

CUTTING THE ROOT
of SAMSARA

LAM-RIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 1991 ■ VOLUME THREE

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

CUTTING THE ROOT OF SAMBARA

Lam-rim Teachings from Kopan, 1991

Volume Three

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Archive #872

Lightly edited by

Gordon McDougall & Sandra Smith



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Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

Bringing you the teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche



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Introducing the Kopan Teachings Series



1990

This is the third volume in a new series presenting previously unpublished teachings from Lama Zopa Rinpoche's 24th Kopan lam-rim course in 1991.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*, the second volume, *Creating the Causes of Happiness*, and now this third volume, *Cutting the Root of Samsara*. 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

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.

-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 thangkas, a kind of guru of Kathmandu business. He had about twenty students selling statues and thangkas, 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 Gyaltzen, 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 Gyaltzen'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

Last updated Aug 27, 2013

Lecture 16



1989

PHENOMENA DON'T EXIST AS THEY APPEAR

Do not commit any unwholesome actions, any harmful actions toward other sentient beings, which are also harmful toward yourself.

Enjoy life by creating perfect, wholesome actions, virtuous, beneficial actions toward other sentient beings, which are also beneficial toward yourself.

Subdue one's own mind.

This is the teaching of the Buddha.

Reflect on the nature of causative phenomena such as the self, your own life, your body, your possessions, friends, enemies, strangers—the whole thing—that they are in the nature of impermanence. Reflect on their conventional nature, which is transitory, and that these things can be stopped at any time. These things do not last, even within a second; in every second they are changing, they are decaying, and these things can be stopped any time.



Therefore, there is no reason to follow the dissatisfied mind, attachment. Similarly, there's no reason for deluded minds to arise toward impermanent phenomena such as anger, ignorance, the concept of permanence. There's no reason, there's no space to arise any harmful thought or any ill will, jealousy and so forth.

By reflecting on the nature of phenomena, such as impermanence, this way you see more reason to generate a good heart, to generate compassion, the positive attitude. There is a valid reason. This way you see more reason to generate the positive attitude, and no reason to follow the negative thoughts, the disturbing thoughts.

Besides that, I, action, object—the whole of existence—while they exist by depending on the base and the thought which labels, by depending on those two, at the same time they are empty. At the same time, while they exist by depending on the base to be labeled and the thought which labels, by depending on those two, while they exist, all these existent phenomena are empty. They are empty of existing from their own side. These existent phenomena that appear as real ones, existing from their own side, are empty, they are empty from their own side. They are empty from their own side in reality.

The way they appear to our hallucinated mind, our dualistic mind, is inherently existent, that they exist from their own side. But the fact, the reality of all the existence is that they do not exist in this way. They do not exist in the way that they appear.



If they did exist as they appeared to our hallucinated, dualistic mind, then they should be findable by analysis. By searching, by analyzing to see whether a phenomenon really exists or not, it should become clearer, it should be able to be found. But when we analyze, it cannot be found.

Like the existence of past and future lives. Because they exist they can be realized, whereas the non-existence of past and future lives, the non-existence of the continuation of the mind before this life and after this life, doesn't exist and so can't be found. That's why there's nobody who has discovered or who has realized that there is no continuation of the mind before this life and after this life. There's nobody who has realized this. There's no omniscient one who has realized this.

Similarly, there's nobody who has realized that things have inherent existence, that things exist from their own side. There's nobody who has realized this. There are numberless beings who have realized that things do not exist from their own side. Similarly, there are numberless beings who have realized that there's reincarnation, that there's a continuation of the mind before this life and after this life. So this is similar.

So, all these things, while they exist, they are empty of existing from their own side.



Be aware of the impermanent nature of these phenomena, that these causative phenomena, including the self, life, are impermanent by nature and besides that, all existent phenomena are completely empty from their own side. How they exist is completely the opposite to how they have been appearing to our own hallucinated mind.

So, suddenly there's no reason at all, no purpose at all to follow all these wrong concepts, all these disturbing thoughts, the three poisonous minds and so forth. Even cherishing ourselves, even clinging to the I, cherishing the self, suddenly it doesn't make any sense. Suddenly we become aware that following these disturbing thoughts is completely unnecessary in life because in reality these things are not how they have been appearing so far.

By being aware of the reality of things, suddenly the old life is stopped and the new life is started. The old life is stopped and we begin a new life—a new life, a new mind, a new awareness, a new wisdom, a new action, which is not the cause of suffering. A life that produces peace, especially ultimate happiness, full enlightenment.

[Rinpoche chants Lion-face Dakini practice in Tibetan.]

KARMA: THE FOUR SUFFERING RESULTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Rinpoche: Is there some question regarding motivation? Something I mentioned yesterday?

Student: There's one. What is the cause of phenomena arising?

Rinpoche: The cause of phenomena arising? You mean, generally existing? Ah lay. Generally speaking, permanent and impermanent phenomena, everything, what makes them exist is because they're empty. They are empty of independence, so that's why they exist. That's why they exist. That's the general thing. Everything comes out of emptiness. The whole of existence comes out of emptiness, the emptiness of inherent existence. It is not saying it begins from nothing, it's not saying that. Everything comes into existence out of emptiness, the emptiness of inherent existence, the emptiness that is the opposite to how things appear to us now, as something unlabeled. Things—people, places, sense objects—appear to us here and now as unlabeled, they seem to exist unlabeled by the mind, to exist from their own side, not merely labeled by the mind.

The other thing is, for example, the various worlds are born from karma. There's individual karma and collective karma, the intention or karma that is an individual person's mind, and one that is a collective action, an action that is done by a group. So, various worlds are born from the living beings who use that world, who experience that world, who own that world. This comes from their karma, from their intention.

You'll understand the explanation to your question when we go through the subject of karma in more detail, with more specifics. For example, sexual misconduct. Since you've brought up this question, I'll give a particular example to show how things come from the mind, how they are born from karma, which is mind, the intention.

First of all, because [the act of sex] is done out of self-cherishing, it becomes sexual misconduct; it becomes a nonvirtuous action. Because of the attitude it becomes a nonvirtuous action. In order to become a complete nonvirtuous action, it has to have four things: base, thought, action and goal.

The complete sexual misconduct becomes nonvirtue because of the self-cherishing thought. Even if the action is done with attachment, from the three poisonous minds, it's done out of self-cherishing and so these four things are completed. Then it becomes a complete nonvirtuous action and this has four suffering results. This has four suffering results. Due to the action, the *ripened aspect result* determines the rebirth, which is rebirth in the lower realms—the narak or hell realm, the hungry ghost realm or the animal realm—one of these realms.

Then, *creating the result similar to the cause* means, even when in a future life we are born as a human being, we do the same action again. We do the same action again because of our past habit, the imprint of the past habit. Even if it's not taught by somebody else, we do it out of what is called by science “instinct.” However, this has a cause. It is due to the past habit or imprint that was left on the consciousness. Depending on how much our mind was habituated to that action in the past, how much karma to do it we have created, at some time, when some positive karma ripens due to having practiced morality, we are born as a human being. During that life, we experience the result of the past negative karma of committing sexual misconduct by doing it again. That's why it's so difficult to control. Even if we wish to control it, even if we wish it to not happen, it still happens uncontrollably. It's because of having become so habituated to creating this karma in the past, being so habituated to it. This is one result of the past negative karma of sexual misconduct, called creating the result similar to the cause.

The third result, the third problem, is called *experiencing the result similar to the cause*, which for sexual misconduct means that we don't have a peaceful, harmonious relationship—the wife can't control the husband and the husband can't control the wife. The relationship is not harmonious and we lose our companion; our companion gets possessed by another person. This problem is called experiencing the result similar to the cause. We have done similar things in the past, so now the result is similar; what we experience is similar to what we did to others. This is experiencing the result similar to the cause.

The fourth problem is the *possessed result*. In the future, when we are born as a human being, the place we get born into is very unclean, very dirty. It's very filthy, dirty, muddy. Where we live there's a lot of mud; it's very dirty, very filthy. Therefore, whenever in our life we have to experience certain places that are filthy, dirty, smelly—when we approach such a place, a village or a city, whatever, when we have to go through such a place, when we experience such an environment, this is the fourth problem, the result of the complete action of sexual misconduct.

When we experience those other problems, we're experiencing the result of the past karma of sexual misconduct.

KARMA: THE FOUR HAPPY RESULTS OF ABSTAINING FROM SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Now, the good news, the pleasant part. Because in our past life we have practiced the morality of abstaining from the negative karma of sexual misconduct, we have completed the action that again has four positive results. By abstaining from sexual misconduct there are four positive results, four results of happiness. Instead of taking the body of a suffering

migratory being, we receive the *ripening aspect result* of a deva's or human body, the body of a happy migratory being. Then, *creating the result similar to the cause*, again we create good karma, again practicing the morality of abstaining from that negative karma, sexual misconduct.

For *experiencing the result similar to the cause*, the temporary result is that there is so much harmony in our relationships. In other words, the other person listens to us and follows whatever we wish. There's a lasting harmonious relationship, which is the complete opposite to experiencing the result similar to the cause for sexual misconduct.

The fourth happiness, the *possessed result*, is that when we are born as a human being the place where we live or travel to is clean. We are able to enjoy a clean place which is not muddy, smelly or filthy. It's a clean, beautiful place. So in our life, even in one day, whenever we experience a place that is clean, nice, beautiful, that is the result of the past good karma of having practiced the morality of abstaining from the negative karma of sexual misconduct. We are experiencing what is called the possessed result. Instead of a place that is filthy, smelly, it has a scented smell; it's a pleasant, desirable place.

So, you can see now that all these four happinesses come from our own mind. They come from our own mind, the karma, the intention. There's positive intention, positive karma, and negative intention, negative karma.

This is to give you an idea how everything in our life is a creation of our mind. From birth to the death, whatever pleasant or unpleasant experiences, whatever miserable or happy conditions, whatever happy or unhappy life, whatever we experience—the people around us, the place, the environment—whatever we experience is all a creation of our own mind. It all comes from our own mind, our own past positive or negative intentions. Even in one day of our life, all the undesirable things we experience have come from our own past negative karma, our negative intention. And even in one day of our life, all the pleasant feelings or desirable conditions, all the experiences of happiness have come from our own karma, our positive intention.

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE KARMA: THE DROUGHT IN AFRICA

There's individual karma, action, and there's collective action, action that is done together, action that is done by the group. We can expand this to the whole world, including the sun and moon and all the enjoyments [experienced by beings], growing things by the heat of the sun—all the things that are the enjoyment of the beings, including the planets, the living beings on this earth, the waters, the mountains, the plants, the crops, the world. As I explained, just as our individual life—a happy one or an unhappy one, the environment and so forth—comes from our individual past karma, in the same way the whole world comes from the collective karma of the living beings who enjoy this world, who use this world.

It's the same thing with one particular country. For one particular country, the millions of people who live there have a beautiful, developed country, growing good crops and with a strong economy. There's no scarcity of food and things like that; everything is plentiful for the people. There's plenty of enjoyment and a good standard of living. Of course that may depend on the policy of the government, how the country is managed by the people. Of course it can also depend on having a good standard of education—it can depend on these

conditions but the *main* cause of the economic development, of having plenty of enjoyments, of the standard of living of the people, comes from the good collective karma of the people, the morality practiced in the past by all these people. That is the main cause. The main cause is having created good karma, practiced morality, abstaining from creating negative karma. Having wealth is especially a result of morality, the morality of abstaining from the negative karma of stealing. And also having made charity to sentient beings in the past, which is opposite of miserliness, which is abstaining from the negative karma of miserliness.

Those are the main causes of economic development—having made charity to other sentient beings in the past and also having made offering to holy objects. That is also one practice for economic development, to not have difficulties, to not have a poor life, to have a means of living. Not having possessions, not having a means of living, is the result of the negative karma of stealing and miserliness, not having made charity to other sentient beings, being miserly. Those are the basic reasons, the basic karma, why we are born to a life that has difficulties earning a living, such as in places like Ethiopia, where millions of people are starving to death. Is there any explanation for these problems?

This is not a problem for the whole southern Africa. I discussed this with a South African person I met at Sydney airport. I asked him about the problem. He was a businessperson living in Hong Kong, and doing business in Thailand and Hong Kong. I think he travels around. I had my mala in my hand and he was very impressed to see it. He took his mala from his pocket and showed me. They kind of looked similar, not the color, but other than that similar. It was also used for counting. I tried to find out from him where they have the particular problem in southern Africa. He said it wasn't the whole of Africa that didn't have rain, just one part. I was trying to find out from him whether the problem was mainly because of the drought. I explained how I had seen it on television.

Then the thought came in my mind that maybe somebody could do a meditation and make it rain. I told him that I'm not a good person but there's the possibility that lamas can do a meditation that can make rain. He said he was very surprised that meditation can make rain. He was very surprised to hear that. He was asking, "Really? Meditation can make rain?" He was very interested. He appreciated meditation very much. I think just generally. From his heart he expressed how practicing meditation was very good. I think he himself did it, I guess, maybe when he went to Thailand. When we talked about the drought he explained the place he came from didn't suffer from it.

I saw on TV during my retreat that so many people, including babies and children, were having such a hard life. Lack of rain was their main difficulty. Then the thought came to me to maybe send some students who had done a lot of practice there to make rain. They would have to be people who were very devoted to the method, to the practice, otherwise it wouldn't work. There's a couple I thought would be good. I did a translation of a naga puja for a sick person, an Australian woman, quite a number of years ago. I asked a Tibetan person to translate it into English so she could practice by herself. I think this translation must have been hanging around in Vajrapani, the meditation center in Boulder Creek, near Santa Cruz. This couple, somehow, found it while they were looking in the office and went to a mountain, I think in Colorado or somewhere, to a place like it was described in the text, and they did the practice. There were some difficulties of not having rain there, not too

much I think, but as soon as they had done the naga puja practice, as soon as they finished, the rain came.

Since there were so many hardships in Africa, with no crops growing and people dying, I thought it might be good to send somebody like that to spend one or two months there, to do the practice, the meditation, and to make rain, or even sponsor a lama who was qualified to do this, to sponsor the expenses of going there for a few weeks or one month.

But then the other question came up. If these people don't have karma to receive rain, if they don't have karma from their side, and if they haven't created the karma, then the rain won't happen. There has to be an inner cause. There has to be an inner cause to receive the rain. The inner cause is the main cause of wealth, of enjoyment. The inner cause means the karma, the positive intention, that I mentioned before.

What they were experiencing was the result of stealing. While they are experiencing difficulties in life, again they're doing stealing. So it goes on and on like that. Even externally, if others tried to help there would be obstacles, because of the inner cause, the main cause of the difficulties of life, the negative karma of stealing and so forth, of being very miserly, of not making charity. They didn't make charity to other sentient beings. This karma is very strong. Therefore, even if someone tried to help in some way, it would be very difficult to solve the problems. Even if externally they tried to help, it wouldn't work; somehow there would be a lot of obstacles.

I heard they tried to bring fresh water from another country by airplane, but as soon as it reached the airport, the water completely changed. It became very filthy, with a very bad smell. Immediately, as soon as it landed, the water became very smelly. It completely changed even though it was fresh water. When it arrived at the airport, the water became undrinkable. It became very filthy, dirty, smelly.

It's like the suffering of the preta beings, the hungry ghosts. The type of suffering they experience is much heavier than what human beings experience but it's a similar type of problem. What they experience is heavier.

So even if someone tries to bring in fresh water, when it arrives there it becomes dirty. I don't remember the person who told me. Maybe the person is here, I'm not sure. The water becoming bad, undrinkable, when it arrived at the airport, the appearance of dirty, smelly water, is a creation of, a production of those people's negative thoughts, their negative karma, their negative intention.

The main cause of all our daily life's difficulties comes from our mind, such as stealing, miserliness, not making charity to other sentient beings. Then, not having made charity to sentient beings, not having made offering to holy objects, means not having created the cause for having enjoyment but having created the opposite cause, the cause of having difficulties in life.

So, I thought that it would be good to maybe even sponsor a lama, to pay the expenses to go there to spend some time doing puja, doing meditation. But from their side if they don't have the karma to receive rain, [it wouldn't happen.] They need to create the karma, which

means depending on changing the mind, which means generating a positive attitude, doing positive actions. It all depends on their attitude, on changing from a negative attitude into a positive attitude.

I thought about that for some time. I asked a few people what the main problem was there. I suggested to a student in Tara House, Australia, whose family is from South Africa, that the best way to help them is to help the mind. Because their life, to change from having a difficult life to a wealthy one for the whole country, that has to come from their mind. Having much enjoyment mainly has to come from their own mind.

The best way to help is if some practitioner, somebody who is also practicing, a very good-hearted person, with the sincere heart, goes there and talks to them about compassion. He could teach the people how compassion is the source of happiness. By talking to one person, by educating one person, two people, three people, four people, gradually he could teach them a good heart, how to live life with the good heart, with a positive attitude. How to live a right life, a correct life, which means not using life to create the cause of suffering, but using life to create the cause of happiness. That it is the right life, the correct life. Mainly, teaching how to live life, how the best thing is compassion, universal responsibility, from morning until night; how to live life with a generous mind.

He could basically talk as much as possible, giving these understandings and giving inspiration to practice. He could also teach by his own example, by himself also practicing, so giving also his own example to them, showing them how he himself practices, giving that vibration or giving that positive feeling toward others.

This is the only way they can become harmonious, bringing a change into their lives, stopping life's difficulties, because this way they can create the cause for success. This way they create the causes, otherwise they live constantly with minds such as jealousy or ill will. Life is used to create only the cause of problems, so even when they die and the next time, due to positive karma created in other lifetimes they are born as human beings, but again the same thing happens. They must endure a difficult life, with no rain, with drought, no food, disease and all these things. As long as they don't change their mind, their problems go on and on.

We need to give people education, showing them that happiness depends on others, it has to come from others, and how others' happiness is dependent on us. These are simple things, but practical. It's very simple but very logical. We all need to do this rather than living our life with a primitive mind, with an old mind, with jealousy, ill will and so forth. With all these bad thoughts, with the old mind, the primitive mind, the undeveloped mind. So anyway, discussing something like that would be extremely beneficial.

We can all practice this, we can all practice universal responsibility, compassion, all these things. While their religion might be Christianity, they can practice that. There are no interferences to that. They can develop a good heart. We can make it clear that this is the way to practice, by developing the good heart. This is precisely how to live the daily life.

At the same time there was a problem of floods in Bangladesh, where so many people died.

So, even though a positive attitude within my mind is like stars in the daytime—it's extremely difficult to see stars in the daytime and likewise for a positive thought to arise in my mind—but still, at that time, because of what I saw on TV, I felt some responsibility. Even though it was nothing, even though it was just a few hundred dollars, I donated that to the Ethiopian foundation. It was nothing compared to what they needed but I felt somehow if I didn't do something, I'd feel guilty. But of course, giving material things alone is not enough, as I mentioned one time before.

You have gone through some of the meditations on lam-rim, but we haven't really gone through the lam-rim subjects, like we have at a similar time on other courses. I'm mainly kind of just talking about lam-rim but more just giving an introduction. That's what I have been talking about. However, this is mainly for new people who haven't got a very definite understanding, a very clear understanding of how things come from the mind, how things are dependent on the mind. With these details we haven't yet gone onto the other lam-rim subjects.

Externally helping is not the ultimate solution. Of course they need help and we should help them, but this is not the ultimate, the main solution to solve their problems. Their problems have to be solved from their own minds. Therefore, they need education; they need to have the mind explained to them, how happiness and suffering—the happiness and problems of life—come from their mind. As long as they don't change their minds, even if we try to help by sending them things, somehow it goes wrong, or if we try to help them develop their land, somehow it doesn't succeed, there are many obstacles.

Well, has there been any benefit so far from what I've talked about for how many days? Since the beginning of the course so far I've talked, so has there been any benefit? Yeah? Was there some benefit to the mind, or not? No, I'm not obliging you to say this.

So, for the last few days I've spent time talking about the good heart and at the beginning of the course, about the need of compassion. There's so much to learn. There's so much to study. There's so much to study, to learn, to practice. But even these last few days' talk, if you practice it, it will help.

THREE BEINGS SEE A BOWL OF LIQUID DIFFERENTLY

When a hundred people look at one person, to each of those hundred people the appearance is not the same. For some, that person appears ugly, for some she appears beautiful, for some she appears indifferent. This is one person, but for each of the hundred people none has the same appearance; they each have a different appearance when they look at this one person.

It's the same thing even if it's a house, a place or a mountain. Some see it as nice, as beautiful; some see it indifferently and some don't like it. So, there are different appearances. There's one object but there are different appearances. We have to study to see where these different appearances come from. There's one object but when different people look at it, they have different appearances.

Now you can understand how all those appearances—beautiful, ugly, indifferent—all those objects come from the mind. They come from the perceiver, from the minds of the people who are looking at the object.

Here is a bowl. We see water, but those who have much more merit, much more positive karma than us, such as devas, even worldly devas, and buddhas who have completed the merit, they see nectar in this container. They have a much better, much purer view than us human beings. Their view is much purer; they have greater, better quality enjoyment.

When the preta beings, who have much less merit than us, look at the liquid in this bowl, they see the liquid as pus and blood. The object they see is much worse quality than the object we see. What they see is worse, more impure.

So you see, the worldly devas see the liquid as nectar. The buddhas see and can taste the purest enjoyment; they can experience the highest bliss, the highest happiness, by tasting the nectar.

So, depending on the level of the mind of the perceiver, one object appears as having different qualities. In this one bowl, nectar exists, water exists, pus and blood—which is object of the preta beings—exist; all these three exist. For all those three beings who have different levels of mind, depending on how pure or impure the mind is, how much merit has been created, they see different objects in this one container and for them it exists. It exists because that valid mind has discovered it.

The point of this example is to understand that the way this one object appears is dependent on the perceiver's level, on the nature of the mind, how pure or impure it is, how much merit there is. The point is to understand how it comes from the mind.

It's exactly like this for us observing this place, this gompa here, this meditation hall, this Kopan place. What appears to us is one type of appearance; the Kopan that appears to us is one type of appearance, according to the nature of our mind, the level of our mind. For those who have less merit, such as preta beings and so forth, this same place, Kopan, would appear much worse, as someplace horrible, much filthier, much dirtier. And for those who have much more merit, those who have a much purer mind, this Kopan place would appear more purer, with better, greater enjoyment. For buddhas, who have completely purified the senses, whatever appears, appears as only pure and is the purest object of enjoyment. What appears to the holy mind are only the purest appearances. This shows how things come from the mind, how things are a creation of the mind.

THE APPEARANCE AT DEATH COMES FROM THE MIND

At death, when we are dying, this liquid can appear as pus and blood. It's the same thing. Kopan can appear like hell for some beings. What I am describing now, how things come from the mind, is also an explanation of how the three lower realms come from the mind. There's no hell, there's no concrete hell, there's no inherently existent hell, one that is permanent, forever; there's no such thing. A permanent hell is not accepted in Buddhism. When the negative karma to experience hell is finished in the mind then we don't see any more hell. When the negative karma is finished, when the inner cause is finished, in that same place we no longer see hell.

The cessation of suffering is permanent in the sense that it can never decrease, it can never change from that. However, things such as hell are not permanent. When the inner cause, the karma, is finished being experienced, right there we no longer have the appearance of hell, the hell that is the appearance of the negative mind, that is the production of the unsubdued mind.

Everyone, all sentient beings, have the potential to be a buddha. There is buddha nature in everyone, in every sentient being's mind. I have been waiting a long time to go through buddha nature but somehow it didn't happen. Because of buddha nature, all sentient beings can become enlightened; there's the opportunity to be enlightened. There are different explanations, different points of view, but every sentient being will become enlightened in time.

What am I saying? That is the main thing to understand about the lower realms. Once we're born in hell then we are forever in hell, that's not logical. It's not logical but that explanation can be beneficial for some people. It's not logical, it's not true, but that explanation in the Bible can be beneficial for many people. Once born in hell, there's no change for that person, therefore he or she puts every single effort into trying very hard to not create negative karma or sin or whatever name that's used, for those actions that harm oneself and harm other sentient beings. That person puts all the effort into protecting him- or herself. So, even though it's not logical, it benefits that person, bringing peace and happiness in life.

Also, at the time of death, people can look like they're having a hallucination, like they become crazy, screaming and saying things like, "I'm seeing this," "I'm being burned by fire," "I'm being eaten by animals." This and that. They say they're experiencing all sorts of things that other people can't see, that only that person can see. People can have terrifying, fearful, unpleasant, suffering appearances happening at the time of death. This can happen to a person who is going to die with a nonvirtuous mind, a nonvirtuous thought, and who is going to be reborn in the lower realms.

Some good practitioners have done some heavy karma in this life or other lives, such as degenerating samaya vows, or some heavy karma created with the relationship with the virtuous friend. However, instead of reincarnating in the lower realms, because of the strong practice, strong purification, that is done, the karma to be born in the lower realm has been purified so instead of that, they have to go through some problems. Instead of being born in hell and so forth for such an incredible length of time, the heaviest experience of suffering, instead of that the karma does not become completely nonexistent so that they never have to experience the suffering result at all—it doesn't become like this—but due to strong purification practice there's only a little bit left, and in the place of the lower realms that person has to experience some problem at the time of death. It's the same. It's the appearance of the impure mind, the karma.

A nurse told me about one of her relatives, her aunt or mother, who died while she was there. She said she was screaming and having a lot of hallucinations at the time of death. There are many examples like this of how objects appear differently to different people, how the object comes from the mind. As I have given many of these examples, so it's same here. This girl's relative was seeing many terrifying appearances that were the production of the negative karma, the impure mind.

Some time ago in Dharamsala a person from Kham died. As he was dying, he was shouting so much that many sheep were coming and attacking him. He was so scared and shouting. Nobody else could see sheep in the room, but for him it was real. For him it was real.

One of my teachers was one of the old meditators, Gen Jampa Wangdu. He gave teachings on doing the pill retreat, where instead of food you live on pills. If you're going to live in a solitary place, this saves time and keeps you away from distractions. Living on pills helps to make quick progress in the practice, quick realizations. He taught this to many of the Sangha as well as many lay people during the first Dharma Celebration.¹

Gen-la went to see this person, who was shouting and screaming. Later, Gen Jampa Wangdu found out that this person used to be a butcher in Tibet and he had killed many sheep. This was a sign that he was going to the lower realms. At the time of death, there's a kind of preparation, there's already a sign, these terrifying appearances are happening. For that person it's real but nobody else could see it. Nobody else in the room could see one sheep.

A similar thing happened in Kathmandu to a big business person from Amdo many years ago. Several weeks before he died, before he was taken to hospital, his body became like a preta, with a huge, huge belly. It became completely black, very dark, with a huge belly and limbs kind of very thin. He feel so thirsty, incredibly thirsty. His wife brought a bottle of water but he could only drink by slowly taking one drop at a time; it was so difficult to drink. He could only swallow one drop and he couldn't eat any food. The doctors couldn't do anything, so he went back home. When he was climbing the stairs, he took a long time to climb each step. It was so difficult to go up.

During those seven days when he was in the room, he saw ants coming in the windows; his room was full of ants. It looked like my room, the same. It reminds me of my room. He saw crowds of ants coming in like this, from the windows. Where there was a window, from all the windows, crowds of ants came in. He was shouting so much, "Close the windows, close the door." So he stayed for many days keeping the room completely dark, but he still saw his whole bed completely filled with ants. But nobody else could see one single ant. The servants couldn't see one single ant on his bed. He experienced this for many days. This was the result [of an impure mind] like that container that appears as water, nectar or pus and blood, depending on the different levels of mind of the different beings experiencing it, whether pure or impure.

For him, the negative karma, the negative thought, the unsubdued mind, the negative intention, that caused him to be reborn in the lower realms was manifesting at the time. It was becoming actualized, experienced, so even before he died these terrifying signs were happening.

EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE MIND

There's nothing concrete, nothing inherently existent from its own side. Everything comes from the mind. What is called the three lower realms, this whole world—everything comes from the mind. Therefore, by practicing, keeping the mind in a positive state to whatever capacity we can—one of those three different levels of motivation I explained yesterday—becomes the cause of happiness. The three levels of motivation become the cause of happiness but the fourth one doesn't become the cause of happiness.

I'm expressing this from the different levels of positive motivation, according to the practitioner's level, the capacity of mind. I'm not saying that you should have this motivation of seeking the happiness of future lives. I'm not saying that this one is more important than the motivation seeking liberation for yourself or to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. I'm not saying that. I'm explaining the different levels of positive motivation, the motivation that happens according to the capacity of the mind.

Even in Christianity reincarnation exists. Christianity talks about resurrection. Christianity talks about heaven and hell. After this life, there is heaven and hell. It doesn't bring up reincarnation as one of the important points, it's not emphasized, but otherwise it's the same. It talks about hell. It is not talking about hell and heaven in this life. It's talking about hell and heaven after this life so that's talking about reincarnation.

Also, the Hindu religion talks to a certain extent about karma and reincarnation. It talks about reincarnation but karma to a certain extent, not exactly, I think, what is explained in Buddhadharma, but to a certain extent karma. Therefore, reincarnation is not a particular Buddhist thing.

There are those who don't accept any religion, who don't have any religion, but who in their daily life have a compassionate, generous mind toward the people and animals around. Their actions are done with that sincere mind, only thinking of the other person, only caring about others. This is the purest virtue because it's unstained by the self-cherishing thought. Only concerned for other sentient beings, with a sincere heart they do service or help. That is the purest Dharma, because it's unstained by the self-cherishing thought. It does help but the action itself doesn't become bodhicitta. It's similar to actions done that become the direct cause for enlightenment but it's not exactly the same as bodhicitta. However, that action done out of compassion has great benefit. The greater compassion there is, the greater benefit. That is part of what makes bodhicitta.

Therefore, the conclusion is we should keep our mind in these positive attitudes, which are the cause of happiness, which are the source of the happiness of life. This comes from the lines of this verse: "Subdue the mind. This is the teaching of Buddha." This instruction by the Buddha becomes an extremely important instruction for us to practice.

So, I'll stop here.

Yesterday there was a request for me to give Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's mantra, so please think as the motivation, "I am responsible to free every sentient being from all the obscurations, sufferings, and lead them to full enlightenment. As I have this responsibility, and this is the meaning of my life, I must achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. For that I need to develop my mind in the graduated path to enlightenment. For that reason, I need to purify and accumulate merit and receive blessings, and I need to receive blessings from Shakyamuni Buddha. Therefore I'm going to take the oral transmission of the mantra."

[Rinpoche recites prayers and gives the oral transmission of the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha mantra.]

Due to the three times’—past, present and future—merits accumulated by me and by other beings, may bodhicitta be generated within my mind and in the mind of all sentient beings. For those who already have it, may it be developed.

May I achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment and lead all sentient beings to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment as quickly as possible.

I recited this, *La ma tonpa chom den de...chbag tshal lo*. By reciting this one time it has the power to purify 84,000 eons of negative karma. This benefit was already explained by Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s tutor, who gave the commentary of *Bodhicaryavatara*² to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and from whom I received the oral transmission of *Bodhicaryavatara* and the commentary and a few other teachings. Rinpoche is exactly the same as those ancient pandits such as Nagarjuna, Asanga and so forth. He’s not only extremely learned in the whole, entire Buddhadharma but even in other subjects such as Sanskrit and in other educations, other forms of knowledge. Rinpoche quite often gives this mantra to people to recite. The mantra contains the whole path to enlightenment, the whole lam-rim.

[Rinpoche does the dedication in Tibetan.]

Lecture 17



Chenrezig Institute, 1991

THE PURPOSE OF THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS

Simply, what taking precepts is, is protecting ourselves from negative karma, from actions that harm ourselves or others, directly or indirectly. Certain precepts such as abstaining from singing or sitting on a high, expensive bed [are there because such actions are considered harmful] because they are done with attachment, without a Dharma reason, without a purpose to benefit. If they are done with a particular purpose to benefit others, with a Dharma reason such as making offerings to another object, because of that purpose then the action becomes Dharma and therefore the action does not become harmful.

Actions such as wearing ornaments, putting on perfume and so forth, even though they don't cause direct harm to others, they do cause indirect harm because if these actions are done out of the black worldly dharmas, the black worldly concerns, the thought of the eight worldly dharmas, then these things become nonvirtue, and by becoming nonvirtue they become obstacles for developing the mind. If we don't get to develop the mind then we can't really benefit other sentient beings, we can't really benefit their minds. We can't give real benefit to other sentient beings without developing our own mind. So even if some of these things don't seem to give direct harm they still harm indirectly, depending on the motivation.

There's a tradition for the teacher to sit on a throne higher than the disciples. The purpose is to show respect for the Dharma, for the teachings. And there are other reasons. It's for a Dharma reason and also when the person sits on the throne, he has to remember impermanence. When the person sits on the higher throne, in the beginning, by remembering impermanence it stops the mind becoming ego. For sitting on the throne to

not become ego, to destroy the ego, you must remember impermanence and especially emptiness.

To do that, to remember impermanence, emptiness and how everything is by nature suffering, you snap your fingers when you sit down. That's to remind you that there's nothing to cling to with these things, because there's nothing of this that lasts. As I mention every day nothing lasts, nothing is permanent, nothing lasts even a second. And then especially to remember emptiness. That way there's nothing for the mind to cling to. This is the practice from the side of the person, even if you don't sit on the throne. No matter how many rich things are around, in your mind you remember the impermanence of the enjoyments.

If you don't have delusions at all, if you have completely removed all delusions, if when you look at objects no delusion arises at all, then you don't need to take precepts, you don't need to take vows. You don't need to take precepts because there's no danger. No matter what object you look at, the mind is free from delusion there's no danger of a delusion arising. Then you don't need the precepts. There's no purpose, there's no danger. Your mind is not dangerous any more. Your mind does not become an obstacle to you any more to achieving liberation and enlightenment.

You need to take precepts because you need to discipline your own mind. Until your mind is disciplined there is a purpose, until then there is a purpose. When you are beyond needing discipline, when you are beyond danger, then there is no need.

You have to know the very essential point why this is important, why this is done. It's not just a custom, it's not just tradition, not just because this is a Buddhist thing. You have to understand the real meaning behind it. That's the same with every practice, with all the prayers. You have to understand there's a whole purpose, a whole reason behind all the different practices.

When you don't understand, it looks like ritual. When you don't understand, it becomes disturbing to the mind, because it doesn't seem to mean anything. It is just like a person who doesn't know the purpose of practicing compassion, who doesn't know the benefits of compassion, that person can't see why practicing compassion is important and so has no interest in doing it. Or similarly, a person who doesn't want to learn Buddhism, it's simply because he hasn't checked up, hasn't analyzed to see what it is. Before practicing, he didn't check up so he doesn't know. It's mainly because of lack of knowing what it is and what it's for. If the person really knew he would see that the Dharma is a universal thing. When you are sick you have to take medicine. It's like that, medicine is universal. Medicine is not only Western or only Eastern, or only Tibetan, it's universal. Somebody who is sick takes medicine, that's universal. Similarly, in reality Buddhism is universal. For somebody who knows what it is, it becomes universal; for somebody who doesn't know then it doesn't become universal.

If you really understand the purpose, then there's enjoyment in the practice. There's great enjoyment, great satisfaction in life. There's great happiness in doing the practice. Doing the practice doesn't become a burden, it becomes enjoyment.

Of course, there's a whole explanation about the practice. There's a whole commentary on it. For example, all the prayers are meditation, and you can do meditation, you can do the whole practice without words. You can do the whole practice but without the words. The words are there to remind you. Also, if you're making offerings, with the chanting, with the speech, you are creating good karma. If it's done with nice chanting, then it becomes an offering. It's also an offering of speech, creating good karma with speech. And the words are also an inspiration; they inspire the mind.

However, without a full explanation, without a clear explanation, when you can't understand it, then it appears just like a custom. Therefore, for those who are not familiar, it's good to read in English. Of course without the commentary you still may not be able understand it. Somebody who is intelligent, who has a lot of merit, can understand why this is done.

About taking precepts, as I mentioned before, as long as you have obstacles, as long as your mind becomes an obstacle, as long as there's a delusion, there's this danger in the mind, you need precepts, but when you're free from this, there's no need for precepts. Except then you have to act as living in the discipline, for the sake of other sentient beings, as an example for other sentient beings. You don't need to live in precepts for your own sake, for your own protection, but even though you're free you need to show an example to other sentient beings, like the Buddha or His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Buddha didn't become a monk and so forth for his own sake. He didn't need to because he had become enlightened innumerable numbers of eons before.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was already enlightened but he took the action of becoming enlightened at Bodhgaya. These twelve deeds were simply to show other sentient beings how to practice Dharma. The deeds showed the examples: being born, playing as a child, having all the wealth of being born to the king's family, getting married, having a child, and then afterwards seeing the suffering and looking for a guru, doing retreat, following the ascetic's life, then achieving the realizations, becoming enlightened—all these were examples for our benefit. From his own side he didn't need to do them. They are to show other sentient beings how to practice Dharma.

So even if you're completely free, even if you're enlightened, you act like this in order to give an example for other sentient beings how to practice Dharma. Besides teaching, from the mouth, besides the mouth giving teachings, you try to physically act that way for the inspiration of others. Then others have something, they have an example. The Buddha did this, leading an austere life and then getting enlightened.

The whole point is that by disciplining ourselves, by living in precepts, we're not allowing our mind to become dangerous to ourselves. We're not allowing our actions of body, speech and mind to become dangerous to ourselves, to create obstacles.

Actually, if you think about it, the only result of stopping negative karma is peace, happiness, success. For example, by keeping the precepts, by practicing morality, we become a deva or human in the next life, attaining the body of the happy migratory being, and then liberation from samsara, everlasting happiness, not experiencing suffering at all. That also depends on the precepts, on the practice of morality. Then enlightenment, the complete cessation of all the obscurations, also depends on morality. The whole of our development is dependent on

morality, from controlling the mind, abstaining from negative karma, abstaining from negative actions of body, speech, and mind.

Even in this life, in this way we don't create many problems, such as relationship problems. By living in the precepts, great confusion in this life doesn't happen. Even in our day-to-day life we have so much peace. If we look at it this way, living in the practice of morality, putting ourselves into the practice of morality, gives us great freedom. By thinking of all the benefits of practicing morality, we can see how important it is, how we are giving ourselves freedom by doing it. It's not putting ourselves into a prison, it's giving ourselves freedom. We're giving ourselves freedom, giving ourselves release; we're giving ourselves liberation. This is what it actually is.

Like this, we stop much negative karma that harms other sentient beings, directly or indirectly. Of course, even if it harms us, we're just one person, one being, so there's not much to be upset about. But the main point, the main thing is that a negative action directly or indirectly harms other sentient beings, who are numberless. Therefore, one way to understand this is that living in the practice of morality stops those negative karmas. As we are not free from delusions, from obscurations now, living in the practice of morality stops the negative karma of the body and speech, and through this we are able to control the mind, to control the delusions, and especially to actualize shamatha, to obtain shamatha, calm abiding. On that basis, we are able to actualize great insight and realize emptiness, and then we are able to completely eliminate all delusions. So, it's all based on the higher training of morality. Stopping our actions from becoming negative karma means we no longer harm others directly or indirectly. You can look at it in different ways like that.

There's a Medicine Buddha meditation that I found that I recently translated which helps us not get disease and if we already have disease then it helps to heal. At the end I mentioned that I hoped many people would practice this short Medicine Buddha, the Healing Buddha, meditation and find it beneficial. I also mentioned at the end that even if you don't have any faith in holy objects, at least you can think of sentient beings, of the promise you made to sentient beings and so make these commitments, determining that for today you are going to give up such-and-such negative karmas and live in this number of positive practices or precepts.

The main goal is to help us not create negative karma. Even if we do it like this, at least we are thinking about other sentient beings. Even if we can't think of all sentient beings, at least we can think about some of them, such as the people in this world or in this country or in this city, or all the sick people, or all the people who have AIDS or cancer, all the people who have this or that problem. At least by thinking of these people when we take the precepts, we stop those negative karmas in order to benefit them. So, the main goal is that it helps us not create those negative karmas, at least some number of negative karmas, and so we don't have to go through all the four suffering results that I explained yesterday relating to sexual misconduct. There are many other negative karmas and each complete negative karma has four suffering results. Then it goes on and on and on and on, life after life, endlessly, as long as the negative karma is repeated over, again and again, without end.

If we do this practice, even by just thinking of sentient beings, it protects us from all those negative karmas and from all those constant suffering results, from the lower realms or even all the problems of the human realm.

I'm not going to go over determining the different levels of motivation now because there's no time. I'll leave it there and go on to exchanging oneself for others, to bodhicitta.

So, at this time we have received a perfect human rebirth from our side and have met the virtuous friend. Even if we haven't met one yet, our life is full of opportunities to meet a qualified virtuous friend, especially one who can reveal the complete path from beginning up to enlightenment, without missing anything. Life is full of opportunities to meet a virtuous friend. Having met the virtuous friend, having met the precious teaching, and then the unmistakable path, the Buddhadharma, these three are extremely rare. At this time we have found these three things that are extremely rare to find, and we have all the conditions, all the opportunities to practice, to achieve liberation and full enlightenment, to have everything that we want.

We have all the opportunities to obtain the long-term happiness of future lives or liberation, even the highest goal, enlightenment, so at this time it's not sufficient to just be able to stop rebirth in the lower realm and receive a deva or human body. That alone is not sufficient because even if we receive a deva or human body, we are still not free from suffering. We can understand from this present life how we are born as human beings but we are not free from suffering. We can understand from this life's experience.

THE THREE TYPES OF SUFFERING

No matter where we are in the six realms, whether we are born in the desire realm, the form realm or the formless realm, we are not free from suffering. There are also the three types of suffering in the desire realm. Living in the desire realm means we live our life depending on the external sense objects, having desire for external sense objects.

There's the suffering of suffering: death, rebirth, old age, sickness, being separated from desirable objects, meeting undesirable objects, not finding satisfaction, all these things. There are so many problems that are suffering of suffering. The other one, the suffering of change, means that by meeting desirable sense objects, even though it seems pleasure, that too is in the nature of suffering. The feeling is suffering but we merely label it "pleasure" because it's as yet unnoticeable. The feeling is less suffering and so we call it pleasure and it appears to us as pleasure. Then by clinging to this as real pleasure, it cheats us for many lifetimes. In this way it cheats us for many lifetimes; it harms us in the long run; it gives us long-term harm. These pleasures are the suffering of change.

Then the third suffering, pervasive compounding suffering, refers to these aggregates, which are not free from delusion, from the seed of delusions, from the imprint of delusions. From these aggregates there is the potential for the other two types of problems to arise, the suffering of suffering and suffering of change. Because these aggregates are caused by karma and disturbing thoughts and the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts, this becomes the potential to experience those two other sufferings.

The nature of these aggregates themselves is pervasive compounding suffering. The cause is karma and delusion from impure causes and the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. This is pervasive compounding suffering; this is the fundamental suffering, these aggregates.

In the desire realm we experience all three types of sufferings but the aggregates in the form and formless realms are also in the nature of suffering because they're not free from the third suffering which has the potential to create the two other sufferings. The aggregates are caused by karma and delusion and the contaminated seed of disturbing thought, and because the seed is there, delusion arises, which motivates karma, and then it creates again future-life samsara. So, even though the beings of the form and formless realm don't have the suffering of suffering or the suffering of change, they have the third suffering.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF SELF-CHERISHING

Wherever we are born in samsara, which comes within these three realms, it's only in the nature of the suffering. Therefore, we must achieve liberation from the whole, entire samsara. But achieving this liberation for ourselves is not sufficient. That is not enough. We must achieve enlightenment. We must achieve full enlightenment, great liberation, for the sake of all sentient beings.

If I put it another way, as I mentioned yesterday, it's not sufficient just to have some sympathy or compassion toward some sentient beings, not all sentient beings, just some beings, seeing some beings having problems that we are able to see and understand. But it's not the whole entire problem. Just having some good heart or some generosity toward others is not sufficient. It's good but not sufficient. We need bodhicitta, the altruistic thought to achieve full enlightenment in order to free every being from all the sufferings and to achieve full enlightenment. Just having some generosity, some sympathy and giving some help to others, that is not sufficient. We really have to develop the mind in a step-by-step way. That is the most beneficial life.

What is needed most by the sentient beings is to be free from all the suffering, from all the obscurations, and achieve the highest happiness, full enlightenment. This is what they need, the highest, peerless happiness, which is full enlightenment. This is what they need. Everyone is looking for the best comfort, the best pleasure. Everyone is looking for the best pleasure, the best comfort, the best happiness that will last the longest; everyone is looking for the best quality. Even when they buy material things, like food or furniture, whenever they shop they try to buy something that is the best quality and will last longer with whatever money they have. They try to buy the best they can afford with the amount of money that they have.

It's the same thing here but because sentient beings, due to ignorance, due to not having met the Dharma, not having Dharma wisdom, don't know there's such an achievement, that there is such an experience in life, therefore they don't talk about enlightenment, they don't use this name. But from the heart this is what they need and this is what is missing. Therefore, it's very clear the help we need to give sentient beings is to bring them to this peerless happiness, to full enlightenment.

To do that, first we ourselves need to achieve full enlightenment. For that we need to generate the realization of bodhicitta, this complete realization, not just a part, not just *some*

good heart or *some* sympathy, just able to do *some* service for others, not just that. To be able to do perfect work for all sentient beings, without any mistake, we really need to completely develop the mind to be able to completely remove all the mistakes of the mind, all the obscurations. We need to study and understand the whole thing, to practice and train the mind on the whole path.

In order to generate bodhicitta, we need to realize the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought. By realizing the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought, that's how we can eliminate the ego, the self-cherishing thought.

Even in one day, there's not much time to explain even in a simple way, even something short like this. As I mentioned yesterday, what makes sexual misconduct nonvirtue is by the self-cherishing thought. Because of it we experience all the problems. Without the self-cherishing thought, there's only bodhicitta. Such actions done with a pure mind don't become nonvirtuous. All the problems of life come from the self-cherishing thought, come from the ego; they're all caused by that.

This is what wastes life. Even in one day, what makes us waste our life, what makes our life empty, is following the self-cherishing thought, because if there is the self-cherishing thought there's no place for bodhicitta. Then none of our actions from morning until night become the cause of enlightenment. They don't become the cause of enlightenment for sentient beings. They don't become actions to benefit all sentient beings, therefore, life is wasted. This precious human rebirth is wasted. Again, that is by the self-cherishing thought.

Secondly, because of the self-cherishing thought, there is attachment to samsara, attachment to samsaric perfections. Because of *that*, the actions done out of that each twenty-four hours don't become the cause to achieve liberation. No action done during the day becomes the cause to achieve liberation, so again, you see, we've wasted our life. Again, the self-cherishing thought has wasted our life, has made our life empty.

Thirdly, because of the self-cherishing thought, there is attachment to this life, clinging to this life happens, worldly concern happens, so therefore, it doesn't allow any action we do during one day to become Dharma, to become the cause of happiness of future lives. It doesn't become Dharma. So again, the self-cherishing thought has made life empty. No action during the day becomes Dharma; it only becomes negative karma.

Therefore, the self-cherishing thought is what makes our day's life completely empty, wasted, and on top of that it makes us use our life to only create negative karma, and experience problems and be born in the lower realms and so forth. Similarly, like this, our whole year, our whole life, is made empty by the self-cherishing thought. What makes it meaningless, empty, is the self-cherishing thought. The self-cherishing thought, the ego, is always harming us. By living in our heart it always harms us. The ego has been endangering us, harming to us, not allowing us to have any realization from beginningless rebirths until now. It has made the mind completely empty; it has made our life completely empty. Even though we were born many times as a human being like this, if we're still following the self-cherishing thought, then it will continuously harm us, it will continuously make our life empty. We will continuously experience the problems.

All our problems come from this ego, the self-cherishing thought. And that comes from the I, that depends on the I, so therefore, who do all problems come from? They come from the I. Therefore, what is called “I” is the object to be renounced forever and what is called “others” is to be cherished forever.

As it’s mentioned in the thought transformation text, we must put the blame on the one, which means the ego. When there’s a problem we put all the blames on the one.³ That means the ego, the self-cherishing thought.

THE KINDNESS OF OTHERS

Then meditate on the kindness of all. Meditate on the kindness of all sentient beings. Any enjoyment we have in our day-to-day life, any comfort we have, all the conditions to practice Dharma and all the infinite merit we create every day by practicing bodhicitta, by meditating on emptiness, or by doing prostrations and making offerings—all those different practices where we purify so many lifetimes’ negative karma and accumulate so much merit—all these things, the cause of happiness, enlightenment, all these things come from the kindness of sentient beings.

Any comfort and enjoyment we have because of the house we live in, having the protection of a house, all these came from the numberless, numberless insects and creatures that were killed. They had to suffer and die for the house to be built. Many other human beings had to create negative karma by killing them and so forth in order to build the house or the apartment so we can have comfort. Every single comfort we have from the house all comes from other sentient beings, from many sentient beings having to suffer and die and from creating negative karma by harming others.

Then, every single comfort and enjoyment that we have from eating and drinking comes from sentient beings. Even one glass of water has many tiny insects we can’t see. They all had to suffer or die even for one cup of tea, even one cup of water. So many of them had to die, had to suffer. This one grain of rice came from another grain of rice and then another grain of rice which came from another grain of rice. Each time, when the continuation of this grain of rice grows, so many insects get killed. They had to suffer and they had to die, and many other beings had to kill them by working in the fields with machines or whatever. They had to create negative karma by killing them. Even for this one grain of rice, numberless sentient beings have died; they suffered and they died for this one grain of rice. They created so much negative karma. For one plate of rice, numberless sentient beings have suffered and created so much negative karma.

It’s the same thing with clothes. Silk comes from an animal’s body. The animal suffered by being boiled in the hot water and so forth. The silkworm is put in boiling water for us to have the silk. Even for this cloth so many sentient beings have suffered and died and many others have created negative karma. Every single comfort that we have comes from numberless sentient beings who have suffered and died, and others who have created negative karma.

Therefore, in day-to-day life, all our enjoyment and comfort, all that makes us alive and have a long life, in each year, each month, each day, each hour, each minute, it *completely* comes from other sentient beings. Each time that we have the opportunity to breathe, it’s

completely by the kindness of other sentient beings. Each time that we're able to breathe and able to practice, and during the time we're able to recite mantras, to meditate, to practice bodhicitta and so forth, all this *completely* comes from the kindness of other sentient beings. Every single enjoyment, everything, including this body, everything. Sentient beings are unbelievably kind, so precious and so kind like this.

Even by thinking of this, this is still not talking about the whole kindness. This is not talking about the extensive kindness but only a part of the kindness of sentient beings. Even by this reason, by thinking of this kindness, there's no space in the mind, there is no time, to live our life with ego, with self-cherishing thought. There's no time for that. There's no time for that. It becomes incredibly cruel that all these things come from numberless sentient beings' suffering, from them harming others and creating negative karma, and yet we use these things only thinking of ourselves, only thinking of our own happiness, how we can eliminate *my* problem and have *my* happiness. It becomes unbelievably cruel, so selfish, so cruel toward sentient beings using all these things for our own happiness. It's so ungenerous, so ungenerous.

However, by thinking of all this kindness, there's no time for that. There's no time to work for ego or to think of ego. There's no space for that. By thinking of even this kindness of others, there's no space for the ego in the mind, there's no time to work for that. There's only time to work for other sentient beings. There's only space for the thought of others to arise, cherishing others.

Therefore, we must live our life and use all these things at least to benefit those sentient beings who suffered for these things and created so much negative karma for their livelihood. At least we should take responsibility for that.

The I is one; others are numberless. There are numberless sentient beings and every one of them is so important and so precious, so kind. Our happiness comes from them, therefore every one of them is so precious. Every one of them is so precious. Just as we think of ourselves as so precious, everyone is so precious like this, more precious than even ourselves. The I is one. We ourselves are just one, so compared to the numberless, precious, kind sentient beings, this I itself, which is one, is completely lost. Even by number, without thinking of the kindness, this one I is completely lost. This I is completely lost. It's nothing. It's just like one atom in the whole of this earth, in that many number of atoms, this one atom is completely lost. It's nothing. When we compare the numberless sentient beings, this I is nothing. Compared to how important, how precious they are, it is nothing.

Therefore, anything other than working for sentient beings is meaningless. It's empty. Anything other than working for sentient beings is empty, meaningless. Therefore think, "In my life, there's nothing to work for other than sentient beings. In my life, there's nobody to work for other than sentient beings. There's nobody to cherish in my life other than sentient beings. What sentient beings want is happiness and they don't want suffering. The happiness they need is the highest happiness, enlightenment. Therefore, I must lead them to full enlightenment. For that I need to achieve full enlightenment myself first. That depends on actualizing the path and that depends on protecting my karma, on practicing morality, not creating obstacles to the path, generating the path. Therefore, for the sake of all sentient

beings, in order to benefit them, in order not to harm them, in order to achieve enlightenment for them, I'm going to take the eight Mahayana precepts."

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS CEREMONY

Visualize the lama who gives precepts in the buddha aspect, the Shakyamuni Buddha aspect. This is related with tantra; this comes from tantra. Then, with this meditation, you do three prostrations, and then you kneel down—those who can kneel down—and put your palms together at the heart in the mudra of prostration. Then please repeat the ceremony prayer.

There's need for this meditation, to do it like this for the development of your mind. Therefore, you take the precepts with this visualization, with this meditation.

Then think that you're repeating what Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is saying. The meditation is that.

[Rinpoche gives the precepts, with the group repeating after him.]

"...in order to benefit them." This means temporary benefits, temporary happiness, that you're going to give them temporary benefit, but taking the precepts is not only to cause temporary happiness. "In order to liberate them..." This means ultimate benefit, taking the precepts in order to give ultimate benefit to the sentient beings. Now remember all those places where there are famines and a lot of difficulties when you recite this. Think you are taking the precepts in order to stop those things. "In order to eliminate famine..." For Ethiopia and all those places, remember that you're taking the precepts in order to stop all these problems that are happening to sentient beings now and in the future.

I and a few of us translated, put together, a commentary on the benefits of taking precepts. As mentioned there, in the past, the king, when the country had a Dharma king, made a rule that on the special days of the month everybody was to keep, to practice the eight Mahayana precept. The king made the law. After people had taken and kept the eight Mahayana precepts on those special days, the country, the environment slowly, completely changed. The environment of the country completely changed. The rains came at the right time, when they were needed, and the crops and forests and all these things grew well. There was much economic development and famine was stopped. There are stories of what happened there, of how living in the precepts benefited the development of the country.

So "to eliminate famine for the sentient beings." Not just this world—there are numberless worlds; there are numberless universes, so for everyone.

Then, "...in order to eliminate sicknesses." Remember all those sicknesses; remember all those sick people in the hospital. Think, "I'm taking these precepts in order to benefit all of those who are in hospital, who are not sure whether they are going to live or die today." Think extensively about all sentient beings and how you are taking the eight Mahayana precepts to eliminate sicknesses.

"In order to perfect the thirty-seven practices on the path to enlightenment..."

[Rinpoche continues to give the precepts, with the group repeating after him.]

At this time you *must*, without a wandering mind, you *must* generate the thought, “I have received the Mahayana ordination, the reviving and purifying Mahayana ordination in front of the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas,” as you have done the meditation, visualizing the Buddha, and also the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas around and in front of him. Think like that. If you don’t think this, you haven’t receive the ordination.

[Rinpoche continues the precepts ceremony.]

“...at improper times,” that means after twelve o’clock. The strict way is only taking one meal. I was advised by my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, that when somebody takes precepts quite often, it’s okay to have breakfast, but when it’s done in public or only occasionally, then it’s better to be more strict. For so many years since we began taking the eight Mahayana precepts here, we have been doing it this way, the strict way, in all these courses. Therefore, we should think of one meal here, in other words, and dedicate for sentient beings.

As far as taking only one meal, first you eat well, then when you stop eating you completely stop. If you stopped then change your mind and eat again, that doesn’t become one meal but two meals. So, first eat well, until real discomfort starts. No, I’m joking. Until the body says no. The mind says yes. Anyway, eat well, then when you stop, completely stop.

[Rinpoche continues the precepts ceremony.]

So please repeat this mantra, the mantra that makes the morality pure. In case of something, in case of being unconscious or if something has degenerated, you recite this mantra a few times to purify.

[Rinpoche continues the precepts ceremony.]

So, please dedicate the merits. “Due to the merits of having taken the eight Mahayana precepts, may the paramita of morality be accomplished by keeping it purely, without pride, without mistakes.”

When I say “*Tab yin no*” you say “*Leg so.*” Which means, “This is the method,” then you have to respond to that, “Yes.”

[Rinpoche continues the precepts ceremony.]

Think this way, please think this first. “Due to all the past, present and future merits, and buddhas’ and bodhisattvas’ merits, and by having taken the eight Mahayana precepts, due to all these merits that are empty from their own side, may the I, who is empty from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, that is empty from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are empty from their own side, to enlightenment, that is empty from its own side.”

By dedicating the merits to achieve enlightenment, the merit becomes unceasing. No matter how much you enjoy the result of merit, how much you use it, it becomes unceasing. So it has that benefit.

By dedicating the merits, by sealing it with emptiness, only emptiness, the ultimate nature, this way the merit can't be destroyed. Afterwards, if heresy and anger, if these obstacles to merit arise, they can't destroy the merit. Otherwise, if you don't dedicate the merit by sealing it with the emptiness, then if heresy and anger arise later, they can destroy the merit. In this way it is protected. It's very, very important when you dedicate the merits, not only firstly to dedicate for enlightenment, which is extremely important because it makes unceasing and secondly to seal it with emptiness.

So please dedicate the merit to generate bodhicitta.

Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chbe...

“Due to all these merits, may the bodhicitta that has not been generated within my mind and within the minds of others be generated. And that which has been generated, may it be developed.”

So please dedicate well for this. Dedicate strongly for bodhicitta.

Then, please dedicate for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all other holy beings who live their lives for sentient beings, to benefit sentient beings, that all their holy wishes succeed immediately, that all their holy wishes, doing the work for the sentient beings, succeed immediately.

Gang ri ra wai...

“Due to all these three-times' merits accumulated by me, and by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may any sentient being who hears me, who touches me, who remembers me, who talks about me, who thinks about me, just by that, from that time may they never be reborn in the lower realms, and may they be liberated immediately from all disease, spirit harm, negative karma, obscurations, just by that, and quickly achieve enlightenment.

“Due to all the three-times' merits accumulated by me, and by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may all the father, mother sentient beings have happiness; may the three lower realms be empty forever; and may all the prayers of the bodhisattvas succeed immediately, and may I cause this by myself alone.

“Due to all these three-times' merits and the three-times' merits accumulated by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may I myself and all sentient beings, in all our lifetimes, be able to meet a perfectly qualified Mahayana virtuous friend, and from our own side see him only as an enlightened being, and to do only actions pleasing the holy mind of the virtuous friend and to fulfill his holy wishes immediately by myself alone.

“As the three-times' buddhas have dedicated their merits, I will dedicate all my merits to quickly enlighten all sentient beings.”

Jam pal pa wo...

Du sum sheg pai...

“Due to all the three-time merits accumulated by myself, and by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may the complete, pure teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, the unification of sutra and tantra, be actualized within my mind, in the minds of my family, in the minds of all the students, in this very lifetime, especially bodhicitta and clear light, and may we achieve enlightenment and then lead all sentient beings to enlightenment. In particular, may the general organization, the projects, to benefit other sentient beings, and for the teachings, and in particular, the meditation centers, all the students, the benefactors and the individual students, for their work to benefit others. May their wishes succeed immediately according to Dharma.”

So please, with the same meditation, do three prostrations.

Lecture 18



[Kopan Monastery, 1987](#)

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS MOTIVATION: THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

As Lama Tsongkhapa explained in *The Hymns of Experience of the Graduated Path*,⁴

*If we do not strive in contemplating the defects of the truth of suffering,
The genuine aspiration for liberation does not arise in us;
If we do not contemplate the causal process of the origin of suffering,
We will fail to understand how to cut the root of cyclic existence.*

*So it's vital to seek true renunciation of disenchantment with existence
And to recognize which factors chain us in the cycle of existence.
I, a yogi, have practiced in this manner;
You, who aspire for liberation, too should do likewise.*

In other words, it's important to practice with the determination to be free from the circling aggregates, to practice determination to be free from the upsetness of these circling aggregates, from what binds us or ties us to the samsara.

Lama Tsongkhapa himself said, "I, a yogi, have practiced in this manner; you, who aspire for liberation, too should do likewise." If we seek liberation we should also do the practice like that.

As Lama Tsongkhapa mentioned in *The Hymns of Experience of the Graduated Path* it's very important to practice the determination to be free from the circling aggregates, and to know what binds us to samsara, to this suffering realm, these circling, defiled aggregates. What ties

us to this suffering realm, these circling aggregates, is action and the disturbing thoughts, karma and delusion.

Maitreya Buddha explained in the *The Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*,⁵

*The disease is to be known,
The cause is to be abandoned,
The medicine is to be relied upon,
And the cure is to be achieved.*

The disease is to be known and the cause is to be abandoned. To be healthy, to be cured, to abide in that happiness, that achievement, the medicine is to be taken, to be relied upon and the cure is to be achieved. Like that, true suffering is to be known, true cause of suffering is to be abandoned, cessation is to be achieved and true path, which is the method to achieve cessation, is to be practiced.

The kind, compassionate Shakyamuni Buddha has revealed the four noble truths, which is the foundation of the whole entire Buddhadharma. To cure the disease by taking the right medicine depends entirely on finding a wise, skillful doctor, and correctly following him or her. Similarly, the first teaching the Buddha revealed was the truth of suffering. By explaining suffering first the questions arise, “What has caused these sufferings?” “Does suffering arise without a cause and conditions, or by depending on cause and conditions?” As these questions arise, then Buddha explained the cause of suffering.

Then, after explaining the cause of suffering, he explained the cessation of suffering. This is ultimate liberation. This is the real happiness. Then we come to know what real happiness, ultimate liberation, is. After the Buddha explained the true cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering, the question arises whether there’s any method to achieve this, the cessation of suffering.

Then, the Buddha revealed the true path as the answer to that question. Achieving ultimate liberation, all these successes, depends on finding, meeting a skillful virtuous teacher, a qualified virtuous teacher who reveals the unmistakable right path and then, from our own side, following that skillful, qualified virtuous teacher. From our own side, by exactly correctly following the virtuous teacher we actualize the true path and the cessation of suffering. From that, all these things happen.

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS MOTIVATION: HOW THE TWELVE LINKS WORK

In the *Rice Seedling Sutra*, the Buddha explained the evolution of samsara to a group of bhikshus, fully-ordained monks, by using the external example of a rice plant. He said,

*Bhikshus, by holding a rice plant, you see a dependent arising.
Whoever sees dependent arising will see the ultimate truth;
Whoever sees the ultimate truth will see the Buddha.*⁶

That might mean by realizing the ultimate truth, by developing that wisdom, we are able to see the Buddha, we are able to achieve full enlightenment.

The Buddha explained that ignorance is not knowing the ultimate nature of the I. That is like the farmer, the cultivator. Ignorance is the first one. The second one is karma or the action motivated by that ignorance. This one is like the field where the various crops grow. From karma, the various rebirths arise. Various rebirths, various experiences of life, arise from the action, from karma.

The action, the karma, leaves an imprint on the mental continuum, the consciousness. There are six consciousnesses, so karma, action, leaves an imprint on the sixth consciousness, the mental consciousness. The consciousness on which the action leaves the imprint is like the seed. One small seed contains the potential to grow into a huge trunk with thousands, billions of branches and leaves, flowers and fruit. One tiny seed contains all that potential. Similarly, the consciousness carries, contains all the potential, all the imprints from one life to another. From one life to another it carries all the imprints, all the seeds, and then the consciousness joins from one life to another life. So, the consciousness on which the karma leaves the imprint is like the seed. It's related to the example.

Then, craving and grasping, craving happiness, to have comfort, and craving to be free from sufferings, to be free from the suffering feeling. When craving is strongly developed it becomes grasping. First of all there's craving, attachment, the want to have things. For example, when we are in a shop, we want to have things, we want to have that particular object. Then by craving arising strongly, we actually decide to get it. Making the determination to get it is grasping.

Craving and grasping from the twelve links of a human being, for example, relate to this present human life. Out of ignorance not knowing the ultimate nature of the I, doing a virtuous action, practicing morality and so forth, that intention leaves an imprint on the consciousness. That makes an imprint that is left on the consciousness by the action, by the karma, ready to produce its own result. For this present human rebirth, the craving and grasping, these two types of attachment, make the imprint left by the karma stronger, ready to bring the result, this present human rebirth. These two, craving and grasping, make this imprint powerful, throwing the consciousness into its future samsaric rebirth, which is this human rebirth.

The Buddha explained this, relating it all to the excellent example of a rice seed that is ready to bring its own result, the sprout.

Then, after that death happens. The consciousness migrates into the intermediate state, and then from that, from the intermediate state, the continuation of the consciousness joins with the fertilized egg in this present life's mother's womb.

If the consciousness that is cause-time consciousness, on which the imprint is left by the karma, if that is counted, then here the result, the consciousness that joins with the fertilized egg is not counted. But if the consciousness that joins with the fertilized egg is counted, then the previous one is not counted. Some lamas count the cause, the consciousness on which the imprint is left, the cause-time consciousness and some lamas, some systems, count the result-time consciousness, the consciousness that joins with the egg, without counting the previous one.

In reality, the continuity of the consciousness comes from the intermediate state and joins with the fertilized egg. The general explanation is that for the third drop, a very thick drop, for the sperm and the egg to meet together at that time and take the rebirth it has to be devoid of three obstacles. It has to be free from these three obstacles in order to be able to take rebirth. From the parent's side, first of all it's having the karma to receive the child. That's one thing. Then, not having any defects. I don't remember the third one. Maybe from the child's side, from the side of the being who takes rebirth, that being who's going to take rebirth having the karma. I don't remember the third one exactly.

Without the three mistakes, without the three obstacles, the consciousness takes place on the fertilized egg and rebirth happens. At that time the physical part is called "form" and the mental part is called "name." The feelings, compounding aggregates, recognition, compounding aggregates, all these mental parts are called "name" and so this link is called "name and form." This is related to the external example, the stem growing from the seed. With name and form, then the sense bases happen and then contact and feeling. All those gradually happen during that time.

The last link is old age and death. Old age starts right after the consciousness takes place on the fertilized egg. Right after that second, old age starts. What is left to be experienced is death.

So, there are seven results, three delusions and two actions. Ignorance, craving and grasping are the three delusions. The two actions are karma motivated by ignorance and becoming. These three delusions and two actions are the causes that were already created, experienced in a past life. The seven results are experienced in this life. We've already experienced them all, except what is left, the death that will have to come.

This is the evolution. This is how we ourselves enter this present samsara, how this present life's samsara, these circling defiled aggregates, happened, evolved. By following ignorance, by being under the control of ignorance, then motivating the karma that leaves an imprint on the mind, on the consciousness of this present life—that's how it started; that's how we entered this present life's samsara. In other words, in that way, the continuation of our past life's samsara joined to this present life, the continuity joined to this life. This is the way, by being under the control of ignorance and karma, that we tie ourselves to the samsara, to this suffering realm.

By realizing the ultimate nature of the I, by developing this, we are able to cease death and rebirth. We are able to cease death and rebirth by ceasing the three delusions and two actions, by ceasing the very root, ignorance, the concept of true existence, the concept of a truly existent I.

According to the evolution of samsara, it started with ignorance. There's evolution and there's the reverse. Death and rebirth and these seven results depend on karma and disturbing thoughts. Then, in the same way, by ceasing ignorance and the three delusions we cease the karma, those actions, and through this we are able to cease rebirth and death; we are able to cease those seven results. So the cessation of suffering has its own evolution, which is the reverse of the evolution of samsara.

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS MOTIVATION: EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE MIND

With this we practice awareness, meditating on where all these aggregates come from. Where did these aggregates come from? They came from our own consciousness, that which carries the imprint. Not just these aggregates, but the whole of appearance, the five sense objects.

For example, starting from this morning, whatever we see in our view, desirable objects, undesirable objects, indifferent objects, the beautiful, the ugly—anything that we see today—whatever appears to us, whatever we see today in our view, all these appearances come from the consciousness. Not only these aggregates but all that appeared to our consciousness today from this morning until tonight, in these twenty-four hours—the appearance of the place, the appearance of the people, how we see the people, how we see the beings, living beings, how we see, and how we see the place, all the sense consciousness objects, how things appear to us—all these things come from the consciousness, because they come from the imprints. All these are manifestations of the imprints. All these come from the imprints.

Just like on the negative roll of a movie film there are various people enjoying themselves or fighting, happy or unhappy, and there are various places, there are many people and places printed on the negative. Then, by putting the film in the machine with electricity, we are able to project it on the screen. Like that, including these aggregates, whatever appearances we have today, whatever appearances, whatever quality, pure or impure, all completely came from imprints. It's exactly like the projection we see on the screen. What we see on the screen comes from the negative roll on which all those figures are printed. Like this, there are so many imprints left on the consciousness by our past actions. In the same way that all the images we see on the screen come from the negative roll, all the appearances we see today come from our own consciousness. It's not only that they come from causes, they come from our own mind. These appearances also come from action, the action that is our own mind, the intention. Therefore again, all these appearances come from our own mind.

Now the third thing is that all these appearances are the creation of ignorance. They all, including these aggregates, come from ignorance. They were originally created by ignorance, the concept of true existence. So including the aggregates, all the appearances come from our own mind, from ignorance.

When we go sightseeing by car, all the mountains, all the houses, whatever we see comes from the mind. As we go by car, each minute, each hour we see different mountains, different things. All these appearances come from our own mind. It's the same thing when we go to the market. All these billions and billions of different objects we see in the shops, all these appearances we're able to see and we're able to enjoy—whether they're desirable or undesirable—all these appearances come from our own mind.

We ourselves, our own mind, are the creator of everything. Suffering, samsara, happiness, liberation—we ourselves are the creator of everything. As the Buddha explained, we ourselves are our own guide, we ourselves are our own enemy. Therefore, there's nobody outside to blame. Whatever problems we have in life, relationships and so forth, there's

nobody else to blame, there's nobody outside to blame except ourselves, because we make the mistake of following delusion, of following the disturbing thoughts.

It's not sufficient that we ourselves become completely free from the lower realms and even free from the whole entire samsara. That's not sufficient. We must achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, because where all the sufferings come from is the I, the self-cherishing thought, by cherishing the I. All the sufferings come from the I, all the problems come from the I, therefore what is called the I is the object to be forever abandoned. All happiness, all successes, all good things come from other sentient beings, therefore other sentient beings are forever to be cherished. As I mentioned on the first morning when discussing the kindness of sentient beings, all happiness, all success comes from depending on the kindness of other sentient beings. Therefore, other sentient beings are the objects to be forever cherished. They are extremely kind and precious. Therefore, in our life there's nothing, there's nobody to cherish other than sentient beings. In our life there's nobody to work for other than sentient beings. Those we should live our life and work for are only sentient beings, only other sentient beings.

Think, "What sentient beings want is happiness; what they do not want is suffering. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and lead them to full enlightenment, that which is the peerless happiness. To be able to do this, I must achieve full enlightenment myself. That depends on actualizing the graduated path to enlightenment, and that depends on protecting karma and accumulating merit. Therefore, I'm going to take the eight Mahayana precepts."

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS CEREMONY

Then, those who can kneel down, please kneel down and put two palms together at the heart.

Please think that you are repeating after me. As there's a need, as there's a purpose, for the development of the mind, in this meditative practice first visualize the lama who grants the eight Mahayana precepts as a buddha, in the aspect of a buddha, surrounded by numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas. Then in the front of them you take the eight Mahayana precepts.

[Rinpoche gives the ordination, with the students repeating.]

So at end of the third repetition without a wandering mind, it's very important to make the strong determination that you have received the reviving and purifying Mahayana ordination in the presence of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and Shakyamuni Buddha.

[Rinpoche continues the ordination, with the students repeating.]

"...in order to liberate them." So reflect on the constant suffering of sentient beings, which continuation has no beginning. Then you can get the idea to completely liberate them, which depends on freeing them completely, eliminating completely their karma and disturbing thoughts. Thinking in that way then the wish to completely liberate them will come. External things alone can't liberate them. Liberating them means completely ending their suffering, making them never experience suffering at all. Think, "For that reason, I'm taking the eight

Mahayana precepts. To stop suffering, to stop famine happening to all sentient beings, for that reason, I'm taking the precepts.”

“...in order to eliminate sicknesses.” For all sentient beings to never experience sicknesses. Remember all those who are sick, all those who are dying of AIDS, cancer and other diseases. There are so many other diseases, not just those two. Remember those people who are in a coma for years, not completely dead but not functioning in life. You should think about this and recognize that taking the eight Mahayana precepts is for all of them, for them to never experience sickness again.

“...in order to perfect the thirty-seven practices on the path to enlightenment...”

[Rinpoche continues the ordination, with the students repeating.]

So when I say “*Tab yin no*” then you say “*Leg so.*”

[Rinpoche continues the ordination, with the students repeating.]

Then please repeat three times the mantra that makes the morality pure.

[Rinpoche and group recite the *Mantra of Pure Morality* twenty-one times.]

“Due to the past, present and future merits accumulated by me, by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may my paramita of morality be completed by keeping it without mistakes, pure, without pride.

“Due to these three-times’ merits accumulated by me, may bodhicitta, the altruistic intention to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings, be generated within my mind and in the mind of all sentient beings. And for those who have it, may it be developed.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits accumulated by me, by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, due to all this merit, that which is merely imputed by the mind, may the I, who is merely imputed, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, that which is also merely imputed, and lead all sentient beings, who are merely imputed, to enlightenment, that which is merely imputed.”

So you can see, you can get some idea in this way, everything is empty. All the billions and billions of things, what are called this and that, everything is empty in reality. Conventionally things are called “I,” “sentient beings,” “enlightenment,” “merits,” “this” and “that”—billions and billions, numberless names, labels, all imputed.

“Due to the past, present and future merits accumulated by me, by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may any sentient being who hears me, who touches me, who remembers me, who talks about me, who thinks about me, just by that, from that time, may they never be reborn in the lower realms, in the hell, preta or animal realms, and just by this may they be immediately liberated from all the disease, spirit harm, negative karma and obscurations, and may they quickly achieve enlightenment.

“Due to all these three-times’ merits accumulated by me, by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may I myself and all sentient beings, in all our lifetimes, be able to find a perfectly qualified Mahayana virtuous friend, like Maitreya Buddha, Manjushri or Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, and then from our own side, may we all the time be able to see him only as an enlightened being and do actions only pleasing the holy mind of the virtuous friend and be able to fulfill service for the holy mind of the virtuous friend immediately and in all the lifetimes. May this happen for myself and for all sentient beings.

“Due to all these three-time merits, may all the father and mother sentient beings have happiness and its causes and may I cause it by myself alone. And may the three lower realms be empty forever and may I cause that by myself alone. And may all the bodhisattvas’ prayers succeed immediately, and may I cause that by oneself alone.”

Gang ri ra wai...

Dedicate for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all other holy beings, who live their life working for sentient beings.

“As the three-time buddhas have dedicated their merits, I will dedicate all my merits to quickly enlighten all sentient beings, just as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha have done.

“Due to all the merits accumulated by me, and by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, may the pure teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, the unification of sutra and tantra, especially bodhicitta and clear light, may it be actualized within my mind, in the minds of my family, in all the students, in this very lifetime, and may I be able to spread the Dharma in the minds of sentient beings and lead them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. And may the general organization as well as the individual Dharma centers and individual students, may their work to benefit others and all their wishes succeed according to Dharma.”

So, please do three prostrations with the same visualization.

Lecture 19



Chenrezig Institute, 1991

THE MAIN MIND AND MENTAL FACTORS

According to the traditional practice of the lineage lamas check the motivation to listen to the teaching and also the righteous conduct of listening to the teaching.

I mentioned one morning about buddha potential. The Tibetan word is *rig*, which is similar to the blood as in blood generation or race, like king's race and so forth. It's the same name, the same spelling, as blood generation, race. The same name is used here but the meaning is different. The race of the buddha, the potential of buddha—just translating the word, the “race of the buddha.”

There is buddha nature in us, in every sentient being's mind. Even the tiniest creature that can only be seen by a microscope has buddha potential or buddha nature, or the “race of the buddha” within the mind. It's in the mental continuum of all us sentient beings, in every hell being, in every preta being, in every animal being, in every human being. No matter how many problems we have in daily life, no matter how many evil actions we have created, no matter how heavy that negative karma is, the fully enlightened being's nature is there in everyone's mental continuum.

First of all, the ultimate nature of the mind is the clear light; the ultimate nature of the mind is that which is called clear light. Then there's the conventional nature of the mind. The conventional nature of the mind is the nature of the mind that is true for the all-obscuring mind, for ignorance, the concept of true existence. It's the nature of the mind that is true for the all-obscuring mind that holds the concept of true existence, the concept of inherent existence. It's the mind as it appears to the all-obscuring mind, to this ignorance.

Of the aggregates of body and mind, this other nature of the mind is the mental aggregates on which we label “I”, which is called in Tibetan, she pa, “knowing phenomena.” Knowing phenomena is that which is colorless, shapeless and formless, but whose nature is clear and knowing, in that it knows the object. As I already mentioned before, like the object that is clearly reflected in a mirror, when the mirror and object meet, when those two things are together, then the object is clearly able to appear in the mirror. Here, the object is able to appear clearly to the mind like a mirror. Like the mirror and the object stay together, the object is able to be clearly reflected in the mirror, like this, the nature of the mind is this knowing phenomena; it is clear and it perceives objects. That is the definition of the mind. Another name is “knowing phenomenon.”

This knowing phenomenon is the “mind” when we say “body and mind.” Within this there is a principal mind or consciousness—there are six types of consciousness—and then there are fifty-one secondary minds, called mental factors.

First of all, what is the meaning of consciousness? It’s just the mind that does the function of knowing the essence of the object. That is the definition of consciousness, the function of consciousness. Of the secondary mental factors, there are fifty-one. They are called *sem jung* in Tibetan. I haven’t heard an exact translation of *sem jung* word for word. It’s normally translated as “mental factors.” What clarifies it is by adding the word “secondary.” That already makes it somewhat clearer. By adding the word “secondary” to “mental factors” that clarifies something; that makes it more specific. So in Tibetan the fifty-one secondary mental factors are called *sem jung*.

Mental factors are minds that arise as a surrounding or support for the principal consciousness, like the entourage and the king that come together and work together. The principal consciousness is like the king and the fifty-one mental factors are like the entourage that come together and work together. Even though the king and each of the people that surround him have different functions, different activities, they are all working for the same goal. Even though they are all working for the same goal, the king has his own function, then there’s a person called the secretary who does a different function and so on. Each person does different activities, has different functions. So sort of like that.

So, there are these fifty-one mental factors that arise as a surrounding of the principal mind, the consciousness. For example, the consciousness of the mind just knows or perceives the essence of the buddha’s holy body. Then, from the fifty-one secondary mental factors, which are called *sem jung*, one of them is remembrance. This is the secondary mental factor or *sem jung* that functions to not forget the object. On the basis of perceiving the essence of the object, the buddha’s holy body, the particular function of remembrance, which differentiates it from the principal consciousness, the principal mind, is to not forget the object. On the basis of the principal consciousness perceiving the essence of the object, its particular function that differentiates it from the consciousness is to not forget the object.

Each of the secondary mental factors has a different function. By analyzing how many different types there are, there are fifty-one. The definition of *sem jung* or secondary mental factor is a mind that, on the basis of perceiving the essence of the object, does a particular function related to that object.

Each mental factor has its own function based on the object that the principal consciousness perceives. It functions according to its label. According to what label it has, it does that specific function. The Tibetan *sem* means “mind” and *jung* means “arising” so *sem jung* means “arising from the mind,” which shows these secondary minds arise from and act as a surround for the principal consciousness.

There are five similarities between the secondary mental factors and the principal consciousness. The first is the *similarity in the object*. Whatever object the principal consciousness focuses on, the secondary mind also focuses on that same object. That’s the similarity in the object. Then there’s the *similarity in time*. Both the principal consciousness and the mental factor are born together, exist together and stop together. Then, there’s the *similarity in the aspect*. As the consciousness becomes the thought of, say, a blue car or the thought of a table, then the secondary mind is also in that aspect. Then, the *similarity in the substances*, or in other words the similarity of being in the same realm: the desire realm, the form realm or the formless realm. If the principal consciousness is a desire realm consciousness, then the mental factor is also the same, a desire realm mental factor. That is the similarity in substances or the similarity in the realm.

I don’t remember the other one but there are about five similarities.⁷

Of the fifty-one mental factors or *sem jung*, there are five that definitely understand or ascertain the object and five omnipresent mental factors. Then, there are eleven virtues such as devotion and awareness—being careful not to create negative karma—being shy about creating negativities and so forth. There are about eleven mental factors that are virtues.⁸

Then there are the nonvirtuous mental factors such as attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, jealousy, wrong view, the view of the changeable aggregates and so forth. The view of the changeable aggregates is the mind that looks at the aggregates that are in the nature of change and apprehending that the I is inherently existent. For example, when we say, “I’m going out” or “I’m going back to my room to sleep,” or “I’m going to sit down.” We say these things because the aggregates of the body are going to go out or go back to the room. We say, “I’m going to sit down,” because the aggregates of the body are going to do the action of sitting down. Whatever function the aggregates are going to do, we label, “I’m going to go back to my room to sleep,” or “I’m going to sit down here.” But how our mind, how our ignorance, apprehends the I doing these things is different. The way our mind, our ignorance believes the I that is going to go back to the room to sleep exists is different from reality. The I is based on these aggregates that are doing this function—sitting down, going to the room and so forth. That I is merely imputed on the aggregates based on their function, which is reality, but it doesn’t appear to us in that way. It appears as inherently existent, as a real I from its own side, unlabeled, not being merely labeled by the mind. The I appears like this for our mind, the ignorance, and then we apprehend it like that. The I appears as a real one existing from its own side, unlabeled, not merely labeled by the mind.

The view of the changeable aggregates means we see the I wrongly, as not being merely imputed onto these changing aggregates. By depending on the reason, by focusing on that, “I’m going to do this and that,” even though it’s merely imputed by the mind, it doesn’t appear that way. It appears as the opposite, as inherently existent, and our own mind,

ignorance, believes that is true. So, the view of the changeable aggregates is the wrong view that apprehends the I as inherently existent, the I that is believed by the ignorance.

How is it translated? Do you remember? How is this one translated, the title? The view of the change? View of changeable? The view of the changeable group.

Anyway, it seems to be referring to the aggregates. The view is to do with the aggregates but the wrong view is to do with the I. But why it's related to the changeable group that are the aggregates is because by focusing on the aggregates we believe that the merely labeled I is inherently existent.

Of the fifty-one mental factors, there are six root delusions, starting from attachment, and then twenty secondary delusions. Then there are four changeable phenomena, such as sleep. Sleep can be virtuous or nonvirtuous. We can transform our sleep. It can be virtuous or we can transform it into nonvirtue. Then there is regret, which can be positive regret or negative regret. It's negative regret if we feel regret that somebody is practicing Dharma or somebody's doing retreat and the same if we feel regret when we hear that somebody has renounced this life, cut off clinging to this life, and is living an ascetic life. It's negative regret if it's about something positive we've done or somebody else has done—if we've taken ordination or taken precepts or if somebody else has—and we regret it. First we took the initiation commitment, then afterwards we feel regret having taken it. All these things are negative regret, negative upsetness.

And then there's positive regret. Positive regret is thinking how we didn't get to practice Dharma and realizing that we have wasted our life, this perfect human rebirth that we have. We feel regret for having wasted this precious human life or this perfect human body, that we didn't get to practice in the most skillful way, we didn't get to practice Dharma or that we practiced Dharma but didn't practice the lam-rim. We might have practiced Dharma, doing preliminary practices, reciting a lot of mantras, doing many other virtuous actions and so forth, but we didn't actually get to meditate on the lam-rim. We didn't really get to meditate on the actual path, that was left out. We didn't get to actually experience the renunciation of samsara, bodhicitta, emptiness—those common paths—and the particular path of the Highest Yoga Tantra. We didn't get to do the actual practice that makes life most practical, most meaningful, by training the mind in the actual path. So, even though we have done many other virtuous actions, many other practices, the real practice is left out. When we feel regret that we have not been skillful in our practice, that is positive regret.

Feeling regret that we didn't get to live our life with a bodhicitta motivation, that we've created negative karma, that we've degenerated our vows, these regrets are positive because they help us direct our life, to put our life into Dharma practice. It redirects our life from one that doesn't practice Dharma into one that does Dharma practice, and into the most pure Dharma practice. It refocuses our life to meditate on the actual lam-rim path. Regretting having created negative karma, degenerated vows, the precepts, the pledges, the samaya and so forth persuades the mind to purify those negative karmas, those obstacles that interfere with achieving the realizations of the path to enlightenment. Then it helps to practice many of those practices of purification by doing prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas or doing a Vajrasattva retreat in order to purify all those negative karmas accumulated from this life and from beginningless past lives, all those obstacles for

developing the mind, all those causes of the sufferings, now and in the future. This regret persuades our mind to do those various powerful purification practices that purify all these obstacles, all these obscurations, those negative karmas.

With conceptual minds, there are two types. One is finer; one is rougher. There are four changeable mental factors, sleeping, regret and so forth.⁹ There are four phenomena that are changeable.

There are fifty-one secondary minds. If you want to know about them in more detail, there are translations of these texts. You can study those things. This is just an idea.

BUDDHA NATURE

In regards to the nature of the mind, there are two ways to recognize this. There's the clear light nature of the mind, which is the ultimate nature of the mind, and there's the perceiving phenomenon, which is the conventional nature of the mind

What is the mind? What is the knowing phenomenon? What is the mind? The phenomenon, the base on which we label "I" is the aggregates, which are the body and mind. The mind or the knowing phenomenon is that which is colorless, formless and shapeless and whose nature is clear and perceiving the object. That is the reason, that is the base on which we label "mind," on which we label "knowing phenomenon," *she pa*. It is that phenomenon that is formless, colorless and shapeless and is clear and perceives an object. Of the base, the aggregates on which we label the I, there is the body and mind, of the body and mind, this is the mind.

Based on this thing that is shapeless, formless and colorless, that is clear and perceives an object, this phenomenon that exists merely imputed on the base, because of this reason, we make up the label, "mind" or "knowing phenomenon" or "*she pa*." It depends on the language. If it's Tibetan, we make up "*she pa*"; if it's English we make up "mind."

However, this mind that appears to us is completely wrong. What we believe, this mind, how it appears to us so far, is completely wrong. So far the mind has been appearing to us as concrete, as a real one, as a real one from its own side. It feels like it's something within us, something real, concrete, existing from its own side. It doesn't seem to have anything to do with our own mind putting the label. Here, we're talking about the subtle refuting object, the object not merely labeled by the mind, seeing there's a real mind from its own side. So far, the mind has appeared to us that way, and we've believed that is how the mind is, a real mind existing from its own side. So you can see, according to the previous analysis, this mind that has been appearing to us so far and that we have believed in—something real from its own side—that's a complete hallucination. That's completely empty; it doesn't exist *at all*.

As I've just mentioned, the mind exists; it's a phenomenon that is shapeless, formless, colorless, clear and knowing, therefore it exists, but how our mind perceives it to exist, within the concept of our mind, the idea about the mind that we have made up, that it exists from its own side, that is a complete hallucination. There's no such mind, a real one from its own side. It's totally a hallucination. It doesn't exist at all. Or looking at it the other way, this

phenomenon exists because of the reason that it's merely imputed [on the base]. It's merely imputed and we believe in that.

So you can see, from this analysis there's no such real mind existing from its own side. There's no such thing. When you analyze, there's no such thing. That real mind we thought was there, the one we have believed in, that real mind, that inherently existent one, existing from its own side, that is completely empty, right there, right there, it's completely empty right there.

So *that* is the clear light nature. That is the ultimate nature of the mind. That is the emptiness of the mind. That is what is called the clear light nature of mind. That is buddha nature. That is buddha nature. That is buddha nature, the buddha's race. That is buddha potential, buddha essence.

UNDERSTANDING BUDDHA NATURE BRINGS HOPE

Because we have this nature of the mind that is clear light, that is buddha nature, the essence of buddha, if we meet the good condition by meeting a virtuous teacher who reveals the right path, the path that is virtue, we are able to achieve liberation and enlightenment. The path of virtue is capable of leading us to liberation and full enlightenment; it's the path to liberation and enlightenment. [It's also the path to] the happiness of future lives. When we hear about the incredible, inconceivable, long-term happiness of future lives, we should remember the inconceivable length of time this long-term happiness is. There is nothing to compare with this life, which is a few years, a few months, a few days—depending on the sentient being, depending on the human being, it may even just be a few hours.

This way it makes sense to think about how our future lives' happiness, liberation and enlightenment all depend on the path that is virtue. By having met the perfectly qualified virtuous teacher who shows us the unmistakable path, by having met the good conditions, this mind, which has buddha nature, can go all the way to enlightenment. The continuation of the mind goes to enlightenment; we are able to achieve enlightenment.

But now if this mind, which has buddha nature, meets bad conditions, the nonvirtuous teacher, the nonvirtuous friend who misleads us, who gives us wrong conceptions, who leads us on the wrong path that only leads to suffering, to samsara, to the lower realms, then the mind gets degenerated and then we go to the lowest realm, to hell, the narak realm, the heaviest suffering. It makes us experience the heaviest suffering of samsara, hell, on this mental continuum.

If we meet a perfect virtuous teacher who shows us the perfect path, then we're able to experience full enlightenment on this mental continuum. So it has potential, but depending on the bad conditions or good conditions we meet, it can be the best, the highest enlightenment or it can go down to the lowest, the heaviest suffering, hell.

It's just like the example of ringing the gong, when you ring the gong. The potential for making the sound is there in the gong but the gong needs to meet the condition of somebody hitting it for the sound to be made. When the gong meets the condition of being hit, because the potential to make sound is there in the gong, the sound is there. It doesn't come from outside, it's there already. It doesn't have to come from outside, somewhere else.

It's already there. Making sound or whatever function an object is supposed to do is there. With the gong, it's a question of meeting the stick.

It's similar how butter can be produced from milk. The potential is there. The butter doesn't come into the milk from somewhere else. It is already there. It's just a question of meeting the conditions that make the butter be produced from the milk.

And similarly, a magnifying glass that can produce fire and burn things. That power is already there. It doesn't have to come from somewhere outside into the magnifying glass. It's already there. To be able to fulfill its function to burn things, it's a question of meeting the right conditions: the sunlight, the sunbeam. If the condition, the sunbeam, doesn't meet the magnifying glass, then it can't function. Even though the potential is there, it can't function. When the sunbeam hits it, when it meets the condition, the sunbeam, then because the power is already there to burn things, it's able to function.

Like these examples, the potential to be completely free from all fears, from all suffering, from all the obscurations, all the mistakes of the mind, all the problems, the potential to achieve the highest enlightenment, it's there. It's always there. It has always been there on our mental continuum from beginningless rebirths, from time without beginning. It's there all the time. It's just a question of whether we choose the right conditions, of what kind of conditions we choose and we meet.

Therefore, there's always hope. Life is full of hope. No matter how much heavy karma we have, no matter how evil a life we have lived—even having killed many millions and millions of people—there's always the potential to be free from all these things, to be free from all these fears, to be free from all these negative karmas, it's always there. It's always within us.

It is in our own hands. It depends on us. That freedom to be completely free from all the fears, to be able to achieve ultimate liberation, the whole thing depends on whether we choose the right conditions are not. And *that* is in our own hands. *That* is in our own hands.

Therefore, since life is full of hope, there's really no need to be depressed. Even though we might have met the Dharma a long time ago but there are still so many obstacles, there's still so much failure in our Dharma practice, even though we might be unable to continue to practice, there's still all the potential because of the clear light nature of the mind, that which is buddha nature. There's always hope it can get better.

There's no need to be depressed, thinking that life is hopeless, that we're hopeless, that we can't do anything, that we can't develop our mind. That is completely wrong. Thinking that life is always suffering, that life is always problems, that there's no way to end the suffering, all that is completely the wrong concept. Thinking that it's all hopeless, that life is only suffering all the time, the thought comes to commit suicide, to kill ourselves. All these things are due to not knowing that we have all the potential, that our own life is full of potential, full of hope and not knowing none of these obscurations are permanent. They are not permanent.

The mistakes of the mind are not permanent; they're temporary. Like the clouds in the sky are not permanent; they're not there all the time. They are just there for some time. Just like

this, strong anger, attachment, the dissatisfied mind, all these mistakes of the mind, all these obscurations, are temporary because they can be ceased. They are temporary because they can be ceased. As I just mentioned, by meeting the right conditions and practicing Dharma, they get ceased. By actualizing the path, by realizing emptiness, and developing wisdom, these mistakes of the mind get ceased. Therefore they are not permanent; they are temporary.

Since the obscurations are temporary, then all our fears, all of life's problems, everything is temporary. No matter how incredibly huge the problem seems—the relationship problems, where everybody in the ten directions, including the family, criticizes us, where nobody loves us, nobody takes care of us, nobody thinks of us—all these things are just for the time being. All these problems are temporary.

If a friend or somebody leaves us; if a friend or somebody we completely trust or rely upon lets us down, it's like falling into a fire, like somebody putting a needle in our heart. It's so painful that there's nothing else we can think about except killing the other person or killing ourselves.

However, if we think of buddha nature at that time, if we remember buddha nature, our own ultimate nature, the clear light nature of the mind, buddha nature, this has all the potential and because of that then all these problems are temporary. They're not permanent. The causes of these problems can be purified, therefore they are temporary. What we are experiencing now—this year, this month, this week, today—it's temporary.

So I'll stop here.

You should dedicate intensively like this, by sealing it with emptiness. Therefore, as I mentioned, until we reach the path of conjunction, what is called the *tip*, there's a possibility for heresy to arise toward the holy objects, towards the guru and the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. There's always the risk for heresy to arise until we achieve that level of path, the path of conjunction, what is called the *point* or the *tip*. Anger and heresy can destroy the merit. In this way, by dedicating the merits and by sealing them with emptiness, the merits can't be destroyed by heresy and anger.

“Due to all the merits, past and present and future merits, and then the three-times' merits accumulated by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, as well as the three-time merits accumulated by sentient beings, due to all these, may I myself, my family and all sentient beings, in all lifetimes be able to meet the perfectly qualified virtuous friend.”

Lecture 20



[Outside Tushita Gompa, 1987](#)

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS MOTIVATION: THE DISADVANTAGES OF SELF-CHERISHING

[Rinpoche and the group chant the preliminary prayers together.]

As it's mentioned by great bodhisattva, Shantideva, in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, the *Bodhicaryavatara*,¹⁰

*All the happiness there is in this world
Comes from wishing others to be happy.
All suffering there is in this world
Comes from wishing myself to be happy.*

However much happiness sentient beings have, including all the day-to-day life's pleasures and comfort up to the highest happiness they can achieve, full enlightenment, all this comes from wishing happiness for other sentient beings. All the sufferings and all the problems sentient beings experience come from wishing happiness for themselves.

What he is saying is that all the happiness comes from the altruism or pure thought cherishing other sentient beings, the thought that wants to obtain happiness for other sentient beings. All the problems and all the sufferings come from the self-cherishing thought, the ego-centered mind, cherishing only ourselves, wanting to obtain happiness only for ourselves.

The verse that comes after this is:

*What need is there to say more?
The childish work for their own benefit,
The Mighty Ones work for the benefit of others.
Just look at the difference between them!*¹¹

Probably the reason why the example of the child is used is because a child lives his life only working for himself, only cherishing himself. With that attitude he does the work with body, speech and mind only for himself. Why? Why are beings whose attitude to life is only cherishing themselves and doing the work with the body, speech and mind for themselves, why are they called children? Because generally speaking children, small babies and children, day and night they only wish to play. For example, their only wish is to not go to school, to not work, but all day long to be able to play. Doing only what they like, their wish is only to obtain their own comfort and pleasure. And, unless they're put in the situation where they're asked to study and do this and that, unless they're forced into that situation by their parents, their wish is just to play. This is their wish and this is what they would do. Here the emphasis is doing only what you like, which is working for your own happiness alone.

And the second thing is that children don't do the important things. Children don't like to do important things. The general character of children is they don't like, they don't want to do important things.

And the third thing, the third example, is children playing in the sand. They make houses, things like that, in the sand. They put their feet in the sand and put the sand on top of their feet and make a house. Then they think, "This is my house" and they really cherish it. "This is my house," "This is my this and my that and my this and my that." Then if somebody disturbs it, if somebody destroys it they get really upset. If somebody breaks it or destroys it, they get really upset and they cry and get really angry and worried. When something happens like that and the child gets angry and cries and things, grown-up people see that as a childish act.

Normally, when a small child does this, a grown-up person wouldn't say to the child, "How childish that is." We don't say that. In the view of the grown-up person, that thing that the child is upset about is not serious; it's a child's act. However, when a grown-up person acts like this, getting upset over meaningless things, doing things without much purpose, that are nonsense, acting like a child, then we tell them they are being childish. When a very old person speaks or acts like a two-year-old, speaking nonsense, we think he's behaving like a child.

So, as I mentioned, children don't want to do important things; they only want to play. There's no concern for important things. Their wish is to play all the time. The wish they have is only to obtain that comfort; they are only thinking of their own comfort and are not concerned to do important things. And, the third thing, like the example I gave of the child making a sand house, if something happens, if some obstacle happens, they get worried or get angry and they cry and all these things. The third thing is in the view of grown-up people that is nonsense.

Therefore, sentient beings who live their life with only the thought of seeking happiness for themselves, who live life with the self-cherishing thought, are called children. Those sentient

beings are called children. For example, if a child spends time only playing, never putting effort into education and doing those important things, the general idea is that he will have a difficult life. If he doesn't have education he will have a difficult life in the future, difficulty finding jobs and so forth. That is the general idea. He can't have a successful life if he never puts effort into having an education and so forth, those important things, and if he lives his life only doing what he wants to do, spending his lifetime only playing.

It's similar with one who lives his life only with the self-cherishing thought. He won't succeed in the important things, he won't succeed. As long as there's the self-cherishing thought, there's no place for bodhicitta, the altruistic thought that cherishes other sentient beings and, with that thought, wishing to achieve enlightenment for them. The thought doesn't arise to succeed at that, for the success of the work for other sentient beings and to achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, by having the self-cherishing thought, which is a childish attitude, we can't achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings. That means it can't happen that we can lead every single one of the numberless sentient beings to full enlightenment. We can't lead them.

If there's the self-cherishing thought abiding in our heart it doesn't allow us, firstly, to generate bodhicitta, and because of that it doesn't allow us to achieve enlightenment, and finally it doesn't allow us to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment.

The second thing, if there's the self-cherishing thought abiding in our heart, it doesn't allow us to practice morality. Why? It doesn't allow us to practice morality because with the self-cherishing thought worldly concern, the attachment clinging to this life, arises.

When we take precepts, when we take the ordination of morality and when we live in that, we have to live in this with the attitude of cutting off the attachment to this life, with the determination to be free from this whole, entire samsara, cutting off attachment to all the samsaric perfections, to samsaric happiness. The fundamental attitude that takes the ordination of living in morality has to be this. The correct way to do it is this. This is the motivation, the attitude which contains the fundamental purpose of practicing morality.

Without this renounced mind, without this pure mind, this pure attitude that has renounced attachment to these things, we can't bear the hardships, there's no inspiration. Without this proper attitude we find difficulties; we see taking precepts or living in the precepts as a suffering, as a difficulty, as a prison. If we don't have that pure mind, then living in the precepts becomes a problem. Rather than enjoyment it becomes a problem, it becomes a difficulty in life. We see it as a problem in life instead of seeing it as a means to free ourselves from the whole, entire suffering and from the cause of suffering, a fundamental method or path to free ourselves from the samsara.

The self-cherishing thought, this attachment clinging to this life and to samsaric happiness, makes it difficult to bear the hardships of the practice, of taking and living in the precepts, of the practice of morality. The conclusion is that it doesn't allow us to practice morality. And, without morality, without the fundamental practice, the higher training of morality, we can't progress. We have to live in pure morality in order to be successful in the second realization, the higher training of the concentration, *shamatha*, calm abiding. By taking the mind through the nine categories, the nine levels, we obtain calm abiding; not just being able to do perfect

one-pointed concentration without any obstacles, we completely cut the attachment-scattering thought mind and the sinking thought and attain the rapturous ecstasy of the extremely refined body and mind. We can't achieve this calm abiding, this special rapturous ecstasy of the extremely refined body and mind, this second realization.

Without *this*, we can't achieve the third realization, the concentration that is the unification of shamatha, calm abiding, and the wisdom realizing emptiness, the equipoise meditation in emptiness. We can't achieve this third realization, the higher training of great insight.

If the self-cherishing thought abides in our heart it doesn't allow us to practice the higher training of the morality, the training that stops the negative karmas, which allows us to abstain from the negative actions of body and speech, the harmful actions, the nonvirtuous actions. That doesn't happen. These negative karmas that obscure the mind become the cause of suffering, and become the obstacle to develop the mind on the path.

Having the self-cherishing thought in the heart doesn't allow us to practice the higher training of morality, the pure morality that is the cause of the successful second realization, the higher training of the concentration, which in turn controls the delusions, the disturbing thoughts. That doesn't happen. And because that doesn't happen, the self-cherishing thought that abides in our heart doesn't allow us to achieve the third realization, the great insight that cuts off the delusions completely. Completely. It completely cuts off, eliminates, the delusions, such as the concept of true existence, ignorance. That doesn't happen.

Therefore, the self-cherishing thought doesn't allow us to achieve the ultimate liberation, the complete cessation of the whole entire suffering and causes. The self-cherishing thought abiding in our heart doesn't even allow us to achieve the happiness of future lives, the long-term happiness, even that temporary happiness, because what makes us achieve long-term future-life happiness is again practicing morality and practicing charity. Because of the self-cherishing thought, worldly concern or the attachment clinging to this life, miserliness arises, not allowing us to practice charity. Therefore, the self-cherishing thought doesn't allow us to create the cause for future lives' happiness. That's how it interferes with us even achieving the temporary, long-term happiness of future lives.

If the self-cherishing thought, the ego, is strong, then the attachment clinging to this life also becomes very strong. The stronger the attachment is, the easier anger arises. The happiness of the I becomes so important. In the view of the self-cherishing thought, the I becomes so important, so precious, therefore, my happiness becomes very important. My happiness and this life's happiness becomes very important.

Anybody who does a small thing disturbs us so much. Even birds making a noise when we want to meditate or when we want quiet to have a sleep—even a dog or a bird making a noise outside, or somebody talking—even a small thing becomes a big disturbance. Even if the decoration of the house is slightly wrong in our view, how things are put on the table, how things are decorated—even just a little bit in the wrong way according to our point of view, it's the wrong way—this becomes very important. There are things in the house put in a slightly different place than where we'd like them. The other person put them in this place where we don't want them to be, moving them from there, putting them here, here. It's supposed to be there, but she moved it here. It's supposed to be that way because we put it

that way. Whatever it is. Even a tiny mouse just going on the roof, making a little noise, just some noise, something we're just able to hear, even a rat just quickly passing through the room. While we're not expecting rats to run, it comes through.

If we expected it, there'd be no problem. If we expected it, if we opened our mind toward rats, there'd be no problem. But if our mind is closed toward the rat, when we're not expecting it, when we're not wishing it, then the rat just quickly runs through, close to us, it becomes incredibly terrifying. Terrifying. Incredibly shocking. A big shock. There's a rat in the house! A big shock! Immediately we want to move into another room or into another hotel where there's no rat.

The stronger the self-cherishing thought is, the stronger the attachment to this life, so the worldly concern is there. In the view of that mind, the I becomes so important, *my* happiness becomes so important. This life's happiness becomes so important, so when there's a small disturbance, which is such a nonsense to be worried about, it becomes a big upset. Even a tiny thing, some small noise, the way the person looks at us, the way the person behaves to us, the way the person walks in front of us, or how the person passes in front of us, keeping the body like this. The way the person shows the body or keeps the body, with the eyes looking at us, completely screwed up tight or whether there are some wrinkles there. Whether there are some wrinkles around, stretching out the skin or completely tight when the person sees us. Depending on this, what we do with these things, the changes to the skin, how we keep the eyes, big or fine or whatever. How the person passes us, or behaves or speaks or looks at us. Even the movement of the eyes. Even a small thing, with a movement of the mouth or with a movement of the cheeks or the shape around the mouth—if that person doesn't behave the way we like, if the person doesn't behave *exactly* the way we like, if the person doesn't do *exactly* what we expect, what the self-cherishing thought expects, what attachment expects, then it becomes a huge upset. If that person doesn't do *exactly* what we wish, it becomes a great upset, a great unhappiness. It causes a great depression.

The stronger the attitude is like this, the more important first *my* own happiness is, then the happiness of this life becomes that much more important. We make it so important because of these attitudes, the self-cherishing thought and attachment. Then it becomes so important that everything should be exactly how we want it. Our mind, these wrong conceptions, the self-cherishing thought, attachment, all this makes it so important. Everything we see, all the five sense objects we experience have to be exactly how we want them—it's so important—and when they are not we are so unhappy.

Of course, it's difficult for everything to be exactly how the self-cherishing thought wants. Nothing can ever be exactly like that all the time. For it to happen exactly like that all the time is difficult. What happens instead is, since we care so much about even a tiny thing, even small problems become a distraction. Even a small thing has to be exactly what the self-cherishing thought, what the attachment, wants, so when things don't happen that way, when they're not exactly according to our own self-cherishing thought and attachment, almost everything becomes a distraction. Almost everything becomes an enemy to us. People, animals, material objects and even places, because they're not exactly how we want them to be, they become a kind of enemy, the cause of anger or of unhappiness.

What blocks people from becoming our friend is the self-cherishing thought. The stronger our self-cherishing thought is, the stronger the attachment, worldly concern, and therefore the more difficult it becomes for people to like us. From this wrong attitude, because whatever action we do is a selfish act, it becomes uninteresting, unpleasant, even harmful to others. How we act becomes harmful to other sentient beings. Especially when they see our attitude, it becomes painful. That's why people don't want to become our friend, or if we manage to make a friend why it doesn't last. This is also because of the self-cherishing thought, this attachment, this strong clinging to this life. It's what makes everyone become our enemy; it's why we don't get along with anyone.

Wherever we go, East or West, whether we live in a city or in the countryside, whatever company we keep or whoever we live together with, there's so much disharmony, so many disasters. We're always experiencing so many problems, always receiving so much harm. Even if we live alone, having this attitude creates so much loneliness. The stronger the selfish, self-cherishing thought, the stronger the attachment clinging to this life is, the more suffering of loneliness.

Conversely, the less self-cherishing thought, the less attachment clinging to this life there is, there's less loneliness, there is less depression. There's more peace, more happiness, more success in the life.

These are just a few examples that show how all this unhappiness in life, all the ups and downs, are related to our own mind, to our attitude, to these concepts. All these troubles, all these problems in life, the whole thing is to do with the self-cherishing thought.

If we are unable to find a job, there are difficulties, but even if we have found a job there are still difficulties. Working also depends on getting on with people, whether people like us or not. We might have a job but there are always others interfering with it. Whether we are teaching in a university, a college, a school or whatever, whatever job we are doing, there are other people interfering with our job, not letting us continue the job. There is a lot of competition, there are lots of obstacles to the job. Other people dislike us; they're jealous of us.

First of all, there is karma created from past time. Out of the self-cherishing thought, we did one of those nonvirtuous actions from the ten nonvirtues. Out of the self-cherishing thought delusions arose and then we did those actions from the ten nonvirtues. Our actions became negative karma. Because of the negative motivation—covetousness, ill will and so forth—we interfered with other people's success in past lives. With this kind of attitude and action, in this life, even if we have found a job there are many obstacles, such as other people interfering with us and being jealous, always trying to create problems for us, wanting us to lose our job. It depends on past karma. It comes from the past karma created by the self-cherishing thought and it is also dependent on our present-life attitude as well.

From the beginningless rebirths it's been like this. It interferes so much even for the success and happiness of this life. Without even talking about the long-term happiness of future lives, it becomes a great obstacle even for our day-to-day life happiness, even for the success of this life's work.

From beginningless rebirths until now, what has made our life, what has made our mind, empty of realizations? Why we haven't had any realizations, why our mind has been empty of them from beginningless rebirths until now, is because of the self-cherishing thought. These are the shortcomings of following the self-cherishing thought.

What has made us from beginningless rebirths until now experience the general sufferings of samsara? The eight types? The six types? The three types? All the general sufferings of samsara? From beginningless rebirths until now, what has obliged us to experience the general sufferings of samsara is again the self-cherishing thought. And what has made us experience the particular sufferings—the sufferings of the narak, the pretas, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the humans, the devas—those particular realms' sufferings numberless times from beginningless rebirths is also the self-cherishing thought.

If we continue to follow the self-cherishing thought, then the same thing will happen. It will continuously make our mind empty, without any realizations. We will have to endlessly experience the general sufferings of samsara and the particular sufferings of each realm, without end. Therefore, this self-cherishing thought is extremely harmful. This is the *most* harmful one, the *most* harmful enemy.

All sentient beings could become our enemy and get angry at us and all sentient beings could even kill us. Even if all sentient beings got angry, became our enemy and killed us, that alone wouldn't make us be reborn in the lower realms. But if there's the self-cherishing thought, because of that, delusions arise that create those nonvirtuous actions, which then causes us to reincarnate in the lower realms without choice and to experience those sufferings for such an incredible length of time. It causes us to wander there, to die there and be born there again in the lower realms for an inconceivable number of times, for eons.

Without the self-cherishing thought, without the delusions creating the negative karma to be reborn in the lower realms, even if all sentient beings became our enemy, even killed us, that alone doesn't make us be reborn in the lower realms and suffer for an inconceivable number of times. Therefore, this self-cherishing thought is much more harmful than all the many enemies there are on the outside. However many outside enemies there are, the harm they do is nothing compared to the inside enemy, the self-cherishing thought.

No matter how many atomic bombs there are that endanger our own life, without the self-cherishing thought, if we don't create the karma to receive harm from those atomic bombs, to receive this life danger, there's no way to experience the danger of the atomic bombs. There's no way. Even if there were numberless atomic bombs in the world, nothing could endanger us, nothing could harm us, if we hadn't created the karma out of self-cherishing. And even if all those bombs killed us, they alone couldn't make us be reborn in the lower realms. But even if all these bombs didn't kill us, if there's the self-cherishing thought, then depending on this delusions arise that produce the karma to take rebirth in the suffering realms, in samsara. That's what makes us experience death, rebirth and death. That's what makes us reincarnate in the lower realms and then experience all those sufferings.

Therefore, the self-cherishing thought, this inner enemy, is much more harmful than however many atomic bombs there are on the outside. If we compare the outside harm, the dangers of the atomic bombs, with the inside harm, the dangers of the self-cherishing

thought, there's no comparison. All that outside danger of the atomic bombs is nothing compared to the danger of the self-cherishing thought and how it has been harming us all the time.

EXPERIENCING DISEASE WITHOUT THE SELF-CHERISHING THOUGHT

Without the self-cherishing thought, if we experience AIDS, cancer or any heavy disease, we can use this disease to become a great, quick, very powerful purification. We can experience this disease in order to benefit all sentient beings. It becomes a very powerful, very quick way to finish the work of purifying the obscurations and a quick way to finish the work of accumulating extensive merit. As we are experiencing the disease for the sake of all sentient beings, even in each second we are accumulating infinite merit. So experiencing these diseases without the self-cherishing thought becomes the quick path to enlightenment, like practicing tantra. It's like doing many hundreds of thousands of Vajrasattva retreats, like doing many hundreds of thousands of prostrations with the Thirty-five Buddhas' names, like doing many hundreds of thousands of preliminary practices.

When we experience this disease on behalf of other sentient beings, without the self-cherishing thought, then there will be great compassion, bodhicitta, for other sentient beings. Therefore, it becomes incredibly meaningful, worthwhile, to experience. It's the means of quickly purifying, very powerfully purifying, and a quick way to accumulate extensive merit in each second. Like this, it's a quick way to achieve enlightenment and to liberate sentient beings.

The whole experience becomes an incredible means. Even if we have to experience this disease for a hundred years, for a thousand years, even if we have to live our whole life with this heavy disease, it becomes a hundred-year retreat, a thousand-year retreat—however long we have the disease. It becomes a very meaningful retreat.

If we do a very comfortable, very luxurious retreat, where we don't have to bear any hardships—a Vajrasattva retreat, preliminary practices or a deity retreat and so forth—but we especially do it with the self-cherishing thought, it doesn't become a powerful purification or a powerful means to accumulate infinite merit, the quick path to enlightenment.

If, on the other hand, we use the diseases of this life or the problems we think are serious to destroy the self-cherishing thought, to eliminate the self-cherishing thought, it becomes an incredibly powerful practice, a quick way to develop bodhicitta and a quick way to achieve enlightenment. Even if we have all these life problems that we think are so serious, without the self-cherishing thought they make our life incredibly meaningful.

Even if we are experiencing death, the disease alone doesn't make us be reborn in the lower realms and experience suffering for many eons—even if we have to go through the death, because at the moment we are not free from the death, we haven't accomplished those paths which make us free from death. Without the self-cherishing thought even the untimely death that the disease causes becomes pleasant, doesn't become terrifying. We have a pleasant, peaceful, happy death and that experience of death takes us to a fortunate rebirth, a better

human rebirth where we can practice Dharma better or the pure realm of Buddha and so forth.

Which is the more harmful, cancer, AIDS or any of the 224 diseases, or our self-cherishing thought? The self-cherishing thought is. There's no comparison. The harm of all those diseases is nothing compared to the harm of the self-cherishing thought.

Likewise when we compare all the weapons there are and our self-cherishing thought, the self-cherishing thought is much more harmful. There is no comparison to all the weapons outside, and to all the enemies, to all the diseases. Even the dangers of earthquakes, the dangers of fire, the dangers of water, the dangers of wind—cyclones, tornadoes—if we compare those outside dangers and the danger of the self-cherishing thought, there's no comparison. All those dangers are nothing compared to the danger of the self-cherishing thought, how it is so harmful to ourselves and to all sentient beings.

Whatever we normally think of as harmful, such as poison, cannot compare. No matter how much poison there is outside, the harm from those poisons is nothing compared to the harm of the self-cherishing thought and the delusions—anger, ignorance, attachment. All those outside dangers, those harms, come from the mind, from our own mind, from the delusions, the self-cherishing thought, those things. That is also one reason.

THE PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

As there's no time to mention the other part, the importance of bodhicitta, cherishing others, maybe I'll explain it tomorrow morning from *Do De Gyen*, [Maitreya's *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*], the sutra text which contains all the unbelievable, inconceivable benefits of bodhicitta.

What makes every sentient being important and precious is this. Just as we think of ourselves as important and precious, all other sentient beings are equal. Their need to obtain happiness and be free from suffering is the same. Not only that, not only that, but by number other sentient beings are numberless, therefore others become the most important. The need for us to obtain happiness for them, to pacify their suffering, becomes extremely important, most important.

Each sentient being is even more precious than we ourselves are because all suffering comes from the I and all happiness comes from others. All the success, all the good things, come from others, from each sentient being, therefore each sentient being is more precious than we are, much more important, much more precious than we are.

The self-cherishing thought is the originator of infinite harm. All undesirable things come from, are dependent on, the I, the self-cherishing thought. All the sufferings come from the I and all happiness, all success, all good things, come from each sentient being. There will be more clarification in the other parts of the talks on bodhicitta.

Therefore, other sentient beings are objects to be forever cherished. Because of these reasons, in our life there's nobody to cherish other than sentient beings. In our life there's nobody to work for other than sentient beings. Other than this it's empty. Empty. Empty

life, empty work, no meaning. By cherishing sentient beings, we should do the work of body, speech and mind for the sentient beings.

Now, think like this. “What work should be done for sentient beings? What service should be done for sentient beings? What they want is happiness; what they do not want is suffering. The highest happiness is full enlightenment, the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind and the complete realizations. Therefore, I must lead them to full enlightenment and to do that I myself must achieve enlightenment. That depends on generating the path, and the means to succeed in all of this is by protecting my karma. For that reason I’m going to take the eight Mahayana precepts from now until tomorrow sunrise.”

So, please do three prostrations with the visualization of the lama who grants the precepts as the essence of the Buddha, in the aspect of the Buddha, surrounded by numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Normally, it happens a lot that during the courses I explain the preliminary practices, such as the prostrations—the meditation that goes with the prostrations and the purpose of doing that, how the prostrations are part of the preliminary practices. They are a condition to accumulate extensive merit, one of the methods to accumulate extensive merit. They are the necessary condition for realizations, for changing of the mind, for the development of the mind, and generally to create the cause, merit, which is the cause of happiness.

To be able to understand these various preliminary practices, which have very deep meaning, explanation, all these various practices—mandala offerings, all the different prayers and so forth—depends on knowing the basic subject, the lam-rim, the graduated path of the lower capable being, from the meditation on guru devotion, then the perfect human rebirth, its usefulness and the difficulty attaining it, then impermanence and death, the lower realms, karma, refuge, then [the graduated path of the middle capable being] what is samsara, all the true suffering and the true cause of suffering, then [the graduated path of the higher capable being] bodhicitta, how all sentient beings are so kind, so precious, how every happiness comes from them, by their kindness.

To know those preliminary practices, to really feel them from the heart, to feel the need, that depends on all these basic understandings, the understanding of the basic, common path, the three principal aspects of the path. By knowing these things, we can see the deep meaning of all these prayers, of those various preliminary practices, of reciting mantras or mandala offerings, prostrations, making offering and so forth, all those different practices.

Actually, by going over those subjects first, before explaining the preliminary practices, that is like studying the reason for doing the preliminary practices. The deeper we understand the whole of the actual path, the deeper the understanding of the preliminary practices we have and the deeper the feeling. We know that without eating food we will die. We know that this problem of hunger in our experience is unbearable. So, the need for food and eating food, the feeling for the need for the food and to eat, this comes very strongly from our own side.

It is not that all these practices have no meaning; they have very deep meaning and it depends on understanding those many other things. It is not like a meaningless custom that people just follow without meaning. It’s not like doing a practice to become the cause of the

happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment doesn't have any meaning for us. It's not like that.

Even if we don't understand well what Buddha, Dharma and Sangha means, even if we don't have a clear idea, if there's no clear, intellectual understanding of what karma is, what is to be purified, but there's unmistakable faith that there are obscurations to be purified and that there's the unmistakable object of refuge who has the power to free us from the lower realms' suffering, from the whole, entire suffering of samsara. We do the practices on the basis of that understanding faith, that unmistakable faith.

Unmistakable faith means it's correct. It's correct as we have faith, it's correct in the meaning. It's correct in the reality because such an object exists. Therefore, even if we don't have a clear, intellectual understanding of what it is, we can have faith that it's correct, because the object exists. There are the obscurations, the negative karma, to be purified; there are the objects of refuge, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, that have all the qualities. If we rely upon them they can guide us; they can protect us. Just like by relying on medicine, a doctor or medicine, they can help us recover. It's like that example. If we don't rely on them by understanding they can help us, they can't help us. If we don't go to them to receive their help, they can't help us. It's like that.

Lecture 21



1990

OBSCURATIONS ARE TEMPORARY

Think, “At any rate, I must achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all the sentient beings who equal the infinite space. Therefore, I’m going to listen to the holy Dharma.”

So please listen to the teachings well, by clarifying your motivation, the purest motivation of bodhicitta, and the righteous conduct of listening to the teaching.

The other night I mentioned what *is* the conventional nature of the mind and the ultimate nature of the mind, and what the “principal mind” or “consciousness” means and what “secondary mental factors” or *sem jung* means. There are many types of secondary mental factors, these minds that arise as a surrounding of the principal consciousness. Altogether there are fifty-one. I mentioned the definitions of them and then mentioned about the ultimate nature of the mind.

I mentioned how the ultimate nature of the mind is empty of existing from its own side. The nature of the mind is what is called the “clear light.” The nature of the mind—that is what clear light means, the ultimate nature of the mind, that which is empty, empty of existing from its own side. *That* is the clear light. Where the clear light is referred to, that is the ultimate nature of the mind.

I also mentioned that no matter how heavy all the delusions, all the disturbing-thought obscurations and the subtle obscurations are, and no matter how much heavy karma we have created, no matter how much we have lived an evil life, all these are temporary. They are not permanent. They are not permanent. They are temporary. Like the weather, like the clouds in

the sky, because we see the sky is covered by clouds, it doesn't mean the sky is forever covered by clouds, by fog, it doesn't mean that. No matter how dark it is, it's temporary.

Similarly, the obscurations are temporary. No matter how much heavy negative karma we have created, it's temporary. No matter how much we have lived an evil life, that is also temporary. No matter how much depression we are experiencing, how much very heavy disease we are going through—very terrifying sicknesses even for our whole life—no matter how many heavy relationship problems we have, even if everybody—our family, the people inside our home and those outside, everybody—dislikes us, none of these things are permanent. They are all temporary. Even if we are going through a lot of life difficulties, failure in business and so forth, going through much hardships in life, where nothing succeeds, also that is not permanent. It's not something that happens all the time. It's just for the time being. So all these are temporary.

A white cloth that is dirty is not oneness with the dirt; it's temporarily obscured by the dirt. Therefore, there's a possibility to clean the cloth with water, soap and so forth, so that the white cloth can be separated from the dirt, so that it can become clean. Similarly, the mirror is not oneness with the dirt. The dirt that covers the mirror is temporary. Because the nature of the mirror is not oneness with the dirt, therefore, as with the cloth, the dirt can be separated away from the mirror, leaving it clean, without having dirt on it.

This is similar to the clear light nature of the mind, that which is buddha nature, buddha essence, buddha potential or the race of the buddha. The clear light nature of the mind is pure because it is not mixed with the stains of mind. It is not oneness with the obscurations. It is not oneness with ignorance; it is not oneness with anger; it is not oneness with attachment. The nature of the mind that is the clear light is pure, "pure" in that sense.

Because of that, our mind, our mental continuum, can be separated from the mistakes, from the obscurations, from these disturbing thoughts, from the negative karmas. It can be separated from the karma that is the cause of samsara, that forms samsara by leaving imprints on the consciousness, negative karmas that are the cause of the lower realms. The mental continuum can be separated away from all these obscurations and negative karmas.

By actualizing the remedy, the path, within our own mind, with that method, the mind can be separated away from the mistakes. All the stains of the mind, the mistakes of the mind, can be ceased. That's why every sentient being can become enlightened. Even mosquitoes, even those tiny insects, the ants, even those tiniest insects that jump onto humid wood, old wood, even big animals no matter how big, whales or elephants, everyone can be enlightened. In time, everyone can become enlightened. It's definite we will become enlightened in time by meditating on the remedy path.

That is because the clear light, the nature of the mind—that which is buddha nature, the race of the buddha—is pure, is not mixed, is not one with the mistakes of the mind, with the obscurations. Because of that, all the obscurations can be ceased, the mistakes of the mind can be ceased, all the sufferings and the cause of the sufferings can be ceased.

How? It's similar to this example. The hallucinated mind, this wrong concept, apprehends a coiled rope that is on the road at dusk as a snake. It appears as a snake. To the hallucinated

mind, there's the appearance of a snake. How can that hallucinated mind, that wrong concept, be eliminated? It can be eliminated by wisdom, by the unmistaken mind, the valid mind, that realizes it's a rope.

On top of the rope, from above the rope, to the hallucinated mind, the wrong concept, there's the appearance of a snake, and it apprehends that as true. With a clear light and so forth, our valid mind realizes that the rope is just a piece of rope. When that happens, that valid mind, that wisdom, eliminates the hallucinated mind apprehending that it is a snake, a real snake.

One time I made a mistake. I think it was in New York or California or somewhere. There was the place where people can make phone calls. There are shops, then outside there's the place where people can make phone calls, standing up. From a distance I saw a lady, not moving, just standing continuously, not moving. I thought that must be a mannequin, like those in the dress shops. In the windows of the dress shops there were many mannequins, statues of ladies to display the dresses. So I thought that this lady must have been a mannequin because she hadn't moved for a very long time, she was just standing perfectly still. But as I went closer I saw it was an actual person. Because of the distance I could not see clearly but by coming nearby, with that method, somehow I was able to see that it was an actual living person making a phone call. *That* understanding then eliminated the hallucinated mind that believed it was a mannequin.

What are the subtle obscurations? They are the subtle imprints of the dualistic view, part of the truly existent appearance. Because of the dualistic view or the truly existent appearance, there is a projection, a decoration of the subtle imprint. The subtle imprint is left by the disturbing thought, such as the concept of true existence. So, the subtle obscurations come from this concept of true existence. This is the base of all the gross, disturbing-thought obscurations. The whole root is the concept of true existence. This is the base, or the root, where all the rest of the delusions and karma arise from.

How can this be eliminated? By another mind. This concept of true existence, the root of all the obscurations, the root of all suffering, the basis of all the obscurations, can be eliminated by wisdom. This concept of true existence can be eliminated because, for example, the nature of the I, the self, is empty of existing from its own side. I explained the other night how the mind is empty of existing from its own side. What is the mind? It is nothing except only what is merely imputed, so the mind is empty of existing from its own side, of being a real one, in the sense of existing from its own side. The mind is empty of that. That is the ultimate nature of the mind. That is what is called the clear light nature of the mind.

By meditating, this is what we realize, that the mind is empty of existing from its own side. This is the nature of the mind, and this is what we realize, by analyzing, by refuting the real object on the mind, the inherent existence on the mind, the mind that appears as a real one existing from its own side. We realize that it's completely, totally a hallucination and that it's completely empty. By analyzing what the mind is, we realize this.

That means that the object apprehended by the concept of true existence, the object of the ignorance, the object that the mind apprehends as inherently existent, that object completely doesn't exist. We realize this through analysis, by doing the Buddha's scientific analysis

according to the reality. It's not referring to Western science but science in the sense of analyzing, by analyzing the reality. We analyze and discover reality through our own analysis. Through analysis, through this science of meditation, we realize that the object of this ignorance apprehending that the I is real, existing from its own side, that is completely a hallucination; that is completely empty. That is completely empty right there, from where the mind is. The inherent existence placed on the merely labeled mind by ignorance is completely empty, right there. Through analysis, through the science of meditation, we see that the object, that concept, that ignorance is completely false, a hallucination, and that it's completely empty.

The main reason we can eliminate this ignorance apprehending that the mind is inherently existent is because the nature of the mind is empty of existing from its own side. That's the reality. That's really reality. Through analysis, the science of meditation, we realize the reality, the nature of the mind that is reality, and then that wisdom is able to eliminate the wrong concept, this ignorance that looks at the mind in the wrong way and believes in that complete hallucination. Similarly, through the science of meditation we can realize the nature of the I, that the I is completely empty of existing from its own side. That is the reality. That is the reality.

Through the science of meditation, analyzing whether there's such an I, a truly existent I, whether that is true or not, whether it exists, we actualize the wisdom that sees that it's completely empty. Then this wisdom is able to eliminate the wrong concept, the ignorance that apprehends the completely false I, that apprehends the I that exists from its own side, independent or inherently existent, which is completely contradictory to reality. This ignorance, this concept of true existence, gets eliminated. It can be abandoned; it can be eliminated.

Lama Lhundrup has been describing the five paths of the Lesser Vehicle and the five Mahayana paths. By developing the wisdom realizing emptiness and renunciation and so forth, the method, we are able to completely eliminate the disturbing-thought obscurations. Through this we are able to completely cease the whole entire suffering. Then developing wisdom with the method, with bodhicitta, we are able to cease not only the disturbing-thought obscurations, but even the subtle obscurations. By developing the wisdom realizing emptiness, with the skillful means of the Mahayana method, bodhicitta, then we are not only able to cease the disturbing-thought obscurations, but even the subtle obscurations, the subtle imprints.

That's why the mistakes of the mind, those disturbing-thought obscurations and the subtle obscurations, are temporary. They are temporary not permanent, so all the rest of the problems are temporary, as I mentioned before. No matter how much heavy karma we have, no matter how many great mistakes we've made, all those are not permanent. They are temporary. They exist by depending on causes and conditions and so they can be purified, they can be ceased by depending on other causes and conditions. All these sufferings and negative karmas, all the obscurations, came into existence by depending on causes and conditions.

EVEN THE CONCEPT OF I CAN BE ELIMINATED

Through these details you can understand how because the ignorance, this concept of true existence, of the truly existent I, came into existence depending on causes and conditions, it can be also eliminated by depending on other causes and conditions.

For example, since you meditated on the lower realms and the general sufferings of samsara, and the particular sufferings of each realm, you can see that all this comes from this ignorance, the very root, the concept of the truly existent I. All this comes from the ignorance that apprehends, that believes, that the I is inherently existent.

I'll just mention a few details on this, how this happens. I think a little bit might have been mentioned before at one time. First of all, there's the imprint left on the consciousness by past ignorance, the concept of the truly existent I.

First of all, because of the reason of the aggregates and the functions they do—sitting, walking, eating, sleeping, whatever—the mind labels “I.” There's the thought of I. The mind labels “I.” The mind that labels “I” is *not* the ignorance. That's *not* the root of samsara. The mind that labels the “I” because of the reason of the aggregates and whatever functions they are doing, that thought of “I” is still not the ignorance, that's not the ignorance that is the root of samsara. There's nothing wrong with that.

Then after our mind puts the label, after the mind merely imputes the I, then there's the appearance of the I.

I mentioned earlier on about dollars. I talked quite a bit, by using the example of dollars, how after we put the label on those lines, how many circles it has, we label \$10 or \$100, this and that. Then after that there's the appearance. *Only* after that, only after that, only after the label then there's the appearance of \$10 or \$100.

Here too, only after the mind has imputed the I, then there's the appearance of I. Then there's the appearance of the I. Still, having the appearance of the I, *that* is not a mistake. The I that is merely imputed appears as something extra, as something additional, as something more than what is merely imputed. It appears as something extra, something additional to what is merely imputed, as existing from its own side.

Having this appearance is still not the basic problem. The very root of the problem is the continuation of the thought that labels the I. The thought had labeled the I before this continues and starts to believe this is a hundred percent true. This appearance of the inherently-existent I, the way it appears, we see as a hundred percent true. Then *at that time, only at that time*, whenever we start to believe that it's a hundred percent true, the continuation of that thought becomes ignorance. Believing that the I that *appears* as truly existent *is* truly existent, that is ignorance.

The I that is merely imputed by the mind appears as truly existent, as inherently existent or existing from its own side because of the imprint left by past ignorance, which apprehends that the I is truly existent. If we're wearing blue-tinted glasses we see the white snow mountain as blue; if we're wearing yellow-tinted glasses then we see the white snow

mountain as yellow. According to what color of glasses we're wearing, we see it as that color. It's like that.

The imprint is like the roll of film that is processed. What we see on the screen depends on what has been exposed on the film. What we see on the TV screen or projected on the wall comes from what was put on that negative roll, what is projected from that negative roll, from that film.

Like those examples, the different colored glasses, the film, depending on that then we see things in that way. Because of the imprint left by past ignorance we see the I as truly existent. Because of the imprint the I appears as truly existent.

The color of the snow mountain is white but, depending on what kind of glasses we wear, we see it as yellow or blue. The I is empty of existing from its own side, but because of the imprint left on the consciousness by past ignorance, it projects onto it true appearance and the I appears that way. The blue or yellow snow mountain that we see is due to the color of the glasses. It's not true. Like those many examples that show what's not true, it's the same thing here. That's how the I appears as truly existent, by what causes and conditions the merely labeled I appears as truly existent.

Now the continuation of that thought which labeled "I," whenever it starts to believe [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] that this appearance is a hundred percent true—a hundred percent true means that the I is like this in reality—we believe it exists in reality as it appears.

We who haven't realized emptiness yet don't see things as illusory. In our everyday life, this is how we believe everything, including the self, to be. As soon as the continuation of *that* thought labels the I and as soon as we believe [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] that this is true, that the I that appears to exist from its own side is actually like this, that this is the reality, *as soon as* we believe it [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] like this, at that time this thought becomes ignorance. Then at *that* time, this is how we create ignorance, how we make up ignorance. Ignorance doesn't come from the outside; ignorance is not dropped from the sky with the rain. It doesn't come from somebody, sent with the breath. As they breathe, ignorance comes and sinks in our brain or somewhere. Anyway, I'm joking. Or as they stare you, something comes through the eyes, their ignorance comes through our eyes or through our nose or something. Anyway, I'm just joking. This I'm just joking, anyway.

At *that* time we're creating the root of samsara. At that time this thought becomes the root of samsara. That's how we create the root of samsara. You can see it's like the machine, it's all dependent arising. All these things exist depending on each other. So you can see now how this ignorance is a dependent arising, how this exists by depending on causes and conditions. It's very clear how this exists by depending on causes and conditions.

Therefore, by depending on other causes and conditions this ignorance can be eliminated. First of all, it exists by depending on causes and conditions, so by depending on other causes and conditions, this ignorance can be eliminated. The nature of the I is empty of existing from its own side. *That* is the reality. By realizing that, that wisdom, then that eliminates the hallucinated mind, the root of samsara, the root of the whole suffering. This ignorance, this concept of a truly existent I or person gets eliminated by depending on other causes and

conditions. Just as weather conditions cause fog or clouds—this happens due to causes and conditions—but when wind arises, by depending on other causes and conditions, the fog or clouds can be cleared away and space becomes empty, devoid of fog or clouds. It becomes clear space.

This understanding, this logic, that shows how we can eliminate the root of the samsara, ignorance, the concept of a truly existent I, that itself becomes the proof to show that we can achieve liberation. That itself becomes the fundamental logic, the proof, that shows how we can achieve liberation. Whether we can achieve liberation or not is dependent on the very basic fact that we can eliminate the root of the sufferings.

If we understand this well, and if we have some experience of the realization of emptiness, that the I is empty of existing from its own side, realizing the object to be negated, the object of ignorance, the truly existent I, is completely empty, at that time when we have this experience, the wisdom realizing emptiness of the I, that definite understanding, at that time we will have definite faith that we can achieve liberation.

IN EMPTINESS OUR MIND AND THE BUDDHA'S ARE THE SAME

It's mentioned in the *Uttara Tantra* that although the fully enlightened beings' actions always radiate out, there's no difference in the suchness.

As all the physical beings have buddha essence, the race of the buddhas, a fully enlightened being's action always radiates, like sending light beams. It always radiates, entering the sentient beings' mental continuum. Whatever virtuous actions we do—for example, when our mind gets transformed when the thought of patience arises, when compassion arises, when devotion arises, whenever a virtuous thought arises—that's the buddhas' actions radiating, entering our mind. So all virtuous thoughts *are* the buddha's actions that are within the mind of sentient beings. There are the buddhas' actions that are only possessed within the buddhas' holy minds. In suchness there's no differentiation.

So here we should do a little bit of meditation. What it's talking about here is this. As far as the mind itself realizing emptiness there's a difference dependent on whether it's our mind—a sentient being's mind—or a buddha's holy mind. As far as the mind is concerned they're different. A buddha's mind is pure and at the moment our mind, this sentient being's mind, is impure. There's differences in the support that the emptiness depends on, the mind. The support, supporting, support? Not the sport, playing football, not that one. What's it called? What's the differences? [*Students explain.*] This one is support? The other one, sport. Okay. Now I realized, sport and support.

Anyway, so the support, the mind on which emptiness depends, our mind, a sentient being's mind, and a buddha's mind—there's a difference. A buddha's mind is pure and our mind, our sentient being's mind, at the moment is impure. *But*, in emptiness, in suchness, there's no difference. There's no difference. The emptiness of our mind, our sentient being's mind, and the emptiness of a buddha's mind, there's no difference. So in emptiness, there's no difference.

That is the nature of this mind, What is the mind? What *is* the mind? It's nothing other than what is merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, the mind is empty from its own side. And

the same thing, a buddha's holy mind, what it is? It's nothing except only what is merely imputed by the mind. Therefore that mind is also empty from its own side. So, there's no difference between the nature of our own mind and the nature of a buddha's mind. There's no difference. So now we'll meditate.

So concentrate just a little bit, as I explained.



First of all think, just keep on thinking "mind, mind, mind." "My mind, my mind." At the same time, you should spy on how the mind appears to you while you're repeating, "my mind, my mind."

Just keep on repeating, "mind, mind, mind, mind," at the same time being aware of how the mind appears to you.

If possible recognize the appearance of the mind, a real mind, the appearance of a real mind from its own side.

Now question yourself. Now analyze. "Is the appearing mind, is the mind appearing merely imputed by the mind or does it exist *not* merely labeled by the mind, existing from its own side, a real one? Which way does the mind appear to me?"

Now think, "How the mind exists is because of the reason of being a phenomenon that the I labels on the aggregates. It's on these aggregates of body and mind that we label 'I.' There's [the physical body] and the other phenomenon that is not physical, that is formless, colorless, shapeless, that has the nature of being clear, of perceiving objects. Because of this reason my own thought merely imputes the "I," merely imputes the mind. Then, I believe in that.

"That's it. That's all it is. Just by that, I am satisfied that the mind exists. There's a mind, I'm just satisfied by that."

Therefore the mind is completely empty. While the mind is existing, the mind is completely empty from its own side. Now concentrate on this point one-pointedly.



In reality, there's no mind there. There's no mind there.

The mind is simply what is merely imputed by our own thought and believed.

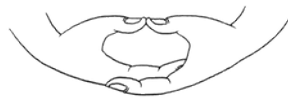
We've made up the label "mind" with our own thought. We've made up the label "mind" with our own concept.

There is a mind but there's no mind there. It's completely empty. It's exactly the same as labeling "mind" on space. In the front of me, in space, I label "mind." In front of me, in front of my face, in space, I label "mind." How does it appear? If I label "mind" in space in front of me how is it? What is the understanding of that?

There's no mind there. We can label mind in the front of us in space. By pointing at the space in front of us we can label it "mind" but there's no mind there. This mind is completely empty, existing from its own side. Like that example.

So think, now you label the buddha's holy mind. Now you label the buddha's holy mind, that is also the same, exactly the same—you have made up the label with your concept and believed in that. There is no buddha's holy mind *there*. There *is* the buddha's holy mind but there's no buddha's holy mind *there*. So the buddha's holy mind is completely empty of existing from its own side. Like the example that I mentioned about labeling "mind" on the space.

So you can see now there's no differentiation between the emptiness of my mind and of a buddha's holy mind. No differentiation at all. One taste, besides that, one taste in emptiness, like having put water into the water. What does that look like? No differentiation. Now here, there is no differentiation in emptiness. One taste. There's no *this* emptiness; there's no *that* emptiness. While you're concentrating on emptiness, there's no such thing as *this* emptiness and *that* emptiness—the emptiness of a buddha's mind and the emptiness of my mind. All one taste in emptiness. In emptiness, all one taste.



Also, in emptiness there's no sentient being, there's no buddha. In this emptiness, there is no sentient being, there is no buddha. There's no hell, there's no enlightenment, there's no liberation, there's no samsara. There's no happiness, there's no suffering. There's no virtue, there's no nonvirtue. There's no I, there's no you.

For example, here in space, you label "sentient being," "buddha." How it is here? You label "sentient being," "buddha," "hell," "enlightenment," "liberation," "samsara," "happiness," "suffering," "I," "aggregates," "six senses," "form," "sound," "smell," "taste," "tangible object." When you label all these things here in space, when you impute everything here in space, if you label them, how is it, how it is? You're making many different ideas, but what is there? You're making up many different ideas, these concepts, you think your label is there. What is there? How is it appearing? If you put all these labels here in space—all these billions and billions, billions and billions, numberless, how many numberless names that you put here in the space—this is all the same. That one made up the idea, this label, made up the concept, but here it's all empty. There's nothing there; it's all empty. There's nothing there. The space where you put the label, there's nothing there.

Even though you make up billions, numberless labels, the reality is the same. The reality is the same. I'm using this as an example. The reality is the same; there's no differentiation. There's no such thing there. There's no such thing there, appearing from its own side.

There's no such thing there; there's no such thing appearing from its own side. In that nature, it's all the same. There's no differentiation. This is one example, to get an idea.

What is the conclusion? Anyway, there's no conclusion!

THE ULTIMATE NATURE OF THE MIND IS BUDDHA NATURE

Meditation on emptiness is very good. Also, if you *can* meditate, it's a great solution for depression because depression comes from believing something is real, concrete from its own side, then wanting to have it and not getting it. Then, loneliness and depression arise. But if you are able to meditate, you see that real thing is just something you have made up, but in essence it's empty, emptiness. And there's no differentiation. In emptiness there's no such thing as this and that. There's no subject that is missing; there's no object to be missed.

To be able to meditate like this on the verse from Maitreya Buddha's teaching, *Uttara Tantra*, you can see there are two types of race: the race of the buddha and the naturally-abiding race. That means that any causative phenomena that all the sentient beings possess, like virtue and so forth, can become the transcendental wisdom, the dharmakaya or the rupakaya, the holy form body. These causative phenomena that sentient beings have, virtue and so forth, become the omniscient mind or the wisdom or the holy body, that is the race of buddha, which can be developed.

Then the other one is the naturally-abiding race. The definition of the naturally-abiding race is the ultimate nature or the reality of the stained mind. It is the ultimate nature or the reality of the stained or obscured mind, which is oneness with its own base or support, the mind. This means the ultimate nature of the obscured mind that becomes the cause of the holy nature body. This means the ultimate nature of the omniscient mind, the buddha's holy mind. That's the definition of the second kind of buddha's race, the naturally-abiding race. The ultimate nature of the mind is that. The naturally-abiding race is the buddha's essence or the buddha potential.

There are four Mahayana sects in Tibet. Some other sects assert that because the ultimate nature of the mind itself is buddha nature, then the mind is already enlightened, our own mind is already enlightened. Our own mind is already a buddha mind and it has been a buddha mind from beginningless rebirths. There's a buddha within us from beginningless rebirths, all the time. Because of the reason that the ultimate nature of the mind is buddha nature they say the mind itself is buddha. We don't recognize ourselves as a buddha due to the obscured mind, the hallucination. By following that, we don't recognize ourselves as a buddha.

So now, because there's a buddha's race, all physical beings have the essence of buddha all the time. The conclusion is that. Now I'm making a truly existent conclusion! Maybe it depends on who hears the conclusion. Because of that, if we practice the Dharma, everyone can become enlightened. Everyone can cease all the mistakes of the mind and can complete all the qualities, all the realizations, of the mind and achieve this peerless happiness. And through this experience we can cause everyone also to achieve full enlightenment, which is the cessation of all the mistakes and the completion of all the qualities of realization.

So therefore, now the last, the very last conclusion! Therefore, it's worth practicing Dharma. That's the very last conclusion. Maybe there's no more conclusion after that.

So, I'll stop here.

Lecture 22



[Chenrezig Institute, 1991](#)

THE EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS MOTIVATION: THE BENEFITS OF BODHICITTA

[Rinpoche chants in Tibetan.]

The motivation the day before yesterday, in the morning, was on meditating on the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought. This morning is about one way to meditate on the benefits of bodhicitta by looking at the benefits of cherishing other sentient beings.

It's mentioned by Buddha in the first verse of the sutra *Phal Po Che*,¹²

*The holy great thought of enlightenment is the treasure of all merit.
From that, all the happiness of living beings arises.
From that all the qualities admired by the Victorious Ones arise.
From that all the three-times' buddhas come.
From that all the obscurations of all migratory beings are eliminated.
From that there's no doubt that you will become a Victorious One.*

“Victorious Ones” means buddhas. The Buddha explained that bodhicitta, the holy great thought of enlightenment, is the treasure of all merit. Lama Tsongkhapa explained like this in the *Hymns of Experience of the Path to Enlightenment*, saying,

*The generation of the thought of enlightenment is the life-tree of the Mahayana path.
The generation of the thought of enlightenment is the base of the extensive conduct.
Like mercury that transforms base metals into gold, it transforms the two types of merit.
The precious thought of bodhicitta should be kept as a heart practice.*

*I, the yogi, practiced this way. I ask you who are seeking liberation to also practice this way.*¹³

The generation of the thought of enlightenment is the life-tree of the Mahayana path, meaning the very essence, the heart of the Mahayana path, like a life-tree of a statue. I'm not a hundred percent sure but it might be that the very essence of things like statues or stupas, the blessed thing is the life-tree that's put inside, which is consecrated with mantras and so forth.

Without the thought of enlightenment there's no way to experience any qualities of the Mahayana path in the same way that without a heart there can be no life functioning. A similar example is the main road that leads to a city. Without taking that main road we can't reach the city. Without the thought of enlightenment there's no way to experience any qualities of the Mahayana path in the same way that without a heart there can be no life functioning.

The second line says that bodhicitta is the base of the extensive conduct. Here, extensive conduct means a bodhisattva's conduct. A bodhisattva uses the basis of the extensive, great conduct, the six paramitas—generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration and great insight—and the four means of guiding other sentient beings, of drawing them to the Dharma—giving materials to other sentient beings, speaking with sweet, polite words, revealing the Dharma according to their level and oneself living in the practice. Bodhicitta is the basis of the great, extensive deeds, all those bodhisattvas' activities, those extensive, great, brave deeds of the bodhisattvas.

The next line says bodhicitta is like mercury that transforms [base metals] into gold. Like mercury, bodhicitta transforms the two types of merit, the merit of transcendental wisdom and the merit of the method. What it's saying is there's no question of this happening if we have the actual realization of bodhicitta—uncreated or effortless bodhicitta—but even if we just have creative or effortful bodhicitta, the motivation of bodhicitta that is created or effortful, that is generated with a lot of effort, any merit we create is transformed.

With the effortful bodhicitta motivation, by thinking of the reasons and quotations, by thinking how we ourselves are suffering in samsara and then using that as an example to understand how all other sentient beings are also experiencing the suffering of samsara, we are able to generate great compassion. That then develops into bodhicitta, the thought of seeking enlightenment for other sentient beings. With much effort, the mind is transformed; the altruistic mind wishing to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings is generated. The actual realization of bodhicitta doesn't happen naturally, without thinking of those basic reasons.

However, even with the motivation of created, effortful bodhicitta, any merit we accumulate—any merit accumulated by meditating on emptiness, on dependent arising, by practicing charity and morality and so forth—the merit of method or wisdom accumulated even with the effortful motivation of bodhicitta is like the well-obtained mercury that transforms many thousands of pieces of iron into gold. Iron, which is a very ordinary material, is transformed by the mercury, making it very precious, very valuable. Even with the effortful motivation of bodhicitta, any merit that we accumulate becomes the cause of full enlightenment. Everything becomes the cause of full enlightenment.

Even with effort, building up our motivation of bodhicitta, if we try to live our life every day with this thought, with this motivation of bodhicitta, all our actions of twenty-four hours—walking, eating sleeping, sitting, talking and so forth—become the means of accumulating infinite merit. All our twenty-four hours’ actions of eating, sleeping, walking, sitting, talking and so forth become the skillful means of accumulating infinite merit because each action is done for the benefit of all the sentient beings. It’s dedicated to obtaining happiness for every sentient being, therefore each action becomes the skillful means of accumulating infinite merit.

For a bodhisattva even every breath, every sip of a drink, every spoonful of food, because they are all done for the sake of all the sentient beings, each of these actions accumulates infinite merit.

BODHICITTA IS WORTH MORE THAN ANY OTHER REALIZATION

This is like the story of Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, a recent lineage lama of the graduated path to enlightenment. He did extensive, great work to benefit the teachings and sentient beings. In both ways, in sutra and tantra, he did extensive benefit for other sentient beings. With his full experience he clearly explained sutra teachings and tantric teachings, the whole path to enlightenment.

The life story of Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. He had one disciple called Togden Rinpoche. In his early life Togden Rinpoche was Nyingmapa, then later he happened to meet a very high lama called Denma Lochö Rinpoche. It might be his present incarnation, I’m not a hundred percent sure, the one who is living in Dharamsala, from whom I also received initiations and teachings, who’s also one of my gurus.

Togden Rinpoche came to debate on emptiness with Denma Lochö Rinpoche, with each question answered by Denma Lochö Rinpoche. Togden Rinpoche went away but as he was going away, the answers made him think so much that he came back, wanting to know more about emptiness. Denma Lochö Rinpoche said if he wanted to realize emptiness then in Lhasa there was a great lama called Pabongka Rinpoche, so he should go there. So Togden Rinpoche went to Lhasa to discuss and receive teachings on emptiness from Pabongka Rinpoche, this great yogi, a fully enlightened being of Chakrasamvara.

After Togden Rinpoche realized emptiness by receiving teachings from Pabongka Rinpoche he became one of his main disciples. He then did retreat for many years under the guidance of Pabongka Rinpoche at the hermitage near Lhasa, called Takden hermitage. This is one of the deity Chakrasamvara’s holy places. From the rock there’s a natural appearance of this deity’s eye, one at the hermitage and one at the bottom on the rock, where there’s a temple called Palace of the King Songtsen Gampo.

In this hermitage, next to a window, on the ceiling there is some kind of triangular-shaped space or hole. It’s said that Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo saw the enlightened being Chakrasamvara there. It’s an extremely blessed, very powerful hermitage. Inside the cave there’s also water. I didn’t notice much but the story is that as the water drips there, there is the sound of the female, the enlightened being Vajrayogini’s mantra. So we all drank that water. There were maybe seventy-one, maybe seventy-three people, at the beginning part of the tour in Tibet. We did a Vajrayogini puja there in that hermitage and even without much

meditation, just reciting the sadhana, there was an incredible feeling, blessing, without much meditation, even without concentrating well.

That's one place in Tibet which I thought to go back to again. From all the holy places I saw on the second tour, among those many, many places, that is one hermitage that impressed me very much to go back again. Another one is the area where there's the lake of the protector, the Palden Lhamo lake. That lake gives predictions to people, like a Tibetan TV. I'm not sure whether Western TV predicts or not, but that one predicts, showing the future, this life and the future lives, whatever question you ask. That area is also extremely blessed and extremely beautiful. Among the places I visited, with those two places came the strong thought to visit again.

That's not the main story. The main story is this. It just went all over the place. The main story is, Togden Rinpoche achieved the nine stages of the concentration, calm abiding, shamatha. He then went down from his hermitage to see Pabongka Rinpoche to make an offering of his realizations. At the time he came, saying that he had achieved *shamatha*, calm abiding, Pabongka Rinpoche was eating, having lunch, eating *pak*. Pak is barley grain flour [*tsampa*] mixed with Tibetan tea. You mix them and make a ball and then eat. When Togden Rinpoche told Pabongka Rinpoche that he had this realization, that he'd achieved shamatha with the completion of all these nine stages, Rinpoche replied, "The merit of my eating this one small bowl of tsampa and your having achieved shamatha, one-pointed concentration"—not the whole bowl, just a small ball in his hand—"there's no comparison."

What Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo meant was that even though Togden Rinpoche had attained perfect one-pointed concentration that can last as long as you wish, even for eons, without any obstacle, without attachment-scattering thought and sinking thought, there is no comparison with Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo eating one ball of tsampa. What Rinpoche meant was because he has had the realization of bodhicitta, eating that one ball of tsampa has infinite merit. Even eating one ball of tsampa, because it is done for the sake of all sentient beings, it has infinite merit. Therefore you can't compare the benefits of any other experiences of meditation without bodhicitta and this one, eating one ball of tsampa with bodhicitta.

Even with the effortful motivation of bodhicitta, all our twenty-four hours' actions, every single action accumulates infinite merit. It all becomes the cause of enlightenment; everything becomes the cause of enlightenment. With each action, we accumulate infinite merit. That's why Lama Tsongkhapa used the example of well-obtained mercury that can transform many thousands of pieces of iron into gold. That was done by Nagarjuna, who used this means to build many monasteries and to take care of the Sangha.

ALL HAPPINESS COMES FROM BODHICITTA

That's why at the end of the verse it says, "The precious thought of bodhicitta should be kept as a heart practice." This is the most important practice. In other words, day and night, developing bodhicitta is what we should be putting all our effort into. It's the heart practice. That's the conclusion of the reasons given in the other three lines.

Then Lama Tsongkhapa said, "I, the yogi, practiced this way. I ask you who are seeking liberation to also practice this way."

So now you can see why in the sutra it says, “The holy, great thought of enlightenment is the treasure of fortune.” With bodhicitta all actions become the cause of the highest achievement, peerless happiness, full enlightenment, therefore also the cause of liberation and of the happiness of [future lives and of] this life. These things happen by the way. They happen by the way, without motivation, without intending them, by the way. Even though we have renounced seeking these happinesses, because bodhicitta becomes the cause of achieving peerless happiness, full enlightenment, it becomes the cause of those other happinesses by the way.

Then the next line: “From that, all the happiness of living beings arises.” Like this, all our past lives’ happiness, our present life’s happiness and our future lives’ happiness, all come from good karma. Good karma means Dharma. Our own good karma, which is Dharma, is also the action of the buddhas. All this comes from the buddhas and buddhas come from bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas come from bodhicitta. So now you can see that all the three-times’ happiness—all our three-times’ happiness and the three-times’ happiness of every sentient being—comes from bodhicitta. With this evolution, with this reality, you can see how all happiness comes from bodhicitta. It’s very clear how all happiness comes from bodhicitta.

Generally it’s like this. Even if we don’t have actual bodhicitta, but have some good heart, some compassion—even a small amount of compassion, a small altruistic attitude—it makes us benefit other sentient beings. It makes us cause happiness for other sentient beings. Even with this very small compassion, this small altruism, it makes us cause happiness for other sentient beings. Therefore, if we have the actual realization of bodhicitta, it makes us cause, obtain, happiness for *all* sentient beings.

As I mentioned before, once bodhicitta is generated every single action of body, speech and mind becomes a service for other sentient beings. Every single thing, whatever we do, even breathing, becomes a service for all the sentient beings equaling the infinite sky, infinite space. Everything, every single action we do becomes a service for all sentient beings, to cause them to obtain happiness, to bring them to enlightenment. Even before we become enlightened, all our activities are purely working for all sentient beings. Whether we’re living in a hermitage or some other solitary place or whether we’re living with people in the city—whether we meet people or don’t meet people—every single action of body, speech and mind becomes a service for other sentient beings.

It becomes *only* work for other sentient beings. Once bodhicitta is generated, there’s no thought of working for ourselves. We completely abandon that thought; we are completely free from that thought, the thought of working for ourselves. Even before we become enlightened it’s like this.

That’s what bodhicitta does even before we become enlightened. It makes us practice the six paramitas, to follow all those paths that make us benefit others more and more, deeper and deeper, becoming more and more skillful for other sentient beings. We develop more and more qualifications, more and more wisdom and skillful means at the same time.

So after we become enlightened, of course, no question, we continuously, without a break of even one second, work for other sentient beings. As long as there are sentient beings. As

long as there are sentient beings, as long as sentient beings exist, we continuously work for other sentient beings. On top of ourselves becoming enlightened, by revealing various means we can then bring sentient beings from suffering into temporary happiness, and then from there to ultimate happiness, to liberation and enlightenment. We will eventually bring every single sentient being to the peerless happiness, full enlightenment. This is what we do after we become enlightened.

After we become enlightened, we become one with all the buddhas, we become one with the guru, which means our own mind becomes [one with] the guru's holy mind, which is the absolute guru, the dharmakaya. Because of that we become one with all the buddhas.

We work for sentient beings as long as there's the existence of sentient beings, leading every single sentient being to enlightenment. We lead everyone to peerless happiness, full enlightenment.

When we become enlightened, we become one with all the buddhas. After we become enlightened especially, all the happiness of sentient beings comes from us. How that happens is because we become enlightened. And how we become enlightened is because of the very root, bodhicitta. This is one way to think how other sentient beings' happiness comes from, is dependent on our bodhicitta. If we generate bodhicitta then this is what happens, this is how we're able to offer all those levels of happiness to sentient beings, including peerless happiness, enlightenment. So like this, from the bodhicitta, all the happiness of all sentient beings arises. It's because of this first reason, that the thought of enlightenment is treasure of the merit, that we should generate bodhicitta.

The second reason is that the happiness of all sentient beings arises from bodhicitta, and therefore we should generate bodhicitta, we should practice bodhicitta as the main heart practice. Then from this all the qualities that are admired by the buddhas arise. That means all the realizations, all the numberless qualities of the holy body, holy speech, holy mind, all the amazing qualities that even the arhats, who have incredible clairvoyance, can't see. Even the tenth bhumi bodhisattvas can't see those secret actions or qualities. All the qualities of the path, the Dharma, and all the qualities of the Sangha come from bodhicitta. Only through bodhicitta can we become enlightened, a Victorious One, so all the three times' buddhas—all the numberless past buddhas, all the numberless present buddhas and all the numberless future buddhas—come from bodhicitta. That's the same as I explained before.

Then bodhicitta makes all the migratory beings' suffering, obscurations, cease. Even just the number of fish in the ocean is uncountable. How many fish there are in the water is uncountable. If we have bodhicitta, it makes all those numberless fish in the water completely free from all the obscurations and all the sufferings. Even just that is amazing. Even just that is unbelievable. Without thinking of all sentient beings, even just the fish that we're freeing from all the obscurations, all the sufferings, is amazing.

Now we concentrate. The tiny flies that are on top of one piece of cow dung or on top of a small spot of grass are numberless. There are thousands and thousands of tiny flies flying around each other in clouds. If we have bodhicitta, we cease all those flies' obscurations and we free them from all the sufferings. So think of those numberless flies in one small place. This might be an old story, I don't remember.

It's the same thing also in London. Just in a small piece of garden, when we walk on the grass, there are so many tiny insects. When our feet touch the grass, when we walk on the grass, they jump. On the top of the garden, even a small area like this, there are so many tiny flies in space, it's unbelievable. When it's dark we don't see those small flies, but when there's a sunbeam, if you look from a road through the sunbeam, the space is filled with tiny flies, an unbelievable number. When there's no sunlight we don't notice but when there's sunlight we see there are an unbelievable number. If we have bodhicitta, we cease the obscurations of all those numberless sentient beings, those flies; we free them from all the suffering. Even just that—how unbelievable it is. Even just to think that we ourselves can free all the numberless flies from all the obscurations, the sufferings, it is out of imagination, it's inconceivable.

If we think that there are numberless ants even in one spot where there's an ants' nest—thousands and thousands, millions—if we have bodhicitta, our bodhicitta ceases all the ants' obscurations and frees them from all the suffering. If this happens in one spot like this, no question in the whole city, no question in the whole mountain, no question in one whole country, no question in one world or in numberless worlds. Even just thinking of ceasing the obscurations of the ants in that one spot, all the sufferings, and bringing them to liberation, full enlightenment, it's amazing. Even just that is an incredible joy, amazing.

Then we think of all the animal beings, then all the preta beings, the hungry ghosts, all the hell beings, who have the heaviest suffering, all the human beings. Each of them is numberless. One person practicing bodhicitta makes the obscurations and the sufferings of everyone finish, for the countless numbers of each of those beings. It's amazing. The benefit of having bodhicitta is inconceivable. The happiness we are able to cause other sentient beings is out of the imagination. It's unimaginable.

We can think this way about ceasing the obscurations and suffering, but in the same way we can think of causing them happiness. It's really unimaginable what a difference we, one person having bodhicitta, can make, what we are able to offer to the numberless sentient beings.

It's mentioned in the same text by the Buddha that we can see all the sentient beings' minds and conduct, but explaining the benefits of bodhicitta can't be finished. This much we can never say. It's also said that while we can break the world into atoms and we can count each of the atoms, we can't count the benefits of bodhicitta. The whole space can be covered by hair and each hair can be counted, but not the benefits of bodhicitta. We can't measure the benefits of bodhicitta. There are so many benefits explained in the sutra Phal Po Che. In the sutra texts that are kept in monasteries, at the altar, there are many volumes that explain the infinite benefits of bodhicitta.

Practicing bodhicitta, meditating on bodhicitta, trying to actualize bodhicitta is the best. This is the best way to obtain happiness for ourselves; this is the best way to obtain happiness for our family. This is the best way to help our parents, to repay their kindness. This is the best way to bring peace to the world, to all sentient beings.

So therefore think, “To free all sentient beings from suffering and obscurations and to help them achieve enlightenment, I myself must achieve enlightenment, therefore I’m going to take the eight Mahayana precepts.”

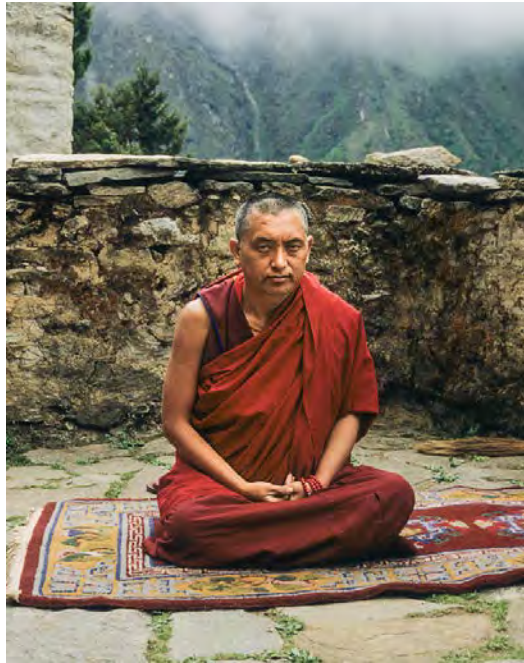
Thinking of the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought, the different ways of meditating on the kindness of sentient beings, all the benefits of bodhicitta, use all that as a motivation for the ordination. In other words, combining the discourse and the ordination.

The aim is to know the different ways to meditate on bodhicitta, such as exchanging oneself for others. That is the aim, to know the different ways to meditate on bodhicitta, especially, particularly the technique of exchanging oneself for others.

Even if you didn’t get to go through the subjects one by one, according to the outline of the lam-rim like it’s normally done, even if that didn’t happen but to leave as much of an imprint of bodhicitta in your mind as possible in this last part of the course is important.

So please do the prostrations with the same visualization.

Lecture 23



Lawndo Retreat Center, 1990

MENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND MEMORY

Maybe tonight I'll leave continuing to talk about the essence of buddha or the buddha nature, the race of buddha that is within all sentient beings' mind. I'll leave that tonight and maybe talk a little bit about karma.

The intention that arises as a surrounding of the principal consciousness, that is the definition of action, karma. The Tibetan term is *sem jung sem pa*, that is explained as the definition of the intention that arises as a surrounding of the principal consciousness.

As I mentioned before, there are six types of principal consciousness. The five consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and the mental consciousness. The other consciousnesses stop, they don't continue to the next life but the mental consciousness, the sixth consciousness, is the one that continues from one life to another life. And the sixth consciousness is the one that makes us remember what we did yesterday. The function of remembering what we did yesterday is the function of the sixth consciousness, the mental consciousness.

What we see with the eye consciousness, what we hear with the ear consciousness and so forth, the function of this mental consciousness allows us to remember things we did this morning, yesterday, last year, from our childhood and even from past lives. There are those who can remember that, and this is all because there's a continuation of the mental consciousness of the mind between yesterday and today. Between yesterday and today there's the continuation of the mental consciousness; between last year and this year there's the continuation of the mental consciousness.

There's a continuation of the consciousness of the mind from childhood until now. There's continuation of consciousness but we don't remember things because of the obscurations. The things we don't remember, that we forget, happen due to causes and conditions. The main cause is ignorance and then there are other conditions, pollutions and so forth. There are negative karmas and other conditions that obscure the mind but the main cause is ignorance, the concept of a truly existent I. That is the main cause, and then there are negative karmas that obscure the mind, making the obscurations thicker, like there's more dirt in the water so we can't see the bottom. There might be gold, diamonds and other jewels but we can't see them if the water is filled with the dirt. It's the same thing, if there's a painting on the wall but it's covered by thick dust, we can't see it. It obscures us from seeing the clear painting that is below the dust.

So it's like that. The other conditions pollute but mainly it's our own negative karma, the unrighteous, unwholesome actions, that obscure the mind. How much awareness or forgetfulness we have—whether we are seventy or eighty years old—depends on how purely or impurely we have lived. At least, that's what I think. There may be a relationship from past lives' negative karmas, but I think a lot has to do with this life.

It's interesting to check how people who have completely lost their memory have lived their lives. This is happening to so many people nowadays in America especially, I think. What's it called? Huh? [*A student responds: "Alzheimer's disease, where you lose your memory."*] All summer disease? All summertime disease! No, I'm joking.

But people who experience those particular diseases, it's interesting to check how they lived their lives. There will certainly be some relationship to their actions. For sure. That is definite. By [examining the lives] of those who live their lives like this [with Alzheimers] we can learn about some particular karma they created. They can stay that way for a long time, for months and years. That is somehow related to a person's attitude, a person's action, how that person lived their life. I'm not talking so much about an outside job but that person's conduct.

There must be some reason why this is happening more in some particular countries For example, I didn't see this much in the East. I've never heard of old monks becoming [intellectually disabled]. There are many old monks but they don't become like that. They become old but they are mostly still able to do their practice with a clear memory. I don't see that in the West.

RINPOCHE VISITS MORGUES, OLD PEOPLE'S HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS

I've visited quite a few old folks' homes. Usually that is one of the places that I go to visit. Places where they collect all those who have various types of imperfect organs or ...[a physical or intellectual disability.] That is one place I like to visit. Then there are hospitals where they study dead bodies. I visited a few of them. We went to one in California with His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, when we invited Rinpoche to give teaching at the centers for the first time. There were very few bodies. There was a lady who had died of cancer and a black man. There were just two bodies.

There was also a lady doctor from Dharamsala with us, Ama Lobsang. She cured many people who had cancer in the West, and maybe also in India. She was invited to give lectures on Tibetan diagnosis or treatment which people enjoyed very much. I think she mixed the talks with Dharma. With the lectures on Tibetan medical treatment, I think she put the emphasis on Dharma. She normally doesn't have any thought of a patient being dirty. No matter how poor or dirty, no matter what heavy sickness, she doesn't have these kinds of thoughts, thinking the other person is dirty.

Of course, I think one of the main causes of becoming a doctor is compassion. In the Tibetan texts, the teaching originally came from Medicine Buddha. There, where it says the qualifications of a doctor, it emphasizes compassion. Compassion is the very root qualification of being a doctor. It mentions three qualifications, but I don't remember the others. One thing is compassion toward others. Without compassion there are a lot of problems. Without it the work doesn't become pure and there can be a lot of problems. With compassion there is not the feeling that this or that person is dirty.

I think there are three qualifications, a few very important causes, mentioned in the text, but I don't remember a hundred percent. At the very beginning it mentions the qualifications to be a doctor and that starts with the mental qualifications. The very first, the very root, is having this positive attitude which stops many dangers to others. It stops many harms to others and makes the work very beneficial.

The Tibetan doctor saw the lady who had died of cancer, then she immediately put her hand somewhere here, inside the body, and took the lung out. The lung had become completely blue, the color of the smoke. I think that was because she had smoked so many cigarettes. Because of too much smoking the lung had completely turned the color of smoke. She just put her hand in and took it out to show us.

In Australia the first time I saw a dead body was in a hospital, but I think it was an old one, not a new one. There were new bodies there but they were mostly old. The new bodies were kept in boxes, like baking tins, filled with water and lots of chemicals to stop the smell.

Somebody pulled a body out and said, "This is the fresh one." It was kept in water with lots of chemicals. When you enter the door, there are piles of faces, framed in glass. They are sort of well-framed. There are many faces like this as well as different parts of the bodies completely decorated. For me, just looking at each face was very interesting somehow. After I entered the room just looking at the faces took a lot of time.

There was a girl there who had come to one of the early courses, I think maybe in Nepal. She and her friend were there and Dr. Nick, the one who works for Wisdom Publications, he was there. It was arranged through them. Everybody went to see some other things inside, but I still did not finish looking at the faces. Then there were jars. The others seemed more interested in seeing small babies in jars. Two small babies, formed this much, with arms kind of like that.

That was the first time. There were several places. I think that must have been quite an old one. When you look at all the dead bodies and then afterwards in the market you see actual living people—people who are not dead yet, still moving—it looks the same. It's kind of

strange, you know. I don't know how to say it, but it's kind of a little bit strange, like dead bodies moving. They're a bit like dead bodies moving, a little bit of a strange appearance. They are kind of similar to the dead bodies but with this extra thing of movement.

We also went to see quite a number of old folks' homes. Also recently in Australia. The first one was in America, I think, in Madison. I was extremely surprised to see those young girls working in old folks' homes, how they really took such good care. It seemed like it was not just a job to them; they worked with such kindness and sympathy. I was very impressed with that. Even though the old people couldn't eat solid food, just things like bananas, and they had to be fed by mouth and things like that, these girls showed a lot of patience. I was very impressed by those young girls. I don't think they had met Dharma.

It seems there are different mental and physical states. One quite old lady seemed like wood, like a big log of wood lying down on the bed. She couldn't move. That was very interesting. For somebody who has studied the lam-rim, the whole teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment, I think visiting such a place all day long itself becomes a meditation. If we do the work by looking at it with the understanding of the teachings, with the wisdom of the teachings, then I think everything, the whole day, what we see while we're serving becomes an incredible teaching.

All day long what we see is the nature of samsara, which is only suffering. It also shows impermanence and becomes the cause of developing compassion. Developing compassion is the cause that makes it possible to have the realization of bodhicitta, and that makes it possible to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Even if we don't know the lam-rim, the complete teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, if we want to develop compassion, to develop a good heart, then I think doing such work, that service, with that motivation is excellent.

But if we don't have that aim to develop a good heart, if we don't have that aim in life but we are only thinking of money—if there's no other way to make money and this is the only job we can find—we'll get bored working there for even one day. Even by looking at it, seeing how much the patients need us to take care of them, seeing all their hardships, we'll get bored. We won't want to see them, we won't even want to come to such a place, if we don't have the aim of developing a good heart in order to serve others.

A young Tibetan man came with us. He just joined us to come there but after he saw the people, then he told the others outside of the house, "I will *never* come to this place again."

There was also an American student called Laurie, who was at Kopan before the gompa was built, before *anything* was built here. I think it was around the time of the second meditation course. She lived here for many years and taught English to Lama Yeshe, and maybe also Lama Lhundrup and the boys. She was nursing there so I asked her if it was possible to go see the old folks' home.

I think that was the first time I went to see an old folks' home. Also recently in Australia, a student from Buddha House arranged for us to go to one. The people who were looking after this one particular old folks' home that I went to were interested in meditation. The

people working there also did meditation. Mostly they were women. They were very interested in healing so they asked questions about how to do the work, how to deal with patients and things like that. When we visited, they all gathered and had tea and asked questions about meditation and things like that. They had a little bit of a talk about the meaning of life and so forth, and how worthwhile and important their job was.

I saw more old folks' homes, I didn't get to see much of the [other institutions] because there was no time. The main one I saw was in Spain. It was run by Catholic nuns, I think. I'm not sure whether they were Protestant or Catholic. The visit was arranged through the old student who started the original center in Spain, the Nagarjuna Center in Barcelona. A couple started the center and the woman worked in this place before, so she was able to arrange the visit.

At the beginning, the head of the nuns gave a kind of introduction to the place. They never asked people for money and even if people came to give money they didn't accept it. They didn't accept money from the government. That's what she said. People bring children with mental and physical problems. They go to collect them and take them there. She said some of the children don't know black people. They think the black color can be rubbed off. They think if you rub it, it'll come off. She said sometimes they would spit on the body to see if it could come go off. I don't know the reason she said that. There must have been some reason for it.

There were people there with big faces like this. I tried to shake hands with almost everyone but while I was shaking hands, sometimes it made me wonder whether this was real or not. They were all smiling and very happy to meet us. Some who had arms and were a little better were given jobs to put newspapers together or things like that. There were many people.

There was one room for girls who were over eighteen or around that age who bit themselves. It was exactly like it was explained in the teachings on the preta beings. Some preta beings eat their own flesh. It was exactly like that. Therefore, what the nuns did was to cover their arms with thick leather so they couldn't bite them. I don't think they could walk. I'm not sure. There was a bar like this, square, and four wheels, and by leaning on that then they moved. We went there because it had been arranged. The place was very clean and they had clean dresses on. It might be like that every day.

There were many different types in that place. There was a small girl who had all the inside things on the outside. Her eyes were very round and tiny. At that time the famous Italian student, Piero, was with me. He was terrified by seeing this girl. He said that if he were not in this place but he unexpectedly saw her somewhere else he would run away. But the nuns were holding her shoulder and kissing her. I'm sure they weren't just doing this for show, that they were practicing compassion and loving kindness. And when this girl saw us she was scared. She tried to run away but she couldn't run.

After we finished the head of the nuns told us that at that place they practiced cherishing others. That's what she said. I don't remember whether she said "exchanging oneself for others" or "cherishing others." I think maybe cherishing others. I was very surprised. I said it was the same practice in Mahayana Buddhism.

I gave a few dollars, probably not even enough to cover a candy or a cup of coffee, but I did prayers to benefit them. I think as far as [institutions] are concerned that one might be the one that I remember most strongly. At other times I planned to visit others but it didn't happen.

What I usually like to see is something extreme. Otherwise, it's boring. Those places make us realize how precious having a perfect human rebirth is and what an incredible, unbelievable opportunity we have to practice. Having all these conditions, we have incredible freedom. From my own side I have met all these conditions, only I haven't got to study the Dharma yet. I didn't get to study the Dharma.

RINPOCHE'S GURUS

I haven't studied much Dharma or practiced it but I have had many virtuous friends, gurus. I have about twenty-five teachers, gurus. Starting from my home, there were two teachers, my uncles, who taught me the Tibetan alphabet for the very first time. Starting from them, every one of my gurus has unbelievable qualities. They have what the *Lama Chöpa* says when it speaks of the qualities of the guru, the originator of the qualities, having excellence in morality and so forth—the section that goes through the different levels of qualities from those teachers revealing the Lesser Vehicle path to the Paramitayana path to the tantric path. Then it talks about their kindness. Not just His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but all the other gurus too, unbelievable, unbelievable—they are all living in these qualities mentioned in the *Guru Puja*, living in the three higher trainings, the higher trainings of morality, concentration and insight. And so based on all those unbelievable qualities, they attain realizations.

As far as having met the perfect teachers, there's no regret. Somehow, in my past lives I must have worked very hard. I think in my past lives I must have done incredible arrangements and created incredible karma to have met such unbelievable teachers, who are very hard to find. It's very rare to find such teachers in the world; they are the top in the world.

Sometimes the thought comes in my mind that if people don't know how to find a guru, then you can rely upon my gurus. You can trust in those lamas I follow. Sometimes if people don't know how to decide, to follow a guru, to find a guru. I think this point of guru is a big point, a very, very important point of life, because all the success of life comes from that. Whether there's success or not comes from two things: first finding a qualified guru and second from our own side practicing correctly. From these two things success comes. If these two things come together—the perfect guru and the perfect disciple—then that makes enlightenment in this life possible. The perfect guru and the perfect disciple is like a good, clear block [mold] that makes a very good, very clear, complete *tsa-tsa*. It makes it so easy like that.

A perfectly qualified guru and a perfectly qualified disciple. There are five qualities of the disciple, but I don't remember them one by one now. One thing is a straight mind, having the intelligence to understand what is right or wrong. A straight mind also means not getting caught in wrong views so that even the teacher cannot guide us. So, a straight mind, not crooked, not bent—a straight mind. With a straight mind, without being caught in our own wrong views, there is space to understand correctly. A straight mind is like a white cloth that can be dyed to any color. We are able to see what is wrong and right. We are able to judge

and then we are able to do the correct practice and follow the right path. In this way, the virtuous friend can guide us, there's the opportunity to be able to guide us.

I think the fifth Dalai Lama said that the perfect disciple can bear hardships and has perseverance like a burning flame.

The Fifth Dalai Lama mentioned the quality of the disciple, saying when the perfect guru and the perfect disciple meet together, enlightenment happens in this life, as easily as making tsa-tsas. For tsa-tsas, with mud or some other material, you make a print of a buddha from the block [mold]. Like that, it's so easy.

I'm just telling this since this talk happened. Some people have a lot of difficulties in regards to the guru, not knowing how to find or to follow the guru. In order to succeed in achieving liberation and full enlightenment we need a guru. Those realizations of the path up to enlightenment have to come from the guru. And to be able to do perfect work, to be of perfect benefit to all sentient beings, to be able to bring every sentient being to the peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, to achieve all these qualities, all these capacities, to develop these things, we must depend on the guru. All these have to come from the guru.

However, if people don't know who to receive Dharma teachings from, if they can't decide which virtuous friend, which guru, they should be devoted to, the thought came to tell them that they can follow the gurus that I have, because you can trust them a hundred percent, you can have a hundred percent trust.

It doesn't mean those who are not my gurus are not reliable. It's not saying that, that anyone who is not my guru is not reliable. But to make it simple, if you don't know who to receive Dharma contact from and who to follow as a guru, if you don't know how to do that, then those teachers I received Dharma contact from you can be devoted to as a guru because you can have a hundred percent trust in them. They all know the path. They all have compassion. That is just explaining the basic qualifications—they all know the path and they have compassion—without talking about all other qualities such as wisdom, sincerity and so forth. So the thought came that for somebody who is having difficulties, at least this is what can be copied.

Normally I myself wouldn't take teachings from anybody. It's not that I have a pure mind. I have a very bad mind, a very bad, very negative mind, so it's not easy to take teachings from anybody, to make the connection, the relationship. I have a very thick-skulled mind so I want to make sure before I decide who to take teachings from.

PANCHEN RINPOCHE

When I was in Tibet, by the end of tour there were not so many people. At the beginning there were about seventy-three but a lot of people had already left, had gone back to the West. There was a small group of people. On the way back we stayed one or two days in Shigatse, where the Tashi Lhunpo monastery is. We went to see Panchen Rinpoche, who is regarded as the embodiment of Buddha Amitabha, just as His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the embodiment of Chenrezig. An unbelievable lama.

We requested some oral transmissions, of the Shambala prayer that you recite to be born in Shambala and to actualize the Kalachakra path. I requested this for the people, but I myself didn't decide to make the connection with Panchen Rinpoche. We had already started to offer mandala but I was still undecided. I was thinking in my mind whether to follow him as a guru or not while the mandala offering was going on. At the end of the mandala offering I still hadn't decided. I didn't want to have confusion, political problems, later. Again, this is to do with the karmic appearance. Basically it's to do with the karmic appearance, sentient beings' karmic appearance. It's again the appearance of your own impure mind. Basically it's that.

There are many things like this kind of situation, but we have to understand this is the appearance of sentient beings' mind, this is the appearance of our own impure mind. If we look at it with guru devotion, with the mind transformed in guru devotion [there is no confusion]. Guru devotion means feeling devotion for all these lamas, all these gurus, either the actual realization or the effortful or creative devotion. When we build up the devotion, we transform the mind in devotion with much effort, using logic, quotations or from our experience, our mind with devotion naturally sees them as buddhas. That is the realization of the guru devotion.

Of course with that mind, there are no problems. With that mind of guru devotion there are no problems at all. When the mind is not in that state, then there are problems, there's confusion.

However, even while the mandala offering was going on, I still hadn't decided whether to follow him as a guru. I had requested the oral transmission for the people. Then, at the end, when the mandala offering was completed, I decided to follow him as a guru.

It's unbelievable. Panchen Rinpoche is an unbelievable lama. After His Holiness, Panchen Rinpoche is one of the most unbelievable lamas. Seeing Panchen Rinpoche makes me think how incredibly lucky the Tibetan people are. They are unbelievably lucky to have such incredible lamas. I first saw him when I was a small child in Tibet but there were crowds of people around so I didn't have much time to have a look at him. The second time I saw him was in Nepal, here.

In the heart, there's no fear at all, there's complete control, complete freedom from all three realms. There's no fear of delusion, no fear of anything. In the prediction, [he's] a reincarnation of Amitabha. So, Chenrezig and Amitabha, together like this, are working particularly for the Tibetan people. Tibet especially becomes the place where the people are the objects to be guided by them. Now, however, Western people, those who also make a connection with them, who receive teachings from them, also become their special disciples, the objects to be guided by them.

This talk just happened by the way.

BECOMING ONE WITH THE GURU

Since I brought up this subject about the old folks' home and these things, I'll go back.

Of the subjects of the teachings of the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment, this topic on the guru—understanding that meditation, how to correctly devote to virtuous friend—this subject is the most important. By knowing this and putting it into practice, especially by having the realization from our own side of seeing the guru as an enlightened being, after that comes correctly devoting. That is the main realization that stops the obstacles, especially the heaviest obstacles to developing the mind in the path to enlightenment. From that, all success comes, the success of all the realizations, the realizations of the whole graduated path to enlightenment. Everything comes from there. It all depends on that, the very root, correctly devoting to the virtuous friend. I can hopefully clarify this subject a little bit with more talks on the basic points. This might happen during the course or, if not, maybe during the lam-rim retreat, if it didn't happen before, in the course.

I think Rinpoche explained the very essence, the very, very, very essence of that, and of the qualities of the Buddha. When he finished the qualities of the Buddha, he brought up the guru.

For sentient beings to practice the Dharma, for sentient beings to have realizations, to perform virtuous actions, virtuous thoughts, all that is dependent on the virtuous friend. It's dependent on the dharmakaya, a buddha's holy mind, that which is the self-condition.

Of the two or three different types of condition, this is the self-condition. That is the dharmakaya. Rinpoche said this is the very, very, very essence, and that is why we need the guru and all the kindness. Everything is contained in that, the last word. All these things are dependent on the dharmakaya.

At the moment our mind is obscured; we cannot see the buddhas. Rinpoche also mentioned this morning that we don't have to feel lonely or depressed because there are numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas, numberless beings who are objects of refuge. Except that we don't see them, otherwise they're numberless. However, what Rinpoche was saying is, wherever we are, whichever place, whatever the circumstances, there are always numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas and they are all there with us. Except at the moment, as our mind is not purified, it's obscured, so we cannot see them. Which means, through practice, through purification, through actualizing the path, as our mind becomes purer and purer, we can see them. First, by achieving the great path of merit, we see the numberless buddhas in the nirmanakaya aspect. Then, after achieving the right-seeing path, the arya path, we see them in the sambhogakaya aspect. Then, when we ourselves become enlightened, at that time we meet the buddhas mentally.

As our mind becomes purer and purer, whether from the side of the guru he is a sentient being or an enlightened being, from our side, from the side of the disciple, as our own mind becomes purer, we are able to see him in the nirmanakaya aspect, then in the sambhogakaya aspect, then in the aspect of a buddha. Then, at the end, when we become enlightened, we meet the guru mentally. We become the guru. Because at that time our own mental continuum becomes the ultimate guru, the absolute guru, which is the dharmakaya, that's how we become the guru; we become one with the guru.

This is similar to seeing statues of holy beings. Now, we see them as statues but when we achieve the great path of merit, we see them in the nirmanakaya aspect. When we achieve the arya path, the right-seeing path, we see the statues in the actual aspect of buddha, the living buddha, the sambhogakaya aspect. It happens like this as the mind gets more and more purified.

At the moment, because we are impure, we can't see the buddhas in the aspect of a buddha. We can't see them in the pure aspect. Having delusions, having suffering, having samsara, making mistakes, that means what appears to us must be mistaken. How we see our guru, his appearance, is according to our present, impure mind. The karma or the mind that we have is only the impure mind, which cannot see the pure aspect of a buddha, which can see only the mistaken, ordinary aspect, the aspect that has mistakes, delusions and so forth.

Therefore, there's no other way for buddhas to guide us. There's no other way for buddhas to guide us. That means there's no other pure way. Since we can't see the pure aspect of the buddhas, in their pure aspect they can't guide us at the moment. The only way the buddhas can guide us is by manifesting in this ordinary aspect that has mistakes, delusions, that has the suffering of samsara. Only in this aspect can the buddhas guide us.

From our side, when we practice as the Buddha explained, from guru devotion, the three principal aspects of the path and the two stages, by actualizing bodhicitta, by entering the Paramitayana path and proceeding along those paths, as I mentioned before, gradually we are able to see those purer aspects of the buddhas. When our mind becomes so purified, the buddhas can guide us in their pure aspects, in the nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya aspects.

Now, however, since the quality of the mind we have is only the impure, obscured mind, the buddhas have no other way to guide us. The other way means the pure aspect, having no mistakes, no suffering. The only other means that the buddhas can communicate with us or guide us is by taking a mistaken aspect, showing the aspect of being in samsara, having delusions and suffering, making mistakes.

In this way, this meditation, this way of thinking, is the technique that uses seeing the [apparent] mistakes as the cause of devotion. Seeing the mistakes becomes the cause of developing the realization of the path to enlightenment, guru devotion. This way of thinking, seeing mistakes like this, becomes the cause or support for devotion. So this recognition becomes an important technique for our quick development and to stop the greatest obstacle of developing the mind in the path to enlightenment, the negative karma that we accumulate with the most powerful object, the virtuous friend, by having heresy, anger and the thought of mistakes arising in connection with the highest object, the virtuous friend.

For example, Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche said that all the numberless buddhas work through this aspect. All the numberless buddhas give us teachings through this ordinary aspect, seeing them in samsara, with ordinary flesh and bones and so forth, the aggregates. All the buddhas guide us to enlightenment through this aspect, suited to the level of our mind, the quality of our mind, exactly according to the level of our impure mind.

Therefore, this aspect becomes extremely precious. This aspect becomes extremely precious for us. Without this aspect, there is no way we can receive guidance from the buddhas; there's no way the buddhas can guide us to enlightenment.

It's like a sunbeam coming through a magnifying glass. As the sunbeam comes through the magnifying glass and hits a substance such as grass or a plant, it can burn that substance and produce fire. Like this, through this aspect all the buddhas can completely cease our delusions and lead us to enlightenment. Therefore, this aspect becomes so precious, so extremely precious to us.

So, I'll stop this part here. Since I mentioned all those other things, the old folks' home and so forth, I thought to mention this one.

KIRTI TSENSHAB RINPOCHE AND THE START OF ROOT'S DESTITUTE HOME

Last year when we were at Bodhgaya, one day we had a break and I thought to make pilgrimage to Rajgir, where Buddha taught shunyata [emptiness] teachings. We went there to receive teachings and the oral transmission from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche on emptiness. There are the Prajnaparamita teachings in twelve volumes, four volumes and one volume called the 80,000 stanzas. Then there's a small Prajnaparamita called *Do Du Pa*, the *Condensed Sutra*. Then, the shortest one is the *Heart Sutra*, which we recite.

I asked Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche because that's the place where Buddha gave teachings on emptiness, which destroys, eliminates the root of samsara and all the delusions, all the sufferings. So we were very fortunate to receive this oral transmission, *Do Du Pa*, this one that is a little more elaborate than the *Heart Sutra*.

Before we went up the mountain, we had lunch at a restaurant at the bottom of the mountain. There was an old Indian man lying on the ground. He had some disease and there were a lot of flies around where the testicles were. He was covered with the flies and lying down there. When Rinpoche saw this he felt incredible compassion. He asked if there was a hospital we could take this patient to. Rinpoche thought to take him to hospital but one of the students, a doctor, explained that because he was a poor old person an Indian hospital won't take good care of him. Then the thought came that maybe we should take him back to Root Institute, the meditation center in Bodhgaya, and take care of him there.

So we went up the hill after lunch and then came back, picked up the old man and took him to Root Institute. I think he was well taken care of by almost everybody, by the Western students, while the retreat was going on, while there were Western students there, especially one from Canada or America, I don't know his name. They took care of him for a long time, maybe three months. A few other ladies also took care of him. His health got better. He was able to walk and his health improved and afterwards he was asking for meat and other things.

However, recently, not so long ago, after all the Western students left, I don't think he got well taken care of. The quality of food and everything changed and suddenly his health deteriorated and I think he passed away.

It wasn't so much this old, sick man. There was another old man next to him, a very old man. I watched him for some time. This old man stood up and he tried to walk, making just two or three very small steps but he couldn't manage. He had a big bag hanging from his arm but I think it was empty. He couldn't manage and he fell down onto a pile of firewood. Then I think he stood up and tried to walk again but he couldn't manage, so he completely gave up trying to walk.

Watching this old man made me think very much. Even if this old man wanted a glass of water just behind of him—just a few steps away—he couldn't walk to it, he couldn't manage. Even though there were so many people in the street, passing by, there was nobody he could ask to help him, even though the water was right there.

When I was returning to Root Institute, the thought of this suffering old man came back to me very strongly, almost constantly it came so much into my mind, stronger and stronger. After I sat down on the bed in the Japanese guest house I felt very strongly that we needed to help that kind of old person who is helpless, who has nobody to help. It came very strongly as I sat down on the bed. The thought came so much how incredible it would be to help, how there is so much of this kind of suffering that human beings have.

So then the thought came that it would be very good to start a home for destitute people who are on the street or people who have nobody taking care of them and are sick or aged, to take them home to take care of them. The main thing is to talk to them, to make them have a positive mind for their life, a positive way of thinking so that they can make their life meaningful and happy, especially when they die. Especially when they die, to help them die with a positive mind, a virtuous mind. We would do this mainly by talking about thought transformation and so forth and with prayers and mantras, and creating a compassionate, positive environment, doing whatever could be done to benefit their mind. In many various ways, we could create a peaceful, compassionate, positive environment, every day benefiting their mind, leaving positive imprints for a calm, peaceful mind. The most important thing is to cause them to die with a positive mind, with a virtuous thought, compassion for other sentient beings and so forth.

The other wish I had or the other purpose was that for the people who worked there and the Dharma students who studied lam-rim there, for it to become a place to actually put into practice the paramitas of charity, morality, perseverance, patience and so forth. To do those practices.

Those people can get all these special benefits, not just able to be given food and medicine and have their body cleaned, but they could be given something for the mind. Something for their mind; the most important one. And then, for the Dharma students working there, serving them, it helps them to develop compassion, loving kindness and bodhicitta, especially to develop bodhicitta. It's a great challenge or a very effective practice to develop. There's meditation—that is one way—but actually serving them, actually living with them in order to develop the mind on the path to enlightenment, that is another goal of the project.

Now I think they're trying to buy a place for that. In the East, there are already three hospices happening in the plan, three or four, so this is the destitute home. There is a rough name for it, "The Destitute Home Under the Care of Shakyamuni Buddha," or "Under the

Guidance of Shakyamuni Buddha,” so that, even psychologically, the patients feel that their lives are in the hands of Shakyamuni Buddha. That naturally becomes taking refuge in the Buddha, as Rinpoche explained this morning.

Then going back to the definition of the karma. I started that, so I’ll go back to the first one. Sorry, I didn’t get it done. I just slipped out through the stories. I got distracted away from talking about the subject of karma tonight.

So, I’ll stop here.

The reason I mentioned the project is that, to manage to raise the money within India, it’s good to keep it in mind so in future, when this project is actualized, if you can find the time, you can come to physically help. That’s the main point.

Thank you. Good-night.

Footnotes

[1.](#) There have been four Enlightened Experience Celebrations organized by FPMT, featuring extended teaching by great teachers such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The first one was in 1982 in Bodhgaya, India and the fourth in 2004 in Mongolia.

[2.](#) *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, by Shantideva.

[3.](#) This comes from *Seven-point Mind Training*, an essential mind training or thought transformation (Tib: *lo jong*) text by Geshe Chekawa. See Geshe Lama Kongchog's commentary on it at LamaYeshe.com.

[4.](#) Vv. 19 and 20. This teaching is also known as *Songs of Spiritual Experience: Condensed Points of the Stages of the Path* (Tib: *lam rim nyam gur*)

[5.](#) *The Ornament of Mahayana Sutras* (Skt: *Mahayanasutralankara*; Tib: *tek pa chen-pö do de gyen*) is one of the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*. Maitreya (Tib: *Jam pa*) is the next buddha of the fortunate eon after Shakyamuni, having been a bodhisattva at the time of the Buddha.

[6.](#) In another translation, Rinpoche uses “Dharma” rather than “ultimate truth” or “emptiness.” Considered a key link between the Hinayana and Mahayana sutras, the *Rice Seedling Sutra* has only been translated into English twice, by Jeffrey Shoening and Noble Ross Reat, neither of which are in print.

[7.](#) The last one is *similarity in base*. For instance, for an eye sense consciousness, both the principal consciousness and the mental factor are empowered by the eye sense organ. See Geshe Tashi Tsering's *Buddhist Psychology*.

[8.](#) The five definitely-ascertained mental factors are: aspiration, appreciation, recollection, concentration and intelligence; the five omnipresent mental factors are: contact, discernment, feeling, intention and attention; the eleven virtuous mental factors are: non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance, faith, self-respect, consideration for others, enthusiasm, suppleness, conscientiousness, equanimity, nonviolence. For more on mind and mental factors see: Geshe Rabten's *The Mind and its Functions* and Geshe Tashi Tsering's *Buddhist Psychology*.

[9.](#) The four changeable mental factors are: sleep, regret, examination and analysis.

[10.](#) Ch. 8, v. 129.

[11.](#) Ch. 8, v. 130.

[12.](#) *Phal Po Che* is the name normally used in Tibetan for the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Skt: *Avatamsakasutra*; Tib: *mdo phal po che*), however I have been unable to find the verse cited by Rinpoche.

[13.](#) V. 21. Compare to Thupten Jinpa's translation: Generating the mind is the central axle of the supreme vehicle path; / It's the foundation and the support of all expansive deeds; /To

all instances of two accumulations it is like the elixir of gold; / It's the treasury of merits
containing myriad collections of virtues.

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 16.](#) Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, 1989. Ueli Minder (donor-photographer) (02483_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 17.](#) Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, CIN Chenrezig Institute, 1991. (Thubten Yeshe (Augusta Alexander) donor-photographer) (14618_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 18.](#) Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Kopan Monastery, 1987. Unknown Photographer (21560_pr.tif)

[Lecture 19.](#) Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, CIN Chenrezig Institute, 1991. TY (Thubten Yeshe (Augusta Alexander) donor-photographer) (14811_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 20.](#) Rinpoche outside Tushita Gumpa during the Enthronement period for Osel 1987. Robin Bath (donor-photographer) (04363_sl.JPG)

[Lecture 21.](#) Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche on the phone, 1990. Ueli Minder (donor-photographer) (02353_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 22.](#) Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, Chenrezig Institute, 1991. TY (Thubten Yeshe (Augusta Alexander) donor-photographer) (14647_ng.JPG)

[Lecture 23.](#) Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Lawudo Retreat Center, Nepal, 1990. Photo by Merry Colony. (21802_pr.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: rūpadhatu). The second of samsara’s three realms, with seventeen classes of gods.

formless realm (Skt: arūpyadhatu). 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.

bearer (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-brdaya). 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, Deep 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 for 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 *three 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.

Previously Published by Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

Becoming Your Own Therapist, by Lama Yeshe
Advice for Monks and Nuns, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Virtue and Reality, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Make Your Mind an Ocean, by Lama Yeshe
Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Mirror of Wisdom, by Geshe Tsultim Gyeltsen (for TDL Publications)
A Teaching on Heruka, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
A Teaching on Yamantaka, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The Essence of Tibetan Buddhism, by Lama Yeshe
Daily Purification: A Short Vajrasattva Practice, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Making Life Meaningful, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Teachings from the Mani Retreat, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (for TDL Publications)
The Direct and Unmistaken Method, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The Yoga of Offering Food, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The Peaceful Stillness of the Silent Mind, by Lama Yeshe
Teachings from Tibet, by various great lamas
The Joy of Compassion, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The Kindness of Others, by Geshe Jampa Tegchok
Ego, Attachment and Liberation, by Lama Yeshe
How Things Exist, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Universal Love, by Lama Yeshe
The Heart of the Path, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Teachings from the Medicine Buddha Retreat, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Freedom Through Understanding, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Kadampa Teachings, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Life, Death and After Death, Lama Yeshe
Bodhisattva Attitude, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
How to Practice Dharma, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
The Perfect Human Rebirth, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Practicing the Unmistaken Path, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
Creating the Causes of Happiness, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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.

Other teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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 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.

VIDEO OF LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

LYWA has released DVDs of early teachings of the Lamas, including *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*, *Introduction to Tantra*, *Offering Tsok to Heruka Vajrasattva*, *Anxiety in the Nuclear Age*, *Bringing Dharma to the West*, *Lama Yeshe at Disneyland*, *Freedom Through Understanding* and *Life, Death and After Death*. See LamaYeshe.com to order any of these DVDs or visit our YouTube channel to view these and many other videos for free: YouTube.com/LamaYeshe.

FPMT has produced a number of DVDs of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's more recent teachings. Visit the FPMT Foundation Store to order. Many more videos are freely available at FPMT.org, and on FPMT's YouTube channel, YouTube.com/FPMTInc.

About Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive



The Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive (LYWA) is the collected works of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. Lama Zopa Rinpoche, its spiritual director, founded the Archive in 1996.

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.

Here at the LYWA we are making every effort to organize the transcription of that which has not yet been transcribed, edit that which has not yet been edited, and generally do the many other tasks detailed below.

The work of the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive falls into two categories: archiving and dissemination.

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.

We organize the transcription of audio, add the transcripts to the already existent database of teachings, manage this database, have transcripts checked, and make transcripts available to editors or others doing research on or practicing these teachings.

Other archiving activities include working with video and photographs of the Lamas and digitizing Archive materials.

Dissemination involves keeping up with evolving technology and making the Lamas' teachings available through various avenues including books for free distribution and sale, ebooks on a wide range of readers, lightly edited transcripts, a monthly e-letter (see below), social media, DVDs and online video, articles in Mandala and other magazines and on our website.

Irrespective of the medium we choose, the teachings require a significant amount of work to prepare them for distribution.

This is just a summary of what we do. The Archive was established with virtually no seed funding and has developed solely through the kindness of many people, most of whom we mention and thank sincerely on our website. We are indebted to you all.

Our further development similarly depends upon the generosity of those who see the benefit and necessity of this work, and we would be extremely grateful for your help. Thus we hereby appeal to you for your kind support. If you would like to make a contribution to help us with any of the above tasks or to sponsor books for free distribution, please contact us:

LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE
PO Box 636, Lincoln, MA 01773, USA
Telephone (781) 259-4466
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LamaYeshe.com

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LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE MEMBERSHIP

In order to raise the money we need to employ editors to make available the thousands of hours of teachings mentioned above, we have established a membership plan. 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, a year of monthly pujas by the monks and nuns at Kopan Monastery with your personal dedication, and access to an exclusive members-only section of our website containing the entire LYWA library of publications in electronic format. Please see 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 over 140 back-issues or to subscribe with your email address, please visit our website.

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.

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, mandalamagazine.org, or contact:

FPMT
1632 SE 11th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214
Telephone (503) 808-1588; Fax (503) 808-1589
info@fpmt.org
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, especially, those 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
SPECIAL COMMENTARIES

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*, *Refuge & Bodhicitta* and *Seven-Limb Prayer*.

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

What to do with Dharma Teachings

The Buddhadharmā 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.

Sign up for the LYWA Monthly Eletter

[Sign up to receive a monthly e-message from LYWA](#) offering you a newly edited teaching from Lama Yeshe or Lama Zopa Rinpoche, up-to-date news about the work of the Archive both at home and online, links to other great Dharma online resources and very special offerings for the LYWA community.

E-letter No. 138: November 2014

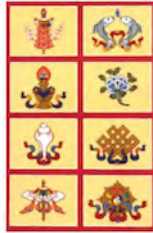
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By Dr. Nicholas Ribush (Last Updated Nov 25, 2014)

Dear LYWA friends and supporters,

Below, we have much to share with you about new teachings made available to you in November from the Archive. Thank you so much for your continued interest and support.

NEW TEACHINGS ON OUR WEBSITE



We have just posted a translation and short commentary by Lama Zopa Rinpoche on [the meaning of the eight auspicious signs](#) and how they can be used for success. It was dictated to Ven. Sarah Thresher at Root Institute, Bodhgaya, India, on February 4, 2014.

Read a talk on [Transforming the Mind in Everyday Life](#), given by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Adelaide, Australia, on August 2, 1991. In this teaching Rinpoche talks about the purpose of our life and how to develop a positive attitude, and gives advice on searching for the I. You can read an excerpt from this teaching as our eletter teaching below.

You can also read the [primer for the quick return of Geshe Lhundub Sopa Rinpoche](#), composed by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Geshe Sopa, Abbot of Deer Park Center in Wisconsin, passed away in August.

Read advice from Rinpoche where he discusses the [reasons for giving up alcohol, cigarettes and other addictive substances](#) at a Dharma talk in Bendigo, Australia, in August 1991. Read more advice from Rinpoche regarding [Addiction](#) in the Online Advice Book.

MORE ADVICE FROM LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

New advices added to the Online Advice Book this month include a letter to a student advising [how to benefit her dogs by building stupas](#) and circumambulating them. In this letter Rinpoche says:

In reality by just walking around a stupa even one time, so many eons of heavy negative karma collected from beginningless rebirth gets purified and we collect extensive merits every time we go around it. That makes it possible to achieve enlightenment.

Read also a letter from a [student writing to confess](#) that he had negative, harmful thoughts when hearing Rinpoche speak; and advice from Rinpoche that when [teaching Dharma, the main emphasis should be on the good heart and benefiting others](#).

For our friends in the US who are celebrating Thanksgiving this week, it is always good to remember the [Rinpoche's advice for this holiday](#). Read a letter Rinpoche wrote to the Sangha of Sera as dedication for pujas they did for all the turkeys killed for Thanksgiving, and Rinpoche's thoughts about this holiday.



OUR WORK TOGETHER



Last week we sent you an email about our [annual year-end appeal](#). Our sincere thanks to those of you who donated during Lhabab Duchen to give us an excellent start to this year's appeal. To date we have raised over \$6,000 towards our \$50,000 goal.

We have much to rejoice in after a very successful year of fulfilling our mission to bring you the teachings of Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other great lamas of our time.

This year saw the publication of [many new ebooks](#), and the start of our first ebook only series of [teachings from Koonen](#). Our website continues to grow by leaps and bounds and we are hard at work on a new and improved website design. We have begun to post many new videos to our [YouTube channel](#) and this year we more than doubled the number of people we share the teachings with daily through social media outlets such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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