says that there is only one life, actually, in the very inside of the heart, most people really don't understand what happens at the end of life. What's her name? [Students: Lydia.] As Lydia said, there's no clear understanding about the ending of life. In the very inside of the heart people aren't sure. There's a suspicion or there's a fear; it's not clear.

As I mentioned at the very beginning, if it's true according to that philosophy, then why should you be afraid? I mean, this way, you don't have to be reborn as an animal, you don't have to worry about old age. You don't have to worry about wrinkles or white hairs. You don't have to color the white hairs. You don't have to fix up the face. You don't have to go to hospital to stretch the skin, to fix the skin hanging down, to stretch it again and again, but gradually it changes again. You don't have to go to hospital to stretch it, to fix it up again, with all those unbelievable expenses. Taking all that trouble to fix it up and then it degenerates again.

There are so many other diseases as well as relationship problems, so many other things like not succeeding, not getting satisfaction, all these things—all these oceans of suffering—that you don't have to experience. But even if you follow this philosophy and say there's only one life, in your heart, your life experience, it's the opposite to the philosophy. The philosophy has been intellectually created and taught by somebody but here, in your heart, inside, you're scared because you're not sure. You have no idea what's going to happen. That's why the heart feels that way.

Then, what Andrew said. Is your name Andrew? Andrew I can remember. Since there's no experience of having realized there is reincarnation, past or future lives, since you only have the experience of this one life, that is ignorant experience. That is the experience of ignorance, of not knowing. Not seeing past and future lives. There's the experience of ignorance and there's the experience of wisdom. All experience is not the experience of wisdom; there's experience according to ignorance and there's experience according to wisdom.

### *CURING DISEASE WITH MEDITATION*

When I was doing retreat in Adelaide, in South Australia, I spent a few hours in the afternoons listening to the radio. A student from Buddha House worked at one of the radio stations. I think she had an audience of maybe six thousand people. I used to listen to her program, to her questions as she interviewed people on different problems, problems in the city, problems in people's lives.

One time, her colleague Philip was interviewing people about health problems. There was one guy who told his experience with some medicine, saying that it was completely contradictory to what the doctors said, how the treatment had not helped him. He explained the whole evolution, how that treatment completely didn't help but was

completely the opposite, contradictory to what was needed for his disease. He very sincerely explained the whole thing.

Then Philip said that his comment was too early. I think that Philip thought there was danger. He was explaining his own experience very clearly but announcing it like that could create a big shock for the doctors, and not just the doctors but for the general Western society. I think it could make a big shock because of the fixed ideas that people had been taught and believed. What most people follow is all fixed. I think it gives a big shock, even the idea of meditation for cancer, even though it's true that meditation cures cancer. There have been a few cases just with a simple meditation. This is my own experience that just giving some mantras or some simple meditations people have been cured. There are many other people [this has happened to]. There's a person in Australia who had cancer but by doing meditation he recovered by himself. What's his first name. Ian? [Ven. Roger: Ian Gawler.] Ian Gawler, not in Goa, Ian Gawler. He's completely recovered.

He established a place to teach meditation. He receives people from all over Australia, he receives people. And there's a book about how many people recovered from cancer through meditation. [9]

I did a healing course for the first time just recently in Australia, in Melbourne, at Tara House. One of the organizers is an old student, a hundred percent completely open-minded and sincere, very compassionate, very sincere. He's somebody who enjoys his family and also has a very open mind and is very kind. He joined this cancer group with Ian Gawler; he asked him to work with him. He did a year's work and because he had some experience, I asked him to work together. So he explained all this. He showed me the book, and said these were only a few examples of people who have recovered.

Anyway, this idea of meditation curing diseases such as cancer has become frightening to society because it goes against the other belief that is set up; it makes people change their concepts. It becomes huge. It hits the personal feelings of jobs, that people are afraid of losing their jobs or afraid of what they have studied, what they have learned no longer being valid and they have to change the basic concept. There's fear, so they reject it, even though there is a lot of evidence that people actually get cured. They reject it but that is completely wrong. There are these things are happening.

### *IT'S WISE TO PREPARE FOR DEATH*

The conclusion is that we can't say past and future lives don't exist just because we can't remember them. We can't say they don't exist. It's possible that past and future lives exist. It can be possible. It can be possible. Even if it's not a hundred percent sure, it can be possible. Therefore, it's wiser to make preparations for the next life, it's better, it's wiser, before it gets too late. I'm not talking about lunch!

What was I saying?

Before we regret it and have to actually experience the result, the suffering, before our life ends, it's wise to make preparations for the happiness of future lives. It's wise to make preparations for liberation, for the cessation of the whole, entire suffering and its causes. It's even wiser to achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

As I mentioned earlier, we have universal responsibility, we are responsible for all sentient beings, to pacify them, to free everyone from all the suffering, to obtain happiness for all sentient beings. Therefore, *especially* for the sake of sentient beings, we need to develop our mind. We need to free ourselves from suffering and its causes, the mistakes of the mind. This way we become fully qualified, completely training the mind in compassion, perfect power and omniscience, to be able to perfectly guide all sentient beings, to be able to do perfect work for all sentient beings.

Therefore, practicing the lam-rim, actualizing the graduated path to enlightenment, becomes extremely important. This is the whole answer. This becomes the whole answer, to actualize the path. The whole thing depends on this, actualizing the graduated path, learning, studying and especially actualizing it. This is what we're trying to do on this course. Therefore, we should feel extremely fortunate.

I think I'll stop here.

## Lecture 15



[CIN Chenrezig Institute 1991](#)

### **THE NEED TO SUBDUE THE MIND**

*Do not perform any harmful action toward other sentient beings, that which is also harmful toward yourself.*

*Enjoy life by creating complete, perfect wholesome actions, virtuous actions, beneficial actions, toward all sentient beings, that which is also beneficial toward yourself.*

*Subdue your own mind.*

*This is the teaching of Buddha.*



You've already heard quite a lot, at different times, about the different levels of paths that remove different levels of obscurations, the obscurations of the mind. On the right-seeing path, with the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, this uninterrupted path is the remedy to the [disturbing-thought] obscurations. These are abandoned on the right-seeing path in order to attain liberation.

The obscurations that are left are abandoned by the path of meditation. [After] the disturbing-thought obscurations are abandoned—there are about 108 or something of those, I don't remember—what can't be removed by the right-seeing path are the subtle obscurations [to knowledge] which are removed by the path of meditation.

When even the seed is removed, not only of the disturbing-thought obscurations, those exaggerated due to wrong doctrines and the simultaneously-born wrong concepts, such as the concept of true existence and so forth, but even the seed of these disturbing-thought obscurations, the concept of true existence, after everything is removed by actualizing, by completing the right-seeing path and the path of meditation, only then have we achieved the complete cessation of suffering, because only then have we completely removed all the causes.

To subdue the mind, to completely purify the mind, to cease the disturbing-thought obscurations, we have to proceed on the path step-by-step, to make it impossible to experience suffering again. Even to achieve just the cessation of samsaric suffering and its causes, without talking about enlightenment, great liberation, the cessation of the subtle obscurations, we have to proceed through these five paths, step-by-step, from one path to another. Our mind has to proceed through them. That's how we achieve the ultimate, everlasting happiness or liberation, the complete liberation having ceased all the disturbing-thought obscurations, even the seed that is left on the consciousness, on the mental continuum.

If our own aim is the wish to free everyone from all the sufferings, all the obscurations, to lead them to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, to do that we need to achieve full enlightenment, great liberation. For that we need to actualize the Mahayana path, we have to proceed through the five Mahayana paths. Whether we practice the Paramitayana path, the Sutrayana path or Highest Yoga Tantra we have to proceed through the five paths. Even if we follow the two stages of the Highest Yoga Tantra we have to proceed through the five Mahayana paths to great liberation, full enlightenment. We ourselves need to achieve full enlightenment by ceasing even the subtle obscurations, that which interfere with the mental continuum becoming the omniscient mind, to be able to fully directly see all the existence, past, present and future, without any resistance.

In our present day-to-day life, of course, subduing the mind is dependent on practicing renunciation, controlling the dissatisfied mind, attachment, anger, ignorance and so forth, cutting off these things, diminishing these disturbing thoughts. We control anger by practicing patience, by practicing compassion, loving kindness, cherishing others, and that way we control the self-cherishing thought and so forth.

It's best in our day-to-day life to practice some positive attitude, having some renunciation, having some satisfaction, controlling the dissatisfied mind, attachment. We need to cut off the dissatisfied mind, attachment and so forth, the disturbing thoughts. It does depend on these things. It does depend on these things, but subduing the mind is not enough. Just having a little bit of a good heart in everyday life toward others, that's not sufficient. That's not enough. Having some generosity, that's not enough. To subdue the mind we have to pacify completely, we have to subdue completely all the disturbing thoughts that interfere, that make us suffer in samsara endlessly. We have to pacify them completely.

We have to completely subdue the mind because we don't like problems. Since our aim is to not have problems at all, to never experience problems at all, to never die, since our wish is to never experience death, this is what we need to do. This is what Andrew said yesterday, "I never want to die." He kindly expressed his wishes, that he never wants to die. This is the wish in our heart, that we never want to die, that we never want to experience death, that we never want to experience any problems again. It's our own disturbing mind that interferes with us achieving the everlasting ultimate liberation, and then full enlightenment. Since this is the wish, then we should—we have to—completely subdue our mind in order to completely cease all these obstacles that are within, that are on our own mental continuum.

The point I'm making is this. To subdue the mind, of course, it's good in day-to-day life to do even a small act of generosity, to have even a small good heart, but that's not sufficient. When some animal has a problem, we can help that animal. When a cat or dog is sick, we can put it in hospital; when a person is sick, we can give some medicine. Those actions are very good, but we can't be satisfied with just some generosity, some sympathy. Subduing the mind in that way is not enough. Completely subduing the mind, achieving enlightenment is dependent on these day-to-day things, even a small act of generosity, even some small compassion, it depends on these things, but just this is not enough at all for us to achieve peerless happiness, the cessation of all the mistakes, completing all the realizations, and especially for the sake of numberless sentient beings equaling the infinite space. Especially for the sake of them, it's not enough. We have to complete developing the mind on the whole path.

When we see somebody who is poor, doing something positive for them, of course, is excellent, but just having some sympathy is not sufficient. Just having a calm mind, a peaceful mind, that's not sufficient, especially if we really want to help other sentient beings, sentient beings equaling the infinite sky, to free everyone from all the obscurations, the whole entire sufferings, to liberate them and lead them to full enlightenment. For that, we have to cease every single stain of the mind and complete our own mind in all the realizations.

Saying we need to subdue the mind, this verse contains the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path [that leads to the cessation of suffering], all the four noble truths. This is

the fundamental teaching of the Buddha, the essence. This is the fundamental teaching of all the teachings that the Buddha taught. And this verse, these four lines, contain the subject of the four noble truths.

To subdue the mind is the teaching of Buddha. This means ceasing the wrong concepts, the mistakes of the mind, like the non-devotional mind, the mistakes of the mind toward the virtuous friend, the one we take our Dharma contact from. We have to subdue all mistaken minds from here, from the non-devotional mind, the mistakes of the mind toward the virtuous friend, up to the last obscuration, the last dualistic mind, the very last obstacle to achieving the omniscient mind, the subtle dual view of the appearance, the white path, the increasing red path and the near-attainment dark path. The whole thing has to be ceased up to the very last obstacle, the most subtle obscuration. That is what is called subduing the mind. We cease all the wrong concepts by actualizing the whole graduated path to enlightenment, starting from the root of the path, the realization, the transformation of mind, the devotional mind, from our own side seeing the virtuous friend as an enlightened being, by doing analytical meditation then fixed meditation, by quotations and logic.

The one thing is the wish. If this is what we wish, we have to completely subdue the disturbing mind. Since these are our wishes—liberation from true suffering and the true cause of suffering, then great liberation, even the cessation of the subtle obscurations—since we don't like having any problems at all, this is what we have to do. Since we don't want to experience problems, this is what we have to achieve, the state of liberation, the state of full enlightenment, great liberation. This is what we have to achieve. This is what we have to achieve, since we don't want to die, since we don't want all those problems.

If we get cancer, once we have recovered we never want to experience it again. It's the same thing with any other problem. There's no way to do that without subduing the mind. Without actualizing the five paths, the remedy of the disturbing thoughts, without proceeding along those paths, there's no way that we can. This is the only way to subdue the mind, by ceasing the wrong concepts, both those that arise due to wrong doctrine that we exaggerate and those simultaneously-born concepts. Without ceasing those obscurations, which are the cause of the disease, which are the cause of the true suffering, there is no way to make it impossible to experience cancer, to experience AIDS and so forth.

Here the question is completely ceasing the three poisonous minds, and the root of the three poisonous minds is the concept of true existence, ignorance, which is the king of all the delusions. Here it's the question of ceasing these ones, so that we are able to cease the karma.

As we proceed through these five paths, when we have actualized the right-seeing path, we don't create any more new karma. Even on the Lesser Vehicle path, when we have actualized the right-seeing path, we don't create any more new karma. We have crossed beyond craving, attachment; we can't create new karma that produces new samsara, that forms another samsara. This happens even by actualizing the right-seeing path of the

Lesser Vehicle path. By completing the path we completely cease the whole suffering of the samsara.

### *PERFECT HUMAN REBIRTH*

The conclusion is this. I mentioned yesterday how precious this perfect human rebirth is. How precious it is. It's more precious than the value of the whole sky filled with dollars, with gold, with diamonds, with that much wealth. Compared to the value of this perfect human rebirth, there's no comparison. As I mentioned yesterday, even if we don't have the tiniest piece of gold, the tiniest diamond, possessions like this, if we have this perfect human rebirth we can do anything. This perfect human rebirth gives us the opportunity to practice Dharma. One of the richnesses is having met the teachings. That means having the refuge in the mind and so having the opportunity to practice Dharma.

Even if we don't have any of those possessions, or even an atom of those possessions, if we have this perfect human rebirth, by transforming the mind into Dharma, we can control the three poisonous minds. Without letting the mind come under their control, we can stop the rebirth in the lower realms: rebirth as a hell being, as an animal, as a preta, a hungry ghost. We can stop this and receive the body of the happy migratory being: a deva or human body. With this perfect human rebirth we can practice Dharma, transforming the mind into Dharma, by practicing refuge and protecting our karma. This is what we can do with this perfect human rebirth.

By practicing the three higher trainings of the five paths of the Lesser Vehicle, with this perfect human rebirth we are able to achieve liberation. Then, again, by practicing Dharma, by transforming the mind into bodhicitta, we can proceed through the five Mahayana paths, and by completing them we are able to achieve full enlightenment, peerless happiness, for the sake of all sentient beings.

So, if we don't have even the tiniest atom of those possessions, if we have this perfect human rebirth, we have the opportunity to practice Dharma and then we can achieve all these things. For example, those yogis, those ascetic meditators such as Milarepa, didn't have even the tiniest atom of possessions such as these, but they had a perfect human rebirth, they practiced Dharma and they achieved full enlightenment. They finished their work. They crossed the oceans of suffering of samsara. Not only that, they enlightened numberless sentient beings, and even now, each day, each hour, each minute, they are still enlightening numberless sentient beings. Like this, they bring infinite benefit, they do infinite work for the sentient beings. They didn't have one piece of gold, one piece of diamond, they didn't even have one dollar.

Therefore, the whole sky filled with that many possessions, with that much wealth, the value is nothing compared to the value of this perfect human rebirth. Even if we have this perfect human body for one day, even if we have this perfect human body for one hour, for one minute, even for a second, the value of having it for even one second is no comparison compared to all the external possessions. Because even in one second with this perfect human rebirth, even if our life is one hour longer, one minute longer, one

second longer, if we practice, even in that one second, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] if we meditate on emptiness, we accumulate incredible purification and gain inconceivable merit by meditating with the mind touching on emptiness for even one second. [Rinpoche snaps his fingers]

By generating bodhicitta, we accumulate infinite merit. Even if we only have that much length of life left, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] such a short life, even if that's all the life that is left, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] if we use it, if we don't waste it, if we practice Dharma, if we practice bodhicitta, then we accumulate infinite merit, we create the cause to achieve enlightenment

Meditating on emptiness with bodhicitta, or renunciation with bodhicitta, even during that second doing a practice possessed by any of these, it becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment. Without bodhicitta, we create the cause to achieve liberation, everlasting happiness.

### *AWARENESS AND CONCENTRATION ARE NOT ENOUGH*

First of all, the perfect human rebirth, the precious human rebirth, is so precious. Even if it's not a perfect human rebirth now we can make it become a perfect human rebirth, having all the eight freedoms and ten richnesses. This is so precious, unbelievably precious. While we have such an incredibly precious human body, we should not be satisfied with just one meditation, spending our whole life for example just doing the breathing meditation, spending our whole life just watching the breath, spending the whole life just concentrating on the sound of a mantra and so forth.

Of course, if we are meditating on the emptiness of the sound that is a very rich meditation. We can meditate on emptiness, on the ultimate nature of the sound, the ultimate nature of the sensation; we can meditate on sensation—how it's impermanent, how it's empty. Within sensation, there are many different meditations. We can do a one-pointed concentration watching the sensation. We can do very deep, very rich meditations, very powerful meditations. We can relate to the four qualities of suffering: the *impermanence* of the suffering, the *suffering*, the *emptiness* and the *selflessness*, meaning the non-truly-existent I, the non-inherently-existent I. There are the four qualities of true suffering; then there are the four qualities of the cause of suffering, the four qualities of the cessation of suffering and the four qualities of the true path. [10]

We can meditate on the four qualities of the true suffering so that the feeling we have is that this is true suffering. We can meditate on the four qualities, the characteristics of suffering. Maybe qualities is not an exact translation. Maybe it's characteristics. There are four characteristics, there are four characters, to true suffering. If we meditate on sensation like this, it becomes a very rich meditation.

One of the most powerful meditations, the greatest purification, is meditating on the sensation that is empty. But to do that I think you have to understand exactly what emptiness means in the Prasangika's view. Of the four schools, the last one is the

Madhyamaka school, and within that there are two [subschoools], Svatantrika (Tib: *u ma rang gyur*) and Prasangika (Tib: *u ma thäl gyur*.) I think you have to know this exactly without making it messy, without making a mess. Without getting mixed up or without making a soup. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

Meditating on the characteristics of sensation, its emptiness, can really cut the ignorance, the concept of true existence, that is the root of the whole, entire samsara, the circling of our defiled aggregates. In order for the meditation on the sensations to become the remedy to cut the root of the whole, entire samsara, the concept of true existence, ignorance, we have to meditate on the emptiness of the sensation. Just any word, just anything that is called emptiness, any explanation on emptiness, that's not enough. There are even many Dharma books that talk about emptiness, they use the word "emptiness" but any explanation is not enough. It has to be exact; it has to be the ultimate emptiness, the Prasangika's view. Only that shows reality, only that can really cut the root of samsara.

Even though each school has its own view of what is the root of samsara, and its own interpretation of emptiness, in reality the ultimate nature is one. The ultimate view of emptiness is from the fourth school, the Madhyamaka school and of the [sub]schools, Prasangika and Svatantrika it has to be Prasangika's view. That is the ultimate view of emptiness.

Meditating on the characteristic or the nature of sensation, we have to know that very subtle right view, the emptiness that is the Prasangika's view, the ultimate view. That happens by meditating on subtle dependent arising.

While having such a precious, perfect human rebirth and then spending our whole life just meditating on the sensation of the body—the abdomen moving back and forth, the belly moving back and forth—is wasting our life. There's nothing after that, besides spending our whole life just watching the mind, just watching the thoughts, nothing more than that. There's no additional practice than that; there's nothing to go beyond that. After watching the thoughts, what are we going to do? We watch the thoughts and then what? There's nothing. Nothing after that.

Spending our whole life trying to meditate by stopping all the thoughts is similar to being in a deep sleep. There is no difference to a deep sleep. When dogs and cats and pigs are in a deep sleep there's no differentiation for them, there's no awareness of the object at all.

As I often mention, if after watching the action no other method is applied—if it's just watching the action—that's the same as the attention needed by a person who is planning to rob a bank. Especially a very professional thief who robs banks needs a lot of attention. He needs a lot of carefulness, a lot of awareness of how to climb on the roof and how to get inside. He needs to know the exact time, the place and how to get inside. He needs a lot of awareness in that. Without a lot of awareness he can't succeed. While he's stealing, the thief knows he's stealing. When a person kills, he has the intention to kill beforehand,

the preparation, and while he's doing the act, he's aware he's doing it. The awareness of the action of killing is there. It's the same for us. When we're walking along the road, we have that awareness: "I'm walking on the road." When we're working, we have that awareness: "I am working." It's the same.

If we only have awareness and there's no other meditation after that to apply, what's the point? Like the Kadampa Geshe Ben Gungyal, in his early life, he lived his life being a thief at night and a robber in the daytime. He had many arrows, knives and other weapons he carried around, hung from his belt. He had so many weapons around his belt. At nighttime he was a thief and in the daytime a robber, robbing other people's possessions.

He had a field that could harvest forty big sacks of grain. From his field he could get that amount of grain. Because of that people called him "Forty Sins" or "Forty Evils." That was his nickname.

Later he began to practice Dharma, constantly watching the mind to try to protect it, to keep it free from the eight worldly dharmas, the attachment clinging to this life. I mentioned those eight objects the other day—craving the comfort, the happiness of this life. By watching the mind and remembering impermanence and death and so forth, he could always practice the remedy to the eight worldly dharmas. By watching the mind, as soon as he saw the eight worldly dharmas start to arise, without delaying even a second, he immediately tried to smash them, he tried to cut them, to destroy them.

When he began to practice Dharma, one day he was staying at a benefactor's house. The benefactor, the owner of the house, went out somewhere and during that time Geshe Ben Gungyal went to steal some of the family's tea leaves that were in a bag. His left hand was already in the bag of tea when he suddenly recognized he was stealing. Then he shouted, "Oh, there's a thief in the house!" Suddenly he shouted, he made a big noise, he shouted, "Oh, there's a thief in the house! Come quickly!" He shouted so much that the owner of the house came running back. So he showed benefactor his left hand in the bag and said, "Here is the thief."

[In that way] he was practicing the remedy to the eight worldly dharmas as well as stopping the negative karma of stealing. He did many practices like this. As soon as he found out, as soon as he became aware, he recognized that he was creating negative karma, then he immediately stopped.

After watching, there's something else. If it's just practicing awareness of the action we are doing, only focusing on what we are doing, it can still become negative karma. Just being aware of something like walking without watching whether negative thoughts arise, it can become a negative action. We need to watch the motivation. If we're practicing awareness just paying attention to our walking, that can still become negative karma if we don't watch the mind, because whether it becomes positive or negative karma, virtuous action or nonvirtuous action, generally depends on the motivation. If the motivation of the action is virtuous then it makes the action virtuous; if the motivation is nonvirtuous it makes the action nonvirtuous. Generally it's like this.

Therefore, simply observing that we're walking, that alone cannot stop the action of walking not becoming negative karma. We have to watch the motivation. Only then can we recognize whether our action of walking, eating, sleeping, whatever it is, is negative karma or not. Only then can we recognize the negativity and then we can eliminate it by applying the meditation that is the remedy. If our aim is just focusing on the actual walking, we can do that all day long and all day long we can be creating negative karma. Even though we believe we're doing a meditation all day long, we're still creating negative karma. A walking meditation, a breathing meditation, watching the mind or whatever it is, if our main aim is just that, if our main concern is not for the action to become virtuous, the action doesn't become the cause of happiness, virtue. The essential point of meditation, the purpose of meditation is not for suffering, it's for happiness. We don't need meditation for that; we don't need an additional method to create suffering. We don't need to use a spiritual practice to have more suffering. There's enough already. There's plenty.

If we don't know the real aim of meditation we could spend the whole of our life doing negative karma. We might have been concentrating on something, but that doesn't mean it's virtue. That alone doesn't mean it's virtue; it doesn't mean we're creating the cause of happiness. If we don't know how to meditate, if we don't know the real point of meditation, if we don't have the aim that the action we do becomes the unmistakable cause of happiness, virtue, if we simply concentrate on something, there's a danger that we waste our whole life. Not just waste our whole life because all those actions didn't become positive karma, the cause of happiness, but we have used our whole life to create negative karma, additional negative karma.

There are many negative karmas. Every day, day and night, we create them, and then, on top of that, even our concentration practice becomes negative karma due to impure motivation. Because there's no bodhicitta motivation, because there's no renunciation of samsara, there's no wisdom, because the meditation is not possessed by the right view. These three very important things are not there. These three very important things cut the greatest obstacles, continuously stopping the action becoming heavy negative karma, the obstacles to achieving liberation, the obstacles to achieving enlightenment, and they are not there.

### *THE THREE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE PATH*

This is the importance of the common path, the general path, the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment. Its essence is the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment: the determination to be free from samsara, bodhicitta and right view.

Without the renunciation of samsara, the determination to be free from samsara, even if we meditate on the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra—meditating on the chakras, winds and drops, doing *tum-mo* meditation and the like—even if we are able to do it during our sleep, moving the subtle wind-mind, having those experiences; if it is not possessed by the thought of renunciation, the determination to be free from the whole,



entire samsara, then that action of meditation, even if it's Highest Yoga Tantra, Secret Mantra, it does not become the cause to achieve liberation, even for ourselves. Here we're not talking about enlightenment but the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path, achieving liberation for ourselves. This meditation does not even become the cause of that.

That is an *extremely* important point to understand and to remember when we devote our time doing a retreat, doing any practice, doing any meditation. It's very important, this one analysis: to remember this and to check whether our action of meditation, doing this practice, is done out of renunciation or not. We need to check, to be aware of this. That is an extremely important point. If it doesn't become the cause to achieve liberation even for ourselves, that means the meditation we're doing, the practice we're doing, simply becomes another additional cause of samsara. Every day, with our body, speech and mind, we are constantly creating so many causes of samsara, so many causes of the suffering realm. And then, even when we do our meditation practice, it becomes the cause of samsara.

And the other thing, even if it's a very highest tantric practice, if it's not done with the motivation of bodhicitta, the meditation doesn't become the cause to achieve enlightenment. This is another extremely important point to remember when we do meditation practices or retreats. Whenever we do a session we need to check whether the session, the meditation, is possessed by that motivation or not, whether it is done to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings or not. We need to check and if it's not possessed with renunciation then we should generate the thought, the determination to be free from samsara. If it's not possessed with bodhicitta, we should generate the motivation of bodhicitta. *Then* we do the practice. We must try to do the practice possessed by that.

Even if our practice is Highest Yoga Tantra, if it's not possessed with the wisdom realizing emptiness, right view, then no matter how secret it is, no matter how high the tantra it is, it can't become the remedy to cut even the root of the samsara. It doesn't even become the remedy to cut the root of the samsara, ignorance, the concept of true existence, that which is the cause of samsara.

If the practice is done without being possessed with right view, even if we are visualizing a deity, meditating on a deity with mandalas and so forth, then there's a danger that it becomes the cause of samsara, that it becomes another additional cause of samsara. That's the third point to check, and then to do the practice with that.

In the same way, from morning until night, if our twenty-four hours' activity—walking, sitting, sleeping, eating and so forth—if these actions in our daily life are done with bodhicitta then they become the cause of enlightenment. If they are done with the renunciation of samsara then they become the cause to achieve liberation, and if they are done with the right view they become the remedy to cut the root of samsara. Besides our meditation practice, even our daily actions create the causes like that.

If the actions of our daily life are done without the three principal aspects of the path, every single action done with the body, speech and mind for the whole twenty-four hours becomes the cause of samsara. Since there's no renunciation, they all become the cause of samsara. Since they are not done out of renunciation, they all become the cause of samsara, circling from one life to another life. Because the aggregates are defiled, we must experience the suffering rebirth and death and so many other problems, we must constantly experience the three types of sufferings. Every action we do becomes the cause of that, the cause of samsara. Rather than becoming the remedy to cut the root of samsara, they become the support for the root of samsara, the concept of true existence. Every action we do in every twenty-four hours becomes an obstacle to achieve the ultimate, everlasting happiness, liberation and full enlightenment.

### *THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION: FOUR PEOPLE RECITE THE TARA PRAYER*

At this point I'll mention about motivation. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo was one of the quite recent lineage lamas of the graduated path to enlightenment. He did extensive work for sentient beings, teaching and completing the whole path, experiencing the whole path and becoming enlightened. He did extensive work and benefited the teachings for sentient beings. From his experience of the teachings, uncountable numbers of sentient beings such as my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, became holy beings, actualizing the path. Innumerable numbers achieved the graduated path to enlightenment; this happened from his teachings, by hearing the teachings from this great enlightened being and studying his experienced teachings. Innumerable numbers of meditators achieved realizations on the graduated path and the two stages of tantra. Not only in the past but even nowadays there have been so many who have developed their mind on the three principal aspects of the path and the two stages of tantra, by studying and putting his teachings into the practice, which are experiential teachings. They come from Pabongka Rinpoche with his own complete experience.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo wrote *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, one of the most effective commentaries on the graduated path to enlightenment. In it, he explained the importance of motivation with the example of four people who recite the Tara prayer.

For those of you who have heard lam-rim teachings before, who have done courses before, this is not a new subject. It's just to remind you and to persuade you practice. For those of you who haven't heard lam-rim, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, before, it's very important. Knowing this advice, knowing this instruction is the greatest gift. Coming to the Kopan course, even if you can't understand any other subject, as long as you can understand this example that Pabongka explained, the importance of the motivation, that is enough. That determines what becomes Dharma and what doesn't become Dharma, which action becomes Dharma and which action doesn't become Dharma. It determines which action becomes the cause of happiness and which action doesn't become the cause of happiness. Even if the only thing you get out of the course is this, you have understood the very heart of the practice, the very essence of the Mahayana practice, the very essence of the Buddhadharma practice.

Of the four people reciting the Tara prayer, the first person recites it with the motivation of bodhicitta, to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Because of that, this first person's action of reciting the Tara prayer becomes the cause of enlightenment.

The second person recites the Tara prayer with the motivation to achieve liberation, the cessation of samsara for oneself. Reciting the Tara prayer with this motivation, the determination to be free from samsara, to achieve liberation for oneself, this doesn't become the cause of enlightenment because there's no bodhicitta motivation. It only becomes the cause of achieving liberation for oneself.

The third person recites the Tara prayer with the motivation to obtain happiness in the future lives. This person's action of reciting the Tara prayer doesn't become the cause to achieve enlightenment, nor does it become the cause to achieve liberation, it only becomes the cause of happiness of future lives, only to obtain that happiness. This is because the third person's motivation for reciting the prayer wasn't done with bodhicitta, it wasn't done with the determination to be free from samsara, but only to achieve the happiness of future lives.

Then the fourth person recites the Tara prayer with the motivation that is attachment, clinging to this life, to have a long life, to be healthy, to have power, wealth and so forth. The motivation is clinging to this life, to the comfort and happiness of this life, so that is attachment.

With the wish to achieve liberation, the wish to achieve enlightenment, the nature of the mind is calm, peaceful. The nature of the mind is calm, peaceful; the nature is not painful. The wish to achieve liberation and enlightenment does not obscure the mind to see reality, to see how causative phenomena are the nature of impermanence, and to see the ultimate nature, emptiness. This wish to achieve liberation or enlightenment does not interfere, it does not obscure the mind to see emptiness.

Clinging to this life, clinging to the black eight worldly dharmas, is a very painful, uptight mind. The thought clinging to this life, to these eight objects, the eight worldly dharmas—craving comfort, receiving materials, friends, interesting sounds, reputation, praise and so forth and not wanting discomfort, not receiving material things or friends and so forth—the nature, the characteristic of that mind is uptight, painful. It's painful because it's extremely difficult to separate the mind from the object. Like when we drop oil onto paper it's so difficult to separate the oil from the paper, the mind of attachment is like that. That is the nature of the attachment toward the object. That's what makes it so painful, so difficult to separate from the object.

It's not just that. Besides the nature of attachment being unpeaceful, kind of painful, if we analyze it, it's like pulling the heart from the object. The mind gets stuck to the object and then the nature is painful, not peaceful. During that time our mind doesn't feel clear; it feels obscured, like a clear sky filled with fog, with thick clouds. During that time the

mind is not like a clear sky or calm, clear water. It doesn't feel free, relaxed, tranquil; it doesn't have that nature. That sense of being very peaceful inside, in the heart, that experience is not there. Strong attachment is there instead.

Attachment obscures us from seeing the nature of the object. It obscures us from seeing the impermanent nature of the phenomenon, to see that is the nature it has. It blocks, it obscures the mind, it distracts us from that mind. It doesn't allow us to see that the nature of the object is impermanence. That is the conventional nature of the object.

Then especially the function of attachment is to obscure us from seeing the ultimate nature of the object, especially from seeing the ultimate nature of the I. First of all, it doesn't allow the mind to meditate on emptiness. It doesn't give us the freedom to meditate; it doesn't give us freedom to reflect on emptiness.

The wish to achieve liberation and enlightenment, the wish to realize emptiness, the nature of those things is a calm, peaceful mind. They don't have the function of obscuring the mind. The function of these wishes is completely the opposite of attachment.

If we analyze our own thoughts, there are big differences between the mind wishing to achieve liberation, enlightenment, wishing to realize emptiness, all these things, and attachment, which is also a wish, to receive these eight objects. Clinging to the happiness of this life is a wish in the same way wishing for enlightenment is a wish, but, if we analyze, there are big differences in the characteristics of the two minds.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo clearly mentions in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that the fourth person's action of reciting the Tara prayer with the motivation clinging to this life, to have the happiness of this life—to have long life, health, power, wealth, these things—that fourth person's action of reciting the Tara prayer does not become Dharma. It is very clearly mentioned there. That's one of the texts that clearly mentions this. Even though the subject that the person is reciting is Dharma, the person's action doesn't become Dharma. The lowest definition of Dharma is that which protects us from falling into the lower realms. It holds us up from falling into the suffering lower realms. That is the lowest definition of Dharma. That fourth person's action, even though the subject is Dharma, the action of reciting the Tara prayer doesn't become Dharma because the motivation was not Dharma but simply attachment to this life, simply worldly thought.

We don't have to live our life concerned with the eight worldly dharmas. There are many positive thoughts we can have. This is not the only motivation of life, this is not the only attitude of life. There are many other positive attitudes of life, there are many other ways we can live our life. If we have life it doesn't mean our attitude of life has to be one of worldly concern. It doesn't mean that. We can live our life with those other positive attitudes that bring happiness, whereas this one only produces suffering.

Lama Atisha was the one who re-established the Buddhadharma in Tibet. When it had become corrupted, Lama Atisha made pure again. He was invited by the king of Tibet,

Lha Lama Yeshe Ö, to come to Tibet from Nalanda, the great university in India, where there were many hundreds of pandits. Lama Atisha was one of the most respected, one of the greatest masters there, even in India. Lama Atisha was invited to Tibet to re-establish pure Buddhadharma.

One day his translator, Dromtönpa, asked what results there are with actions done out of the motivation of worldly concern, the mind clinging to this life. Lama Atisha explained that for actions done out of the motivation clinging to this life, the result will be rebirth in the naraks—the hells—as a preta or hungry ghost or as an animal.

So now you see what makes an action become Dharma. The fourth person's action of reciting the Tara prayer does not become Dharma. It becomes *worldly* dharma not *holy* Dharma. It does not become holy Dharma, it becomes worldly dharma. It doesn't become the cause of happiness of future lives. Even though reciting mantras and prayers like this has power, even though when they are recited with the wrong motivation, with a negative motivation, they have power to heal disease, to stop the life obstacles, to gain power, to have wealth, to have success in business and so forth, success in the work—even though they can stop obstacles to success, that does not mean the action of reciting those mantras or prayers becomes holy Dharma.

Similarly, when we take medicine, it can cure the disease, but that doesn't necessarily mean taking medicine becomes Dharma. It doesn't mean that. Just because the medicine can cure, can solve some problems, that doesn't prove that the action of taking medicine becomes Dharma.

What we have to understand is that what makes our daily life's actions the unmistakable cause of happiness is made by the mind, by the motivation. There's no virtuous action from its own side. There's no cause of happiness from its own side. The mind has to create the action, the mind has to create the cause of happiness, the mind has to make the action become the cause of happiness.

It's the same in anything we do. Not only when we do retreat, doing those particular practices, even in daily life, from morning until night, for all our actions—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, those four actions, and so forth—even for those daily life's normal activities it's the same. If they are done with bodhicitta they become the cause of enlightenment. If they are done with the motivation of attachment clinging only to this life, then they only become nonvirtue, they only become the cause of suffering, the cause of the lower realms. If they are done with the motivation of obtaining the happiness of future lives, [they become the cause of that, and if the motivation is freedom from samsara] they become the cause of liberation for the self. If these actions are done with bodhicitta, then they become the cause of enlightenment, even the daily life actions: eating, walking, sitting, sleeping and so forth. Depending on the motivation they become virtue or nonvirtue, the cause of happiness or the cause of suffering.

Since happiness and suffering depend on the action and the action depends on the motivation, we need to know what kind of motivation. If the importance of the

motivation is never taught, if it is never explained at all, then even a whole life in retreat can be wasted. A person can be taught some meditation and spend his whole life in meditation, doing retreat in an isolated place, not meeting people, not eating food or drinking water, living in silence, even doing a Highest Yoga Tantra meditation, but if he doesn't watch the mind, if he doesn't attempt to transform the mind, to generate positive attitudes such as bodhicitta, if he doesn't transform the mind in renunciation, cutting the attachment clinging to this life, then none of his actions become Dharma, no matter how many years he spends in retreat. None of his actions become Dharma at all, since they are all done with attachment, clinging to this life. Therefore you can now see how his whole life has been wasted. Not only that, he has used his whole life only to create another cause of the lower realms, another cause of samsara.

There are some stories from India and Tibet that show this. Once there was a person who spent his life meditating on a deity, Yamantaka, doing a retreat on the deity. After he died, he was born as a spirit. He did a Yamantaka retreat in Tibet. He lived in a hermitage and meditated on the deity, Yamantaka, but after his death he was born as a very powerful spirit that had a similar shape to Yamantaka, the deity the meditator had visualized in the past life. There are many stories like this.

This is something to think about. It means that if we miss out renunciation, bodhicitta and wisdom, we don't know how to meditate. We don't know how to meditate; we don't know how to do a retreat. We don't know the lam-rim. We don't know the lam-rim practice; we don't do the lam-rim practice, the three principal aspects of the path. That's why these problems happen. Meditators can do a high tantric practice but that action of practicing tantra doesn't become the cause to achieve liberation or enlightenment.

So, I'll stop here.

## Footnotes

- [1.](#) Adornment of the Mahayana Sutras (*Mahayanasutralamkara*; *Do de gyan*).
- [2.](#) Skandha (Skt) means "aggregate" or "heap," the five psycho-physical constituents that make up a sentient being, as Rinpoche has listed.
- [3.](#) Manjushri Institute was one of the first FPMT centers. It operated between 1976–83.
- [4.](#) Six advanced tantric practices devised by the great Indian pandit, Naropa (1016–1100); they are: the yoga of inner fire (Tib: *tum-mo*), of illusory body, of clear light, of the dream state, of the intermediate state (Tib: *bardo*), and of the transference of consciousness (Tib: *po-wa*).
- [5.](#) This will almost definitely be Ian Stevenson's *Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation* or his *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*. Rinpoche has often referred to these books.
- [6.](#) *Tum-mo* (Tib) is the Highest Yoga Tantra inner fire meditation where the energy residing at the navel chakra is used to bring the psychic winds into the central channel.
- [7.](#) Like other lam-rim subjects on this course, perfect human rebirth was covered by another teacher and so not included here. The eight freedoms are the eight states from which a perfect human rebirth is free: being born as a hell-being, hungry ghost, animal,

long-life god or barbarian or in a dark age when no buddha has descended; holding wrong views; being born with defective mental or physical faculties. The ten richnesses are being born as a human being, in a Dharma country and with perfect mental and physical faculties; not having committed any of the five immediate negativities; having faith in the Buddha's teachings; being born when a buddha has descended, the teachings have been revealed, the complete teachings still exist and there are still followers of the teachings; and having the necessary conditions to practice Dharma, such as the kindness of others. See Rinpoche's *Perfect Human Rebirth* for a full explanation.

[8.](#) A print of a buddha's image made from plaster or clay from a carved mold.

[9.](#) The book is almost definitely Ian Gawler's *You Can Recover from Cancer*.

[10.](#) They are: for the *truth of the cause*: causes, origin, strong production and condition; for the *truth of cessation*: cessation, peace, contentment and definite emergence; and for the *truth of the path*: path, suitable, establishing and definitely emerging. See Geshe Jampa Tegchok: *Transforming Adversity into Joy and Courage*, pp. 136–148.

## Images

[Introducing the Kopan Teaching Series.](#) Portrait of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, possibly in Switzerland 1990 (Photographer Ueli Minder) (02357\_ng.JPG)

[How the Kopan Courses Began.](#) Group photo from the Fourth Meditation Course, Kopan Monastery, Nepal, 1973. (Photo Christine Lopez) (13294\_pr-2.psd)

[Lecture 11.](#) 1989 (Donor-photographer Ueli Minder) (02481\_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 12.](#) Kopan Monastery, 1987 (Unknown photographer) (21559\_pr.tif)

[Lecture 13.](#) CIN Chenrezig Institute 1994 (Negatives from Lama Zopa Rinpoche) (35388\_ng.jpg)

[Lecture 14.](#) Bern 1993 (Donor-photographer Ueli Minder) (04166\_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 15.](#) CIN Chenrezig Institute 1991 (Donor-photographer Thubten Yeshe (Augusta Alexander) (14836\_ng.JPG)

## Glossary

You can also explore the extensive glossary available on the [LYWA website](#).

*aggregates* (*Skt: skandha*). The association of body and mind; a person comprises five aggregates: form, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and consciousness.

*Amitabha* (*Skt*). One of the five Dhyani Buddhas, red in color, representing the wisdom of analysis and the fully purified aggregate of discrimination.

*anger*. A disturbing thought that exaggerates the negative qualities of an object and wishes to harm it; one of the three root delusions.

*arhat* (*Skt*). Literally, foe destroyer. A being who, having ceased their karma and delusions, is completely free from all suffering and its causes and has achieved liberation from cyclic existence.

*arya* (*Skt*). A being who has directly realized emptiness.

*asura (Skt)*. demigod.

*Atisha, Lama* (982–1054). The renowned Indian master who went to Tibet in 1042 to help in the revival of Buddhism and established the Kadam tradition. His text *Light of the Path* was the first lam-rim text.

*attachment*. A disturbing thought that exaggerates the positive qualities of an object and wishes to possess it; one of the three root delusions.

*Avalokiteshvara (Skt)*. See *Chenrezig*.

*bhumi (Skt)*. Literally, stage or ground. Bodhisattvas must traverse ten bhumis on their journey to enlightenment, the first being reached with the direct perception of emptiness.

*bodhicitta (Skt)*. The altruistic determination to achieve full enlightenment in order to free all sentient beings from suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

*bodhisattva (Skt)*. One who possesses bodhicitta.

*buddha, a (Skt)*. A fully awakened being. One who has totally eliminated (Tib: *sang*) all obscurations veiling the mind and has fully developed (Tib: *gye*) all good qualities to perfection.

*Buddha, the (Skt)*. The historical Buddha, Shakymuni. See also *enlightenment*, *Shakyamuni Buddha*.

*Buddhadharma (Skt)*. See *Dharma*.

*capable being (lower, middle or higher)*. See *three levels of practice*.

*chakra (Skt)*. Energy wheel; the focal point of the wind energy channels within the body.

*Chengawa, Geshe* (1038–1103). One of Dromtonpa's main disciples.

*Chenrezig (Tib; Skt: Avalokiteshvara)*. The Buddha of Compassion. The male meditational deity that embodies the compassion of all the buddhas. The Dalai Lamas are said to be emanations of this deity.

*compassion*. The sincere wish that others be free from suffering and its causes.

*conventional bodhicitta*. The altruistic mind that wishes to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. The word “conventional” is used to distinguish it from “ultimate” bodhicitta, the realization of emptiness with a bodhicitta motivation.

*dakini (Skt)*. Literally, “female sky-goer.”

*Dalai Lama, His Holiness* (b. 1935). Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso. Revered spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and tireless worker for world peace; winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989; a guru of Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

*deity (Tib: yidam)*. An emanation of the enlightened mind, used as the object of meditation in tantric practices.

*delusions*. The disturbing, negative thoughts, or minds, that are the cause of suffering. The three root delusions are ignorance, anger and attachment.



*Denma Lochö Rinpoche* (b. 1928). A learned Gelugpa lama, a former abbot of Namgyal Monastery, who is one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus.

*desire realm* (*Skt: kamadhatu*). One of the three realms of samsara, comprising the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demigods and the six lower classes of gods; beings in this realm are preoccupied with desire for objects of the six senses.

*Dharamsala*. A village in the north-west of India, in Himachal Pradesh. The residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

*Dharma* (*Skt*). In general, spiritual practice; specifically, the teachings of Buddha, which protect from suffering and lead to liberation and full enlightenment.

*Dromtönpa* (1005-64). Lama Atisha's heart disciple and chief translator in Tibet; propagator of the Kadampa tradition.

*eight freedoms*. The eight states from which a perfect human rebirth is free: being born as a hell being, hungry ghost, animal, long-life god, when no buddha has descended, as a barbarian, being born with defective mental or physical faculties or as a heretic, holding wrong views. (See also *ten richnesses*.)

*eight Mahayana precepts*. One-day vows to abandon killing; stealing; lying; sexual contact; taking intoxicants; sitting on high seats or beds; eating at the wrong time; and singing, dancing and wearing perfumes and jewelry.

*eight worldly dharmas*. The worldly concerns that generally motivate the actions of ordinary beings: craving material possessions and to be free from lack of possessions; craving happiness and comfort and to be free from lack of happiness and comfort; craving a good reputation and to be free from a bad one; craving praise and to be free from criticism.

*emptiness* (*Skt: shunyata; Tib: tong-pa-nyi*) Literally "emptiness only." The absence, or lack, of true existence. Ultimately, every phenomenon is empty of existing truly, or from its own side, or independently. Lama Zopa Rinpoche explains the importance of the syllable *nyi* (Tib) or "only" in cutting off ordinary emptiness, for example, a purse being empty of having money. Without this final syllable the term falls short of indicating the total lack of inherent existence.

*enlightenment* (*Skt: bodhi; Tib: jang-chub*). Full awakening; buddhahood; omniscience. The ultimate goal of a Mahayana Buddhist, attained when all obscurations have been removed and all the qualities of the mind have been fully actualized. It is a state characterized by perfect compassion, wisdom and power. Lama Zopa Rinpoche points out that the Tibetan, *jang-chub*, is much more precise than the English as the two syllables encompass what enlightenment is: *jang* meaning "elimination" as in the elimination of all gross and subtle obstacles and *chub* meaning "development" as in the development of all perfect qualities.

*eon* (*Skt: kalpa*). A world period, an inconceivably long period of time. The life span of the universe is divided into eons.

*faith*. There are three kinds: believing, or pure-hearted, faith; lucid, or understanding, faith—faith based on logical conviction; and yearning, or aspirational, faith.

*five lay vows*. The vows against killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and taking intoxicants taken by lay Buddhist practitioners.

*five paths*. The paths along which beings progress to liberation and enlightenment; the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation and no more learning.

*form realm (Skt: rupadhatu)*. The second of samsara's three realms, with seventeen classes of gods.

*formless realm (Skt: arupyadhatu)*. The highest of samsara's three realms, with four classes of gods involved in formless meditations.

*four means of drawing disciples to the Dharma*. The second of two sets of practices of the bodhisattva (the other being the six perfections); they are giving, speaking kind words, teaching to the level of the student and practicing what you teach.

*four noble truths*. The subject of Shakyamuni Buddha's first teaching, or first turning of the wheel of Dharma: true suffering, true cause of suffering, true cessation of suffering and true path leading to the cessation of suffering.

*four opponent powers*. The four-part purification practice; the power of the object (refuge), regret (having done a specific negative action), resolve (not to do the specific negative action again) and remedy (a practice such as Vajrasattva).

*Gelug (Tib)*. One of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it was founded by Lama Tsongkhapa in the early fifteenth century and has been propagated by such illustrious masters as the successive Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas.

*Gelugpa (Tib)*. A follower of the Gelug tradition.

*geshe (Tib)*. Literally, spiritual friend. The title conferred on those who have completed extensive studies and examinations at Gelugpa monastic universities.

*Geshe Chengawa*. See *Chengawa*.

*god*. See *deva*.

*gompa (Tib)*. Usually refers to the main meditation hall, or temple, within a monastery.

*graduated path to enlightenment*. See *lam-rim*.

*Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. See *Lam-rim Chen-mo*.

*guru (Skt; Tib: lama)*. Literally, heavy, as in heavy with Dharma knowledge. A spiritual teacher, master.

*guru devotion*. The sutra or tantra practice of seeing the guru as a buddha then devoting to him or her with thought and action.

*Guru Puja (Skt; Tib: Lama Chöpa)*. A special Highest Yoga Tantra guru yoga practice composed by Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltzen.

*hearer (Skt: shravaka)*. Followers of the Hinayana, who strive for nirvana on the basis of listening to teachings from a teacher.

*Heart Sutra aka Heart of Wisdom Sutra (Skt: prajnaparamita-hridaya).* The best known of a series of sutras on emptiness classified as *prajnaparamita (perfection of wisdom) sutras*. See also *prajnaparamita*.

*hell.* The samsaric realm with the greatest suffering. There are eight hot hells, eight cold hells, four surrounding hells and various occasional hells.

*heresy (Tib: log-ta).* Also called “mistaken wrong views,” one of the five afflicted views that are part of the root afflictions. Heresy is a deluded intelligence that rejects the existence of something that exists, such as karma, reincarnation, the Three Jewels and so forth, and ascribes existence to that which is nonexistent. It is also holding incorrect views about the guru.

*Highest Yoga Tantra (Skt: Anuttara yoga tantra).* The fourth and supreme of the four classes of tantra, which mainly emphasizes internal activities.

*Hinayana (Skt).* Literally, the Lesser Vehicle. The path of the arhats, the goal of which is nirvana, or personal liberation from samsara. Although not synonymous, the term Theravada is often preferred. (See also *Theravada*.)

*hungry ghost (Skt: preta)* One of the six classes of samsaric beings, hungry ghosts experience the greatest sufferings of hunger and thirst.

*ignorance.* A mental factor that obscures the mind from seeing the way in which things exist in reality. There are basically two types of ignorance, ignorance of karma and the ignorance that holds the concept of true existence; the fundamental delusion from which all other delusions arise.

*impermanence.* The gross and subtle levels of the transience of phenomena.

*imprints.* The seeds, or potentials, left on the mind by positive or negative actions of body, speech and mind.

*inherent existence.* See *true existence*.

*initiation (Skt: abhishika; Tib: wang).* Or empowerment. The transmission of the practice of a particular deity from a tantric master to a disciple, which permits the disciple to engage in that practice.

*Kadampa geshe.* A practitioner of the Buddhist tradition that originated in Tibet in the eleventh century with the teachings of Lama Atisha. Kadampa geshe are renowned for their practice of thought transformation.

*Kagyü (Tib).* One of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, having its source in such illustrious lamas as Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa and Gyalwa Karmapa.

*karma (Skt; Tib: lä).* Literally, action. The working of cause and effect, whereby positive actions produce happiness and negative actions produce suffering.

*Kasyapa.* The third buddha of this eon.

*Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen (1894–1977).* A renowned bodhisattva born in northern India, who wrote *Vast as the Heavens, Deeps as the Sea: Verses in Praise of Bodhicitta*; a guru of Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

*Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche* (1926-2006). A highly attained and learned ascetic yogi who lived in Dharamsala, India, and who is one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus.

*Kopan Monastery*. The monastery near Boudhanath in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, founded by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

*lama* (Tib). See *guru*.

*Lama Atisha*. See *Atisha, Lama*.

*Lama Chöpa*. See *Guru Puja*.

*Lama Tsongkhapa*. See *Tsongkhapa, Lama*.

*Lama Yeshe*. See *Yeshe, Lama*.

*lam-rim* (Tib). The graduated path to enlightenment. A presentation of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings as step-by-step training for a disciple to achieve enlightenment.

*Lam-rim Chen-mo* (Tib.) *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. Lama Tsongkhapa's most important work, a commentary on Atisha's *Lamp for the Path*, the fundamental lam-rim text.

*liberation* (Skt: *nirvana* or *moksha*; Tib: *nyang-dä* or *thar-pa*). The state of complete freedom from samsara; the goal of a practitioner seeking his or her own escape from suffering (see also Hinayana). "Lower nirvana" is used to refer to this state of self-liberation, while "higher nirvana" refers to the supreme attainment of the full enlightenment of buddhahood. Natural nirvana (Tib: *rang-zhin nyang-dä*) is the fundamentally pure nature of reality, where all things and events are devoid of any inherent, intrinsic or independent reality.

*lineage lama*. A spiritual teacher who is in the line of direct guru-disciple transmission of teachings, from Buddha to the teachers of the present day.

*loving kindness*. The wish for others to have happiness and its causes.

*lower realms*. The three realms of cyclic existence with the most suffering: the hell, hungry ghost and animals realms.

*Mahayana* (Skt). Literally, Great Vehicle. The path of the bodhisattvas, those seeking enlightenment in order to enlighten all other beings.

*Maitreya Buddha* (Skt; Tib: *Jampa*). The Loving One. The next buddha, after Shakyamuni, and fifth of the thousand buddhas of this present world age.

*mala* (Skt; Tib: *threng-wa*). A rosary of beads for counting mantras.

*mandala* (Skt). The purified environment of a tantric deity; the diagram or painting representing this.

*mandala offering*. The symbolic offering of the entire purified universe.

*mantra* (Skt). Literally, mind protection. Sanskrit syllables usually recited in conjunction with the practice of a particular meditational deity and embodying the qualities of that deity.

*meditation.* Familiarization of the mind with a virtuous object. There are two main types of meditation: analytical and concentration, or fixed.

*merit.* The positive energy accumulated in the mind as a result of virtuous actions of body, speech and mind. The principal cause of happiness.

*merit field.* Or field of accumulation. The visualized or actual holy beings in relation to whom one accumulates merit by going for refuge, making offerings and so forth and to whom one prays or makes requests for special purposes.

*method.* All aspects of the path to enlightenment other than those related to emptiness, principally associated with the development of loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta.

*Milarepa* (1040–1123). A great Tibetan yogi and poet famed for his impeccable relationship with his guru, Marpa, his asceticism and his songs of realization. A founding figure of the Kagyü tradition.

*mind.* Synonymous with consciousness. Defined as “that which is clear and knowing”; a formless entity that has the ability to perceive objects.

*mind training.* See *thought transformation*.

*Mount Meru.* The center of the universe in Buddhist cosmology.

*mudra* (*Skt*). Literally, seal. Symbolic hand gestures used in images of Buddha or in tantric rituals.

*naga* (*Skt*). Snake-like beings of the animal realm who live in or near bodies of water; commonly associated with fertility of the land, but can also function as protectors of religion.

*Nagarjuna.* The great second-century Indian philosopher and tantric adept who propounded the Madhyamaka philosophy of emptiness.

*Nalanda.* A Mahayana Buddhist monastic university founded in the fifth century in north India, not far from Bodhgaya, which served as a major source of the Buddhist teachings that spread to Tibet.

*narak* (*Skt*). Hell, either an overall term for the hell realm, or a specific term, as in the hot hells or cold hells.

*negative karma.* See *nonvirtue*.

*nirvana* (*Skt*). See *liberation*.

*nonvirtue.* Negative karma; an action that results in suffering.

*Nyingma* (*Tib*). The oldest of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it traces its teachings back to Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche.

*obscurations* (*Skt: avarana; Tib: drip-pa*). Also known as obstructions, these obscurations block the attainment of liberation and enlightenment. They are: the grosser kind, called *disturbing-thought obscurations* or *obscurations to liberation*, and the subtle obscurations, the imprints left when those are purified, called *obscurations to knowledge* or *obscurations to enlightenment*.

*om mani padme hum*. The *mani*; the mantra of Chenrezig, Buddha of Compassion.

*omniscient mind*. See *enlightenment*.

*Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo* (1871–1941). The author of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, and a very influential teacher and root guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Senior and Junior Tutors.

*Padmasambhava*. The eighth-century Indian tantric master mainly responsible for the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, revered by all Tibetan Buddhists, but especially by the Nyingmapas.

*Panchen Lama*. Lineage representing incarnations of Amitabha Buddha; the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama are the two highest spiritual leaders of Tibet.

*pandit* (*Skt*). A great scholar and philosopher.

*paramitas* (*Skt*). See *perfections*.

*Paramitayana* (*Skt*). Literally, Perfection Vehicle. The bodhisattva vehicle; a section of the Mahayana sutra teachings; one of the two forms of Mahayana, the other being Vajrayana. Also called Bodhisattvayana or Sutrayana.

*perfect human rebirth*. The rare human state, qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses, which is the ideal condition for practicing Dharma and attaining enlightenment.

*perfections* (*Skt: paramitas*). The practices of a bodhisattva. On the basis of bodhicitta, a bodhisattva practices the six perfections or paramitas: generosity, morality, patience, joyous perseverance, concentration and wisdom.

*pervasive compounding suffering*. The most subtle of the three types of suffering, it refers to the nature of the five aggregates, which are contaminated by karma and delusions.

*Prajnaparamita* (*Skt; Eng: Perfection of Wisdom*). Shakyamuni Buddha's second teaching, or turning of the wheel of Dharma, in which the wisdom of emptiness and the path of the bodhisattva are explained.

*preliminaries* (*Tib: ngön-dro*). The practices that prepare the mind for successful tantric meditation by removing hindrances and accumulating merit.

*preta* (*Skt*). See *hungry ghost*.

*prostrations*. Paying respect to the guru-deity with body, speech and mind; one of the tantric preliminaries.

*puja* (*Skt*). Literally, offering; a religious ceremony.

*pure realm*. A pure land of a buddha where there is no suffering; after birth in a pure land, the practitioner receives teachings directly from the buddha of that pure land, actualizes the rest of the path and then can quickly become enlightened.

*purification*. The removal, or cleansing, of negative karma and its imprints from the mind.

*Rajgir*. A town in Bihar, northern India; ancient capital of Magadha kingdom. Vulture's Peak is nearby.

*refuge* (*Skt: sharana; Tib: kyab*). The door to the Dharma path. Having taken refuge from the heart we become an inner being or Buddhist (as opposed to an outer being). There are three levels of refuge—Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana—and two or three causes necessary for taking refuge: fearing the sufferings of samsara in general and lower realms in particular; faith that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have the qualities and power to lead us to happiness, liberation and enlightenment; and (for Mahayana refuge) compassion for all sentient beings.

*renunciation*. The state of mind not having the slightest attraction to samsaric pleasures for even a second and having the strong wish for liberation.

*Rinpoche* (*Tib*). Literally, precious one. Generally, a title given to a lama who has intentionally taken rebirth in a human body to continue helping others. A respectful title used for one's own lama.

*Sakya* (*Tib*). One of the four principal traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it was founded in the eleventh century by Drokmi Shakya Yeshe (933–1047).

*samsara* (*Skt; Tib: khor-wa*). Cyclic existence; the six realms: the lower realms of the hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, and the upper realms of the humans, demi-gods and gods; the recurring cycle of death and rebirth within one or other of the six realms. It also refers to the contaminated aggregates of a sentient being.

*Sangha* (*Skt; Tib: ge-diin*). Spiritual community; the third of the Three Jewels of Refuge. In Tibetan *ge-diin* literally means intending (*diin*) to virtue (*ge*). Absolute Sangha are those who have directly realized emptiness; relative Sangha refers to a group of at least four fully ordained monks or nuns.

*Sarnath*. A small town near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, India; the site of Deer Park, where the Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma, giving his famous discourse on the four noble truths.

*secret mantra*. See *Vajrayana*.

*self-cherishing*. The self-centered attitude of considering one's own happiness to be more important than that of others; the main obstacle to the realization of bodhicitta.

*sentient being* (*Tib: sem-chen*). Any unenlightened being; any being whose mind is not completely free of ignorance.

*Sera Monastery*. One of the three great Gelugpa monasteries near Lhasa; founded in the early fifteenth century by Jamchen Chöje, a disciple of Lama Tsongkhapa; now also established in exile in south India. It has two colleges, Sera Je, with which Lama Zopa Rinpoche is connected, and Sera Me.

*Shakyamuni Buddha* (563–483 bce). The founder of the present Buddhadharma. Fourth of the one thousand founding buddhas of this present world age, he was born a prince of the Shakya clan in North India and taught the sutra and tantra paths to liberation and full enlightenment.

*Shantideva* (685–763). The great Indian bodhisattva who wrote *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, one of the essential Mahayana texts.

*single-pointed concentration.* The ability to focus effortlessly and for as long as one wishes on an object of meditation.

*six realms.* The general way that Buddhism divides the whole of cyclic existence, with three suffering realms (hell, hungry ghost and animal) and three fortunate realms (human, demigod and god).

*spirits.* Beings not usually visible to ordinary people; they can belong to the hungry ghost or god realms and can be beneficent as well as harmful.

*stupa (Skt).* A reliquary symbolic of the Buddha's mind.

*sura (Skt).* Another term for deva or god.

*sutra (Skt).* The open discourses of Shakyamuni Buddha; a scriptural text and the teachings and practices it contains.

*Sutrayana (Skt).* the pre-tantric division of Mahayana teachings stressing the cultivation of bodhicitta and the practice of the six perfections. Also called Paramitayana or Bodhisattvayana.

*tantra (Skt).* Also called Vajrayana, Mantrayana; the secret teachings of the Buddha; a scriptural text and the teachings and practices it contains. Tantric practices generally involve identification of oneself with a fully enlightened deity in order to transform one's own impure states of body, speech and mind into the pure states of that enlightened being.

*Tara (Skt; Tib: Drolma).* A female meditational deity who embodies the enlightened activities of all the buddhas; often referred to as the mother of the buddhas of the past, present and future.

*ten nonvirtues.* The three nonvirtues of body are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; the four nonvirtues of speech are lying, slander, harsh speech and gossip; the three nonvirtues of mind are covetousness, ill will and wrong views.

*ten richnesses.* The ten qualities that characterize a perfect human rebirth: being born as a human being, in a Dharma country and with perfect mental and physical faculties; being free from the five immediate negativities; having faith in Buddha's teachings; being born when a buddha has descended, when the teachings are still alive, when there are still followers of the teachings and having the necessary conditions to practice Dharma, such as the kindness of others. (See also *eight freedoms*.)

*thought transformation (Tib: lo-jong).* Also called *mind training*; a powerful approach to the development of bodhicitta, in which the mind is trained to use all situations, both happy and unhappy, as a means to destroy self-cherishing and self-grasping.

*Three Baskets.* See *Tripitaka*.

*three doors.* Body, speech and mind.

*three great meanings.* The happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment. See also *three ways a perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful*.

*three higher trainings.* The higher trainings in morality, concentration and wisdom.

*Three Jewels.* Another term for the Triple Gem.



*three levels of practice.* Also known as the three scopes, the three levels of lower, medium and higher capable being, based on the motivations of trying to attain a better future rebirth, liberation or enlightenment.

*three poisons.* Attachment, anger and ignorance.

*three principal aspects of the path.* The essential points of the lam-rim: renunciation of samsara, bodhicitta and right view, or emptiness.

*three ways a perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful.* The happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment and making this life useful in every moment. See also *the great meanings*.

*torma (Tib).* An offering cake used in tantric rituals. In Tibet, tormas were usually made of tsampa, but other edibles such as biscuits and so forth suffice.

*Tripitaka (Skt).* Literally, “three baskets”, the way the Buddha’s teachings are traditionally divided: the *Vinaya* (monastic discipline and ethics), *Sutra* (the Buddha’s discourses) and *Abhidharma* (logic and philosophy).

*Triple Gem.* The objects of Buddhist refuge: the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

*true existence.* The type of concrete, real existence from its own side that everything appears to possess; in fact, everything is empty of true existence.

*tsampa (Tib).* Roasted barley flour, a Tibetan staple food.

*Tsongkhapa, Lama (1357–1419).* The revered teacher and accomplished practitioner who founded the Gelug order of Tibetan Buddhism. An emanation of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom.

*twelve deeds.* The twelve deeds that each of the thousand buddhas of this eon perform, including Shakyamuni. They are: 1. descent from Tushita heaven, 2. conception in the womb, 3. being born, 4. training in the arts and sciences, 5. enjoying palace life, 6. renouncing the life of leisure, 7. practicing austerities, 8. sitting under the bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, 9. victory over the maras, 10. the attainment of enlightenment, 11. teaching the Dharma, 12. passing into Paranirvana.

*vajra (Skt; Tib: dorje).* Literally, “adamantine”, often translated as “thunderbolt” but usually left untranslated, the vajra is the four- or five-spoke implement used in tantric practice.

*Vajrasattva (Skt; Tib: Dorje Sempa).* A male tantric deity used especially for purification.

*virtue.* Positive karma; that which results in happiness.

*virtuous friend (Tib: ge-wai she-nyen).* See *guru*.

*wheel-turning king (Skt: chakravartin).* A monarch of an entire continent who rules by the Dharma and encourages his people to practice the Dharma. Ashoka is a prime example.

*wisdom.* All aspects of the path to enlightenment associated with the development of insight into the nature of reality, often specifically referring to the realization of emptiness.

*wish-granting jewel*. A jewel that brings its possessor everything that he or she desires.

*Yeshe, Lama* (1935–1984). Born and educated in Tibet, he fled to India, where he met his chief disciple, Lama Zopa Rinpoche. They began teaching Westerners at Kopan Monastery in 1969 and founded the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) in 1975.

*yoga* (*Skt*). Literally, to yoke. The spiritual discipline to which one yokes oneself in order to achieve enlightenment.

*yogi* (*Skt*). A highly realized meditator.

*zen* (*Tib*). The upper robe of a monk or nun.

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Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970. Since then, their teachings have been recorded and transcribed. At present we have well over 12,000 hours of digital audio and some 90,000 pages of raw transcript. Many recordings, mostly teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, remain to be transcribed, and as Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of recordings in the Archive increases accordingly. Most of our transcripts have been neither checked nor edited.

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*Archiving* requires managing the recordings of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche that have already been collected, collecting recordings of teachings given but not yet sent to the Archive, and collecting recordings of Lama Zopa's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. Incoming media are then catalogued and stored safely while being kept accessible for further work.

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Membership costs US\$1,000 and its main benefit is that you will be helping make the Lamas' incredible teachings available to a worldwide audience. More direct and tangible benefits to you personally include free Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche books from the Archive and Wisdom Publications, a year's subscription to Mandala and a year of monthly pujas by the monks and nuns at Kopan Monastery with your personal dedication. Please see [www.LamaYeshe.com](http://www.LamaYeshe.com) for more information.

#### *Monthly e-letter*

Each month we send out a free e-letter containing our latest news and a previously unpublished teaching by Lama Yeshe or Lama Zopa Rinpoche. To see more than one hundred twenty back-issues or to subscribe with your email address, please [go to our website](http://www.LamaYeshe.com).

## **About The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition**

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) is an international organization of Buddhist meditation study and retreat centers, both urban and rural, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 160 FPMT centers, projects and services in over forty countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general and the Tibetan Gelug tradition, founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsongkhapa, in particular.

Every quarter, the Foundation publishes a wonderful news journal, Mandala, from its International Office in the United States of America. To subscribe or view back issues, please go to the Mandala website, <http://www.mandalamagazine.org>, or contact:

FPMT  
1632 SE 11th Avenue,  
Portland, OR 97214  
Telephone (503) 808-1588;  
Fax (503) 808-1589  
[info@fpmt.org](mailto:info@fpmt.org)  
[www.fpmt.org](http://www.fpmt.org)

The FPMT website also offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition, details about the FPMT's educational programs, an online learning center, a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world and in your area, a link to the excellent FPMT Store, and links to FPMT centers—where you will find details of their programs—and other interesting Buddhist and Tibetan pages.

### *FPMT Online Learning Center*

In 2009, FPMT Education Services launched the FPMT Online Learning Center to make FPMT education programs and materials more accessible to students worldwide. While continuing to expand, the Online Learning Center currently offers the following courses:

- Meditation 101
- Buddhism in a Nutshell
- Heart Advice for Death and Dying
- Discovering Buddhism
- Basic Program
- Living in the Path

Living in the Path is particularly unique in that it takes teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and presents them in theme-related modules that include teaching transcripts, video extracts, meditations, mindfulness practices, karma yoga, and questions to assist

students in integrating the material. Current modules include: Motivation for Life, Taking the Essence, What Buddhists Believe, Guru is Buddha, Introduction to Atisha's text, The Happiness of Dharma, Bringing Emptiness to Life, The Secret of the Mind, Diamond Cutter Meditation, and Refuge & Bodhichitta.

All of our online programs provide audio and/or video teachings of the subjects, guided meditations, readings, and other support materials. Online forums for each program provide students the opportunity to discuss the subject matter and to ask questions of forum elders. Additionally, many retreats led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche are available in full via audio and/or video format.

Education Services is committed to creating a dynamic virtual learning environment and adding more FPMT programming and materials for you to enjoy via the Online Learning Center.

Visit us at: [onlinelearning.fpmt.org](http://onlinelearning.fpmt.org)

## **Other teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche currently available**

### **Books published by Wisdom Publications**

*Wisdom Energy*, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*Introduction to Tantra*, by Lama Yeshe

*Transforming Problems*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*The Door to Satisfaction*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification*, by Lama Yeshe

*The Bliss of Inner Fire*, by Lama Yeshe

*Becoming the Compassion Buddha*, by Lama Yeshe

*Ultimate Healing*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*Dear Lama Zopa*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*How to Be Happy*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

*Wholesome Fear*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche with Kathleen McDonald

*When the Chocolate Runs Out*, by Lama Yeshe

### **About Lama Yeshe:**

*Reincarnation: The Boy Lama*, by Vicki Mackenzie

### **About Lama Zopa Rinpoche:**

*The Lawudo Lama*, by Jamyang Wangmo

You can get more information about and order the above titles at [wisdompubs.org](http://wisdompubs.org) or call toll free in the USA on 1-800-272-4050.

### *Transcripts, practices and other materials*

See the LYWA and FPMT websites for transcripts of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other practices written or compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

## **What to do with Dharma teachings**

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this show you how to put the teachings into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings, the names of your teachers or holy images is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes such as propping up wobbly chairs or tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped in cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in the rubbish but burned in a special way. Briefly: do not incinerate such materials with other trash, but alone, and as they burn, recite the mantra om ah hum. As the smoke rises, visualize that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six samsaric realms, purifying their minds, alleviating their suffering, and bringing them all happiness, up to and including enlightenment. Some people might find this practice a bit unusual, but it is given according to tradition. Thank you very much.

## **Dedication**

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may everything needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have love and compassion for all sentient beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

## **About Lama Zopa Rinpoche**

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche was born in Thangme, Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thangme home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction*. At the age of ten, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim

retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found in *The Lawudo Lama* and on the LYWA and FPMT websites. Rinpoche's published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems, Virtue and Reality*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Heart of the Path* and *How Things Exist*.

### **About Dr. Nicholas Ribush**

Dr. Nicholas Ribush, MB, BS, is a graduate of Melbourne University Medical School (1964) who first encountered Buddhism at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1972. Since then he has been a student of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and a full time worker for their international organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). He was a monk from 1974 to 1986. He established FPMT archiving and publishing activities at Kopan in 1973 and with Lama Yeshe founded Wisdom Publications in 1975. Between 1981 and 1996 he served variously as Wisdom's director, editorial director and director of development. Over the years he has edited and published many teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other teachers and established and/or directed several other FPMT activities, including the International Mahayana Institute, Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre, the Enlightened Experience Celebration, Mahayana Publications, and now Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies and the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive. He was a member of the FPMT board of directors from its inception in 1983 until 2002 and currently serves on the boards of LYWA and Maitripa College.

### **About Gordon McDougall**

Gordon McDougall first met Tibetan Buddhism in Hong Kong in 1986 and was the director of Cham-Tse Ling, the FPMT center there, for two years. Since then he has been involved with various FPMT centers and projects. In 2001 he became the spiritual program coordinator of Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London, where he worked with the resident teacher, Geshe Tashi Tsering, to develop the Foundation of Buddhist Thought, the two-year campus and correspondence course that is part of the FPMT core education program. He administered the course and worked at Jamyang for seven years, editing the six FBT books, first as study books for the course and then as "stand-alone" books for Wisdom Publications. He has also led lam-rim courses in Europe and India and was involved with the creation of the Discovering Buddhism program. After moving to Bath he became a full time editor with the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive in 2008, managing the Publishing the FPMT Lineage project and editing the books in this series.

### **About Sandra Smith**



Sandra Smith, BCmn, met her teachers Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche in New Zealand in 1975. Later that year she joined the community at Chenrezig Institute, Queensland, Australia, where she has offered service in various roles. Sandra has studied with many lamas, including Geshe Loden, Zazep Tulku Rinpoche, Geshe Thinley, Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Tashi Tsering, H.E. Chöden Rinpoche and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. While raising her two children, Sandra became coordinator of the Dharma Club at Chenrezig Institute for several years. This role led to the creation of FPMT children's practice materials, including [Meditations for Children](#) and [Plays for Children](#). She currently writes feature articles for an Australian parenting magazine. Sandra served as Director of Chenrezig Institute from 2004 to 2006 and then worked at Mandala Books, a project of Karuna Hospice Service, Brisbane. In 2007/08 she held the positions of FPMT Australian National Coordinator and Tour Coordinator. Sandra commenced work as a web editor for Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive in 2009.

