

KOPAN COURSE NO. 36

LAMRIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 2003

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LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

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Lecture 1

MOTIVATION: DEDICATING FOR ALL SENTIENT BEINGS

So, I want to say hello.

The reason why all of us are here—you are here or whatever—it's not just for our individual peace and happiness. It's not just for that. Even though you may have come for that purpose at the beginning, in reality it's not just that. Not even just inner spiritual growth—not cancer growth, spiritual growth—spiritual improvement, spiritual development in our own mind, for ourselves. The purpose is not even just that. It's for the benefit of numberless mother sentient beings.

I am sure I can say “mother,” by now you must have gone through bodhicitta, the seven techniques of Mahayana cause and effect, you know, the bodhicitta technique, developing the mind in bodhicitta. You know what's called the seven techniques of Mahayana cause and effect, based on the equilibrium meditation, the equilibrium mind—after equalizing the mind, how all sentient beings have been our own mother, and then repaying kindness.

Then we generate affectionate loving kindness, the loving kindness seeing the sentient beings. The preliminary reason is our mother has been so kind and seeing it's wonderful, like a son or daughter who realizes how our mother or father is so kind and precious—that is our view. Or the mother who sees her beloved child as something very precious, something very wonderful. So like that, how a mother feels for her most beloved child. By using reason, by proving to our own mind which doesn't realize all sentient beings have been our own mother and kind to us numberless times, numberless times. The mind does not see that, then we prove to that mind and then we are able to see it and feel it. Loving kindness is the nature of that, seeing them as very precious, very wonderful, then wishing only happiness to others.

And then compassion, which is wishing others to be free from suffering. Then to cause that by ourselves. That is the special attitude to take the whole responsibility, to cause them, to free from all the sufferings and to have all the happiness, especially full enlightenment. Taking that whole responsibility to do that, taking whole responsibility upon oneself, that is special attitude.

Then for the success of that, without ourselves first becoming a buddha, an enlightened being, free from all the gross and subtle mistakes of mind, all defilements, by that then having all the qualities, all the realizations, fully perfected in all the qualities—that's what's needed to benefit, to be able to do perfect work toward numberless sentient beings.

Anyway, since you are going through those, meditating through these stages of meditation, the purpose that we are here is not just for one person alone, for ourselves. Among the numberless sentient beings, we are here for just this one person's happiness—it's not just that.

[We are here] to benefit each and every single mother sentient being, who wants happiness and does not want suffering. Listening, reflecting, meditating—what we are doing here—taking the eight Mahayana precepts, which is so essential, so important for the world peace, and not only our own happiness, not just for the peace and happiness of this life, which is just a very short time, like last night's dream. It happened and it's gone, just something for a very, very short time.

Not just that—the happiness beyond from this life. Of course it benefits that but another very important practice that benefits to numberless sentient beings, as we motivated when we took the eight Mahayana precepts, we took that motivation and also we dedicated to the end of the day, or after the precepts also we dedicate to all the sentient beings. Of course, each precept that we have taken, that we practice, definitely benefits for the peace and happiness of numberless mother sentient beings.

It brings great happiness in the world, in the country and especially to develop the economy and not have recession and also not have all these difficulties of life. For the people in the country to not suffer or to have less poverty, to have great enjoyment, to have an easier life. It definitely benefits for that.

THE STORY OF THE FOUR HARMONIOUS BROTHERS

There have been stories in the past that maybe you might have heard already. There happened in India, I think maybe in a country called Kashika, before there was much poverty then after some time a lot of enjoyment happened, with crops growing well, and the rains came at the right time, anyway, so much enjoyment, so much development happened. So the king of that country thought, “I did it, I am the one who developed the country.” But the ministers thought they did it. Everyone thought they did it. A minister suggested to the king that they should ask a sage who had clairvoyance. So they all went to see the sage and ask him.

The sage told them that it’s not because of the king, it’s not because of the ministers. There are four harmonious brother animals living in the forest, it’s because of them. The harmonious brother animals: one is an elephant, one is a monkey, one is a rabbit and other one is a bird—I don’t know whether it’s a particular bird, I’m not sure. Anyway, it is a bird. I think the bird is a manifestation of the Buddha and then the others are the Buddha’s disciples, Ananda, and one is Chugawo, maybe, Ngegawo, Buddha’s disciples. So the elephant spread five precepts to other elephants for the other elephants to practice. And the monkey spread the five precepts to other monkeys to practice. And then rabbit made the other rabbits practice the five precepts and then the bird made the other birds practice the five precepts. And not only that, also to respect each other—whoever was the elder, they respected.

Actually that story is mainly for advice, I think, for the people in this world to respect each other and to live an ethical life and to avoid living a life of nonvirtuous actions which harms ourselves and harms others. When we harm others, that itself means we harm ourselves. When we harm others there are immediate consequences, we receive harm from others. The other one, the long-term result is the karmic result, we create the negative karma of harming others, then we have consequences. Even if the other person doesn’t harm us, if they don’t take revenge on us, we still have to experience the suffering results of our karma sooner or later, at any time. Unless we purify before experiencing the result, then that’s a different case, that’s a different situation. But if it is not purified then we definitely have to experience the suffering result of negative karma, the action that we have done that harmed others. By harming others, we harm ourselves—we have to understand that way. Whenever we harm others, that means harming ourselves.

NON-HARM MEANS PEACE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

Those actions of committing harm to ourselves and others, those nonvirtuous actions, those immoral actions came from and are motivated by the impure mind or negative thought, nonvirtuous thought, mistaken thought, the wrong way of thinking.

It not only affects our life, it affects the world. Those unethical, negative actions, those nonvirtuous actions, immoral actions, not only affect our personal life, but they also affect the world, they affect other sentient beings. They affect the environment, they affect other living beings, they affect the environment. Then the environment is made impure, polluted, then it affects back to us, it affects back to the people, then they get sick, lots of sicknesses, and even the doctor can't tell how many sicknesses, even they cannot tell exactly.

Respecting each other brings so much peace and happiness in the life, in the family, in society, in the office, and there is so much peace and happiness in the country, in the world. Practicing respect brings so much peace and happiness within individuals, within each individual's life. It has a positive effect on others; it makes others happy. Sincere respect—not political respect, not diplomatic respect—sincere respect by thinking of the qualities of others.

As His Holiness says, even flies can't give much harm to others. They can't think that many evil thoughts, as we can. We can think so many evil thoughts, we can generate so many evil thoughts, but not this fly; it doesn't generate so many. That is because we are a human being, and that fly is not a human being. We have this precious human body; we can achieve all the happiness up to enlightenment for ourselves. We can achieve all these different levels of happiness up to enlightenment; with this human body we can cause all the happiness to numberless other sentient beings, which is an incredible opportunity. It is something which is higher, which has all this freedom or opportunity. There are limitless skies of benefit, good things that we can do with this human body that they can't with their body. [We can achieve so much] with this human body which has so many qualities, much higher, but using this to generate so much ill will to others, then engaging in actions to harm others—the harm we can do to ourselves and others—this fly cannot do that. His Holiness says, by thinking that way, respect the fly. So we can compare and think in this way.

When we respect others sincerely, then we create good karma, virtue, which of course makes others happy. It has an immediate effect because we see it makes others happy then that affects back to our mind and makes us happy. The immediate effect is it makes our life happy. So there is this. Then of course, there is the karmic result of happiness later, either in this life or after this life, in the future.

KINDNESS IS THE CAUSE OF A BEAUTIFUL BODY

In one text it is said, when we smile at other sentient beings with loving kindness, with compassion, with a sincere heart we will achieve a beautiful body. For example, when His Holiness sees anybody, old or young, poor or rich, educated or uneducated, he shows respect to everyone. He smiles, first. Not smell, smile! [Laughter] Smell, smile. It's very dangerous to get it mixed. Always giving smiles, giving a smile. In one text it is mentioned that, if the motivation is loving kindness and compassion—not political, not with the evil thought of the eight worldly dharmas, when of course it becomes nonvirtue whatever you do, smile or what—the text says that smiling at somebody sincerely from our heart to make that person happy is the cause in the future to have a beautiful body. You can see that from the cause. The cause is showing a pleasant

face to somebody, which makes that other sentient being happy, so you can get some idea from the cause, from that good karma, that the result we will achieve will be a beautiful body.

So then what happens, what's the big deal if you have a beautiful body? What's the big deal, what's the use of that, what's the big deal, what's important? Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself, and many other of those great pandits, the highly attained yogis like Lama Atisha, many of them purposely reincarnated with total freedom, not under the delusions and karma. If we have a beautiful body it's easy to draw people, it's easy for other people to listen to us. Then this way we can bring them into the path, into the right path to happiness, we can use that as a means to bring them to happiness, and not only temporary happiness, but by causing them to practice morality, charity, and to practice the good heart, and ultimately to bring them to full enlightenment.

Let's say, in the world somebody has a very beautiful body, and so many people get attracted to them, get drawn to them. By reincarnating and taking such a body, we can very easily help others; it is so easy for them to follow us or listen to us. That way it's much easier for us to benefit them, to cause them happiness. If they don't follow us, if they don't listen to us then we can't help them. No matter how much they suffer we can't, if they don't listen to us, if they don't follow us. That blocks us from benefiting them, from bringing them into the path to liberation, to full enlightenment.

EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS: RINPOCHE ADDS "IN ORDER TO BENEFIT AND LIBERATE"

Definitely, because you have been taking the eight Mahayana precepts, not just for one day but for many days, for half of the course, every day for about two weeks, that becomes a great contribution for the world, for world peace, for the world and Nepal.

Recently, during the ceremony prayer, I added, "in order to benefit, in order to liberate...." "In order to benefit" is temporary happiness, to cause others' temporary happiness, and "in order to liberate" means to cause others ultimate happiness. Then, it says, "to not have famine, to not have sickness." It's good to remember many parts of the world where there are famine, like there has been famine in Africa for so many years, and many millions of people died of starvation. Many have still not developed enjoyment well, but that's what's happened. For quite a number of years, many millions of people, young and old, died due to famine, in so many different parts of the world. Remember all that, and not only in this world but all the sentient beings. There are numberless universes, not only explained by Buddha but scientists explain there are numberless of universes. So you shouldn't think only this world, just this one, you should think of all the universes, you should think as extensively as possible, cover as many sentient beings as possible. When you take the eight Mahayana precepts, think who you are doing this for, and you should cover all sentient beings.

Think that those who are suffering from poverty now, who have the karma to experience poverty and to have famine, they stop experiencing it. Then sicknesses. It's good to remember all the hospitals. I don't mean you need to have clairvoyance and see all the hospitals, I don't mean that, I'm not saying that! Almost everyone must have visited a hospital, so the minute you enter a hospital, how is the feeling? How is the environment? So depressed, so sad, so much sorrow. When you come in from the outside, the minute you enter the hospital, the feeling is totally different, the feeling is totally different. It is exactly what Buddha explained in the teachings

about the sufferings of human beings, exactly what is explained in lamrim, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment. In this one hospital there is so much going on, so much happening, all the suffering and the different people. Some are having heart attacks, some are having operations and are not sure they will ever come back. They can't say. The person has to sign for that. Some are in a coma, and it's not sure how many years it will take, even on a machine. And the parents, the families come to see them.

There is nothing you can do; the karma is already experienced. What is not purified before has already happened; the result is already experienced. There is nothing you can do. So it's very sad. The hospital is full of that [suffering]. So unimaginable.

This is not all the human problems there are. What you see in a hospital is not all the human problems, just the sicknesses and then death—the end of the life and death, separating the consciousness from the body due to delusion and karma.

In the hospital, that's the reality of life. You can't pretend, you can't cover it up. The other things you can cover up a little bit. When there are more and more wrinkles coming—one wrinkle, two wrinkles, three wrinkles—those you can stretch out, you can operate to stretch them out. But I think there are still some differences; it can still look a little bit funny. [Laughter] It's not exactly the same even after the operation. It's not exactly the same; it's just a little bit funny on the face. It's not natural.

Even in one country there are so many hospitals, so many. Even in one city, even in one country, there are so many. How many are there in this world? So many, you see. It's very good to not have sicknesses. It's very good to remember what you have seen in the past, remember when you went to hospital how you saw things. So all that, you see, in this world and in any universes, and also at home.

[Think] everyone who is sick now and who has karma to get sick, to get sicknesses, you are taking precepts for everyone, to benefit everyone, to pacify, to not experience sicknesses.

EIGHT MAHAYANA PRECEPTS: RINPOCHE ADDS “TO NOT HAVE WAR”

After that I added “to not have war.” Even though it's not mentioned there, because of the recent world situation, I thought very good to add those words after the bit about sicknesses, to add “to not have war.” That also makes you feel you are helping, you are doing something by taking precepts, by collecting this merit and living in the vows yourself, to not harm others. You yourself are living in the vows to not harm others, to not commit eight negative karmas, to abstain from eight harmful actions.

This is one way of starting peace within yourself. Then when you have peace within yourself, you are giving peace to the world. This is also like that. You are giving peace to yourself and you are giving peace to the world, by living in the vow to not harm.

Therefore, it is an extremely practical thing to do. For example, you can have meetings, you can have *lots* of meetings for world peace but you yourself are not living in the vow to not harm others. You engage in harming others, but you attend a lot of meetings for world peace. *Here*, it's very practical, here, you start from yourself. You start giving peace from your side, by living in these vows to not harm others. So definitely, definitely, such a practice, definitely benefits, adds

to the world peace. And not only for this world but for the peace and happiness of all the sentient beings.

As His Holiness mentioned, when a country or the people don't fight, they keep quiet because of the fear of weapons, of bombs, because they are afraid of being killed, destroyed, that is not real peace. That's not real peace. The real peace has to come from the individual's heart.

THE NEED FOR COMPASSION IN THE WORLD

If there is more education about compassion in the world, in the country, if there is more education, educating people in compassion and how to practice it—the more that happens then the more real peace happens. It comes from within their own heart, from compassion, from the good heart. By having compassion, a good heart, we don't harm others. On top of that, we only benefit others; we become the cause of happiness for others and we don't harm either ourselves or nature. Peace comes from each individual being with the freedom.

Just by saying there is a need for compassion, just by lecturing there is a need for compassion, that alone doesn't generate compassion in the mind. Just by lecturing that we need compassion, that alone cannot generate compassion in the hearts of the people in this world. We need to learn *how* to develop compassion. Compassion, like rain falling, doesn't just happen. Even if the rain comes from the foggy area due to the vapor from the ocean or whatever it is, it's all dependent arising. It's not just happening instantly, it's not happening without causes and conditions. Even that. Compassion doesn't just drop into the brain or into the heart like that.

The mind has to be trained in compassion. There is a graduated method to develop compassion. There are preliminary stages to have the realization of compassion. There is a whole graduated path; there are whole stages the mind has to develop through—then we can have the realization of compassion.

How much peace and happiness within our individual life, how much fulfillment and high esteem, having a happy life, a meaningful life, then our life is meaningful, worthwhile, beneficial—it is not meaningless, not depressing—there is peace and happiness within our individual life. Then peace and happiness in the family, in society, in the neighborhood, in the people around us, peace and happiness in the country, in the world, global peace and happiness—all this depends on compassion. When there is less compassion in the world, in the hearts of the people, there are more problems, more wars. It is similar in the family, even in a small group like a family. Even in one person's life there are more problems, so many more problems and disasters. Body disasters, mind disasters—there are two kinds of disasters: body and mind. The whole world peace depends on how much a good heart is educated and practiced.

As I often say, if one person has compassion, then that attitude doesn't produce a harmful action; it doesn't produce an action that harms others. Starting from the family, from an animal or human being, whoever is nearest to us in everyday life, starting from there, to all the rest of the sentient beings, they don't receive harm from us, and that absence of harm is the peace and happiness they receive from us. Then, on top of that, with compassion, with stopping giving harm, the more we develop compassion, the more we benefit others. So, numberless other sentient beings receive peace and happiness. From our compassion, the numberless other sentient beings not only receive the happiness of this life, but more importantly, they receive

peace and happiness in all future lives. For numberless others, their long-term happiness in all the coming future lives is received from us. By having compassion, it can cause this.

And not only that, an even more important happiness, we cause other sentient beings to receive ultimate happiness, the everlasting happiness having pacified completely the whole oceans of samsaric sufferings. By pacifying the cause which is within them, delusion and karma, or the mistaken thoughts, wrong concepts, the emotional, afflicted thoughts, and then the actions, karma, by pacifying them completely, including the seeds of the delusions, which are within their mental continuum. By ceasing all that, including the seeds of delusion, which is the nature of the imprint, by ceasing all that completely and making it impossible for those negative emotional thoughts, the wrong concepts, those disturbing emotional thoughts to arise again. Due to that, it is impossible to create karma again and impossible then to experience the result, suffering. That is ultimate happiness, everlasting happiness. They are free from suffering forever. Numberless sentient beings can achieve that happiness from our compassion.

If we have compassion, then we also develop wisdom. If we have compassion then we look for wisdom, we put effort into learning Dharma wisdom, to know what is right, what is beneficial for others and ourselves, and what is wrong, what harms others and ourselves. Wisdom knows this. Wisdom knows karma, what is the cause of suffering. Without knowing, without wisdom, how can we achieve happiness? How can we prevent suffering without knowing the cause of suffering?

If we have compassion we continuously put effort into developing wisdom so that we can benefit others more deeply, we can be of better service to others. And with that compassion, we are able to bring the numberless sentient beings to great liberation, to full enlightenment, which is the cessation of even the subtle mistakes of the mind, the subtle defilements, the subtle negative imprints, which project the hallucinated appearance, the truly existent appearance. By ceasing that, then the realizations are completed, all the qualities are achieved. Then, there is nothing more to develop, that's the end, it's completed; there is bliss, peace. The spiritual work, the attainment is finished, is completed. Our compassion causes numberless sentient beings to achieve peerless happiness, full enlightenment. That which is the highest success, the most important happiness—that should be achieved. That is what sentient beings need to achieve.

Therefore, all this happiness that numberless other sentient beings receive from us, all this up to enlightenment—is in our hands. All this happiness is caused by us. Our compassion is the cause of all this; it is in our own hands. It is up to our own mind, what we do with our mind. It all depends on what we do with our mind. If we develop compassion for other sentient beings, then that compassion becomes the cause for all those numberless sentient beings to achieve happiness up to enlightenment. All that comes from us. If we don't generate compassion, then all these benefits, all those skies of benefit, the numberless sentient beings cannot receive from us.

MEDITATION ON UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

Therefore, all of us here, every one of us here has full responsibility. Every one of us here has full responsibility for numberless hell beings—to free them all from those most unbearable sufferings and cause all this happiness. We all have full responsibility.

We just meditate on this universal responsibility, try to feel this.

“I have full responsibility to numberless hell beings, to free them from the most unbearable of all the sufferings of hell, and to cause all this happiness.” So, feel that way.

[Pause]

Now feel, “I have full responsibility to numberless hungry ghosts to free them from the most unbearable sufferings of the preta realm and for them to achieve all the happiness up to enlightenment.”

[Pause]

Now feel that, “I have all the responsibility to numberless animals, to free them from all the most unimaginable sufferings of the animal realm and for them to have all the happiness up to enlightenment.”

[Pause]

Now think, “I have full responsibility to free the numberless human beings from the oceans of problems of the human realm.”

[Pause]

As it is mentioned in the teachings, all those problems that you yourself have gone through and all the problems that you hear about from your own friends or family, from people you know, who are suffering. All the human beings’ problems that you see every day on TV, all the problems that you see in newspapers—global problems, countries’ problems, individual people’s problems, relationship problems—including the cause, delusion and karma and the three types of suffering—the suffering of pain and the suffering of change or the temporary samsaric pleasure which is only in the nature of the suffering, but they believe is real happiness. They have no idea there is happiness beyond this, that there is long-term happiness, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment, that there is real happiness by developing the mind in the path, through the different stages. There is all this freedom, all this bliss—incredible peace, happiness and bliss that they can achieve—but they have no idea.

There is so much we can achieve. Happiness is not just the temporary samsaric pleasure, not only sensual pleasure—the pleasure of sleeping, the pleasure of eating, the pleasure of sex, the pleasure of singing, the pleasure of having wealth, the pleasure of being famous. What they know as happiness is only suffering, but they believe that there is nothing more than that. Due to lack of wisdom, due to ignorance, due to lack of discriminating wisdom, they believe that this is pure happiness.

[Think, “I have full responsibility”] to free the numberless human beings from all these sufferings—the suffering of pain, the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering, all these. The body and mind are in the nature of suffering, experience suffering, are pervaded by delusion and karma, the contaminated seeds of delusion, the contaminated aggregates, the imprints, the seeds of delusion, so pervaded, like that. Constantly, the aggregates are only in the nature of suffering. Think, “I have full responsibility” to bring sentient beings freedom from the oceans of those problems and bring them all the happiness up to enlightenment.

[Pause]

Then, “I have full responsibility for the numberless sura beings, the same, to free them from oceans of their sufferings, from all their hallucinations, all their ignorance, all their desires, which continuously create the cause of samsara and again cause them to be reborn in the lower realms. After higher realm rebirth, again they are reborn in the lower realms and suffer, circling again and again.”

[Pause]

This is similar, as I mentioned about human beings’ suffering, as far as the hallucination.

[Pause]

Think, “I have full responsibility for the numberless asuras, to free them from all the oceans of their sufferings and cause them to have all the happiness up to enlightenment.”

[Pause]

Think, “I have full responsibility for the numberless intermediate stage beings, to free them from their most terrifying karmic appearance, all those sufferings, the violence of the four elements, the karmic appearance and all those unbelievable fears, then I will cause them to have all the happiness up to enlightenment.”

[Pause]

Now the conclusion: “Therefore I must, I *must* practice compassion. Whether the other person practices compassion or not, first I myself should practice compassion. Whether the enemy practices compassion or not, whether another companion practices compassion or not, first I myself should practice compassion.”

[Pause]

“Whether the person who I call enemy changes their mind or not, or the companion changes their mind or not, first I myself should change my mind. I should start from my own side. That is the change to compassion from the ego, the self-cherishing thought, and from the angry, impatient nature.”

[Pause]

Think, “Therefore, in order to be able to offer all this service, up to enlightenment, to other sentient beings, all this happiness, then I need to actualize the graduated path of the higher capable being. I need to be fully qualified to do all perfect work for all sentient beings, therefore I need to actualize the graduated path of the higher capable being, therefore I need to actualize the graduated path of the middle capable being and in general I need to actualize the graduated path of the lower capable being. So, the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment, starting from the beginning of the path, the perfect human rebirth, starting from there. I need to have realization of all these paths. And what makes successful realization of all these paths, attaining all these paths up to enlightenment and causing all this happiness to all the sentient beings up to

enlightenment, that is the root of the path to enlightenment, guru devotion, having that realization and correctly devoting to the virtuous friend.”

After you have analyzed like this, you should conclude like this. “And then I should live my life for others, to offer service, to obtain happiness for others.

I should live my life for the numberless other sentient beings.”

That’s the conclusion.

[Chanting]

So drinking tea with compassion should be more delicious.

Lecture 2

THE GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA AND THE ARYA SANGHATA SUTRA

I thought to do a short oral transmission, just one or two pages, to start today.

Not this text. I thought I brought the text but I brought some other text. I was going to do oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*. That’s a very, very important sutra to recite; it helps very much for world peace, for peace in the country. So many benefits have been explained. I thought to do it since I have received the lineage, the transmission. There are three volumes—elaborate, middle and short—in the Buddha’s teaching, the Kangyur.

I received the oral transmission of the middle one from Bakula Rinpoche, from Ladakh, who was a prince, I think, before the British took over India. His father was the king, so he was born in the king’s family in Ladakh. Then he went to Tibet, to Drepung monastery, to study philosophy and then become a lharampa geshe, like a Doctor of Philosophy in the West. Then he worked for the Indian government, the parliament, for many, many years and then he became the ambassador in Mongolia some years back. He is a great holy being; he has done unbelievable benefit, skies of benefit for sentient beings in this world, to protect the teachings of the Buddha, to protect Buddhism in Ladakh, for many years. None of the monasteries have been destroyed. His life has been totally sacrificed to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, to preserve it. His life story is really most inspiring, most inspiring, and it shows a great holy being in this world.

There are sixteen arhats. They are showing the aspect of arhats but they are not ordinary arhats who are just free from samsara, from delusions, having entered in the Mahayana path, not that kind. They have taken the aspect of arhats, but they are actually enlightened beings.

The sixteen arhats are regents of the Buddha; the Buddha asked them. So, he is a regent to protect the teachings of the Buddha in this world and for the teachings of Buddha to last a long time in this world and then to protect, to help the Dharma practitioners, the practitioners of the teaching of Buddha. One of the arhats is called Bakula Rinpoche, so I think he is an incarnation.

It is said by Lama Atisha's disciple, a Kadampa geshe, that Lama Atisha himself came to Tibet and made Buddhism pure in Tibet. He started the term *lamrim*. He wrote a text of a few pages that integrated the 84,000 teachings of Buddha, which covers the three levels: the Lesser Vehicle teaching, the Mahayana Paramitayana teachings and the Mahayana tantra teaching. All these levels that the Buddha taught for the different levels of sentient beings, Lama Atisha integrated into a number of pages, making a very simple graduated practice for one person to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. The teachings he wrote and the way he presented them are what we are meditating on during this course; this is what we are learning.

Lama Atisha wrote this lamrim teaching, then it was preserved, practiced and studied in Tibet, and so many beings became enlightened, so many beings became bodhisattvas, great saints, and so many beings became highly attained yogis, many becoming enlightened. Now that is spread all over the world and these days many tens of thousands, even in the West, have the opportunity to follow the path to enlightenment and make their lives meaningful and find peace and the answer in life that they could not find in Western society, culture, where there are gaps, where there are holes. They could not find the answer, but here they are able to find the answer.

Lama Atisha's practice is the sixteen arhats. He strongly advised his disciples, including Kadampa Geshe Potowa, to practice the sixteen arhats very strongly, worshipping, offering and making requests to them. Kadampa Geshe Potowa had great success in attaining realizations, in benefiting others. And many other Kadampa geshe experienced how it benefited them so much and they advised others to do it in a similar way. It is said that in any monastery, if there is one arhat from the sixteen arhats, it is beneficial to spread the Dharma.

Reciting the prayer of the sixteen arhats offering has several benefits: to be able to practice Dharma and to be able to live in pure morality, in ordination, and then to increase the Sangha. It also brings wealth, prosperity. Reciting the prayer and offering to them is also good for healing and for long life. There are quite a number of benefits.

So, I have received the oral transmission of the middle version of the *Golden Light Sutra* from Bakula Rinpoche and then there is another very short one, a condensed one, that I also received the oral transmission of from Bakula Rinpoche. I have already given the oral transmission of the short one a few times in different places. The middle one, I don't remember, I started at Institut Vajra Yogini, a center in France last year, but I don't think I finished it.

So anyway, this time I thought I brought the text but this is the *Arya Sanghata Sutra*, another sutra that is so precious, which just by hearing a few words, as soon as you hear the words you collect merit. As soon as you hear the words it immediately purifies very heavy karma, the five uninterrupted karmas, from which immediately after death you get reborn in the heaviest of the hot hells, that stage which lasts for eons. That is the negative karma such as killing your father or mother of this life, harming a buddha by causing the blood of a buddha to flow, killing an arhat—one who is free from delusion and karma, from samsara—and causing disunity among the Sangha. All these very heavy negative karmas immediately get purified as soon as you hear the words of the Buddha's teaching, called the *Arya Sanghata Sutra*. That means there is no question that negative karma such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies—all those ten nonvirtues—all get purified. And as soon as you hear the words, you collect merit. A buddha is one who has completed all the merit, who has nothing more to complete, nothing more to collect. So a buddha is like this, and this text gives you the idea; it shows you how all extensive merits up to buddhahood can slowly be developed.

As soon as you just hear the words of the sutra, how much merit you collect equals offering to all the buddhas equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. It says “Ganga” but Ganga is not only the River Ganga. In the text it is explained it is the Pacific Ocean. And “sand grain” is not what we call ordinary sand; it’s much more subtle. It’s an atom, even the water has atoms. So, it’s much finer. So, you collect that much merit, more merit than offering to all the buddhas equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. I don’t remember a hundred percent but it’s like twelve times that, twelve times the number of buddhas equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean.

There was a large Buddha that was destroyed some time ago in Afghanistan. There are lots of caves there. I’m not sure, but it seems there is story that even the Buddha came there and gave the Kalachakra initiation in that area. And I heard that there are supposed to be two thousand people there who are Buddhists, but I think maybe that’s what was left. Of course, they had no support, the family life had degenerated and I don’t think they had any support in education. So anyway, there was a stupa built in that area of Afghanistan and it was completely filled only with this special sutra of the Buddha, the *Sanghata Sutra*. It was only filled with this text because the merit, the purification by just hearing it is unbelievable, unbelievable, incredible. This was mentioned by a professor who in the early times translated this text from Sanskrit. Anyway, I mention the story because I brought this text, but I was going to give the *lung* of the *Golden Light Sutra*. That was the idea.

The second time I went to Mongolia—I don’t think it was the first time—there was a Mongolian man who was a doctor. He was the husband of the sister of Dr. Renuka Singh, who is the present director of Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre in Delhi. Her sister passed away. She was a very wonderful person, with a very good heart, extremely good-hearted, a wonderful person, but somehow she didn’t take care of her body, of her health, and she passed away. So, I went to the doctor’s house in Mongolia. There were a few texts kept very high, very respected. I think maybe his father read them, but I don’t think these were read, so they kept them very high.

I was curious, kind of looking for antiques. I am just joking! Anyway, I asked him if I could see one text. There must be some karma to be able to see these texts, to use these texts to benefit the world, I guess, maybe the Buddha’s action. There were a few texts there, but this was the text he brought down. The minute I opened it, the first line that I saw was, “And by hearing this, all the negative karmas get purified.” Just that one, that’s the line I saw first. So that inspired me. Of course, I am very excited about anything that purifies negative karma, anything that you see around that is very helpful, very powerful to purify negative karma. So anyway, anything that you see around that can purify negative karma.

So I borrowed the text, I took it back home—I mean the house in Mongolia. I thought to read this text in the market because it was so powerful and by hearing it, it purifies negative karma. I thought maybe it would be very useful to go to the market and sit down and read the text so that people passing by could hear it and their negative karma could be purified. I went to one shop, to the market, which was maybe twenty times this space, I am not sure, maybe thirty. It was a huge, huge ground, but it was all filled with Mongolian leather boots and shoes, clearly all covered. So there was no place to sit to read the text. Outside there were cars going round but it didn’t seem the right place. So this didn’t happen. I also thought to read it outside the house where there were a few people passing by but that didn’t happen.

When I came back to New York, Ribur Rinpoche—a guru I received many initiations and teachings from—was doing retreat outside New York, at Richard Gere’s private house. Rinpoche asked me to come there to do retreat. While I was staying there, I borrowed the text, which came from Mongolia. There is an American geshe, I’ve forgotten his name. Huh? Ah, Geshe Michael Roach. He went to Mongolia, so one of his disciples had the text and I borrowed it. So I read it while I was staying at Richard Gere’s house. It brings unbelievable, unbelievable benefit to the world, to the country, to that area it is in. It brings unbelievable benefit, it brings peace and happiness, it stops violence. It has a few chapters. I thought it would be nice, because it brought so much benefit, if it went to Africa where there is a lot of fighting. If you could go there and stay some time, and just read this text, to bring peace to the country. This is an idea.

After I read this then I made a vow that in order to repay the Buddha who left such precious teachings, to be able to bring such incredible benefits to the world, to translate it into many different languages, in order to spread it all over the world. So the Spanish translation is done already by a monk who is in Sera Monastery, in south India. I think probably now a few other translations are in process. It already exists in Chinese because the whole entire teachings of the Buddha, the Kangyur and Tengyur, were translated into Chinese many hundreds of years ago, I am not sure how long ago. It seems there are a few more texts in Chinese which are not translated into Tibetan. By giving other translations for people, all over the world, it gives them the chance to purify and to collect so much merit and to bring peace in the world, in the country, in the area.

It seems that this text was very famous in Mongolia. I didn’t hear that it was so well-known in Tibet. Of course, it’s always there in the Kangyur, wherever there is the Kangyur this is always there. But in Mongolia, it is common that every family has this text. In the past for many, many years there has been so much prosperity in Mongolia. So much power and so much prosperity happened in Mongolia because of this *Golden Light Sutra* text, for so many years. It is said in the text and explained by some high lamas. This is also to do with the oral transmission, to give this as much as possible. The Buddha taught this to spread this precious teaching, to benefit sentient beings, to offer service.

I received the middle version and the short one from Bakula Rinpoche. In the Kangyur there are three volumes—the elaborate, middle, short ones—which I received at Vajrapani Center in Santa Cruz in America from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, who is great yogi, a great scholar whose qualities and realizations, whose experience of tantra, are like the limitless sky. So, I received the oral transmission from Rinpoche recently, which I had been waiting a long time for, as well as the *Golden Light Sutra*—except the elaborate one which I haven’t received yet. I’m hoping to receive it soon from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche. Every single word is very clear. If you are able to concentrate and you never miss one single word, it is very clear. It becomes that much more perfect, when you transmit it to others, so much more perfectly.

Anyway I think we’ll stop here. It will take some time, maybe tomorrow, maybe tomorrow. So, I think that’s it.

DEDICATION: GREAT COMPASSION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

[Chanting mandala offering]

Due to all the past, present, future merits collected by me, the three times merit collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated within one's own heart, one's own family members and in the hearts of all the sentient beings, every single sentient being, without delay of a second, and that which is generated, may it be increased.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated within one's own heart and in the hearts of everyone in this world.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated within one's own heart, one's family members, all of us here and all the leaders of the countries, all the leaders of this world. If one leader of a country generates bodhicitta, is able to have bodhicitta, then all the millions of people in that country will have so much peace and happiness and all those millions of people will be led in the path of peace and happiness, in a correct way. Therefore, it makes a difference whether the leader has bodhicitta or not; it makes a huge difference for the happiness of all those millions of people in that country. It is like the difference between sky and earth. It makes their lives different.

It's very important to pray as well that bodhicitta, the altruistic mind to achieve enlightenment, be generated in the hearts of all the terrorists and all the gangsters, the mobs or gangsters or whatever, all those groups of people who engage in violent actions harming others.

[Chanting]

I didn't conclude; I talked but I didn't conclude. What I was saying was that here we are receiving an education, not only in meditation, which is training the mind in compassion, in bodhicitta, the root of the door of the whole Mahayana path to enlightenment. Like the root of the tree that bears so much fruit, it is the root of the whole path to enlightenment, to attaining a buddha's infinite qualities, a buddha's holy body, holy speech, holy mind. Each one has infinite qualities, and is spontaneously working for sentient beings equaling the limitless sky. The root is bodhicitta and great compassion toward all sentient beings. So here, receiving an education means not only an intellectual education but also to put meditation into practice by training in compassion. What I was saying before was that this is what is needed most in the world; it is the most important thing. It is the antidote for every negative thing—war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sicknesses. All those things come from negative karma, produced by those deluded, afflicted minds and all that is to do with the self-cherishing thought.

Compassion is the complete opposite of all this. With compassion, everybody collects virtue. With compassion, everybody stops giving harm others and benefits others and only creates virtue. That brings all the prosperity, inner prosperity, inner realizations, outer prosperity, all wealth, enjoyment, everything. It brings the opposite to famine, to poverty, the opposite to sicknesses; it brings good health; it brings peace and happiness, the opposite to war. So, training the mind in compassion is the answer for everything. It brings world peace, peace and happiness to all sentient beings in this world, in this country, to our own family, to ourselves. Our compassion becomes the root of peace and happiness for everybody.

You should therefore recognize that coming to this course you are doing the most important thing in life, the most important thing that the world needs, the most important thing that sentient beings need.

So that's why I was saying at the beginning, it's not just for one person's peace of mind or even for liberation, not for that—it's global. What you are doing here is something related to all sentient beings, connected to all sentient beings, connected to whole world. What you are doing here is connected to the whole world. That's what I was saying from beginning. So now I'll conclude. [Laughter]

All the opportunities that we have are due to kindness of His Holiness Dalai Lama.

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present, future merit collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, that which exists but which does not exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, may the I, who exists but who does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which exists but does not exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but who does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds as the bodhisattva Samantabhadra and Manjughosha realized, and I dedicate all my merits in the same way the three times' buddhas, the past, present and future buddhas, dedicate their merits. May the general teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, which is like refined gold, that which is unified sutra and tantra, may it be spread in all directions. May it flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing it within oneself, within all of us, in the hearts of all the students and benefactors of this organization, those who give up their life for this organization, doing service to sentient beings by teaching Buddhism.

[Chanting]

Thank you very much. I don't know what the time is. I have no idea.

Lecture 3

EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE MIND

[Chanting long mandala offering]

I go for refuge to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha until enlightenment is achieved. Due to the merits of having done charity and so forth, may I achieve full enlightenment in order to benefit all migratory beings.

So, good afternoon. Maybe there is a question. [Pause] No questions? You don't have to have a question.

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: You just listen to my cough. [Laughter] Ignore the rest; just listen to the cough. What about that?

I think you asked your question at the right time. Your question is right time question. It is the right timing question.

Normally, I say there are two things, [learning] how to do everything. One, you can learn at school or college, university. Maybe at the university there are Buddhist subjects, maybe that is a little bit different. But you learn how to do a job, how to do business, not just listening to teaching, not only how to meditate but it is important at the same time [knowing] how to do a job, how to sleep, how to wash, how to sit, to cook, to do business. All these are important to know how to do, as much as how to listen to teachings, how to meditate. It is not only important to know how to meditate or listen teachings, it is important to know how to put those things into practice twenty-four hours a day, so whatever you do is very important, very essential.

What I normally say is that the physical side you can learn from college or university—how to do business, how to start a cleaning business, how to be a waiter in the restaurant. In the East, here in Nepal, I think there isn't much of this kind of thing to learn, but it looks like in the West you can learn how to be a waiter, how to behave, what to say to people. When the people come in, after they are sitting down, you learn to say, "How are you?" and when they leave, "Have a nice day," or something like that. [Laughter] It may not be just that but other things. Of course, that brief communication makes people very happy; it's a nice way. Saying a few words gives a kind of close feeling and makes people happy, makes them feel like home. Paying attention makes some connection. And you can learn the way to carry the food—all those practices and details, so it doesn't become a mess, so it becomes convenient and nice.

These external aspects are taught in school or college or university, but the other aspect, how to do things mentally, is not really taught. That is biggest thing missing in the life—mentally how to do things. Externally how to do things is taught but mentally how to do isn't taught. Mentally how to do things is missing, and that is the most important part, that is where peace and happiness comes from. It is the source of peace and happiness in life; it is where satisfaction comes from, where fulfillment comes from. It is what makes life meaningful, beneficial for yourself, beneficial for others. All this comes from the mind, from the attitude.

What we want is happiness and what we do not want is suffering. Happiness and suffering do not come from outside. Even worldly pleasures, samsaric, temporary sense pleasures—their root comes from our own mind. However, when we are not aware, when we do not think about it, when we do not meditate, when we do not analyze it, when we do not think about karma, it appears as if it is coming from outside. When we do not analyze where it's coming from, when we do not think about karma, how everything comes from mind—when we either do not know or we intellectually know but fail to practice mindfulness in daily life—it appears as if it comes from the outside. When we encounter problems, the suffering appears to come from the outside; when we have success, the sense pleasure we experience appears to come from the outside. Even though samsaric sense pleasures, temporary pleasures, have external conditions, the main cause is not outside but in our own mind. It's a healthy mind, a virtuous thought, a positive action caused by a pure mind—pure in the sense of a mind of non-ignorance, non-anger and non-attachment. That is the definition of a pure mind, a pure attitude in that sense. A good heart, unstained by

the self-cherishing thought; a good heart cherishing others, as well as wisdom, which is opposite to ignorance. From that, the unmistaken, pure thought comes.

There are two ways of thinking. Our present happiness comes from the positive attitude we have today, this hour, this minute. Also, today's, this hour's, this minute's problems come from the negative attitude we have today, this hour, this minute, from that way of thinking. This is the negative way of thinking, not the positive way of thinking. The previous one was the positive way of thinking. This moment's happiness and peace depend on or come from how we think this moment, whether it is positive. And this moment's problems come from the negative way of thinking or negative attitude we hold at this moment.

THE ENEMY COMES FROM THE MIND

For example, the minute we get angry with somebody—the minute I get angry with them, if I get angry with them, if I get angry with them [Laughter] Anyway, maybe in future, on a special day, the minute I get angry with them.

The minute our anger arises, we find an enemy in our life. We see a person that we hate or we want to hurt, or a person harms us and we see them as an enemy. But the minute our anger is gone, we don't see them as an enemy. Only when anger arises do we see the enemy but the minute the anger is gone, we don't see them as an enemy.

We interpret based on their way of thinking, how they behave with their body, their way of speaking. Based on that, we put a negative label on it, that they harmed us and then they are an enemy. Then, we believe in that. We put the label on a situation and then we believe in it. After we believe in it, the person's action and the person themselves appear bad, harmful. We label them "enemy" and we believe in that and after that they appear back to us as an enemy. Only after our mind labels "bad" and we believe in our label, do that person's action and that person appear to us as bad. Then it creates, by seeing that, by contacting that, the feeling that we get is an unpleasant feeling—not pleasant but unpleasant feeling—so we become unhappy.

From this, we can see very clearly that the enemy is the view of anger. That's why when the anger has gone, we don't have that view of an enemy. First our own mind interprets, negatively labeling "bad" to the action and the person. It does not appear like that, however. The person disturbs us, we put that negative label on the situation, we believe in it, and then anger arises. Believing in that negative label that has been imputed by our mind, we get angry, we experience all these unpleasant feelings. Before, we didn't have a problem. Because there was no problem before the mind labeled it, it's very clear that it came from our mind. It came from our mind. It is solely the creation of our own mind, by putting a negative label on it and believing in that.

So, we get angry, and then that makes the other person get angry with us, they are unhappy with us. Not only do we create negative karma but our anger also causes the other person to create negative karma by getting angry, destroying the peace and happiness within us and the peace and happiness within the other person, replacing it with an unpleasant feeling, which is the problem. Engaging in negative karma creates the cause to reincarnate in the hells or as a hungry ghost or animal. It brings not only unhappiness in this life but even in the future life when we are born as a human being again, where we will have to experience the consequences of this negative action. The effect of this even in the future life when we are born as a human being is that we have to experience many problems.

That person's attitude to us didn't change—whatever their attitude, angry or whatever, it is the same. From the other person's side—their behavior, their attitude—nothing has changed.

The next way of thinking is that instead of that person's action causing us to get angry, we can think that it's kind. Instead of seeing it as harm, we can think that their anger toward us is a special favor they have done for us, a special kindness. It is something very particular, very special. If we don't practice patience but always let the anger arise, we will always create suffering. Rather than giving ourselves the victory, we give the victory to anger, always letting ourselves be dictated to by anger, letting ourselves be abused by anger. We always let ourselves be used by anger, like a slave. We become a slave to anger, being dictated to by anger. If we don't practice patience, if we let anger arise, this is what happens. If we give in to anger, instead of giving victory, freedom, to ourselves, we are giving victory, freedom, to anger and we are letting ourselves be overwhelmed, possessed, by anger.

In the world, people don't like dictators. They complain about them; they don't like them. And also, instead of bringing peace and happiness, they bring so much suffering. This is similar; we let anger dictate to us. There is not one single benefit from anger, not one single benefit, only destruction. We destroy our merits, the cause of happiness. The cause of happiness is only virtue, merit, and that is destroyed by anger. Whatever little we have gets destroyed by anger, what we receive is only harm and what the other person receives from that is only harm.

If we don't practice patience but always let anger arise, then even our most beloved friend can become our enemy at any time. Even our most beloved friend—the person closest to us in our life—can become our enemy at any time because we can get angry at them, since we don't practice patience. Our anger can turn our closest friend into an enemy at any time, so there is no question it can do it to others. In that way, we make the other person unhappy, we desert the other person and then the relationship doesn't last. There is no harmony in the relationship. There is no peace and happiness in the relationship. It makes the other person think more and more about leaving. Finding our character difficult, this thought of leaving arises in the heart.

The day that happens—the day our friend speaks out and leaves us—the pain and the grudge from that day stays there in our heart for years. For years and years, the pain stays there. And every time we remember the situation, tears come out; we feel very sad and disturbed. Even if the person who is closest to us in our life, our beloved friend, can make us angry, there is no question about other people who try to harm us.

Therefore, if we don't try to change our mind, if we don't try to change ourselves to become a better person now, when will we? Now, we have this precious human body, which gives all the opportunity to develop all the good qualities, such as patience, wisdom, compassion, loving kindness, universal responsibility. Only now is the chance to develop, to generate all these basic good qualities of the human mind; there is all the opportunity that this human body gives, this human body we won't have for a long time. How long we will have this precious human body is only a very short time. Its duration is like a flash of lightning. When it's dark, then suddenly a flash of lightning appears and it is gone. Or like last night's dream—it appears but it's gone. How long we have this precious human body is a very short time. It gives us all the opportunity to be better, to develop our mind on the spiritual path.

If we can't develop this quality of a good heart during this brief lifetime, while we have this precious human body, then it will be impossible when we have an animal's body or some other rebirth. Developing these qualities, let alone the higher achievements, liberation, the freedom from suffering forever, and finally achieving full enlightenment, if it doesn't happen during this time when we have this precious human body which gives us all these opportunities, if we miss out on this by not practicing, once we lose this precious human body it will be extremely difficult to regain the opportunity.

THE KINDNESS OF THE ENEMY

Without developing, we won't change, we'll always stay this deluded being. Of course, if we are an enlightened being, if we are free from delusion, that's different. Or if we are not free from delusions, but actually want to be a suffering being, that's different too. [Laughter] But basically maybe if a person is like that, they don't know what it means. Since we are not like that, not an enlightened being free from delusion and karma, but are given to selfishness and impatience, there is no protection for our mind and anger can arise at any time. Whenever the situation comes, anger arises all the time.

Anyway, maybe I should bring up this issue. If we don't practice patience, whatever the situation, anger arises. No matter what the situation, it becomes the cause for anger unless we practice patience, and when anger arises, all the time it harms us and other sentient beings in this life and in future lives. Like this, from life to life, with our anger we harm numberless sentient beings. It becomes very frightening, it becomes very scary.

Then the situation happens, if one person doesn't practice patience, that one person can torture or kill many millions of people in this world. This is without counting animals, who suffer and are killed, by the way. These things can happen if we do not practice patience. We can become like those people who cause so much destruction in the world. We can become like that. Even if it doesn't become like that in this life, it can become like that in other lives. So, there is danger. We can see in the world history, it has happened many times that one person not practicing patience has tortured and killed many millions and millions of people. So many incidents in history have happened like this. If you think of life to life, we ourselves can also become like that, creating great danger to numberless sentient beings.

Therefore, if we practice patience with the person who has anger toward to us, then our anger will gradually become less and less, weaker and weaker; it will arise less and less through the continual practice of patience with person who has anger toward us. Then, after some time, getting angry becomes extremely rare. Even if anger arises, it only lasts a few seconds and it dissipates. So then after some time, we never get angry, our mind is always in the nature of patience.

By practicing patience with a person who has anger toward us, it helps us not to get angry with the rest of the sentient beings. That means we stop giving harm with anger to the rest of the sentient beings. Then all other sentient beings, who are numberless, get so much peace and happiness from us, from our patience. The peace and happiness that numberless sentient beings receive from us, from our patience—this is something we can offer. We stop giving harm to numberless sentient beings with anger, and we give only peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings with our patience. The person who gave us this opportunity is the person who

has anger toward us. It is by their kindness that we are able to do this, that we are able to give so much peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings because of our patience.

By training our mind with this person who has anger toward us, we are then able to turn to numberless sentient beings and, from our patience, offer them peace and happiness. This is very clear. We can offer this completely due to the kindness of this person who has anger toward us. Therefore, this person is the most precious, most kind one in our own life, the most precious, most kind one in our own life.

And this person who has anger toward us is the *only* one who can help us train our mind in patience. Among the numberless beings, there are numberless buddhas, numberless bodhisattvas, there are numberless other sentient beings, strangers, and then other ones, friends—they are all different sentient beings, but among them this person with anger toward us is the only one left who can train our mind in patience, which is the path to happiness for ourselves and which brings happiness and peace to numberless sentient beings, and the path to enlightenment.

As it is mentioned in the teaching by the great bodhisattva Shantideva in *Bodhicaryavatara*, the Buddha gave teachings on how to practice patience, but the buddhas and the bodhisattvas don't have anger toward us so we can't really practice patience with them. There is no opportunity to put the teachings into practice, and to train the mind. And while the friend remains our friend, there is no anger toward us so they too are unable to give us an opportunity to train our mind in patience. With them, there is no opportunity to train our mind in patience, to put the teachings into practice. And the rest are strangers. Strangers don't have anger for us, so with them we have no opportunity to practice the meditation that we have learnt and to put the patience teachings into practice.

Among the numberless beings, both holy beings and sentient beings, this person [who has anger toward us] is the only one with whom we have opportunity to train the mind in the good heart, with patience. Only with patience can we achieve the highest enlightenment and bring skies of peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings. By allowing us to train our mind in patience, and through that to bring peace and happiness to numberless sentient beings, this person is so kind, so precious.

As I mentioned before, even though the buddhas explain how to meditate on patience, since the buddhas and bodhisattvas don't have anger toward us, there is no opportunity to put the teachings on patience into practice, and similarly with friend or strangers. This person who has anger toward us is the only one left. Because of that, this person is extremely kind, extremely precious.

Even for a nonbeliever, with no religion at all, if that person wants a harmonious relationship with others, if they want other people to not get angry at them but to love them, if they desire peace and happiness, there is no choice but to practice patience. Even if somebody is a nonbeliever—not believing in reincarnation or karma—if they do not practice patience, then what happens? For example, it is said in the *Bodhicaryavatara* that if we are not a bodhisattva and we get angry at a bodhisattva, then even if the negative action is done for one second, for however many seconds it lasts, that causes us to be born in an inexhaustible hot hell, the very last of the eight hot hells—where there is the most unbearable, the heaviest suffering—for as many eons as the seconds we were angry.

Then, with the negative karma collected from beginningless rebirth, then is no question, we won't get reborn in the realm of the happy transmigratory beings. It means we won't get reborn as a human being or as a deva in the next life. There is no question of that. If the negative karma done for one second causes us to abide in the inexhaustible hot hell, the very lowest hot hell, for eons, with all the negative karma we have accumulated from beginningless rebirth, then no need to say that we won't get reborn in the realm of the happy transmigratory being.

That is what it is saying. If we, who are not a bodhisattva, get angry at a bodhisattva for the shortest time, for only one second, it has that much effect, causing us to suffer for an incredible length [of time], for one eon.

It is also mentioned in the *Bodhicaryavatara* that the merit collected for thousands of eons by doing charity and having made offering to the Gone to Bliss Ones, the buddhas and so forth—I don't remember the exact words—by allowing anger to arise for one second, whatever merit not done with a bodhicitta motivation, not dedicated to enlightenment for sentient beings, doesn't get destroyed completely but gets weakened. All the merit collected by offering to the buddhas, by offering to the stupas, no question actually to the Buddha, but even to a statue of the Buddha, or a stupa, a scripture, by doing prostrations, by circumambulation of those holy objects of the Buddha—that merit doesn't get destroyed completely, even if it is not done with bodhicitta, not dedicated to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings at the end, but becomes weaker, becomes less [if anger arises.]

The other merits [from actions] not done with bodhicitta motivation, not dedicated to achieve enlightenment, those are completely destroyed [by anger], like burnt rice. And so, even the merit created with bodhicitta motivation, dedicated to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, even that merit become weaker, smaller, when anger arises. That's how the anger destroys our merit. That's the definition of destroying that merit, even if it is done with a bodhicitta motivation, dedicated to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, because it makes it smaller, so whatever instances of the shortest possible time duration we get angry at a bodhisattva—this not talking about a guru or the Buddha, just somebody who has the realization of bodhicitta—that many eons of merit get destroyed and that many eons of realization are delayed.

So again, this person who has anger toward me gives me the opportunity to train my mind in patience. This way, there is no danger to destroy my merit. By having anger, this person is helping me, mainly because having anger toward me, I am able to practice patience and in this way I am able to protect all the merit, so it does not get destroyed and the realizations are not delayed again and again, again and again. Each time anger arises, the realizations are delayed. So this person helps me to quickly achieve realizations, by attaining the path to be free from samsara and by attaining the path, such as bodhicitta, to achieve all the realizations of the Mahayana path, bodhicitta and so be able to achieve enlightenment.

That is the special kindness of this person. It is a different kindness from somebody who gives us a billion dollars, a different kindness from the kindness of the father and mother, the kindness of a friend. Somebody who gives us a billion dollars doesn't offer us that special kindness. Even if somebody gives us a billion dollars, we don't feel that kindness from the bottom of our heart, that very deep kindness, we don't feel that. But with somebody who has anger toward us, we can see how beneficial it is, being the cause for us to achieve realization of patience and to train the

mind in the entire path. This kindness is a very deep, very deep kindness. And our appreciation is very deep.

I think the tea has become very hot. Let's make the offering.

[Chanting]

What I was saying before, the person didn't change from their own side. The anger toward us didn't change. It is still the same, but now we are seeing the unbelievable kindness of that angry person, because we can see what incredible limitless skies of benefit, of advantages we can get from that angry person. Now, we look at it only in a positive way, we label it only positively. There is nothing slightly negative at all, only kindness. We label it positive; we see only positive. It appears only positive; we see only good, most beneficial, most beneficial, most beneficial—the person who has anger toward us is the most beneficial for us.

Now, in this second, with patience, we are so happy with that person's anger at us, so happy, and we want to repay the kindness. We want to thank him because his kindness is so deep, the benefit we get is like the limitless sky. Therefore, from the bottom of our heart, from the very depth of our heart we feel appreciative.

When we think of the benefits of practicing patience by depending on a person who has anger toward us, there must be a person who is angry with us. For the practice, this is something we must have. It is not something to give it up, it is not something to abandon, it's something that we must have in our life, this person who has anger toward us—we have to have that. The need for an angry person in our own life becomes an utmost need, so crucial, so important. It is so crucial, so important, to train our mind. There is an incredible need, like the need for a guru who reveals the teaching on the short path. This is the one who makes us practice. This is something so incredible; it is not something to abandon, it is something to have.

And also, as I have mentioned, this person is not angry all the time; they are not forever angry. If they *were* angry with us forever, it would be very good as then we would have the opportunity to practice patience all the time. But it's not like that. Their anger can change at any time. Their anger can stop at any time, and then we have no opportunity to practice patience. Even this one person who has anger toward us, this person doesn't get [angry with us] forever. This can be stopped at any time; their mind can change at any time. Therefore, we have the opportunity now to practice patience, to train our mind in the path.

Because their anger can stop at any time, now becomes even more precious. By thinking of this reason, the time they are angry with us becomes so precious. So precious. Every moment of their anger becomes very precious, very precious, a very precious moment.

When we think of the kindness of that person who has anger toward us, how they give us the opportunity to practice patience and receive all the benefits which that brings, then we label that anger as positive; we see only positive, good. And from that, we have a pleasant feeling. Because it makes us happy, our happiness with them can change them; it can affect them, also making them happy. So here you can see, a deep peace and all this happiness comes from our positive label and positive thought. Looking at it that way, the person with anger toward us is not harming us but only benefiting us, only helping us.

Therefore, it is so important to practice patience. That is one side I have emphasized here. As I mentioned before, today, this hour, this minute's happiness comes from our own positive mind. This example shows that.

THE TWO MISTAKES OF NOT PRACTICING PATIENCE

The other thing I want to emphasize is this. I mentioned this before. If we don't practice now while we have this precious human body, which is only for short time, when can we? Relating to patience, if we don't do that practice now, in this life, now, today, one day sooner or later we will separate from this human body, and then it will be extremely difficult to get such an opportunity again to practice. Even just to be human again is extremely difficult, extremely rare, without talking about a precious human body qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses. Just to be a human being is extremely rare because it has to come from having practiced pure morality.

Practicing pure morality, even to take one vow and not necessarily to be able to practice purely, is so rare. Here, we are so lucky to be able to take the eight Mahayana precepts, even it's not for a lifetime but just a one-day precept, and through that we are able to open our heart. To be able to accept and practice like that is extremely fortunate.

Generally speaking, first of all, to understand and have faith in karma is extremely difficult and rare. The people in this world who understand and have faith in karma are very few, whereas those who don't are so many, even in this world of human beings. So, it is not easy to open the heart, to take the vows, the precepts, and even if we are able to take them, it doesn't mean we are able to practice purely. And if we do take them but can't keep them purely, we cannot receive a human rebirth in the next life.

I don't remember it, but there is a sutra quotation that is very, very important, very, very beneficial. The essence is very important to remember. Whenever anger arises, it comes from a cause, and there are conditions. There is a cause and there are conditions. Why does anger arise in this life? Because there is a cause of that anger, and that cause is not outside. The cause of that anger is on the mental continuum, as an imprint, a seed. The lamrim texts talk about delusions and then talk about cause and conditions that make delusions manifest, and that is the imprint, the seed of anger that is on the mental continuum.

We haven't actualized the path in the past, the *path of merit*, the *preparatory path*, where we achieve both *shamatha* [calm abiding] and the great insight based on shamatha. At this level we attain the extremely refined, rapturous ecstasy of the body and mind by doing analysis on emptiness, unified with shamatha. This is great insight. It is like the preparation for the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in the next path, the third path, the path of seeing. This is like the preparatory step. By actualizing the *right-seeing path*, the exalted path, which is the transcendental wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, we actualize that path which ceases the intellectual defilements and by actualizing the *path of meditation*, we continue training the mind, training in wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. That's the path of meditation, and by actualizing that we cease the simultaneous-born defilements, the delusions. Then there is the *path of no more learning*.

We haven't actualized these paths, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation, those exalted paths where we directly cease the disturbing thoughts, the obscurations, the defilements. If that *had* happened, there would be no cause of anger, no seed, the nature of imprint, which gives rise

to the delusion—that’s the definition of the “seed.” The definition of “seed of delusion” is that which gives rise to delusion, which is the nature of the imprint. This has already been removed by completing the path, therefore it is impossible for anger to arise, as it had in the past. There would be no anger at all, and the same with attachment and all these things. We wouldn’t be born with anger, attachment or any of this. We wouldn’t be born with all this stuff, with a mind with all this garbage. But because that wasn’t done, because we did not complete the path, which ceases all disturbing thoughts, obscurations and the seeds of delusion, therefore the seeds of delusion are still there. We are born with this, even today we have that.

Not completing the path in the past is the first mistake. That’s why delusion arises, why we are born with delusion, why we suffer so much with the delusion, why we have all these mental sufferings, and because of that all the physical sufferings. That’s our first mistake.

The second mistake is that, when we are in a situation where anger can arise, we either don’t know the meditation techniques taught by the Buddha to deal with the situation to stop these delusions—the negative emotional thoughts, the cause of the suffering—to arise or if we do intellectually know we don’t apply them. When we are in a situation, because the seed, the imprint, is there, because the cause is there, and we make the second mistake of not applying the correct meditation technique, then anger arises. From that negative imprint, anger manifests and then that motivates karma.

It destroys our own liberation, our own peace and happiness and it delays the realizations by destroying the merit. Because it destroys the merit, it delays the realizations, therefore that’s how it harms sentient beings. Anger is especially a very harmful enemy to bodhicitta.

To actualize bodhicitta we need a lot of merit. We need to collect so much merit, because if we have bodhicitta, then everything is possible, we can achieve enlightenment and enlighten numberless sentient beings, being able to cause all happiness up to enlightenment for all sentient beings, and to achieve it ourselves. Bodhicitta fulfills every single wish for happiness, for ourselves and for every single sentient being: every single hell being, every single hungry ghost, every single animal, every sura, every asura, every human being. Every single human being’s wishes for happiness get fulfilled.

As I mentioned the other day, we need to collect so much merit, but anger destroys merit. With anger, the nature of that thought is to hurt, to harm others. The nature of the thought of bodhicitta is to benefit others. Therefore it is easy to see how the thought of anger doesn’t allow us to develop our mind in the path, how it hinders the achievement of enlightenment, it hinders the actualization of bodhicitta. In that way, our anger harms all sentient beings. We can think like that.

We can understand where the anger arises from—the imprint already on our mindstream. Every time we get angry, it leaves a negative imprint back on the mental continuum; it plants the seed in the ground every time we get angry. So, the more we get angry, the more negative imprints there are, and that makes it more difficult in our future life. Each time we get angry, more negative imprints are left on the mental continuum, and it becomes very heavy. Our future life is much more difficult because impatience and anger can much more easily arise due to those negative imprints and this makes it much more difficult to practice in the future.

One of the most frightening things is that the negative imprint is left again and again on the mental continuum by anger, by desire and attachment. And the more negative imprints left on the mind, the more difficult it becomes in the future for us to control the mind, to have realizations. This is very important to remember in our daily life, very important. It makes it difficult in the long run, in the future, to have realizations completely. That is very important to write in your notebook! [Group laughs] You can see there are some small notes in the daily prayer book. If you have that problem of anger, you can have a very special piece of paper and keep it along with your daily prayer book, maybe on the cover, something like that. To recite the words of a prayer is easy, but to practice what those words mean is not easy. Reciting prayers is easy.

The Kadampa geshe says it is easy to meditate on deities, anybody can have a deity practice to do. Similarly here, reciting daily prayers is easy, but to practice, as the Kadampa geshe says, is not. The problem is not having a mantra to recite or not having a deity to meditate on. That's not the problem. Anybody can have a deity to meditate on, anybody can have some mantra to recite, but the problem is that we do not practice Dharma. Here, we can relate that to patience. It means letting go of desire, the desire clinging to this life, the attitude that is nonvirtue and so makes every action nonvirtuous. That includes anger and all those other things. The opposite is practicing Dharma, practicing patience, like that. This is very true.

THE ENEMY IS CREATED BY THE MIND

It happened once that while a person, a student, was doing a retreat, busy reciting mantras, his enemy came and banged on the door very strongly. He banged on the door very strongly. The student continued reciting mantras, but in this hand he held the mala and in this a knife. [Laughter] He kept on reciting mantras during the session, but also kept hold of the knife. This happened. We can think like that.

We have already used this example. There is a person who has praised us and given us presents, not this year, not last year, but the year before. Because of that, we label that person "friend." Then, last year, they didn't give us a present but criticized us instead. Then, we called them an "enemy." Then, this year, that person again gives us a present and praises us, so now they are a "friend." So you see now, the same person, at one time we interpret a good friend, at another time we interpret as bad and labeled as "enemy," and then at a third time we interpret as good and label as "friend." Even just looking at one person, we can see the different labels we put them, the different interpretations, friend, enemy, friend. One is the view of attachment, the other is the view of anger. However, it's all the view of delusion. It's all the view of the hallucinatory mind.

Here is another example. It comes from our mind, and by believing our own label—this is positive, this is negative—we have the appearance of friend or enemy and from that we have a pleasant or unpleasant feeling. Each is the view of the hallucinated mind; one is the view of attachment, the other the view of anger.

When we make further analysis, we can discover that this is all our mind's creation. We have this appearance, then it affects back to us. We see it like that. When we don't analyze it, it appears like it comes from the object's side whereas it actually comes from our own mind. So you see, our mind is the creator, our mind is like a TV and it depends which channel we watch. Our untamed mind is the door to suffering, but our mind is also the door for all happiness, the

happiness of this life, of future lives, of liberation and enlightenment. It depends on whether the mind is tamed or not. The good heart, the mind with the thought of cherishing others, especially the mind called bodhicitta, is the door for all the happiness; the mind cherishing the I is the door for all the suffering.

This is one thing. Our present happiness or present suffering depends on whether our present attitude is positive or negative. As all things come from our own mind, that happiness or suffering come from our own mind. In the long term, whatever happiness or suffering we will ever experience come from our own mind. This long-term evolution is karma. Whether the action becomes good karma or negative karma depends whether the attitude that motivates the action is positive or negative, whether it is pure or impure, whether it is virtue or nonvirtue. Our long-term evolution—our future happiness or suffering—comes from karma, from the mind.

Whatever karma we create becomes the cause of happiness or suffering. That karma is solely a creation of the mind; it comes into existence by the mind. As Nagarjuna explains, actions born from non-ignorance, non-anger and non-attachment all result in birth as a happy transmigratory being; actions born from ignorance, anger and attachment, all result in birth as a suffering transmigratory being, as a hell being, a hungry ghost or an animal. What makes the action positive or negative is the motivation. An action is positive karma and the cause of happiness, or negative karma and the cause of suffering, depending on the type of mind, whether it is virtuous or nonvirtuous.

KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT COMPASSION IS USELESS

One thing I am going to mention is this. We might have a very good job and make a lot of money. Perhaps we learnt how to do that job from university or college. We know externally how to do the job, and so make a lot of money, but we don't know how to do it mentally, with a bodhicitta motivation. If we do the job with a bodhicitta motivation, with the thought of benefiting other sentient beings, then our action of doing the job becomes the cause of enlightenment. That brings us the greatest profit; it brings the greatest success and, out of that, peerless happiness—the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind and the completion of all the realizations. And we are then able to benefit and enlighten numberless sentient beings.

Because of lack of education, that is not happening. That lack of education is not having a full understanding about the extensive knowledge of the mind, not having an understanding of karma, of reincarnation and all the subjects about the mind. That makes it difficult to have faith and difficult to understand things, because of obscurations, defilement, mental pollution. We have not purified and so our mind is still obscured. When we can have extensive knowledge about the mind, which includes karma, the function of mind, the nature of the mind and all these things, with that understanding we can practice purification, by purifying the defilements.

Defilements, obscurations, happen due to causes and conditions. Therefore, because of dependent arising, we can purify them by depending on other causes and conditions. If they were independent, we couldn't do anything about them. We couldn't change the mind, we couldn't develop, we couldn't have any realizations.

Until now, we haven't had this knowledge; there has been no education about this practice, so to make whatever we do in our daily life—sleeping, eating, walking, working, whatever—the cause to achieve enlightenment and be able to enlighten sentient beings, this is not happening.

If whatever activities we do in our daily life with the thought to attain liberation from samsara, to gain freedom from all suffering realms and the continuity of birth caused by karma and delusion; if whatever we do is not motivated by this thought of renunciation of samsara, then there is no way it can become the cause to achieve the ultimate happiness of liberation from samsara, even just for ourselves. All those long, long hours working at whatever job we do doesn't become the cause to achieve ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara for ourselves. If all those activities are not done with the Dharma, with virtuous thought, unstained by attachment, clinging to this life and seeking the happiness of future life, all those hours spent working not only don't become the cause for the happiness of future lives, ultimate happiness and liberation, it is all nonvirtue.

If whatever we do in each twenty-four hours—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working, all those things—is done with attachment, with clinging to this life, it all transforms into nonvirtue. It all becomes nonvirtue, the result of which is only suffering. This even includes meditation. Even when we do meditation, if we do it with that thought of worldly concern, with attachment, clinging to this life, even that action of meditating becomes nonvirtue, as does the action of reciting prayers. Even if the subject is Dharma, our action becomes nonvirtue when done with worldly concern, with attachment, clinging to this life. Even visualizing a deity, an enlightened deity, if it is done with attachment, it becomes nonvirtue.

There are stories about this. In Penpo in Tibet, two people were meditating on Yamantaka, the extremely wrathful aspect of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom. They spent many years of their lives meditating on the deity. Then, one friend died and was born as a preta, a hungry ghost. The other friend, who was still living, kept doing the retreat, and each evening he did the *sur* practice, the practice of burning *tsampa*, barley flour, in the fire to make charity of the smell for the pretas. One evening, a very terrifying spirit, with many heads and arms, appeared to him. He asked who the being was and why he was there, and the spirit answered that he was the other meditator, now reborn as a spirit and brought by the smell of the food. Even though he had been meditating on the highest level of tantra, he still didn't know how to meditate. He didn't meditate with either renunciation or bodhicitta motivation; he didn't meditate with right view. Because of that, all his meditation became nonvirtue and he was born as a spirit.

Therefore, as I mentioned at the beginning, there are two things how to live life: the external things can be learnt from school or college but the other one, mentally how to do things, is not taught there. We might have a job and a lot of money, but we don't know how to do the job mentally, with a positive mind. All that part is not there—the positive mind that transforms the actions into good karma and brings the result of happiness. Therefore, what is happening in our life is only negative karma, because our attitude is only nonvirtue. That is the reason why, even though a person might make a lot of money, their mind is not happy, why they never seem to have satisfaction. Why can't they be fulfilled in his heart? Why can't they have peace? Why is that person's inner life suffering? Why are they crying, suffering, miserable? Even though they are externally wealthy, making lots of money, regarded as successful, their real life is unhappy, they are totally miserable. It is because what is missing is how to live life, how to do things mentally. The other education is missing.

We need that other education; we need to learn how to do things mentally, so that all our activities, all our many hours working, studying, meditating—whatever we do—becomes good karma, so that it only results in happiness, in success in this life and in future lives, all the way up to enlightenment. That way, everything creates the cause for long-term success, long-term

happiness, it transforms whatever we do. Because the action is positive karma, the result can only be happiness. Otherwise, even though externally we are able to be successful, in reality all the actions become negative karma because our motivation transforms them into nonvirtue.

This is why a person's life can have so much suffering even though there is so much wealth and so much success in business. You see, the heart is totally empty. *That* describes how the other education, the internal, mental education, the extremely important part, is missing.

So that was the question.

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

I'll just read one page and stop, only one page.

“At this time, I have received a perfect human rebirth, that which extremely difficult to find again, and if it is found, that has great meaning. I have received it this time but it doesn't last long, death can happen any time, so before that I must be free from samsara and not only that, just that not sufficient, I must achieve enlightenment because all the sufferings come from cherishing the I and all the happiness come from cherishing other sentient beings. All my past, present and future happiness, everything comes from the kindness of the sentient beings, every single sentient being. They are most precious, most kind, so I have the responsibility to free them from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I am going to listen, I am going to take the oral transmission of the Buddha's most precious teaching *Golden Light Sutra*.” And then think, “May each word that I listen to benefit, may it free numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment.”

[Oral transmission]

I think if you concentrate on the sound of every word, it plants the seed of enlightenment. Each word that you listen to becomes incredible purification and leads to enlightenment.

[Oral transmission]

So that's one page. One page is one Tibetan page, back and front. It's extremely fortunate even to hear one page.

[Chanting]

DEDICATION

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated within one's own heart, one's own family members, all the students, benefactors, all of us here and all those who benefit this organization, and in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated in one's own heart, all family members, all of us here and in the hearts of everyone in this world.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated in one's own heart, all family members, all of us here and all the leaders of this world, every country, without delay even one second, may the bodhicitta be generated in their heart. This way can bring so much peace and happiness to many millions of people in each country, their own country. And as well as all the people, the terrorists or gangsters or all those different groups, all those who harm others, may bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts without delay even a second.

[Chanting]

May all the father, mother sentient beings have happiness, may the three lower realms be empty forever, may all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately, and may I be able to cause all these by myself alone.

That we have all these opportunities here, to do listening, reflecting and meditation practice, the opportunity to train the mind in path to enlightenment, is by the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. So please pray for him to have a stable life and for His Holiness's holy wishes to succeed immediately. And also in particular, after that then particularly Lama, particularly my kind guru, who is kinder than all the three times' buddhas, Lama Yeshe. It is by Lama Yeshe's kindness that we have this opportunity, that we have all these opportunities to do listening, reflecting and meditation practice on the Buddha's teachings, especially on the lamrim. Being able to train the mind in the path to enlightenment, that is due to Lama Yeshe's kindness. That I myself have the opportunity to speak, to tell you a little bit of the Dharma and from your side to have all these opportunities is by Lama Yeshe's kindness. So dedicate for Lama's incarnation, Lama Ösel Rinpoche, to be able to complete his study in the monastery and to be able to show all the qualities like Lama Tsongkhapa, and to benefit all sentient beings just like Lama Tsongkhapa.

[Chanting]

So make the dedication, please do it this way.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, anybody who sees me, touches me, remembers me, harms me or helps me, benefits me, talks about me, criticizes or praises me, even dreams of me, even sees a photo of me—just by this, may they never ever get reborn in the lower realms from that time and may they immediately be free from sicknesses, spirit possession, free from negative karma. May their negative karma totally get pacified, purified instantly, and may all their wishes be instantly, immediately fulfilled.

May whatever happiness they are wishing for immediately get fulfilled according to the holy Dharma. That means their wishes get fulfilled but at the same time nothing becomes negative karma, that's very important. If it becomes negative karma then they have to suffer. So their wishes get fulfilled, but only good karma. May other sentient beings seeing me, touching me,

remembering me, talking about me, seeing my picture, even dreaming of me, be able to become of incredible benefit to other sentient beings.

Dedicate, so that you will be able to affect, to benefit to others.

May they immediately actualize, find faith in refuge and karma, actualize bodhicitta, and complete the path and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may I able to offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings. Like the Buddha, Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities in me as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on, in all my future lifetimes, in every second, may I become like that. From now and in every second may I be like that.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, that which exists but does not exist, all these merits which exist but do not exist from their side, which are totally empty. May the I who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, which is totally empty.

May I lead numberless sentient beings who exist but do not exist from their own side, into Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow holy extensive activities just as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjughosha realized. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicate their merits. May the general teachings of Buddha and the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa spread in all the directions, may they flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing in one's own heart, by completely actualizing in all of us here, in the hearts of all of us here, in the hearts of all the students in this organization and the supporters of the centers and those who gave up their lives to this organization, doing service for sentient beings, in all their hearts.

[Chanting]

Sorry, many hours. Good night.

[Chanting]

Lecture 4

HOW HAPPY WE ARE DEPENDS ON OUR LEVEL OF MOTIVATION

[Chanting]

People can wonder why there is a need to understand reincarnation or karma. Why not just do the meditation, why not just meditate? Why bother with reincarnation or karma, all that stuff? Why bother to listen to all these things? What is the need to understand all these things?

Now, actually, all these things are important because without them you would feel lonely! In this life, you have nothing to do, so you can fill your life up with all this information. I'm just joking, I am joking.

Anyway, it depends on your wishes, it depends on what kind of happiness you want. The question is that. Do you want long-term happiness or do you want short-term happiness? It's a question of that. It's basically up to the individual person—whether you want to be free from suffering and what kind of suffering you want to be free from. Do you want to be free from all suffering or just from a little pain? Just free from a little pain? And if you were free from all suffering, would you feel lonely? Would you miss the suffering? Without suffering in life, there is nothing to experience. Well, you see, if you don't have realizations, without a pure mind, you can't experience that level of peace or happiness. Then what's left is only suffering in life. What you experience, what is left is only suffering. But, then again, maybe your life would be boring without suffering, without problems. Anyway, so you have to think.

SUFFERING: PERVASIVE COMPOUNDING SUFFERING

I think we have gone through all the suffering of samsara: the suffering of pain and the suffering of changes, which is temporary samsaric pleasure, because the feeling we label "pleasure" is suffering. That's why pleasure does not increase, and not only does it not increase but even when we start to experience it, it decreases. Even that, even what we experience, stops—that is the suffering of changes.

The very important one to understand is pervasive compounding suffering. This is extremely important. Without understanding this level of suffering, we have no idea where suffering comes from. We have no idea where our problems come from—our own problems, global problems, universal problems, we have no idea where they come from. Our mind is totally dark, totally dark. There is no light. There is no wisdom understanding where suffering comes from. With no idea at all, our idea of liberation is "free from pain," just that, not even liberation from the suffering of changes. If we don't know that is suffering, our concept of what suffering is will just be freedom from experiencing pain.

If we don't know about pervasive compounding suffering, we have no idea of how our body and mind, our aggregates, are in the nature of suffering. We don't know why the mind experiences depression, why the mind experiences unhappiness, loneliness, all the ups and downs, all that mental unhappiness, and the negative emotional thoughts. There are so many of these sicknesses of the mind, all those negative emotional thoughts—ignorance, anger, attachment, all those things. There is body sickness and there is mind sickness, chronic diseases of mind. It is chronic because not only are we born with it, but it has been with us from beginningless rebirths. Its continuation has been there from beginningless rebirths and it hasn't been healed. It hasn't been healed because we haven't actualized the path, that which removes all these negative emotional thoughts, and the seeds that caused them, as I mentioned yesterday. We haven't had that new experience, actualizing the path and removing all those. Therefore this chronic sickness, this sickness of mind whose continuation has no beginning, we have been suffering with that from beginningless rebirth.

SUFFERING: DISSATISFACTION IS THE RESULT OF DESIRE

Whenever we have taken another body, those aggregates are also in the nature of suffering—experiencing rebirth, old age, sicknesses and death, worry, fears, not receiving desirable objects and so forth. Even after putting so much effort into that, we are still unable to find a desirable object, or even if we do find one, there is another problem, we still can't find satisfaction. We can't find satisfaction, our mind is still empty, our heart is still empty. We are still crying, there is unhappiness inside. There is a hole in our heart, always wanting more and better, always. There is no end to dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is the biggest problem in our life. The major sickness of our mind is dissatisfaction.

We can say that the major problem, the greatest sickness of the mind, is dissatisfaction, or we can say our major problem is desire. They are two ways of putting it. For some people, maybe, it's possible maybe to have more anger than desire, I don't know, maybe not, but I think more anger. Desire will be there all the time, but on top of that there is more anger. It is more suffering, being more impatient or angry. So much of the problem is desire; it is really the whole world's problem.

When there is stronger desire, then there is also anger. When somebody interferes with that desire, anger will arise very easily. I think it's kind of related. Whenever somebody interferes with our desire then anger arises. Desire doesn't get what it wants because somebody interferes with that, then anger arises.

Even many of our health problems come from desire. That has been discovered by a number of scientists who studied it. Among people who have a more angry character, a more impatient nature, among those people, there are more heart attacks. Through scientific analysis, there have been studies showing that there are more heart attacks among people who are impatient. And that is due to desire, basically it is due to desire. Immediately, when there is anger, why? Because of desire, we didn't get what we want, so anger rises.

[Desire causes] so much of the sickness we experience, no question about AIDS, cancer. For so much of disease, the main cause is related to desire. If we analyze the action created out of desire, we harm others but we first harm ourselves. First there are those delusions of desire and then karma, those actions, and then we experience the result, all those many sicknesses.

In the case of business, business problems come from desire. For example, the more profit a businessman makes, by following desire, it is never enough and he always wants more and more. If he makes a thousand dollars profit, then he wants ten thousand dollars profit; if he is able to make ten thousand dollars profit, he wants to make one hundred thousand dollars profit and then a million dollars profit. If he succeeds in making a million dollars profit, then he is not happy until he makes a hundred million dollars profit. If he gets one hundred million, then he has to make a billion dollars profit. If he is able to get a billion dollars, then he wants to get a zillion dollars profit. If he gets a zillion dollars profit, then it's a trillion dollars profit. Then I am not sure.

Of course after some time, because life is not permanent, death ends his business. Not that death ceases the desire, but his life is ended by death. Otherwise, there would be no end to it. No matter how much profit he made, no matter how much he was able to gain, he would always

want more and more. This is how it happens if we just follow desire. If we live life only with desire, this is how life goes. Of course, after some time, there is no choice. Life is in the nature of impermanence, so it's ended by death.

By following desire, we will also want more and more. Because of desire, by following desire, we will also want more and more, more than others. And more than others, we have worries and fears—worry and fear that others might become richer than us—and jealousy and all that. So when we become wealthy there is a different kind of suffering.

First, when we are poor we have suffering, the suffering of poverty, but when we become wealthy there is different suffering. As long as we are in samsara life is like this, only in the nature of suffering, whether we are poor or whether we are rich.

Living life only with desire, not practicing contentment, satisfaction, we try so many ways to make more money, to have more wealth. Then we get involved in illegal things in order to get more. Then, after some time we end with a bad reputation in the world, and after some time, we get exposed. Somebody exposes our mistake and at the end of our life we have a bad reputation, and we end up in the jail, in prison. After all that, our life ends in prison. That's how life ends, turning out like that. From being famous, the end of life is something very bad.

So all those things—including bad reputation in the world and worries, fears for the family and all those—are shortcomings of desire, all those are shortcomings of following desire.

WHEN THE KARMA RUNS OUT

Even if we do manage to make a lot of profit, and then more and more, and more and more, after some time, one day because we don't have the good karma to have success all the time, it finishes. Because we have succeeded in the past doesn't mean we will succeed every year. Because we don't have enough merit, good karma, every year we might have success but we don't create more merit, we are just living on past good karma. Our success is from a little past good karma, like having worked and saved hard, and then living on the money we saved without earning any more, never realizing there will come a time when it will run out

Especially with no understanding of Dharma, no understanding of karma, that we can purify negative karma and create good karma, that all obstacles, all failures can be purified, that we always create good karma, the cause of success, all the time, twenty-four hours a day—without that understanding, there is no wisdom and so no freedom to purify past negative karma, the cause of obstacles, of failures and all the undesirable things and no way to create only the cause of success.

If we don't understand reincarnation and karma but we have a good heart, compassion for others, we will still create good karma. Here, now, is our only chance to create good karma without an understanding of karma: to have compassion for others. That's it. That is the only chance: a good heart, a sincere mind, one that gives us the opportunity to create good karma by doing sincere service for others. Being generous to others with a sincere heart, with some compassion, there is the opportunity to create good karma, otherwise not. Besides that, if the good heart, the sincere heart to help others, is not there in our daily life, then there is no chance at all, everything we do is only negative karma. It will only be the cause of problems, only the

cause of failure, not the cause of all happiness and success, only the cause of problems in this life and in future lives, for life after life, only creating the cause for undesirable things to happen.

We haven't attempted to collect merit, and our success, the little success we are having is only the result of some past good karma we created, so we are able to make some profit, we are just living on that. And then one day, the result, the enjoyment we are experiencing, finishes, the little good karma runs out. And what's left is only negative karma.

This is because there is no practice of purification, purifying past negative karma, there is no practice of collecting extensive merit. Making more merit than negative karma is not happening. So then one day everything collapses. The whole business collapses. On that day, even paying rent on our own house, even paying for daily expenses like food and rent—things we have never worried about in the past—now become a very big concern. Even survival becomes a worry, even our means of earning a living. With no knowledge of karma we were—our desire was—always expecting more and more, then one day it completely collapses.

It happens like this. Especially in recent years, so many banks that were supposed to be very stable and safe went bankrupt. Then, so many people in the world totally changed their life. They didn't control their desire, and continued until everything collapsed, in business and in life. This is the shortcoming of desire in business life.

Then there is bad reputation and the concern over bad reputation. I am not sure in the West, but in the East, there is lot of question of saving face. Saving the face! Saving the small face! [Laughter] There is lots of saving face. In order to hold the reputation, the wealth and all that, people spend a lot of money for that, for the face. To keep the reputation. Even if they don't have enough, they borrow money, just to protect their reputation. There is so much concern about what society will think.

These are all the sufferings of desire. You can see now how the whole of life is the suffering of desire, working for desire. The whole of life is working for desire and suffering, working for desire and suffering. We work to achieve more and more happiness, more and more peace—that's what needed—but it doesn't happen. We work so hard but it doesn't happen, so that's a contradiction. What we experience is completely contradictory, the opposite to what we want.

Here I want to mention something. It is completely different for a businessperson who is not just following their own desire but living life with a good heart, in order to benefit others. Doing work, living a life like that, with that thought, with the thought of benefiting others, is a totally different motivation, you see—not following desire but following the thought of benefiting others, with a good heart. Or obeying the guru's advice, not following our desire but following our guru's advice or wishes with a good heart, to benefit others.

I am just explaining another line now, a different one. In business, even if we lose everything, even if we don't succeed, even if we don't have material success, we still haven't lost the *real* profit, the merit. Because of the good heart, benefiting others, because of obeying the guru's advice, we always collect merit, we always collect the cause for success all the time. So, even if our business itself doesn't succeed, even if the company collapses, we have all the merit in the merit bank, in our mental continuum. There is all the merit collected, the cause of success. Just this once, part of our life didn't succeed but that doesn't mean our whole life is a failure, that in

this life or in a future life we won't have success. The little merit, the good karma we collected in the past that we have been living on has finished, but we are collecting merit all the time.

Without a good heart, if we are not a genuine person, everything we do is only negative karma, and the little wealth we have is due to some past good karma. That's constantly finishing, as I mentioned, like the little money we saved from many years of doing a job and we are now just living on that, without collecting more—every day it runs out. Like that, life is very sad. It is a very sad life.

So now here, the other person's life, having a different attitude, not following desire but having the good heart, the thought of benefiting others, so they are always collect merits, good karma, so much merit. The person is earning all the time, gaining all the time, receiving merit all the time. Even if something failed due to some other past negative karma or whatever, experiencing that, there is so much merit there to have success. This is coming in the future of this life, in this life, later, and in the future life's happiness—to enjoy happiness, to have a good rebirth and happiness for thousands, so many thousands, thousands, billions of lifetimes, you see, like that, to have incredible success. So like that.

This other businessperson who failed externally, even though there was some success before due to past good karma but now it has completely collapsed, the merit has run out, and they don't create extra [merit]. Here, there is failure—external failure and internal failure. That is very sad. There is nothing there. It is a very sad life.

Anyway, this is a side talk.

There was a student who had to take care of his family. His whole family, who were very wealthy before, relied on him. He was advised by my guru, Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than the three times' buddhas, to take care of his family, doing whatever business he needed to in order to care for them. He continued to follow this advice for some time, keeping it in his heart, helping the business of the family, which was worth millions and millions of dollars. Then the whole business collapsed. The whole family complained, criticizing him, saying he was incapable. He became an object of criticism.

Externally this is what was happening, but maybe because he was following his guru's advice, what was happening in his heart, his devotion increased more and more, and his realization of renunciation of samsara increased more and more. His inner life developed, progressed, with more devotion to the guru, more devotion to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and more detachment to samsara, to samsaric enjoyments. His renunciation grew and the lamrim grew in his heart, despite what was happening externally.

Here I am talking about another [kind of] life, not achieving material gain but achieving spiritual gain, all the time collecting so much merit, changing what's happening in his heart, changing his heart for the enlightenment. From these experiences, what he achieves is liberation from samsara and full enlightenment, the completion of all the realizations and being able to enlighten numberless sentient beings. That's what is going on, what is happening in his heart. So, that is the best achievement. That is the real achievement in the life, the real success of life. Because he didn't achieve material gain, in the view of common people in the world he is a failure, but in the view of the buddhas, in the view of the bodhisattvas, in the view of Dharma wisdom, in the view

of holy beings, he is having a real success. In the view of ignorance maybe he didn't have material success, he lost that, but in the view of Dharma wisdom, he is gaining real success.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF DESIRE: DESIRE FEEDS DESIRE

Another shortcoming of desire is, for example, those people who become alcoholics. They suffer from the shortcomings of desire, they are unable to limit, to control, their drinking, so then they become addicted to it and they become alcoholic. For them, it becomes so *difficult* to live life without alcohol. Then for most of that person's life, there is no mindfulness—it is like they have no mind at all, and because of that, violence comes and they beat their children or [partner]. Then they have a car accident. In all this, they lose so much and waste so much money they have saved.

All the years of study are wasted. As a child, first they go to kindergarten to learn the alphabet, then primary school, then—you know the procedure—high school or college, whatever it is, then university where they get a degree. They do so many years of study to finally get a job. But it doesn't mean anyone who gets a degree finds a job easily. They finally get a job and then earn money, but because they can't control their desire, their attachment to the pleasure of drinking, they follow desire continuously. Then all those many years of study, all that hard work to get the degree, all the work to earn money, is all wasted on drinking. All that money is used for bottles, in order to make themselves into something not like a human being, to make themselves mindless.

Not only can't they meditate, not only can't they practice Dharma, but they can't even live in society. They can't even do their job. The drinking becomes an obstacle for that. Then what happens, sooner or later, they are on the street, homeless. It becomes very difficult for their [partner] or whoever is the family, very difficult to take care of them. So they are on the street, alone. Their precious human rebirth is completely destroyed.

Even if we don't meditate to develop the mind on the path, at least we can use our life, we can use our healthy body and mind to offer service to others. At least in our daily life we can use our healthy body and mind to offer service to others, to cause others to have happiness. Still it is something for the life, something useful in life. Our mind and body are still useful, even that little usefulness for others. But even that they can't do, so you see, they totally destroyed or wasted that. Then they have so many unnecessary problems in the family, for their partner, their children or parents; so many problems for themselves and others. Their life finishes like this. It is very, very sad. All these are the shortcomings of following desire.

When somebody is drunk, they beat their children, they beat their family members or break things. They destroy things in the house that have been collected. And they harm others, becoming very violent. When some people become drunk they go to sleep. That one is better. [Laughter] I heard whenever some people get drunk, they go to sleep. That is a better thing than making themselves violent, harming the family and harming the people outside, in the office and everywhere. Compared to that, the person who goes to bed is good. At least they don't harm others.

Then the other thing is because by following desire, not just experimenting with drugs once, but following desire—when we follow desire, we want more and more and more and more. Then after that, we made our life so difficult. Life becomes unbearable without buddha grass.

[Laughter] Without that thing, without that injection, we can't bear it. We can't stand to be without it. We make our life so unnecessarily difficult and expensive.

Then, we have no money so we have to steal from our friends or our parents, from the cupboard, from their purse, from their bank. We have no other way to buy the buddha grass or to buy the injection or this stuff. Then, we engage in another negative karma, stealing. Then also killing. So we make our life unnecessarily painful, so painful. So uncontrolled.

Alcohol makes life unfunctional. With such a precious human body we can do so much, develop our mind on the path, be of so much benefit to others. We have so much opportunity, so much potential, so to then make life completely unfunctional, that is another great shortcoming of desire. And to be unable to complete our education, whatever it is, all those things. Whether it is Dharma education or even ordinary learning, we can't do it; we can't practice because our mind is so uncontrolled.

Then we end our life by going to prison. Not one time but even after we come out of prison, because we don't control the desire, we do the same thing, then again we get into the same problem. We repeat this over and over in life. Our life goes like that.

The other shortcoming of desire is relationship problems. *That* is the biggest thing. That's the most painful one. I think we'd better to have tea. [Laughter] Better to relax.

[Chanting]

Lecture 5

THE WISH TO HARM THE ENEMY, DESIRE

The shortcomings of desire, the problems of relationships, is another of the biggest sufferings in life! I think, if I mention just the title, the rest you know. It's the main book you have in your experience—I just have to mention the title. Because we haven't thought well, we haven't studied well about desire and its shortcomings, even though we have gone through the experiences, we have gone through so much unbelievable suffering because of it, so many difficulties, somehow still it happens again and again. It doesn't cease; it doesn't end. It happens again and again. That is through not having thought well about the shortcomings of desire and all the harm desire gives us, all the problems. That is because we haven't meditated that way.

If we meditate that way, we come to see desire as our enemy. Like, for example, when we think somebody has provoked us or disrespected us or somebody we have helped hasn't thanked us. We helped that person, we did them some favor, but they didn't thank us, even after a long time. Then, after that, when we think of that person we think of what we did for them and how they were so ungrateful. And the same with somebody who provoked or disrespected us, we think about what they said about us, "You are so stupid," or "You are dumb," I don't know what else, "You are selfish," all these, whatever—we think about this again and again, thinking how terrible that person is. And then we see that person more and more as the enemy. The more we think about it, the more we think what that person did was so bad, and then we see that person more

and more as the enemy. And then the thought arises in our mind to harm that person. The thought of revenge or harm comes strongly.

In exactly the same way, if we meditate on desire, if we think of desire in the same way we think of the outside enemy, we will want to harm it back. With an outside enemy, after some time we think, “How terrible he did this, this, blah, blah, blah,” on and on and on. “How terrible, how terrible, what an enemy he is,” and then after some time we can’t stand it. We have to get up and do something, to destroy him. We have to do whatever harm we can, scratching his face or whatever. Whatever harm we can do that person. Whatever we can do, with the feet and hands—not with the nose. After some time we can’t stand it, we have to do something, we have to destroy that being. We can’t stand that person existing.

Just as we do this for an outside enemy, we should do a similar meditation on desire as the enemy, meditating on all the problems given to us by desire, all the problems that have made us suffer so far, that we’ve gone through so many times in our life, so many times, all given to us by desire. We meditate on our own life, with our own life experience—we meditate on that. All the small problems, all the big problems, all these desires made us suffer, all these problems were given to us by desire. Even without looking at other people’s life problems, just our own life, in our whole life, from childhood whatever we can remember, it has been like this. Of course, if we can remember our past lives’ problems, then of course we can add on that too.

So think how bad it is, how harmful it is. This is exactly how we normally think about outside people—we blame outside people for our problems and call them bad, bad, bad. *That* technique is not meditation; *that* creates negative karma, but here we use the same technique with the desire, and that becomes a very powerful meditation. That is real meditation.

RENUNCIATION IS THE PATH TO LIBERATION

The definition of Dharma is when we are fighting desire. Here, it becomes the real Dharma when we are fighting and trying to defeat desire, to destroy desire. That’s the real Dharma, the real spiritual path. Following desire is not Dharma. What is Dharma, what is not Dharma? Following desire is not Dharma whereas renouncing, letting go of desire is pure Dharma. Letting go of desire is not just Dharma but pure Dharma. The benefit we get from letting go of desire is liberation. The benefit we get from that is we don’t get reborn in the lower realms—the hell, hungry ghost or animal realms—because by not following desire, by letting go of desire and therefore not creating negative karma, the cause for the lower realms doesn’t happen, so there is no resultant suffering in the lower realms. And also not only that, because desire is the nearest cause of samsara, if we die with desire, with craving and grasping, that is the immediate cause to be born again in samsara, in one of the six suffering realms.

Therefore, letting go of desire is achieving liberation from samsara. Renunciation of samara is the very door to enter into the path to liberation. Without that realization, we cannot enter the five paths to liberation: the path of accumulation, the path of preparation, the path of seeing, the path of meditation and the path of no more learning. In order to achieve liberation, we have to achieve these five paths.

The door of the path to liberation is the renunciation of samsara, the renunciation of the desire clinging to samsara, to temporary samsaric pleasures, to samsaric perfections, to samsaric happiness.

Renunciation is detachment, the opposite of desire; it is detachment from samsara. Here, renunciation is detachment from samsara, from samsaric perfections, from temporary samsaric pleasures. By understanding the sufferings of the hell beings, the hungry ghosts and the animals—how these sufferings are most unbearable—we wish to be free from all that and to never reincarnate. Not only that, even the human realm, even the desire realm, the form and formless realms, these are samsaric realms. We are in the desire realm. There are devas who are also in the desire realm, who have desire for sense pleasures, but there are also devas who are not in the desire realm, who are in the form realm or the formless realm. All these are samsaric realms.

SUFFERING: PERVASIVE COMPOUNDING SUFFERING

I didn't get to the point before. I was trying to explain the third suffering, pervasive compounding suffering, but I went off somewhere else. I went sightseeing. Even the form and formless realms are samsaric realms and so are suffering realms. Not only is the desire realm in the nature of suffering but even the form realm and the formless realm, the highest realm of samsara, are only in the nature of suffering. This is a basic fact we need to see.

The form realm has four stages. The fourth stage and the four stages of the formless realms do not have the suffering of pain. They do not even have the suffering of change. But what the fourth stage of the form realm and all four stages of the formless realm have is pervasive compounding suffering. They are not free from this fundamental suffering.

Relating this to ourselves, His Holiness mentions that this collection of body and mind is a product of delusion and karma. It is under the control of karma and delusion. This is another meaning of pervasive compounding suffering. Because this mind and body that we have now is under the control of delusion and karma, that's why it is in the nature of suffering. That's why this body is in the nature of suffering; that's why this mind is in the nature of suffering. That's why we experience so many problems. As it is mentioned in the teachings, there are over four hundred sicknesses. I don't know whether in the West a certain number of sicknesses has been calculated or not but just the sicknesses themselves, just the field of sicknesses is unbelievable, unbearable, unbelievable. Even if we only think of sicknesses, the suffering of these aggregates because of the sicknesses, without thinking of the other sufferings of the mind and the body.

From this explanation, we can understand reincarnation, that there is life before this one. Many of us, including myself, don't remember when we were in our mother's womb. We can't remember all the feelings in there or the first time the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg, what kind of experience we had at that time. What I heard, for the great yogis it is like entering the mandala, the vision of the pure mind as it enters in the womb; everything is pure. With those yogis, that being has its own appearance, its own pure mind, that is developed.

For us, the minute the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg in the mother's womb, right from there it is in the nature of suffering. The teachings say when the consciousnesses of ordinary beings reincarnate, it is like jumping into hot water. There is so much suffering even from the very beginning of this life in the mother's womb. Even right from the very beginning there is so much suffering.

Due to ignorance, pollution and things like that, we don't remember the experiences in the womb. Some people can remember coming from the womb, but not most of us. Because our mind is not clear, because it is polluted, obscured, we don't remember. In fact, there are so many things we have done in our life, even as children, that we don't remember but other people do. They remember seeing us at such and such a place and doing this, but we don't remember it at all. Sometimes, even a person who is very forgetful can remember something we don't—maybe even what we had for lunch yesterday or even certain things we did very recently that we have forgotten. So, there is no question we can't remember things from childhood time or when we were in our mother's womb. How can we remember? At that time, there was a big shock, a big change. If we can't remember so much of what happened to us after we left the womb, how can we possibly remember what happened in the womb?

Anyway, from the very beginning, after birth there is so much suffering, as is mentioned in the teaching. Now, what I was going to say is this. If there were no delusion and karma before the consciousness took place in the fertilized egg, if there were no impure cause, delusion and karma, first of all the question is why? Why did birth happen? That's a *very* big question, why birth happens. Why does the consciousness take place on the fertilized egg, why? That's a very big question.

And the other big question is this. Did the suffering start after we came out of our mother's womb? Did our suffering start after coming out of our mother's womb or did it start in the womb? Did the experience of suffering—the pleasant feelings, the unpleasant feelings—start after leaving the womb or in the womb?

Every time you see a child coming from the womb, you always see the face, you know, a very suffering face. Completely squeezed, you know, completely squeezed. It's something unbearable. The expression of the face tells us it's unbearable. The child doesn't come out with a smiling face. Just that, what we see with the eye, the expression of the face is what the mind experiences. If the mind is unhappy there is no smile, the face is very intense and dark. For a person with problems, who is unhappy, it is difficult to smile. What's the word? Can you find the word? You're a doctor; you should be able to find that word. What?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: For what? Liberation? Enlightenment? When the person's mind has some problem or is unhappy, what do you call the expression of the face?

Student: [Inaudible] [General discussion]

Rinpoche: But I thought in this case, his face and his heart are different. His heart's happy but his face is something else.

The common thing is the person's vibration. The face is an expression of the state of mind, the vibration. Even though the mind is formless, the face is an expression of the mind, of the state of mind. With a person who has a very good, very tamed mind, a very subdued mind, a very soft heart, a very loving nature, we feel it and we can see from the face; it's a very kind, warm face. Even just seeing the face makes us very happy. When we see that kind of person's face, it makes us very happy and we always want to see the face because it has a very positive affect. But then

the opposite expression, of somebody who is very self-centered or egoistic or with a very impatient nature, that is a totally different face, not a happy face, not a loving face.

So exactly the same, when a child comes from the womb, we can see from their face that they are suffering. We can see that very clearly. How do you define it in the West? Does suffering only start after we come from the womb or has it already started? Has the experience of suffering, of happiness and unhappiness, of discomfort and unpleasantness, already started in the womb? If it has already started when the child is in the womb, then did it start sometime later or right from the beginning, when the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg? That is the question.

To me it is clear. Whenever I see a child come from the womb, it seems to have a very bluish complexion, because the birth [canal] is very tight. There is a lot of suffering on the face; it looks totally squeezed. The child is going through so much pain. So, there is no question for me that suffering started in the womb. The baby is experiencing suffering coming out of the womb and suffering in the womb.

The Buddha explains that right from the beginning, it is in the nature of suffering. If there were no cause of suffering, delusion and karma, before that birth, there couldn't be a suffering birth. In that case, it would be the other type of reincarnation, where the higher being reincarnates with total freedom, in order to benefit others—total freedom, not under the force of delusion and karma but with virtue, with merit, with realization. Due to past prayers to benefit others the higher being has these realizations and then can reincarnate without suffering. There is no suffering at all there. This is especially so with arya beings, the exalted beings who have a direct perception of emptiness, like those arhats or higher bodhisattvas, and so no question about buddhas showing birth without suffering.

Why is our life—our body and mind—in the nature of suffering? When did it begin? It did not begin *after* coming out; it's already [in the nature of suffering] in the mother's womb—we can see that from the expression on the face when the child comes out. From the very beginning, birth is in the nature of suffering. Why? The whole answer is that from birth up to now, from the birth up to death, the body and mind are suffering because before the birth there is delusion and karma. The cause exists before the result, the suffering rebirth. The cause, delusion and karma, exists before the result, the suffering of birth. Usually the cause and the result cannot be together, the cause has to come first. Cause and effect relating to one phenomenon cannot live together; there has to be a different time. From the very beginning of the birth, of the whole life, the body and mind are in the nature of suffering because there was the cause before that, delusion and karma.

That is the main answer. There was the cause before—delusion and karma—which resulted in the product, the suffering birth. If there were no cause, delusion and karma, then there would be no reason before the birth, before the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg, why the body and mind are in the nature of suffering. No reason at all. The body and mind wouldn't be in the nature of suffering, and therefore there wouldn't be any suffering of pain, any suffering of change, any pervasive compounding suffering. These aggregates wouldn't experience the suffering of pain and the suffering of change because they would not be in the nature of pervasive compounding suffering, because they would not be produced by delusion and karma. I am not a hundred percent sure, but maybe the arya bodhisattvas, the exalted bodhisattvas who have a direct realization, a direct perception of emptiness, have a spiritual body and don't

experience the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death. They have completely abandoned suffering; they are completely free from all of them. We can also use the example of a buddha's vajra holy body.

Therefore, birth is in the nature of suffering, and there has to be a cause, something that came before which produced it. That cause has to exist before the result, which proves life existed before this one. Even this shows there is reincarnation.

I must conclude now and pack up. So, these aggregates, the body and mind, are the product of delusion and karma; they are under the control of karma and delusion. That's one definition, that's why this is in the nature of suffering. So being under the control of karma and delusion—that's one definition of pervasive compounding suffering.

The other thing is that these aggregates have the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. These aggregates are contaminated with the seed, the imprint, and because the seed is there, at any time when the condition comes delusion arises. At any time when the situation comes, delusion arises, desire and all those things. Because the seed, the imprint, is there, delusion arises and that motivates karma, and so the suffering of the mind.

This contaminated seed that gives rise to the delusions and all the sufferings we experience is something no doctor can find, no matter how carefully they examine us. Usually, if a doctor examines a patient very carefully, they'll be able to find something, but this contaminated seed goes deeper than that. When the condition comes, because that contaminated seed is there, sickness or problems of the body or mind occur. So, this seed of delusion, this seed of karma, compounds life's problems and not only that, it becomes the foundation for the problems we will face in future. It compounds all our future lives' problems, which, if we are reborn as a human, are the sufferings of rebirth, old age, sickness and all the other problems we face. It is the foundation for all this.

Another meaning of "pervasive" is the seed of delusion, meaning these aggregates are contaminated with the seed of delusion. Because of that, we experience suffering. Delusion arises, that produces karma and the result is suffering. The Tibetan term is *nā nem lai*, so this word *nā*—this imprint is called *nā*. Because this seed of delusion, this seed of karma is there, at any time we can receive future problems. So, it is something unpleasant, something bad.

Because we are under the control of delusion and karma, our body and mind are in the nature of suffering and so we experience suffering. Maybe it can be said also that they are pervaded by suffering.

The whole of the entire samsara—the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm—all these aggregates are the product of delusion and karma; they are under the control of delusion and karma; they are pervaded by it. Therefore, all these realms, all these aggregates are in the nature of suffering. So maybe it can also be called the pervasive nature of suffering.

The contaminated seed of delusion pervades all these three realms—desire, form and formless—so that is another meaning of *pervasive*. It is pervasive compounding suffering. The desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm are all in the nature of this suffering that is pervasive and compounding. Wherever we reincarnate is all suffering. All these realms are pervasive compounding suffering.

As I was saying before, although the fourth stage of the form realm and the four stages of the formless realm don't have the suffering of pain or the suffering of change, they are not free from pervasive compounding suffering. They are still in the nature of suffering because they are under the control of karma and delusion. The other reason is that their aggregates are contaminated with the seed of disturbing thoughts. Because the seed is not removed, when their karma to be in the highest samsara realm, the formless realm, finishes, they can reincarnate back to even the hell realm, the hungry ghost, or as an animal or a human. They circle again and again like that, because they are not liberated from pervasive compounding suffering; they are not liberated from the seed of delusion. The seed that gives rise to delusion, that motivates karma, is still there, so another meaning of pervasive suffering is that the seed is there.

The formless realm has four stages and the last one is the *tip of samsara*. The others are *infinite sky*, *infinite consciousness*, and *nothingness*. His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, who is a great Tibetan pandit, a highly attained being, used to say that if we meditate on nothing, if when we meditate we stop thinking, like a blank, spaced-out mind where we don't use our wisdom at all, we will be reborn as an animal, with a very ignorant nature, because the way we meditated—just thinking of nothing—we stopped wisdom. So we get reborn as a very ignorant animal or the highest we can achieve in samsara is the level of the formless realm called nothingness. Even that is just another samsaric realm. The tip of samsara is the last level.

With the thought of renunciation of all of samsara, including the renunciation of the tip of samsara, we not only see the desire realm in the nature of suffering, but we also see the form and formless realm, including the fourth level, the tip of samsara, as only in the nature of suffering.

Like this, we cannot find attraction for even one second, even in a dream, to all these realms. All the desire realm pleasures, all the states in the form and formless realms—all these states, we see are only suffering in nature and we do not find attraction even for one second, even in a dream. Even for one second. We see it as being totally like in a prison. When we are caught in prison it feels so unbearable that every minute we want to be free from that prison. Or it is as if our naked body is sitting on a thorn bush or in the middle of a fire. This is how we feel. In every second, in every minute, we can't stand it; we want to be free from it. It is like that when we have the renunciation of the whole samsara, the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm. With that realization, we enter the path, then gain a direct perception of emptiness. Only then can we remove this seed. This is the only [way] to be free from samsara.

RENUNCIATION IS FREEDOM

There was one point that I was talking about before I'd like to go back to. In order to achieve liberation we have to actualize the five paths. To enter the path we have to have this realization, this renunciation of samsara. What I was saying before was that letting go of the desire for samsara, for samsaric pleasure, this is renouncing samsara. What we achieve by letting go of desire is all of these five paths; it is the realizations of all the five paths on the path to liberation. Then we achieve the total cessation of the whole entire samsara—the oceans of hell suffering, of hungry ghost suffering, of animal suffering, of human being suffering, of sura, asura beings' suffering, of intermediate state beings' suffering. We are totally free forever from all the oceans of samsaric suffering, including delusion and karma and the seeds of delusion. Achieving that realization, we are free forever.

Then not only that, with bodhicitta we are able to complete, to actualize the method, supported with wisdom, the path of wisdom supported by method. Then by practicing like this, we cease not only gross defilements, but also subtle defilements and our mind becomes a fully enlightened mind.

So, what I was saying before, letting go of desire, we have all these advantages. What we achieve are benefits like the limitless sky; we gain limitless skies of benefit. Following desire, what we get, what we achieve, is only the suffering of samsara, including the lower realms' suffering. So there is a huge difference.

Letting go of desire is not losing; it is only gaining. It is freeing ourselves from the prison of samsara. We are put in the prison in chains but by letting go of desire we are released; we are free. Letting go of desire is freeing ourselves from the bondage of delusion and karma, from samsara.

THE NEED TO CUT THE ROOT OF SAMSAARA, IGNORANCE

This is very important. I want to take the opportunity to express this. It is very important. I think maybe I'll conclude here.

It's very important that if we have some meditation technique that just brings some peace of mind, that's not enough—just some realization, some peace of mind. After we have worked so hard, doing very hard labor carrying rocks or something and then we take a rest, at that time also we have peace, relaxation. After working so hard then we go to the beach, we lie down, after working so hard on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. We go to beach, we lie down in the water or on the sand, then there is some peace, there is some relaxation. Even by going to the beach, when we look at the water, we don't think of our problems. We think of the water, so we don't think of the problems, we have some peace.

If our meditation is just like that, this is not sufficient. The purpose of meditation is not for that kind of peace. Even though common people look for that kind of thing, this is not the real purpose of meditation. This is the wrong purpose of meditation.

If we never know what the root of samsara is, if we are never educated in what it is, we can never eliminate it. There are many different types of ignorance but there is only *one* root of samsara, one particular one, one specific ignorance, so we have to know that, and we have to know what can eliminate it. There are many schools with different views of emptiness, of ultimate nature, shunyata. There are many different schools with their own point of view of emptiness, but cutting the root of samsara, ignorance, can only be realized through the view of the fourth of the four philosophical schools, the Madhyamaka school, and then only the second one, the Prasangika school. Only by realizing *that* school's view of emptiness, which is extremely fine, extremely subtle—finer and subtler than all the other schools' views of the ultimate nature of emptiness—only then with that wisdom can we cut the root of samsara, otherwise we can't.

In reality, there is only *one* emptiness, only *one* shunyata. There is only one specific root of samsara, ignorance, and there is only one emptiness. Only by realizing the Prasangika school's view of emptiness, only then can we cut the root of samsara, otherwise not.

Developing that wisdom realizing emptiness and combining it with the realization of shamatha leads to great insight, which is the preparation for the arya exalted path, where wisdom directly perceives emptiness. This is the wisdom that can directly cease the defilements, both gross and also subtle defilements. The wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is the only one that can directly cease both gross and subtle defilements. Without this wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, we can't remove the delusions, we can't remove the seed of delusions, we can't remove karma. That means as long as the seed is there, delusions will come back again and again and therefore we can never be free from samsara. We can never be free from samsara forever.

If the meditation on emptiness, the ultimate nature of phenomena, is not introduced, if it is not taught, we can't have that realization, we can't have the wisdom realization which cuts the root of samsara, ignorance. We will never have opportunity to remove the disturbing-thought obscurations or the seed [of delusion]. We can never be free from samsara forever but must continuously suffer.

Even if we don't like suffering, we still have to suffer continuously. Therefore, if we don't have the wisdom realizing emptiness, then whatever other realizations we have, including tantric realizations, we cannot remove the delusions, including the seed. There is no other realization that can directly remove delusion and the seed of delusion.

If our goal is just as I mentioned in those examples, going to beach and seeing water so we can have some peace and we don't have to think about our problems—if our goal is only that kind of peace then that is different. Just by distracting the mind from the problems then there is some peace. By focusing on the breath or any object, if we spend our whole life just doing that then the wisdom part is not educated. If the wisdom is not educated, if it is unknown, then there is no way to be liberated from suffering and its causes. So that is one thing. So that's one emphasis.

THE THREE SCOPES

Going back to what I said at the beginning, if the happiness we are seeking is long-term happiness, the happiness of all coming future lives, then we must practice. I want to mention this. Making this life meaningful, taking the essence of this precious human body, this perfect human body, the first great meaning to be achieved, the meaning of the purpose of life is the happiness of all the coming future lives. That is long-term happiness, the happiness of all those future lives.

Which one do you prefer? Today's happiness, today's comfort—just this one hour's happiness and comfort—or the happiness and comfort of all the hours of this life until death? Working for just this hour's happiness while ignoring the happiness of all the many days and hours that will follow is totally meaningless. That is very foolish—a little happiness and then suffering.

Because we don't prepare for happiness in all those coming hours and days, we don't prepare to achieve that happiness; we only work for this hour, for this day or this hour. So then we suffer. We don't prepare for happiness, so then there is only suffering for all those hours and all those days to come. That's totally silly, totally silly. But if we are detached from this one hour's happiness, from today's happiness but instead prepare for long-term happiness, that's very wise.

Similarly, this life is very short, just a few years, a few months, a few weeks. We can never be sure how many hours, and so only working for this is not virtue. The method to achieve happiness is

not virtue; it is something else, which only results in suffering. Even for achieving the happiness this life, the method is mistaken.

If we don't work for all the coming future lives' happiness, if we don't use this life to prepare, then all these future lives are only suffering. That means this life is totally wasted; it becomes meaningless. So, the first great meaning of this life, taking the essence of this body, is achieving the happiness of all coming lives.

The second great meaning of life or taking the essence of this body, is achieving liberation from samsara, ultimate happiness. The third great meaning of life, achieving the essence of this body, is full enlightenment, the great liberation. This third one is the most important one, the highest success, peerless happiness, concerning both ourselves and all other sentient beings.

What kind of happiness do we want to achieve? If we want to achieve the happiness of future lives then we must practice the graduated path of the lower capable being. By realizing that this precious human rebirth is qualified with eight freedoms and ten richnesses, that it is highly meaningful and difficult to find again, this persuades the mind to practice, to let go of the attachment clinging to this life, and then the mind becomes Dharma. All the actions become Dharma and the result is only happiness. Then, the realization of impermanence and death and the realization of the existence of the suffering lower realms, which becomes also the cause to generate compassion for those beings. If we don't know their suffering, we can never generate compassion for them and the thought to help them never arises. We don't generate bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment for them, and our compassion remains partial; it doesn't involve all sentient beings. It is not complete.

THE NEED TO PRACTICE ALL THREE SCOPES

The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have all the qualities, all the power, to save us from not only the sufferings of the lower realms but also from the suffering of the whole of samsara. Taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, whole-heartedly, not with blind faith but with understanding, can save us from suffering. We see that the object we take refuge in is reliable. It is as if we have a fever and buy medicine from a shop but we don't really know if it will help us, then we take it and find that it really does cure us. We have picked the right medicine and so we can safely rely on it.

Even in the case of blind faith, what we have relied on is correct as it has the power and the qualities. Therefore, if we rely on it, it can definitely protect us and liberate us not only from the lower realms but also from the entire suffering of samsara and its cause, delusion and karma. Even in the case of blind faith, as long as the object has the qualities and power, there is no problem. But if it is a wrong object that we rely on, one that doesn't have the quality and power to do that, then that's a problem. No how much faith we have, it doesn't help. Therefore, here we need to analyze and study, we need to use our wisdom and not rely on what other people say.

Fully understanding the advice the Buddha gave, based on knowing about refuge and karma, we need to totally practice that. The cause of the suffering, the problems, we don't like, which is nonvirtue, the negative karma, we abandon. The cause of the happiness we all want, which is virtue, positive karma, we have to practice. By following the instructions given by the Buddha, by relying upon the Buddha and practicing the teachings of the Dharma, we protect our karma, and in that way we are liberated not only from the lower realms but forever from the oceans of

samsaric suffering, which are caused by delusion and karma. And not only that, not only personal liberation, but we also obtain ultimate great liberation, enlightenment, by ceasing even the subtle defilements.

If what we want is happiness for all these coming future lives, if we want to achieve the meaning of life, we must practice the lamrim, the graduated path of the lower capable being, with reliance on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and we must protect our karma, firstly understanding that the nature of life is impermanence and death, and then that the result of negative karma is rebirth in the lower suffering realms and the result of good karma is a higher rebirth.

If the happiness we want to achieve is liberation from samsara, then we need to practice the graduated path of the middle capable being, by realizing how all of samsara is in the nature of suffering, and by practicing the three higher trainings: the higher training of morality, of samadhi (or calm abiding, concentration) and the higher training of wisdom. This is what we need to do if our goal is to achieve ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara.

If our goal is to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings, then we must practice the graduated path of the higher capable being, attaining bodhicitta, the bodhisattva path with the six paramitas [perfections], the higher training in morality.

But of course, to be able to practice the graduated path of the higher capable being depends on the preliminary, the graduated path of the middle capable being as a foundation, and to have a realization of that depends on the foundation, the graduated path of the lower being. So like that, the whole lamrim comes, in order to achieve enlightenment for the sentient beings, in order to liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment.

So what meditation we are going to do, what meditation we want to spend our life on depends on what kind of happiness we want to achieve.

Even shamatha, calm abiding, where we can one-pointedly concentrate by being free from both the attachment of scattering thoughts and sinking thoughts, and where we have this extremely refined rapturous ecstasy, this bliss of body and mind—even with this alone we cannot be free from samsara. Through this concentration, we have achieved this numberless times in the past and because of that we were born in the form realm numberless times. We have attained the four stages of continual precise concentration. This is how it is translated but I haven't seen a really exact translation of that—in Tibetan it's called *sam den*. We have gone through this meditation and been born in the form realm numberless times. We have even renounced the form realm, realized the nature of all the suffering and been born in the formless realm numberless times.

Even so, we are still suffering in samsara, still stuck in the circle. What has been lacking is the realization of the renunciation of samsara, of emptiness, of bodhicitta. This is what has been lacking. So this is what we need to achieve. Bodhicitta especially should be the main goal. If we want to meditate, bodhicitta should be the main goal, the main project in our life. Then we can achieve enlightenment. With stronger compassion, stronger bodhicitta, then we can achieve enlightenment quickly and we will be able to fulfill the wishes of all sentient beings for happiness. Then, the numberless sentient beings don't have to suffer for a long time. We can liberate them quickly. So I think that's the end.

DEDICATION

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated within one's own heart, one's family members and in the hearts of all of us here, in the hearts of all the students of this organization and all the supporters, and those who give up their lives doing service for sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, and in the hearts of all the sentient beings, without delaying even a second, and that which has already been generated, may it increase.

[Chanting]

May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of oneself and all one's family members and all of us here and then in the hearts of all the sentient beings in this world without delaying even a second.

[Chanting]

May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of oneself and all one's family members and all of us here and then all the leaders of the country, that is so essential, for all the millions of people in each country to have peace and happiness. How much they have peace and happiness depends in part on the leader, so it becomes crucial. May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all the groups of people—the terrorists or the gangsters or the Maoists, all those different groups of people who are harming others, doing so much harm to others.

[Chanting]

That we have all these opportunities to explore, to do listening, reflecting and meditation practice on the path to enlightenment, to complete the works for the self and works for other sentient beings, most of the others, to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment, that we have all these opportunities now is by the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. So please pray for his stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may all the father, mother sentient beings have happiness, may the three lower realms be empty forever, may all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately and may I be able to cause all this to happen by myself alone.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, from now on whatever life I experience—happy, unhappy, healthy, unhealthy, rich and poor, gain or loss, receiving criticisms or praise, bad reputation, good reputation, even dying, even getting reborn in hell, hungry ghost, animal realms—whatever happens, whatever life I experience from now on and whatever action I do, whatever work I do from now on—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing a job—may all my experience, all my actions from now on become only the cause to achieve, to *enlighten* the numberless sentient beings, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness. Whatever my life experience from now on, whatever action I do from now on, the most important thing is to become only the cause to

enlighten numberless sentient beings, from whom I received all my past, present and future happiness, all the collections of goodness.

So here in this prayer, what it expresses is the real meaning of life, not to live long, not to just have a long life or not just to be healthy, not just to be wealthy, not just to have a good reputation, not just all these—the main purpose of life, the main goal of life is for whatever happens to be most beneficial for others. That everything we do causes all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible—that is the main goal. As long as that happens, as long as our actions, our experience, works that way, becoming the cause for numberless sentient beings to achieve enlightenment, whenever this happens in our everyday life, the meaning of life is fulfilled. Even if we have cancer, our life, our experience of cancer becomes beneficial for others, and we are able to cause happiness for all sentient beings. So our purpose of life is fulfilled. Otherwise we have a healthy life for thousands of eons but it is totally empty, meaningless, without that attitude, without that experience or action benefiting other sentient beings. It is a totally meaningless, empty life.

Even dying and being reborn in the hell realm—if our experience of being born in the hell realm becomes the cause of happiness of all sentient beings, for sentient beings to achieve enlightenment, then the meaning of our life is achieved. Even if we are born in hell, experiencing suffering, it becomes so meaningful, our purpose of life is achieved, our goal is achieved. So the purpose of life or the goal of our life should be this way. Then the direction of our life is clear, what we are supposed to do, whether it is lay or whether it is ordained life, our attitude, our direction of life is clear—it is to achieve this goal. There is no confusion, it's clear. Whatever is of benefit, this we do. It makes it very simple, very easy to follow.

Then with this attitude, this goal, of life, our mind is always happy, peaceful. Even if there is loss we are happy. Whatever happens—gain, loss, poor, rich, cancer, no cancer, living a long life, living a short life, death—whatever happens nothing bothers our mind, nothing disturbs our mind. Our life is always happy, always peaceful, always fulfilled, always very satisfied because whatever happens is beneficial for sentient beings. So this prayer is also very important. It contains advice on our everyday life attitude, the goal of our life, the direction of our life.

Whatever we are doing should be toward this goal. Even if our work is dancing, Scottish dancing—I'm joking, anyway—even if we are dancing, the attitude, the goal is like this. Even if we are working in a restaurant, the goal is like this. Even if we are a teacher, even if we are a student, learning, studying, the goal is this way. Doing business, whatever, the external style of life is different, but the goal is this way.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may I be able to benefit like the sky toward sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on and in all my future lifetimes, in every second to be like that.

This dedication is extremely important if we wish to offer extensive benefits to sentient beings, to give stainless teachings of the Buddha.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, and the three times' merits collected by others, that which exist in mere name, merely labeled by mind, may the I who exists in mere name, merely labeled by mind, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, that

which exists in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, and lead all the sentient beings who exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind, to that enlightenment, which exists in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, by myself alone, who exists in mere name, merely imputed by mind.

So this way of meditating—exists in mere name, merely labeled—gives an understanding, what it should affect. All these things exist but nothing exists in the slightest from its own side, all these phenomena do not have the slightest atom of true existence, existing from their own side. They are [not] truly existing, in the sense of existing from their own side. Therefore it means that they are totally empty of this, this true existence, that which appears to us. This is a hallucination; these phenomena are totally empty of true existence. As they appear to us, they don't have this true existence, not even an atom. So, all these appearances are in reality empty, all these are totally empty.

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds just as Samantabhadra and Manjugosha did. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicate the merits. May the general teachings of Buddha and the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, unified sutra and tantra, enlightenment the final goal—may they be spread in all the directions, may they flourish forever in this world, by actualizing all of them within me and within our own family members, all of us here, in the hearts of all the students and the supporters of this organization, all those who gave up their lives for this organization doing service to sentient beings and to the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

[Chanting]

Again, many hours. So good night.

Lecture 6

REFUGE: THE USEFUL FEAR OF DEATH

[Chanting]

This is one of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's most precious sutra teachings, left in this world to benefit us sentient beings, to purify all the negative karma and to pacify obstacles, mainly to develop the mind in the path to enlightenment and also to wish for happiness and success, for peace and happiness in the world, in the country and family, and within ourselves. So I think that it brings skies of benefit to listen to them. It is incredibly powerful purification to listen to each word. Therefore we visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, either the elaborate merit field or refuge merit field, or Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in the center and all the numberless buddhas, all into one aspect, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Then you take refuge and generate bodhicitta.

[To Ven Antonio:] Did you introduce the twelve links? Did you finish the twelve links? In the Nepalese way or Italian way?

I was just joking, asking whether Venerable Antonio introduced the twelve links in the Nepalese way or the Italian way. I'm just joking, I'm teasing, I'm just joking.

[Taking refuge the Mahayana way has] three causes. The Hinayana way of taking refuge has two causes. This is not mythical, not just belief or superstition. There may be different levels of superstition, but this is not mythical, not just mere belief, not existing in reality, not like that.

[The first cause is] intelligent fear or useful fear. For example, many people may think of death, but if they haven't met the Dharma, they can do nothing. Even if they remember death—how others have died or how they will die—because they don't know the meditation practices that show what to do with it, they haven't met the Dharma, they haven't met the teaching of the Buddha, there is nothing they can do. It just becomes frightening, that's all, nothing else. Of course, because of that, some people then look for a path, trying to find what to do to make their life better. Because of that, they are persuaded to make their life a better quality and more beneficial for others.

It can happen that somebody is in total danger of being killed, like in a car accident or somebody is about to kill them, but they don't die. This can happen to a person in a car accident who doesn't die. The shock makes them realize; it wakes up their mind, making them think that since birth until now, their life has been totally under distraction, there has never been one thought about what really makes it meaningful, worthwhile, beneficial to others. This really didn't get done; their life has been totally lost in distraction.

From childhood, the mind has been distracted; then growing up, there have always been so many different problems, such as relationship things, and life goes, lost in distraction, only thinking of the outside. They never get to examine their own mind, their own needs in life; they never get to really check what is missing, what they need to accomplish. Then, they have a car accident and there is a big realization, a big shock. It makes them suddenly realize, discover, that all their life so far has been wasted; there has been nothing worthwhile.

This can also happen not only from a car or plane crash but from a sudden sickness, when suddenly facing death, it brings attention to the inside of our life. Then we realize our whole life has gone and we didn't really make it worthwhile, beneficial, something that made us feel satisfied. That didn't happen. Now, there is no time. Now, you see, we are going to die; there is no time. Many times it happens, and it is very sad. There is nothing sadder than that wasted life, than wasting what is an incredible opportunity. So, a car accident can give us a big shock, waking up the mind, the sleeping mind, the distracted mind, the mind sleeping in ignorance and with hallucinations, with all the delusions.

I have heard many people say that because some good karma ripened and they didn't die at that time [when they were in great danger], that really gave them the strong determination, *now*, to make their life useful for others. Even if for such a person there is no meditation, there is no Dharma path to enlightenment, they still think, "Now, I must do some service for others." They at least think that. They decide they must do something for others, and then go to do social service, whatever they can do. Before, they were working for themselves, *now*, you see, that person can think to work for others, to offer something for others.

If we have met the Dharma, especially the lamrim, then the essence of the holy Dharma is remembering death, having a useful fear of death. If we have negative karma, if we have the negative karma that is the cause of rebirth in the lower realms, there is the fear of death. If we don't have negative karma, there is no fear of death. Whether we have a fear of death or not is a

question of whether our mind is very obscured, filled with negative karma, negative action, negative thoughts, whether we have done a lot of negative karma in this life.

If we are a nonbeliever, not believing in any religion, the day we are going to die we will have a lot of fear. Normally, even if we don't believe negative karma exists, at that time, from those consequences, from those actions, suddenly the result exists. Even if we don't believe, our heart tells us, expresses it, at the time of death. The day we are about to die, there is fear; something is going to happen after this, something very heavy. Some very heavy thing is going to happen after this. This is something our heart expresses. Something very dark, something very heavy is going to happen. It's some natural fear our heart feels. Even if intellectually we don't believe in reincarnation, this happens, so you can see how there's a contradiction here.

What I was saying, even in the West, even those who haven't met the Buddhadharma, there are people who have lived a sincere life, and no question about having a good heart, who have lived with a good heart, always generous, always giving, always caring for others. Even if that person doesn't meditate, hasn't met the Dharma, the Buddha's teachings, for such a person who has such characteristics of mind and who has lived life like that, there is no fear of death at all. When death comes, there is no fear of death at all in the depths of their heart; that person is very happy. Even when death comes, the person's mind is very happy, with no fear at all. Maybe they instinctively feel there is a good future. This natural thought arises. There are people like that.

One time in Australia I was doing a retreat. Actually, it was a retreat watching TV. A watching TV retreat, TV retreat. The altar was the TV. [Laughter] The merit field was the TV. Anyway, I was also listening to the radio, and a Dharma student was doing some radio work. She had 60,000 people, or something like that, listening to her program. I was curious how she was doing the work, so I listened to radio. When she was having a conversation with people about problems or things like that, from time to time she let slip from her mouth words like "meditation."

There was another friend—the name sounds a little bit funny; I don't know exactly how to spell it—who was on the radio, interviewing a lady. This lady said that she was not afraid of death. She said, "I know where I am going." I don't think this is particularly a person who has met the teachings of the Buddha, I didn't get that feeling, but she was somebody who had lived a genuine life, a good-hearted and sincere life. She expressed her mind, what she felt toward death, the end of life. I was very curious if the interviewer—I am not sure how to spell his name—would ask any question but he didn't. He just stopped. I was quite disappointed because after she said that, he never asked further questions. It would have been very interesting to find out the reasons why she had no fear of death.

Anyway, this is the main point. If we have committed so much negative karma and we haven't purified, then there is fear of death. That doesn't mean there is fear for anybody who experiences death; it is question of how much negative karma—negative actions, negative thought—was generated in the life. The question of fear is dependent on that.

Therefore, if we have met the Buddhadharma, especially lamrim, if we have a clear idea how to practice Dharma, how to go about it, it brings not just some peace of mind in this life, not just the happiness of future lives. Of course, we know all that, what to do to achieve the happiness of future lives and then liberation from samsara, but even more important than that, we know how to achieve enlightenment, to be able to enlighten numberless sentient beings, to liberate them

from the oceans of samsaric suffering. This is our main goal in life, the purpose of being born as a human being at this time. We have an idea how to go about the path to enlightenment, how to practice it. Therefore, thinking of, reflecting on death, on our own death, we can relate it to karma and the lower realms' sufferings, the results of the negative karma and the results of good karma.

Having met the Dharma, that only persuades us, gives us courage, like fuel for a plane, like fuel for a car to function, to be able to take different people to their destination. Without fuel, the plane cannot function; it is the force. By thinking [about death] we understand, and that persuades us to practice Dharma, to do something. Rather than living life with fear, we do something, we practice Dharma. That way, we start to make our life most beneficial for sentient beings, which by the way is also most beneficial for ourselves as well. We start to actualize the graduated path of the lower capable being and we start to actualize graduated path of the middle capable being, then we start to actualize bodhicitta, the graduated path of higher capable being.

After that, with that foundation, we put our effort into mainly achieving enlightenment in the quickest possible time, so that sentient beings don't have to suffer for a long time. In order to enlighten them as quickly as possible, we need to practice tantra. So, [this fear of death] persuades us to do tantric practice.

There are four levels of tantra, and the highest, the fourth one, is Highest Yoga Tantra, by which it is possible to achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate time. In the case of the lower tantras we achieve immortality and live for thousands of years—many hundreds of years or thousands of years—and then we achieve enlightenment, but in Highest Yoga Tantra we don't need to do that. Practicing Highest Yoga Tantra enables us to achieve full enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate time, within a few years, if we practice it correctly, as Buddha Vajradhara explained. Buddha Vajradhara explained that the qualified guru, the vajra master, guides us in that form.

Reflecting on death, the fear of death and the lower realms—related to how the result of negative karma is the suffering of the lower realms, those unimaginable sufferings, and the sufferings of samsara—persuades us to begin to practice Dharma, to continue to practice Dharma and complete our Dharma practice, to actualize the path and to cease the defilements, the delusions, completely. Then when that happens, we have finished the fear. There is no delusion and karma, there is no cause for fear. Once we are free from delusion and karma, there is no cause for fear, so we are free from fear forever.

This is like Milarepa, who became enlightened in one brief lifetime of degenerate time. He was one of the great Tibetan meditators, a yogi who achieved enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate time. As he mentioned,

First, I was afraid of death, then I escaped to the mountains. Now that I have actualized the primordial nature of mind, emptiness, even if death comes to me I have no fear.

This is what he experienced and this is what we have to experience. This is how we should go forward, what we should put effort into.

At the beginning, through the meditation on impermanence, fear comes, [but we must be able] to bear all the hardships, to realize the nature of the primordial mind, emptiness. Then we are able to overcome delusion; we are able to overcome fear. Then we are not only free from fear but free from death, from the suffering of death and rebirth. So, here, the fear of death is related to karma, the sufferings of the lower realms and of samsara. As I mentioned before, the benefits of remembering death are to achieve happiness in all the future lives, to achieve liberation from samsara and to achieve enlightenment, to be able to enlighten all sentient beings. So, as a meditator, a Dharma practitioner, there are skies of benefit meditating on that, remembering that.

Other people who haven't met Dharma, who have no Dharma education about what to do with death, for them the fear of death is just torturing themselves, causing depression and so forth, but here it becomes a useful, intelligent fear.

REFUGE: THE FEAR OF SUFFERING

Here, it is the same. This useful fear is not only of the suffering of the lower realms, but of the suffering of samsara. Understanding our own suffering of samsara is one cause of refuge. We not only see how we need to free ourselves from samsara but, using that as an example, we see that all the six realms' sentient beings are also tormented by the suffering of pain, the suffering of changes and pervasive compounding suffering, that there is this continuation causing unimaginable suffering. Even just the suffering of pain in the human realm alone is enough. Or the deva realm—where the suffering caused when the signs of death happen is unbelievable suffering. It is said to be mentally heavier than a hell beings' suffering. Even the suffering of pain of the deva realm is unbearable.

This is like an extremely wealthy person who has tried everything in this world, who has got everything but still hasn't found satisfaction, and so feels unbelievable depressed. He has tried everything but didn't find satisfaction. He is unbelievably depressed; he has so many problems. His mind is more painful, it has more suffering than a beggar who lives from day to day searching for food. Mentally, there are far more problems. This is a similar example.

It's unbearable just to think of a human being's suffering of pain, even if we don't think of the suffering of change or pervasive compounding suffering—just the suffering of pain. If we look at somebody who has a very severe sickness or something, with unbelievable pain, we think that it's so unbearable, we can't stand it. Life is full of this, besides the suffering of change, that suffering where even pleasure is actually suffering, in the view of wisdom. In the view of the hallucinatory mind it appears as pleasure, it is labeled pleasure and believed to be pleasure but in the view of wisdom, of Dharma wisdom, by analyzing we discover it's only suffering. In the view of wisdom it is only suffering; it's a hallucinated pleasure. And in addition to that suffering, there is pervasive compounding suffering—the body and mind being in the nature of suffering, under the control of delusion and karma.

Just there is the most extensive, unbearable suffering of pain of the hell beings, as we were going through the outlines, then there is the preta realm where for hundreds of thousands of years the pretas are unable to find food and drink, unable to find one single drop of water or one spoon of food. But then they don't die, they have to suffer. Due to heavy karma, they must endure the unbelievable suffering of pain. And then there are the animals, incredibly ignorant, being eaten by another one, all these problems. Then human beings have all these oceans of human beings'

problems, all these six or eight types of sufferings, such as rebirth, old age, death and so forth. Each one has so much suffering, so much suffering.

Besides the suffering of pain there are the two other types of suffering.

Here, we include all those in the form and formless realms, which are not free from pervasive compounding suffering—there is not even one second's break; they are only in nature of suffering. Before, you only meditated on your own suffering but now, here, there are numberless others in each realm, each with so much suffering. So now, compassion. Seeing this, compassion is generated for them, wishing them to be free from suffering, by knowing, by meditating, by listening to the teachings of the Buddha, the enlightened one, the omniscient one. By listening to the teachings, by studying, first we need to understand, then we need to meditate, so that we actually feel that compassion. The more we feel others' suffering, by knowing all the sentient beings in those other realms have suffering, then through meditation we really feel how they suffer, then the more our compassion arises, wishing them to be free from all the suffering and its causes.

So now here, not only is this fear of our own suffering of samsara a useful fear, an intelligent fear, but it also creates compassion for all sentient beings, who are suffering in samsara.

REFUGE: THE DOCTOR, THE MEDICINE AND THE NURSE

The third cause is faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, who have all the power, the qualities to liberate us and all sentient beings from the oceans from samsaric suffering and the cause, delusion and karma. With this intelligent or useful fear of our own suffering of samsara and with compassion for other sentient beings' experience of suffering of samsara, we then have faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, understanding that they have qualities and the power to liberate us from the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause, delusion and karma. Then with our whole heart, we rely upon them.

These are the three causes that make the Mahayana way of taking refuge: the fear of samsara, our own samsara, then faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and *then* with our whole heart, with our mind being perfectly with these two causes, relying upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, that's taking refuge. That mental factor is refuge. That might be both the principal consciousness and mental factor. The extra cause of taking refuge, which makes it the Mahayana way of taking refuge, is compassion toward other sentient beings.

So first, we have to reflect on our own suffering of samsara. Think, "This not the first time I have suffered; I have experienced suffering numberless times, from time without beginning, due to delusion and karma." We have experienced the six realms, one after another, without beginning.

Then think of the numberless other sentient beings who have similar suffering, who have also been suffering from time without beginning in samsara. There are numberless others. We ourselves are nothing, how important this self is, is nothing. Now, we think of others who are numberless, suffering in samsara. So now, you see, *now*, with our whole heart we rely upon the numberless buddhas, we rely upon those who are totally free not only from the oceans of samsaric suffering but from the cause, delusion and karma, all the obscurations. They are totally

free, and only they have all the qualities to liberate us and all other sentient beings. So, with our whole heart we rely upon them.

The Buddha is like the doctor, the Dharma is like the medicine. The actual path removes all suffering; it liberates us from all suffering and all delusions and karma. With our whole heart, due to the reason I explained before, the fear of our own suffering in samsara and recognizing all sentient beings' suffering, we rely upon the Dharma like the medicine.

Then Sangha are like the nurse. We need to rely upon the Sangha just as a serious patient needs the help of a nurse. The Sangha are the example, the inspiration, who help us practice and guide us on the path to liberation and enlightenment. So, we totally rely upon the Sangha.

Now here, we can see that relying upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is not just a custom. It is not just some custom that we act out; it is a really serious thing. There is utmost need to take refuge, utmost need.

The person who has a heart attack runs to the emergency hospital. Taking refuge here is billions, billions and billions of times more important than that because here it's a question of liberating ourselves, not only from the oceans of suffering of samsara, the true suffering, but liberating ourselves from the true cause of suffering. You see, in the emergency hospital, they can do nothing for the cause of suffering. No matter how many operations they do, they cannot remove the cause of suffering. They cannot find the cause of suffering, delusion and karma. First of all, there is no education about that in societies such as the West. There is no education about that.

The purpose of refuge is to liberate ourselves from all the causes of suffering, delusion and karma, all the causes including our negative karma. Now here, you see, taking refuge is not something small, it is really serious. There are no words to describe how utterly important it is. It is not just some fashion, like going to a church or a temple or lighting some incense or doing this or doing that, as a custom of that tradition or that religion. If we follow this religion, we have to do this and this, all the external things—it is not like that. Of course, in Buddhism there are rituals and they have great meaning however, what I am saying is that refuge is not just the outer acts, the external things you are expected to do if you follow some religion. Here, it is a very serious matter, a matter of great urgency, of great urgency.

If a snake bites us and we can't get medicine immediately, it will spread all over the body and we will die. That is regarded as very urgent but that is nothing; that is nothing. Here we are talking about liberating ourselves from all the oceans of suffering of each realm and from all the causes, delusion and karma. It is a question of freeing or liberating ourselves from not just one type of sickness, not just from all the sickness, but from the whole entire suffering of samsara and its causes and freeing ourselves from the cycle of death and rebirth. Taking refuge is like that—freeing ourselves from the cycle of death and rebirth.

But the reason for taking refuge doesn't finish right there. Numberless sentient beings are suffering like ourselves and in order to free all of them from all those oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes, we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, who have the qualities and the power to liberate us and all sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, delusion and karma.

With this vast understanding, this deep understanding of suffering and the cause—of your own and numberless sentient beings’ suffering—you generate compassion toward them, then rely upon Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. With that, you recite the prayer. Then the words and your heart go together.

“I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until enlightenment is achieved. I rely upon the numberless buddhas, the numberless Dharma, the numberless Sangha.”

The conventional Buddha is the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya aspects of the rupakaya, that is the conventional Buddha. Then the absolute Buddha is the dharmakaya, the Buddha’s holy mind, within which there are two: the omniscient mind, that wisdom, and then its ultimate nature, which is totally free from defilements, the *svabhavakaya*, the holy truth body or the holy body of the essence.

Conventional Dharma refers to the scriptures, not just any scriptures but the Tripitaka teachings, which contain the lamrim. Absolute Dharma is the cessation of all suffering, of all delusions and karma. That includes not only lower nirvana, liberation from samsara, but also great liberation, full enlightenment, the cessation of even the subtle defilements. Then the path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which directly ceases the defilements—that is the true path. That’s also the Dharma, and we should rely upon it.

Then, we rely upon the Sangha who support us, who guide us to actualize the Dharma and to achieve enlightenment, to become a buddha—those who have the qualities to do that. [The absolute Sangha] have the realization of directly perceiving emptiness, the right-seeing path and path of meditation, then no more learning. The conventional Sangha is four or more nuns or monks living in full ordination but not having realization of the exalted path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. That’s conventional Sangha. Here, we take refuge in both of them.

REFUGE PRAYER: WE SHOULD RECITE IT FOR ALL SENTIENT BEINGS

“I go for refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, until enlightenment is achieved.”

With the reasons, then take refuge. The reasons for taking refuge are so vast, to relieve not only your own suffering but that of numberless sentient beings who are experiencing oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, to free them.

“Due to the collections of merit of having done charity and so forth, of practicing morality and so forth, may I achieve full enlightenment in order to benefit all the transmigratory beings.”

Now here think, this is to liberate numberless hell beings, the transmigratory beings who transmigrated and are now in hell, experiencing the most unbelievable suffering. Also the numberless preta beings, the transmigratory beings who transmigrated and are now in the preta realm, experiencing the most unbearable suffering. Then, the numberless animals, the transmigratory beings who transmigrated to the animal realm and are now experiencing the most unbearable suffering. Then, the human beings, the transmigratory beings who transmigrated and are now in the human realm and experiencing all the oceans of human problems, with all the causes, delusion and karma. The same with the sura and asura, the transmigratory beings who transmigrated to the sura and asura realms and are experiencing most unbearable suffering in their realms.

Other than fear of death and all that, their minds are totally distracted by all those sense pleasures, comfort, enjoyments. They are totally distracted and everything becomes negative karma. Everything becomes negative karma because of attachment, their motivation is only attachment, so whatever enjoyment they have—even a billion times more than human beings' sense pleasure—the devas have billions of times much greater sense pleasure [than humans] but their motivation for enjoying that is only attachment. They are totally distracted. Therefore, all their actions of enjoying sense pleasures, of having sense enjoyment, all this is negative karma creating the cause to be born in lower realms, to again reincarnate in samsara, so it is nothing special. Therefore, their whole life is only suffering; it is nothing special, it is only a suffering life, even though they have billions of times much greater sense pleasure than we do.

We take refuge to benefit all those transmigratory beings, who are under the control of karma and delusion, causing them to transmigrate all the time, one time after another to each of the six realms, and experience the oceans of suffering of each realm again and again, again and again, from time without beginning. We take refuge to benefit them, to liberate them, not just by giving shelter to the homeless, not just by giving money to the sick, not just by giving food to those who are dying of starvation, not just that. Here, the main thing is to liberate them from all suffering and its cause, delusion and karma. Therefore, we take refuge for the benefit of *all* the transmigratory beings.

“Transmigratory” has great meaning. The Tibetan term is *dro la*. *Dro* is transmigratory being. They must transmigrate not with freedom, but without choice, by being under the control of karma and delusion. That's why it's only suffering. Then, they experience all the suffering results. They transmigrate through the twelve dependently related links. So, whenever we recite the prayer, *dro la phän chir* “in order to benefit all the transmigratory beings” we should always remember the meaning of “transmigratory being”—all those numberless sentient beings in each realm who are under the control of karma and delusion. Not one of them can enjoy even one single freedom at all. They are totally under the control of karma and delusion, then they reincarnate and have to experience all these sufferings. When we think like that, there is no choice—compassion has to arise.

We can take the example of a monkey. It's not that the monkey has total freedom, that it wanted to reincarnate as a monkey. It didn't choose that life. Taking such a body happened without choice. Similarly, the worms, or the ringworms in the stomach, or the insects that are born when the rains come, all those insects, like those whose bodies are like thorns, such terrible ugly forms, living in the rocks in the desert—there are unbelievable kinds. None of them transmigrate by choice. They didn't really want to have that particular body, with the thought that they could enjoy it. It's not that; it happened without choice due to delusion and negative karma. Now the reincarnation has finished, they have to suffer until the karma finishes, no matter how much they don't like it.

If we look at each sentient being, how they transmigrate, if we understand the meaning of transmigratory, *dro la*, then there is no choice, compassion has to arise.

Therefore, we take refuge to be able to benefit all the transmigratory beings, to liberate each and every single transmigratory being. There are numberless beings in each realm and to liberate all of them and not just liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering but bring them to full enlightenment. So think this.

“Due to the collections of the merits, having done charity, practiced morality, so forth, may I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all the transmigratory beings.”

Here, you can think like this—your own three times’ merits, the past, present and future merits, and the three times’ merits collected by others, you can think of that as very vast, you can put everybody’s merit together, so it becomes very powerful.

Then, “May I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit, to liberate and enlighten those numberless suffering beings, the transmigratory beings—those in the hell realm, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the suras, the asuras, the human beings, and the intermediate stage beings.”

[Chanting]

REFUGE PRAYER: THE MERIT OF GENERATING BODHICITTA

It is said if you put your palms together, then generate bodhicitta: “May I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all the sentient beings,” the merit you collect is actually much greater than the universes equaling ... how many universes? Equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. Visualize that many universes filled with the seven types of precious jewels and then you make offering. Also, the buddhas, I don’t remember exactly now, but equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean—so many buddhas, you make it an unbelievable number. So, you put your palms together and then generate bodhicitta: “May I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all the transmigratory beings.”

By doing this you collect far more merit than having made offerings of universes equaling the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean—that many filled with diamonds, gold, the seven precious jewels. Also think you are offering to not just one buddha but to all the buddhas equaling the number of the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. Those merits are unbelievable, mind blowing, unbelievable, mind blowing, blowing the mind.

Even offering one jewel to the Buddha, I normally say, offering even one tiny flower, one tiny grain of rice to the Buddha, or even to a statue of the Buddha, a stupa or a scripture, the benefit you can get is inconceivable. If you offer one grain of rice, one single flower or one tiny flower, to a statue or picture of the Buddha, or a stupa—not necessarily with a virtuous motivation, even if it is done with anger, or with attachment to this life, even totally nonvirtuous thought—as long as it’s offered to the Buddha, or to a statue of the Buddha, or a scripture or stupa, even those holy objects of the Buddha, the benefit is inconceivable. It contains all the happiness of samsara that we have experienced so far from beginningless rebirth, and what we will experience in the future, and all the samsaric pleasures that still haven’t finished. The benefit of offering one grain of rice or one tiny flower, even to a picture of the Buddha or a statue of the Buddha, doesn’t finish.

It is said in one sutra, I don’t remember the name of the sutra, it is said by the Buddha, maybe when he explained to Kungawo [Ananda], that the benefits don’t finish until the happiness is complete, only when you achieve liberation, the sorrowless state. Here, liberation is not just the Lesser Vehicle liberation, not just freedom from samsara, not just that, but *great* liberation, enlightenment.

But I think, the good karma or merit still doesn't finish. The result of the merit of this offering of one tiny grain of rice or flower to a picture or statue of a buddha, or a scripture or stupa still doesn't finish, because after you achieve enlightenment then you benefit all sentient beings, you liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, you are still enjoying the result of offering that one tiny grain of rice, that one tiny flower to a statue or picture of a buddha, a scripture or a stupa. You are still enjoying the result of that. That is what I think.

Therefore, the numberless past samsaric pleasures we had, also those in all the future lives, counting like that, it doesn't finish the benefit of offering this one grain of rice or one tiny flower to a picture or statue or a scripture of a buddha. If you offer a jewel instead of a flower, there is no question that the merit is much, much greater. If it is a whole gompā filled with jewels, making an offering to a buddha, you can't imagine the merit. So now here we are talking about making offerings of that many universes equaling the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean, filled with seven types of jewels, and offering to not just one buddha, but buddhas equaling the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. So, you can't imagine these merits; it's beyond imagination; it's really mind-blowing.

Anyway, if you compare this with the benefit of bodhicitta, simply putting your palms together and saying, "May I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all the transmigratory beings," with feeling in your heart, this collects far greater merit than all those other [offerings]. All those others become small. Therefore, for this reason, every day—as you remember I mentioned yesterday—our project in life should be to achieve the realization of bodhicitta. That should be kept in your heart; you should write it down in your daily diary, in your diary or diarrhea book. [Laughter] You should write it in your diary book. The benefit is like that.

With bodhicitta you collect so much merit. Every time you generate bodhicitta, you collect limitless skies of merit, in order to achieve enlightenment, especially to be able to enlighten all sentient beings, to be able to do all these projects, to enlighten numberless sentient beings. It collects so much merit. The bigger the project, the more money you need. You need many billions of dollars, many millions or billions of dollars. Here it is the same. To complete the project, you need so much merit. Therefore, collecting more merit means you are closer to enlightenment. Without bodhicitta you can't collect that extensive merit; it is only with bodhicitta that you can achieve enlightenment.

To achieve enlightenment, you have to complete the two merits, the merit of wisdom and the merit of virtue. There is no question of that. Every time you generate bodhicitta, you collect extensive merit. With bodhicitta every single activity you do, you collect limitless skies of merit. So that's why enlightenment is possible. You can achieve enlightenment if you have bodhicitta. Without it, it is not possible. To complete the two types of merit in order to achieve enlightenment, in our everyday life we should put all our effort into bodhicitta motivation in whatever activity we do.

So, we offer praise, homage to the Buddha, the seven-limb prayer and the short mandala offering to the Buddha before we do the short oral transmission.

[Chanting]

We dedicate the merit of having offered mandala and all those other practices, the seven-limb practice, refuge and bodhicitta.

May all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the three times' merit collected by others, that this time I have met the teachings of the incomparable peerless founder, by your kindness, by this then may all the transmigratory beings also be able to meet you, the sublime leader, the guide, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, and your teachings. Like this may all the other transmigratory beings be able to meet this sublime guide, this leader, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, and your teaching. You who trained the mind in compassion for all us sentient beings for so many eons and sacrificed your life, your family members or possessions, you sacrificed everything and bore hardships for so many eons to actualize the path, to achieve enlightenment and to reveal the teachings, to reveal the path to us. May I also be able to lead the numberless transmigratory suffering beings in this pure path shown by you and cause them to achieve enlightenment.

[Chanting]

The mandala offering to the lama who offers the teaching was already done at the beginning.

[Chanting]

Lecture 7

HOW TO LISTEN TO DHARMA

Every single word of the Dharma heard or read purifies your own negative karma and plants the seed of enlightenment and brings so much peace and happiness in the world and country, and prevents all violence, the turmoil of anger and delusions.

Without a distracted mind, pay attention, concentrate, meditate on the sound of each word. Normally when you listen to the teaching, think of the teacher who is giving the teaching, this is all the buddhas. In other words you listen to the teaching with guru yoga mind. This is the meditation. Think, “This is Guru Shakyamuni Buddha giving me teaching; this is Maitreya Buddha giving me teaching; this is Manjushri, this is Compassionate Buddha, this is Tara—this is all the numberless buddhas giving me teaching.” And then think what every single word does to you by listening. How listening to Dharma words affects you is to liberate you from the oceans of samsaric sufferings. It liberates you from the oceans of samsaric suffering. And it heals you; it ceases all the mental sicknesses, all the delusions from where all the suffering arises. It is as if you yourself are a patient with a severe disease, even a patient with mental sickness, the sickness of all these delusions, from time without beginning, not only from this life's birth. So think, “What listening to every single word does for me is it ceases all these mental sicknesses, these delusions, and liberates me from the oceans of samsaric suffering.” Think like that.

Then pray, “May each word that I listen to benefit all the sentient beings. When I mention it, may they immediately be able to achieve realizations on the path to enlightenment.” You should dedicate in this way. “May every single word that I am listening to benefit all sentient beings and cause me to instantly actualize the path within myself and then also benefit all sentient beings. As

soon as they hear it, may they be able to actualize the path to enlightenment.” You should dedicate like that. Normally when you listen to teachings, this is the way you should listen to every single Dharma word, whether it’s an oral transmission, a commentary or whatever. Then, you dedicate for all sentient beings.

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

[Chanting]

This is the first chapter. This teaching is the secrecy of all the buddhas; it is difficult to find such a teaching, even if we searched for tens of millions of eons. I am going to explain this.

“Whoever listens this sutra teaching, whoever makes other hear, whoever rejoices, whoever makes offering to this teaching,” and then, “devas, nagas, human beings, nonhuman beings...” and then there are other beings but I don’t remember the exact meaning. “Asuras...” so many of those, the wealth-giving devas, and those called harm-givers, “...the wealth-giving devas will make offering to you for tens of millions of eons. And all these sentient beings who collect merit, who listen to this teaching and who cause others to listen to this teaching, who rejoice, and who make offering to this text, the merit that they collect is numberless, inconceivable. Also, they will be guided by buddhas and bodhisattvas, by listening this teaching.”

There is a section I don’t remember, but when the lama comes to give the teaching, it is said when offerings are made with umbrellas and banners, the merit will constantly increase during the teaching. So, the person who receives the lama giving teaching is so precious. Even the person who brings the lama purifies so much. I don’t remember the number, but inconceivable eons of negative karma get purified even just by bringing the lama giving this teaching. Those who do prostrations purify unbelievable negative karma. It is explained somewhere, but I don’t remember the number. You collect inconceivable merit like that.

When the teaching is given, many devas stay around, they even respect the throne. There are so many other instances, but I don’t remember now; I’ve forgotten. After some time, if it comes to me, I’ll explain.

[Chanting]

The number of the page is according to the Tibetan number 58 but this means, by following another text before this, this goes on the back of that page.

THE YOGA OF EATING FOOD

[Food offering]

When we eat food, if we don’t practice the yoga of eating, making offerings, making charity, if we don’t use this opportunity to create positive karma when eating food, the mistake or the problem that arises is that it becomes another cause of samsara. All our actions of eating become another cause of samsara.

Since we don’t want suffering, we don’t want to reincarnate in samsara again and again, we need to renounce the cause of samsara. So one thing, if we eat food with delusions then it becomes

the cause of samsara. This is yet one more additional cause we are creating, like rain, like showers of rain, creating so many causes of samsara all the time. This becomes another cause of samsara that leads us to the continual suffering of samsara. That's one problem. That's one big problem, one *huge* problem.

Then, the other thing is that if we don't make our action of eating food good karma, we are constantly finishing our past merit, we are finishing our past good karma, making it less and less.

Just simply eating food with attachment is the cause of samsara. It becomes negative karma; it becomes the cause of the lower realms. It becomes the cause to reincarnate and experience the most terrible suffering, the unimaginable suffering of the lower realms.

So, there are three major problems. By eating with attachment, the attitude of eating food is only the cause of samsara, of continuous suffering, to reincarnate there. The other problem is that the action of eating food becomes negative karma, attachment, clinging to this life. This is specific attachment, not just attachment but specific attachment—attachment clinging to this life, which is nonvirtue. The action becomes nonvirtue; it makes you reincarnate in the lower realms. The third problem is that the little good karma that you collected in the past is finished.

Therefore, the action of eating food *has* to become Dharma. It has to become Dharma. At least, it shouldn't become the negative karma that causes you to reincarnate in the lower realms, at least that. You have to at least prevent it from becoming the cause of the lower realms. That is the minimum. Even if you cannot make the action of eating food become the cause of enlightenment for sentient beings, the cause of happiness of all sentient beings, at least you yourself are not reborn in the lower realms.

As far as eating food, there is the yoga of eating food. There is a Hinayana way eating food; there is the bodhisattva's way of eating food, and there is the yoga of eating according to tantra, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana way of eating food.

THE YOGA OF EATING FOOD: THE HINAYANA AND THE MAHAYANA WAY OF OFFERING

The Hinayana way of eating food is what the Sangha normally do. They recite the food offering prayer as advised by Nagarjuna, which says you eat this food just to sustain the body in order to practice Dharma, not to develop attachment, not to have a nice, fat, slick body. Of course, in the West, fat is bad! However, in Eastern countries fat is good. So, you eat the food not to be arrogant, just to make the body flexible. The essence is not to eat to be fat or beautiful or to have a good color, just to sustain the body in order to practice Dharma.

Basically, you eat with the renunciation of samsara, not eating with delusion but with detachment from samsara. By eating food like that, you do it to achieve liberation for oneself, to actualize the path. To eat food without attachment or anger is the Hinayana way of eating.

The Mahayana way of eating food is the bodhisattva's way. "For the benefit of all the sentient beings, I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I am going to eat this food." That means that whatever you eat is only to benefit others, to serve others. That is the bodhisattva's way of eating food, the yoga of eating food.

The essence of the Mahayana Secret Mantra Vajrayana way of eating food is to see yourself as oneness with the deity. Without the guru there is no deity, so you are deity and guru, all three in one. Then you purify the food in emptiness and generate it into pure appearance as tsog, communal or tsog offering, that is the combination of nectar and wisdom, which is your own mind. That is what is meant by tsog offering. Then everything you eat or drink is a tsog offering to you the guru deity—to you who are the deity, who are also the deity. Every morsel of food and drop of drink is a tsog offering. By thinking of yourself as guru and making the offering, that also becomes part of guru yoga practice.

By offering to the guru, you collect the most extensive merit, much more merit than having offered to numberless buddhas, numberless Dharma, numberless Sangha, numberless statues of the Buddha, numberless scriptures of the Buddha, numberless stupas of the Buddha. As I gave the example before of the merit collected by offering one tiny flower or a grain of rice to the buddhas, all those merits become small if you compare making an offering to guru. So here, you yourself are the guru, then you make the offering. To see yourself as the deity and make the offering creates so much merit, but to see yourself as the guru-deity creates so much more.

You can also think that in your heart of yourself is guru deity, there is either syllable HUM or the deity, like body mandala, depending which deity you are practicing. Cittamani Tara, Heruka or Vajrayogini have the body mandala practice. There are many deities to visualize. But still, your heart holds the merit field, with the guru, and that is everything, that's the embodiment of everything—all the merit field, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, as well as bodhisattvas, arhats and Dharma protectors. Then you make the tsog offering and every time you take a spoonful of food or a sip of drink you collect the most extensive merit. Because the merit field contains numberless buddhas, numberless Dharma, numberless Sangha, you collect infinite merit.

Another way is to offer the burning puja with two hands, one is the *gang sur*, one is *gang gu*. *Gang sur* has butter and other substances which you hold and then give to the fire. When you offer fire puja, you offer into the mouth of the deity of whichever retreat you have done. So here you offer to yourself as guru-deity, offering to the mouth, then you experience bliss.

That tantric practice—the tsog offering or offering burning fire puja, the yoga of eating food—is done on the basis of bodhicitta. In another words, it is done on the basis of those other two practices.

With the Mahayana, the bodhisattva's way of eating food, every single [action of] eating and drinking is for the benefit of all sentient beings. So you generate bodhicitta while you are eating and drinking, for the benefit of all sentient beings, with that continual thought of benefiting other sentient beings. Then with every single morsel of food or drop of drink, you collect limitless skies of merit. That makes your life so rich in merit; it makes life so meaningful during those hours of eating food, especially if you are eating for many hours. Ongoing, ongoing food, ongoing eating, until you become enlightened! [Laughter] Until you experience so much bliss in your stomach and it crashes the stomach, the stomach can't stand any more bliss and it bursts.

With the tantra practice, tsog offering, you don't receive pollution from that. People offering purely with devotion can receive pollution, especially if you are not practicing pure morality, then it becomes very dangerous. It is said it becomes the same as licking or drinking molten iron. There's a particular iron in Tibetan, *trok*, I am not sure whether it's lead or not. So it's the same

as drinking molten liquid or licking a red-hot container, like the hell realm beings are forced to do. With this pollution it is difficult to develop the realization of the path to enlightenment.

But when you eat or drink, if you do this yoga of eating the tantric way, the tsog offering or the fire puja, [on the basis of bodhicitta], then you don't receive pollution, you have no danger to receive pollution—all those dangers, those causes of the lower realms, the hell realm. It is like turning poison into medicine. Without this practice it is like eating poison, drinking poison, but then with this practice, it becomes like medicine. With every bite and every sip, you collect inconceivable merit and it only becomes the quick path to enlightenment. It only becomes the quick path to enlightenment, to achieve enlightenment quickly.

So maybe I'll stop there.

Generate bodhicitta. “The purpose of my life is to free all the sentient beings from all the suffering causes, and bring them to enlightenment, therefore I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I am going to do the yoga of eating and make food offering, the charity to all sentient beings.”

I left out one thing in the bodhisattva's yoga of eating food. It is mentioned that the bodhisattva's yoga of eating food is making charity to all creatures, to all sentient beings who are living in your own body, so you should think like this.

So here, think, “I am making charity to all sentient beings, including all sentient beings living in my body and bringing them to enlightenment by revealing the Dharma when they become human beings.” Through the connection you are making with them now, by making offering to them as they live in your body, when they finally become human beings, you will be able to reveal the Dharma to them.

Then all the food in the kitchen also becomes empty. What appears real from its own side, you see as empty, is not existing at all in reality. There is food there, but the food that appears as not merely labeled, that doesn't exist at all. It appears as not merely labeled—the food is empty of that. So then think, as you label the jewel container, then nectar appears. So from ordinary food, it turns into nectar. Then you offer oceans of nectar, uncontaminated and in the nature of great bliss. Now offer. The simple way is to offer to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha or the elaborate way is to the merit field. Either way, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is all the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, then all ten directions' holy objects.

OM AH HUM OM AH HUM OM AH HUM—the blessing.

Then offer to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, all the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, all the ten directions' holy objects. Generate bliss, instant bliss. Now you offer these oceans of nectar, food, to all the ten directions' Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, by meditating that their essence is the virtuous friend, from one's own side.

Then the oceans of nectar offered to all the ten directions' statues, stupas, scriptures, all the holy objects, by seeing their essence is the root guru, one's virtuous friend.

Generate bliss. Then offer to the seven Medicine Buddhas for success—I am not going to elaborate—and to bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, to be able to instantly fulfill the wishes of all

sentient beings and for their happiness. Then offer to the Thousand-arm Chenrezig, to be able to generate compassion so that you can take full responsibility to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings.

After this, make charity to every hell being. They accept it and enjoy it. Then, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every sura being, every asura being, every intermediate state being. They all enjoy it and it causes them to be free from all the defilements and negative karma, delusion, and liberates them from all the sufferings, actualizing the whole path and becoming enlightened. Everyone becomes enlightened. Every hell being becomes enlightened. And the same with all the rest.

You can visualize Shakyamuni Buddha. Even if you haven't received the great initiation you can visualize Shakyamuni Buddha. You can do the whole practice.

DEDICATION

Now dedicate. We collect numberless merit with the bodhicitta motivation; we collect numberless merit by offering to the gurus; and we collect numberless merit by offering to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. We collect three times' numberless merit. Then [by offering to] all the many holy objects, [we collect] three times' merit again. So [by offering to] all the numberless holy objects, we collect numberless merits. And then by having made charity to all sentient beings, we also collect numberless merits, many times' numberless merits are collected.

Due to all the past, present and future merit collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, the numberless sentient beings who died for this food, the numberless sentient beings who died in the preparation of this food, the numberless sentient beings who created negative karma harming others in the preparation of this food. Then the numberless sentient beings who suffered and the numberless sentient beings who died in the preparation of this food that we are going to eat—every single grain of rice, every single piece of whatever food—may all those sentient beings never be separated from the Triple Gem, the Guru-Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and always be able to collect merit by making offering, and receive blessings of the Triple Gem, that which is realization from guru devotion up to enlightenment, especially bodhicitta, clear light. May it be actualized within our own heart, in the hearts of all those sentient beings, who have suffered or died for this food, creating negative karma, and in the hearts all the rest of the sentient beings. So dedicate like that.

It is very important to dedicate for all the numberless sentient beings who died, who suffered, for this food. It is very important to offer some benefit to them because this food came from them. Numberless of them died, suffered, created negative karma giving harm to others. So pray like this.

Then the last one.

Dedicate the merits to achieve enlightenment, which makes inexhaustible merit, then also by sealing with emptiness it is protected from anger and heresy. This is the way to dedicate merits. This is the perfect way to dedicate merits.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, that which exists but which is empty from its own side, which does not exist from its

own side, that which is totally empty. May the I, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, and lead all the sentient beings who exist but do not exist from their own side, who are totally empty to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment which exists but does not exist from its own side, which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

So this way of dedicating merit is so essential. Even if you don't do any other dedication, at least one is very essential, do not miss this way of dedicating merit at end of each practice.

[Chanting]

Thank you. So, please enjoy.

Lecture 8

FINDING THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

Before the oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*, I want to do the oral transmission of a lamrim prayer, *The Condensed Essence of the Path to Enlightenment*.¹ I received the oral transmission of this from the Mongolian lama, Geshe Senge Rinpoche, who was in Tibet, studying at Sera Monastery.

After Mao Zedong passed away, there was a little freedom and a small number of monks could do some study. During the twenty years of revolution, the hardest time, they had to do many terrible things; they were obliged to kill animals such as goats and many things like that, otherwise they would be badly punished. Geshe-la wasn't like others who had to do many things and the monks all had high respect for him, so when a little freedom returned to the monasteries they appointed him to be the abbot of Sera Je Monastery in Tibet. He was abbot for five years.

I wished to receive the complete teachings of the special deity of Sera Je, Most Secret Hayagriva, and I was looking for somebody to give these complete teachings so I went to Geshe Senge Rinpoche, who in his previous life had been Ketsang Rinpoche, the incarnate lama who found the fourteenth Dalai Lama.

After the thirteenth Dalai Lama died, Ketsang Rinpoche went to Amdo in disguise to look for his reincarnation. He disguised himself as a beggar to examine what the very little child, the possible incarnation, could recognize. He was wearing the thirteenth Dalai Lama's mala and had his stick. Ketsang Rinpoche went to Palden Lhamo Lake, the lake that belongs the protector of the Tibetan government and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Palden Lhamo is another manifestation of Tara in the form of a protector.

There are many lakes in Tibet, not only that one, with different protectors, such as the Twenty-one Taras lake that gives prediction for your life. If you have a question, it's like watching TV. In

¹ This prayer now has the title [*A Direct Meditation on the Graduated Path Containing All the Important Meanings*](#). It is composed by Dorje Chang Lozang Jinpa.

the West, it's TV; in Tibet it's the lake. In Tibet the lake gives you a prediction; it answers whatever question you have, and that is how these lakes are usually used. It shows your future. Many people who want to look for the incarnation of their gurus or lama of their country or monastery go there and then they wait, spending many hours. They do their protector practice and then some hours later they find the answer. Sometimes it comes in the form of syllables; sometimes it shows the actual person or the family, the mother or the father.

At one time, after a lama from Makhamba [?] passed away, the lama's manager went to look for the incarnation in that lake. He went with other people but he didn't see anything even though he stayed all day, but then, after everybody left, when he was alone he saw everything. He saw the family, the mother and child—the incarnation—playing, running around. He also saw the protector of that lama of the past life was also there guarding the child, also playing, running around. The child and the protector were doing this together.

I think he and his manager were in Lhasa when I went to Tibet for the first time. I got a relic of Lama Tsongkhapa from that lama. Lama Tsongkhapa gave a tooth to his disciple, Khedrup Rinpoche. Usually there are two statues of his heart disciples, Khedrup Rinpoche and Gyaltsab Rinpoche, on either side of a Lama Tsongkhapa statue. There are nine relics, like a mala of pearls, that came from this tooth. The manager might have had quite a number. I got one and the lama wanted to give me more, but the manager stopped him.[Rinpoche laughs]

So anyway, when the little child who became the fourteenth Dalai Lama heard that somebody had come, he immediately said the name of the incarnate lama, "Alak," in Amdo dialect. This little child called that, and he said, "This is my mala." He took the mala the lama was wearing and put it around his own neck. Then after that he said, "This is my stick." He was able to recognize all this. He was very happy to meet this lama, Ketsang Rinpoche, who came there to examine him. Even though Rinpoche saw this in the lake, he still wanted to examine the incarnation, so he disguised himself in the form of a beggar.

I heard this story from an old monk when we visited His Holiness' palace, the Potala, in Tibet. There are six rooms they don't normally show people but at that time they showed us everything. They have a very clever way of disguising these rooms so other people don't see them. They showed us the rooms where His Holiness had his meals or received teachings from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche, the elder tutor, where he memorized, where the government met, where there were official functions and things like that. The monk was very elderly and very spiritual. Although it is very dangerous, he recited the long-life prayer for His Holiness for our group. There was a security camera there, like you have in supermarkets to check if anybody is stealing. I'm sure he knew he was being filmed but he still recited the prayer.

When the old monk told us the story of the finding of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, in the end he said that when His Holiness was about four years old, he said, "I am the one who does the work for all sentient beings." When I heard those words, I burst out crying and cried for some time. I cried so much the old monk had to help me wipe my nose. All because of those words: "I am the one who does the work for all sentient beings."

It's true. If you look at the qualities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, if you look at the work he does, you'll see it's true. He represents all the buddhas, he is the embodiment of all the buddhas' compassion, working for sentient beings, taking full responsibility—not only for Tibetans but for the whole world, and not only people but all sentient beings, taking full responsibility to liberate

all beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering. This is what we have been hearing about and what we have been meditating on. There is still the outline of the sufferings we have been reading and hearing about—all those oceans of samsaric suffering. So, it is very true when the four-year-old Dalai Lama said, “I am the one who works for all the sentient beings.” That shows the extent of his compassion, the compassion that makes all the buddhas work for sentient beings and not even for one second working for themselves. With the great bodhisattvas and the buddhas, seeking happiness for themselves does not even arise for one second.

There are numberless sentient beings who have different characteristics, different levels of intelligence, different karma, therefore because of the buddhas’ compassion, they manifest in various forms of tantric deities. Even Chenrezig, the Compassion Buddha, has many hundreds of different aspects. There are many different aspects of Vajrapani and many different aspects of Tara. Even with the Twenty-one Taras, there are different sets of Twenty-one Taras. Even with one buddha, there are many different aspects. And then there are the thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon. For example, there are the Thirty-five Confession Buddhas, particularly to purify the negative karma of sentient beings. Some have different functions for developing wisdom and long life and many manifest in certain forms to protect sentient beings against certain harm, such as disease and things like that. All this is compassion. So, His Holiness is the whole essence of the compassion of all the buddhas. This fits exactly with what the child said and what His Holiness now does. We can see that when we see the qualities of His Holiness and the work he does.

So Ketsang Rinpoche’s incarnation told me when I met him in Dharamsala, in the room of this deity, Most Secret Hayagriva, that in Tibet there is a lama called Geshe Senge who has the whole lineage of this deity. I hoped to meet him and receive the whole lineage, all the transmissions of this deity. Then, at a Kalachakra initiation in Bodhgaya, surprisingly, there was Geshe Senge. He was the ex-abbot of Sera Je and a very senior monk, but he came as a friend, not as a teacher. He is one of the main teachers of this world, so learned in the extensive philosophy of Buddhism, in the pure forms of debate, in special study. He is so special, in this world, on this earth. There are other monasteries that debate, but nothing like the extensive forms or with the depth that happen in Sera, Ganden and Drepung. There are also smaller ones, but the major ones, the biggest ones, are like universities. He was one of the main teachers who educated many hundreds and hundreds of young monks. Many of our Kopan monks went there and he was the main teacher who educated them, who gave them a very good understanding of Dharma, very clear and deep, with very good debating and analytical skills. He was one of the main teachers who taught all the monks who went from Kopan to Sera in south India.

Ketsang Rinpoche’s incarnation informed me that Geshe Senge was there, and he sort of persuaded me to go see him. So I spent two or three days checking because I hadn’t made the Dharma connection yet—I was checking whether it is good or not. I did many divinations. It’s good to make sure before you make a connection. Of course, that doesn’t mean I am a good example for the guru devotion practice.

LIBERATING ANIMALS

When I was coming from the airport there was a goat on the road, going off to be killed, so I said I would buy it. It took a little bit time for Shenphen, the monk driver, to check, because the husband was upstairs. He had to explain to the wife, then the wife told her husband that they would collect merit if they offered the goat to the lama but the husband said no, that people

would pay good money for the meat. He put the price at 6,000 rupees, something like that, but we bargained it down to 4,000 rupees. [Laughter] That's why I took my time. I was sitting in the car and I didn't realize how long it took. The husband was saying that the goat was just about to be killed and people would come to get the meat, and he and his wife would have no meat, and things like that, so that takes time.

I was going to chant some powerful mantras for purification. When you liberate animals, it is good to save their lives but it is extremely beneficial if you can also recite prayers in their ears, some lamrim prayers and the *Heart Sutra* and especially purifying mantras. Any buddha's mantra but especially those mantras of deities who are powerful in purifying, especially if you can recite those in the ear of the animals. That makes it extremely meaningful; it purifies so much negative karma and plants the seed of enlightenment. It plants the seed of enlightenment and it causes them to receive a higher rebirth in the next life. This way is much more worthwhile; it makes the life of the animal extremely worthwhile. By leaving positive imprints on mind, it directs them in their next life to meet the Dharma, and then their life gets better and better, all the way to enlightenment. This way you *really* liberate the animal. You really liberate the being from the lower realms, not right away like that, but reciting these prayers is what affects the mind, what prepares the mind, all the way up to enlightenment. It is good to just save their lives but if you can do this extra thing, it makes a huge difference, the difference between the earth and the sky.

Since I am reading the *Golden Light Sutra*, what I wanted was to get the cows and all the other creatures to come around, assuming that they can hear, so I could chant some mantras, but that never happened. So to combine two things, while I am reading the sutra, we'll have a few goats here.

LAMRIM PRAYER: INTRODUCTION

I did two or three days of divination whether to make Dharma connection with Geshe Senge or not. Then the ex-abbot who is my friend, Geshe Lobsang, said he is so inspiring. He told me, "Go! Go! Go!" So, I went to see him. He was in a tent, not in a hotel, with so many monks. He was sitting in the door of the tent, facing out. When I saw him, it looked like he was an old friend, not like seeing him for the first time. The feeling was we had met before. Anyway, he is a great, great teacher, who is learned, good-hearted and pure and everything. So, it is very fortunate to have met him and made a Dharma connection with him. I have received this short lamrim prayer, this lamrim teaching, from Geshe-la's holy mouth in Dharamsala.

It was composed by a very high lama from Sera Je, called Dorje Chang Lozang Jinpa Rinpoche, who is the embodiment of Maitreya Buddha. So this is a very, very good prayer. I translated this many years ago, at the beginning of the book called *The Wish-fulfilling Golden Sun*,² that we used in the early times of Kopan courses, when Kopan was very primitive. I taught the eight worldly dharmas for many days and the hell realms for many days—the eight worldly dharmas and the hell realms. The people then were very aware of the hell realms. They went for lunch under the bodhi tree and then all the smell of *kaka*, all the smell of toilets down below, all that *deep* toilet smell, comes. Here they were all eating food and here was the smell from the toilets, so that's what I meant by "primitive," that Kopan was very primitive.

² Read [The Wish-fulfilling Golden Sun](http://www.lamayeshe.com) online at www.lamayeshe.com or [download a PDF](#).

There was an American nun called Thubten Pemo who was leading the course. She told me it was not easy to sit in the room, with all the teachings on the eight worldly dharmas and the hell realms, followed by lunch and the smell from the toilets as they were eating. Anyway, with all those conditions, people did the courses.

Here, with the title, it says “Here is the complete meaning of the importance of the direct meditation on the steps of the path to enlightenment.”

THE AIM IS TO ATTAIN ENLIGHTENMENT

I want to bring up the issue I mentioned yesterday again. You shouldn't be satisfied with just some peace of mind. The purpose of meditation is not just for some peace of mind, like when you go to the beach and your mind is distracted from your problems by the water. You don't think of your problems, so you have some kind of peace. Your mind is distracted from the problems when you see the water, so you think you don't have any problems, which gives some kind of peace. There are many examples like that. Meditation shouldn't just be like that. The happiness of this life is just for a very short term, and it is only some partial happiness.

As I mentioned, if you only look for the next second's happiness but you don't look for the happiness of all the coming seconds—you don't prepare for that but only for this moment's, this second's happiness—that is totally silly, totally ignorant. Likewise, seeking only the happiness of this life is just silly. We don't know how many hours we have to live. We're not sure how many more minutes there are in this life. The happiness of all the coming future lives, that's very long-term happiness. Of course, it is good not to suffer, but even if you have to suffer in this life so that you do not have to suffer for all the coming future lives and you have happiness, that is much wiser. To bear hardships in this life, then to have happiness all the coming future lives, that is very wise.

This is good to remember when we feel bored or tired or we become lazy and don't want to practice. It is said in the texts:

One who only seeks small happiness cannot achieve great happiness.
One who seeks comfort now cannot achieve the happiness of all future lives,
Nor can they achieve liberation from samsara or full enlightenment.
One who bears the hardships now and renounces laziness,
Can achieve the happiness of future lives,
Liberation from samsara and full enlightenment.

I don't remember the words exactly. If we can renounce comfort and laziness now, if we can bear the hardships now, we can attain great happiness, up to full enlightenment. This is how practitioners like Milarepa attained enlightenment in a few years. You will see this if you read his biography. You must read his life story.

I want to tell you this. When you meditate on the lamrim every day you must use it to develop your mind, even if you are studying philosophy extensively, otherwise you are just collecting information, like putting information into a computer or recording things on a tape recorder. You are just collecting information. So, when you meditate on the lamrim, at the same time you are developing your mind in the path. That's what the lamrim is for, to integrate the vast

teachings of the Buddha. While you are doing that, it gives you energy, it gives you courage to overcome delusions, attachment, emotional problems, any obstacles that happen.

The other thing that is very helpful to support your mind, to help you continue to practice the Dharma, to give your courage, [is to read biographies like Milarepa's]. When your mind is weak and you get overwhelmed by attachment, you can't practice, you can't meditate, you can't keep the vows—the lay or ordained vows. If you are weak, then you give up everything. This is one example. What gives you courage, continuous courage, is reading Milarepa's life story or Lama Tsongkhapa's life story, reading the stories of many great Indian and Tibetan pandits or yogis from the past and also maybe the present. To read their life stories—how those high lamas practiced Dharma, how they achieved realizations and attained enlightenment—is very important. As much as possible, this protects your mind and inspires you to practice continuously. Now there are more and more translations in English, and of course if you read Tibetan, there are so many.

The inspiration you get from reading life stories like this is like the fire on the stove that keeps burning until the food is cooked. When you read their life stories and see how they renounced their delusions, their attachment, it is so inspiring; it gives you so much courage and devotion. The stories of the great lamas give you so much advice on how to live your life, how to solve your difficulties. Seeing how they gave up their lives for others, you get the courage to let go of the I and cherish other sentient beings. You get the courage to practice renunciation.

So anyway, I just mentioned Milarepa's life story. I thought to bring up that issue. As a source of inspiration, that's a very good technique to continue your life in Dharma. If the happiness you want to achieve is the happiness of future lives, then you must practice the lamrim, the graduated path of the lower capable being in general. And if the happiness you want to achieve is the liberation from samsara, then you must practice the lamrim, the graduated path of the middle capable being in general, renunciation of samsara and the three higher trainings. If the happiness you want to achieve is full enlightenment, then you must practice the graduated path of the higher capable being—bodhicitta, the six perfections and so forth, and you must learn and practice the five Mahayana paths.

On top that, if you want to achieve enlightenment quickly so you can enlighten sentient beings quickly and so they don't have to suffer for a long time, what you need is to actualize tantra, the tantric path, and especially Highest Yoga Tantra, where you can achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate time within a few years. If you can, that is the quickest way to enlighten sentient beings.

Achieving enlightenment by practicing the graduated path of the higher capable being, including tantra, depends on the preliminary, actualizing the graduated path of the middle capable being, and that depends on the preliminary, actualizing the graduated path of the lower capable being.

What makes actualizing the whole path successful, from perfect human rebirth to enlightenment, the root of it all, is guru devotion, correctly devoting yourself to the virtuous friend. After you have found the guru by analyzing, then correctly devoting yourself to the virtuous friend with thought and action. That is the root of the whole path to enlightenment.

LAMRIM PRAYER: ORAL TRANSMISSION

I will read the English translation so then you get the oral transmission and it also becomes a commentary at the same time.

Essence encompassing all the buddhas,
Originator of all the holy Dharma of scripture and realization,
Principal of all the aryas intending virtue:
In the glorious holy gurus, I take refuge.³

So, then next one:

Please, gurus, bless my mind to become Dharma,
Dharma to become the path,
And the path to be without obstacles.

These three requests contain the whole lamrim. “My mind to become Dharma” becomes the graduated path of the lower capable being and general. “Dharma to become the path” is the graduated path of middle capable being and general. “The path to be without obstacles” is the graduated path of higher capable being. So, the whole path to enlightenment is contained within these three requests.

Then, the next one:

Until I achieve buddhahood, please bless me
To be like Youthful Norsang and Bodhisattva Always Crying
In correctly following the virtuous friend with pure thought and action,
Seeing whatever is done as pure,
And accomplishing whatever is said and advised.

When you have pure thought, devotion—by looking at the guru as a buddha, by seeing the guru as a buddha, with devotion—then your actions also become pure. Whatever action is done, to be able to see it as pure, and whatever advice is given [by the guru], to be able to follow it exactly. So we ask for that blessing.

That part is a section on guru devotion, correctly devoting to the virtuous friend.

Now, the next one:

Please bless me to see that this greatly meaningful body with freedoms and riches
Is difficult to find and easily perishes,
That action and result are so profound,
And that the sufferings of the evil-gone transmigratory beings are so difficult to bear.
Therefore, please bless me to take refuge from the depths of my heart in the Three Rare Sublime Ones,
To abandon negative karma, and to accomplish virtue according to Dharma.

That section of the lamrim, the steps of the path to enlightenment, is the lower capable being.

³ The verses quoted here are from an updated translation of this prayer. You can find it [on the LYWA website](#) and in the FPMT booklet [*The Method to Transform a Suffering Life into Happiness \(Including Enlightenment\)*](#) (2018 edition).

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve the mere higher rebirth of a deva or human,
I will still have to experience suffering endlessly in samsara
Because of not having abandoned, and being under the control of, the disturbing thought
obscurations.
Therefore, please bless me to reflect well upon the way of circling in samsara
And to continuously follow, day and night,
The path of the three types of precious trainings—
The principal method for becoming free from samsara.

“In dependence upon that,” means by depending on the previous practice—realizing the body is so precious, qualified with eight freedoms and ten richnesses and highly meaningful, difficult to find again, impermanent and easy to perish. Then, understanding karma and the unbearable sufferings of the lower realms. With this understanding we go for refuge, then by protecting karma, we practice Dharma. By depending on that, even if we have achieved merely the state of a higher rebirth, as a deva or human being, but have not abandoned the delusions, we are still in samsara and we will have to experience suffering without end. By reflecting well on the circling in samsara, the way we evolve in samsara, we then ask to be granted blessings to be free from this. The principal method to liberate oneself from samsara is the three higher trainings and to be able to practice this, day and night, not only daytime practice, but the whole circle, day and night.

This section of the lamrim is the graduated path of the middle capable being.

Then it says:

In dependence upon that, even if I achieve mere liberation,
Since there is no sentient being of the six types who has not been my father and mother,
Please bless me to think, “I must fulfill their purpose,”
And turn away from the lower happiness of nirvana.
Then, please bless me to generate precious bodhicitta
By equalizing and exchanging myself with others,
And to follow the conduct of the conquerors’ sons, the six paramitas and so forth.

By depending on the previous practice, we no longer have to suffer continuously in samsara, because of not having abandoned delusion and being under the control of karma and delusions, and having practiced the three precious higher trainings—the higher training of morality, the higher training of concentration and the higher training of wisdom. So now, even if I myself have achieved this mere liberation, of all the sentient beings of the six types, there is not one who has not been my father or my mother. Therefore, I will generate the thought that I will do the work for all these sentient beings.

In this way, we change our own mind from the mind seeking liberation, lower nirvana, seeking liberation just for oneself. We change the attitude that is seeking only ultimate happiness for oneself and ask to be granted blessings to be able to generate bodhicitta through the method of equalizing and exchanging oneself for others. Then, we ask to be granted blessings to be able to practice the bodhisattva’s conduct, the six paramitas and so forth.

That section is the graduated path of the higher capable being.

Now, the next:

Having trained my mind in the common path in that way,
I will not be upset even if I have to experience the sufferings of samsara for a long time.
However, please bless me to look at sentient beings with extraordinary unbearable compassion,
And to enter the quick path of the Vajrayana teachings.
Then, please bless me to protect my vows and samayas more than my life,
And to quickly accomplish the unified Vajradhara state
In one brief lifetime of this degenerate time.

What it is saying is this: normally, we always cherish our life, we always try to protect it every second of every twenty-four hours. We are always so careful to protect ourselves from any harm, even from wrong food or diet, getting sick, the cause of death—there are so many conditions that are harmful. So we always protect our life, that we cherish the most. So, here it says that we protect our samaya vow, taken during an initiation, just as we protect our own life.

Then, “Please grant me blessings to be able to achieve the unified state of Vajradhara quickly in this brief lifetime of degenerated time.” That part is the graduated path of the secret mantra Vajrayana of the great capable being.

This is a direct meditation on the whole of the lamrim, the steps of the path to enlightenment. It was composed by Vajradhara Lozang Jinpa. I think maybe, I am not a hundred percent sure, but maybe he was Lama Tsongkhapa’s disciple, a direct or indirect disciple, one of the lamas that completed the path to enlightenment. I received this *lung* from Geshe Senge Rinpoche. This is extremely good to use to meditate on lamrim or to use as a motivation.

This way you have received the oral transmission of this, which is in *The Wish-fulfilling Golden Sun*. which I taught so long ago that now even I can’t remember.

Anyway, please have tea.

Lecture 9

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: MOTIVATION FOR ORAL TRANSMISSION

This morning I mentioned page 158, remember?

So again, as we have just heard, generate the motivation of bodhicitta.

The numberless hell beings, every one of them is a source from whom I have received all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment. They are the most precious, most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all the sufferings and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

Then, the numberless hungry ghosts, from each of them I receive all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment, everything. They are the most precious, most kind ones in

my life. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

The numberless animals, from each of them I receive all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment, everything. They are the most precious, most kind ones in my life. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

The numberless human beings, from each of them I receive all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment, everything. They are the most precious, most kind ones in my life. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

The numberless suras and asuras, from each of them I receive all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment, everything. They are the most precious, most kind ones in my life. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

The intermediate state beings, from each of them I receive all my past, present and future happiness, realizations, enlightenment, everything. They are the most precious, most kind ones in my life. Therefore, I must free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

Therefore I must achieve enlightenment, I *must* achieve enlightenment. For that I need to actualize the path, therefore I need to purify all the defilements and negative karma and collect extensive merit—the merit of wisdom and merit of virtue.

Therefore I am going to take the oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*, one of the most precious teachings of the Buddha, which, as I mentioned before, collects the most extensive, innumerable amount of merit by listening to each word. It becomes unbelievable purification. All the negative karma gets purified by listening to each word, which plants the seed of the whole path to enlightenment; which has incredible power and benefit; which brings peace and happiness in this world, in this country, at home—wherever this holy text is, it brings so much peace and happiness, prosperity and protection.

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: THE BENEFITS OF HEARING THE TEXT

When I carry this text on the plane, I think that it becomes protection for the flight, for all the passengers, for their safety. So, when you have some danger or sickness or something, it is said in the teachings that even just remembering the name “Golden Light Sutra” seems to stop that danger or sickness.

In Malaysia, when I was staying in a wealthy couple’s house, we went out to dinner and as soon as I ate the first spoon of rice a toothache started. Somehow, at that time I remembered what the teaching said, that remembering even the name “Golden Light Sutra” stops illness. As soon as I remembered that, the discomfort and pain of the toothache immediately went. It just started with this first spoon of rice, then remembering this it immediately was stopped. I guess it was maybe some involvement of spirits, I am not sure what.

So, every single word that you listen to is for the benefit of all sentient beings, to be able to benefit, to bring peace and happiness to all sentient beings, particularly in this world, in Nepal, and then in your own home, your family.

[Oral transmission]

I have finished the front page, then the back page needs to be read.

DEDICATION

About refuge and precepts, refuge was already explained this morning. Without food in the stomach, refuge and precepts might be difficult. [Laughter] Maybe it doesn't go here, it passes through. It passes through, like the wind. So anyway, it's better to have food. So maybe we'll do that after dinner, after dinner with a half sleep.

[Chanting]

So the same. The inconceivable merit we have collected by listening to each word of the *Golden Light Sutra*, the precious teaching of the Buddha, listening and transmitting the lineage, all the three times' merit collected by myself and the three times' merit collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated in the heart of myself, in my family members, in all of us here and all the students and benefactors of this organization, who give up their lives for this organization doing service for sentient beings and then in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

Then the second one, particularly the sentient beings in this world. The third one, to generate bodhicitta in the hearts of all the leaders of this world, and as well, to generate bodhicitta without delaying even a second in all the terrorists, in all their hearts, the Maoists and all the people, all the different groups, whatever they are called, who are harming the world, causing so many problems to others.

[Chanting]

Due all to these merits of listening to and transmitting the *Golden Light Sutra*, by generating bodhicitta, loving kindness, compassion, in the hearts of everyone in this world and all sentient beings, may all their actions become only virtue, may they live their lives only benefiting each other, never giving harm. In this way, may they prosper and only create good karma. May they enjoy external prosperity and all the perfect enjoyment. May there be no economic problems, and also inner prosperity, the realizations of the path to enlightenment. So like that, may the whole world, globally, be filled with peace and happiness, as well as every individual person's life, be filled with peace and happiness. And may they all achieve enlightenment quickly.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, that which are merely labeled by mind, may I, who is also merely labeled by mind, lead all the sentient beings to achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, and then lead all the sentient beings, who are also merely labeled by mind, to that enlightenment, which is merely labeled by mind, by myself alone, who is also merely labeled by mind.

I dedicate all the merits to follow what the buddhas Samantabhadra and Manjughosha realized, to able to follow, in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicated their merit. May the general teachings and the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa spread in all the directions and may they flourish forever in this world, by being completely actualized in my own heart and in the hearts of all of us, in the hearts of all the students and the benefactors.

[Chanting]

Please enjoy the nectar.

REFUGE: THE BENEFITS OF OFFERING TO THE BUDDHA, DHARMA AND SANGHA

As I said, it is mentioned in the lamrim teachings, the benefit of having refuge in our own heart is that we become an inner being. Refuge is like the door for entering the Buddhadharma. The door through which we enter the path to enlightenment is bodhicitta.

The door through which we enter the secret mantra, the Vajrayana, is to take a great initiation—not a *jenang*, not just the blessing, the permission to practice the holy body, holy speech, holy mind of the deity—the great empowerment, that is the door of the secret mantra Vajrayana.

The door through which we enter the Buddhadharma is refuge. By having refuge we enter into the Buddhadharma. Without having refuge, we have not entered into the Buddhadharma. It is defined like that. All the negative karma collected in the past from beginningless rebirths is purified by having refuge in the heart. Then we collect extensive merits instantly, immediately.

If we want to grow crops in a field, we can't plant them any time we want; it depends on the season. We can only plant in the right season, and we can only harvest at the right time. That is not so with the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, with the holy objects such as statues, stupas and scriptures. We can collect merit twenty-four hours a day. The only question is from our own side—whether from our own side we are unable to collect merit, unable to take the opportunity, unable to practice—otherwise there is no limitation from the side of the merit field.

There is no question; whatever offering we make toward the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha such as making prostrations or offerings, even just to statues, stupas and scriptures of the Buddha, the minute it is done it has infinite results; we collect inconceivable merit. It has the result of inconceivable happiness.

I don't remember all the words but in the sutra the Buddha explained four or five times that the minute we make offering to holy objects, the result is numberless and unconceivable, the merit is fathomless and the result is happiness. The Buddha explained this.

If we offer a grain of rice or a tiny flower to even a statue or picture of the Buddha the result is inconceivable. This is explained in the sutra. All the samsaric pleasures that we experienced from beginningless rebirth up to now, all comfort and all the samsaric pleasure that we'll be experiencing in the future, all that is still not enough—it is still nothing compared to offering one tiny grain of rice or one tiny flower to a statue of the Buddha, or a stupa or scripture, to any of them. All that happiness, all those past samsaric pleasures that we experienced from beginningless rebirth and that we will experience in the future, altogether doesn't finish covering

the benefit, the result, of this offering of one tiny grain of rice or a flower to a statue, stupa or scripture of the Buddha.

The Buddha says that until we achieve liberation, the sorrowless state, the result of happiness doesn't finish. But here liberation is not just liberation from samsara. There is great liberation, full enlightenment. In my view, we still don't finish the result of that [offering]. Why? Because after achieving great liberation, enlightenment, then we liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. So, we are still enjoying the result of that offering, that one grain of rice or tiny flower we offered to a statue, stupa or scripture of the Buddha, one of these holy objects.

Can you imagine? The result, the benefit, of this good karma, of offering one single grain of rice or one tiny flower to a picture, a statue, a stupa or a scripture of the Buddha is infinite; the resulting happiness is infinite. It's unconceivable. This contains all the samsaric pleasure from beginningless rebirth, now and in the future and on top of that we actualize the whole path to liberation and the whole path to enlightenment. We achieve the Buddha's holy body, speech and mind which has infinite qualities—the Buddha's speech which has infinite qualities and the Buddha's holy mind which has infinite qualities. So, you see all that we achieve from this offering of one grain of rice or one tiny flower to a holy object: a picture, statue, stupa or scripture of the Buddha.

If we really understand the benefit of this, the resultant good karma is unconceivable. Then after that we liberate numberless sentient beings who are locked in unimaginable suffering and we bring them to enlightenment, causing them to actualize the whole path to enlightenment. It's incredible that we are able to guide even one sentient being, to reveal the various methods, the various manifestations, that lead from life to life, from happiness to happiness, to enlightenment.

So, karma is a very important subject; it is not a small subject. It's very extensive. In a positive way, the result of good actions is unbelievable. And also in a negative way, the result of negative result is unbearable. In this case, this is good karma with the merit field, with the holy objects of Buddha.

By having refuge in the mind, by having faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, it makes it so easy in life to collect extensive merit, the cause of happiness. It is so easy to create the cause of success, of happiness. We can do that twenty-four hours a day. There is no limitation from the side of the object. The only question is from our own side, whether we practice or not, whether we take the opportunity or not.

Merit is not like money, like gold. The currency market goes up and down. Gold prices go up and down but here, by offering or prostrating to these holy objects, the statues, stupas, scriptures, the holy objects of the Buddha, the benefit we get from that never varies. There is no such thing as now it is low, now it is higher. There is no such thing. There is no such thing as decreasing, for example, when the value of gold sometimes goes down. Sometimes a particular currency is higher than another and sometimes it's lower. But here, the amount of merit we collect from even a small offering, like the example of a grain of rice or a flower offered to a picture of the Buddha, always remains. I just gave an idea from the sutra, from what the Buddha explained with his compassion for us sentient beings. The merit is always same; it is always like that. Whenever we make offering, it's always like this. There is no such thing as decreasing. That would mean the quality of the Buddha is going down. If the amount of merit becomes less, then

their quality is going down. Like that, that mistake would arise. There is no such thing as their quality going down.

Why does offering this one stick of incense, this one grain of rice or this tiny flower to a holy object collect inconceivable merit, with the result of happiness? Why? Because the Buddha has inconceivable qualities. Even the arhats who are free from samsara, and the tenth bhumi bodhisattvas, who are close to achieving enlightenment, even they cannot see every single quality of a buddha; they cannot see the subtle qualities. They are qualities, actions of a buddha, that are only objects of the buddhas themselves, of their own omniscient minds. Even tenth bhumi bodhisattvas, who have skies of qualities themselves, cannot see every single quality of a buddha, all the buddha's secret qualities or secret actions.

Therefore, Lama Tsongkhapa said in the teachings that by doing four sessions a day—say, in the morning, before twelve, then afternoon, then night time—always with the merit field, with the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we can always, every day, collect merit, like planting seeds in the field. Planting rice and so forth depends on the right season—we can't plant them any time we want and receive crops any time we want but here, Lama Tsongkhapa explained, we can plant the seeds of all happiness every day four times a day. We can create happiness, all happiness and the cause of all happiness.

Lama Tsongkhapa said that it's a great loss if we don't take this opportunity, if we miss the chance, every day four times a day, to be able to collect merit, like make offerings. If we don't get this done it's a great loss. There is no comparison, but just as an idea it's like in every hour we lose many billions, many trillions of dollars. While we have all these opportunities and we don't do the practice and collect the merit it is that kind of loss. Lama Tsongkhapa emphasized to always take the opportunity to collect merit with the field of merit.

By having refuge in our own heart, we are able to collect extensive merit immediately, just by seeing thousands of holy objects. Before mentioning that, I want to say, as Lama Tsongkhapa mentioned in *Lamrim Chenmo*, the *Great Treatise on the Steps of the Path to Enlightenment*, that any action done without renunciation, bodhicitta or emptiness—that is, the three principal aspects of the path—becomes just the cause of samsara, except for a few exceptional actions. That means normally our actions, whether good karma or not good karma, bad karma, the cause of happiness or the cause of suffering, depend on our motivation. It depends on whether our motivation is virtuous or nonvirtuous. If it is done with renunciation then it becomes virtue and the cause to achieve liberation from samsara. If it is done with bodhicitta, of course, it becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment. If it is done with right view then it is the remedy to samsara, the remedy to the root of samsara, ignorance. Actions done with not all three, just one of these, all become virtues, the cause of happiness.

Any action not done with any of these thoughts, with lamrim, becomes ordinary, just the cause of samara, except for some exceptional actions. That means doing circumambulation, prostration, making offering to holy objects, with a nonvirtuous thought like anger, ignorance, attachment clinging to this life—even if the motivation is nonvirtue these actions become virtue, become Dharma. They not only become Dharma, they become the cause of enlightenment. How? Not from the side of the motivation but from the side of the power of the holy object. So, that is one thing.

It is so difficult to make our motivation pure, unstained by the three poisonous minds. It is difficult to transform, to generate renunciation, bodhicitta and emptiness. But if there is a holy object—if there is even a holy object at your house, if there is a holy object in the country, a statue, a stupa, a scripture, or you visualize the Buddha—by doing this practice, by visualizing or prostrating or offering, it immediately becomes the cause of enlightenment. The minute it is done it becomes the cause of enlightenment. So, you see, there is no question it is the cause of liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives. Those come by the way.

Therefore, just by these holy objects existing, it makes it unbelievable easy for us sentient beings—who have such uncontrolled minds, such obscured minds and rainfalls of delusions arising one after another—to collect merit, because it doesn't depend on doing virtuous actions. Because of the existence of holy objects, whatever the motivation, it becomes virtue, it becomes the cause of happiness, even enlightenment.

There's a word in India, *baksheesh*, but that's not quite right. It's when somebody does a good job and you give them something. [Student explains] Bonus, yes, bonus. So this is our bonus. This is the bonus for us ordinary sentient beings who don't have realizations, who find it so difficult to make the mind Dharma, pure. But by these holy objects existing, it is so easy to collect merit, the cause of enlightenment, the cause of all realizations. So, this is a bonus. This is bonus for us. Bonus? [Student explains] This is the best bonus for us.

Why do holy objects have such power? It comes from the Buddha's compassion, that embraces all us sentient beings, never giving up no matter whether we believe in the Buddha or not, whether we worship the Buddha or not. It doesn't depend on that. No matter how evil we become, how much we harm others, from the side of the Buddha's compassion, he never gives up, even for one second, he never gives up his compassion for us sentient beings.

That compassion was developed, generated, for us sentient beings before even realizing bodhicitta, then developed while on the bodhisattva's path and then he completed the mind training in compassion to us sentient beings. This is how it happens that even these holy objects of the Buddha—the statues, stupas and scriptures—have so much power to benefit us. It is because of the Buddha's power. The holy objects have power because of the Buddha's qualities, the Buddha's power. Such inconceivable power, such qualities, are actualized by compassion. The fuel, the force is compassion for us sentient beings, to free us from sufferings and to cause all happiness. Because compassion develops, it forces us to develop wisdom, understanding the Dharma, the wisdom realizing emptiness.

Therefore, even just by seeing a statue of Buddha or a picture of Buddha, the effect it has on our mental continuum is inconceivable. It is inconceivable. We collect inconceivable great merit by merely seeing a statue of the Buddha or a picture of the Buddha. That is said in the sutra by the Buddha to Buddha Manjushri, called the *Sutra of the Mudra Generating the Power of Devotion*. It is said there that making offerings every day of hundreds of different kinds of divine food—divine food is nectar, the food of even ordinary devas, worldly gods and so, of course, the Buddha—and clothing to all the arhats, the solitary realizers, who are free from samsara and delusion and karma, offering all this for how many eons, every day like this, for the number of eons equaling the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. It says, numbering the sand grains or the atoms of the universes for that many eons, making offerings to all the solitary realizers, all the arhats—that amount of merit is inconceivable. But if we compare that to the merit of merely seeing a picture of the Buddha or a statue of Buddha, this collects more merit, this collects numberless times'

greater merits than the other one. The other one becomes small if we compare it to this. It says in the sutra there is no question if we do prostrations or make offerings, we collect even more merit, we collect incalculable great merit.

In the lamrim texts it is mentioned that in the past somebody offered a medicinal drink to four ordinary monks, not even exalted arya Sangha. Because of the karma of having offered a medicinal drink to four ordinary monks, the result was that in the next life that person was reborn as a very powerful king and had all the wealth in India in a country called Kashika. But the cause was just offering a medicinal drink to four monks. It was something very small but the result was immense. If the object we are offering to is all the arhats, the exalted beings free from samsara, from delusions and karma, and here we are offering hundreds of kinds of divine-tasting nectar for eons. How many eons? Equaling the number of the atoms of the universes. Even just making offerings to one arhat, we can't imagine the merit. By understanding the previous example of karma, this is mind-blowing merit! But then, if we compare it to just seeing a picture of the Buddha or a statue of the Buddha, or the seven stupas—just merely seeing this, we collect much more merit, numberless great merit.

RESPECT FOR HOLY OBJECTS

Therefore, I normally advise people to have as many holy objects as possible, not only in the shrine room, the meditation room, but even in the sitting room, everywhere. Maybe the toilet is not so respectful, with those smells, but I think any other place, inside or outside. It must be a respectful place, not putting it on the ground. There is a kind of maybe bad habit or something, a custom from Japan, where people make a Japanese garden and put the buddha on the ground. When they make this kind of garden, they dig the Buddha into the ground. I just remembered that. You see many places where even students who are Tibetan Buddhists, because they follow some other custom, put the Buddha on the ground in the garden. That is disrespectful; it should be in a higher place.

In Washington, there were a couple of very old students who had a garden with a buddha statue on the ground. There was a Muslim family next door, and the lady of the family asked them to put something under the Buddha to raise it up a little, out of respect. Can you imagine? Next door was a Muslim family, a very good-hearted family, and the wife asked the old students to put something under the Buddha, to lift it up.

We have buddha statues on the altar in the shrine room but I think the idea of a Japanese garden with a buddha on the ground doesn't relate to karma, doesn't relate to how the Buddha explained the refuge vows. Part of the refuge vows is to respect holy objects. It's for our benefit. It's not as if the Buddha gets cold or the Buddha gets sick or gets a fever by being on the ground. It's for our benefit, for us not to create obstacles for our success in developing our mind in the path to enlightenment, for realization.

We must respect a buddha image, whether the art is perfect or not, whether the proportion is perfect. As long as it is a buddha statue, in any material, even made of *kaka*, whatever it is, even if it is not proportional, not perfect, as long as it is a buddha statue, we must respect it. Whether it is a painting or drawing or statue, we have to put it in a high place and respect it. Otherwise, even though it's merely labeled, it functions in mere name, and even though the negative karma is merely labeled by the mind, we experience the suffering result, the pollution, the obscuration of mind. That also exists in mere name, but we have to experience it. Everything is empty,

dependent arising, existing in mere name, but we have to experience it. I thought to mention this. I didn't get to mention it before, I just remembered it.

As part of the refuge, as part of the basic practice, if we want to develop our mind, if we want to have realizations, to have happiness, to not have suffering, then we should abandon any type of negative karma. So you see, that's the reason. After we take refuge, then we should respect holy objects.

As I have just explained, as many holy objects as we have in the house, inside and outside, all these benefits come just by seeing the holy objects, what it does to our mind. Therefore any time, the minute we wake up in the morning we see holy objects, we collect all this merit constantly whether we are outside or whether we are inside in the room, we always see holy objects. We are always purifying the mind, always collecting limitless skies of merit, always planting the seed of enlightenment. It makes our life always meaningful.

If we build holy objects like stupas, like statues, also scriptures, if we build such holy objects as this in the world, in the country, it benefits so many sentient beings. So many sentient beings come to see this holy object and it purifies so many defilements of the sentient beings. Just by seeing a stupa or statue even from distance, they collect inconceivable merit. So then of course the bigger it is, the more people come to see it and the more sentient beings get benefit. So many more sentient beings get benefit and more sentient beings get liberated from lower realm sufferings, from samsara, and direct their life toward enlightenment. That's the whole reason why the Maitreya statue is five hundred feet tall, so that all the people of the world can come to see it because it is so big, so large.

In Australia, in Queensland, there is a huge papaya—not papaya—there is a huge pineapple. There is a *huge* pineapple and thousands of people come each year to see it. [Laughter] It's a *huge* pineapple. They come to see this huge pineapple and go inside and there is a restaurant. I haven't been, but after I heard the story, I thought about Chenrezig Institute. That's the original meditation center in Australia. Before, there was nothing, just a mountain, but now Chenrezig Institute has very good programs, like the five-year Basic Program. Venerable Antonio was there for two years, helping the program, yes? I think there are maybe twenty or thirty nuns there and some monks.

So anyway, I was thinking, we have very good teachers there, excellent teachers, very learned. Before, during Geshe Thinley's time, Lama's brother was resident teacher there. He was a great teacher. People don't understand that Chenrezig is a great place to study. So, I thought in my mind to make a huge potato. [Laughter] I thought to make a huge potato or carrot and then on the inside paint Milarepa's life story or the Buddha's life story. And then you have a cafeteria with cakes and chocolate and ice cream. So then, by the way, people come to know the center.

The reason why it should be so big is that this has great benefit because more people come to see it as a sight, for sightseeing—either with devotion or sightseeing. Therefore, the world gets a lot of benefit from it. Besides that, those who donate toward it—the people who put in time, the companies or the workers, the potters, anybody who works for it—get unbelievable, unconceivable merit, like the Buddha explained. Any holy object that is built, any stupa or statue, whatever, in the world, in the country, how many hundreds of thousands of years this holy object exists, every day it liberates sentient beings, it works for sentient beings.

Without words, without needing to explain, for hundreds of thousands of years, however long it exists, it constantly benefits sentient beings, it works for sentient beings, it liberates them, it purifies their minds and causes them to collect merit, to plant the seed of enlightenment. It does this constantly. Examples are any of those large statues built in different places, like in Hong Kong or different places. Every day, thousands of people come to see them. So, every day the statue or statue, the holy object, liberates many thousands of sentient beings from the lower realms, because they purify negative karma and then it causes them to collect so much merit and plant the seed of enlightenment, to eventually liberate them from samsara and to achieve enlightenment. It causes them to achieve all the realizations on the path to enlightenment.

So even if we built it and we die, whatever rebirth we take, for hundreds of thousands of years it constantly benefits other sentient beings, it benefits the world. So, we are still benefiting sentient beings.

THE BENEFITS OF HAVING HOLY OBJECTS

Besides those benefits, who actually builds a holy object collects inconceivable merits. When King Sogyal asked the Buddha what the benefits of that are, the Buddha explained that how many atoms the statue has, we will be born as a king in the human realm or the deva realm. How many lifetimes? Equaling the number of atoms that the statue or stupa has. That means, with all that wealth and power we can benefit sentient beings. And how many atoms the statue has, that many lifetimes we will create the perfect cause of *shamatha*, calm abiding meditation, the continual precise concentration, what's called *sam den* in Tibetan, in the form or formless realms. We will create as many perfect causes as there are atoms, causes equaling the number of atoms of the statue, causes of perfect concentration. Without perfect concentration we can't actually develop our mind in the path to enlightenment, liberation, the path to enlightenment.

The next benefit is we will achieve the arya path. We create how many causes? Equaling the number of atoms of that statue. We create that many causes to achieve the arya path, to achieve especially the bodhisattva arya path.

If we achieve the Hinayana arya path, we achieve the path of no more learning then we overcome the cycle of death and rebirth. If we achieve the bodhisattva arya path, then by attaining the third path, the right-seeing path we also abandon the suffering of rebirth, old age, sickness and death. When we achieve the tantra arya path, in Highest Yoga Tantra there is the graduate generation stage and the graduate completion stage. In the graduate completion stage there is the isolation of speech, isolation of mind, clear light and so forth. There are five stages. There are different ways of counting according to the different lamas. After the isolation of speech is the isolation of mind, which is clear light. Clear light has example clear light and meaning clear light. Meaning clear light is the exalted path. By achieving this meaning clear light we are totally free from death, we totally overcome the cycle of death and rebirth by achieving the Highest Yoga Tantra completion stage. When we achieve that level, we are free.

However many atoms the statue has, we create that many causes to achieve arya path. However many atoms it has, we create that many causes to achieve enlightenment. This is the essence of what the Buddha explained to King Sogyal. Anyone who actualizes a holy object—who causes them to be built—they get all this merit. They get all these incredible extensive merits.

Even when we make *tsa tsas*. Even making a tsa tsa the size of a thumb, a statue of the Buddha the size of a thumb, that still has so many atoms, it has an unbelievable amount of atoms, so we can't imagine all those merits, the causes of all those results, equaling the number of all those atoms.

It is said that holy objects benefit world peace, they bring peace and happiness to the world, because they have the power to purify defilements, obscurations of mind, and to collect extensive merit, even without depending on the mind, the motivation becoming virtue. When that happens, *only* through that, the mind can become soft, the heart of the people can become softened, and only then can they generate loving kindness and compassion. To generate loving kindness and compassion depends on purifying the defilements, negative karma, obscurations. It needs a lot of merit, the necessary conditions to have these realizations, to develop this good heart. Without purifying the defilements, without collecting merit, from our individual side, just by somebody explaining how to develop compassion, just by having mere intellectual understanding, it cannot happen, it cannot happen. We have to purify the obstacles, the defilements, the negative karma, and we need to collect a lot of merit. As I mentioned, a project needs a lot of funds, and the bigger the project the more funds. Here, it is the same for realizations.

Through purifying lots of defilements and collecting lots of merit, gradually the heart becomes softer and we are able to develop a good heart. Then we are able to practice. If we have a lot of negative karma and defilements, we can't practice. Without merit we cannot practice. [When we are] able to practice, we can then generate loving kindness, compassion, a good heart—that gets developed more and more. Then that way we stop giving harm to others and become more generous to others, we become kinder to others. It happens more and more that we stop giving harm to others and we benefit others more and more. This is how holy objects are able to bring peace and happiness, to bring world peace. They allow us to develop our mind in the path, not only liberation, but up to enlightenment. Therefore, world peace comes just by the way, no question. An individual person's peace and world peace come from the good heart.

ALL HAPPINESS COMES FROM OFFERING TO THE THREE JEWELS

It is mentioned in the teachings many times that without the teachings of the Buddha there is no medicine to heal the sufferings of sentient beings. To heal the suffering completely depends on healing the cause of suffering, delusion and karma. We do this by actualizing the path, the scriptural understanding, the transmitted scripture, the teachings and then the realizations. By putting them into practice we have realizations. This is the true teaching of the Buddha.

So you see, all the sentient beings' happiness—both temporal and ultimate happiness—comes from that. It comes from understanding the transmitted teachings, understanding karma and the explanations about compassion, and putting that into practice.

Therefore, the existence of the teachings of the Buddha becomes so essential, and that depends on the existence of the holy objects. This is emphasized in the teachings. It is also mentioned the *Ten Bhumis Sutra* or the *Ksitigarbha Sutra*, that all the happiness of the world comes by offering to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, therefore if we desire happiness we should put effort into offering to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

By having refuge instantly, immediately, we can collect extensive merit. As I mentioned before, before lunch, every time we drink, every time we eat, by offering to the Buddha, by offering to ourselves as guru-buddha, every single bit of food we eat or drink, how many times we do it, everything becomes the cause of enlightenment; it collects inconceivable merit. That is also the same when we get dressed, if we think of ourselves as the deity, the guru, if we meditate like that, with that mind of guru yoga, it's the same, we collect inconceivable merit, the cause of enlightenment. Whatever we do, everything collects inconceivable merit and becomes the cause of enlightenment.

By having refuge in our heart, we don't give harm and we don't get harmed by human beings and nonhuman beings. And whatever wishes we have—everything—succeeds. Then, we don't fall down into the lower realms and we quickly become enlightened. I am not sure whether I finished all the eight benefits or not, but anyway, these are the benefits of having refuge in the heart.

EVEN REMEMBERING JUST ONE MEMBER OF THE SANGHA SAVES US FROM THE LOWER REALMS

We rely on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, but just to not to be reborn in the lower realms, we don't need to take refuge to all three. Just by taking refuge to one of these three, we don't get reborn in the lower realms. For example, I've often said that when we are dying, if we remember one ordained person, one Sangha member, if we have much faith and if we remember them when we are dying, we won't get reborn in the lower realms. Similarly, if we remember the *Heart Sutra* or a Dharma text like that when we are dying. If we remember the *Heart Sutra*, the *Diamond Cutter Sutra* or some other of the Buddha's teachings, if that is our the last thought, then we are completely saved; we won't get reborn in the lower realms.

But here, the purpose of taking refuge is to be totally free from the entire suffering of samsara, including the cause, delusion and karma. For this, we need to rely on all three, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Then also, we need to not only free ourselves from samsara but to free the numberless sentient beings from the sufferings of samsara as well, and for that we need to take refuge with compassion.

Then there is a fourth refuge, the refuge of secret mantra, Vajrayana refuge. For that one, we need to abandon the impure appearance and only practice pure appearance, seeing ourselves as a deity, the place as a mandala and other beings as deities. This is practicing pure appearance. That is the secret mantra refuge, the Vajrayana refuge that saves us from the ordinary appearance, the concepts that hinder us from achieve enlightenment quickly, in one life. We practice pure appearance, which collects so much merit and allows us to achieve enlightenment in one lifetime. Then, there might also be the refuge of completion stage

Before taking refuge, I should say how extremely important it is to take precepts, vows. Even if you cannot take all the five lay vows then from these five, you should take four or three or two or one. Of course, even if you cannot take any of the vows, still you can take the refuge vow, the refuge ordination. The Buddha is so compassionate for us, so this practice is given and you can do the practice according to your own capacity. But I normally emphasize that, since you take refuge in the Dharma, that it involves avoiding giving harm to other sentient beings—that's the refuge vow, that comes with the Dharma refuge. Therefore, among harming others, generally killing is the heaviest one—not for everybody, but generally speaking killing is the most harmful

thing. If somebody wants to either cut your finger off or completely kill you, if you had to choose one, you might choose having your finger cut off rather than being killed.

Therefore, normally I emphasize, if you can't take any other vow, at least take the vow to not intentionally kill other sentient beings. But of course, if that is a very difficult one, you can take the vows to not lie or to not steal or to not commit sexual misconduct or to not take alcohol.

THE TEN NONVIRTUES: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Why is taking vows so important? For example, the complete negative karma of sexual misconduct. I think you have gone through this, so I don't need to mention it much. The complete negative karma of sexual misconduct has four parts. That produces four suffering results: the *ripening aspect result* is rebirth in the lower realm, as a hell being, a hungry ghost or an animal, one of those. Then, the other three suffering results we experience in the human realm. After some time, when we get born in the human realm due to another good karma—not by this negative karma but by another good karma—during that life then we experience these three suffering results of this sexual misconduct.

With the *possessed or environmental result*, or Tibetan, *dak pa*, we get born in an unpleasant environment, a very dirty place, a very dusty place or a depressed place, where there is a lot of danger to our own life. There is a lot of disease, a lot of danger to life, obstacles, like that.

Then, as we experience the *result similar to the cause*, we receive harm from others. A person might die in their mother's womb, in childhood time, or be unable to have a long life; they are harmed or even killed by others. Here, you can see very clearly, when others harm us, actually it comes from us. Actually, it comes from us because we harmed others in the first place. We can meditate on this in order to understand this. There is nothing to blame others for, because we are the one who harmed that being in the past. So now, in this life, that sentient being is harming us.

What I want to emphasize is the next one, *creating the result similar to the cause*, which means that again in the next life we engage in sexual misconduct and then become so uncontrolled. As another example, even though somebody has gone through so much torment, so much suffering and pain, years of pain during a terrible relationship, but then again they can't control themselves and commit sexual misconduct again. Even though they went through so much suffering, years of suffering, and of course they never want to go through anything like that again, and even though they never want to create the cause of it again, still they can't control their mind. That is creating the result similar to the cause.

Creating the result similar to the cause means engaging again in sexual misconduct, and that complete negative karma produces four suffering results, and one of them is creating the result similar to the cause. Then, *that* complete negative karma again produces four suffering results. So it goes on and on and on without end. So now you can see, here, one negative karmic action of one sexual misconduct, one negative karma, produces unending suffering. It produces unending suffering that goes on and on and on. There is no end. If we leave it, just simply following our habits all the time, if we leave it up to delusion then this is what happens.

As long as we don't purify the past negative karma and don't live within the vows—these two things—this is what happens. So there are two things we need to do. Purifying our past negative karma is one solution. If we don't want to experience the result of past negative karma, we need

to purify it. That's one practice. The other one is to not commit that action again. With these two practices we can stop the problem, otherwise we can't. Even if we practice purification but we don't abstain from committing sexual misconduct again, our purification will have to be without end; there can be no end to the practice of purification, because we commit the act again and again, we do it again and again. So, there is no end, the purification never finishes.

Therefore, to solve all these ongoing sufferings, the four results of our ongoing suffering and especially creating the result similar to the cause, to stop experiencing all this we need to purify the past negative karma that has not been purified, and we need to live in the vow to not commit that action again, to abstain from this. These two Dharma practices can solve, can stop us from experiencing ongoing suffering.

This is what I want to emphasize. It's not just experiencing the four suffering results one time, it's not just that. It's ongoing, it's unending. So we have to meditate, we have to know that if we don't purify, if we don't abstain from recommitting the action, if we don't live within the vow, from one negative karma this is what happens. I think I got mixed up! I was talking about sexual misconduct then I jumped into, I think, the possessed result of killing.

The unpleasant possessed or environmental result of sexual misconduct is a very dirty place, very filthy, full of excrement. We have to live in such place. Now, even if we have to cross through such dirty place, with all its filth and smells, even that, even for few minutes, that is the result of a past negative karmic action of sexual misconduct.

I was talking about sexual misconduct, then I think I jumped to the result of killing. I mentioned about sexual misconduct then I think I explained about killing. I went to the result of killing, I think. I probably got messed up.

So, the four suffering results of sexual misconduct: as I've already explained, rebirth in the lower realms is the possessed result. Experiencing the result similar to the cause—people in the office, at home, they are not harmonious to our wishes. They are against our wishes. They don't support us. Even our companion, our friend or our husband or wife, is against our wishes, not harmonious to our wishes. There is disharmony and fighting, all these things, and then all these relationship problems come and separation and things like this. This is experiencing the result similar to the cause of sexual misconduct. Then, creating the result similar to the cause, which produces four suffering results, which in turn has a result similar to the cause, which is doing it again. And so on, like that. It goes on and on.

THE TEN NONVIRTUES: ILL WILL

It's the same with the negative karma of ill will. The minute we generate ill will to somebody, that is a complete negative karma and it produces four suffering results. The *ripening aspect result* is rebirth in the lower realms. Then, of the three suffering results we experience in the human realm, the first is the environmental result, which is being born in a suffering environment. The *possessed result* is that animals harm us, human beings harm us, there are lots of wars and disease. There are so many harms to our life. When insects such as mosquitos, ants or flies bite us, all these are the result of the negative karma of ill will. Even a mosquito biting us, having lots of fleas biting us, this is the possessed result of the negative karma of ill will, because we have harmed others, generated ill will toward others. And then, experiencing the *result similar to the cause*, we receive harm from others, others have ill will toward us. And then *creating the result similar*

to the cause, when we are born in the human realm, then again we generate ill will to others. Then that complete negative karma produces the four suffering results and one of them is creating the result similar to the cause. Then again *that* produces the four suffering results, so it goes on and on, creating unending suffering.

So you see how one negative karma, if we don't purify it and if we don't abstain from doing it again, this one negative karma produces ongoing suffering results, on and on. It is unending.

Therefore you can see now the reason why it's so important to take precepts, to take vows. It's not just for this life's peace, to not have problems such as relationship problems, to not have sicknesses, AIDS or something like that; it's not just for that. It becomes the basis for the happiness of all the future lives, and then there is liberation from samsara. Then there is enlightenment. So, the purpose of taking precepts, the reasons are so deep, so vast. Whether there will be peace and happiness in all our future lives, how it's going to turn out, everything is dependent on how we live this life—each day of our life, each day, each hour, each minute, each second, how we live our life, our attitude, our actions. How all our future lives are going to turn out depends on this, whether there will be only suffering or more and more happiness, then to liberation and enlightenment. So you see, this life has *great* responsibility. In our past life, we did a good job, we practiced morality, practiced charity, and made prayers so we got this human body, which enables us to practice.

Even though we can take only the refuge vow, how important it is to take, even if not all five vows, any number, and at least one of the five. Here it becomes so important. It's not just to stop experiencing the four suffering results one time, it's ongoing.

THE REFUGE CEREMONY

Therefore, those taking the refuge precept please do three prostrations to the statue of the Buddha by thinking it's the living Buddha. Do three prostrations to the statue of the Buddha by thinking it's the actual Buddha, OK.

Then after that, do three prostrations to the lama who gives refuge and precepts.

After that, those who can kneel down, please kneel down, the same as taking the eight Mahayana precepts. Those who can't kneel down, can just sit in the normal way. Then put your palms together like this at the heart, in the mudra of prostration.

“While I have this precious human rebirth qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses, if I don't make it possible to achieve liberation, forever free from the suffering of samsara, then I will have to suffer endlessly. Therefore, this time, for the sake of all sentient beings, to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, I am going to take refuge in the Buddha as the founder, the Dharma as the actual refuge, the Sangha as the supporters, the guides to actualizing refuge, the Dharma, within my own heart.” So, think like that.

Then please repeat ceremony prayer.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

Rely upon the Buddha billions of times more than you rely upon a doctor, who can only ever cure diseases temporarily. But here, the Buddha can completely remove all the causes of suffering.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

Take refuge in the Dharma, the sublime Dharma that is free from attachment. Why it is specifically seen as a cure for attachment is because even though there are so many delusions, attachment is the nearest cause of samsara, the main cause of samsara. That's why attachment, the name of that delusion is used particularly. Taking refuge in the Dharma, the cessation of all suffering—here, specifically, it is the cessation of attachment—and the true path that ceases delusions, including attachment. So totally rely upon Dharma, a billion times more than medicine.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

Rely upon the Sangha who are the sublime ones in absolute bliss. So, remember there is the conventional Sangha and the absolute Sangha. The absolute Sangha are those who have attained the true path and true cessation of the path.

Please repeat the words, a second time.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

If you only taking the refuge vow, think “I am only taking the refuge vow.” Think this in your heart. If you are taking any number of precepts then you can think in your heart, “I am taking *upasika* [lay vows], this many number of precepts.”

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

Now request the preceptor to grant the vows from now until death time. So please repeat.

Please repeat a third time.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

So that's the Buddha, now it's Dharma, the next one is Sangha.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

When I say these words very loudly, at that time you must generate the thought that you have received the vows, whatever you are taking—only the refuge vow, all the *upasika* [lay] vows, either five complete or any of the vows. Without the mind wandering, you must generate that thought in your heart. This qualifies you to receive the refuge vow, the ordination of the *upasika*.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

Third repetition.

Before taking the vow, if a Dharma connection has already been made with a master then he is the *lobpon* but if it hasn't, if it's only now, then from this time on I become your *lobpon*, which means the spiritual master and the leader, leading the disciple in the path to enlightenment. So that's *lobpon*.

Those who are taking the vows repeat this.

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

“[Just as previous arhats] changed their minds and actions, refraining from killing, living in this vow, I am also going to do the same. I will abandon killing and live in this vow to not kill.”

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

“Until the death time, I am not going to abandon this.”

[Ceremony of taking refuge]

So now, feel great happiness. Feel great happiness that however many vows you are taking, you have stopped giving that many harms to other sentient beings and to yourself. This becomes your most practical contribution to world peace and the peace and happiness of all the sentient beings. In this world, this is your best contribution to world peace and the peace and happiness of all the sentient beings. This is what you should remember every day when you wake up, when you begin your life. Each day remember this, “What I am offering sentient beings and the world is all this peace and happiness.” And then, rejoice. This is the way to make your life so meaningful. So rejoice in this. And also, since you have taken the vow, your merit, whatever virtuous action you do in everyday life increases by hundreds of thousands of times. Since you have taken the vows, any virtuous action you do, any merit, increases hundreds of thousands of times. This makes your life so meaningful and therefore you must rejoice in this. Every day you should feel great happiness.

It is also mentioned in the sutra that if all the sentient beings of the three realms—the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm—if everyone becomes a wheel-turning king, the most powerful king in the world, then each king offers oceans of butter or wax light offerings the size of Mount Meru to the buddhas, compared to one person living in the vows, who makes an offering of butter the size of a mustard seed or a light offering the size of a hair to the buddhas, that one person living in the vow, in ordination, making such tiny light offering to the buddhas, because of living in the vows, collects far greater merit than the numberless desire realm, form realm, formless realm beings not living in the vows, each one having become a wheel-turning king, and offering oceans of butter and Mount Merus of light offerings to the buddhas. All their merit is certainly great but it becomes small when you compare it to one person living in the vows making a tiny offering. It makes a huge difference living in the vows. Even a tiny offering made to the Buddha, the merit is unbelievable. So, you *must* rejoice. This way, it makes your life unbelievable, most productive, most beneficial.

Then, please do three prostrations to the lama.

DEDICATION

Then you put your palms together like this, while you are standing, and dedicate the merits.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may I, myself, and my family members and all sentient beings be able to complete the paramita of morality. Dedicate your merits for everyone, for this to happen.

Due to all the three times' merit collected by me and by others, may I, my family members—if you want to specifically include the enemy, any person you hate or who harms you, it's very good, it becomes Dharma practice—and all sentient beings be able to complete the paramita of morality by keeping the vow without mistake, keeping it pure and keeping it without pride.

[Chanting]

Due to the three times' merit collected by me and by others, may bodhicitta be generated in my own heart and in the hearts of all sentient beings without the delay of even a second and that which is generated, may it be increased.

[Chanting]

Then with the same [dedication], to realize emptiness.

[Chanting]

You can also dedicate your merit to actualize the two stages of tantra within yourself and in the minds, in the hearts, of all sentient beings without the delay of even a second

[Chanting]

Then all this opportunity that you have to take the refuge vow, the pratimoksha vows, all this is fundamentally to liberate yourself from the oceans of samsaric suffering and not only that, also to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings, the basis of realizations, the path to liberation and enlightenment. All this and all these merits that you can collect every day, all this inconceivable merit by living in the vows is solely by the kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Compassion Buddha, due to his existence in this world. So, dedicate all the three times' merit collected by yourself and others, may it actualize, stabilize, all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Chanting]

Dedicate particularly, [remembering] the kindness of Lama Yeshe, so that all his wishes, whatever in his past life Lama intended be actualized, that it happens.

And for his incarnation, Lama Ösel Rinpoche to have a long life and to be able to complete his study in the monastery and to show the same aspect as Lama Tsongkhapa, benefiting, offering limitless skies of teachings of the Buddha to sentient beings.

[Chanting]

Dedicate the merit like this.

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may I, myself, being in whichever universe, world, country, area, place, house, wherever I am, may it affect all the sentient beings who are in that universe, world, country, area, house and may they never get reborn in the lower realms, just by me being in that universe, world, country, area, place, house, to be able to affect like that. May they never get reborn in lower realms, and from this time may they immediately find faith in refuge, karma and may they generate loving kindness, compassion, bodhicitta, immediately. And may all their sicknesses immediately get healed.

May all those who have depression be filled with great bliss in their hearts and have a most meaningful life. May those who have relationship problems immediately have their hearts filled with loving kindness, compassion and much joy. And those who are crazy, wild, possessed by spirits, receiving spirit harm, may they immediately be free from spirit harm and have a meaningful life by actualizing the lamrim. May those who are poor, starving, have wealth. May those who wish to find a guru find a perfectly qualified guru and may those who want to receive teachings be able to receive the unmistakable teachings. May those who want to do a retreat be able to find a conducive place and have all the realizations during that time. May whatever problems or difficulties they have immediately stop. May all those sentient beings' wishes for happiness be immediately fulfilled according to the Dharma, and may they be able to complete the path to enlightenment and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. May I, myself, become wish-fulfilling for all the sentient beings, from now on, in this life and in all future lives.

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to all the sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa, from now on and in all my future lifetimes.

Due to all past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others—all these that are like a dream—may the I, who is like dream, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is like dream. What this is saying is it is empty from its own side, it doesn't exist from its own side. It *exists* but it *doesn't* exist from its own side. So, come to this conclusion, this understanding. That's the correct way to meditate. May I lead all sentient beings, who are also like a dream, to that enlightenment, which is also like a dream, by myself alone, who is also like a dream.

Now I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds just as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas and bodhisattvas dedicated their merit.

May the general teachings of Buddha, and in particular the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, flourish forever and spread in all the directions by being completely actualized in my own heart and in the hearts of my own family members, all of us here and in the hearts of all the students, benefactors of this organization and those who give up their lives for this organization, doing service for sentient beings, with Shakyamuni Buddha in all their hearts.

In that way, may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sicknesses, danger from fire, water, earth or wind, earthquakes and so forth—may nobody experience all these

undesirable things and forms. May they enjoy perfect peace and happiness, perfect enjoyment, external prosperity and inner prosperity, realizations and the path to enlightenment.

[Chanting]

To be able to continuously live in the vows purely, with morality, it is advised to recite this mantra, the mantra of the pure morality.

OM AMOGHA SHILA SAMBHARA / BHARA BHARA / MAHA SHUDDHA SATTVA PADMA
VIBHUSHITA BHUJA / DHARA DHARA / SAMANTA / AVALOKITE HUM PHAT SVAHA

As part of the refuge vow, in the morning do at least three prostrations by reciting refuge prayer. If you do prostrations with the Thirty-five Buddhas [practice], that's best, but at least do three, to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, by reciting the refuge prayer. After that, you can kneel down and recite this OM AMOGHA SHILA. It is not the eight Mahayana precepts but normally, if you can recite it twenty-one times, it purifies degenerated vows, the vices, and makes the ordination pure. It helps you to be able to live in vows purely.

There are three benefits of reciting this mantra explained by my root guru Trijang Rinpoche in his commentary on *nyung nä*, Chenrezig retreat. The Buddha explained in the Kangyur that there is so much benefit from reciting this mantra. It helps to purify broken vows, to be able to make the vows pure and to continue to be able to live in pure vows.

So, I'll finish.

There are books on refuge and instructions here. At the end, there is a prayer of St Francis of Assisi. His practice, his advice, is the same as the Kadampa geshe's thought transformation practice, so I added it there. It's very interesting; it's not contradictory. There is only one thing but that one I fixed, so it's not contradictory.

Then, there is a picture of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, that is the most precious statue in the history. When the Buddha was in India he went to the Realm of Thirty-three for three months' vinaya practice, abiding in the summer retreat, I am not sure about the translation of the rainy season retreat but "abiding in the summer retreat" is *jar ne* in Tibetan. At that time, the Buddha's mother missed him very much, so the Buddha asked an artist to make a statue of him. After the statue was made, the Buddha blessed it and predicted that this statue would work for so many sentient beings in India for this many years and then it would go to Mongolia where it would benefit so many sentient beings. Then it would go to China where it would benefit so many sentient beings and then it would go to the Land of Snow—Tibet—where it would benefit so many sentient beings. The Buddha mentioned the length of time it would be in each place. Then he said it would go to the naga land. So maybe some change will happen and the statue will go under the ocean. I am not sure, something like that.

Usually there is no crown, but Lama Tsongkhapa offered a crown to this statue, made in the *sambhogakaya* aspect. By making it in the sambhogakaya aspect with a crown, it helps the teachings last a long time. That's the reason why Lama Tsongkhapa offered the crown. Even though some other people criticized it, there was a reason why Lama Tsongkhapa did that. So there is also a picture of that, for you to do prostrations before, as a devotional object, to make offerings, to collect merit.

Then there is a Mickey Mouse picture. There are some with His Holiness but mostly there is a Mickey Mouse picture. So, like that.

So, thank you.

Lecture 10

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Here, when we recite *dro la*, transmigrator, in the mind, the meaning contains the whole explanation of the Wheel of Life, how we suffer because of the twelve links. Yama's two hands hold the Wheel of Life, which signifies the cause of suffering, delusion and karma. Being under the control of that, we experience the three types of suffering. The suffering of pain is signified by the three lower realms drawn there, signifying the suffering of samsara, the suffering of pain. It doesn't mean their suffering is only the suffering of pain. It's not saying that desire realm devas and humans don't also have the suffering of pain, but it's shown like that because the heaviest suffering of pain is in the lower realms.

The suffering of change is shown by the deva and human realms.

Then, for pervasive compounding suffering, on top of the Wheel of Life there are seventeen categories. Some of the Wheel of Life drawings have these seventeen levels, which show the seventeen levels of the form realm, which has four levels of *continual precise contemplation, sam den*. I haven't heard a precise translation of that, but it is sometimes translated as "absorption." I haven't heard whether there are different translations. It still needs a precise translation like that. It is much simpler to use the Tibetan name if it is not clear. At least you have a correct label to hold on to. So, it's *sam den* in Tibetan.

Anyway, within that there are different levels, making a total of seventeen levels. That signifies the form realm and that is to show pervasive compounding suffering. I don't think there is any representation of the formless realm there in the drawing. Here, it is mainly to show that the entire suffering of samsara comes in three [types]: the suffering of pain, the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering. Being under the control of karma and delusion, we continuously circle in samsara, experiencing or being tormented by the suffering of pain, the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering. And at times, even when there are not the two other sufferings, there is still pervasive compounding suffering, particularly like the formless realm. This shows there is no freedom at all there; it is only suffering.

How that happens is shown through the twelve links. All this is in the nature of impermanence. The whole Wheel of Life is held in the mouth of the Lord of Death, showing all this is in the nature of impermanence. All of life is in the nature of impermanence and death. The whole Wheel of Life is held in the jaw of the Lord of Death, so we are already inside his jaw, because our life is in the nature of impermanence and death. That means we are supposed to remember to practice mindfulness in our everyday life; we are supposed to remember every day that we are already in the jaw of the Lord of Death, in the nature of impermanence and death. The jaw can close at any time and we can never be sure when it will be closed. We can never be sure when

death will happen. It can happen at any moment. The jaw can close at any moment. That is to show our mind [why we need] to practice mindfulness in our everyday life and therefore to not waste our precious human life or human body.

Even if we are happy, we must practice Dharma; even if we are unhappy, we must practice Dharma. Even if we encounter problems, we must practice Dharma. Even if we have comfort, a happy life, we must practice Dharma. We must do pure Dharma practice, continuously. Our Dharma practice should be equal with life and life should be equal with our Dharma practice.

Therefore, when we hear *dro la phän chir*, with the *dro la*, we should remember in our mind, in our heart, the whole meaning of the Wheel of Life. While we are studying what this word *dro la* is supposed to be, there should be compassion in our heart toward numberless sentient beings.

THE SEVEN-LIMB PRACTICE: PROSTRATIONS

Through doing the seven-limb practice, we purify defilements, negative karma, and increase our merit. These are seven very important things that create enlightenment, like seven very important parts of a car or horse carriage, that help carry people to the place they wish to go. These seven very important limbs are seven important methods or practices that create enlightenment and cause us to have realizations on the path to enlightenment.

So, with the first limb, “I prostrate with my body, speech and mind, respectfully with the three doors,” even though it is not your actual body doing a full-length prostration, but just putting your palms together like this as in prostration to the merit field, still you can visualize numberless emanations of your body in the form of the deity, Thousand-arm Chenrezig, which makes it very easy to cover the entire ground. Or you could visualize just your ordinary body, but very tall like a ridge of mountains, covering the whole ground in all directions and corners, lying down before the merit field.

If you are reciting this prayer of prostration, then with your palms together in the prostration mudra, visualize numberless emanations of your body, numberless of you, having bodies like a ridge of mountains, very long, lying down in the four directions and four corners, prostrating to the merit field. If you do that, then even if it is done only one time, if you have visualized one hundred bodies then you have collected the same amount of merit as having done a hundred prostrations with your actual body, you get the same amount of merit. If you visualize billions of your body doing prostrations then you collect the same amount of merit as your actual body, numbering billions, having done prostrations, you get the same amount of merit. Especially when you visualize your actual body as huge.

My own body is very short so I tell the students who have very tall bodies that they can collect twice as much merit doing prostrations as I can. They only have to do it once, but I have to do it twice. [Rinpoche laughs] By using their tall bodies to do prostrations, they collect a lot of merit. The taller the body you have, the more the merit. That’s one great advantage. A tall body is the result of good karma. Another advantage is that the short body can’t reach something high but a tall body can. That’s another usefulness other than prostrations. It has great usefulness, great advantage to help others. Maybe sometimes there are difficulties, such as low doors or rooms, the ceiling is very low. Then you have to bend so much, so maybe sometimes there are a few difficulties. But that doesn’t happen all the time, anyway. Only joking.

You can visualize that there is no restriction, there is no resistance of mountains or buildings. You can visualize covering the whole ground, but your actual body cannot do that, even if it is like a ridge of mountains or a body that you actually have. You can't cover the ground; there are so many buildings or mountains resisting. But by having a body like a ridge of mountains, numberless mountains, and doing prostrations, it is very easy, because you collect the same amount of merit having [visualized] that many bodies and that much length, like a ridge of mountains, as actually having that many bodies or being as big as a ridge of mountains. This is mentioned in the teachings.

I am not going to mention any details here about prostrations. Just remember when you recite prayers such as this seven-limb prayer, by seeing how you should do the meditation, you collect the most extensive merit, making your life most beneficial, most meaningful for all the sentient beings.

Then next one, as I just explained, you do the practice.

So recite “I prostrate respectfully with three doors...” and do that extensive meditation, doing prostrations. With your actual body you put your palms like this, do the prostrations to the merit field, and immediately you achieve the eight benefits or ten benefits, the last one being enlightenment.

THE SEVEN-LIMB PRACTICE: OFFERING

Then, “I offer mentally every single offering, that which is actually performed and mentally transformed.” Here the offering limb is performed, and I would like to say one thing. When I lead the offering practice, I often mention to make offering of all the extensive offerings which are in FPMT centers. Wherever there is an FPMT center gompa there are extensive offerings; many of the FPMT centers have extensive offerings, so offer all that. And then in the Aptos house where I live in the United States, there are many hundreds of water bowl offerings, and the water bowls are very big, not small, very big, very large water offerings. There are two main rooms for water offerings, with several hundred water offerings, both large and small, some upstairs and some downstairs. In just one offering room there are four thousand light offerings, with extensive light offerings on the ceiling. At nighttime there are many lights outside as well, around the house. There are also many of those lotus lights, so if it is nighttime there are many thousands of light offerings and water offerings. One nun makes offerings in one room and another nun offers on this side, so there are two offerings. Also downstairs there are flowers and food, inside and outside.

Recently, I think it might be at a center, I suggested that for the students of the organization—not just students but anyone—whenever you do a sadhana, whenever you do your practice and do this offering limb, you can always offer all those offerings there in the Aptos house, that I have performed there, that the student nuns are doing. They have dedicated their lives to set up all these offerings every day. So anyone, students of this organization, even non-students, anyone, you can use that when you do sadhanas, when you do your guru yoga practice. Any time you do the offering practice, you can offer all those flowers, all those flowers, lights and water outside and inside, all the offerings there.

And if you do that, then for those nuns who are doing so much hard work, making all those offerings, their efforts become very meaningful and everybody collects extensive merit,

unbelievable merit. Anyone can use all those offerings, wherever you are. So this is what I would like to let you know.

Even if your room is very tiny and there is no place to offer, but you wish to make extensive offerings—if you don't have time or you have no place or you can't afford it—like this, you can offer and if you want to collect extensive merit, you can benefit, you can have quicker realizations and be able to benefit more and deeper other sentient beings.

There is also a retreat house in Washington. There are so many lights there. Right now, there are some light offerings but there are even more when the monk who takes care of the place, John Jackson, is there. John was the Vajrapani director for a long time. He worked so hard for the center for a long time, doing carpentry, building, for his whole life while he raised a family. Now all the family is grown up, all the children are grown up, they are doing jobs, so he is free. He became a fully ordained monk, not just the thirty-six vows but the two hundred and fifty-three vows. I don't know whether he's gone back or not, but there are already so many large bowls of water and so many lights. I went to a very large supermarket half an hour from this place. It is very interesting there. I think maybe the light offerings were waiting for me there. There were some colored lights, but they are extremely well-designed. They go like this, like that, and between there is some nice design. There are different styles or designs, very beautiful light offerings, something like a tree or something. So, there are many offerings there. Maybe he has gone. There are going to be many, and I have already offered many when I was there. I've also bought bowls a few times.

So, again it's the same thing. When you do an offering practice you can offer these. "Whatever offerings there are, I offer," like that. Of course, if you have clairvoyance, you can see all the offerings, then it's OK. [Laughter] But if you have difficulty in seeing the offerings, you can just say, "Whatever offerings there are in Washington and in the Aptos house, I offer." That way, you can offer every single flower, every single water bowl.

Normally when I lead the practice of offering, I offer all the extensive offerings in all the FPMT centers' gompas. Also, here in Kopan upstairs there are many water bowl offerings, offered by Venerable Janne. In the section on offering, I would like to take the opportunity to explain this. If from your side you don't use that, you don't take advantage of this, then that's a different thing. But just to let you know that you can use all those offerings, wherever you are in the world, whichever part of the world, when you do the practice.

I am not going to talk much here. Once you have offered to the Buddha, whether it's a picture of the Buddha or visualized, immediately you create the cause for enlightenment and by the way, liberation from samsara, and by the way, the happiness of all the future lives. Then there is no question about this life's success—it just comes by the way without expectations, without concern.

So now, with one offering—one tiny Christmas light or one water bowl offering or whatever—you create the cause for all this happiness. That means if there are ten thousand Christmas light offerings then you create ten thousand causes for enlightenment, and by the way, you create the cause for liberation from samsara, for happiness in all the future lives, and so forth. This is an example. Because there are so many offerings, there are so many causes for enlightenment you create, equaling that number.

Here what I want to say, like I introduced the food offering that was done yesterday—if one tiny Christmas light is offered to the gurus, and then to the merit field, and the ten directions' buddhas, to the Dharma, the Sangha, the ten directions' statues, stupas, scriptures, the other holy objects, then offered to any number of holy objects in India, Tibet, Nepal and the whole world, with this one offering, with this one tiny light offering, by offering to all these numberless holy objects you collect *so* many times numberless merit, *so* many times numberless merit with this tiny light offering. Similarly, with one stick of incense or whatever, you collect so many limitless skies of merit. With one tiny offering. So you can see the unbelievable, unbelievable advantage you are taking from that, with just one tiny offering, with this extensive meditation on offering, when just one small light is offered to numberless merit fields. So many times' limitless skies of merit are collected. It's so easy. Within a few minutes. It doesn't even take a few minutes, within *one* minute, numberless, limitless skies of merit are collected so many times, like that. The more merit you collect, the easier it is to achieve realizations. That means it doesn't take long to achieve enlightenment; it's easier to achieve enlightenment, and then you are able to enlighten sentient beings quickly.

But to have faith, to really enjoy, to feel the advantage, to really practice and collect good karma with the merit field it's a question of understanding karma, of creating karma. The karma that Buddha explained, all the unconceivable benefits by doing this practice of offerings. With all the different offerings you have basically the same goal, liberation and enlightenment. The conclusion is the same but there are different benefits.

For example, light offerings help you develop Dharma wisdom and clairvoyance. Without clairvoyance it is difficult to benefit other sentient beings. If you don't know their minds then you make mistakes in helping and guiding them. You can reveal the wrong method to them if you don't know, if you can't read their minds, if you don't know their level of karma. So it's very important to have clairvoyance in order to benefit other sentient beings. There are six types of clairvoyance.

Making light offerings helps to develop Dharma wisdom, to know what's right, what brings happiness to yourself and others, and what harms yourselves and others, what is wrong for them. Clairvoyance is also for long life. So, light offerings are particularly for long life. Making light offerings all night is for long life. That doesn't mean light offerings in the daytime don't cause long life, I'm not saying that, but it's particularly, especially like that at night. There are many other benefits. Therefore making light offerings is very important if you want to develop wisdom, if you don't want to always be ignorant, as we have been ignorant from beginningless rebirths and suffered because of that. If you don't want to have any more ignorance and you want to develop wisdom then you must offer many lights, always offer many light offerings in the life.

Making incense offerings enables you to live in pure morality. So, there are particular benefits like that. I was giving you an idea of all those actually performed ones at several of those places, so you can offer them. There are also the mentally offered offerings. You can visualize whole skies filled with offerings, then offer them. Then, you do them one by one.

Please put your palms together toward the merit field.

[Chanting]

The nature of offering is bliss, so then generate infinite bliss within the holy mind of the merit field.

THE SEVEN-LIMB PRACTICE: CONFESSION

With the limb of confession, think, “I confess all my negative karma and downfalls collected from beginningless rebirths, I confess them individually.” Think as you recite this line that nothing in the slightest exists in your own mental continuum. Everything that is an obstacle to realizations, to benefiting other sentient beings, is completely purified.

[Chanting]

For example, in twenty-four hours, in one day, as I mentioned the other day, from morning until nighttime, the time of going to bed and sleeping, if you examine your actions then everything is done with the attachment clinging to this life. Getting up and dressing are done with attachment, clinging to this life. With what motivation did you wash? If you check, again it was done with attachment clinging to this life, with nonvirtue, so everything become nonvirtue, even washing, having a bath, everything is nonvirtue. Again, if you check your motivation for eating breakfast, it is attachment clinging to this life, so everything becomes nonvirtue, even eating breakfast.

Then, going to work and doing your job, if you check, if you examine the motivation, it’s attachment clinging to this life. Again, however many steps you make, the whole action of driving a car to go to the workplace, if it’s done with attachment clinging to this life, again it becomes nonvirtue, negative karma. If you check the motivation for doing the many hours of work, it’s again attachment clinging to this life. It’s for this life’s comfort, pleasure and so it all becomes negative karma. Then, having lunch, if you check your motivation, again it is attachment clinging to this life. However much you eat, it is done with negative karma. Going home is the same, again it is done with that motivation—everything—driving back also becomes negative karma, once back there is also negative karma, having dinner, if you check back your motivation, it is attachment clinging to this life, and so it becomes negative karma. Everything you eat becomes negative karma. Then, going to bed, again if you check the motivation, it’s only for the comfort of this life, for the pleasure of this life.

So, if you check one day’s activities, the motivation behind them, every single thing becomes negative karma. For most of us it is like that. Creating negative karma means the result is only suffering. As I often mention, using as an example, a big mug of tea or coffee you can buy in the places where you fill your car up in the United States—what do you call those places?—gas stations, where truck drivers always get the big mugs of coffee. However many times you drink from that big mug, if it is with the motivation of attachment, clinging to this life, then everything become negative karma. The larger the mug is, the more negative karma. [Laughter]

I am sure, through listening to the lamrim and doing meditations, you wouldn’t think negative karma is only killing a human being or somebody. Normally people think, “Oh, I didn’t do anything wrong. I didn’t kill people or steal from people, so I am OK.” Normally people think like that. Whether they call it negative karma or sin, they think that because they don’t do big things like killing people or stealing, they haven’t done anything wrong.

You have to remember the definition of nonvirtue. If you remember it, you can see in just one day how much negative karma is done. If you don’t define what nonvirtue is then you will think

it is only killing human beings or something. Then you think you didn't do anything wrong. Then, when there are big problems or heavy sickness, your whole body deformed or some incredible change happens in your life, you think you didn't do anything wrong and you can't understand why this has happened to you. There are many people who wonder like this. It is not only in this life, there have been numberless past lives before this; there is so much other negative karma besides the negative karma of this life. It is not only today, not only in this life, from beginningless rebirth there has been this nonvirtue.

From that, the results of the ten nonvirtues, as I mentioned last night, go on and on, on and on. One result produces another result, creating the result similar to the cause, with produces four suffering results, one of which is again creating the result similar to the cause, which in turn produces four suffering results. There is endless suffering, as long as you don't do something to purify past negative karma and you don't abstain from committing that action again.

Therefore, you should always remember the definition of nonvirtue when you do the practice of purification, of confession, how from one of the ten nonvirtues, the suffering goes on and on, unending, from just *one* negative karma. It is very important to remember this ongoing suffering. You have done this action numberless times. You have done that numberless times, so many times in this life, then if you think about past lives it is uncountable, meaning there are so many suffering results you haven't finished experiencing. There is so much you haven't finished yet, that is not purified.

You should feel it's like poison in your heart. Think, "This is most unbearable. I can't stand this; I must purify it right now without delaying even a second." Like poison, you must get rid of it immediately; like a snake bite, you must get rid of it immediately. This is billions of times more than that, therefore you should generate the thought to purify it. On top of that, if you have taken vows and broken them, the pratimoksha vows, the bodhisattva vows or the tantric vows—even if you haven't taken them in this life but you have taken vows in a previous life—then you have collected the heaviest negative karma in the relationship to the guru. Heresy, anger, the thought of mistakes toward your virtuous friend—you have done this numberless times, from beginningless past lives.

Thinking this way, reflecting this way, practice purification, such as Vajrasattva, prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas or whatever. Even just doing the practice of confessing, reciting like this, is so powerful. Then develop very strong regret, which immediately makes the heavy negative karma thin. The stronger the regret, the more it weakens the negative karma, purifying it.

So, think that everything gets purified.

[Chanting]

Think your whole mental continuum is completely pure; there is not the slightest negative karma left in the mental continuum. Feel happiness for your past, present and future merits. Feel happiness for the numberless merits collected in the past and present and which you will collect in the future. Feel great happiness in your mind for the three times' merits collected by sentient beings, including bodhisattvas and buddhas, all their past, present and future merits. Feel great happiness about the three times' merits.

By doing this, so many times' limitless skies of merit are collected again and increase. By rejoicing in all these merits, your own merits are doubled up in one second.

I am not going to say too much here, just do the practice.

[Chanting]

THE SEVEN-LIMB PRACTICE: REQUESTING

So now, request the merit field to abide here until samsara ends, for all the buddhas who are in the *nirmanakaya* form to not pass into the sorrowless state. Make the same request to your root guru.

Then the golden throne, beautifully decorated with jewels, held by eight snow lions, with the double vajra in the front, numberless of your bodies make the offering of the golden throne. After making the request, you absorb the merit field.

[Chanting]

Think that the merit field accepts this request, either as *dharmakaya*, mentally accepted, or in the *rupakaya* way, verbally saying "yes" in response.

The next one is requesting to turn the Dharma wheel. It is said you visualize Brahma because Brahma is the one who requested the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel, as in that story. Holding the thousand-spoked golden Dharma chakra, offer numberless of these.

[Chanting]

Dedicate the merits. Again think they have accepted. "I dedicate myself and others' merit to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings."

[Chanting]

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

Think, "The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from all the sufferings and causes, to bring them enlightenment, therefore I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I am going to take oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*." Just one page.

Do you remember the number that I mentioned? [Conversation with students]

[Oral transmission]

Think, "Listening to this, I am taking the oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*, each word of which purifies negative karma and plants the seed of enlightenment, collecting skies of merit, an innumerable amount of merit, and bringing so much peace in the world and in the country, in the area."

[Oral transmission]

THE BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO DHARMA TAPES

If somebody taped this reading, there were words I made mistakes with but I repeated them, so you can use the tape when you drive your car, when you go to work, going and coming, where you have to spend so much time in the car, you can play that tape in the car. Of course, if you can, what you should do for practice while driving the car, for that many hours you can do recitation of mantras or practice Vajrasattva. You can finish so much, such a big number because you have to spend a lot of time in the car driving for many hours. If you are doing something like Vajrasattva or Chenrezig mantra or any prayer, visualize the deity on your crown then constantly nectar is coming and purifying you and sentient beings at your heart, purifying all together. You can finish many thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of mantras if you do practice in the car while you are driving, because you do many hours of driving. You can finish a lot; you can do a lot.

Since you have not become habituated to that practice yet, even if it is difficult to remember to do it, if you play the tape of the teachings, you don't need effort, you just hear the sound and then constantly your negative karma gets purified. Constantly your negative karma gets purified. Like that, you plant the seed of enlightenment, you collect inconceivable merit. Every time you hear one word, you collect innumerable merit.

There are also other sutras, such as the *Arya Sanghata Sutra* that as soon as you hear it, it purifies the five uninterrupted negative karmas—killing your father, mother or an arhat, harming a buddha and causing disunity among the Sangha. That means there is no question about the ten nonvirtuous actions. As soon as you hear [the sutra], all this is purified and there is unbelievable merit. I think I mentioned this already—unbelievable merit is collected, like the merits of buddhas equaling the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. The buddhas equaling the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean—sand grains here do not refer to normal sand grains but water atoms, so they are very subtle. So, it is like that, with that many buddhas but twelve times that many. Like that, it is unbelievable. There is also the *Diamond Cutter Sutra* or the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* and there are also commentaries. You can listen to commentaries of the teachings while you are driving a car.

There is a student, Harvey, who has been director of quite a few centers and also the International Office director, who spent his life for many years working for the organization. He listens to Lama Yeshe's commentary of Tara Cittamani whilst he is driving the car back and forth. You don't need to put effort into it. If you play a tape of this sutra, all those hours of your life become so meaningful because you remember your practice. There is no need to put effort into it; you just hear the sound.

Also, when you are driving a car, people in the street can hear the Dharma words and their negative karma gets purified. With those sutras, those unbelievably heavy negative karmas are instantly purified by just hearing them, as soon you hear the words of these precious teachings. The people and animals—the deer or whatever—on the road, in the houses, next to the road, can hear the words and their negative karma gets purified. So, while you are driving your car you can benefit so many sentient beings, purifying their negative karma, liberating so many sentient beings from the lower realms—just while you drive back and forth.

One time, as I was driving from the Washington house to the market, I played Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche reciting a sutra. Of course, not only are the teachings of the Buddha so precious, if the

one who recites them is a great holy being, a bodhisattva and holy attained enlightened yogi, again there is double benefit. In the back of the car there were two nuns sitting who were getting very cold because I kept the windows down and the wind that came through was cold. I thought, they might get cold but then it can benefit so many sentient beings on the way, the people on the road or in houses near the road and the animals. Once, there was a deer on the road. We stopped a little bit so the deer could hear some words, and so much negative karma was purified. Driving back and forth is just a simple thing but it has incredible benefit for sentient beings as well as for the people in the car. Of course, unless there is somebody who gets very angry and beats [others] because of it! Anyway, it also helps to make the lives of the people in the car meaningful.

In Hong Kong, I suggested to an Indian lady that she make a tape of the *Door to Satisfaction* book, and as she spent some time driving, she could listen while she was driving. It's very meaningful, very true. People often have more time in the car than in the house. When you arrive home there is so much to do, so maybe in the car there is more time.

DEDICATION

[Chanting]

Due to the three times' merit collected by me, collected by others ...

[Chanting]

Due to all the three times' merit collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may I, myself, my own family members and all the students and benefactors of this organization, those who sacrifice their life for this organization, doing service for sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha, and all the rest of the sentient beings, may we be able to meet in all the lifetimes only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus and to see enlightened beings, by each sentient being, by ourselves, in all the future lifetimes, devoting to the virtuous friend and to be able to receive enlightenment for myself and all sentient beings.

May each sentient being, in all the future lifetimes, be able to fulfill the wishes of and only do actions most pleasing for the holy mind of the virtuous friend in all the future lifetimes. And may I and all sentient beings, every sentient being, be able to fulfill the holy wishes of the virtuous friend immediately, in all the future lifetimes.

This dedication is very important. If everything happens it can create complete success for yourself and success for all sentient beings. And this dedication is very good to do at the end of a guru yoga practice. When you finish doing guru yoga practice, do this. This dedication is very important.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, that which exist but do not exist from their own side, which are totally empty, may the I which exists but does not exist from its own side, which is totally empty, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, and lead all sentient beings, who exist but do not exist from their side, who are totally empty, to that enlightenment, which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

I dedicate all the merits the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicate their merits, that the general teachings of the Buddha, and in particular the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, unified sutra and tantra, may they flourish forever and spread in all the directions by completely actualizing them within all of us, in all the students in this organization, and all the supporters who give up their life to this organization, doing service for sentient beings and the buddhas.

[Chanting]

Thank you so much.

I hope the cooks are enlightened. [Laughter]

Lecture 11

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PURE MOTIVATION

[Chanting: *Heart Sutra. The Foundation of Good Qualities*, lamrim prayer.]

You can read in English. If you are not familiar, then you can read the English.

[Chanting in Tibetan]

After the praise, the homage to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is done, it expresses what is Buddhadharma, the Buddha's teachings. It is saying to not commit any unwholesome actions, actions that harm self and others, whose result is only suffering, so to not commit any of those actions, any type. Even if it is a very small one, you should abandon it because you want all the happiness—you want even the smallest happiness, even the small comfort in the dream. Therefore, if this is what you want, you have to abandon even the small negative karma and you have to engage in perfect wholesome actions, virtuous actions, actions which result only in happiness.

Usually we do our perfections the other way round. Usually we do a *perfect* nonvirtuous action, a complete perfect, powerful nonvirtuous action. And even if a virtuous action is done, even if it is finally done, it's very short-term and very weak, not powerful and not perfect. Either there is no motivation, no virtuous motivation, leave aside bodhicitta, not the thought of seeking liberation from samsara for ourselves, not even a Dharma mind, a Dharma attitude, seeking happiness of future lives, being detached from this life—without even that very last Dharma attitude, the minimum, without even that.

There is no understanding of reincarnation and karma; there is no thought of seeking long-term happiness of a future life. And even if there is understanding, it doesn't mean we seek the happiness of future lives twenty-four hours a day, that doesn't happen, because the mind is totally occupied by attachment, clinging to this life, to reputation and pleasure, comfort, sense enjoyment, just the pleasure of this life, power and so forth, totally occupied by the sense pleasures, attachment, clinging to sense pleasures of this life. So, even if we have an intellectual understanding of negative karma, that thought seeking happiness for all those coming future

lives doesn't arise. That attitude, which is Dharma, seeking the happiness of future lives and being detached from this life, doesn't arise. It's quite rare.

Therefore, even if we do a virtuous action, either the motivation or the actual body of the practice is missing. If we are going to recite just one mala of OM MANI PADME HUM or whatever mantra then we can't concentrate during that minute. We can't concentrate, the mind is so scattered. In that way, the actual practice is not perfect like that. Either there is no meditation or even if there is a visualization we can't concentrate throughout, for that duration, we can't keep the concentration and there is no clear visualization, and so forth.

Even when we do a virtuous action, because there is no virtuous motivation, no Dharma motivation, no Dharma attitude for the action, even if we are trying to practice virtue, the cause of happiness, trying to practice Dharma, the Dharma motivation, the attitude is not there, and we are unable to transform the action into virtue. Leave aside the other activities in daily life, even something different from we would normally do, reciting prayers or doing meditation, again, we have no knowledge of karma, of how creating karma is to do with our attitude, with what kind of attitude we do the action, what creates good karma and bad karma, all those different levels of good karma that produce different levels of happiness. We have no knowledge of that. Even if there is an intellectual understanding, we are still unable to practice, unable to use the understanding, unable to put that intellectual understanding into practice in daily life.

Usually, for Western people, there is not so much emphasis on prayer. Prayer is not the trip; the trip is meditation. The trip is meditation, quietly sitting in meditation, not prayer. Chinese, Tibetans and others do so much prayer, but Westerners don't usually like to do prayers. Here, even if the person tries to meditate, there is no virtuous motivation; there is no Dharma. The meditation does not become Dharma, the cause of happiness; it does not become even the very least Dharma motivation. Even if the person has been doing meditation for thirty or forty years, looking back it is extremely hard to find even one meditation that has become Dharma.

THE BUDDHA: HIS KINDNESS IN SHOWING THE PATH

Using myself as an example, from Tibet, from Solu Khumbu when I was, I think, maybe four, five or six years old, I started to learn the Tibetan alphabet from my uncle who carved mantras on rocks, huge rocks that are near the road. Different families and people sponsored them, requesting him to carve the mantras, then they place them on the road so that people who are travelling, who are passing through, when they come up this way, when they go down this way, it becomes circumambulation. When they come up this way either they actually circumambulate the rock or the next time, when they come down, it becomes a circumambulation. It's a service, a way of benefiting other sentient beings.

Here the service is purifying other sentient beings' negative karma, the cause of their problems, the cause of their sufferings, by circumambulating the Dharma, these very powerful mantras, carved on the huge rock. It is a very important service, purifying the root, purifying the cause of the suffering. It's something that really changes their mind, the mind becomes Dharma and creates the cause of happiness, the cause of liberation and the cause of enlightenment. They develop Dharma; it becomes the path and then the path becomes the cause of happiness, the cause of enlightenment. It causes other sentient beings to collect extensive merit, the cause of happiness. So, it's very, very practical, very practical; it has very deep benefit. This kind of service affects the mental continuum of the sentient beings; it purifies and collects so much merit.

Due to the great lamas of the past who gave advice with their compassion, people learned many ways like this—how to offer service to other sentient beings and how to purify their own karma and collect merit, and bring peace and happiness to the country. In this way, by purifying negative karma, it is causing them to collect a lot of merit and for their mind to become pure Dharma and especially to generate a good heart. So, it's quite common.

I don't think it's happening these days but in the past for so many years, especially in old times, people in Solu Khumbu were so devoted—they had so much devotion, so much good luck. They build many beautiful holy objects. Somebody who had a little bit of wealth had large prayer wheels in their own house, like here at Kopan. Here, we have modern technology, and because of that we put a lot of microfiche, with many, many mantras. Usually, there was just paper, with small mantras, which you can carve or print. This large one is usually called *mani dung chur* in Tibetan language. That means there are one hundred million OM MANI PADME HUM mantras inside. Any big prayer wheel is given that name and so is supposed to have that number of mantras. Nowadays, due to modern technology, microfiche, in a tiny prayer wheel you can have so many millions of mantras. This also has some microfiche, and that's why it can have so many. I think it has thirteen hundred million OM MANI PADME HUM.

So, families who had some wealth had extremely beautiful shrine rooms and many of the extremely precious Buddha's teachings, if not all of the Kangyur—the complete teachings of the Buddha and the pandits—at least, the *Prajnaparamita*, the teachings on the *Perfection of Wisdom*. Many families couldn't read because there was no such system in Solu Khumbu or Tibet where lay people went to school. There was a school, but it was very little, where they learnt Tibetan writing. But there were not many and they were very little. Somehow they didn't get set up for lay people to learn reading and writing. If you were going to learn writing and reading then that meant you had to live your life in a monastery, with the Dharma. There was no other reason, but it meant you were going to live your life in the Dharma, so then you could learn the alphabet, to read scriptures.

In the past, in the mountains, people were so devoted; they had incredible devotion. There was not as much distraction as there is now, with so much business and this and that, with the focus on money totally occupying our life, with so many things that we can do for money. There weren't such things like that before. It was totally different in Solu Khumbu now and before, the difference between sky and earth. Now it's not permitted, but before in some ways it was holy.

So anyway, there were people who at least had the Buddha's *Prajnaparamita* teachings, the *Perfection of Wisdom*, the teachings on emptiness. This is what the Buddha told Ananda, the Buddha's attendant, that if any of the other teachings are destroyed, it doesn't matter but you should not degenerate even one corner, even one piece, of this *Prajnaparamita* teaching, you should take responsibility to not allow it to degenerate. And the Buddha said, "Wherever this teaching is, I am there." The *Prajnaparamita* teachings are what the Buddha left in this world to liberate us; this is what liberates. The way that the Buddha liberates us sentient beings is not by washing with his hands, not by releasing all our sufferings, all the negative karma by water, like other religions do. The Buddha does not liberate us sentient beings by taking thorns out of the body without using his hands, not in that way, and also not by transplanting his realizations within us, also not that way—like translating a monkey's heart into a human being's body.

The Buddha's way of liberating us sentient beings from suffering and its cause, delusions and karma, is by revealing the truth. The truth, what is that? That is this teaching talking about the reality of the nature of I, the mind, the aggregates and phenomena.

EMPTINESS: THE EMPTINESS OF THE ICE CREAM

The emptiness, the ultimate nature, the very nature of phenomena is very subtle. Everything we see, including the I, the sense objects, the sense of the ear—sound—of smell, of taste—food and drink—and tangible objects. All that we see, people, buildings, statues, pillars, the floor, ceilings, all these things, trees, earth and sky and mountains, rocks—their very nature is emptiness. But this is unknown to us, this is unknown to our mind. Even though that is their nature, it is unknown to us.

Why is their nature emptiness? They are not empty of substantial phenomena, not empty of concrete, substantial phenomena. They are not empty of what is labeled this and that. Not empty of substantial phenomena, like the sky or space. Neither is it empty of what is merely labeled, not that. Like this—this is *not* ice cream, you can see is empty of ice cream. It is empty of ice cream. For example, ice cream is empty of ice cream. It's not empty of merely labeled ice cream, which exists. Merely labeled ice cream exists. The ice cream that exists is what is merely labeled by mind. The ice cream is not empty of merely labeled ice cream. When we talk about emptiness, we are not saying that ice cream is empty of ice cream; we are not talking of that.

While there is ice cream, *while* this ice cream exists, it is empty. It is saying, *while* there is ice cream, *while* the ice cream exists, then it's empty. Therefore, you can see it's not empty of ice cream. It's not empty of kaka. The ice cream is not empty of kaka, excrement. So the ice cream is empty of something about the ice cream. The ice cream is empty of something about the ice cream. It's not empty of ice cream but something related to ice cream, something which doesn't exist. It's not that it's empty of some other phenomenon, kaka or something. Not that. It's not empty of the ice cream that exists, which is merely labeled by the mind. So, it's empty of something about ice cream.

The ice cream that exists is what is merely labeled by the mind. What is merely labeled by mind. Maybe I'll just mention this, maybe it might help. It might give you some idea a little.

When there is not this cream, what is this? There is milk and what else? Milk and cheese? Milk and sugar? Ice? These eyes? Eyes with white eyebrows! I am joking. So anyway, milk and sugar, that's all?

[Student explains]

What substance is cream made from? It is milk, right? So anyway, when the milk is in that state, you don't call the cream "milk?" Do you call cream "milk?"

Student: No

Rinpoche: Why?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Separate? But the thick milk top, you call that cream, right? The top, when you say, thick or something, right? The creamy milk. So anyway, it's ice, then the sugar and then milk. The milk will become thicker when it's all put together. So that is the base, that is the base. Before that existed, before actualizing this, even your mind labeling "ice cream" doesn't exist. You see before this base materialized, even your mind that labels "ice cream" doesn't exist. It's impossible for ice cream to exist before the base materializes.

Even if there is the base, if it is not labeled "ice cream," ice cream doesn't exist. Even though there is the base, if your mind hasn't labeled it "ice cream" yet, ice cream doesn't exist. That's should also be known.

EMPTINESS: DO THE BASE AND LABEL HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME?

As soon as the base comes into existence, the label, say, "ice cream," also comes but they don't come into existence at the same time. That is very important to know. That's a very important analysis to do. The base and the label don't happen together. When they come into existence, is it possible to come into existence together? Do they come together? I said it's not possible but I think ... huh?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Why?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Little bit after, not at the same time? After a long time? The label comes after a long time? After one hour? After that you completely enjoy it? If you enjoyed it, then you can label it "ice cream." But if you haven't enjoyed it, then you don't label it "ice cream." I am joking. If it has a good taste, then you label it "ice cream," and if it doesn't, then you don't bother.
[Laughter]

If there is a spider suddenly coming down, suddenly falling down onto your leg or onto your nose, at that time, didn't it come together?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Oh, I see, if you labeled in your mind "spider," then they come together, huh?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: You mean even before you see it coming down, dropping down, landing on your nose. Huh? What?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Oh, I see. So, as soon as it lands, the minute you see it landing on your nose, then the base and label happen together at that time? You see it comes down like this. It comes down so fast.

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: So, they come together, the base and label? The base and label come together?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: At that moment, it sounds like it? When you look through the window or a glass door and you see a car speed past or a bird fly past, is it the same? The label and base you see together like that? When you look through a window, you see a bird flying or a car passing quickly, so you see base and label together. You immediately see the car passing, right? That means at the same time you are seeing the base of the car going, it's happening together? Seeing the label "car" and the base going together?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: You see the base and the label? Oh, then the label. So, it's a little bit different from the spider. The spider you see together but the car changes a little? There's some flexibility.

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Oh, I see. You see the spider dropping on the nose, landing on your nose, but you don't see it? But you don't think of it? No time to think? You see it landing on the top of your nose and enjoying it, you know. But you don't think, you are not trying to think, so you don't think, right? You don't think, so you don't label. You don't label "spider" right at that time? You see the spider landing on your nose, but you are seeing spider landing on your nose without labeling?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Without labeling. You see the spider landing on your nose without the mind labeling. Without your mind labeling "spider," how do you see the spider landing on your nose?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Without the mind labeling, how do you see the spider landing on your nose?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: So, you don't see it; you just see a phenomenon landing on your nose? You just see this beautiful phenomenon landing on your nose? Or most precious! So, anyway, just to finish this.

Suppose a person is separated from their father or mother from childhood time, many years ago. Then when they meet, when the daughter or son meets either the father or mother and is unable to recognize them because they hadn't met for many years, at that time does that child see the father or mother, or not?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Does the child see the father or mother or not? They don't see the father or mother? So, they don't meet. While they are meeting, they are not meeting? While the son and father are meeting, they are meeting but not meeting?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: They are meeting. They are meeting but the son doesn't see his father?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Yeah, yeah, right. You are right.

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Yeah, it takes a lot of time to work it out in the mental office. So, while it's not recognized, the son sees the father or not? Is the son seeing the father or not? The son sees the father? The son doesn't meet the father?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Yeah, he doesn't recognize him. Yeah, that's right. I think I agree, but the son doesn't meet the father? The son doesn't see the father?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: So, the son doesn't see the father. The son doesn't meet the father? The son is not meeting father?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: If the son kills that man, then the son is not killing his father? Is the son killing his father or not? On the basis of not knowing, the son doesn't recognize that this is his father, on the basis of that. So, the son doesn't kill the father, even if he killed that man. Because the son doesn't recognize the father, if he killed him, he did not kill his father; this is not killing the father. So, he doesn't create the uninterrupted negative karma of killing a father?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: That's quite an advantage. It is so useful to not recognize things. [Laughter] That way, you have less negative karma.

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: That memory is a good one. That not memory, that forgetfulness helps reduce karma. So you are saying right?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: I think it will be good if you can think whatever he thinks.

You see, that person *sees* the father but he doesn't *recognize* that person as the father. That's the difference. The person sees the father, otherwise he would completely lose. He sees the father but does not recognize him as father. Even if the son didn't recognize that he killed his father, because the relationship is there, the karma is there. He was born from that mother and father; his body's evolution came from the father. So that's what that means. The combination of sperm from the father and egg from the mother, the fertilized egg, so even if the person didn't know that it was his father but killed him, it would create the uninterrupted negative karma of killing his father. If that son didn't recognize his father but in reality that body, because of the blood connection, which made the body of this child, therefore he receives the label "father." It is a valid base that can receive the label "father." Therefore, if he killed him, he would create the uninterrupted negative karma, that without the interruption of another life, would immediately cause him to reincarnate in the lower hot hell realm.

So anyway, the label "ice cream" and the base also don't come into existence together. The reason why is this. For example, maybe I'll put this first. A person that you met in the past, whether it's your father, mother or friend, somebody that you have met long time ago. Now, at the beginning you don't recognize him, then slowly while you are talking, the voice and the shape of the face, manners or certain things cause you to slowly remember. You could remember from the voice, the way of talking. Slowly you remember, slowly it comes into your memory. So, you see, here is the label. Here, you see the base first, you are able to recognize the base first, because of certain shapes, characteristics and so forth. Then recognizing the base, as a preliminary, that becomes the reason. Then that reason persuades the mind to make up the label, "father" or "mother" or "this face" or "that person." The mind makes up the label. This is exactly same. It doesn't come together. You recognize the base and make up the label; base and label don't come together. The label comes later. So now it's exactly like that, the base of ice cream and the label "ice cream" don't come together. There is no way to come into existence together. This is like the other example.

Here you see the base first. Seeing the base, the milk and sugar and ice together, and the milk thick like that, in that style, in that form, by seeing that all together like this and recognizing it, that causes the mind to make up the label "ice cream," that label you were taught, you were introduced by somebody. There was a time when you learned the name "ice cream." There was a time in childhood or whenever, there was a day, when you learned this label "ice cream" because somebody introduced you to the label. All phenomena are like this. You are introduced to the label by somebody and then you believe in that. Somebody introduces you to the label and then you believe in that. Then, your mind makes up the label and you believe in that. And then after you believe, there is the appearance. After that, there is appearance to you of that phenomenon, which you labeled and which you believe. If you don't believe it, I don't think there will be the appearance. I don't think there will be the appearance if you don't believe that label. So you believe in that then, next, as a result of that there is the appearance to you.

That's how the whole thing works, everything here, everything, all that appears to the senses—the eyes and so forth—everything we see here, when we are in the temple, when we are outside, when we are shopping, at the market, when we go for sightseeing, at the beach or at a movie, all that appearance. All the appearances we have recognized here, the appearances of the sense of ears, of nose, of tongue, of body, all the appearances we have when we are outside—the sky, the earth, the buildings, the mountains, the birds, the people, everything—through analysis you can see, all these came from your own mind. Everything came from your mind. Before mentioning

that, first somebody introduced you to the label. Your parents or some teachers, in the school, in kindergarten, in primary school, all the way up to university—it's all about teaching labels. What you learn is labels. What you are learning is all labels. What you are taught is all labels. Everything you are learning in university is labels. Somebody introduces you to the label, you learn that and you believe in that. Then your mind makes up the label, and believes in that and there is appearance, then you see this and that. Then you see this phenomenon, that phenomenon; this person, that person. So like that. Then there is *du she*, discriminating, *du she*, how you say? Discriminated?

Student: [Inaudible]

Rinpoche: Discriminative? Native American. [Laughter]

Therefore, now here, all the things we see right here is discrimination. You are seeing me, I am seeing you, all the things here—the statues, the ceiling, the floor, this carpet, this brocade, all these phenomena—seeing and discriminating, always discriminating, this, this and this. Seeing all these, discriminating all these, before that there is appearance. The appearance came from the label, your mind labeled and believed in that. Before your mind made up the label, you are introduced by somebody, the name, the label. In some ways the whole of study is actually the studying of the labels. When we are learning the path, we are studying the labels. Everything—hell, the sufferings, the true cause of suffering and the true path, the true cessation of suffering, enlightenment—one way of looking at it is by doing the analysis this way. You are studying the whole thing that is labeled. You are studying what is labeled. You are introduced to the label, and you learn that. Then your mind makes up the label and believes in that.

Through this knowledge, you generate beneficial thoughts, which only produce happiness, which is labeled “virtue.” This thought, the action, is labeled “virtue.” And then the result that is experienced is what is labeled “happiness.” Then you try to abandon all the thoughts which result only in suffering, which is called “nonvirtue.” So, while everything is existing in mere name—true suffering, true cause of suffering—it all functions in mere name. The true path and removing the delusions, all these, actualizing the path, the cessation of suffering—everything functions, exists in mere name. It exists in mere name; it functions in mere name.

Because it is dependent on cause and conditions, dependent on base and mind, on the label and existing, it is a dependent arising. Therefore we have total freedom. We can change, we can remove the cause of suffering and we can be free from suffering. We can actualize the path and achieve liberation, enlightenment.

Anyway, now to go back.

That base and that label “ice cream” don’t come into existence together. You can see from that, you can see the evolution of the label “ice cream,” how it comes. By understanding that, you can see they don’t come into existence together. As soon as you see the base you see the label—that doesn’t come, that doesn’t happen, it’s impossible. They don’t come in existence together. After seeing the base, that becomes the reason, that persuades the mind to make the label “ice cream.” And you believe in that, the label. Then, there is the appearance of ice cream, then you see ice cream. So, to be able to see ice cream there is a whole evolution that has taken place. It started from somebody, at the very beginning, introducing the label, “This is ice cream.” You learnt that name.

EVERYTHING IS A CREATION OF THE MIND

Just by this example, you can see this is completely the creation of your mind, the creation of your mind, right down to seeing the ice cream. First, somebody introduces you then after seeing ice cream, you think, “This is ice cream.” The whole thing is a creation of the mind. Being a creation of the mind doesn’t mean without depending on the base, it’s not saying that. Without the base then it’s like what you see in a dream. You dream you win a billion dollars in a lottery or somebody gives you a billion dollars in your hand, but when you wake up you don’t have a cent, even your purse is empty. When you wake up, that billion dollars is merely labeled by the mind. It’s the same as ice cream but there is no base, there is no valid base, so that’s why when you wake up you don’t have it. Or if somebody, a magician, transformed something into a million dollars and gives it to you in your hand but when you get back home, it’s not there in your purse, the magician had just hallucinated you. That is similar to the dream because there is no valid base.

So, created by mind doesn’t mean without a valid base, without depending on a base, it’s not saying that. It exists by depending on the base, but even the base is also the same. Again, again it’s exactly same. Whatever the material there is—ice, milk and so forth—again those names were introduced to you by somebody. Somebody introduced the label and you learned that, then your mind imputed, merely imputed it, and you believed in that, then there is appearance, and then you see it. So again, with all those materials it is the same. Again, all those labels have their own base, so it is the same. Once you know that the ice cream exists as merely imputed by depending on the base, then all the rest of the phenomena, all the rest based on that, then that base, that base, that base, so you see, all the rest of the phenomena, it’s the same. Then the atoms, particles, the particles of particles and so on, it’s all same. Everything from particles to atoms, according to Prasangika, in reality everything exists in mere name, merely imputed by mind and functions that way.

That’s the reality. Everything exists in mere name, merely imputed by mind. That’s the reality. In Tibetan it is called *tagyö tsam*,⁴ existing being merely labeled; *tröpa*⁵ or *tagyö tsam*, merely labeled. Starting from ice cream, the whole of phenomena exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, when you meditate, first do the analysis, what was analyzed just now, how everything exists, starting from the ice cream to the whole of phenomena, existing in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. Meditate on that, on subtle dependent arising.

Then, when you precisely meditate on the meaning of that, what understanding comes in your heart is that all this is empty. The understanding that this is empty should come in your heart, when you meditate on all this, existing in mere name, merely imputed by mind, extremely subtle dependent arising—then the effect of that understanding comes right in your heart. There is the discovery that all these are empty of existing from their own side, or truly existing. Before I said something about ice cream is empty, empty of something about ice cream—not ice cream itself but something about it, so here the ice cream is empty of truly existent ice cream, ice cream existing from its own side, ice cream by its nature.

⁴ Wyl: *briags yod tsam*. Merely labeled phenomena.

⁵ Wyl: *spros pa*. A mental fabrication or construct.

Therefore, how the ice cream appears to us, how we see the ice cream, how we believe, how we apprehend the ice cream is *totally* something else. It's *not* the ice cream that exists. All that is ice cream that doesn't exist at all. Normally, what appears to us, the way it appears, how we see it, how we believe it to be, which is ice cream not labeled by mind, not only that, not *merely* labeled by mind, and existing from its own side or truly existent or existent by its nature. There is ice cream, there is *real* ice cream in the sense of existing from its own side. That way the ice cream appears and how we see the ice cream and believe it, *that* is a total hallucination. That's a total hallucination. That's a projection of our mind, our ignorant, hallucinatory mind—the ignorance, the concept of true existence. This is the biggest superstition, the king of the delusion. The thing as we believe it to exist, doesn't exist at all. There is no such thing there.

On the basis of this projection, this hallucination of being truly existent, attachment rises. It seems something worth being attached to. We exaggerate the object, with this and that qualities, how good this is, and then the attachment, clinging to it, arises. Similarly, anger also builds up, the wrong concept of anger, believing this is harming me, this is bad, so anger totally wanting to hurt. The anger and the view of the anger, that there is something really bad, is built up on the basis of this truly existent hallucination, this truly existent appearance, projected by ignorance, the concept of true existence. So, all the other delusions arise, delusion and the view of that delusion, which is another hallucination, all these minds such as jealousy, all these delusions, these wrong concepts and their view, which is hallucinated. Everything is built on this totally false world, this totally false hallucination, the truly existent appearance projected by this ignorance. This is why ignorance is the king of the delusions.

There no such thing as what attachment believes in, the view, there is no such thing as what anger views. It is not true; there is no such thing there. There is no such thing there. Even the foundation that appears to us as something real and we believe, is not there. We believe it is real in the sense of existing from its own side, but it is not there *at all*.

So here, the ice cream is empty of the truly existent ice cream. What normally appears to us in daily life in that way and the way we believe, *that* is not there. That one is *totally* empty. That one is *totally* empty. Not even the slightest even atom exists. That's the emptiness of the ice cream.

So, therefore, what is the ice cream? What is the ice cream? It's totally empty. The ice cream is what is merely labeled by mind and that is *totally* empty of the real ice cream, in the sense of existing from its own side. The nature of the ice cream is existing in mere name but at the same time it's empty of the real one, what has been appearing to us, and so far what we have been believing, that there is a real one existing from its own side. We think, we believe, we have been eating this real ice cream for so many years. We think, "I have been eating this real ice cream for so many years." Or, "This shop has very good ice cream, the best ice cream," or "This country has very good ice cream." However, in reality such ice cream as that we have *never* had, because it didn't exist.

You have never had that ice cream in reality—not even one atom—you have never had it in this life, you have never had it from beginningless past lives. You have never had such ice cream in the world, not even the slightest atom, because it has never existed. It never existed before and it doesn't exist now. As long as it is ice cream, it is not that. As long as it is ice cream, it exists in mere name, empty of the real one that exists from its own side. There is no such ice cream. So, you have never had that ice cream. What you had is what is merely labeled by mind, which is empty.

So, I think I'll just stop there.

EMPTINESS: THE OBJECT OF REFUTATION

The problem is this. Because we don't analyze, it appears that the base and the label "ice cream" come into existence at the same time or that the base of the ice cream and the label "ice cream" are inseparable. They appear like that, inseparable.

If we are more aware of our view and we recognize the object to be refuted or the hallucination as a hallucination, then we can see that on this base there is ice cream, which means, on this base there is ice cream *existing from its own side*, on this base there is *real* ice cream.

If we recognize the hallucination as a hallucination, if our mind is analytical, sharper, able to recognize our view as a hallucination, we will see that on the base there is ice cream, which means on the base there is *real* ice cream, in the sense of existing from its own mind, it's not merely labeled by mind. That is the projection of the negative imprint left on the mental continuum by the ignorance, by the past concept of inherent existence. That projection is total hallucination.

It's not possible base and label come into existence simultaneously, it's impossible. Similarly, the base, the aggregates, the association of body and mind, and the label "I" don't come into existence, they don't come together. If they came in existence like that, in order for our mind to make up the label "ice cream" we would have to have a reason. Why does the mind choose the particular label "ice cream?" There has to be a reason. The reason is that before we make up the label there has to be a particular phenomenon that can receive that label. We have to see some particular phenomena that can receive that label. Otherwise, there is no reason, nothing there for the mind to choose this particular label "ice cream." If we just see water, that doesn't cause us to make up the label "ice cream."

In order to label something, there must be a valid base. For example, "I am listening to the Dharma," or "I am explaining the Dharma." To label that depends on a reason, first seeing the aggregates and doing the function of listening to the teachings or explaining them. We see that first, then because of that reason the mind makes up the label, "I am listening to the Dharma," or "I am explaining the Dharma." Therefore, the base and the label don't come into existence together. The base comes first, the label comes after.

If they came together, if the base of ice cream and the label "ice cream" came together, that would mean that the base of the I and "I," the label, would come together, that the aggregates and the label, "I," would come together. If they came into existence simultaneously, not sequentially, that would mean that the aggregates themselves would be the I. The aggregates themselves would be the I. The base itself would be the ice cream. The label "ice cream" would become one with the base if they came into existence together. If the aggregates are the I, why we do need to label "I" on the I? If that were so, we would have to label "I" on *that* I. Then, we have to label "I" on *that* I. So it becomes endless. That is the reasoning, to prove that negates this false view, as it is explained in the Madhyamaka teachings.

This comes from the *Prajnaparamita* teachings. I was saying, in Solu Khumbu the people with some wealth always at least had the *Prajnaparamita* text on the altar, even if they couldn't read,

even they didn't know how to read, because they knew it was incredible good luck, bringing so much merit; it is so fortunate to have. Then, they would make prostrations, make offerings, make light offering or water offering, and in that way offering to the *Prajnaparamita* teachings collects unbelievable, unbelievable merit.

So, this subject came from there. And I was saying, the Buddha's way to guide us sentient beings is by revealing the truth. That is how the Buddha liberates us sentient beings. This teaching of the *Prajnaparamita* shows the truth, the ultimate nature of phenomena. By learning what the Buddha has already revealed, taught, by listening, reflecting and meditating, and by actualizing wisdom, realizing emptiness, then developing the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, and directly ceasing both the gross and subtle defilements, that is how we achieve liberation and enlightenment. That's how the Buddha guides us. Therefore, this *Prajnaparamita* teaching is so precious.

Lecture 12

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

[Page] 166? 106? That was the same thing yesterday, no? [Student explains] I see. 166? Oh yes, that's right.

Think, "The purpose of my life is to free numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment: numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless suras, asuras, human beings, intermediate stage beings—to free them from all the suffering and its causes, to bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I am going to listen to the oral transmission of the Buddha's teaching, *Golden Light Sutra*, the most precious. By hearing each word, I purify so much negative karma, and that plants the seed of enlightenment in my own heart and directs my life toward enlightenment and then brings so much peace and happiness in the world, in the country, the area, like that. And I collect inconceivable merit by hearing these words."

[Oral transmission]

So, page 169, the back side.

ADVICE ON PRACTICING DHARMA AFTER KOPAN: RINPOCHE'S SHAKYAMUNI BOOK

Since there are some of you going back to the West and if it is the first time you have attended the course here, I would like to say a few words about how to carry on, after you learned here during this one month what to do in your life, how to carry on, how to continue your practice. Those who attended the course in the past time may have already received many lifetimes' practices, a few lifetimes of practices, not only for this life.

Anyway, the one thing is to practice one guru yoga every day: *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*⁶ or Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. If it is your first time, unless you have some strong feeling for *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* then that's different, but because you have been visualizing Guru Shakyamuni Buddha during this course and maybe reciting the mantra, maybe you are more familiar with the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha yoga that I put together, the daily meditation practice, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guru yoga.⁷

This book is made for two reasons. For people attending the course for the first time, after the course then there is the question of how to carry on, what to do. So, this abbreviated practice has many essences of the practice, the preliminary practices and the lamrim prayer, the meditation prayer of the whole path to enlightenment. There is something complete. This book is made so that after having done the course you know what to do to carry on, to do the lamrim practice meditation based on something such as a guru yoga practice. If you can do that, that's extremely good; it makes life so rich if this can be done. Of course, it's up to the individual person.

If this can be done at the beginning of each day of your life, then for the rest of the day really you feel very rich. You feel the day is meaningful, having done that practice in the morning, at the beginning of the day. So, that's one thing.

By practicing guru yoga, you receive the blessing of the guru and from the blessing of the guru realizations come from within. It's like when you pour water on a seed. The plant is as a seed, but when you pour water on the seed, that produces the stem, then the plant comes, then the tree and the fruit. So, the realizations, enlightenment, come from within your mind, which has all the potential, from your buddha nature.

With all these conditions, in order to purify the obstacles, the negative karma, the defilements, you need to create the conditions, the merit, which you do with guru yoga practice, where you one-pointedly look at the guru and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha as inseparable, oneness. This destroys the mind that sees them as separate and the guru as an ordinary being. By looking at them as one and seeing them as one, then from the cause, the devotion, this makes you receive the blessings of the guru. It is received in your own heart like water pouring on a seed. Then, realizations come from within; they get developed.

And that way you can sooner or later be liberated from the oceans of the undesirable sufferings of samsara, and even achieve enlightenment to be able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment, which is the main purpose of our life. It is the objective or the main project of our life, the goal of our life, the purpose of being born as a human being at this time.

ADVICE ON PRACTICING DHARMA AFTER KOPAN: MEDITATE ON THE LAMRIM

Then, there is the actual body of the meditation, which is on the lamrim path. On the basis such as guru yoga then you meditate on lamrim. With that, there is the lamrim, there is the *Foundation of All Good Qualities*, the prayer which plants the seed of the whole path. Just by reading that mindfully, then within that one or two minutes it plants the seed of the whole path to enlightenment in your heart. Each time you read such a lamrim prayer mindfully, the seed of

⁶ *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* eBook and PDF is available from FPMT Foundation Store, www.shop.fpmt.org.

⁷ *A Daily Meditation on Shakyamuni Buddha* eBook and PDF, available from FPMT Foundation Store.

enlightenment is planted every time, every day. If in one day you do some different lamrim prayers, or the same prayer at different times, then many seeds are planted and that becomes the main cause to receive the realizations of the path to enlightenment, sooner or later. The more imprints you plant the quicker you'll receive realizations on the path to enlightenment.

So, it's not only guru yoga, but the basis of guru yoga is combined with the direct meditation on the lamrim. You can meditate on the lamrim after you finish the lamrim prayer or, depending on which meditation you're going to do within lamrim, you can stop at that point in the prayer and do the elaborate meditation there. Or you can finish the prayer and at the end do the meditation, before Guru Shakyamuni Buddha absorbs into you.

My suggestion to you is to study as much as you can. Now there are many books coming out in English. Before, quite a number of years before, there were very few. The first book by His Holiness was just three pages long, an essay on Buddhism or something, but now there are so many. My suggestion is to study *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, that is the most elaborate one, or you can study Lama Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo*. I think it's all in English? The *Great Treatise* is in English?

[Student explains it is.]

So, you can do that. You can do that, or you just read *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* or *Essence of Refined Gold*. Study the lamrim from beginning to end. Study first. If possible, study it two or three times. Read some today, read it with meditation, then do some tomorrow. Whatever time, in the day you are working, or at night, whatever, whenever you have time, read some slowly and think about it. When you think, see how it is related to your own life, your own mind. Then it becomes a meditation. Do that at least once a day.

Since you have done the course and most of the actual meditations, since you've covered much of it, you have some idea. Still, you can read, go through the lamrim. In that case, once you have an idea of the whole lamrim, as far as meditation, then one day do guru devotion meditation. If there are different techniques, today you can do this technique, tomorrow you can do that technique—if there are different techniques, you can do that.

However, do one meditation on guru devotion, even for ten or fifteen minutes, whatever time, until you have a stable realization of that, as it is explained in the teachings. You realize the guru is all the buddhas, all the numberless buddhas, and from the bottom of your heart, you feel the oneness. Your own guru is all the buddhas and all the buddhas are your own guru. So, the oneness. All the numberless buddhas are your own guru, and your own guru is all the buddhas. From the bottom of your heart, you feel this rising devotion, not for a few hours or a few days but something that is very stable, unshakeable, very stable. That has to be obtained by quotations, by logic, by reasoning; that makes it stable. Whatever mistake that you seem to see, externally, in your view, any mistake you see, nothing can destroy your devotion, nothing can make you lose your devotion, nothing can affect you. But still you do a little bit of meditation to stabilize.

I am not going to elaborate here but this one is extremely important, the most important, because how this and future lives are going to turn out is based on this. How your life is going to turn out, this life and future lives, your success in actualizing the realizations of the graduated path, from perfect human rebirth, the beginning of the prayer, right up to enlightenment, the

three principal aspects of the path, then the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra, all that success depends on the guru devotion practice, how correctly, how well that is done.

Yesterday also I mentioned to our monks and nuns here, a person who is expert in devoting to the virtuous friend is defined by seeing that that person follows every single word the guru says, and is able to put it into practice, is able to do it. That's the definition of a person who is expert in devoting to the virtuous friend. That's where we have to pay most attention because from there we create the heaviest negative karma, but also, if it is done well, we create the highest merit and gain the quickest realizations. It's the quickest way to purify negative karma, any heavy negative karma, and the quickest way to collect extensive merit, the quickest enlightenment. Everything comes from there. That is wish-fulfilling. That is wish-fulfilling. You can have every realization quickly if it is done well. So, that's one thing.

The other one is mind training. The first part of the lamrim is the graduated path of the lower capable being. You can do one month's meditating on the perfect human rebirth, the next month on its usefulness, the next month on how it is difficult it is to find again, the next month on impermanence and death, the next month on the suffering of the lower realms and the next month karma.

You can do that and you may get to achieve realizations of those meditations, depending on how much purification you are able to do and how much extensive merit you can collect, with the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and also with sentient beings. You collect extensive merit by rejoicing, making offerings, offering service, then bodhicitta, compassion for others. You collect extensive merit with the sentient beings and also rejoicing. Depending on guru devotion, depending how strong, how well it is done, you can achieve realizations. Some people can achieve them very easily. If you really meditate like this every day. I don't mean the whole day but do the perfect human rebirth meditation for however many minutes—half hour or whatever—and so on, up to karma. Then, when you finish karma go back, until you achieve realizations. Do it like that. Until you achieve all those realizations, you can do it like that. The definition of those realizations you have to learn from the texts or teachings.

After that comes the graduated path of the middle capable being. Meditate on that until you have realizations, then the graduated path of the higher capable being. However many months or years it takes, meditate on that until you achieve stable realizations. Then, meditate on the higher capable being's path, bodhicitta, how many months, years or lifetimes it takes. Then, emptiness should be every day. Recite the *Heart Sutra* or any other text, teachings on emptiness or quotations, or just do the meditation. You should do the meditation on emptiness, something, everything, because that is an atomic bomb, able to destroy samsara, delusions. Without that you can't escape from samsara, therefore you must do it. At least you must recite the words. There are many texts, the *Heart Sutra*, the *Diamond Cutter Sutra* or a Mahamudra text. Even if you don't understand it, read it every day to leave imprints on the mind, so that sooner or later, sooner or later, after some time understanding comes like a lotus opening. It just comes one day, then also the realization can happen.

ADVICE ON PRACTICING DHARMA AFTER KOPAN: CONTINUE LAMRIM MINDFULNESS IN DAILY LIFE

During the working day, for the rest of the day, when you are not doing sitting meditation, in your working life, if possible, do the meditation that you did in morning, try to continue that in

your daily life, in your working life. Continue with that same thought, with that same feeling that you generated during your meditation. If it was the perfect human rebirth, try to see how it is so precious. Generate that strong feeling how it is so precious, much more precious than a wish-granting jewel or much more precious than mountains of gold, diamonds, most precious. Those feelings that were generated during meditation, as a result of meditation, try to continue that experience for the rest of the day, while you are working, see how this is so precious. When you keep this feeling, then naturally you won't get angry and you are very mindful, so you don't engage in negative karma. You are constantly only practicing Dharma; you engage only in what's meaningful without difficulty. That makes your life so meaningful. Even during the break time, even your working life becomes so good. Everything becomes good karma.

Everything overall—your sitting meditation, your working life—everything is to do with bodhicitta. Your sitting meditation, your working life, eating, walking, sleeping, whatever, is to do with bodhicitta. That makes your life most beneficial.

That way your working life, the break time from sitting meditation, is not break time from the Dharma. There is no break time from the Dharma. It is very important to practice Dharma during the break time from sitting meditation. That's very important, because if you don't practice Dharma then you can collect so much negative karma, anger can arise. If you don't practice Dharma, anger can arise, strong attachment can arise, then so much negative karma increases. Then it becomes an obstacle for the sitting meditation. Instead of supporting it, it becomes an obstacle for the sitting meditation, you can't even do the meditation. This way, the sitting meditation helps your working life to have a better quality, to be inspired and better and more compassionate. You do everything with a pure motivation, a Dharma motivation. It helps that and then, in the same way, your working life helps your sitting meditation. Your break time life, all that becomes meaningful, Dharma, the cause of enlightenment, that helps your sitting meditation. It becomes very strong; it's very easy to meditate; there are less distractions. Then it becomes easy to have realizations. This is practicing Dharma in both times.

It is totally wrong after a session to think that you have finished your meditation and then you can do anything. After getting up from the thick meditation cushion, you think because you have finished you can do anything. Now, you can become wild and do anything that comes into your mind. It's not like that.

Do any service you can do for others with a sincere heart, whether small or great, whatever it is—helping animals or human beings, any sentient beings, practicing kindness and forgiveness in daily life, especially in relationships. The heaviest thing, the most difficult thing is relationships, so you must practice forgiveness. This way, whatever happens, any problem that arises, your mind is always in a happy state. With an open mind you can help others. You are always happy. Otherwise, you are so depressed. You have so much understanding of Dharma but you're unable to practice, so your mind is depressed and then you can't do anything; you can't do any practice, you can't even recite OM MANI PADME HUM once because your mind is so unhappy, so depressed.

If possible, do prostrations by reciting the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas in the morning. After you get up and wash, you should do prostrations, set up the altar, then make offerings, by reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas' names or you can also do Vajrasattva, either way.

VAJRASATTVA AND MEDICINE BUDDHA ORAL TRANSMISSION

In the evening time before going to bed, you can chant the Vajrasattva mantra, either the short one, OM VAJRASATTVA HUM, at least twenty-eight times or if you can, one mala, or recite the hundred-syllable mantra at least twenty-one times. It's very good to do that meditation. That way, all the negative karma collected during the day gets purified; it doesn't get multiplied, doubled the next day and tripled the third day and so on. Today's negative karma gets purified. The first thing is it stops multiplying day by day, which makes it very light. Then it purifies this life's negative karma, as well as so many past lives' negative karma. By reciting the long mantra twenty-one times great benefit is received. When you die, the negative karma is very light, even if you have committed so much heavy karma. Because of the skillfulness of the tantric practice of Vajrasattva, it becomes very, very light. You don't have to be reborn in the lower realms or you don't have to suffer for a long time; it is easy to have realizations and quicker to be free from samsara.

I'll do the *lung* of Vajrasattva and the Thirty-five Buddhas, then we'll stop there.

[Oral transmission]

The Medicine Buddha is very powerful for purification. For any problem in life, you can use Medicine Buddha to solve the problem. It can help with any problem. It is very powerful purification. Even if somebody has died, if somebody has problems, the best thing is to practice Medicine Buddha for a good rebirth. And it is very powerful to fulfill all your wishes.

[Oral transmission]

Then the *Heart Sutra*. This is the heart of the *Prajnaparamita*. The *Perfection of Wisdom* is the heart of all the Buddha's 84,000 teachings, and this one is the heart of all the teachings of the *Perfection of Wisdom*.

[Oral transmission]

DEDICATION

Due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated within my own heart and all of us here, and in the hearts of all the students, all the benefactors, all those who sacrifice their lives for this organization, giving service to sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, and may it be generated in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

[Chanting]

May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of myself, all of us and all the family members and all the students, benefactors, all the leaders of this world, every leader of this world. May bodhicitta be generated in their heart without delay even a second and in the hearts of everyone in this world.

[Chanting]

May it be generated in the hearts of all the terrorists and all the gangsters, all the Maoists, all those groups who are causing destruction to the world or harming others. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts, without delay even a second.

[Chanting]

Then all this opportunity that we have to purify, to collect merit and to plant the seed of the whole path to enlightenment every day, and this incredible freedom to practice Dharma, to benefit sentient beings, is all by the kindness of His Holiness Dalai Lama, so dedicate to fulfill all His Holiness' wishes immediately and for him to have a stable life.

[Chanting]

Due to all the three times' merit collected by me from now on, may I be able to offer in every second, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings, the teachings of the Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on, in all the future lifetimes.

[Chanting]

Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, that which are empty from their own side, which exist but are empty from their own side, may the I who exists but is empty from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which exists but is empty from its own side, and lead all the sentient beings, who exist but do not exist from their own side, who are also empty, to that enlightenment, which exists but doesn't exist from its own side, that which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

May I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds just as the buddhas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as all the three times' buddhas dedicated their merits—I dedicate all my merits in the same way. May the general teaching of the Buddha, particularly the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, spread in all the directions, may it flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing within my own heart and in the hearts of my own family members, all of us here and in the hearts of all the students in this organization, the FPMT organization, and all the supporters, and those who devote their lives to this organization, those who give up their lives for this organization, doing service for sentient beings, the teachings of Buddha.

[Chanting]

RINPOCHE THANKS STUDENTS

Those who are here who are leaving, anyway, leaving or staying, I want to thank you very much. Thank you very much to everyone from the bottom of my heart for all your sincerity, all your open hearts, seeking something which is extremely worthwhile. Many times we seek something which is empty, which has no meaning. This time we are seeking something more worthwhile for you and for all sentient beings.

Of course, since I came here I destroyed your schedules. [Laughter] Anyway, thank you very much for all your discipline also, for following the sessions. Well done. Well done. And then, of course that is here, what I call the long-life man. There is one arhat of the sixteen arhats who has all this white [hair] with this long white one [beard]. I'm not sure of the name of that aspect, otherwise I can give that name to him.

Anyway, Ven. Antonio, this is the first time he has been at the Kopan course and leading a course. He studied at Lama Tsongkhapa Institute and with many other great geshe, Geshe Rabten Rinpoche, who is also my guru, my first philosophy teacher. So, he has followed many great lamas.

And twenty-five years a monk? Twenty-four. I added one more year. Venerable Antonio has been very good in his monk's life, from the beginning, in the middle, all through. All through. Sometimes, people are good at the beginning but then go down. Sometimes, they have a bad beginning but then get better. But he's always good. He's been a good example of the Sangha of the FPMT organization for many years. He has been very beneficial for sentient beings. So, I rejoice and here I would like to thank Antonio Rinpoche very much. For his love and compassion and all the effort and guiding you, leading this course. Particularly during this course, then in general in all the past things as well.

And then, Ani Karin also helped, you know. She doesn't travel much to many countries and give talks but just stays at Kopan. From Kopan she benefits all the world. From Kopan she benefits all the world. For so many years she has been leading many meditation courses many times each year. She herself practices very sincerely, she lives in the practice. She is a great example as a nun. Even though she didn't travel all over the world and give talks and this and that, she has so many years' experience, guiding and teaching. So, thank you very much, Ani Karin.

I don't think I ever thanked her. I can't remember thanking her. So anyway, thank you very much.

Then there are many others here from different places, working in different centers, like that. Thank you very much.

To anybody who supported, who helped the course here, to everybody I want to thank you very much, even the person who rang the bell. So, everybody. OK. Thank you so much. Maybe the food is getting upset!

Lecture 13

EXTENSIVE OFFERINGS

So, I'm going to maybe read one or two pages from the *Golden Light Sutra*.

[Chanting]

We're going to do the short seven-limb practice and the Thirty-five Buddhas, and the homage. And then we'll do the meditation as I have gone through before, at least briefly like that, before we listen to the Buddha's most precious teaching. So, the preliminary prayers, offering the seven-limb practice, which comes in three conclusions: purifying the defilements, collecting merits and increasing merits.

[Chanting]

All the offerings here, the offerings in Kopan monastery, upstairs in the rooms where I stay, all the extensive offerings that are in all the FPMT centers' gompas, which are in the nature of great bliss and all the offerings, all the many thousands of light offerings, water offerings, the flowers outside and inside, as well as the food and tea offerings in Aptos House in America and in Washington, the many lights, all the offerings there. And then extensive offerings also in Mongolia at the center. The extensive offerings also in Lillian Too's house upstairs, where many offerings are arranged, as well in Singapore, in Derek's house, all the extensive offerings upstairs. So arranged there to make offerings.

Those two offerings—in Lillian Too's house upstairs and Derek's house upstairs in Singapore—those offerings are made by Filipino maids. They are Christians but they are very happy doing water bowl offerings. They enjoy it very much. One time at Lillian Too's house, Lillian made offerings herself early in the morning, so the next day the maid got up even earlier and made the water bowl offerings, she enjoys doing it so much.

The water of the water bowl offerings is wet, it makes substances wet, so it's very easy to soften the heart. The water bowl offerings soften the heart. If the heart is not soft, the mind can't change. If the mind is very solid, we can't practice Dharma; the mind doesn't become Dharma. So, it's very helpful to soften the heart, like cotton or like tissue paper, toilet paper or tissue paper. Anyway, like cotton, soft. The nature of the offering is wet so it softens the heart and grows realizations. Water bowl offering are also to have a clear mind. Because the water is very clear, so the mind becomes very clear.

Maybe this is according to Tibet. Generally any offering you can make is good, but I think why the water is done more, is that water is good. The reason was, I guess in Tibet you don't have to buy the water, you just get water from the river or stream. So, it's very easy to make offering with water and you don't have much miserliness, general speaking, of course. Where there is scarcity of water, like Africa or somewhere, that may be different in that case, but I think generally in Tibet, a stream or whatever is always running. So I think there are no difficulties. There is no miserliness so it's a very pure offering, there is not sense of stinginess. So, it collects merits and it's very easy to offer without being stingy. Other offerings might be difficult, because of miserliness or stinginess, so it is more difficult to make offerings, for them to become pure offerings, to give from the heart.

There may be other benefits. Your mind is watered with loving kindness. I don't remember a hundred percent, to generate loving kindness, to be watered with loving kindness. Anyway, there is no miserliness, no stinginess, so water is easy to offer. That's why it can be a purer offering. That is why the water is offered more, that is the reason.

They explained to the maids how to offer all the things. And then they said they enjoyed it somehow. Maybe it is the blessing they receive by doing that; it might be because they are

Christian but somehow maybe it's the Buddha's blessing. It's possible. One maid in Singapore is Christian but she was also doing water bowl offerings. And then when she had some sickness, there was a Medicine Buddha picture. Somehow she made a prayer and she was healed. And then she somehow responded. That gave her faith, I think.

So, the offerings here, upstairs, all those things. Then, all the extensive offerings at all the FPMT centers' gompas, which are in the nature of great bliss, then all the offerings at Aptos House, so many thousands of offerings, the water offerings, many hundreds of water offerings and then food offerings, tea offerings in front of His Holiness and those gurus. Then, the flowers inside and outside. Then the extensive offerings at Lillian's house upstairs in Malaysia as well as Derek's house in Singapore, upstairs there are extensive offerings, many water offerings offered in crystal bowls. We can offer all that, by thinking of them all in the nature of great bliss. So, offer to the merit field. Either Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, as all the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, all the holy objects or the elaborate merit field, or the lamrim merit field, either way. So, please offer.

[Chanting]

THE SEVEN-LIMB PRAYER: REJOICING

Maybe I'll mention here, in case it doesn't happen because it becomes late, but a very important practice is rejoicing. Rejoicing is a very important practice. You must know that, if some of you are not aware of that. This is because any success with happiness has to come from virtue.

Why it's so important to rejoice is any success or happiness, even the temporal happiness of this life, has to come from virtue. Of course the realizations on the path to enlightenment have to come from merit, there is no question. If you think of that, it becomes so important to collect merit. It is a necessary condition in order to have realizations of the path to enlightenment. To be able to learn teachings, to be able to listen, to be able to hear, to be able to receive teachings depends on merit. To be able to comprehend the words and meanings, to understand the meaning, depends on merit. To be able to practice depends on merit. To be able to have realization depends on merit. Everything depends on that. Even if you want to help others, to benefit others, to be able to benefit others, it has to come from the merit, from good karma. If you want to do social service, to benefit others, without depending on merit, you just cannot simply benefit others. How much you can benefit others, how much success your service has with others, depends on merit, how much merit, how much luck you have. Therefore, everything, any good thing that you wish for depends on merit.

As Lama Tsongkhapa mentions in the *Hymns of Experience of the Path to Enlightenment*, in which he tells his own realizations of the path to enlightenment, rejoicing is the treasure of merit, like the hand collecting grain. Among the means of collecting merit, rejoicing is the best one. As Lama Tsongkhapa mentions in the *Hymns of Experience of the Path to Enlightenment*, it collects limitless skies of merit.

If you rejoice in your own merit, it doubles it. By rejoicing in your merit collected from beginningless rebirth, all those merits become double, every time you rejoice in your own virtue, in all the past merits. Whatever practice you have done, by rejoicing it becomes double. It's very good, it is very good in our everyday life, whenever we finish one practice, after that we rejoice. If you can add that, it's very good. For example, after making offerings, performing offerings at

the altar, after you do the practice of offering, then at the end think, “How fortunate I am that I collected innumerable numbers of merit, so much merit, how wonderful it is.”

All the extensive merit you collect, whether it’s one light offering or one incense offering or many offerings, after practicing offering if you rejoice then all the merit becomes double. Just rejoicing in one second, all your past merits, everything becomes double, so limitless skies of merit are collected that way. If you rejoice in others’ merits, whose level of mind is lower than yours, then you collect more merit than that sentient being, whose level of mind is lower than yours. You collect double the merit.

If that person’s level of mind is higher than you, you don’t collect the same amount of merit but you collect half of what the other person collected, whose level of mind is higher than yours, so how much merit you collect is half of that.

If you are not a bodhisattva and you rejoice in a bodhisattva’s merit, as it is said in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, by Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, you collect half as much merit as the bodhisattva collects in one day. You get half that amount, half of that merit.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains that to collect that much merit without rejoicing, to get half of what a bodhisattva collects one day, takes thirteen thousand years. That is unbelievable! That is unbelievable, inconceivable, unbelievable, inconceivable! What takes thirteen thousand years to collect, you collect within a second. How wonderful it is, these bodhisattvas’ one day merit, if you generate happiness, what takes thirteen thousand years you collect within one second.

Normally I explain it like this. For example, when you go to Singapore or Hong Kong or Taiwan—I haven’t been to mainland China yet—there are huge monasteries, huge temples, very well-decorated, huge beautiful monasteries. As soon as you see them, when you see them and later you realize what’s happening in your mind, you rejoice. The abbot, the benefactors, all those people who donated to build this temple, who did the labor, building and constructing, who created the idea, all those people, how wonderful it is that they collected so much merit, how wonderful it is. So you should rejoice, rather than feeling envy or jealousy, which doesn’t help your mind, which causes pain to your mental continuum. It creates negative karma. Just by rejoicing, how wonderful that they collected unconceivable merit.

If the level of mind of the people who built this temple—this incredible huge temple—who serve this temple, is lower than yours, you collect more merit than those who built it, than those who worked for this for many years. Maybe it took fifteen, twenty or even thirty years, raising funds and building, for that many years, they bore so much hardship to actualize this temple.

For those whose level of mind is higher than yours you get half of the merit.

So you see, by rejoicing, within that second you collect unconceivable merit. And you yourself didn’t put any effort into that at all, not even one *paisa*. According to [the currency of] Nepal or India, one paisa, you didn’t put one paisa into that. You didn’t even lay one brick for it, but you collected unimaginable merit, even more than the many people who put many years of effort into building it, if their level of mind is lower than yours.

And then it creates the karma to be able to build a temple like that. Just that one time rejoicing creates the karma so that you can build temples like this, so many—ten, fifteen, twenty—so

many, if not in this life, then in the near future. You create the cause. Then, you benefit sentient beings, you offer service to the Sangha, to let them build a temple. To able to benefit the Sangha, to have a place for the Sangha to do their practice, to preserve the Buddhadharma, to actualize it, to help it spread.

I used to say this. We are building this five-hundred-foot Maitreya Buddha statue. It's not the statue itself. Inside there are many shrine rooms. In the holy body, in the heart and the neck and different places, there are different shrine rooms of deities. Inside Maitreya Buddha's legs, there are many temples. There are temples of Twenty-one Taras, of only Tara, and one temple of only Medicine Buddha, one temple of only the Thousand-arm Chenrezig and one of the sixteen arhats. There is one temple with only Lama Yeshe's statue. Then one temple with many hundreds of Lama Tsongkhapas. So there are many, many temples in the holy body.

The throne itself I think is probably—I am not sure—nearly like the Potala in Tibet. Maybe it's almost more than half the Potala, I am not sure. Anyway, it's a *huge* throne, so huge, so there will be one hundred thousand Maitreya Buddha statues within that. Then there will be another sambhogakaya aspect, the divine aspect Maitreya Buddha statue inside. Then on top of that a very large Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, advised by the most respected Nyingma lama, Trulshik Rinpoche, from whom I have received teachings, oral transmissions and advice. So there will be Prajnaparamita statues, advised by His Holiness Chogye Trichen Rinpoche. So there will also be the thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon around the Buddha, upstairs, within the throne on the second level.

Outside will be the Buddha's life story, the Jataka Tales, those stories of the bodhisattva who for three countless great eons bore hardships to benefit for sentient beings, who sacrificed his life for sentient beings. He collected merit and actualized the path, having given his own body as charity to sentient beings for so many lifetimes, and when he was born as a king, he gave his whole family as charity to others, his wife and so forth. Having practiced morality, charity and practiced perseverance, patience, this will be shown in stories around the park. The idea is that when the people from all over the world come there to look around, at the end they get impact in their heart. They will think, "The Buddha sacrificed his life for that many eons, he gave everything for sentient beings; he bore so much hardships to collect merit, to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. From now on my life should be different. From now on I should make my life beneficial for others." So this is to inspire even the tourists, the people who come there, by going around and seeing this, at the end to get that impact, to transform the mind. "Now my life should be something different from the past; it should be better, more beneficial for others."

Then, there are twelve deeds, the Buddha's twelve deeds around the first circle, the circumambulation road, after the very first one. By seeing this it causes the people to realize the four noble truths: that there is suffering, that it depends on the cause, that it didn't exist from its own side, it depends on causes and conditions, that it came from delusion and karma—to understand that and that by removing the cause completely, that is the sorrowless state. That's the liberation we need to achieve, and that can be achieved because there is a path. So they realize the four noble truths from that.

Anyway there are many, many things. It's not just the statue itself, that's not the only thing. I didn't mean to give an introduction to the Maitreya Project! By the way, it became that.

What I was trying to say was, we build all these projects and then somebody comes along and rejoices in all these projects, the statues and so forth, “How wonderful it is that all these people build this, they collect so much merit, how wonderful it is.” When somebody comes along and rejoices in that way, if this person’s level of mind is higher than us, the organization, they collect far greater merit than those of us from the organization and those people who donate to the project. That person collects double the merit. They didn’t give anything, they didn’t spend one penny to build it, they didn’t do anything but go there and simply rejoice. That person didn’t put one single effort but got all the profit by rejoicing. They get all the merits and even double it if their level of mind is higher than us, the organization. So I use that example to show the importance of rejoicing, what incredible profit you can have, how the meditation technique of rejoicing creates great profit in collecting merit.

Here in one second, that person didn’t have to do anything but still collected so much merit. We, the organization, spent so many years working. How many years is it already? Already it has been many years ago, since starting, looking for the land and planning it—it took a long time to buy the land and all that, then so many people donating to that. It has taken so many people so much effort, then to build it—the companies and the workers transporting things, doing the labor. But after all this materializes, this person comes along one day, and rejoices. “All these people who built this Maitreya statue, how wonderful it is that they collect so much merit.”

If that person’s level of mind is higher than the organization who built it, in that second they collect so much merit, double the merit. If the level is the same as the people who built the project, they collect the same amount of merit, and if the level of mind is lower than those who built the holy object, then they get half of what the organization or people who built it collect. This is mentioned in the teachings. That’s unbelievable, you don’t have to do anything, but you receive all the merit just by rejoicing. That gives you an idea.

Then that creates the cause for you to build similar things many, many times, in the near future. When you go on pilgrimage, like here in Nepal, at Swayambunath, there are so many prayer wheels, monasteries or incredibly beautiful stupas—each time you see one, even if you didn’t get to make offering but at least to think how wonderful it is, you collect so much merit. Each time you see a beautiful holy object or temple or whatever it is and think, “How wonderful it is that all these people who built this collected immeasurable merit,” you generate happiness. In that second you collect so much merit. As I mentioned before, you collect double the merit or the same merit as them, depending on the level of mind. But you yourself collect it without needing to do anything, without donating money or laboring, building, just by rejoicing, in that second you collect unimaginable merit.

You can do this practice while you are lying down or while you are walking. Any time at all you can do that practice. Even if you are not a bodhisattva, there are many sentient beings whose level of mind is lower than yours, there are numberless sentient beings, so you collect double the merit, besides rejoicing in your own merit, it becomes double. Then, as I mentioned before, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains that if you rejoice in the merit a bodhisattva collects in one day, you get half of that. So, if you rejoice in all the past, present and future merits of even one bodhisattva, it’s unimaginable. Then, there are numberless bodhisattvas, not just one—there are numberless, so if you rejoice in all their merit, it’s mind-blowing, it’s mind-blowing merit. And then if you rejoice in all the buddhas’ merit, it is said you get a tenth of all their merit. By dividing their merit by ten, you get one part. That’s how much merit you collect.

For those of you who are not aware, who do not know that rejoicing is the easiest practice you can do to collect the most extensive merit, in case there are any of you, this is an explanation. Since you are doing the meditation, I thought just to take the opportunity to explain now, so then that gives you the opportunity to practice this in the daily life from now on. So we can complete this.

So you can rejoice again. When you start to rejoice think like this, “Without merit, there is no happiness at all. Without merit there is no happiness at all, either temporary or ultimate, therefore merit is so precious. Merit is so precious. I have collected merit from the beginningless rebirths, I have collected so much merit up to now, in the past, in the present and I will continue to collect merit in the future.” So, you see how it’s so precious, then think, “How happy I am.” Repeat this over and over, “How happy I am. How precious, all these merits that I have collected, how happy I am.” So you feel the happiness and repeat this over and over. Each time you do that, you collect limitless skies of merit, all the merit is doubled up. You can do this twenty-one times, depending on your mind, or five times or ten times or twenty-one times. You can do like that, rejoicing in your own merit, for half a mala and then for the other half you can rejoice in the merit of all the other sentient beings and buddhas. You can do like that for one mala, or one mala rejoicing in your own merit, then one mala rejoicing in others’ merit—other sentient beings and buddhas.

When you do the *Condensed Four Mandala Ritual of Cittamani Tara*, you repeat the seven-limb practice four times. For the first time you rejoice in your own merit, for the second time you rejoice in sentient beings’ merit, which includes the bodhisattvas, so you collect unconceivable merit.

For the next one, you can rejoice in the bodhisattvas’ and the buddhas’ merit, due to the realization of bodhicitta. Even if you don’t have the realization of bodhicitta, when you generate effortful bodhicitta—not effortless bodhicitta but effortful bodhicitta—you collect skies of merit. With the effortful experience, bodhicitta, the altruistic mind wishing to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, even if you don’t have actual realization of bodhicitta but with effort, by thinking of the reasons why sentient beings are so precious and their unimaginable suffering, you take full responsibility to free them from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment. Thinking like this, “Therefore I must achieve enlightenment.”

With effort, when you generate the bodhicitta motivation, you collect limitless skies of merit. You collect limitless skies of merit. The bodhisattvas, by having realization of bodhicitta, in every second they collect limitless skies of merit. As Khedrup Rinpoche praised Lama Tsongkhapa in every breath, that became the cause of happiness for all sentient beings, for numberless sentient beings. Every single action done with that motivation, in every second, collects limitless skies of merit. Therefore, if you rejoice in the bodhisattvas’ merit and the bodhisattvas’ realizations and especially when they achieve the bhumis, especially the arya bodhisattvas who achieved the bhumis and who have incredible qualities, if you rejoice in their merit and their realizations, you collect unimaginable merit. Therefore, it is very important to rejoice in the bodhisattvas’ merits. So anyway, the third one is rejoicing in the bodhisattvas’ and buddhas’ merit.

With the fourth one, you rejoice in your own three times’ merits.

In this way, the seven-limb practice gets done, as Pabongka explains in the lamrim teachings these are seven very important parts which create enlightenment. It’s like the seven different

parts of a horse carriage or car that make it function, taking people where they want to go. So this is the essential preliminary practice to collect merit and to purify obstacles. It enables you to change your mind, to be able to actualize realizations, to grow them from within. This is an extremely essential practice.

If you don't meditate, if you don't take the opportunity, you won't get the profit. Only by meditating then you get the benefit. If you don't do the meditation, but just repeat the words, then you miss out on the inconceivable merit each of these practices creates or you miss out on the purification. And life is short, life is not long, it's short. Even in the time it becomes just words, then you don't really take the essence in your life. Life becomes empty. You are unable to take the essence.

THE MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE CAN BRING WORLD PEACE

You can do the same thing when you do the Medicine Buddha puja. At the moment, the long version is not translated into English but I have asked a student, who is also Geshe Sopa's student, a professor, to translate the long version of the Medicine Buddha puja. However, as I mentioned, with the *Condensed Four Mandala Ritual of Cittamani Tara* practice, how you divide the different sections of rejoicing, you can do the same when you do the Medicine Buddha sutra. In the ceremony puja, again the seven-limb practice comes many times. So, the first time you rejoice in your own merit, then the second time you rejoice in sentient beings' merits, which includes the bodhisattvas. Then next one, rejoice in the bodhisattvas' and buddhas' merit. Then again, you rejoice in your own merits, and so you continue like that. So, within that hour doing the Medicine Buddha puja, you collect inconceivable merit. Then, after that, you dedicate all the merit for the benefactors or the people who asked to do the puja. That way, it becomes unbelievably rich. All that merit, the limitless skies of merit, you have collected so many times you are able to offer, to dedicate to the benefactors or for all the sentient beings. It's a great gift for numberless sentient beings, for them to be able to eliminate poverty, famine, disease, torture, all the sufferings, and to achieve whatever happiness they wish for.

In a similar way, to stop violence in a country, to have peace and happiness, that depends on merit. Stopping the violence and having peace and happiness in a country has to come from merit—the merit of the people in that country. So here you dedicate for that, and then you collect so much merit during this one hour puja. There is so much to offer to the world, to the sentient beings. From there peace and happiness can come and it can affect, it can change their minds.

It's the same thing in the case of the Tibetan people, to achieve freedom, to get their country back, to have total freedom. In this case, it's also the same. The more merit you collect and dedicate for that, when there is so much merit dedicated, you can change the karma. If there is more merit then you can overwhelm the negative forces; the obstacles can be overcome. The more merit that you can offer, you can overcome that. So then from that, even the freedom to get back the country or to have total religious freedom, all that, and so that His Holiness continues to guide, so all that also comes from having collected more merit.

This includes your own enlightenment. It all depends on sentient beings. When I was in Bangalore, just a few days, I did my Mickey Mouse talk, my Mickey Mouse Dharma talk, for two days to Indian people. A person asked a question. In Sri Lanka, there has been so much violence for so many years between the two sides, Tamil and what? Huh? [Student explains] Tamil and

the Sri Lankans themselves, I think. So, this Indian man asked—I don't remember the question to do with karma—or something like if you are talking about compassion, then how to deal with such a problem. He asked a question, but I don't remember exactly. A person asked a question about compassion then this Indian man got up and he said he was a teacher of Sanskrit at the university, and what about the situation with Mao Zedong and this and that, who did so much harm, and took over Tibet. How do you deal with this, if you are talking about compassion, then how do you deal with this?

Anyway, I explained that the Tamil need to collect a lot of merit. If they collect a lot of merit then they can overcome the problems; they can change the karma. They can stop the violence. Of course, collecting merit depends on the education, understanding Dharma, understanding karma. So anyway, this person asked the question.

So, we'll just finish there.

[Chanting]

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

By these merits, by having these merits of offering the mandala, that I have met this time the teaching of the peerless founder is by your kindness. By this, may all the transmigratory beings also meet your teachings, you, the supreme leader.

[Chanting]

You, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, trained the mind for countless eons and sacrificed your body, possessions and family numberless times. You bore so much hardship to actualize the path to enlightenment. May I be able to bring all the sentient beings to this path and cause them to achieve enlightenment.

[Chanting]

What page number are we on? Huh? 169. Thank you very much. I am glad, very clear.

[Chanting]

And then, the purpose of my life is to free the numberless sentient beings from all the suffering and causes and bring them to enlightenment, therefore I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I am going to take the oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*. By hearing each word it will purify all the negative karma and collect inconceivable merits and that which brings peace and happiness in the world, in the country, in the area, and plant the seed of enlightenment in my own mental continuum.

[Oral transmission]

So, it is saying some part of the benefits, that the race or type of son or daughter, anyone who hears this *Golden Light Sutra* and generates faith will never ever fall down in the hell realm, the animal realm, the hungry ghost realm or the asura realm, in those realms. They will never be reborn there. That's what is said. By anyone who hears this sutra and generates faith. And it says,

all the time they will be born in the deva and human realms, and even then, they will never be reborn in a lower caste. In India or Nepal, the countries where there is this culture, there is the discrimination of caste. So, such as in these countries they won't be born as lower caste. Lower caste, like the problems in India with the untouchables. There are many millions of them. Everybody puts them down and they find it difficult to get a higher job and even in society they are kept down. If you are born in those lower castes, there is a limitation, you can't benefit others, others won't listen to you. I think that's the reason why it's stated here that even if you are born as a human being, you won't get reborn in this lower caste. You will always make offerings to the Buddha, and you will always be able to listen to the Dharma, the Buddhadharma, and be able to preserve and be able to be born in a buddha's pure realm, pure land. Why? Due to hearing this extremely profound Dharma, the *Golden Light Sutra*.

[Oral transmission]

As I mentioned, it brings peace and happiness in the country. It says here, the place where this *Golden Light Sutra* is expounded, is explained, there are four benefits you receive. What are they? In that country, if there is an enemy, a group of people, like the Maoists, who attack the king or the leader of the country, the king of the country cannot receive harm from them. Also, by expounding, by explaining this *Golden Light Sutra* then also disease will be eliminated and the people will have a long life and it will be auspicious. There will be happiness and perfect Dharma will be revealed. The kings, the prince and the ministers, all of them, will be harmonious, they won't quarrel and they will abandon harming each other, cheating each other.

The virtuous friends, the Buddhist Sangha and the Brahmins, will all enjoy the holy Dharma; they will engage in the holy Dharma. And there will be no sicknesses or sudden death; they will be able to have happiness and sudden death won't happen and they will collect a lot of merit. They won't experience things like the four elements being unbalanced and all the devas will protect them. They will have equal loving kindness, compassion and have no thought of harm and all the sentient beings will go for refuge to the Triple Gem. So, the people in that country will pray to be able to accomplish, to follow the bodhisattvas' holy deeds. There are many benefits like that.

[Oral transmission]

And the bodhisattva, Essence of Sky, I don't know the Sanskrit, Indra, Brahma, the four guardians, they told the Buddha that they will benefit anybody who preserves this teaching. In order to spread this text, this *Golden Light Sutra*, whoever preserves this text, this teaching, then they will be there, wherever this person is preserving this teaching. They will benefit anybody who preserves this teaching

[Oral transmission]

So the Buddha told them, the Buddha responded, saying, "Good, good, yes, yes. This *Golden Light Sutra*, the *King of the Sutras*, what is called *King of the Sutras*, in order for this holy teaching to exist for a long time in this world you must spread it and then attempt to elaborate this."

[Oral transmission]

So the third chapter is finished.

[Chanting]

We are going to recite the Six-arm Mahakala praise and Kalarupa and then Palden Lhamo, as traditionally it is done but also now it is the most urgent, it's a crucial point, an emergency, in the Maitreya Project. Within this day and within these days it is the most crucial point. If it succeeds then that's the start. Then all the debts get paid, all those millions of dollars of debts get paid and we will be able to start something. Today and in these few days, it is a very crucial point. And then if nothing happens, then I think it won't for a long time, then I think maybe for long time, I'm not sure when. So while we are reciting the prayers, if you have the prayers there in your book, then you can recite, and make strong requests to the Dharma protectors.

[Chanting]

THE MEDICINE BUDDHA SUTRA: THE BENEFITS WHEN SOMEBODY HAS DIED

Just to mention briefly the benefits of the Medicine Buddha practice, reciting the name and mantra.

Lama Atisha explains the Tibetan *chag tshäl lo*. Lama Atisha praises the Medicine Buddha, which contains the essential benefits.

“The Destroyer, the qualified Gone Beyond One, who has equal compassion for all the sentient beings, just merely hearing the name eliminates sufferings of the lower realms, the bad migratory beings.” By merely hearing the Medicine Buddha’s name it eliminates, it purifies the sufferings of the lower realms. Then it is said that there are inconceivable benefits in hearing, even hearing the name Medicine Buddha, it purifies the negative karma that causes you to be reborn in the lower realms. There is no question if you actually recite the name and mantra. After explaining so much benefit, the Buddha asked Ananda, “Do you believe in this?” So Ananda said, “Yes, I believe in this.” Why? Because the Buddha has inconceivable qualities, that’s why reciting the Medicine Buddha’s name and mantra has all these inconceivable powers, these benefits for sentient beings, it is so *easy* to purify negative karma and the sufferings of the lower realms, the problems of whatever sicknesses, whatever problems we have in this life. All these things, the very heavy negative karmas, it is so easy to purify. There is so much explained in the Medicine Buddha’s sutra.

There are two parts to the Medicine Buddha sutra. When I go to Taiwan or Singapore or Hong Kong, many Chinese, they say “Oh, I recite the Amitabha sutra, I recite the White Lotus sutra, the Chenrezig sutra, the Medicine Buddha sutra, all these.” I always hear this from the lay people. They read many sutras and they chant the whole sutra for many hours. I haven’t read these sutras, so I get embarrassed. I myself haven’t seen or haven’t read them.

So I finally read the Medicine Buddha sutra. I think last year or the year before, I went to Germany. There is the Arya Tara Center, whose resident teacher is Geshe Thubten Sopa from Sera Je. He had made copies of the Medicine Buddha sutra for me before I came, ready to give me. He got them from another geshe from Sera Je, who was from the same *khangtsen* as Geshe Rabten and Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey. He’s Geshe Rabten’s disciple, who has established a center in Hamburg, originally Geshe Rabten’s center. Geshe Thubten Sopa got the sutra from

that geshe from Hamburg. So he made copies for me. Normally I don't get to read the texts I receive, but I read this, because the lay people read so many sutras.

In the two parts of the sutra, there is unconceivable benefit in reciting the Medicine Buddha's name mantra, just that—there is so much benefit. When you read that, it seems you can use Medicine Buddha practice for any problem, for example, when there are difficulties in giving birth, the Medicine Buddha practice is the best thing. And if somebody passes away, the best thing to do is the Medicine Buddha puja practice.

So many times when somebody passes away, the question is asked, "What should I do?" Even from some of our Sangha who are resident teachers, even if they have been conducting meditations for many years, giving teachings for many years but when people call them saying some family member has died and they call for some practice, [they are not sure what to do.] You can do a *Guru Puja*, you can recite the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas with strong devotion, you can take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is the most powerful thing, even just refuge. You have so many things you can do.

Among those, the basic thing, the most powerful thing is to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and with your whole heart rely upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Even if you don't do anything else, even if you don't do any other things, just take refuge, NAMO GURU, NAMO BUDDHA, NAMO DHARMA, NAMO SANGHA. Whichever language you recite, that's the foundation. With any practice you do refuge. With strong refuge, you chant this and then nectar comes from Buddha. If you think of the Buddha as all the gurus, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, as everything, with strong faith, and purify that being's negative karma, it's extremely powerful. Whatever practice you do, that's the foundation. There are so many things you can do—the daily prayer or whatever you normally do, you can use that to benefit that person.

But somehow it doesn't click in the mind. When somebody dies and people ask for help, suddenly, somehow it doesn't click. You should know what to do, but you can't think. Whatever you do in your daily practice, you can do that. Even refuge, that's so powerful. That's the main thing, taking refuge, having really strong reliance on the Buddha. And purify, and pray for that person to be born in the pure land of a buddha, where that person can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body by meeting the perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and then receive teachings, actualize the path and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. Dedicate the merits for that.

However, the best practice to do at the meditation center or in the individual person's house where some member has died is the Medicine Buddha puja, especially in that situation.

Even if you are doing *powa*, this special practice of transferring the consciousness of the person to the pure land, what makes powa powerful is if you do the Medicine Buddha practice before, then the powa becomes very powerful, so that you are able to shoot that other person's consciousness into the pure land.

I have to say this. Why is it so powerful? Because when Medicine Buddha was a bodhisattva, as you know if you have done Medicine Buddha before, each of the Medicine Buddhas made so many prayers, they vowed that anyone who recites the name mantra of that buddha will pacify whatever problem they have. Each one made so many vows when they were bodhisattvas. "Who recites my name prayer will pacify whatever problem they have and receive all these

happineses.” They became buddhas and one of the qualities from the infinite qualities, one of the qualities they have is the Buddha’s ten powers. Among the ten powers, there is the power of prayer. Because they have achieved the power of prayer, as they made these prayers when they were bodhisattvas, their name and mantra gets all the power, as they intended, as they motivated when they were bodhisattvas. Therefore, when we recite the Medicine Buddha’s name mantra, we receive the benefits of all the prayers they did before, when they were bodhisattvas. Not only that, whatever we pray for succeeds. People think the Medicine Buddha practice is only for healing sickness, but it’s not only that. It’s for success. It is very powerful for success.

Even by making offering to Medicine Buddha, without reciting the prayer, just making offering to Medicine Buddha, it is mentioned in the sutra that there are twelve groups of hosts, the protectors, and each of those protectors are surrounded by seven hundred thousand protectors—all those protectors protect you in everyday life, simply by making offering to Medicine Buddha. They protect your everyday life. That means you are free from obstacles and all your wishes get fulfilled. So, even just making offerings to Medicine Buddha has incredible benefit for success. That’s the main thing, if you recite. Medicine Buddha has achieved the ten powers, one of the qualities of Buddha, and among them is the power of prayer. Because of that, it gives all the power, as they intended before, the name and mantra has all the power. That’s why the prayer we normally do is so effective to fulfill all our wishes. We receive all their prayers.

First, you do Medicine Buddha. Even if you are unable to do the long version, the middle version is already in English. Even if you are unable to do that, just reciting the seven Medicine Buddhas’ names and mantra, the short meditation I translated many years ago—you can visualize what comes during the initiation. It’s short, but has a very rich essence. If you do that first, if it’s for a dead person you can visualize on the crown of that person, instead of visualizing on your head, then you do the same meditation, purifying and absorbing, all that.

If, after reciting the name and mantra, you do powa, that’s very powerful. I’ve already explained the reason before. Powa becomes very powerful. That’s what Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche often does when we pray for somebody. One time, at Tushita during Lama’s time we had many dogs, a mixture of Pekinese and Lhasa Apso, I think. Is that right? Anyway, many dogs. I think maybe at one time we had thirteen dogs. I labeled all these dogs the whole path to enlightenment. I don’t think “Guru Devotion” was there, but “Renunciation,” “Bodhicitta,” “Emptiness” and then the names of the tantric path, “Rupakaya,” “Dharmakaya.” There was the whole path to enlightenment named on the dogs. So anyway, Lama said he didn’t want to give them to other people. He said, “I *love* my dogs.” Lama said this. So, they increased. Some dogs died, so I asked Rinpoche to pray. Just by standing where the dogs were in the room, the dogs slept curled like this—I don’t know what you call it—Rinpoche did Medicine Buddha first, chanting the seven Medicine Buddhas’ names, each name seven times, then the mantra, then he did powa.

Of course, the best, most powerful thing to do is the other powerful mantras: the five powerful mantras, the deities’ mantras, the Chenrezig mantra. There are many other prayers you can do. There are eight different types of prayer like that, including the *King of Prayers*. However, to do Medicine Buddha practice, even if you don’t know how to do powa, if you haven’t received the lineage, but to do Medicine Buddha practice is the most powerful thing.

When there is danger, such as a tornado in America, within one hour or a few minutes it destroys a whole city or a whole town. There are some parts where it happens, where it completely destroys a whole town. After an hour, all the buildings are completely destroyed,

everything is in pieces. Recently there has been the danger of fire in America, in San Francisco there were so many fires that even the government could not control them. It took a very long time. And then, two years ago, in Australia, there was a fire that lasted for a few months; it could not be controlled. My idea at that time was that there are many centers there, there are many geshees there who are qualified, great practitioners, so if they were asked to pray, to do some puja, if they knew what they could do in the country, there are so many spiritual people. There are Christians, there are other religions, so they can ask them to do prayers. I sent the message because the fire was getting closer and closer to the city, and it was becoming very dangerous. I sent a message to our centers to do four Medicine Buddha pujas. I don't know whether they did it or not but around that time the fire did stop. Whether it was because the karma had finished or because the centers did Medicine Buddha pujas, I was not sure, but the fire stopped.

You can read the sutra, this Medicine Buddha practice, for any problem, for court cases, for anything, especially if you don't know other things to do. You can do this for everything.

The Buddha asked Kungawo, Ananda, "Do you believe in this as I have explained, with all these benefits?" Kungawo replied, "Yes, I believe, because the Buddha has inconceivable qualities." And then the Buddha told Kungawo that even animals which hear the Medicine Buddhas' names and mantra will never ever be reborn in the lower realms. That's what the Buddha said, it's explained in the sutra.

Therefore, I try to recite the Medicine Buddha mantra for animals, and the Maitreya Buddha mantra. You can also recite other purifying mantras, like that. Anybody who hears the Maitreya Buddha mantra, even animals, never ever gets reborn in the lower realm. When I checked what's best to recite for animals, to help them, the divinations came up as the Maitreya Buddha mantra. So, I recite both the Maitreya Buddha mantra and the Medicine Buddha mantra, sometimes the two of them, sometimes just one.

Lama Atisha said, "Guru Medicine Buddha eliminates sicknesses of the three poisonous minds, to the radiating..." I think I have been translating *baidurya* as lapis lazuli, but I think that's wrong. The Tibetan I have been translating as lapis lazuli. I don't know how others translate it but last year a Tibetan doctor came to Land of Medicine Buddha, an old friend I've known for a long time. He taught here at Kopan Monastery many years ago. I think he spent a year here, I am not sure. He taught all the elder monks how to diagnose and he also taught the root text, which they all memorized. And then, only what's left for them to learn of medicine is how to mix them. He's a very good doctor; he studied with very old geshees, with a very, very old monk, an ascetic monk with whom my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, studied. So, last time he came to Land of Medicine Buddha in United States, he explained to me, when you say the Medicine Buddha holy body, *baidurya*, the translation is *not* lapis lazuli. The Tibetan translation for lapis lazuli is *mumen* the stone is called *mumen*; it is a healing stone, the blue one that has got sometimes silver inside, sometimes gold—that's lapis lazuli and the Tibetan translation for that is *mumen* something, I don't remember now.

There are five types of jewels that go into Kriya tantra vase pills. Of the Maha Anuttara Yoga Tantra pills, there are twenty-five substances, and the other five are five precious jewels, so this *mumen* is one of those that goes into the pills.

So, I think the translation of *baidurya* is maybe sapphire, very deep blue, very radiant or very shiny, very expensive, very, very expensive. How do others translate it, do you know? Huh? So *baidurya* is sapphire, sapphire. Not Sophia. So Lama Atisha praised Medicine Buddha.

Due to the Medicine Buddhas' bodhicitta and prayers they did when they were bodhisattvas, due to the karmic connections, even just remembering the name protects you from the lower realms and the minute you remember them, even if you are in the lower realms you immediately get liberated from the lower realms' suffering. By remembering even just the names, by hearing even the Medicine Buddhas' names and mantra, your life always goes toward enlightenment; it never returns back. Then, you purify all the defilements, negative karma and you won't get harmed, overwhelmed by maras, evil doers. You pacify all the harms, all the unhappiness, any problems, and all your wishes get fulfilled. So, it has that general benefit.

For a person who is almost dying, who has become sort of unconscious, by correctly doing the Medicine Buddha puja, by taking strong refuge in Medicine Buddha, anybody can benefit that person—parents doing it for children, children doing it for parents, the guru doing it for the disciple, disciple doing it for the guru or if you have some connection with the material existence of that person, such as staying in the same apartment or sharing the same material thing. For somebody who is passing, somebody who is dying and becomes sort of unconscious at such time, almost dying, by doing this Medicine Buddha puja correctly, that person is able to come back to consciousness, is able to come back to remember things.

If you have broken any of the five lay vows or the *getsul's* 36 vows or any of the 253 vows of a fully ordained monk, due to ignorance or due to carelessness, due to many delusions, those who would have gone to the lower realm from life to life, just by hearing the Medicine Buddhas names, if you make offerings to Medicine Buddha, all those negative karmic downfalls get completely purified and then, as a result of hearing the Medicine Buddha names and mantra that person will never experience the lower realm sufferings. And then, in the future life, the person will be born as a wheel-turning king.

Then the merits of a person who hears the Medicine Buddha names and mantra will become inexhaustible. By living in those vows, he will be born in Amitabha's pure land. It is much easier, reciting Amitabha Buddha's name to be born in Amitabha Buddha's pure land, and reciting the Medicine Buddha name, reciting and hearing—here, it's talking about hearing Medicine Buddha's name and having devotion to and respect for Medicine Buddha—this is one of the most powerful ways to make you be born in Amitabha Buddha's pure land. When you die, the eight bodhisattvas will lead you to Amitabha Buddha's pure land and you will be born in the lotus.

In a country where there is untimely rain, hailstones destroying the crops, earthquakes, the various contagious diseases such as SARS that happened some time ago—quite a number of people, so many people were scared to travel to the countries where various contagious diseases occurred—and then also wars happen, wars and famine, with other countries attacking. If, during that time, the king of the country receiving these problems, with a mind of loving kindness, an attitude of loving kindness, makes offerings to the Medicine Buddhas, as it is explained in the sutra, then there will be much happiness in that country. The crops will come at the right time, rain will come at the right time, wind and the rain will come at the right time, the crops will grow well and all the sentient beings will be free from sicknesses, they will have much happiness and they will have so much surrounding joy. The wars will be pacified and they will have long life, wealth and power, with no sickness. All these will be increased.

Because of the concentration of invoking the seven Medicine Buddhas, in the presence of all of them, Manjushri requested to grant the mantra of the Medicine Buddhas, of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and the seven Medicine Buddhas, and all in one voice explained the benefits of the mantra. He granted the mantra and the benefits of mantra.

If you recite this mantra, all the buddhas will pay attention to you and all the bodhisattvas will think of you, all the vajra holders, the tantric practitioners, the yogis, will protect you and even Brahma, Indra and all those devas and the four guardians will protect you. It will purify negative karma, defilements, such as the five uninterrupted karmas—killing your father or mother, killing an arhat, harming the Buddha and causing disunity among the Sangha—so that means there is no question about purifying the ten nonvirtuous actions. They get purified and you won't experience sicknesses or disease; you'll have a long life and be free from untimely death.

I'm not sure but I thought that when Princess Diana died so many people in the world were very sad; so many people were upset, even people in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan or maybe mainland China, I think. She died in a car accident. I'm not sure but I thought, for example, if she practiced the long-life meditation mantra, if she recited the long-life mantra or did Medicine Buddha practice, then that car accident, that kind of untimely death would have been put off, that karma would have been purified. Not that I know, but it's a thought that such an untimely death could have been put off if she had done a long-life meditation mantra, like White Tara or the Medicine Buddha practice.

Here, it says that by doing the Medicine Buddha practice, all the enemies, the harms, the quarrels, all these will be pacified and you won't be controlled by the enemy and all your wishes get fulfilled.

If you recite this mantra 108 times, according to what is instructed in the text, then you blow over the food, drink, medicine or water, and then if you eat the food and drink, the pain, the sicknesses will be pacified and all your wishes will be fulfilled. You will be free from sickness and have long life and ultimately you will be born in the pure land of Medicine Buddha, and you will never turn back from enlightenment; you will always direct your life toward enlightenment.

Also, it can help if you bless the medicine that you are taking. Reciting the Medicine Buddha mantra, practicing Medicine Buddha, has all the power to receive the blessings of Medicine Buddha. It might help you avoid having side effects, to not get side effects. Even though the medicine might be correct, sometimes it harms; instead of getting better, it harms or creates other sicknesses. So, it can help you not to have side effects.

It also says you will achieve the result immediately. As the seven Medicine Buddhas generated bodhicitta, made all these prayers and vows, so you will receive the result immediately. And when you die you will be born on a lotus in the pure land of Medicine Buddha, then you will complete all the merits and bodhisattva deeds there and you will quickly become enlightened.

If you make the request to Medicine Buddha, by doing the practice exactly according to how it is explained in the sutra, then due to the blessings of the truth, of the seven Medicine Buddhas' previous prayers and the compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and the bodhisattva

Manjushri and the skillfulness of the liberating Jamgon⁸ and Kyab Dröl,⁹ of Vajrapani and Indra and Brahma, the harm-givers, the leaders of the groups, those protectors, they will all protect you and will grant action and all your wishes, which will immediately result in you having success. Without doubt, by relying upon the Buddha's valid instruction, the truthful valid instruction, you should keep this Dharma, the Medicine Buddha practice in your heart and then you will accomplish works for yourself and works for all sentient beings.

THE MEDICINE BUDDHA IS IMPORTANT FOR DHARMA CENTERS

In the past, why Buddhism spread so well in Tibet and was able to go for a long time, why so many people were able to learn, to practice and to become bodhisattvas and why so many became enlightened, it is said, was because the Medicine Buddha practice spread out so much. I think especially the Fifth Dalai Lama very strongly emphasized the Medicine Buddha practice. I think the Fifth Dalai Lama composed this long version of the Medicine Buddha practice. Because of that, so much development happened in Tibet, to be able to practice the Dharma, to spread the Dharma, and there was so much peace and happiness in Tibet. It is explained this is due to the practice of Medicine Buddha. All sentient beings' wishes were fulfilled, and there was inner prosperity and outer prosperity, wealth.

So, if centers have many expenses and need financial support, if they need external prosperity and inner prosperity, I would like to emphasize this. I did mention this to one person at a center in America, and I would like to emphasize that all the centers on the Tibetan eighth [of the month] should do Medicine Buddha puja. As the Fifth Dalai Lama explained how great success happened in Tibet because of this, it is the same with our centers. So, on the Tibetan eighth, please do Medicine Buddha puja. Normally many centers do Tara puja, especially the older centers, but I want to emphasize that all the centers, especially the organization, do Medicine Buddha puja. Many people love to do Tara puja, as a female deity, so you can do Tara puja in the afternoon or evening and do the Medicine Buddha puja in the morning, because you have to abstain from black food: onions, garlic and meat, things like that. Therefore, it's good to do it in the morning, before the meal.

So, I thought that within the organization, the organizers don't have to suffer, they don't have to struggle with finances, they don't have to struggle with so many things and they can have a very easy life with inner and outer prosperity. The organization has been developed over so many years with so much struggle, so many hardships, so much pain, struggling how to make the center more beneficial for sentient beings, how to make the center more accessible. With so much worry and fear, how to keep the center running, how to survive the next month. With many years of learning, going through so many hardships, so much pain, they have become really developed now, so beneficial; they are able to establish very good programs, good education, so people can learn Buddhist philosophy and do retreats. They have been able to create the conditions to offer this. Now, it is much better, much easier, because they have gained so much experience, building the experience for many, many years on how to do things. In the beginning, they had so much difficulty.

When the season of the drugs happened, when the karma of drugs happened—Buddha grass and LSD and all the other things—it opened, it broke many young people's fixed solid concept,

⁸ Here, Rinpoche is most likely referring to either Maitreya (Tib: Jamgon), one of the sixteen bodhisattvas who are part of the Medicine Buddha mandala. However, another possibility is Manjushri (Tib: Jampel).

⁹ Kyab Dröl (Wyl: *skyabs grol*; Skt: Tranamukta).

it broke that down. Somehow, they discovered or they felt that the mind could exist without the body; this was some idea through the drug experiences or whatever. At that time there were only two or three Dharma books, such as Lama Govinda's book, the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and Milarepa's life story. That's another great one! Through reading those books, they changed their minds and they came to search for a new life, a spiritual life. They came to the East, to India and Nepal, mainly to search for a new life, for something meaningful or some new thing. They got bored with their life in the Western society, and, being against that, according to their karma, some met Hindus, sadhus, according to their karma some met different lamas in India or here in Nepal.

For example, here at Kopan, by listening to the teachings they found much benefit for themselves. Then those young people wanted to go back to the West, to their own country; they wanted others also to have the same benefit. So, they started centers, meditation groups and like that. It started with nothing. Most of the centers started with nothing, not with a big fund. It started with a good heart but no money. They didn't have experience of business, they had no business background, so then they got lots of debts and when they tried business they lost so much money.

The different centers developed due to so many people, but they started like that, with so much pain, so much hardship. For many years they bore so much hardship, they sacrificed their lives, they put so much effort into sustaining or helping the center survive, to continue the teachings. Now it's like a flower blossoming; now it becomes so beneficial and now there are much better conditions. As I mentioned, Kopan was very primitive before; in the past it was extremely primitive. Now, there are much better conditions. So many other centers are also better.

Of course, individual beings also practice Medicine Buddha. On the Tibetan eighth they do the Medicine Buddha puja, the long version or short version. I mean, the long version is not possible now but the middle version is there. If the centers could do the Medicine Buddha in the morning, and then do the Tara puja later in the evening, something like that. I thought this, after finding out what the Fifth Dalai Lama emphasized so much, how it brings great prosperity and so much peace and happiness and fulfills all the wishes. All the wishes come true, especially spreading the Dharma.

Reading that, I thought to do the same in the FPMT centers, to make life much easier, without so much worry and fear, so much struggle. You start the work at the beginning with a good heart but with so much financial burden and so many problems, then after some time you don't have time to meditate, to continuously meditate on lamrim, which is like recharging a battery. You are unable to recharge your mental battery by meditating on the lamrim, because that continuation didn't happen with all the hard work you have to do for the center, all that pressure. I don't mean reciting the words, the prayers, I am not talking about that. You can do that very fast, but the *meditation* on the lamrim doesn't get done, transforming the mind doesn't get done, then emotions such as anger and the selfish mind, all these arise more and more, because there is no protection, there is no lamrim meditation. Then, it is very easy to become upset, emotional, it's easy to get angry, to become kind of egoistic. Then, people clash; there is disharmony and community problems—the problems of two egos clashing. I have seen this in some of the centers in the past.

Therefore, Medicine Buddha is very important, to make everything easy, so you can work with less pressure, so you can meditate on the lamrim, and you have more time to have an easy-going life.

With giving torma—the preparation—from the lama’s side, there is the sadhana and front generation, and the blessing vase. The next one is giving torma to the interferers.

[Chanting]

“SUBDUE THE MIND” VERSE CONTAINS ALL FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Do not commit any unwholesome action,
Engage in perfect wholesome action,
Subdue your own mind.
This is the teaching of Buddha.

It is said by Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche that this verse, this stanza, contains the four noble truths, the essence of the foundation of the Mahayana Paramitayana teaching as well as Mahayana secret mantra, the Vajrayana.

“Do not commit any unwholesome action” could contain both true suffering and the true cause of suffering, showing how to be free from suffering, to abandon the cause of the suffering, delusion and karma. “Engage in perfect wholesome action” could contain the true path. “Subdue your own mind,” shows cessation. Subdue your own mind is the cessation of the obscuring disturbing thoughts, delusions and karma, including the negative imprints, the seed of delusion. Subduing your own mind means totally ceasing the mistakes of the mind.

In the lesser vehicle path, that means ceasing the gross mistakes of mind. Actualizing the Mahayana path means ceasing all the subtle defilements, the subtle negative imprints—not the one which gives rise to delusions, not that imprint, that’s the seed of delusion. It is not that which has that function, which results in delusions, ignorance and attachment and so forth. This one, this subtle negative imprint you have within your continuum, even if you have totally actualized the path, the exalted right-seeing path and the exalted path of meditation. So by actualizing these two paths, you completely cease the seed of delusion, that which is in the nature of imprint. But then there is still the subtle negative imprint left on the mental continuum by the concept of holding I, object and so forth as inherently, truly existent.

EVERYTHING IS A PROJECTION OF THE MIND

That doesn’t give rise to delusion, but it projects the hallucination, as if you are wearing red-tinted glasses, and even though what you are looking at is white, you see it as red. But if you wear blue-tinted glasses then you see everything as blue. It doesn’t mean that white cloth is red or blue, it doesn’t mean that, but that’s your view because you are wearing those tinted glasses. So it is like that. This is similar to that. The subtle imprint left on the mental continuum by the concept of true existence is like wearing different colored glasses, it projects that onto everything. Or like the negative roll, like a reel of a movie. The pictures are taken, of people fighting or enjoying entertainment, all those sorts of things. Then they are projected onto a movie screen or TV screen through a machine. I don’t remember, maybe in Germany once, I don’t remember the subject but I saw a movie on a *huge* screen. Yeah, huh? [Student explains.] It

was round like this, so huge, so big that things look kind of real, you look very close to everything. I think it must have been made in Germany. Anyway, it was so huge, it looked like you could shake hands or something, you were that close.

The film is just projected from a projector, from a negative roll, but when we are not aware it is a mere projection, we start to believe that it is real, we start to believe that it is real, and the effect from that is that we feel fear or terror or whatever. It brings our emotions up and down, believing that it is real, when we forget it is mere projection from the negative roll.

Conversely, when we know it is just made up, just projected from a negative roll, it doesn't bring our emotions up and down; it doesn't affect us much. It is similar when we recognize a dream as dream. In the dream, we have a lot of difficulties or we experience relationship problems, separating from our friend who follows another companion. We dream things like that, others harming us or something very sad happening or something very exciting or very sensual happening in our dream. When we recognize the dream is a dream it doesn't affect us in any way. It doesn't bring our emotions up and down. It doesn't affect our mind because we know it's not true. We know it's not true. We have this appearance but it is not true, like with a mirage we have the vision of water, coming from the effect of the heat on the sand. Even though we have the vision of water, we know it is not water at all, and so we don't run to it, thinking it will stop our thirst.

Or if in the field there is a scarecrow at some distance. We see the shape of a person in the distance, but we have been told by somebody it is a scarecrow. So, even though we have the vision of a person, we know it isn't a person.

There are many of these examples that are very helpful to examine or to recognize our hallucination, the truly existing appearance that we have, showing us how our view is completely covered by this, how our entire view is just hallucination. All our views are just hallucination, just this, all of these hallucinations. Until we become enlightened we have this hallucination of true existence, true appearance. Whatever appears, the view that we have until we become enlightened is all hallucination, truly existent, existing by its nature, existing from its own side, not merely labeled by mind. It's all the same meaning, it's all the same meaning but each word has its own taste, its own flavor.

Everything is merely labeled by the mind. Everything—hell, enlightenment, samsara, nirvana, happiness, problems, true suffering, true cause of suffering, true cessation of suffering, true path—all these, even our daily life's problems and happiness, everything that exists is merely labeled by the mind. That's how things are and that's how things exist, merely labeled by the mind, existing in mere name; that's the reality. That's how things are and how things exist, but that's not what we see. Unless we are a buddha, then *that* is a different case. Somebody who is a buddha, if somebody here in this gompa is a buddha, they are different. Somebody who is a buddha is totally different, but otherwise not.

All these phenomena that I mentioned before, all these phenomena are covered by our hallucinated view, projected by this negative imprint, made by the concept apprehending phenomena as truly existent.

What I was saying before was, even after you have removed the negative imprint, which is a seed, which gives rise to delusion, there is still a subtle one, there is still a subtle one. The other seed, which gives rise to delusion, even that is completely removed but there is a subtle negative imprint which projects or decorates this truly existent appearance or hallucinated appearance, the hallucinated view. Everything is covered by the projected hallucinated view; it covers reality. It covers the I, which exists in mere name, which is merely imputed by mind, which does not exist at all from its own side, which is totally empty, as well as the aggregates, mind, body, everything and all the rest of the phenomena, those phenomena which I mentioned. It's not that they don't exist; they exist, but they exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind. They are empty—that's the way they exist—and because of that they are totally empty of existing from their own side. Anything that exists is totally empty. That's the nature of all phenomena. Anything that exists is merely labeled, and right after the mind merely imputes the thing, in the next second, the next second it appears real. First, the mind merely imputed, then in the next second, this negative imprint decorates onto that mere imputation, decorates the hallucination, the truly existent appearance. Right after the mere imputation then that negative imprint decorates the hallucination, the truly existent appearance.

IGNORANCE CREATES A SENSE OF TRUE EXISTENCE

The ignorance and this negative imprint makes everything appear real in the sense of existing from its own side. According to the fourth of the philosophical schools, the Madhyamaka school, the second [subschool], Prasangika, according to that, that extremely subtle hallucination is the object to be refuted. In the first [sub]school of the Madhyamaka, the *rang gyü pa* or Svatantrika school, they think the I and phenomena are labeled by mind but they exist. They are labeled by mind but they exist from their own side. This is what they believe. This is their doctrine, their philosophy.

Normally, it is easy for us to think that way. We can accept that things are labeled by mind. Of course, things can't exist without being labeling by mind, but there has to be *something* from its own side. There has to be something existing from its own side otherwise how is it possible that thing exists? If there isn't something from its own side how can it exist? For something to exist, there should be something from its own side. This kind of thinking is easy for us to accept if we don't know the Prasangika school's viewpoint.

We need to get some clear idea of the extremely subtle dependent arising, the meaning of that, that everything exists merely imputed by mind, that there is no other way of existing. It is merely imputed by the mind. How things exist in mere name, *that* is extremely subtle dependent arising. When we get a clear idea of the way things exist, we see how extremely subtle it is.

This definition of the way phenomena exist is not because there is omniscient mind, there is a valid thought that realizes this, that is not the definition of it. What I mean is the definition of the way things exist is extremely, most subtle, extremely fine, most subtle. When we come to that point, the way things exist, such as the I and so forth, it is *not* that it doesn't exist—it exists but it is unbelievably subtle. What it is or how it exists, is extremely, unbelievably subtle phenomena, extremely fine. It is not that it doesn't exist, it exists but it's *like* it doesn't exist. It's not that it doesn't exist at all, it exists but it's *like* it doesn't exist, it's so subtle, so fine. For example, what's the I, how does it exist? Every single phenomena is like that, it's the same, not just I. Anything that exists is in the same nature, *so* fine, extremely subtle, what it is and how it exists.

It exists, but it's *like* it doesn't exist. It is merely labeled by mind. Of course, that is not the only reason that it exists. There are many other things, such as things we see in a dream that are also merely labeled, but that does not mean they exist. As I mentioned before, wearing different colored glasses, we see a white-colored thing as yellow, red, green, all different colors, whereas in reality it's not there, that thing. What exists is white; it is not a red mountain or blue mountain. Or our mind might be hallucinated due to fever or spirit possession, and we see all sorts of things. Like, where there is no road, we see a road under us and the spirit is urging us to jump. Actually we are going over a cliff but to us it is big, wide road. Like that, we have total hallucination. Also, there are other hallucinations that don't exist.

This is not the same as those imagined things. All these phenomena I mentioned before, they exist. The reason they exist is because they are merely labeled but that's not the only reason. The main reason why this label exists, why this phenomenon exists is because there is a base. The main reason is the base; the main refuge is the base. The main refuge of existence, what makes things exist, is because there is a base, there is a valid base that can receive that label.

But of course our mind has made up that label. Of course we can't find the label on that base. So that's very important, that's extremely important to research and understand. We cannot find the label on the base. We can't find the I on form, feeling, cognition, compounding aggregates, consciousness. Even altogether we can't find it on that.

EMPTINESS: THE FALSE I AND THE MERELY LABELED I

Even altogether we can't find the I. When I say "we can't find the I," there are two things: the false I and the merely labeled I. There's a merely labeled I, the I that is merely imputed by our own mind, and then *after the projection*, then there is a real I, the one created by the negative imprint. This real I is the I that we talk about all the time. When we use the term "I" we are not talking about the merely labeled I, that one is like it's unknown. The I that exists, this merely labeled I, is unknown, except to those who have studied Buddhadharma and the two truths, the teachings on emptiness, those who have studied and meditated and come to know and differentiate what exists and what doesn't exist. There is the I that exists and the I that doesn't exist, and they are able to recognize this. Otherwise, we can only judge from our view, and that recognition is a hallucination. Still, it helps knowing our view of what exists and what is false is not correct, is the hallucination of true existence.

That truly existent I, which is projected by our ignorance, by our negative imprint, of course we cannot find that; there is nowhere we can find it. We can't find it on these aggregates, on this collection of five aggregates, from the tip of the head down to the toes, we can't find it anywhere, neither on this body nor anywhere. Not only is each of these aggregates not that I, altogether they are not that I, so with the rest of the analysis, we cannot find it on any of these. The whole collection of aggregates is not that I, so when it comes to the point that the whole collection is not that I, then it becomes quite clear. It's very easy to understand this doesn't exist *at all* on these aggregates, on this base, on the collection of aggregates. We cannot find it anywhere, so that's the definition. Through meditation, through analysis, we can't find it anywhere and therefore we discover it doesn't exist anywhere. Its essence is it's totally empty, it's totally nonexistent.

What exists is an I that is merely labeled by mind—that's what exists—but even when we look for it, where is it? Even the merely labeled one, we can't find on this base. We can find it in this

world, we can find it at Kopan, at this moment, in this world, in Nepal, at Kopan, in this gompā, on this cushion. It is now on this cushion *but* it is not on this base, we can't find it on these aggregates; we can't find anywhere. Therefore you can see now what it is. It is nothing except what is merely imputed by the mind. Now here, with this analysis, we can see how what this I is, is *the* most subtle phenomenon. I am not saying this only refers to the I. I am saying, once you get the idea of the I, how it is subtle, how unbelievably subtle it is, that's the same with anything. It's not that it totally doesn't exist. It exists, a kind of inner existing. It exists but if we compare it to the previous, the other appearance, the one we have been believing since birth, since this morning, from beginningless rebirths, that doesn't exist.

As I gave you the example, ice cream. I told you that ice cream appears to us and we believe in that real ice cream, and we eat it. We've eaten so many ice creams in this life, you know, "I bought an ice cream from this shop, from that shop. I enjoy this flavor, that flavor, blah blah blah." Actually, in reality, we have never had one ice cream. Such a thing, such an action has never existed from beginningless samsara, it has never existed. It doesn't exist at all now and also it won't exist in the future. There's no such thing. That thing we have been believing in is *all* a hallucination, whatever has been appearing and we have been believing in.

What has appeared to us and what we have been believing in doesn't exist at all, but when we compared that to this I which does exist, it's *like* the existing I doesn't exist, it's so subtle. You can't say that it doesn't exist. It exists because there is a base, the aggregates. There are the aggregates, then the labeling mind merely imputed "I", then it comes in existence, just for that.

You see, these aggregates are a valid base which can receive the label I. There's something *on* that which can receive the name, which can be imputed, so the mind just made it up, the mind thinks "I." That's it. There is a valid base and the mind just thinks "I." Just thinks the label, and that's why it came into existence, because there is valid base, relating to that.

Here you can see just how unbelievable it is, how the I really exists. This I that exists has never been discovered, it's totally unknown. The I which exists is unknown, totally unknown, it has never been thought that way because it is impossible to appear that way, so until you become enlightened, that merely labeled appearance is not there. This is because all the time this negative imprint made by ignorance always projects, always cover the hallucination, all the time. The minute our mind merely labels this valid base, the next moment, right at that time [Rinpoche snaps fingers], right after our mind merely imputes, it appears back to us. That second it appears back to us. It *should* appear back to us as merely labeled by mind, but at the moment it does not, and that won't happen until we become enlightened. Immediately there is a hallucination projected on it that it is not merely labeled by mind. It is merely labeled by mind but due to the negative imprint it appears to us to be *not* merely labeled by mind—not in reality but in our view. This is like wearing red-tinted glasses that make everything appear red in our view. It is not red but we see things as red.

So, *first* mind merely labels, then *second* it appears back. It is supposed to appear merely labeled by mind, but it appears *not* merely labeled by mind, *not* merely labeled by mind. So you see, when it appears back it's a hallucination.

That is not the real problem. The real problem starts where the suffering starts, where all the sufferings start, all the delusions, karma, and all the suffering, the oceans of samsaric suffering that we investigate in our meditation, the oceans of [suffering of] hell beings, hungry ghosts,

human beings, all these problems, world problems, all these. This is due to ignorance, lack of understanding about the two truths, either conventional truth or ultimate truth, the object to be refuted, the false view and reality, emptiness, the way things exist, existing in mere name. So it is due to ignorance, not having discovered this even if we know it intellectually, even if we have studied all these extensive philosophical subjects but actually we don't apply any of these reasonings, these meditations that are explained in the simplified lamrim. We don't apply them in the daily life, we don't practice mindfulness to protect the mind, to not create the root of samsara, to be liberated from all the delusions and karma. We do not apply the meditation, we do not practice mindfulness continuously, we are not continuously mindful of our view, seeing that which is hallucinated, hallucination, *is* hallucination.

As I mentioned about dreams and movies, as I gave those examples before, we do not practice mindfulness, and emptiness, dependent arising, even if we know intellectually but we do not practice, we do not use it to cut the root of samsara or to not create again continuously the root of samsara, ignorance, producing all the delusions and suffering.

This is how it appears to us all the time until we achieve enlightenment, except when we are an arya being in equipoise meditation. At that time, we don't have that appearance. Therefore, even if we have an understanding but we don't meditate, we don't apply the meditation, there's no protection. We've made our own mind believe, and the minute we allow our mind to believe, to hold onto that concept of true existence, when we believe that this is true, that's ignorance. That way of apprehending the object is totally against the wisdom realizing emptiness.

So at that time—the minute when we let our mind believe that's true—at that time we create ignorance. That concept, believing this is true—that's the ignorance. Every minute, every twenty-four hours of our life, every time the mind merely imputes I, the next second it appears as truly existent, *not* merely labeled by mind. Appearing not merely labeled by mind, then we allow our mind to hold on to it as true. We hold on to it as true. It appears as not merely labeled by mind but true. The minute when we believe [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] it is not merely labeled, the minute [Rinpoche snaps his fingers again] when we believe in that, *that's* the root of samsara, that is the ignorance.

There are many types of ignorance, I don't remember, but there are many types of ignorance according to the different schools' view of the root of samsara but the reality is only one, as I said before. There is only one, only *this*—believing that the I exists not merely labeled by mind. Being merely labeled by mind, *that's* the reality. Realizing *that* is realizing the extremely subtle dependent arising, what the I is. Therefore, ignorance is what is totally opposite to that way, totally opposite to realizing the extremely subtle dependent arising; it is the mind that believes the I is *not* merely labeled by mind. It is so slight, it is just slightly beyond what is merely labeled by mind. So slightly beyond that. That's the extremely subtle object to be refuted according to the Prasangika School. That's the root of samsara. This ignorance, and only this one, is root of samsara.

EMPTINESS: IGNORANCE CAN BE CUT WITH EMPTINESS

Therefore, in order to cut this ignorance, it *has* to be the wisdom realizing the extremely subtle dependent arising, not just any emptiness that the four different philosophical schools explain. The less subtle forms of realizing emptiness cannot cut this particular ignorance. Only the wisdom realizing the extremely subtle object, the Prasangika school view of emptiness, which is

extremely subtle, only that wisdom can cut the root of samsara. This is the wisdom that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha realized, that everything is totally empty, existing in mere name, merely imputed by mind, and therefore it's totally empty of existing from its own side. Everything functions in this way, karma and everything, in mere name. Cause exists in mere name, functioning in this way; the resultant suffering and happiness also exists in mere name.

Using this wisdom, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha totally liberated himself from this ignorance, including the imprint of this ignorance and all the delusions and karma and all the oceans of samsaric suffering. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself revealed this truth to us and liberated numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and brought them to enlightenment. And so did Lama Tsongkhapa, Nagarjuna, Milarepa and so forth, all those great Tibetan yogis, by having the same realization. Numberless of them have had the same realization as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha explained, as Nagarjuna explained, as the great propagator of Buddha's teachings, Lama Tsongkhapa, made in the clearest explanation.

Because it's so subtle, many learned meditators have made mistakes in the past. It gets left out, because the way things exist is so subtle. It's very easy to slip into nihilism. It's difficult to stay in the Middle Way, devoid of eternalism—true existence—and devoid of nihilism. It is difficult to stay, to realize the Middle Way view. To realize that we need so much merit, unbelievable merit.

Also, we need to have chai! We need to have chai; we need to drink chai, not only merit.

[Chanting]

BENEFITS OF HOLY OBJECTS: ANIMALS CIRCUMAMBULATING STUPAS

I thought to have the animals, all the goats—not the goats I bought coming from the airport—but there are quite a number of goats here and I wanted them during the morning to be around outside, in the courtyard, and by opening the door, maybe it's cold but they can hear. But I think maybe the caretaker has gone, the man who takes care of them has gone back home.

Two or three years ago, I told a Nepalese man to bring all the animals to where we built the eight buddha stupas so they could circumambulate the stupas. I said I will pay him twenty-five rupees each time he did it. He was told at that time to bring all the animals, even the buffaloes, but I am sure it's not easy to do. I think maybe he did it twice, but then I left so I didn't continue and I don't know how long he also continued making the animals circumambulate the stupas.

There is a story, but I don't know where it happened, whether it is Tibet, India or Nepal. It sounds like it's maybe in Nepal. I am not sure, but maybe Nepal. A dog chased a pig, and because they went around a stupa, it became a circumambulation. When the pig died, it went to the deva realm, I think the Realm of the Thirty-three or something, the Tushita deva realm or the Realm of the Thirty-three. Just one time, the pig was chased by the dog and of course it ran, with its short tail hanging down, and because it went around a stupa it became a circumambulation.

The being doesn't have to have a particular virtuous motivation, knowing that this action will become the cause of enlightenment or liberation from samsara, or the happiness in the future life and all the future lives. The pig didn't have any education and understanding of that. There was no virtuous motivation; it just ran away from the dog. Being attacked by the dog, it ran away

with fear but it became a circumambulation. It did not become good karma from the side of the motivation. Here, it became good karma because of the power of the holy object, the stupa. So, in this case, the statue, the stupa, the scripture, in this case—not in every case but in this case, particularly in this case—in the case of statues, stupas, scriptures and of course, no question, of buddhas or bodhisattvas.

Therefore, even if children are chasing a dog, if it is near a stupa and it goes around that, then it benefits, it becomes virtue, good karma for them and, like this story, they will achieve a higher rebirth in the next life.

PRECIOUS HUMAN REBIRTH: THE BENEFITS

By actualizing a holy object, such as a stupa, statue and so forth, it makes it unbelievably easy, even for the animals, not only humans. Human beings can learn so much, can do much better; there is so much that human being can do, vast, like limitless skies, with a bodhicitta motivation and wisdom. Not only that, it makes it so easy for human beings, but even for the animals who cannot think, who cannot meditate. There is no way for them to learn the meaning of virtue, the cause of happiness, and how the cause of suffering is nonvirtue—even if it is explained for billions of eons there is no way they can learn until they receive a human body, especially a human body like we have, that gives all the opportunity to learn the words and meanings, and on top of that to practice—not just intellectual learning but to practice and have realization.

What this human body offers, the opportunity it gives us is much more than skies filled with billions of dollars or limitless skies filled with gold, diamonds or even wish-fulfilling jewels. Even if we own that much, limitless skies filled with wish-fulfilling jewels cannot stop our rebirth in the lower realms.

Therefore, this human body that we have now is more precious than all the wealth in the world, more precious than all the wealth in the deva realm. It is said that in the deva realm even one earring is worth more than all the wealth in this world. I don't remember exactly where I heard that. All the money in this world is not even the value of just one earring of the deva realm. But all the wealth in the deva realm is nothing if we compare it to the value of this human body. It is so precious, even more precious than whole skies filled with wish-granting jewels, with numberless wish-granting jewels.

Wish-granting means that in the past, bodhisattvas or wheel-turning kings or those who have a lot of merit find wish-granting jewels from the ocean and then they clean them in three ways, in three stages, first getting the mud off, then the smell or something else, very subtle. They clean them in three different ways. Then they put the wish-fulfilling jewels on top of a banner, which is on top of the roof of the house. Then, whatever people pray for, all the material things, all the sense objects, the material enjoyments, whatever they wish for, they get. That's why it's called "wish-fulfilling" but of course to have that power, you also have to have merit. It is similar to the person who has a billion dollars. With a billion dollars you can buy many things, but to get a billion dollars you first have to have the merit. Therefore, it can't stop a lower rebirth; it cannot save us from the lower realms.

Therefore, this precious human body we have now is unbelievable; it is more precious than anything. Having this precious human body, we can achieve any happiness, the four levels of happiness: the happiness of this life, of future lives, of liberation, and enlightenment, as well as

bringing happiness to all sentient beings. We can do that by developing the mind in the path, from life to life, and we can cause others, all sentient beings, to create the causes of happiness, so this can even cover all sentient beings.

We can't be sure how long we will have this human body. We won't have this forever and there are only a certain number of breaths from now on. With every breath that finishes, that's one less. Every time it becomes less. There is only a certain number and they are finishing continuously, becoming less and less. So the duration we have this precious human body for is continuously getting shorter and shorter. There are only a certain number of seconds, from now on, from this moment, there are only a certain number of seconds. Constantly, so quickly, it is finishing. How long we will have this precious human body, there are only a certain number of seconds and they are running out, finishing so fast.

And there is so much negative karma—not only from one day, not only from birth, but from beginningless rebirths—that we haven't purified and we haven't finished experiencing. There are so many negative karmas; they're uncountable.

Generally speaking, we don't get really strong purification or really pure practice done. Then if death happens suddenly, there is no way to purify all that karma, not only from today. It is not easy to purify even one karma, and there are so many, from this one day, from birth and then from beginningless rebirths. Therefore, if death happens we must be thrown back into the lower realms, where we came from. We came from there before and we will go back to the same place, to the lower realms again. Once we are born there, it's not sure when we can come back.

The great bodhisattva Shantideva mentions in a verse of the *Bodhicaryavatara*,

If when I have the chance to live a wholesome life
My actions are not wholesome,
Then what should I be able to do
When confused by the misery of the lower realms?¹⁰

Using this perfect human rebirth, all the different levels of happiness can be obtained, but if we fail to take advantage of this, when we die and we are thrown into the lower realms, what can we do? If we are born as a worm or a turtle, as an alligator or a crocodile or as those worms given to the fish, put on the hook to catch fish—if we are born like that, if the result of our negative karma has ripened already—there is nothing we can do.

Shantideva continues,

So if, when I have leisure such as this,
I do not attune myself to what is wholesome,
There could be no greater deception,
And there could be no greater folly.¹¹

By opportunity, by luck, having found this perfect human body, without training the mind in virtue, say, if we get reborn in the lower realms, there is nothing more ignorant than this. There is no greater way to cheat ourselves than this.

¹⁰ Ch. 4, v. 18.

¹¹ Ch. 4, v. 23.

The conclusion is that death can happen any time, on any day. At any moment it can happen. Therefore, without wasting even one second we *must* dedicate our life to living in the lamrim, to practicing the lamrim. Since I brought this issue up of how we should practice, we need to know this—how human life is so precious and how the time we have is very short, very short, like the duration of lightning. It comes, it happens, it's gone. It's like last night's dream.

Therefore, we must make a decision about our life. Making a decision about our own life, we need to be most careful. By using our wisdom, by analyzing, our decision should be the most beneficial one. Whatever decision we make in our own life, it should first of all be to only create good karma, to become the cause of happiness.

Even that is not enough. Even for ourselves, the happiness we want is the highest, peerless happiness. The profit we want in life is the highest profit. Normally, when we are in business, in our normal life, we want the best, the highest happiness or profit. This is no different than what animals want to achieve. Even the tiniest insect that we can only see through a microscope wants to achieve happiness in this life, so that is nothing special. That doesn't qualify us, that doesn't become the special purpose for having a human body or being human. It doesn't fulfill the purpose of being human, because any other animal, even the insects can do that. Even chickens or pigs, they can do that.

A perfect human rebirth transcends the meaning of life. The activities that we do with this human body, if it is working to achieve long-run happiness, the happiness of all the coming future lives, then it is special. We can only achieve that through good karma, not through bad karma, negative karma. So, all our actions, whatever we do, have to be good karma, Dharma, in order to achieve all this.

ONLY WITH A PERFECT HUMAN REBIRTH CAN WE ACHIEVE ENLIGHTENMENT

As I mentioned before, what we call our desire, the greatest, positive, highest happiness needs to take responsibility for all sentient beings, to have responsibility to free all sentient beings from suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. Without bringing up that reason, just working for our own happiness is not sufficient. Even if we should achieve everlasting happiness, liberation from samsara, still our realizations are not complete; there are still defilements that need to be ceased. That's not the completion of our realizations; that's not completion of the bliss, to achieve full enlightenment.

When our attitude, the actions we do, is because we desire full enlightenment, for peerless happiness, especially the biggest reason, the limitless skies of reasons, then we ourselves have responsibility to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. At this time we have received the perfect human rebirth, which gives us all the opportunities to develop our own mind in the path, to be able to help sentient beings, to be able to achieve this goal, to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment. We have all these opportunities, we can do that, because we have met the teachings, we have met the virtuous friend, we have met Buddhadharma, and so we have all these opportunities. Therefore, we have the full responsibility. These are the limitless skies of reasons why we need to complete the path and achieve full enlightenment.

Therefore, whatever we do, we need to put effort into it to ensure we achieve enlightenment for sentient beings in our daily meditation and most importantly, in our daily life. We might be doing something that is called meditation but that alone is not sufficient. It depends on what kind of meditation we are spending our life doing. Just doing what's called meditation is not enough; we have to analyze our motivation before we put our own life into that, and see if with that meditation practice we can achieve our goal or not. As I already explained, normally our desire is to achieve the greatest profit, the highest happiness, the longest happiness, the most pleasure. When we analyze that, we see that is enlightenment. To do that, we need to complete all realizations, to cease all obscurations. That's enlightenment.

Then, we need to help limitless skies of sentient beings. There are numberless sentient beings, and we have the responsibility to free them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. So, our meditation practice has to be something that can lead us to that goal. It has to be like that, something that has that goal. Something that doesn't lead us to that goal is wasting our life. Even if we believe, if we have been doing other meditations for many years, doing this and that, it is wasting our life—wasting so many years, maybe even our whole life—until we discover what the most practical thing in life is. And that is to meditate, to practice, to make life most beneficial for ourselves and for other sentient beings. To be able to understand that we have to understand the lamrim. As long as we don't know the lamrim, we are totally ignorant of the lamrim, there is no way to judge, there is no way to understand how to make life meaningful, what the purpose of life is.

We may have our own interpretation of the meaning of life, but that's not necessarily what's meaningful in reality if we don't have wisdom, if we don't have an education in the lamrim. And without understanding the lamrim, we have no idea at all where to begin this practice, where to begin the path to enlightenment, no idea how to go about becoming enlightened. No idea at all. Even though we are doing meditations for our whole life, even if our meditation is correct meditation, it's a small part of the path, it's a very basic part of the path. It is correct but it is not the whole path. Without understanding the stages of the graduated path, that meditation alone doesn't help our development on the whole path to enlightenment.

THE NEED TO FOLLOW THE ENTIRE PATH

To conclude, Vipassana is good; it is something simple and helpful to start with. Normally the attention is outside, the mind is always occupied by sense pleasures, sense objects, but by meditating, by watching our mind, we bring the mind in and see things we don't normally see about ourselves; we discover things.

To give you another example, a meditation on impermanence. If we are *only* doing that meditation, of course it is good, it cuts strong desire clinging to this life, it brings peace in the heart. By realizing how this life is very short, we see all the activities clinging to this life's comforts and pleasures are nonsense. All the activities working just for this life, obtaining the comfort and pleasure of this life are totally nonsense, childish nonsense. We come to realize that. But if we spend our whole life just meditating on impermanence, that is not sufficient. This is just to give another example. If we spend our whole life just only on this, there is so much to learn, so much to realize, even without talking about liberation from samsara and enlightenment; there is so much on the path we need to make progress on. Spending our whole life just meditating on impermanence, that meditation itself is very beneficial, but we need to go through to the next stage of the path. If we stay only on that our whole life, there is no development; we

can't realize emptiness. Without merit, without meditating, we can't realize emptiness, then we can't remove the root of samsara, we can't be free from all the delusions and karma, all those sufferings of samsara.

There is all this procedure of the whole path to liberation that we need to realize. Even though impermanence is a foundation, a very important foundation, an important meditation, it is not only that we have to realize. What I am saying is that even though this meditation is correct, it is not correct to spend our whole life *just* on that, with no idea of the path and no idea how to go on to achieve liberation from samsara. I'm talking in that sense.

We need to be introduced to the motivations of the three scopes, of the lower capable being, the middle capable being and the higher capable being—the different Dharma motivations that result in different levels of happiness, that transform our actions, resulting in different levels of happiness. If we are never introduced to that motivation, to what is Dharma and what is not Dharma, if it is never explained, we can never differentiate between what is Dharma, what isn't Dharma. Then there is no way, there is no way to know how to meditate. Even if we are instructed to focus on an object of meditation, that doesn't explain how to meditate. We are totally blind, dark, ignorant; we don't know how to meditate if the motivation is not explained.

Then there is the danger that we meditate our whole life and nothing becomes the cause of enlightenment—not only eating, sleeping, walking or doing our job, even meditation itself, the actual meditation, nothing becomes the cause of enlightenment. This is a great loss of our life, a great waste of life.

Even if it becomes the cause of liberation from samsara for ourselves, if it doesn't become the cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, it becomes great loss of profit in life, of skies of merit. Every time we generate bodhicitta, every action of meditation becomes the cause of enlightenment, but this didn't happen, so it's a loss. That's the greatest loss in life.

And if there is not even the motivation to achieve liberation from samsara, then that is worse than before. Our action of meditation is only the cause of samsara. Our whole life's actions of meditation only become the cause of samsara. If there is no Dharma, if our action of meditation is not Dharma, it does not become even the cause of happiness of future lives, it becomes only the cause of suffering, only nonvirtue.

It is mentioned in the teachings by the Kadampa geshe, Lama Atisha's disciples, Chengawa asked Potawa, "What would you prefer, meditating on the lamrim, or having realizations of eight common siddhis and the five types of clairvoyance?" The eight common siddhis are those psychic powers, such as being able to see treasure underground or to be able to fly with the power of meditation, psychic powers, by meditating on wind, where instead of taking many months of walking you can reach [the destination] within a few hours or days. The five types of clairvoyance are things like seeing past and future things but I don't think it's seeing all the numberless past and future lives or seeing the numberless sentient beings' minds. You achieve one-pointed concentration that can last for years, so that even if a big drum is beaten in front of your ear, it can't disturb your concentration. However long you want to concentrate you can.

So Chengawa asked Potawa whether he would prefer all this or just being able to meditate on the lamrim. He replied he would prefer even questioning what the lamrim is, rather than having all these powers, the eight siddhis, the five types of clairvoyance and one-pointed concentration that

lasts for years. He said this makes life more meaningful, even if you just question lamrim. By questioning, he means studying, learning about the lamrim, finding out about the lamrim. He would prefer this because we've had all those powers numberless times. But by finding out about the lamrim and discovering what the three principal aspects of the path—all the stages to enlightenment—are, we can develop on the path.

Without renunciation of samsara we can never be liberated, we can never achieve liberation from samsara, without that lamrim realization. Without realization of emptiness, we cannot cut the root of samsara, the root of the oceans of samsaric suffering. Without bodhicitta, we cannot achieve enlightenment, we can't liberate and enlighten all sentient beings. That is the reason why this Kadampa geshe said he prefers even just questioning what the lamrim is to all these powers, all these realizations, because by questioning, we come to learn, then we practice, and by practicing we gain realizations.

And especially Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, the great Tibetan enlightened being who completed the path, who did incredible skies of benefit to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, said that compared with doing the preliminary practices or reciting many hundreds of millions of mantras, and many prostrations—I am not sure—and having visions of the Buddha, compared with that, just going over a lamrim meditation prayer, even a short prayer that has the essence of the path to enlightenment, is more meaningful. To go over the lamrim prayer, the direct meditation, is going straight over the path to enlightenment, mindfully reading the prayer is going straight over the path. This makes life more meaningful than all those other practices. We have to understand that those other practices without lamrim, without the mind living in lamrim, doing all that many number, even seeing the Buddha, compared to even a short lamrim prayer, what makes life more beneficial is that prayer that contains the essence of the whole path to enlightenment, just going through it, mindfully reading it, one time. This makes life more meaningful than all those other things.

It makes sense. Of course, if we can see the Buddha it's very exciting, but then we still cannot achieve enlightenment. Seeing the Buddha doesn't mean we can become enlightened, that doesn't happen. Even if we see the Buddha, we still have to realize renunciation, bodhicitta, emptiness, the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment, the foundation. On the basis of that, we actualize all the rest of the Mahayana path and the highest tantric path. Then we gradually cease the defilements, gross and then subtle ones. Even if we see the Buddha, that doesn't mean we become enlightened at that time, we have to go through the realizations.

Therefore, what Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says makes great sense, that even seeing the Buddha, we still need the direct meditation on the lamrim. Of course, this makes it more meaningful. In order to have a realization of the whole path to enlightenment, it depends on leaving an imprint on our mental continuum, it depends on how much imprint the lamrim is able to leave on our mental continuum. Each time we go over the lamrim prayer of the whole path to enlightenment we leave an imprint, and each time we leave an extra imprint that means we get closer and closer to actualizing, to having a lamrim realization, a realization of the graduated path to enlightenment. Each time we go over the lamrim prayer, the lineage prayer, it leaves an imprint, it plants a seed of the steps of the path. That means each time we are getting closer to enlightenment. That means each time we become closer to enlightening all the sentient beings. That's the goal of our life.

So what Pabongka Rinpoche advises makes great sense. This is the very heart, what makes life so rich, what makes it possible to achieve enlightenment quickly, to be able to offer extensive benefit to sentient beings, to liberate them quickly from suffering, from samsara. So there is no question if we actually live our life, dedicate our life to actually realizing the path, not just leaving imprints, reading meditation prayers and on top of that actually meditating on the path, on the lamrim and training the mind stage by stage—of course then no question that is the best essence of life, taking the best essence of our life, having the most meaningful life. In this way, we are progressing our mind on the path in the correct way, to be able to progress, then to be able to achieve enlightenment, which means to be able to enlighten other sentient beings.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO FREE ALL BEINGS

The other thing is that the purpose of life is to benefit sentient beings, to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment, and for that we need to be enlightened. That depends on creating the cause; achieving enlightenment depends on the cause. Without the causes and conditions, actualizing enlightenment cannot be achieved and even that cause has to be the unmistakable cause—the path to achieve enlightenment has to be unmistakable. And, as I mentioned, even if it is unmistakable but your practice is only one meditation in your whole life, not learning anything more, not reaching anywhere, just one part of the path or one meditation, even if it is correct, you cannot achieve enlightenment.

And even if it's the whole path, but the practice of the teaching is not in order, I think you can't achieve enlightenment, if it is not in order. Maybe, I'll put it this way. If you only practice what you like and you leave out the ones you don't like, you can't achieve enlightenment. You can't have the realization of bodhicitta without the renunciation of samsara, without meditating on samsara, how samsara is in the nature of suffering. Without realizing the sufferings of the lower realms you can't generate compassion for the beings of the lower realms. Your compassion will be limited, so you cannot achieve enlightenment that way. To achieve the practice, it has to be graduated, step by step, as it's arranged and simplified, made very easy by Lama Atisha, the composer of *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, which makes it extremely easy for sentient beings to go about enlightenment. Then Lama Tsongkhapa and many of the great lamas came to experience it and made commentaries on how to go about achieving enlightenment. So, you need to actualize it step by step. *Only* in that way can you achieve full enlightenment.

You can see from this talk what the very essence of life is, what's best, the truest, the ultimate life. It's most skillful that whatever lifestyle you live, whether you spend life in retreat or working in the city, the essence is to meditate on the lamrim every day. First, you make yourself familiar with the whole thing and then after that you start with one meditation every day, starting with guru devotion, until you achieve a stable realization of that. Not just seeing the Buddha, but seeing how the guru is the Buddha in your own heart, doing this for a few hours or a few days, mainly that, but understanding in a very stable way how the guru and the Buddha are oneness. Doing it until that realization is very stable. Then, even after the realization still you do a little bit of meditation every day, for whatever length of time, even ten minutes or fifteen minutes on guru devotion, even for a short time like that for no matter how long it takes. You try to make your life most productive, most beneficial for sentient beings. The goal is to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment, so of course, this is the root of the path to enlightenment.

Then you can do another meditation on the same day, if you can train the mind in the beginning of the path, on the perfect human rebirth. However many weeks, months, years it takes, try to have the realizations, step by step, of those stages of the graduated path of the lower capable being. Or you train the mind from perfect human rebirth up to karma, each day, you go through karma then come back, so train within that until you achieve all those realizations. Train in that part of the realization, until you achieve up to karma, especially impermanence and death. No matter how many years it takes, just carry on every day. Every day do some, then when you finish karma again come down to the beginning. The whole point is to continue until you achieve realization of all those meditations, especially impermanence and death. Meditating on that helps to have quick realization of all those things. So it becomes a very important key, some meditators advise.

Then after that, train the mind in the graduated path of middle capable being, on the particular sufferings of the deva and human realms and the general sufferings—the three types, the six types and the four types. Then on the evolution, the twelve links, on delusions and the shortcomings of delusions, on all those things, on delusion and karma, the cause of the samsara. Do this until you have the realization of the renunciation of samsara, your own samsara, like being in the center of the fire or like a poisonous snake's nest, so that you are so frightened you don't want to be there even for one second. Or, as I mentioned, feel like you are a naked body sitting on a thorn bush, or like a prisoner, where there is no attachment to being in prison even for one second.

Maybe there are some prisoners who like to be in prison; it's possible. Generally, however, there is not even one second where a prisoner is attached to the prison. Every second, day and night, you want to be free from that, you have total aversion. This should be like that for your own samsara, to help you seek liberation and to have a very stable realization. So, you do that until you achieve it, no matter how long, how many years it takes. Only after that can you have the realization of great compassion, of loving kindness, and then, based on those, you achieve the realization of bodhicitta. You should train like that until you attain bodhicitta. Do the same thing every day, no matter how many years it takes, no matter how many lifetimes it takes. Plan like this, to have these realizations.

For emptiness, however, you don't need anything else. It's not like bodhicitta, which you can only realize after you have realized renunciation. So, every day do some meditation on emptiness, either by reciting the *Heart Sutra* or any other quotations, on the basis of that, or just using different meditation techniques. Do some meditation on emptiness every day to plant the seed, and read teachings on emptiness. Even if you don't understand them now it leaves such a strong imprint on your mind and that helps sooner or later. Sooner or later you will be able to understand the words, the meanings and then be able to have the realization.

Especially, the more you are able to leave the imprint, even if you cannot achieve the realization in this life but the more you listen to teachings on those different texts on emptiness, the more you listen, study, read, even if you don't understand them—even if you are unable to realize emptiness this life—it leaves imprints all the time and in future lives it makes it so easy, unbelievably easy in the next life to understand the meaning immediately of whatever you read, or even, as soon as you hear it, to be able to have a realization of emptiness. It makes it unbelievably easy in the next life.

That's the same with Dharma in general. Even if you don't understand, you can't comprehend the teachings you are given, especially the philosophical teachings, when you study the Dharma, because the subject is faultless—it's the teaching of the Buddha where there are no mistakes, there is no cheating, no misleading—every time you listen and study, it leaves so many imprints, even just reading. That becomes a preparation, and sooner or later you are able to remove the cause of suffering, delusion and karma, and be forever free from the oceans of samsaric suffering. So that is true not only of emptiness, but of all the other subjects.

By working on the three principal aspects of the paths, by putting the main effort into working on that along with the practices of purification and collecting the remedies of the four powers and collecting extensive merit—these are the necessary conditions to have realizations. And what makes you receive the realizations is the blessing of the guru, which you receive in your own heart. That is the cause of quick realizations on the path to enlightenment. So, along with these three practices, that makes it possible to have realizations. Meditate on the actual path, along with purifying, collecting merit, then guru devotion.

Make a one-pointed request, with that devotion to the guru, to be granted blessings, to have realizations.

If you are able to practice, on the basis of that you should take a great initiation, then practice the generation stage of the tantric path based on that. While you are training the mind in the generation stage, you can study the teachings of the completion stage, to have knowledge about it, even though you haven't yet reached the level to actually do the main meditation practice. You can prepare by reading at least, by reading the direct meditation on the tantric path, like that lamrim prayer, the direct meditation of your own personal deity, the one you have a karmic connection with, and that deity's whole graduated path, which comes normally after the long version of the deity's sadhana. The three principal aspects of the path are at the beginning, in short form, then it describes the tantric path, the generation stage and completion stage of the deity. Going over that is a very important thing, to plant the seed of the tantric path every day, otherwise you might have the foundation of the lamrim now but no imprint of the tantric path. So, mindfully go over one tantric graduated path of your own deity, the direct meditation on that. Each time you do that it leaves an imprint of the whole tantric path. Doing that every day becomes the preparation, and sooner or later it becomes very easy to achieve the realization of the completion stage. This is how to make preparation every day for the whole path to enlightenment. These two prayers are the basis, the foundation that leaves an imprint. Then on top of that do the meditation and have realization of that.

So, I'll read one or two pages then we stop here.

[Rinpoche reads in Tibetan]

No matter how busy life is, it is so important to be able to get this done even for a few minutes, even for ten or fifteen minutes, to do this direct meditation on the prayer, then to do the lamrim meditation. If you continue like this, like a river flowing, then definitely with so many positive imprints, definitely there will be progress. If you are actually correctly practicing lamrim and know how to go about it, by continuing every day, for sure—definitely!—you will achieve realizations, you will make real progress on the path in the mind. As the years go, you will be able to feel the definite difference to your mental state. Of course, it's all based on paying all the

attention to correctly devoting to the virtuous friend with thought and action. All the answers lie there, how well it is done.

Making progress quickly depends on how much you, the disciple, are able to follow every single piece of advice of the guru. As I mentioned the other day, whoever is expert in devoting to the virtuous friend, whoever follows every single piece of advice, whoever's expert in devoting to the virtuous friend, that person finds it so much easier to succeed in gaining realizations. Everything depends on that, therefore you need to pay all your attention there. In everyday life, that needs to be taken care of, that is the one you need to pay the most attention to.

Otherwise, if you don't know that part of the subject and don't practice—devoting yourself only to the virtuous friend you like and not to the virtuous friend you don't like—by not seeing all virtuous friends as buddhas, you can never achieve realizations. Your mind gets stuck and you can't achieve realizations.

JE DRUBKHANG COUNTS HIS GURUS

There is the story about Drubkhang Gelek Gyatso, a great lamrim lineage lama who wrote extensive scriptures on sutra and tantra. When Je Drubkhang began to meditate on lamrim he spent many years meditating, but nothing happened. There was no change in his mind, no realizations. He went to consult his root guru—I think it might be Pulchog Jamgon Rinpoche, I am not sure. The guru said, “When you visualize the merit field, have you forgotten anybody you have made a Dharma connection with? Go back and check whether you have left out any of your gurus.”

When Je Drubkhang checked, he found he had left out the teacher who had taught him the alphabet when he was a child living at home. He saw this monk, who later broke his vows, as bad-tempered and cruel. Because he didn't like this teacher, Je Drubkhang found it difficult to develop devotion toward him and didn't visualize him among the other teachers he visualized in the merit field. When he went back and explained this to his guru, his guru explained, “This is the problem. This is why you haven't been able to have any realizations during all these years. You must completely change your attitude and meditate on this guru as your root guru in the center of the whole merit field. Until you develop devotion, look at him as the essence of the entire merit field.”

In the center of the merit field is usually Lama Losang Thubwang Dorje Chang. So *lama* means “root guru.” In Nepal, we not only call monks “lamas” but also the police, the “lama police.” There are many people called “lama,” it's so common. It's not like that in the merit field. Here, the lama is Losang Thubwang Dorje Chang and lama means guru, manifesting as Lama Tsongkhapa. The guru also manifests as Shakyamuni Buddha, and that guru also manifests as Vajradhara. Then there is HUM, the concentration being.

There are the Anuttara Yoga Tantra deities, the Charya tantra deities, the Kriya Tantra deities, and the One Thousand Buddhas of the fortunate eon, including the seven Medicine Buddhas and the Thirty-five Buddhas. Then, there are the sixteen arhats and after that the bodhisattvas, the dakas and dakinis, and the Dharma protectors.

But all of these, no matter how many there are, are all embodied into one, the virtuous friend, the root virtuous friend, which is one manifesting into many. It's like when you make tea, you use water and milk, but it's all mixed as one. So here, it looks like there are many but it's one. There is so many but it's one. With this understanding of guru yoga, you do the meditation, the practice of refuge and all that, the seven-limb practice, the four immeasurable thoughts, and all those things. The seven-limb prayer is for purifying obstacles to realizations, collecting extensive merit and dedicating the merit. Also offer a mandala, do the requesting prayer to receive realizations and so forth.

In the *Guru Puja* there are outer, inner and secret offerings, which are very subtle if you do those Highest Yoga Tantra practices. You do the requesting prayer to the lineage lamas, then requesting for realizations on the path to enlightenment.

What I am going to say is that for us ordinary beings, the guru appears normally to our impure karma and we believe that an ordinary being cannot manifest into the actual Buddha with all the qualities. We believe he cannot do that, because the guru seems ordinary. In our meditation, if it is ordinary, as it appears and we believe it, then we cannot do all this, with all the qualities. So, while recognizing this from our own side, from the disciple's side, we meditate on the guru's holy mind, that is the dharmakaya. This is what we have to realize from our side—it is dharmakaya, the holy mind of all the buddhas. The holy mind of all the buddhas is the dharmakaya, and that is the dharmakaya of all the buddhas, their holy mind. With this recognition, with this discovery from our own side, through this meditation then we see numberless buddhas are the guru, and the guru is all the buddhas; they are one. And all this merit field, even though they appear as different deities and all the fortunate eons' buddhas, arhats, bodhisattvas, dakas, dakinis, Dharma protectors, they are not ordinary protectors, ordinary bodhisattvas, ordinary arhats, you know, they are all this one, this one creator or this one doer; they are the essence of the guru.

So, that's the meditation, Lama Losang Thubwang Dorje Chang. Lama is root guru. Losang is Tsongkhapa, then the guru manifests as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, at the heart is also the guru, Vajradhara, at the heart of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Then there is the concentration being HUM—that signifies the dharmakaya, all the buddhas' holy minds.

As soon as Je Drubkhang did this meditation, everything changed. He started to have devotion toward this teacher and realizations came very easily, one after the other, like falling rain. This is a great teaching for us, showing us the importance of ensuring no guru is left out of our visualization of the merit field so that we develop devotion to all our gurus.

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

So, I'll read one page.

[Rinpoche reads]

This time, I can remember it easier because the third chapter is finished.

[Rinpoche reads]

So, page 174, the front page.

Here it is said, in this section, the fourth chapter, confession, this particular *Chapter on Confession*, the *Chapter on Confession of the Golden Light Sutra*. This is regarded also as very powerful for purifying. Lama Tsongkhapa or maybe Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo mentions when you talk about confession what to do, so it mentions also this. If possible recite this, because of this name. Here it says if there is extremely heavy negative karma done for one thousand years, by doing one time this *Golden Light Sutra*, this *Chapter on Confession*, all that gets purified. It talks about the benefits of dedication.

So it also says in the prayer:

To these sentient beings I shall reveal
This sutra called Sublime Golden Light,
Which rids one of every harmful misdeed
And expounds upon the profound.

Those who for a thousand eons
Committed deadly unwholesome deeds,
By confessing them earnestly once
Through this sutra, all will be purified.

So, in regards to another method, using this *Chapter on Confession* is a very powerful way to purify.

[Rinpoche reads.]

DEDICATION

[Chanting]

Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated within my own heart, all the family members, in the hearts of all of us here and in the hearts of all the students, benefactors of this organization and those who devote their lives to the organization, doing service for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, in all their hearts. And may it be generated in the hearts of all the sentient beings without delay of even a second.

[Chanting]

May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of myself, my own family members, all of us here and everyone in this world.

[Chanting]

And may bodhicitta be generated within my own heart, my own family members, all of us here and in the hearts of all the leaders of this world, of all the countries. May they all develop bodhicitta. Then, all the millions of people who are suppressed, may they have so much peace and happiness and may they be led to the correct path to happiness. May this world be filled with so much peace and happiness, with so much prosperity, external prosperity and inner prosperity.

Now, may bodhicitta be generated within my own heart, the hearts of everyone here and in the hearts of all the terrorists, in the hearts of the Maoists and those people who are harming others in this world. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts without delaying even a second. I dedicate the merits, all the three times' merits collected by me and by others.

[Chanting]

Due to the three times' merits collected by me, collected by others, may the father, mother sentient beings have happiness, and may the three lower realms be empty forever. May all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately. May I be able cause all these to happen by myself alone.

[Chanting]

That we have all these incredible opportunities to make our life meaningful, to be able to discover the lamrim and the opportunity to practice every day, to purify our own negative karma, whether it's by prostration or by reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas, to collect extensive merit and also to make our mind closer to the realization of the path to enlightenment, by meditating on lamrim every day, by reciting the prayers—all these are opportunities are so incredible we can't believe how we got these opportunities, but they are all by the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. So, pray for His Holiness to have a stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

Like that, and then for Lama Yeshe who is kinder than all the three times' buddhas, even though you haven't met him, however, establishing Kopan, this monastery here, and opening the teachings to you, the Western people. So, Lama Yeshe established this, and even though you haven't met him, you haven't received teachings directly from him, you are receiving his guidance, you are receiving the help and guidance from Lama Yeshe. So, therefore again in the same way, as I mentioned before, all these incredible opportunities we have received, we have these by the kindness of particularly Lama Yeshe, so therefore pray that Lama Ösel, his reincarnation, has a stable life and is able to complete his study in the monastery, to show the aspect of Lama Tsongkhapa, having all the qualities and also bringing skies of benefits to sentient beings.

[Chanting]

Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, myself, my own family members, all the students, benefactors of this organization, those who gave up their life for this organization, doing service for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, and all the rest of the sentient beings, may we be able to meet only the perfectly qualified Mahayana virtuous friend in all the lifetimes. That means not only in this life, but in all coming future lives.

And from the sentient beings' side, from my own side, to be able to see the virtuous friend only as an enlightened being, in this and all the future lifetimes.

And from each sentient being's side, from my own side, to be able to do only actions most pleasing to the holy mind of the virtuous friend, not only in this life but in all the future lifetimes.

And may each sentient being and myself be able to fulfill the wishes of the virtuous friend immediately, not only in this life but in all the future lifetimes.

This dedication prayer is the most important dedication to do at least once a day or a few times, at least at the end of one session, especially after a guru yoga practice. It is very important. All the success comes for your own self or other sentient beings, all wishes can succeed.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by me and the three times' merit collected by others, may I be able to offer skies of benefit to all sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, just like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa, from now on and in all my future lifetimes.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by me and collected by others, which are like a dream, may the I, who is like dream, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which also is like dream, and lead all sentient beings, who are also like a dream, to that enlightenment, which is also like dream, by myself alone, who is also like dream—which means all these things, nothing exists from its own side, all is empty.

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the buddhas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha as they realized it. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicate their merits.

May the general teachings of the Buddha and particularly the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa spread in all the directions and flourish forever in this world, by completely actualizing in my own heart and in the hearts of all the family members, all of us here and in the hearts of all the students and benefactors of this organization and those who devote their lives doing service for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, in all their hearts.

And please pray, everybody make this request, now is the most emergency time to get all the funding to start the project, the five-hundred-foot Maitreya statue, to get funding in this time of great emergency. So, everyone, please, everyone pray. Again I've said "Play!" Everyone pray that we are able to construct the statue as quickly as possible and complete it to abide in this world until Maitreya Buddha comes in this world, descends in this world, and to be the most beneficial for all sentient beings, to be able to open their hearts, the cause to rise faith in refuge and karma and the cause to generate loving kindness, the compassionate thought, bodhicitta, in the hearts of everyone, in every sentient being, especially in this world.

May it benefit everyone who see the statue or circumambulates it, besides the people who actually build it or donate to it, the companies, the coolies, all those who are actually building. People who are supporting, donating, the lifetime finances, besides those then anyone who sees the statue, circumambulates, make prostrations to the statue, and anyone who even sees a picture of the statue, anyone who hears of the Maitreya project, who dreams about it or talks about it, even who criticizes the project—that it is so big or wasting money—even who praises it—anyone at all—due to the existence of this statue may they never get reborn in the lower realms since that time, not create negative karma and may all their negative karmas get purified. May they collect extensive merit so that all of them plant the seed of enlightenment and through that their hearts become softer and opened until realization, loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta comes from within. In that way, may they live their life, and may everybody only create good karma, only benefiting each other, never giving harm. May there be much external

prosperity, perfect enjoyment, as well as the inner prosperity, the realizations of the path to enlightenment. May there be perfect peace and happiness in this world, and may the statue cause them to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. And may all the funding for this statue be received without delaying even a second.

[Chanting]

I talked for a long time. As I mentioned in the conclusion, I emphasized lamrim practice, how you can spend your life on that. Therefore, please continue even after the course. First of all, to be able to do a lamrim course, you are extremely fortunate, unbelievably fortunate. It's unbelievable, it's really a miracle, it's amazing that it happened and even after the course, please do retreat again on lamrim. That's unbelievable, that's extremely, most fortunate. So, what I want to say is that.

Thank you.

Lecture 14

EMPTINESS: CAUSATIVE PHENOMENA ARE IN THE NATURE OF SUBTLE IMPERMANENCE

The last prayer, the first stanza I mentioned yesterday, the next stanza, the very last one, "Look at causative phenomena, like stars", this expresses how they are in the nature of impermanence. A shooting star appears then disappears, like at dusk, when it is not completely dark, after sunset but not completely dark, when there is shimmering. As it appears it doesn't exist. So here, it shows that.

That example shows that we have some appearance but in reality there is no such thing there. There is a bush but at dusk we see a tiger or an animal or a person, something like that. It appears but it's not true. In reality if there is a piece of rope that is coiled like a snake, it appears to us as if there really is a snake there on the road. As it appears, but it's not there. Like that, causative phenomena, including our own I, our own life, the sense objects, our family, enemies, strangers, possessions, surrounding people, the five sense objects, all these causative phenomena don't exist as they appear.

Except it doesn't stop there; it doesn't finish there. Causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence; they don't last, they are indefinite, uncertain. Causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence, therefore there is nothing to cling to. That becomes the reason—there is nothing to cling to or nothing to get angry about. The reason is this, that these phenomena in our life are in the nature of impermanence. Not only that they get older and perish but they don't last, even from hour to hour, minute to minute, second to second, they don't last. They perish, they decay, even from second to second, minute to minute. Year by year, month by month, week by week, day by day, hour by hour, they also decay. That means they don't last. And why, because they change, they decay, they don't last even minute by minute. They do not last even minute by minute and that is because they don't last second by second. They don't last and they decay even second by second. And not only that, even within a second. Not only second to

second but even within a second, like the duration of this, [finger snap] like a finger snap. It's called one second of completing the action. So this [finger snap] this second is called the duration of this, the second of completing the action.

[Conversation in Tibetan]

This duration [finger snap] in Tibetan is called [Rinpoche gives the Tibetan], this second of completing the action, this one second of completing the action. So even within that second, these causative phenomena do not last, including our own life, our own body, all these sense objects; they do not last. They change even within a second, they decay even within a second.

What exists in the first second is gone by the next second. It's not there, it's gone. Today's you will not exist tomorrow. So what exists in the first second, during the first second, is gone by the next second.

By reflecting, meditating and analyzing on the nature of impermanence, it is helpful, it is helpful. That's the reality of what's happening. That does affect attachment, you know. This is the nature of phenomena, so to discover this is the nature, that it doesn't last, this is the reality of causative phenomena, it affects the delusion, attachment, seeing that it does not exist, that after the first second it has gone in the next second. It is surprising, there is no interest in being attached to this thing, by thinking this way. This is not thinking about emptiness; this is analysis of the conventional nature of how things perish and decay, how they change continuously. When we don't meditate and analyze how things are in the nature of impermanence, which is the reality, we have this hallucination and they appear as permanent and we believe them to be permanent. That is not what is happening. This is the view that we have, the hallucinated view, the view of permanence.

We have this hallucinatory view, this view of permanence, and we believe in that. We follow the hallucinated mind, this concept of permanence, this delusion and believe in that. But in the view of wisdom, discovering the nature of impermanence, it is totally something else. Even without the ultimate nature, emptiness, just seeing impermanence, just the nature of impermanence, that is our nature, that is something else.

This is how things are in the nature of suffering. It doesn't mean we don't feel any suffering. It doesn't mean that, but the nature of impermanence is that nothing lasts. That includes our own body, our own life, other people's bodies, this beautiful flower—they are all the same. The way we look at it, it looks like permanent; it doesn't appear impermanent. Maybe in the morning and afternoon, or day after day, maybe we see some difference, when there is some color change, when it's a very gross change like that. With the gross nature of the phenomenon, the very gross change, then we can see there is some change but while we are looking at it, in reality it's changing, decaying continuously. The first-second's flower is gone by the next second. Then, the next-second's flower is gone by the third second. So like that. When we hear or see it's gone, it's something kind of sad. It's something kind of sad, the nature. It doesn't last. It doesn't exist after the first second; it's gone by the next second. It's sad.

Even from this analysis, this meditation, even from this analysis, this discovery of the conventional nature, impermanence, you see there is nothing to cling on to. Within a minute, how many seconds in one minute? [Student replies] Sixty-four? Sixty-six? One way of looking at it, the flower. So, there are sixty-six, sixty-four—sorry? Huh? [Student explains] How many

seconds? There are not sixty-four seconds? So how many seconds in a minute? [Student explains] How many seconds within one minute? Sixty! So, it became less! [Laughter] Anyway, decaying second by second, changing, decaying—that is subtle impermanence. It's changing, decaying even in this second. That is the third type of impermanence, the very subtle nature of impermanence. There is gross, subtle and very subtle. So including the changing, decaying within each second.

With this awareness of the reality of phenomena, with this discovery, there is nothing to be attached to. Even in that sense, there is no such concrete thing there—here, concrete in the sense of permanence. Anything that appears permanent and not changing, is decaying continuously, but when we don't see that then it looks like it's worth being attached to.

All phenomena are like this, whatever we see, whatever we hear. Whatever beautiful object, what we believe as beautiful—a beautiful body or beautiful car and so forth, any beautiful object—even though it appears permanent and we believe that it is going to be always like this. When we look at the flower, we believe it's always going to be like that. It appears as permanent, then we think it's always going to be like that. When we don't use reasoning, analysis, it seems like it's always going to be like that. The car is always going to be like that or the person's body is always going to be beautiful like this. There is something concrete or something permanent in the appearance, in the situation. But in reality it's all changing, decaying, getting older, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second, within one second. It does not last, it does not exist by the next second.

What exists during the first minute doesn't exist during the next minute; it's gone. In the same way, what exists during the first hour is gone by the second hour. So, it's always changing, decaying.

This is the nature of suffering, that these phenomena, which are caused by karma and delusion, by depending on these objects then also delusion rises. That is the nature of suffering.

LIKE A CANDLE FLAME

The Tibetan *rab rib* means having a vision, a person having a hallucination, *like a hair falling down* on the food. What it is saying is that these causative phenomena don't exist as they appear to us. That's all. Usually they use this as an example. *Rab rib*.

One time, in Milan, Italy, while I was at the airport, I was standing there and I saw a person standing so still I thought it was a shop mannequin. Because there were so many mannequins around, all dressed so well, I thought it was a mannequin but it was a real person. On another occasion exactly the opposite happened. I saw what I thought was a real person, but when I went closer I saw it was a mannequin. [Laughter] Anyway, that's an example of *rab rib*, how causative phenomena don't exist as they appear to us.

Then, the next one shows how they are in nature of impermanence, like *a candle flame* flickering in the wind. Before it ends, a candle flickers, so it can be stopped any time, like flickering light, like a candle standing in the midst of the wind, that can stop any time. That is an example of how causative phenomena can perish or they can be ceased at any time.

Even very huge concrete buildings that we think are always going to be like this, completely permanent, suddenly collapse when an earthquake happens. Suddenly an earthquake happens, and it *totally* changes; the building collapses. Or a bomb, or a tornado—not tomato, tornado, not tomato, especially not an Italian tomato. [Laughter] Anyway, it's completely destroyed. It looked really permanent, like it was always going to be like this, but then suddenly it's gone. Even this earth, one day it's gone, this whole entire earth will be gone. Where there was this earth, there will be nothing there, just space. That is the nature of impermanence.

LIKE AN ILLUSION

Then, *like an illusion*, again that's another example of how causative phenomena don't exist as they appear to us. They are like an illusion. A magician person illusions us a beautiful house or beautiful man or woman or car or a billion dollars, beautiful parks. He illusions a beautiful park; he illusions a whole city. We have the appearance of all these things but they are not real; they don't exist. As they appear to us, they don't exist at all like that. All causative phenomena don't exist as they appear to us. I already mentioned that yesterday, so that should give you some idea.

Today, I wanted to go through this teaching of the Buddha and this verse that comes before the teachings all the time, to bring our mind, which is distracted by outside sense objects and pleasures, to bring it back, to look at the very nature of the phenomena, to look at the very nature of life. Our mind is always distracted, hallucinating, believing that it is real, permanent, appearing inherently existent, true. Now here, you see, we are looking at the very nature of the life.

The nature of causative phenomena is that it's impermanent and empty of existing from its own side, which we call real. Our definition of "real" is what appears and what we believe is real, the definition of that is "existing from its own side." If we put it into words, that describes what "real" means to us. Things appear *not* merely labeled by mind and we believe this is true. Whether we are able to express this in words or not, this is what is in our heart. If somebody tells us this isn't like that, it really upsets us. How dare you tell me this doesn't exist! I can *see* it exists!

When common people talk in daily life, when they use the expression "real," that is actually expressing the object to be refuted. They don't know they are saying this, that what the word "real" or some similar word contains is the object to be refuted, the hallucination, that which is believed, that thing that appears as not merely labeled by mind and that is true. That concept becomes the basis for the delusions. And the view of that ignorance, the hallucination which is the view of that ignorance—of a truly existent phenomenon—becomes the basis to be attached to, to be angry about, to be jealous of. That becomes the object of attachment; that becomes the object to be angry about, to be jealous of—but in reality there is no such thing.

First of all there is the view of ignorance and from that all the rest of the delusions build up. All the emotional thoughts build up on the basis of the view of the ignorance, which is only a hallucination. Whatever appears is believed, but it does not exist. It is believed by the ignorance, but it does not exist at all, not even one atom. Therefore, how can the object of attachment exist? How can the object of anger exist? That is a hallucination; the view of attachment is a double attachment, the view of anger is a double hallucination, the view of jealousy is a double hallucination—all built up on the basis of the view of the ignorance, which is a hallucination.

That's how we are living our life. That's how we are living our life—on top of one hallucination, there is another hallucination built up.

So this way, this is how sentient beings suffer. This is the way sentient beings circle in samsara continuously, including us, continuously circling in samsara. This is not the first time, our circling in samsara, experiencing all the sufferings; this continuation has no beginning. Our continual circling in samsara, experiencing all these sufferings, does not have a beginning; it's beginningless.

So that means, when we think of that, this is not the first time in this life and this is not the first life where we have experienced these hallucinatory sufferings, all these wrong beliefs, these wrong conceptions, these piled up hallucinations, like building a stupa or a wall, putting one brick on top of another. Our hallucinations pile up and we believe they are real. By the wrong concepts, the delusions, this is not the first time we have suffering like this. We are *totally trapped* in all these hallucinations, which are wrong concepts, delusions, totally consumed by all these piles of hallucinations, overwhelmed or possessed, under all these wrong concepts. And this is not the first time; this is not the beginning. The continuity of this suffering has no beginning; it is beginningless. When we think that this experience is beginningless, all these sufferings, all this hallucination is beginningless, all these delusion are beginningless, that really makes us to think that we *must* do something, we *must* do something right away. We can't wait; we can't bear it any longer. We must do something to be free from this prison. We're enveloped by all these wrong conceptions, all these hallucinations; we're gloomed by them.

When we think of beginningless time, that really makes us think we must do something—there is no choice, we must do something, whatever we can do in this life, we must do it right away, because we can lose this opportunity at any time. We can lose this opportunity to practice, this opportunity to realize the nature of phenomena, impermanence and death, and to realize emptiness. We *must* actualize the path that removes the gross and subtle defilements; we must actualize the path in this life. Even more, we must do it right away, right away; we can't wait, we cannot wait. We can't stand the suffering, which has been controlled by delusion from time without beginning—that one has been controlled.

Usually people make a big noise about not being controlled by somebody else, not being dictated to by somebody, but actually we have been controlled by delusion from time without beginning. From time without beginning, from beginningless rebirth, we have never had freedom. We have never had freedom from all these delusions and karma. We have never had freedom for even one second, freedom from delusions, freedom from this ignorance. We have never had one second's freedom, not possessed, not contaminated, not overwhelmed, controlled by delusion, by this ignorance.

So, actualizing this path, practicing this Dharma becomes the most important thing in our life to do, more important than anything else. This becomes a more important thing than anything else in our life.

If we don't do something now in this life, in this present life while we have the opportunity, we will have to suffer again, we will have to circle in this samsara and continuously suffer from this hallucination, trapped in the net of all these hallucinations, contaminated or possessed, controlled by delusions and wrong concepts and suffer continuously. That's why Buddha gave

this essential advice to meditate, to realize how phenomena are in the nature of impermanence and how they don't exist as they appear to us, giving these examples.

MORE ANALOGIES OF HOW THINGS APPEAR

Then, *like dew*. Causative phenomena are like dew that is on a plant but can drop at any moment. Like that, causative phenomena can cease at any time, can be stopped at any time. They are like water dew—including our own life; they can be stopped at any time. This precious human life can be stopped at any time, just as dew can drop from a flower at any time. At any moment it can drop.

Next is *like a dream*. Here, what it is saying is that things appear like in the dream. Things, phenomena, people and the other phenomena appear to us in a certain way and we believe they exist in that way, but they do not exist in that way at all. We dream something and in the dream we have attachment, we get angry and have all these emotional thoughts, like in the daytime, believing that they are real. Even things that we see in a dream appear to us, we are unable to recognize or realize as a hallucination, that they are not true, besides being unable to recognize the truly existent appearance as a hallucination, as false. Phenomena do not exist as they appear to us, which means truly existent, just as things in a dream appear to us and while we are dreaming we believe they exist.

Then next one, *like lightning*. This one shows the nature of impermanence, that causative phenomena do not last, that they are in the nature of change. In that, they are like lightning—it happens and it's gone. During the flash of lightning itself, we see phenomena—we see trees, houses and those things—and there is such a vivid appearance. There is vivid appearance, it happens and it's gone. It happens, it's gone. So like this, this life's friend, enemy, our entire possessions, property, buildings, houses, however much we have, our wealth, including friends, enemies, all the family members, including our own human body—all these sense objects appear and then stop. They appear, then they stop, they're gone. When we die, it's like this. It happens, it's gone. When death comes to us, this is what we get.

The concept of permanence makes us think we are going to live for a long time, but when death comes we see that this whole appearance of life is as brief as a flash of lightning. It's exactly like lightning—it appears, it's gone. It happens, it's gone. Our own life is like a dream. This shows the nature of impermanence.

Then, *like clouds*. That shows how causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence, like clouds. While we are looking at clouds in the sky, they are always changing. They change; they do not last. We see a cloud there, and the next minute it's not there; it's disappeared. While we are looking at it, it's changing. Causative phenomena, like clouds, do not last; they are forever changing, decaying. This shows how causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence.

The conclusion is this. Our hallucinated appearance is that they are permanent while they are impermanent, and while they are empty of existing from their own side, they have the appearance of existing from their own side and we believe in that. We believe the common appearance, believing the permanent appearance as permanent. Causative phenomena appear to be permanent and we believe that is true. Causative phenomena appear to be truly existent and we believe that is true. Our ignorance believing that these causative phenomena are permanent and truly existent becomes the cause of samsara. It becomes the cause of samsara, the cause of

the oceans of each realm's suffering—the oceans of hell realm's suffering, the oceans of the hungry ghost realm's suffering, the oceans of suffering of the realms of the animal, the human being, the sura, the asura. It becomes the cause of the oceans of each of those realm's suffering, as well as the bases for all other delusions, all the rest of the delusions and then karma.

If we live our life with these wrong concepts, this ignorance—while things are empty of existing from their own side, we believe that they exist from their own side, and while they are impermanent in nature, we believe that they are permanent—what does this wrong concept do to us? The harm it does us is like the limitless sky. It does inconceivable harm, incredible suffering.

Therefore, what we need to do is practice the opposite. We need to see that it is a wrong concept to believe that what is impermanent is permanent, that what is empty of true existence is truly existent. We need the opposite of wrong view, of ignorance; we need right view, the wisdom realizing emptiness. We need correct thought, the awareness that life and the causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence. These right thoughts, the thought of impermanence and the wisdom realizing emptiness, free us from attachment, anger, ignorance and all those other delusions, and stop us creating negative karma. They protect us from all the oceans of samsaric sufferings. They help us to not create, to not experience the oceans of samsaric suffering again and again, again and again, without end.

By meditating, practicing mindfulness, realizing how the nature of phenomena is impermanence, and practicing mindfulness that causative phenomena's nature is empty, thus what appears as existing from its own side, we recognize that is a hallucination as it is a hallucination. We need to practice mindfulness of that—that causative phenomena exist being merely labeled by mind. We need to practice mindfulness of subtle dependent arising. It's the realization of this that especially cuts ignorance, the root of samsara. And not only that, it ceases all the delusions, including the seed of delusion, and then we are able to achieve the nature of the mind which is free from all disturbing thoughts, from all obscurations. That is nirvana, the sorrowless state, the ultimate happiness.

With the support of bodhicitta, great compassion toward sentient beings, bodhicitta, we enter the Mahayana path. Wisdom is supported by method—we develop method, we practice method supported by wisdom—then we are able to cease even the subtle defilements and achieve the two kayas, rupakaya and dharmakaya, a buddha's holy body and mind.

So, I'll stop there.

Lecture 15

MOTIVATION

Please listen to the Buddha's teaching. We'll do some prayer, the *Heart Sutra*, some reading and the lamrim prayer, these two, to leave some imprints, by reading those precious teachings of the Buddha. So maybe we'll do the *lung*.

Think like this:

“This time I have received a perfect human body, which is extremely rare to find. I have found the Dharma, which is extremely rare to meet, and not only the Buddhadharma to achieve the happiness of future lives, not only the Buddhadharma where I can achieve liberation from myself, not only that. I have met the Dharma, the Mahayana teachings, which reveal the whole path to enlightenment, how to achieve enlightenment, especially the lamrim, integration of the entire teaching of the Buddha, the whole path to enlightenment, set up in a graduated way for one person to achieve enlightenment. And then at this time I have met a virtuous friend who reveals the path, a sublime leader who reveals the path, not only so I can achieve the happiness of this life, not only achieve liberation from samsara, but I can achieve enlightenment in order to be able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment.

“So, while I have all these opportunities, before death comes, I must make sure that I achieve a good rebirth in the next life, all the happiness of all the coming future lives. I must make sure of that. Not only that, I must make sure I free myself from samsara, to be totally free from the oceans of samsaric sufferings. I must make sure this happens. Achieving this liberation from samsara only for myself is not sufficient. All suffering comes from the self-cherishing thought, by cherishing the I. All the sufferings come from the I. All problems come from the I. Therefore, I must let go of the I. And all happiness, all the collections of goodness and all the realizations to achieve enlightenment come from bodhicitta. Everything comes from bodhicitta, from cherishing others. That means that everything comes from others. All my own past, present and future happiness, everything comes from others, from every single sentient being and their existence.

“Therefore, the numberless sentient beings are most precious, most kind, most precious, the most kind ones in my life. What they want is happiness; what they do not want is suffering. Therefore I have full responsibility to free them from all the sufferings and for them to have all the happiness, especially peerless happiness, enlightenment. To do that, to cause this, then first I myself must achieve full enlightenment. For that I need to actualize this graduated path to enlightenment, by following guru devotion, which is the root of the path to enlightenment. For that, I need to purify. To actualize the whole path to enlightenment, I need to collect merit, which are the necessary conditions, and to purify the defilements, which are the obstacles.

“Therefore I am going to listen to the oral transmission of the *Golden Light Sutra*, which plants seeds of enlightenment, which by hearing each word purifies all the negative karma and collects inconceivable skies of merit.”

HOW TO LISTEN TO DHARMA

Whenever we listen to teachings, it's good to think like that. This is not saying that I am the Buddha, it's not saying that, but I explain the meditation. So, it is good to think that. Normally, when we receive teachings from the guru, from the virtuous friend, from our own side we should think, meditate, that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is giving us the teaching or Maitreya Buddha is giving us the teaching, or Manjushri is giving us the teaching, or Tara is giving us the teaching. Meditating this way, we think there are numberless buddhas, all the buddhas are giving us the teaching. This way, we feel connection with all the buddhas. All the buddhas are doing something for us, guiding us, working for us, benefiting us, bringing us from samsara to liberation, bringing us to enlightenment.

And then we should think, “Each word that I listen to, what it does to me is, it stops the oceans of samsaric suffering. It stops me from continuously experiencing the oceans of samsaric suffering. Each Dharma word that I listen to, what it does to me, it stops my continuously experiencing oceans of samsaric suffering.”

Then we see how precious each word is, how precious it is. The effect is unconceivable, so important, most important, unconceivable. The benefit we get from each word is like limitless sky. Each word we listen to is the most precious thing; it is wish-fulfilling, the most precious thing, the most important thing, so we cannot miss it.

And then we should think, “Each word that I listen to, may all the meaning, which is the path, be actualized immediately within my mental continuum and each word that I listen to, may it be beneficial for all sentient beings. Each word that I listen to, may it become beneficial for all the sentient beings.” If we can think like this normally when we listen to teachings from the guru, from the virtuous friend, if we are able to do guru yoga meditation like this, and also dedicate the words in order to be able to actualize the meaning of the path immediately in our own mental continuum. Each word that we listen to is to be able to become most beneficial for all sentient beings, to cause the numberless sentient beings to achieve enlightenment quickly. And we should also think, “Whenever I reveal these words to others, may it cause them to actualize the path within their heart immediately.”

After the motivation, if we can make our motivation bodhicitta, if we can dedicate like this, each word will be most beneficial to all sentient beings.

As it is mentioned in the sutra, all the dharmas, like conditions, are up to the intention. So you see, it’s up to the intention, it’s up to karma. So if we generate the wish, if we dedicate like this, it creates that karma so that it can happen, and each word can affect that; it can cause us to help actualize the path in the hearts of all sentient beings.

[Chanting]

GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

[Student: Page 74.]

Mainly, I would like to have the text in rainbow color. This was a photocopy made in New York by a student whose house I was staying in when she became a nun. She did this and a hundred thousand names of the buddhas, which is highly admired by Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. If somebody dies, then reciting the hundred thousand names of the buddhas is much more beneficial than reading the *Book of the Dead, Bardo Thodol*. Because among these names of the buddhas, if we recite them once it purifies one hundred thousand eons of negative karma. We collect inconceivable merits, so many benefits by reciting these buddhas’ names. These buddhas’ names purify different negative karma and also for different success. It is highly recommended that if somebody passes, if you want benefit them, then reciting the one hundred thousand names of the buddhas is much more beneficial than reading the *Book of the Dead*, how do you say it? *Book of the Dead*?

[Student: *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.]

Huh? It's not an American book? It's not the California Book of the Dead? Anyway, I am joking.

This was what the great enlightened Pabongka recommended. Before it was very rare, it wasn't available. Then I think Ribur Rinpoche received three copies from Lhasa, so I got one, Rinpoche gave me one. But now it seems to be available at Dharamsala, the Tibetan Dharamsala publishing houses have a list of so many texts in Tibetan, a list of Tibetan books.

As I mentioned before, if you dedicate like that, each word has an effect, each word is beneficial for you and all sentient beings.

[Oral transmission]

First, by reciting this dedication chapter, one abandons ... [Inaudible]

[Oral transmission]

There is no dot; it's not clear. The text is not clear. The mind is not clear!

[Oral transmission]

Anybody who hears the drum sound of the *Golden Light Sutra*, anybody who hears this, admiring the qualities of the Buddha and anybody who hears the words, confessing negative karma—all those sentient beings, anybody who hears these words will collect extensive merit and will benefit so many other sentient beings. And then all the negative karma get purified, you should realize. This is what the Buddha said. So that means having heard this chapter, the drum sound of the *Golden Light Sutra*, which expresses the qualities of the Buddha, and the confession of negative karma, you have collected extensive merit and you are able to benefit so many sentient beings. By that, you can make so many sentient beings satisfied, happy, and purify all the defilements.

[Oral transmission]

The Buddha said the reason you have such special conduct is because in the past you have praised the Buddha, and also you did extensive prayers in the past. It is the blessings of the Buddha. That's why you are able to hear these teachings.

[Oral transmission]

Then all the surroundings, the human beings and other nonhuman beings who are in the area, who gathered when the Buddha was giving teachings, they all praised Buddha's teachings.

[Oral transmission]

The *Golden Light Sutra*, the king of the sutras, brings incredible benefit because of what it has, what it does. This king of the sutras, the *Golden Light Sutra*, this one has twenty-nine chapters, this is the medium version *Golden Light Sutra*. From the twenty-nine chapters, this is the fourth chapter; it's called the chapter of confessing the dream. So I'll stop here. It is finished up to fourth chapter, and I am beginning the fifth chapter.

DEDICATION

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, and all the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all of us here, in all the family members, all the students, the benefactors of this organization, and those who devote their lives to doing service for sentient beings, the teachings of Buddha, then also may bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all the rest of the sentient beings.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated in my own heart, my own family members and all of us here, in the hearts of all the family members and in the hearts of all the sentient beings who are in this world.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated in my own heart, family members, all of us here and in the hearts of all the leaders of this world and all those groups that harm sentient beings, so many people, the terrorists and the Maoists or whatever, all the different groups harming so many sentient beings. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts without delaying even a second.

[Chanting]

Due to the past, present and future merits, the three times' merit collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may all the father, mother sentient beings have happiness, may the three lower realms be empty forever, may all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately. May I be able to cause all these to happen by myself alone.

[Chanting]

This incredible opportunity to do lamrim retreat and also to collect so much merit and purify so many defilements, to plant the seed of liberation and enlightenment, so much each day, to make us closer to enlightenment and to be able to purify unconceivable negative karma and defilements, and collect unconceivable merit by giving this *Golden Light Sutra* oral transmission and by listening to the *Golden Light Sutra*, all this is by the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

[Chanting]

Do the same dedication for Lama, who is kinder than all the three times' buddhas. For Lama Ösel to be able to complete his studies in Sera Monastery and to offer limitless skies of benefits to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha like Lama Tsongkhapa, by showing the same qualities.

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may every sentient being who sees me, touches me, remembers me, thinks about me, talks about me, who harms or helps me, whatever connection they make with me, just by this, may it affect them so they never ever get reborn in the lower realms from that time.

May it cause them to find faith in refuge and karma and generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta in all their hearts, instantly, immediately.

Even if they just mention my name or see my photo, the minute they mention my name may it be able to affect them like this. May it immediately free them from all the sicknesses, heal all sicknesses and free them from spirit possession and harm. May their negative karma and defilements be purified and may all their wishes for happiness immediately get fulfilled, just by their seeing me, touching me, talking to me, remembering me, talking about me and so forth. Even if they dream of me or just mention my name, may it have all these effects on them. May it immediately fulfill their wishes for happiness, so in that way I become wish-fulfilling; even my name becomes wish-fulfilling for all sentient beings and causes them to actualize the whole path to enlightenment. May they achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the three times' merits collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to all sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on and in all my future lives, in every second, to be able to be like that, to offer skies of benefits to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, that which appear as real from out there, but which is totally empty, nonexistent, may the I, which appears a real one but which is totally nonexistent, empty—that one, that I is totally nonexistent, empty—achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which appears a real one from out there, but in reality is totally nonexistent, empty. May I achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment that appears to me in that way, but which is totally empty, totally nonexistent. And may I lead all sentient beings, who appear as real ones from out there—not the sentient beings who are merely imputed, this is not them, but the sentient beings who appear to me that way, not appearing as merely labeled, but appearing *not* merely labeled, as real ones from there, but who are totally nonexistent in reality, totally empty—may I lead them to that enlightenment, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, again, which is merely labeled but appears not merely labeled, appears a real one from there, but which is totally empty, nonexistent, by myself, which again, when you think that, again not appearing merely labeled but appearing not merely labeled, appearing as a real one from there, which is a total hallucination, it is totally nonexistent, empty.

Due to these merits, may I be able to follow the holy extensive deeds, just as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicated their merit.

May the general teachings of the Buddha and particularly the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa spread in all directions, may it flourish forever. May it spread in this world, and may it flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing it within myself, in my own heart, and in all of us here, in the hearts of all the students, benefactors of this organization and then particularly those

who give up their life to this organization, doing service to sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha. May it be actualized in all of our hearts.

[Chanting]

Lecture 16

MOTIVATION: EXTENDED SEVEN-LIMB PRAYER

[Chanting]

We are going to do practice of the seven-limb prayer like before. Visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, either all the merit field into one aspect, called all-encompassing jewel tradition, or visualize the elaborate merit field, like the refuge merit field.

So we collect merit and practice. We begin with *sang gyä chö dang*, with refuge and bodhicitta, with that prayer.

[Chanting]

“How wonderful it is if all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free from discriminating thought, anger, attachment, discriminating some sentient beings as far, some as closer. May they abide in equanimity. I’ll cause them to abide in equanimity. Please Buddha grant me blessing to be able to do this.”

“How wonderful it is if all sentient beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.” In your whole heart, think of enlightenment, of peerless happiness—not just ordinary happiness—think of peerless happiness, of full enlightenment. The happiness you wish for others is not just temporary pleasure, not only samsaric pleasure, it is ultimate happiness, even full enlightenment.

Wish the numberless hell beings to have that happiness, as well as the numberless hungry ghosts to have that happiness, the numberless animals to have that happiness; the numberless human beings to have that happiness, the numberless sura beings to have that happiness, the numberless asura beings to have that happiness, the numberless intermediate state beings to have that happiness. Wish like this. “May they have happiness. I will cause them to have happiness.” Think of all the hell beings, think of all the hungry ghosts, all the animals, think of all the human beings, think they all receive this. Think of all the suras, asuras, all the intermediate stage beings, taking responsibility upon yourself.

“Please Guru-Buddha grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

“How wonderful it is if all sentient beings are free from all the suffering and the causes of the sufferings.”

Think of all the hell beings, free them from all the suffering and its causes. Think of all the hungry ghosts, free them from all the sufferings and causes. Think of all the animals, free them from all the suffering and causes. Think of all the numberless human beings, free them from all

the sufferings and causes. Think of all the suras, free them from all the sufferings and causes. Think of all the asuras, free them from all the sufferings and causes. And think of all the intermediate stage beings, free them from all the sufferings and causes.

“May they be free from all the sufferings. I will cause them to be free from all the sufferings. Please Guru-Buddha grant me blessings that I will be able to do this.

“How wonderful it is if all the sentient beings are not separated from the happiness of the upper realms, deva and human being, and ultimate happiness. May they not be separated away from this happiness. I will cause them to not be separated from this happiness.”

Again, think of all the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, and cause them to not be separated from all the temporary and ultimate happiness. And then all the human beings, suras, asuras and intermediate stage beings, and cause them to not be separated from the happiness of upper realms and ultimate happiness.

“May they not be separated away from this happiness. I will cause them to not be separated from this happiness. Please Guru-Buddha grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

[Chanting]

All the offerings here and all the offerings in all the FPMT centers, the extensive offerings in the FPMT centers' gompas, which are in the nature of infinite bliss. All the extensive offerings at Aptos House in the United States, all those extensive offerings, all the flowers outside and inside, all the water offerings, all those thousands and millions of light offerings, tea offerings, food offerings and all the water offerings, light offerings in Washington. As well as at Lillian Too's house upstairs, all the extensive offerings, also Derek's house in Singapore, all the extensive offerings, the offerings here at Kopan gumpa, upstairs, all the extensive offerings, are all in the nature of infinite bliss. Think like this and offer.

And then you can also think of the whole sky filled with the various offerings, mentally transformed offerings, with scented smell, the blissful smell of incense, the blissful nature of various beautiful flowers. The whole sky is filled with the lights, with light offerings, like when you look at a whole city from an airplane before landing and see all the lights, the whole ground covered by the lights.

And then the offering goddesses, making music offerings, food offerings and nectar drink. They are offering nectar, cleaning the feet with water and making the offerings. Then you can think, other than that, of offerings that are owned and all the beautiful offerings in this world that don't have an owner.

You can make all these extensive offerings here, those that are in all the FPMT centers' gompas and Aptos house, also in Washington, all the offerings they perform there in the Washington house, at Kopan upstairs, all the offerings there, that which have been performed. And all the extensive offerings in Derek's house in Singapore, upstairs, all the extensive offerings upstairs in his house. Offer to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, as well as to all the gurus, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, all the statues, stupas, scriptures, all those holy objects.

Offer toward all the ten directions' buddhas, the Dharma and Sangha, by meditating on how their essence is the root guru, your own virtuous friend, from your own side.

Now offer toward all the ten directions' statues, stupas, scriptures and prayer wheels, and the Buddha's relics, the various forms of other holy objects, by meditating that all their essence is the root virtuous friend, from your own side, and make all these offerings.

The next one, offer to all the ten directions' statues, stupas, scriptures, the various forms of holy objects, to the seven Medicine Buddhas for success, and bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, so you can instantly fulfill the wishes of all the sentient beings' happiness, and to the Thousand-arm Compassion Buddha so that you can generate great compassion, to be able to take full responsibility to free all sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings, like Chenrezig.

All the offerings here, upstairs, above the gumpa, in those rooms, as well as all the extensive offerings in the FPMT centers' gompas and at Aptos House, Washington, and in all those other places. Generate great bliss with all of them, the seven Medicine Buddhas, the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, the Thousand-arm Chenrezig, by meditating they are the essence of your own virtuous friend, from your own side.

Now, make offering of all these offerings toward all the holy objects in India, and to the gurus in India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and any other gurus there. Also make offerings together, by visualizing all the holy objects in India and meditating that their essence is your own virtuous friend, from your own side. Thinking of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, make offerings.

Now, offer all the things here and then all the offerings in the rooms here above the gumpa, and those which are in the FPMT centers' gompas and at Aptos House, Washington and all those in other houses, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, offer them toward all the holy objects in Tibet, by meditating that their essence is your own virtuous friend, from your own side.

Make offerings toward Guru Shakyamuni Buddha statue in Lhasa, which is blessed by the Buddha himself, the most precious holy object in the world.

And make offering, all the offerings here, above the gumpa in those rooms, and then all the extensive offerings in FPMT centers' gompas, at Aptos House, Washington and those other places, which are in the nature of instant bliss—offer every single holy object which is in Nepal, including the most precious ones in Kathmandu, Swayambhunath stupa and Boudhanath stupa, which are all-encompassing, wish-fulfilling. Anybody who does a prostration or makes an offering or a circumambulation, all their wishes get fulfilled. Anybody who makes prayer to those, all their prayers succeed. So, offer to the Boudhanath stupa and all the rest of the holy objects in Nepal, by meditating that their essence is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the virtuous friend.

Now, make offerings toward all the holy objects which are in this world, altogether, all the holy objects which are in this world—all the offerings here, those above the gumpa, all the offerings in FPMT gompas, in Aptos House, Washington and those other places.

Normally it's done with prostrations, putting your palms together, prostrating toward all of them, and all the offerings, so that was left out.

So, put your palms together and prostrate to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, that is all the buddhas, the Dharma and Sangha. And now prostrate toward all the ten directions' holy objects. Now prostrate to all the ten directions' Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, that which are the virtuous friends, from your own side. Now prostrate to all the ten directions' statues, stupas, scriptures and all those holy objects, the relics and prayer wheels, and any kind of holy objects. While meditating that their essence is your own virtuous friend, from your own side, prostrate toward all of them.

Now prostrate toward all the ten directions' seven Medicine Buddhas, prostrate toward the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha and the Thousand-arm Chenrezig. Now prostrate with two palms together toward all the holy objects in India, meditating that their essence is your own virtuous friend.

Put two palms together toward all the holy objects which are in Tibet, meditating that they are in essence your own virtuous friend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Put two palms together toward all the holy objects in Nepal, meditating that their essence is your own virtuous friend, from your own side.

And now prostrate toward all the holy objects in this entire world.

[Chanting]

The merits I have collected numberless of times from beginningless rebirths up to now, which I have collected in the present time and which I will collect in the future are so precious. They are precious. How happy I am. How wonderful it is. All the sentient beings, including bodhisattvas and buddhas, collected merits numberless times, from time without beginning, from beginningless rebirth until now, and now and in the future as well, all that is so precious. Their wishes and all the happiness they wish for get fulfilled from all these merits. How wonderful it is!

May I be able to collect so much merit; may I be able to collect so much merit for the benefit of all the sentient beings.

[Chanting]

So this time we are going to do the very important prayer that we need to practice in daily life for success of our Dharma practice, requesting to complete the three great purposes. By doing this, by doing this practice, a long mandala, then at the end doing requesting prayer for completing the three great purposes, this way there are no obstacles to our Dharma practice. There are no obstacles, delusions, our own mind blocking the Dharma practice, not allowing us to practice or delaying the practice, our own obstacles and as well as sicknesses, not allowing us to do the practice, being unable to do practice, whether it is due to pain or sickness. Our mind cannot concentrate or cannot do the listening, reflecting and meditation practice. To pacify these inner obstacles and outer obstacles, being under the control of people, being under the control of other people's power so we are unable to practice Dharma, we are not allowed to practice Dharma as we wish. To pacify these outer obstacles, to be able to do the listening, reflecting and meditating practice, to continually practice to actualize the path, to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings.

So, please make this request to the guru, the three aspects, the three precious sublime ones, the three rare ones, the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the three types.

I prostrate to the precious guru, then to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. I prostrate and go for refuge. Please grant me blessings. Please bless my mental continuum.

I am requesting to immediately purify all the wrong concepts from the thought of mistakes, ordinary thoughts, this aspect, disrespect or non-devotional thoughts toward the guru, from there up to the subtle dual view, may all these wrong concepts be immediately pacified.

I am requesting to immediately grant all the right realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment in my mental continuum. Please pacify all the outer and inner obstacles immediately.

To the guru and the three types, the three aspects, the precious sublime ones, I prostrate and go for refuge. Please bless my mental continuum.

Please pacify immediately the non-devotional thoughts toward the guru, from there up to the subtle dual view of the white appearance, increasing appearance and near-attainment, the dark appearance.

Please grant blessings to generate realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment, the unified state of no more learning, to generate this immediately.

Please grant blessings to immediately pacify all the outer and inner obstacles.

To the guru and three aspects, the precious sublime ones, I prostrate and go for refuge. Bless my mental continuum.

Please grant blessings to immediately pacify all the wrong concepts, the non-devotional thoughts toward the guru, from there to the subtle dual view of the white appearance and the increasing appearance and near-attainment, dark appearance.

Please grant me blessings immediately to generate right realization from guru devotion up to the unified state of no more learning, full enlightenment.

[Chanting]

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL GOOD QUALITIES

Make a request to the lineage lamas, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the rest of the lineage lamas down to the root guru.

[Chanting]

Is there the *Foundation of All Good Qualities* in English?

To plant the seed of the whole path to enlightenment, just by reading it through mindfully, this becomes a direct meditation of the whole path to enlightenment.

[Recitation in English of the *Foundation of All Good Qualities* and chanting of preliminary prayers in Tibetan]

So these are the preliminary prayers before the oral transmission. The requesting prayer to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who is author of these teachings, then the lineage lamas. Then if there is time also do direct meditation on the whole path, lamrim. Reciting this mantra TAYATHA OM DHARE DHARE BHENDHARE SVAHA multiplies the merit many millions of times, the benefits increase, so even if it is recited only one time it is as if each page is recited many millions of times. So it has that power to multiply the merits.

I stopped after the fourth chapter, right? I was looking at the bottom of the text, one of the texts where it finishes. Maybe I will do the oral transmission backwards, since it seems difficult to finish.

[Chanting]

You may have generated the motivation already but just to remind you in case you did not generate the motivation of bodhicitta.

“The purpose of my life is to free the numberless sentient beings—the numberless hell beings from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, and to free the numberless hungry ghosts from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, to free the numberless animals from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, to free the numberless human beings from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, to free the numberless suras and asuras from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, and to free the numberless intermediate state beings from all the suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, I must achieve full enlightenment. So therefore then I am going to take the oral transmission of the king of sutras, the *Golden Light Sutra*, and by hearing each word, it purifies all the negative karma and collects inconceivable merit and brings peace and happiness in the world, in the country, in the area.”

[Oral transmission]

Page 365.

EXTENSIVE DEDICATION

I think before I was reading the Tibetan number, and I'm not sure whether I mentioned the Western number. The Tibetan number is 183.

In the evening are you doing Vajrasattva or not? Starting from last night?

[Chanting]

[Student: Page 103.]

You read in English. I'll recite in Tibetan.

So we are doing extensive dedication. Among the dedication prayers, this extensive dedication is the *King of Prayers*, the sublime prayer, the way of dedicating merits. All the extensive bodhisattvas' prayers of the ten times, the hundred thousand prayers of the bodhisattvas are included in this; they are contained in this *King of Prayers*, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra's prayer, or the prayer of the holy deeds.

[Rinpoche chants and congregation reads the text]

[Chanting]

Even though the extensive dedication is done, we still precisely dedicate again to generate bodhicitta. The first time we generated bodhicitta in our own heart, all of us here, in the hearts of all students, benefactors of this organization, those who give up their life for this organization, doing service to sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, then in the hearts of all sentient beings.

[Chanting]

At the same time, may the bodhicitta be generated in my own heart, my own family members, all of us here, in the hearts of everyone in the world, without delay of even a second.

[Chanting]

Then, for the third time, may bodhicitta be actualized in my own heart, my family members, all of us here, as well in the hearts of all the leaders of this world and all the terrorists or Maoists, the groups who harm others, who are involved in violence, who do a lot of harm to sentient beings. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts without delay of even a second. And may this world be filled with great peace and happiness and not experience wars, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness, dangers of fire, water, earthquakes, all these undesirable things; may nobody experience them forever.

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, which are merely labeled by mind, may the I, who is also merely labeled by mind, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also merely labeled by mind, to that enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, by myself alone, who is also merely labeled by mind.

This is the most urgent time. Just as we were about to have success in receiving funds for the Maitreya Project—it was just about to happen—but an obstacle happened, so it is most urgent right now. So, please everyone dedicate all the merits, all the three times' merits collected by ourselves and by others. May the future Maitreya Buddha statue be completed as quickly as possible and abide in this world until Maitreya Buddha descends in this world. And may it succeed in its special functions, to open the hearts of everyone in this world and cause them to generate faith in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and karma, to generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta in the hearts of everyone in this world. May the statue cause all beings to purify all the defilements and negative karma, all the heavy negative karma, and then collect so much merit. The statue has that benefit but may all sentient beings from their side get

the opportunity to see the statue, to circumambulate it, prostrate to it and make offerings. It's not that it doesn't have that benefit, it doesn't have the power. The statue itself has all these powers but, from the sentient beings' side, they must take the opportunity to see the statue and circumambulate it, prostrate to it and make offering.

In this way, all their negative karma gets purified, they collect extensive merit and in this way it softens their hearts, and there is the possibility to change their minds. Only in this way, from within their heart comes loving kindness, compassion, bodhicitta. Only then comes the good heart. Through purification, collecting the causes and collecting merit, this is how the statue benefits, bringing realization in sentient beings' hearts. And that's how it helps the teachings, by actualizing the teachings in the heart. It helps beings to understand the teachings, by collecting merit and being able to understand the words and meaning, and to be able to have faith, understanding and faith, and to have realization. In this way, it liberates sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings, it enables them to cease the delusions and karma and also then they are able to achieve enlightenment by ceasing the subtle defilements. They are able to complete the path of method and wisdom, the two types of merit. So, the statue's special function is to enable sentient beings to open their hearts and to generate loving kindness, compassion, bodhicitta, in the hearts of all sentient beings.

May all the funding be received without the delay of even a second, without any obstacles, and may all the obstacles that are happening be pacified immediately.

[Chanting]

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me and by others, due to the blessings of innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas, and unbetrayable dependent arising, and due to my pure attitude, may all my pure prayers succeed immediately.

If we can recite these buddhas' names and mantra, whatever merit we collect increases a hundred thousand times. It makes it very profitable. More merit means we are closer to achieving liberation from samsara. It is easier to achieve realizations of the path of liberation and enlightenment. So, we are closer to liberation, closer to achieving enlightenment, and closer to enlightening all sentient beings, to freeing them from all the suffering of samsara and bringing them to enlightenment. We are closer to that.

[Chanting]

This last name has some benefit, so any merit we collected from whatever prayers we have done is increased a hundred thousand times by reciting this buddha's name—it makes us actualize whatever prayer we did. That is very important. And then the other one is the Medicine Buddha's name and mantra. Whatever prayer we have done, to actualize for success, the other one [to increase merit and actualize success] is Medicine Buddha, reciting Medicine Buddha's name and mantra.

[Chanting]

So, good night or good morning.

Lecture 17

HOW TO PRACTICE DAILY PRAYERS

[Chanting]

Doing the prayers, it is not an utmost need to read in Tibetan, so you can read them in English. It is totally up to you whichever language you want to use to recite the prayers—the language that you know or the language you don't know.

[Chanting]

Do not commit any unwholesome actions.

Engage in perfect, wholesome actions.

Subdue your own mind.

This is the teaching of the Buddha.

—Verse 183, *Dhammapada*

Then, read the next stanza, do the meditation on the next stanza. Causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence, including your own life. And they don't exist as they appear to your own mind, which is hallucinated.

Therefore, giving those words exactly, don't allow your mind to apprehend, to hold onto appearance as being true, the appearance which is a hallucination, holding onto that as being true, the opposite of false. Apprehending that it's true, not a hallucination, it's reality. That's how we create delusion, that's how we create delusions all the time, how we create the king of delusions, ignorance, the root of samsara, all the time. That's how we produce hallucinations all the time, mistaken thoughts, the hallucinatory mind and that motivates karma all the time. That makes the endless suffering of samsara.

[Chanting]

THE IMPERMANENCE OF THE BODY

Along with this, reflect that we cherish this body so much, that we take such care of it, from kindergarten, and primary school, then high school, college or university, obtaining all that education up to a degree then finding a job and earning money. So many years of effort and education in order to make money, to get a degree and to find a job, to obtain money.

In order to take care of this body, for survival, we spend so much on this body, in order to have shelter, money for that, buying a house, renting, all these things for this body and then all the money that we spend, after all those years of education and many years of working, saving money, spending on food, for the comfort of this body, for survival and the comfort of this body. There is so much expense—food and drinks—we have so many expenses, we spend so much money for the comfort of this body. We buy clothes for this body to wear, for protection, for comfort. And then there are other things like getting sick. We spend so much money, even just having checkups, before we even get sick, making sure that we are not sick, making sure there is no sickness at all, hoping there is no sickness at all. To check, to make sure to not get

disease, to check whether there is sickness or not. And if there is sickness then again we spend so much money for this body, then we have operations.

We cherish this body so much, but at any day it can be in the fire. There is a verse in the meditation on impermanence and death. The Buddha is teaching us, showing us how causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence and phenomena do not exist as they appear to us, to our mind which is hallucinated—not hallucinated forever but temporarily. Of course, if we practice Dharma, if we actualize the path, we can remove the hallucination, including the seed that is the imprint, which projects the hallucination. As I mentioned before, we spend so much, an unbelievable amount, huge expenses, to buy shelter—renting, buying, working for many years to pay back the money, many years of work to pay back the house, shelter, all these clothes, having to clothe every piece of the body, except the nose. I don't think you need to cover the nose. Anyway, I am joking. And food and like that.

We cherish this body so much, twenty-four hours a day, buying so many other things besides shelter and clothes, so many other things, even just for the hair there are so many things. The hair is very expensive. [Laughter] To take care of the hair, all the different styles and different colors. Even just for the hair we spend much money. Besides that there are the shoes. There are all the different seasons' shoes, shoes for outside, shoes for inside, shoes to wear to parties. To parties or for dancing.

In reality this body is destined for the fire. Maybe the text relates to the place where the body is burnt on firewood or by electricity. Immediately it's just dust, it's only ashes, there are only ashes left. Ashes or hashish. [Laughter] Maybe some people's bodies become hashish. I am joking, I am joking. Maybe those who have taken a lot of hashish after two minutes become hashish. [Laughter] Anyway, I am joking. That can happen at any time. We put all this effort into our body but in reality, as the Buddha says in these verses, this body can any day be ashes. What do you call that one? You press the button and then ... huh?

[Student explains]

Rinpoche: What?

[Student explains]

Rinpoche: Cremation, this one minute or immediately it becomes ashes, right? Anyway, whatever it is. That or firewood. So, this is how it can be. Any day this body can be put on the firewood. That can happen at any time, any day. Any day it can happen. And then, nobody can see us. We can't see our friends, those who already passed away, our family members who have passed away. There are only the pictures left, photos or their names in a letter or in books. We see some dresses, clothes, skirts, worn by others, that belonged to others, and we say, "This belongs to so-and-so."

Any day, any day, that can happen to us, to ourselves, like it has been happening to others. We must have already experienced others' death, but the same thing can happen any day to us. Death can be experienced any day, suddenly, there will be a time when we ourselves are not there. We are not there with this human body, at all. It's gone; we have left this human world. That absence, that impermanence can happen to us, any day.

Today we can go to bed and during the sleep, death happens. Then tomorrow, what's left there is just the body, the thing called a "corpse." Now it is not labeled "corpse" but tomorrow morning this body receives the name "corpse," the label "corpse." This is something terrifying. Even friends or people who normally come around, playing, spending time with us, for them it is suddenly a big shock, when our body becomes a corpse, unable to be touched. They can only bear to pull it by the clothes, in the bed. That can happen, by this time tomorrow this body can be lying lifeless in bed and receiving the label "corpse."

There are so many people in this world who went to bed today and have no chance of waking up tomorrow as a human being. By the time the sun rises tomorrow, they will no longer be a human being; they will be separated from their precious human body. This will happen to so many people in this world tonight. They will go to bed believing that they are going to live for many years, that they are not going to die for many years, then suddenly death happens, and tomorrow when the sun rises they will be separated from this precious human body. Even today, this is happening so much. We could be part of that group, suddenly becoming nonexistent in this human world. The whole body could suddenly disintegrate.

And we can never be sure where that consciousness will be, maybe in another universe. We can be anything; it's all to do with the karma, the various karmas from beginningless rebirth. By this time next year we could be a pig. We could be a chicken, like those chickens at the butcher's place down there, left there to be killed at any time, or packed in the cage. Like in India, they are so hot and completely packed in this small cage, waiting to be killed at any time for food, for human beings' food. We could be in that small cage, packed with so many others, so hot, so thirsty, and at any time taken out to be killed for human beings' food. Or by this time next week we could be born as a snake or a crocodile in Africa. We could be anything, even a worm.

We could even be in the hell realm. This is the most terrifying thing. Once we are reincarnated like that, there is nothing we can do, nothing. We have to experience that until our karma finishes. Once that result is experienced, then it's very difficult. Before experiencing the result, we can purify the cause, stopping it from happening. That is now, that is now, every day, every hour, every minute, every second, with this precious human body, that is the best time to do anything. Now, we can practice. There is all that opportunity to practice the best method and to stop creating the causes of suffering again and to purify the previous ones, those already created. How many seconds we have left in this human life, with this precious human body, this is the time we have left, this is all the opportunity that we have.

Therefore, every second we have this precious human body is wish-fulfilling, bringing all the happiness, up to enlightenment. Every second of this precious human body is wish-fulfilling in that we can achieve any happiness. With each second of this precious human body we can even create the cause of enlightenment. We can create any happiness, liberation from samsara, the happiness of future lives, any happiness we can achieve. And we are able to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment.

[Chanting]

THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES

"How wonderful if all sentient beings were to abide in equanimity, free from discriminating thoughts, anger, attachment, discriminating some sentient beings are far, some are closer. May

they abide in equanimity. I will cause them to abide in equanimity. Please Guru-Buddhas grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

That is generating the immeasurable thought of equanimity. The next one is generating the immeasurable thought of loving kindness.

“However wonderful if all sentient beings were to have happiness.” In their hearts, thinking of enlightenment, of peerless happiness. In each realm there are numberless beings, in the hell realms there are numberless hell beings, and so on, like that, wishing everyone to have peerless happiness, enlightenment. And the same with the pretas, animals, with every realm. “... and the cause of happiness. May they have happiness. I will cause them to have happiness. Please Guru-Buddhas grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

“How wonderful if all sentient beings were free from all the sufferings and the causes. May they be free from all the sufferings and causes. I will cause them to be free from all the sufferings and causes. Please Guru-Buddhas grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

To be free from all the suffering and causes, think again about the numberless hell beings being free from all the suffering and its causes, with the mindfulness of all those unimaginable sufferings of the hell realm, human realm, preta, and so on. Think like that.

“Please Guru-Buddhas grant me blessings to be able to do this.” Generate the immeasurable thought of compassion.

Now, generate the immeasurable thought of joyfulness.

“How wonderful if all sentient beings were never to be separated from the happiness of the upper realms and ultimate happiness. May they not be separated from this happiness. I will cause them to not be separated from this happiness. Please Guru-Buddhas grant me blessings to be able to do this.”

VISUALIZING THE BUDDHA

As I explained at other times, visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha either in one aspect—that is, as everything, as all the Gurus, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, like that—or in many aspects, the elaborate refuge merit field. Whichever one you visualize, however, is in essence the Guru. The very essential meditation should be guru yoga. In guru yoga, the mind is transformed into pure thought, devotion. What is that? Devotional thought, seeing the Guru as Buddha, by looking at the Guru as Buddha, that kind of pure thought, that devotional thought. From the ordinary thought, the mind is transformed into pure mind, with devotion, by seeing the virtuous friend, with whom you have established a Dharma connection, from your own side, as Buddha, by looking at the Guru as Buddha. That mind is guru yoga.

So, this is the way, when we visualize the merit field, the Buddha, the deity, this is the way to meditate. This is the way to recognize, how to look at them or how to meditate.

With that mind, with that guru yoga mind, with your mind transformed into guru yoga, then practicing the seven limbs purifies the obstacles to achieve realizations of the path to liberation and enlightenment, the obstacles to completing the work for self and for other sentient beings.

That pacifies, that purifies, that makes you collect the necessary conditions, the merits and you increase the merits by rejoicing and by dedicating, by doing the practice of dedication. That enables you, that creates the condition, like in a field, where all the rocks, the stones, all the things that interfere with growing the crops are cleared away and then there is good soil and water, everything, to make the seeds planted in the ground ready to grow. It makes them ready to grow, to produce the stems.

So, refuge, bodhicitta, generating the four immeasurable thoughts, the seven-limb practice, the mandala offering, requesting the blessings of guru and the guru-yoga, then the direct meditation on the steps of the path to enlightenment. Go over the meditation prayer, the actual body of the meditation, planting the seeds and meditating on path. With all these together, then the realization comes from within. Liberation and enlightenment come from within, just as the stem comes from the seed, it doesn't come from somewhere else. It comes from the seed that you have planted.

[Chanting]

To repeat again here the confessing.

THE NEED FOR PURIFICATION

In your heart, think, as I mentioned before, from the ten nonvirtuous actions, having committed any nonvirtuous action, as long as you don't purify, you will experience the four results, and one of them is creating the result similar to the cause [Tibetan]. By experiencing this one, creating the result similar to the cause, then it produces the four suffering results, and one of them again is creating the result similar to the cause. That produces again four suffering results. It goes on and on, so it's endless suffering of samsara. Having committed one of the ten nonvirtuous actions, one negative karma, a complete negative karma, then the result goes on and on.

It is very important to remember that. You are really seeing how karma works. It's something very deep. It's not just experiencing something one time and then it's finished. Not like that. If you don't purify, if you don't do anything, it goes on and on.

From this one negative karma, this is the result you have to experience. But there have been ten nonvirtuous actions done numberless times, even in this life. Even in one day, things like gossiping, covetousness, the three negative actions of mind. For example, covetousness, when you go to the market for shopping, being attached to things. How many objects you get attached to when you go for shopping, and then you decide to buy—it's to do with the motivation, with how much covetousness you have. Even in the house, even in your room, it's a mental action. So in one day, there are so many completed negative actions. From beginningless rebirths you haven't finish experiencing them, you haven't purified them, there are so many.

By committing one negative karma from the ten, that becomes endless suffering. Now there are so many, uncountable. Even one negative karma you can't stand, because the result is endless as long as you don't purify—as long as you don't purify and don't abstain from committing that negative karma again. Even just this one. Even if you eat poison, the worst thing it can do is to separate the consciousness from this body, to be the cause of death. If you don't have negative karma, even though it can cause the consciousness to separate from the body, but without negative karma, poison doesn't cause you to be born in the lower realms as a hell being, hungry

ghost or an animal. You don't get reborn in the lower realm by eating poison alone. But if you have negative karma then it makes you be born in the lower realms.

What the negative karma does is not just cause death, but also all those eons of suffering in the lower realms, then all those ongoing sufferings again and again in the human realm that you experience, just from that one negative karma.

Therefore, feel that even if you have only committed one negative karma, you can't stand it, you have got to purify it, you have got to purify it *without delay* even a second, because death can happen at any moment. Death can happen at any moment—any day, any hour, any minute, any moment it can happen—so you *must* purify. Death can happen at any moment, so you *must* purify *immediately*. You must not miss out on the opportunity, the chance to purify. So you *must* do it, you must do it right away, you can't delay even one second.

If you have eaten poison or a poisonous snake has bitten you, you can't stand it; you have to rush to the emergency hospital without waiting even for a second, but that's nothing, that's nothing. That's regarded as very terrifying but it's nothing. The only thing that it can do is just cause death, separating the mind from the body. If you don't die with the nonvirtuous thought then you won't get reborn in the lower realms just because a poisonous snake has bitten you. That alone doesn't cause you to be born in the lower realms. But if you die with nonvirtuous thought, if you have negative karma, if you die with negative karma, then you will certainly be born in the lower realms.

If you think about the numberless negative karmas you have committed from beginningless rebirths—or even just in this life, if you think only of this life—it's uncountable. That's much more terrifying. You can't stand not purifying them right away. On top of that, those who have taken the pratimoksha, bodhisattva or tantric vows, this is not the first time you have taken them. You took them in past lives and broke them. There are so many of those vices you collected in the past numberless times. And the heaviest negative karma collected is within the relationship with the virtuous friend. That's the heaviest negative karma. If it's done in this life, that's not the first time. It has happened numberless times in the past. This is so terrifying, you can't stand it even for one second. You can't wait; you must purify immediately.

So, when you do confession, at least think something like this, something strong like this.

In the teachings it is said it is a feeling like you have eaten poison and are in mortal danger. Somebody else has taken that poison and has already died, and although you're not sick from it yet, you know you must die from it. You need to feel that much regret about having done a negative action. If somebody has created negative karma and then already died, they will surely be born in the lower realms, and experience great suffering. You are in the same situation, except you have not yet died.

Think like this when you do Vajrasattva practice or when you do the Thirty-five Confession Buddhas purification practice—doing prostrations while reciting the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas, or just reciting the 'Thirty-five Buddhas' names without doing whole body prostrations. Whenever you do a confession practice, at least try to think something like this, to make yourself mindful of all these karmas, how they are not easy to purify, how they are something very deep. Think how the suffering is unbearable, for many lifetimes.

As the thought of regret becomes stronger, the thought of repentance becomes stronger, then the negative karma becomes thinner. Regret is the remedy from the four powers that makes your confession perfect, powerful. Among those four this is the most important one. Depending on the strength of your regret or repentance, that negative karma, even though it is very heavy, becomes very thin.

[Chanting]

That I have met the teachings of the peerless founder at this time is by your kindness. By this may all the transmigratory beings meet the teachings of you, the supreme leader.

[Chanting]

You, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, for an inconceivable number of eons trained your holy mind in compassion toward the sentient beings and gave up your life, family, belongings, everything, numberless times, You bore so many hardships to actualize the path and achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. May I be able to bring all the transmigratory beings in this path and bring them to enlightenment.

[Chanting]

THE GOLDEN LIGHT SUTRA: ORAL TRANSMISSION

The refuge and merit field absorb. If you are visualizing the elaborate one, they absorb to the Buddha, then the Buddha descends to your crown, melts into light and absorbs here at the center of the eyebrows. He then blesses your body, speech and mind, in the essence of the Buddha's vajra holy body, holy speech, holy mind. This is the visualization for those who haven't received a great initiation; this is how you are advised to visualize when you absorb. But if you have that initiation, then you absorb straight from the crown. In the case of the Buddha, who is the founder of the present Buddhadharma, that is OK. So he can melt into light or absorb within yourself. Then he blesses your body, speech and mind. Then think, "I have achieved all the qualities of the Buddha," which is the blessing.

Even when you meditate on the lamrim, you visualize here and meditate; you can also do that. But here in the oral transmission, this is how it is advised. So we did the mandala offering already in the beginning.

[Chanting]

Which number?

[Student explains]

The Tibetan number, huh?

[Student explains]

I thought maybe keep the doors open, so that outside, if there is anybody around, on the trees, they can hear.

[Oral transmission]

Another thing, please think of the motivation and the benefits of listening to this, as I mentioned at other times.

[Oral transmission]

Here, it is talking about the benefits of requesting the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. So here Buddha told Sharipu, his heart disciple, one who is excellent in psychic power, wisdom: “When I was doing the bodhisattva’s conduct in the past, I made a request to the tathagatas to live a long time and due to these merits I have achieved the four fearlessnesses realization.” From the ten powers, those realizations, the Buddha’s qualities, the ten powers and eighteen unmistakable dharmas, those realizations, the four individual perfect wisdoms, and great loving kindness, great compassion and he completely achieved sorrowless state—full enlightenment, great liberation. Then it says, “May the holy Dharma also last a long time.”

The Buddha made a request to other buddhas, when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was a bodhisattva. Due to that, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened and then he revealed Dharma in this world. When he was a bodhisattva, having requested to other buddhas to live long, that caused him, when he descended in this world and revealed teachings, it helped the teachings to last a long time. It helped Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s teachings to last a long time.

In the seven-limb practice requesting a stable life or to live long, that’s talking about what an incredible benefit that practice has. Here, this section is talking about the benefits of rejoicing and then the next one is requesting to turn the Dharma wheel, to abide here for a long time. So, it is talking about how each one has greater merit. It goes like that.

[Oral transmission]

Here, it is talking about rejoicing. It explains here the unconceivable merit, which is not clarified in lamrim that extensively, as much as it is here. Then, it is saying that by requesting the tathagatas to abide for long time, you collect much, much, much greater merit. Then requesting them to turn the Dharma wheel, you collect even much, much more greater merit. Then the last one, dedication, even doing that you collect even much greater merit. So, it talks about how much incredible merit you collect through that.

The Buddha is telling Sharipu, the type of son or daughter, anyone who receives this sutra, this *Golden Light Sutra*, who tries to understand the meaning, who memorizes it, who reads it, who reveals it to others, that person will collect innumerable number of merits, numberless merits doing the dedication practice. So he is comparing this, saying dedication becomes incredible merit, here it is the most.

Then now, you compare this with anyone who receives this text, who tries to understand the meaning, to memorize, to read it, to reveal it to others, then this collects even more innumerable, numberless greater merit than the previous merit, the dedication.

So page what? Page a billion? That is the Western number, 371.

[Chanting]

DEDICATION

Due to all the three times' merits, the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated in my own heart and in my own family members, in all of us here, in the hearts of all the students and benefactors of this organization and those who give up their life to this organization, doing service for sentient beings, for the teachings of the Buddha, then in the hearts of all the sentient beings without delay even a second.

[Chanting]

May the bodhicitta be generated in my own heart, in my own family members, in all of us here and in the hearts of everyone in this world without delaying even a second.

[Chanting]

Then all the leaders of this world and all the Maoists or the terrorists, all these different groups who harm so many beings, may bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts, anybody who gives harm to others, may the bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts without delay even a second.

[Chanting]

That there is all this incredible opportunity to do retreat and study the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment, the essence of the whole path and to hear the *Golden Light Sutra*—where hearing each word purifies all the negative karma and collects inconceivable merit and brings so much peace and happiness in this world, country, area, and plants the seed of enlightenment—to explain, to read and to listen, all this is due to Avalokiteshvara in human form, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then, it is also due to Lama Yeshe's kindness, whose name is extremely rare to mention and who is kinder than all the three times' buddhas, who is particularly kind.

So please dedicate for His Holiness' long life and for all his wishes to succeed.

[Chanting]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may the father, mother sentient beings have happiness, may the three lower realms be empty forever, may all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately. May I be able to cause all this by myself alone, due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the three times' merits collected by others.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may any sentient being who sees me, touches me, remembers me, thinks about me, criticizes me, praises me or whatever connection they have with me, even making fun of me, or seeing my pictures—just by that, may they never ever get reborn in the lower realms from that time on. May it cause them to immediately open their hearts, find faith in refuge and karma and generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta, in all their hearts instantly. Just their seeing me, touching me, remembering me, thinking of me, talking about me, criticizing me, praising me,

harming me, or whatever conditions may it be able to affect back to them only as wish-fulfilling, only as wish-fulfilling toward others. May all these become wish-fulfilling toward all living beings, to themselves, to cause all their wishes for happiness to succeed instantly, immediately. May all their negative karma be immediately purified, and may they never ever be reborn in the lower realms from that time. May they be free from all the defilements and may all their sicknesses be immediately healed. May they immediately be able to actualize the whole path to enlightenment.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, from now on may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefits to sentient beings like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on and in all my future lifetimes.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, who do not exist from their own side, may the I, who does not exist from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which doesn't exist from its own side, which is empty, and lead all sentient beings, who do not exist from their own side, who are totally empty, to that enlightenment, which doesn't exist from its own side, which is totally empty, by myself alone, who also does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

[Chanting]

I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicated their merits.

[Chanting]

Please pray. Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three time merits' collected by others, especially today having listened to and explained the *Golden Light Sutra* and given the oral transmission, the very precious teaching of the Buddha, may the five-hundred-foot Maitreya statue be able to be constructed immediately and without delaying even a second. May it be completed and abide in this world until Maitreya Buddha descends to this world. And may it do the special function of causing to purify all sentient beings' negative karma and cause them to collect so much merit. Through this may they be able to soften their hearts, find faith in refuge and karma, and actualize loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta in their hearts. May the statue cause them to purify and collect so much merit and through that this lamrim realization comes from within. In that way, may everybody live their life only benefiting each other with the special motivation, and may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, the dangers of fire, water or earth.

And may all the companies who are working on the statue, the coolies who are doing labor, may all those people involved actualize guru devotion, the three principal aspects of the path, the two stages of tantra, in this very life, while they are working for the statue.

May all the people who donate, anyone who is doing service and anybody who helps the project, who thinks of the project, who dreams of the project, who criticizes the project, who praises the project, may they never ever get reborn in the lower realms from that time and immediately find faith in refuge and karma and actualize bodhicitta. May they meet Maitreya Buddha's teachings and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. And may all the funding for this be received without delay even a second, to not have any more obstacles.

May the general teachings of the Buddha and particularly the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa spread in all the directions. May they flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing within my own heart, in the hearts of my own family members, in all of us here and in all the students and benefactors of the FPMT organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives for the organization, doing service for sentient beings and Buddha.

[Chanting]

Due the blessings of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, due to my pure prayers and unbetrayable dependent arising, may all my pure prayers succeed immediately.

[Chanting]

Good night. I hope this causes a very blissful sleep. [Laughter]

Lecture 18

BELIEVING INCREDIBLE STORIES

[Chanting by nuns and monks]

[Rinpoche speaks in Tibetan]

Dr Adrian brought a book for me with things in it that are hard to believe. The title is *Whether You Believe It or Not*. This is the same, what the Buddha explained in the sutra, and what Lama Tsongkhapa then quoted in his lamrim. There are stories there that are hard to believe, especially those stories explaining how the karma is inexpressible, unimaginable, how karma is unimaginable. If there is an unimaginable result from good karma, from one small good karma, for many lifetimes, many hundreds of thousands of lifetimes, such unbelievable things from a small good karma, then there is also unimaginable suffering from one small negative karma.

What I was trying to say is that Lama Tsongkhapa and the other lamas chose these stories that are hard to believe from the Buddha, from what the Buddha explained, especially taking those stories to explain about karma, how from a small negative karma the suffering result can be so unbearable in order that sentient beings pay more attention in daily life to karma. That means you pay attention to your motivation in daily life by always practicing mindfulness and then watching the motivation of the act. *Before* you act, you know, watching what the motivation is and always keeping a Dharma motivation. The best, of course, is bodhicitta.

It is similar here. The stories in the lamrim, taken from the Buddha's teachings, the sutras, which are hard to believe, these are similar to the ones in these books in the West with titles like *Whether You Believe It or Not*. It's hard to believe but it actually happened. This body is unbelievable; it shows incredible, unbelievable things. There is a whole book of incredible things. So it's exactly the same. If somebody could predict that you would be born like this, or in your past life you were like this, that in future you will be born like this, your body will become like this, or even in this life that your body will change totally, if somebody predicted that, you may

not believe it, you may think it's impossible. But it happens. Once that negative karma is collected, once that particular negative karma is collected, the result is experienced, if it is not purified before experiencing the result.

So, in the West there are these books like *Whether You Believe It or Not*. Similarly, there are stories mentioned in lamrim, by Lama Tsongkhapa and by great lamas, taken from the Buddha's teaching, the sutras, and whether you believe them or not they did happen, those sentient beings did experience these things.

What I was saying, there is one story I used to mention in the past many, many years ago, in the courses and many people had difficulty with it. It was about a golden elephant. A family had seven golden elephants, they materialized, they actualized in the field or at home or something. The seven golden elephants were solid gold, even all their kaka was gold—not made of gold, not beaten with a hammer but the sentient being's whole body was gold. There are similar stories. I haven't gone through the different stories about karma this time, but in France or somewhere there was a person born with a wooden leg. It was either in the newspapers or somewhere. Some years ago, a person was born from their mother's womb with a wooden leg. So these things happen.

So there is no surprise in golden elephants, in elephants that have a gold body. A king during that time in India, King Sangyal—it might be King Sangyal, I am not sure—when he heard about these seven golden elephants he wanted them for himself so he confiscated them. He confiscated them but he didn't have the karma to have the golden elephants so they disappeared. By the time they got to his property, they disappeared and returned to the family. Hearing the golden elephants were back there, he confiscated them again, and again, when they arrived at his property, they disappeared. This happened seven times, I think, seven times. This was because he didn't have karma to have them, the other family had.

That is because in the past life of the head of the family, in Buddha Kashyapa's time, when Buddha Kashyapa was in India, outside Buddha Kashyapa's house there was an elephant made of earth. So this person offered gold, he painted it gold. So the seven golden elephants are due to that merit.

I was talking about heresy, talking about definition of negative karma. You know, it's not only the ten nonvirtuous actions, negative karma, there are so many others, just in daily life, from morning until night, twenty-four hours, sleeping, washing and eating, whatever we do, if it is done with attachment, clinging to this life, it is negative. Reciting prayers, doing meditation and all those things, all those hours, so many hours of sleeping, done with attachment, clinging to this life. What I was saying, at the end of the day you are tired, so it is very difficult to generate a Dharma motivation before going to sleep, when you are very tired, exhausted. As quickly as possible, you throw your body into the bed. Then how many hours you sleep, it's all negative karma. It is the cause of rebirth in the lower realms because you are tired and you can't remember to generate a Dharma motivation, leave aside a bodhicitta motivation. It is purely done with attachment, clinging to the comfort of this life, to the pleasure of this.

This is true of whatever is done in the twenty-four hours, except for offering service to guru or circumambulating, prostration, cleaning, making offering to statues, stupas, scriptures those holy objects. Due to the power of the holy objects, even if your motivation is nonvirtue, due to the power of the holy object those actions even become the cause of enlightenment and, by the way,

liberation from samsara, and, by the way, the happiness of future lives. Except those, otherwise the rest, which depend on your motivation becoming Dharma, those actions just become the pure cause of rebirth in the lower realms and nonvirtue.

What I was mentioning is that gossiping, idle talk doesn't reduce delusions; it makes delusions increase. So, from the ten nonvirtues, the one that we always collect is gossiping. *That* is our normal daily life practice, that is our daily sadhana.

Another one is covetousness. When we go shopping, when we go to the market, if it is done with neither bodhicitta, renunciation, nor emptiness—if there are none of the three principal aspects of the path in the mind while doing the shopping—then it is a negative action. I am not saying all three but if there is no bodhicitta, you need at least renunciation, or if not, then right view. Right view, looking at everything as empty or looking at everything as merely imputed by the mind—the I, the object, the action, the whole thing, merely imputed by mind, using the Prasangika's extremely subtle dependent arising. With that meditation, if you do shopping, that helps to stop delusion from arising. Even if what you buy is only what you really need, if you see that what you are buying is empty, merely imputed by mind, it helps to stop attachment arising.

So, you need lamrim even when you are shopping. Lamrim is not just something to meditate on when you are on the cushion, in the gompas or in the meditation room. You need lamrim even when you go to a restaurant. You need lamrim to eat the food; you need to eat the food with lamrim. When you go shopping, you need to do shopping with lamrim. Even when you go sightseeing, you need to go sightseeing with lamrim, otherwise everything becomes negative karma.

Another one of the ten nonvirtuous actions is covetousness. What I was telling you before, when you come back from shopping then you come back with a huge amount of negative karma, of covetousness. Not a huge load of coughing, a huge load of covetousness!

If you analyze your own mind, the way you live your life then you'll see how many nonvirtuous actions happen; you'll find so many. Without examining, we all think we are good, pure. None of us think we create the ten nonvirtuous actions. But if you examine your own life, you'll find many.

AVOIDING HERESY

I was talking about heresy. From time to time, it's maybe possible due to past strong imprints, you suddenly think, "Oh, there's no Buddha. There's no such thing as enlightenment," or "There are no such things as reincarnation or karma." Suddenly the thought arises, without effort. It just comes due to some strong past negative karma. Even while you are doing a practice, even while doing Vajrasattva, purifying, this kind of thought arises, because of some strong negative imprint from a past life. Or sometimes a person who has been very strongly devoted to Buddhism, after some years *totally*, totally changes their mind, and they have no faith at all in reincarnation or karma. They have no faith at all in the path to enlightenment. They seem to have totally lost their faith. That person totally changes. This can happen, it can happen like that.

It's very terrifying. There are many imprints from past negative karma, from past lives, there is lots of heresy, for so many lifetimes, believing the opposite to Buddhadharma, that there is no

karma, there is no liberation and so forth. There is this very strong negative karma left from the past.

In this life, even if they have become very strongly devoted, doing practice, after some years, some people totally change the other way round. For that person's mind, you see, all that is wrong. From that person's viewpoint, their mind has a kind of conviction, but when negative imprints manifest then their whole belief changes. For that person, the other one is totally wrong and this one is right, this path which is not the path shown by Buddha, the omniscient one. This path is totally the opposite, not believing in reincarnation, karma or liberation, it's totally opposite. When negative imprints arise, in the view of that person this opposite path is completely true. That comes from the negative imprint left on the mental continuum by the past heresy and those things, those negative thoughts in the past. This is very terrifying, *very* terrifying, because when it comes, you really a hundred percent believe in this other totally opposite view; you really feel faith in it.

Therefore, we need purification. We need so much purification to destroy those negative imprints, those obscurations. And in this life we need to make very strong prayers every day dedicating the merit, continuously to not lose faith, to have total realizations, devotion to the path, to be able to complete the path. We need very strong dedications, making request prayers to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in our everyday life. And we need to be aware, in case this kind of thought comes, even while we are doing practice, this total disbelief, with no faith at all. It can even happen while we are doing practice. If it does suddenly come up, we need to remember, to check up, how this has come from past negative imprints, therefore this is totally wrong. We need to see that this is not what our mind is, this is not what we are. But usually people in the West seem to think that because this is what arises in their mind, this is what their mind is and this is what they should believe. That is totally wrong. If we believe whatever thought arises in our mind, thinking "This is my mind, this is me," then we become crazy, we become totally crazy.

It is very important to have that awareness, that this total change of mind can happen, that we can totally lose faith due to negative karma, generating heresy toward the Buddhadharma on these subjects, reincarnation, karma, liberation and so forth. If there is that awareness normally, if we are cautious that this can happen, then we are able to protect ourselves from this heresy, these wrong beliefs. Otherwise, we believe in that and our life totally changes, and we are totally on the wrong path. Then we live life only engaging in the cause of samsara, only engaging in the cause of the lower realms. Only engaging in the wrong path becomes a very heavy obstacle to actualizing the four noble truths, to achieving liberation and enlightenment.

What I am talking about here isn't necessarily heresy toward reincarnation, karma, liberation, but we must make sure we don't develop heresy by assuming these stories that are difficult to believe, such as the Buddha uses to illustrate karma, or that are used in the lamrim texts such as in *Lamrim Chenmo* or *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, are not true. When we read these and we think that what the Buddha said can't be true, that it is not *possible*, then we develop heresy. Whenever we refuse to accept what the Buddha has said as truth, we commit heresy, even if that story is difficult to believe from our limited perspective. That's heresy and that heresy leaves a negative imprint on our mind, which makes it easier for heresy to arise again in the future. This is an obstacle to realizations, to attainments.

And then I was talking about the heresy to the Guru. It is very easy to develop heresy toward the Guru, and that is the heaviest negative karma. Generally any negative action or negative thought that arises toward the Guru is very, very heavy; it's the heaviest obstacle to realizations, to achieving any happiness but particularly to realizations.

Therefore, it is said in the tantric text *drag po rang jung rang shar chen poi gyu*¹² that if you break the Guru's advice you will be reborn in the hell realm. If you think the Guru is angry or impatient, if a thought like this arises, you will fall down into the hell realms and suffer there for sixty eons.

In the tantra requested by Vajrapani, it is mentioned by the Buddha about making mistakes in devoting to the virtuous friend. He said, "If I were to express the karmic result of that, it is so heavy that the bodhisattvas or those born of the blood [?] would be terrified. But I will hint to you." He then said that if you commit one of the five uninterrupted negative karmas—killing your father or mother, killing an arhat, harming a buddha or causing disunity amongst the Sangha—you will be reborn in the very lowest hell, the most unbearable hot hell. Making a mistake in devoting to the virtuous friend also results in such a rebirth. He said he didn't want to go further because it was too terrifying, so he would just hint at it in this way.

Therefore, we should never belittle or criticize the vajra master. What I was saying is that even if we don't develop the very heavy negative karma of this type of heresy, where we belittle or criticize the Guru, there is this other type of heresy, where we read the Buddha's teachings and we don't believe it, like the stories of karma. It is very easy for heresy to arise. This is to give an idea when we meditate on karma, the ten nonvirtues, when we examine the other areas. There are other types of heresy. We need more details, more elaborations so that we can purify, so the thought to purify comes. Then we become free from obstacles, from obscurations, from negative karma, and free from the result, all the unbearable suffering which we would have to experience for many eons. Then, it makes it easy to achieve liberation and enlightenment, and to benefit sentient beings. By being aware, by knowing about negative karma and all the suffering results, we are persuaded to practice purification.

THE BENEFITS OF VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE

Besides the general negative karma I already explained, on top of those ten nonvirtues, there are so many others we commit every day. On top of those, we break the pratimoksha vows, the bodhisattva vows, the tantric vows. It is said that if we break even one of the forty-six secondary downfalls of the bodhisattva vows, that is heavier than breaking any of the pratimoksha vows. And breaking not just a root tantric vow but a secondary one is a hundred thousand times heavier than breaking a root bodhisattva vow.

So as I mentioned, as Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says in the commentary in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, there are all these additional negative karmas. If we break one and don't practice Vajrasattva at the end of the day, then it multiplies. If we kill a tiny insect today, that negative karma increases, double tomorrow and triple the third day and then it increases and increases and after fifteen or eighteen days, it becomes as heavy as having killed a human being. If we kill a tiny insect today and if we don't do purification with Vajrasattva, then after fifteen or eighteen

¹² Wyl: *drag po rang 'byung rang shar chen po'i rgyud*; Eng: *The Great Tantra That Is Fierce, Self-emergent and Self-Arisen*. This is a terma text, part of the Great Northern Terma collection, that was discovered by Rigdzin Goedem.

days it increases 131,072 times and becomes the same negative karma as having killed a human being. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says that negative karma increases that much.

By the time of our death, after increasing month by month and year by year, it becomes the size of this earth. One negative karma by multiplying becomes the size of this earth or the mountains. It becomes so heavy. With all these karmas we have to be born in the lower realms and for eons we will experience the most unbearable suffering. I am not sure whether we can come back to the deva or human realm. So, one negative karma like a dust particle increases to the size of a mountain, to the size of this earth.

Therefore, by doing Vajrasattva even twenty-one times at the end of the day, it stops this one negative karma multiplying and becoming that many. That is unbelievable, unbelievable profit, unbelievable profit. Therefore, it becomes so important, so important; how urgent it is to practice Vajrasattva, to stop that one negative karma multiplying. It becomes so urgent.

But there are so many other negative karmas we have committed in these twenty-four hours, there are so many. Each one multiplies day by day, each one becomes like the size of a mountain, the size of this earth. That is so terrifying. Therefore, by doing Vajrasattva at the end of the day, we completely stop all these negative karmas multiplying.

That is an unimaginable achievement. What we gain, just by reciting the Vajrasattva mantra twenty-one times, is unbelievable unhappiness. It stops all those negative karmas from increasing. So, it makes it so light, when we die. That heavy negative karma becomes so thin, so light, and our mind is so much happier at the time of death. There is not much regret, feeling sad, thinking badly of ourselves. We don't look negatively at ourselves at the time of death.

Not only that, not only does it stop today's negative karma multiplying, it also purifies today's negative karma, it purifies this life's negative karma and it purifies past lives' negative karma. So, the second benefit is purifying the negative karma already collected. That's another unbelievable advantage of reciting the Vajrasattva mantra even twenty-one times before going to bed, at the end of the day.

By doing the Vajrasattva practice it stops our negative karma multiplying and it purifies our past negative karma. It is said,

For the learned ones, even though they have created very heavy negative karma it becomes very small, very thin. But for the foolish ones, who don't know Vajrasattva, even though they have only created very light negative karma, it becomes very heavy.

In tantra there is the incredible skill of allowing us to purify all these heavy negative karmas. The foolish ones, those who don't know this skill, even though the negative karma they create is small, can't do this and so it gets multiplied and becomes very heavy.

Lama Atisha explained that it's important to know, if we take a higher tantric initiation and we have taken the vows, we must keep even the secondary vows purely. We must always practice pure appearance, with ourselves as the deity, with other sentient beings as deities, with the environment as the mandala of the deity and so forth. If we cannot do that, if we are unable to do that, not having stable concentration, then vices fall like rainfall, vices fall like dust. This is not

mentioned in the texts, but if we leave our car outside then very quickly it gets completely covered in dust. We must think about that. If we are unable to keep these commitments very seriously, it's better we don't take a great initiation. This is what Lama Atisha said. That is because of not knowing that tantra has the skillful means of Vajrasattva practice, which is like a cloth that can wipe all the dust from our car. It's not knowing that tantra has this skillful means of the Vajrasattva practice where we can wash, where we clean all this at one time. The text says that the mandala is covered with dust, but we can clean it by doing the Vajrasattva practice once. All the vices get cleaned up. Lama Atisha says people who think it can't be cleaned are mistaken, not knowing that there is such skill in tantra.

His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, from whom I received many teachings and initiations, and also other gurus, have said that after we have taken a great initiation, even if we are unable to keep the root vows and the secondary vows and because of that we get reborn in the hell realms, after some time when we are reborn in the human realm, we will meet tantra again because we have met tantra before and received the initiation, and it has left an imprint already from the past. Because of that imprint, we are born in the human realm, we meet the tantra teaching, receive initiation and practice tantra. At that time, we will practice it much better and then be able to achieve enlightenment.

The comparison is with a person who follows the lesser vehicle path and achieves arhatship. They can abide in that blissful state of peace for many eons, for so many eons and then, when the karma ripens, they enter the Mahayana path and achieve enlightenment. Compared with this practitioner, who follows the Hinayana path, becomes an arhat and abides like that for so many eons in that state, this other person who has taken an initiation but has been unable to keep the vows, then is born in the hell realm and has to experience its suffering then is born in the human realm, and again takes tantric teaching because of the past imprint, takes an initiation, then practices and achieves enlightenment—comparing the two practitioners, the one who takes the initiation will be enlightened far quicker. While the arhats are abiding in the blissful state for many eons, the other one will have experienced the hell realm and then practiced as a human and become enlightened. You understand? This is what His Holiness Zong Rinpoche often used to say.

LAMRIM MOTIVATION

Then think, “At this time, we have received the most precious human rebirth qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses, we have met the Buddhadharma, and not only the Buddhadharma where we can achieve happiness, but also the Mahayana teaching, which enables us to achieve enlightenment.” For those who have received a great initiation, a higher tantra, great initiation or tantra, you have entered the door of tantra, secret mantra. You have met tantra. Those who have met the virtuous friend, the perfectly qualified virtuous friend, like His Holiness and many other great lamas, who are extremely rare to find in this world, in the universe, this great opportunity doesn't last long, this is not here all the time because of death. Death will definitely happen and it can happen any day, at any moment.

Therefore, think, “Before death happens I must make sure to achieve the happiness of future lives. Right after this life, I must make sure to achieve happiness, a good rebirth in the next life, where I can practice Dharma again and then actualize the path. But that alone is not sufficient. This life I am born into with a human body is totally in the nature of suffering, being under the control of karma and delusion. This is only in the nature of suffering. Because of that I can be

tormented by the suffering of pain, the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering. Temporary samsaric pleasure are only in the nature of suffering. Therefore, I must be free from samsara, the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause.

“But achieving this for myself alone is not sufficient. All the suffering, all the obstacles, all the undesirable things, all come from the self-cherishing thought, from the I. And all happiness comes from bodhicitta, and *that* means all happiness comes from sentient beings. Therefore, in my life, other sentient beings are most precious, the most kind ones, the most precious ones. What sentient beings want is happiness and they don’t want suffering. In my life there is nobody to cherish except only sentient beings, and in my life there is nobody to work for except only sentient beings. What they like is happiness, what they don’t want is suffering, therefore I must free them from all sufferings and causes and bring them to enlightenment. To do that is not possible without achieving the omniscient mind myself, the mind that knows all sentient beings’ minds and karma and the level of intelligence and all the methods that fits them exactly. Therefore, I *must* achieve enlightenment.

“To see my mother sentient beings, from whom I have received all my past, present and future happiness, suffering for even one second is unbearable for me and they have been suffering in samsara for eons. So, I need to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. Therefore I need to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. Therefore I need to actualize the path, I need to purify the defilements, negative karma, therefore I am going to take the Vajrasattva general permission to practice, for the benefit of all sentient beings.”

[Chanting]