

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

TEACHINGS FROM THE
MEDICINE BUDDHA RETREAT

LAND OF MEDICINE BUDDHA, OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2001



EDITED BY AILSA CAMERON



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TEACHINGS FROM THE MEDICINE BUDDHA RETREAT



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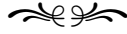
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Teachings from the Medicine Buddha Retreat



LAND OF MEDICINE BUDDHA
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2001

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Edited by Ailsa Cameron

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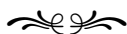
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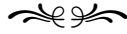
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The group at the Medicine Buddha retreat, October–November 2001

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We are also deeply grateful to all those who have become members of the ARCHIVE over the past few years. Details of our membership program may be found at the back of this book, and if you are not a member, please do consider joining up. Due to the kindness of those who have, we now have several editors working on our vast collection of teachings for the benefit of all. We have posted our list of individual and corporate members on our website, www.LamaYeshe.com.

In particular, we thank our anonymous benefactors for so kindly sponsoring the production of this book.

Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation for the kindness and compassion of all those other generous benefactors who have contributed funds to our work since we began publishing free books. Thankfully, you are too numerous to mention individually in this book, but we value

highly each and every donation made to spreading the Dharma for the sake of the kind mother sentient beings and now pay tribute to you all on our website. Thank you so much.

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—Dr. Nicholas Ribush

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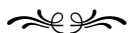
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For Alice, who, through her simple humanity, kindness and generosity, touched the lives of so many, most often children, disadvantaged through poverty, illness and discrimination; who was an example to all who knew her of our human ability to grow and change for the better even, and especially, through her eighties and nineties, right up to her last days – may she journey through the bardo and into a precious human rebirth; may she meet the perfect spiritual mentors for her to continue the growth and change begun in this life and reach complete awakening as quickly as possible.

*Through the merit of having contributed to the spread of the Buddha's
teachings for the sake of all sentient beings, may our benefactors
and their families and friends have long and healthy lives,
all happiness, and may all their Dharma
wishes be instantly fulfilled.*



Editor's Preface



KYABJE ZOPA RINPOCHE gave the teachings in this book during a Medicine Buddha retreat held at Land of Medicine Buddha in Soquel, California, from October 26 to November 17, 2001. Having himself recently completed a Medicine Buddha retreat, Rinpoche began by giving a Medicine Buddha great initiation on October 27 and 28. Rinpoche commuted from his nearby home in Aptos almost daily for the duration of the retreat, attending the final retreat session most days, with the teachings generally finishing in the early hours of the morning after recitation of various protector prayers and extensive dedications. The days began with *Combined Jorcho and Lama Chöpa Puja*, which Rinpoche attended three times.¹

With the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and elsewhere still painfully fresh, Rinpoche emphasized the urgent need for and benefits of Medicine Buddha practice and the need for compassion for Osama bin Laden and other terrorists, and shared the details of his open letter to President Bush about how to avert war and other disasters. There are numerous references to the war in Afghanistan, missiles and other weapons, and world economic problems. However, Rinpoche also gave detailed, invaluable teachings on emptiness, focusing especially on identifying the ignorance that is the root of samsara and of all suffering and on how to eliminate it. Rinpoche also covered a myriad of other subjects, including making extensive offerings, the nature of anger and desire, rejoicing, generating bodhicitta, the four immeasurable thoughts and ritual practice. As Rinpoche

¹The Medicine Buddha sadhana used in the retreat was not a final translation and is not reproduced here. The Medicine Buddha puja commonly done in FPMT centers can be found in *Essential Buddhist Prayers: An FPMT Prayer Book*, Vol. 2.

explains, “My stories are like a spider’s web, with one strand connected here and another one connected there.” There are strands that connect teachings, for example, to stories of the great yogis Serkong Dorje Chang, Gen Jampa Wangdu and Geshe Lama Konchog and of Rinpoche’s childhood in Solu Khumbu.

These are edited transcripts of the teachings given during the retreat. Unfortunately, since one audiotape was lost, most of the advice on preparing for the retreat is missing. Also, because the recording of sessions was not continuous, there are some gaps in the teachings and sudden jumps to new topics. In the eighteenth discourse, the replies in the discussion about what determines whether an action is virtuous or nonvirtuous were inaudible, but Rinpoche’s responses in the one-sided debate have been retained.

When talking about the benefits of Medicine Buddha practice, Rinpoche was usually translating directly from sutra sources, with the quotations from the sutras often hard to separate from Rinpoche’s commentary to them. It would be safest to regard the indented quotations as paraphrases rather than word-by-word translations of the sutra texts.

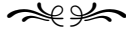
My heartfelt thanks to Rinpoche for his kindness and patience in giving the rich teachings in this book—and in the long wait for their publication; to all the LMB staff who organized and supported the retreat; to Ven. René Feusi and Ven. Sarah Thresher for leading the retreat sessions; to Claire Atkins for her continued generous support; to Nick Ribush and everyone else at Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive for helping to make these teachings available; to the indefatigable Su Hung for transcribing all forty-seven audio tapes; and to Ven. Lozang Zopa for his assistance with Tibetan terms and technical points.

I apologize for any errors of omission or commission in the editing of this book. Any merit created in the production of this book is dedicated to the long lives, good health and continued teaching of Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all other perfect, pure gurus.

1

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

Combined Jorchö and Lama Chöpa Puja



YOU HAVE ALREADY generated the motivation in my absence....

[The group recites verses 2–6 of *Lama Chöpa*.]

Those who are familiar with the practice should meditate on purifying ordinary death, intermediate state and rebirth, ripening your mind in the path-time three kayas and planting seeds to achieve the result-time three kayas.

[There is a long pause for meditation, then the *Lama Chöpa* practice continues to the end of verse 22.]

EXTENSIVE OFFERING PRACTICE

Here we're going to do the extensive offering meditation. We blessed all the extensive offerings here before, but besides these offerings we're going to bless all the extensive offerings at the Aptos house,² where there are many hundreds of bowls of water offerings, many thousands of light offerings and flowers inside and outside the house. We'll also bless all the extensive offerings in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, including the two thousand offerings at the center in Mongolia, the many offerings at Kopan Monastery and all the extensive offerings at Derek Goh's house in Singapore. We will bless them all together, then offer them.

First we will bless the offerings.

[The group recites the *Offering Cloud Mantra*³ three times, with music.]

² This is Kachoe Dechen Ling, Lama Zopa Rinpoche's home in California.

³ OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SARA PRAMARDANE/ TATHAGATAYA/ ARHATE SAMYAK-SAM BUDDHAYA/ TADYATHA/ OM VAJRE VAJRE/ MAHA VAJRE/ MAHA TEJA VAJRE/

Before we offer all the offerings here, in the Aptos house and in all the rest of the FPMT centers, we first make charity of them to every hell being; we give all the offerings to every hell being.

We give all the offerings here, including every single light, and all the offerings in all the rest of the FPMT centers to every hungry ghost.

We then make charity to every animal, every insect.

We make charity to every human being. Again these days there are many economic problems because of the recent destruction in New York,⁴ which you hear about billions of times every day. Many people all over the world have lost jobs, with airlines, banks and insurance companies collapsing everywhere.

We first make charity of these offerings to sentient beings, and we then make the offerings together with all sentient beings or on behalf of all sentient beings. Sentient beings own the offerings, and we become the manager, or organizer, who directs the making of the offerings to the Triple Gem. In this way everybody gets merit. We make charity to all sentient beings and then make the offering of what belongs to sentient beings on their behalf. So, the offering is coming from them.

In daily life when you make water offerings at your own house, first make charity to sentient beings before you offer. Knowing that the offerings belong to sentient beings also helps you not to cling to the offerings, thinking, “This is my offering.” It also helps it to become pure practice, because it is an antidote to self-cherishing thought.

No matter where they are—in Africa, Tibet or any other part of the world, or in any other universe—every single human being gets merit by our making offering for them and also by our dedicating the merit at the end, which makes the practice very powerful. Every mother sentient being gets all this merit, and from that they then get happiness. It’s great to do this practice, especially with the present problems in the world. Sentient beings need a lot of merit. What’s happening in the world is happening because of negative karma, and the opposite of that is good karma. Human beings need a lot of good karma to have successful lives. Without talking about

MAHA VIDYA VAJRE/ MAHA BODHICITTA VAJRE/ MAHA BODHI MANDO PASAM KRAMANA VAJRE/ SARVA KARMA AVARANA VISHO DHANA VAJRE SOHA. Most of the prayers and mantras mentioned in this book can be found in *Essential Buddhist Prayers: An FPMT Prayer Book, Vol. 1*.

⁴The Medicine Buddha retreat began on October 26, 2001, only six weeks after the 9/11 attacks.

good rebirth, the happiness of all their future lives, liberation from samsara or full enlightenment, but just about not having problems in this life, such as difficulties surviving, and about having comfort and happiness, sentient beings need a lot of good karma.

So, we give all the extensive offerings here and in the rest of the centers to every human being.

We give all the extensive offerings to every *asura* being and to every *sura* being.

We also give all these offerings to every intermediate state being. All the intermediate state beings receive them.

Think: “I must achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings; therefore, I’m going to do the practice of offering. I’m going to offer all these offerings to the guru-Triple Gem on behalf of (or together with) all sentient beings.”

First, we will offer to the gurus. Put your palms together and prostrate particularly to your gurus, those with whom you have a Dharma connection. Offer all the offerings here and those in all the rest of the centers, as well as those in the Aptos house, which are all of the nature of infinite bliss, to the gurus and generate infinite bliss within them. There are three points: prostrating, making the offerings and thinking the offerings generated bliss within the gurus.

With this guru yoga mind, feeling with your whole heart that each guru is the essence of all the buddhas, prostrate, make the offerings and think the gurus generated infinite bliss within them. You can do this five, ten, twenty-one or more times, but always with these three points.

Then prostrate and make all these offerings here and those in all the rest of the FPMT centers, which are of the nature of great bliss, to the whole *Guru Puja* merit field by meditating that each being in the merit field is your own root virtuous friend. With this meditation, with this guru yoga mind, prostrate, make the offerings and think they generated great bliss within them.

Prostrate and make all these offerings here and all the extensive offerings in all the rest of the centers, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to all the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in the ten directions, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think they generated infinite bliss within them. Prostrate, make the offerings, think they generated bliss. Offer with these three things as many times as you can.

Prostrate and make all the offerings here, those in the Aptos house and those in all the rest of the FPMT centers’ gompas to all the statues, stupas,

scriptures and thangkas in all the universes in all the ten directions, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think they generated infinite bliss within them. Offer as many times as you can: prostrate, make the offerings, generate bliss.

Offer all the offerings here, all the offerings in the Aptos house and those in all the FPMT centers' gompas, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to all the holy objects in India, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think that they generated infinite bliss within them. Prostrate, make offering and generate bliss within them. Do these three as many times as possible.

Prostrate and make all the offerings here and all those in the FPMT centers' gompas to all the holy objects in Tibet, including the most precious one in the Lhasa temple, the Shakyamuni Buddha statue blessed by Buddha himself during Buddha's time. It is actually Buddha benefiting sentient beings in the form of a statue, liberating many hundreds, many thousands, of sentient beings every day from the lower realms and from samsara by allowing them to collect merit and to have realizations of the path to enlightenment from that merit. Think also of the stupa we have built in Sera Monastery in Tibet, as well as of the Maitreya Buddha statue, Meaningful to Behold, which is in Drepung Monastery, and of the most holy Most Secret Hayagriva statue in Sera. Prostrate and make all the offerings here and in all the rest of the centers to all the numberless holy objects in Tibet, meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think that they generated infinite bliss. Do these three—prostrating, making the offerings and generating bliss—over and over, as many times as possible.

Now prostrate and make all the offerings here and all the offerings in the Aptos house and in all the FPMT centers' gompas to every single holy object in Nepal, including the most precious Swayambhunath Stupa in Kathmandu, which contains a natural crystal stupa that appeared from the lake that once completely filled the Kathmandu valley. This crystal stupa, a manifestation of dharmakaya, was predicted by Buddha himself. It appeared from the lake spontaneously and is now inside the Swayambhunath Stupa.

Also remember the Boudhanath Stupa, which is called "the all-encompassing, wish-fulfilling stupa." The woman who started to build the stupa passed away when she had completed the vase, and her four sons then completed the stupa. After they completed the stupa, numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas absorbed into the stupa when the four brothers dedicated the merit and made various prayers. The eldest brother made prayers to become

a Dharma king and be able to spread Dharma in Tibet, the Snow Land; the next brother prayed to become a minister and help his brother to spread Dharma; the third brother made prayers to be the abbot to pass the lineage of ordination in Tibet; and the youngest brother made prayers to become a powerful yogi to pacify obstacles to the spread of Dharma in Tibet. The eldest brother became Trisong Detsen, the Dharma king of Tibet, and each of the others became what they had prayed for, with the last one becoming the powerful yogi, Padmasambhava.⁵

There were many obstacles to building Samye, the first monastery in Tibet. In the daytime people would build and at night spirits would tear down what had been built. This happened many times. Padmasambhava was then invited to Tibet from India. He hooked and subdued the spirits, except for three who ran away. He then made the spirits pledge to become Dharma protectors, protecting the Dharma and Dharma practitioners in Tibet and the Himalayan regions. Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism was then preserved and spread in Tibet for many years, and so many beings achieved unmistakable realizations of the path to enlightenment and achieved enlightenment in Tibet. Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism has now spread all over the world, even in the West, and every year tens of thousands of people are able to have the opportunity to follow the path to enlightenment and to make their lives meaningful, including us. That we can make our lives meaningful twenty-four hours a day every day by having refuge in our heart, by practicing bodhicitta, by meditating on emptiness and by collecting merit are all benefits from the Boudhanath Stupa.

So, we prostrate and make all the offerings here and all those in the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas to Boudhanath Stupa and all the numberless other holy objects in Nepal, meditating that they are all our own root virtuous friend. Think that they generated infinite bliss. Prostrate, make offering, generate bliss: do these three over and over, as many times as you can.

Prostrate and make all the offerings here and all the offerings in the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas and in the Aptos house, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to all the holy objects in Sri Lanka, Burma and all the rest of the world, meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. They generated infinite bliss. Prostrate, make the offerings, generate bliss within them.

⁵The abbot was Shantarakshita and the minister was Selnang. For further details see *The Legend of the Great Stupa*.

Last, prostrate with your two palms together and make all the offerings here and in the Ashes Temple [Memorial Shrine]⁶ and all the lights and other offerings in the Aptos house and in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to the seven Medicine Buddhas (or eight Medicine Buddhas, if you include Guru Shakyamuni Buddha) for success. Without talking about reciting the name and mantra of Medicine Buddha or meditating on Medicine Buddha, if you simply make offering to Medicine Buddha, Medicine Buddha's entourage, which includes the twelve groups of harm-givers living under Medicine Buddha's orders, will always protect you. They're called *nöjin* in Tibetan, which translates as *harm-givers*, but I'm not sure of the exact meaning of the term. Each of the twelve leaders has an entourage of seven hundred thousand. If you simply make offering to Medicine Buddha, the entire entourage of Medicine Buddha always protects you. Thus, all your wishes get fulfilled.

We also offer all the offerings here and all the offerings in the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, so that we can instantly fulfill the wishes for happiness of all sentient beings, like Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha himself. We also make offerings to Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, Compassion Buddha, so that we can develop great compassion and quickly liberate the numberless mother sentient beings from their unbearable sufferings and bring them to full enlightenment. So, we specifically make offerings to Medicine Buddha, Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha and Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, meditating that their essence is our root virtuous friend. By meditating that they are our guru, we collect the most extensive merit.

We'll now do the next prayer from *Guru Puja*.

[The group recites verses 23–31 of *Lama Chöpa*.]

We can also visualize the sixteen goddesses from the Heruka Chakrasamvara practice making offerings. Infinite bliss is generated within the holy minds of the beings in the merit field. We can also offer the eight auspicious signs, the eight substances and the seven royal emblems. Offer numberless quantities of each of them.

⁶ A specially designed building at Land of Medicine Buddha where the ashes of beloved ones are preserved in individual beautiful small stupas.

[The group recites verse 32, the twenty-three-heap mandala.]

Due to the merit of having offered this mandala, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of the FPMT organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives to the organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and all the rest of the sentient beings be able to completely actualize in this very lifetime the stainless teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, the pure wisdom of the Victorious One, which involves living in pure morality, having the brave attitude to do extensive works for sentient beings and practicing the yoga of the two stages, the essence of which is the transcendental wisdom of non-dual bliss and voidness.

Mä jung nam thar tsang mäi thrim dang dän
Lab chhen gyäl sä chö päi nying tob chhe
De tong chhog gi rim nyi näl jor gyi
Lo zang gyäl wäi tän dag jäl war shog

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

[The group recites verses 33–37.]

RENEWING THE BODHISATTVA AND TANTRIC VOWS

Taking the bodhisattva vows

Those who have taken bodhisattva vows in the past take the vows again to purify the vows that have been degenerated and to enhance those that have not been degenerated.

Think: “The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment; therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Since it’s impossible to achieve enlightenment without taking the bodhisattva vows, I’m going to take the bodhisattva vows for the benefit of all my kind mother sentient beings.”

[The taking of the bodhisattva vows is recited in Tibetan.]

Think: “I have received pure bodhisattva vows.”

Taking the tantric vows

Those who have taken the vows of Highest Yoga Tantra should think, “My kind mother sentient beings suffering in samsara for even one second is like suffering for eons. It’s unbearable to me. I must liberate them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. There’s no way to achieve enlightenment quickly and more quickly without living in the tantric vows. Therefore, I’m going to take the tantric vows for the benefit of all sentient beings, to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and to bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

[The taking of the tantric vows is first recited in Tibetan, then Ven. Sarah Thresher reads it in English.]

Think that you have received pure tantric vows. The vows that have been degenerated have been revived; those that have not been degenerated have been enhanced.

SAMAYAVAJRA PRACTICE

We’ll now recite the Samayavajra mantra.

sang gyä chhö dang tshog kyi chhog nam la.... (3x)

Visualize Samayavajra above your crown, then purify your negative karmas as with the Vajrasattva practice. Purify particularly the heaviest negative karmas, those collected in relation to your gurus, which are the greatest obstacles to achieving realization as well as to all other success. Think that you are purifying those you have collected during beginningless past lives and any you have collected in this life.


[The group recites the Samayavajra mantra, OM AH PRAJNA DHRIKA HA HUM.]


Think that nothing is left. Every single negative karma, every degenerated samaya vow, collected in relation to the guru has been completely purified.


Due to these merits until I achieve enlightenment may I never transgress the samaya vows of Guru Vajradhara.


[The group recites verses 38–39 of *Seven-Limb Practice*.]

REJOICING


Think: “I have collected numberless merits in the past and in the present, and I will collect numberless merits in the future. Without merit there’s no happiness, not even temporary happiness. There’s not the slightest happiness I can experience. So, all the past, present and future merits are very precious. How wonderful it is that I have collected all these merits!” Feel happiness in your heart.  [meditation]


“The numberless merits that I have collected in the past and in the present and that I will collect in the future are so precious. How happy I am that I’ve collected all these merits. How wonderful it is!” 

“I have collected numberless merits in the past and in the present and I will collect numberless merits in the future. They are so precious.” 

“How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is!” Generate greater and greater happiness. 

Each time we feel happiness, which is rejoicing, we collect skies of merit.

We now rejoice in the merits of other sentient beings and particularly in those of the bodhisattvas and buddhas. They have collected numberless merits in the past and the present and will collect numberless merits in the future. From that they receive so much happiness and so many perfections. Think, “How wonderful it is!” 

“May I be able to collect that much merit for the benefit of each sentient being.” 

[The group recites verses 40–42 of *Seven-Limb Practice*, then the long mandala offering. Ven. Sarah then reads *Special request for the three great purposes* three times in English. The group then recites the nine-line migtsema twice in Tibetan.]

You can do the request and the visualization of purifying the negative karmas collected in the relationship with the virtuous friend.

[Ven. Sarah reads *Requesting the Guru* three times and *Visualization*.]

This requesting prayer describes the different levels of qualities of the guru and what the guru is.

[Ven. Sarah reads verses 43–52 of *Making Requests to the Guru* in English.]

Read the next verse twice in English, then we’ll do it once in Tibetan.

[Verse 53 is recited twice in English, then Rinpoche chants it once in

Tibetan, followed by verse 54.]

Recite your root guru's mantra.

[This is followed by recitation of the mantras of Shakyamuni Buddha, Yamantaka, Heruka, Guhyasamaja and Vajrayogini then OM AH HUM and *ge wa di yi nyur du dag....*]

Now, the blessing of the tsog.

[The group recites verse 55.]

We'll skip the next part of the prayer and just do the invocation and the offering of the tsog.

[The group recites verses 61–67, *Praise in Eight Lines* and verses 68–69.]

Recite Lama Ösel's long-life prayer.

[The group recites Lama Ösel's and Lama Zopa Rinpoche's long-life prayers.]

The lam-rim prayer can be read in English with the addition of *Practicing Guru Devotion with the Nine Attitudes*. Stop just before the verse on the paramita of charity.

THE EIGHT VERSES

Compassion for terrorists

Whenever I see beings who are wicked in nature and overwhelmed by violent negative actions and suffering, I shall hold such rare ones dear, as if I had found a precious treasure.

Here with this verse⁷ we should think of all those people who are terrorists, such as Osama bin Laden. They're the main object of meditation for us when we say "those with wicked minds, those who have engaged in heavy negative karma and those who have much suffering." They will have to experience heavy results for many eons. Not only will they experience these problems in the future, but when they are again born as human beings due to another good karma, they will have to experience being attacked, wars and so many other difficulties in their lives. This will happen not just in one human lifetime, but in many hundreds, many thousands, of lifetimes. For

⁷There is a gap in the recording at this point, but it seems that the following comments relate to the fourth verse of *The Eight Verses of Thought Transformation*.

many, many human lifetimes they will have to experience being attacked and killed, which is the effect similar to what they did to others. Their having a human life will be caused by another good karma, not by their destroying the Twin Towers. They will not get reborn as human beings in New York by destroying the New York buildings. Anyway, I'm joking....

This is on top of the sufferings in the lower realms that they will have to experience for many eons. Therefore, when we recite this verse at the present, the terrorists should be objects of our compassion rather than objects of our anger. This verse fits them very well; it fits the nature of their minds and of what they did, their heavy negative karma and so forth. Their wrong views are like rocky mountains, heavy and fixed, and they can't see that their views are wrong. It's difficult for them to see that what they've done is negative karma.

Because of all the resultant sufferings and the consequences for many eons (the negative imprints left on their minds will make them continuously engage in negative karmas, for example), they are real objects of compassion. People get upset or angry when you say, "You must have compassion for the terrorists." When you just say the word "compassion," people get angry. People are very angry because they can't bear the destruction that has happened in the United States and the effects in all the rest of the world. But you should have compassion for the terrorists.

Since it's difficult for people to understand this, you have to explain that because of their many wrong views and harmful actions, the terrorists themselves will have to experience all those sufferings for thousands and thousands of lifetimes, even when they're born human. Each time they are born human they will have to go through all these disasters. This is *in addition* to suffering in the lower realms for eons. When you think of their situation (their wrong views, the heavy negative karma they have created and what they will have to go through), there's no choice—compassion has to arise. You see that their situation, with all their delusions, negative karmas and sufferings, is unbearable. When you understand their situation, compassion naturally arises.

Of course, if you don't understand all this, being told that you should have compassion for the terrorists only makes you angry. It only makes you say, "What are you talking about? They destroyed all this!" There has been such a negative effect on the world that people can't understand when you say that they should have compassion for the terrorists. If you talk about peace, people get angry. But if you think in this way, particularly as described in

this verse, the terrorists are objects that cause you to develop compassion. These people themselves have unbelievable suffering. If you understand their situation—their suffering, their negative karma, all the harm they did to so many other sentient beings—you see that they're pitiful. It only makes compassion arise. Of course, if you have compassion, realization of bodhicitta then comes. You then enter the Mahayana path, complete the two types of merit and achieve all the infinite qualities of a bodhisattva. You then achieve the two kayas, dharmakaya and rupakaya, and are able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. Now when we think of this, these people who engaged in so much heavy negative karma, caused so much suffering and harmed the world are so precious in our life. What they did is unbelievably harmful to themselves, but for us, as individuals, it's precious because it enables us to develop compassion and that enables us to become buddha. We then have all the means to liberate sentient beings, who are numberless. So, this benefit comes from the terrorists.

Wrong rejoicing

I want to mention to you, and maybe it can go to the FPMT centers and the website, to make sure that you don't rejoice in the wrong things, because it's heavy negative karma. If you feel dislike or hatred toward the Taliban, when you then hear that some of them have been killed, you naturally rejoice. You naturally feel happy in your heart. However, if you hear that one thousand people have been killed and you rejoice in it, you then receive the same heavy karma of having killed one thousand people. If you simply feel happy on hearing that information, you create the heavy karma of having killed one thousand human beings. Even though you're not in the war and you don't actually shoot or bomb anyone, as far as negative karma is concerned, you create the same heavy negative karma as the person who killed those one thousand people. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains this in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*.

I thought to mention this great danger. If you feel dislike or hatred toward the Taliban, there's a danger that when you hear some of them have been killed you will immediately feel happy. If you don't feel hatred toward them, I don't think you will rejoice. But if you feel hatred or anger toward them, rejoicing will happen. So, this is very heavy. Of course, people who practice lam-rim in their daily life, those who remember karma and what is said in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* and other lam-rim teachings,

don't need to be told this. But I thought it might be useful to remind those students who have heard it but maybe don't remember it in their daily life.

The first time I heard that a few places in Afghanistan had been destroyed (the report didn't mention people), because I wasn't careful to watch my mind at that time, I suddenly felt kind of good. Then I immediately remembered karma. There was no mention of any people being killed—just of a place being destroyed. Because that happened the first time, after that I was more careful. When you hear such news, be careful not to rejoice.

Of course, if you meditate on these verses, your view changes; but when you don't meditate, when your mind is not in the state described in these verses—holding those sentient beings as precious or feeling compassion for them—you see them as undesirable. At times when you're not meditating, what has happened appears heavy.

The destruction of Buddhism

Buddhism in India was attacked three times by Muslims. (I'm not giving you reasons to get angry with Muslims. If you remember the verse that I mentioned just before and keep your mind in that state, it will be OK.) Before, inside the stupa at Bodhgaya, there was a Buddha statue that radiated its own light at night. It didn't need any other light as it had its own. I think this Buddha statue was made by the same artist who made the Shakya-muni Buddha statue in Lhasa. He wasn't an ordinary man, an ordinary artist, but a transformation. Maybe because sentient beings' karma to have such an incredible holy object had run out, the whole statue was destroyed. The present statue that we see inside the Bodhgaya stupa was then made. Even this statue is exceptional—so alive and beautiful. I think His Holiness also likes it very, very much.

The bodhi tree, where Buddha showed the holy deed of becoming enlightened, was also destroyed three times, but because the roots were under the ground, it grew again and again. I don't think there are any stories of Hindus attacking Buddhism, but there was some karma that the Muslims attacked Buddhism three times. I think it also happened in Indonesia. Somehow there was some karma there.

I heard a story from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche that a long, long time ago one of the monks in a Buddhist monastery was very naughty and didn't follow the discipline. The *gekyö*, the monk who looks after the discipline of the monastery, got very angry and punished that monk very harshly. That



ROGER KUNSANG

Statue of Lord Buddha in the Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya

monk then generated much hatred toward Buddhism and made many negative prayers to be able to destroy it. So, in all of his following lives he was born as a Muslim and attacked Buddhism. That was the original karma: as a monk, when he was punished by the disciplinarian, he generated much hatred toward Buddhism and made many prayers to destroy it.

This story shows the effect of prayers. If you make bad prayers to harm somebody, they can have an incredibly negative effect. If you make good prayers, they can have an incredibly positive effect. It shows the power of mind. Since prayer is what the mind thinks, it's the power of mind. The negative mind, as well as the positive mind, is very powerful. It shows us that in our daily life we must put a lot of effort into praying to benefit other sentient beings, as in the incredible prayers and dedications of the bodhisattvas. We must generate the power of positive mind and dedicate our prayers in that way.

Even with Shakyamuni Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, who were able to achieve enlightenment, the skies of benefit they offered came from prayer. They were able to completely cease the oceans of samsaric suffering, which have no beginning, achieve the vajra holy body and liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering. All these skies of benefit came from prayer, from the power of the positive mind.

According to Padmasambhava's prediction, the world will eventually be conquered by the Muslims. When I was in Tibet and maybe fourteen or fifteen years old, the monk who looked after me, supervised my becoming a monk in Domo Geshe's monastery and rode with me from Tibet through Bhutan to India was reading Padmasambhava's predictions. I think the Muslim invasion starts from Mecca, the main Muslim holy place, then eventually takes over the whole world. At that time there will be much killing and war and many more disasters.

Due to karma, nobody will be able to defeat them, and the Muslims will conquer the whole world. At that time the Shambhala war will start, and those bodhisattvas will then defeat the Muslims. I guess there will be manifestations in different kinds of materials, as mentioned in the Shambhala prayer. The bodhisattvas will come as an army, but as soon as they have conquered the Muslims—or, as it says in the text, “the barbarians”—they will immediately stop showing the aspect of an army and teach the Dharma. The teachings of Buddha will last for one hundred years. This is why there

is a dedication to be born in Shambhala at the end of the long version of *Six-Session Guru Yoga*.⁸ You pray that if you don't become enlightened in this world during this period, that you be born in this world during the time that the Kalachakra teachings are being spread, hear the tantric teachings and practice them, and achieve enlightenment. Pabongka Rinpoche explained that this is why, even though there are many other pure lands, at the end of the long *Six-Session Guru Yoga* you pray to be born in the Kalachakra pure land, Shambhala.

Anyway, let's go back to compassion. That's safest.

We'll finish the prayer.

[Ven. Sarah concludes the reading of *The Eight Verses of Thought Transformation*.]

DEDICATIONS

"Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of this organization, especially those who sacrifice their life to this organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha, as well as all the rest of the sentient beings, from now on in all our future lifetimes meet only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus. From our side, may we see them as only enlightened beings and do actions only most pleasing the holy minds of the virtuous friends. And, from now on in all our future lifetimes, may I and every other sentient being be able to immediately fulfill the holy wishes of the virtuous friends.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the virtuous friends have stable lives and all their holy wishes be accomplished immediately."

Think here particularly of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is the sole source of peace in the world and the holder of the entire Buddhadharma, thus giving sentient beings the opportunity to listen to, reflect, meditate on and actualize the paths to liberation and enlightenment.

I have heard from good sources, from those who are able to predict well, such as Khadro-la in Dharamsala and a Tibetan woman here in America,

⁸ "In brief, may I be born in Shambhala, the great jewel treasury, and complete there the stages of the peerless path in as quick a time as the amount of white merit I have gathered from this virtuous practice."

who is over eighty years old, that there will be a lot of obstacles to His Holiness during the next three years. Khadro-la explained to me from Dharmasala that while there will be good things, there will also be many obstacles to His Holiness during these coming years. Of course, that's in the view of us sentient beings. In India, Khadro-la, with some of the ascetic monks from the mountains, is making one hundred thousand tsog offerings to Tara for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She chose monks she thinks are pure practitioners. Many pujas are also being done. It seems this year—and maybe the next few years—is quite a heavy time in the world, and also for His Holiness's life.

So, it might be good to do *tong-len* practice,⁹ to take upon yourself all the obstacles to His Holiness and other great holy beings, those who can bring unbelievable benefit to the world, and allow them to have long lives. Of course, you too can benefit the world but maybe in a very limited way compared to them. Doing *tong-len* practice and taking all their life obstacles becomes the same as the practice of *chöd*, or *slaying the ego*; it is bodhicitta practice. When you sacrifice yourself to save somebody's life, it becomes all those practices. Here we're talking about those great holy beings living longer in this world, where, with all the violence and turmoil, there's an incredible need for them.

There's also a special puja for long life in which you turn away the *dakinis*. When somebody's sick from spirit harm, you usually make a figure of the person, called *lu*; you dress this figure up with jewels and surround it with food and many other things. You then tell the spirit how beautiful this figure is, with all its jewelry, and even though there's very little there, you tell the spirit that there are clothes, jewels, food and drink and so forth, like in a department store. You tell the spirit how much wealth there is, and as you say the words, all that wealth appears to the spirit. The spirit is actually able to see all that you are describing.

One time when His Holiness Song Rinpoche was in Italy, an Italian woman had spirit problems that caused her telephone to always ring even though no one was actually calling her. His Holiness put a blessed string on the telephone and that stopped the ringing. Maybe you can do that if you don't want to hear the telephone. I'm joking.

When doing *lu* for that woman, His Holiness used a mold, like that used

⁹The meditation practice of taking the suffering of others onto oneself and giving them all one's own happiness, possessions and merit.

to print tsa-tsas, to make the face of the lu. It was a smiling face. His Holiness carefully painted the face of the lu and made it very nice. At that time His Holiness said that you shouldn't say that the face is ugly, because while you're making the lu, the spirit is waiting nearby and hears whatever you say. Therefore, you have to say how beautiful it is and other nice things. I got the idea from that to carry a mold to make the lu instead of molding it by hand. My mold is of the Chinese Maitreya, which is also called "Laughing Buddha," because it has such a happy-looking face.

You give the lu to the spirits as a substitute for the sick person. After you have satisfied the spirits, you then teach them Dharma. You tell them not to harm other sentient beings, and that if they harm others, suffering will result from that karma. If they benefit others, on the other hand, the result will be happiness. If you plant a hot chili seed, only a hot chili plant results from that. If you plant a seed of sweet fruit, only sweet fruit comes from that. So, you give a teaching to the spirits, such as the verse, "Do not commit any nonvirtuous actions...."¹⁰

This puja is short but very effective. It takes hardly any time—maybe ten or fifteen minutes, depending on who does it. When doctors can't do anything and someone is about to die, if you do this short puja, that person can sometimes completely recover. One time a child in France was dying, and the doctors said there was no hope. Geshe Lama Konchog was in Holland, and he performed *cha sum*, a very short puja with three tormas. Within a few minutes of his finishing the puja, that child the doctors had decided was going to die had completely recovered.

It's a short puja but because it's related to sickness caused by spirits, it has a quick effect. You give the spirits the lu in place of the sick person with life obstacles. There's also a long-life puja similar to that, which the Tibetan Government sometimes offers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Because I had heard from Khadro-la about obstacles to His Holiness's life, I asked this 80-year-old extremely spiritual Tibetan woman about His Holiness's life. She suggested that people from four countries take the obstacles. Each person would actually become the lu, rather than making one out of *tsampa* dough, then take the obstacles to His Holiness's life. In other

¹⁰ Do not commit any nonvirtuous actions,
Perform only perfect virtue,
Subdue your own mind:
This is the teaching of the Buddha.

words, the person would be given to the dakinis or those other beings as a replacement for His Holiness. That person would take the obstacles. She said that only then would His Holiness's life obstacles be removed. At the moment I'm thinking about how this could be done. This is just for your information; this is just the news.

"May all virtuous friends have long lives, and may all their holy wishes be accomplished immediately.

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

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty, may the I, who is empty from its own side, achieve Guru Vajradhara's enlightenment, which is empty, and lead all sentient beings, who are empty, to that enlightenment, which is empty, by myself alone, who is empty.

"I dedicate all my merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha.

"As all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times have dedicated their merits, I dedicate my merits in the same way.

"May Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching spread and flourish in the world, and may I be able to cause this to happen."

For those who are going to do the retreat, we'll now have a break then do the seating and other preparations. There are a few things to do, including giving tormas to the interferers and the landlord, though maybe he's now sleeping. Maybe we'll have to make a phone call to the landlord in order to give the torma. I'm joking. There are just a few preliminaries: blessing the place, blessing one's body, speech and mind and other things like that.

We'll then do an abbreviated version of the Medicine Buddha sadhana and recite just a few mantras, which won't be counted.



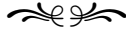
THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

Retreat Preparation



MOTIVATION: IMPERMANENCE AND DEATH

GURU SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA achieved full enlightenment in this world but then passed away into the sorrowless state. All we can see now are Buddha's relics and substitutes for Buddha, such as statues. This is all we can devote ourselves to, do prostrations to and make offerings to. Buddha didn't stay in that holy form, from that time in India up to now. There's a place near Kushinagar, in India, where fire was offered to the holy body in the normal way. There is an extremely beautiful garden there in the place where Buddha's holy body was offered fire. It's most pleasant and taken care of very well. I think the caretaker has done a very good job.

"Since you can see the place where the Buddha's holy body was offered fire, why couldn't this happen to me? Death could happen to me at any time, even today. Even tonight it could happen."

After Buddha there were Nagarjuna, Asanga and so many other great Indian pandits, who wrote many texts, as well as many Tibetan lamas from the various traditions, who wrote commentaries that have been studied up to now in the monasteries. So many beings have become enlightened from their teachings. But the Six Ornaments,¹¹ the pandits and the two arhats, Shariputra and Maudgalyayana, who brought great benefit to sentient beings, have all left.

"Even though there were so many arhats at that time, they have all left. So, of course, my death will definitely happen, and it could happen to me at any moment."

¹¹ The Six Ornaments are Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga and Dharmakirti.

In Tibet there were Marpa, Milarepa, Sakya Pandita, Lama Tsongkhapa and many other great lamas, but they have all left their holy bodies. All you can see now are tiny pieces of Lama Tsongkhapa's robes or *ding-wa*, the seat cloth. Or sometimes you see one or two of Lama Tsongkhapa's hairs. But you can't see that holy body.

"So, of course, my death could happen at any time."

Many of my gurus have already passed away, including Lama Yeshe, who quite a number of us here met and received teachings from, with all the loving laughter. During that time, Lama looked very real and permanent, like something that was going to be there all the time. During that time, this is what we believed. Many of our gurus have already passed away. Quite a number of us here received teachings from many incredible, enlightened gurus, such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama's tutors, His Holiness Ling Rinpoche and His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, and His Holiness Song Rinpoche.

"So many of my gurus, including Lama, have already passed away. I can't see them in that aspect; they have left their holy bodies. So, death could happen to me any day, even in this moment."

In regard to my family, I don't remember seeing my father. He passed away while I was still a tiny baby sleeping in a bamboo basket. My mother has also passed away. She reincarnated as an extremely beautiful, very good child, of whom I had great hopes, but that child has also already passed away. Instead of sending him to Kopan Monastery to be educated, his parents sent him to Penor Rinpoche's monastery in South India. About fifteen days after he arrived there, he was playing outside when rain suddenly came. As he rushed inside, he fell on the cement steps and fractured his skull. He had many operations, but then passed away.

Many members of my family and other relatives have already passed away, including also a sister. I don't remember whether she came after me or before me, but there was another sister besides Ngawang Samten, who is a nun and now at Lawudo. Ngawang Samten is the eldest child, but there was another sister, who passed away when she was young.

"So many family members and relatives have already passed away. I'm in a similar situation to my parents and other family members who have passed away, who have already gone. Therefore, my death could happen any time, any day, any moment. It could be my turn now."

Also think of the many friends and people you knew who have already passed away.

“So many people who are the same age as I am, even born on the same day, have already died in this world. Therefore, it could now be my turn. I could die at any time. Any day, any moment, it could happen.”

Then think in the following way. “In my life, since the time I was born, death has almost happened to me many times. Occasionally, I have almost fallen off a cliff, a roof or some other dangerous place. It has happened many times that I have almost had a car accident in which I could have died.”¹²

BLESSING OF THE SEAT

It doesn't matter whether it's from the cushion or the ground, but think that from there down to the bottom, it becomes solid, in the nature of vajra. To bless the ground, recite the mantra OM AH VAJRA ASANA HUM SVAHA. [This mantra was repeated nine times.]

Think that all the ground is blessed in the nature of vajra.

BLESSING OF THE BODY, SPEECH AND MIND

Next is blessing your body, speech and mind. At your crown is OM, which transforms into a white wheel with OM in the center. At your throat is AH, which transforms into a red eight-petaled lotus with AH in the center. At your heart there's a HUM, which transforms into a blue vajra with HUM in the center.

White, red and blue beams are emitted from the OM, AH and HUM respectively. All the blessings of the holy body, holy speech and holy mind of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, in the forms of the three vajra deities—Vairocana, Amitabha and Akshobhya—are absorbed into your three places. Meditate on this. The blessings of the holy body, holy speech and holy mind of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas are absorbed into your three places.

Think that your body, speech and mind are blessed into the nature of the three vajras, the holy body, holy speech and holy mind of the deity.

¹² There is a tape missing at this point, so the next ninety minutes of the teaching have been lost.

Some practices also have blessing of the materials. Since there's no separate text for Medicine Buddha explaining how to do the blessings, I have used some of the basic ones from the Vajrayogini text. I didn't use everything because Vajrayogini is a Highest Yoga Tantra practice.

I think we can do the sadhana tomorrow. I thought to do the short sadhana, but we would have to make it even shorter. It would have to become shorter and shorter, until it disappeared. There would then be nothing.

[The group offers a short mandala.]

Recite the mantras to multiply the merits, increasing them one hundred thousand times.¹³

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

Then recite the buddha's name to actualize all the prayers we have done.¹⁴

[The group recites the final multiplying mantra.]

Due to the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas,
due to my special attitude and due to dependent arising, may all
my pure prayers succeed immediately.

So, good morning and good night. Thank you. See you tomorrow.

¹³ CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI
SANG GYÄ NAM PAR NANG DZÄ Ö KYI GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO (1x or 3x)
JANG CHHUB SEM PA SEM PA CHHEN PO KÜN TU ZANG PO LA CHHAG
TSHÄL LO (1x or 3x)
TADYATHA OM PÄNCHA GRIYA AVA BODHANI SVAHA OM DHURU DHURU JAYA
MUKHE SVAHA (7x)

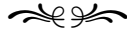
¹⁴ CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG
GYÄ NGO WA DANG MÖN LAM [THAM CHÄ RAB TU] DRUB PÄ GYÄL PO LA CHHAG
TSHÄL LO (1x or 3x)

Due to the power of the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas, the power
of infallible dependent arising and the power of my pure special attitude, may all my pure
prayers succeed immediately.

3

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27

Discourse Before Medicine Buddha Preparation



THE SOLUTION IS LAM-RIM

THE REASON we have to get out of samsara is that other sentient beings are suffering in samsara and we need to help them, to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering. Of course, that's what we normally talk about and what we're supposed to think, particularly after having met Mahayana Buddhism. But there is now an even stronger reason that we have to practice Dharma and do this retreat. What is it? We can see the reason on the world news these days. Especially because of the present situation, we have even stronger reasons to practice Dharma. Doing retreat is the only way; it's the real solution. But not just doing any retreat, not just doing a retreat where we watch our breath or our belly moving in and out or where we walk and think, "I'm walking," or where we think, "I'm breathing," "I'm touching," "I'm eating," "I'm sleeping" or "I'm dreaming." This is not a retreat where we have just the awareness, "I'm stealing" or "I'm killing." Anyway, I'm joking about this.

Here it's a retreat on lam-rim, on tantric deity practice based on lam-rim. This is the most important retreat. The only way you can do deity practice perfectly, the only way you can make it a pure, real retreat, is by practicing lam-rim. It is only then that a deity retreat becomes pure and correct. Otherwise, without lam-rim, it doesn't become even Dharma. The very first thing is to make the retreat become Dharma. Without lam-rim, it's difficult for meditation on a deity to become even Dharma, so there's no doubt that it won't become a cause to achieve liberation or enlightenment. There's no way for that to happen.

The solution is lam-rim. If we don't want to suffer ourselves and we don't want others to suffer, the ultimate solution is lam-rim, the foundation

of which is the four noble truths. Of course, bodhicitta is the most precious thing we can meditate on in our life. After meeting Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, we have this most precious opportunity to meditate on bodhicitta. As Shantideva mentions in the first chapter of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, which praises bodhicitta, after we have taken this impure body, it becomes the priceless holy body of the Victorious One, or Buddha.¹⁵ We have taken a body that is only suffering in nature. It is like a garbage can or a septic tank. As Nagarjuna explains in *Letter to a Friend*,¹⁶ it is the container of thirty-two impurities. All the dirty things that come out from the lower and upper doors are regarded as things to throw away. That shows that the body is suffering in nature and filled with impurities. Before we eat food it's clean, but after it goes into our body it gets dirty and nobody wants to eat what comes out. It is this body that makes clean food dirty.

Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen Rinpoche used to say that before you eat food, it is clean; after you eat it, if you then vomit it up, nobody can eat what you have vomited. It's regarded as dirty. Khunu Lama Rinpoche is the great bodhisattva from whom His Holiness the Dalai Lama received commentary on *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* in the Tibetan temple in Bodhgaya. In the early times there were only the Gelugpa monastery and the Burmese Vihar, but now there are many monasteries in Bodhgaya.

After having taken such a suffering body, you can transform it into the vajra holy body of a buddha, which is totally free from suffering. This is priceless. What enables you to achieve this complete transformation is the lam-rim, especially bodhicitta. That's why Shantideva emphasizes practicing bodhicitta. It's not that you just think about bodhicitta from time to time—you must realize bodhicitta and then stabilize that realization.

Every day on the TV news you hear about so much violence not only in Afghanistan but in many other places. There is more and more violence, so much killing. All the TV news programs talk about so much killing, tor-

¹⁵ It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,
For it transforms the unclean body we have taken
Into the priceless jewel of a Buddha-Form.
Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind. (Ch. 1, v. 10.)

¹⁶ V. 25.

ture, poverty and other sufferings in the world. These days especially it has increased. So, it has all to do with the mind. It has all come from the mind, from the unsubdued, or untamed, mind. These problems don't come from outside; they come from the untamed mind, from the delusions.

I've been feeling more and more that the real solution for world peace is meditation centers doing retreats and practices, including lay people taking the lay precepts and the Eight Mahayana Precepts and ordained people living in their vows. The real solution for world peace starts with you, with your stopping giving harm to others and giving them peace. The numberless sentient beings in the world then receive peace and happiness from you. It comes from looking after your own mind, from taming your own mind with these various most precious practices. As long as there's delusion, as long as there's ego, others can harm you and you can harm others. So, the solution is to get rid of your delusions. Otherwise, there's always the danger that you will harm others and also receive harm from others.

You can now see that Dharma practice, lam-rim practice, is the only way. On the basis of guru devotion, you have to realize renunciation, bodhicitta and emptiness; you have to actualize the path to liberation and to enlightenment. It's the only way. This is the ultimate solution. This is how we can end the suffering of ourselves and of other sentient beings, including all the terrorists. Actually, when we are practicing Dharma, our delusions are the terrorists; our ego is the terrorist destroying us. Our negative thoughts, our afflicted minds, our disturbing thoughts, our self-cherishing—these terrorists are destroying us. These terrorists don't give us any peace and destroy our merit, the cause of our happiness. When we do retreat, when we practice Dharma, at that time we're overcoming the terrorists within our mind. Also, we then don't become terrorists. By following our delusions, we allow ourselves to become terrorists. By following the terrorist delusions, like blowing up the Twin Towers, we blow up our enlightenment, we blow up our liberation and we blow up all the happiness of our future lives. In that way we blow up all our peace of mind.

When we practice Dharma in our daily life and when we do retreat, we abandon the delusions. We separate ourselves from our delusions; we don't follow our delusions. If we follow our delusions, it doesn't become Dharma. The moment we stop following our delusions, whatever we're doing can become Dharma. Whether we're walking, eating or even going to the toilet, the moment we stop following delusion we're practicing Dharma. That is pure Dharma, real Dharma. Doing retreat means retreating from delusion.

That is the real meaning of retreat. I'm not going to mention the details of the retreat at this time, but that's the essence of retreat.¹⁷

We're then gradually able to actualize the path and overcome our delusions, and we're then able to make it impossible for delusion to arise again by ceasing the seed of delusion, which is in the nature of an imprint. That's how we achieve everlasting happiness, with cessation of all suffering and its causes. By developing the path still further, we then cease even the subtle faults of the mind, the subtle imprints left by ignorance, the concept of inherent existence, and achieve full enlightenment.

The practice of Dharma comes in two points: stopping giving harm to others and benefiting others. The entire 84,000 teachings of the Buddha are integrated into the lam-rim. By actualizing the graduated paths of the beings of lower and middling capability, we stop giving harm to others. This happens by actualizing these two lam-rim paths. By actualizing the graduated path of the being of higher capability, we then benefit other sentient beings. By having the realization of bodhicitta and performing the six bodhisattva deeds, or paramitas, we benefit other sentient beings. To really cover everything—not harming others and benefiting them—we need to actualize the whole path to enlightenment.

That's why I said that the daily practice we do and things such as this retreat are the real solutions for the peace and happiness of the world and of other sentient beings. It's the best prayer. It's everything.

We collect skies of merit when we begin the practice by generating bodhicitta. We collect skies of merit during the practice by practicing the seven limbs. We collect so many skies of merit by rejoicing and by doing meditation on emptiness. We collect skies of merit at the beginning of the session and in the middle of the session, and at the end of the session we dedicate all the skies of merits we have collected so many times in that one session to the well-being of all sentient beings, especially to their success in solving their financial problems. So many people not only in the United States but also in the Middle East, Europe and everywhere else are losing their jobs. Even banks and insurance companies are collapsing. Many of the big airlines have had to pack up, and I don't mean pack up a suitcase. People are suffering so much. Many people have lost their jobs and now can't take care of their families. This is happening everywhere. People are having a hard time. And this is besides what's happening in Afghanistan.

¹⁷ For more teachings on retreat, see Lama Yeshe's *Becoming Vajrasattva*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche's *Heart Advice for Retreat*, and various teachings at www.LamaYeshe.com.

Here, now, we have the chance to create unmistakable causes of happiness. Dharma is not simply up to what we believe. It's not just believing that if you jump into a fire you will achieve liberation or that if you go to war, God will take care of you and you will go to heaven. What we're doing here is not simply up to belief. It's valid. What we believe and practice is valid. It is something that exists, something that we can practice and actualize. It's a path that was actualized not only by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself but even by the buddhas before him. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the present Buddhadharma, actualized this path. Like stars at night, countless pandits and yogis also actualized this path, and right at this present moment meditators are actualizing this path. After the Buddha, so many other beings actualized the path and achieved enlightenment as Buddha had explained. They all had the same experiences, and even now many meditators are having those experiences. Even among Western students doing meditation, you can see people having experiences. It is proved to your mind through your own practice. If you meditate correctly, you can see that you get some experience, if not the actual realization then something close to it. Some experience of renunciation, bodhicitta or emptiness happens. Even if you don't realize renunciation, bodhicitta or emptiness, you can see that it's a hundred percent true. You see that the inherent existence you believed in before is totally false. Through meditation and through the blessing of the guru, which comes through strong guru devotion and strong purification and collecting of merits, you're able to see that the teachings are correct. Through analysis, you discover that what you believed before is false, totally false. What the teachings say is proved to you.

It's not that Buddhists simply have blind faith in what they practice. In many other religions, however, people spend their whole lives practicing with blind faith. You can see that that's the suffering of wrong view. That obscuration of mind is very heavy suffering and very difficult to overcome. It's not like having a sickness for which you can take some medicine and recover. Those wrong views, those hallucinations, are very difficult to recognize and to cease. It happens only through lam-rim practice.

A LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

Recently I thought to offer my ideas to President Bush. They were just my suggestions, but if there were some benefit, it would be good. When this war started I wrote a letter to George Bush. (See appendix 1.) It became many pages long, but the essence of what I was trying to say is that all these

problems with the terrorists happened because of a lack of clairvoyance. You need clairvoyance so that you can see what's going to happen. You can then protect the country from terrorists and all this trouble. The problems happened because of a lack of development of the mind. You need to develop the power of mind beyond the normal capacity of ordinary people so that you can see such things. You can then protect the country and all those thousands of people wouldn't then have to die; you can also protect the whole world, and all the economic problems, with people all over the world losing their businesses and jobs, wouldn't then have to happen.

I'm not sure how my advice appeared, but I just thought to bring up the issue of the need to develop the power of the mind.

Also, at the end, I said that all these problems with terrorists are due to the untamed mind, to wrong views and negative emotional thoughts. I made the suggestion that the whole country, and the whole world, put effort into education in compassion. There should be special education in compassion in schools, so that children generate the good heart, the thought of benefiting others. Just as many countries support each other in a war and other activities, here everybody should put effort into together bringing this special education into the schools in their own country. There should be special education that emphasizes the good heart in schools, and at home parents should also teach this to their children and practice it themselves, becoming examples to their children. Children should learn this at school and also at home.

Each child will then grow up with a good heart, patience and universal responsibility, feeling, "I'm responsible for freeing others from suffering and bringing them happiness." When children grow up in this way, they will bring much peace to their parents and the rest of their family. When they then become fathers and mothers, they can educate their own children by being an inspiring example. Their grandchildren will then practice in the same way. They will have a good life, a happy life. They will grow up with inner peace and satisfaction, rather than with anger, egotism and other negative emotional thoughts. Instead of dark lives, those children will have lives filled with light. They will grow up with love, compassion and wisdom inside them. They will then educate their own children in the same way, and it will go on and on in this way. The benefit of educating one child goes on from generation to generation. That one child will stop giving harm to other sentient beings and will benefit others. This is what he or she will practice in daily life. It is not that this benefit will happen only here in the

United States or whichever other country the child is in. The rest of the world won't receive harm from that person, and on top of that will receive benefit from them. That person will bring so much peace and happiness to the rest of the world and to all sentient beings.

The opposite of this is when one influential person in the world, because of lack of the good heart, tortures and kills many millions of people. At different times, because of his lack of good heart, various highly influential and powerful people have done this to millions of people. This is without talking about all the animals and insects in the ground and in the water that are killed during a war.

For example, if Osama bin Laden had practiced the good heart, there's no way that the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center would have happened. That wouldn't have happened, and all the big airlines wouldn't have lost so much business, the many hotels everywhere wouldn't have had to close down, and so many people wouldn't have had to lose their jobs. There wouldn't have been these problems all over the world. If bin Laden, this one person, had practiced the good heart, all those many thousands of people wouldn't have had to suffer. You can see how all this came from one person's anger. It happened because one person didn't practice patience, didn't practice the good heart. Osama bin Laden himself is a very thin person with a beard; he's not gigantic like a mountain. But his mind-power has brought unbelievable harm. Mind-power can destroy the world.

It would be so good if what I emphasized at the end of the letter, the idea of special education in compassion, could be introduced. While I've been watching the news on TV, I have heard compassion mentioned only two times. I think Bush mentioned compassion in America once, and I've forgotten the other time. You hardly ever hear compassion mentioned in the news. In all the other news I haven't heard any mention of it.

The other point I mentioned in the letter is that there are other ways to solve the problem. This problem can be solved through spiritual practice. You don't have to harm others. War has side effects. Even if you defeat your enemies, it's only temporary; sooner or later they will retaliate or other people will attack you. The result of the karmic imprint planted on your mental continuum is that others will attack you, either now or in the future. Even if you win, there's only temporary benefit. Many others will also get upset. So, I tried to bring up the issue that these problems can be solved through spiritual means.

I also made a suggestion about tornados and other so-called natural

disasters. We call them “natural disasters” and in the West we think they’re natural, but they’re actually not natural. When anybody is experiencing a tornado, hurricane, flood or earthquake, it came from their mind; it came from their self-cherishing thought, ignorance, anger, attachment or another negative emotional thought and from their karma. They have given harm to others motivated by negative thoughts of ill will or anger, which all start with ignorance, anyway. These disasters are the result of harming other beings, and not only human beings but also spirits, *nagas* and other living beings situated in the country. Since these disasters come from the negative karma of the people experiencing them, they’re not natural. They happen because of causes and conditions created by those people.

I also offered an idea as to what could be done to solve these disasters that cause many billions of dollars worth of damage. There are many religions in the United States and they should all be requested to put effort into solving these problems. Here you have to come to spiritual power because it’s beyond the capacity of ordinary people to control such things. When a disaster has actually happened, with many people homeless and experiencing unbearable suffering, you can’t do anything about it.

I offered an idea as to what could be done, though it doesn’t matter whether or not anyone pays attention to it. The idea is to request Sangha members, those who are living a pure life (though lay people can also read it), to recite the Buddha’s precious teaching, *Holy Sutra of Golden Light*. They can be requested to read it all the time. This would help a lot to protect countries from all such disasters.¹⁸

This is what came out as beneficial from my Mickey Mouse divination. There have been predictions that there is some danger of poisoning of the water supplies of Washington, New York, Boston and other cities in the United States. According to my divination, Medicine Buddha practice is very good to protect from the danger of this poisoning.

We have here the small booklet from Wisdom Publications, with the very short healing meditation from Padmasambhava, which I translated many years ago.¹⁹ Padmasambhava’s short healing practice gives protection from anthrax. I think that is more for the general public, who can’t do much practice.

¹⁸ See more about the *Sutra of Golden Light* at www.fpmt.org.

¹⁹ *Healing Buddha: A Practice for the Prevention and Healing of Disease*.

There is also the short Medicine Buddha text that I translated many years ago at Kopan. In the past it was published as a small dark blue book, though it might now be in a different form.²⁰ It's a short meditation but very powerful. It's condensed from the long and middle-length Medicine Buddha pujas, but it's powerful and unique. This is the Medicine Buddha practice that I try to do when I'm not being lazy. In it you offer the seven-limb practice to each Medicine Buddha. Anyway, you can do any of the Medicine Buddha practices.²¹

There's also a mantra that destroys negative karmas and defilements.²² This mantra is unbelievably beneficial; it's very powerful for purification but also protects from the dangers of fire, water, earth and so forth. This mantra also came out as good for protection from these dangers.

FOUR BASIC WAYS TO HELP

I mentioned before about compassion, and here we're trying to organize Universal Education.²³ As part of Universal Education, I thought it would be good to have stories of Buddha's past lives as a bodhisattva, telling how he sacrificed himself. In so many lifetimes, as a human being and as various animals, he made charity of his holy body to so many other sentient beings, saving their lives and benefiting them. In one lifetime as a king, he made charity of his whole family and all his possessions to others. He sacrificed himself for other sentient beings. There could also be stories of other great bodhisattvas and of the great Italian saint, St. Francis of Assisi, who acted like a real Kadampa geshe. Externally, he prayed to God and appeared a Christian, but his mind was that of a real bodhisattva, a real Kadampa geshe. He preferred to be criticized by others rather than be praised. He was a great holy being. There could also be stories of other Christian saints, such as Mother Teresa, and of Mahatma Gandhi-ji and so forth. There could be stories of any great being from any religion, anyone whose mind was enriched

²⁰ *Medicine Buddha Sadhana*.

²¹ See also *The Concise Essence Sutra Ritual of Bhagavan Medicine Buddha Called The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*, *Essential Buddhist Prayers*, Vol. 2, p. 99 ff.

²² The mantra is OM BI PULA GARBHE MANI PRABHE / TATHAGATA DHARI SHANI / MANI MANI SUPRABHE VIMALA SANGARA GAMBHIRA HUM HUM JVALA JVALA / BUD-DHA VILOKITE GUHYA / ADHISHTITE GARBHE SVAHA / PADMA DHARA AMOGA JAYATI CHURU CHURU SVAHA.

²³ Now called Essential Education. See www.essential-education.org.

by compassion, who brought much peace and happiness to others, and who offered great service to many sentient beings. Children could learn these stories through theater performances, which could also be shown to adults. Those holy beings could become models for young people, through their becoming familiar with them in theater performances, instead of famous boxers, body-builders or Sumo wrestlers.

Then another way to help would be to have special education on how to be kind and tolerant based on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's public talks. The main things would be all His Holiness's advice on kindness and compassion, how to live daily life, how to deal with others, how to live in the world, how our happiness is dependent on others and others' happiness is dependent on us, how we are interconnected. There could also be instructions from Lama Yeshe's talks, as well as from some of mine on transforming problems.

A third way to help would be through more education in philosophical reasoning. There could be education in the deeper philosophy for practicing all these things. Ideas could be taken from the five major sutra texts, from the very beginning of logical reasoning with *dura*, through to the higher subjects, such as Madhyamaka. Some of the FPMT geshe could take suitable ideas from various texts and make them into a book, which a group of Western students with the right talents could then put into Western terms and make into a series of books.

Finally, a further way of helping would be through a new approach to psychology, so that it becomes a bridge to Dharma. That is the fourth point.

There are these four basic ways to help, in which you teach the essence of Buddhism, a little like teaching Buddhism in a university, but you don't actually tell people they have to devote themselves to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You teach the essence, but not like in a lam-rim meditation course. This is something that could really become worldwide, because there's no need to be afraid of any religious bias. People from other religions can learn about these things. That is one big thing about Universal Education. Not everybody can become Buddhist or Christian or Muslim or Hindu, but everybody can participate in Universal Education.

BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE

I think that this Medicine Buddha retreat has happened at the right time. There's now a great need for it. Medicine Buddha practice is the most

beneficial thing to do, and there is so much power in doing group practice. I had heard that many people praying together in a monastery has much more power than one person praying alone. I then saw in a thought transformation text by a Kadampa geshe (though I don't remember which Kadampa geshe it was) that people doing prayers together has more power to bring success than one person praying. Here in this retreat, we are being given the chance to pray together, which is very powerful for our own development, as well as for the effect on the world.

The great enlightened being Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said that in such a degenerate time Medicine Buddha and Heruka are two very precious deities to practice. When the time is very degenerate, with an explosion of the five degenerations, (1) *delusions* become stronger and harder to abandon; (2) the degeneration of *sentient beings* means that they are more and more thick-skulled and more and more difficult to subdue; (3) the degeneration of *time* means that there are more wars, sicknesses (with new diseases coming) and so forth; (4) the degeneration of *life* means that the life span is becoming shorter and shorter; and (5) the degeneration of *view* means that people very easily believe wrong views and find it difficult to believe the right view. Only a small number of people believe in karma or understand emptiness.

There are four schools of Buddhist philosophy, each with a different view in regard to emptiness. The real, unmistaken view is that of the Prasangika school, but those who hold this view are very small in number. It's only by realizing the Prasangika school's view of emptiness that you can cut the root of samsara. With realization of the views of emptiness of the other schools—Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra or even Svatantrika Madhyamaka—in reality you can't cut the root of samsara. It is only by realizing the Prasangika view that you can cut the root of samsara, because the root of samsara is of only one type: a very subtle wrong concept. There's no mention of *subtle wrong concept* in the texts—I'm just expressing it this way. In terms of wrong concepts, there are other grosser ones.

So, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained that in such a degenerate time Medicine Buddha and Heruka are two very precious deities to practice. In other words, from sutra, there is Medicine Buddha, and from Highest Yoga Tantra, there is Heruka, with which the blessing becomes more and more powerful at this time. Therefore, we are very fortunate to be able to practice Medicine Buddha.

Also, the Medicine Buddhas made many prayers in the past. Those who

have done the Medicine Buddha puja will have seen in the text that each one of the Medicine Buddhas made different prayers to solve various problems of sentient beings and to bring them happiness and success (see appendix 2). They made these prayers to be able to benefit sentient beings in the future. They all then became enlightened. A buddha has skies of qualities, one of which is the ten powers, and one of the ten powers is the power of prayer.²⁴ In the past the Medicine Buddhas prayed, “When anybody recites my name and mantra, may such and such problems be solved and may they have such and such success.” Because of that, when they became enlightened and achieved the power of prayer, their names and mantras have all this power. When we recite the Medicine Buddhas’ names and mantras, we receive the results of the prayers they made in the past. And if we recite the Medicine Buddhas’ names and mantras, whatever prayers we do are actualized. Therefore, doing Medicine Buddha practice is very powerful for success. People think Medicine Buddha is only for healing. It’s not only for healing but for everything.

After explaining all the inconceivable benefits of practicing, praying to and reciting the name and mantra of Medicine Buddha, Buddha then asked Ananda, his attendant, “Do you believe this?” Ananda replied, “Yes, I believe it. I believe what Buddha has said about these benefits because Buddha has inconceivable qualities, including omniscient mind, which can see everything.”

Buddha then explained that even animals who hear Medicine Buddha’s name will never get reborn in the lower realms. To save them from reincarnating in the lower realms forever is unbelievably compassionate. For each heavy negative karma you commit, you have to experience suffering in the lower realms for many eons. However, by simply hearing the name-mantra of Medicine Buddha, a being is saved forever from being reborn in the lower realms. That is unbelievable! It is simple to chant the name-mantra in the ear of an animal, but it has incredible power because of Medicine Buddha’s bodhicitta. At the very beginning, when Medicine Buddha first generated compassion for sentient beings, Medicine Buddha wished to benefit all sentient beings. The root of all this power is Medicine Buddha’s great

²⁴There are two sets of ten powers enumerated in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: wang-chu* and *yon-ten tob-chu* (vol.2, pp. 166–67). The former is power, or dominion, over life, deeds, necessities, devotion, prayer or aspiration, miraculous abilities, birth, doctrine, mind and pristine cognition.

compassion, which embraces all us sentient beings. Medicine Buddha developed this compassion and then, of course, achieved omniscient mind. All the skies of benefit we get from simply reciting Medicine Buddha's name-mantra, with simply hearing the mantra giving protection from the sufferings of samsara, come from Medicine Buddha's compassion. And sooner or later we will achieve enlightenment. So, all this came from Medicine Buddha's compassion.

As those who have done Medicine Buddha puja will know, Medicine Buddha practice is also very powerful in purifying degenerations of lay vows and vows of ordination. That is another way this practice saves us from the lower realms. Since in the lower realms we have no opportunity to practice Dharma, being saved from the lower realms enables us to quickly be liberated from samsara and achieve enlightenment.

It is said that Medicine Buddha's mantra has inconceivable benefits. In the presence of the eight Medicine Buddhas (there are eight when you include Shakyamuni Buddha), Manjushri requested, "When there's an explosion of the five degenerations and sentient beings have very little merit, they will mostly engage in negative karma, and positive actions will be very rare. When sentient beings are totally possessed by various sicknesses and spirit harms, may whatever prayers the Medicine Buddhas made in the past quickly be actualized. May sentient beings be able to see the Medicine Buddhas and may you actualize all the wishes of sentient beings. Please teach us this special mantra."

In one voice, Shakyamuni Buddha and the seven Medicine Buddhas then granted the Medicine Buddha mantra.

If you recite this mantra as a daily practice, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas will always pay attention to you and always guide you. Vajrapani, Owner of the Secrets, and the four guardians will also always protect you.

Last time I came here I brought a copy of the Medicine Buddha sutra and had a photocopy made of it so that you could put it here in the mandala. When you do Medicine Buddha practice, you need that special Medicine Buddha text. If you're doing Medicine Buddha puja in a Dharma center, you need this special sutra and also the Medicine Buddha mandala. You should keep that in mind. There are two types of sutra. This one elaborately explains the benefits of practicing Medicine Buddha.

As mentioned in the Medicine Buddha sutra, if you practice Medicine Buddha or simply make an offering to Medicine Buddha, all twelve leaders of the groups of the entourage, who are like protectors and each of whom

has an entourage of seven hundred thousand, will protect you. Through that all your wishes are then fulfilled.

Also, all your negative karma is purified. All sicknesses and spirit harms are quickly pacified. When someone is in a lot of pain that is difficult to control, if a Medicine Buddha puja is done in a monastery or somewhere else, the person will either recover or peacefully pass away, so that they don't have to continue with all that pain.

Also, all your wishes are fulfilled.

Some years ago in Taiwan, George, a man I met when I went to Taiwan for the first time, gave me a Medicine Buddha statue to fill. He was the only person that I talked to about Dharma on that first visit. I talked to him at the airport, when I was leaving. Because of laziness I didn't get to fill the statue, but I asked Dr. Adrian Feldmann (Ven. Thubten Gyatso) from Australia to do it. Many people here know Dr. Adrian. He's one of the elder Sangha and has been a fully ordained monk for many years.

I was in Taiwan about seven days, but nothing much happened at that time. I was held hostage in a hotel by a Tibetan lama from Sera Je who was then a layperson and has since passed away. One idea was to start a Dharma center and another was to start a translation program in a place where it could be more successful financially. Westerners and others would learn the Tibetan language, and there would be a geshe to translate Dharma texts with the help of a Western professor who knew Tibetan. We had the idea to start these projects in Taiwan. The lama told me that the projects could happen, but something didn't feel right, so I suddenly changed my plans. Of course, my changing plans is nothing new.

The next day everything was planned for us to go on pilgrimage to Master Hsing Yun's large monastery in Kaohsiung. The lama had arranged the transport and everything else. With me were Merry Colony, Neil [Ven. Thubten Dondrub], who was my attendant at that time, and the translator. We were going on pilgrimage to meet the four great abbots of Taiwan and to question them about gelongma vows, as His Holiness had asked for this to be checked in Singapore and other countries. I also had some other Dharma questions that I thought to ask the abbots. Master Hsing Yun was to be the first abbot we visited, and we planned to go the next day. Somebody then came and talked for hours about that Tibetan lama. I then changed my plans in the middle of the night, and the next morning I left for Nepal instead of going on pilgrimage. At the airport before I left I talked a little bit to George about Dharma.

Anyway, George had the Medicine Buddha statue filled. He then gave it to someone who was very sick with cancer. One day this person was lying in bed. He needed his medicine but it was in the bathroom, and he couldn't move. He slowly turned his head to the Medicine Buddha statue, which had been left on a table beside his pillow. He saw that the Medicine Buddha statue was holding the medicine in its hand. He then took that medicine.

When he later passed away, he slowly turned and put his palms together at his heart, then very peacefully passed away. He wasn't a Buddhist or of any particular religion, but because of what happened to him, with Medicine Buddha guiding him, I think he must have remembered Medicine Buddha. So he put his palms together at his heart as he was lying there and then very peacefully passed away.

Also, it is very, very powerful to recite the name of each Medicine Buddha seven times. It quickly purifies all the heavy negative karmas collected during beginningless rebirths. One collects much merit and has a long life free from sickness. One is saved from the lower realms and is quickly able to achieve enlightenment.

DEDICATIONS FOR THE RETREAT

We can dedicate the Medicine Buddha initiation and retreat to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long life. The very first dedication is for His Holiness to have a long life and for all his holy wishes to be accomplished immediately. We can then make the same dedication for other holy beings, other virtuous friends. Besides dedicating for general purposes, we can make this specific dedication.

We can also dedicate our retreat to all the people who are dying now in the war in Afghanistan. And dedicate for all the terrorists and Muslims who are very angry to be able to generate bodhicitta in their minds. This retreat is for all of them, including that skinny person, bin Laden. Whether their body is fat or skinny, may they all generate bodhicitta in their hearts. When I was doing retreat I did do some prayers for those who had died not to be reborn in the lower realms.

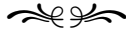
We can also dedicate in the following way. "May everyone in the whole world generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta and understand karma. May they abandon negative karma and practice virtue. From that, all the problems—sickness, poverty, so-called natural disasters—will stop and

all the good things will happen. There will be peace and happiness in the world. May all sentient beings quickly achieve enlightenment.

“May I also become like Medicine Buddha. May anyone who even hears my name never ever get reborn in the lower realms. May anyone who remembers or recites my name, as with Medicine Buddha’s name, have all their wishes for happiness fulfilled in accordance with the Dharma.

“May all the disasters caused by the weather and all other harms be pacified in the world, and particularly in the United States.”

Preparation for Medicine Buddha Initiation



[RINPOCHE LEADS CHANTING of the Medicine Buddha mantra.]

MEDICINE BUDDHA PREPARATION

To be qualified to do Medicine Buddha practice, including generating yourself as Medicine Buddha, you need the preliminary of having received a great initiation of Medicine Buddha. As I requested, Chöden Rinpoche gave the great Medicine Buddha initiation here.

Medicine Buddha belongs to Action Tantra, of which there are three types: lotus race, *tathagata* race and vajra race. Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, as in the *nyung-nä* practice, and Four-Arm Chenrezig belong to the lotus race of Action Tantra. Mitrugpa belongs to the vajra race. Here Medicine Buddha belongs to the tathagata race. So, Action Tantra deities belong to the lotus, vajra or tathagata race.

To do a great initiation you need the preparation. I received the great initiation of Medicine Buddha from Chöden Rinpoche last time Rinpoche was here, and I just recently finished Medicine Buddha retreat. I've been trying to spread the Medicine Buddha practice to as many people as possible. I usually carry photos of Medicine Buddha around with me and give them to many people. I've been trying to spread knowledge of the benefits of Medicine Buddha to inspire people to do the practice, which is very simple. The name-mantra is very easy to recite but even it has benefits like the sky. It has unbelievable power to purify negative karma and save beings from the lower realms. For quite a number of years I've been trying to inspire people to do this practice and giving out pictures of Medicine Buddha. I feel very

fortunate and very happy to be able to help many sentient beings to practice Medicine Buddha.

As far as preparation for the initiation goes, there are normally five things to be done. The first preparation is analyzing whether or not a disciple is suitable to be given the initiation; there are different ways of analyzing. Then, in the sadhana, there are preparation of the earth goddess, preparation of the deity's mandala, preparation of the vase and preparation of the disciple. That's the general outline. Here today I did the short version of the preparation of the vase and so forth, but it still took a long time.

THE FALSE I

There are self-grasping of the person and self-grasping of the aggregates, which are the base to be labeled "I." How does ignorance arise? The I and the aggregates are totally empty in nature; they're empty of existing from their own sides. They are totally empty, like space, devoid of any inherent existence. However, in the view of our hallucinated mind, these phenomena appear to be inherently existent, and we allow our mind to apprehend that as true. That's how we create the root of samsara, the ignorance that grasps inherent existence.

That ignorance is a totally false, totally mistaken, concept. Why? Because the objects it believes in, the truly existent I and aggregates, are not there. When we think of I, we think of a real I, an I that is not merely labeled; we don't think of an I that our mind has labeled. On top of that, when the I appears back to us, it doesn't appear to us to be merely imputed by our mind. We don't see it that way. We don't see that the I is merely imputed by our mind. The I doesn't appear to us in that way, as simply labeled by our mind, and we don't see it in that way. Even though the reality of how the I exists and how it came into existence is that it's merely imputed by mind, it doesn't appear to us in that way and we don't see it in that way. Even though that is the only way the I exists, being merely imputed by the mind, we don't see it that way.

The I that appears to us and that we apprehend is totally false. The self that we're expecting somebody to praise or that gets hurt when somebody criticizes it, the self that gets upset and experiences all those emotional ups and downs, doesn't exist. We make up so many fantasies about this imagined self. However, not even an atom of this self that appears to be not labeled by our mind and that we apprehend to exist in that way exists. We can't find it

anywhere. It doesn't exist. Such a self cannot be found anywhere on these aggregates or anywhere else. It is totally empty, totally nonexistent.

HOW TIME EXISTS

When we think of a year, when we don't analyze how it is merely imputed by our mind, we think of a truly existent year. (I'm talking about a year, not an ear. I remember one time at Vajrapani Institute I was talking about the ear when I was supposed to be talking about the year.) When we think about a year, when we don't meditate, when we're not aware that time is made up by our mind, a year appears to us to be a truly existent year. It appears to us like that, and we then allow our mind to believe that it's a hundred percent true. That's the view of the ignorance that apprehends inherent, or true, existence. So, that's a total hallucination.

Now, that hallucination is the normal view of sentient beings. Those of us who haven't realized emptiness (not only not having a direct perception of emptiness but not having any realization of emptiness) allow our mind to believe that's true. We don't question it. We have no doubt that there's a real year. But we cannot find that year on the first month, second month, third month, fourth month, fifth month, sixth month, seventh month, eighth month, ninth month, tenth month, eleventh month, twelve month, thirteenth month, fifteenth month.... I'm joking. We can't find the year there on any of the twelve months. And we can't find the year on all of the twelve months together. The twelve months are the base. When our mind sees the twelve months, we just make up the label "year"; we merely impute "year."

You can see now that there's no such thing as a real year there. You cannot see a real year there. Before, a real year always appeared to you and you believed in it, but suddenly it's not there. It is totally nonexistent. That real year is the object to be refuted, or *gak-cha*, as explained in the philosophical texts. This is the one you have to realize is empty, nonexistent, because it doesn't exist. The year that exists is the one that is merely imputed by the mind. There is a year because there are twelve months. That's it. What is that year? It is nothing other than what is merely imputed by the mind. Your mind merely imputed and believed in that. It's just a thought, a concept.

You can't say there's no year at all. There is a year, but it's totally empty. The year that appeared to you before and that you believed in is totally nonexistent.

Now it is the same with a month. When we don't analyze, when our mind is not aware of the nature of a month, again a month appears truly existent. A real month appears to be existing from there, and we let our mind hold on to that as a hundred percent true. We never question it. We have no doubt about it. Again, if we look for that month, if we search on the base of each day, we cannot find a month. We cannot find a month even on the whole thirty days together. If we look for it, we cannot find it.

The month that appeared to you and that you believed to be a hundred percent true cannot be found anywhere, neither on the thirty days nor anywhere else. That month is totally nonexistent, totally empty. It is the same with every single one of the twelve months. You cannot find any of the months on that base of thirty days. That month that appeared to you to be truly existent and that you believed to exist in that way is totally nonexistent, empty, right there.

Now, when we think of a day, when we're not analyzing or not aware of the nature of a day, it appears to be a truly existent day, a real day from there, and we then let our mind believe that there is such a real day, that it's true. When we then check whether it really does exist on the base, the twenty-four hours, we can't find it. It doesn't exist on each hour, and we can't find it on the collection of all the twenty-four hours. So, the day is totally nonexistent, empty, right there from where it is appearing as a real one. It is totally empty.

Again, with an hour, there's a real hour appearing to us, and we allow our mind to believe it's true. But when we look for it on the base, the sixty minutes, we cannot find that real hour. We can't find it on each minute or on all the sixty minutes together. Again, that real hour is totally nonexistent, empty, right there from where it is appearing.

It is the same with a minute. When you think of a minute, how does it appear to you? And do you believe in what appears to you? A real minute, a truly existent minute, appears from there. If you look for that real minute, however, you can't find it on each second or on all the sixty seconds together. That real minute is totally nonexistent, empty, right there.

When we talk about the speed of a camera, we count in hundredths or thousandths of a second, so there are split seconds. When we think about a second, again a real second appears from there, and we believe it to be true. We don't question or doubt it. We believe one hundred percent that it's true. A totally false second appears to us and we believe it to be true. If we

look for that real second in all its split seconds, however, we can't find it. We can't find that second on any of those split seconds. Again, that real second is totally nonexistent, totally empty.

According to the Prasangika school, it's the same with a split second. The truly existent split second that we believe in is totally false. It is totally nonexistent, totally empty. Everything is totally empty. From the year down to the split second, and also the divisions of a split second, everything is totally empty. Or, I could say, from the year down to the split second, everything is merely imputed by the mind. The way they all exist is simply by being merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, starting from the year and going down through the month, day, hour, minute and second, everything is totally empty of existing from its own side. This is the reality in regard to analyzing the nature of time. The conclusion is that all those divisions of time are empty. While they exist, they're empty. And while they're empty, they exist; they exist in mere name. Dependent arising and emptiness are unified, which is what the Buddha realized and taught. That's why Lama Tsongkhapa highly praised the Buddha. The way that time and other phenomena exist is extremely subtle, extremely fine. There's an extremely fine line between existing and not existing. This is what Nagarjuna and Lama Tsongkhapa explained.

ANALYZING BODY AND MIND

Now it is the same with the I and the aggregates, the association of body and mind. Everything is merely labeled by the mind, from the body down to the atoms of the body and the particles of those atoms and the particles of those particles. What they are is what is merely labeled by the mind.

Again, from the consciousness down to the seconds of consciousness and the split seconds of consciousness and the divisions of the split seconds, what they are is what is merely labeled by the mind. When you think precisely, they are all merely imputed by the mind. Everything is like this, from the I down to the particles of the atoms of the body and the split seconds of the consciousness.

Therefore, all these are totally empty. From the I down to the particles of the atoms and the particles of those particles and down to the seconds of consciousness, the split seconds of consciousness and the divisions of those split seconds, they are all totally empty. They are all totally empty of existing

from their own side. From the I down to the particles of the atoms and the split seconds of consciousness, nothing at all exists from its own side. They are all totally empty. Concentrate intensely on this point.

[There is a very long pause here for meditation.]

THE ROOT OF SAMBARA

This is the very nature of all these phenomena. In reality they are all empty. However, while it is like this in reality, when our mind thinks of the base of the merely imputed I, the aggregates, the negative imprint left on our mental continuum by past ignorance, the concept of inherent existence, immediately projects inherent existence. It is like a camera that has recorded images on a roll of film, which can then be projected onto a movie or TV screen. Right after our mind thinks of the base, the aggregates, right after the mere imputation, the negative imprint left on our mental continuum by past ignorance projects inherent existence. That's why the I, which is merely imputed by the mind, doesn't appear back to us as merely imputed by the mind but as the total opposite, as truly existent. Also, we are unaware or we forget that the I is merely imputed by the mind. The first moment of thought merely imputes "I," but because, first of all, the negative imprint left by the ignorance that apprehends inherent existence causes the I to appear inherently existent and, second, we're not aware that the I is merely imputed, with the next moment of the continuation of that thought, we believe the inherently existent I to be true. So, the moment we allow our mind to apprehend that this truly existent I is true, that this view is right, we create the root of samsara. That thought apprehending that the I appearing as truly existent is true becomes the root of samsara. The moment we do that this thought becomes the root of samsara, the ignorance apprehending the inherent existence of the I, the self-grasping of the person. When we do the same thing with the aggregates it is then the self-grasping of phenomena, which means the aggregates. This is the root of samsara according to the Prasangika Madhyamaka school. In reality, there is only one root of samsara, not many, and this is it. You can see that this is a very subtle concept.

This is the very root of samsara, the very root of the entire suffering of the six realms. From this root, ignorance, anger, attachment and the other delusions arise and then motivate karma. This body and mind, these aggregates, are suffering in nature. As explained in the lam-rim teachings, they experience suffering rebirth; the suffering of old age; all the 424 different types of

sickness; depression, which can be very difficult to cure, going on for years and years; the pain of being unable to find desirable objects; then after having found them the pain of not being able to gain satisfaction. Your mind becomes so unhappy, because even though you have material enjoyments and friends, you can't find satisfaction. Your mind is hollow, empty. There is also so much suffering from worry and fear about having to separate from those desirable objects. In regard to the sufferings of the aggregates, five types of suffering are explained in the lam-rim.²⁵ However, whatever feeling these aggregates experience—pleasure, suffering or indifference—is suffering in nature. There is also the suffering of death. So, all these sufferings are the productions of ignorance. They all came from ignorance.

When a plane crashes into a building and the whole thing becomes an inferno, with many people suffering and dying, and smoke still coming from it many days later, where do all those appearances of fire and smoke and people dying come from? It's the creation of mind. It all came from this ignorance, this root of samsara. It is all a production of the ignorance of the people who experience it.

It is similar with the beings in the hot hells, who live in a place that is oneness with fire. There is a red-hot iron ground that is one with fire. In one of the secondary hot hells, there are oceans of red-hot lava that are one with fire, as when a volcano erupts. Beings are born and have to suffer there for many eons. There are also iron houses that are one with fire and whole fields of swords, where there is nowhere you can step without cutting yourself. All the appearances of those unpleasant places are the productions of delusion; they all come from this ignorance. All those terrifying hell realms are productions of this wrong concept that I described just before.

In other words, all the unbelievable sufferings of the six realms come from that concept, that subtle thought that makes you view objects wrongly. All those sufferings come simply from that thought, simply from apprehending objects in the wrong way. This thought itself is kind of nonsense, but it can have a great effect, as in the recent example with the terrorists, which brought unbelievable suffering here and also affected the rest of the world.

²⁵ The aggregates are vessels for future suffering; vessels for present suffering; vessels for the suffering of pain; vessels for the suffering of change; and vessels for pervasive, compound-ing suffering.

THE DANGERS OF SELF-CHERISHING

We must be liberated from all these samsaric sufferings forever by ceasing karma and delusion, by ceasing this ignorance along with its seed, or imprint. However, simply achieving that is not sufficient as it doesn't complete the works for self and for other sentient beings. The cessation of defilements and accomplishment of realizations are still not complete. During beginningless rebirths up to now, it is the ego, the self-cherishing thought, that hasn't allowed us to achieve enlightenment. It hasn't allowed us to achieve even liberation from samsara. And it is following this self-cherishing thought that hasn't allowed us to have any lam-rim realization during beginningless rebirths up to now. These are the shortcomings of this ego. This is the real demon, our real enemy. And it is this ego that has made us suffer in samsara and experience all these obstacles up to now.

Think, "If I don't get rid of this self-cherishing thought right now, I will continuously experience the sufferings of samsara without end and won't achieve any realizations of the path to enlightenment. It will cause me to continuously suffer in samsara.

"What is more harmful, all the atomic bombs in this world or my self-cherishing thought? Even if they cause my death, all those atomic bombs alone can't make me to be reborn in the lower realms, in the hell realms. But if this ego, this self-cherishing thought, is there, it causes me to be reborn in the lower realms by obliging me to create negative karma. So, this self-cherishing thought is much more harmful than all the atomic bombs and other weapons in this world.

"And what is more harmful, all the cancer and other sicknesses or my self-cherishing thought? Even if they cause my death, all the sicknesses alone can't make me to be reborn in the hell realms. If death happens, one can go to a pure land. Many holy beings and meditators who had cancer have gone to a pure land or reincarnated again to continue to benefit sentient beings. Sickness alone, even if it causes death, doesn't cause one to be reborn in the lower realms. But if self-cherishing thought is there, it causes not just death but rebirth in the lower realms. It doesn't allow one to be reborn in the pure land of a buddha or to receive a perfect human rebirth in the next life."

No matter how much poison or anthrax there is in the world it's nothing when compared to the danger from your own ego, your own self-cherishing thought. Even if the poison causes your death, you can still go to a pure land or have a perfect human rebirth and continue to practice Dharma

and benefit others. Even if the poison kills you, it can't interfere with those things.

Think, "Poison alone can't make me to be reborn in the lower realms, in the hell realms. I can still go to the pure land of a buddha and achieve enlightenment there or receive a perfect human rebirth. But if I have self-cherishing thought, it doesn't allow those things to happen and causes me to be reborn in the lower realms, in the hell realms. Therefore, this is the great demon; this is my enemy. And it is not only my enemy, harming me, but it harms all sentient beings. So, I must eliminate this ego, this self-cherishing thought, right now. I must abandon it right now and change to cherishing others."

CHERISHING OTHERS

Think, "Great compassion is generated in dependence upon all sentient beings: every single hell being, hungry ghost, animal, asura, sura and human being, including even my enemy, the person whom I hate or who hates me, who criticizes or provokes me or causes me trouble. From great compassion, bodhicitta is generated; from that, a bodhisattva happens; from that, Buddha happens; and from Buddha, Dharma then happens. All the good karma that I've collected in the past during beginningless rebirths, that I am collecting now and that I will collect in the future is the action of the Buddha. All these virtuous actions, all this Dharma, are the actions of Buddha. From all these virtuous actions, which are Buddha's actions, I then receive all my past, present and future happiness, including the realizations of the path to enlightenment. The infinite qualities of Buddha's holy body, holy speech and holy mind that I will achieve come from good karma, the Buddha's action, collected in the past and present and which will be collected in the future.

"Therefore, I receive all my past, present and future happiness, including enlightenment, by the kindness of every single hell being. They are the most kind, most precious one in my life.

"And I receive every single happiness, past, present and future, in dependence upon the kindness of every single hungry ghost. They are the most kind, most precious one in my life.

"I receive all my past, present and future happiness by the kindness of every single animal. They're the most kind, most precious one in my life."

Meditate very strongly on this. Feel how kind and precious they are.

“I receive every single one of my past, present and future happiness by the kindness of every single human being. They are the most kind, most precious one in my life.

“I receive every single past, present and future happiness of mine by the kindness of every single asura, every single sura and every single intermediate state being. So, every single asura, sura and intermediate state being is the most kind, most precious ones in my life.

“Therefore, in my life there’s nobody to cherish and nobody to work for except other sentient beings. What they want is happiness and what they don’t want is suffering. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself *alone*. Therefore, I must achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, for success in actualizing the whole path and for great success in being able to offer skies of benefit to sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, I’m going to take the preparation for the Medicine Buddha initiation.”

That’s the essence. Only someone with a motivation of bodhicitta, someone who is seeking enlightenment, is allowed to enter the mandala. Otherwise, you are not allowed to enter it.

If you have that attitude of seeking enlightenment, everything else—liberation from samsara, the happiness of future lives and the happiness of this life—come by the way.

MEDICINE BUDDHA PREPARATION²⁶

Now, here, if you’re taking the great initiation, you have to generate yourself as the deity. You purify in emptiness, and the wisdom seeing emptiness then generates into the deity.

* * *

Wisdom focuses on the aspect of the deity’s holy body and at the same time understands that it’s empty. This is the unification of method and wisdom. The meaning of *vajra* is the inseparability of these two, method and wisdom. Since your mind is transformed into this transcendental wisdom and it brings you to enlightenment, it’s like a vehicle, or *yana*, in Sanskrit. This vehicle brings you to enlightenment.

²⁶ Most of the preparation for the Medicine Buddha initiation has not been transcribed.

* * *

The life span gets longer and longer, up to eighty thousand years. During that time, since no Buddha descends, it's a dark age. Maitreya Buddha descends in this world and reveals Dharma when the length of human life is increasing to eighty thousand years, but in the case of the rest of the buddhas I think they descend and give teachings when the length of human life is becoming shorter.

Meeting a buddha is extremely rare, and meeting tantra is much rarer than that, but we have met it at this time. The Vajrayana, or Secret Mantra, teaching is very powerful. Simply seeing a mandala, whether sand or drawn, purifies many tens of millions of eons of negative karma that you have collected. Here, each time you do the sadhana, you have to visualize the mandala of the deity, and each time you do this you purify many tens of millions of eons of negative karma. This happens each time you do a sadhana, which involves visualizing a mandala.

Simply seeing a painted or drawn mandala purifies the five uninterrupted negative karmas and the ten nonvirtuous actions. The Vajrayana teaching is very powerful. If simply seeing a mandala does this, there is no doubt that if you actually do the practice and recite the mantra, you will achieve enlightenment quickly. It has skies of benefit. During this time, we've met not only the Mahayana but the Vajrayana teaching, so we must put all our effort into doing the practices of listening, reflecting and meditating. We should generate happiness that at this time we have met tantra.

Just as the door to enter the Mahayana path is bodhicitta, the door to enter tantra is initiation. Receiving initiation allows you to practice tantra, to do the retreat and the meditation-recitation of the deity.

* * *

Protection from obstacles comes with the action mantra and with the sprinkling of the dispelling water. To protect them from obstacles until they receive the initiation, the disciples are given the action mantra to recite two or three times before going to sleep.

[Rinpoche recites OM VAJRA AMRITA KUNDALI HANA HANA HUM PHAT three times.]

The disciples are also given advice to analyze, or check, their dreams. You go to bed with the plan to recognize your dreams. If the night is divided into

three parts, you pay attention to the dreams in the third part of the night, from around three or four o'clock, not to those in the first and second parts of the night. Try to remember the dreams that happen just before you wake up. Go to bed with the thought to recognize and remember your dreams.

So, the preparation is finished. Please offer a short mandala.

[The group offers a short mandala.]

DEDICATIONS

Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me and those collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay. May the bodhicitta that has been generated be increased.

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

5

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27

Medicine Buddha Session



SIMPLE VISUALIZATION

IN THE CENTER, you yourself, Medicine Buddha, are seated. Around you there are eight petals. In the south-east is Shakyamuni Buddha. In the south is Medicine Buddha Tsen Leg (Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs). In the south-west is Dra Yang Kyi Gyäl Po (King of Melodious Sound). In the west is Ser Zang Dri Me (Stainless Excellent Gold). In the north-west is Nya Ngän Me (Supreme Glory Free from Sorrow). In the north is Chhö Drag Gya Tshö Yang (Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma). In the north-east is Ngön Par Khyän Pa (Clear Knowing, Supreme Wisdom of an Ocean of Dharma). And in the east, which is in front of you, Medicine Buddha, is Mother Prajnaparamita.

This doesn't mean that all these buddhas are separate from you. The whole mandala is constructed from wisdom understanding emptiness, wisdom nondual with emptiness. The wisdom understanding emptiness manifested in all the different parts of the mandala, including Medicine Buddha and the other deities. It's all your (Medicine Buddha's) holy mind. That's what you should recognize or feel. It is not that you are Medicine Buddha and the rest has nothing to do with your mind.

Outside of that is a sixteen-petaled lotus. In the east there are four petals with the bodhisattvas Manjugosha, Chenrezig, Vajrapani and Nyi Nang. In the south there are four petals with the bodhisattvas Da Nang, Lodrö Chenpo, Maitreya and Kyab Dröl. In the west there are four petals with the bodhisattvas Pobpa Tsegpa, Nampar Nonpa, Tenduk and Munpa Thamchä Ngepar Jompa Lodrö. In the north there are four petals with the bodhisattvas Sampa Legpar Sempa, Lhünpo Tseg, Sang Sangpö Yang and Lhünpo Chenpo Tse Dzin.

Outside of this are twenty-two petals. Starting from the east, there are the ten guardians of the directions. It is the same as in the Yamantaka sadhana, with Brahma, Indra, fire deva, Yama, cannibal, water deva, wind deva, harm-giver, Wangdän (which is for control) and the earth goddess.

Starting from the east and going round anticlockwise are the twelve leaders of the hosts of nöjin.

The main thing is just to generate faith that they're there.

At the four doors of the mandala are the four guardians, one in each door.

That's the very simple visualization.

You are already generated as Medicine Buddha. Now visualize all the deities with OM, AH and HUM at their three places. We will start from there.

THE POWER OF MANTRA

The power of a mantra mainly depends on your faith in the mantra. How much negative karma you can purify or how many activities you can accomplish by reciting the mantra comes from your faith in the mantra, not from how you recite it. In other words, it doesn't depend on whether or not you recite it correctly according to Sanskrit. Most Tibetans don't learn Sanskrit; in Tibet, they recite mantras in their own way.

The power comes from having strong faith in the mantra and its benefits. Those of you who have heard lam-rim teachings many times will know the story of the old woman who was able to cook stones by reciting the deity Chunda's mantra. The mantra is actually OM CHALE CHULE CHUNDE SVAHA, but she recited OM BALE BULE BUNDE SVAHA. One day her son, a monk living in thirty-six vows, came home and heard his mother reciting OM BALE BULE BUNDE SVAHA. He corrected her, and she then changed to reciting OM CHALE CHULE CHUNDE SVAHA. This mantra is used when there's a famine; you recite this mantra and are then able to cook and eat stones. She was able to cook the stones with the mantra she used before, OM BALE BULE BUNDE SVAHA, but when she changed to the correct mantra, the stones didn't cook. When the correct mantra didn't work, she changed back to the incorrect one, which again worked.

The power of mantra comes from faith, not from how you recite it. Because they don't know Sanskrit, many Tibetans recite mantras in a way that is not correct according to the Sanskrit. This might also be the same in the Chinese community. With those who don't know how to recite in the

Sanskrit way, the pronunciation changes. But I've met some Chinese who can recite mantras according to Sanskrit. One Chinese woman in Taiwan saw Chenrezig, Compassion Buddha, who then taught her the long Chenrezig mantra. She is able to recite it perfectly in Sanskrit.

You can recite the root mantra three times. It says here to recite it as many times as possible, but I think we'll recite it just three times. It's only three times, but for us it's many times....

There is then Buddha Ser Zang's mantra: TADYATHA / SIDDHI SIDDHI SUSIDDHI MOCHANI / MOKSHANI MUKTE BIMUKTE / AMALE BIMALE MAM GALYEY HIRANYE GARBHE RATNA GARBHE / SARVA ARTHA SADHANI / PARAMARTHA SADHANI / MANASE / MAHA MANASE / ADBHUTE / ADYA BHUTE / BHUTE BHAYE SUBANE BRAHMA GHOKE / BRAHMA KHITE / SARVVA...

[There is a discussion with students about how the mantra in the sadhana is different.]

...ARTHE KHU APARATZITE / SARVVA TRA PRATI....

The Tibetan word is pronounced "*trati*" but the actual Sanskrit word is "*prati*."

...SARVVA TRA PRATIHATE....

There are two ways of reciting this, but it has to do with the Tibetan letters. All the syllables that are put together don't come out in the English pronunciation, just the total sound. The next word is either "*satu*" or "*satus*," with just a slight sound of "*sa*" at the end.

...TZATUS KHAETHI BUDDHA KOTI BHAKHITE NAMA SARVVA TATHAGATA NEN SVAHA.

COUNTING MANTRAS

In regard to counting mantras, the tantric text *Well-Accomplished Tantra* mentions that for a mantra with up to fifteen syllables, you recite the mantra one hundred thousand times the number of syllables. For example, if you're going to do Compassion Buddha retreat and recite OM MANI PADME HUM, you have to recite OM MANI PADME HUM six hundred thousand times. But if you recite the long Chenrezig mantra, the one in the nyung-nä text, which has many more syllables, reciting ten thousand mantras is enough to fulfill the retreat enabling actions. This tantra explains that for a mantra with up to fifteen syllables, one has to recite the mantra one hundred thousand times the number of syllables to fulfill the retreat enabling actions. For a

mantra with more than fifteen syllables, one has to recite the mantra three hundred thousand times; and for a mantra with more than thirty-five syllables, one recites the mantra ten thousand times. After that, you're then allowed to do the fire puja, consecrations and various other activities to benefit other sentient beings.

If a mantra has more than thirty-five syllables, it's enough to recite just ten thousand mantras. This is mentioned in *Well-Accomplished Tantra*. This is according to the lower tantras; it doesn't apply to Highest Yoga Tantra. In this text there's no TADYATHA. When I counted here, TADYATHA OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA has only twenty-six syllables (when the fourth BHEKHANDZYE is not included). The long Medicine Buddha mantra, OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHEKHANDZYE GURU BAIDURYA PRABHA RAJAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA, has fifty-seven syllables. Therefore, if you recite the long mantra, you have to recite it only ten thousand times. It then becomes an enabling action retreat, and you can then do the fire puja.

So, you have a choice. If you recite the mantra with twenty-six syllables (you usually recite TADYATHA OM BHEKHANDZYE... even though there's no TADYATHA in the text), you recite it 300,000 times to complete the retreat. But if you add the extra syllables of the long mantra, you have to recite it only ten thousand times. I think it might be the same time-wise whether you recite the long or short mantra, because you are familiar with reciting the short mantra. This is the main mantra that you count.

At the end, when you stop the mantra recitation, you recite the hundred-syllable mantra one time.

You can start counting mantras from tomorrow. Since tonight is just the beginning, we'll chant the short mantra.

[The group recites the short Medicine Buddha mantra.]

In either *Rinjung Gyatsa* or *Sukha Gyatsa*, which are texts with a hundred initiations, the mantra is written as TADYATHA OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA, but in this text and in the text of the long Medicine Buddha puja (and maybe also in the middle-length version by Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen), the mantra is written as OM BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE MAHA BHEKHANDZYE BHEKHANDZYE RAJA SAMUDGATE SVAHA. Different texts have different

ways of saying it. Some texts have an extra BHEKHANDZYE. I think it can be recited either way.

When you're too excited, you can recite the extra BHEKHANDZYE. When you're not too happy, you can recite the shorter mantra. I'm joking.

[Rinpoche continues reciting the Medicine Buddha mantra, then recites the hundred-syllable mantra.]

THE MAIN POINT

This is a quick way to purify and to have realization of lam-rim: guru devotion, the three principal aspects of the path and so forth. The quick production of realizations is the main purpose, not completing the number of mantras. Of course, if we can, we should do both: have effective practice of lam-rim and also finish the number of mantras. If we are able to complete the retreat, we can do the fire puja, and we are then qualified to give initiation and do other activities of Medicine Buddha. Finishing the number of ten thousand mantras is not the main point. The main point is to purify and to have more feeling of guru devotion, renunciation and bodhicitta. The main purpose is to reduce ignorance, anger, attachment and our other delusions and to have more good heart. That's our main goal. To do that we need to collect a lot of merit and do much purification. The aim of the retreat is to purify a lot of negative karma and to collect as much merit as possible.

That's why in the sessions each of the seven limbs is recited seven times, and not just recited but meditated upon. Each of the seven-limb practices is done seven times with meditation. This is like in the Medicine Buddha puja, where you make prayers to each Medicine Buddha with the seven-limb practice. Here, when you do the seven limbs, if you do each one seven times and then recite the names seven times, it's shorter, but the same as the Medicine Buddha puja. That's the essence. We collect unbelievable merit and perform so much purification if we do the seven-limb practice seven times, not just repeating the words seven times but doing the actual practice.

I think that's enough for tonight. During the sessions I will explain the things that need to be clarified.

So, good morning and another good morning. Thanks so much.



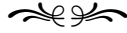
THUBTEN DAMCHOE

Geshe Lama Konchog's stupa at Kopan Monastery

6

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28

Discourse Before Medicine Buddha Initiation



[RINPOCHE LEADS RECITATION of the Medicine Buddha mantra.]

GESHE LAMA KONCHOG'S STORY

I thought to mention a little about Geshe Lama Konchog, who recently passed away, so that we can see the result of practice and that we can achieve the same thing.²⁷

I heard stories from Geshe Lama Konchog himself and from others that when he was in Tibet in Sera Monastery, he went to receive a lot of lam-rim teachings. He didn't stick to just studying philosophy. While he was studying philosophy, his style was to go to receive lam-rim teachings or commentaries on *Guru Puja* from Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, Pari Dorje Chang, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche and other high lamas who were Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo's disciples. He often went to receive such teachings. He also did a lot of pilgrimage in Tibet, even while he was in the monastery. I don't mean that while he was in the monastery at the same time he manifested in all the pilgrimage places. I'm not sure about that one. His style was to do a lot of pilgrimage and practice. I don't think he particularly wanted to be a scholar but wanted more to practice and actualize the teachings.

When he and some friends were escaping together from Lhasa, since Chinese soldiers were on the roads and watching the borders and planes were flying over, it was very dangerous and not easy to escape. I think Geshe-la did a protector puja, which caused clouds to gather and snow to fall. The

²⁷ The story of the search for and discovery of his reincarnation is told in the 2008 film *Unmistaken Child*.

Chinese army vehicles were there in the road, covered by snow, and they escaped by passing right by the vehicles. Nobody bothered them. I don't remember exactly which route he took to the border.

At some point Geshe-la arrived in Nepal. He didn't live in Buxa, in West Bengal, where the Gelug monks from Lhasa and also some Kagyü, Nyingma and Sakya monks from other places lived together in one place. In the mornings and evenings the monks from Sera, Ganden and Drepung and those from the other traditions would do puja together on a platform. But when it came time for debate, though some of the other monks, those who were studying, would stay and later engage in debate, most of them would just go back to their rooms, because their monasteries didn't have that style of study. Their main form of study was to receive a commentary then memorize it, not so much to debate the subject. Some of the Sakya monasteries might have had debate, but it sounds as if the others didn't.

After he came from Tibet, Geshe Lama Konchog lived for many years in Tsum, high in the mountains of Nepal. I don't know exactly how you get there, but from Kathmandu, you have to go by bus for a certain number of days and then go on foot for fifteen days. It's very far away. Geshe-la spent his time doing a lot of practice in caves of Milarepa. For many years he also lived in a hermitage. I think he had a very successful life.

Each time his food ran out Geshe-la would have to go to a nearby village. Going down to the village, getting the food and coming back took a lot of time. While he was staying there at the hermitage, he decided one day that he would never go to the village again, that when his tsampa finished he wouldn't go to the village to get more food. On the day he decided this, he had a dream of his root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, who is also my root guru. His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche made *pak*, tsampa mixed with butter tea, and gave it to him. To make the pak more elaborately, after you mix the tsampa with the tea you can add cheese and sugar. However, the basic ingredients are tsampa and butter tea. His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche was eating this tsampa very blissfully and then gave some to Geshe-la. The next day a man brought Geshe-la a huge load of tsampa, and from that time he never had to go out to get food. Geshe-la said that when his food was about to finish, somebody would bring him more. I think that's the power of renouncing the eight worldly dharmas, of deciding not to go out for food.

It's mentioned in Chen-nga Lodrö Gyaltzen's thought-transformation teaching, *Opening the Door of Dharma: The Initial Stage of Training the Mind in the Graduated Path to Enlightenment*, which contains many pieces

of advice from the Kadampa geshe on how they practiced, that once you renounce the eight worldly dharmas, it is natural that things just come to you.²⁸ You don't starve, you don't die. Dying of starvation happens when you don't renounce the eight worldly dharmas. When you renounce the eight worldly dharmas, due to the benefit of Dharma practice, it doesn't happen. It never happened in the past to any pure meditator, to anyone who had renounced the eight worldly dharmas.

Here I want to say this. Of course, from the meditator's side they should practice like that, but from the side of the FPMT organization, we should offer service to meditators. We shouldn't think, "This is the way they must practice. We shouldn't help them. We shouldn't give them food or money." That's wrong. A meditator should practice like that, and other people should offer them service. Other people also collect merit by serving them. It's similar to the guru-disciple relationship. From the guru's side, there is a responsibility and from the disciple's side, there are also responsibilities.

A proof of what is said in the teachings is that from the time he renounced the eight worldly dharmas, Geshe-la never had to go to town for food. One Kadampa geshe (I think it might have been Ben Kungyel) said, "Before, my mouth looked for food but could not find it. Now it is difficult for the food to find my mouth." It means that before he practiced Dharma, before he renounced the eight worldly dharmas, attachment clinging to this life, he worked hard to look for food but still couldn't find it. After he renounced his desire, however, so much food came that it had difficulty finding his mouth.

Also, Lama Yeshe used to tease Gen Jampa Wangdu, who was one of the most successful older meditators in Dharamsala and Dalhousie. After starting to meditate on the path in Tibet quite a few years before, he then achieved calm abiding in Dalhousie. At one time His Holiness was saying in teachings that people should put effort into experimenting with, or meditating on, calm abiding. His Holiness sent Geshe Rabten Rinpoche to check in Dalhousie, where there were many meditators. Geshe Rabten Rinpoche had been at Buxa, and he was the first teacher to introduce me to *dura*, the initial stage of philosophy, which is like learning the ABC. Later, after Geshe Rabten had finished the *lharampa* geshe examination, His Holiness's office invited Geshe-la to come to Dharamsala to help His Holiness. I think Lati Rinpoche was invited at the same time. Geshe Rabten Rinpoche had

²⁸ Lama Zopa Rinpoche's book *The Door to Satisfaction* is based on this text.

been living in Dharamsala for a long time when His Holiness sent him to Dalhousie.

In Dalhousie, a group of meditators, geshees and incarnate lamas who had studied well in monasteries in Tibet were being guided by the great lama, Trehor Kyörpon Rinpoche, who became a geshe with Serkong Dorje Chang, the great yogi who was like the past great yogis Marpa and Milarepa. Serkong Dorje Chang later lived in a Gelugpa monastery in Swayambhunath in Nepal. The monastery is down below where people park their cars before walking up to the top of Swayambhunath hill. Before living there, Rinpoche lived in a Nepalese house right on top of the hill.

I had heard stories at Buxa about Serkong Dorje Chang, so I had a great wish to meet this great yogi. One day I went to see him with Lama and Zina, the Russian woman who was our first Western student. Because her family was royal, her name was Princess Rachevsky. At that time I think we were staying in the house of one of the sons of Chini Lama, the old caretaker of Boudhanath Stupa. Chini Lama's son had two houses, and we stayed in both of them at different times. I don't think the one that was next to the road and had a double vajra exists now. We stayed in that house for almost a year, I think. We stayed in a green house for some time then moved to the house with the double vajra.

Anyway, the three of us went to Swayambhunath Stupa. There must have been some karma because as soon as we arrived outside Serkong Dorje Chang's house, a very simple monk came down the steps. I think he asked us what we wanted. We said that we wanted to see Serkong Dorje Chang. The monk then said, "Wait." I think he then went to the bathroom. After we went upstairs, we found that that monk was Serkong Dorje Chang. We hadn't recognized him.

Because of Zina, we also went to see many of the high lamas of the other Tibetan traditions. Sometimes she had her own questions and sometimes Lama would help her to compose questions to ask.

There were some texts piled up next to the bed, so Zina asked Serkong Dorje Chang, "Can you read some of those texts?" I guess that's an unusual question.²⁹ ...He used to talk like this. I wouldn't say it was arrogance, but an expression of having those realizations.

²⁹ At this point about ten minutes of the teaching were not recorded. See *The Heart of the Path*, pp. 58–63, for more on this story, Zina and Serkong Dorje Chang.

My stories are like a spider's web, with one strand connected here and another one connected there. I don't remember how I came to this point from Geshe Lama Konchog's story.... That's right! I was talking about Gen Jampa Wangdu.

Of course, some of you here have heard the story of Gen Jampa Wangdu many times and have also received teachings from him. He had great success in calm abiding, then also achieved realization of bodhicitta in Dharamsala. Geshe-la would sometimes come to talk to Lama and me in the evenings or at lunchtime. He usually fasted at night, but sometimes he would eat dinner with us. One time he told us that it had been seven years since he had been to anyone else's house for himself. It didn't mean that he hadn't been to anyone else's house for seven years, but that he'd never gone for himself. What he was saying was that he had realized bodhicitta seven years before. It is mentioned that sometimes the bodhicitta of a new bodhisattva can degenerate, but generally once you have the realization of bodhicitta it is impossible for the thought of seeking happiness for yourself to arise for even a moment. There is only the thought of seeking happiness for others once you have the realization of bodhicitta.

Gen Jampa Wangdu also realized emptiness—I think while he was in a cave down below His Holiness Ling Rinpoche's house. Geshe Rabten Rinpoche used to always praise Gen Jampa Wangdu as being very fortunate. When I went to my first teaching on *mahamudra* from Geshe Rabten Rinpoche, Geshe-la praised Gen Jampa Wangdu and told me to ask him any questions I had. I think it was a sign that around that time Gen Jampa Wangdu had realized emptiness. He also had great success in the Six Yogas of Naropa and other high tantric paths.

After we had received teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Gen Jampa Wangdu would come to my small room at Tushita and we would discuss the teachings. He would then talk from his own experience. It was my great hope to bring Gen Jampa Wangdu to the West as the lama to guide those doing serious retreats and meditating on the lam-rim. That was a great loss. I think if I had requested him, Geshe-la would have listened.

After Lama passed away and before Geshe-la passed away, I received from Geshe-la the lineage of the teachings on *chu-len*, the pill retreat, as I thought it might become rare in the future. It's not a rare teaching at the moment, with many lamas having the lineage, but I thought it might become rare in the future.

I then asked Gen Jampa Wangdu about the quickest way to have lam-rim

realization. His essential advice emphasized purification. This is the way it generally is. A teacher who is a great scholar usually emphasizes study, saying, “You must do extensive study.” An ascetic teacher who has spent his life meditating and has not been involved in extensive study emphasizes meditation. Of course, some emphasize both. When a teacher has been very successful in actualizing the path, his main emphasis is purification. I think it’s true, because without purification nothing works. The mind is stubborn, and nothing happens. Even if you can recite by heart all the 84,000 teachings of Buddha, the entire *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*, and can explain them without reading the text, that alone is not enough to change the mind. Transformation of the mind, realization, is something else.

When I asked that question about the quickest way to have lam-rim realization, Geshe-la also said that in daily life, rather than following self-cherishing thought, you have to always practice the remedy to self-cherishing thought. Rather than being a friend of self-cherishing, you have to stay away from it, just as you keep away from a dangerous enemy who can harm or kill you. You have to practice the antidote to self-cherishing thought. Although the words aren’t exactly the same, this is the meaning of Geshe-la’s advice. This is the way to cut through obstacles and have successful lam-rim realization.

That was Geshe-la’s answer to my question. He didn’t use many words, but his answer came from his own experience. In *Seven-Point Thought Transformation*, there is the outline, “Put all the blame on one.” It means that in daily life you should act toward the self-cherishing thought, the great enemy that doesn’t allow you to have temporary or ultimate success and happiness, as the United States military does in Afghanistan: always being where the enemy is and attacking it continuously, day and night.

Anyway, Geshe Lama Konchog did many years of practice in a few different caves. When he came to Kopan, he said, “I have completed Vajrayogini and *Lama Chöpa*.” When you say that you have completed a practice it normally means that you have achieved enlightenment. This is what the expression “I have completed Vajrayogini practice” or “I have completed *Lama Chöpa* practice” means. The time you don’t need to practice is when you have achieved enlightenment; until then, you need to practice. Geshe Lama Konchog told us that, and the usual meaning of those words “completed the practice” is that the person has achieved enlightenment.

As I have also mentioned at other times, after Lama Yeshe had passed

away, Lama Lhundrub and I needed somebody to help us at Kopan. I had met Geshe Lama Konchog a few times before. I think I met him for the first time in Bodhgaya, and he then came to Kopan and stayed for some days. That was a long time ago, when Lama was there. I wished very much for Geshe Lama Konchog to be at Kopan. During those times, we were practicing the protector, so I made a few prayers for Geshe-la to come down to Kopan. After some time, and I don't think it was very long, Geshe-la came to Kopan, even though I hadn't sent him a letter. Geshe-la told the story that one day he just came down from his hermitage to his benefactor's house in the village. There was no letter, but when he was at the benefactor's house, his mind was drawn to come down to Kopan. So, without picking up all his things, he rushed down to Kopan. After he had been at Kopan for quite a few years, he went back up to Tsum, packed up his things and then came down again.

Geshe Lama Konchog has been of incredible benefit to Kopan Monastery. He gave teachings to the nuns on the preliminary practices and gave them Vajrayogini commentaries. Ten or so of the nuns started a three-year Vajrayogini retreat quite some time ago. I think they have already finished the preliminary practices and quite a number of nyung-näs. The idea was for them to do one hundred nyung-näs before the Vajrayogini retreat. I would like all the Kopan nuns to do this, besides the other preliminary practices. Doing the hundred nyung-näs was Geshe Lama Konchog's idea, and I thought it was a very good one. The three-year retreat would then be incredibly successful and go very smoothly, with no obstacles, because they would already have collected a lot of merit. Quite a number of years ago I thought the nuns should have some plan for their life, so I had this idea for them to do the preliminary practices. They also study philosophy and debate, the same as the monks, as well as learn grammar and the other subjects that the monks learn, apart from extensive study of the vinaya, as they don't have those vows. They also study tantra and Tibetan medicine. I think in the early times the monks also learned about Tibetan medicine.

However, the specific plan is for every nun to do the nine preliminary practices, then do a three-year Vajrayogini retreat. They then just wait for death and departure to the pure land of Khachö or to have a perfect human rebirth and develop their mind in the path and further benefit other sentient beings. The first group of nuns has already started, with Lama Lhundrub's guidance. When this group of nuns finishes, other nuns

will then take their place, and it will go on like that. Sangye Khadro and some other people from Singapore are supporting the nuns who are doing retreat.

Geshe Lama Konchog also taught and guided Western students, not only in Kopan but also in Australia. Geshe-la was supposed to stay at Chenrezig Institute in Australia for one year. When I came there, I tried to inspire Geshe-la to stay by telling him that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was coming to Australia. Geshe-la didn't say anything to me, but after six months he returned to Kopan. Geshe-la taught *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, then left for Kopan. It was only when I came to Kopan that Geshe-la told me about all the difficulties he had with the translator. When I was there he didn't tell me anything. He just kept quiet. I thought that was very smart.

Geshe-la bore many hardships for Kopan Monastery, helping with the fundraising for the buildings and also with teaching. He also spent a lot of time in the centers in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, giving initiations and teachings and doing pujas. He gave his life to me, to the FPMT centers and students, and to sentient beings. Even though he had physical problems with sickness, he was very heroic in his work for others, whether doing pujas or giving teachings.

One time at Kopan, it had been raining and the steps to the old gompa were slippery. Geshe Lama Konchog slipped and fell very heavily down the steps; I think he banged his head on the cement. He felt very happy that it had happened. Why did he feel so happy? Because he immediately thought that he had experienced my life obstacles on himself. That's what he told me and that's what made him so happy. Even when things like that happened, that's the kind of attitude Geshe Lama Konchog normally had.

In Tibet, when we went on pilgrimage with seventy-three people, we went to the Palden Lhamo Lake, the lake that gives predictions, though not everyone sees something. Many people have gone there to search for the reincarnations of high lamas, with the hope of seeing the town where the child would be born, his family or the child himself. The lakes of the protectors are Tibetan TV. There are many lakes around there. Besides the Palden Lhamo Lake, there are Mahakala lakes and the lakes of many other protectors. There's also a Twenty-one Taras lake. Some of the lakes are very wrathful and people are scared to go to them.

We hired horses to go to the Palden Lhamo Lake, and Geshe Lama Konchog was probably the only one who didn't ride the horses. He walked. He never rode, despite his age, going or coming back. I thought that showed his

bodhicitta. He didn't want other sentient beings to suffer; he didn't want to use other sentient beings for his own happiness. He never used a horse.

Geshe Lama Konchog was somebody who practiced sutra and tantra and really sacrificed his life for others. When he was in his hermitage he read by himself the whole *Kangyur*, which is more than one hundred volumes, as a puja for the long life of His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche.

While he was living in the mountains in Tsum, there were many people who went crazy. People would go to get blessed strings, which have a special knot, from other more famous lamas there, but the crazy person wouldn't get better. In the end they would come to Geshe Lama Konchog, who would give them just a simple thread—nothing elaborate, nothing elegant. They would then recover. This happened many times, due to the power of his practice.

I'm not sure when Geshe-la took the aspect of cancer, but it might have been a long time ago. Hot places didn't suit him much and I had asked Geshe-la to go to Taiwan to teach for a long time, to Hong Kong and to various other places. I don't know when the cancer started. When he was in Singapore, I wrote Geshe-la a letter to thank him for sacrificing his life for the organization and sentient beings. I told him that I was very grateful for his service to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe and me. I said that even if he passed away, his life had benefited others so much. I also told him that his incarnation must come back to Kopan.

One time I sent Geshe-la a singing fish. When I was taking a course at Geshe Sopa's place some of the nuns gave it to me as a present, so I sent it to Geshe Lama Konchog, who was either at the Singapore center or in hospital. I heard that Geshe-la went to bed with the fish, like a child going to bed with his toy. Tenzin Zopa said that Geshe-la slept holding the fish next to his head. Then in the middle of the night, at one or two o'clock, Geshe-la played this singing fish. Normally when the Chinese students came, Geshe-la would be in bed and everything was very sad. But after the fish came, Geshe-la would play it for them. Each time the students came, Geshe-la played this fish to them and made everybody happy. They would burst into laughter.

During his life Geshe-la also sponsored many monasteries and built statues everywhere, not only at Kopan. With the money offerings that he received from the many pujas he did for people, he built statues for monasteries in many places. He dedicated himself so much, even up to recent times.

It seems that when he was dying Geshe-la was able to recognize the

twenty-five absorptions, which we're supposed to meditate on when we do sadhanas in Highest Yoga Tantra practice. A few days before he passed away Geshe-la told Losang Jamyang, one of the Kopan geshes and now resident teacher of the Kaoshiung center in Taiwan, that the vision of the mirage and the vision like smoke were happening. That means he was able to recognize the clear light and all those other things, and on the basis of that he was able to apply the meditations of the Highest Yoga Tantra path.

I'm not sure how long he was in the meditation state, but it wasn't for just three days. I think it was for about a week. At Kopan they planned to read the Guhyasamaja root text, but if you read the Guhyasamaja root text when someone is in the meditation state, it causes the meditation to finish, so it wasn't read while Geshe-la was meditating. Instead they did *Guru Puja*, Vajrayogini self-initiation and other practices. I think that first they did Yamantaka self-initiation; second, Vajrayogini self-initiation; then Thirteen-Deity Yamantaka self-initiation.

I think the day they were doing the Yamantaka self-initiation I tried to speak to Geshe-la. He was still able to speak but there was some obstacle with the telephone. I could hear his voice, anyway, and again I thanked him. Since Geshe-la had already done the work by himself during his life, he didn't need to do *powa* or anything like that. *Powa*, transferring the consciousness, is only for ordinary people. Somebody who is in the meditation state doesn't need *powa* because he can guide himself. There is no danger of being born in the lower realms. He can go to a pure land or, according to the person's wish, take a perfect human body to benefit others. I asked him which way to pray, Amitabha or Vajrayogini *powa*, and I think he answered Vajrayogini. But when I did my Mickey Mouse *mo* it didn't come out to do *powa*. Actually, I think he was beyond the need for *powa*.

I then sent all the guidance about what to do with the body, because we had done all that with Lama Yeshe. We didn't offer fire in an ordinary place where other people's bodies are burnt but behind the hill at Kopan Monastery. In such cases, the cremation stupa has to be opened after a few days and somebody pure has to look at the relics. I suggested that Charok Lama be the first person to look at the relics, so that's what happened. Anyway, the story is here in this letter from Tenzin Zopa, which I haven't yet read.

On Thursday, 22nd October, at 4:30, Geshe Lama Konchog's cremation stupa was opened and from 7:30 onward, under the guidance of Charok Lama, Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrub

and myself [which means Tenzin Zopa],³⁰ relics were taken out. So many relics were found.

Lama Lhundrub told me that when the holy body was offered fire, relics were jumping out. It's usually said in the texts that relics come from the holy body if you have the completion stage realization of clear light.

So many relics were found that what was supposed to be a two-hour job turned into eight hours. We found incredible items in the ashes. All different types of relics: two or three hundred white relic pills; one golden and a few black-colored relic pills; three pieces of red relics and between ten and twenty gray-colored relic pills. We also found Geshe-la's heart. [High tantric practitioners' eyes, heart and tongue don't usually burn.] When we first found the heart it was still soft, like fresh.

Usually after a person's breath has stopped, they don't open their eyes. But after Geshe-la's breath had stopped, it seems he opened and closed his eyes a few times. I guess it is different for someone who has overcome ordinary suffering death by having the Highest Yoga Tantra realization of clear light. The last time, he had one eye closed and one open or something like that. Anyway, that's very unusual.

After a few minutes it became hard, like resin. We also found an eyeball. And we think we have found the tongue. Geshe-la had white hair but we found a bunch of black hair, and I am convinced it is Vajrayogini hair. We also found a bunch of red-gray hair like wrathful deities or so people say. Also one handful of silver, thin, wire-like hair, quite a few relics that look like pearls, also something looking like turquoise. Some relics looking like mud pills, very hard. We also found a lot of bones. When cremating a high lama usually a plate turned upside down is put under the seat with smooth sand in it. We also did that. And we found something looking like lotus petal in the sand mandala, one or two inches high under it, with two footprints pointing towards the gompas...

³⁰ The bits in square brackets are Rinpoche's asides.

When you take out the container, there's usually a pattern in it and it's quite common to have footprints. At the Thamo nunnery down below Lawudo, they had an abbot who was a very good monk, a very good practitioner. He was in the meditation state for eight days, a long time. He was somebody who was doing practice; he was very humble and did pujas for other people. I think he was a very good monk. He was in the meditation state for many days, then after the cremation they kept the cremation stupa closed for some days. They saw the Vajrayogini mantra on the ashes and many other incredible signs, including footprints. The footprints face the direction in which the reincarnation will be found.

...exactly like Geshe-la's feet. We then covered this one up again, on Lama Lhundrub's advice. Then when we looked again, the lotus petal was higher, up to two inches high. [It was still changing.] There was a crown on top of the lotus. The footprints indicate that Geshe-la will definitely return.

The other day I mentioned an 80-year-old Tibetan woman who is very, very spiritual and could be a dakini. According to her, Geshe Lama Konchog has already incarnated somewhere in lower Dharamsala. She gave the names of the parents and even the child's name, Dorje or something like that. We just have to check and to wait for a few years. What I mean is that we're still analyzing whether it is right or not.

At 2:30pm we invited Geshe-la's relics to the gompa with music and auspicious banners and flowers. In the gompa the request for Geshe-la's incarnation to come quickly was repeated. Then the relics were taken in procession to Geshe-la's house. In the entrance of the house there was a table with three types of food prepared—bowls of milk, tsampa mixed with the three white and three sweets and six medical substances, and also auspicious sweet rice. This was offered to all coming into the house.

All the monks and nuns and many lay people came to look at the relics. There is still one big container with ashes and relics that need to be looked through and we are working at it every day. Lama Lhundrub said it is like Geshe-la's whole body was a precious jewel. We will keep all the relics here till Lama Zopa

[Mickey Mouse] comes. He can decide what to do. The relics will be kept in Geshe-la's room together with a large picture of Geshe-la and many of his holy objects, and this will be accessible to everyone.

This morning there was a meeting with Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrub, Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche and Denpa Chöden, in which we discussed the building of a huge stupa...

Geshe-la wanted to build a large stupa at Kopan—for him to reincarnate and to benefit sentient beings, I think. This was probably with the idea of coming back to Kopan. Usually when a lama passes away, quickly building a stupa, either an outside stupa or an inside one made of copper or some other material, helps to quickly find the reincarnation. That has been my experience with Lama Yeshe's incarnation and with others.

...in the space where the cremation stupa was. The stupa will be around twenty feet high and surrounded by the statues of the five Dhyani Buddhas. There will be beautiful gardens surrounding it. The motivation for building the stupa is to fulfill all Geshe-la's wishes and for his incarnation to come to Kopan, to be able to help Lama Zopa Rinpoche, to serve all FPMT students and all sentient beings. So we dedicate it to Geshe-la's students and to those who knew him and those who didn't. Just by seeing the stupa extensive merit will be accumulated and so much negative karma will be purified. It will be there for everyone to meditate and to make offering there. The building of the stupa will start on 13th of December.

It is very sad that Geshe-la has left his body and is now away from us. He gave us the opportunity to feel fortunate to have met him and to rejoice in his great realization, which he manifested in his relics. Definitely Geshe-la will come back as soon as possible. His prayers and blessings are always with us and our prayers make us never to be separated from him. For me he's without doubt right now Buddha. He did convince us of this at the end of his life by taking on the aspect of Buddha. He tried to show that while he was alive, his humility and simplicity and our own extensive

delusions prevented us from seeing this while he was alive. However, there is no doubt now.

I am planning to make a book about Geshe-la's life story as well as a video that will be a one-year project. I am going to show Geshe-la's activities to all his disciples, students. Thank you for all your messages and special thanks to those who did prayers and things and offered money to do pujas for Geshe-la and so forth.

So, this is the result of somebody who practiced. Geshe-la himself said that in his life he did two thousand nyung-näs. And, of course, there were many other practices.

So, I think that's the motivation for the initiation!

Perhaps you need a short break? Ten or fifteen minutes for *chai, chai garam*.

* * *

I didn't have the merit to invite this great meditator, Gen Jampa Wangdu, to the West to guide people doing retreat and meditating on lam-rim. However, we have the merit to now have Kyabje Rilbur Rinpoche, who is the actual Heruka. Rinpoche's simply being in this area is a great blessing, and not only that, but Rinpoche is here to guide students from here, Vajrapani Institute and other centers who want to do retreat. Rinpoche has dedicated his whole life to meditating on the lam-rim. We are unbelievably fortunate, and we should also pray for Rinpoche to have a long life and for us students and other sentient beings to be able to continually receive his guidance and teachings; to receive his guidance not just at this time but for it to continue. In general, this is the antidote to world problems and the cause of peace and of the enlightenment of all us sentient beings.

THE ROOT OF SAMSAARA

Yesterday I made a mistake when I was talking about the very specific ignorance that is the root of samsara. This is not just any kind of ignorance. There are four schools of Buddhist philosophy, and this is not the ignorance from the point of view of the Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra or even Svatantrika Madhyamaka schools. What they see as the ignorance

that is the root of samsara is not actually the root of samsara. Even though these schools talk about the root of samsara, the types of ignorance they talk about are not really the root of samsara. It has to be the specific ignorance I introduced last night, which is a subtle wrong concept compared to all those others.

The I is merely labeled by mind, but when it appears back to you it doesn't appear to be merely labeled by mind; it appears to be *not* merely labeled by mind. There is a very subtle hallucination there on the base, and you allow your mind to hold on to that as true. The moment you allow your mind to hold on to that as true, that's the very specific ignorance that is the very root of samsara. You can cut that root *only* by realizing the Prasangika view of emptiness, or ultimate nature. The other schools talk about emptiness, and, of course, understanding their views of the root of samsara and emptiness is helpful. Their views become progressively more and more subtle and help you to understand the Prasangika school's extremely subtle view of emptiness and of the very subtle wrong concept that is the root of samsara. However, realizing emptiness according to those other schools cannot cut the root of samsara.

I said yesterday that from this ignorance the other three poisonous minds arise and karma is created and then all this samsara, the body and mind, which is suffering in nature, is produced. This is what I said, but if you analyze it, there are some mistakes, of course. I wasn't careful in what I said. We have the body of a happy migratory being; even though it's suffering in nature, it's a product of good karma. There is good karma motivated by attachment. There are two types of attachment: attachment clinging to this life and attachment clinging to future-life happiness. This body could be the result of the good karma from practicing morality with attachment seeking to have a precious human body in the next life, and that would be produced on the basis of the ignorance that apprehends inherent existence. Of course, in regard to the delusion that produces this human rebirth, the body of a happy transmigratory being, it wouldn't be anger or ignorance of karma. I'm just trying to clarify what I said yesterday.

However, this also doesn't mean that all the rebirths as happy migratory beings are products of attachment. For example, last night your motivation for the preparation was seeking enlightenment, but even though your main goal is enlightenment, by the way you achieve liberation from samsara, a good rebirth and the happiness of future lives. And, for example, when you make offerings or do prostrations your goal is to achieve enlightenment for

sentient beings, but by the way you receive the benefit of a good rebirth in future lives, wealth, long life and so forth, in dependence upon which particular offerings you make. You made the offering, did the prostration or made charity to others to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, not with any intention to receive a good rebirth. However, even though you didn't look for the happiness of future lives, it comes by the way. It's like planting a seed in the ground to get fruit. Your main aim, of course, is to get the fruit but leaves and stems come by the way. Before you plant the seed, you never think, "I want the leaves." When you plant a seed, the main thing you want is the fruit, and the leaves and stems come by the way.

You do many practices only to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, but liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives then come by the way. So, that happiness of future lives doesn't come from attachment. This is one example, and there might be others, where you receive the happiness of future lives without depending on attachment. And, as I mentioned before, there's the happiness of future lives where you have created good karma with attachment seeking that.

I just wanted to clarify what I said. From ignorance come the three poisonous minds, which then motivate karma, and you then receive this rebirth, which is suffering in nature. There is a possibility that this rebirth came from attachment, but not from the other two poisonous minds.

BODHICITTA MOTIVATION

Since I, action, object and all other phenomena are merely labeled by mind, everything is empty; everything is empty of existing from its own side. Nothing has an inherently existent nature. Even though everything is totally empty, we are unable to realize this; we apprehend that everything exists from its own side as it appears to do. We apprehend that which is hallucination as reality. That ignorance then produces the three poisonous minds. The three poisonous minds then motivate karma, and we then experience the oceans of samsaric suffering of the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asuras and suras.

During beginningless rebirths up to now, we haven't been liberated from all these sufferings. And it is very difficult to say whether we will have the opportunity to do this in our future lives. This life, the life we have now, is our only chance. From our side, we have received a perfect human rebirth and have met not only Dharma but Mahayana Dharma, as well as tantra,

the quick path to enlightenment. (Even if you haven't met tantra before, by taking this initiation, you will meet tantra.) And you have met not just me, a Mickey Mouse guru, but many other gurus, including the actual living Compassion Buddha, His Holiness the Dalai Lama; the actual Heruka, Rilbur Rinpoche; Denma Lochö Rinpoche; and many other highly qualified gurus. You have met and received teachings from many great gurus with every single good quality of a teacher. Therefore, you shouldn't miss the chance you have at this time to liberate yourself from the oceans of samsaric suffering. At this time you have all the opportunities. You've met Buddhaharma, which is the unmistakable path to liberation and to enlightenment. Your next life is uncertain. Therefore, before what is called "death" happens, you must take this opportunity to liberate yourself from the oceans of samsaric suffering.

However, just that alone is not sufficient. All the sufferings and all the obstacles come from the I. (We normally say that they come from the ego, the self-cherishing thought, but to say they come from the I is the same, because the ego is the mind cherishing the I as more important than all other sentient beings.) All the happiness, all the good things, come from others. We receive everything—all our temporary and ultimate happiness, all the realizations of the path and enlightenment—by the kindness of every single sentient being. Even the happiness of this life—a good reputation, food, clothing, shelter, money, a job—is given by other sentient beings. We receive all the good things by the kindness of sentient beings.

Also, every single happiness, every single collection of goodness, comes from bodhicitta. Bodhicitta comes from great compassion, and great compassion is generated in dependence upon every single sentient being. Therefore, we receive every single happiness of the past, present and future, including enlightenment, and every single comfort and pleasure in our daily life by the kindness of every single sentient being. We receive this happiness by the kindness of each and every sentient being.

Therefore, if you cherish even one sentient being, even the one who criticizes or provokes you and whom you call "enemy," you can achieve enlightenment. There's enlightenment. But if you don't cherish that sentient being whom you call "enemy," you can't achieve enlightenment. There's no enlightenment. You can't achieve any realization of the Mahayana path. You can't achieve the bodhicitta realization, which is the door of the Mahayana path. But if you cherish one sentient being, even this sentient being whom you call your enemy, you can achieve all the realizations of the Mahayana path,

including enlightenment. You are then able to free the numberless sentient beings from all their sufferings and bring them to full enlightenment. But if you don't cherish that sentient being, you don't achieve all those things.

This is besides your daily pleasures and comforts. For example, because a cook makes food, you have the pleasure of drinking tea or eating food, the pleasure of stopping feelings of hunger. You can relate in this way to many other pleasures: this pleasure comes from this person, this pleasure comes from that person.

Here you can see that if you don't cherish this sentient being, you have no enlightenment; if you cherish this sentient being, there's enlightenment. Therefore, every single sentient being is the most precious one in your life. This is without talking about how sentient beings are precious because they are numberless. Here we are talking about how every single sentient being is the most precious one in your life. Every single insect, every single person, is the most precious one in your life.

Shakyamuni Buddha sacrificed his life to make charity and practice morality for three countless great eons. To sacrifice your life isn't easy, but Buddha did it for three countless great eons. For us it's difficult to do even one time. It's difficult for us to practice morality for even a day, let alone a year or a lifetime. Buddha did it for three countless great eons for sentient beings. Buddha practiced charity, morality, patience, perseverance and the rest of the paramitas for three countless great eons, then completed the two types of merit and achieved enlightenment.

After achieving enlightenment, Buddha worked to benefit sentient beings, to help sentient beings. There was no other activity. There was nothing to do except to benefit sentient beings, to work for sentient beings. All this effort in sacrificing his life to do all this practice for three countless great eons was only to complete the collection of merit and actualize the path for sentient beings. All this was done for you. Buddha did all this for you and for all other sentient beings. For you and all sentient beings, Buddha made an unbelievable sacrifice to practice charity, morality, patience, perseverance and so forth and then achieved enlightenment and revealed Dharma. It was all for you, for you and all sentient beings. The 84,000 teachings of Dharma that Buddha taught are for you and all sentient beings. Even after Buddha achieved enlightenment, all he did was work for others.

Working only for others doesn't apply only to the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas. In our life there is nothing better than working for sentient beings. There's nothing better in life than cherishing others, benefiting

others, working for others. There is nothing better. Think, “Therefore, I must free all the sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.” Think, “By myself alone.” Remember the hell beings and hungry ghosts and their suffering, then think, “I will free them by myself alone.” Think of the animals, be aware of their sufferings, then think, “I must liberate them by myself alone.” Then think of human beings and all their problems, “I will liberate them by myself alone.” Think of all the asuras and suras and of all their sufferings, then think, “By myself alone I will liberate them from all their suffering and its causes.” Think in that way with all sentient beings.

Then think, “I must achieve enlightenment quicker and quicker, which means quicker than the sutra Paramitayana path; therefore, I’m going to take this Medicine Buddha initiation to have success in doing extensive works for sentient beings and for the teaching of Buddha.”

[Rinpoche then gives the Medicine Buddha initiation.]³¹

DEDICATIONS

As I mentioned yesterday, this retreat is dedicated for His Holiness’s long life, to which there are many obstacles. Our practice of retreat is dedicated for that, as well as to pacify as quickly as possible all the terrorist attacks, which harm so many people, as well as all the wars. So, it is for world peace.

“May the numberless sentient beings who are suffering in the lower realms immediately be liberated from those suffering realms and reincarnate in a pure land of buddha where they can achieve enlightenment or receive a perfect human rebirth as quickly as possible. (This includes those people who have died who relied upon me, for whom I promised to pray and whose names were given to me.)

“May you, your family members, all the students and benefactors of this organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives for the organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and those who are living who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray and whose names have been given to me and those who are offering service to me have long lives and be healthy. May all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma.

³¹ The Medicine Buddha initiation was not transcribed.

“May we be able to completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s pure teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime.

“May all the Sangha in this organization be able to completely actualize both the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime by receiving all the necessary conditions. May they then be able to live in pure vinaya.

“By receiving everything they need, may all the social service centers and meditation centers be most beneficial for all sentient beings and spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings. May all the projects at every center succeed immediately by receiving everything they need. May all the projects here at Land of Medicine Buddha benefit sentient beings. (There is to be a temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and a place for Sangha to live, as well as 100,000 stupas to help sentient beings to purify and to collect merit and quickly bring them to enlightenment.) May the hospice, school, Universal Education and every other project here succeed immediately by receiving everything they need, and may all these projects be most beneficial for all sentient beings.”

Here I would like to say that when Land of Medicine Buddha was going through a very difficult time and there was nothing here, I asked Dr. Chiu Nan Lai to be the director of LMB. She worked very, very hard and developed LMB. After that, many other people have put effort into developing LMB. It has now become very beautiful and developed because those original people, including Chiu Nan Lai, put in effort when it was very difficult to work here. It has developed from the efforts of those people and has now become very beneficial for sentient beings. There are now many holy objects here, making this place meaningful to behold for anybody who comes here. Simply coming onto this land and looking at these holy objects makes their life meaningful, purifying their mind and planting so many seeds of enlightenment. Simply coming on this land and seeing these holy objects purify so much negative karma. And hopefully we can do more. All this came from those early people, including Chiu Nan Lai, who did a lot of work and sacrificed their lives. It also includes Angela Wang and Harvey Horrocks, as well as all the other benefactors, who helped to build the beautiful Ashes Temple. They are also helping with the Medicine Buddha Temple.

There has been a lot of destruction in this world, including that of the buildings in New York and the two large buddhas in Afghanistan, but hopefully the holy objects that we have here can quickly liberate and enlighten sentient beings without words, without needing to say anything. When

sentient beings come on this land and see and go around the stupa and temples and see all the numberless holy objects, they will go back home with so much merit, with so many seeds of enlightenment planted in their minds, and with less negative karma. It is the quickest, easiest way to liberate sentient beings. The teachings together with all these holy objects will quickly liberate sentient beings.

I would also like to thank Tom Flynn. Tom isn't here—he's gone to the pure land. I can't think of the words for which one....³²

Ven. Sarah: New Zealand pure land, Rinpoche. Tom went to New Zealand pure land and Ecie came here.

Rinpoche: Anyway, I would like to include Tom and all the artists, cooks and other people who worked hard here to beautify the place. I would like to thank everyone.

The negative karma of even the insects that come to LMB and touch or go round the stupa will be purified. When butterflies and other insects land on the stupa their negative karmas will be purified. With all these holy objects, you can liberate sentient beings without needing to say anything. In silence, you can benefit sentient beings.

In Australia there is going to be a large stupa similar to the one at Gyantse in Tibet. They're going to start to build it next year.

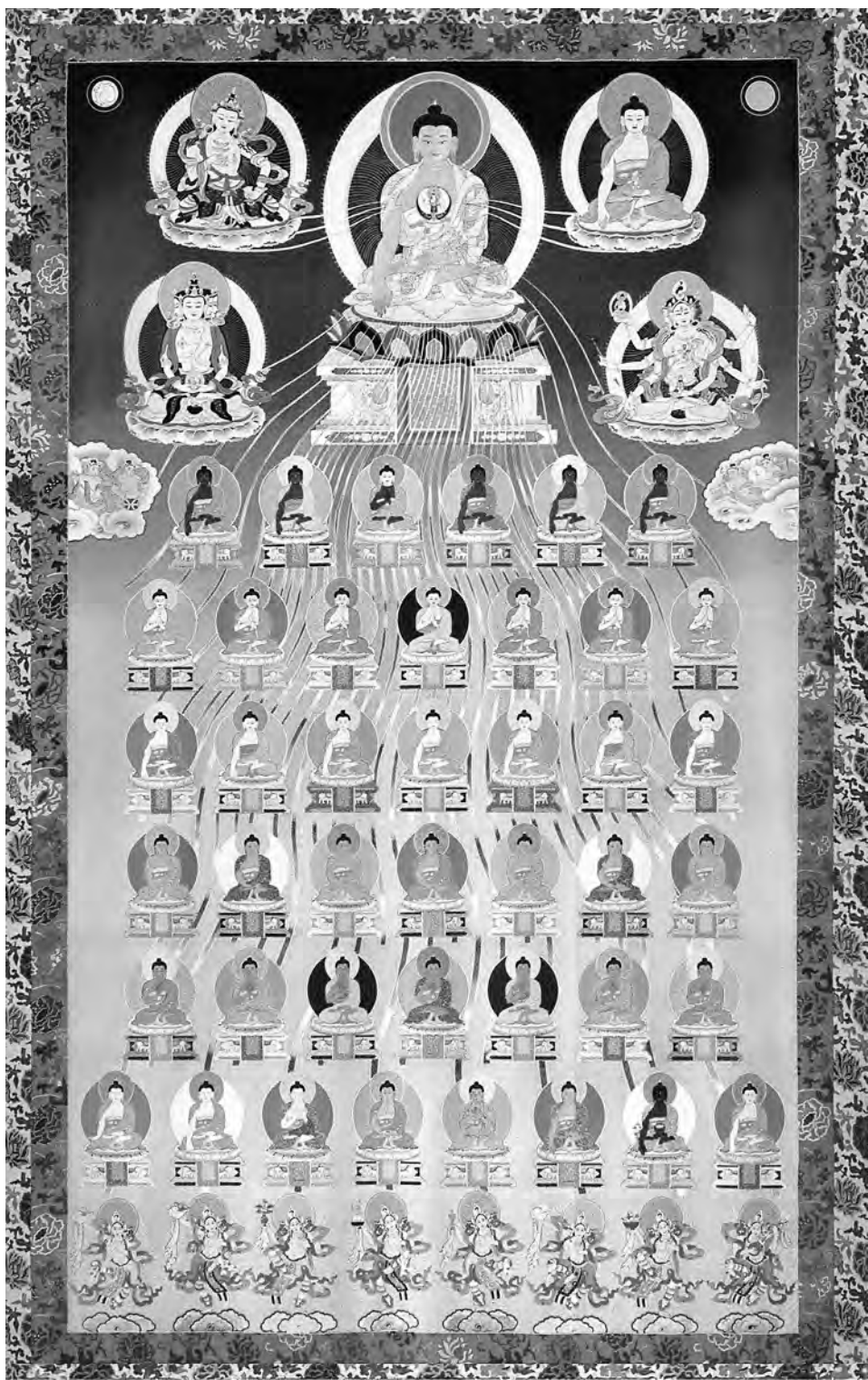
"May this and all the other projects—building monasteries and nunneries and holy objects and the social service projects—succeed immediately. Especially, may the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue be able to be completed immediately by receiving everything that is needed. May the construction be completed peacefully and without any obstacles. May this statue be able to liberate sentient beings as quickly as possible, especially causing loving kindness and bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits collected by buddhas, bodhisattvas and others, which are empty, may the I, who is empty, achieve Medicine Buddha's enlightenment, which is empty, and lead all sentient beings, who are empty, to that enlightenment, which is empty, by myself alone, who is also empty.

"I dedicate all my merits to follow the bodhisattvas' deeds, and I dedicate my merits in the way that the buddhas of the three times admire the most.

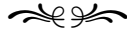
"May Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching spread and flourish forever."

³² Tom Flynn, a former director of Land of Medicine Buddha, passed away in 2008.



PAINTING BY PETER ISELI

Final Medicine Buddha Session



THIRTY-FIVE BUDDHAS PRACTICE

THINK, “I need to purify all the defilements, negative karmas and downfalls collected with the ten nonvirtuous actions numberless times during my beginningless samsaric rebirths up to now. On top of this, I have collected many vices by breaking the *pratimoksha*, bodhisattva and tantric vows during beginningless rebirths. I have also collected the heaviest obstacles to actualizing the path to enlightenment, negative karmas in relation to the virtuous friend, during my beginningless samsaric rebirths up to now.

“If I were now in the lower realms, in a hot hell, being there for even one second would be unbearable, like suffering for eons. Because death is definite, I could be there right this moment experiencing that unimaginable suffering. Not only is death certain to happen but it could happen at any time—even this moment. Therefore, I must purify all these defilements and negative karmas right now, without even a second’s delay. Therefore, for the happiness of all the numberless other sentient beings, I’m going to do prostrations by practicing the *Confession of Downfalls*.”

[The group performs prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas.]

Hello. Good afternoon.

Unless you know by heart the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas, my suggestion is that you imitate René or whoever else is reading them. Verbally following what the person who is leading is saying will help you to become familiar with and memorize the names. Repeating the names many times helps you to memorize them. After some time you will have memorized them. It’s a way to do this.

As I have mentioned many times in the past, reciting each of the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas just one time purifies many thousands of eons of

various negative karmas. It purifies having collected those different negative karmas not just one time but for thousands of eons. Besides the ten nonvirtuous actions, many other negative karmas collected for many thousands of eons are purified by reciting the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas just once. Reciting the names verbally has that incredible advantage. It's like an atomic bomb; it's such an incredibly quick way to purify. If you don't recite the names, that doesn't happen, even though you still collect merit by doing prostrations to these buddhas and to the Triple Gem. If you don't recite the names, however, you are losing this unbelievable opportunity to purify negative karma. Since you are now giving yourself time to practice, if you don't recite the names, it's an unbelievable loss.

For example, take *de zhin shegpa me tog pälla chhag tshäl lo* ("To Tathagata Glorious Flower, I prostrate"). Reciting that buddha's name just one time has the power to purify 100,000 eons of negative karma. If only one person recites the names, only that person gets all that benefit; the rest of the people don't get it.

It's very good to memorize and know by heart some prayers, especially the Thirty-five Buddhas. That's all I'm going to say.

I remember some years ago when we did the Most Secret Hayagriva retreat at Vajrapani Institute, I told everybody to make sure that during that time they memorized this prayer so that before they left the retreat they knew at least the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas and the confession prayer. I guess many people may have done that. So, that's my request. If you at least memorize the names, it gives you the chance to recite them anywhere, even when you are traveling by plane or by car. Even while you are driving a car or walking along, you can visualize the Thirty-five Buddhas in front of you and then recite their names.

Reciting each name once purifies so many eons of negative karma. This practice is what made Lama Tsongkhapa very successful in realizing the path to enlightenment, in realizing bodhicitta, emptiness and so forth. It was also practiced by many of the lineage lamas of lam-rim. Lama Atisha, even when he was very old and shaky, still did prostrations by reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas' names. For many of the lam-rim lineage lamas, the Thirty-five Buddhas was a very important practice in their daily life, and what made it possible for them to purify all their obstacles and to have realizations. It was part of their daily practice, as well as part of the preliminary practices.


We have the opportunity to purify so easily the obstacles to having realizations of the path, to developing our mind in the path to enlightenment.


This is such an easy way to purify, to save ourselves from the sufferings of the lower realms and to liberate ourselves from samsara. Purifying ourselves allows us to have realizations of the path, including emptiness, and that then helps to liberate us from samsara. It also enables us to actualize bodhicitta, which then allows us to complete the Mahayana path and achieve enlightenment, which then allows us to enlighten the numberless sentient beings.


It's very good to repeat the names out loud rather than silently. It's only when you're taking the oral transmission of the Thirty-five Buddhas' names that you keep quiet and just listen.... If you know the names by heart, it's very good to repeat them. Thank you so much.

You can just repeat the names straight through—you don't need to have a break between them. It's like singing a song together.

[The group finishes the prostrations and confession prayer.]

Think, "All the defilements and negative karmas that have been collected in my mental continuum during beginningless rebirths up to now have been completely purified. Not even the slightest negative karma has been left in my mental continuum." 

In emptiness there is no creator, no I. There is no action of creating. There is no creation, no negative karma. 

In emptiness there's nothing. 

All phenomena—including the I, the action of dedicating, the merits that are dedicated, the goal of enlightenment to which they are dedicated, the sentient beings for whom the merits are dedicated—are completely empty of existing from their own side. With continual awareness of this, you then impute labels and dedicate.

Due to the merits of the three times collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment and lead all sentient beings to that enlightenment by myself alone.

MAKING REQUESTS TO THE MEDICINE BUDDHAS

Sorry to interrupt, but I would like to mention that it is essential to recite the name of each of the Medicine Buddhas seven times. It is mentioned in the Medicine Buddha sutra as being very, very important for success. Reciting each name brings incredible blessings; it's so precious.

With each buddha, if possible, completely rely upon that buddha with your whole heart, then recite that buddha's name seven times. With total refuge, or trust, in that buddha, recite his name seven times. After that, you recite, "May whatever prayers you have done in the past for me and all other sentient beings be actualized immediately for me and all sentient beings." This is mentioned in the meditation that accompanies the Medicine Buddha initiation in the *Rinjung Gyatsa*, and it might be the same in the *Sukha Gyatsa*. Both of these collections of the initiations of hundreds of deities have Medicine Buddha initiation.

The meditation is similar to what is in the small Medicine Buddha booklet. It's not Padmasambhava's simple healing meditation with the medicine goddesses, but a different book that has recently been published in a new form, *Medicine Buddha Sadhana*.³³ Reciting each name seven times is there, but I don't think this prayer of request, "May whatever prayers you have done immediately ripen for me and all sentient beings," is there at the end. I normally add this prayer from the *Rinjung Gyatsa* Medicine Buddha initiation to the short practice of Medicine Buddha. This is how I try to do the practice.

After that, you then say, "May all my prayers succeed immediately." When we were revising the Medicine Buddha sadhana, I did mention to add this but I think it was left out. You add, "May whatever prayers you have done in the past immediately be received by me and all sentient beings" or "May whatever prayers you have done in the past be received right this moment by me and all sentient beings." You make that strong prayer. After that, you say, "May all my prayers succeed immediately." I added that request after that. It refers to any prayers you normally do in daily life to have realizations yourself, including bodhicitta, and to benefit other sentient beings.

Some time ago I compiled a daily meditation practice, a Shakyamuni Buddha guru yoga,³⁴ for beginners who want to do some serious meditation every day, something basic but extremely worthwhile. It's a booklet to guide people who have done a meditation course, such as the November course in Nepal or a weekend course in another center, and want to continue meditation practice in their daily life. This booklet can be given to them to do as a daily practice. At the end of that booklet there are quite a

³³ See note 20, p.33

³⁴ See *A Daily Meditation on Shakyamuni Buddha: How to Meditate on the Graded Path to Enlightenment*.

number of dedication prayers to either have realization or benefit other sentient beings. There are different ways to make your life most beneficial for others. So, *May all my prayers succeed immediately* refers to all those prayers that you normally do in your daily life, even if you don't specifically think of the individual prayers. After you recite the name of each Medicine Buddha seven times, you recite this request.

In the practice *Medicine Buddha Sadhana*, you normally visualize the Medicine Buddhas on your crown. After you make the request to each buddha, that buddha accepts your request. The dharmakaya way of accepting is to accept with delight but in silence. The rupakaya way of accepting is to respond to you by verbally saying, "Yes, yes." While you are reciting each buddha's name and making the request, you can visualize nectar coming from that buddha. After that, that Medicine Buddha absorbs into the Medicine Buddha below, until finally the last one, the Medicine Buddha, absorbs into you.

However, in the visualization here you have invoked the Medicine Buddhas in front of you, so you make the requests to them in front of you. Make the request and think that the Medicine Buddha has accepted your request. A replica of that Medicine Buddha then absorbs within you and blesses you. When you do the sadhana in retreat or do Medicine Buddha practice, you normally do it in this way.

When somebody has died or is very sick and dying or has a big problem, you might want to do Medicine Buddha puja to help that person. If you want to pray for somebody in particular to be healed or to have success, remember them when you recite each Medicine Buddha's name and make the request. For example, if you are praying for somebody who has died, think of that person immediately being reincarnated in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receiving a perfect human rebirth to be able to practice Dharma and benefit all sentient beings. Remember that particular purpose when you are reciting each Medicine Buddha's name seven times.

You can apply the Medicine Buddha practice to any purpose, to bring any success. After I read the sutra—I think there are two types of Medicine Buddha sutra wrapped up there on the mandala—I realized that you can use this practice for everything. You can do it to pacify any problem, including court cases. It's very, very effective. Medicine Buddha practice is the best one to do especially in the case of somebody who is dying or who has died. After doing Medicine Buddha practice, at least visualizing the Medicine



LYWA

Lama with some of his dogs, Tushita, Dharamsala, 1982

Buddhas on the person's crown, you can do powa, transferring the person's consciousness to a pure land, if you have received the lineage of powa and done the retreat until you had signs. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche advised that the transference of the other person's consciousness is much more effective after Medicine Buddha practice.

In the early times in Tushita Retreat Centre there were many dogs. Now most of the dogs have died and I think there are only two left; before there were about fifteen dogs—a big population. When I mentioned to Lama that maybe we should give some of the dogs to other people, Lama said, “I love my dogs. I don't want to give them away.”

I later gave a few away to different people, but with a commitment, not of a sadhana, but to read a lam-rim prayer or chant mantras for the dogs. I gave one dog, Detong, to a lady who worked in the Spanish embassy in Delhi. She wasn't Buddhist but I think she was a very sincere, good person. I don't think I met her, but I gave her a dog and said that every day she had to recite the lam-rim prayer *Foundation of All Good Qualities* to the dog. She took it very seriously and did it. Detong was in Delhi for about a year, then one day the woman's servants forgot to close the door and the dog got out. (Wongmo knows those dogs very well.) *Detong* means bliss-voidness. So, Detong was lost.

I was very happy to hear that every day she had done the whole lam-rim prayer, *Foundation of All Good Qualities*, for the dog. I rejoiced in the sincere way she followed the instructions. I was supposed to give her another dog but I don't think it happened.

Another dog went to Austria. One of the main dogs that Lama had was a Pekinese called Dorje Den. *Dorje den* is Tibetan for “vajra seat,” and refers to Bodhgaya. Jane Seidlitz took care of him for a long time, about twelve years. I think he lived such a long time because he was in good hands.

When one of the dogs died while Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche was giving teachings at Tushita, I asked Rinpoche to do powa. The first thing Rinpoche did was to recite all the names of the Medicine Buddhas, and I think Rinpoche might have then done powa. The reason I brought up the dogs is in relation to Rinpoche doing Medicine Buddha prayers and powa.

Anyway, when you do Medicine Buddha practice, it's very good to remember at that time particular projects or people you want to pray for or particular difficulties that you're having.

ACTION TANTRA MUDRAS

Some people, those who have done nyung-näs in the past, might know the Action Tantra mudras, but others may not be familiar with them. I think the mudras might also be a bit different in the Nyingma, Kagyü and Sakya traditions.

This is the mudra for OM ARGHAM AH HUM. When His Holiness Song Rinpoche introduced us to the lower tantra mudras, Rinpoche did the same mudra for ARGHAM as in Highest Yoga Tantra. But some years ago when we were receiving many hundreds of initiations at Tushita in Dharamsala from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, Rinpoche told us it was this mudra.³⁵ The abbots of Namgyal Monastery and the Tantric College, as well as high lamas, geshe and other monks were there in the Tushita gumpa. What Rinpoche said was very skillful. Rinpoche said that he was doing nothing new but just reminding us that this was the mudra for ARGHAM. I think the mudra that is most commonly done is the Highest Yoga Tantra one, and the lower tantra mudra is not as common. I think sometimes there is a danger that these practices will be forgotten or degenerated. This is the Highest Yoga Tantra mudra for ARGHAM and this is the Yoga Tantra mudra, as used in Kunrig practice. One has to learn many mudras. In the lower tantras the mudras are regarded as very important. Since they're part of the samaya, you must do the mudras. But it's not like that in Highest Yoga Tantra.

This is the mudra for ARGHAM in the lower tantras. There's also a picture of it in the nyung-nä text, as well as pictures of the other mudras. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche said that it's like the shape of a conch shell and is visualized full of water.

The mudra for PADYAM is the same in both tantras. In this mudra for cleaning the feet with water, you gradually release your fingers to represent pouring the water.

The mudra for PUSHPE, flowers, is like this and DHUPE, incense, is like this. These are the Highest Yoga Tantra mudras for PUSHPE and DHUPE. You curl your fingers in for DHUPE. When the offerings are more elaborate, there's one called ANCAMANAM, water for cleaning the mouth, which is like this. Anyway, it doesn't come in this practice.

This is the lower tantra mudra for ALOKE, and this is the Highest Yoga Tantra one.

³⁵ For this and the other mudras, see pp. 157–61 in *Nyung Nä: The Means of Achievement of the Eleven-Faced Great Compassionate One, Avalokiteshvara*.

This is the lower tantra mudra for GANDHE, offering scented water at the heart, and this is the Highest Yoga Tantra one.

The mudra for NAIVIDYA, food offering, is the same in both.

The lower tantra mudra for SHAPTA, music, is like this. His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche said that there is a different mudra for SHAPTA, but it's been lost. His Holiness Song Rinpoche and Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche used the same mudra for SHAPTA.

MAKING OFFERINGS

To make offerings to the merit field, the Medicine Buddhas, you snap your fingers outwards then do the “lotus turning” mudra. Snapping your fingers is to remind you of emptiness. You yourself, generated in the deity Medicine Buddha, are empty. There is the appearance of you as Medicine Buddha, but it's empty, just as when you see the reflection of the moon in water, the water is empty of moon. There is no moon there. You see a reflection of the moon in the water but it's not the moon. There's the appearance of you as Medicine Buddha, but it's empty. All these phenomena are empty of existing from their own side. Why? They are all merely imputed by the mind. What is the subject, the Medicine Buddha who is making offering? It's what is merely imputed by the mind, existing in mere name. Therefore, it's totally empty of existing from its own side. The basic reason that you, Medicine Buddha, who is making the offering, exist is that you exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind. Because of that, even though Medicine Buddha is appearing, it's empty of existing from its own side. Who is making the offerings? The merely labeled I, Medicine Buddha, is making the offerings.

In dependence upon many causes and conditions, the sound of a finger snap happens; therefore, it's empty of inherent existence. You snap your fingers to remind yourself of that.

The action of making offering also appears to our hallucinated mind as a real action of making offering, but it's empty. It is totally empty. The action that is happening is also happening in mere name, merely imputed by mind, so it's empty.

The object to which you are making offerings is the merit field, the Medicine Buddhas. When you think of the Medicine Buddhas, they appear to your hallucinated mind as truly existent Medicine Buddhas, real Medicine Buddhas from their own side, but what they are is what is merely imputed by mind. Therefore, they're empty of those real Medicine Buddhas appearing from their own side.

It is the same with the offerings. Again, each of the offerings appears to be something not merely labeled by the mind, something truly existent from its own side. But it is empty, because what it is is what is merely labeled by mind.

To do the practice of offering correctly, you do it with this awareness of emptiness, and you begin the practice with bodhicitta. In other words, everything in the practice of tantra, from the beginning of the sadhana to the end, is done with lam-rim.

When you snap your fingers, transform numberless offering goddesses from the blue syllable HUM at your heart. Not just one, but numberless offering goddesses carrying the drinking water, the nectar, fill the whole sky. When they offer the nectar, great bliss is generated in the holy minds of the Medicine Buddhas.

I usually emphasize that when you make offerings, you should think of the guru. Whether you are offering to one or many buddhas, do it without forgetting guru yoga. Whether it's one buddha or many buddhas, think that they are the guru. If you like, you can think they are one specific guru, your root guru. By making one offering with this guru yoga mind, you collect far greater merit than by making offering to all the buddhas, all the bodhisattvas and all the statues, stupas and scriptures of Buddha that exist in all universes. By making one offering by thinking of the guru, you collect far greater merit than by making offering to all those holy objects.

That's why the lam-rim prayer in *Lama Chöpa* begins with, “*zhing chhog dam pa je tsün la ma la...*, Supreme merit field, holy and perfect, pure guru....”³⁶ The guru is the supreme merit field. We should remember this in our daily life every time we make offerings when we do sadhanas and when we offer water bowls, flowers or other offerings to the statues, paintings and pictures of Buddha in our house. We should always remember that their essence is the guru.

It is the same with making offerings to the guru's pores. The *guru's pores* means not only the guru's disciples but even dogs, horses and other animals that belong to the guru. If you give a piece of meat to the guru's dog or a biscuit or bunch of grass to the guru's horse, you collect far greater merit than from having made offerings to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas in all the

³⁶Through the power of having made offerings and respectful requests

To you, holy and perfect, pure gurus—supreme field of merit,
I seek your blessings, saviors and root of well-being and bliss,
That I may come under your joyful care. (V. 84.)

ten directions and to all the statues, stupas and scriptures in all universes. All that merit is less than the merit from offering one bunch of grass to a horse that belongs to the guru by thinking of the guru. In your mind, you think, “This is my guru’s horse,” then offer the grass.

The guru’s pores also include the guru’s friends, family, such as brothers and sisters, and neighbors, and if the guru is lay and married, their husband or wife and children.

The merit you collect from making offering to all the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas and all the numberless statues, stupas and scriptures of Buddha is small compared to that from giving food or drink—even one piece of fruit or candy or one glass of water—to even one of the guru’s pores, one disciple of the same guru.

As I often say, when you make offerings to a monastery, it is very good to think that most of the monks there, especially in the Gelug tradition but also in the other traditions, are disciples, or pores, of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many other great lamas. Thinking especially of your guru, His Holiness, you then make the offering to the monastery. The merit from this is unbelievable. There are many advantages to doing this. First of all, because you are making offering to gelong, those who are living in higher ordination, there is more merit. By doing that, you collect unbelievable merit. In the past in India, one person offered a medicinal drink to four monks. Simply from that karma, he was born as a powerful, wealthy king in his next life. Making offering to Sangha is very powerful.

In the major monasteries, there are thousands of monks. Even if you can’t afford to offer tea to all the monks, if you offer a bottle of milk, a small packet of tea or just a handful of tea leaves to the monastery to be mixed in the tea that is served to all the monks, you receive unbelievable merit from having offered tea to all those thousands of monks. It’s the same if you offer even a few rupees toward a money offering that is offered to all the monks. On top of the merit you collect by making offerings to those thousands of monks who are living in higher ordination, if you think that they are pores of your guru, of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, you collect the most extensive merit. You collect extensive merit by making offering to even one monk, and there are thousands of monks in the monasteries.

It is similar when you offer food to the people at a Dharma center. Even if there are no Sangha but only lay people, since they are disciples of the same guru, offering them food and drink is an easy and powerful way to collect merit just at that same place where you are.

The point is to think of the guru when you make offerings. After making

each offering, think that the guru generated bliss in his holy mind. That's the essence of the offering. *Puja* means pleasing, and pleasing the guru is the best puja, the best guru puja. Here the essence of the offering is that the guru generates infinite bliss after you make the offering.

You then snap your fingers inwards, which means that at the end the offering goddesses you transformed from the syllable HUM in your heart are absorbed back into your heart.

It is said in tantric commentaries that visualizing that the offering goddesses absorb back into your heart helps to actualize clear light—I mean the real *dzog-chen* clear light. Another term for it is the *dzog-rim*, or graduated completion stage, clear light. It helps you to draw the winds into the central channel.

Sometimes we also do like this. [Rinpoche demonstrates one hand facing in and the other out.] There was one Ganden Tripa, the regent of Lama Tsongkhapa, who came to America—including, I think, to Vajrapani Institute—and who has now passed away. Many years ago there was a discussion about this mudra when this Ganden Tripa came to Nepal with some Tantric College monks sent by His Holiness to bless and consecrate the Boudhanath Stupa, which is closely linked to Tibet. He was then the Tantric College abbot. At that time Mummy Max, an African-American, was our benefactor. After Zina, the Russian nun, Mummy Max took care of Lama and me for many, many years. Mummy Max invited the abbot and the Tantric College monks to do a Tara puja. At that time there was a discussion about this mudra with the abbot, who later became the Ganden Tripa. He said that one hand facing out and the other facing in means that while some offering goddesses are being transformed from the heart, others are coming back and absorbing. So, that's what he said. Anyway, I think normally both hands face out, and when you finish the offering, both face in.

Here in the lower tantras doing the mudras is regarded as very important.

Again here think that you, Medicine Buddha, are existing in mere name; you are empty. Even though everything appears to be inherently existent, you have the understanding that everything is empty. Nothing has even the slightest inherent existence, not even an atom, even though there is an appearance of inherent existence, just as even though it looks as if there's a moon in the water, there's no moon there.

Transform all the different offerings from your heart one by one, filling the whole sky all at once. All the different offerings also appear to be inherently existent, but because they exist in mere name, they don't have inherent existence. Even though they appear to have inherent existence, they don't. It is the same with the objects of offering, the Medicine Buddhas: they exist in mere name. Even though they appear to be inherently existent, they don't have inherent existence. And the offerings are of the nature of bliss.

[Rinpoche chants the ARGHAM offering mantra.]

Think that their essence is the guru and that they generated infinite bliss within them.

[Rinpoche chants the PADYAM offering mantra.]

Think that skies of bliss, infinite bliss, is generated within Guru Medicine Buddha's holy mind, then think of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

[Rinpoche chants the PUSHPE offering mantra.]

Infinite bliss is generated in Guru Medicine Buddha and in His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

[Rinpoche chants the DHUPE and ALOKE offering mantras.]

Think that infinite bliss is generated in the holy mind of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Medicine Buddha. They experience skies of bliss.

[Rinpoche chants the GHANDE and NAIVIDYA offering mantras.]

Infinite skies of bliss are generated within His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Guru Medicine Buddha.

[Rinpoche chants the SHAPTA offering mantra, then the verse of prostration and praise in Tibetan.]

[Ven. René reads from the sadhana: "At my heart on a moon disc is the resounding mantra circle. From this, rays of light are emitted, purifying all the negativities and defilements of all sentient beings. All the qualities, might and powers of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas are withdrawn in the aspect of light, absorbing into the mantra garland."]

MOTIVATION FOR MANTRA RECITATION

Think, "Every single mantra I recite is for every single hell being, who is my kind mother, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"Every single mantra I recite is for every single hungry ghost, who is my kind mother, to free them from all their suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

“Every single mantra I recite is for every single animal, who is my kind mother, to free them from all their unbearable suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

“Every single mantra I recite is for every single human being, who is my kind mother and experiencing so much suffering, to free them all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“Every single mantra I recite is for every single asura, who is my kind mother and has so much suffering, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“Every single mantra I recite is for every single sura, who is my kind mother and has so much suffering, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“Every single mantra I recite is for every single intermediate state being, who is my kind mother and who has so much suffering, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.”

Also think that you are reciting every single mantra for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for world peace and for the success of all FPMT Dharma activities, including the Maitreya Project.

You can now chant the mantra—the visualization is explained in the text.

I would like to emphasize again that when you recite the first long mantra, where many Tibetans might normally recite PURANI PURANI PURANIYE, you should instead recite PAURANI PAURANI PAURANIYE, which is the way to recite it in Sanskrit.

At the beginning of the sadhana there should be, of course, the motivation; then just before you begin the mantra recitation also make sure to renew your motivation so that the recitation of mantra becomes Dharma and doesn't become service to the ego, the self-cherishing thought. Make sure the recitation doesn't become work for the ego.

Also, before you recite the mantra, as I mentioned before, to make it most beneficial make sure you dedicate each and every single mantra to every single sentient being. Also dedicate each and every single mantra for His Holiness and your other gurus to have long lives and for all their holy wishes to succeed. Also dedicate for the success of all the FPMT centers' activities and the FPMT projects, such as the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue and here the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and the 100,000 stupas and for the various social service projects. Also dedicate for world peace. Make sure that you have dedicated for others. Even knowing

that each mantra you recite is for everybody makes you feel very joyful, and you know that what you're doing is very meaningful.

When you recite for everybody in this way, every single mantra is also recited for bin Laden. When we recite mantras, do dedications or practice tong-len, we make prayers for sentient beings. When you see an insect in the road or flies flying around here, you have already done prayers for them. Your recitation of mantra and your prayers cover all those beings, all those insects you see on the grass or in the road, all those people who are suffering so much that you see on TV, hear about on the radio or read about in the newspapers. Your recitation of mantra and your prayers cover everybody; they cover all those different beings in different situations who are experiencing so much suffering.

When you then see an insect or a worm in the road, think, "I'm doing sadhanas and prayers in my daily life for this being."

END OF MANTRA RECITATION

At the end of the mantra recitation, to make the mantras powerful for quick success, you can recite the Sanskrit vowels and consonants, OM A AA I II U UU RI RI LI LI E AI O AU AM AH SVAHA and OM KA KHA GA GHA NGA / CHA CHA JA JHA NYA / TA THA DA DHA NA / TA THA DA DHA NA / PA PHA BA BHA MA / YA RA LA VA / SHA SHA SA HA KSHA SVAHA, followed by the heart mantra of dependent arising, OM YE DHARMA HETU PRABHAVA HETUN TESHAN TATHAGATO HYAVADAT TESHAN CHAYO NIRODHA EVAM VADI MAHA SHARMANA YE SVAHA. If you recite this at the end of the mantras, whether you are reciting the mantras for purifying, increasing, controlling or some other activity, your recitation becomes very powerful.

When you recite the Vajrasattva mantra at the end of the mantra recitation or the sadhana to purify mistakes you have made, things you have missed and so forth, as His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche advised and as I have also mentioned during other retreats, you must ring the bell and at that time meditate on emptiness. You purify the negative karma in emptiness, which makes the purification extremely powerful. While you are ringing the bell, as in an initiation, you should understand that the sound of the bell is telling you that no phenomenon has inherent existence. That's what the bell is saying. Phenomena don't have inherent existence, as they appear to us to have and as we believe them to have. All phenomena are empty. This is what

you meditate on while you're ringing the bell. Purifying the negative karmas in emptiness by meditating on emptiness brings very powerful purification.

A sutra—I don't remember which one—mentions that simply listening to a teaching on emptiness collects far greater merit than practicing the five paramitas of charity, morality, patience, perseverance and concentration for ten eons. Of course, we can understand how difficult it is to practice charity and especially morality, patience and the others. So, just listening to teachings on emptiness collects far greater merit than practicing these five paramitas for ten eons. Giving teachings on emptiness collects far greater merit than listening to teachings on emptiness for ten eons. And meditating on emptiness for a moment, concentrating on emptiness for a moment, collects far greater merit than giving teachings on emptiness for ten eons. This shows how unbelievably powerful it is to meditate on emptiness for even a moment.

During the Vajrasattva mantra, while ringing the bell, meditate on right view, on emptiness. The bell is saying, "All these phenomena—I, action, object—appear to be inherently existent, and you believe them to be inherently existent, but they don't have even the slightest inherent existence." Since you are meditating on emptiness for much longer than a moment, there's unbelievable purification and merit, as I mentioned.

At the end of the Vajrasattva mantra, it's good to do as I did at the end of the prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas. It's good to say, "In emptiness there is no I, no creator. There is no action of creating. There is no creation, no negative karma." It reminds everybody of emptiness; it brings everybody back to emptiness.

TEA OFFERING TO THE PROTECTORS

What's next? The potato offering? I love the potato offering.

We'll recite *Praise to Six-Arm Mahakala*.

[Rinpoche and the group chant the praise.]

Do you have copies of the tea offering to the protectors that begins with the offering to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the root guru? I just added verses to the basic prayer composed by His Holiness Serkong Dorje Chang, though I don't know whether it was the one who passed away in Nepal or in Tibet. I think it could be the one who passed away in Tibet. I put His Holiness the Dalai Lama's name at the beginning of the prayer and also added a tea offering to Most Secret Hayagriva.

The verse of tea offering to Namthöse (Vaishravana) came from His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche, who is also one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's gurus. One night, when His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche was in Nepal to give the initiations of the hundreds of deities of the *Rinjung Gyatsa* and *Sukha Gyatsa*, he had a dream about Namthöse, who is the protector of the higher training of morality, enabling one to keep vows. Kalarupa is the protector of the higher training of wisdom and Mahakala is the protector of the higher training of concentration. These three are the Dharma protectors for the three higher trainings or, in other words, the protectors for the three principal paths. Mahakala is the protector for bodhicitta. I think Kalarupa is the protector for emptiness and Namthöse for renunciation. These three Dharma protectors are the protectors of the lam-rim, of the three higher trainings. In the dream Rinpoche was teaching His Holiness the Dalai Lama this verse for offering tea to Namthöse. Rinpoche could remember the verse the next day, so I wrote it down and added it there. I think it is something that perhaps needs to be practiced at Kopan Monastery.

Near the end of the prayer there's also a verse about support for the Sangha in this organization and for the organization as a whole. That has been added there. Kopan as well as any other FPMT center can recite that verse.

[Rinpoche recites OM AH HUM three times.]

Maybe somebody can stand here and pour the tea.

[Rinpoche and the group chant the tea offering prayer.]

DEDICATIONS

"No matter what kind of life I experience—happy, unhappy, healthy, unhealthy, gain, loss, rich, poor, receiving praise or receiving criticism—and even if I am reborn in a hell realm, from now on may all my actions and experiences of life be most beneficial for all sentient beings, causing them all to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by my becoming enlightened.

"From this may every asura being, every sura being and every intermediate state being receive everything they need. May every human being receive billions and billions of dollars. May all the rest of the beings also receive everything they need, everything they want. And may all the places they live become pure lands."

You can think of the pure land of Medicine Buddha, Vajrayogini, Chenrezig, Amitabha, Heruka or Tara or of any other pure land where you wish to be reborn. The hells and all the other realms become pure lands where there is no suffering and only beauty and pure, perfect enjoyments.

Having all these enjoyments causes sentient beings to actualize the paths of method and wisdom in their minds. They cease all their defilements, gross and subtle, and they all become enlightened. Every hell being becomes enlightened as the deity of whichever pure land you thought of before. They all become enlightened as that deity.

We have collected two times skies of merit right now by giving away all our merits and all our happiness. And by giving away our body to all sentient beings, we have collected skies of merit, numberless merits. We have also collected numberless merits by giving away all our possessions. Right now we have collected so many times numberless merits.

“Due to this merit, may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen on me and may whatever happiness and merit I have ripen on all sentient beings.

“It is through the guru’s kindness that I have met the teaching of the peerless founder. By this merit, may all transmigratory beings without exception meet and be guided by perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are merely labeled by mind, may the I, who is also merely labeled by mind, achieve Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, and lead all 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.

“I dedicate all the merits collected by me and by others to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha.

“I dedicate all my merits in the way that the buddhas of the three times admire most.

“May the numberless sentient beings in the three lower realms and all those who rely upon me, those for whom I have promised to pray and those whose names have been given to me immediately be reborn in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body.

“May I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors in this FPMT organization, especially those who sacrifice their life to the

organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray, and whose names have been given to me, those who are offering service and all of us here be healthy and have long lives, and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma. May we all be able to completely actualize within us Lama Tsongkhapa's stainless teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, without even a second's delay.

"May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete scriptural understanding and realization of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime by living in pure vinaya and by receiving all their needs and all protection.

"May all the social service centers and meditation centers be most beneficial for all sentient beings, pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. May they be able to spread the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings.

"May every center's projects to benefit others, including the 100,000 stupas, the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and the other projects here at LMB, succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May all the rest of the projects in the organization, including the Maitreya Project, the building of holy objects, monasteries and nunneries, succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May all these projects be most beneficial, enabling everybody to have perfect peace, happiness and equanimity.

"May the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa spread all over the world and flourish, and may I be able to cause this to happen."

Chhö kyi gyäl po tsong kha päi....

*Dag dang zhän gyi dü sum dang....*³⁷

³⁷ See *Essential Buddhist Prayers, Volume 1*, p. 267, for the Tibetan. In English, these two prayers are:

By pacifying all the signs of obstacles
And by perfecting every single required condition,
May the Dharma tradition of the Dharma king Tsongkhapa
Be preserved and developed.

Due to the two types of merit collected
Over the three times by myself and others
May the teaching of the far-famed
Victorious One's pure wisdom blaze forth.

To multiply each merit we collected today 100,000 times, we'll recite the multiplying mantras.

[The group recites the first three multiplying mantras (see footnote 13, p. 24).]

We'll now recite the buddha's name that has the power to make whatever prayers we have done succeed as quickly as possible.

[The group recites the buddha's name (see footnote 13).]

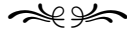
Due to the power of the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas, the power of infallible dependent arising and the power of my pure special attitude, may all my pure prayers succeed immediately.

So, good night, good morning.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30

Final Medicine Buddha Session



THIRTY-FIVE BUDDHAS PRACTICE

THINK, “I must free all the numberless hell beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

“I must free all the numberless hungry ghosts from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

“I must free all the numberless animals from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

“I must free all the numberless human beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

“I must free all the numberless asuras and suras from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.


“I must free all the numberless intermediate state beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.


“Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I need to actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, and therefore, I need to purify all my defilements.


“To be in a lower realm, such as a hot or cold hell, for even a second would be unbearable; it would be like suffering for eons. And I could be there any time, even in this moment, because death is definite. Not only is death definite, but it can come any moment of any day—even this moment. Therefore, I must purify all my defilements. During beginningless rebirths up to now, I have committed the ten nonvirtuous actions, broken the pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows, and collected the heaviest negative karma in relation to my virtuous friends. Without even a second’s delay I must purify all these negative karmas collected during my beginningless samsaric rebirths up to now.

“Therefore, I’m going to do prostrations by reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas’ names to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment.”

[The group performs prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas.]

Again do the visualization of purification even if you have already done it during the prostrations. Strong beams are emitted from the merit field and totally illuminate within you. All the defilements and negative karmas you have collected during beginningless rebirths up to now are completely purified. There’s not even the slightest negative karma left on your mental continuum. 

In emptiness there is no I, no creator. Emptiness means the total absence of true existence, of truly existent phenomena. Emptiness is devoid of all phenomena appearing from their own side. To express it in another way, all the phenomena that are appearing from their own side as independent or as existing by nature are totally nonexistent. In this very nature, emptiness, there is no I, no creator, at all. 

There is no action of creating negative karma, and there is no creation, negative karma. 

While the mind is aware of this state of emptiness, that everything is totally nonexistent from its own side, dedicate the merits. Dedicate the merits with continual awareness of emptiness, of how everything is empty.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, as well as the merits collected by doing these prostrations, may I achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment and lead all sentient beings to that enlightenment by myself alone.

*Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...*³⁸

³⁸ May the supreme jewel bodhicitta
That has not arisen, arise and grow;
And may that which has arisen not diminish
But increase more and more.

DEDICATION OF SESSION

As I mentioned yesterday and as mentioned in the lam-rim, we are doing this Medicine Buddha practice in order to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings. We are also doing it for the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to have stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed, as well as for all our other virtuous friends and all other holy beings to have stable, long lives and for their holy wishes to benefit other sentient beings to succeed.

We're also doing this practice for world peace, for nobody to ever have to experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness, dangers from fire, water, air or earth or any other undesirable thing and for the whole world to be filled with perfect peace and happiness, for everyone's mind to be filled with loving kindness and compassion.

We're also doing the practice for the success of every FPMT center and its projects, including here at Land of Medicine Buddha, the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and a place for the Sangha, as well as the 100,000 stupas to purify sentient beings and liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and quickly bring them to full enlightenment. We're doing it for all the projects of this organization, particularly for the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue to be completed as quickly as possible by receiving everything needed.

Also, we're doing the practice for all the people who are dying now in the war to never ever be reborn in the lower realms and for them to be born in a pure land of buddha where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human rebirth.

Think, "I am going to dedicate this session to these purposes. I am going to do this session for these purposes."

MUDRAS WITH PROSTRATION VERSES

This mudra is the same as, for example, in the prostration verses from the seven-limb practice in *Lama Chöpa*, which describe the deep and extensive kindness of the guru.³⁹ This signifies the dharmakaya, this one the sambhogakaya and this one the nirmanakaya.

³⁹ *Lama Chöpa*, vv. 18-22.

When you turn your hands in the lotus-turning mudra, you shouldn't spread your fingers but keep them together. This creates the cause to achieve the webbed fingers that are one of a buddha's thirty-two holy signs. Keeping your fingers together creates the cause for that special sign of a buddha. This is how His Holiness Ling Rinpoche and His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche did this mudra. You do the mudra at your heart.

The essence, or heart, of the merit field is the root guru, the root virtuous friend. Out of dharmakaya, out of sambhogakaya and out of nirmanakaya, the merit field is guiding you, bringing you toward enlightenment. You yourself will then also guide other sentient beings in that way. I added that last part, but I thought you could also think like that. After you become enlightened, out of dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya, you can then also guide sentient beings. This mudra has that meaning.

First you do like that, then second you ring the bell, then you turn like this. We should offer music when we do the invocation.

Ven. René: We'll start with prostration to the guru.

By whose kindness the greatest bliss
Can be achieved in one single instant,
To you, the lama, a jewel-like field,
I pay homage to the feet of the vajra-holder.

[Ven. René then recites *Prostrations to the Three Rare and Supreme Ones*, *Prostrations to the Lords of the Three Types* and *Prostrations to the Assembly of Deities of the Medicine Buddhas* to the following point:]

The fully realized destroyer of all defilements, fully completed
Buddha, having fully realized the absolute truth of all phenomena,
Buddha King of Glory Renowned with An Excellent Name,
to you I prostrate and go for refuge; to you I make offerings.

Rinpoche: "May whatever prayers I have done be actualized immediately." Did you do that prayer?

Ven. René: Yes. After each buddha.

Rinpoche: Yes, that's right—you do it after you have repeated each name seven times. You say, "May whatever prayers you have done in the past be received by me and by all sentient beings" and then say, "May whatever prayers I have done be actualized immediately."

Ven. René: Do we stop at the end of each one or go straight through the seven and do the request at the end?

Rinpoche: The idea is to recite each name seven times, then after that you make the request. Did you do the request at the end of each of the seven repetitions?

Ven. René: In the previous sessions we went straight through all seven buddhas and did the request at the very end. Should we stop after each buddha and do the request?

Rinpoche: Yes, after each buddha. After you finish repeating the first name seven times, you then make the request. You then recite the name of the next buddha seven times, then make the request. In regard to the request, you say, “May whatever prayers you have done in the past ripen on me and all sentient beings right this minute,” and then say, “May whatever prayers I have done be actualized immediately.”

MAKING OFFERINGS

I mentioned transforming offering goddesses from the heart of you, the deity, and they then make the offering. But when you do ARGHAM, PADYAM...SHAPTA, you can offer not just one set of offerings but all the offerings. Also, if you have arranged many offerings at your own house, each time you recite ARGHAM, PADYAM...SHAPTA when you do the sadhana, you can think of all the offerings in your house and offer them each time. It doesn't have to be that you offer them just one time in the morning. When you do sadhanas during the day, every time there are offerings you can remember all those offerings and offer them. The actually performed offerings are offered along with the visualized ones. It's such an easy way to collect merit and to then quickly achieve enlightenment.

SEVEN-LIMB PRACTICE

In the Medicine Buddha puja, you practice the seven limbs in relation to each buddha. Here, if we recite each limb seven times with meditation, I think it will be very, very powerful. It's very good to do the seven-limb practice precisely and effectively because it's one of the important basic preliminary practices. There are three essential points: purifying negative karma, collecting extensive merit and increasing the merit. Confession purifies negative karma; offering prostration, requesting to turn the Dharma wheel

and requesting to have stable life collect merit; and rejoicing and dedicating the merits for enlightenment increase the merits.

Did you meditate on rejoicing in the other sessions?

Ven. René: In *Lama Chöpa* in the morning.

Rinpoche: Oh, I see.

With the short Medicine Buddha practice, I normally try to repeat each of the seven limbs seven times to collect a lot of merit. It then becomes very powerful.

(i) Prostration

Since you have done prostrations at the beginning, you can actually leave that limb or you can still do it the seven times. In that case you visualize numberless replicas of your body in the form of the deity, but very tall, like a mountain. From the four directions and four corners, they all lie down, prostrating to the holy objects on the altar or to the merit field, while you're reciting, "With my three doors, I prostrate," seven times, with the meditation. When you do the practice of four mandala offerings to Tara, many other practices normally come with it. Physically you put your palms together and mentally you visualize numberless replicas of your body, as tall as mountains, lying down and covering the ground in all directions, prostrating to the altar or the merit field.

If you have visualized 100,000 replicas of your body doing prostrations, in that minute you have done 100,000 prostrations. You collect the same amount of merit as if your actual body had done 100,000 prostrations. The more bodies you can visualize the better it is. This is one basic meditation that makes prostrations most profitable in collecting extensive merit.

Physically put your palms together, verbally recite *go sum gü pai go nä chhag tshäl lo* seven times and mentally do the same meditation. If you can't physically do prostrations because of old age or sickness, according to how many bodies you can visualize doing prostrations, you actually get the same merit as your actual body doing that number of prostrations. It's very important to understand and to remember this. It is mentioned in the lam-rim teachings. You shouldn't think, "It's just a visualization." I think you get if not more, then not less merit....

So, we'll do that practice. Put your palms together. You can read it in English seven times.

Ven. René: "Reverently, I prostrate with my body, speech and mind."

(ii) Offering

My suggestion is that it would be good to do the extensive offerings at least once a day, either in *Lama Chöpa* or in one of the Medicine Buddha sessions. I did the extensive offering meditation in *Lama Chöpa* on the first day. Here you also recite this limb seven times. You can do the same meditation, offering all the offerings here, the many offerings at the house where I'm staying and all the many offerings in the gompas of all the FPMT centers. However, at least offer all the offerings here and all the lights in the Ashes Temple. Recite this line seven times then offer all these offerings to the merit field, to the Medicine Buddhas, thinking of the guru, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Ven. René: "I present clouds of every type of offering, actual and imagined."

If you were told you would get a billion dollars if you climbed Mount Everest or did some other risky thing, you would be very happy to do it. But you find it more boring or more difficult to do the extensive offering meditation than to risk your life climbing Mount Everest. There must be a better example, but I can't think of one right now. If you can get a billion dollars from some activity, you're happy to do it even if it endangers your life. However, you find doing the meditation of extensive offering boring and tiring. You get tired just hearing the words "extensive offering." Just hearing the word "extensive," you get a pain in your back. But for a billion dollars, you're willing to sacrifice your life.

Here, in such a short time, we have unbelievable opportunities to collect merit, the cause of realizations of the path to enlightenment. We can collect numberless causes of enlightenment, numberless causes of liberation from samsara.

Remember the example in the lam-rim of going to a land of jewels where you can collect as many jewels as you want, but returning empty-handed. That example is applied to someone who is born a human being, with all the opportunities, but doesn't practice Dharma and then dies with an empty life. Here we have all these incredible opportunities, and if we don't take them, if we don't practice, we will die and go to our next rebirth with an empty life.

(iii) *Confession*

Next recite the limb of confession seven times.

Think of what I usually explain at the beginning of prostrations or Vajrasattva recitation about practicing the power of regret. In your heart think of all the ten nonvirtues you have collected and of the negative karma you have collected by breaking the pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows, as well as the heaviest negative karma collected in relation to the virtuous friend, during beginningless rebirths up to now. Remember all that then think, “I am confessing all these negative karmas and downfalls.” Then recite the limb of confession seven times.

Ven. René: “I declare all my negative actions accumulated since beginningless time.”

(iv) *Rejoicing*

With rejoicing, you can repeat the words together or just individually repeat them maybe five or ten times. You can do the practice in the following way. In one session rejoice in your own merits of the three times. In the next session rejoice five, ten, twenty-one or more times in the merits of other sentient beings, especially of bodhisattvas, who collect limitless merit in every second, and also rejoice in the buddhas’ merits. So, in one session you can rejoice in your own merits and in the next session rejoice in the merits of others. Generate a feeling of happiness five, ten, twenty-one or more times. You don’t need to repeat the words together; it might be easier if everyone just does their own individual practice. Leave some space there for individual practice.

First think in this way. “Without merit there is neither ultimate happiness nor even temporary happiness. Without merit, I can’t experience the slightest pleasure.” You should first think in this way so that you see how precious merit is. Because, of course, you want happiness and don’t want suffering, you have to have merit. You then see that merit is important for success.

You then think, “I have collected numberless merits during beginningless rebirths up to now. How precious it is, how precious it is, how precious it is. How wonderful it is that I have collected this merit.” Think then about your present merits, “How precious it is! How wonderful it is!” Think then about the merit you will collect in the future, “How precious it is. How wonderful it is.” Feel happiness in your heart. “I have collected numberless

merits in the past, present and future. How precious it is! How wonderful it is!" Once you have started with that, just keep on saying, "How wonderful it is!" In your mind think of how precious all your numberless past merits, present merits and future merits are. Once you have begun with that feeling of how precious they are, then think, "How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is! How wonderful it is!" Rejoice in this way, making your mind happy.

Each time you think, "How wonderful it is!" and feel happy, the merit you have collected during beginningless rebirths is increased, or multiplied. You collect skies of merit each time. It's like investing a hundred dollars in the stock market or a bank and then getting billions of dollars from it. Each time you think "How wonderful it is!" you are getting something better than billions of dollars.

Then think, "Other beings, especially bodhisattvas and buddhas, have collected so much merit in the three times, past, present and future—how wonderful it is! May I able to collect all that merit that each living being has collected to benefit every sentient being." It's mentioned in either a lam-rim or *Guru Puja* commentary to think like this at the end.

You can also mainly rejoice in your own merit then at the end rejoice just one time in the merit of others.

In each session stop there at the limb of rejoicing for just one or two minutes, and each person can then do their individual practice.

Ven. René: "And rejoice in the merit of all holy and ordinary beings."

(v) Requesting to have stable life

Visualize a golden throne in your hand then offer it to the merit field, to the guru. With this visualization we recite the line seven times.

Ven. René: "Please remain until the end of cyclic existence..."

(vi) Requesting to turn the Dharma wheel

It's mentioned that here you can visualize Brahma, because it was Brahma who, by offering a dharmachakra, first requested Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. You can visualize Brahma then offer the dharmachakra with the request to turn the Dharma wheel.

If the top of your mandala is a dharmachakra, you can hold that when you do the limb of requesting to turn the Dharma wheel in the seven limbs.

Visualize this, then recite the line seven times.

Ven René: "And turn the wheel of Dharma for living beings."

Think that the merit field has accepted both requests.

(vii) *Dedication*

At the end of the practice I normally try to mention “merely labeled” as I do the dedication seven times. Of course, if you can think properly, it makes it very powerful.

Think, “I, others, merits, enlightenment—everything is empty of existing from its own side. They are all empty of those real ones that are appearing from there.”

Dedicate with that awareness or with the awareness of merely labeled I, merely labeled others, merely labeled merit, merely labeled enlightenment. You can do it either way: by looking at them as empty or with awareness of dependent arising, of how they are merely labeled. You then recite the dedication seven times. The Tibetan translates as, “My merits and others’ merits are dedicated to achieve enlightenment.”

You meditate that they are all merely labeled or that what appears to you as something real from its own side is a hallucination. In this way the dedication is done by sealing it with emptiness, which protects the merits from being destroyed by anger or heresy.

So, please read that line seven times.

Ven. René: “I dedicate my own merits and those of all others to the great enlightenment.”

MEDITATING ON EMPTINESS

Here I think maybe we’ll just sleep tonight....


This section on emptiness is different for those who have had some experience, for those who are able to recognize the object to be refuted. Once you’re able to recognize the object to be refuted, the false view of the false object, which is apprehended by ignorance to be truly existent, you have the correct idea of emptiness, and it’s easier for you to meditate and get to that point. Those who have had many experiences can go immediately to that point of emptiness. Otherwise, it might be good to use different meditation techniques in this part of *tong pa nyi du gyur*, *they all become empty, emptiness only*. It might be a good idea to use different ways of meditating on emptiness, not only here in this retreat but also when you do a Highest Yoga Tantra deity retreat and each time when you meditate on dharmakaya in a sadhana. You can use the same ideas there.


Generally, you should apply whichever technique is most powerful, most effective, for your mind. However, first you should try the different techniques. If one technique isn't effective, another technique might be. There are different tastes. It's all tea but there are different tastes of tea. As you know, emptiness is one of the basic lam-rim meditations; it's a very important point of meditation in lam-rim practice. The wisdom understanding emptiness is the only one that can directly cut the delusions, the defilements. It's the only one that can directly cut the root of samsara. Therefore, meditating on emptiness is important in our daily practice and in a retreat. We have to do what we can to make our meditation on emptiness as effective as possible. Sometimes, due to strong guru devotion with the support of a lot of merit and purification, it's possible that you will suddenly have some experience of emptiness.

Anyway, maybe not tonight. We'll try tomorrow or at another time....

Emptiness only is a new term that you've probably never seen or heard before. This is probably the first time you've seen this translation. The Tibetan term is *tong pa nyi*. *Tong pa* means empty, and it can refer to ordinary emptiness, such as space being empty of substantial phenomena, a cup being empty of tea, a stomach being empty of food or a purse being empty of money. All these are examples of ordinary emptiness.


The extra word *nyi* is used to specify the kind of emptiness. In Tibetan the term is not just *tong pa*, but *tong pa nyi*. The *nyi*, which means *only*, cuts out ordinary emptiness. So, what kind of emptiness are we talking about? In the Madhyamaka teachings and also in the lam-rim, if this bell is empty of bell, it means the bell is nonexistent. It negates itself. And it is the same with all the rest of the phenomena. If a house is empty of house, it negates the conventional truth. It means the house doesn't exist. It's another way of saying the house is nonexistent: "This is not house, so house is nonexistent."


While the bell is existing, it's empty. It's not empty of bell but it is empty of something; it is empty of something about the bell. The bell is empty of a bell existing by nature. The bell is empty of the bell that appears to one's own ignorance and is believed in by that ignorance. It is empty of the bell that is not merely imputed by the mind. That truly existent bell, that bell not merely imputed by mind, doesn't exist. It appears to us in that way, and we believe it exists in that way, but that bell is not there. It doesn't exist at all. That bell is false, a total hallucination. That bell is totally empty, totally nonexistent, right there. 

The bell is totally empty of existing from its own side. 

Here, when you meditate, it becomes meditation on emptiness only. By cutting ordinary emptiness, you are meditating on emptiness only, the absence of true existence. Emptiness totally negates the object to be refuted. In the view of your mind there is no appearance of conventional truth.



In *tong pa nyi*, the *nyi* stops ordinary emptiness and shows emptiness only. In the view of your mind the object of refutation is totally nonexistent, the object that appears to be truly existent is totally nonexistent, totally empty. In the view of your mind, during that time it's not space but like space. Somebody who has realized emptiness would not be seeing emptiness as we see the absence of people in an empty house or the absence of tea in an empty mug. I guess that person would see emptiness as something very intense. In the view of that mind, during that time there is no such thing as this and that: "This is I, the meditator" and "This is emptiness." There is no such duality. There's no subject and object. There's no such discrimination during that time. There is no this and that. 

There is the total absence of I and the other phenomena that appear to you and that you apprehend to be inherently existent. There is total absence, total nonexistence, of that. 

So, just read that section.

Vén. René: So, we'll do the abbreviated sadhana. "OM SVABHAVA SHUD-DHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM, All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only. While they are emptiness, a PAM appears...."

MOTIVATION FOR MANTRA RECITATION

Think, "I'm going to recite this mantra for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and of all my other virtuous friends and all other holy beings. May all their wishes succeed immediately.

"I'm going to recite this mantra to quickly free every single hell being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

"I'm going to recite this mantra to free every single hungry ghost them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I'm going to recite this mantra to free every single animal from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“I’m going to recite this mantra to free every single human being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“I’m going to recite this mantra to free every single asura being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“I’m going to recite this mantra to free every single sura being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“I’m going to recite this mantra to free every single intermediate state being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

“I’m going to free all sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible by myself alone.

“I’m also going to recite this mantra for world peace.”

As I mentioned before, think that you’re reciting each mantra so that nobody experiences war, famine, disease, hunger, poverty, dangers from fire, water, air or earth or any other problem. Think, “May any problem sentient beings are now experiencing be pacified, and may they never experience any problems in the future.”

Also recite each mantra for the success of all the FPMT projects and centers, including the Maitreya Project and Land of Medicine Buddha.

TEA OFFERING TO THE PROTECTORS

You can think that there is an ocean of uncontaminated great bliss in an extensive jewel container or, in accordance with Highest Yoga Tantra, in a skull. Offering this to each of the different protectors in the merit field causes them to generate infinite bliss within them and fully inspires them to pacify obstacles and to grant the success of all your wishes and prayers, including all the things I mentioned at the beginning of the session and before the mantra recitation. Remember any particular success you want to achieve, make a request and think that they fully accept to immediately grant you help. There are worldly devas, landlords, wealth-giving protectors and nagas included in the eight groups of worldly beings called *de gyä*. Think in particular of all the nagas, devas and landlord spirits in this area. Make the offering to all these beings in Tibet and in the rest of the world, then in particular to those situated in this area, then ask them to help you. They are fully inspired to help.

I would just like to mention here that it’s particularly good to do the tea offering to the *de gyä*, these eight groups of powerful worldly beings, so

that you don't have obstacles when you travel. They control the weather. Of course, the whole thing has basically to do with people's karma and delusions. The main cause of problems is negative karma done in the past. If things were done that upset the devas and made them angry, they then come and cause a lot of harm with storms, hailstones or drought. Nagas receive pollution from people, who disturb them and destroy their environment; they can then cause sicknesses, failures and many obstacles in the lives of the people in that area.

You normally do this tea-offering practice before you travel or before you start a big project such as building a monastery or a house. You ask these worldly beings not to cause obstacles and to help everything go smoothly. It's also common to do this practice when wrathful tantric actions of Highest Yoga Tantra are used to subdue evil beings, or interferers, who are harming many sentient beings or holy beings or causing many obstacles. When peaceful means can't subdue those evil beings, you use wrathful tantric actions. Externally, there can be violent actions but the motivation is one of great compassion, of course. The correct way to do the practice so that there's no danger of its becoming negative karma for you, the practitioner who engages in that action, is by having unbearable compassion for those evil beings. As in the stories of bodhisattvas, you would sacrifice your life to be born in hell for that evil being. You have to have great compassion as the background, the motivation, for your action. Of course, you're more qualified to do such wrathful actions if you have realization of emptiness and the divine pride and clear appearance of yourself as the deity, as in the realization of generation stage. You should have stable concentration of yourself as the deity, with clear appearance and especially with stable divine pride that you are the deity. If you have these qualifications on top of lam-rim realization, you are qualified to do these types of activities.

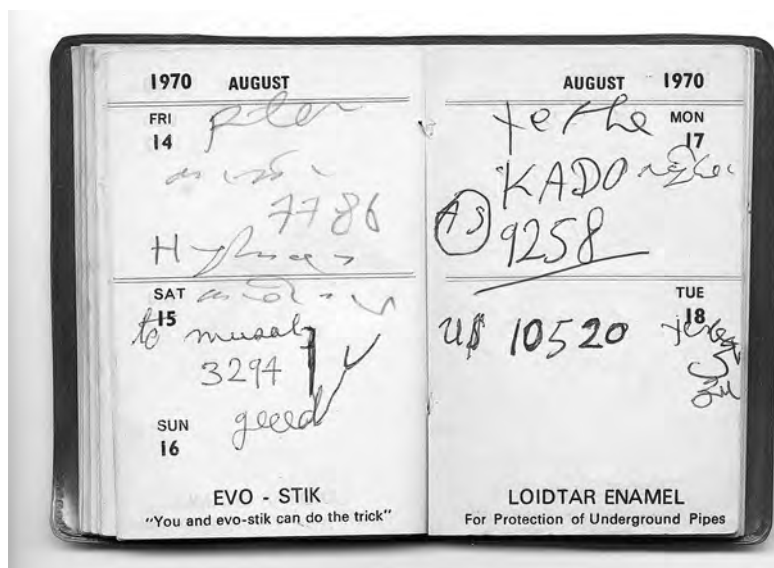
In the wrathful practice you hook the consciousness of the evil being into a figure that has been made and then transfer the person's consciousness to a pure land. You also throw a wrathful tormo with a decoration of flames. Anyway, I don't need to tell you the details of the meditations here at the moment. That being then doesn't engage in any more negative karma, in harming any more beings. These practices are quite commonly done in monasteries by qualified geshe or tantric practitioners.

It might seem a little strange to have gone into such details, but in my letter to President Bush (see appendix 1), I did mention, just to give him some idea of this, that even though there are many religions, in particular

the leaders of each Tibetan Mahayana Buddhist tradition and their monasteries could be requested to do pujas for months or years. In this way people in the military forces wouldn't have to die, and there'd be no side-effects. Because the wrathful practice is focused on only one particular person, there's no danger to anyone else. You don't kill other people, and you don't have the danger of so many people in your own country getting killed. And the cost of one muscle—not “muscle,” missile....

Lama Yeshe always called Marcel, “Musal,” which sounded like “muscle.” Marcel Bertels is the monk who has been working very hard for quite a number of years for the Maitreya Project and for the FPMT organization. Lama had a book in which he would write down his expenses—how much money was borrowed, how much was spent—and also Dharma notes.

On one side of the book he would have Dharma notes, such as things His



COURTESY NICHOLAS RIBUSH

Lama's little black book showing money owed by Peter, Musal and Yeshe Kado!

Holiness said that he found very effective, and on the other side were his expenses: money to Yeshe Khadro, Marcel and Peter, money in and out. I just remembered that Lama always wrote “Musal” for Marcel.

Anyway, one missile must cost quite a few million dollars. I said in my letter that the expense of sponsoring monasteries to do pujas is hardly anything. You could sponsor pujas in many monasteries of the four Tibetan traditions, and sponsoring pujas would cost hardly anything compared to

the millions of dollars that one missile costs. Of course, many monks in Sri Lanka, Burma and other countries could pray too. Since there are many pure monks, their prayers would have much power. But in particular I mentioned the Tibetan tantric methods. It might look a little strange, but I thought to offer my ideas anyway.

The people in many different countries in the world also wouldn't have to get upset. It wouldn't upset so many other Muslims. The war, of course, upsets many Muslims, but here the focus would be only on that very person. Since nobody else would know about it, there would be no protests. Unlike with the present war, nobody would know about it.

Since there are so many religions in the world, I was thinking that it was very strange not to use spiritual means to solve the problems.

This tea offering is a very good practice to do to stop disasters that have to do with the weather, with the elements, such as hurricanes or tornados. It's very effective if it is done by a qualified person, somebody who is living in pure morality, whether a lay or ordained person, has strong compassion or bodhicitta and realization of emptiness. However, the very basic thing is morality. The purer a person's morality, the more effective their practice will be. The worldly devas then listen to the person and will obey whatever order they give them. It's such a simple practice, taking only one or two minutes, but it can overcome the problems of tornados and other disasters. Within hours a tornado can destroy many billions of dollars of property: whole houses and whole towns. A whole building with all the people inside can go up into the sky. This simple practice deals with the beings who are causing, or even involved in, all that violence.

A few years ago, the first or second time I was at Geshe Sopa's place doing a course, George Propps was there but then left for Florida, where he lives. When Yangsi Rinpoche, Tsen-la's brother, was at Kopan, I think Lama asked George to be his benefactor, and George sponsored Yangsi Rinpoche for some years. I remember one time he sent a small airplane, but not one with remote control. I went up on top of the hill and played with it, but I think it flew a little then dropped.

Anyway, George went to Florida, then sent a telephone message to me. He didn't tell Geshe-la but he told me that there was going to be a hurricane and he asked me to pray. But I then gave him a job. I told him to recite a few *malas* (rosaries) of the Kshitigarbha mantra. There are two mantras, a long one and a short one, but I'm not sure which one he recited. I don't

remember right now what else I told him to do, but that was the main thing. I then did a tea offering in my room at Geshe Sopa's place. Of course, that didn't have much power, but I tried. The weather forecasters had predicted that the hurricane would be coming to Florida, where George was. He chanted the mantras. The hurricane came toward Florida but then went around it. He explained afterwards what had happened. He had total faith that his practice had worked.

When a hurricane or tornado comes, you can't send planes to fight it or send in the army. No matter how much scientific knowledge or technology you have, you can't do anything. Here, due to the power of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, with just a very simple prayer and the chanting of a few malas of mantras, you can stop the problem; you can stop many billions of dollars of property being destroyed and many people becoming homeless, or even dying. On the basis of refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, you chant those mantras and do this tea offering. It's a very simple practice.

I just wanted to let you know that you can use this practice with those kinds of dangers, not only to help yourself but to help many other people in the country, to save their lives from danger. Kshitigarbha's mantra is very powerful, and Most Secret Hayagriva's mantra is another one that is very powerful in overcoming these things.

[Rinpoche chants the tea offering prayer.]

Here the practice is condensed, with just mention of the eight worldly beings, or *de gyä*.⁴⁰ But there's a separate prayer, which I asked my relative, Pemba, the resident teacher in the Hong Kong center, to translate. There should be a translation of that prayer available.⁴¹ To control the weather and for big construction projects, it's good to use that prayer along with this one. At the point where the names of the eight worldly beings come in this prayer, you then make the tea offering to them by reciting that longer version. Within the eight groups there are outer, inner and secret groups. You can insert that prayer there—it's just a few pages. These beings are worldly

⁴⁰ In short, to all the visible worldly gods such as asuras and rakshas;
To the eight classes of gods, including their entourages;
And especially to the gods, nagas, and landlords of this location,
I offer this nectar drink that gives rise to bliss,
Please take it and accomplish all my wishes quickly.
From *The Iron Hook Swiftly Hooking All Wishes*.

⁴¹ The prayer is *Ablution to the Eight Powerful Worldly Spirits*.

beings and not objects of refuge, but they are very powerful. It's a useful practice.

One time when I was at Geshe Sopha's place for the teachings, we were planning to have a picnic outside but it was raining. I think I used this practice on two different occasions during two courses. It could be a coincidence and not because I did my prayer, but the sun did come out on those two occasions. In the end we did have the food outside. It seems the prayers did help. Of course, it's based on karma, but it could also have been a coincidence.

DEDICATIONS

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay. May that which has been generated be increased.

Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...."

Dedicate in the same way for emptiness to be realized in your mind and in the minds of all living beings and for the wisdom of those who have realized it to be increased.

*"Tong ye ta wai rin po chhe...."*⁴²

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

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, from now on and in all my future lifetimes, in every second may I be able to bring limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa have.

"I give away all my past, present and future merits and all the resultant happiness, both temporary and ultimate, up to enlightenment, including all the merits collected today by taking Eight Mahayana Precepts and in all

⁴² See footnote 38, p. 102. The first line is "May the precious view of emptiness," the rest of the verse is the same as the bodhicitta verse.

the sessions and break-times, as well as my possessions and my own body in the form of a wish-granting jewel that fulfills all the wishes of other sentient beings. I make charity of all of this to every single hell being, every single hungry ghost, every single animal, every single human being, every single asura, every single sura, every single intermediate state being.

“I also offer all this merit to all the arhats and all the higher bodhisattvas, and it becomes the cause for them to complete the path. I also offer it to my gurus, and it becomes the cause for their success in spreading Dharma, for their holy wishes to succeed.”

By making charity of our own body, all our belongings, merits and all the resultant happiness, we have collected so many times limitless skies of merit.

“Due to this merit, may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen on me and may whatever happiness and merit I have ripen on all other sentient beings.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me and by others, from now on may whatever actions I do—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working—and whatever kind of life I experience—happy, unhappy, healthy, unhealthy, gain, loss, rich, poor, receiving praise or criticism from others, and even being born in a hell realm—be most beneficial for all sentient beings, causing all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by my becoming enlightened.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by the buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, which are like a dream, may the I, who is like a dream, who appears to be inherently existent but is empty, nonexistent, achieve Guru Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also like a dream, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also like a dream, to that enlightenment, which is like a dream, by myself alone, who is also like a dream.

“I dedicate all these merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha.

“I dedicate all my merits in the way that all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times have admired as best.

“I dedicate all these merits to the numberless beings who are suffering in the lower realms. May they immediately be liberated from all those realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by meeting perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus and Mahayana teachings.”

(This dedication includes all the people who have died whose names were given to me, for whom I promised to pray or who relied upon me.)

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, my family members, all the students and benefactors in this organization, especially those who give their life to the organization to offer service to sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, and those who rely upon me, those for whom I have promised to pray, those who are offering service to me and all of us here have long lives and be healthy. May all our wishes succeed immediately in accordance with the holy Dharma. May we be able to completely actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, the stainless teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, which unifies sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime without even a second’s delay.

“May all the gurus have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

“May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime by living in pure vinaya and by receiving all their needs and all protection.

“May all the social service centers and meditation centers be most beneficial for all sentient beings, immediately pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of the sentient beings. May they be able to spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of sentient beings by receiving everything needed.

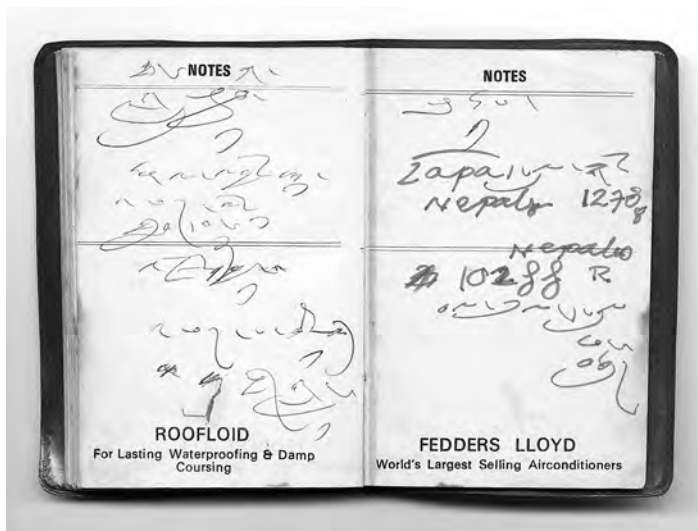
“May LMB and all the Dharma projects here be successful, including the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the place for Sangha and the 100,000 stupas to liberate sentient beings and bring them to enlightenment.”

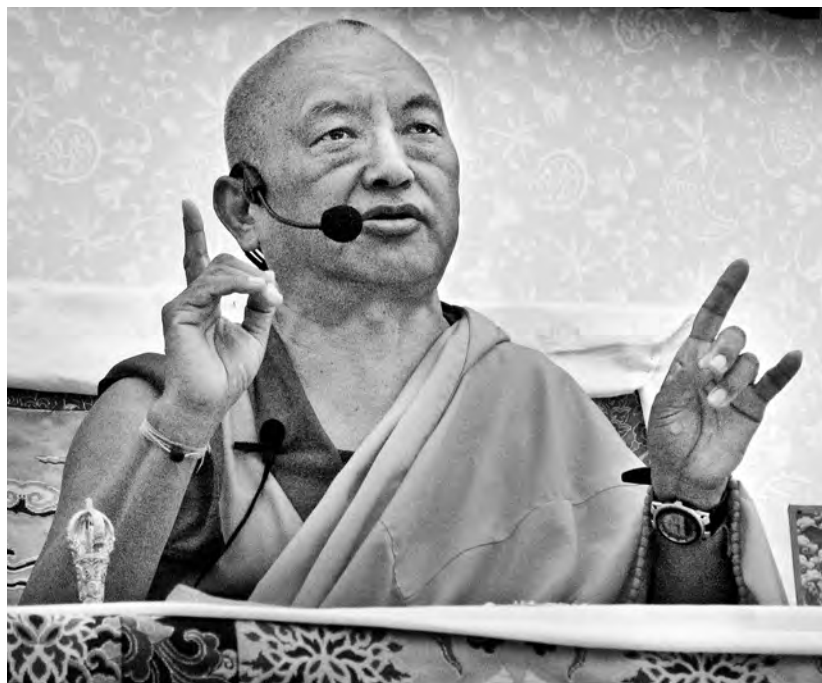
In silence, without words, the stupas will free so many sentient beings from samsara and bring them to enlightenment every day. For hundreds or thousands of years, these stupas will liberate and bring sentient beings to enlightenment every day.

“And may all the other social service projects here, such as the school, and those in all the rest of the centers, as well as all the other projects of each individual center, succeed immediately. May all the other projects in this organization to build monasteries, nunneries and holy objects, including the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, succeed immediately. May this statue be completed as quickly as possible, without any obstacles, by receiving all

the necessary funding. May the Maitreya Project and all the other projects in all the centers cause sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible, by causing them to actualize loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta.

“May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching spread and flourish forever, and may I be able to cause this to happen by myself alone.”





THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

9

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31

Final Medicine Buddha Session



MEDITATING ON EMPTINESS

WE ARE EXTREMELY fortunate to be able to recite at least the correct words of emptiness. Of course, these words are based on those of our kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, Nagarjuna and so forth, and on Lama Tsongkhapa's clarification of emptiness. Due to Lama Tsongkhapa's kindness at least the words are correct, even if we don't know how to meditate and even if we don't know what he's talking about. It's very important that first the words be correct. In dependence upon the correct words, we then have a chance to understand the correct meaning. Explanation in the correct words gives us the opportunity to have the correct understanding of the Prasangika Madhyamaka view of emptiness. There are four schools of Buddhist philosophy, one of which, the Madhyamaka school, has two divisions: Svatantrika and Prasangika. The Prasangika view is the only one that is *the* emptiness.

You can't meditate on emptiness if you don't have a clear idea of what emptiness is or, even if you have a clear idea, you can't concentrate on that idea. There are these two factors: no clear idea and no concentration. You can't really meditate on emptiness if you're not clear about what phenomena are empty of and what emptiness is; and even if you have some idea of emptiness, you can't meditate on it if you can't really concentrate.

At least we have the correct words, the correct explanation. If even the words aren't correct, you have nothing to hold on to; you have no basis on which to really do correct meditation. I think Lama Tsongkhapa's particular explanation of emptiness is very clear—it's an example of Lama Tsongkhapa's special kindness. Of course, it's not the only example of Lama

Tsongkhapa's kindness, which is shown in many other subtle, important points of sutra and tantra.

I think we're very fortunate to have these correct words. Even if we don't understand what we're saying, at least the words we're saying are correct. Getting the idea from that leads to realization of the Prasangika school's view of emptiness, which then leads to the unification of dependent arising and emptiness.

There are many different ways of explaining, or presenting, emptiness. Of course, if somebody has a lot of merit from the past, has performed strong purification and has imprints from meditating on emptiness in the past, they can receive incredible blessings because of great guru devotion and have everything click in their mind. When they read the teachings everything clicks, and one day their meditation works.

My root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, used to say that guru devotion and bodhicitta are more difficult to realize than emptiness. With emptiness it's a question of untying a knot. You just need to recognize the vital point that can release everything. It's simply a question of recognizing that vital point. Once you can hit upon that point you can release the knot very easily. It's a question of recognizing the object to be refuted.

The object of refutation, or object to be refuted, is called *gak cha* in Tibetan. It refers to the inherently existent I or inherently existent phenomena, which don't exist. We have to recognize that this is the object to be refuted. We have to understand the meaning of "inherently existent," "truly existent" or "existing by nature." In our view everything appears to be truly existent twenty-four hours a day, from birth until death, from beginningless rebirths until we totally remove the subtle negative imprints left by delusion. Cessation of those subtle negative imprints is full enlightenment, great liberation, the nonabiding sorrowless state. However, until that happens, the subtle negative imprint left by the concept of true existence projects dualistic view, inherently existent appearance. That negative imprint constantly projects, or decorates, truly existent appearance. The moment after our thought merely labels, or imputes, something, that negative imprint projects an inherently existent appearance of it. Twenty-four hours a day we have that hallucination. It covers all phenomena: the merely labeled I, the merely labeled mind, the merely labeled body, the merely labeled senses, the merely labeled forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects. It covers the merely labeled hell, the merely labeled enlightenment, the merely labeled problems, the merely labeled happiness, the merely labeled samsara,

the merely labeled liberation, the merely labeled nonvirtue, the merely labeled virtue. It covers the merely labeled bodhicitta and all the other merely labeled realizations, as well as all the merely labeled sufferings and all the merely labeled delusions: the merely labeled ignorance, the merely labeled anger, the merely labeled attachment.

Every time, right after the mere imputation, the negative imprint projects the truly existent appearance. All phenomena are covered by this hallucination, by this inherently existent appearance.

Everything that exists is merely labeled by mind in dependence upon a valid base. The valid base is also merely imputed; it's a mere imputation in dependence upon another base. It goes on and on in that way. All phenomena exist in that way, in mere name, being merely imputed.

If everything that exists is merely imputed by the mind, why doesn't it appear to us all the time in that way? That appearance is blocked because everything is covered by this projection of inherent existence. There is an inherently existent appearance on the merely labeled I; there is an inherently existent appearance on the merely labeled aggregates; there is an inherently existent appearance on the merely labeled mind and the merely labeled body; there is an inherently existent appearance on the merely labeled form, the merely labeled feeling, the merely labeled aggregate of recognition, the merely labeled compounding aggregates and the merely labeled consciousness. Hallucinations completely cover the seconds of consciousness and even the split seconds of consciousness.

In our life we believe all these hallucinations of inherent existence to be real. We think, "I am this inherently existent I. This is me." And it's the same with everything else.

You can see that that real thing appearing from there, from the side of the object, is not there. In reality it is totally nonexistent. That real thing appearing to your mind is not there. All these things are totally nonexistent. Totally nonexistent.

It is exactly the same with everything else. An appearance of inherent existence covers the merely labeled text; an appearance of inherent existence covers the merely labeled table; an appearance of inherent existence covers the merely labeled lights; an appearance of inherent existence covers the merely labeled ceiling, the merely labeled beams, the merely labeled pillars. An appearance of true existence covers the merely labeled Medicine Buddha statues. A truly existent appearance covers the merely labeled flowers, white, red and yellow. The merely labeled white, red and yellow colors

are covered by a truly existent appearance. This hallucination covers everything we look at—everything.

And when we go out outside, the merely labeled road is covered by an appearance of true existence. When we look at the sky, when we think of the sky, it is merely labeled but it is then covered by a truly existent appearance.

It is the same with every phenomenon. When we eat, again an appearance of true existence covers the merely labeled food. A truly existent appearance covers the merely labeled vegetables, the merely labeled rice, the merely labeled noodles, the merely labeled soup, the merely labeled bread. A truly existent appearance covers everything. It's like eating a hallucination. The hallucinated person eats hallucinated food from a hallucinated bowl or plate with a hallucinated fork. And the hallucinated food is made by a hallucinated cook. The cook is merely labeled but is then covered by an appearance of true existence, making them a real cook.

When we read a book, every single letter is merely imputed by our mind. While we are reading, our mind is imputing every letter. We were taught by somebody that this letter is A and so forth; we were introduced to the labels. We label "A" on this design, we label "B" on that design. While we are reading each page, our mind is constantly labeling because of the different designs in the writing on each different line. We have been introduced to which labels to apply, so we then apply those labels from the beginning of the page. When we are doing a sadhana, from the beginning of the sadhana to the end, we are constantly applying labels: "this is A," "this is B" and so forth.

In reality the letters are all mere imputations. All these letters are merely imputed by the mind, but a projection of true existence is then put on all the merely labeled letters. Therefore, when we read a book, every single letter appears to us to be a real letter from its own side; not a single letter appears to us to be merely labeled by our mind. For example, when we look at an L, there is a real L appearing from there, an L that is not merely labeled by mind. It is completely covered by all this hallucination. When we read a book, the whole thing, including all the pages themselves, is a hallucination. No matter how many pages we turn, it's all hallucination.

It's the same when I play these cymbals. By seeing how it's made and what it's used for, we call this instrument "cymbals." The cymbals are merely imputed by mind, but because we haven't purified the negative imprints left by delusion, they project a truly existent appearance onto the merely labeled

cymbals, so that they become real cymbals appearing from their own side. So, I am playing real cymbals, hallucinated cymbals.

When we look at these offerings, it is the same with every offering. No matter how many details there are in all these many different flowers, it is the same: they are all covered by a truly existent appearance.

When you go shopping in a supermarket or department store, it is the same with all the billions of bright objects that you see. It is the same with every single object that you see there in the supermarket, with all the billions of different colors in all the bottles in the cosmetics department and with all the billions of things you see when you go to the clothing section. When you look at each thing, you apply a label; your mind merely imputes this and that. You apply the label because of what that thing looks like, its shape, and what it's used for, its function. In dependence upon shapes and functions, you constantly apply labels while you're looking at things in a shop, department store or supermarket. When you look at food in a supermarket, you can see thirty or forty different types of cheese, including the cheese that smells rotten. One lama, new in the West, said that when he went into a supermarket, there was so much stuff there that it made him want to vomit.

Anyway, what I'm saying is that it's the same with a shop or department store as the example of reading a book. While you're looking at things, your mind is constantly labeling. Right after that moment of mere imputation, the negative imprint left on your mind constantly projects something real; it makes everything real. That is how it then appears to you, as a real thing existing from there.

However, that is not the main problem. Even though things appear to you to be truly existent, if you are aware that they are all hallucinations, there is then no basis for attachment or anger to arise. You don't find any reason to get attached or angry or jealous. If you recognize all those hallucinations as hallucinations, even though you're still hallucinated, there's no problem. It's like recognizing a dream as a dream: you can play with things but you don't get attached to them, because nothing is real. You can have great fun when you recognize a dream as a dream. You also have no fear when somebody is hurting you because you don't have the concept that the things in your dream are real. And when you see a beautiful object you feel no desire because you know that it's a dream. You see what is happening but you feel no clinging.

The main problem is that we don't practice mindfulness of the

hallucination. We haven't recognized that everything is a hallucination, that it doesn't exist. We haven't recognized the false as false; we haven't recognized that which doesn't exist as nonexistent. And we allow our mind to hold on to things as true, to believe that the way things appear to us is true. That is the root problem. When we allow our mind to apprehend as true the way things appear to us, we then become jealous of other people, angry with others, attached to others and so forth. Allowing our mind to hold on to as true the way things appear to us then becomes the basis for all those other emotional negative thoughts, which then motivate karma. We then make the oceans of samsaric suffering endless. As samsaric suffering has no beginning, we make it have no end. Every day we are creating the cause of samsara; we are creating samsara.

There's a sentence here in Tibetan: *chö tam che rang zhin tong pa tong pa nyi*. We spent half an hour or an hour translating just these words, I think.

Can you read the translation? I don't remember it now.

Ven. René: "All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only."

Rinpoche: Now, the key point, as I mentioned, is allowing our mind to hold on to the hallucination as true. Of course, having this hallucinated appearance is a problem, but allowing our mind to hold on to the way things appear as true is the very root problem. That is the biggest problem in our life, because all the trouble comes from that concept. We think that being depressed is a big problem, but all the emotional thoughts that make us unhappy actually come from this concept, which many of us are not aware of in our daily life. All the trouble comes from this concept. The root of suffering is created the moment we allow our mind to believe that the way things appear to us is true. That is what produces a frightening death. It's not that every single person finds death a frightening subject, but for ordinary people, death is generally something frightening. This concept is the root of all the trouble, including that frightening experience even at the end of life. Also, if you have much pain in your knees or in your back, that concept is the root of it.

So, what is the antidote? The antidote is not to allow your concept to hold on to the inherently existent appearance, which is the object of refutation, as true, as one hundred percent correct. The antidote can be just a very simple thing, such as being mindful every day that your whole life is like a dream. Philosophically, the correct wording is "like a dream" and not "a dream." But I think for meditating in our daily life we can practice

mindfulness by simply thinking “I’m dreaming”: “I’m dreaming that I’m doing retreat here at LMB,” “I’m dreaming that I’m doing the sadhana,” “I’m dreaming that I’m walking,” “I’m dreaming that I’m eating.” It’s helpful to practice mindfulness in this very simple way, because it brings you to the point of seeing that the way things appear to you is not true. You can say things are “like an illusion” or as the teachings say, “like a dream,” or you can simply say, “I’m dreaming,” even though that’s not really correct. If you are just dreaming that you are at LMB doing retreat, it means, of course, you’re not doing retreat and you’re not at LMB.

The objects you see in a dream don’t exist. Otherwise, after you have dreamt that you have found or somebody has given you a trillion dollars, when you wake up you should have a trillion dollars, but you don’t. And if what you see in a dream exists, there would then be no difference between a dream and your daytime state after you have awoken from the dream. If you married somebody in a dream, in the daytime when you woke up you should then be married to that person. But when you wake up that marriage doesn’t exist. If you had a dream of marrying and having children, in the daytime when you woke up, you would ask, “Where are my children?” They don’t exist. Dreams are hallucinations.

For meditation, you can say that everything is like a dream or just say, “I am dreaming.” I think it’s very good to do this. It’s like in the *Heart Sutra* where it says “no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind...” The *no* is like an atomic bomb or like one of the missiles the Americans are shooting at the Taliban in Afghanistan. You throw the *no* like a bomb, but not on the merely labeled eye, which exists; not on the merely labeled ear, which exists; not on the merely labeled nose, which exists; not on the merely labeled tongue, which exists; not on the merely labeled body, which exists; not on the merely labeled mind, which exists. You throw this *no* bomb on the right target, the object of ignorance, the concept of true existence. You throw it on the eye that appears to you to be not merely labeled by mind, on the real eye that is appearing from there, and which you then believe to be true. You see that that inherently existent eye is nonexistent, as it is totally nonexistent, totally empty, in reality. And it is the same with all the rest of the phenomena: “no form, no sound, no smell, no taste...”

You can meditate here in a similar way to meditating on the *Heart Sutra*. Where you put *no* in the *Heart Sutra*, you can put *dream* or *illusion*. When you say, “I am dreaming,” you put the dream on the real I that is appearing to you, on the real body, the real mind. You put the dream on the real enemy.

Thinking, “I am dreaming,” you put the dream on the real friend, the truly existent friend that is appearing to you.

Even this simple meditation, practicing mindfulness of “I am dreaming,” is an antidote to this wrong concept of true existence in daily life. You think that everything is like a dream or even say, “I am dreaming.” Even though the wording is not philosophically correct, it’s very powerful for your mind. While you are walking, while you are eating, while you are doing a session, while you are talking to somebody, you think, “I am dreaming.” It then gives you the understanding in your heart that everything that is appearing to you and that you believe is not true. It brings you to the conclusion that all these things are empty. This protects you from the king of delusions, this ignorance, the concept of true existence. What is the antidote to this concept that believes that things exist in the way they appear to exist? You don’t let your mind hold on to those things as true, but think the opposite. You instead think, “It’s like a dream” or “It’s like an illusion” or “I’m dreaming,” as I mentioned before. You think that these things are false, hallucinations, which means that they don’t exist. The concept holding, or grasping, on to that then doesn’t happen. Because you don’t allow that concept to happen, anger, attachment and all the other emotional thoughts don’t then arise. Then, by the way, it brings your mind into a stable state of peace, of tranquility.

Here, simply keep your mind in the awareness of *chö tam che rang zhin tong pa*, *All phenomena are empty by nature*. Practice mindfulness of this. No matter what words you use—“dream,” “illusion,” “object of refutation,” “dependent arising”—the point is that you understand that all phenomena are empty.

If you let your mind hold on to phenomena as existent by nature, truly existent or independent, which is a projection of the negative imprint, you could say that when this is happening, you’re not meditating on emptiness. The moment you let go of that truly existent object, the moment you stop grasping that object, such as the real I, you are meditating on emptiness. At that time you’re meditating on emptiness. But as long as you’re holding on to that real phenomenon appearing from its own side, you’re not meditating on emptiness, no matter how many hours you spend doing that and no matter what other experiences happen. Whatever discovery you make, you’re not meditating on emptiness. You have the belief, “I’m meditating on emptiness,” but you’re not. You’re doing the total opposite.

Of course, if you're able to recognize the object of refutation as the object of refutation, there's no doubt that you're meditating on emptiness. However, even if you can't recognize the object of refutation, it's still useful to train your mind in what it says in the *Seven-Point Thought Transformation*:

Reflect on phenomena as being like a dream.

These are very powerful words, like an atomic bomb. When you meditate on them, they bring you to an understanding, or awareness, of emptiness. You may not realize that phenomena are empty, but at least these words give you that idea. It's very powerful for destroying delusions, especially ignorance.

The next line is:

Examine the nature of the unborn mind.

This means that the mind meditating on emptiness is also empty.

The third line is:

Even the remedy is naturally free.

Even the person who is meditating is empty of inherent existence, devoid of inherent existence.

Place the mind in the basis of all, which is the essence of the path.

When you place your mind in the emptiness of the basis of all, since all phenomena come from emptiness, perhaps at that time it becomes the essence of the path. I don't remember now in which way it is the essence of the path.

The *Seven-Point Thought Transformation* then says:

In the break-times, be the illusory person.


In the sessions, you meditate on emptiness, then in the break-times you become the illusory person. In other words, you practice mindfulness of that, as I explained just before.


To return to what I was going to say at the beginning, but which got elaborated.... When you meditate on emptiness, when you say “empty” you shouldn’t think that it means the way my two hands are empty at the moment. That was actually what I meant to tell you at the beginning. When you do the blessing of the offerings and later all the offerings are taken away, the altar is then empty. If your idea of emptiness is like that, it’s not emptiness but actually getting close to nihilism. If, while the offerings are there, you believe there are no offerings, you are falling into nihilism. If you meditate that the offerings are taken away and there’s empty space there, you’re simply meditating on the absence of substantial phenomena. You’re not meditating on the absence of truly existent offerings. You’re not meditating on emptiness, which is the absence of true existence, but on ordinary emptiness, the absence of the substantial offerings.


All the offerings are empty of inherent existence or of existing by nature. This is the view of Lama Tsongkhapa and Milarepa and all the others who became enlightened in the other traditions. Phenomena are empty of true existence, empty of existing by nature or empty of independence. At least you should use the correct words, and you can then think about those words as correctly as you can.


Now tonight the correct words are “All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only.”

I described before how everything, starting with the I, is false. I gave examples of how the hallucination of true existence covers the merely labeled I and all the rest of the merely labeled phenomena here: the merely labeled forms, sounds, smells, tastes and so forth. The hallucination of true existence covers all the merely labeled phenomena. It is the same with hell and enlightenment, samsara and nirvana, problems and happiness—the hallucination of true existence covers all these merely labeled phenomena.

We will now meditate for a little while on this. 

Practice mindfulness of how this hallucination covers all these phenomena, which are merely labeled by mind. 

It is the same with everything, from the I down to the particles of the atoms of the body and the split seconds of the consciousness. Even though everything appears to be truly existent, everything is completely covered by the hallucination of inherent existence. 

The merely labeled I and everything else are completely covered by this hallucination. 

Think of all the external phenomena around you. Then think of all other phenomena: hell, enlightenment, samsara, nirvana, happiness, problems, suffering, cause, cessation, path. Everything is completely covered by hallucination. All the merely labeled phenomena are covered by hallucination so that they appear to be independent, to be not merely labeled by mind.



Think of the meaning of “All these are hallucinations.” What does it mean? It means all of them are totally nonexistent right there, from where they are appearing. Everything is totally nonexistent right there, from where it is appearing.



Everything is *totally* nonexistent from where it is appearing as a real one.



Now, from the I down to the atoms of the body and the split seconds of the consciousness, the real I appearing from there is totally nonexistent.



All phenomena are empty by nature.



If you want to make this stronger, think, “In emptiness there is no I, no meditator. There is no action of meditating. There is no meditation.” You can add this to make the meditation more precise and stronger.

Now, your mind is aware that nothing in the slightest exists from its own side. Everything is totally emptiness only. You see emptiness only.

Your wisdom seeing emptiness, nondual with emptiness, then manifests a PAM, which transforms into a variegated lotus, with BHRUM in the center.

Please read.

Ven. René: “At my heart on a moon disk is the resounding mantra circle. From this radiates....”

MOTIVATION FOR MANTRA RECITATION

Think, “I am going to recite each mantra for the long life of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and of all my other virtuous friends and all the rest of the holy beings. May all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless hell beings, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless hungry ghosts, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless animals, to free them from all their unimaginable suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless human beings, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless asuras and suras, to free them from all their unimaginable suffering, their hallucinations and distractions, and its causes and bring them to enlightenment.

"I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless intermediate state beings, to free them from all their suffering, all their terrifying fears, and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

"And I am going to recite every single mantra for world peace, and for all of us to generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta. May all the wars, disease, spirit harms, famines, natural disasters and all other problems that are happening now be stopped, and may nobody ever experience such things again. May everybody have perfect peace and happiness.

"May all the FPMT projects and centers succeed immediately, including, here at LMB, the 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas, the school and other social service projects, and all the other projects.

"May all the projects to build holy objects succeed immediately, including the large stupa at Bendigo, which will be a replica of the Gyantse Stupa in Tibet. And may the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue and all other holy objects be completed as quickly as possible."

KING OF PRAYERS

This is to wake everybody up. [Rinpoche plays the cymbals for a long time.]

Ven René: Long-life prayer, page 7.

Rinpoche: *King of Prayers*.

Ven. René: First the long-life prayer, then *King of Prayers*.

Rinpoche: No, *King of Prayers* instead of the long-life prayer.

Ven. René: All right.

Rinpoche: Reciting *King of Prayers*, the extensive bodhisattva's prayer, definitely enables you to quickly achieve enlightenment, as mentioned in the prayer itself.⁴³ And it is a very powerful means of purifying heavy negative karmas, as also mentioned there.⁴⁴ From the prayer you can see that you can quickly purify even the heavy negative karmas of having killed your father, mother or an arhat, harmed Buddha and caused disunity among the Sangha. The five uninterrupted negative karmas cause one to be reborn in the lower realms immediately after death without the interruption of another life. Even those heavy negative karmas are quickly purified.

Since this prayer contains numberless hundreds of thousands of extensive bodhisattvas' prayers, if we pray in this way, we will then be able to benefit sentient beings in a way similar to a bodhisattva.

Reciting this prayer is also a means of collecting extensive merit. It is mentioned there that by reciting or hearing this prayer and generating faith in it, you collect much more merit than by offering to the buddhas the universe filled with jewels and all the enjoyments of devas and human beings.⁴⁵

Reciting this prayer every day is also one method to be reborn in the Amitabha pure land when death comes. That's one very important benefit.

DEDICATIONS

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated

⁴³ Have no doubt that complete awakening
Is the fully ripened result—comprehended only by a buddha—
Of holding in mind by teaching, reading, or reciting
This aspiration of the bodhisattva practice. (V. 54.)

⁴⁴ Those who give voice to this extraordinary aspiration
Will quickly and completely purify
The five boundless harmful actions
Created under the power of ignorance. (V. 51.)

⁴⁵ One may offer to the buddhas
All wealth and adornments of infinite worlds in ten directions,
And one may offer during eons numberless as atoms of the world
Even the greatest happiness of gods and humans;

But whoever hears this extraordinary aspiration
And, longing for highest awakening,
Gives rise to faith just once,
Creates far more precious positive potential. (Vv. 47–48.)

within my own mind, in the minds of the members of my family and in the minds of all other sentient beings without even a second's delay. And may the bodhicitta that has been generated be increased.

"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...."

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and all other virtuous friends have stable lives. May all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

"May Lama Ösel Rinpoche also have stable life, show the aspect of having all the qualities of Lama Tsongkhapa and be able to offer skies of benefit to all sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha. May he be able to complete his Dharma activities in this life without any obstacles and complete his studies in the monastery.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, who are unimaginably suffering right now, and those people who have died whose names have been read or have been given to me, for whom I have promised to pray or who relied upon me immediately be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by meeting perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus and Mahayana teachings.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing that somebody is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover, including those people with cancer and other illnesses whose names have been given to me. May this happen not only in this life but in all future lives. May my hearing a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be born in a pure land where they can become enlightened.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the sentient beings who are sacrificing themselves through the organization to serve other sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha and those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray, whose names have been given to me and those who are offering service, including everyone here, have long lives and be healthy. May all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma. (If it's according to the holy Dharma, there's no danger of its becoming negative karma.) And may we be able to actualize in all our minds Lama

Tsongkhapa's stainless path, which unifies sutra and tantra, all the realizations of the steps of the path to enlightenment, in this very lifetime without even a second's delay.

"May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime by living in pure vinaya and by receiving all their needs and all protection.

"May all the meditation centers and all the social service centers, such as hospices, schools, hospitals and so forth, be most beneficial for all sentient beings, immediately pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. And may they be able to spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed for that.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, every day for the many hundreds or thousands of years that the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the place for the Sangha and the 100,000 stupas exist, may they purify many sentient beings without words, in silence, liberating them from the lower realms and from samsara and bringing them to enlightenment."

Since they are meaningful to behold, anybody who sees or touches these holy objects purifies their negative karma and defilements. Anybody who remembers or dreams of the stupas and other holy objects plants the seed of enlightenment. Every time somebody remembers them or sees pictures of them, that memory plants the seed of enlightenment in their mind and brings them to enlightenment, so there is no doubt about the result for those who circumambulate or make offering to these holy objects. They are all meaningful to behold.

"May the universal education school, the hospice and the other social service projects here and all the projects in the rest of the centers succeed immediately by receiving everything needed.

"May the large stupa, a replica of the stupa in Gyantse in Tibet, that we are trying to build in Bendigo and all the other projects for building monasteries, nunneries or stupas in Colombia, Mexico, Spain and other countries succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May they be most beneficial for all sentient beings, purifying the negative karma of numberless sentient beings and allowing them to generate loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta, as well as the wisdom realizing emptiness. (This is besides the people who are actually engaged in building these holy objects.)

May these holy objects make an extremely important contribution to world peace.”

World peace depends on good karma. All the good things—health, happiness, success—have to come from good karma. These holy objects are actually very powerful means to create good karma for sentient beings. That’s how they benefit the world. They bring not just temporary peace but end samsara and then bring sentient beings to enlightenment. That’s the most important achievement.

“May the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue also be completed as quickly as possible by receiving all that’s needed. May all these projects cause bodhi-citta to be generated in the minds of all the sentient beings. Through that may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness or dangers from fire, water, air or earth, such as earthquakes. May everybody have perfect peace and happiness.”

BENEFITS OF HOLY OBJECTS

I know it’s late, but I would just like to mention that in the sutra text, *Engaging the Mudra Generating the Power of Devotion*, it says that simply seeing a statue of Buddha, or even a picture of Buddha, collects numberless great merits. It collects greater merit than offering the entire universe filled with jewels to how many arhats? (Arhats are those who have put unbelievable effort into ceasing karma and delusions and are free from samsara.) Arhats equal in number to the sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean. The merit is more than from offering the entire universe filled with jewels to that many arhats for many eons. I mentioned the other day that the good karma from somebody offering a medicinal drink to four monks was so powerful that in their next life that person was born as a very powerful, wealthy king in India. This was from offering just a medicinal drink to four members of the Sangha. Here we’re talking about offering to so many arhats.

Buddha explained in that sutra that a sentient being simply seeing a statue of Buddha collects numberless great merits, far more than from making offering to that many arhats. You can now see that if you really want to bring happiness to sentient beings, holy objects are the practical means to do so. Happiness has to come from good karma. Sentient beings generating loving kindness and compassion has to come from good karma, from merit. Without merit, how are you going to change your mind? Having intellectual understanding alone doesn’t mean that you can change your

mind. Even if you know all Buddha's teachings by heart, that alone doesn't mean you can change your mind. You have to have good karma, or merit, to change your mind.

There is no doubt about how much merit the people in the FPMT organization who are actually building statues or stupas collect, but even a sentient being who sees the statue or stupa collects mind-blowing merit.

DEDICATIONS

"May Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching be spread all over the world. May it flourish in all the directions, and may I be able to cause this to happen."

I left out my favorite dedication!

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are *totally* nonexistent from their own side, may the I, who is *totally* nonexistent from its own side, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama's, Medicine Buddha's, enlightenment, which is also *totally* nonexistent from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are also *totally* nonexistent from their own side, to that Medicine Buddha's enlightenment, which is *totally* nonexistent, empty, from its own side, by myself alone, who is *totally* nonexistent from its own side."

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

THE BENDIGO STUPA

I would like to introduce Ian and Judy Green from Atisha Centre in Bendigo in Australia. Maybe you could come up here and just introduce the essential points about the stupa.⁴⁶

A long time ago, in Lama Yeshe's time, when Lama came to Bendigo Ian offered a place to build a monastery, and Lama said to build a stupa. I didn't know that Lama had told Ian that, so when I came to Bendigo many years ago, I said it would be very good to build a large stupa there. Dr. Adrian has built the monastery, so that has been done. Last time I was in Australia Ian had already laid the foundations for the stupa.

Ian Green: Thank you very much, Rinpoche. As Rinpoche mentioned, I am Ian, and Judy is over there. Twenty years ago last August, Lama Yeshe

⁴⁶ See www.stupa.org.au

was in Australia, and my family had just offered fifty acres of land to Lama. Lama walked around the site and laid out a master plan in August 1981 for a Dharma center, a large monastery, a hospice and a lay community. Right in the middle of this was to be what Lama described as a *big* stupa, and he said that inside this *big* stupa was to be a *big* gumpa and also a library.

During the past twenty years, we've been developing our center, and three or four years ago Dr. Adrian, Thubten Gyatso, also completed building the first stage of the monastery there in Bendigo. A lay community is also just starting to happen at the moment, and a small group is working on the hospice. So, most of the plan that Lama laid out for us is happening.

About eight years ago we still hadn't decided what this big stupa should look like, and then Rinpoche said that this was his idea for the big stupa. This is the Gyantse Kumbum, which was built around 1450 by Rabten Kunsang, a prince of Gyantse. We are building a stupa that is exactly the same size and that will externally have exactly the same appearance. In feet, it's approximately 150 feet high and 150 feet square. For those of you who know meters, that's almost 50 meters high and 50 meters square. Inside our stupa will be a three-story high gumpa that will seat 500 people. When you walk in, you will see at the end a large three-story high Buddha with light coming down around it.

This is the stage we're at. At the moment, from a distance and from the air it looks as if a spaceship has crashed into the bush. But it hasn't. In the middle of the picture you might be able to see three or four little dots. They're bulldozers, big earth-moving equipment.

The inner circle is where the stupa will be located. The three rings around that are for circumambulation, a *ling kora*. Around those circumambulation paths, on the retaining walls, will be 100,000 small stupas

Rinpoche: Nothing unusual. Nothing new!

Ian: I'm pleased it's not more.... There will be 100,000 small stupas. There will also be 5,000 larger stupas, as well as many prayer wheels.

Rinpoche: I thought there were 100,000 prayer wheels?

Ian: Yes, you did say that, but I was hoping that you might have forgotten. Well, it will be very difficult to fit 100,000 prayer wheels unless they're very, very small, which I know Rinpoche doesn't want.

The project is well under way in terms of construction. This is the timeline chart for the construction of the stupa. What it shows is that there will be actual concrete in the ground in those earthworks next year. And in two and a half years the construction will commence. Initially we'll just be

building the gompa part as a functioning building, and then from there the rest of the building will be built in stages, with ultimate completion of the building in 2010. So, that's the schedule, and on paper it all seems to work very effectively.

Judy and I have been traveling around India and around America telling people like you about the project. We've been offered some wonderful relics and holy objects for the stupa, and we've also had many great offers of support. This is very much part of an ongoing program, and I'm just letting people know about the stupa and just gaining support for it around the world. Here in America we've had absolutely fantastic support from the people we've met in Colorado and in New Mexico. They've shared information about their stupas and also backed us as much as they possibly can.

Rinpoche: What happened in India?

Ian: The reason we went to India was to take a large model of the stupa, two meters square, which is about six or seven feet square, and about this high. One of the monks in Bendigo worked on the model for about four months and then four volunteers painted it beautifully. We air freighted it to Delhi, which was far and away the most expensive part because everything else was volunteered. And, of course, getting it out of Delhi airport was really expensive and time-consuming. There was a lot of trouble getting it there, and Judy and I had \$US500 stolen, and many other things like that happened.

Anyway, we got the model to Kushinagar which, as many of you will know, is where the Buddha passed into *parinirvana*. There is a large Buddhist museum there, with a new international wing, and our stupa is sitting right in the middle of it on permanent display. Kushinagar is one the four holiest places of Buddha, where Buddha said that it's good for Buddhists to make pilgrimage. It's also where Buddha was cremated. Before Buddha was cremated he gave instructions on what was to be done with his ashes, which was, of course, to make stupas with them. So, the whole birth of the Buddhist stupa tradition was in Kushinagar.

Representatives from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Office, who were very supportive, were there, as well as people from the Uttar Pradesh government and even the Australian High Commission. It was a big event. Then afterwards we traveled to other places in India, including Dharamsala.

Is that OK?

Rinpoche: It was great.

Ian: Thank you.

[There is a round of applause from the audience.]

Rinpoche: The Gyantse Stupa in Tibet is very interesting. I don't know much about it and so much has been destroyed, but there is a Kalachakra temple and also a Medicine Buddha temple, I think. There is also a combination of Gelug and other traditions just in that area. It's a very, very interesting place. The different colleges of the monastery practice different deities. It's very inspiring.

In the stupa as you go around there are different lower tantra, yoga tantra and maha-anuttara yoga tantra deities. I think there are about sixty different deities from the different levels of tantra. It's very interesting. So much has now been destroyed, so you see the ruins. Fortunately the main stupa was not destroyed, but many of the small temples were.

Ian and Judy have taken on the great task of this stupa, which will be most amazing, not only generally in the world but especially in Australia. Near Chenrezig Institute there is a huge pineapple, about the size of a house, and people come from all over the world to see this pineapple. That's right, isn't it, Anila Ann? Thousands of people come each year to see this big pineapple, but what do they get? Nothing.

But when people come to Bendigo, there will be 100,000 stupas and prayer wheels and so many other holy objects. After they go around the stupa, they will go back home with many hundreds of thousands of causes of enlightenment planted in their mind and so many negative karmas purified. Even the tourists, who don't have any devotion, will have made so much preparation in their minds to achieve enlightenment.

Both Ian and Judy, besides taking on this great task of building this incredibly inspiring stupa, have worked very hard for Atisha Centre. In the past when I was visiting Bendigo, I remember Judy working so hard for the center for many years. I have that strong imprint in my mind of their hard work, their service.

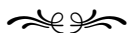
So, I think that's it. I want to thank you both very, very much from the bottom of my heart. Really, thank you very, very much for dedicating yourselves for so many years to the center and especially to this project, which is actualizing Lama's original wishes.

Thank you so much. Good night, good morning.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Final Medicine Buddha Session



REQUESTING PRAYER

“MAY WHATEVER PRAYERS you have done in the past ripen to me and all sentient beings. And may whatever prayers I have done be actualized immediately.”

Whatever prayers I have done refers to the many prayers you have done for yourself as well as for other sentient beings in your daily life. You are praying for all of them to succeed.

ASPECTS OF THE MEDICINE BUDDHAS

In regard to the colors and mudras of the Medicine Buddhas, I can't say which ones are correct, because you find slight differences between different Tibetan texts. I can't say which ones are correct because I haven't met the seven Medicine Buddhas and been able to ask them, “What are your mudras? What are your colors?” Basically, I think you can follow the ones you see here in this text. The main point is to have some idea of the colors and mudras to distinguish the different buddhas.

We checked with His Holiness's Private Office about the colors and mudras, but it seems there are differences between the different texts. I don't really think it's a problem. The main thing is just to focus on the deity itself. You can follow what we have in the text here. If all the other texts were one way and this was the only one that was different, this one could be mistaken, but there are differences between the different texts.

THE NATURE OF OMNISCIENT MIND

In Highest Yoga Tantra there are two stages: the graduated generation stage and the graduated completion stage. The generation stage has gross and subtle stages, and in the subtle stage you're able to clearly visualize every single detail of yourself and the entire mandala as a drop the size of a mustard seed at either the lower or upper tip of the central channel. You have that realization of stable concentration.

This then becomes preparation for the completion stage, which has isolation of body, isolation of speech, isolation of mind, clear light, the illusory body, and the unification of those two. When you have achieved the illusory body, your subtle body is able to do practices and activities without depending on your gross body. With unification, you are able to manifest many forms of yourself as the deity. By training your mind, you then achieve the unification of no more learning. In regard to unification, there is the path unification and the unification of no more learning. At that time you have removed the subtle negative imprints left by delusion that projected inherently existent appearance. There's no resistance to the extremely subtle wind in that holy body and, of course, there's no resistance to the mind. That's according to tantra. From Highest Yoga Tantra you can see how there is no place where there is no buddha. It is not just that the omniscient mind can see everything from a distance. Omniscient mind covers all phenomena. There is no place where there is no omniscient mind, because the extremely subtle wind is beyond obstruction, beyond resistance.

Anyway, these are very secret points of tantra. If you don't have a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation, it will be revealing secrets to discuss this. I can't really clarify this as it involves talking about the dharmakaya, which is an ultimate secret. You can only understand precisely about dharmakaya from Highest Yoga Tantra explanations. With the sutra explanations, even though you can do extensive study of a buddha's qualities, you can't really clarify the very subtle points. You can do this only with Highest Yoga Tantra.

What I'm saying is that the Medicine Buddhas are always there. It's just that our mind is obscured, so our defilements block our seeing all the deities. Medicine Buddha is always there on our crown or in front of us. The reason we do the invocation, even though the Medicine Buddhas are already there, is for our ordinary mind, because it helps us to have more faith.

Even with an ordinary spirit, who is a samsaric being, when you think of the name of that particular spirit to invoke it, it immediately enters the

medium's body. If this happens with even a spirit, there's no doubt about when we invoke a buddha. Even ordinary spirits, who are not free from samsara, can see with their ordinary kinds of clairvoyance that you have invoked them and can come immediately. *Pretas* have ordinary clairvoyance; it's not developed through meditation but is just their karma while they are in that state.

So, of course, when you mention the name of a buddha, when you invoke a buddha, there's no doubt that they will immediately come. A buddha has an omniscient mind that can see all past, present and future existence directly and unmixed, that can see all the karmas, even the subtle ones, of each and every one of the numberless sentient beings directly and unmixed, so there's no doubt that they are really there where you visualize them, especially if you invoke them by mentioning their name. There's no doubt about this. Even without the invocation, they are always there with you. The numberless buddhas are always there with you wherever you are.

As our mind becomes more and more pure, we see more and more phenomena. When our mind becomes purer, we can then see a buddha's form; we can then see a buddha in the aspect of a buddha. Other than that, what we see are just representatives of buddhas, such as statues of deities. It's mentioned in the teachings that other sentient beings, such as animals, can't see even statues of buddha, which we can see. It is said that these statues are manifestations of buddha. Even though we can't see an actual living buddha in that aspect adorned with the holy signs and exemplifications, or in the aspect of a deity, all the holy objects that we now see are manifestations of buddha in accord with our present karma, our present state of mind.

Many other sentient beings can't even see holy objects; they can't see statues or stupas of buddha or texts. Their mind is so obscured that they don't have the karma to see them. In the world there are also many human beings who never see even a statue of Buddha in their whole life. They have no opportunity at all to purify their mind by seeing that form and to plant seeds of liberation and enlightenment. So many human beings don't have even that karma.

When we think of the sentient beings who don't have this opportunity, we then see how extremely fortunate we are. I mean, in some ways we are pure compared to those sentient beings. Being able to see this many holy objects gives us the opportunity to collect merit day and night in our everyday life, unless from our own side we don't do the practices of making offerings and prostrations or don't take the opportunity to look at holy objects

and purify our mind and plant seeds of enlightenment, which cause us to have realizations within our mind. Unless from our own side we don't take the opportunity, we can see, have and make so many holy objects all the time, which gives us an unbelievable opportunity for quick enlightenment. It makes it so easy for us to create the cause of all happiness and to quickly achieve enlightenment. We can see that having and seeing holy objects are unbelievably precious. It shows that we are unbelievably fortunate.

As our mind develops more and more, we are able to see more and more. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo mentions in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that a meditator who has entered the Mahayana great path of merit, (the Mahayana path of merit has small, intermediate and great divisions) is able to see the statues that we normally see as ordinary statues in nirmanakaya aspect, with the holy signs and exemplifications. And a meditator who has achieved the Mahayana path of seeing (and this can also be related to the tantric path) is able to see statues in sambhogakaya aspect. Of course, when that meditator then becomes enlightened, their mind becomes one, or mixed with, the holy mind of all the buddhas.

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche says there are two views on this. Some people accept that the mind becomes one with all the buddhas and others don't accept that. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains that when you become enlightened, your mind mixes with the holy mind of all the buddhas. I follow that explanation. In Maitreya Buddha's teaching, *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*, though I don't remember the exact words, there are powerful quotations about how all the water from different springs or rivers comes into the ocean and becomes one with it and about how the beams of the one sun reach everywhere. In a similar way, all the various forms of buddha are manifested from dharmakaya and then liberate sentient beings and bring them to enlightenment.

BENEFITS OF HOLY OBJECTS

As you will remember, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that you should have an altar in your home and that you must look at it every day. Don't just think, "Oh, I know what's there." It's emphasized that every day you must look at holy objects, even those in your room. By simply seeing them, as I mentioned last night, you collect unbelievable merit, purify your mind and plant seeds of enlightenment. Planting seeds of enlightenment doesn't refer to just enlightenment itself.

That's the ultimate goal to be achieved, but I think it also includes achieving the realizations of the whole path to enlightenment.

For example, it is normally said that as soon as you offer one stick of incense, one flower, one bowl of water or one tiny grain of rice or do a prostration or show respect to a holy object, such as a statue, stupa, scripture or picture of Buddha, whether that holy object is actually there or you have visualized it, it becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment. And it is the same when you make a food or tea offering, where you offer the essence of the food and drink to holy objects. As soon as you make the offering by thinking of Buddha, it becomes a cause to achieve enlightenment. And how can you achieve enlightenment without actualizing the path? There's no way you can. Becoming a cause to achieve enlightenment means becoming a cause to achieve all the realizations of the path from the beginning to the end: guru devotion, the three principal aspects of the path and the two stages of tantra. The moment you make the offering, you create the cause to achieve all that.

Therefore, you can see that holy objects, whether big or small and no matter what material they're made of, are most precious, more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel. If you find a wish-fulfilling jewel, by praying to it you can get all the enjoyments you want. You can get as many limousines as you want, as many swimming pools as you want, as many motor cycles as you want. Anyway, I'm joking. By praying to that wish-fulfilling jewel, you can get as many enjoyments as you want. You might be thinking that this happens due to the power of the wish-granting jewel, but of course it's based on your karma, your merit. Having the karma to have that jewel means that you also have the karma to have all those enjoyments.

These holy objects are far more precious than numberless wish-granting jewels. These holy objects bring you limitless skies of benefit: cessation of all karma and delusions, of all the defilements, the continuation of which has no beginning; cessation of all suffering, the continuation of which has no beginning; and all the realizations of the path from the beginning to the end, which means enlightenment. This is what you get from these holy objects. You are then able to liberate the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. The preciousness of these holy objects is beyond words. The benefit we get from them is definitely beyond our concept. It's unimaginable. We could never finish explaining the benefit we get from them. Since they are extremely precious, we should have as many of them as possible.

We talk about good luck and success, and we use feng shui and many other methods to have them. Some people don't believe in or use feng shui or those other methods, but they have their own understanding of how to make their life successful. They may think, "If I study this, I will be successful in my job."

However, if you don't have good karma, if you don't have merit, you can't even find a good doctor that can cure your sickness. Or even if you find a good doctor, they won't be able to cure your disease if you don't have merit. Even if you use feng shui, it won't work if you don't have merit, because feng shui is only an external arrangement. Feng shui alone won't work. You first have to have the merit, the good karma. If you have the good karma, you will then find the person to do feng shui correctly. This is just an example, but it is the same with everything else.

It is the same with the Dharma. If you don't have merit, you can't find the right virtuous friend to reveal Dharma to you, to show you the path to happiness, to liberation and enlightenment. The very first thing is to find someone who can show you the path to happiness and not the path to suffering. You don't want to be shown a path that leads to suffering, to the suffering of the lower realms and of samsara. You don't want to follow a path that causes you to be born in samsara and to experience samsaric suffering. You need merit, because without merit you can't meet an unmistakable guru who can reveal the right path. For everything you need to have merit.

Having these holy objects makes life so easy; they make it easy to collect merit and to create the cause of any happiness, any success. You can create all the good luck, or good fortune—or whatever else you want to call it.

In his lam-rim teachings Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo emphasizes that we should treat holy objects as actual living buddhas. We should respect a statue as an actual living buddha. Respecting them in this way then becomes the cause, sooner or later, to actually see them as buddhas.

MEDITATING ON EMPTINESS

Yesterday I introduced the idea of first focusing on the hallucination. The essence of what I mentioned yesterday is to first just look at the I and the aggregates. Look at how your body, from your limbs down to the atoms and the particles of each atom, appears to you. Also look at your consciousness, down to the split seconds of consciousness and then the divisions of those


split seconds. Look at how they appear to you and how you believe them to exist. Look at how your mind apprehends them.

On the merely imputed I there is a hallucination, or projection, of a truly existent appearance. On the merely labeled aggregates, there is a truly existent appearance. On the merely labeled form, there is an appearance of a truly existent form. And it is the same with the consciousness. On the merely labeled feeling, there is a truly existent appearance. On the aggregate of recognition, which is merely labeled, there is the projection of a truly existent appearance. On the merely labeled compounding aggregates, there is the projection of a truly existent appearance. And on the merely labeled consciousness, there is the projection of a truly existent appearance.

In regard to the body, from the limbs down to the particles of the atoms, which are all merely labeled, there is the projection of a truly existent appearance. And in regard to the consciousness, from the seconds of consciousness down to the split seconds of consciousness, which are all merely labeled, there is the projection of a truly existent appearance.

We can say either “projection” or “hallucination.” We can use either term. Just focus on this. Look at this. Reflect on this. Think, “This is how it appears to me. This is how I see it in my mind, and this is what I believe.” Think of all these things, from the I down to the particles of the atoms and the split seconds of consciousness, then think, “All these are hallucinations.”



Mediate intensely on this: All of them are hallucinations. Look at all of them as hallucinations, as they are hallucinations. 

While you are looking at the hallucinations as hallucinations, the idea of emptiness comes in your heart as a result. There you have the understanding of *all phenomena are empty by nature*. Those words are an exact commentary to your experience. Your mind is seeing what the words in the texts say.

It is the same with all external things, with every single phenomenon that we see here. First of all we'll start with the forms. All these forms are merely imputed by your mind, but a hallucination, or projection, of truly existent appearance completely covers all of them. This applies to everything here, whether you are looking at me, other people, the statues or the flowers.

It is similar with the sounds. On the merely imputed sound, there is the projection of an inherently existent appearance. When you hear my voice from my throat, it is a merely imputed sound, but with the hallucination of a truly existent appearance, a real voice, a real sound, is appearing to you.


I hope you have some smells there; otherwise, we can't meditate on emptiness. Somebody can create the smell so that we can meditate on emptiness. Somebody can create the smell to support their neighbor's meditation on emptiness. I'm joking. Anyway, whether you call it "a bad smell," "a good smell" or "a fantastic smell," it is a smell that has been merely imputed by your mind. And your mind has projected a truly existent appearance on that merely imputed smell. Your mind has made it a real smell appearing from there, a smell from its own side, whether it is the smell of perfume or incense or kaka.


It is the same with tastes. The taste that is merely imputed by the mind is covered by the hallucination, or projection, of a truly existent appearance.


It is the same with the merely imputed tangible objects, whether rough, soft or hard. The merely imputed tangible object is covered by the hallucination, or projection, of a truly existent appearance.

When you reflect on the heaviest suffering in samsara, your mind merely imputes "hell" to that. That reality is then covered by the hallucination, or projection, of a truly existent appearance. In a similar way, "enlightenment" is merely imputed to the mind (or the ultimate nature of the mind) that is free from all defilements and complete in all realizations. That's the reality, but it is covered by the hallucination of a truly existent appearance projected by your own mind, by the negative imprint left by ignorance.

This is meditating on the meaning of *All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only*. All these phenomena are covered by this hallucination. Starting with the I, as we meditated before, and including all other phenomena, all of them are covered by hallucination. Everything, which exists being merely imputed by mind, is covered by hallucination.


Practice mindfulness of this here for a little while. Be aware of the hallucination. Look at the hallucination as a hallucination. Look at how all these phenomena are covered by hallucination. 


Think, "This is my own hallucination. This hallucination came from my mind; it is projected by my mind. Everything, including the mind, is merely imputed, but it is covered by hallucination, so that an inherently existent mind, a real mind, is appearing from there. All these are hallucinations." Be deeply mindful of how all these are hallucinations. 


Think of the meaning of hallucination. Think of the meaning of "All these are hallucinations." What does it mean? 

It means they are all empty, nonexistent. Starting with the I and including the mind that projects the hallucinations, all these phenomena are totally


empty, nonexistent. All these phenomena appear as something real from there but they are all totally empty. In other words, they are all hallucinations. That means they are all totally empty, totally nonexistent. What was appearing before was a hallucination, which means it's totally nonexistent.

Now, concentrate intensely on that emptiness. 

In emptiness, there is no this and that. There is no *samsara* and no *nirvana*. There is no hell and no enlightenment. There is no me and no you. There is no bad and no good. There is no pure and no impure. In emptiness, there is not even emptiness itself. 

Here you can see that if there is no appearance of conventional truth, there will be no appearance of inherent existence. For us sentient beings these two come together: if there's appearance of conventional truth, there's appearance of inherent existence. Here there is total absence of truly existent appearance, which is the object to be refuted. In Tibetan it's called *me gak*. Here *emptiness only* makes sense. You are seeing emptiness only, *tong pa nyi*—nothing other than that. 

When you practice mindfulness of everything as a hallucination, as it is a hallucination, you start to see its nature is empty. Looking at the hallucinations as hallucinations, as they are hallucinations, enables your mind to see the nature of phenomena, which is that they are empty. Before you believed one hundred percent that they were truly existent, as they appeared to you to be. But after you have recognized the hallucination as a hallucination, at that time you are able to see that *all phenomena are empty by nature*, which means empty of existing from their own side.

You now see nothing: no conventional appearance, no truly existent appearance, nothing. You now see that all those are totally empty, nonexistent. You see *only* the total absence of that, the emptiness of that. Nothing else. That intense emptiness that your mind sees is the very nature of phenomena, emptiness only. 

Now, that wisdom seeing emptiness becomes the creator of everything: the meditator, the action of doing the *sadhana*, the deity. Everything manifests from that emptiness.

Please read.

Ven. René: “While they are emptiness, a PAM appears, and from this comes a variegated lotus....

Rinpoche: I think it should be kept as before, “while it is empty” not “while it is emptiness only.” It becomes emptiness only, then while it is empty.... It's different.

Before you were just concentrating on emptiness by stopping everything. When you meditate on emptiness, everything—the truly existent appearance and the appearance of conventional truth—is stopped. There's nothing, so it's emptiness only.

Your wisdom seeing that emptiness then manifests the mandala, the deity and various other things. What this means is that that mind understanding emptiness then takes these forms of the mandala and the deity. Whatever form is taken, the idea is that your mind is constantly aware that they are all empty. The moment it takes the form of the mandala, we're aware that it's empty of inherent existence, that it doesn't have inherent existence. The moment it takes the form of the deity, we're aware that it doesn't have inherent existence, even though it appears to us to have inherent existence because we're sentient beings. Even though it appears to be inherently existent, our mind, which is in the form of the deity, understands that it doesn't have inherent existence. We have that awareness. So, there is constantly the practice of wisdom. And at the same time there is the practice of method, with our mind focused on the pure appearance of the mandala, deity and all the other things. At the same time, that mind is aware, as every single one of these things takes form, that it doesn't have inherent existence. Even though everything appears to be inherently existent, we have the understanding that it's not true. At the same time that mind is aware of this. That is the path of wisdom. The one mind practices method and wisdom together, inseparably. That's what receives the name *vajra*, as in *Vajrayana*. If we meditate like this, with inseparable method and wisdom, our practice becomes *vajra*. Because this ceases the gross and subtle defilements and then brings us to enlightenment, it is called *yana*, which means vehicle. So, *Vajrayana*. This is the way we're supposed to practice the *sadhana* from the beginning to the end. If we do so, our practice becomes *Vajrayana*. Otherwise, it doesn't become *Vajrayana*. If we forget emptiness, the nature of phenomena, it's only method, and it then doesn't become *Vajrayana*. This inseparability of method and wisdom is the foundation of the practice. Here, the inseparability of method and wisdom of our mind is like flour, which can be used to make noodles, momos, bread, cake and all sorts of other forms.

So, if you say "while it is emptiness only" instead of "while it is empty," it means you are supposed to see only emptiness, with no appearance of conventional truth. You then can't have the appearance of the deity, the mandala or anything else. Therefore, you should say "while it is empty," which means empty of true existence. You should use the same expression as you

used previously during the offerings, “while it is empty,” or *tong pai nang le*, in Tibetan. It then fits. Otherwise, there will be confusion. If your mind is emptiness only, nothing of a conventional nature is supposed to appear, and yet at the same time you have to manifest the mandala and the deity. That problem arises. So, use “while it is empty.”

Ven. René: In the blessing of the offerings it was “while everything is empty.”

Rinpoche: That’s right. It should be the same here.

Ven. René: So, we should say “while everything is empty” instead of “while they are emptiness”?

Rinpoche: “While it is empty” means while it is empty of true existence.

Ven. René: In the blessing of the offerings, it was “While everything is empty, OM appears....”

Rinpoche: That’s right. It should be exactly the same here.

Ven. René: And here it says, “While they are emptiness, a PAM appears....”

Rinpoche: I see. So we are going to throw away the word “only” this time?

Ven. René: There is no word “only” here.

Rinpoche: When we say “while” we don’t say “only.” It’s “While everything is empty of true existence....”

Ven. René: So the sentence goes “All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only.”

Rinpoche: Perfect!

Ven. René: And then it goes on, “While they are emptiness, a PAM appears....”

Rinpoche: Oh, that’s great! “Emptiness” is OK, but not the word “only.”

Ven. René: There’s no word “only.”

Rinpoche: Oh, I’ve been hearing it. There might be something wrong with my ear—I have been hearing “While everything is emptiness only....”

Ven. René: No, it’s not there in the text. Maybe I said it, but it’s not in the text.

Rinpoche: Oh, I was about to blame someone. Anyway, go on, please. Now we’ll let the horse run....

Ven. René: “While they are emptiness, a PAM appears, and from this comes a variegated lotus....”

MOTIVATION FOR MANTRA RECITATION

Think, “I am going to do the recitation of every single mantra for the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to have stable life and for

all his holy wishes to succeed immediately. As well, may all other virtuous friends and all other holy beings who are working for sentient beings and for the teaching of Buddha, have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes to benefit others succeed immediately.

“I am going to recite every single mantra to free the numberless hell beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless hungry ghosts, who are the most precious, most kind ones in my life, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and quickly bring them to enlightenment.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for the numberless animals, including every single insect. Some animals are as large as mountains and others are so small that you can see them only through a microscope. Every single one of them is the most precious, most kind one in my life. I’m going to recite every mantra to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for every single one of the numberless human beings, who is the most precious, most kind one in my life, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“As well, I am going to recite every single mantra for every single one of the numberless asura beings, who is the most precious, most kind one in my life, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for every single one of the numberless suras, who is the most precious, most kind one in my life, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“I am going to recite every single mantra for every single one of the numberless intermediate state beings, who is the most precious, most kind one in my life, to free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Also, I am going to recite every single mantra for world peace, to stop all the wars that are happening, as well as all the terrorist attacks, famines, diseases, poverty and dangers from fire, water, air or earth.” Think especially of all those in Afghanistan who are having problems; thousands of people have lost or are losing their jobs, as well as facing poverty and disease. “May all these problems that are happening be stopped, and may sentient beings never ever experience them again.

“And may all the FPMT projects, including those here at LMB (the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas, the social service projects of the school and hospice) and all the other projects in all the rest of the centers, and especially the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be completed as quickly as possible by receiving everything needed.”

So, we are going to recite the mantras for all these purposes.

You can also think of either a particular purpose or a particular person that you want to pray for, perhaps someone who has died or is sick. The mantras can also be dedicated for that.

PROTECTOR PRAYERS

From our hearts we should make strong prayers to the protectors that Lama Ösel Rinpoche have no obstacles to his studies. Lama Ösel recently left for Spain after doing very intensive study and examinations. His attendant said that he was the top student. Then just two days ago he sent a message expressing how much he needed a holiday. His mother and Francois came and spent a few weeks there, and Lama expressed a great need for a holiday, for his health and to recover from the intensive study. He expressed this strongly. It would be best for him not to go, but I said that maybe it's OK to go for two weeks.

Make strong prayers for Lama Ösel to come back without any obstacles and to continue his study. May Lama's mind not change, and may he be able to come back even within the two weeks and continue his study. Make strong prayers for this to the protectors.

This way of playing the cymbals is not particularly the Gelug way of doing it. It's kind of the Solu Khumbu way, but not pure Solu Khumbu....

[Rinpoche plays the cymbals for a long time, then chants the protector prayers. Rinpoche then recites *King of Prayers* in Tibetan while the group recites it in English, with Rinpoche taking a little longer to complete it.]

So, I was late.

DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and all other virtuous friends have stable lives. May all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

*"Gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir...."*⁴⁷

Then, for all other virtuous friends....

*"Päl dän la mäi ku tshé tän pa dang...."*⁴⁸

"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...."

Dedicate the merits in the following way. "May the source of all happiness and success for me and for all sentient beings, bodhicitta, be generated within my own mind, in the minds of the members of my family and in the mind of every single sentient being without even a second's delay. May the bodhicitta that has been generated be developed.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, from now on in all future lifetimes, forever, may I be able to offer extensive benefit like the sky to all sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa have.

"Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, in whichever universe, world, country, area, place and house I am, may just my being there in that universe, country, area, place and house be most beneficial, so that all the sentient beings living in that universe, world, country, area, place and house never ever be reborn in the lower realms from that time. May they immediately actualize bodhicitta and realize emptiness. May they never experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness and dangers from fire, water, air or earth, such as floods and other natural disasters that cause so many people to be homeless or to die. May those happening now immediately be stopped, and may they never ever experience any of those things again. May those who are deaf be able to hear; may those who are blind be able to see; may those who are lame be able to walk; and may those who are in comas be able to immediately recover consciousness. May the hearts of those who experience many depressions where nothing can help immediately be filled with great

⁴⁷ In the land encircled by snow mountains
You are the source of all happiness and good;
All-powerful Chenrezig, Tenzin Gyatso,
Please remain until samsara ends.

⁴⁸ May the glorious gurus' lives be long and stable.
May all beings equaling the extent of space have happiness.
May I and others without exception accumulate merit and purify negativities,
And may we be blessed to quickly attain buddhahood.

bliss. May those who have many headaches that are difficult to cure immediately stop getting those headaches. May all those with emotional problems, those who are sad, hurt, angry or otherwise disturbed by their own emotional thoughts, and all those with relationship problems, those who have been abandoned or abused, have their minds filled with great loving kindness, and may their lives be filled with joy and satisfaction. May those who are looking for a guru be able to find a perfectly qualified guru. May those who are looking for the Dharma be able to find unmistakable Dharma, the correct path to enlightenment and the teachings that reveal that path. May those seeking to do retreat be able to find a perfect place and conditions and then be able to have a successful retreat and achieve realizations during it. May everyone obtain peace and happiness. May everyone with sickness, including those with cancer, AIDS and other incurable diseases, immediately recover; and may they be able to complete the path and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. May my being in that universe, world, country, area, place and house be able to cause sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

In each session you have collected skies of merit so many times, with the bodhicitta motivation, by making offerings, by rejoicing and so forth. Each time you have rejoiced you have collected skies of merit. When you generate the four immeasurable thoughts in each session, with each one you collect skies of merit. During one session you collect inconceivable merit. And you have been living in the Eight Mahayana Precepts. Since each precept is taken for the benefit of all sentient beings, you collect skies of merit with each precept. The amount of merit you have collected today, and even within one session, is unbelievable.

“Due to all the merits collected by me today, during this retreat, in the past, and all the merits that I will collect in the future, and all the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty from their own side, may the I, which is empty (the real I that is appearing from its own side, from there, is totally nonexistent; not even the slightest atom of it exists), achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s, Medicine Buddha’s, enlightenment, which also does not exist at all from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who appear truly existent from their own side but who are completely empty, completely nonexistent, to that Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the

merits of the three times collected by others, may the numberless sentient beings who are experiencing unimaginable suffering in the lower realms now and those people who have died whose names were given to me, for whom I promised to pray and who rely upon me, including the Chinese student, Peter, who passed away yesterday, immediately be free from the sufferings of the lower realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body and quickly achieve enlightenment by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings.”

I recently met Peter, a lawyer, who had cancer, in Hong Kong. He was a very intelligent, very nice person. I went to the hospital to give him refuge and the Medicine Buddha practice. He had been unable to get out of bed, but later, after chanting the Medicine Buddha mantra after I had told him how to think, he was able to get up and walk around. His parents were very surprised.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing that a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover. May my hearing that a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be born in a pure land where they can be enlightened. And may any sentient being who has been born as a human being but with no opportunity to practice Dharma be able to meet a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings, and by putting them into practice, may they quickly achieve enlightenment.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of this organization, especially those who give their lives to this organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and those who rely upon me, those for whom I have promised to pray and those who are offering service have long lives and be healthy, and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime, based on living in pure vinaya and by receiving all their needs and all protection.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the

merits of the three times collected by others, may all the social service centers, such as the schools, hospices and so forth, and all the meditation centers become most beneficial for sentient beings, immediately pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. May they spread the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed for that.

“May all the projects that each center has succeed immediately. Here, may the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas and all the rest of the projects succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May all the rest of the projects, such as building stupas and other holy objects, monasteries, nunneries and especially the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be completed as quickly as possible by immediately receiving all the finance and all other things needed. And may all these statues and projects and centers cause all sentient beings to generate bodhicitta and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

We will also dedicate the merit with the prayer for the flourishing of Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, which specifies the special qualities of those teachings. When it says, “May the conqueror Losang’s teachings flourish,” it means flourish within your own mind and in this world, in others’ minds. When we do this prayer, it’s good to think of flourishing both within our own mind and in the minds of others.

[The group recites in English *Prayer for the Flourishing of Je Tsongkhapa’s Teachings*.]

[Rinpoche and the group then recite the mantras to multiply the merits.]

Due to the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas, to my pure attitude and to dependent arising, may my pure prayers succeed immediately.

[Ven. Sarah starts to chant Rinpoche’s long-life prayer.]

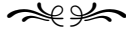
No, no. Not tonight. Good-bye. Maybe you can recite it in your dreams!



THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Final Medicine Buddha Session



THE POWER OF COMPASSION

GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE. I'm late because I was watching TV. Last time, Russia was fighting Afghanistan. Even though Russia is so big, with all its armies and airplanes, and Afghanistan is a very small country, with the Afghanis like ants hiding under stones, the Russians couldn't defeat them. The Afghanis had a system for dealing with any Afghanis who were spying for the Russians. They would chain a few people together, then cut off their heads with a big axe. One of the executioners came with a heavy axe and was very proud of what he had done. I think he killed four thousand people. He was very thin, with a beard—just as usual.

You can't say that every Muslim is a barbarian, because there will be buddhas and bodhisattvas among Muslims. In any religion there will be manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas. You can't say that everyone with that traditional look is a barbarian, because Buddha manifests also as maras. It seems that some things, even though they seemed to be interfering with Buddha, were simply Buddha's manifestations. Sometimes, to show sentient beings his capacity, Buddha would manifest in other forms, as evil beings, who would interfere with Buddha's activities. To handle sentient beings Buddha had to play with them, just as older people act differently when they play with children; they do all sorts of things to make the children happy. I think the buddhas have to act in a similar way to handle sentient beings. The buddhas have to do all sorts of things because there are all kinds of sentient beings. Buddha has to play games with each sentient being. Buddha has to do all sorts of things in all sorts of manners to gradually bring each sentient being from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. The main goal is to bring sentient beings to enlightenment, but it has

to happen step by step. The buddhas can't just bring sentient beings directly to enlightenment; in the meantime they have to play kindergarten with the sentient beings, I think.

Anyway, Afghanistan is a very heavy country with very heavy people. The people in this country have no opportunity to hear Dharma or even a mantra. I was telling Roger and his nephew, Brandon, how fortunate we are compared to them. These people have so much heavy negative karma and no opportunity to purify it—not even for one day. One thing that could purify it is compassion. Even if you're not Buddhist, even if you don't have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, if you have strong compassion, if you have a good heart, you can still purify your negative karma. If you have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, of course, the easiest way to purify those heavy negative karmas would be by chanting mantras, such as the Medicine Buddha mantra, OM MANI PADME HUM and so forth. Mantras are like atomic bombs in purifying the mind. But if you don't have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha or in karma, the only opportunity to purify that you have left is through generating compassion, through having a good heart. There's a chance to purify if you bear hardships to serve others with a good heart. For those people who don't have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and don't understand reincarnation and so forth, there's the good heart; there's compassion. The only chance they have is if they have a good heart. When they generate compassion for somebody, they then have some opportunity to purify. Here I'm not talking about generating compassion for all sentient beings. They don't understand "all sentient beings"; they just understand a human being or an animal who is suffering. The stronger the compassion they generate, the more negative karma they purify and the closer they become to enlightenment. Even if they have no faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, I would say that they become closer to enlightenment.

For example, some texts say that the first time Buddha generated bodhi-citta was in a hell realm. I'm not sure that this is what everyone says, but this is according to some texts. Buddha, in a past life, had to pull a cart on the red-hot iron ground in a hot hell, along with another hell being. They were like two animals pulling a cart. Buddha felt it was unbearable suffering and was concerned that the other being also had to suffer so much, so he thought, "Why don't I pull the cart by myself and allow him to be free?" As soon as he generated this compassion, a karmic guardian hit him on the head with a hammer, and his consciousness was transferred to Tushita or to

the Thirty-three Realm. (I don't remember which one it was.) The power of that special attitude wishing to take on himself the suffering of the other being who had to pull the cart immediately purified all his negative karma to be in the hell realm and suffer on the red-hot iron ground. Due to the power of compassion, all that negative karma was purified, and his consciousness was transferred from the hell realm to Tushita or the Thirty-three Realm.

Therefore, I would say that when you generate compassion for some being, whether a human being or an insect, the stronger the compassion you generate, the closer you become to enlightenment because you purify more negative karma, even if at that time you're not a Buddhist and don't have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Of course, it will eventually, either in that life or in a future life, enable you to have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

So, the only chance these Afghani people have is through generating compassion, and that's unbelievably difficult because of wrong views. It seems that in Islam there are no teachings on how sentient beings are kind. It seems there's no emphasis on not harming others or benefiting others. If people don't think that way, it's very difficult to bring peace through that religion. It's sometimes said that in the beginning some religions were pure, but other people then introduced wrong views into the religion and it degenerated.

In their whole life such people have no opportunity, not even once, to purify their negative karma. Of course, if you don't generate a single regret or do any confession, the negative karmas get multiplied hour by hour, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year. Even a very small negative karma will then become very heavy. The lam-rim explains what makes karma heavy. Even a small negative karma becomes very heavy if you do it repeatedly. If you don't feel regret and make confession with the remedy of the four powers, there is no antidote to the negative karma. There is nothing to reduce, or weaken, the negative karma. Because of that, even a small negative karma can become very powerful.

Anyway, I was saying that we would find it unbearable if we were now born like those people in Afghanistan. We would find it unbearable to be in that situation, with that state of mind, totally ignorant of karma. But if someone has a good heart, the thought of benefiting others, that's another matter, even if they don't have faith in reincarnation and so forth.

Therefore, what we are doing here—taking this opportunity to do

Medicine Buddha retreat, especially because Medicine Buddha practice is incredibly blessed and precious—is unbelievably, unbelievably fortunate. We have given ourselves the time and the freedom to do this retreat. Just by reciting each of the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas once at the beginning of every session, we purify many thousands of eons of negative karma. This is without talking about the session itself—just talking about the prostrations at the beginning. On top of reciting each name, we collect skies of merit with each prostration. If you do each prostration by thinking that you are prostrating to all the buddhas, you create numberless causes of enlightenment. By putting your palms together to all the buddhas and by lying down in prostration to all of them, you create numberless causes of enlightenment and, by the way, numberless causes of liberation from samsara and, by the way, numberless causes of the happiness of future lives. There is then no doubt that the success of this life comes by the way. All happiness simply comes by the way. So, it's unbelievable.

This is without talking about meditating on the three principles of the path, based on guru devotion, which hooks all the blessings. By receiving blessings, you're able to transform your mind, to change your mind for the better, and to achieve realizations, the ultimate one of which is omniscient mind. You are then able to liberate the numberless sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. Being able to do that is just amazing! Even thinking about liberating every single sentient being from their suffering and its causes and bringing them to full enlightenment is amazing.

How many worms are there? If we're talking about the number of worms on the earth, they're uncountable. If we're talking about the number of worms on one farm or in one field, there are so many. This is talking only about what we can see with the naked eye. When we use a microscope, we see that they are uncountable. Those worms are eaten by birds, by other animals in the ground and by one another. When we generate the attitude of bodhicitta, we are praying for every single one of those worms. How many worms are there in one field? In one country? In this world? In the other human continents? In the numberless universes? In the numberless universes, there are numberless sets of Mount Merus and numberless human continents (east, west, south and north), like in the mandala offering. Scientists don't talk about Mount Meru, but they do talk about numberless universes. So, when we generate the attitude of bodhicitta, we say, "I will liberate all sentient beings, including the numberless worms and even the

tiny ones that can be seen only through a microscope, and bring them to enlightenment by myself. I will bring them all to enlightenment.”

There are also numberless ants. Again, how many ants are there in one spot? There are an uncountable number—many more than the number of people in a city—so there’s no doubt about the number of ants living on one mountain. It makes the number of people in a city insignificant. Think of all the numberless ants in one country, on the whole earth and then in numberless universes. When we generate bodhicitta we are thinking to free all those numberless ants from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. We think, “I am going to do it.” That thought is just amazing. It’s really incredible. When we recite the words, “I will bring all sentient beings to enlightenment,” it sounds simple. When we don’t think about the details, about each type of sentient being, each type of insect, which are numberless, it seems very easy. It sounds as if we are bringing sentient beings who are very far from us, somewhere between the clouds and the earth, to enlightenment.

THE CAUSES OF ABUSE

The words you say in the bodhicitta prayer include your parents, your family and your enemy. It includes the person you call your enemy, the person who has abused you and toward whom you have built up hatred because of your projections. You put a negative label, “bad,” on that person and “abuse” on that person’s action. Your mind made up the label, believed in that label, and that is what then appears to you. So, your mind made it up. Your mind made up the label and you then allowed your mind to believe in that label. That then made you generate hatred in your heart. I will say here, as I’ve said in London and other places, that when you analyze the situation, you find that the abuse actually came from you. Why? Because it came from your mind. If your mind hadn’t labeled and you hadn’t believed in your label, you wouldn’t see yourself as having been abused. The abuse that you see came from your concept. Your mind imputed “abuse” and believed in what it had imputed. You made up the concept, “This is bad.” Your belief in that concept then made you generate hatred toward the person for years and years and years, for your whole life. It’s very difficult to make the hatred go away, to separate from it. It’s difficult to heal. Because you never change your concept, your problem never changes; your hatred never changes. The hatred is always there, because you never change your mind, your concept.

This explanation is talking about only this life, about how this problem of abuse came from your present life, from your mind making up the label “abuse” and believing in it. Here we’re not talking in terms of reincarnation and past karma.

Now, on top of that, there’s your past karma. There is a reason that this situation happened. The reason this happened existed before the situation, before the abusive relationship. The reason existed before you were born. Everything you experience in this life doesn’t have to come solely from past-life karma; you create some of the karmas in this life: last month, last year or in your early life. Sometimes you create the karma one day and experience the result the next day, or sometimes even the same day.

Before we were talking about how things come from your mind in this life and not about karma. The other reason, a very deep reason, is karma. This abuse is happening because you treated that person in a similar way in the past. So, it’s the result of past karma, of your doing the same thing to others.

So, what is the conclusion? The conclusion is that you have to purify your negative karma. One way to solve this problem is to change your mind, to change your concept, which means the practice of thought transformation. The other solution is to purify your karma. This is what you have to do from now on not to experience such a thing again.

Because of that abuse, you feel so much hatred and experience so much suffering and so many emotional problems that you feel as if you are the worst person in the world. You feel that you are the one who is suffering the most in the world. You don’t see anybody else suffering—only yourself. You think, “I am the only one suffering in the world.” This happens because of the influence of society. It has to do with the society, which believes that abuse is the most terrible thing. You then make yourself the most terrible person and the person who is experiencing the most suffering. Because you make the problem so huge, you don’t see the sufferings of other sentient beings, even other human beings. There are beings with suffering that is a billion times worse than yours, but you don’t see that. You see only your own suffering. Wherever you go, you see only your suffering, only your problem. Of course, you don’t see the sufferings of the hell beings or of the beings in the other lower realms, who experience the heaviest sufferings.

There are negative actions that society doesn’t think are heavy even though they are very heavy negative karma, and there are certain things that

society thinks are terrible. It has partially to do with social beliefs, which you then follow.

THE BENEFITS OF LIVING IN VOWS

The solution is to purify the past negative karma—what has already been done not just in this one life but during numberless past lives—and not to commit negative karma again. This depends on understanding the benefits of living an ethical life, of living in morality. I'm not sure whether these terms actually mean the same thing. I don't think *living an ethical life* covers taking precepts and living in vows. Basically it means abstaining from the ten nonvirtuous actions. I guess that being ethical means abstaining from the very basic things like stealing and sexual misconduct, though I'm not sure about killing. I think the definition of an ethical life depends on the society. It would probably be agreed that abstaining from stealing is part of an ethical life and maybe abstaining from sexual misconduct, but I don't know about killing. In Western society somebody who is virtuous wouldn't kill people, but I'm not sure that abstaining from killing animals would be part of an ethical life as defined by Western society. I don't think the definition of abstaining from killing is as extensive as it is in Buddhism.

Even though the definition of what an ethical life is varies, basically it means abstaining from the ten nonvirtues, from sexual misconduct and so forth, done with self-cherishing, ignorance, anger, desire or another impure mind. It is the motivation that makes an action negative karma.

The solution is to abstain from those negative actions and not commit them again. You have to understand the benefits of an ethical life; you have to understand the inner peace and happiness that come from it, as well as the stability of mind, without ups and downs. I think the root of the ups and downs of life, and especially depression, is definitely nonvirtuous action.

I have mentioned a few times that one or two years ago, I saw a sutra that talked about the benefits of living in the five lay precepts and the shortcomings of not living in them. There Buddha explained that when your mind suddenly becomes depressed, or unhappy, in the evening and you don't know why, it's the result of the past negative karma of sexual misconduct. It is one of the results, besides the ripened aspect result of rebirth in the lower realms and all the sufferings you experience there. After some time when, due to another good karma, you are born as a human being, you then experience problems, the other results of the past negative karma of sexual

misconduct, in the human realm. One of the results is your mind suddenly becoming depressed in the evening. It doesn't mention suddenly becoming depressed in the morning, but I think it's the same. Many people say, "I was feeling OK, but when I woke up this morning my mind suddenly became very unhappy and I don't know why."

Buddha said in this sutra that suddenly becoming depressed in the evening is one of the results of sexual misconduct. It's not the only result—it's just one of the problems you experience in the human realm. Another result is the ripened aspect result, which you experience in the lower realms. Another result you experience in the human realm is creating the result similar to the cause, which means again engaging in sexual misconduct due to your previous habits. There is also the possessed result, which has to do with the environment. Even when you are born as a human being, you have to live in a dirty, smelly, unhealthy place. Even if we usually live in a very clean place, sometimes we have to pass through, even if only for a short time, muddy, filthy places that are filled with excrement and garbage. Even though we might experience such places for just a short time, other people have to live their whole lives in such places. Even though we don't usually live in such places, at certain times we experience them as a result of our past sexual misconduct.

Creating the result similar to the cause means that when, due to another good karma, you are born as a human being, because of the previous imprint, or habit, you again engage in sexual misconduct. Because you haven't purified the negative imprint, it is manifested out and you again engage in the same negative karma of sexual misconduct. That complete negative karma of sexual misconduct again produces another set of four suffering results: the ripened aspect result, experiencing the result similar to the cause, creating the result similar to the cause and the possessed result. After experiencing the ripened aspect result, due to another good karma, you are born as a human being and you again create the result similar to the cause, which means that you again engage in sexual misconduct. That complete negative karma again produces four suffering results. (A complete negative karma has four factors—base, thought, action and goal—complete.) So, from that one negative karma of sexual misconduct the resultant suffering goes on and on: from one negative karma of sexual misconduct comes another one, from that one comes another one, from that one comes another one....

Also, karma is expandable. You create the negative karma one time but you experience the resultant suffering again and again and again. You can

experience it so many times in one life, and also in many hundreds or thousands of lifetimes. By creating one negative karma, you then experience the suffering results for so many lifetimes, because karma is expandable. You don't experience the result just one time but in many lifetimes. It's very important to remember that karma is expandable. It's not that you experience the result one time and the karma is then finished. Because karma is expandable, you can experience the result in many lifetimes, even hundreds or thousands of lifetimes.

In Aryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas*, it says that if you cheat one sentient being one time, you will then be cheated by others for a thousand lifetimes. Why? Because karma is expandable. There are four outlines of karma: karma is definite, which means that you definitely experience the result; karma is expandable; you don't experience the result of karma if you haven't created the cause; and the karma that you have created is never lost. Even if it takes billions of eons, in time you will definitely experience the result. However, it's not like in Christianity, where if you go to hell, you are then there forever in the hell realm, with no opportunity to free yourself from hell. In Buddhism there's so much flexibility and unbelievable freedom. Here it means that if you don't purify the karma, you will still experience the suffering result of even a small negative karma even if it takes billions of eons. Even if it takes billions of billions of billions of eons to be experienced, it won't get lost. But no matter how heavy the negative karma is, if you purify it, you won't experience the result. This is how it is in Buddhism, and this is how it is in reality.

I think that Chöden Rinpoche recently went over the outlines of karma here or at Vajrapani Institute. It's very important to think about how karma is expandable, because that then makes us take more responsibility in relation to karma and gives us more courage to abandon negative karma.

Here I am talking about committing one negative karma one time. From that one negative karma, the consequences go on and on from creating the result similar to the cause, from that negative imprint and habituation. The suffering result of that negative karma is endless and makes the suffering of samsara endless. If we follow our desire and don't purify anything but leave everything up to karma, we make the suffering of samsara endless.

Now think about being on the verge of engaging in negative karma and stopping yourself just one time in your life. Since you experience the suffering result of one negative karma of sexual misconduct from life to life—the suffering of samsara from this one negative karma goes on and on and on,

endlessly—if you stop yourself from engaging in that one negative karma, all those sufferings are completely stopped; you don't have to experience them. They don't happen because you didn't create that one negative karma. Because you didn't create the cause, you don't have to experience all the consequences, all the sufferings that go on and on and on. Since the absence of all that suffering is peace and happiness, you give yourself so much peace and happiness from life to life.

Living in morality by taking a vow from holy objects or a virtuous friend and living in that vow results in four types of happiness. In regard to the ripened aspect result, instead of rebirth in the lower realms, you have the body of a happy migratory being, which means a *deva* or human body. When you are born as a human being in future lives, you are surrounded by people who are harmonious with and support you. Everybody's wish accords with yours. Your husband, wife or partner is very supportive; their way of thinking exactly accords with yours. Their wishes are exactly the same as your wishes, as if you're one person. Because everything is very harmonious, you experience so much peace and happiness. This is the result of living in the morality of abstaining from sexual misconduct. We see certain people like that: couples or families that are very happy and harmonious, that experience much peace and happiness. That is the result of having lived in the morality of abstaining from sexual misconduct in the past.

Also, in future lives you are again able to live in morality. The possessed result is that you always live in a beautiful, clean place where there are beautiful flowers and a clean, scented smell instead of a dirty smell. You have the karma to always enjoy such a place. This is the result, not just in one lifetime but in hundreds or thousands of lifetimes, from that one good karma of living, not even your whole life but just one day, in the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct. In the five lay vows, the vows of individual liberation, it's abstaining from sexual misconduct, but in the one-day Eight Mahayana Precepts it's abstaining completely from any sexual activity. From living in that vow for one day, you can experience those resultant happinesses not just the one time and not just in the one life but in hundreds or thousands of lifetimes.

It is the same with each of the other negative karmas, and we should think in the same way with each good karma. We experience the results of living in morality one time for one day for hundreds or thousands of lifetimes.

There are two quotations, one from *Moonlight Sutra* and the other from *King of Concentration Sutra*, that are very encouraging, but I might have got

them mixed up with other quotations. Once when Rilbur Rinpoche was staying at the Aptos house we did Vajrayogini self-initiation and I saw that Rinpoche kept these quotations as very precious in his prayer book.

This first one is from the *King of Concentration Sutra*. With a calm mind, offering food, drink, umbrellas, flags, garlands of light and service to ten million times one hundred million buddhas.... I'll explain here the Tibetan terms for the numbers. I've translated these terms a few times but the translation doesn't stay in my mind. Ten times one hundred million, or a billion, is called a *ther bum*, and ten ther bum, or ten billion, is called a great ther bum. Now, ten great ther bum, or one hundred billion, is one *trag trig*. Of course, the numbers don't stop there; they go on.⁴⁹

So, with a calm mind, offering food, drink, umbrellas, flags, garlands of light and service to ten million times one hundred million buddhas, for how many eons? For eons ten million times the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. Here this is not just the sand grains of one river, the River Ganga, but the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean, the largest ocean in the world. In the teachings, and also recently when Chöden Rinpoche was giving lam-rim teachings, when talking about how heavy the karma of avoiding the holy Dharma is, Rinpoche said that that negative karma is much heavier than having destroyed all the stupas of Buddha built in this world. At that time Rinpoche mentioned that the term *River Ganga* doesn't mean the river that comes from Mount Kailash and flows through Varanasi, India, and which Hindus believe can purify negative karma, or sin, by washing in it. They bring dead people to the river to wash their body, believing that their sin is then gone. That river is called the Ganga, but I think I recently saw in one of Rilbur Rinpoche's texts that the expression also means the Pacific Ocean. The sand grains of the Pacific Ocean make it the largest number.

Compared to continuously making offerings to that many buddhas for that many eons, somebody keeping one precept for one day and night when the holy Dharma has degenerated, when the teaching of the One Gone to Bliss (which means Buddha) has stopped, is far greater. For example, we take the Eight Mahayana Precepts from dawn one day until dawn the next day, which makes it one day, or twenty-four hours. The merit from keeping just one precept, one vow, for one day is far greater than that from making so many offerings to ten million times one hundred million buddhas not just for one day, one year or even one hundred years, but for eons equal to

⁴⁹ See the chart of "Tibetan numbers" on the LYWA website.

ten million times the number of sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. All those merits are amazing, but they become insignificant when compared to the merit from taking one precept and keeping it for one day.

Buddha explained this in the sutra *King of Concentration*. Rillbur Rinpoche keeps this quotation in his prayer book and Rinpoche said that he reads it from time to time.

There is also a quotation from my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, in his teaching about the benefits of the Eight Mahayana Precepts.⁵⁰

When the holy Dharma has degenerated and the teaching of the One Gone to Bliss has stopped, the merit of somebody keeping one precept day and night (which means for one full day) is far greater than that of somebody making offerings to ten million Victorious Ones (which means buddhas) for an inconceivable number of eons.

This quotation is from another sutra, but it's talking in a similar way.

In the past, when it was not a degenerate time and Buddha's teaching was flourishing in this world, it was much easier to practice and to keep vows than now, when the Buddha's teaching is setting like the sun. Since there are so many obstacles now, keeping one precept for one day creates far greater merit.

Therefore, again, we are unbelievably fortunate here that every day, we are not just doing retreat but Medicine Buddha retreat, which is unbelievably powerful, and we are taking not just one precept but eight precepts. We can't even imagine the amount of merit we're collecting—we're unbelievably fortunate. We have to recognize what we are doing and realize its benefits. Otherwise, you will think of only your problems and nothing else.

⁵⁰ See *The Benefits of Protecting the Eight Mahayana Precepts: Restoring Broken Vows and Purifying Negative Karma*, pp. 2–3 in *The Direct and Unmistaken Method*. “In *Victorious Concentration Sutra*, Buddha says that if with a calm mind one makes offerings of umbrellas, victory banners, light and jewel ornaments to a hundred billion buddhas for eons equal to the number of sand grains in the Ganges River, a great deal of merit is acquired. However, if, during these degenerate times when the holy Dharma, the teaching of the One Gone to Bliss, has almost ceased, one keeps just one precept for a day and a night, the merit acquired is far greater than that of giving all those offerings to an uncountable number of buddhas over such a long period.”

You will make yourself dark, thinking, "I am this and that." We can collect all these merits then offer them to the world. Can you imagine? We not only collect all these merits but offer them to all sentient beings and for the teachings to be developed and spread. It's amazing! This the best social service. I normally explain that living in precepts, in vows, is the best contribution to world peace, even though you're not someone famous in the world for having won the Nobel peace prize.

Usually people consider social service to be paid or voluntary work to help children or old people, such as cleaning in a hospital and so forth. It usually involves being seen in public helping people. But if you think very broadly, like the sky, and very long-term.... Of course, you can do both.

As I normally say, if someone is living in the one vow of abstaining from killing, all the rest of the numberless sentient beings, people and animals, don't receive the harm of being killed from that person. So, the absence of that harm of being killed is peace and happiness. The numberless human beings and animals not receiving harm from that one person who is living in the vow of abstaining from killing are receiving peace and happiness. Absence of that harm is peace and happiness that all those numberless sentient beings receive from that person.

You can see that one person living in the vow of not killing is really the most practical thing, because it covers all living beings. Since you live in a vow not to kill any living being, all those numberless other beings receive peace and happiness from you. Without doing that, when you actually physically go to work as a volunteer, you take care of only a few people or a few animals. But here, if you live in the vow of not killing, even a lay vow, numberless other beings don't receive harm from you and they receive peace and happiness from you.

Now, if you take the five lay precepts, others receive so much less harm from you. Since those numberless other beings don't receive all that harm from you, they receive so much peace and happiness from you. And they are numberless, not just a few people or a few animals. You can see how practical this is.

Another point is the positive effect on an area, a country and the world from someone living in vows, as in the story, which many of you know, of the four harmonious brothers. In a kingdom in India there had been famine and a lot of difficulties, but later the rains came at the right time and there was plenty of food and much prosperity. The king thought he was responsible for it and the ministers thought that they were. Since

everybody thought that they had done it, in the end nobody was sure who had done it.

One minister then suggested that they ask a sage living in the forest, who had clairvoyance, who was responsible. The sage said, "It's none of you. It's happened because of the four harmonious brothers, who respect each other, with the junior ones respecting the senior ones." In the forest there lived four animals: an elephant, a monkey, a rabbit and a bird. The elephant promised to spread the five lay vows to others; the monkey lived in the five vows and also spread the practice to other monkeys so that they lived in the five lay vows; and the same thing happened with the rabbit and the bird. Because of their living in the five vows, because of their practice of morality, these four brother animals were harmonious and respected each other, and their practice of morality then affected the whole country, which changed and became prosperous.

I think the bird was a past life of Shakyamuni Buddha and the rabbit might have been Ananda, Buddha's attendant. I don't remember the names of the other two. Anyway, their living in vows affected the economy of the country.

It is a great blessing for an area and a country when there are Sangha, ordained people, living there, especially if they're living in pure vows. The more Sangha there are, the more it affects the economic development of the country. There are many stories of this happening in the past.

When the monks do their confession practice, a piece of wood called a *gandi* is beaten to invite the monks for the vinaya practice of confession. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explains that even the sound of the *gandi* being beaten benefits the area and the country. I have seen for myself that it's very powerful. One time when I was in Sera Monastery, as soon as the monk beat the wood, it began to rain. The clouds were already there, but as soon as the wood was beaten, the rain suddenly came. That's what I noticed, and it might be quite common. It means that because of the vinaya practice, the devas and landlords in the area are very happy. Because they're connected with the weather, a sign that they're happy about the practice is that rain suddenly comes. It's something of small significance but it helps generally to bring prosperity.

I normally say that if you're an ordained person living in your vows, even if you do nothing but eat, sleep and go to the toilet, there is incredible benefit to other sentient beings. Of course, if someone is Sangha, because the number of vows is many more, you can see how other sentient beings don't

receive harm from that person, directly or indirectly, and how much peace and happiness other sentient beings receive from them. You can understand the positive effect, or benefit, to the country. It makes the devas, nagas and all those other beings happy. That is one explanation. There are two explanations as to how it benefits other sentient beings. It is a most practical thing and brings extensive benefit.

Abstaining from that many negative karmas and stopping giving that many harms to other sentient beings by living in that number of vows bring incredible benefit to others. The purer the life you live, the less negative karma you create. Because of that you have the possibility of having good concentration. (Now I am explaining more deeply the social service for sentient beings.) The basis of success in *shamatha*, or calm abiding, is pure morality. The purer your morality, the more success you have with calm abiding. You achieve perfect concentration when you attain the ninth level, where you experience extremely refined, rapturous states of body and mind. You finalize calm abiding after that realization.

The purer your morality, the more success you have in achieving perfect concentration. It is only by having the higher training of concentration that you then have a chance to have great insight, which involves deriving extremely refined bliss by doing analysis on emptiness unified with shamatha. So, only after attaining shamatha do you gain the realization of great insight. When you build a house, you first prepare the ground, and attaining shamatha is like preparing the ground. On the basis of this you can then enter the arya path by achieving the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which directly ceases the defilements. You achieve the path of seeing and then the path of meditation.

With these two paths, if it's the Lesser Vehicle path, you cease the disturbing-thought defilements; and if it's the bodhisattva's path, you also cease the subtle defilements and your mind then becomes omniscient. During your time as a bodhisattva, of course, you work more and more deeply for sentient beings, especially when you are an arya being. The more qualities you have, the deeper your benefit to sentient beings. When you then become a buddha, you spontaneously, effortlessly, have the motivation to benefit others. It's natural, like the sun rising. When the one sun rises, its beams cover the whole world and dispel darkness everywhere. As a buddha you continuously, naturally, work for sentient beings until every sentient being becomes enlightened. Not only do you free beings from the sufferings of the lower realms but from the entire samsaric

suffering. You then cease even their subtle defilements and bring them to enlightenment.

You can now see how living in pure vows becomes the foundation for all those realizations, so that you're able to benefit other sentient beings more and more deeply and, ultimately, you're able to enlighten numberless sentient beings.

If you think deeply in that way of the benefits of living in vows, you see how everything is built up on that foundation. All the realizations, up to enlightenment, are built up on that basis, as well as your working for sentient beings after enlightenment. There are all these benefits of living in vows, of living in morality, whether as a lay person living in lay vows or as an ordained person living in ordination.

You can now see how much benefit there is for sentient beings from someone living in their vows, even if they don't do any work, any study or anything else apart from the three functions of eating, sleeping and going to the toilet. You can see how practical it is. Even if they're living in the mountains like an animal in hiding so that nobody sees them, you can see the benefit that sentient beings get from them. The benefit happens even if the person spends their whole life hiding in the mountains in Afghanistan, where bin Laden is, or on Mount Kailash.

I'm just trying to emphasize the unbelievable benefit for sentient beings. Even if a person living in vows doesn't see anybody or do anything, their service to other sentient beings is very extensive. Service to others doesn't happen only when you mix with people and do something physically for them. Of course, if you can do both, that's great. Of course, in your life you do what you can to serve other sentient beings. But what I am saying is that you should also understand this deeper benefit. Even if that person lives their whole life on Mount Kailash or Mount Everest and sees nobody during their whole life, if they are living in their vows or ordination, there is incredible benefit to sentient beings. That's all I'm trying to say.

I don't remember how I came to this point. How did it start? Oh, that's right. It started because I came late because I was watching television.

Anyway, the conclusion is that we are very fortunate. It's unbelievable. Especially that besides doing Medicine Buddha retreat, we have the chance to take the Mahayana precepts.

[Rinpoche chants in Tibetan while Ven. René leads the praise to Four-Arm Mahakala in English, followed by chanting of a Palden Lhamo prayer

in Tibetan. Ven. René then leads recitation in English of *King of Prayers* while Rinpoche recites it in Tibetan.]

[Rinpoche recites the Yamantaka inner offering in Tibetan, then something falls down.]

The whole world fell down! I went to get the cymbals, so I'm blaming the cymbals.

[The group chants the protector prayers in Tibetan accompanied by cymbals.]

DEDICATIONS

We'll recite the lam-rim prayer to spread Dharma.

[The group chants *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* in Tibetan, followed by the long-life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.]

"Due to these merits may all other virtuous friends have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

"Päl dân la mõi ku tshe tân pa dang....

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, from now on in all my future lifetimes may I be able to offer skies of benefit to all sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa have. From now on, in every second may I be able to benefit as they do.

"I give all my past, present and future merits and all the resultant happiness to all the sentient beings: to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being and every intermediate state being. I also give the merit to the arhats and the bodhisattvas to help them to complete the realizations of the path. And I also offer it to the gurus and to the buddhas for the success of their activities of working for sentient beings."

By doing this we have collected limitless skies of merit. "Due to this merit, may whatever sufferings sentient beings have ripen upon me, and may whatever happiness and merit I have ripen upon all sentient beings.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are merely labeled by mind, may the I, who is also labeled by mind, achieve His Holiness the Dalai

Lama's, Medicine 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.

"May Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching be spread in my own mind and in the minds of all the students and benefactors and those who sacrifice their lives to this organization to benefit other sentient beings, and in the minds of those whose names have been given to me, those who rely upon me and those for whom I have promised to pray, living or dead. May we all completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching in this very lifetime and then spread it in all the directions, and may it flourish. May I be able to cause this to happen."

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

USING ABUSE TO DEVELOP COMPASSION

Before, I extended the talk from karma. After that, I was trying to specify that we need to purify the past karma and then abstain from creating the negative karma again. That's one solution. It applies not only to this problem of abuse but to any other problem in life, including addiction to alcohol and relationship problems.

The other solution is to accept that this is your karma. As bodhisattva Shantideva said, "In the past I gave this harm to other sentient beings; therefore, I deserve to receive this harm."⁵¹

It's very, very good to accept the situation as your own karma.

On top of that, you then use that situation of abuse or whatever else to develop compassion for that person. You use the situation to develop loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta. In this way, you are actually using that situation and that person for you yourself to achieve enlightenment. I wouldn't say that you are taking advantage of that person, but you are using them to develop a very special, very strong compassion within you because that person is suffering so much. They are totally under the control of karma and delusions, such as desire and so forth. They are totally overwhelmed by

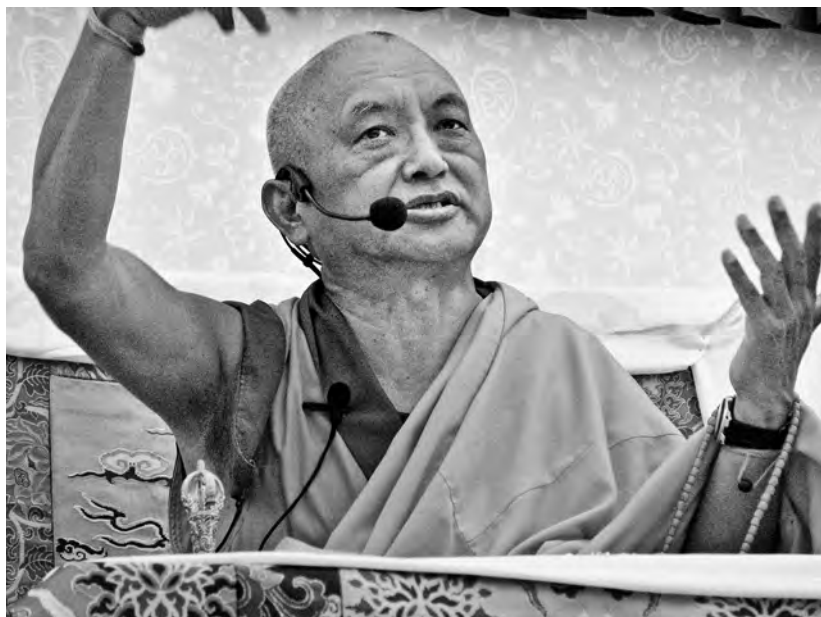
⁵¹ Previously, I must have caused similar harm
To other sentient beings.
Therefore, it is right for this harm to be returned
To me, who caused injury to others. (Ch. 6, v. 42.)

karma and delusion, with no freedom at all, and suffering so much. There is so much to meditate on in relation to how this person is suffering. You can meditate on the whole lam-rim, on the twelve links, on the three, four or six types of samsaric suffering. You can see the whole package of samsaric suffering there.

For you it's an incredibly quick way to develop compassion and bodhicitta. If you are smart, you actually use that person to quickly achieve enlightenment yourself, and you then enlighten the numberless sentient beings. You should especially meditate on the special kindness of that person, because it helps you to generate compassion and patience. It's a different kindness from somebody giving you chocolate or ice cream.

Because I started from there, I thought that I must conclude that part of the talk.

So, I think that's all. Thank you so much. Good night.



THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Final Medicine Buddha Session



BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE

I THOUGHT to mention a little about the benefits of Medicine Buddha and other holy objects.

I think that the whole *Medicine Buddha Sutra* has been translated into Chinese from the original Sanskrit of the *Kangyur*, Buddha's teachings. The sutra part of the *Kangyur* has been completely translated into Chinese and there are perhaps even a few more texts in Chinese than in Tibetan.

The *Medicine Buddha Sutra* that we have here already exists in Chinese. I think many Chinese people have read the whole sutra, which describes all the extensive benefits. There are different texts, and I think that what I have here has been compiled from the sutra and from other texts.

If we practice the seven limbs—prostration, making offerings, confession, rejoicing, requesting to turn the Dharma wheel, requesting not to pass away into the sorrowless state and dedicating the merits to achieve enlightenment—in relation to Medicine Buddha, we collect the same amount of merit as having practiced the seven limbs in relation to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. We get the same amount of merit as having done the seven-limb practice in relation to every single one of the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas. That might be one reason that in the intermediate and long versions of the Medicine Buddha puja the seven-limb practice and requests are done with each of the Medicine Buddhas. Instead of doing the seven-limb practice just one time to all of them, you do it very precisely to each of them. I don't do it every time but I often try to do each limb seven times. (I'm not talking about Padmasambhava's simple meditation for healing, but

about the other one, where you visualize the Medicine Buddhas on your crown, like in the *thangka*, though I'm not sure about the colors of the Medicine Buddhas in the *thangka*.) When you do the seven limbs seven times in relation to each Medicine Buddha, as you do during the *sadhana*, you collect unbelievably extensive merit. It's really powerful.

The physician of the devas, Kyegu Dakpo, requested Buddha to explain everything about the Medicine Buddha, including the benefits of the practice. This sutra is Buddha's explanation.

Buddha said, "Physician Kyegu Dakpo, listen to me. One hundred *phag-tsä* to the east from here is the Bedurya, or Lapis Lazuli, pure land. There abides the Buddha, Medicinal King, who has accomplished extensive prayers. Due to having generated the good heart, this buddha is very compassionate and extremely powerful."

According to the *Abhidharmakosha*, five hundred arm-spans is one *gyang-tag*, and five hundred *gyang-tag* is one *phag-tsä* [Skt: *yojana*]. I heard that there are different ways of measuring, one according to Kalachakra and the other according to the *Abhidharmakosha*, but maybe there are also others.⁵²

Buddha then explains to Kyegu Dakpo, the physician:

"If, to this buddha, you prostrate, make offering, confess negative karmas, rejoice in merits, request to turn the Dharma wheel, request to have stable life and not pass into the sorrowless state, and dedicate the merits for enlightenment, through this seven-limb practice you will have collected the same virtue as having done the seven-limb practice in relation to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas."

⁵² See p. 396, *Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat*, where Rinpoche also discusses these measurements. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Vol. 2, p. 38, n. 518, quotes the *Abhidharmakosha*: "Twenty-four inches equal one cubit; four cubits equal one bow-span; five hundred bow-spans equal one 'range of hearing' [*gyang-tag*]; eight 'ranges of hearing' are said to equal one *yojana*."

There are numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas and by doing the seven-limb practice one time in relation to Medicine Buddha, you get the unbelievable merit of having done the seven-limb practice in relation to all those buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Buddha then says:

“You have offered respect and service to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.”

If you make offering to Medicine Buddha, you have made offering to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. The reference for that is this major teaching, this sutra from Buddha.

Also, another text, *Mengyu Rinchen Bumpa*, says:

Reciting Medicine Buddha’s name and mantra one time becomes having recited the names and mantras of all the tathagatas of the past, present and future.

So, if you recite Medicine Buddha’s name and then recite the Medicine Buddha mantra, it’s the same as having recited all the names and mantras of all the buddhas of the three times.

Remembering, seeing, hearing, touching or meditating on Medicine Buddha includes remembering, seeing, hearing, touching or meditating on all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, all the Triple Gem. Therefore, the Medicine Buddha’s holy name is “All-Encompassing of Those Gone to Bliss.”

The Medicine Buddha mantra is all-encompassing of Those Gone to Bliss. In other words, the Medicine Buddha mantra is the mantra of all the buddhas.

You will achieve all your wishes, temporary and ultimate, and all success. It will destroy all of the ten nonvirtuous actions. All negative karmas will be purified. When your death happens, you will immediately go to the pure land and then achieve enlightenment. Therefore, do not have any doubts about the benefits of this practice.

In the *Encompassing Only That Sutra*, there's a story about how powerful Medicine Buddha practice is for purification. The head of one family, who was called Having Bird Wings, had collected much negative karma, including the five uninterrupted negative karmas (having killed one's father, one's mother or an arhat, caused blood to flow from the Buddha and caused disunity among the Sangha). Why are these negative karmas called *uninterrupted*? Other negative karmas are not as powerful as these karmas. Even if you create those other negative karmas in this life, you can have the interruption of another life before experiencing their result—for example, maybe another good karma ripens so that you are reborn in a deva or human realm. Because these negative karmas are not so powerful, you don't have to experience the lower realm suffering that is their result right after this life; you can experience it after a few lifetimes or after many lifetimes. But the negative karmas of having killed one's father, one's mother or an arhat, caused blood to flow from the Buddha and caused disunity among the Sangha are so powerful that without the interruption of another life, right after death you are immediately reborn in the eighth hot hell, Unbearable Suffering. I'm not sure whether you have to experience all eight hot hells or just the last one, Unbearable Suffering, which has the heaviest suffering of samsara, of the lower realms and of the hell realms.

This person, Having Bird Wings, collected all five uninterrupted negative karmas in that one life, as well as the five actions that are close, or similar, to the uninterrupted negative karmas.⁵³ It is mentioned that if you step on the shadow of your guru's holy body, while it's not one of these five actions, it is similar to them. The same applies to sitting or stepping on the guru's seat without the guru's permission. It is also disrespectful to ride the guru's horse without his permission. I think it might be the same with the shadow of a stupa. Of course, when you walk around a stupa, many times there's no choice—there's no other way to walk. Also, when you're offering service, there may be no other way to walk except by going over the shadow of the guru or a stupa. The main point is mentally to have respect; if there's disrespect mentally, it then becomes heavy negative karma. While you are going around a stupa, you think that you are going underneath the shadow

⁵³ The five actions are committing incest with one's mother who is an arhat; killing a bodhisattva who is destined to become a buddha in that life; killing a Hinayana arya other than one abiding in the result of arhatship; stealing the possessions of the Sangha; and destroying a stupa or monastery out of hatred.

of the stupa. This way, mentally, there's respect. It is similar if you have to walk on the guru's shadow.

I've just remembered something that happened one time in Delhi. Due to Lama Yeshe's kindness in setting up the Dharma Celebration, each year Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre invites His Holiness the Dalai Lama to give teachings. The main focus is the Indian people. Buddhism came from India to Tibet, where the Tibetan lamas and Tibetan people preserved it, and now it is time to return it to the Indian people. That was why Lama started the meditation center in Delhi. Lama also checked with his root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, who is also my root guru. Trijang Rinpoche did a divination and said that at the beginning it would be difficult but in the long run the center would be very beneficial.

I think we've missed having His Holiness teach only one or two years. Once was because the director was Indian and quite new (not new to the center but new to the job) and didn't take the job seriously. Otherwise, we have received His Holiness every year.

One year His Holiness himself chose to give a Chenrezig great initiation, but normally we choose a title for the talk then check it with His Holiness. Two or three years ago, when there were a lot of problems in India, we came up with a title that was, while not exactly political, connected to the current Indian situation. That time many people from foreign embassies and also Indian high officials, including even the head of the army, came, because of the advertisement. It was very good.

Before that talk His Holiness asked me, "What is the subject?" When the director of the center, Dr. Renuka Singh, who teaches at a Delhi university, presented the title, His Holiness said, "Oh, I don't know." His Holiness then actually spoke on that topic. For quite a number of years His Holiness has talked more in relation to the present global situation, which has been extremely beneficial because the teaching applies to thousands of people, including most of the Indians and also the people from other countries, including usually many officials. They are really very impressed, and because they can relate to the talk, they enjoy it very much. They then talk about it for long time, about what a good time they had. The Delhi center offering this service of arranging for His Holiness to teach is a quick way to spread Dharma and to serve many sentient beings by bringing them to enlightenment.

During recent years His Holiness has become well known and respected in the West, especially in the United States. Of course, India then naturally



*Lama Yeshe offers mandala to HH the Dalai Lama at Second TMMC
Dharma Celebration, Ashok Hotel, November 1982.*

has to do the same thing and respect His Holiness. It is due to Lama's kindness that Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre in Delhi has that special karma. Even though at other times teachings and meditations are normally happening, it is through the Dharma Celebration that the center can offer the most extensive benefit to sentient beings.

The main point that I was going to mention is that a few years ago, when I was receiving His Holiness with incense, as we were coming through the door to go to the teaching site, His Holiness's shadow was on the steps. As I was trying to go around the shadow. His Holiness asked, "What's happening? What are you doing? What are you doing?"

Anyway, to return to the story: Having Bird Wings collected all five of the uninterrupted negative karmas and even the five close ones. He also collected the fourteen tantric root falls. He created so much heavy negative karma. When the time came for this karma to ripen, though he didn't see any form he heard a voice say, "You, Having Bird Wings, have collected such heavy negative karma that the earth will crack, and you will then be born in the hell realm, Unbearable Suffering." (That's the eighth hot hell, the very bottom one.) When he heard this he became unbelievably frightened. Then again he heard a voice from space say, "If you recite the mantra and holy name of the Medicinal King, which encompass all Those Gone to

Bliss, all your negative karmas collected during beginningless rebirths will be purified. It will close the door to your reincarnating in the hell realm. And in this life you will achieve no birth.” (I guess it means that he would actualize the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, the arya path, and by ceasing his delusions through that, he would then overcome death and have no further rebirth.)

Remembering the qualities of Medicine Buddha, Having Bird Wings then recited Medicine Buddha’s name and mantra. After seven days a fully ordained monk in the form of a physician appeared in front of him and told him, “Hold the corner of my robe. We’re going to see the wonderful medicinal city.” Having Bird Wings immediately held the corner of the monk’s robe and was taken to the pure land. (What actually happened was that Having Bird Wings saw Medicine Buddha in the form of a fully ordained monk, who then took him to the pure land in that body, and there he became enlightened.)

Also, in the tantra called *Ser Dom Upa*, Buddha explained to his attendant Ananda:

If you recite one time the name and mantra of the Medicinal King, encompassing all Those Gone to Bliss, you purify 80,000 eons of negative karma; if you recite it ten times, you purify 800,000 eons of negative karma; if you recite it twenty times, you purify 8,000,000 eons of negative karma; if you recite it one hundred times, you purify the negative karma from unimaginable samsaric lifetimes. Anybody who even hears or remembers the name and mantra purifies the five uninterrupted negative karmas.

This applies to any being, even an animal. It doesn’t depend on whether or not someone has faith or is Buddhist. This is why it’s very good to recite Medicine Buddha’s name and mantra to any animal that we see.

I think I mentioned during the introduction to the initiation that Buddha told Ananda that even an animal who hears Medicine Buddha’s name and mantra will never ever be reborn in the lower realms. When we are near cats, dogs or any other animals in our daily life, we should recite the Medicine Buddha mantra so that they can hear it. It’s an extremely beneficial service. Even if we explained Dharma to an animal for billions of eons, there is no way they could understand what we were saying. Because

they have taken an animal body and don't have a human body, this is the only way we can help them. If they had a human body, when we talked to them they could understand simple Dharma explanations or at least the Dharma words would stay in their mind. But because they don't have a human body and have taken an animal body at this time, it completely blocks their understanding the meaning of Dharma. So, all that's left is to chant the name and mantra of this powerful buddha, which has unbelievable benefit. If we chant the Medicine Buddha mantra in their ear or chant it and blow on their body, it purifies their negative karma. It's an excellent thing to do to help them, to liberate them from the sufferings of the lower realms. And because it leaves a positive imprint on their mind, sooner or later they will gain a higher rebirth, meet the Dharma, actualize the path, cease their defilements and achieve enlightenment. That's how, by chanting mantras for animals, we liberate them from samsara and bring them to enlightenment.

This tantra says that even hearing or remembering Medicine Buddha's mantra purifies the five uninterrupted negative karmas. Even seeing or touching a Medicine Buddha statue or the Medicine Buddha mantra purifies negative karma, such as the ten nonvirtuous actions. It also says that even seeing, touching or remembering the holy body of a statue of Medicine Buddha completely purifies *kor*, the pollution that comes from taking food and other things that people have offered with devotion to the Sangha community. Since those things belong to the Sangha, taking them brings pollution. If you use something that belongs to the Sangha without permission, the pollution obscures your mind; it interferes with realization. Here *pollution* isn't referring to external pollution in the Western sense; this is mental pollution. It doesn't become pollution for buddhas or arya beings. Whether or not it becomes pollution depends on the person. It's different if you're a Sangha member who has studied very hard, offered service in the monastery or lived in pure morality; otherwise, using the Sangha's enjoyments obscures the mind and then makes it difficult to have realizations. That's the function of *kor*. So, the stains of *kor* are purified by seeing, touching or remembering Medicine Buddha's holy body or a statue of Medicine Buddha.

The heavy negative karma of causing disunity among the Sangha is also purified, as well as the heavy negative karma of trying to stop somebody from making offering to the Sangha. In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, when Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo talks about refuge practice in the

commentary to *Jorchö*, he mentions various negative karmas collected in relation to the Sangha that you have to purify. One of them is trying to block other people from making offering to the Sangha. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo gives the example of somebody planning to offer butter to make Tibetan tea, and you, as manager of the monastery, say, “Oh, this is too much for the Sangha—they don’t need it.” If you stop someone from offering even one slice of butter, you create the heavy negative karma of stopping offerings to the Sangha. So, those negative karmas are purified by reciting the Medicine Buddha mantra. Criticizing Sangha, another heavy negative karma, is also purified. In short, all the negative karmas collected in relation to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are purified.

By making offering to Medicine Buddha, you purify even the negative karmas of having harmed the guru’s holy body, gone against his advice and disturbed his holy mind, as well as the pollution from using the guru’s belongings.

Buddha explained all this to Ananda, his attendant. Buddha also explained:

This buddha is equal to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. His life, holy activities, duration of his teachings and power of his blessings are equal. This buddha’s compassion and prayers working for sentient beings are equal to other buddhas. This buddha is the embodiment of all the gurus, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. He encompasses Those Gone to Bliss. He is the embodiment of the Triple Gem, the mind-seal deities, the dakinis and the Dharma protectors; he is the embodiment of all the objects of refuge. This one Victorious One encompasses all. Therefore, there is no doubt that if, with strong devotion, you make prostrations, offerings or requests to Medicine Buddha, or even hear the name or see a holy object of this buddha, or merely remember him, you will be saved from the sufferings of the lower realms.

We’ll do just that much tonight. I thought during this time to talk a little, here and there, on some of the benefits of Medicine Buddha practice; and to talk also in relation to the practice of the sadhana. I’m not sure what will come.

What’s left?

Ven. René: The long-life prayer and *King of Prayers*.

Rinpoche: No, not the long-life prayer—*King of Prayers*. *King of Prayers* makes everybody have a long life.

MULTIPLYING MANTRAS

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

There have been some changes in this last buddha's name—just one or two words. Here in this text it has CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄI SANG GYÄ NGO WA DANG MÖN LAM DU PÄ GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO. We have been reciting ...NGO WA DANG MÖN LAM THAM CHÄ RAB TU DU PÄ GYÄL PO LA CHHAG TSHÄL LO. I don't remember whether I have seen "THAM CHÄ RAB TU" in another text, but it's not here in this one.

If you recite this buddha's name one time, whatever dedications and prayers you do succeed. (With a dedication, you collect merit then dedicate that merit to some goal; with a prayer, you're not dedicating merit but simply requesting for something to happen.) It also increases whatever practices you do by a factor of ten million times one hundred thousand, or *jewa bum*, in Tibetan. *Jewa* is ten million and *bum* is one hundred thousand.

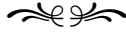
[Rinpoche recites the final multiplying mantra.]

Due to the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas,
my special attitude and unbetraying dependent arising, may my
pure prayers succeed immediately.

So, good night and have very sweet dreams. You can have a dream in the dream.

Three parts of the sutra have been translated from Chinese into English. There are two sutras there in Tibetan and I'm sure there must be a translation of them. But when you read these sutras, you might need to let go of some things—women's liberation, for example. I'm just warning you....

Final Medicine Buddha Session



MOTIVATION FOR THIRTY-FIVE BUDDHAS PRACTICE

THINK, “The numberless hell beings, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

“The numberless hungry ghosts, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

“The numberless animals, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment by myself alone.

“The numberless human beings, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone.

“The numberless asuras and suras, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment by myself alone.

“The numberless intermediate state beings, from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness and all realizations, including enlightenment, are the most precious and most kind ones in my life. I must free them

from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment by myself alone.

“Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I must actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment; therefore, I must purify all my defilements, all my negative karmas and downfalls.

“If I were now in one of the hot hells, it would be unbearable. I couldn’t bear to be there for even a second—it would be like suffering for eons. I could be born there and experience that suffering any day, any moment—possibly even this moment. Why? Because I have created the causes of that, such as the ten nonvirtuous actions, during beginningless rebirths. And I have committed those negative actions even in this life, right up to this moment. On top of that, I have collected negative karmas by breaking the pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows. Those negative karmas are progressively heavier and heavier. I have also collected the heaviest negative karma in relation to the virtuous friend during my beginningless samsaric rebirths and also in this life up to now. I have collected numberless of these unimaginable negative karmas, which are the causes of rebirth in a hot hell.

“Not only is my death definite to happen, but it could happen any day, any moment. It could happen even this moment. Therefore, I *must* purify all my defilements, all my negative karmas, right now without even a second’s delay. I must purify all of them. Therefore, to bring temporary and ultimate happiness to the numberless sentient beings, I’m going to do prostrations with the practice of *Confession of Downfalls* by reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas’ names.”

GENERAL CONFESSION

Woe is me!

Woe is me, again! I’m joking.


O great guru Vajradhara, all other buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten directions, and all the venerable Sangha, please pay attention to me.

I, who am named Thubten Zopa, circling in cyclic existence since beginningless time until the present, overpowered by mental

afflictions such as attachment, aversion and ignorance, by means of body, speech and mind have created the ten negative actions.


When we do this practice of confession, we do it by sealing each negative karma with emptiness. When we mention each negative karma, we remember it and then seal it with emptiness. It becomes extremely powerful purification if we do this in addition to going through the negative karmas and generating strong regret that we've committed them, which makes the negative karma much thinner. If we then seal each negative karma with emptiness, with right view, it is like dropping an atomic bomb on each negative karma or like firing missiles at an enemy target, like the United States is now doing in Afghanistan. It is similar here. We bomb our negative karmas and our egos here in this gompa at LMB. We bomb our bin Laden, our ego. The most harmful terrorist is self-cherishing thought, and the other harmful one is ignorance. Here we are bombing this ignorance. Each time we remember emptiness we are bombing the king of terrorists, ignorance, which is more harmful than numberless bin Ladens.

...have created the ten negative actions.

There are two basic ways you can do that in relation to the ten nonvirtuous actions. You remember that since the ten nonvirtuous actions are dependent arisings, merely imputed by the mind, they are empty, empty of existing from their own side. This is not saying that the ten nonvirtuous actions are empty of the ten nonvirtuous actions. Since the ten nonvirtues are merely imputed by the mind, they are empty of the real ten nonvirtues existing from their own side. Look at them as totally empty, totally non-existent. Not even an atom of the truly existent ten nonvirtuous actions collected during beginningless rebirths exist. They are totally empty. Since they're merely imputed by the mind, they're totally empty, totally non-existent, even though they appear to be truly existent. 

I have engaged in the five actions of immediate retribution and the five close actions of immediate retribution.


Think of the five uninterrupted negative karmas and the five close ones you have collected during beginningless rebirths. Since they are merely imputed

by the mind, they are totally nonexistent, totally empty of existing from their own side. 


I have transgressed the vows of individual liberation....

The Tibetan term *so sor thar päi* means liberation for self.

I have transgressed the bodhisattva vows and secret mantra.

All those negative karmas are merely imputed by the mind. Right now my mind merely imputed them. Therefore, those negative karmas are totally nonexistent, totally empty of existing from their own side. 

I have been disrespectful to my parents...


All those negative karmas collected during beginningless rebirths are merely imputed by the mind. Since my mind has merely imputed them right now, they are totally empty of existing from their own side. 

I have disrespected my own vajra master and my abbot...


All those negative karmas collected during beginningless rebirths are merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, all those negative karmas are totally empty of existing in the way they appear to me and the way I believe they exist.



...and I have disrespected my vajra brothers and sisters and other spiritual friends living in the vows of pure behavior, or morality.

Because all those negative karmas collected during beginningless rebirths up to now are merely imputed by mind, they are totally empty. In reality they are totally empty of existing from their own side. 

I have committed actions harmful to the Three Jewels,...

Any of those actions I have done during my beginningless samsaric rebirths are merely imputed by mind; therefore, they are all totally nonexistent, totally empty of existing from their own side. 

...abandoned the holy Dharma,...

Abandoning the holy Dharma is very heavy negative karma. All this heavy negative karma of avoiding the holy Dharma collected during beginningless rebirths is merely labeled by mind; therefore, this heavy negative karma is completely nonexistent. It's totally empty of existing from its own side.



...criticized the arya Sangha,...

I think this might be referring to the general Sangha, not necessarily just to those who have achieved the arya paths, the path of seeing and the path of meditation. It may not be restricted to that. I don't think it means that it is only the arya Sangha that you can't criticize but you can criticize other Sangha. It means all the Sangha. It is because the karma is very heavy that it's mentioned here.

Because the negative karma of having criticized Sangha created during beginningless rebirths is merely labeled by mind, it is totally nonexistent. It is totally empty of the real one appearing from there, in which we believe.



...harmed sentient beings, and so on.

All the negative karmas of having harmed sentient beings collected during beginningless rebirths up to now are merely labeled by mind, so they are totally empty, totally nonexistent.

These and many other nonvirtuous negative actions I have done,
have caused others to do,...

They are all totally empty.

...have rejoiced in others doing, and so forth.

All those negative karmas are totally empty.

In the presence of the great guru Vajradhara, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas who abide in the ten directions, and the venerable

Sangha, I admit this entire collection of faults and transgressions that are obstacles to my own higher rebirth and liberation and are causes of cyclic existence and miserable lower rebirths. I will not conceal them, and I accept them as negative. I promise to refrain from doing these actions again in the future. By confessing and acknowledging them, I will attain and abide in happiness, while by not confessing and acknowledging them, true happiness will not come.

The I, the action of dedicating the merit, the merit that is dedicated, the aim to which it is dedicated, enlightenment, and those for whom it is dedicated, the sentient beings: look at everything as empty. With awareness of your own mind labeling, dedicate the practice.

“I dedicate any merit I’ve collected from having done prostrations, made offerings, confessed, rejoiced, persuaded and requested to achieving enlightenment for sentient beings.

“Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chbe....”

This is called a standing meditation session....

TAKING REFUGE

Just as you yourself are experiencing the suffering of your own samsara, there are numberless other sentient beings experiencing the unimaginable suffering of samsara, the continuation of which has no beginning. When you think in this way, renunciation of your samsara is covered, as well as compassion for others. Think, “Therefore, to be free from all these oceans of samsaric suffering, I and all sentient beings go for refuge to guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.”

With renunciation of your own samsara, compassion for other sentient beings by reflecting on how they are suffering in samsara just like you, and faith that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have the power to guide you, you then perform the action of going to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha for refuge.

You can visualize the elaborate refuge merit field. There is no milk ocean, just the throne with your own guru in the form of Shakyamuni Buddha in the center and the rest of the merit field (the four classes of tantric deities,

the one thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon, bodhisattvas, arhats, dakas and dakinis, and Dharma protectors) on the layers of petals.

You can do that elaborate visualization or just visualize the one aspect, your root guru in the aspect of Buddha, which embodies all gurus, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. That one aspect embodies everything that you visualize in the elaborate merit field.

Whichever way you visualize the merit field, rely upon them with your whole heart. You have devotion to their qualities and faith in their power to free you and all the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering. With that devotion you rely upon them with your whole heart, then recite the prayer.

MEDITATING ON EMPTINESS

One idea I had is that I can talk while you are meditating on emptiness. You don't need to rise up from emptiness....

Have you used different techniques or not?

Ven. René: I did once before—I started the four-point analysis.

Rinpoche: As I mentioned in similar talks on two other nights, the moment you recognize the hallucination as a hallucination, *all phenomena, which are empty by nature, become emptiness only.*

Right after you look at the hallucination as a hallucination, it's easy to see that what appears to you and what you believe are nonexistent. You immediately see what reality is: emptiness only. It's then easy to meditate on how *all phenomena, which are empty by nature, become emptiness only*; it's easy to come to that point in relation to all phenomena, including your own aggregates and even forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects.

However, when you don't recognize that which is a hallucination as a hallucination, it's then a little difficult to think of emptiness. When that recognition isn't there, it's difficult to meditate on emptiness. You become stuck. You can even come close to nihilism. As I mentioned the other night in relation to meditating on the emptiness of the offerings, if you think that the offerings are not there and then believe there are no offerings, that's nihilism. If the way you meditate on emptiness is to meditate that the offerings are not there, it becomes like the example I gave the other night. Do you remember? I put my hand out of sight and then said, "Now it's not there." If your meditation on emptiness becomes like meditating on the absence of

this hand, you are meditating on ordinary emptiness. I said that when you meditate on the emptiness of the offerings, when you bless the offerings, you first have to meditate on purifying them. However, your meditation on emptiness becomes the same as this example of the absent hand if it's the same as when the offerings have been packed away, so that there is the absence of offerings. If meditating on the emptiness of the offerings means that you don't see the offerings there, when the offerings are packed away and not there, you are also meditating on emptiness. It would then become that when you don't see the offerings on the altar, you would be seeing the emptiness only, or *tong pa nyi*, of the offerings. This mistake would arise.

It would mean that when you don't find money in your purse, you would then realize the emptiness of the money. Emptiness would become just the absence of the merely labeled money, which is a conventional truth. It would then be contradictory because while you had money in your purse, you could never realize the emptiness of the money. In order to realize the emptiness of money, you would have to empty your purse.

Even if you can give a very extensive philosophical explanation of the view of the Prasangika school, I think that when it comes to meditation, it's not easy. Even if you have extensive scriptural understanding and can explain the philosophy in great depth, when it actually comes to meditating, I think it's not easy to do correct meditation.


The four-point analysis, or analysis of the four vital points, starts with first recognizing the object to be refuted. What is the object to be refuted? What is it that you have to realize is empty, as it is empty in reality? Recently, when the US air force was bombing in Afghanistan, they missed their target and killed some civilians in a United Nations or Red Cross food depot. If you don't recognize the enemy or the right spot where the enemy is, you will miss your target and there is a danger that you will harm or kill others. It is similar when you meditate on emptiness if you haven't done the analysis of the first vital point, recognizing the *gak cha*, the object to be refuted. This is your enemy, your target. If, instead of hitting this target, you miss it and don't recognize the object to be refuted, all the rest of your analysis will miss the target, and you won't get to destroy the object of ignorance. All your reasoning and analysis, which is like an atomic bomb, will totally miss the target. It will go somewhere else, and the object of ignorance will still be left there. While the analyses are going on and on and on, you'll be strongly apprehending and taking care of the target, that ignorance. At the end of all that extensive analysis, you will have achieved nothing. You won't come to

the correct conclusion, where you see that the object is empty, that it exists in mere name, merely imputed by the mind.

You should come to the understanding of subtle dependent arising according to the Prasangika Madhyamaka definition, which is extremely subtle. The I and every other phenomenon exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind; therefore, they're empty. While they are empty, they are existing. While they are existing, they are empty. Emptiness and dependent arising are unified. That's the correct conclusion. Whether you do the analysis by applying the king of logic, dependent arising—"it's empty because it's a dependent arising"—or by using the many other methods of logical reasoning explained in the Madhyamaka teachings, whether you apply just the essence, dependent arising, or extensive reasoning, at the end you should reach the extremely subtle dependent arising of the Prasangika view. You should come to that conclusion. It's not that phenomena are totally non-existent, which would be falling into nihilism; phenomena exist, but they are empty of existing from their own side. Your view of emptiness should be free of the two extremes, nihilism and eternalism, which means belief in inherent, or true, existence.

In Tibetan, you say *nga cho chen den pa me de ten drel yin pai chir*, which means the I does not have inherent, or true, existence. This is the same as saying that the I is empty, but when you are debating or reasoning, you say, "The I doesn't have true existence." Whichever way you express it, it is saying the same thing. It is not saying that I is empty of I, but that the I is empty of a truly existent I. That eliminates the extreme of eternalism. Then *ten drel yin pai chir* means it's a dependent arising, which eliminates the extreme of nihilism, that it doesn't exist. So, it helps to realize the Middle Way view of emptiness, devoid of the two extremes.

FORM IS EMPTY

You realize that form is empty of truly existent form, as in the *Heart Sutra*, where it says "Form is empty. Emptiness is form." *Form is empty* means that form is merely imputed by the mind. What is form? It's nothing other than what is merely imputed by the mind; it is existing in mere name. Just concentrate on that. What is form? Form is just what is existing in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. Just think about that. 

What form is is extremely subtle, extremely fine. What is form? That which exists in mere name. It is extremely subtle, on the borderline between

existing and not existing. The borderline between existing and not existing is extremely fine. Existence in mere name is so subtle that it's easy to slip into nihilism.

It is difficult to define the way that form exists neither inside the mind nor outside it. According to Lama Tsongkhapa, which is the Prasangika school's explanation, form exists in mere name, being merely imputed by the mind. When you meditate on form according to the meaning of subtle dependent arising in the Prasangika school, which is that form is merely imputed by the mind, you see that form is neither truly existent nor totally nonexistent. Form exists in mere name, being merely imputed by the mind.

You can see that form doesn't have true existence through your own experience when you meditate on the extremely subtle way form exists according to the Prasangika school's view of subtle dependent arising. As I mentioned the other night, there is an extra thing projected by the negative imprint left on our mental continuum by the ignorance that apprehends true existence. We then hold that truly existent appearance to be true, to be the reality.

So, form is empty. Form doesn't have the true existence that is projected onto, or covers, it. Ignorance apprehends true existence because of the truly existent appearance projected onto the merely labeled form. In the view of ignorance, a truly existent form appears and is apprehended. You can now see that that is a total hallucination. A real form appearing from there, which is another way of expressing it, is a total hallucination. That is totally nonexistent. Totally nonexistent.

Since this realization doesn't harm the existence of the conventional truth form, you don't fall into nihilism. You just realize that the truly existent form is totally nonexistent, empty. You don't realize that form is empty of form, which would mean harming the dependent arising.

After you have realized form is empty or the I is empty, while you are seeing the form or the I, naturally, as a result, you never see it as you did before and you never believe it to exist in the way you believed it to exist before. You see something that you had never discovered before. There is form and there is I, but they are extremely subtle, something merely imputed by the mind. As a result you understand that they are merely imputed by the mind, which is realization of the conventional truth. Realizing that form or the I exists in mere name is a result of realizing that the covering of true existence on the merely labeled form or merely labeled I is totally nonexistent. That extra thing is totally nonexistent; not even an atom of it exists. You realize the form or I is totally empty of an inherently existent form

or I. So, you realize form is empty. The form that you discover is a form that is totally empty of existing from its own side. That's form. Emptiness is form. *Form is empty* eliminates eternalism. *Emptiness is form* eliminates nihilism.

When you meditate or analyze, you check the effect of realizing that form doesn't have the slightest true existence, that form is empty. Realizing that form is empty of truly existent form, that realization of emptiness, leads to understanding of the conventional truth of form. It leads to the discovery that form exists; it exists in mere name. So, *form is empty* seems to perform two functions. It cuts eternalism, but also cuts nihilism, because it leads to the realization that form *does* exist, in mere name. And it is the same with realizing that the I is empty. It seems that even this one point of realizing the emptiness of the I, that I is empty of true existence, cuts two things: nihilism and eternalism.

Also, meditating on the meaning of the subtle dependent arising of the I harms the truly existent I, or eternalism. It destroys that. And there is no doubt that it destroys nihilism. You can analyze the matter, but it seems that even *I is a dependent arising* performs two functions.

What I was going to say is that in the four-point analysis, the first point, recognizing the object to be refuted, determines how effective the rest of the logical reasoning will be in subduing your mind, in cutting the root of samsara. The extra explanation just happened.

I was going to explain another technique you can use, but maybe it would be better if we did it tomorrow. I guess that for somebody who has the actual realization, it's easy to meditate on emptiness, but knowing different ways to meditate might be helpful for some people. Anyway, I've already talked quite a bit, so I think we'll do it in one of the sessions tomorrow.

MOTIVATION FOR MANTRA RECITATION

Think, "I'm going to recite every single mantra for the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to have stable life, and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately by all obstacles being pacified. I'm also going to recite every mantra for all my other virtuous friends, as well as for all other holy beings, to have stable life and for all their holy wishes and works to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha to succeed immediately.

"There are numberless hell beings and I'm going to recite every single

mantra to free every single hell being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless hungry ghosts and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every single hungry ghost from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless animals and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every single animal from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless human beings and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every human being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless asuras and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every single asura being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless suras and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every single sura from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.

“There are numberless intermediate state beings and I’m going to recite every single mantra to free every single intermediate state being from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself.”

The different ways of saying the words have different effects on the mind. When you say that you’re going to free everyone from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment, it looks as if you’re reciting the mantras for them. But when you say that you’re going to free everyone from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by yourself, it looks as if you’re reciting the mantras more for your own success. Does it appear like that to you?

The way I said it might look as if you’re doing it for the success of your own activities. But I think because the activities are done to benefit others, it might be OK. Even though the way I said it this time might give you the feeling that you’re reciting the mantras more for yourself, for your own success, the work you want to succeed in is freeing others from suffering and bringing them to enlightenment, so that might be OK.

“I’m also reciting every single mantra for world peace, for all the wars, disease, famine, torture, poverty, sicknesses and dangers from fire, water, air or earth, such as earthquakes, that have been happening to be stopped and for sentient beings, from now on, to never ever have to experience any of these undesirable things again.

“I’m also reciting every single mantra for the success of the projects here at LMB, such as the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas, and the social service projects, and for the success of all the projects and activities of all the rest of the FPMT centers, as well as for the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue to be completed as quickly as possible by receiving everything that is needed.”

Do you have the names there?

[Ven. René reads the names for dedication.]

Are they living or sick?

Ven. René: They’re still alive.

Rinpoche: There’s also Kendall’s grandmother, and all the others who have died whose names have been given to me, those for whom I have promised to pray and those who rely upon me and everyone else who has died.

Ven. René: And Dan Howlett, from Kurukulla Center in Boston, who died two days ago.


Rinpoche: Please pray for them to immediately be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms and to be born in a pure land where they can become enlightened or to receive a perfect human rebirth and quickly achieve enlightenment by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings.

So, each mantra is also for them.

DIVINE PRIDE AND CLEAR APPEARANCE


While you are reciting the mantra, meditate as explained in the text. While reciting the mantra, you have to visualize yourself as Medicine Buddha. As well as visualizing yourself as Medicine Buddha, you have the divine pride, “I am Medicine Buddha.” With the appearance of yourself in the aspect of Medicine Buddha’s holy body, you generate the divine pride, “I am Medicine Buddha.”

As you are reciting the mantra, at the same time you are holding divine pride, thinking, “I am Medicine Buddha.” But not a truly existent Medicine Buddha. “I, who am merely labeled, am Medicine Buddha, who is merely labeled.”

Or you can think, “I’m the result-time Medicine Buddha.” This is another way of saying it. You think that you actually now are the Medicine Buddha that you are going to become in the future. 


Now, along with that divine pride, “I am Medicine Buddha,” you have

the clear appearance of yourself in the aspect of Medicine Buddha. You have to put these two things together.

While you're reciting the mantra, focus on the aspect of Medicine Buddha's holy body. 

The nature of the holy body is blue light, like a clear, very blue sky. Medicine Buddha has one face and two arms. The left hand, in the mudra of concentration, holds a begging bowl filled with the nectar that pacifies the chronic disease of delusion and the nectar of immortality, which destroys death. The right hand is on the knee in the mudra of giving sublime realization, with the palm facing outward. He holds an arura plant with fruit, the medicinal plant that heals both the sickness of mind, the delusions, and sickness of body, suffering. He destroys the cause of suffering as well as the resultant suffering.

With all the holy signs and exemplifications, Medicine Buddha is seated in the vajra posture. He has a loving smile, and his compassionate eyes look at sentient beings. He is adorned with robes. Beams radiate from his holy body, each beam liberating numberless sentient beings in every second.

One-pointedly focus on the deity's holy body. 


Now, that mind focusing on the deity's holy body understands that all these things are merely labeled by the mind: the I is merely labeled, existing in mere name; Medicine Buddha is merely labeled, existing in mere name; Medicine Buddha's holy body is merely labeled, existing in mere name.




Every part of the holy body is also merely labeled, merely imputed, by the mind. Each part is merely labeled this and that: this is Medicine Buddha's holy body, this is the head, this is the hand, this is the leg, this is the begging bowl, this is the medicine, arura. They are all merely imputed by the mind. However, even though they are all merely labeled by the mind, all these merely labeled parts appear to be truly existent. So, all these truly existent parts are not true; all these are hallucinations.


Focus on the deity's holy body. Your mind, your wisdom, which manifests as Medicine Buddha, focuses on Medicine Buddha's holy body but at the same time understands that the aspect of the holy body doesn't have true existence or that all the truly existent appearances appearing to your own mind are hallucinations, which means they are all empty, nonexistent.


While your wisdom focuses on the clear appearance of Medicine Buddha's holy body, which is method, at the same time wisdom understands that it doesn't have true existence. What appears to be truly existent is


not true; it's a hallucination. Your mind focuses on the clear aspect of the deity's holy body and that mind also understands that it's empty, that it's totally nonexistent, that it doesn't have true existence, that the truly existent appearance is a hallucination. The clear aspect of Medicine Buddha's holy body is clarity, and the wisdom that understands the aspect of the holy body doesn't have the true existence that it appears to have is profundity. One mind unifies clarity and profundity. The mind that is focusing on the deity's holy body is method, and wisdom is at the same time understanding that the deity's holy body doesn't have even an atom of true existence and that what appears is a hallucination. One mind practices method and wisdom together. This is the perfect way to meditate on yourself as Medicine Buddha. While reciting the mantra, concentrate in this way, your one mind practicing method and wisdom together. This is the fundamental practice of what is called *Vajrayana*. This is Vajrayana. You are meditating on Vajrayana. 

VISUALIZATION DURING MANTRA RECITATION


The blessings and qualities of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions, in the form of numberless replicas of Medicine Buddha's holy body, some as huge as mountains and others as small as atoms, come from all the directions like snowfall and absorb into you through your pores to your heart, where there are the mantras and the heart syllable HUM. Concentrate on this. This includes all the qualities of the buddhas' holy body, holy speech and holy mind. While strongly concentrating on this, recite the mantra. 


Feel that you have received omniscient mind. You have received all the buddhas' qualities, including the holy mind, omniscient mind. 

Think that numberless Medicine Buddhas have absorbed into you and focus on their various qualities. You have received not only clairvoyance, which enables you to help other sentient beings, but the ultimate complete understanding of omniscient mind. 


Now concentrate on receiving the quality of great compassion. Put the main emphasis on receiving the great compassion of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Your whole being is completely filled with great compassion for each and every sentient being without discrimination. 

Now particularly concentrate on the quality of power. You are receiving Medicine Buddha's perfect power to benefit sentient beings. Think, "I


have received this perfect power.” Focus particularly on this quality of the perfect power to benefit other sentient beings; think that you have received it within you. As you continuously absorb numberless Medicine Buddhas from all directions, all the buddhas’ qualities absorb within you in Medicine Buddha’s form. You have the power to work perfectly for others without making the slightest mistake, exactly in accord with each sentient being’s wishes, level of mind, karma and intelligence. 

Now send beams to sentient beings from the heart of yourself as Medicine Buddha, who is endowed with all these qualities. With great compassion, send beams to the numberless hell beings. As soon as the beams, like sunbeams, touch the numberless hell beings they immediately purify them of the two defilements and liberate them from all their sufferings. They all become Medicine Buddha. Every single hell being becomes Medicine Buddha. And all the hell realms become mandalas, the pure land of Medicine Buddha. 


Think, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all the hell beings as Medicine Buddha.”

Now send beams to the numberless hungry ghosts. As soon as the beams reach them, they are instantly purified of all their defilements. They are immediately liberated from all their sufferings, and they all become Medicine Buddha. They all become enlightened in the essence of Medicine Buddha. Visualize every single one of them as Medicine Buddha. 


Think, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all the hungry ghosts as Medicine Buddha.”

With great compassion, now send beams from your (Medicine Buddha’s) heart to every one of the numberless animals. They are instantly purified of all their defilements. They are immediately liberated from all their unimaginable animal suffering and all become enlightened in the essence of Medicine Buddha. 


Feel great happiness, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all the animals as Medicine Buddha.”

Now send numberless beams to all the numberless human beings. As soon as the beams touch them, they are instantly purified of their two defilements and liberated from the oceans of human sufferings and problems. Every one of them becomes Medicine Buddha. Visualize every single human being in the aspect of Medicine Buddha. ]

Feel great happiness in your heart, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all these numberless human beings in Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment.”

Now send beams to the asuras, instantly purifying them of their two defilements and liberating them from all their unimaginable suffering. They all become Medicine Buddha. 


Think, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all of them in the essence of Medicine Buddha.” Feel great happiness.

Now send beams to all the numberless suras, instantly purifying the two defilements and liberating them from all their sufferings. Every one of them becomes Medicine Buddha. 

Think, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened them in the essence of Medicine Buddha.” Feel great happiness.

Now send beams to all the intermediate state beings, instantly purifying the two defilements and freeing them from all their unbearable sufferings, all the frightening karmic appearances. They all become Medicine Buddha.



Feel great happiness in your heart, thinking, “I have enlightened them in the essence of Medicine Buddha.” Look at all of them in the aspect of Medicine Buddha. 

[The group recites the Sanskrit vowels and consonants, the mantra of dependent arising, absorption of the wisdom beings and dedications. Rinpoche then plays the cymbals, and the protector prayers are recited, followed by recitation of *King of Prayers*.]

Rinpoche: I think I must have left out part of the prayer, because I finished earlier than you.

Now we’ll recite the lam-rim prayer for the spread of Dharma within one’s own mind and in the minds of other sentient beings.

[The group chants *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* in Tibetan, followed by the dedication prayers for the spread of Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, the long-life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other dedication prayers in Tibetan; then the multiplying mantras.]

Good night.

MEDITATIONS DURING MANTRA RECITATION

I just wanted to give you an idea of the visualizations during the mantra recitation. With each visualization you can recite one, two or three malas. You can divide the visualizations between different sessions or do everything in every session. It’s to make the visualization more precise, more effective, during the mantras.

If your mind is too distracted and can't concentrate on these meditations, you can read a lam-rim meditation book and recite the mantra. I heard that His Holiness told Rilbur Rinpoche that he reads a Dharma text then recites the mantra, reads the text, recites the mantra. Since the mantra goes automatically, you can read a Dharma text. That's how it normally is for us. Of course, His Holiness is beyond all this, but for us it at least keeps our mind in virtue when we read Dharma texts. What we are thinking about is virtue; it involves the path. Since it keeps our mind in virtue, we don't waste our life.

Especially when your mind is very distracted, rather than waste your time in distraction, read Dharma. If you don't know the lam-rim meditations by heart, read the texts, with your mouth just reciting the mantra. For example, if you are doing Vajrasattva meditation-recitation, you can visualize Vajrasattva on your crown emitting nectar, which purifies you. When you finish one mala, again remember Vajrasattva and the nectar continuously flowing and purifying you, then read a lam-rim meditation text or meditate on lam-rim. That will then inspire you and keep your mind in virtue. Each time you complete a mala, you again remember Vajrasattva and the nectars flowing and purifying you, then again read the text.

Of course, besides what I mentioned before, there are some tantric meditations based on lam-rim, on bodhicitta and emptiness. While reciting the mantra, you can meditate on bodhicitta, on renunciation, on different aspects of the sufferings of samsara or be mindful of emptiness. With one-pointed concentration you can practice mindfulness of the hallucination, keeping continuous awareness of the hallucination, looking at the hallucination as a hallucination. Or you can practice mindfulness of the object to be refuted or of dependent arising. You can also meditate on guru devotion while you are reciting the mantra. Using the quotations and lines of reasoning from lam-rim, you can generate guru devotion, then do strong stabilizing meditation on that. Or you can do the tong-len, taking and giving practice, to generate bodhicitta. It's a very powerful meditation.

If you want to do more elaborate meditation on Action Tantra practices, there are also the four limbs that you practice in the path not having sign.⁵⁴ There are different concentrations you can do that are more specifically related to Action Tantra. It's in the Chenrezig practice, and I think you can apply them to other Action Tantras.

⁵⁴ The four limbs of Action Tantra are self-base, other base, mind and sounds.

THE MEANING OF RETREAT

The basic definition of retreat is keeping the mind in renunciation, retreating away from this life and attachment to samsara. There is also keeping the mind in bodhicitta, retreating away from self-cherishing thought. There is also keeping the mind in awareness of dependent arising or emptiness, retreating away from the ignorance that holds the concept of true existence. Looking at things as dependent arisings brings the idea of emptiness, that things are empty. You can also look at things as hallucinations, as they are hallucinations. Again it gives you the idea that they are empty. These are the best ways to do retreat, the best ways to make retreat effective. You can also keep your mind in guru devotion, retreating away from the thought of faults in the virtuous friend, of seeing the virtuous friend as ordinary. These are the meditations that really bring a messy mind into good shape. These are the ones that transform the mind. The main retreat involves developing guru devotion and the three principles of the path.

On the basis of that, you then practice tantra. You practice pure appearance, seeing yourself as the deity, the place as the mandala and other people as deities. This is called the yoga of three utilizations, or transformations. The basic practice of tantra is to see whatever form appears as the deity and the place as the mandala, which is in essence the deity, anyway. The mandala is visualized as a kind of house but it's actually your mind, the dharmakaya, the deity's holy mind. No matter what form you visualize, whether a being or a house, that is the essence. Whatever sound you hear is mantra and whatever thought arises is dharmakaya. That is also another useful technique you can use when strong desire, anger or any other negative emotional thought arises. You can look at that thought as dharmakaya. Whatever appears to you, you look at it as the holy mind of the deity, the dharmakaya. That is one of the thought-transformation techniques. When you look at the thought as dharmakaya, as the deity's holy mind, the attachment, anger, jealousy or other negative emotional thought disappears.

Besides the sitting meditation practice, use whatever activities you do in the break-times—eating, sleeping, sitting—for tantric practice. Practice the yoga of eating, the yoga of sleeping and so forth. This makes even your break-times very rich. These break-time activities are a powerful means of purifying negative karma and collecting extensive merit in such a short time, even within a minute, a second. It becomes a quick path to enlightenment. Of course, these practices are done on the basis of lam-rim, especially

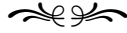
bodhicitta. If the emptiness part isn't happening, put your main effort into bodhicitta. Do everything on the basis of the thought of benefiting others.

The very minimum retreat is to keep your mind in virtue. Retreat isn't just about putting your body inside a room or cave somewhere and then locking the door so that you don't see anybody—not even the birds or flies or worms. I'm joking. Retreat doesn't mean just locking yourself up so that you don't see or hear anybody. Retreat means keeping your mind in virtue. That's a very important definition of retreat: keeping the mind in virtue. If that doesn't happen, if you don't keep your mind in virtue, then it's not retreat. This means that you can be in retreat even if you're having a party or disco dancing or playing basketball. Anyway, I'm joking. Wherever you are and whatever you're doing, if you're able to continuously keep your mind in virtue, that's retreat. Keeping your mind in virtue, in Dharma, is the very bottom line. Beyond that, there's no retreat. Anything beyond that is retreat in nonvirtue. If your mind is not in Dharma, you're keeping your mind in nonvirtue and retreating from virtue, from Dharma. That's retreat to achieve samsara, to achieve the lower realms. We have been doing that retreat during beginningless samsaric lifetimes up to now. That's why we're still stuck in samsara and still have the same problems.

This is the meaning of retreat that we have to understand not only during this time but also at other times when we do retreat, whether a lam-rim or deity retreat. Those people who have done a lot of retreat and received teachings and commentaries already know that. For those who haven't received much instruction, hopefully I'll be able to explain different points from time to time during this retreat. Sometimes I'll be explaining about the nose and sometimes about the ears. I'm joking!

I think that's all for tonight, so good night. Thank you very much.

Final Medicine Buddha Session



[RINPOCHE PLAYS the cymbals, then chants protector prayers with the group.]

PALDEN LHAMO

There was a request for some explanation about Palden Lhamo but I don't know much about Palden Lhamo. You can say it's a wrathful manifestation of Tara or of Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom. Sarasvati is a common deity that is also worshipped by Hindus. There are a few deities that both Hindus and Buddhists worship; ones that Buddhists may take refuge in. I guess that Sarasvati is another manifestation of Tara, but one that grants wisdom, especially for writing. In Nepal school children and university students go to a particular Sarasvati temple in Swayambhunath to pray. So, Palden Lhamo is related to Sarasvati.

Tara is the female buddha who is the embodiment of all the buddhas' holy actions. She is green in color, and this has two meanings. One meaning is related to Amoghasiddhi, the buddha of accomplishment. The green color also signifies wind. When you paint, the color of wind is green. I can't fully remember the details, and I don't think I understand it clearly, but according to tantra, samsara is the production of the impure wind-mind. The wind referred to here is the vehicle of the mind, not external wind. The wind and mind are one in essence but perform different functions. The one that is clear and perceives objects is labeled "mind" and the one that has movement is called "wind." Those two are one in essence, but they're given different labels because of their different functions. From the impure wind, there's samsara; and from the pure one, you receive enlightenment:

Buddha's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech and vajra holy mind. This is just my guess, but maybe it's something like that.

His Holiness usually explains that green is related to the color of wind, but the rest of what I said is just my assumption. I don't remember exactly what His Holiness explained.

Tara is practiced for success in achieving temporary and ultimate happiness for sentient beings, and Tara manifested in this wrathful form of Palden Lhamo as a protector. It is said in the text that Palden Lhamo is a wrathful aspect of Sarasvati, but I think Sarasvati is also another name for Tara. I think Sarasvati is one of the 108 names of Tara. In that case it can be said that Palden Lhamo is a wrathful Tara, or Tara in a protector aspect. That aspect of a protector deity is needed to protect from outer and inner obstacles to quick success in actualizing the teachings of Buddha and particularly those of Lama Tsongkhapa within our own mind and to spreading them in the minds of other sentient beings. Protectors pacify obstacles and obtain what is needed.

Why are there different protectors? Because sentient beings have different karmas. Even one sentient being may need different protectors at different times. It's basically due to karma that there are different protectors and different aspects of buddhas. Why isn't there just one buddha? Why are there so many different aspects of deities? For the same reason. Sentient beings need them for different purposes, according to their karma, their mentality.

Basically, relying upon protectors on the basis of living in morality, or in the teachings, obliges the protectors to help or to protect you. Your practicing the three principles of the path, especially bodhicitta, on the basis of guru devotion, obliges them to pacify obstacles and to help you to obtain what you need. It is on this basis that you make requests to them. In essence, they help you to protect your own mind. Not protecting the mind creates samsara; the oceans of samsaric suffering come from not protecting the mind. Being careless about your own mind and allowing it to be controlled by delusion create the oceans of samsaric suffering, which you have been experiencing without beginning and which you will also experience without end if you don't protect your mind. If you protect your mind, you will get everything that you want: temporary happiness and ultimate happiness, including enlightenment.

Remembrance, which is like a rope, and awareness, or conscientiousness, which is like a hook, protect your mind. It's said that if you have both of

them, you will obtain any virtue that you wish, including enlightenment. This is from a stanza in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, but I don't remember it word for word.⁵⁵

Also, in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* it says, "What is the need of so many conducts, except the conduct of protecting the mind."⁵⁶

There are so many disciplines, or rules, that are labeled spiritual, but they often have to do with external changes, such as ways of dressing. If you are learning Buddhism and become a Buddhist, you dress like a Tibetan. If you are following the Hindu religion, you dress in Hindu saris. However, what is the need for so many rules of conduct, except for the conduct of protecting the mind? Shantideva is saying that if the mind is not protected, nothing happens; there is no development. Even if you lock your body up in a room or a cave, if you don't protect your mind, it simply becomes a prison.

This verse can be understood in many different ways. Even if you have taken vows, or precepts, if you don't protect your mind they become like a burden. If the practice of protecting the mind is not there, the vows you have taken become a burden, a prison. Living in ordination becomes like living in a prison for you if the practice of protecting the mind is not there. You feel that all those rules are suffocating you; you feel as if you are living in a prison. The mind then becomes wild, like a mad elephant.

It's different once the practice of protecting the mind is there, once you meditate strongly on the shortcomings of delusions and the objects of delusions—in other words, on the shortcomings of samsara, on how samsara is suffering in nature—and on the skies of benefits from living in vows. Not only do you achieve good rebirth in future lives, all the temporary happiness of this life and future lives, with freedom from all the relationship and other emotional problems that lead people to commit suicide or engage in many negative karmas, liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, delusion and karma, and full enlightenment, but also you are able to work perfectly for other sentient beings, bringing each and every single

⁵⁵ However, if the elephant of my mind is firmly bound
On all sides by the rope of mindfulness,
All fears will cease to exist
And all virtues will come into my hand. (Ch. 5, v. 3.)

⁵⁶ This being so,
I shall hold and guard my mind well.
Without the discipline of guarding the mind,
What use are many other disciplines? (Ch. 5, v. 18.)

one of the numberless sentient beings to enlightenment. By seeing all these skies of benefit, you then protect your own mind very happily, very joyfully. Living in the spiritual disciplines that protect your mind, such as vows and so forth, then comes from your heart. You do it with a very happy mind. You don't feel obliged to do it; you don't see it as a burden but like going to the land of wish-granting jewels and picking up one of the jewels. You do it very happily.

So, the protectors help in that practice of protecting the mind.

The very first thing to request the protectors is that all the holy wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and our other virtuous friends succeed.

We also request for the success of all the projects of every FPMT center, including all the projects here at LMB, such as building the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, building 100,000 stupas and all the social service projects. We also request that the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue be actualized as quickly as possible, by receiving all the funding without even a second's delay.

Also request for success in actualizing within your own mind in this very lifetime Lama Tsongkhapa's complete stainless teachings, which unify sutra and tantra. Also request for the spread and flourishing of Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching in this world and for you yourself to offer that service to sentient beings and to Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching.

[Rinpoche leads chanting of the Palden Lhamo prayer and other prayers.]

BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE

Maybe tonight we'll have a little bit of teaching on the Hari Krishnas. No, I think the Muslims. Since it's becoming more important, tonight I think we'll have a teaching on the Koran. That's like the Bible, right?

Tantra of the Thousand Goddesses—not the Koran—contains further benefits of practicing Medicine Buddha. There it says that in a country called Pema Chen (Having Lotus), many sentient beings were tormented by disease, dangers from weapons and famines. So, the head of a family, a woman called Having the Light of the Sun went to Shakyamuni Buddha. She made prostrations to the Buddha, then prostrated to the Dharma, prostrated to the Sangha and prostrated to the deva who protects sentient beings from sickness. (The Tibetan term *lha* doesn't necessarily mean a worldly deva;

it can also mean a buddha. *Lha* is a general term that can refer to a being beyond samsara as well as to a worldly deva. It can also mean a spirit that you are worshipping. So, *lha* is a general term used for a being that is not a human being. Here, since I'm not sure whether it strictly means a buddha, I've just used the term *deva*.)

She prostrated to the deva who protects sentient beings from sickness, including the cause and result, and also protects them from the suffering of the lower realms.

She then made the following request to Buddha: "Please pay full attention, enlightened Destroyer Gone Beyond. Please protect me and all sentient beings from even the temporary harms from disease, the dangers of weapons (this now includes atomic bombs and other modern weapons) and famine. Ultimately, protect us from the evil-gone realms."

This is what she requested. Like in the *Heart Sutra*, Buddha then entered into the concentration called "the Medicinal King eliminating the three poisons, sickness and all poverty." As soon as Buddha's holy mind became absorbed in that concentration, blue light was emitted into the ten directions from Buddha's *zupu*. The *zupu* is the white hair curled to the right, a cubit in length, between Buddha's eyebrows. His Holiness Song Rinpoche and Geshe Sopa Rinpoche said that this hair is like rubber: if you pull it out, it springs back into place when you let it go and stays curled.

I'm not sure how many years ago it was that I went to Deer Park to do a course for the first time (though it wasn't the first such course).⁵⁷ His Holiness Song Rinpoche and various other teachers were there. His Holiness Song Rinpoche gave a *Jorchö* commentary, I think, and then a Vajrayogini commentary. After that Denma Lochö Rinpoche gave a commentary to *Guru Puja*. Geshe Rabten Rinpoche was also invited and taught one of the Madhyamaka subjects, I think. Lama Yeshe was supposed to come, but he was traveling around. I was there and so were Geshe Sopa Rinpoche and Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey.

In the gumpa there was a very nice statue of the young Buddha, from Delhi. It's the same kind of statue that many of the FPMT centers now have in their gompas. I thought it would be easy to make this statue into Medicine Buddha, because apart from having to change the arms it's otherwise basically the same. I asked about it in Delhi, where the statue is made. I have been to that place a few times. There are two places in Delhi that make

⁵⁷ It was 1978.

statues. I didn't go to the other place because it seemed to me that their art wasn't of good quality, or that's what I heard. We used that life-size Buddha statue to make the seven Medicine Buddhas for Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharamsala. Tushita has a very small gompa and since I have suggested many statues for them to have, they now have to extend the gompa. There are seven Medicine Buddhas on one side, a Thousand-Arm Chenrezig on another side, and there's supposed to be a Tara, I think. They also have a large bronze Lama Tsongkhapa statue, maybe one story high, though it's not as large as the Lama Tsongkhapa statue at Kopan. There was some difficulty fitting it in, but the head fits very well where there was a chimney before. Lama Tsongkhapa's head is down below, but the hat goes through the chimney. Somehow it fits perfectly. It came out very good to get that statue from Delhi and not from Nepal, which would have been much more expensive.

Tushita is an old house, perhaps more than a hundred years old, but it's a very blessed holy place. Lama's and my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, the actual living Heruka, lived there in that house for seven years.

I remember coming one time from Buxa to Dharamsala to see His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche in that house. You entered through a kind of dark passage. Even though Rinpoche lived there for seven years, Rinpoche didn't fix anything. I asked Rinpoche's attendant about it. I'm sure they had a toilet but everything else was left as it was before. Nothing new was built in those seven years.

I also went there when Zina, our first student, who was Russian, was ordained there. We requested His Holiness the Dalai Lama to ordain her, but His Holiness couldn't do it so Trijang Rinpoche ordained her.

I don't remember which year it was, but Rinpoche later moved down to lower Dharamsala because it was warmer. Tushita was then vacant and became like a haunted house, with rats and mice. Maybe someone was organizing courses for the mice from Dharamsala.

I don't remember exactly, but I think a major sponsor for both these places was Jon Landaw. Lama thought to buy Tushita for doing retreats, and I think Jon Landaw was the main sponsor during that time. I don't know whether there were any other people involved. It then became a retreat center. Some years ago there were six ascetic monks who were doing retreat around there.

Anyway, at Geshe Sopa's place, I was painting these life-size Buddha

statues, and, due to my ignorance, I made this zupu hair blue. Geshe-la then said, “No, no, it’s white. The color of this hair is white.” Geshe-la correcting me made a strong imprint and since that time I’ve been aware that the zupu, the central hair between the two eyebrows, is white.

Now, coming back from that side talk to the point: When Having the Light of the Sun made the request, Buddha’s holy mind became absorbed in that concentration and blue light was immediately emitted into the ten directions from the Buddha’s zupu. When the blue light hit the sentient beings, it eliminated their diseases and spirit harms. The blue beams then again absorbed back into the Buddha’s forehead.

Buddha then said to the woman, “Listen. In the eastern direction in a great realm called Lapis Lazuli, there is a buddha who equals all the buddhas. This buddha’s holy mind of omniscient transcendental wisdom, power and holy actions equal those of all the buddhas. This buddha has oceans of capability, mountains of power and skies of prayers (which means extensive prayers). It is of the nature of compassionate and omniscient saving (which means the wisdom and compassion that save sentient beings from suffering). It has the thought and action benefiting all others and it has the qualities of cessation and realization.”

This means that all the qualities that the buddhas have are embodied in Medicine Buddha. Medicine Buddha’s qualities equal those of all the buddhas.

“If, with devotion, you recite the holy name, recite the mantra, make offerings, make requests and so forth or even hear the holy name, see a statue of the holy body or merely remember it, there is no doubt that it will completely destroy the multitudes of disharmonious hosts.”

If something is harmonious with your mind, it’s positive; if something is disharmonious with your wishes, it’s negative, like an enemy. This is like the millions of maras who tried to attack Buddha when Buddha was about to achieve enlightenment. Just hearing the holy name of Medicine Buddha, seeing the holy body of a Medicine Buddha statue or merely remembering it completely destroys the huge groups of evil beings who want to harm you.

“Just hearing the holy name, seeing a holy statue or merely remembering it gives you all power over the harmonious side.”

Buddha then said, “The Founder, Destroyer, Qualified Gone As It Is who destroys the enemy is the fully enlightened Guru of Medicine, King of the Victorious Ones, Lapis Lazuli Light, who is the father of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. You never become satiated from looking at the holy

body of the arya Victorious One, leader of all the Tathagatas, essence encompassing Those Gone to Bliss.”

After some time you get bored with looking at an ordinary body. At the beginning there’s excitement, but then after some time you get bored and see it as unappealing or ugly. It’s not like that with Medicine Buddha’s holy body. No matter how much you look at it, you are never satiated.

“Medicine Buddha’s holy speech is very pure and his holy mind has the five types of clairvoyance.”

There is the clairvoyance able to read others’ minds; the clairvoyance able to see karmas and where a being is going to reincarnate after this life; and uncontaminated clairvoyance, which means having ceased delusions. Of course, omniscient mind is the ultimate one but it could also refer to the clairvoyance of arya beings on the eighth and ninth bhūmis and of arhats. I don’t remember every single one of the five.⁵⁸

“Medicine Buddha turns only the Mahayana Dharma wheel. The light of the holy body illuminates the three realms.”

Buddha then said, “Simply remembering Medicine Buddha has the power to destroy the sicknesses of cause and effect and to destroy samsara and the lower realms. It can destroy dangers from disease, weapons, famine and so forth. This is the savior and guru for sentient beings who are sick. This is the doctor who helps them to live. Any connection made with this buddha abiding with its entourage there in that great realm called Lapis Lazuli is very meaningful.

“Remembering these qualities and having faith in this buddha as a foundation, express your wishes to this buddha. All the buddhas are embodied in this buddha, and for sentient beings this buddha made oceans of prayers: limitless, numberless and inconceivable. Therefore, this buddha is more extraordinary than other buddhas. This is the Victorious One encompassing All Those Gone to Bliss.”

There are other quotations about the benefits of Medicine Buddha in *Sutra Requested by Bodhisattva Palden Pemo*—not Thubten Pemo. I don’t think we need all the details, but in this sutra Buddha said, “Anyone who sees, hears, touches, remembers or meditates on or recites the mantra and holy name of the physician, Stainless Star (I think this was Medicine Buddha’s name when he was a bodhisattva doing all these prayers), will never see

⁵⁸ The five types of clairvoyance are divine eye, divine ear, knowledge of others’ minds, memory of former lives and knowledge of the extinction of contaminations.

any inauspicious signs, bad omens, inauspicious phenomena or bad dreams. They will never experience dangers from the four elements or from wild vicious animals. They will also never experience dangers from war, from being attacked by the multitudes of others' army or from thieves. They won't be harmed by disease and spirit harm and will be liberated from sam-sara and the lower realms."

Buddha then told his attendant Ananda, "If you have doubts about the benefits of this mantra and the holy name, it means that you are in the lineage of the Lesser Vehicle, which means your merit is very low."

Buddha then said, "Ananda, only an extremely small number of people see, hear, touch, remember or do the meditation-recitation of the mantra and holy name of the Medicine Buddha. Why is it an extremely small number? Because it's profound, extremely profound. Therefore, it is very difficult to find."

Buddha is saying that there are benefits like the limitless sky from reciting the name and mantra of Medicine Buddha and from seeing, touching or even remembering the holy body of a statue and so forth and that the number who are able to do so is extremely small. Why? Because you need so much merit to be able to have that opportunity to see Medicine Buddha, or even a statue of Medicine Buddha, to hear the holy name, recite the mantra, remember Medicine Buddha and so forth. It's not easy to see a holy statue of Medicine Buddha or to have the opportunity to even hear—let alone recite or meditate on—Medicine Buddha's name and mantra. Buddha mentioned this to Ananda but Buddha is actually telling us. Here we are actually doing retreat on Medicine Buddha—not just visualizing Medicine Buddha but generating ourselves as Medicine Buddha.

Here I want to tell you a story about a monk who asked Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo what statue or thangka he should have made to ensure his good rebirth. You can check astrologically your future rebirth, whether you're going to be reborn in the lower realms or in a higher realm. Astrology can also advise to make a statue or painting of a buddha or to do something else. "If you do this you will then be reborn in the western world and be very wealthy, blah, blah, blah." That's one of the common ones, but being born in the western world isn't the only positive answer. "You'll be born as a tantric practitioner or you will become a vajra master, blah, blah, blah." So, you're told to make a Vajrapani, Padmasambhava or some other statue or a thangka. There is an astrological method that you can use to check your future rebirth. You go to see a lama or you check astrologically. Before you

die you can make a statue or perform some virtuous activity that stops your reincarnating in the lower realms and causes you to have a good rebirth. It's very common, even in Solu Khumbu, for people to do such things before they die. After a person's death, family members also go to ask lamas for a mo or astrology to find out where the family member who has died has been reborn. In astrology, it usually comes out that if you don't do something, you will be reborn as a monkey, a dog, a kangaroo or a crocodile. I'm joking a little. The answer is often that you'll be born as a preta, a hell being or an animal, but if you make a statue or painting of such-and-such a buddha, you will then have a good rebirth as a human being in such-and-such a situation.

So, this monk asked Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo what statue or *thangka* he should have made for his good rebirth. I think Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo mentioned *Mitrugpa*. In his answers to questions from people who had broken or degenerated vows and engaged in many negative karmas, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo's answers quite often emphasized reciting the mantra and also making statues and *tsa-tsas* of *Mitrugpa*. I'm not sure whether he said this to this monk, but the main thing Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said was: "Do your *sadhanas* every day, because you are then generating yourself into buddha every day. You are making yourself buddha every day." When you practice your *sadhanas* every day, you generate the deity and the mandala. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said, "You arise in the deity's holy body, and this way you collect many hundreds of thousands (or maybe millions) of times more merit than by making an external statue or *thangka* of a buddha."

This is one issue I thought to bring up. Each *sadhana* that you do each day involves generating yourself as a deity and generating the deity's mandala. So, if you have many *sadhanas* to do, each time you do this, of course, you collect many hundreds of thousands of times more merit than by making external holy objects.

Nowadays more interest or inspiration to make holy objects is slowly coming. Otherwise, if neither the *sadhana* is done nor external holy objects made, there is nothing. If you don't do *sadhanas*, where you generate yourself as the deity and collect inconceivable merit, because they're too long and don't collect merit even by making external paintings or statues of buddha, there is nothing. But in the West nowadays, I think, compared to the past, there is more interest or more faith in having holy objects. I'm talking about just among Dharma students.

It is the same here doing retreat—I mean at least in the three sessions of Medicine Buddha practice where you generate yourself as Medicine Buddha. As Pabongka explained, you collect many hundreds of thousands or millions of times the amount of merit. And for those who are practicing *Guru Puja* in the morning, that also involves generating the deity and mandala. That's just talking about the retreat sessions, without mentioning the other practices you do.

The next quotation from this sutra is a little long, so maybe I'll stop here for tonight.

We'll quickly do *King of Prayers*.

[The group recites *King of Prayers* in English.]

DEDICATIONS

Ven. René: Let's dedicate the ocean of merits we have created during the day by taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts, by practicing the sadhana of Medicine Buddha and by listening to the holy teaching of our spiritual friend. We also dedicate this ocean of merit to the following people, who are experiencing suffering.

[Ven. René reads the list of names for dedication.]

[There is a long pause.]

Rinpoche: Dedication? *Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...*?

[The group recites *jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...*, *gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir...*, *päl dân la mäi ku tshe tän pa dang...*, and then *Prayer for the Flourishing of Lama Tsongkhapa's Teachings* in English.]

Rinpoche: I missed out my favorite dedication last night!

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others—the buddhas, bodhisattvas and all the rest of the sentient beings—which appear as truly existent ones, independent ones, real ones appearing from there and in which we believe, but which are the object to be refuted, total hallucinations and totally nonexistent, may the I, who appears a truly existent one, an independent one, a real one appearing from there and in which we believe, but which is a total hallucination and totally nonexistent, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama's, Medicine Buddha's, enlightenment, which again appears to be a truly existent one, an independent one, a real one appearing from there and in which we believe, but which is the object to be refuted, which is a

total hallucination and totally nonexistent (His Holiness the Dalai Lama's, Medicine Buddha's, enlightenment exists, but the way it appears to us and the way we believe it to exist is as a truly existent one, an independent one, a real one appearing from there, and that part is totally nonexistent, totally empty), and then lead all the sentient beings, who again appear to be truly existent ones, independent ones, real ones appearing from there and in which we believe, and again this is the object to be refuted and a total hallucination, which means they are all totally nonexistent, to Medicine Buddha's enlightenment, which is also totally nonexistent from its own side, by myself alone, who also appears to be a truly existent one, an independent one, a real one appearing from there and in which we believe, but which is the object to be refuted and a total hallucination, which means it is totally empty, totally nonexistent."

We'll recite the multiplying mantras to multiply the merits one hundred thousand times.

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

Reciting this last buddha's name multiplies each merit one hundred thousand times and also has the particular benefit of causing the success of whatever prayers we do.

[The group recites the final multiplying mantra.]

If the last prayer is chanted in Tibetan, I can then say "woooooooo..." at the beginning. If I do it in English, "woooooooo..." doesn't come. I'm joking!

Good night. Thank you very much.

Final Medicine Buddha Session



DANGERS OF WRONG VIEWS

THE BROTHER-IN-LAW of one of the people doing this retreat is having some mental problems, and there is a danger he will commit suicide. So, make strong request to the Dharma protectors to protect him from outer and inner obstacles, from outer and inner interferences. The inner obstacles are his delusions and the negative actions motivated by those hallucinated minds, those impure thoughts. That is the main cause of his mental instability. That is what hallucinates the mind. It is dangerous to believe that your own wrong thoughts are true. I'm not talking about all thoughts, but believing wrong thoughts are right is extremely dangerous. That's why there are a lot of wars happening in the world. We're talking about danger to one person's life, but what's happening in the world nowadays is another example of believing wrong views are correct and of not recognizing that which is wrong as wrong.

Even one influential person's inability to recognize their wrong thoughts as wrong and their total belief that they're right can bring huge harm to the world; it can cause economic problems all over the world. It's basically due to lack of wisdom, Dharma wisdom. It's caused by ignorance, especially the root ignorance, not knowing the very nature, or ultimate truth, of the I, of the self. (The two truths of the I are the ultimate truth and the conventional truth.) It comes from not having discovered this ultimate truth. From this root ignorance, other types of ignorance and other negative emotional thoughts then arise. Many other wrong views are produced, which then lead to many millions of people with these wrong beliefs being willing to sacrifice their lives to make war, seeing it as a path to heaven. They believe

that making war, with the killing of so many human beings, besides other sentient beings, and the destroying of the world, is a path to heaven. This is the danger of even one person's ignorance, of even one person not understanding that their wrong thoughts are wrong. That one influential person can lead millions and millions of people to believe in a similar way. Then, on top of the war and killing, many thousands of people all over the world lose their jobs at airline companies, banks and businesses. That's how one person's wrong view can destroy the world.

It happened in the past that many millions of people, including children and babies, were killed and tortured, with some being burned in fires and others tossed up into the air to land on spears. Unimaginable things have also happened in the past. All these negative effects, all this suffering, basically came from the wrong views of one influential person. It happened because they believed their wrong views were correct. It happened because of one person's ignorance, because of one person not knowing the ultimate nature, emptiness.

On a small scale, when someone is suicidal, they believe to be true many things that are not true. There are inner obstacles, the person's own wrong concepts, and also outer obstacles, which means non-human beings such as spirits, who can influence the person to think that way. When your negative karma has ripened, such beings can also influence you, making you believe that whatever thoughts and visions you are having are correct. They can also cause a person to have hallucinations and to believe that they are true. In a similar way, when a person's negative karma has ripened, other people will also abuse them and treat them badly. Those other people are not the main cause of the problem. The main cause is the abused person's past negative thoughts and negative actions, which have ripened. Because of that, other people become the conditions for them to receive harm. That abused person has a connection with those people, because he or she has harmed them in that same way in the past, though not necessarily during a human life. That is why this person is now receiving this abuse or harm and why these particular people are involved in giving the abuse or harm.

A person you have never seen before in your life and who has never seen you before could suddenly appear in the street and get angry with you or shoot you. It might not necessarily be someone you have met in this life and have harmed in some way. It might be someone you have never met in this life, but when you meet you suddenly have a negative effect on each other. (It can also be a positive effect.)

There has to be an explanation as to why this person you've never met before is suddenly shooting you. There's an explanation for why everything happens; everything has a cause and conditions. The reason for everything that happens is karma. The karma is created before you experience the result. Karma is the reason, and the reason exists before you experience the result. Otherwise, it wouldn't happen at all. All these things happen because they are all dependent on causes and conditions; they are not independent. They don't exist from their own side; they're not independent. They are dependent arisings, dependent on causes and conditions. Any problem that happens is dependent on a cause that was created before you experience that problem. That is the reason it happens.

I mentioned spirits and other beings, who, on the basis of negative karma, can make a person hallucinate. In what is called schizophrenia or paranoia (I don't know the exact definitions of these terms), there is also the involvement of other beings. These beings make you believe things, they influence you, based on the cause, your past delusions, or wrong concepts, and the negative actions done out of them.

As I was saying, in a similar way, a person also receives harm from other people, based on that person's karma. They gave similar harm to those people, not necessarily in this life but in a previous life, and in whatever form they had then taken. That's why this specific person engages in harming that person. In the past, that person definitely did something wrong in relation to that other person. That's the main cause.

If a person's karma is not very heavy, they can purify their negative karma. Pujas or meditation practices can also be done to deal with those beings who are influencing that person's thoughts or controlling their mind so that they think and believe all kinds of things. It is an exact practice, an exact method, that precisely connects to the situation and those who are giving harm. If the correct practice is done by the right qualified person, it works, and the person is then healed, even of those kinds of mental problems. This is quite common.

When a person's karma is very heavy, however, it's difficult. Not everybody can be healed. Ultimately, of course, everybody can become enlightened. Ultimately, everybody can be totally freed from all their suffering and the causes of the suffering, delusion and karma, and can become fully enlightened. They can achieve this peerless happiness, with cessation of even the subtle faults of the mind, the subtle negative imprints left by delusion. Of course, everybody can eventually become enlightened, because

their intrinsic nature is pure. (That's how it's usually expressed in English, but I don't know exactly what *intrinsic* means.)

THE NATURE OF MIND

The nature of our mind is not independent; it is a dependent arising, existing in dependence upon causes and conditions. Therefore, the nature of our mind is empty of independence. And what is mind? Mind is that which is empty of form, of substantial phenomena, and to which any phenomenon can appear clearly. There's a third characteristic, but I don't remember it at the moment. Any phenomenon can appear clearly to the mind, just as objects can be clearly reflected in a mirror that isn't covered with dust. The mind is also able to perceive objects. I think that's the third characteristic, but I'm not a hundred percent sure.

Of the two phenomena, body and mind, the mind is the phenomenon that is empty of form, or substantial phenomena, that any object can appear clearly to, and that is able to perceive objects. The phenomenon which has those characteristics and which performs that function is the base. If this base exists, without choice it receives the label "mind."

When someone comes into this room, when they see something that people use to lift things up or put things on top of, no matter what its shape or design or the material it's made from, simply by seeing that base, that person's mind labels "table." For a person who enters this room, when they simply see that phenomenon that is used to lift things up or put things on, without choice they label it "table." Once the base is there, it receives the label "table." Once the base that performs this function of lifting things up or that is used by people to put things on is there, it receives the label "table." When the mind sees that base, it merely imputes "table." There is no choice. Once that base is there, it receives the label "table."

Now it is similar here with the mind, this phenomenon that is empty of form, to which any object can appear clearly and which perceives objects. When that base exists, without choice it receives the label "mind." Thought merely imputes "mind." So, what is mind? We can now see that the base of the mind and the label "mind" are two different things. They are not two separate phenomena, but they are two different phenomena. We can now see what mind is. It's nothing except what is merely imputed by thought. That's all that mind is. On seeing this base—this phenomenon that is empty of form, clear in nature, with objects appearing to it, and which is able

to perceive objects—thought then makes up the label “mind,” or merely imputes “mind.” That’s all that it is.

The other day I was going to present various techniques for meditating on how all phenomena are empty. This is one of them.

So, the base of the mind and the mind are two different phenomena. We can now differentiate the mind from the base of the mind, that which receives the label “mind.” They are two different phenomena. That point is extremely important, because we then come to know how the mind is a dependent arising according to the view of the Prasangika Madhyamaka school.

THE VIEWS OF THE FOUR SCHOOLS

There are four schools of Buddhist philosophy: Vaibhashika; Sautrantika; Cittamatra, or Mind Only; and Madhyamaka. The Madhyamaka school has two divisions: Svatantrika and Prasangika.

Here, when we are able to differentiate the base from the label, we come close to the Prasangika school’s view of subtle dependent arising. It is then easy to get some idea of how the mind is a mere imputation, merely imputed by mind, or thought. This differentiation is essential. Understanding the difference between the base and the label is like clearing away clouds to see a clear, beautiful sky.

From understanding this we then get some idea of the subtle differences between the views of the Svatantrika school and the Prasangika school. This understanding is essential, because it makes it easy to understand how the beliefs of the Svatantrika school are wrong. According to the Svatantrika school, on the base of the mind, this phenomenon that is empty of form, clear and able to perceive objects, you can find the mind, and because you can find the mind on that base, the mind exists from its own side, or by its nature. The Tibetan term is *rang zhin kyi drub pa*. Because there is mind on that base, the mind exists by its nature. The Svatantrika school accepts that the mind is empty of true existence but says that the mind exists by its nature. Why? Because they believe you can find the mind on the base.

While the Svatantrika do accept that the mind is imputed by thought, they don’t accept that the mind is merely imputed by thought. Why doesn’t this school of philosophy accept that the mind is merely imputed by thought? Because they believe that the mind exists by nature. For anything to exist, they believe there should be something that exists from its own

side. They believe that the mind is findable on the base of the mind and that the table is findable on the base of the table.

According to the Svatantrika school, for everything that exists there should be something existing from its own side, or existing by nature. Otherwise, how is it possible for a phenomenon to exist? They accept that everything is labeled by the mind and exists by its nature, or from its own side. They don't accept true existence, but their interpretation of true existence is different from the explanation of the Prasangika school.

In the view of the Prasangika school, everything that exists is merely imputed by the mind. First you have the mere appearance of the base. For example, you are watching the street through a window, and you suddenly see a cat running along. There is the mere appearance of the base, the cat. I'm sure the visualization of the face of a cat is very clear to everybody's mind. I think there's no problem at all with that. With the mere appearance of the base, the particular shape and pattern of that running body, because the mind sees that shape and pattern, right away it merely imputes "cat" and its function, "running."

Have you all got a clear visualization of a pig, with its short legs and short tail hanging down and its face with the flat, round nose and small eyes? When the mind sees the mere appearance of this base, this particular design of the body, nose and eyes, because it sees the mere appearance of this base, it makes up the label "pig" and believes in that label, and it then labels whatever action the pig is doing, such as "running" or "eating garbage."

When you then see a person, she is standing upright and dressed. One of the differences is that she's dressed. When the mind sees the mere appearance of that particular shape of body, it merely imputes the label "person" and believes in that and then, in dependence upon the function performed by that body, labels "running" or "walking" or "driving."

Here we can see that these phenomena are all mere imputations, merely imputed by the mind, by the thought. This includes the mind; the mind is also merely imputed by thought. Here we used those external examples, but it's exactly the same with the mind. The mind is merely imputed by thought. Why did that thought merely impute "mind"? Because it saw this base, the phenomenon that is empty of form, clear and able to perceive objects.

In the Prasangika view, as in these examples, all phenomena—happiness, problems, virtue, nonvirtue, true suffering and true cause of suffering, true path and true cessation of suffering, samsara, nirvana, hell,

enlightenment—are merely imputed by the mind to the mere appearance of the base. Everything is like that.

For example, you can think about what the aggregates do. When the mind sees that the base, the body, is doing the action of sitting, it makes up the label “I” then labels its function “sitting.” (I think that the word *up* in *makes up* is helpful, as it helps you to understand how the I is merely imputed by the mind, by the thought. The *up* is my own expression—I don’t think other teachers use that term.) Everything is just made up by the mind. “I’m sitting” is simply made up by the mind.

If the mind sees the base, the mind.... So that I don’t confuse you, I think I’ll use the word *thought* instead of *mind*. I think I saw one translation of *rigpa* as awareness. Is that right? How is *rigpa* usually translated?

Ven. René: Pristine awareness.

Rinpoche: What does *pristine* mean?

Ven. René: Pure, clear.

Rinpoche: I think you have to add more Tibetan words to *rigpa* to get the translation *pristine awareness*. I think it probably means that after you have cleared away the gross superstitions, you see the pristine awareness, like you see the clear sky when clouds disappear. It might be an expression for when the mind is very calm and tranquil after all the superstitious thoughts have been cleared away. I think I saw one translation of *rigpa* as *awareness*, without the *pristine*.

Anyway, what I was talking about just before?

Ven. René: The thought that is labeling. Rinpoche was perhaps looking for another word instead of *thought*?

Rinpoche: Oh, yes. Anyway, it doesn’t matter....

The thought sees the base, the mind, meditating. If the mind is concentrating on the Buddha or a deity or reflecting on the lam-rim path, the thought that sees the base, the mind, performing that function merely imputes “I” and then merely imputes “meditating” to that action.

When the mind then analyzes the base itself, the general aggregates, the way it exists is by being merely imputed in dependence upon the base, the collection of the five aggregates. The way the general aggregates, which are the base to be labeled “I,” exist is by being merely imputed by the mind in relation to the collection of the five aggregates. Therefore, when it comes down to the point of analyzing the aggregates themselves, we again see that even they are merely imputed by the mind in relation to the collection of

the five aggregates. Again here we can see the differentiation between the label, “aggregates,” and the base, the collection of the five phenomena. We see that there are two different phenomena there. We discover that they are not one, and we also realize that the aggregates are not the I. Through analysis, we also discover that.

According to the Prasangika school, the I cannot be found. According to the Svatantrika school, the I can be found on the base, the aggregates. They accept that the I should be findable and that it exists by its nature, or from its own side. In the view of the Prasangika school, however, the I cannot be found on the aggregates at all. If that’s the case, if you can’t find the I on the aggregates, is the I then nonexistent? In the view of the Prasangika school, the I is not nonexistent. It exists, but it exists in mere name. That’s the main point: it exists in mere name, *merely* imputed by the mind. The Tibetan term is *ming tsam kyi drub pa*: *ming* means name and *tsam* means merely, so *merely imputed by the mind*. In the term *tok pai par tak tsam*, *tok pa* means superstitious thought and *par* means from the side of the mind.

It’s very important to translate every single word in philosophical terms. I think it’s important that every single word is translated in translating anything, but especially for the study of philosophy, because each word has great meaning. If it’s a general translation and words are left out, you lose the rich taste.

We normally see something appearing from the side of the object, and we believe it exists from there. Here *tok pai par* means superstitious thought from the side of the mind. Whereas *tsur* means toward the mind, *par* means from the mind toward the object. Then *tak tsam* means merely imputed: *tak pa* means labeled and *tsam* means merely, or only. This is the way that things exist. This is the reality, but it is the total opposite to the way things appear to us in our daily life and to what we believe. The way things appear to us and what we believe have nothing to do with the reality. It never appears to us that the way things appear comes from the side of our mind, *tok pai par*. We never see that things come from our mind. Never. Things exist only from the side of the object. We don’t see anything as existing from the side of our mind. We don’t see that things are imputed; then, on top of that, to make it more subtle, we don’t see that they’re *merely* imputed. Of course, if we don’t even see that something is imputed, how could we see that it’s merely imputed, the subtle reality of the way things exist? There is no way we could see that.

In the view of the Prasangika school, or in reality, everything exists by being merely imputed by the mind. The word *merely* cuts off what the Svatantrika school believes to be correct: that even though the I is labeled by mind, it is findable on the aggregates. According to the Svatantrika school, if the I is merely imputed by the mind, *merely imputed* means the I hasn't even the slightest existence from its own side, so there is nothing there. So, the *merely* in *the I exists being merely imputed by the mind* cuts off what the Svatantrika school believes: that the I is findable on the aggregates and that it exists by its nature, or from its own side. According to the Svatantrika school, the I is labeled by mind but not merely labeled by mind, because there should be something existing from the side of the I.

Now, to go back to the Prasangika school's view, the way that everything exists is being merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, anything that appears to our mind as *not* merely labeled by mind is a wrong view according to the Prasangika school. The Prasangika view cuts the wrong view of the Vatsiputriyas, a particular division of the Vaibhashika school, who hold that the I and other phenomena are permanent, independent, exist without depending on causes and conditions and exist alone without depending on parts. It also cuts the wrong view held by the Vaibhashika and Sautrantika schools, that the I is self-sufficient. Besides that, it cuts the wrong view that I and other phenomena exist from their own side without depending on the imprint, or substance, left on the seventh consciousness being manifested. When the imprint left on the seventh consciousness is manifested, one part manifests as the knowing phenomenon, the mind, and the other part as the object. The example is used of putting a piece of glass on a red or blue cloth; the glass reflects the color of the cloth. That is how things exist according to the beliefs of the Cittamatra school.

Besides that, the Prasangika view also cuts the wrong view of the Svatantrika school, that the I is labeled by mind but should have something from its own side; in other words, that the I exists by nature, or from its own side. The Svatantrika school accepts that the I is labeled by mind, but they say that there should be something that exists from the side of the I. Otherwise, how is it possible for the I to exist? They can't accept that the I is merely imputed by the mind; they're not satisfied with that. The Svatantrika school thinks that there should be something slightly more than that in the way the I exists. They think the I is not just merely imputed by mind; they think there should be something slightly more than that, some very subtle existence from its own side.

So, all those are examples of the object to be refuted according to the different schools. But I'll maybe mention more on them later....

The Svatantrika school isn't satisfied that the way the I exists is by being merely imputed by mind. They think it's impossible that things exist being merely imputed by mind, and that there should be something slightly more than that, which means something from its own side. They call that something slightly more "existing by nature" or "existing from its own side." Things are not merely imputed by mind—there's something more than that. Apprehending that tiny extra thing, that tiny hallucination, becomes the obstacle to realizing that the I and all other phenomena exist being merely imputed by mind. This means that it becomes the obstacle to realizing the Prasangika school's view of subtle dependent arising, of how the I and other phenomena exist being merely imputed by the mind. Why does it become the obstacle to realizing the Prasangika school's view of the extremely subtle dependent arising? Why is apprehending that the I should exist as more than what is merely imputed by the mind such an obstacle? What the Svatantrika school believes is correct becomes a huge obstacle because it is actually a wrong view and the object to be refuted according to the Prasangika school. You have to realize that what appears to you and what you believe—that the I and other phenomena are not merely imputed by mind but have some existence that is slightly more than that—is totally empty. You have to realize that even that subtle hallucination is totally empty, totally nonexistent. The way things appear to you and the way you believe them to exist are completely nonexistent there. You have to meditate intensively, again and again, on only this unmistakable view of emptiness, the Prasangika school's view of emptiness. As a result of training your mind in this unmistakable emptiness, you will gain the realization that the I and other phenomena exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind.

So, *merely* cuts what the Svatantrika school thinks is correct: that things are not just merely imputed by mind but have something slightly more than that. It cuts *that* subtle hallucination, which is left after you have gone through all the wrong views of the object to be refuted according to the other lower schools. The *merely* cuts that subtle hallucination, which is what the Svatantrika school thinks is correct. There is nothing in the slightest more than what is merely imputed by the mind. That's why the Prasangika school's view of the object to be refuted is so subtle; that's why their view of emptiness is so subtle.

I mentioned before the Prasangika school's connotation of true

existence, or *den par drub pa* in Tibetan. True existence is defined as something slightly more than what is merely imputed by the mind. The Svatantrika school's connotation of true existence is very gross, because they believe that existence from its own side is correct. The two schools used the same term, *true existence*, but the meaning is different. If you don't understand these differences, you could get confused when you hear or study teachings, because both schools use the term *true existence*. While you are studying or reading the Svatantrika school's view of dependent arising or emptiness, if, because you have heard the lam-rim explanation of true existence, which talks from the point of view of the Prasangika school, you bring that idea of true existence, which means existing from its own side, into your study of the Svatantrika school's view, I think you'll get very confused. When you hear that the Svatantrika school accepts existence from its own side but then says that things don't truly exist, you'll get confused. The Svatantrika school has its own definition of true existence, which is the I or any other phenomenon existing particularly by its nature without depending on appearing to a valid, non-defective mind and that valid mind labeling it.

It's good to use the terms correctly, exactly according to how it's said in Tibetan. If you use the term *inherently existent*, it then becomes confusing for people who are studying. You must translate the terms exactly, because they describe different levels of thoughts, or views. Translations need to be very precise, because otherwise the people who are studying won't gain a clear understanding. Of course, it also depends on the presentation.

For example, if you use *inherently existent* for everything, I think within that you can have many different layers of inherent existence: gross, subtle and very subtle. And I think it's the same with *true existence*. I think that *inherent existence* generally means existing from the object's side.

Another term is *natural existence*, or *existing by nature*. As I mentioned in relation to the Svatantrika school's view, they don't believe that things are truly existent but they do believe things exist by their own nature, or from their own side. The Tibetan term *rang zhin kyi drub pa* means existing from its own side, or existing by nature. If you don't translate this term exactly according to the Tibetan, but instead translate it as *inherent existence*, what do you do when you then translate the term, *den par ma drub pa*, which means non-truly existent? Do you use the term *inherent existence* again there? I'm not saying that everyone does that, but I just want to emphasize that if a translator doesn't stick with the philosophical terms, it

can be confusing, especially here in the Svatantrika school and in the previous schools. I think it might be easier with the Prasangika school, because they don't accept existing by nature or existing from its own side or true existence. Since all of them are objects to be refuted, they are all totally nonexistent. But it's not like that according to the Svatantrika school's view. If words are used in exact accordance with the Tibetan terms, you can see the difference.

How did I come to this point? Do you remember?

That's right. We were talking about making strong prayers to the protectors for a student's brother-in-law, who has problems. Then, of course, there are so many other sentient beings who have similar problems.

I didn't mean to talk on emptiness tonight; I planned to talk on it some other day. I think karma must have pushed, or maybe it was just asking to pray to the protectors....

[The group chants the protector prayers together.]

DEDICATIONS

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all other sentient beings without even a second's delay. May that which has been generated be increased.

"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe....

"Gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir....

"I also dedicate the merits for all other virtuous friends to have stable lives and for all their holy wishes to succeed.

"Päl dân la mäs ku tshe täñ pa dang....

"I give all my past merits, all of the merits collected today and all the resultant happiness up to enlightenment, and everything else, including my own body in the form of a wish-granting jewel and all my possessions, to all sentient beings. I make charity of all this to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being and every intermediate state being. All their environments become pure lands of buddha, where there's no suffering and there are the most perfect, pure enjoyments. (You can think of whichever pure land you wish to be born in.) All the sentient beings receive everything they need, everything they want. Every human being receives billions and billions of dollars, and all the rest receive whatever they need, whatever they want. If they need

to meet gurus and the teachings and achieve realizations, they receive the conditions for that to happen. They receive everything they need and want, and all these enjoyments then cause them to actualize the paths of method and wisdom and thus cease all their defilements. They all then become the deity.” (You can think of whichever pure realm you wish and the deity of that pure land. They all become enlightened in the essence of that deity. Or you can think of Medicine Buddha’s pure land and that everyone becomes Medicine Buddha.)

“I have collected so many times limitless skies of merit by giving my body, all my merits and all the resultant happiness, as well as by making charity of my belongings. Due to this merit, may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen on me; may whatever happiness and merits I have ripen on all sentient beings.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me and by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to all sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa and Medicine Buddha, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa and Medicine Buddha have. From now on, in all my future lives, in every second may I be able to benefit like that.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, whatever actions I do—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working, meditating—and whatever kind of life I experience—happy or unhappy, healthy or unhealthy, rich or poor, gain or loss, good reputation or bad reputation, praise or criticism, and even if I am reborn in a hell realm—from now on, may all my actions and experiences of life become most beneficial for all sentient beings. And what is that? That which causes all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by myself being enlightened.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may those people who have died who rely upon me, whose names have been given to me and for whom I promised to pray and all the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animal beings who are now experiencing unimaginable suffering immediately be liberated from those sufferings and suffering realms and reincarnate in a pure land of buddha where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human rebirth and achieve enlightenment quickly by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the

merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover.”

Please dedicate also for Andrea Antonietti, an old Italian student, who was a monk before. Andrea has been very sick for quite some time. It’s been a very delicate and very dangerous situation, but so far somehow he has survived. Now his life is in danger. Please dedicate for him to recover immediately and to have a most productive, most meaningful life, actualizing the lam-rim path. Or if there is no chance of that, may he, without difficulties, immediately be reincarnated in the Vajrayogini pure land.⁵⁹

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be reincarnated in a pure land of buddha where they can become enlightened. And may the sentient beings who have been born as human beings but with no opportunity to practice Dharma meet a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings and by putting them into practice, may they quickly achieve enlightenment.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the people with whom I have a connection, all the students and benefactors of the FPMT organization, especially those who give their life to the organization to serve sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha, and those who rely upon me, those for whom I have promised to pray, those whose names have been given to me and those who are offering service have long lives and be healthy, and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma.

“May we be able to actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s pure teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, the whole graduated path to enlightenment, within all of our hearts in this very lifetime and without even a second’s delay.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may Lama Ösel Rinpoche have a stable life and be able to return soon and without any obstacles from Spain and complete his studies. May he show the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and offer skies of benefit to sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha. May he be able to come back as quickly as possible, within two weeks.

⁵⁹ Andrea passed away in 2002.

“May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime, on the basis of practicing pure vinaya and by receiving all their needs and all protection.

“May all the meditation centers and social service projects in this organization be most beneficial, immediately pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings and spreading the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of those sentient beings by receiving everything necessary for that.

“May all the projects that each center has, such as here the building of the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas and the social service projects, be accomplished immediately and be most beneficial for all sentient beings. May these projects liberate and enlighten sentient beings as quickly as possible. May all the projects in the FPMT centers, including the building of monasteries, nunneries and holy objects in different parts of the world, succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue be completed immediately by receiving all the funding and other needs as quickly as possible. May the centers’ projects and the other projects cause bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings. May everybody have perfect peace and happiness, and may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness, dangers from fire, water, air and earth, such as earthquakes and so forth, or any other undesirable thing. May the Maitreya Project and all the other projects cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching spread and flourish forever, and may I be able to cause this to happen by myself.”

[The group recites *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* in Tibetan.]

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty from their own side, may the I, who is empty from its own side, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s, Medicine Buddha’s, enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also empty from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side.”

The essence of bodhisattva Samantabhadra’s *King of Prayers*, all the ten numberless times 100,000 prayers, are condensed into the following two stanzas.

“I dedicate all my merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of Samantabhadra and Manjugosha, as they realize.

“And I dedicate all the merits in the way the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times have admired the most.

“Jam päl pa wö ji tar khyen pa dang....

“Dü sum sheg päi gyäl wa tham chä kyi....”

All those extensive bodhisattva prayers are contained in the two verses we’ve just recited. This is how you do them in an abbreviated way.

“Chhö kyi gyäl po tsong kha päi....

“Dag dang zhän gyi dü sum dang....”

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

This last buddha’s name not only multiplies each merit 100,000 times but also causes whatever prayers we have done to succeed.

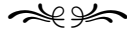
[The group recites the final multiplying mantra.]

OK. Gut nacht.

16

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7
(BUDDHA'S DESCENT FROM TUSHITA)

Final Medicine Buddha Session



MOTIVATION

THINK, “At any rate I must achieve full enlightenment for the benefit of all my kind mother sentient beings. It’s not sufficient that just I myself be liberated from the sufferings of samsara.”

It’s uncertain whether we will have the opportunity to achieve this in our coming lives. If we leave it up to our future lives, it’s difficult to say what will happen, because it will be very difficult to find again a precious human body qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses, which gives us all the opportunities to do whatever Dharma practice we wish to do. We have met the Lesser Vehicle teaching, which brings cessation of the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion, and have the opportunity to practice that path. By actualizing the four noble truths we can achieve cessation of the entire suffering of samsara and its cause. Besides that, by having met Buddhadharma, we can create the unmistakable cause of happiness. Until we are completely liberated from the suffering realm, from samsara, we have the opportunity to achieve happiness, including rebirth with the body of a happy transmigratory being. This perfect human body gives us all the opportunities to create the unmistakable causes of all those types of happiness.

On top of that, this perfect human body gives us the opportunity to practice the Mahayana, or Great Vehicle, teaching, which enables us to achieve full enlightenment, the state of completion of all the qualities of cessation of the faults of the mind and of all the qualities of realization. With this attainment we can then work perfectly for all the numberless sentient beings, freeing them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bringing them to full enlightenment. The perfect human body we now have gives

us the opportunity to free all the numberless other sentient beings, from whom we receive all our past, present and future happiness and realizations, including enlightenment. They are the most precious, most kind ones in our life.

We can liberate quickly and more quickly all the different types of beings—all the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, asura beings, sura beings and intermediate state beings—who are experiencing unimaginable suffering. Why? Because we can achieve full enlightenment quickly and more quickly. Why? Because with this perfect human rebirth we can practice Mahayana Secret Mantra, or Vajrayana, which has all the skillful means to enable us to quickly achieve full enlightenment. This perfect human body gives us the opportunity to do any practice we wish.

We have all these opportunities and we have met all these kinds of Dharma. Or even if we haven't met all these different levels of teachings, we have the great opportunity to meet and to practice all these teachings. And this doesn't last. This human body that gives us all these opportunities is so precious. Which one is more precious, all the wealth in this world or our human body? Our human body is more precious, because it gives us the opportunity to use the buddha-nature that we have within us.

HOW THE MIND EXISTS

Yesterday I was talking about the nature of the mind and trying to explain how the mind is a dependent arising, not independent. I meant to explain what buddha-nature is yesterday, but it went off into something else. I was trying to introduce buddha-nature by explaining how the mind is a dependent arising and how it is nothing other than what is merely imputed by the thought, or the mind. Your thought just made up the label "mind." "Mind" is merely imputed by thought because there is a phenomenon that is empty of form, or substance, clear in nature (just as things appear clearly reflected in a mirror, phenomena appear clearly to the mind), and *rigpa*, or knowing. Yesterday I was trying to find a translation for the word *rigpa*, which can be translated as *awareness* or *knowing*. That phenomenon that is empty of form, clear and knowing is the base, and because that base exists, the mind exists, because that is what receives the label "mind." As I mentioned yesterday, as long as this phenomenon exists, without choice the label "mind" exists.

What is the mind? Mind is nothing other than what is merely imputed by thought because this base, this phenomenon, exists. It is never the mind

that has been appearing to us and that we've been apprehending. That one is a hallucination. When we think about the mind, that real mind appearing from there is called "the object to be refuted."

As I mentioned yesterday, there are four schools of Buddhist philosophy, one of which is the Vaibhashika school, and one of the eighteen sub-schools within the Vaibhashika school is the Vatsiputriya. In the view of the Vatsiputriya school, the mind, while it's impermanent, appears permanent; appears independent, without depending on causes and conditions; and appears to exist alone, without depending on parts or its continuity. This school has all these extremely gross wrong views of the mind.

As I mentioned before, the mind is merely imputed by thought. On the mind, which exists in mere name, merely imputed by thought, we put all these projections, all these gross wrong views of it as permanent, independent and existing alone.

On top of that, many of the other Vaibhashika schools, as well as the Sautrantika school, have the wrong view of the object to be refuted as the mind existing self-sufficiently, without depending on the base and the continuity of that base. While the mind is dependent on these things, the negative imprint on the mental continuum projects the mind as self-sufficient, so it then appears to be self-sufficient.

On top of that, there is also the object to be refuted according to the Cittamatra, or Mind Only, school. As I mentioned yesterday, for this school all phenomena come from imprints left on the seventh consciousness, which is called *kun zhi* in Tibetan, or basis of all. Everything comes from the mind-basis-of-all. The imprint left on the seventh consciousness is manifested out in two phenomena: one is the knowing phenomenon, or knower, and the other is the object. This is what the Chittamatrins believe. In the Mind Only school, the object to be refuted is anything that exists from the object's side without depending on the imprint left on the seventh consciousness, the mind-basis-of-all, being manifested out.

When we think of the mind, it also appears to us in that way. This wrong view is also there. This hallucination, this projection, which is the object to be refuted of the Mind Only school, is also there when we think of the mind.

The Madhyamaka school has two divisions: the Svatantrika school and the Prasangika school. In the view of the Svatantrika school, for anything to exist it has to appear to a non-defective, or valid, mind and that valid mind labels it. The opposite to that is the wrong view, the object to be refuted,

according to this school, which means anything that appears to exist from its own side without depending on appearing to a valid mind and that valid mind labeling it. When we think about or talk about the mind, the wrong view, the object to be refuted, from the point of view of the Svatantrika school is also there. If we don't analyze exactly what the ultimate nature of the mind is, that view is also there.

There is then the Prasangika school. As I mentioned last night, the object to be refuted from the point of view of the Prasangika school is what is believed by the previous school, the Svatantrika school: that while the mind is labeled by thought, it exists by nature, or from its own side. The Svatantrikas don't accept true existence; they accept that the mind is labeled by thought, but they also believe the mind exists by nature, or from its own side. They think that there should also be something, some existence, from its own side. They are unable to accept that the way the mind exists is by being merely imputed by thought. They think that there should be something more than that, something existing from its own side, something beyond being merely labeled by thought. However, what the Svatantrikas believe to be true is totally wrong according to the Prasangika Madhyamaka school. From the Prasangika point of view anything slightly more than what is merely imputed, or labeled, by the mind is totally nonexistent, totally empty.

According to the view of the Prasangika school, the mind appearing to be not merely labeled by thought is the object to be refuted. This very subtle hallucination is the object to be refuted. The total absence of anything even slightly more than what is merely labeled by thought is the ultimate nature of the mind. *Only* that is the ultimate nature, the emptiness, of the mind. That is what is called the clear light nature of the mind, and that is buddha-nature. The total absence of even that subtle hallucination is buddha-nature.

You can now see that the mind is totally empty of all those wrong views. All those views that I went through are mistaken, down to that very subtle hallucination, that very subtle object to be refuted. The mind is totally empty of even that very subtle object to be refuted.

Now, when it comes to this point of the mind being empty of even that subtle object to be refuted, it looks as if the mind doesn't exist. It's not that the mind doesn't exist, but it's as if it doesn't exist. Through analysis, when you negate all those wrong views, including the subtle wrong view that is the object to be refuted according to the Prasangika school, it looks as if the mind doesn't exist. It's not nonexistent. It exists, but it exists in mere name,

merely imputed by thought. The mind is empty of inherent existence, of existence from its own side.

What I was trying to say before is that this nature of the mind, which is emptiness, is unstained by existence by nature or true existence or inherent existence. You can say that the mind is pure, because it's unstained by existence by its nature, existence from its own side. Even though to us sentient beings in our daily life the mind appears to be inherently existent, or existent from its own side, in reality the mind doesn't have even an atom of inherent existence. That nature of the mind, that emptiness, is buddha-nature, and that buddha-nature gives every sentient being the potential to be totally liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion, the continuation of which has no beginning. This gives us the potential to cease all of them and to be free from them forever. This is the potential from where all the realizations of the path to liberation and enlightenment come. They come from within.

For example, when a stick hits a gong, a sound comes from the gong. Or when you ring a bell, a sound comes from the bell when the tongue hits the side of the bell. In a similar way, when you meet a qualified virtuous friend who can reveal the whole path to liberation and to enlightenment without any mistakes and who does reveal the Dharma, all the realizations and enlightenment come from that potential, from that buddha-nature.

Every sentient being has this potential within their mind. Now here, along with that, we have this precious human body, which gives us the opportunity to communicate and to understand the meaning of the teachings. Having this precious human body enables us to understand the meaning of the teachings, to learn, to practice and to actualize realizations. This precious human body gives us the opportunity to use the buddha-nature that we have. We can use it to produce all the realizations and to overcome all the defilements, all the delusions. With animals and other sentient beings with lower rebirths, the body they have taken completely blocks the opportunity to use their buddha-nature to achieve liberation and full enlightenment. It completely blocks their understanding the meaning of the path and their practicing it.

Therefore, this precious human body that we have is unbelievably precious. It's more precious than all the wealth in this world. This human body that we have is more precious than not just gold, diamonds or wish-granting jewels the size of this earth, but the whole sky filled with gold, diamonds or even wish-granting jewels. The value of all of them is nothing compared

to the value of our precious human body, especially since it's qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses. Even if we had that much wealth, that alone couldn't stop our rebirth in the lower realms. Milarepa had nothing, not even one dollar or one rupee, but he had a precious human body, which he used to practice Dharma, and he achieved enlightenment in that very lifetime.

You can see how precious our human body is, more precious than skies filled with wish-granting jewels. Therefore, every second that we have this perfect human body is precious. Each second is more precious than skies filled with all those jewels. Why? Because even within one second we can create the cause to achieve the happiness of future lives; we can create the cause to achieve the ultimate happiness of liberation from samsara; and we can create the cause to achieve the ultimate happiness of full enlightenment. With this perfect human body, even in each second we can create the cause for whatever happiness we wish to achieve.

Also, it doesn't last long. Not only is death definite, but death can happen any day, any moment. Therefore, we have to immediately start to practice Dharma to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings. That depends on actualizing the path, on actualizing method and wisdom. With method alone, without wisdom, we can't remove the defilements. It is wisdom that really ceases the defilements. And which wisdom is it that directly destroys all the defilements, all the delusions? The wisdom that realizes emptiness.

This is not only the way to liberate yourself from all the oceans of samsaric suffering, all the delusions and even the subtle defilements, but the way to liberate other sentient beings from the sufferings of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion. The way to do this is by revealing the truth to them, which means teaching them the profound ultimate truth, emptiness. You reveal the truth of emptiness to them, and then by listening, reflecting and meditating, they actualize and develop this wisdom. This is the only way you can liberate the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering.

As Buddha said, "The Mighty One does not wash away negative karma with water..."⁶⁰ Some religions believe that defilements or negative karmas

⁶⁰ The great ones do not wash away sin with water;
They do not rid beings of suffering with their hands;
They do not transfer realizations of suchness onto others.
They liberate by teaching the truth of suchness.

can be washed away by water. The way Buddha guides us sentient beings to enlightenment, or liberates us from suffering and the causes of suffering, is not by washing the negative karma away with water. The Buddha doesn't eliminate the suffering of sentient beings with his hands, like taking a thorn out of flesh; nor does Buddha transplant his realizations into the minds of sentient beings. Buddha liberates us sentient beings by revealing the truth, by revealing ultimate reality.

TEACHINGS ON THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

Buddha revealed emptiness in various teachings on the *Prajnaparamita*, the *Perfection of Wisdom*, or the *Wisdom Gone Beyond*. There are the teachings in twelve volumes called *One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*; those in three volumes called *Twenty Thousand Stanzas*; and also *Eight Thousand Stanzas*. They become shorter and shorter, down to short ones such as the *Diamond-Cutter Sutra*. There are various other short teachings on the Perfection of Wisdom, such as *The Heart Sutra*, or *Essence of Wisdom*. After that comes the *Lesser Letter*, which is the verse of Buddha's name, *la ma tön pa chom dän dä de zhin sheg pa dra chom pa yang dag par dzog päi sang gyä päl gyäl wa shakya thub pa la chhag tshäl lo*⁶¹ recited at the start of the mantra TADYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SVAHA. This mantra and Buddha's name are very precious and are part of the teaching for sentient beings on the Perfection of Wisdom, the *Lesser Letter*. This teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom is incredible. I've seen an introduction to this teaching that explains how precious it is, but maybe we'll talk about it at another time.

There is also the teaching, *The Perfection of Wisdom in One Syllable*. I think I might have mentioned this teaching before. So, it's AH. In other words, everything is contained in this one letter, AH. AH expresses emptiness, the ultimate nature of all phenomena. AH is a negation. What does it negate? Existence by nature, or true existence. AH negates the true existence that covers everything: I, action, object; hell and enlightenment; samsara and nirvana. Like a carpet covers a floor, true existence covers all phenomena, which are all merely imputed by the mind. This hallucination of true existence, or existence by nature, covers everything. Or it might be

⁶¹ To the guru, founder, bhagavan, tathagata, arhat, perfectly completed buddha, glorious conqueror Shakyamuni Buddha, I prostrate.

easier to understand if we say that the inherently existent appearance, or the appearance of existence by nature, covers everything. It is projected by our own ignorance, which apprehends things as truly existent. The negative imprint left on our mental continuum by that ignorance projects this hallucination of a truly existent appearance onto every single phenomenon, which exists in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. So, AH negates all these hallucinations. AH negates the hallucination of true existence that appears to us from above the I and everything else and that our ignorance believes to be true. This then becomes the basis for all our other delusions, or negative emotional thoughts, for all our other wrong concepts, as well as karma and all the oceans of suffering of the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras and suras. The AH negates the true existence, or existence from its own side, that appears to us and in which we believe. Since it negates all this true existence, what we then see is emptiness, the very nature of phenomena. This is what this one syllable, AH, shows in the teaching, *The Perfection of Wisdom in One Syllable*.

If you understand the meaning of AH, when you then say “AH,” you negate, or destroy, the object of ignorance, true existence. Everything is then empty. That is what this teaching on the one syllable AH shows, and that’s what you meditate on.

In the Nyingma tradition, visualizing AH in space is regarded as a very important meditation. It’s a very common, very essential meditation. I remember that when I was taking hundreds of initiations from His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche, the practices of some of the deities involved this visualization. I think you visualized AH in space and then concentrated on it, or something like that. The purpose of that meditation is to prepare the mind to realize emptiness. You leave a positive imprint and sooner or later you realize emptiness and develop the wisdom that ceases the defilements, gross and subtle, and achieve enlightenment; you then liberate other sentient beings by revealing the teachings. For that reason you are now going to take the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*.

THE DIAMOND-CUTTER SUTRA

I have received the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* from Geshe Senge, the Mongolian lama who for a few years was the abbot of both Sera Je and Sera Me in Tibet. The old monks who lived in the monastery had faith in Geshe Senge, so they asked for him. During the previous years,

many of the monks had been forced to kill goats, sheep and other animals and do all sorts of other things. Maybe because Geshe-la was Mongolian, his treatment was a little lighter. Geshe-la was abbot of both colleges for about five years. Normally each monastery has a separate abbot. I think that after Mao Zedong passed away, a little freedom was given to have monasteries and to have some monks studying in them, and they then appointed Geshe-la as the abbot.

I received this oral transmission at Tushita in Dharamsala the first time Geshe Senge came to Dharamsala.

If you can, it's very good to think that the lama who is giving you a teaching or an oral transmission is all the buddhas, all the deities. Shakyamuni Buddha is the buddha who gave this teaching, but it's good to meditate that the lama is Manjushri, Tara, Medicine Buddha and all the other buddhas and that all the buddhas are giving the oral transmission of this teaching through this lama's body. That kind of meditation helps you to receive great blessings.

When you receive an oral transmission, it's important to put as much effort as possible into not missing the words. I'm not saying that you have to repeat the words, but it's important to hear them.

[Rinpoche begins the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*.]

Here Buddha says to Subhuti, "For any boy or girl of any type of race (I'm not sure but it might mean the Great Vehicle, or Mahayana, type), who memorizes one verse of only four lines from this *Diamond-Cutter Sutra* and explains it to others, the merit is an unimaginable number of times greater than from filling up the great thousand of three thousand galaxies with the seven precious jewels and offering them to the Buddha." (*The great thousand of three thousand galaxies* means one thousand times one thousand times one thousand times, or a billion, galaxies.) Even though there is inconceivable merit in making such an offering to Buddha, the merit from memorizing one verse of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* and explaining it to others is countless times more.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

It then explains the reason that memorizing and teaching even one verse of this teaching creates so much merit. It says, "In essence, the full enlightenment of all the buddhas comes from this teaching. Shakyamuni Buddha himself was born from this teaching of the *Perfection of Wisdom*." It is saying how precious this teaching is and why it has so much benefit.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

“Any place where you recite one four-line verse from this text, *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, becomes like a stupa. That place becomes an object of offering for asuras, suras, human beings and so forth.” The place where just one verse of four lines from this text is recited becomes a holy place, and that place becomes an object of offering for asuras, suras and human beings. It then says, “If you write out this text, if you memorize this text, if you keep this text, if you read this text, if you understand this text, if you meditate on this text, there is no doubt about how much merit you collect nor about how holy and precious that place becomes.”

Therefore, it is very good to try to get as many teachings as possible on *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, *Eight Thousand Verses* or any other of the *Perfection of Wisdom* teachings. Of course, if the text is in English or your own language, you can read it, but even if it's in Tibetan or some other language you can't read, just having it in your house blesses your house. Your house becomes a holy object that other beings worship. Somewhere else it also says that worldly devas come three times a day to worship at that place. Even if the text is in Tibetan or another language, it's extremely fortunate to have it in your house. Even if you can't read the text, you can make offerings to it of lights, water and so forth and do prostrations to it. The merit from making offerings to Buddha's *Perfection of Wisdom* teachings, such as *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, is just mind-blowing. It's unbelievable.

LIFE IN SOLU KHUMBU

In Solu Khumbu, not the poor families but the families who are a little wealthy have the twelve volumes of Buddha's *Prajnaparamita* texts. In the past the family members couldn't read them because there were no schools and they never learned to read and write. In the past only those who wanted to live their life in Dharma learned how to read the Tibetan alphabet, so that they would be able to read and memorize texts. When they were young (it didn't happen so much when someone was older), those who wanted to live their life in Dharma would go to a monastery and learn to read from a teacher. There was no system of schooling in the past. There was a Nepalese school, but learning Tibetan was forbidden even though this was what the Sherpas needed to learn to be able to read Dharma texts. The texts were written in Tibetan, not Nepalese, letters, because the original Sherpas came from Kham in Tibet, from somewhere near Derge, I think. Two groups

were fighting, and I think the Sherpas must have been weak people because they were the ones who left. They didn't have much courage, I think. Anyway, I'm joking. So, they left Kham and came to live in Nepal. The direction they came from was the east, or *shar*, in Tibetan. They came with their animals, goats and sheep, and lived on them. After some time they finished the animals, then due to their karma they found some plants to eat on the mountains. So, that's the story of the Sherpas.

The Sherpas' main food is potato, but I think it must have been introduced from the West. I'm not sure, but maybe it was brought from Holland. The Sherpas then planted potatoes in their fields, and potato became their main crop. They have a few other vegetables, but don't eat them much. Sherpas have a lot of karma with potatoes. I think they make about twelve different foods with potatoes, including potato pancakes and potato noodle soup. To make potato noodle soup, you mash the potatoes, put some butter in your hand and make a long noodle. Because there's no oil, you melt some fat, and when it becomes like soup, you just swallow it without chewing. The soup is quite tasty. Potatoes are also used to make potato alcohol, which is very, very strong. People don't eat the small potatoes but use them to make alcohol. When I counted one time, I think I counted twelve or thirteen different foods Sherpas make from potatoes.

I stayed at home until I was around the age of five. While I was staying at home, I remember my mother quite often used to make this strong potato alcohol. She would go to collect firewood from the forest, because there was no one else to do it. My father died when I was very young; I don't remember seeing my father. My eldest sister was the only one who could do anything to help my mother; the rest of us were only children. My sister would take the animals out on the mountain, and the rest of us would just play. There was nothing we could do to help. We would just play and eat the food that our mother made in the morning and the evening. All day long we would just play in the house or in the fields. Between me and my brother Sangye, who now lives in Kathmandu, there was another girl, who had a small tail. I think she died after I left for Tibet.

To make the alcohol, there was a large pot filled up with small potatoes, then another pot on top of that, then another pot, then another pot.... It looked a little bit like a stupa. You had to burn the fire for many hours, so a lot of firewood went into it. The vapor would come into the last pot, a small one, at the top. The drops of alcohol would be collected in this small pot.

This is how you made the alcohol. It's very, very strong alcohol. After many hours of burning the fire, you got only a small quantity of alcohol—maybe two mugs of it.

My mother was the only one in the family who could do all the work of bringing water from the river and firewood from the forest. Those of you who have been to Solu Khumbu have seen how its mountains are. She would have to get a huge load of firewood from the forest a long way away then bring it home. One time my mother went to get firewood but didn't come back. It became late and dark. We children were sitting lined up outside the downstairs door waiting for our mother to come. There was a moon. After quite some time she came back with a huge load of firewood from the forest. I think we were scared without our mother there; we were talking about how the moon would take us away or something like that.

After she came back, my mother then made a fire and made some food. Until that we did nothing.

We had fixed places at the fireplace. I would sit on one side, my mother would sit on another side, and then the others. I remember one evening when she had come back from getting the firewood. I think she was very sick. She was lying on her side and calling her mother, "Ama! Ama!" I went to her, but I just stood there looking at her as there was nothing I could do. And because she was so sick she couldn't make the fire or make any food. I remember that on this one occasion there was no fire in the stove.

My mother sacrificed herself for her children, bearing many hardships and working very hard. She told me that she prayed for me three times every day: in the morning, the afternoon and the evening. When I asked her what she prayed, she said, "May the lama become like the sun hitting the snow mountains and be able to have control over the three realms (the desire, form and formless realms)." She also prayed for me to have a long life as stable as a mountain or something like that.

I told her, "Your prayer doesn't make any sense. You should pray, 'May he complete his Dharma practice.' That's what you should pray."

At that time I thought her prayer didn't make sense, but later when I was taking these hundreds of initiations, I saw part of her prayer in the practice of a deity called Marici, whose mantra is OM MARICI MAM SVAHA. This goddess, or buddha, brings success in traveling and overcomes obstacles, such as somebody attacking you. You can also do a special practice with this deity if you have problems with court cases. Also, if you visualize this deity in the sun when it rises, then do the practice, your opponent can't

argue with you. In this deity's practice, there is something a little bit like my mother's prayer. I was a little surprised.

I'm not sure, but I hope my life has brought a little bit of benefit to the world and that that repays her kindness for bearing all those hardships to take care of me when I was a child and for all her prayers. I stayed at home only until I was five, then left, but she always did pujas and prayers for me.

OK, that side-talk is now finished....

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*.]

BENEFITS OF THE DIAMOND-CUTTER SUTRA

Buddha Shakyamuni told his disciple, Subhuti, of another unimaginable benefit of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*. "Every day, in the morning, a man or a woman makes charity of their body to other sentient beings. How many bodies? Bodies equal in number to the sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean. At noon they also make charity of bodies equal in number to the sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean. In the evening they also make charity of bodies equal in number to the sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean. They do this every day, and for how many eons? One hundred billion times ten million eons. And how many times one hundred billion times ten million eons? Many hundreds of thousands of times. However, if you hear *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* and don't give up (which means don't lose faith in) *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, you collect numberless times greater merit than with the previous example of making charity of your body for so many eons." The previous example is of making unbelievable charity for many eons, but the merit from that is small compared to the merit of having heard and not given up faith in *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*.

It then says, "There is no doubt that the merit is far more when somebody writes *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, reads, memorizes, tries to learn its meaning, teaches it to others or even keeps the text in their house." Of course, with these there's no comparison.

Today, by listening to the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* and generating faith in it, you collect far greater merit, as just explained here, than from making charity of your body morning, noon and night every day for many hundreds of thousands of times one hundred billion times ten million eons. This is the power of simply listening to this teaching of the *Perfection of Wisdom*. By understanding the importance of this subject, we

realize that it's urgent that we study this teaching and actualize its wisdom, which means realize emptiness. It's an emergency. Without even a second's delay, we need to actualize and develop this wisdom and cease our defilements, our delusions and negative karma; otherwise, we will experience the suffering of samsara without end. As our suffering didn't have a beginning, it will become endless. Therefore, this teaching is unbelievably precious. Today, by generating faith in this teaching, we collect unbelievable merit.

Today is one of Buddha's special days, the descent from Tushita, so whatever merit we collect becomes multiplied one hundred million times. Or is it one hundred thousand times? I've forgotten the number! I've said it so many times that I've now forgotten the number. Yes, it's one hundred million times. So, if you do one prostration, it becomes one hundred million prostrations; if you make one light offering, it becomes one hundred million light offerings. It is the same with any practice we do today. And while listening to Buddha's teaching on the *Perfection of Wisdom, The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, collects that much merit even on other days, the merit increases even more today.

As I have also mentioned in the past, Buddha's sutra, *Meeting of Father and Son*, mentions the merit you collect if you practice the five paramitas of charity, morality, patience, perseverance and concentration for ten eons. Practicing charity, giving away something that you like, something that you are attached to, is not easy. Living purely in morality especially is not easy. It's very difficult to understand the benefits of and have an interest in taking vows of morality. When, after a long time, you finally take the vows, it's difficult to live in them purely. Besides a year, it's difficult to live in them purely for even a month, a week or a day.

Here it's saying that you collect far greater merit from listening to Buddha's teachings on the *Perfection of Wisdom* than from practicing the five paramitas for ten eons. Since this is what you are doing today, you are collecting unbelievable merit.

Explaining teachings on emptiness to others for ten eons collects far greater merit than listening to teachings on emptiness for ten eons. Now, meditating on emptiness for even the duration of a finger snap collects far greater merit than explaining teachings on emptiness to other sentient beings for ten eons. While you are doing sessions, there are many points where you have to think of emptiness. So, especially today, the amount of merit you collect each time is inexpressible. Therefore, rejoice in this.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

It says that the place where this text is recited becomes a worthwhile object for all the worldly beings—asuras, suras and human beings—to prostrate and make offerings to and to circumambulate. It becomes like a stupa.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

If you read this text, the heavy karmas you have done in past lives that would cause you to be reborn in the lower realms for many eons are purified by manifesting in this life as a sickness, a catastrophe or some other obstacle. That problem exhausts all those heavy negative karmas that would make you reincarnate in the lower realms and experience those heavy sufferings for many eons. With their manifestation as some problem in this life, you then don't have to experience them.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

Therefore, I think that it's an extremely good sign when people who are doing pure Dharma practice, strong practice, have a lot of sicknesses, one after another, like rain falling, or other obstacles. It means that person is purifying so much heavy negative karma collected during beginningless past lives by having them manifest in sicknesses or other problems in this life. That person has a very good future. There might be a lot of sickness and other difficulties now but they will have a very good future, like the sun shining; they will go from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. They won't have to reincarnate in the lower realms and experience suffering there for many eons. At the time of death, they will go to a pure land or get a perfect human rebirth and then continue to develop their mind in the path by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru. It will be easier and easier for them to actualize the path; they will have more success and, sooner or later, they will achieve enlightenment and then be able to work perfectly for all sentient beings.

Here, having problems is positive, not negative. It's very positive; it's a sign of success, not failure. Because of those sicknesses and difficulties, you won't have to suffer for many eons in the lower realms or even in the human realm. You won't have to experience all those sufferings in your future lives. You should understand that problems don't always mean something negative.

It is said that even when you practice bodhicitta, your compassion for other sentient beings brings powerful purification, so you experience as somebody criticizing you in this life your past heavy negative karmas, which would otherwise result in heavy suffering for many lifetimes or many eons. Your heavy negative karma is purified by being criticized by somebody.

That's part of the benefit, or power, of bodhicitta. Again, if somebody criticizes you, saying how bad you are, it's not necessarily always bad. Generally, of course, since it gives you the opportunity to practice Dharma, to practice thought transformation, it's positive. It's positive because you can use the experience to practice, to achieve enlightenment and to be able to enlighten all sentient beings. Even for that reason, it's all positive. Here we're talking about being criticized as a sign of the power of bodhicitta. You purify heavy negative karma by experiencing some hurtful words, somebody criticizing you or putting you down.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

This is *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* mantra. Hopefully it was there when Geshe Senge Rinpoche was giving the oral transmission, but I'm not sure. If you recite this, it has the benefit of having recited *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* ninety thousand times. I'll read it for the positive imprint.

[Rinpoche gives the oral transmission of OM YE DHARMA HETU PRABHAVA HETUN TESHAN TATHAGATO HYAVADAT TESHAN CHAYO NIRODHA EVAM VADI MAHA SHRAMANA YE SVAHA.]

This dependent arising heart manta, or *tendrel nyingpo*, has unbelievable benefits, but maybe I'll mention them another time.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission.]

This text is copied from a text originally beautifully written on black paper in actual gold by a Bhutanese practitioner from Mon, near the border with Tibet. In the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, there will be a *Diamond-Cutter Sutra* written in silver, which has already been done by Tsenla. I am writing the *Eight Thousand Stanzas* in gold. I take it around with me and write a little bit when I can, so it's taking a long time. My first idea was to write the whole *Prajnaparamita* in gold by myself, but now that doesn't seem possible. I'm now thinking to ask a number of monks in Sera Je Monastery in south India to write it. About thirty of them who want to write it have sent me a sample of their handwriting. I thought to divide the text between monks with very good handwriting in Sera, Ganden and Drepung and make offerings to them every month or year. In this way, hopefully that text will be ready when the statue is built. It's to be put at the heart of Maitreya Buddha. There will be a very big gompā, or shrine room, in the heart, and the texts will be put on shelves there.

The one that I'm slowly doing here is on very thin paper, which Chiu-Nan Lai's husband said it took a long time to find. It has been proved that this paper can last for one thousand years, since a Muslim manuscript written

on the same paper lasted for a thousand years. Because that paper is very thin, I thought to put rainbow-colored paper between each sheet, so that when the pages are piled up you see a rainbow. It will be put on a shelf, and people will be able to come and make offerings and prostrate to and rejoice in the *Prajnaparamita* teaching. Even though many people will put much effort into writing and sponsoring the text, anybody who comes along to the temple and simply rejoices in all the merit of the people who wrote or sponsored it will get the same amount of merit (or even more if the level of their mind is higher) as the people who did the work. That person didn't write all those pages or sponsor the gold, but by simply rejoicing, they will collect the same or even more merit.

Tsering, the Kopan monk who is here in the Aptos house, is also writing the *Prajnaparamita* text in gold. He's one of the first Kopan monks to have studied in the tantric college tradition, learning all the traditional ways to do pujas, such as Mahakala, extensive consecrations and sand mandalas. He has also studied how to construct the Thirteen-deity Yamantaka mandala, which has been constructed at Kopan. He's one of the monks who has not only studied all the texts for the pujas but also memorized them. He knows all the puja texts by heart. I was away from Kopan for four months, wandering around the West, and when I came back, the monks who were involved in studying had memorized all the texts for the extensive consecration, the Mahakala prayers and many other things. They did all the chanting exactly according to the tantric college. Within three months, they had learnt the whole package: how to play cymbals, how to make sand mandalas, everything.

I don't remember whether I have mentioned this in the past. It is mentioned in the Buddha's teaching, *Condensed Precious Qualities*, that you fill up worlds with stupas of the One Gone to Bliss made of the seven precious jewels and containing Buddha's relics. How many worlds do you fill up? A thousand times ten million times the number of sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean. Even to completely fill up this one world with stupas would be unbelievable. If you build just one stupa, it directs your life toward enlightenment and purifies unbelievable negative karma. Here we are talking about filling a thousand times ten million times the number of sand grains of the Atlantic Ocean worlds with stupas, and stupas made of the seven precious jewels. All the sentient beings in all those worlds do nothing except make offerings of incense, flowers and paint to the stupas three times a day.

Here the *Guide Enriched by Ten Powers* says that if you write out the text

of Buddha's teaching, *Prajnaparamita*, and keep it and offer it respect, the merit you collect is unbelievable, far greater than that from the previous example of building stupas made of jewels to cover that many worlds and all sentient beings making offerings to the stupas three times a day for an incredible length of time. The merit of writing out *The Heart Sutra* or *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, keeping it and offering it respect is also far greater than that previous merit, which becomes very small by comparison. It is explained that there is unbelievable merit in doing this.

Of course, if you study the subject of the *Prajnaparamita*, you collect powerful merit and perform powerful purification. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche explained that the best, or highest, preliminary practice is studying the *Prajnaparamita* teachings; the intermediate preliminary practice is reciting the *Eight Thousand Stanzas* one hundred times; and the lowest preliminary practice is doing the nine preliminaries (prostrations, mandala offerings and so forth)⁶² that we normally do.

Therefore, if you wish to collect merit, it's very good to write or print the *Prajnaparamita* teachings. It's extremely powerful. With more merit, it is easy to have realization and also easy to do extensive works to benefit other sentient beings, as well as to offer service to the teaching of Buddha.

I got the idea to start writing the *Prajnaparamita* teachings early, because we'll need a lot of merit to be able to complete the Maitreya Buddha statue.

DEDICATIONS

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may we here and all sentient beings realize emptiness as quickly as possible. And may those who have already realized emptiness increase their realization.

"Tong ye ta wa rin po chhe...."

"Jang chhub sem chog rin po chhe...."

Dedicate the merits to quickly actualize the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in this very lifetime and with the support of bodhicitta, cease all the defilements and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

⁶² The nine preliminaries are: prostrations, mandala offerings, guru yoga, refuge, Vajrasattva meditation-recitation, Dorje Khadro fire pujas, Samayavajra practice, water bowl offerings and tsa-tsas.

“May I be able to cause the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings as quickly as possible, ceasing all their defilements, and bring them to enlightenment.”

Dedicate in this way the merit collected by listening to and giving the oral transmission of *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, Buddha’s most precious teaching.


We should have had a peepee break a long time ago. So, we’ll have a break and then do a short tsog offering.

TASTING TSOG ON PRECEPT DAYS

You can’t take the actual tsog, but when the *bala* and *madana* come around, touch them with your fingers and think that you have taken the blessing. Don’t take a whole lot of the liquid; just touch it for the blessing, rather than take an actual drop. That’s according to the advice of His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche. One time when we had taken the Eight Mahayana Precepts, Rinpoche said that we should put our finger on the bala, the meat, and think that we have taken the blessing. Also, with the madana, you don’t actually take any out. When Lama Ösel was very small, at Kopan, he used to like the madana very much. He wanted it again and again. He went again and again and watched while it was going around. Anyway, I just remembered that....

So, generate into a deity for which you have received a great initiation of Highest Yoga Tantra, then bless the tsog into nectar and offer it. Before that, you bless the inner offering in order to be able to bless the tsog offering.

FINAL DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty, may the I, who is empty, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s, Medicine Buddha’s, enlightenment, which is also empty, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also empty, to that enlightenment, which is also empty, by myself alone, who is also empty.” 

Go to bed in emptiness.

Lama Tsongkhapa?

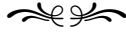
[The group recites the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedication verses in Tibetan, then the multiplying mantras.]

Thank you very much, and gut nacht.

Since today is a special day, I want to offer half of the money offerings you have given, except for those dedicated for particular projects, to building one billion stupas. It has multiplied tonight! I think Bob is going to be encouraged.⁶³ The other half will go to the temple. There is more than \$300, apart from the money dedicated for particular projects, so half will be for the stupas and half for the temple. I hope next year we can see all the stupas.

⁶³ At that time Bob Cayton was responsible for the stupa project at LMB.

Final Medicine Buddha Session



MEDICINE BUDDHA'S PRAYERS

In the *Inconceivable Secret Sutra*, it says that the last of the one thousand buddhas (though I'm not a hundred percent sure about this), who is called Shonnu Norbu Taye, generated bodhicitta and then took the ordination renouncing a householder's life. He then trained his mind in the scriptures of sutra and tantra through the oral transmissions and instructions and practiced. He became the bodhisattva Stainless Star and, following the bodhisattva's deeds, he expressed the power of prayer.

Here it's describing how Medicine Buddha, when a bodhisattva called Stainless Star, made prayers.

E-ma!

This is an expression of sadness, which he probably made because he is going to express the sufferings of sentient beings.

When I become the Medicinal King, the King of Lapis Lazuli Light, may any sentient being who recites my mantra or hears my name or sees, hears, touches or remembers me or does the recitation-meditation never have any sickness or harm. May they have a long life, the Dharma and wealth.

This *wealth* could be referring to both spiritual and material wealth. The expression here in the Tibetan is *chö nor: chö* means Dharma and *nor* means wealth. So, it could mean Dharma, or spiritual, wealth and material wealth or just Dharma wealth. Of course, the prayer could be referring to both

spiritual and material wealth, which can be used to increase the happiness of sentient beings and free them from the sufferings of nonvirtue. The wealth could be used for sentient beings to perform the actions of the ten virtues instead of those of the ten nonvirtues.

May they not have rebirth, old age, sickness and death, sorrow, unhappy minds and quarrels (fighting and screaming), suffering and delusion. And may they have all happiness.

Like that, may I become meaningful to behold for anyone who makes a connection with me. May I be meaningful to behold for anybody who sees me; may I be meaningful to behold for anybody who hears me; may I be meaningful to behold for anyone who remembers me; may I be meaningful to behold for anyone who touches me.

It then says:

There is no doubt about for anyone who passes through my mind.

I think the Tibetan term *yi gyug pa tang* might mean remembering a sentient being, having them pass through the mind, but I'm not sure.

There is no doubt that for any sentient being who makes a statue of Medicine Buddha or does concentration, or meditation, on Medicine Buddha, but even for someone who doesn't concentrate on Medicine Buddha but simply expresses my name or even makes seven steps in my direction (which means toward a Medicine Buddha statue or to do a puja), the door to the evil-gone realms (which means the lower realms) and to samsara will be closed. May they be born in the higher realms, have all seven qualities and achieve peerless enlightenment.

This means being born not just with the body of a happy migratory being, as a human being, but with all seven qualities, such as the thought of devotion, morality and wisdom.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The seven qualities are a good social class, a beautiful body, a long life, a life free of illness,

May the power of my prayers be equal to that of all the buddhas of the fortunate eon, especially in regard to profundity, extensiveness and power.

This means equal to the prayers that the one thousand buddhas of this fortunate eon have made.

May I equal these buddhas' life span, actions, Dharma, the sentient beings they subdue...

Each buddha subdues the sentient beings with whom they have karmic connection. I think it's referring to the number of sentient beings each buddha directly subdues—I don't think it includes the indirect ones, which now include us. Buddha's teaching has been left in the world to guide us to enlightenment, but I don't think we are included. It probably means, for example, the sentient beings during Shakyamuni Buddha's time to whom Buddha directly gave teachings, subduing them, liberating them from samsara and bringing them to enlightenment. In the text *Sutra of the Fortunate Eon*, which is beautifully written in verse form, there are stories of each of the buddhas: when each buddha will descend in this world, the names of their mother and father, their race, how that buddha first generated bodhicitta as a bodhisattva, and after their enlightenment, the number of sentient beings each buddha will teach, liberate from samsara and bring to enlightenment. Even the numbers are mentioned in the story of each buddha.

I don't remember the exact number, but it seems Maitreya Buddha will subdue an unbelievable number of sentient beings. Maitreya Buddha will descend in this world when the life span of human beings goes down to ten years. The life span will decrease due to delusions, due to degeneration of the mind.

When Maitreya Buddha descends, he will be beautiful, very tall, golden in color and radiant. All the ten-year-old human beings, who will be very small, will wonder how Maitreya Buddha came to have such a tall, beautiful body, and they will question him about it. Maitreya Buddha will reply, "It happened through collecting merit." That will then inspire human beings in this world to practice morality, such as the ten virtues and so forth. When they then practice morality and collect merit, their life span will become longer and longer. From ten years it will go up to eighty thousand years.

prosperity, wealth and great wisdom.

After the human life span goes up to eighty thousand years, there will be a dark age. It is usually only in the periods that the life span starts to go down that a buddha descends, but it seems that Maitreya Buddha will descend when the human life span has reached eighty thousand.⁶⁵

Just as Shakyamuni Buddha was born into the Shakya caste in India, Maitreya Buddha will be born into a Brahmin family in India. He will also reveal the teachings in Varanasi and perform the rest of the twelve deeds. As one of the twelve deeds, he will show sentient beings the four noble truths. By showing them suffering, the cause of suffering and the way to be liberated from suffering, he will inspire sentient beings to practice Dharma and to renounce samsara. In a similar way to Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Buddha will show the twelve deeds.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo gave the teachings in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* in 1921, eighty years ago. If you count from that year, Maitreya Buddha will descend in this world to give teachings in four billion nine hundred million years. (I don't think this is when the human life span is ten years but when it is eighty thousand years.) So, eighty years have already gone. There could be different explanations, but this is what is mentioned in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*.

May I equal these buddhas' life span, actions, Dharma, the sentient beings they subdue and the duration of their teachings.

This means that during the time that Medicine Buddha was the bodhisattva Stainless Star, he made prayers to have a life span equal to that of the thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon, to equal their holy actions, to equal the Dharma they teach, to equal the number of sentient beings they liberate and bring to enlightenment and to equal the length of time their teachings last.

May any sentient being who always remembers my name, who recites my name and mantra, who remembers my qualities or who expresses offerings...

This is like at the end of reciting each Medicine Buddha's name, when we say "...I prostrate (*chhag tshäl lo*) and make offerings (*chhö do*). Please grant me blessings (*jin kyi lab tu sol*)."

⁶⁵ We're not sure what to make of this apparent contradiction.

MAKING EXTENSIVE OFFERINGS

There's something that I forgot to mention before. When we recite *chhō do*, which means *make offering*, at the end of each name, we can offer all the extensive offerings here. We now have all the extra colored lights. Even in regard to light offerings, we're not offering just one light but many hundreds, many thousands, of lights. There are also extensive offerings of drinking water and all the other things. When you use the words "offer" or "make offering," at that time, if possible, you should offer all of them to Medicine Buddha. If you can do that, it's very good. You should make all the offerings here to each buddha seven times. You should at least offer the offerings here and also the many lights up there in the Ashes Temple. However, at least offer the extensive offerings here.

Maybe at another time I can explain the benefits of each of the different offerings. But I would like to express here that if you were doing retreat in your own home, you wouldn't have the opportunity to offer all these many sets of offerings. All these lights are here because they were offered by the great benefactor who has been the main sponsor of International Office, paying all the wages, as well as supporting many other projects. I don't know where she got the lights, but she brought quite a lot. There are also many around the Aptos house.

When we do the extensive offering meditation, even if we are offering just one light, we offer it to the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas, to the numberless Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and to the numberless statues, stupas and scriptures, not only in this universe but in all the universes in all the directions. We think of all the holy objects not just in this world or universe but in every universe. If we do the extensive offering meditation and offer one of the lights to the numberless statues, we collect numberless causes of enlightenment. By the way, we also collect numberless causes to achieve liberation from samsara; and by the way, we collect numberless causes of good rebirth and the happiness of future lives. For hundreds of thousands of lifetimes, we will experience good rebirth, wealth and all the other kinds of temporary happiness while we are in samsara. We collect all this with just this one light. There are also numberless stupas and numberless scriptures, so with each one we collect numberless causes of enlightenment, of liberation from samsara and of good rebirth and happiness in future lives.

There are also numberless Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in all the directions. Just from here you offer one light to all the numberless holy objects in

India, to all the numberless holy objects in Tibet, to all the numberless holy objects in Nepal. You offer the light to every painting or statue of buddha, large or small, in every monastery. You offer the light to every holy object in every universe, even to very small pictures of the *Guru Puja* merit field the size of a thumbnail. If you make just this one light offering to all the statues, stupas, scriptures and thangkas in all the ten directions and then offer it to all the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in all ten directions, in those few seconds you have collected numberless causes of enlightenment and, by the way, numberless causes of liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives, as well as the success of this life.

It is the same with making a food, tea or any other kind of offering. Within that few seconds, you have made the offering to every single holy object that exists in any universe in any direction. From here you have made offering to every holy object in anybody's house. If anybody makes an extra tsa-tsa, one more image of buddha, you get more merit. If anyone anywhere in the world makes one more image of buddha—one more thangka, one more statue, one more tsa-tsa—it means you get more merit. You simply have to take the time to think, "I'm offering this." That's all you have to do. Somebody else works very hard to make the tsa-tsa, getting plaster dust up their nose and everywhere else, making everything white, but you, by simply making offering, have created an extra cause of enlightenment.

I think it's a very good for those who are making tsa-tsas to remember and to rejoice in this. Because you have made one more statue of buddha or one more stupa, all the other sentient beings who are making offerings to all holy objects will create more merit. Not only does your making the holy object enable you to collect merit and purify your own mind of negative karma, enabling you to have realization, but you are helping other sentient beings to collect more merit. One more statue means other sentient beings who make offering to all holy objects create an extra cause of enlightenment, liberation from samsara and also good rebirth and temporary happiness. This is one of the benefits of making a tsa-tsa. Anybody who makes offering to all holy objects then includes this tsa-tsa that you have made. All the merit that each sentient being collects is your gift to that sentient being. It is something to rejoice in and feel happy about.

You can collect merit not just by making tsa-tsas but in many other ways. However, the particular advantage of making holy objects such as statues is that they make it so easy for other sentient beings to collect merit, because you can give these holy objects to other sentient beings

for them to prostrate and make offerings to or to circumambulate. Each time they even see the holy object it purifies their mind, their defilements. Remember how I mentioned the benefit of simply seeing a statue of buddha. You collect great merit. I don't remember exactly, but I think you collect more merit than from making offerings to arhats equal in number to the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean for eons equal in number to the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. Arhats are those who are free from samsara, who have completely ceased not only suffering but even its cause, delusion and karma. (I also mentioned the story of someone making an offering of a medicinal drink to four ordinary monks. The karma of that offering to Sangha was so powerful that in his next life that person became a powerful and wealthy king in India.) This is making offerings to arhats, the ultimate Sangha, who have not only actualized the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness but are totally free from the suffering of samsara. By simply seeing a statue or picture of buddha, you collect numberless times greater merit than from making offering to arhats equal in number to the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean for the same number of eons. It then says that there is no doubt that if you actually make offerings or prostrate to a statue or picture of buddha, the merit is much more. These are quotations from what Buddha said in the sutra, *Mudra Generating the Power of Devotion*.

If you produce holy objects, such as pictures or statues of buddha, it benefits very much not only you but especially other sentient beings. I have just mentioned one example of how powerful holy objects are in purifying the mind and in collecting merit. There's also incredible benefit in giving holy objects to other sentient beings. It gives other sentient beings, including children and animals, more and more opportunity to see holy objects. Of course, if you have devotion, you experience stronger purification and collect more merit, but even when animals and people who aren't Buddhist, who don't have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, see, touch or go round holy objects, they get the benefits mentioned in the sutra. It makes it so easy to benefit other sentient beings, to help others to collect merit and to purify their minds. From that they then have realization. They meet and understand Dharma, and from that they then actualize the path and cease their defilements. This is how, by making holy objects and giving them to others or giving others the opportunity to see them, you bring other sentient beings to enlightenment.

It doesn't require much intelligence or many years of study just to go

around a stupa or to do prostrations or make offerings to a statue of Buddha. Making a stupa, a tsa-tsa or any other holy object and giving it to other people is a very easy way to help to liberate other sentient beings. That is the particular advantage that I have been noticing. There may be no time to explain Dharma or it may not suit someone; the person may not have the karma to hear or the wish to learn Dharma. Even though the main thing is to understand and meditate on lam-rim, it's not that everyone has the karma and the time for that. Of course, again, the person needs much merit; without that, their mind cannot change, and realization cannot happen. It's all a question of how much merit a sentient being has. Since even success in obtaining the happiness of this life depends on how much merit you have, there's no doubt that you need a lot of merit to have realization and to offer extensive benefit to sentient beings.

I mentioned before the merit that you collect by making one light offering using this extensive offering meditation, which takes only a few seconds. I don't need to repeat this again and again. It takes only a few seconds, but within those few seconds you have collected so many times skies of merit. Now here there are so many lights and so many flowers. For all of us doing retreat here—of course, I myself haven't made it to all the sessions—every time we do the sadhana, especially when we make extensive offering of the many water, flower, incense and light offerings here, with each offering we collect numberless causes of enlightenment, of liberation from samsara, of the happiness of future lives and of the happiness of this life. From each offering arranged in this hall we create these causes numberless times.

If we were doing retreat at home, we wouldn't have this unbelievable opportunity, because we wouldn't be able to arrange such extensive offerings. Also, our having the opportunity to collect all this merit is by the kindness of the organizers here at the center and by the kindness of the people who put effort every day into arranging the offerings. So, remember the kindness of the people who put effort into the offerings.

When we do a group retreat it's always good to make extensive offerings. I started this tradition quite a number of years ago in Taiwan. It happened when I was at a nunnery outside Kaoshiung to do a Medicine Buddha retreat, I think, though not using the sadhana that we're using here. That nunnery helped to build the Kopan nunnery and has also been a benefactor of Kopan monastery. I told the abbess that I was going to make very

extensive offerings, so she went to the market and bought many orchids, which she hung from the altars. The nuns were very good; they made very extensive offerings.

After that I went to Kopan, where upstairs on the roof of the Chenrezig gumpa, where the November course is held, they had built a dining room with glass all the way around, from where you could see the Boudhanath stupa. Downstairs were rooms where Lama Lhundrub and the other teachers used to live, and I was staying on top of that. They built the room as a dining room and put tables and everything else inside, but I converted it into an offering room. All the tables were covered with offerings, then later we made another offering area outside. We bought nearly one thousand of the nice stainless steel bowls, which don't rust. We also had offerings on the wall at the edge of the roof. Sometimes pigeons and other birds would land in the bowls to take a drink, then together with the bowl they would fall down.

Gloria, a nun from Hong Kong, did the offerings outside for quite a long time—three months, I think. Since there were many offerings, she spent a long time outside in the hot sun. After three months, her right arm, which was exposed, was black and her left arm, which was covered by her zen, was white. After she finished the offerings, it seems she then did very extensive dedications.

One time I sponsored a Namgyälma long-life puja for Geshe Lama Konchog. I said that all the bowls should be set up in the gumpa to make one thousand offerings. The idea was that each time the ARGHAM, PADYAM, PUSHPE... offerings were made, which happens many times in the puja, everyone was supposed to remember all the many offerings and offer them to Namgyälma. It takes just a few seconds to do this. All you need to do is, when you read the part of the offerings, just remember the offerings and offer them. As I mentioned before, this collects unbelievable merit. Anyway, I told Lama Lhundrub to tell the monks that this was the idea.

The tradition then started that when the monks are doing Namgyälma practice or the puja called "One Thousand Offerings," they borrow many bowls from upstairs. Also, when the nuns do the thousand-offering Namgyälma puja, they take all the bowls down to the nunnery to make extensive offerings. It's very good. If everybody can then remember during the puja to make all the offerings each time, everybody gets an unbelievable opportunity to collect merit.

MEDICINE BUDDHA'S PRAYERS

It says here in the last prayer (sorry, this is not the last prayer):

May any sentient being who always remember my name, who recites my name and mantra, who remembers my qualities or who expresses offerings, after three lifetimes be born in front of me, Medicine Buddha, and possess all qualities.

I think this means be born in Medicine Buddha's pure land.

When somebody meditates on my form with precious qualities and with intense intention makes request, as soon as that sentient being dies, like a shooting star, may they be born in the pure land where I became enlightened.

Like a shooting star means the consciousness, like in powa, shoots to the pure land.

May that sentient being possess my qualities, and may all sentient beings become like that.

Medicine Buddha's bodhisattva deeds are immeasurable, his skill in means is immeasurable and his special extensive prayers are immeasurable.

DEDICATIONS

Please dedicate the merits to actualize bodhicitta...

"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chbe...."

And to realize emptiness...

"Tong ye ta wa rin po chbe...."

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I in every second from now on, in all future lifetimes, be able to bring benefit as limitless as the sky to sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa and like Medicine Buddha, by having the same qualities within me as they have.

"Due to all past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits

of the three times collected by others, wherever I am and wherever I will be, in whichever universe, world, country, area, place and house, just by my being there, may all the sentient beings living in that universe, world, country, area, place and house never ever be reborn in the lower realms. (In other words, may just my being there be able to benefit others in that way.) May my being there save them from the lower realms, and may they never ever again be reborn in the lower realms. May they immediately find faith in refuge and karma, actualize bodhicitta and realize emptiness. May they have perfect peace and happiness. May all those sentient beings never ever experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness or dangers from fire, water, air or earth, such as earthquakes. May any of these things they are now experiencing be immediately stopped, and may they never ever experience them again. May they immediately be freed from all sicknesses and spirit harms. May those who have manic depression, which is incurable, immediately be relieved of that, and their hearts be filled with great bliss instead of depression. May those who have many headaches or any incurable sickness, such as cancer, AIDS or multiple sclerosis, and those who are in a coma immediately be healed just by my being there in that universe, world, country, area, place and house.

“May the blind see, the deaf be able to hear and the lame be able to walk. May those who have much hardship and difficulties because of poverty immediately gain wealth. May the hearts of those with relationship problems immediately be filled with loving kindness and compassion; may they find satisfaction and joy in their life. May those who want to receive teachings be able to receive the unmistakable teachings they need. May those who need a guru be able to find a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru. And may those who would like to do retreat be able to find a perfect place, with all the conducive conditions, and be successful in achieving realizations. May they receive everything they are looking for and immediately be liberated from all the defilements, all the negative karmas, and be able to actualize the whole path to enlightenment and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may anyone who has died whose name has been given to me, for whom I have promised to pray and who relied upon me, as well as all the numberless beings in the hell, hungry ghost and animal realms, immediately be liberated from all their sufferings and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened

or receive a perfect human body and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings.

“May my hearing a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover. May my hearing a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be born in a pure land of buddha where they can become enlightened. And may the sentient beings who have become human beings but who have no opportunity to practice Dharma meet a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings and, by putting them into practice, achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors in this organization, especially those who give their lives to the organization to offer service to sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, and all those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray and those who are offering service have long lives and be healthy, and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma. Most importantly, may we be able to actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s pure teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, the steps of the path to enlightenment, within our mental continuum in this very lifetime without even a second’s delay.

“May all the gurus have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes be accomplished immediately.

“May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the scriptural understanding and realization of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime, based on living in pure vinaya, by receiving all their needs and all protection.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may all the social service and meditation centers be most beneficial, pacifying immediately the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. May they also be able to spread the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed. May all the projects of the centers, such as here at LMB where the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and the 100,000 stupas are to be built, and the other social service projects, as well as all the individual projects of all the rest of the FPMT centers, whatever activities they are doing to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. Also, may all the

projects to build holy objects in different countries, including the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be completed as quickly as possible by receiving all the funding and everything else that is needed. And, especially, may the Maitreya project, all the holy objects and all the other projects, as well as all the centers, cause all sentient beings to generate bodhicitta in their minds and then cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Also pray to Medicine Buddha for Diana, who has very heavy sicknesses. May she immediately be healed, and may anyone with similar problems also immediately be healed.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty from their own side, may the I, who is also empty from its own side, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s, Medicine Buddha’s, enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are also empty from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side. By myself alone, who is not there, or not here.

“I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha, as they realize.

“I dedicate all the merits as the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times have dedicated their merits, as they admired most.”

[The group recites further dedications in Tibetan, then the multiplying mantras, *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* and the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedications.]

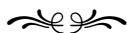
So, good morning or good night or....



THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Final Medicine Buddha Session



COMBINING LAM-RIM WITH SESSIONS

IT SEEMS that many of you in this retreat are about to finish ten thousand of the long mantra, which is the number of mantras for enabling actions. But as it was originally planned that this retreat would last three weeks, you can recite more than ten thousand mantras. Recite as many mantras as you can. It may not happen that you will be able to do Medicine Buddha retreat again and again, so do as many mantras as possible.

The other point is that in the group retreats that I have been joining, I have suggested doing one of the lam-rim prayers that contains the complete essence of the path to enlightenment at the beginning of each session. The lam-rim prayer becomes the motivation, but it also plants the seed of the whole path to enlightenment. In other words, with each session you plant the seed of the whole path, which brings you closer to the realizations of the path, closer to enlightenment. Each session brings you closer to the ultimate goal of your life, freeing the numberless sentient beings from all the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, the defilements, and bringing them to enlightenment. With each session you become closer to enlightenment by doing direct meditation on lam-rim by going over one of the lam-rim prayers at the beginning of the session, which also acts as the motivation.

At the beginning of each session you can read either one of the lam-rim prayers or a section from *The Essential Nectar*. Maybe in the mornings at the very beginning you can read a few lines from the guru devotion section of *The Essential Nectar* and then at the beginning of the first Medicine Buddha session, you can read a little bit from the perfect human rebirth section. As the motivation, you can start with perfect human rebirth, the graduated path of the being of lowest capability, then move on to the path of the being

of middling capability and then to the path of the being of highest capability. Start by spending maybe ten or fifteen minutes on perfect human rebirth; at the conclusion of that, you then read the sections on how samsara is suffering in nature and on bodhicitta, on how, like you, numberless other sentient beings are suffering in samsara, so you need to free them from all their suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. You then begin the session.

At the beginning of the second Medicine Buddha session, after you have done the prostrations, you can complete whatever sections of the graduated path of the being of lowest capability you didn't complete in the first Medicine Buddha session. Again, that becomes the motivation of a being of lowest capability. You then think about how samsara is suffering in nature, which is the motivation of a being of middling capability, and about bodhicitta, the motivation of a being of highest capability. You continue from wherever you stopped in the first session. You then continue with the rest of the subject the next day. At the end of the first session, if there's time, you could read a few words from the guru devotion section, then in the next session, you could continue the lam-rim meditation from where you stopped the day before. When you have completed the section on bodhicitta in *The Essential Nectar*, you then go back and start again from perfect human rebirth. But in the first session in the morning, at the end of the guru yoga, you should always read a few lines, even if it's only four or five, from the guru devotion section.

Simply reading the lam-rim slowly and meditating on the words becomes a direct meditation on the lam-rim. In the morning reading the lam-rim section of *Guru Puja* becomes direct meditation on lam-rim. At other times, even if you don't recite a particular lam-rim prayer, you can just slowly go over *The Essential Nectar*, then meditate on it.

The other thing you can do with the different lam-rim prayers is to meditate more elaborately on the section that you are supposed to cover in that session. Elaborate from the lam-rim outlines or by reading *The Essential Nectar*. In this way there will be more lam-rim meditation. Of course, while you're reciting the mantra, you can also meditate on lam-rim or read a lam-rim text. If you don't know the outlines of the meditation subjects by heart, you can read one of the lam-rim books and meditate on lam-rim, with your mouth just reciting the mantra. If you wish to do that, you can.

Most people here are getting close to finishing the mantras and can then maybe spend more time on lam-rim. With the mantra you can also just do the particular visualization that goes with it. It can be a very effective retreat,

and if you do lam-rim meditation with each session, it also becomes a lam-rim retreat.

Even when we are at home, we are supposed to meditate on lam-rim. We are supposed to live our daily life, even our working life, with lam-rim: with guru devotion, renunciation, bodhicitta and emptiness. We are supposed to do even our work with lam-rim, with the attitude of the three principal aspects of the path. Everything we do then becomes a cause of enlightenment. Not only does it become a cause to achieve liberation from samsara, but especially it becomes a cause to achieve enlightenment and an antidote to samsara, because it's done with the thought of emptiness, looking at everything that appears to us as a hallucination, as it is a hallucination. We look at phenomena in that way, thinking that they are merely imputed by the mind.

HOW DHARMAKAYA MANIFESTS

Are there any questions? Or maybe half a question?

[The question from a student is inaudible.]

Is dharmakaya nihilistic? Do you mean something coming into existence out of nothingness?

Dharmakaya is not nothingness. There are two types of dharmakaya. *Dharmakaya* is a general label, and within that there are the transcendental wisdom dharmakaya and the *svabhavikakaya*, the holy body of ultimate nature. The omniscient mind, which is the conventional truth aspect, is the transcendental wisdom dharmakaya; the nature of that, which is emptiness, free from both gross and subtle defilements, is the *svabhavikakaya*.

I think that taking the holy body of form, the *rupakaya*, has more to do with the wind, which is the vehicle of the omniscient mind and inseparable from it. The wind, which is inseparable from a buddha's holy mind, takes form, or manifests.

It has to do with the power of a completely purified mind, which is free from all gross and subtle defilements, free from obstacles, or resistance. Since there are no blocks, it is able to spontaneously manifest in numberless different forms in accordance with the karma of sentient beings. Basically, I think it has to do with the power of mind, with the power of a completely purified mind.

You can manifest in various forms even before you become enlightened. A bodhisattva on the first *bhumi* is able to manifest one hundred bodies

and then go to different pure lands, make offerings and prostrations and listen to or give teachings. I think that a second-bhumi bodhisattva is able to manifest a thousand bodies, and it keeps increasing with each bhumi. I don't remember the exact numbers, but a bodhisattva on the ninth or tenth bhumi can manifest an unimaginable number of bodies. So, that's even before becoming enlightened.

In regard to exactly how to do that, maybe you can try, and when you achieve that level, you can then inform me.

I remember a long time ago at Kopan I was working on *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun*, the very first meditation course book, which we used for many years but which I still haven't finalized. I was thinking to write a different lam-rim book. I have some other ideas—I wasn't thinking to use that same one. But in those old fortunate times, many people did use it, especially in the courses, and it seemed to have been helpful. Some years ago I asked Dr. Adrian and a few other people to write some additional material and make it into a book, but I think that maybe it didn't happen. After so many years, Dr. Nick still wants to use it, but there are now so many Dharma books. I mean, in the early times there were only a very few. When we started doing the Kopan courses, I think there were two small books by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *Essay on Buddhism* and *Introduction to Buddhism*. They were very thin, just six or seven pages, I think. Of course, *The Book of the Dead* was there and many people talked about it. And Lama Govinda's book, *Way of the White Clouds*, was a common one that many young people read after taking drugs. Many people were inspired by Buddhism through reading Lama Govinda's book. There was also another book, and maybe Geshe Wangyal's book was available then. There was also Milarepa's life story. Many people read that. I think it was their karma, but after taking drugs, they went to bookshops and found Milarepa's life story, which then inspired them in regard to Buddhism.

PIERO'S STORY

Many of the old students here will know Piero Cerri very well, but some of you may not know him. Piero is one of the very old students, one of the original Italian students. The first one was Mario Maglietti. He's Kagyü, a follower of Khamtrul Rinpoche, who has a monastery near Tashi Jong. I remember Mario as the first Italian that came to Kopan. I think the next one after that may have been Massimo Corona, though I'm not really sure

of the order they came. Anyway, Claudio, Piero and Massimo were the very first Italian Buddhist gangsters. I'm joking! They were the first Italian students to come to Kopan in those early times, though not to the first course. Massimo was there for the second course, I remember. In the second meditation course, I started teaching straight from the beginning on the preliminary prayer, *la ma sang gyä la ma chö*....⁶⁶ I think it happened because it fitted the people who were there, most of whom had already met Dharma. I went as far as karma, but then I had to leave, as Lama and I had to go to Dharamsala at that time. Anila Ann, you were there, right? And the course was continued, I think.

I don't remember which year we first went to Italy, but it was after some time.⁶⁷ At that time Geshe Jampel Sangye, one of the most outstanding, learned geshe from Drepung Gomang Monastery in Tibet, was teaching in a university in Rome. I think that Namkhai Norbu might also have already been there when we came for the very first time to Italy. Apart from Namkhai Norbu's Nyingma center, I don't think there were any other Dharma centers in Italy at that time. We did the first course in a Christian church where people came to make confession or to do retreat. I think the priest sometimes came to the teachings. On Sundays we participated in the holy communion. Some students attended, and others circumambulated outside while we were inside the central church. We were the last people to go up to take the wine and bread. Lama didn't have any superstition, so Lama took the bread, but there was no wine left. Of course, I have a lot of superstition. That was the first course in Italy.

I think the next course was at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, which had belonged to the family of Massimo Corona, who is the International Office director. I think that property was his share of his family's property. From there, many centers were gradually started around Italy.

So, the story of Piero.... Piero came to Buddhism after he had been a

⁶⁶ *La ma sang gyä la ma chhö*
De zhin la ma ge dün te
Kün gyi je po la ma yin
La ma nam la kyab su chhi

The guru is Buddha; the guru is Dharma;
 The guru is Sangha also.
 The guru is the creator of all (happiness);
 To all gurus I go for refuge.

⁶⁷ It was 1975.

communist. I guess drugs kind of opened his mind and he read Milarepa's life story. I'm sure it was Milarepa's blessing, Milarepa's holy action, that seeing that book affected him and helped him to look for Buddhism and for a guru. I think it definitely had to be Milarepa's holy action guiding him, as well as the action of all the buddhas. If it's one buddha's action it has to be the action of all the buddhas. He read Milarepa's life story, which greatly benefited his mind.

When he read the book, he thought that much of Milarepa's life story was about renunciation of possessions. Of course, he didn't have any idea of the whole path to enlightenment, so he thought to just give everything away, all his possessions. He got rid of everything, then came to India and Nepal to look for a guru. I think he was following Milarepa's example. When he came to Kopan, of course, he had nothing. He was wearing a long yellow dress that was so thin you could see through it. Anyway, he spent a lot of time in Dharamsala and in Nepal, and by listening to teachings and studying them, he gradually learned what the real Dharma is and how to begin to practice it.

WISH-FULFILLING GOLDEN SUN

Why have I brought up Piero? I'm not sure how my talk jumped to Piero.

[Ven. Sarah reminds Rinpoche that he was talking about how there weren't many Dharma books in the early days.]

Oh, that's right. I was saying that after they had taken drugs, different people, according to their karma, met different Dharma books. The point of what I was saying is that in those times there were very few Dharma books, just two thin books by His Holiness. Now there are so many good books.

I have had different ideas, but so far they haven't been actualized into a new lam-rim book. Nick thinks the original book, *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun*, is still very good for people's meditations. He feels it is something complete. Some people want to fix up this book and publish it.⁶⁸

What I was wanting to say is that there in *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun* it talks about the five knowledges. I think normally there are the five great knowledges and the five small knowledges. I think the last one might be *dra*, in Tibetan. It refers to knowledge of the way of making sounds in Tibetan,

⁶⁸ A version of this book (with the two mistakes Rinpoche mentions!) may be found on the LYWA website.

and also in Sanskrit, by putting different syllables together with AH. I think there's one mistake there. I think it says that *dra* means hearing some meaning or words in the sounds of running water and so forth.

There's another mistake in the section on making life meaningful, on how the precious human body qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses is meaningful because with it one can achieve the three great purposes. One time I was working on that section with Anila Ann. Do you remember? I was dictating that section to Anila Ann, who was an expert ski instructor, so I think I mentioned in *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun* something about having the opportunity to ski. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I wasn't saying you would have the opportunity to ski next life; I was talking about having the opportunity to ski in this life.

Basically, practicing Dharma benefits future lives. The meaningless activities of this life don't bring happiness next life; they don't benefit after this life. Even though they can help to bring temporary pleasure in this life, they can't bring happiness beyond this life. Achieving the happiness of this life is nothing special. Even animals, even tiny insects such as ants, can achieve the happiness of this life. Achieving sense pleasures, the temporary happiness of this life, is nothing special. It doesn't make your life more special than that of an animal. That isn't one of the three great purposes you can achieve by having this precious human body, especially one qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses. No matter how expert you are in achieving the happiness of this life, you aren't fulfilling the special purpose of having a human rebirth, especially a perfect human rebirth. The special purposes of having a perfect human rebirth are to achieve the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment. You can achieve all of these happinesses because you can create the causes to achieve these three great purposes even in each second.

Attachment to the happiness, or pleasure, of this life is a nonvirtuous thought, and that is the first renunciation. The very first Dharma, the fundamental Dharma, is renunciation of the attachment that clings to this life's pleasure. That nonvirtuous thought is the very first thing to renounce.

All the actions done with this attachment become nonvirtues. If you renounce this attachment that clings to this life's pleasure, your attitude becomes pure, and everything you do—meditating, sleeping, eating—becomes Dharma. If you renounce this worldly concern, the thought of the eight worldly dharmas, the attitude of your life then becomes pure. Nothing you do is done for this life.

There is no thought of seeking the pleasure of this life; there is no attachment to comfort, to receiving praise from others, to having a good reputation, to receiving material gifts and so forth. In regard to all these, you are free from expectations. Your mind is totally pure and free from this attachment. There is nothing that makes your life go up and down many times a day. When you don't fulfill your expectations or something that is opposite to your expectations happens, you go down. When you receive what you expect, you go up. With this renunciation, there are no ups and downs. Your mind is completely calm, peaceful, tranquil. From that you achieve real inner happiness, real inner peace.

Everything you do becomes Dharma. By renouncing attachment, you then renounce all the actions done with attachment. With attachment, everything—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping and even doing prayers or meditating—becomes nonvirtuous. That doesn't happen once you renounce this attachment, the thought of the eight worldly dharmas. Once you renounce that worldly concern, none of these nonvirtuous actions happens. Attachment pollutes all these activities of eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working, doing prayers and meditating. It's like putting poison in food. It makes everything black; it makes everything a nonvirtue. When you renounce this life, it means you renounce this attachment that clings to the pleasure of this life, and all those nonvirtues are also stopped. All these actions becoming nonvirtuous is stopped. All the actions you do become virtuous, including doing prayers, meditation, preliminary practices and so forth.

So, there in *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun*, I put something about having the opportunity to ski. Do you remember how it's said? The happiness of future lives? After that you can ski? In the section on perfect human rebirth, I mentioned having the opportunity to ski. I noticed that mistake a long time ago, but so far we haven't made a new version of *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun*.

WHAT MAKES AN ACTION VIRTUOUS OR NONVIRTUOUS?

As we are talking about motivation, I'd like to ask a question. If somebody is starving and you give them food, not with a virtuous thought but with a nonvirtuous thought of worldly concern, clinging to the happiness of this life, with attachment to your reputation and with the hope that other people will praise you, is that charity virtuous or nonvirtuous? Somebody is

dying of starvation, and you give them food but with the motivation to receive praise from other people, “Oh, you’re such a generous person. You’re so kind.” With that expectation, seeking the happiness of this life, you give food to somebody who is dying of starvation. Of course, the food enables them to survive. So, is that charity virtuous or nonvirtuous?

[The reply from a student is inaudible.]

You’re saying the motivation is nonvirtuous but the feeding is virtuous? So, is that action of charity virtuous?

[The reply is inaudible.]

But the action of giving food is virtuous? Why is that action virtuous?

[The reply is inaudible.]

In that case, if someone wants to be killed and you then kill that person because they want to be killed, it’s then a virtue because it makes the other person happy. You are making that person happy because they want to die. It’s similar to the previous example, where filling their stomach makes the starving person happy. Now here, since the person wants to be killed, you are making that person happy. So, it has got to be virtuous.

[There is an inaudible comment, something about turning off life-support.]

So, the person wants to live on the machine. Here I’m talking on the basis of what the other person wants. Do you understand? Someone is starving, and you give them food, but your motivation is nonvirtuous. So, is that action virtuous or nonvirtuous? Someone said that it’s virtuous because it helps the other person. I’m now asking, if you kill somebody who wants to be killed, is that action virtuous or nonvirtuous? There are many other examples that are similar, such as sexual misconduct, which are based on what the other person wants, on what makes the other person happy. There are many different examples where what you do makes the other person happy but your motivation is nonvirtuous. So, is your action then virtuous or not?

Anyway, I now have another question. When I talked about giving food to this person dying of starvation, somebody said that there are two different things, that the motivation is nonvirtuous but the action is virtuous. Does everybody agree?

[There is an inaudible discussion.]

If you make charity of food so that someone doesn’t die of starvation, but your motivation is nonvirtuous, is that action virtuous or not? Here we know that the person’s motivation is nonvirtuous, because they’re expecting

something in return. Their motivation in giving the food to that person is for the happiness of this life, to receive a good reputation or praise from other people.

Now, let's say that you have cancer, which shortens life, and you take medicine with attachment clinging to the pleasure of this life. Is that virtuous? Your motivation for taking the medicine is simply attachment clinging to this life's pleasure. You want to have a long life, but the long life is just for yourself; you're not thinking of having a long life to benefit other sentient beings. Of course, the thought of benefiting others is a Dharma motivation. But here you simply want a long life for yourself. Your motivation is attachment to this life's happiness. Taking the medicine cures the cancer and enables you to have a long life. So, is it virtuous to take medicine to cure the cancer on the basis of attachment? I'm talking about the action of taking medicine with attachment clinging to this life's pleasure. Is that action virtuous or nonvirtuous?

[The reply is inaudible.]

Yes, an action can benefit others without being virtuous. There are actions that benefit others but are not necessarily virtuous.

If your making charity to others with the nonvirtuous thought of attachment clinging to your own pleasure of this life becomes virtuous because it helps the person to stay alive, in that case it is the same with everything you do in your daily life—eating food, going to sleep, going to the toilet, doing your job—because you're doing all these things to help you survive and have a long life and be comfortable. None of them involves killing or any other violent action toward others. Everything you do during the day then becomes virtuous, because eating and drinking stop your hunger and thirst, having a house protects you and gives you comfort, clothing gives you comfort and doing a job gives you money, which helps you to have this life's pleasures. Everything you do during the twenty-four hours helps for that. There is no violent action toward others; therefore, all these actions would become virtue.

If everything we did naturally became virtuous, there would be no purpose in meditating nor in generating a motivation before we begin a practice. When we do any practice there is preparation, which is the motivation; the actual body of the practice; and the dedication. These three things make the virtue complete, or perfect. Therefore, there would be no reason to generate a motivation at the beginning of meditation, before we visualize Buddha or meditate on lam-rim. We wouldn't have to generate a virtuous

motivation before any practice. There would be no reason that we should generate a virtuous motivation before we meditate.

With a motivation of bodhicitta, you can direct the action of meditation to enlightenment, make it become a cause of enlightenment. And with a motivation of renunciation, the action of meditation becomes a cause to achieve liberation from samsara. Of course, it doesn't have to be bodhicitta or renunciation of samsara to be a virtuous thought. There are other virtuous thoughts that are detached toward this life and seeking the happiness of future lives. If the motivation is none of these three—a thought of seeking enlightenment or of benefiting others, a thought of seeking liberation for oneself or a thought seeking the happiness of future lives—there is no other virtuous thought as a motivation of activities. Other than that, there is either no motivation or a motivation of attachment clinging to this life, this nonvirtuous thought.

Sometimes meditation can be harmful to us; it depends on the kind of meditation and on how we think. Generally, if you were doing a wrong meditation, which you believed to be a correct meditation, since the purpose of doing it would be to benefit yourself, all your actions of meditation would be virtuous, because what you are doing is actually to benefit you. If whether something is virtuous or nonvirtuous doesn't depend on the motivation, all the actions of meditation have to be virtuous. In that case, there would be no need for you to generate a virtuous motivation.

The emphasis is on watching your mind, and if you find it to be nonvirtuous, either you do breathing meditation or, if your mind is too disturbed, you transform it by remembering impermanence and death (especially that death can happen at any moment), the sufferings of samsara, karma and the sufferings of the lower realms. You cut attachment and change your mind into the thought of seeking the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and eventually the thought to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings.

When we meditate, we have at least to generate a virtuous motivation. If we can't generate bodhicitta or even the thought of seeking liberation from samsara, at least we should generate a virtuous thought that our action of meditation becomes a cause of the happiness of future lives.

There is a text of questions and answers by Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen, the great enlightened being who was the author of *Guru Puja* and also a mahamudra text. One of the questions in the text is, "What is the beginning of meditation?" Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen replies, "The

beginning of meditation is the motivation,” and he then gives the example of how when Dharma texts, Buddha’s teachings, such as *Prajnaparamita*, were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan, they always began by saying, “In the Indian language blah, blah, blah” and “In the Tibetan language blah, blah, blah.” Just as the texts always begin with this, meditation always begins with the motivation.

If an action was virtuous because it was peaceful and didn’t harm others through killing and so forth, whenever we did meditation, there would be no need to generate a virtuous thought because just doing the meditation itself would be virtuous. This mistake would arise. This is why there is so much emphasis on watching the mind and changing it not just into virtuous thought but into renunciation of samsara, and not just into that but into bodhicitta.

Now, what has happened with the charity? Is it now virtuous or nonvirtuous when done with a nonvirtuous motivation? Is everybody saying nonvirtuous or virtuous? You understand that what you’re doing may help that starving person, but your main motivation is expectation of a good reputation or something for yourself. The nonvirtuous motivation is stronger. So, is the action virtuous or nonvirtuous?

I have already mentioned bodhicitta there in the three levels of motivation. It means the thought of seeking enlightenment for others or the thought of benefiting others. I’m including somebody who is sincerely, purely, benefiting others but has no understanding of or belief in reincarnation and karma. The other two virtuous motivations are the thought of renunciation to achieve liberation for oneself and the thought seeking the happiness of future lives.

Now, you have to understand the conclusion. If you believe that an action, even if the motivation for it is nonvirtuous, is virtuous because it is peaceful and doesn’t hurt others, what about when a bodhisattva kills somebody with a weapon. Since there is violence and the other person is hurt, that has to be nonvirtuous, even though the bodhisattva has bodhicitta. The other being who is killed is not a buddha or an arya being; it’s somebody who experiences pain. Since the action of killing someone with a weapon is violent and causes much pain to that other being and also shortens their life, is it nonvirtuous?

[The reply is inaudible.]

But isn’t killing with a weapon violence? It hurts that person, and of

course they don't want to die. It's not what they want; it's against their wishes. So, is that nonvirtuous?

[The reply is inaudible.]

In that case the charity would be nonvirtuous because the motivation was nonvirtuous. It is the same. If you are giving the power to the motivation, then the charity is nonvirtuous because the motivation is nonvirtuous. There is talk about a mixture of white and black karma, as you mentioned, but I don't think it applies to the example I gave of making charity with nonvirtuous thought, with attachment to receiving a good reputation or something else in return. I don't think you can bring in that discussion of a mixture of karma here, because if you separate the two things and say that the motivation is nonvirtuous and the action is virtuous, then, as I mentioned before, all the activities of our daily life such as eating, sleeping and doing our job, which are done to help ourselves, would be virtuous. Everything we did would become virtuous, even though the motivation was attachment. That mistake would happen. There is then a danger that anything that appears to be spiritual would become Dharma.

For example, there is the story, from the topic of karma, of somebody who did a three-year (or lifetime) Yamantaka retreat. When that person then died, he was born as a hungry ghost who looked like Yamantaka, with the many arms, but who was a hungry ghost, a preta. He was a preta but he looked like the deity he had been meditating on during his life as a human being.

There is also a story about two people who were doing deity retreat in Penpo, an area north-east of Lhasa. One of them died. Every evening the other meditator would do the *sur* practice, which involves burning tsampa and making charity of the smell. One evening he didn't do the practice, and a terrifying hungry ghost with many arms then appeared. The meditator asked, "Who are you?" The hungry ghost replied, "I am your friend. The one who was doing retreat with you before." Even though he did retreat on a deity for many years, he didn't know how to do the retreat properly. He missed out the lam-rim motivation; he practiced the deity without lam-rim. His mistake was to do the retreat with attachment and without bodhicitta. There wasn't even a virtuous thought seeking the happiness of future lives, which would at least make the motivation Dharma. There was neither bodhicitta nor renunciation. There was no Dharma thought. If his motivation were at least that, he wouldn't have been born as a preta. There was no

virtuous motivation, only attachment clinging to this life, wanting to be famous or to have a good reputation as a meditator. So, he was then born as a hungry ghost.

Now here you are doing meditation on a deity, but if your motivation is not virtuous, there will be a problem. It was because this meditator didn't know how to do retreat and so did deity retreat without lam-rim that he was born as a hungry ghost. Lama Atisha told the story of somebody who was a yogi of Hevajra (I think here *yogi* means that he meditated on Hevajra, not that he had realization of emptiness and bodhicitta), but he did the tantric practices without lam-rim. He was even born in a hell realm. Such things happen.

This is why the motivation is so important. The motivation controls the action. The following example is normally given: if the root of a plant is medicinal, the flowers, fruit and the rest of the plant will be medicinal; but if the root is poisonous, the rest of the plant will be poisonous. What an action becomes depends on the motivation with which it is done. A great bodhisattva is permitted to do the seven actions of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slandering, gossiping and speaking harshly because they have such great compassion for others that they are able to transform these actions into virtue. They are able to transform everything into virtue.

For example, in one of his past lives Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was the bodhisattva captain of a ship who killed a man who was planning to kill the rest of the five hundred traders on the ship. By killing the man, that bodhisattva collected great merit and shortened the duration of his time in samsara by one hundred thousand eons. This means that he was one hundred thousand eons closer to liberation and to enlightenment. It made him much closer to enlightenment, not because of his action but because of his motivation of great compassion. His great compassion transformed that action. What determines whether an action is a virtue or a nonvirtue is its motivation. Therefore, in regard to this action of charity, even though the food enables the person to survive and have a long life (and it is similar in our everyday life when we eat food or take medicine: it helps us to be healthy and live long), but this action of making charity becomes nonvirtuous, even though it is useful for that starving person, because of the power of the non-virtuous motivation.

There is no discussion here about a mixture of karma. If you talk here about a mixture of karma, with the motivation being nonvirtuous and the action being virtuous, it means that the motivation can't influence any action


that we do. It means there is no connection. It then also does not become Dharma. This is why it's important that we generate a virtuous motivation at the beginning of any activity that we do. The topic of a mixture of karma doesn't apply here. It applies to some other activities in relation to the special power of holy objects, but not in this case. It doesn't apply to ordinary beings doing this kind of action.


DEDICATIONS


"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...."

"Gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir...."

"Päl dân la mäi ku tshe tân pa dang...."

Give all the merits of the past, present and future, as well as all the resultant happiness up to enlightenment, your own body as a wish-fulfilling jewel, all your possessions and everything else to all sentient beings. 

Give everything to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being. 

All the realms become pure lands, where there is no suffering and only pure perfect enjoyments. (Think of the pure land of whichever deity you practice or in which you wish to be reborn.) All the beings receive whatever they want, whatever they need. Every human being receives many billions and billions of dollars, and all the rest of the beings receive whatever they want, whatever they need, which includes a guru, teachings and realizations. Having these enjoyments causes them to actualize the path of method and wisdom and to cease all their defilements, gross and subtle, and they all become enlightened in the essence of the deity. 

"We have collected many times infinite skies of merit, and due to all these merits may whatever sufferings other sentient beings have ripen on me; and may whatever happiness I have ripen on all sentient beings.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, from now on, in every second, may I bring skies of benefit to sentient beings like Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me that Medicine Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa have.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may any sentient being who sees me, touches me, remembers me, thinks about me, criticizes me, praises me, harms me, helps me or makes any other connection with me, just by

that, immediately be liberated from all sickness, spirit harm and negative karma. May they immediately be healed of all sickness, both curable and incurable. May those people who are possessed by spirits and have become completely wild and crazy, as well as all other people affected by spirit harms, immediately be freed from all those spirit harms by simply seeing, touching, remembering, thinking, talking about or dreaming about me, or seeing even photos of me. May those sentient beings immediately be healed, freed from all sickness, spirit harms, negative karma and defilements. May they actualize the whole path, especially bodhicitta and the wisdom realizing emptiness, and may they achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are merely labeled by mind, may the I, who is merely labeled by mind, achieve Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, and lead all 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.

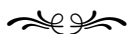
“May the teaching of Buddha, especially Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching, be completely actualized within my mind and in the minds of all the students and benefactors of the FPMT, all those who sacrifice their life to the organization to serve other sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, as well as in the minds of all those who rely upon me, those for whom I have promised to pray and those offering service. In this very lifetime may we be able to completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching. May it spread and flourish in the world in all directions, and may I be able to cause this to happen.”

[The group recites the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedication prayers in Tibetan, followed by the multiplying mantras.]

Good night, good morning.

So, I think the example of skiing is helpful for clarifying nonvirtues.


Combined Jorchö and Lama Chöpa Puja



EXTENSIVE OFFERING PRACTICE

Ven. Sarah Thresher: Then there are the extensive offerings. So, first of all, blessing all the offerings here. Rinpoche?

Rinpoche: So, we will recite the mantra for blessing, though this mantra is not only for blessing. It has two functions. It blesses and multiplies the offerings so that each of the numberless buddhas receives clouds of offerings. The power of this mantra is unbelievable. This mantra has such powerful blessings that each buddha receives an unimaginable number of offerings.

Remember the offerings that are to be blessed: all the offerings here and all the extensive offerings at the Aptos house, where there are many hundreds of water offerings and many thousands of light offerings, as well as flower offerings inside and outside the house. Also remember all the extensive offerings in all the gompas of all the FPMT centers in the East and the West. And there are a thousand offerings in the center in Mongolia. Remember all of them. 

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SARA PRAMARDANE.... (3x)


Next is the verse expressing the words of truth. The benefit of reciting this is that the buddhas actually receive the many offerings that you have mentally transformed, or visualized. So, if you have visualized skies of offerings, each buddha receives all of them. Think that each buddha receives that many offerings.


[The group recites *The Power of Truth*.]


First we make charity of all the offerings here and those in all the rest of the places to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being and every intermediate state being. Make charity to all sentient beings.

We now offer all the offerings on their behalf. You can think that you're offering them for you yourself to achieve enlightenment to be able to enlighten all sentient beings. By our making the offering on behalf of all sentient beings in this way, every sentient being gets the merit.

We will now offer all the offerings here, all the light offerings in the Ashes Temple, all the extensive offerings at the Aptos House and those in all the rest of the FPMT centers, the nature of which is infinite bliss.

First we will offer them to the gurus, by thinking that each one is, in essence, all of the buddhas. In this way, while we are actually offering to the guru, we are also offering to all the buddhas. By offering to each guru, we offer to every buddha without exception. 


Make the offering not just one time but as many times as possible. Think that they generated infinite bliss within their holy minds. 

Put your palms together and then offer. Repeat "I prostrate, make offering and generated bliss within them..." five, ten or twenty-one times. 



Prostrate and make all the offerings here, all the offerings in all the gompas of all the FPMT centers, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to the whole *Guru Puja* merit field, by thinking that the essence of every single being in the merit field is your root guru. Meditate that each one is your root virtuous friend. Now offer.


"I prostrate, make all these offerings, generated bliss. I prostrate, make offering, generated bliss...." 


Prostrate and make all these offerings here, those in the Aptos house and those in all the rest of the centers, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to all Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in all the ten directions, thinking that in essence they are your root virtuous friend.

"I prostrate, make all these offerings, generated great bliss. I prostrate, make offering, generated great bliss...." 


Prostrate and make all the offerings here, as well as those in the Ashes Temple, the Aptos house and all the FPMT centers, which are of the nature of infinite bliss, to all the statues, stupas, scriptures and thangkas in the ten directions, thinking that in essence they are your root virtuous friend.

 "I prostrate, make offerings, generated great bliss. I prostrate, make offerings, generated great bliss...." 


Now, to elaborate more, we will specifically offer all the offerings here, in the Aptos house and in all the FPMT centers, the nature of which is infinite bliss, to all the holy objects in India, thinking that in essence they are the root virtuous friend. 

“I prostrate, make offering, generated bliss....” 


Prostrate and make all the offerings here and those in all the rest of the places, the nature of which is infinite bliss, to all the holy objects that are in Tibet, including the most precious Shakyamuni Buddha statue blessed by Buddha himself, the stupa that we have built at Sera Monastery, the Most Secret Hayagriva statue, the Maitreya statue that is meaningful to behold in Drepung Monastery, as well as all the rest of the holy objects in Tibet. Meditate that in essence they are your root virtuous friend.


“I prostrate, make offering, generated bliss....” 


Prostrate and make all the offerings here and those in all the rest of the places, the nature of which is infinite bliss, to all the holy objects in Nepal, including the two most precious objects in Kathmandu, the Swayambhunath Stupa and Baudhanath Stupa. Think that the essence of all them is your root virtuous friend.

“I prostrate, make offering, generated bliss....” Repeat this twenty-one times. 

Prostrate and make all the offerings to all the holy objects in the rest of the world, such as in Burma and Sri Lanka, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think that they generated bliss within them.

“I prostrate, make all the offerings, generated bliss within them....” 

Prostrate and make all the offerings here and those in all the rest of the places, the nature of which is infinite bliss, to the seven Medicine Buddhas, for success; to bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, to be able to instantly fulfill the wishes of all sentient beings; and to Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, to be able to develop great compassion so that you can liberate sentient beings as quickly as possible and bring them to enlightenment. Meditate that their essence is your root virtuous friend and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. 

“I prostrate, make offering, generated infinite bliss within them. I prostrate, make offering, generated infinite bliss....” 

We will now do the verses of offering. Think that there are numberless of each of the eight offerings. Numberless offerings of drinking water, water for cleaning the feet and all the rest of the offerings have already been transformed. Then, as we go through the prayer, offer them and think that the merit field generated bliss. At the end, we then visualize offering numberless eight auspicious signs, eight substances, seven royal emblems and offering goddesses carrying the sixteen offerings, which is a practice from Heruka Chakrasamvara. We prostrate, offer and think that we have generated bliss within the merit field.

[The group chants the verses of offering from *Lama Chöpa*, followed by the taking of bodhisattva and tantric vows. The remaining verses of *Lama Chöpa* are chanted through to the end of the recitation of mantras.]

DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty, may the I, who is empty, achieve Guru Vajradhara’s enlightenment, which is also empty, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also empty, to that enlightenment, which is empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side.

“I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha, as they realize.

“And I dedicate all the merits the way the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times dedicate their merits and the way they admire the most.

“May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching be completely actualized in my own mind, in the minds of the members of my family and of all the students and benefactors, especially those who sacrifice their life to the organization to serve others. May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching spread and flourish in all directions, and may I cause this to happen.”

[The group recites the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedications in Tibetan.]

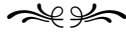
At the end of guru yoga practice, it’s very important to dedicate in the following way.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, from this moment on, in all future lifetimes, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of the FPMT, and all the rest of the sentient beings be able to meet only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus. From our side, may we be able to see the virtuous friend as only an enlightened being. May we be able to do actions only most pleasing to the holy mind of the virtuous friend, and may each of us be able to immediately fulfill the holy wishes of the virtuous friend.”

It is extremely important to do this dedication at least once each day.

Thank you. Sarah did unbelievable chanting. It’s hard to believe....

Final Medicine Buddha Session



BODHICITTA MOTIVATION

IT IS ABOUT only this one time that we will receive not only a precious human body but especially a precious human body qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses. Many of us have also met the Buddhadharmā, the unmistakable path through which we can definitely achieve cessation of the entire suffering of samsara and its cause, delusion and karma. Besides that, we have met the Mahayana Paramitayana teaching, the complete unmistakable path which, if we practice it correctly, definitely enables us to achieve full enlightenment, and we can then liberate the numberless sentient beings, who are the source of all our past, present and future happiness, realizations and enlightenment. Practicing this path enables us to free the numberless sentient beings from all suffering and its causes and bring them to full enlightenment.

Not only that, but we have also met the Mahayana Secret Mantra, or Vajrayana, teachings, with which we can quickly achieve enlightenment, because it is unbearable that sentient beings are suffering. Sentient beings are the field from which we receive everything: all happiness and all the collections of goodness, both temporary and ultimate, including every single quality of a buddha. A buddha has infinite qualities. A buddha's holy body has infinite qualities, a buddha's holy speech has infinite qualities, and a buddha's holy mind has infinite qualities. It is from the field of sentient beings, in dependence upon their kindness, that we receive every single one of the qualities of a buddha. We also receive every single realization of a bodhisattva, of both an ordinary bodhisattva and an arya bodhisattva. We achieve every single one of those qualities in dependence upon the field of sentient beings, in dependence upon their kindness.

Bodhicitta has limitless skies of benefit. It is said that even Buddha, the Omniscient One, could never finish explaining the benefits of bodhicitta. All the benefits of bodhicitta are extensively explained in the sutra teachings of Buddha and by the great bodhisattva Shantideva in the first chapter of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, which has incredibly inspiring stanzas on the benefits of bodhicitta. Also, in *Praise to Bodhicitta*,⁶⁹ Khunu Lama Rinpoche wrote a stanza about bodhicitta for every day of the year. The benefits of bodhicitta are limitless like the sky. All these benefits come from the field of sentient beings, from the root of sentient beings. By achieving bodhicitta, you yourself can actually experience all these limitless skies of benefit, which come about in dependence upon the kindness of every single sentient being.

All the limitless skies of qualities of a buddha, all the limitless skies of qualities and realizations of the different levels of bodhisattvas and all the infinite benefits of bodhicitta come from every single sentient being. They all come from that one tiny mosquito that you see taking blood from your body. They all come from that one tiny flea that bites you. It all comes in dependence upon the kindness of that one tiny flea. Just as we get crops from a field, all those collections of goodness come from this field of sentient beings.

OVERCOMING ANGER AND EGO

You label as abusive a person you believe badly treated you, didn't take care of you when you were a child and so forth. You interpret that person's attitude or actions of body, speech and mind as harmful or bad. You see it as bad because it bothers your own attachment. What the person does or the way they think of you, the actions of their body, speech and mind, harms your attachment. It harms your ego, your self-cherishing thought.

If a person acts in a way that is not what your attachment wants, anger arises, and you then label them "enemy." It's an enemy from the point of view of anger, of self-cherishing thought. It's not an enemy from the point of view of bodhicitta. It's not an enemy from the point of view of patience. It's not an enemy from the point of view of compassion. It's not an enemy from the point of view of the wisdom seeing emptiness or seeing things as illusions.

⁶⁹ Published as *Vast as the Heavens, Deep as the Sea*.

It is just another view of your negative thought. It is the view of one of your negative thoughts, your impure thoughts, your hallucinated thoughts, your wrong concepts. It's the interpretation of one of your negative minds, not of all your minds. It's not the interpretation of your positive minds, your pure minds. In the interpretation of your pure mind, this person is kind. In the view of patience, this is the kindest person, the kindest sentient being. They are the most precious one.

They are the kindest one because they give you deep inner peace and give special training to your mind. They give you a special opportunity to practice. You cannot achieve this deep inner peace and special training of the mind from a person who gives you a billion dollars. You cannot achieve this deep inner peace even if somebody gives you six billion dollars. There may be excitement but not this deep inner peace. But this person you believe to be your enemy, the one who puts you down, criticizes you or provokes you, gives you deep inner peace if you take the opportunity to recognize, "I myself always follow the ego, but this person is now helping me to destroy my ego, my self-cherishing thought, as well as to overcome my anger."

You have always been overwhelmed by anger. Anger has always defeated you. You have always let your anger abuse you. You have always let your ego, your self-cherishing thought, abuse you. You let your ego use you to do whatever it wants. You have allowed yourself to be a slave to the ego, to be completely used by the ego for whatever it wants. During beginningless rebirths, you have let the ego give harm to you. That's why you're still in samsara. The ego didn't allow you to have any realization and allowed you to create only the cause of samsara. That's how you let the ego harm you.

When you gave yourself to the ego, you were then unable to offer perfect service to other sentient beings and bring them unmistakable benefit, as Buddha did. You can't even do what arhats can do to benefit sentient beings, let alone what bodhisattvas can do. Even a new bodhisattva can bring incredible benefit to sentient beings, and a higher bodhisattva can bring unbelievable benefit. As a bodhisattva proceeds through each bhumi, they bring greater and greater benefit to sentient beings. We're unable to do that because we have always given ourselves, made offering of ourselves, to the ego, the self-cherishing thought. That is how self-cherishing thought has harmed us and other sentient beings during beginningless rebirths.

Think, "During beginningless rebirths, I have always allowed myself to be controlled by anger and used by the ego. This person whom I believe is abusing or criticizing me or putting me down is now helping me to destroy

this ego and to overcome this anger that destroys all my merits, happiness and peace of mind and makes me harm many sentient beings from life to life. Anger leaves a negative imprint on my mind, which then makes anger arise again. As this imprint then goes from life to life, I harm numberless sentient beings. By enabling me to practice patience, this person is helping me to overcome my anger. After some time, through training in patience, I will never give rise to anger again.”

Anger destroys merits. Since merits are the cause of liberation and enlightenment, anger destroys your liberation and your enlightenment. Your main objective in being born as a human being is to liberate every one of the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. You have been born as a human being this time to achieve this unbelievable aim. What you can offer others is incredible, but it has to come from merit, from developing your mind in the path, and anger destroys all this.

Think, “This person is now giving me the opportunity to practice patience and overcome my anger, which is more harmful than the hell realms.” You experience hell one time, then your karma is finished; but if you allow yourself to be controlled by anger, it leaves a negative imprint. You still get angry at this time because you haven’t actualized the path that ceases the imprint, or seed, of anger. To completely cease the seed of delusion, the imprint, you need to actualize the arya path, the wisdom that directly perceives emptiness. It happens only by developing that wisdom.

You didn’t apply the meditations on patience and compassion and didn’t look at the very nature of phenomena, at how everything is merely imputed by your mind. There is no such real thing existing from its own side. Since you didn’t use wisdom, the right view, you didn’t recognize the hallucination as a hallucination. You looked at the hallucination as the reality, as the nature of the object. The reality is the total opposite. You didn’t see the actual nature, because you believed the hallucination to be true. Reality is covered, so you don’t see it. You veil your mind from seeing reality. First, you haven’t actualized the arya paths, the path of seeing and the path of meditation, which cease the seed of delusions. Second, you didn’t know the other meditations on patience and compassion or didn’t apply them if you did know them. In that way, since there is no protection, anger arises.

Why does anger arise? Because the seed of anger, the negative imprint, is there on your mental continuum. Since you did nothing to remove it, it still exists. The imprint left by your past anger has continued from your past lives

and then, with the right conditions, anger arises. If you get angry again, you again leave an imprint on your mental continuum, which then makes anger arise again. There is a circle, like an egg and a chicken.

As I mentioned the other night when I was talking about karma, just one complete negative karma of sexual misconduct can lead to endless suffering of samsara. Each complete negative karma has four suffering results, one of which is creating the result similar to the cause, and that complete negative karma again produces four suffering results. So, it goes on and on like that, until you purify the negative karma, abstain from it by living in morality and actualize the path. The ultimate method is to actualize the path and cease the seed of delusion.

You can now see, even in relation to anger, that it makes the suffering of samsara endless. If you don't practice, if you don't apply the meditations, if you don't try to actualize the path, the suffering of samsara is endless. You continuously imprison and torture yourself. No one else does that to you—only you yourself. That is why I said that giving rise to anger is worse than hell. With hell you experience the result of the karma once for a certain length of time; but anger leaves a negative imprint on your mental continuum, which makes anger rise again, which again leaves a negative imprint on your mental continuum. The more negative imprints that anger leaves, the easier it is for anger to arise. It is similar also with attachment and the other delusions.

Delusion is much more terrifying than the hell realm. You don't want to meditate on the hells; you don't want to see even a painting of the hell realms because they are so scary; you don't want to think of the hell realms and of the things that could happen to you there—even a description of them is terrifying. But if you analyze and recognize the harm from delusion, delusion is actually much more terrifying, much more horrible. Where does hell come from? Hell comes from delusion. Hell doesn't exist from its own side; hell comes from your mind. In a similar way, any undesirable thing that happens to you in your daily life comes from your mind. Hell comes from your own mind. It comes from delusion; it comes from anger, desire and ignorance—and the very root is the ignorance that apprehends true existence. I would say that the mind that is ignorant of the ultimate nature of the I itself and the aggregates is much worse than hell.

This person who is abusing you is helping you to destroy the ego. You are working together to overcome your anger and other delusions. So, they are the most precious, most kind one. They enable you to achieve liberation

and full enlightenment, to complete the path and to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. In your life there is no one kinder than this person, who gives you all this opportunity to benefit others. They give you the opportunity to become a wish-fulfilling jewel and bring all temporary and ultimate happiness, including enlightenment, to all sentient beings. This person is helping you to develop your mind in the path, to overcome your delusions, especially the ego. In your life there is no one kinder than this person.

This person is allowing you to put into practice the Buddhist path that you have read about and studied. Without practice, nothing happens, no matter how much knowledge you have, no matter how learned you are. No realization will happen without practice.

As said by great bodhisattva Shantideva in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, "As you respect the Victorious Ones (the buddhas), why don't you also respect the sentient beings?"⁷⁰ One reason that Buddha is so precious is that Buddha gave teachings that showed the path to enlightenment. How does Buddha free you from suffering and the cause of suffering and lead you to liberation and enlightenment? By giving teachings. It is the same here. If you don't practice, you suffer; if you practice, you can complete the path to liberation and enlightenment. If you practice patience, compassion and so forth, if you practice lam-rim, in relation to this person who shows anger toward you, who abuses you, who puts you down, you are able to overcome the self-cherishing thought and your other delusions. Without obstacles, you can then achieve liberation from samsara and full enlightenment. Therefore, you have an unbelievable need for this person. This person is extremely important, the most important person in your life. You need this person for your liberation and enlightenment. You are in urgent need of this person because they give you the opportunity to practice. Therefore, why don't you respect this person the same as you respect Buddha?

Of course, as I often say, sentient beings are even more precious because Buddha, Dharma and Sangha came from sentient beings. As mentioned during the motivation for refuge practice, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, to whom we always pray for refuge and who have the power to save us from the

⁷⁰ A Buddha's qualities are gained
From the sentient beings and the Conquerors alike,
So why do I not respect them
In the same way as I respect the Conquerors? (Ch. 6, v. 113.)

oceans of samsaric suffering and bring us to enlightenment, came from sentient beings. Because of this, sentient beings become even more precious.

It's unbearable that the most precious, most kind sentient beings, who are the root of all your happiness of the three times, including enlightenment, are suffering in samsara. To liberate them as quickly as possible and bring them to enlightenment, you need to achieve enlightenment, and the method for that is to practice tantra. Because you have received a great initiation, you have the opportunity to do that. Therefore, at this time, while you have all these opportunities, it's not enough that after death you not be reborn in the lower realms and receive a deva or human body. That's not enough, because that's still in the nature of suffering, under the control of karma and delusions. Any realm we are reborn in—as a deva or human being in the desire realm, in the form realm or even in the formless realm—is only suffering. Even the formless realm is only a suffering realm. Since these realms are all contaminated by the seed of delusions and completely under the control of karma and delusions, they are only suffering. None of these realms, including the formless realm, is free from pervasive compounding suffering. So, we must be liberated from the whole suffering of samsara. But just that alone is not sufficient. That is not the real goal of our life. Especially because we have this perfect human body, we must achieve full enlightenment for the sake of the numberless kind, most precious sentient beings. Think, “For this reason, I will listen to the holy Dharma.”

BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE

We've been talking about the incredible benefits of practicing Medicine Buddha, of reciting Medicine Buddha's name and mantra. Before becoming enlightened, Medicine Buddha made extensive prayers to be able to benefit sentient beings, as I read out to you the other night. During Medicine Buddha's past life as the bodhisattva Stainless Star, he practiced the bodhisattva deeds.

All the benefits of practicing Medicine Buddha that I mentioned the other night were explained by Buddha in the sutra called *Inconceivable Secret*. This will be a continuation from that text. Buddha is saying that even if the prayers made by bodhisattva Stainless Star were explained for eons more than eons, you could never reach the end of that bodhisattva's prayers. That bodhisattva became enlightened in the eastern field, King of Lapis Lazuli Light.

Buddha then said to his attendant Ananda, “The benefits of Medicine Buddha practice, its qualities and powers are due to the power of the tathagatas, the Ones Who Have Gone As It is.”

In other words, it is due to the power of the buddhas.

There is also another quotation in *Sutra Requested by Maudgalyayana*. (In temples a Shakyamuni Buddha statue usually has two arhats standing beside it. One of them is Maudgalyayana, the one among the Buddha’s disciples who excelled in psychic power. The other arhat, who excelled in wisdom, is Shariputra.) *Sutra Requested by Maudgalyayana* says:

Maudgalyayana, the followers of the Hinayana path, the Hearers and Self-Conquerors, won’t believe all these benefits of practicing Medicine Buddha, of reciting the holy name and mantra of Medicine Buddha and doing the meditation. Because their merit is so small, it will not fit their minds. It will be difficult for them to believe.

I’m not a hundred percent sure, but I think this next part might be referring to the bodhisattvas who have only one life until they become enlightened.

Because bodhisattvas have unbelievable merit, they can understand the limitless skies of benefit and qualities that Medicine Buddha has. The fortunate one who has good karma and much merit and the one who has miraculous psychic powers is able to believe in this, and they should cherish this Medicine Buddha practice. The devas of the white side will be very happy with any sentient being who reveals this Medicine Buddha practice to other sentient beings or talks about the qualities of Medicine Buddha. Those devas will protect and guide any sentient being who spreads the Medicine Buddha practice.

There are white-side and black-side devas. The white-side ones are devas who are happy when sentient beings practice Dharma and who support them. The black side devas, or maras, don’t like sentient beings to practice Dharma; they interfere with their practice of Dharma and cause sentient beings to engage in negative karma.

For quite a long time, I have always carried around Medicine Buddha

pictures with me. I put them on a table and circumambulate them and make offerings to them. When other people come to visit, I also have the opportunity to collect merit by giving them a picture of Medicine Buddha and the mantra and by talking a little about the qualities and power of Medicine Buddha. I have been doing that for quite a number of years, after seeing some of the benefits of Medicine Buddha. I hadn't read these sutras before, so I didn't know of the extensive benefits. Now, having seen the different texts, including this one, I know that it has unbelievable, unbelievable benefit.

Many years ago, I started to make offerings to various monasteries and asked them to do pujas on the special days of Buddha, when you collect one hundred million times more merit. If you offer one rupee (or tea or bread or something else), you collect the merit of having offered one hundred million rupees. In the monasteries, the puja is usually done in the morning, so the monks eat breakfast. So, on the special days of Buddha, when all this merit is collected, the monks receive tea, bread and also a money offering. I think we also make the offerings on each solar eclipse. The pujas are mostly done in the monasteries of my gurus, because the offering is then made to disciples of the same guru. Those nuns or monks are pores of that guru; their guru is also my guru. By offering one fellow disciple one rupee or one piece of bread or one cup of tea, you collect far greater merit than from having made offering to numberless buddhas, numberless bodhisattvas, numberless statues of Buddha, numberless stupas and numberless scriptures in all the directions. By making offering to one disciple of the same guru, you collect far greater merit than from making offering to all those other holy objects. That other offering becomes insignificant.

There is no monastery that has only one monk, and most of the monasteries, especially Sera, Ganden and Drepung, have a large number of monks. Just our college, Sera Je, alone has almost three thousand monks, and Sera Me has fewer than that. Ganden Monastery has two colleges, and Drepung also has colleges. There are also the two tantric colleges. There are also Kopan Monastery, His Holiness Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche's monastery and Trulshik Rinpoche's monastery, where we also offer lunch, which started during Lama Pasang's time.⁷¹ There is also Nalanda, our monastery in

⁷¹ Lama Pasang, a Tibetan disciple of Lama Yeshe, supervised much of the early building work at Kopan Monastery, Tushita Meditation Centre and Khachoe Ghakyil Nunnery. He died in 1993 in an accident digging a well for the Nunnery.

France, and we have recently also included Chenrezig Institute, where there are many nuns. I don't know how many nuns are there now. The offerings are made wherever there's a Sangha community. Some Sangha are spread all over, but the offerings are made where there is a community. There is also the monastery of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, because I received the Thirteen Golden Dharmas, which includes Vajrayogini initiation, from His Holiness Sakya Trizin after Lama passed away. Lama had a plan to do it, but he hadn't decided, so I then checked with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Some of us then took that initiation in Bodhgaya quite a number of years ago. His Holiness Sakya Trizin has two monasteries. Apart from Namgyal Monastery, which we haven't included yet, offerings are made to all those other monasteries. Of course, especially in the Gelugpa monasteries, almost everyone is a disciple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many are also fellow disciples of other gurus. Offerings are also made to the gurus on those special days.

There are also offerings to Boudhanath Stupa and Swayambhunath Stupa. For quite a number of years, on every special day of Buddha, Marcel, who has been working for Maitreya Project, and I together offer to Boudhanath Stupa the white color and saffron, a new umbrella on top and the canopy around where the eyes are. Now, even when there's no special day, we have asked Denpa Chöden, the manager of Kopan Monastery, to offer all these on the fifteenth of every month. I thought it was an unbelievable opportunity to be able to make this offering to this unbelievably precious holy object. We now offer them once a month, on the fifteenth, and if there's a special day of Buddha, we also offer on that day.

Since last year we now include Swayambhunath Stupa, the original, most precious stupa in Kathmandu. Swayambhunath Stupa contains a crystal stupa, an embodiment of the dharmakaya, which appeared when the Kathmandu valley was filled with a lake. The crystal stupa appeared from the lake, as Buddha himself had predicted. Near Swayambhunath, there's a high mountain called Langri Ruden, where many Tibetans go to offer incense; that's the place where Buddha placed his holy feet and gave the prediction about the crystal stupa. It is said in a sutra that Buddha gave a prediction on this mountain. There it talks about the Swayambhunath Stupa and another stupa mentioned by Kashyapa (I don't know whether this is Buddha Kashyapa—or Ösung, in Tibetan—or the arhat Kashyapa). If these two stupas are taken care of and people make offerings to them, Kathmandu will be

fine; but if these two are abandoned, there will be many problems in Kathmandu. I also recently saw that it says in that sutra that if the king doesn't live an ethical, or moral, life there will be danger to his life and a lot of catastrophes. I think that what Buddha predicted in that sutra has probably happened, with the king being killed. For quite a few years there have been a lot of disasters in the royal family.

The point of my bringing up this story is that many of the pujas I request are Medicine Buddha pujas. I think that in His Holiness Sakya Trizin's monastery, we request the self-initiation of Hevajra and maybe Vajrayogini, and in Chogye Trichen Rinpoche's monastery we also request Hevajra self-initiation. But in many of the Gelugpa monasteries we mostly request Medicine Buddha puja and Namgyalma puja. At the tantric colleges we request Kalarupa puja, or *trukchuma*, which is a very powerful puja to eliminate obstacles. We request the monks to dedicate for the sick people that I meet, the benefactors and the organization.

For a long time these offerings weren't made public, but then Roger thought that if it was publicized, maybe other people would want to join in and there could then be continual offerings forever. It was mentioned one time in *Mandala* magazine, I think. The idea is for these offerings to go forever, for as long as these monasteries last, to benefit them and to collect merit. Pujas are also done separately for the Maitreya Project.

The organization has some merit to have been able to offer food to Sera Je college, which has almost three thousand monks. We have been able to offer the monks lunch and dinner and now also breakfast. I don't remember whether or not the whole year is covered.

His Holiness also asked us to help support teachers in the major monasteries. Some students in Singapore and other countries have become benefactors of teachers in basically the major Gelugpa monasteries: Sera, Ganden and Drepung. As an offering, we pay the salary of ten teachers in each of those monasteries to educate the young monks. There are many more teachers, but we support just ten in each monastery. We also make offerings to Tashi Lhunpo, the Panchen Lama's monastery, and the two tantric colleges. We also make offerings to the Gaden Tripa, high lamas and all the ex-abbots.

So far, as there haven't been any heavy obstacles, we have been able to continue these offerings. I have mentioned the major ones. I think one of the benefits of the organization is being able to offer service to the monasteries

so that they can continue their education and practice to actualize the path and to spread Dharma in the world. Therefore, we can rejoice.

If you make offerings and requests to Medicine Buddha, in that country the crops will grow well, and there will be a lot of peace and happiness. The rains will come at the right time, and the wind will come the way you like it....

No, I'm just joking about that last one.

The rains will come at the right time, and the crops will ripen. The king, or leader, of the country will be healthy, with no sicknesses, and will have happiness. That king will be able to control, like servants, the sentient beings who are evil. One becomes very powerful, and all disharmony is pacified and wealth, life and fortune increased.

The four guardians said, "Due to Shakyamuni Buddha we have heard the name and mantra of the Medicine Buddha, so we won't experience the suffering of the lower realms. We will protect from all harm any other sentient being who makes offerings to the Medicine Buddhas, who offers them service, who recites the holy name and mantra, who keeps the name and mantra, who hears the name and mantra, who sees a statue of Medicine Buddha or the mantra, and who remembers, touches, recites, writes, meditates on or reveals it to others. We will protect all those sentient from all harm and accomplish all their wishes."

That's what the four guardians promised.

TSOG OFFERING

Ven. René: Please, those who have taken precepts, remember not to eat or drink.

Rinpoche: You can drink, but not eat. I'm joking! I'm joking.

Ven. Sarah: We'll do the long-life prayer for Lama Zopa.

Rinpoche: No, I think we'll do *de zhin shog pa*....

[Rinpoche leads the chanting of *Song of the Spring Queen*.]

PROTECTOR PRACTICES

We'll now do the protector prayers. We are going to recite the Six-Arm Mahakala prayer three times for the protection of Lama Ösel Rinpoche, for Lama to be able to return as quickly as possible to the monastery, and then for the success of all the FPMT projects, including the Maitreya Project and the projects here.

[Rinpoche plays the cymbals, then the group chants the Six-Arm Mahakala prayer three times, the praise to Four-Arm Mahakala, Palden Lhamo and so forth, then the long-life prayers of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Ösel Rinpoche. The group then reads *Stages of the Path* in English, with offering of the leftover tsog. There is then recitation of the Maitreya Buddha mantras, *Dedication of Merits* and *Verses of Auspiciousness*.]

DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, *gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir....*

“Päl dân la mäs ku tshe täñ pa dang....

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated in my own mind and in the minds of all other sentient beings. May that which has been generated be increased.

“Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe....

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may all the father and mother sentient beings have happiness; may the three lower realms be empty of beings 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 and the merits of the three times collected by others, in every second from now on, in all my future lifetimes, may I be able to offer extensive benefit like the limitless sky to all sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Medicine Buddha and like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, in whichever universe, world,

country, area and place I am, just by my being there may all the sentient beings living in that universe, world, country, area and place never ever be reborn in the lower realms from that time, and may they immediately be able to find faith in refuge and karma and actualize bodhicitta. May everyone in the entire universe live in peace, happiness and prosperity.

“May those who are blind be able to see, those who are deaf be able to hear, those who are lame be able to walk. May anyone in a coma or with an incurable disease, such as cancer or AIDS, or any other sickness immediately recover just by my being there in that universe, world, country, area, place and house. May the hearts of those who have relationship problems, which are like living in a hell realm, with so many emotional problems of disharmony, worry, fear and so forth, be filled with great loving kindness and compassion and with satisfaction and joy.

“May those who have manic depression, which the doctors can do nothing to help, immediately be healed, and may their hearts be filled with great bliss just by my being there in that universe, world, country, area, place and house.

“May those in poverty have wealth. May those who would like to meet a guru find a perfectly qualified guru who can show them the complete path to enlightenment. May those who want teachings be able to receive unmistakable, perfect teachings; may those who want to do retreat be able to find a most suitable place and all the necessary conditions for that, and may they be able to have realizations of the path to enlightenment. May they immediately be liberated from all disease, spirit harm, negative karma and defilements and actualize the whole path to enlightenment, achieving enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

We now give away all our own past, present and future merits, especially all the merits collected today by taking precepts and by doing each session, with the various practices of prostrations, extensive offering and so forth. We have collected skies of merit many times, so we now give everything—all those merits and all the resultant happiness up to enlightenment, as well as our possessions and our own body, as a wish-granting jewel that fulfills all wishes—to all sentient beings. We now give everything to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being, every intermediate state being. They receive everything they need, everything they want. Also, their environment becomes a pure land where there is no suffering and not even the word “suffering.” They have whatever perfect, pure enjoyments they wish, and all the enjoyments

they receive cause them to actualize the path in their mind. They cease all their gross and subtle defilements, and they all become the deity.”

By giving our body, all our merits, happiness, perfections and so forth, we collect limitless skies of merit so many times. “Due to this merit, may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen on me, and may whatever happiness I have ripen on all sentient beings.”

We have done tong-len so many times in the past and made prayers so many times to receive other sentient beings’ sufferings on ourselves. It is not only about doing prayers. In our daily life when we actually encounter a problem, some undesirable thing, at that time we immediately have to remember, “I have been praying all the time for this to happen, and now I have received it.” You then enjoy that problem, thinking, “I have received what I have made prayers to receive so many times. I have succeeded in my prayers.” Also enjoy the problem by thinking, “How extremely fortunate I am that I can receive and experience the problems of all other sentient beings.”

In this way you use your problems in the path to achieve enlightenment. You use any problem you encounter to liberate not only yourself but numberless other sentient beings from all their suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. You use the problem to cause not only temporary but ultimate happiness to all sentient beings. This is what transforming problems into happiness means. You make having the problem worthwhile, meaningful. What appeared to be negative, you make positive.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty from their own side, may the I, who is also empty from its own side, achieve Medicine Buddha’s enlightenment, which is empty from its own side, and lead all the sentient beings, who are empty from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may all the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, who are experiencing unimaginable suffering, and the people who have died whose names have been given to me, who rely upon me and for whom I have promised to pray immediately be liberated from all the sufferings of the lower realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing that a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover; may my hearing that a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be born in a pure land where they can become enlightened. And if that sentient being has been born as a human being but with no opportunity to practice Dharma, may they achieve enlightenment quickly by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and by receiving Mahayana teachings and putting them into practice.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others (buddhas, bodhisattvas and other sentient beings), may all of us here, the members of our families, all the students and benefactors in this organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives to serve others through the organization, and those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray, whose names have been given to me and those who are offering service have long lives and be healthy, and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma. And, most importantly, may we be able to actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, the lam-rim. May we completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime.

“May the virtuous friends have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

“May all the Sangha in this organization complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime, based on receiving all their needs and all protection.

“May all the social service projects and meditation centers be most beneficial for all sentient beings, immediately pacifying all the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. May they be able to spread the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed. May all the projects here at LMB—the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas and the social service projects—succeed as quickly as possible and be most beneficial for all sentient beings. As well, may all the projects of all the rest of the centers succeed immediately and be able to be most beneficial for other sentient beings. And may all the monasteries and nunneries and all the projects to build holy objects in different parts of the world, particularly the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be completed as quickly as possible by receiving all the funding and other needs.”

This week it has become essential to start the project, to not delay it any more, as well as to have success in the funding.

“May all the projects and centers be most beneficial for sentient beings, causing bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings.

“May nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness, dangers from fire, water, air or earth or any other problem. May everybody have perfect peace and happiness.

“May all these centers and projects, and the Maitreya Buddha statue, cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa be spread in all directions and flourish, and may we be able to cause this to happen.”

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

We’ve recited the Buddha’s name and mantra to increase any merit we have collected one hundred thousand times. The next one also does that, and it has the particular benefit of causing whatever prayers we did to succeed.

[The group recites the final multiplying mantra.]

“I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas Manjugosha, Kshitigarbha, Samantabhadra and so forth, as they realize.

“As the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times dedicate their merits, I will dedicate all my merits in the way that they admire the most.”

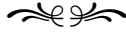
Good night, good morning.



THUBTEN KUNZANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Final Medicine Buddha Session



CEASING SAMBARA

I THOUGHT to give some explanation at this point, rather than waiting until the end of the sadhana. I love this practice of the four immeasurables very much. Of course, unfortunately, even though I love it very much, it doesn't mean my mind is in the immeasurable state twenty-four hours a day.

As I mentioned one time when I was leading the refuge practice here at the beginning of the sadhana, there is a Hinayana way of taking refuge and a Mahayana way of taking refuge. We have to understand the differences between them. One of the two causes for taking refuge is the useful fear of how samsara is in the nature of suffering. What is that samsara? It is the continuity of these aggregates, which are defiled, contaminated by the seed of disturbing thoughts and under the control of karma and delusion. In other words, they have an impure cause. That's why these aggregates, our body and mind, are suffering in nature.

To achieve total liberation—in other words, complete cessation of the continuation of these aggregates, which are suffering in nature—we need to cease the cause of this samsara, karma and delusion. These aggregates, caused by karma and delusion, circle from one life to another. From here they circle to the next samsara, the next aggregates, and the continuation of that samsara circles to the next samsara. In this way we continuously suffer, without end, until we cease the continuation of this samsara. To cease this we need to cease the cause of this samsara, karma and delusion, by completely eliminating the root of samsara, the ignorance that is unknowing in relation to the ultimate nature of the I and the aggregates.

How can we achieve this? How can we make it possible to achieve this

total liberation, this sorrowless state, so that we make it impossible for us to ever experience suffering again? How can we ensure that there will be no more death, no more suffering rebirth, no more suffering old age? How can we make it impossible for us to experience the problems of human beings? There are relationship problems, which are like being in hell. Physically you're not in hell but mentally you're in a hell realm, an emotional hell. There is the suffering of poverty that we always hear about, even though we ourselves mightn't be living in poverty. There are two types of poverty: poverty of material means and poverty of Dharma, or spiritual poverty, which means poverty of scriptural understanding and of realizations. As we hear on the news, millions of people in Afghanistan are now facing many hardships because of poverty, and many others are dying of starvation in many other countries.

Many people have manic depression, which no doctors can help. Even though they take many medicines and try various methods, nothing helps. There are also many people with headaches or incurable sicknesses that no medicine can help. Or even if there is a cure, some people don't recover; somehow the method doesn't work for those people because of their heavy karma. Even though many pujas are done, because the karma is very heavy, they aren't healed quickly. There are the sufferings of physical sickness and of mental problems, mental instability. Human beings and non-human beings, such as spirits, interfere on the basis of past negative karma collected by degenerating samaya vows or in relation to gurus, the Triple Gem or other holy objects or by having harmed other sentient beings. The person then has to live their whole life with no control at all, no freedom at all. They can't use their precious human body to do any practice, and they can't offer service to other sentient beings. They are unable to meditate, unable to actualize the path. It is very heavy karma.

THE PROBLEM OF DESIRE

As well as all those sufferings, the whole world is filled with the problem of desire. Wars basically have to do with desire. Because desire isn't controlled, there are wars between countries. This is what is now happening with the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and damage to the Pentagon on September 11. Basically, it has all to do with not controlling desire. It happened because of desire and lack of Dharma wisdom; it happened because of wrong views, because of not understanding what is true

and what is false. It happened because of the lack of the wisdom that understands these things.

It has now affected the rest of the world. Many airlines have lost business, even Swiss and British ones, as well as many airlines in America. One airline in Arizona has closed down. Many banks have collapsed, and many other businesses are bankrupt. Even though the destruction happened in New York in America, it has affected not only the whole of America but many other countries all over the world, including Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the mother of the incarnation of Gen Jampa Wangdu has been working for twenty years in the same company. (Gen Jampa Wangdu was one of the great meditators from Tibet. He passed away in Dharamsala, where he had realized emptiness and actualized bodhicitta and the Six Yogas of Naropa; he had very high attainment of the tantric path, actualizing clear light and the illusory body. He had great success in that life. He completed the nine levels of calm abiding, or shamatha, and achieved the actual shamatha at Dalhousie. He completed the lam-rim realizations, based on the root, guru devotion.) So, in the company where the mother of that meditator's incarnation works, many of her friends and their boss lost their jobs, because the company couldn't afford to pay all the workers. She said that because she has been working there for a long time, she wouldn't mind giving her job to one of the people who had lost their job. Many hotels have also lost business. There are problems all over the world. It has affected not only Western countries but even Muslim countries.

However, you can see that all these wars, fighting back and forth, that have happened in the past and are happening in the present are basically related to desire. It's a problem of desire. In the past many millions of people have died because one influential person didn't control their desire.

It is due to the problem of desire that you end up again and again in prison. You go back home, then again go to prison; you go home again, then again go back to prison. It is due to desire, to being unable to control desire.

It is by following desire that a person becomes an alcoholic. Following desire, you drink more and more and then become an alcoholic. Your life becomes very difficult; you cause so much trouble to yourself. What made you an alcoholic and made your life so difficult, so uncontrolled, is your own desire. Nobody else did it, only you yourself did it. By following desire, you made yourself an alcoholic. You completely destroy your life. You can't function; you can't do anything.

The mind, which has buddha-nature, gives all the hope, all the potential, and a perfect human body gives you the incredible opportunity to achieve any happiness you wish, temporary or ultimate. You can achieve all the happiness of future lives: a beautiful perfect body, with perfect people around you who do everything you want them to do. You could become a king, be the wealthiest person or be born even in a deva realm or in a pure land of buddha where you can become enlightened. This is another quick way to become enlightened. If you don't become enlightened in this life, if death happens without your completing the path, you can go to a pure land and complete the path and become enlightened there. This precious human body gives you the opportunity to achieve any happiness of future lives that you wish to achieve.

You can also achieve ultimate happiness, with total cessation of suffering. As I mentioned before, you can cease the continuation of this samsara, these aggregates, which are suffering in nature and caused by karma and delusions. You can also achieve full enlightenment, the cessation of even the subtle faults of the mind and the completion of all realizations. If you wish to, you can achieve the peerless happiness of full enlightenment. With this precious human body you can achieve any happiness you wish, including the happiness and inner peace of this life. By achieving the happiness beyond this life, by creating the cause to achieve enlightenment, you achieve all the other kinds of happiness, including the happiness and success of this life, by the way.

Why are you able to achieve all this with this precious human body? Because there is buddha-nature within your own mind. This is within you. Even the mosquito or flea that bites you and takes your blood has buddha-nature, this potential to achieve full enlightenment. As I mentioned the other night, even though they have buddha-nature, because they don't have a human body they're unable to practice. I often give the example of cats and dogs. Even though cats and dogs live with people, if you explained to them for eons that the cause of happiness is virtue and that if you want happiness you must practice virtue, there is no way they could understand you. You could explain for eons in both an English and American accent. If they didn't understand the American accent, then hopefully they would understand the English accent. I'm joking. Even if you explained for eons, there's no way that cats and dogs could understand.

It would be the same if you explained to a snake, "If you want happiness, you must practice virtue." The snake, with its long body, is slithering around

looking for a mouse or a frog. Its mind is thinking of mice or frogs or something else to eat. Due to the pitiful karma that a snake has, that's the only food it can eat. It's due to its past karma. I suppose it's possible that someone could have the karma to see a snake and think, "Oh, this snake is so beautiful," as if it had no suffering. Maybe someone could become attracted and attached to a snake. You never know. Sentient beings have all kinds of views. Someone could be attracted to that, and that could then cause them to be born as a snake.

If you're attracted to Buddha, on the other hand, that attraction leads you to enlightenment. It leads you to always be able to be near Buddha, to see Buddha, to be the heart disciple of Buddha, as in the story of the arhat Shariputra. You might remember the main cause of Shariputra always being with Buddha and becoming Buddha's heart disciple from reading *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, the lam-rim teaching by the great enlightened Tibetan lama, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, it's mentioned that in one of his past lives, Shariputra was traveling and stopped one night in a temple. He had a light and was fixing his shoes. He then saw a painting of Buddha on the wall and thought it was very beautiful. While he was sewing his shoes with needle and thread, from time to time he would take a rest, look at the painting and think, "How wonderful it is!" Doing that left a positive imprint on his mind, which became the cause in one of his lives for him to become the arhat Shariputra, Buddha's heart disciple, and to be with Buddha.

Here in this case, it's possible that thinking a snake is beautiful could become the cause to be born as a snake. However, I'm not saying that is the only cause. There are various negative karmas that cause rebirth as a snake. As you might remember, in the story of Jinpa Pelgye, I think, Buddha explained that in one of his lives he was born as a beautiful girl who was so attached to her body that when she died she was then born as a snake. I think the snake went inside the mouth of the girl's body or something like that. There are many stories like that.

There are various negative karmas that cause one to reincarnate as a snake. It's not that you would like so much to be born as a snake that you purposely take rebirth as a snake. It's not that you are happy to be born as a snake. You reincarnate as a snake due to heavy negative karma, due to anger, attachment and ignorance, including the root ignorance not knowing the ultimate nature of the I and the aggregates. Everything is rooted in that.

A snake, for example, is without freedom. It is totally under the control

of past karma and delusions that the consciousness took birth in this particular body. Even though this snake body depends on the father and mother snake, that's not the main cause. The physical cause of the body is the male and female snake mating and the sperm and the egg meeting, but there is the other cause, which is mental: the karma and negative imprint left on the mental continuum in the past life. This is what causes the consciousness of this being to take this body, to migrate and be conceived in this snake body. Due to karma and delusion, the consciousness migrates into this snake body totally without freedom, totally without choice. Without choice, it receives such a body that lives only by eating frogs, mice and other sentient beings. It has no other means to survive. Every day it has to kill so many other beings.

Every day animals such as snakes have to eat so many other creatures, and those creatures get unbelievably frightened. The frog tries to escape, but it can't jump very far, especially on rocks. The snake comes so fast from behind that the body of the frog goes into the mouth of the snake so that only the head and the front legs are left outside. The frog, with big eyes, holds strongly to a plant, but almost half of its body is already inside the snake's mouth. It is unbelievably frightening for the frog.

At a park or zoo for tourists somewhere in south India, Roger and I saw crocodiles on the side of the road. I don't think they were dead but they looked as if they were dead. I don't know how long they had been there without moving. You couldn't see any movement. There were also many snakes curled up in a small mud house. Their food was small brown birds, maybe sparrows. A skinny Indian worker would bring a basket full of those small birds and feed them to the snakes. The snake would coil its body around the bird so that it couldn't move, then it would open its mouth and eat the bird. While this was happening, the other birds didn't notice; they would just be walking around like normal, pecking at the ground with their beaks, as if they were outside.

In another place there were different snakes, many huge ones. The skinny Indian man brought frogs there to give those snakes. I think he must give them thousands of frogs every day—very heavy karma. He jumped down from the wall and went there where the snakes were. He picked up one green snake then swung it back and forth. After some time, he let it go. The green snake must have been very frightened, I think, because as soon as he let it go, it quickly hid in the bushes. I think this man probably does this many times a day when groups of people come to see the snakes.

My talk got scattered—it went all over the place!

SAVING THE LIVES OF ANIMALS

I think I have mentioned at another time, a number of years ago, that the centers in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong quite often save the lives of animals. They buy animals from restaurants and markets where people buy live animals for food. In Taiwan or Hong Kong, there is a man with a truck who volunteers to help anybody who wants to liberate animals. He brings his truck and helps to take the animals to the reservoir. He voluntarily offers this service to anybody who is saving the lives of animals.

At our centers in Singapore and also Hong Kong, I think, where they do the practice quite often, one of the students is responsible for collecting donations from the center members for saving the lives of animals. That person is in charge of arranging everything. They go to the market and buy the animals, then bring them in a truck to the ocean or reservoir.

In Hong Kong they do the practice quite often, and liberating animals has also happened many times when I've been there. One time the truck was filled with tanks of water with oxygen. There were many big fish and many frogs. We chanted mantras and blessed many buckets of water. People came with their children. Many family members and other people who don't normally come to the center to meditate or do practice also participate. Everybody chants whatever they can of the different mantras then blows on the buckets of water. The water is then poured into the tanks of water filled with big fish on the truck. The blessed water is also poured over the many thousands of frogs and sprinkled on birds. Everybody together, all the parents and children, then help to liberate the animals in the ocean. This is a very good thing to do because that day you feel you are doing something for others. You are doing something pure, without any expectation. At other times you may be giving things but it's not pure because you have the expectation of receiving something in return. Here there is nothing in return. You simply help the animals, causing them to have longer lives. I think it's a very positive thing. It's very good education for the children, as well as a very good thing for everybody to practice.

We have a table on which we put many holy objects that we bring from the center. I also bring Buddha's relics and all the many pictures of buddhas that I travel with. We then set up an altar with all those holy objects and arrange sets of offerings around them. We then do refuge and bodhicitta,

the seven limbs, a mandala offering and a lam-rim prayer as a puja for the animals. We make these offerings in the same way as when we do a puja for other people. After that, we chant mantras, then blow on buckets of water. This way of blessing animals with water purifies their negative karma and causes them to have a good rebirth in their next life. And by hearing the mantras, the frogs, birds and other animals that can hear are able to meet the Dharma in their next life. With the huge sacks of shellfish, we just pour the blessed water on them to purify all their negative karma. I don't think the shellfish can hear mantras. These are the ones that people fry in oil with a lot of garlic then put in a cup or a big bowl, where two or three people eat them with chopsticks. In Malaysia one wealthy benefactor that I know explained to me that he enjoyed very much eating live shellfish with chopsticks. He said that they're very delicious while they're moving, while they're alive, with just some oil. As I didn't feel it was the right time to talk to him, I just listened. Or maybe I wasn't brave enough. I wasn't sure whether, if I told him a story about karma, he would believe in that or not. Anyway, he told me how delicious they were and how he enjoyed them so much.

Blessing the animals with water blessed with all these powerful mantras, including Medicine Buddha mantra, purifies their negative karma and causes them to have a good rebirth. That's an incredible gift from us to the animals. Giving them a good rebirth as a deva or human, where they have an opportunity to achieve much happiness and comfort, all temporary and ultimate happiness, is an incredible gift.

The other thing we do is have everybody, adults and children, carry the animals in as many circumambulations as possible. Each of the animals, no matter how many thousands of them there are, creates the cause of enlightenment with every circumambulation. And by the way, they create the cause of liberation from samsara and good rebirth. They create the causes to have a good rebirth for hundreds or thousands of lifetimes. Because you are taking them in circumambulation around holy objects, you're causing them to create causes of enlightenment and, by the way, causes of liberation from samsara and of all the happiness of future lives. From just one circumambulation, they can experience all this happiness for hundreds or thousands of lifetimes. Therefore, if you're carrying one hundred or one thousand animals, you're giving enlightenment to those one hundred or one thousand animals. By the way, you're giving them all those types of happiness as you take them round the holy objects. That's one point.

The other point is that this happens even if there is only one stupa, one

statue of Buddha or one text. By taking them round even one time, you are giving enlightenment to the one thousand insects in the plastic bag or other container. If there are one hundred holy objects—one hundred statues, stupas, tsa-tsas or texts—on the table and you carry one animal around the table one time, you are giving one hundred causes of enlightenment to that animal. If there are one thousand holy objects on the table, if you take one insect around the table, you are giving it one thousand causes of enlightenment. What I'm saying might sound funny, but it means you are enabling the sentient being to collect merit, to collect one thousand causes of enlightenment. By taking one insect, no matter how tiny it is, around at the same level as the holy objects, you are giving this sentient being one thousand causes of enlightenment. If there are one billion holy objects on the table, you are enabling that one tiny insect (or however many thousands of insects there are in the plastic bag or container) to collect one billion causes to achieve enlightenment.

Therefore, it is extremely good to have as many holy objects as possible to circumambulate. At a temple, where there are already many holy objects, you can circumambulate the outside of the building if there's a road or path around it, like here at LMB. When you carry animals around the outside of this building, your circumambulation includes all the holy objects here inside. Later, when we have the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues and the 100,000 stupas, you will be able to carry animals around them. There will then be many more holy objects because many tsa-tsas go inside each stupa. In dependence upon how many sentient beings you are carrying in circumambulation and how many holy objects there are, you are giving them that many causes of enlightenment. If there are a thousand or a billion holy objects, you are giving them a thousand or a billion causes of enlightenment. Then, by the way, you are also giving them causes of liberation from samsara and of the happiness of future lives. So, it's a most precious gift.

This is not the only thing you can do to help animals. You can purify them with blessed water or by blowing on them, which is the best, most certain way to help them, and you can then take them around the holy objects. It's such an easy way to liberate them. The existence of external holy objects makes it so easy to save sentient beings from reincarnating again in the lower realms and to give them a good rebirth. You can give them a good rebirth for many lifetimes, thousands of lifetimes. It makes it so easy to help them to purify their negative karma and defilements and to achieve enlightenment.

Even though the main thing is to meditate on the path, we also need to

collect merit. The existence of holy objects makes it unbelievably easy to benefit and liberate others, and you yourself also collect merit. It becomes so easy to purify and collect merit and thus easy to achieve enlightenment.

So, going back to Singapore.... In one of the early times we bought a lot of frogs. I suggested that we also buy snakes, so the person in charge bought three sacks of snakes. They were bought the night before and kept in a car, then brought to the reservoir that morning. When the snakes were released, they seemed puzzled. Maybe it was because of the heat, but they seemed as if they were drunk. They didn't escape immediately but went away very slowly.

At that time it made me wonder: we're liberating snakes, and they will eat mice and frogs and harm birds, so what do we do? They frighten and are a danger to those other animals. However, if we don't liberate them, they will be killed. They have such a long body and will experience so much suffering when their whole body is split. The bigger the body, the more the suffering. So, what is the solution? If we don't liberate that snake, it will suffer. If we liberate it, it will harm so many other sentient beings. So, what do we do? Well, we liberated them anyway, but it made me think for a while. I came to the conclusion that the only solution is to free all sentient beings from samsara.

You also have to free yourself from samsara so that you don't harm other sentient beings. If you are born as a snake or a tiger, what can you do? You have no food except other animals. As human beings, we don't need to kill. We have so many choices of food we can eat that we can survive without killing animals. We can change our habits; we can change our mind. By generating thoughts not to harm others and to benefit them, we can then change our habits.

DHARMA IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

The solution is to free sentient beings from samsara. And what is the method for that? It's Dharma. We have to free sentient beings from samsara, from the circling continuation of these aggregates. In essence, to explain it simply, we have to free sentient beings from this body and mind, which are suffering in nature, which experience so many problems, which are a container of suffering. Besides the four major sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death, there are so many other problems. Every day sentient beings are experiencing so many problems. Even if there are no physical sicknesses,

there are mental problems, such as loneliness and depression. There are all the emotional sufferings: feeling hurt or jealous, the pain of attachment and anger. Of course, this gross physical body doesn't continue, or circle, to the next life. The part of the aggregates that continues to the next life is the mind. It is the continuation of the mind that joins to the next aggregates, to the next *samsara*.

Ceasing *samsara* completely comes by ceasing karma and delusions. No matter how much progress there is in developing technology or the physical sciences that alone can't stop the suffering of death. And because you can't stop that, you can't stop the suffering of rebirth. In a similar way, you can't stop the sufferings of old age and sickness. You can't make it so that you don't experience them at all, because technology can't cease karma and delusions. Even the most sophisticated machine that science can develop can't make it impossible to get angry; it can't eliminate desire, or attachment. No matter how much technology is developed, it can't cease desire, this painful mind that brings so many problems and so much confusion and unhappiness in your own life and in the lives of others. So many disasters are created in life because of desire. Anger then comes and creates so many other disasters. No matter how much technology is developed, it can't stop the three poisonous minds of ignorance, anger and attachment. No matter how much technology or the physical sciences are developed, they can't eliminate the very root of *samsara*, which is the ignorance that apprehends the I and the aggregates, or phenomena, to be truly existent. It can't eliminate the root of *samsara*, the root of all karma and delusions, the root of all suffering. It can't stop the false view that is the object of that ignorance.

Anyway, now going back.... Therefore, Dharma is the only solution. Dharma practice is the only thing that can cease the cause of suffering, karma and delusion, and the root of suffering, ignorance. Of course, the specific Dharma realization that eliminates ignorance is wisdom, the wisdom that realizes that the object of ignorance is empty, totally nonexistent. This wisdom realizes that the I and the aggregates, which appear to be truly existent, to exist from their own side, and which ignorance believes to be true, are empty, totally nonexistent. So, the only solution is Dharma, specifically, the wisdom realizing emptiness.

The conclusion is that for you to help other sentient beings, for you to liberate other sentient beings, other sentient beings need to learn Dharma. They need to understand Dharma, practice Dharma and actualize the path. For you to help them do that, you yourself need to understand Dharma and

realize the path. So, Dharma practice is for both you and others. The solution is Dharma practice. There is nothing else.

Here again you can see that there is nothing more important in life than Dharma practice. The rest is meaningless. Anything other than Dharma is meaningless.

I now want to make some commentary on that, just to clarify it a little.

When you go shopping, if you go shopping with your mind in lam-rim, with a bodhicitta motivation, the altruistic thought to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, your shopping doesn't become a cause of samsara, a cause to reincarnate in the lower realms; it becomes a cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. When you go to buy food or clothing, even though you haven't realized emptiness, the ultimate nature of the I and phenomena, you can do the shopping with mindfulness that you the buyer, the money you are paying and the object that you are buying from the shopkeeper are merely imputed by the mind. The buyer is merely imputed by the mind. What you are called depends on what function you are performing, whether you are buying or selling. If you are performing the function of buying, due to that action, you are merely imputed "the buyer." Because you pay money and get something for it, that action is merely imputed "buying." The person to whom you give the money and who is supposed to give you something that you want in return is merely imputed "shopkeeper" or "seller." Due to their function, that person is merely imputed "shopkeeper" or "seller." Your mind merely imputes "shopkeeper" to that person who performs the function of owning a shop or selling things. And what is called "money" is merely imputed by your thought to the paper with all the designs that is made by the government and officially accepted as money. This paper, officially accepted and believed to be money, has been labeled "money." You label "money" on this paper that has been officially designed and labeled as money by the government. Because you are giving this paper that is officially accepted and labeled to the other person to get things, you merely impute, "I am giving money. I am giving ten dollars." The government officials who made this paper with all its designs simply believe that it is money, and you also believe the same thing. You then give this paper to the shopkeeper. Your mind merely imputed "money," and because you are giving this paper to the shopkeeper, you believe that you are giving money to them. That is what you merely impute and then believe.

The buyer who does the action of buying from the shopkeeper, the

shopkeeper, the action of selling, the money: all these labels came from the mind. All these labels were imputed by the mind and then believed in. When you analyze all of them, you see that the mind merely imputes, or just thinks, “This is this.” It’s just an idea. You just think something and believe in it. It’s not that all this is happening in your mind. You might think that this person and all these shops or department stores are in your mind, but that’s not quite it, even though it might look like that when you analyze how all this came from your mind. Since your mind simply thought and believed this, since you created the idea of all this, you might think that everything is in your mind, but it’s not quite like that.

It’s true to say that some things are the mind, but it’s wrong to say that about other things. In your daily life, the day when you see that your friend is angry with you or doesn’t love you any more or has left you, even though it’s wrong, it’s good to think, “All these things are happening in my mind. It’s just in my mind.” I think that’s helpful during that time. It’s as if you’re having a dream of that happening, so it doesn’t bother you because it’s just a dream. When you think, “All this is in my mind,” there is no painful mind of attachment, and no anger arises.

Everything has a base. Take the aggregates, for example. The general aggregates are the base in relation to the label “I,” but “aggregates” is the label in relation to the collection of the five aggregates. The aggregates are the base in relation to the label “I.” This is the label that the aggregates receive. “Aggregates” is then the label in relation to its base, the collection of the five aggregates: form, feeling, discrimination, compounding aggregates and consciousness. Each of those five then has its own base. Those five are the base in relation to the general aggregates, but each of them is then labeled in relation to its own base. So, it continues in this way. Any base is a label imputed to another base. Therefore, all the bases are labels merely imputed by the mind; all the bases exist in mere name, merely imputed by a thought. That’s the very nature of everything; that’s how everything is.

HARMING OTHERS

Anyway, going back to what I was saying before.... Without talking about other sentient beings, if even we ourselves don’t get liberated from samsara, the suffering realm of these circling aggregates (and this present samsara has not only a mind but also a body that is suffering in nature, caused by karma and delusion), so many sentient beings will have to suffer because of us. For

example, think of how many insects die when we drive a car. Think of how many sentient beings there are in the vegetables we eat. You don't see all the insects because the vegetables you buy in a supermarket have already been washed and cleaned by other people. If you are taking vegetables directly from a farm, however, you see there are so many tiny insects living on green plants. Their consciousness takes place there, and their body becomes green. If you're not aware, you don't notice them. If you don't normally pay attention, if you don't normally think about whether there are sentient beings there, you think there are no sentient beings there. However, there are many tiny green insects, the same color as the leaves, on the front or back of the leaves when vegetables come straight from a garden or a farm. When the vegetables are washed and cut for food, all those insects are killed. You can see this if you check carefully the vegetables that come straight from a farm. With the vegetables that come from a supermarket, they've already been washed, so somebody else has already killed the insects.

I've just remembered a story. Tim McNeill, the person in charge of Wisdom Publications (before, it was Nick Ribush), has a house in the country outside Boston, with a big lake down below the house. One time I went to stay at his country house for a few days. Tim's friend Bob, who did fundraising for presidential elections, also came to stay there. Tim had his own vegetable garden, so he had picked some vegetables and made a nice, big, American-style salad. Bob, Roger, Tim and I were sitting out on the patio. I usually have many superstitions. Like a preta, I find hairs and worms in food. Pretas see food as pus and blood, whereas other beings see it more purely. The hairs and worms are very easy to find because of my superstition. I started to eat the salad, but then I saw that there were many tiny green insects on the leaves. I ate a little but then just pushed the salad backward and forward, and I was looking at Roger. Bob kept on saying, "This is so delicious!" He made it out to be special because Tim had his own garden and the salad hadn't come from a supermarket. Bob said many times, "So delicious, so delicious."

Roger was sitting there, and I don't know how I passed the message, but I got him to put the salad somewhere in a corner of the garden. I don't think Tim knew what had happened.

Anyway, what I was saying is that if we ourselves don't get liberated quickly from samsara, the longer we are in samsara, the more sentient beings that have to suffer because, like a snake, we have no other way to live. Without sentient beings suffering, dying and killing for our comfort and survival,

there's no way we could survive one day, one hour, one minute or even one second.

For example, when this house was built, how many worms in the ground and insects on the trees were killed? So many sentient beings died so that we now have the comfort of this house where we can do practice. Here one point is that we *are* using this house for practice, for generating bodhicitta. We are generating bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment not only for the thousands and thousands of insects who have died, but for every single sentient being without exception. As much as possible, we are trying to do prostrations for them; we are trying to make offerings for them; we are trying to do Medicine Buddha practice for them; we are trying to dedicate the merits for them, for all sentient beings. Here we're not using this house just for our comfort but for practice for all sentient beings, to liberate them and bring them to enlightenment. Sentient beings, and not just the ones that suffered when this house was built, receive a lot of benefit. Even though many sentient beings have suffered for this house, we are making it meaningful, or worthwhile, by doing practice to bring them to enlightenment.

It is the same with water. If you look at water through a microscope, you see that it contains many tiny sentient beings. When we heat the water, those sentient beings die. Then, as I often say during courses, to have one grain of rice, land needs to be fertilized, and when the land is fertilized, so many ants, worms and mice in the fields have to be killed. They die for us to survive. And this grain of rice has come from another grain of rice, for which so many sentient beings suffered and died and other sentient beings had to create the negative karma of killing them. That grain of rice came from yet another grain of rice, for which so many sentient beings suffered and died and other sentient beings had to create the negative karma of killing them. Then that grain came from another grain of rice.... It goes on and on in this way. If you think about the entire continuation of this one grain of rice that you eat, numberless sentient beings have suffered and died for it and other sentient beings have created the negative karma of killing them. In all the generation of this one grain of rice, numberless sentient beings have suffered and died and others have created the negative karma of killing. This is how it is even for those who are vegetarian, those who are not even eating meat.

Now, when we are eating a plate of rice, since numberless sentient beings suffered and died for it and other sentient beings created the negative karma of killing them, there's no way we can eat even one grain of rice for our

own happiness, with the thought of seeking happiness only for ourselves. It's unbearable when we know that numberless sentient beings suffered and died and other sentient beings created negative karma in the continuation of this one grain of rice. There's no way we can eat it with the thought of seeking happiness only for ourselves. It's impossible to eat the grain of rice for ourselves, for our own happiness. And for a whole plate of rice and vegetables, so many sentient beings have suffered and died and other sentient beings have created the negative karma of killing them.

We are talking about one meal in one day of this life. By eating this food, you have to sacrifice your life for others. It's impossible not to do that. You have to sacrifice yourself at least for the numberless sentient beings who have suffered to bring you this food, for all the numberless insects and animals who have suffered and died and the people who have created negative karma by killing them to produce this food. It's impossible to eat this food without sacrificing your life to others, especially to those numberless sentient beings. You have to do something meaningful, something beneficial, for them. For their happiness, you have to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering, ceasing their delusion and karma, and bring them to full enlightenment. Without cessation of their delusion and karma, there is no way they can be liberated from samsara. What they need is happiness: not only temporary happiness, but ultimate happiness, with cessation of all suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. What they need is the peerless happiness of enlightenment. This is the best, longest-lasting happiness; this is the highest, everlasting happiness. Even if they don't know that such a thing exists, this is what they need. Even when they go shopping, people look for the best and buy the best quality they can afford. And it is the same with all other creatures. So, what others need is for you to free them from suffering and the cause of suffering, karma and delusion, and to bring them to ultimate happiness, especially enlightenment. Causing them to achieve this is the benefit you're going to bring them. So, that happens only through Dharma. For that, you yourself first need to learn Dharma and then actualize the path.

Again my talk has become scattered....

It is the same with our silk clothes and other clothes. If we think of the long-term evolution of silk clothes, again they came from the suffering and killing of so many sentient beings.

Without sentient beings suffering and other sentient beings harming them, there is no way we can get even water or a plate of food. Our survival

not only for one day, but even for an hour, a minute or a second depends on so many sentient beings suffering and creating negative karma. It is in dependence on so many sentient beings that we have food and drink and all our other comforts and enjoyments, such as a house and clothing to protect our body. Therefore, without talking about snakes, tigers and all the other sentient beings, we ourselves need to get liberated from samsara as quickly as possible so that we don't have to be reborn any more and depend on other sentient beings for our survival. Numberless sentient beings have to suffer for our comfort and survival. Therefore, we need to practice Dharma and actualize the path; we need to realize the four noble truths, which is the essence of the path. Buddha has revealed the complete path to total liberation from all suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. Buddha's teaching reveals the means to be totally liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause. Not only that, but it reveals the complete path to full enlightenment.

Christianity, while it has some good things that are useful in life, doesn't have a complete path to achieve liberation or full enlightenment. That's the difference. Christianity doesn't mention bodhicitta; it doesn't mention having compassion for pigs or fish. Compassion for animals isn't emphasized, even though there is compassion for poor or sick human beings. People who sincerely practice Christianity do sacrifice themselves. His Holiness was saying that there was a priest who sacrificed himself to look after someone with leprosy. He served that person and didn't care whether he himself got that contagious disease. While there are individual people like that, in Christian teachings, there's no emphasis on compassion for every single sentient being, for every being who is obscured and suffering. That kind of compassion is not there.

Since that compassion is not there, Christians can't have the realization of bodhicitta. Great compassion that embraces all sentient beings is the root from where bodhicitta rises. Because you have that great compassion, you feel it is unbearable that sentient beings are suffering in samsara, being under the control of karma and delusion, and you wish to free them from all their suffering and its cause and bring them to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment. You then generate the special attitude, thinking to do that by yourself. For success in that, what do you need to do? First you yourself need to achieve enlightenment. The realization of bodhicitta then comes. Without great compassion, which embraces every single one of the numberless sentient beings without exception, you cannot then generate

bodhicitta. Without depending on every single sentient being, you cannot generate bodhicitta, and without bodhicitta, you cannot enter the Mahayana path to enlightenment. You then can't cease the gross and subtle defilements without completing the Mahayana path, without the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. You need to actualize the Mahayana arya path to directly cease the defilements with the support of bodhicitta. And you need to complete the two types of merit: the merit of virtue and the merit of wisdom. By completing the practice, which comes in two, method and wisdom, you then achieve full enlightenment.

The techniques for developing bodhicitta are not there in Christianity. Even though there are good-hearted, compassionate individual people who are helping the poor, since the Christian religion itself has no technique for developing bodhicitta step by step, it's impossible to achieve enlightenment.

The four noble truths are also not there in Christianity. There's no explanation of the entire suffering, of not only the suffering of pain but the suffering of change, the temporary samsaric pleasures that are in the nature of suffering. Therefore, how can you cut attachment to samsaric pleasures? There's no way to do that if there's no explanation of how samsaric sense pleasures are suffering in nature, if that which is suffering in reality is not introduced as suffering. Ordinary beings without renunciation of samsara just hallucinate that the suffering of change is pleasure. Because there's less pain and the suffering is subtle, you don't notice it, so your mind labels it "pleasure." It then appears to you to be pleasure, and you become attached to it. If there's no explanation of how that is suffering in nature, you cannot be liberated from the attachment that clings to that.

It is the same with pervasive compounding suffering, such as these aggregates. These aggregates are contaminated by the seed of delusions and under the control of karma and delusion. This body and mind are suffering in nature. If there's no explanation of pervasive compounding suffering, how can we achieve liberation? How can we achieve liberation from the attachment that clings to these aggregates? There is no way we can be liberated. There's no way we can generate renunciation of this samsara, of this pervasive compounding suffering. We can never cut the attachment to this.

Also, because this suffering is never explained, the wisdom of emptiness is never explained, so there is no opportunity to realize emptiness, ultimate nature, and cut the delusions, especially ignorance. Ignorance is the root of all the delusions, all the karma and all the suffering. Since the wisdom

realizing emptiness, the ultimate nature of the I, aggregates and so forth, is not mentioned, there is no means to cut the root of all these sufferings, karma and delusion. Because there is no mention of right view, of the wisdom realizing the ultimate nature of the I and phenomena, the seed of ignorance gives rise to ignorance, like a seed in the ground giving rise to a sprout. It is the seed, or imprint, left on the mental continuum that gives rise to ignorance. We need to cease that seed completely, to make it impossible for the ignorance that is the root of samsara, of suffering, to arise. That can be done *only* by the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. Since that wisdom is not mentioned in Christianity, since the ultimate nature is not explained there, that opportunity to achieve total liberation, what is called “nirvana,” is not there.

TAKING MAHAYANA REFUGE

So, going back to refuge, which is what I was explaining before. The Hinayana way of taking refuge is with the useful fear that one’s own samsara is suffering in nature and faith that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have the power to save one from the oceans of samsaric sufferings. All suffering is included in three divisions: suffering of pain; suffering of change, which are the temporary sense pleasures of samsara; and pervasive compounding suffering, which refers to the aggregates, which are suffering in nature. With these two causes you then rely upon Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with your whole heart. That is the Hinayana way of taking refuge.

For the Mahayana way of taking refuge, there should be three causes. One is the useful fear of your own samsara, understanding how it is suffering in nature. You then think, “Like myself, numberless other sentient beings are suffering in samsara.” You reflect on how other sentient beings are suffering in samsara and wish them to be free from the sufferings of samsara. This is compassion, the third cause of Mahayana refuge. The second cause is the faith that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have the power to save you and all other sentient beings from the suffering of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion. With these three causes, you then rely upon Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with your whole heart. That’s the Mahayana way of taking refuge.

Therefore, when we take refuge we should always remember not only the first two causes, but also compassion. As I mentioned the other night, you first reflect on your own samsara, which is in the nature of suffering. You reflect, in essence, on the three types of suffering. You then look at the

numberless other sentient beings who are in a similar situation, suffering in samsara. So, what can be done? “The guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha who are in front of me are the only ones who have the power to save me and all other sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering. Therefore, I go to them for refuge, which means relying upon them with my whole heart.” You then recite the words of refuge. Once your mind has been transformed into refuge through the three causes (fear; faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; and compassion) you then rely upon them with your whole heart and recite “namo gurubhyah” or “lama la kyab su chi wo.” When your mind has been transformed into refuge, you then recite with that mind. Since your heart and what you recite are then connected, it becomes very meaningful and very rich. You then do the meditations of purifying and receiving the qualities.

THE FOUR IMMEASURABLE THOUGHTS

I will mention the four immeasurables and then stop. I actually meant to expand a little on *All phenomena are empty by nature and thus become emptiness only*. Well, I did mention a little bit on emptiness....

My idea was actually to elaborate on this at this time, but then my talk went to refuge, and then it went round and round and round. It went sight-seeing!

I think here the sadhana has immeasurable loving kindness first: “May all sentient beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.” This is the shorter version of generating the four immeasurable thoughts. The longer version, which is in *Jorchö*, the preparatory practice, is a little more elaborate. *Jorchö* has practices to purify negative karma and defilements, which become obstacles to achieving realization, and has various means to collect extensive merit, which allows one to have realizations of the path to enlightenment within one’s heart. It also has guru yoga. Those previous two, purifying negative karma and collecting merit, are not enough; you also need to receive the blessings of the guru by meditating that the guru is one with buddha. With the devotion that sees the guru in that way and then relies upon that, you then make the various offerings, do confession and the rest of the seven-limb practice, mandala offering, requests and so forth. By making offerings and so forth with that devotion, you then collect extensive merit. It is receiving blessings from the guru that causes you to have realization within your mind. You then meditate on the lam-rim path, which

is the actual body of the practice. *Jorchö*, or preparatory practice, is what makes it possible to have realization of the path to enlightenment within your mind.

In *Jorchö*, you first generate the immeasurable thought of equanimity:

How wonderful it would be if sentient beings were to abide in equanimity, free from anger and attachment, discriminating some sentient beings as distant and others as close.

When you recite this, you can first think of yourself. Remember how these discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment create many sufferings for you and for others. Then look at the rest of the world, at how sentient beings are suffering so much with these thoughts of anger and attachment, discriminating some sentient beings as far and others as close. World War I, World War II and this present war are the same in that they all happened because of discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment. It is the same whether on the largest scale, where many millions of people are killed, or on a small scale, where two insects are fighting and killing each other.

Think in a vast way about the harm of discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment. You will then get the feeling:

How wonderful it would be if sentient beings were free from discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment, holding some distant and others close.

You can then really feel the wonder of how it would be if everyone were free from these thoughts. If everybody were free from anger and attachment, how would it be? There would be unbelievable peace for everybody, including you.

May they be free from these discriminating thoughts.
I will free them from these discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment.

When you recite this you should know that here you are taking the responsibility upon yourself: "This is what I am going to do."

The four immeasurable thoughts are there at the beginning when we do *Guru Puja* in the morning and in other practices, especially long sadhanas.

Even in Highest Yoga Tantra practice, you can see that the four immeasurable thoughts are always there just before you engage in meditation on the three kayas. This is because practice of the four immeasurables is a powerful way to collect merit. For example, to be born as a king, especially a wheel-turning king, you need to collect inconceivable merit. Such a king is the most powerful one in the whole world; no other king can compete with him. In a similar way, you need to collect a lot of merit before you engage in meditating on the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. You need a lot of merit to achieve them.

During the rest of the day and especially when you are in danger of having emotional problems—of getting angry with and harming someone or of giving rise to discriminating thoughts—you then remember, “Oh, I said this prayer this morning and made this vow. I have taken responsibility for this today.” This way the prayer you did in the morning in your meditation room or in the temple or gumpa is connected to the rest of your daily life. There’s a continuation of that. Otherwise, there’s just a few seconds on your meditation cushion, and that’s it. The rest of the day then becomes the complete opposite to the prayer you did in the morning. It becomes, “For a few seconds I’m going to do this, but for the rest of the day I’m going to practice the complete opposite; I’m going to practice discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment, especially when I encounter difficult situations. I’m going to practice equanimity only for the few minutes that I’m sitting peacefully here on my cushion and nobody’s bothering me.” Anyway, I’m joking.

To be able to do that practice of equanimity, you then make request to your guru, for whom you have generated devotion by looking at him as buddha:

Please, guru-buddha, grant me blessings to be able to do this.

You can visualize that nectar is emitted and purifies the discriminating thoughts, both yours and those of other sentient beings. You can think that you then receive blessings to be able to free other sentient beings from these discriminating thoughts.

How wonderful it would be if sentient beings were to abide in equanimity, free from thoughts of anger and attachment, discriminating some sentient beings as distant and others as close is generating the immeasurable wish. May they be free from discriminating thoughts of anger and attachment is

immeasurable prayer. *I will free them from these discriminating thoughts* is the immeasurable special attitude. And *Please, guru-buddha, grant me blessings to be able to do this* is the immeasurable request.

Next is generating immeasurable loving kindness.

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings had happiness and the causes of happiness.

Here you particularly think, as I mentioned before, that what sentient beings need is highest, everlasting peace and happiness. Even though they might have no idea of this, this is what they need. When you wish others to have happiness, think especially of the peerless happiness of enlightenment. Don't just think of ordinary pleasures: the pleasure of chocolate or ice cream or coffee or the beach when the sun is shining and there are big waves. When you say that you wish other sentient beings to have happiness, in your mind think especially of enlightenment.

May they have happiness and the causes of happiness.

I will cause them to have happiness.

Again you are taking the responsibility upon yourself for the success of that. You then request for blessings:

Please, guru-buddha, grant me blessings to be able to do this.

If you can, think of being purified and receiving blessings and qualities.

When you think of enlightenment, it includes everyone: not only the beings in the lower realms and those in the deva and human realms, but also the arhats and ordinary and higher bodhisattvas. It includes all sentient beings.

There is then immeasurable compassion:

How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings were free from all suffering and its causes.

Don't just say the word "suffering," but try to picture the extensive suffering of sentient beings. Human beings have their oceans of problems, and it is the same with the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras and suras.

They all have the cause of suffering, karma and delusion, even the beings in the form and formless realms. The beings in the formless realm don't have the suffering of pain and the suffering of change but they do have pervasive compounding suffering; their aggregates are pervasive compounding suffering, contaminated by the seed of disturbing thoughts and under the control of karma and delusion. And when their karma to be in the formless realm finishes, they will again be reborn in hell or one of the other realms.

When you think about freeing others from suffering, don't think of some small problems. Look at the suffering in a vast way. The vast oceans of suffering of each realm come in three types: the suffering of pain; the suffering of change, the temporary sense pleasures, which are only suffering; and pervasive compounding suffering, which beings in the form and formless realms also experience.

In this way, all the sufferings are included; nothing is left out. You simply say "suffering," but in your mind you should have this vast view of suffering, like looking down on a city from a mountain. You are seeing the whole city. The word is just "suffering," but the meaning is very extensive.

May they be free from all suffering and its causes.

I will cause them to be free from all suffering and its causes.

So, you take the responsibility upon yourself.

Please, guru-buddha, grant me blessings to be able to do this.

May sentient beings not be separated from the happiness of higher rebirth, as a deva or human, and from the everlasting happiness of liberation.

Here *liberation* doesn't mean just the cessation of samsara but includes enlightenment, the great liberation. Both types of liberation are included.

How wonderful it would be if sentient beings were not separated from the happiness of the upper realms and liberation.

I will cause them not to be separated from this happiness.

Please, guru-buddha, grant me blessings to be able to do this.

When we do each practice of the immeasurable thoughts, we collect merit as limitless as the sky. Why do we collect limitless merit when we generate

each immeasurable thought? It's the same as with generating bodhicitta. We collect numberless merits because the sentient beings for whom we generate bodhicitta are numberless. The logic is similar here. When we generate each immeasurable thought, the object for whom we generate each one, sentient beings, is numberless. Therefore, with each immeasurable thought we collect skies of merit.

In his commentary on lam-rim and also dzogchen, Shabkar,⁷² a great lama respected in all four traditions, mentions that if you generate the immeasurable thought that all the people in Tibet have happiness, you create the cause for you to be the leader of the whole of Tibet. In a similar way, if you think of all the people in the world and generate the thought that they have happiness, it creates the cause for you to become a wheel-turning king. A wheel-turning king is the king of the entire world and everyone in it. Geshe Sopa Rinpoche explained that no other king on this earth can compete with a wheel-turning king.

You then generate the thought that the human beings of the eastern continent have happiness; then the thought that the human beings of the western continent have happiness; and the thought that the human beings of the northern continent have happiness. This creates the cause for you to be a wheel-turning king, the leader of those other continents. If you generate this immeasurable thought in relation to the devas in the same way, you then become king of the deva realm. You can do the same thing with galaxies and universes, with the great thousand of three thousand galaxies, or universes.

If you generate the immeasurable thought of loving kindness in that way toward every single sentient being without exception, it becomes the cause to achieve buddhahood. It creates the cause to become a buddha.

The benefits of generating immeasurable loving kindness and practicing the immeasurable thoughts are also mentioned in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*. It is the same with each practice of generating an immeasurable thought: you create the cause of enlightenment. This is one cause to consider if you are thinking of becoming a leader, or a king, and benefiting many millions of people in the world. Generating the four immeasurable thoughts becomes the cause for that. Because you yourself have power, you can bring many millions and millions of people to Dharma, to liberation from samsara and to enlightenment.

⁷² Shabkar Tsokdrug Rangdrol, a highly attained Nyingma lama, wrote *Practicing Guru Devotion with Nine Attitudes*. Read it on www.LamaYeshe.com.

My gossiping is now done, so maybe we'll stop there. I guess we can recite a few mantras—I think one and a half.

Ven René: Rinpoche, maybe a short break?

Rinpoche: Oh, that is also very good. That is an excellent idea.

Ven. Sarah: Rinpoche, I just wanted to say that we've ordered 10,000 animals to be liberated this week, as part of the long-life offering. We want to do the practice here every month. I wondered if Rinpoche would join us for that.

Rinpoche: Maybe I could join as part of the worms; then you can carry me round....

Thank you very, very much. That's very good. I think that it would be very good if our Western centers could propagate this practice. Families and children can participate. It's a very good thing to do.

Ven. Sarah: Rinpoche, we've found a company that sells these animals over the Internet. You can order over the Internet. We had a thought to liberate 100,000, but we would then have to take care of them, and we also didn't know how much damage they would do to the property, so we thought maybe it would be better to liberate 10,000. It's much, much cheaper—I'm just making a commercial for people. They sell crickets and worms, and they guarantee that when they send them, every single one will be alive when it gets there.

Rinpoche: Do they also send human beings? I'm joking.

Because we take the animals around the stupa, they are actually helping to liberate us. Saving them helps us to collect merit and to have a long life; it also helps us to purify our negative karma and to achieve liberation and enlightenment. Here we've been thinking we're helping them but maybe they're also helping us.

So, pi-pi break.

Ven. René: Just five minutes, please.

[The break is followed by recitation of the Medicine Buddha sadhana, a cymbals solo from Rinpoche, then the protector prayers and *King of Prayers*.]

DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by the buddhas, bodhisattvas and all the rest of the sentient beings, may the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the

Dalai Lama, who is the sole object of refuge of all us sentient beings and from where all the temporary and ultimate peace and happiness of all us sentient beings come, have stable life. May all his holy wishes succeed immediately, and in particular, his holy wish for the Tibetan people to have total freedom, especially of religion, like before.

“May all the leaders of the government of mainland China completely change their attitude into the thought of bodhicitta, cherishing sentient beings, thinking that sentient beings are the most precious and understanding their need for happiness and religious freedom. May they be able to find faith in refuge and karma, as well as unmistakable faith in Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra. May they cease their wrong views and projections, which block their minds from seeing the truth of the Buddhadharma teachings, particularly Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching. May they be able to find unshakable faith in the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, realizing that within His Holiness there’s not the slightest self-cherishing thought nor the wish to have power, as they have. May they purify their wrong views and be able to discover this reality. May they see that His Holiness has omniscience, great compassion for all sentient beings and all other good qualities. His Holiness’s only concern is other sentient beings, including every single person in mainland China. He cherishes most and is concerned about every single person there, officials and the general public. May everyone, including the officials themselves, be able to realize that and change their attitude to sentient beings. May they then offer service exactly according to His Holiness’s wishes to benefit sentient beings. May they allow all those billions of people access to the Buddhadharma, like the sun rising on mainland China, by inviting His Holiness the Dalai Lama there, as well as, of course, to Tibet.

“May all the holy wishes of all other virtuous friends also succeed immediately.

“In particular, may Lama Ösel Rinpoche, without any obstacle, be able to come back from Spain to Sera Monastery as quickly as possible, within these weeks, to continue his study. Like Lama Tsongkhapa, may Lama Ösel Rinpoche offer skies of benefit to all sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha by showing the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa shows.

“Gang ri ra wāi khor wā zhing kham dir....

“Pāl dân la mǎi ku tshē tǎn pa dang....

“Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe....

“May bodhicitta, which is the source of all temporary and ultimate

success and happiness for myself and for all sentient beings, be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay. May that which has been generated be increased.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may all the father and 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 and the merits of the three times collected by others, from now on, forever, may whatever activity I do—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working, meditating, doing sadhanas, reciting mantras—and whatever life I experience—happy or unhappy, healthy or unhealthy, rich or poor, gain or loss, receiving praise or criticism, receiving a good reputation or a bad reputation, and even if I am born and am suffering in a hell realm—become most beneficial for sentient beings, causing all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible by myself becoming enlightened.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I be able to bring skies of benefit to all sentient beings and to the teaching of Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa and like Medicine Buddha, by having the same qualities within me as they have. May this happen in every second from now on, forever. In all future lifetimes may I offer infinite benefit to all sentient beings by having the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and Medicine Buddha.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others (the buddhas, bodhisattvas and the rest of the sentient beings), which are merely imputed by the mind, may the I, who is merely imputed by the mind, achieve His Holiness the Dalai Lama's, Medicine Buddha's, enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by the mind, and lead all the sentient beings, who are also merely labeled by the mind, to that enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, by myself alone, who is also merely labeled by the mind.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals, those people who have died who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray and whose names have been given to me immediately be liberated from all those unbearable sufferings of the lower realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or

receive a perfect human body and achieve enlightenment quickly by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover; may my hearing a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened. Also, may the sentient beings who have been born as human beings but with no opportunity to practice Dharma meet a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings, and by putting them into practice, may they achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors in this organization, as well as the members of the centers or of the FPMT who give their lives to the organization to serve other sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray and whose names have been given to me and those offering service to me have a long life and be healthy; may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma; and, most important, may we be able to actualize in our mind the whole path to enlightenment, the stainless teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, which unifies sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime without even a second’s delay.

“May the Sangha in this FPMT organization, as well as the Sangha outside this organization, complete the scriptural understanding and realizations of the path to enlightenment in this very lifetime by living in pure vinaya and by receiving all protection and all their needs.

“May the social service and meditation centers of this organization become most beneficial to all sentient beings, immediately pacifying the sufferings of mind and body of sentient beings. In particular may they be able to spread the pure teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed for that. May all the projects that each center has to benefit sentient beings succeed immediately, including, here at Land of Medicine Buddha, the building of the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,00 stupas project and the social service projects.”

Universal education is included in these projects. We are now trying to organize the production of books for the different subjects. “As planned,

may universal education be most successful and most beneficial for all sentient beings. May all the children and teenagers who learn about universal education immediately transform their minds into bodhicitta, the special attitude of universal responsibility, taking full responsibility for bringing happiness to all sentient beings as well as for freeing them from all their sufferings. May they immediately generate this special attitude of universal responsibility and then, on the basis of that, have great compassion, loving kindness and tolerance, or patience, which prevents anger and then frees them from obstacles. On this basis, may they develop their minds in the spiritual path, developing the precious qualities within their minds to benefit themselves and the world, bringing peace and happiness to all sentient beings.

“May every person who is involved in and who studies universal education become the source of peace and happiness. May every child become the source of peace and happiness not only for him- or herself but for their whole family. May they be the source of peace and happiness for their whole family, for their country, for this world and for all sentient beings.

“May they become like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi and the other great saints, who are great examples of compassion and gave so much peace and happiness to this world. May the children also inspire their parents, helping them to transform their minds. When they become parents may they help their own children in the same way, giving them the same excellent education so that their actions are good-hearted, generous and kind. May they educate their own children to be kind human beings. In this way, may this universal education cause happiness from generation to generation. And may universal education be accepted and studied in public schools worldwide.” Please dedicate for the quick success of this.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times merit collected by others, may all the projects related to building holy objects in different parts of the world, such as the large stupa in Bendigo, which will be the same size as the Gyantse Stupa in Tibet, and the building of monasteries and nunneries succeed immediately, particularly the project to build the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue. May this project succeed immediately by receiving all the funding without any delay and without any obstacles.”

Pray like this to Maitreya Buddha, to the Medicine Buddhas, to bodhisattva Kshitigarbha and so forth. “May the Maitreya Project and all the other

projects of the centers cause bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings. In this way may this world be filled with so much peace and happiness, and may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness or danger from fire, water, air or earth, such as earthquakes. May nobody experience anthrax, which has now become very famous, terrorist attacks and so forth.

“May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching spread and flourish in all directions, and may I be able to cause this to happen.”

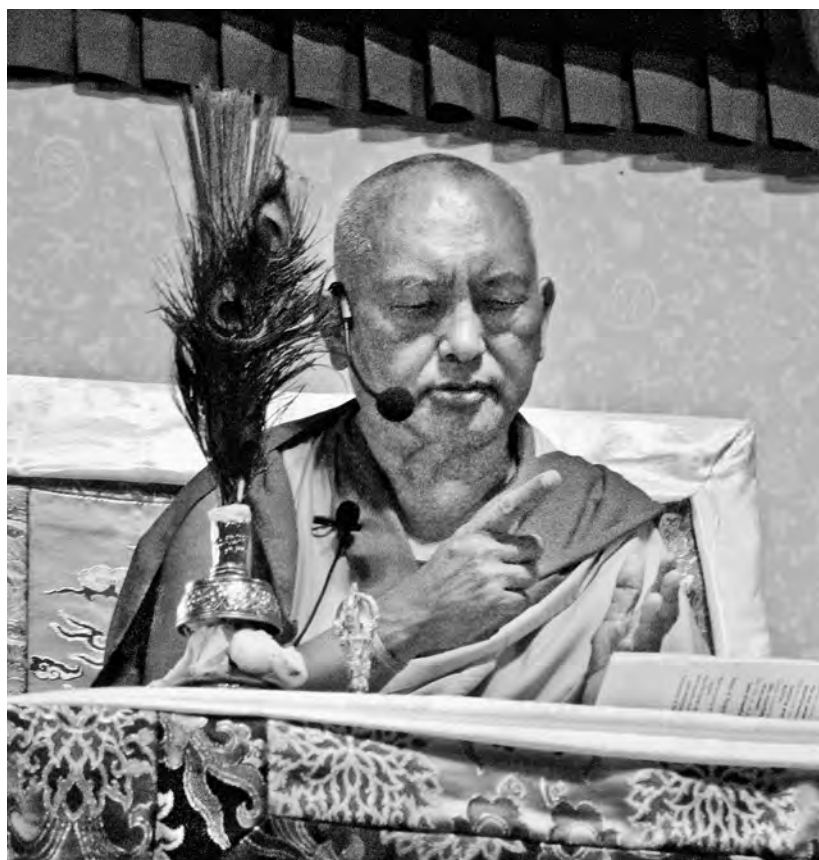
[The group recites the multiplying mantras].

Today, by taking each of the Eight Mahayana Precepts with a bodhicitta motivation, we have collected skies of merit, so we have collected eight times skies of merit. With each session we have collected skies of merit. We have collected skies of merit with the prostrations done with bodhicitta, then skies of merit by doing the practice of the seven limbs; with the offerings and by rejoicing, we have collected limitless skies of merit so many times. We have also collected inconceivable merit by meditating on emptiness and by reciting mantras with a bodhicitta motivation. We have collected so many skies of merit even with one session.

We will now multiply all these merits one hundred thousand times by reciting this next buddha’s name, which also causes whatever prayers we have made to succeed.

[The group recites the final multiplying mantra and prayer, followed by *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* and the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedications.]

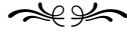
Good morning.



THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Final Medicine Buddha Session



NEW YORK AIR DISASTER

I WOULD LIKE to talk about the object of ignorance, and then we will chant some Mitrugpa and other mantras for the 250 people who died in the airplane crash in New York this morning.⁷³ I'm not sure exactly when it happened—it might have been early this morning, I think. The plane took off, then exploded in the sky, killing everyone on board. The pieces of the plane dropped on a residential area, and people also died there. The FBI expert said that he didn't think it was due to terrorists because of the way it happened. First one engine fell off, then the wings. They cannot yet tell how it happened. From President Bush's words, it sounded a little as if it were related to terrorists.

The plane took off from one of the airports in New York, and after a few minutes it exploded into pieces in the sky. They said that the cemeteries will now be very busy. Eight stewards working on the plane were also killed. So, I think it would be good for us to chant some mantras for them. Of course, the buddhas and bodhisattvas pray, but it's also our duty, our responsibility, to pray for them.

IDENTIFYING THE OBJECT OF IGNORANCE

As Lama Tsongkhapa explained in *Praise to Dependent Arising*, "Our kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha sees that phenomena are dependent arisings, existing in mere name, merely imputed by the mind." Buddha

⁷³ Rinpoche is referring to the crash of American Airlines Flight 587, which crashed in the New York borough of Queens killing 265 people.

realized this, then taught it to us sentient beings. By explaining how to make the object of ignorance totally nonexistent by recognizing it as false, Buddha enables us sentient beings to realize emptiness. In that way we are able to cut the root of samsara, ignorance; and by developing this wisdom, we cease even the imprint, or seed, of ignorance, which then liberates us completely from the oceans of undesirable samsaric sufferings. That's how Buddha has already liberated numberless sentient beings in the past, is liberating them now and is also liberating us, especially by revealing the teachings of the *Perfection of Wisdom*, the Wisdom Gone Beyond. There are four types of Wisdom Gone Beyond: the Wisdom Gone Beyond of ultimate nature, the Wisdom Gone Beyond of the path, the Wisdom Gone Beyond of scripture and the Wisdom Gone Beyond of the result, the transcendental wisdom of dharmakaya. The ultimate one is the Wisdom Gone Beyond of the result.

Lama Tsongkhapa wrote a praise to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha for realizing profound dependent arising and then instructing us sentient beings in the teachings of dependent arising. It says, "To the peerless founder, Victorious One, who has understood, realized and taught dependent arising, I pay homage. How much suffering there is in the world, the root of that suffering is ignorance." Lama Tsongkhapa is saying that the root of the suffering realm, of cyclic existence, of samsara, is ignorance, or the unknowing mind (*ma rigpa*, in Tibetan). *Rigpa* means knowing; *ma rigpa* means unknowing.

"Since seeing that eliminates it, dependent arising is taught." Whatever suffering of samsara there is, whatever problems there are in this world, the root of them is the unknowing mind. With realization that the object of ignorance is false and totally nonexistent, empty, that ignorance is eliminated. Therefore, dependent arising is taught.

THE PROBLEMS OF DESIRE

With the realization of renunciation of samsara, we see the desire realm as *only* suffering in nature. Our realm is the desire realm, where pleasure depends on contact with sense objects. The deva realms situated on the various levels and top of Mount Meru, including the realm of Thirty-three, are all desire realms. No matter how many billions of times greater deva realm enjoyments are than those of the human realm, all the enjoyments of all these desire realms are *only* suffering in nature. If you have renunciation,

you aren't attracted to them for even a second. You see being in the desire realm, even in a deva realm, as like being in the center of a fire. Since you don't want to get burnt, you don't want to be in the very center of a fire for even a second. It doesn't make any sense to be inside that. You don't have the slightest attraction to being in the center of a red-hot fire.

I don't think that even those who are suicidal and want to jump into a fire jump because they are attracted to fire. They jump because they can't stand the relationship problem or whatever other problem they have in their life. Since if they continue to live they have to experience the problem, their hope is that if they die they won't have to experience it. They then jump into a fire. However, the person has no idea at all about what happens in the life after this. The person jumps into the fire and dies, but they have no idea what is going to happen to them after they commit suicide. They don't know whether what comes after death is going to be better than their present life. There's a problem in this life, but they don't think about the life after this.

Even though normally you might intellectually believe in reincarnation, that there is life after this, when you are overwhelmed by relationship problems or other emotional problems, feeling so much sadness, anger and hurt that you can't stand it, during that time it's difficult to think about how there is another life. You have no time to think about how your next life might be much worse than your present one. There is no analysis because your mind is totally overwhelmed by your problems, by this concept that believes, "This is a problem." You create this concept, this belief, about whatever change has happened in your life that you didn't want to happen, that your self-cherishing thought didn't want to happen. Your own attachment doesn't like the change in your life, whether it is a separation from somebody or something else. Your attachment or self-cherishing doesn't want it to happen.

Just because of that, you create the concept, the belief, that this change is a problem, that it is bad. You are deeply hurt. Since you are completely overwhelmed by your concept that this change is a problem, you are completely overwhelmed by the problem. Because you have the concept that this change is a problem, you create the belief that it is a problem, then see it as a problem. After that, the problem then appears to you, and you believe in it. Because you created the concept that this change is a problem, you then believe that it is a problem. After you believe it to be a problem, it then appears to you as a problem. Only then is there an appearance of a

problem, so that you believe, “I have a problem.” You believe it to be true and are totally overwhelmed by it. At that time you have no space in your mind for anything but the thought of suicide, because if you live you then have to experience this problem. Since you can’t stand the problem, you then think of killing yourself.

At that time there’s no space in your mind to think about the next life, even though you normally talk about reincarnation and intellectually believe in it. At that time you don’t think about how there is another life, how that life is going to be much heavier than this one, how life in the hell, hungry ghost or animal realm is billions and billions of times heavier. You don’t think, “If I reincarnate there, I’ll experience much heavier suffering.” Even when you are later born as a human being, you will have much heavier problems than you have now. There’s no time, no space, to analyze such things—not even to have the doubt, “Maybe this could happen. Maybe it could be worse.”

I suddenly forgot why I am talking about this....

That’s right—I was talking about jumping into a red-hot fire. Even when you’re suicidal, you don’t jump into a fire because it seems pleasant and you’re attracted to it. You think that if your life is stopped then your relationship problem or whatever other situation you believe to be a problem will be stopped. I sometimes mention the story of a student in Switzerland. I have some visualization of his face, but I don’t remember his name. He studied and knew the Tibetan language and was maybe even teaching it. For quite a number of years, I think, he received teachings from Geshe Rabten Rinpoche, as well as from Lama Yeshe. He had studied Dharma for many years, though not very intensively, I think. One day his wife left him—it might have been for another man. He then hanged himself in his house and died. He was a Dharma student. He’d been around for many years and received many teachings, but this is what happened. When his wife left him, he hanged himself and died.

Ven. René: Actually, he was reborn as a spirit, and for many years he hung around his mother. His mother went to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama a few times, and the Dalai Lama said, “It’s true—your son is always around you. He has been reborn as a spirit.” His Holiness then advised the mother to have some pujas done in the different monasteries to free him from that rebirth. After three or four years she felt that he had gone.

Rinpoche: His mother needed to practice sur, where you burn flour in a fire and make charity of the smell.

Yesterday I was talking about the problems of desire. I meant to elaborate more, but it didn't happen. I started, but then went somewhere else....

Even in worldly life, if you don't control desire, it becomes a problem. Even when you're successful in business, if you don't control desire, when you've made a profit of \$100 you want \$1,000. When you've made \$1,000 profit, you then want \$10,000. After you've made \$10,000, you want \$100,000. After you've made \$100,000, you want a million dollars. After a million, you want a billion dollars. After a billion, you want a trillion dollars. After a trillion, you want a zillion dollars. What comes after a zillion? It goes on and on like this. While you are experiencing success, if you don't control your desire, it grows more and more. You are never satisfied. That's the shortcoming of desire.

Of course, you don't have the merit to be successful forever. Because you always follow your desire and never control it, one day you no longer have merit, and your whole business collapses. The next day you are poor, concerned about even paying the rent. You are worried about meeting even your basic needs, which you normally didn't have to worry about. This is happening everywhere in the world. Because you don't control your desire, you don't stop before your business fails. If you had stopped before that, you would have had enough wealth. If you wished to help others, you had the wealth to do so. However, you didn't control your desire, and since you didn't have enough merit to always have profit, your business suddenly collapsed. You then have a nervous breakdown or go crazy, then become suicidal. These are shortcomings of not controlling desire. Because you have failed and all your wealth is gone, you don't see any meaning in life and want to commit suicide. Because you are bankrupt and unable to pay all your debts, you want to jump off a roof or out of a window.

In worldly life, there are so many problems, so many shortcomings, if you don't control desire. Even if you are not meditating, not practicing Dharma, if you don't control desire in worldly life, you lose even your present wealth and comfort, then become very depressed and mentally disturbed. Because of that, even though nobody else physically harms you, you harm yourself.

The other point is that if you don't control desire, you want so many things; you want more and more. Then, because there is no other way, you do illegal things to make money. You then get caught or you lose a lot of money and end up involved in court cases. That is another shortcoming of desire that we often see in the newspapers and on TV. There are many such cases in the world.

If you are unable to control your desire for food, you can end up with many sicknesses from the food, including cancer. In relationships, if you don't control your desire, the partner you now have is not enough, and you want somebody else. You want more and better partners. Desire is always looking for something better. Desire always has expectations, one after another; that's why you encounter problems one after another. You create one relationship problem and suffer unbelievably for some time, then it's over. You again start another relationship, another package of problems, then suffer heavily for some time. Then again you start another one. The problem is not controlling your desire. As I mentioned the other day, being an alcoholic, a smoker or a drug addict also comes from not controlling desire. All those problems are shortcomings of desire.

When you're unable to start retreat because you need so many things, that's also part of the shortcomings of desire. Since even in worldly life not controlling desire causes many problems, there is no doubt about in Dharma practice. Self-cherishing thought is like the prime minister or president and desire is like a very active, powerful, influential minister.

First of all, it is desire that makes it difficult to take vows, whether lay precepts or ordination. Then, even if you have taken vows, it is desire that makes it difficult to live in pure morality. It is desire that doesn't allow you to live a pure life. And desire is the major obstacle to successful shamatha meditation.

Also, if you are following desire, you then want what desire wants, so your efforts go into achieving the object of desire. If your guru advises you not to be with the object of your desire, if your guru advises you to do something that is opposite to your attachment so that you then don't get the object of your desire, you generate anger and heresy toward your guru. And no matter how qualified your guru is from his side, even if he is the most qualified one in the world, even if it's proved and even historically known that the guru is Chenrezig, if you receive advice that means you don't get the object of your desire, anger and heresy arise. Then, even if you try to meditate on calm abiding in an isolated place, nothing happens. There's a total blockage. It's like when the road you are traveling on is blocked; you are completely stuck and can't go beyond that point. When things like this are happening, it's basically the mistake of not controlling desire. The reason you hate your guru's advice and get angry with your guru is that you are not controlling desire.

There is no question of realizing emptiness, of course, because desire

obscures your mind so that you can't see the ultimate nature. Desire is an obstacle to actualizing the wisdom that realizes emptiness, and without that, you cannot then achieve the path of seeing and the path of meditation. You can't realize the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which is what directly ceases the delusions and defilements, and you then can't achieve the sorrowless state. You can't achieve even the blissful state of peace and everlasting happiness for yourself.

Desire brings harm everywhere in worldly life. If you go to climb Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world, and die there, it happens because you didn't control your desire to get a good reputation. So many problems, including AIDS and other life-threatening diseases that shorten life, happen because one didn't control desire. Even when you try to practice Dharma, you can't practice purely. Again, that's because of desire; that's a shortcoming of desire. Even when you try to meditate, try to do retreat, it's not pure Dharma, because of not controlling desire. From that, many obstacles arise. You're unable to keep your samaya vows or your pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows. It is basically because of desire that you collect many vices by breaking those vows.

However, to go back.... With renunciation, you see abiding in the desire realm like being in the center of a red-hot fire; you don't find any attraction to it for even a second. You also see the form realm as only suffering in nature, like being in the center of a fire; you can't find any attraction to it for even a second. You see that even the formless realm is samsara, and being in it is also like being in the very center of a red-hot fire. You can't find a single attraction to it. You see even the formless realm as unbearable, as only suffering in nature. So, you then want to be free from all of those realms. You can't stand to be in samsara—whether it's the desire realm, the form realm or the formless realm—for even a second. You see that it's like being in a red-hot fire. You can't stand not being liberated from samsara for even a second.

When you feel like this, you have renunciation, and that renunciation is stable when it lasts and is not there for just a few hours or a few days. You don't have any attraction to anything from the lowest hell realm up to the highest level of the formless realm, Tip of Samsara. You don't feel any attraction, even in a dream, to samsara and samsaric perfections. When it is like that, your renunciation of samsara is stable, and when you have this realization, you enter the path. Here we're talking about just the Lesser Vehicle path.

You then actualize the path of merit, which has three levels: small, intermediate and great. You then actualize the preparatory path, which has four divisions: heat, tip, patience and sublime Dharma. There, on the basis of the shamatha realization, you achieve the realization of great insight. You are then able to derive the extremely refined ecstasy of body and mind by doing analysis of emptiness based on great insight unified with calm abiding. There you realize the four noble truths. You then actualize the path of seeing. Here there is equipoise meditation and the achievement after that, the uninterrupted path and the liberating path. I think there is also transcendental wisdom that is neither of them. By actualizing the path of seeing, you cease the defilements—112 disturbing-thought obscurations. By actualizing the path of meditation, within which there is equipoise meditation and the achievement after that, similar to the path of seeing, you cease sixteen disturbing-thought defilements. You then completely cease even the imprint, or seed, of delusion, and the ultimate nature of that mind is nirvana, the sorrowless state. You achieve the path of no more learning. The ultimate nature of the mind that is free from all defilements as well as their seed, which is of the nature of an imprint, is nirvana, the sorrowless state. This is just liberation from samsara.

IDENTIFYING THE OBJECT OF IGNORANCE

Achieving nirvana and ceasing the disturbing-thought obscurations through the path of seeing and path of meditation depend on actualizing the wisdom realizing emptiness. For that, Buddha has explained dependent arising, how phenomena are dependent arisings.

The safe way to learn about emptiness, so that you don't fall into nihilism, is to first be introduced to dependent arising. Make sure that you first understand how things are dependent arisings. One wouldn't realize the subtle dependent arising of the Prasangika school's view without realizing emptiness, without realizing that the object that ignorance apprehends, true existence, is false and totally nonexistent, totally empty. Without realizing that, one cannot realize that the nature of phenomena is subtle dependent arising. Realizing that phenomena exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind, is realizing conventional truth.

The main point is that realizing the emptiness of the I, for example, depends on recognizing the object of ignorance, the self-grasping of a person, which holds the I to be truly existent. You have to recognize the object

of that ignorance. This is what is called “the object to be refuted,” or *gak cha*, in Tibetan. Recognizing the object of ignorance after you have the lama’s instructions or teachings on the object to be refuted is like having a picture of someone who is a thief and checking until you actually find him.

How do you recognize the object to be refuted? One easy way to recognize this object of ignorance is by analyzing time—a year, month, week, day, hour, minute, second—as I mentioned some days ago. When you don’t analyze how a year exists being merely imputed by the mind, how does the year appear? What is that year? Because there is the base, the twelve months, your mind merely imputes “year”; your mind simply makes up the label “year” and believes in it. You create the concept. Because your mind sees the base, twelve months, it simply makes up the label “year.” When you analyze how the year exists in this way and see that it’s merely imputed by mind, you see that the year you believed in before, the year that appeared to you to exist from its own side on the twelve months, is no longer there. That real year that appears from its own side and that you believe to be true is no longer there. That one is totally false. You have a perception of a real year appearing from its own side, and your ignorance then believes in it. When you analyze what the year is, however, you see that it is nothing except what is merely imputed by thought, and that real year that appeared to you before and in which you believed is totally false, totally nonexistent.

It is the same with a month, week, day, hour, minute and second. As you analyze each one, you find that it is merely imputed by mind. When you think of how each of them is a dependent arising, merely imputed by thought in dependence upon its base, you see as false the way all these—year, month, week, day, hour, minute, second—have normally been appearing to you in daily life and the way your mind has apprehended them every day since your birth, and during beginningless rebirths. This is not the first time they have appeared to you in this way and you have believed them to exist in this way. By analyzing the gross dependent arising and the subtle dependent arising, that they are merely imputed by mind in relation to the base, you then see that the year, month, week, day, hour, minute and second that have been appearing to you and that you have believed a hundred percent as true are now gone. Now they’re not there. Now you see all of them as completely false. You see them totally differently. Your understanding of what they are is totally different from your previous understanding. You have proved that your previous understanding was totally wrong. The way they appeared to you and your belief as to how they existed were totally

wrong. Doing this analysis is another easy way to recognize the object to be refuted. You realize the emptiness of the truly existent year, month, week, hour, day, minute and second. Realizing the absence of their true existence is realizing that they are totally empty; it is realizing the emptiness of the year, month, week, day, hour, minute, and second.

There is another example that makes it easy to recognize the object to be refuted, so that you can realize emptiness quickly. The more easily and quickly you recognize the object to be refuted, the more easily and quickly you can realize emptiness.

You can use many other different examples. You don't have to stick to only what is in the texts, which all use the example of a rabbit's horn. Since a rabbit doesn't usually have a horn, the texts use that as an example of something that doesn't exist. Human beings also don't usually have a horn, but sometimes a human being is born with one. It's not an impossible thing.

Langdarma, the king who destroyed the teaching of the Buddha in Tibet, had a horn on his head like the horn of an ox. I think he usually covered it. Langdarma destroyed the teaching of the Buddha for about sixteen years, I think. The lineage of the vows then started again from Kham. Since they didn't have enough Sangha to grant ordination, I think Hashang from China was added as a member of the Sangha. They then gave the ordination, and it spread from there. Geshe Sopa Rinpoche often says that the reason we have this blue cord on the edge of our dongka is to remember the kindness of the one or two Chinese Sangha who completed the number of the community of Tibetan Sangha so that the ordination could be given.

As Chöden Rinpoche explained in the lam-rim teachings, Langdarma was killed by Lhalung Palgyi Dorje. I think he invited Langdarma to a performance of a religious dance, a black dance ceremony. During the dance, he shot an arrow through the king's heart and killed him. He then changed the color of the king's horse from black to white and rode it.

So, what I was saying is that the Tibetan philosophical texts quite often use the example of a rabbit horn. It's a famous example in the texts. Another example is a sky flower. They are used as examples of something that doesn't exist.

Of course, you can use many other examples. Here I'm going to use the example, mentioned in the texts, of a coiled rope in a road at dusk, when it cannot be seen clearly. In dependence upon the lack of light and the way the rope is curled to look like a snake, your mind, on seeing that, makes up the label "snake," then believes in it. Your mind labels "snake," and it then

appears to be a snake. After you have labeled the rope “snake,” it appears to you as a snake, and you believe that is true. If you look at what is appearing to you, it’s a real snake. There is the appearance of a real snake; you see a real snake. In the view of that hallucinated mind you see a real snake. A real snake is appearing to you, and you believe it to be a real snake. There’s no doubt about it in your mind.

Now, when you put on a flashlight and check, that real snake exists nowhere. That real snake, which appeared to you and in which you believed, exists neither on the rope nor anywhere else. You can’t find it anywhere, neither on this rope nor anywhere else. It’s a complete hallucination, totally nonexistent.

We will now analyze the rope itself, the rope that you see with your flashlight. When you look at the rope with the light, how does the rope appear to you? What is your view of the rope? And what is your belief about it? Your view of the rope is of a real rope appearing from there, a truly existent rope. A real rope is appearing from there, and you believe that it’s true. You believe, “There is a real rope appearing from there.” The rope appears to you to be not merely labeled by the mind. Not only does it appear to be not merely labeled by the mind but it appears to be not labeled by the mind at all. The rope appears to you to have nothing to do with your mind, with the perceiver’s mind. The rope appears from there, as if it never came from your mind. Besides appearing to be not merely labeled by mind, it appears to be not labeled by the mind at all.

We will now analyze whether this rope is there or not, whether it really exists or not. First we will analyze what the rope is. Each single tiny fiber is not the rope. Even the whole collection of all the fibers together is not the rope. Here I’m talking about the merely labeled rope. The rope that exists is what is merely labeled by your thought, by your mind. So, each single fiber is not the rope. Even all the fibers together are not the rope. The rope that exists is the merely labeled rope, but even all the fibers together are not the merely labeled rope. All the fibers together are the base to be labeled “rope.” When you think, “This is the base to be labeled ‘rope,’” you see the base, the collection of fibers, and the label, “rope.” These two phenomena don’t exist separately but they exist differently. The collection of fibers and the label “rope” are two different phenomena.

Now here you can’t find even the merely labeled rope. First of all, every single fiber is not the merely labeled rope, which means it’s not the rope. Even the whole collection of fibers is not the merely labeled rope, which

means it's not the rope. Why? Because that is the base to be labeled "rope." So, which comes into existence first? Does the label "rope" or the base, the collection of fibers, come first? If you don't first see the collection of fibers that performs the function of tying things, your mind doesn't have any reason to choose this particular label, "rope," and to label this object, "rope." If you don't see this base, this collection of fibers wound together, there is nothing there to make your mind decide upon this particular label, "rope." If you don't see that particular base that performs the function of tying things, there's no reason for your mind to choose the particular label, "rope," and to label that base, "rope."

Even if your mind labels "rope" at that time, rope doesn't exist because there's no base. Because there is no base, the collection of fibers that performs the function of tying things, rope doesn't exist, even if your mind labels "rope" at that time. And even if the base, the collection of fibers that performs the function of tying things, is there and you see it, if your mind doesn't make up the label "rope" again rope doesn't exist.

This can be helpful in understanding how to differentiate the base and the label. In our perception these two, the base and the label, are mixed and undifferentiable. That's the definition of *gak cha*, the object to be refuted. This is according to what His Holiness Ling Rinpoche explained when he was giving a commentary to *Mind Training Like the Rays of the Sun* at Drepung Monastery. Rinpoche was explaining what the object to be refuted is. According to Rinpoche's explanation, in order to realize emptiness we have to recognize the object to be refuted, which is the object of ignorance. Rinpoche explained that we see the base and the label as undifferentiable. This is the huge hallucination, the huge false view. Letting our mind believe that the base and the label are undifferentiable cheats us of our whole life. We are completely trapped in this hallucination, like a mouse trapped in a cage or a fish trapped in a net. It is essential to differentiate them. When we are able to differentiate the base and the label, it then makes it very easy for us to recognize the object to be refuted. But as long as we are unable to differentiate them, we can't recognize the object to be refuted.

I will give you another example. When you meditate on the emptiness of a table, analyzing the table, where is the table? If you point here, this is a part of the table; you are pointing to part of the table. If you point at that side, if you put your finger there, it's part of the table; you are pointing to part of the table. Wherever you point, it's part of the table; you're pointing to part of the table, whether it's a table leg or the top. This is not table, this

is not table, this is not table and that's not table. None of the pieces is table, and even all the pieces together is not table. You don't find table on this. None of these parts is table, and you don't find table on any of these parts. You don't find table anywhere. None of the pieces is table, and even all the pieces together is not table. All these are parts of the table, and this is the collection of the parts of the table. Since the collection of all these parts is the base of the table, it's not the table.

You have done all this analysis and found that any part you point to is not the table and that even the collection of all the parts is not the table. That is the base of the table. Now here is the point: you have to analyze your view of the table. You cannot find the merely labeled table. If you look, if you analyze your view, you cannot find it anywhere. If you then examine your view, there is the appearance of a table in your view, but it's inseparable from the base. Nothing changed in your view. In your view table is undifferentiable from its base. If you analyze your perception, or your view, there is an appearance of a table from there. The table is appearing from there, undifferentiable from the base, as His Holiness Ling Rinpoche said.

Now, it means that the way you did your analysis didn't harm the object of ignorance at all. You missed your target, as a missile shot by the Americans can miss its target. You missed the target. You didn't hit the right point, right on the object of ignorance, the concept that apprehends true existence. Since you didn't hit that, in your view there is still a truly existent table. There is still a real table appearing to you, even after you did all this analysis. After the analysis, you look at your view and find a real table appearing from there, undifferentiable from its base.

So, this is the object to be refuted. I am using this as another example of how to recognize the object to be refuted. When you do the analysis in the wrong way, nothing touches your wrong view. After all that analysis, the truly existent table, the real table appearing from there, the table that is undifferentiable from its base, is still there.

Now, to realize emptiness you have to realize that *this* one is totally empty. To see emptiness, you have to see it as totally nonobjectifying, totally nonexistent. You have to realize that the real table appearing from there, undifferentiable from its base, is totally nonexistent there. It's appearing from there, but it's totally nonexistent right there. That's the correct conclusion.

Later, the realization of the total nonexistence of that truly existent table, that real table from there, leads, as a result, to the discovery, or realization, that the table exists, that the table is not nonexistent. It's not that the table

doesn't exist at all; the table exists in mere name, merely imputed by mind. So, it leads you to understand how the table exists as a subtle dependent arising. In the same way, realizing emptiness gives us more faith in karma, in cause and effect. It gives more faith in the existence of karma rather than negating it.

Until we become enlightened, as long as we are sentient beings, whenever a conventional truth appears to us, it will appear to be inherently, or truly, existent. The only exception is when we become an arya being and are in equipoise meditation on emptiness. Otherwise, until we become enlightened, we will always have this hallucination; any conventional truth, any phenomenon, that appears to us will appear to be truly existent, to be existing from its own side. But in our heart we will have the definite understanding that phenomena do not have true existence.

This table does not exist from its own side at all; it is empty of existing from its own side. Even though there is the appearance of a table existing from its own side, you have the definite understanding that it's not true, that the table is empty of existing from its own side. You then see everything as like a dream or like an illusion. When you recognize a dream as a dream, you don't believe what is happening in the dream is true, even though it is appearing to you. You see things as being like illusions. It is like realizing, in relation to a mirage, that there is no water on the sand. Because you walked across that part of the sand, you know there's no water there. When you look back, you have a vision of water, but at the same time you have the definite understanding that there's no water there because you came through there and didn't see any water. Combining these two things, you see that the appearance of water is a hallucination. It's false. Realizing that doesn't allow you to cling onto that appearance. You don't see any point because it's not true. Seeing it is not true doesn't allow you to give rise to anger, attachment and other delusions. I am using this as another example of how to recognize the object to be refuted.

Of course, by searching for the table in that way, even though at the end you don't find it, that has done nothing to touch the *gak cha*, the object to be refuted, the table appearing from there. When you analyze your view, the table is appearing from there, and you believe it to be true. Nothing has touched the real table appearing from there, the truly existent table. It's still there. You then say, "Oh, this is a hallucination. This is the object to be refuted." You then one-pointedly meditate on how that is a hallucination. You meditate on the meaning of hallucination. What it means is that it is

totally empty, totally nonexistent. You then concentrate on that emptiness. So, that's the correct meditation. That's the shortcut.

From the analysis of the four vital points, you now recognize the first one, the object to be refuted. This is the target. You then use the other vital points: if something exists, it has to exist either one with the base or separately from it. The conclusion is that it doesn't exist. In short, that real table, that inherently existent table, exists neither separately from nor as one with the base. For any phenomenon to exist, it has to exist either separately from or one with the base.

With the I and the aggregates, you first check whether or not the I is one with the aggregates. It's not one with the aggregates. You then check whether the I exists separately from the aggregates. No, it also doesn't exist separately from the aggregates. You then conclude that that real I appearing from its own side that you believe in, that inherently existent I, is totally nonexistent. You come to the conclusion that it's totally nonexistent. After realizing that I is neither one with nor exists separately from the aggregates, you understand that the I is merely imputed by mind in dependence upon the base, the aggregates. This truly existent I, this real I appearing from there, in which you believe, is *totally* nonexistent. You come to that conclusion.

So, just to finish discussing the example of the rope. Each single fiber is not the rope. Even the whole collection of fibers is not the rope; that's the base to be labeled "rope." The merely labeled rope exists nowhere on this. Since you cannot find it, it exists nowhere. You now see that the rope that previously appeared to you as not merely labeled by mind, the truly existent rope, the real rope appearing from there, is a total hallucination. After that analysis, you see that the rope that appears to you as not merely labeled by mind, as truly existent, is completely false. You see that what appeared to you and what you believed before are completely false. It exists nowhere. It exists neither on this collection of fibers nor anywhere else. But, of course, the merely labeled rope exists. You cannot find it on this collection of fibers but the merely labeled rope exists where there is the base, the collection of fibers. Where there is the base, there is the rope. Even though you cannot find the merely labeled rope, which exists, on this base, this collection of fibers, you can find the merely labeled rope. Even though you cannot find it there on the base, you can find it in that place where the base is. You can find it at that spot in the road, but not on the base.

You cannot find what you saw previously, the real rope appearing from there that you believed in, anywhere. That exists nowhere. The absence, or

emptiness, of that is the emptiness of the rope. So, that's another way to do the analysis to recognize the object to be refuted.

Sorry, it became many eons of talk. We will stop here.

DEDICATIONS

“Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe....

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and those collected by others, gang ri ra wä khor wä zhing kham dir....

“Päl dän la mäi ku tshe täñ pa dang...”

Give everything—all your own past, present and future merits and all the resultant temporary and ultimate happiness up to the ultimate happiness of enlightenment—to all the sentient beings. Give everything to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being, every intermediate state being. They all receive whatever they want, whatever they need, from this. And everyone—every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura being, every sura being, every intermediate state being—becomes enlightened by ceasing all defilements and completing all realizations. Everyone becomes Medicine Buddha.

We will do the *King of Prayers* for all those 250 people who died. It's for all sentient beings, but particularly for them. It's a very powerful prayer.

[The group recites *King of Prayers* in English.]

“Due to whatever small merit I have collected by doing Samantabhadra's *Prayer of Good Deeds*, may all the virtuous prayers of transmigratory beings be received by them in one second. Due to whatever merit I have collected by doing this dedication *Prayer of Good Deeds*, may all the transmigratory beings who are sunk in the oceans of suffering achieve Amitabha's state. (That means all the 250 people who died today in the airplane explosion in New York, as well as the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, who are suffering in the lower realms, those who are suffering in the intermediate state and all the rest of the sentient beings who are suffering in samsara.) May all those who are sunk in the oceans of suffering be born in the Amitabha pure land and achieve Amitabha's enlightenment.”

We dedicate to all those people who suddenly died in the plane all the merit collected by doing this prayer, as well as the limitless skies of merit we have collected today by taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts, practicing the three principles of the path (renunciation, bodhicitta and emptiness)

and doing the Medicine Buddha practices (the seven-limb practice, making offering to Medicine Buddha, which is equal to having made offering to all the buddhas, the recitation of mantra and so forth). “May all those people, as well as all the beings in the lower realms and all other sentient beings, be born in the Amitabha pure land and achieve Amitabha’s enlightenment.”

If we recite the five powerful mantras, those of Mitrugpa, Namgyälma, Kunrig, Stainless Beam Deity and Stainless Pinnacle Deity by thinking of those people who died, these mantras have the power to transfer their consciousness from the lower realms, even if they have already been born there, to a deva or human rebirth.⁷⁴ If these mantras are recited by thinking of the people who have died, they have the power to liberate them from those suffering realms and cause them to receive a higher rebirth. Putting these mantras on the body of someone who has passed away also has the power to transfer the consciousness from the lower realms to a higher realm. And if you recite these mantras and blow on water, mustard seeds or sand grains, then sprinkle the substance on a dead body or even on the place where a dead body has been burned, even that affects the consciousness of the person who has died, helping to free them from the lower realms and to receive a higher rebirth. Thinking you are reciting the mantras for those people who died still helps them to be liberated from the lower realms and to receive a higher rebirth.

So, we will chant a mala of OM MANI PADME HUM. Visualize that Chenrezig purifies the people who died in the plane, all the beings in the three lower realms and all other sentient beings.

[The group recites the *manis*.]

All their negative karmas are purified, as well as those of all other sentient beings, by nectar-beams emitted from Chenrezig, who then absorbs into you.

Visualize that nectar-beams are emitted from Mitrugpa, purifying the people who died in the plane, the beings in the lower realms and all the rest of the sentient beings.

[The group recites Mitrugpa mantras.]

We’ll now recite the short Namgyälma mantra.

[The group recites Namgyälma mantras.]

We’ll now recite the Kunrig mantra.

[The group recites Kunrig mantras.]

⁷⁴ See *Heart Practices for Death and Dying*, p. 115 ff.

I have to recite it very fast; otherwise, I can't make it.

We'll now recite Stainless Beam Deity's mantra.

[The group recites the mantras.]

We'll now recite Stainless Pinnacle Deity's mantra.

[The group recites the mantras.]

This Stainless Pinnacle Deity's mantra, which is sometimes called the Amoghaparsha or Wish-Granting Wheel mantra, is an extremely powerful one.

[The group recites more mantras.]

The Stainless Pinnacle Deity's mantra is extremely powerful. If you recite this mantra seven times then blow on a drum, gong or conch shell, when you beat the drum or gong or blow the conch shell, anybody in that area—not only human beings but also animals and birds—who hears the sound is purified of the ten nonvirtuous actions and other negative karmas they have collected in the past. Besides that, the sound purifies even the five uninterrupted negative karmas (having killed father, mother or an arhat, harmed Buddha, caused disunity among the Sangha). All those heavy negative karmas are purified. So, it's very, very powerful.

We should use this mantra before we ring gongs or play the small cymbals. In the text of making a hundred tormas offerings to the Triple Gem and the beings of the six realms, including pretas and nagas, it talks about reciting this mantra seven times then blowing on the small cymbals. When you then ring the cymbals, the negative karma of anyone who hears the sound is purified. If you recite this mantra and blow on musical instruments that make a big sound, such as large gongs, bells and especially conch shells, then play them on the top of a mountain, it becomes very powerful purification for the many beings, animals as well as people, who hear the sound.

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by the buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, including themselves, may all those people who died in the plane, all those people (no matter which side they were on) who died today in Afghanistan, where there is continual war, and all those people who have died whose names were given to me, for whom I promised to pray and who rely upon me never ever be reborn in the lower realms. May they receive a perfect human body and find unshakable faith in refuge and karma. May they enter into the Buddhadharmas when they are young, take the ordination of renouncing worldly life, be ordained in Buddha's teachings, and with a happy mind only pleasing them, be guided by perfectly

qualified Mahayana virtuous friends. May they then train their mind in the common path, the three principles of the path, and be able to complete the ripening path, the graduated generation stage, and the liberating path, the graduated completion stage, and achieve the Vajradhara state, which has seven qualities, as quickly as possible.

“May all the sentient beings who are suffering in the lower realms quickly achieve enlightenment in the same way.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of this organization, those who give their life to the organization to offer service to sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha, and those who rely upon me, for whom I have promised to pray and who are offering service to me have long lives and be healthy. May all our wishes succeed immediately in accordance with the holy Dharma. May we be able to completely actualize the pure teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, which unifies sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime, without even a second’s delay.

“May all our virtuous friends, including the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, have stable lives, and may all their holy wishes be accomplished immediately.

“May all the Sangha in this organization be able to complete the realizations, as well as scriptural understanding, as quickly as possible, based on living in pure vinaya and by receiving all needs and protection.

“May the social service centers and meditation centers be most beneficial, able to pacify immediately the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings and able to spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed for that. May all the projects here at LMB—the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupas and the social service activities—as well as all the projects and activities of all the other centers, succeed immediately by receiving everything needed for that. May all the projects involving building holy objects, monasteries and nunneries succeed immediately, especially the building of the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue. May this project be completed immediately by receiving all the funding without any obstacles and without any delay.

“May all these centers and all the projects be most beneficial for all sentient beings, causing bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of all sentient beings. And due to that, may everybody have perfect peace and happiness.

May nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness or dangers of fire, water, air or earth, such as earthquakes. May no one ever experience any of these undesirable things. And may the Maitreya statue and all the other projects and the centers cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching spread and flourish, and may I be able to cause this to happen.”

So, thank you very much for praying for all the people.

If we ourselves had been in their place in that plane when it exploded today, think how frightening it would have been. Where would we be by now? There would have been a total change of life, and we would now be somewhere else. Yesterday we were a human being but today we are somewhere else. Suddenly we would have another rebirth. It would be difficult to say what rebirth. Since most people create mostly negative karma, it would be difficult to say whether we would have a good rebirth, according to our karma.

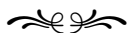
If we had been in their place, we would have experienced incredible fear and suffering. We couldn’t do anything, as the karma had already ripened. It’s so important that somebody somewhere in the human realm thinks of you and recites OM MANI PADME HUM even one time. That is something you need so much.

So, thank you very much and good morning. Have a long dream.

Oh, the multiplying mantras!

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

Final Medicine Buddha Session



BODHICITTA MOTIVATION

GOOD EVENING. I was supposed to come this morning and spend all day here. This one sitting here is false; the one that you didn't see is the reality. The Lama Zopa that you didn't see sitting on this throne is the reality. Anyway, I'm joking.

I hope you are all healed by now, from the other night.

Think, "At this time I have received all the necessary conditions to practice Dharma, and I'm free from all the obstacles to practicing Dharma. At this time, while I have all these opportunities, I must make it certain that I receive the body of a happy migratory being, particularly a perfect human body, right after my death happens, whenever that is. Wherever I reincarnate in this samsara—the desire, form and even the formless realm—is only in the nature of suffering. Therefore, I must achieve liberation, which is freedom forever from all these suffering realms. However, this alone is not sufficient. This is not the ultimate meaning of why I have taken not only a precious human body but a perfect human body at this time. The ultimate purpose of having taken a precious human body, particularly a perfect human body, is to benefit others, and the ultimate benefit is to free the numberless sentient beings, each one of whom is the source of all my past, present and future happiness, including realizations and enlightenment. Every single sentient being without exception is the most precious thing in my life. I must free them from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone. To do that, I must achieve full enlightenment; therefore, I am going to listen to the holy Dharma."

BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE

We have been talking about the skies of benefit from practicing Medicine Buddha, from even reciting Medicine Buddha's name and mantra.

There are twelve leaders of the *nöjin*, or harm-givers. I'm not quite sure about *nöjin*, the name of these beings. Perhaps it means protecting beings from harm, but I'm not sure. The twelve leaders of the *nöjin*, the harm-givers, promised to protect day and night, all the time, without distraction, any sentient being who recites Medicine Buddha's name and mantra, memorizes it or remembers it. Their mind will not be distracted for even one second from protecting that person. They made a promise:

We will protect that sentient being six times day and night without even a second's distraction.

It means that they will protect that person all the time: morning, noon, evening and also nighttime.

We will protect and guide them and conceal, or hide, them.

I'm not sure about the meaning of that. It might be that if some other beings are going to harm the person who is practicing Medicine Buddha, they hide that person from those beings.

We also remember the qualities of Medicine Buddha and the special prayers Medicine Buddha made in the past. We devote ourselves to and have faith in Medicine Buddha, and we will remember Medicine Buddha's name without ever forgetting it.

This is what the twelve leaders of the *nöjin* promised. In the mandala you visualize the ten guardians and the twelve groups of *nöjin*.

The twenty medicinal goddesses also promised that any sentient being who generated even a small merit in relation to Medicine Buddha would generate the extensive merit of having done the seven-limb practice in relation to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. I have already explained before that if you make offering to Medicine Buddha you collect the merit of having made offering to all the buddhas. So, if you do the seven-limb practice with Medicine Buddha, you collect the merit of having done the seven-

limb practice with all the buddhas. There is a great difference in terms of merit between doing the seven-limb practice with Medicine Buddha and with another buddha. When you compare the two, you collect far greater merit by practicing the seven limbs with Medicine Buddha than with any other buddha, because you collect the same merit as having done the seven-limb practice with every one of the numberless buddhas. You collect skies of merit.

What the twenty medicinal goddesses of Medicine Buddha promised is in the text that talks about the benefits of Medicine Buddha.

Any sentient being who even sees Medicine Buddha's name and mantra purifies mountains of negative karma, even the five uninterrupted negative karmas of having killed father, mother or an arhat, harmed Buddha or caused disunity among the Sangha.

When a sentient being even hears Medicine Buddha's name and mantra, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas descend in front of that being and initiate and bless them. The buddhas and bodhisattvas also make to ripen the pure prayers of those sentient beings who hear Medicine Buddha's name and mantra. Their life is also prolonged. Even if that sentient being has no more life to live according to their previous karma, if they hear Medicine Buddha's name and mantra, the buddhas and bodhisattvas will help them to live a long time, even hundreds of years, and to enjoy peace and happiness.

As I mentioned one night when I was talking about the Medicine Buddha sutra, there are two types of sutra. You find that the sutra mentions a few times how, as it says here, "By remembering Medicine Buddha's name, you will never be born with a woman's body." His Holiness used to say that when the culture changes, it will be different. One has to understand this is in the ordinary sense.

The main point is that whether you are a man or a woman, if from your side you put effort into practice, you will achieve enlightenment; but if you don't put effort into practice, whether you are a man or a woman, nothing will happen. There will be no development. As explained in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*,⁷⁵ even a mosquito has buddha-nature, and if a mosquito practices Buddhadharma, it can achieve enlightenment. Mosquitoes

⁷⁵ If they develop the strength of their exertion,
Even those who are flies, mosquitoes, bees and insects
Will win the unsurpassable Awakening,
Which is so hard to find. (Ch. 7, v. 18.)

and ticks have buddha-nature, and if they practice Dharma, they can also become enlightened. It is basically like that. There have been many female beings who became enlightened in a woman's body. The proof comes from those who did the practice.

In tantra, one can achieve enlightenment on a woman's body. Even though the Theravadins may not accept achieving liberation on a woman's body, even enlightenment can be achieved on a woman's body by practicing tantra. You achieve enlightenment quickly if you put effort into practicing Highest Yoga Tantra on the basis of practicing well the pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows and correctly devoting yourself to the virtuous friend, cherishing the samaya of the guru like your own heart or life.

The person who remembers Medicine Buddha's name and mantra won't receive harm from maras, spirits and such beings. The person who even touches the Medicine Buddha's name and mantra written on rock or paper won't be reborn in the hell, animal or preta realms or in the world of yamas.

By doing the recitation of Medicine Buddha's name and mantra, when you die one thousand buddhas will make prediction, and you will be born in Medicine Buddha's pure land. If you write Medicine Buddha's name and mantra, you will be protected by the four guardians. If you meditate on Medicine Buddha, Medicine Buddha will descend in front of you and lead you by the hand to the three pure fields.

I'm not sure what *three pure fields* means. One must be Land of Medicine Buddha, where we are now....

Wherever a sentient being who even remembers Medicine Buddha's name and mantra goes, the black-side spirits who are in that place run away, but the white-side devas see Medicine Buddha and do prostrations and circumambulations.

This probably means that when a person is remembering or reciting Medicine Buddha's name and mantra as they are simply walking around on the beach, in the jungle or somewhere else, the white side devas, who like Dharma and help sentient beings to practice Dharma, see this person as

Medicine Buddha and make prostrations and offerings to and circumambulations of this person. They offer them chocolates, ice cream and pizza. I'm joking. That's not quite mentioned, but I think it's included.

They will grant food, wealth and medicines, and without doubt they will help that person to accomplish all their wishes.

The white-side devas will help that person to accomplish everything they desire.

In Hong Kong, Esther, the mother of the reincarnation of Gen Jampa Wangdu, the great meditator who was also my teacher, used to have many severe headaches and had a major operation in which they cut open her skull. It was a very dangerous treatment, but the doctors commented that it was surprising how well it succeeded for her. She didn't tell me what happened during the operation for a long time. I think she normally does some Medicine Buddha practice every day, maybe reciting one mala of the mantra. When I met her in Hong Kong before the operation, I think I did mention the practice to her and gave her advice on what to think when she went to hospital to have the operation.

Anyway, during all those hours of a very intense operation, she saw herself very clearly as Medicine Buddha. That's what happened during the operation when they were cutting her skull. She also thought of me, but I think that part is just her own mind.

There is also a story about John Schwartz, who has now passed away. John was the director of Vajrapani Institute for quite a number of years, and he was also Lama Yeshe's attendant for some time around the time Lama was in America teaching at a university in Santa Cruz. He was a nice guy, with a very sharp mind. Many years ago he guided the meditations during one of the meditation courses. People found him very dynamic, I think.

One time John was having a major heart operation. It might sound funny but during that intense operation, he had a vision that I was lying down right on his body, head to head. I don't have any capacity to help in that way and, anyway, it was not in the form of a buddha.

After his recovery, he came to see me at the airport and said, "Now I understand. Now I will do everything that you say." I didn't understand why he was so keen. There were many other people at the airport, but somehow he quietly explained what had happened to him during the operation. I think he might also have been practicing Medicine Buddha. Of course,

that happened because we have a Dharma connection as guru and disciple. Whether it was Medicine Buddha or not, Buddha was helping to save him during that operation, but because we have a connection, it was by using my form. I wish I could actually help like that, but I think that is how it works. It came from him; it was the result of his own practice in the past.

We are talking about two very risky, intense operations, but the same thing happened in both. Seeing Medicine Buddha, as happened to Esther, can also happen when you die; at that time Medicine Buddha can also guide you. I told her that she doesn't have to worry at all about when she dies. Anyway, she normally says that she is not afraid of death, and that the main purpose of her staying alive is to help the FPMT center in Hong Kong and the Maitreya Project, as well as other projects that I have. Her wish to live is only to help these projects, and she herself is not afraid of death.

Also, Angela [Wang] saw Medicine Buddha when she was giving someone acupuncture. She saw Medicine Buddha on a woman's body as she was putting needles into her.

The medicinal goddesses (who have tantric realizations, I guess) initiate and bless every day a sentient being who one-pointedly makes prayers and requests to Medicine Buddha. The medicinal goddesses then make the prayer: "My fortunate son, may the buddhas of the three times and ten directions initiate and bless you to heal sickness by medicine and to develop your works for sentient beings." They also pray, "May this person have complete freedom in treatment by operation, not being distracted for even one second in their service to sick sentient beings. May this person be able to work for sick people."

This means that not only the medicinal goddesses but also Medicine Buddha prays for the person to be able to heal sick people.

"May this sentient being never separate from me for even a second, always accompanying me like a shadow follows a body. May this person spontaneously and effortlessly accomplish all the nectar medicine and equipment necessary to help sick people.

"May this person be expert in giving medicines for heat and cold."

There might be two meanings here. I think it might be related more to the person needing to be wise in mixing the medicines for those two, heat and cold.

“May this medicine, like shooting an arrow at a target, be the exact remedy to sicknesses of heat and cold. When this person does pulse diagnosis, may they immediately be able to recognize the sicknesses.”

The doctor holds the patient’s wrist and checks their pulse while asking them questions.

“When this person checks urine, may they clearly see the outer and inner sicknesses.”

This is like a Tibetan doctor, who uses urine to diagnose a person’s sickness.

“May this person be wise in mixing the medicines for heat and cold and be able to heal sicknesses.”

For fever or sicknesses that involve heat, you give cool medicine. For sicknesses that involve feeling cold, you give warm medicine. For sicknesses that are a mixture of heat and cold, you give a balance of the two medicines.

“May the collection of the hosts of sicknesses be destroyed.”

Medicine Buddha and the medicinal goddesses pray in this way every day for that person. Medicine Buddha especially helps you to serve sick people if you are practicing Medicine Buddha by reciting the mantra and doing the meditation. In such degenerate times (over-degenerate times), the diagnosis of disease is not clear even to expert doctors. Since diseases don’t follow what is normally explained in the texts, it’s easy to get mixed up so that you can’t judge the sickness a person has. By doing Medicine Buddha practice, however, you are then able to diagnose exactly the diseases that confuse even other expert doctors. The diseases that they can’t recognize, you are able to diagnose and treat with the right medicine. Medicine Buddha and the medicinal goddesses help you to give the right medicine to your patients.

There is a Medicine Buddha retreat to do, which is from Padmasambhava's practices. After you have done that, you have to always keep the samaya of eating only white food and no black food. I think it's done to keep the body clean. To do the retreat, I think you need a Highest Yoga Tantra Medicine Buddha initiation, which is from the Nyingma tradition, I think. If possible, you should have received this initiation as a preliminary. Once you do Medicine Buddha retreat, you can then diagnose patients without doing even the normal study. I guess that your mind becomes very clear from having done the retreat and from eating only white food. When you diagnose patients, you recognize a patient's sickness either through your own clairvoyance or through the medicinal goddesses telling you in your ear what sickness the person has. Without needing to go through the normal study, you are able to diagnose sickness, especially the many new sicknesses there are nowadays, the explanations of which aren't actually mentioned in the texts, which were written in olden times. Sicknesses nowadays don't normally match what is written in the old texts; sicknesses haven't stayed that way but have got mixed up. It is now easy for doctors to make mistakes. So, this is one particular practice that helps in these difficult cases.

I think I saw this text when I was staying for a long time in Dharamsala during Lama's time, during one of the Dharma Celebrations. I gave the text to Dr. Barry Clarke, an old student of Yeshe Donden, and asked him to translate it. I don't think it got done, so I got the text back. One point is that you have to eat only white food to make your body clean so that your mind is clear. I think that may be very helpful for your patients.

The person has to practice Medicine Buddha and have a good heart, with a sincere wish to help others. Medicine Buddha and the buddhas and bodhisattvas then help that person to help others; they bless the person to give them healing power.

I think the Highest Yoga Tantra Medicine Buddha initiation was given by His Holiness in Dharamsala in recent times, though I didn't receive it. I think Khamtrul Rinpoche also gave it some years ago at Root Institute when I was there, but I didn't attend the initiation. Root Institute invited Khamtrul Rinpoche there to do a course, and he also gave Medicine Buddha initiation. I heard that initiation was the Highest Yoga Tantra one.

"They help to take out sicknesses with the wisdom needle. They burn some sicknesses with the transcendental wisdom of the magnifying glass."

I think it means by making a small fire.

“Some sicknesses are taken out with the iron that drops from the sky.”

You often see this metal in Tibet, where the nomads keep it to sharpen knives. It’s called *nam chak*. You put it on the body to draw out sickness.

“Some sicknesses are healed by wisdom binding.”

The medicinal goddesses help in many different ways. They bring all these tools and medicines to help that person cure the sick person.

“The Brahmin sage who has attainments does good prayers, and this sage also makes prayers that the person who is treating other sick people succeeds in all their activities.

“Generate strong faith in Medicine Buddha and be certain to recite my holy name and mantra and make offerings and prostrations.”

If you are doing massage or other types of healing, it’s very good to practice Medicine Buddha. If you put effort into this practice, your treatment will then be more successful, more effective, and you will be able to benefit others more.

Short, short, short!

[The group recites the short mandala offering.]

Now *Queen of Prayers*. Or does everybody have the prayer called *Blissful Realm*? No? OK, so today we’ll do *King of Prayers*.

[The group recites *King of Prayers*, followed by the long-life prayers for Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Ösel Rinpoche.]

I drew this Buddha a long time ago at Kopan, when there was plenty of time to do many things. Anila Ann made a copy of it, and it was used in the *Wish-Fulfilling Golden Sun*, the early Kopan course book.



ཨ། འདྲེན་ཅག་གི་ཕྱི་རྒྱུ་པམ་ཉམ་མེད་བས་གཙུང་
སྤུལ་ལྟོས།

DEDICATIONS

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may bodhicitta, which is the root of all success and all temporary and ultimate happiness for me and for all sentient beings, be actualized within my own mind, in the minds of my family and in the minds of all the rest of the sentient beings without even a second’s delay. May that which has been generated be increased.

“Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe....”

Do the same dedication for the wisdom realizing emptiness.

“Tong ye ta wäi rin po chhe....”

“Gang ri ra wäi khor wä zhing kham dir....”

Do the same dedication for the other virtuous friends to have stable life. “May all their holy wishes succeed immediately, including those of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, who are now experiencing unimaginable suffering in those realms and those who have died whose names have been given to me, for whom I have promised to pray and who rely upon me immediately be liberated from all those unimaginable sufferings and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or receive a perfect human body and quickly achieve enlightenment by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may my hearing a sentient being is sick cause that sentient being to immediately recover. And may my hearing a sentient being has died cause that sentient being to immediately be born in a pure land where they can become enlightened. Or if a sentient being has been born as a human being but with no opportunity to practice Dharma, may they achieve enlightenment quickly by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and Mahayana teachings and by putting the teachings into practice.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors of this organization, those who give their lives to the organization to offer service to sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha, as well as those who rely upon me, those for whom

I have promised to pray, those whose names have been given to me, those who are offering service to me and everyone else, have a long life and be healthy. May all our wishes succeed immediately in accordance with the holy Dharma. Especially, may we be able to complete the realization of the lam-rim, the steps of path to enlightenment, and Lama Tsongkhapa's stainless teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra.

"May all the Sangha in this organization be able to have complete scriptural understanding and realization of the path to enlightenment, by living in the foundation practice, vinaya, and by receiving all their needs and protection.

"May the social service centers and meditation centers become most beneficial for all sentient beings, immediately pacifying the sufferings of body and mind of sentient beings. May they be able to cause bodhicitta, the ultimate good heart, to be generated in the minds of sentient beings.

"May anyone trying to help and any dying person connected with any of the hospice projects in this organization never ever again be reborn in the lower realms. May they immediately be reborn in a pure land of buddha—not just any pure land but a special pure land where they have the opportunity to practice tantra and become enlightened. Or may they receive a perfect human body and, by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings, achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible. May all those people die with a virtuous thought, either of compassion, emptiness or devotion to Buddha. (Dying with such a virtuous thought means dying without fear.) May all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, especially Medicine Buddha, bless and protect all those people that the hospice groups have tried to help.

"May all the centers be able to spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything needed for that. May the temple with 100,000 Medicine Buddha statues, the 100,000 stupa project, the building of a place for Sangha to stay, the social service projects, as well as any other projects here, and universal education quickly liberate sentient beings. May these projects enable sentient beings to purify their negative karma and to collect extensive merit and quickly bring them to enlightenment. May any human being, insect, spirit or any other sentient being who sees the stupa, goes round the stupa, remembers the stupa or sees a picture of the stupa be quickly brought to enlightenment. May the universal education project be most successful, even more successful than what has been envisioned by the organization.

May it be able to bring so much peace and happiness in the world and stop the violence, killing and wars between religions and between countries. May each child or teenager who joins and completes universal education become like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, like Compassion Buddha, like St. Francis. May they become an inspiring example of compassion and a leader of peace, bringing peace to the whole world. May every child and teenager bring peace to all sentient beings.

“May all the projects in the rest of the organization and the centers succeed immediately by receiving everything needed. May all the building of monasteries and nunneries and holy objects in different parts of the world, especially the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, be completed as quickly as possible by receiving all the funding without even a second’s delay. May this project and all the other projects of the FPMT centers be able to cause bodhicitta to be generated in the minds of everyone in this world and of all sentient beings. May everyone have perfect peace and happiness. May nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness, the danger of fire, water, air, and earth, such as earthquakes, or any other undesirable thing. May they never ever experience anthrax or a terrorist attack or any other undesirable thing. May the Maitreya Project and the other projects in the centers cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May Lama Ösel Rinpoche come back to the monastery as quickly as possible (as he should already have done two weeks ago) to continue his study. May he be inspired to change his mind and want to come back to Sera Monastery as quickly as possible. May he want to do only that. May he be able to complete his study then show qualities like Lama Tsongkhapa’s and bring benefit like the sky to sentient beings. May he guide the students, bringing the light of Dharma all over the world, like the sun rising. May he bring so much peace and happiness and grant enlightenment to sentient beings.

“May the teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa be spread in all directions and flourish, and may I be able to cause this to happen.”

[The group recites the multiplying mantras.]

Which prayer is it? *Der ni ring du....* or the one for the spread of Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings?

[The group chants *Final Lam-Rim Prayer*, followed by the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedication prayers in Tibetan.]

BREAK-TIME PRACTICES

The retreat is now about to finish. I didn't get to spend enough time here to give more explanations here and there, either related to the sadhana or to things to practice not only during this retreat but also normally in daily life. I would like to have explained some things for you to experiment with during this retreat.

Even though there's not much time in the breaks, during these few days that are left, we'll still try to practice mindfulness of bodhicitta in the mornings and concentrate more on emptiness in the afternoons. Tomorrow, in the morning, we'll practice mindfulness of bodhicitta, particularly in the breaks between sessions. With any being that you see—any person, insect or bird—practice mindfulness that they have been your mother and kind numberless times. Remember how they gave you a body not just to enjoy temporary pleasure but especially to practice Dharma. They have given you a body numberless times—even the omniscient mind cannot see the beginning of those bodies. Think, “Each time that sentient being has been my mother, they have saved my life from danger many hundreds of times a day.” That sentient being has been kind like that numberless times. Even the omniscient mind cannot see the beginning of that second kindness.

Next, they led you in the path of the world, which means they gave you an education. They especially gave you the opportunity to read and write, to read Dharma books and to learn Dharma. They did this numberless times.

Think, “They also suffered for my well-being, for my happiness, for my survival. Each of the numberless times they have been my mother they have suffered so much.” Even the omniscient mind cannot see the beginning of that kindness. To repay the kindness, even if you sacrificed your life equal in number to the atoms of this earth or the drops of water in the ocean, you could never finish repaying each of these kindnesses of the mother.

I'm just giving you an idea of how to meditate when you practice mindfulness of kindness, especially in the break-times when you go out walking. While you are walking, remember this with everybody you see. With every insect, animal or worm, think, “This being has been my mother numberless times and been kind in the four ways numberless times to me.” You just say those words, but in your heart you have the idea that you have received all that kindness numberless times. It's like looking through the eye of a needle and seeing a whole city. You say just one or two words but you then get the whole idea.

Of course, we don't just think they are kind and stop there. We then think to repay their kindness by thinking, "I should achieve enlightenment to benefit them." That's the conclusion, after meditating on their kindness. The basic thing is to feel in your heart that everybody is very precious.

That is the same even if you are doing retreat alone. It is fantastic to practice like this even in the break-times, while you're sitting or while walking around. Meditation is not just for when you sit. You should actually be practicing lam-rim wherever you are and whatever you're doing. Whether you're standing, sitting or sleeping, you should be practicing lam-rim.

I didn't get to tell you about this at the beginning of the retreat, and it's not that I myself practice it, but it's my wish for this to happen when we do retreat. I think it's very, very good to put strong and continuous effort into mindfulness. There will then really be some result in your heart. Retreat is not just about finishing mantras. In this way, a retreat becomes really inspiring, whether it's a group or individual retreat.

Anyway, tomorrow meditate like that. Since there's not much time left, do that meditation in the morning and meditate on emptiness in the afternoon. Maybe tomorrow you can start doing this while you're in your room, in the gumpa or outside walking around. Practice constant mindfulness that what appears to you and how you see it have to do with your view. What appears to you—people, animals, objects—is the view of your mind. So, that means it has come from your mind, from your concept; you created it.

This kind of mindfulness is extremely powerful. You're not just mindful, "Now my foot is touching the ground." As I think I mentioned one other time, you can practice mindfulness like an expert thief. As a thief, especially in the West, you need a lot of mindfulness to choose the right time to get into a house or a bank. You need to be aware of the right time and the right place, where there's money. You need to be mindful of how to get inside and have all the tools. You need a lot of skill, a lot of awareness.

These meditations on bodhicitta, emptiness, renunciation and guru devotion are the actual antidotes. When you practice these meditations, you're taking powerful medicine that heals sickness. You need a lot of awareness when you're a professional thief, but of course at that time there is no lam-rim. There is no bodhicitta there; there is no emptiness there; there is no guru devotion there; there's no three principles of the path there; there is no visualizing yourself as a deity. When you go to rob a bank, you don't visualize the bank as a mandala and yourself as a deity. What is missing is the three

principles of the path. Of course, if you thought of lam-rim at that time, you wouldn't go to steal. You would stop stealing if you applied lam-rim.

Here the mindfulness doesn't involve just watching your breath or watching your bare foot touch the ground all day long. Here it's very rich meditation. Practicing mindfulness of what appears to you is a very powerful, scientific meditation. What appears to you, what you see, is all the view of your own mind; it came from your mind.

To give a clearer idea, I sometimes use the example of how your friend and your enemy come from your own mind, are projected by your own mind. I think many of you will have heard this in different places, as I usually mention it in courses. I usually give the following example, which is quite helpful to get an idea of this meditation practice, of how to practice mindfulness of this.

When you were a child and couldn't read, when you didn't know the alphabet, before your teacher introduced you by saying, "This is A," you had no idea what it was. The teacher drew three lines on the blackboard in this particular design, and that's all you saw. Before the teacher taught you, "This is A," and you believed in what the teacher said, that's all you saw. Before that, you saw just three lines; you didn't see A. At that time you didn't see this as A, because this didn't appear to you as A. Do you understand? The reason it didn't appear to you as A is that your mind hadn't yet labeled "A" on this design and believed in that label. That hadn't happened. Because of that, you didn't see this as A. You just saw these lines. The teacher then taught you that this is A, you believed in what the teacher said and your mind then made up the label "A." Your mind imputed "A" and believed in that. So, that's how you created the concept of A and believed in it. Right after that, A appeared to you. You then saw these lines as A.

You can now see that there's a projection of A, a projection from your mind. There is now an appearance of A; you see this design as A. This came completely from your mind, from your concept.

Now, it is the same when you see a bell. Because you are familiar with this base and the label that is given to this base, you already have the concept, so on seeing this base, you label it "bell" and believe in that label. You then see a bell. It is the same with the I, the aggregates and all other phenomena. It is like this with every single object here: the Medicine Buddha statues, all the different colored lights and so forth. And when you go outside, it is the same with the sky, the road, the plants, the people, the insects. It is like this

with everything. Everything that appears to you, everything that you see, including the sky and the earth, came from your mind. You can now see that it's the view of your mind.

The same liquid in the same bowl appears as nectar to devas, because they have more merit; as water to human beings, who have no merit to see nectar; and as pus and blood to pretas, who have no good karma to see something clean. The view of these three different types of beings depends on how much merit they have.

If you start with awareness of the example I gave of the A, it helps you to see how everything came from the mind, which can be very helpful in leading to emptiness. You recognize more and more that the object to be refuted is a hallucination. You recognize more and more how things appear to be truly existent, to be existing by nature. The more you think that these things came from your mind, the more you recognize that they are false. In that way it is then easier to get an idea of emptiness. As you are able to recognize the more subtle wrong view, the more subtle object to be refuted, your understanding of emptiness becomes more correct.

This can also be practiced in daily life. Before you leave home to go sight-seeing or to the market or beach, plan to meditate like this. Use what you are going to do for meditation. There are many different ways you can meditate. Take seeing a beautiful object, for example. Here it becomes very interesting when a beautiful object causes desire to arise. You then remember that it came from your view, that it's simply the view of your mind. As with the A, what appears to you, what you see, is simply the view of your mind.

When you don't analyze, when you don't practice mindfulness, it looks as if that beautiful object totally exists from its own side, as if something real exists from its own side, as if something truly exists from its own side. But when you analyze, when you're mindful, it's actually not like that but the total opposite. It's the view of your own concept. You created a certain belief, and you then have this view. If you change your belief that it's beautiful, you will then see it as ugly. By thinking of the reasons, you will see that thing you now believe is beautiful as ugly.

It is the same with something that you see as ugly or undesirable, which makes you angry. If you are aware, you will think, "This is just the view of my mind. I have this view because I have created such a concept of an ugly, undesirable thing. Because of my concept of ugly, I have this view of ugly." It's like having a movie projector with a film inside on which are recorded

very unpleasant things; they are then projected onto a screen, and you see them. When you're not mindful, "This is just a movie," you think that what you're seeing is real, and it then disturbs you. If you're mindful that a dream is a dream, anything you see in the dream doesn't bother you. It is similar here. Without mindfulness, without knowing this is the view of your own mind, it appears to you as something truly ugly, a real ugly existing from its own side. By believing in that, you then get angry. It affects your mind, and anger then arises. It is the same with the rest of the emotional thoughts.

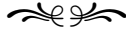
You practice mindfulness that what you see is projected by your mind, just as a movie projector projects what is on the film inside it. When you practice mindfulness of this, anger, attachment and other negative emotional thoughts don't arise. (Devotion to guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha might also be called an emotional thought, but it's positive emotion not negative. It's positive and useful, but these negative emotions only harm you and other sentient beings.) Thinking in this way doesn't allow negative emotional thoughts to arise, because there is mindfulness of their nature. So, it brings equanimity, stability and peace to your mind. I think it also brings satisfaction, because it doesn't allow desire to arise. When desire is cut, you find satisfaction. That's what satisfaction is.

Anyway, it's not exactly meditating on emptiness, but it's a basis for that. It's very helpful, especially for a beginner. It's an introduction that allows you to gradually discover more and more wrong views. It's a scientific analysis of how you see things, of how things appear to you.

I thought there was a prayer left. Maybe *Lama Chöpa*?

OK. Good night.

Combined Jorchö and Lama Chöpa Puja



THE IMPORTANCE OF LAMA CHÖPA

[Rinpoche performs a cymbals solo.]

Good morning.

Before doing the offering practice, I want to mention how Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo highly praised the importance of practicing *Lama Chöpa*, or *Guru Puja*. It might be good to write this down and keep it at the beginning of your *Guru Puja* text as a reminder of the importance of the practice.

The great enlightened being, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, said:

If you are able to do the practice of *Guru Puja* in your daily life, it contains all the important points of sutra and tantra. It is a complete practice, and it shows the palm (which means the heart) of the instruction of the ear-lineage of Ganden.

Ganden refers to the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition. There are two terms: *Gelug*, which means the virtuous tradition, and *Ganden*, which means the joyful one. Lama Tsongkhapa's monastery, Ganden, was established before the other major monasteries of the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition, Sera and Drepung. *Ganden* means having joy or joyful one. I don't know how others translate *Ganden*, but *ga* means joy and *den* means having, so having joy or joyful one. *Nyen gyü* means the ear-lineage. It can be translated as *whispered lineage*, but *nyen* means ear and *gyü* means lineage, so *ear-lineage*. The translation could read, "It shows the palm of instruction of the text of manifestations of the ear-lineage of the Joyful One." I think it should be translated that way.

I think it means that Manjushri manifested in the form of a teaching, or text. Lama Tsongkhapa received sutra and tantra teachings from Manjushri in the manner of a disciple receiving teachings directly from their guru. It didn't happen as some kind of vision or dream. Lama Tsongkhapa met and directly received teachings from Manjushri. This was definite, not like some kind of vision that you're not sure you can really trust.

I think *shows the palm* is expressing that this is a key secret instruction that gives enlightenment in the very brief lifetime of a degenerate time. The expression also means that it shows it very clearly.

The lineage of mahamudra of Drubchen Chökyi Dorje....

Drubchen Chökyi Dorje [the *mahasiddha* Dharmavajra] was a disciple of a disciple of Lama Tsongkhapa. Chökyi Dorje was a Tibetan lama who, like Milarepa, achieved full enlightenment in the brief lifetime of the degenerate time by practicing tantra on the basis of lam-rim. I think His Holiness the Dalai Lama also explained this in the mahamudra teaching during the first Enlightened Experience Celebration.⁷⁶ I don't remember whether we or some other people requested a tantric mahamudra commentary. There was a lam-rim commentary before it, I think. Alex Berzin translated the teachings, as those who were at the first EEC in Dharamsala will remember. At that time His Holiness explained that Drubchen Chökyi Dorje, this great yogi, this great enlightened being, is still living on Mount Everest, or Chumolhamo, in Tibetan. Alex Berzin, who is normally able to translate terms very well, wasn't familiar with the meaning of *Chumolhamo*.

There is also Gyalwa Ensapa. His Holiness Song Rinpoche used to mention quite often that Gyalwa Ensapa achieved enlightenment in the brief lifetime of the degenerate time very comfortably, eating delicious food. His Holiness Song Rinpoche used to say Gyalwa Ensapa achieved enlightenment in comfort, without having to bear hardships as Milarepa did. His Holiness Song Rinpoche said that this happened because *Guru Puja* involves integration of three deities: Guhyasamaja, Yamantaka and Chakrasamvara. Generally, in the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition one practices tantra by integrating these three deities. One way to do this is by doing the sadhanas of the three deities each day. The general reason for practicing these three deities is in order to benefit sentient beings. In order to liberate sentient beings from the

⁷⁶ Published in *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra*.

oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause and bring them to full enlightenment, you need to achieve the two kayas: the dharmakaya and the rupakaya. Once you have achieved the dharmakaya, while you are in that state, you then manifest in the rupakaya, as you've just recited in the second verse of the prayer of prostration from the seven-limb practice, "manifesting in various forms to whomever it subdues."⁷⁷

Achieving the two kayas, unification of the holy body and holy mind, depends on achieving the direct cause of that, the unification of no more learning. In order to achieve the unification of no more learning, the unification of the holy body and holy mind, you need to achieve the direct cause of that, the unification of learning, which involves the unification of the clear light and illusory body. In order to achieve the unification of those two, you first need to separately achieve the clear light, which is the direct cause to achieve dharmakaya, and the illusory body, which is the direct cause of rupakaya. You need to achieve those two separately. It is the Chakrasamvara teaching that gives detailed techniques for achieving the clear light. One has to practice mother tantra, which emphasizes clear light, and that practice is Chakrasamvara.

The tantric teaching that emphasizes the means to achieve the illusory body is father tantra, specifically the Guhyasamaja teaching. The Guhyasamaja teaching, particularly Lama Tsongkhapa's commentary on Guhyasamaja practice, shows clearly and in detail how to achieve the illusory body. Such a clear explanation didn't exist before Lama Tsongkhapa. Of course, there have been many Tibetans who achieved enlightenment in other traditions, but as far as commentaries go, there hadn't been such a clear explanation of the techniques before Lama Tsongkhapa. Anyway, this is why you need to practice Guhyasamaja.

Then, of course, for the success of those two practices, you need to practice Yamantaka, the wrathful aspect of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom. While Manjushri is a peaceful aspect, Yamantaka is extremely wrathful. It's a most powerful deity in eliminating obstacles. By doing the practice of Yamantaka, you are able to eliminate obstacles and succeed in the other two practices. Of course, by practicing Yamantaka you are also able to develop

⁷⁷ You are the wisdom-knowledge of all infinite conquerors

Appearing in any way that subdues.

With supreme skillful means, you manifest as a saffron-robed monk.

Holy refuge savior, I prostrate at your feet. (V. 19.)

wisdom, because Yamantaka is a manifestation of Manjushri. It fulfills these two purposes. So, that's why you need to practice these three deities.

Doing the sadhanas of the three deities each day is related more to the generation stage, I think. There is then a way of integrating the practice of the three deities according to the graduated completion stage. You practice Yamantaka to dispel obstacles. Practicing the Six Yogas of Naropa, for example, is part of the Chakrasamvara practice. And there are Guhyasamaja completion stage techniques to open the heart chakra. The final instructions on how to release the knots at the heart chakra and open the heart chakra are from Guhyasamaja, I think. I don't remember exactly, but it is something like that.

One reason that *Lama Chöpa* is so special is that it integrates these three practices. You begin by generating yourself as Yamantaka. The second merit field is from the Guhyasamaja body mandala. You visualize the different parts of the guru's holy body as all the deities of the Guhyasamaja body mandala. The Chakrasamvara practice then comes in the section of offering. Visualizing extensive offerings, with the sixteen goddesses carrying the various offerings, is part of the Chakrasamvara practice.

Geshe Senge Rinpoche advised that another way of integrating practice of the three deities is by reciting the mantras of the three deities after the guru enters your heart—by meditating on being oneness with them, I guess.

From Geshe Senge Rinpoche, a great yogi of Most Secret Hayagriva, I received almost all the oral transmissions of the teachings of Most Secret Hayagriva of a past incarnation of Kalka Damtsig Dorje, a great yogi of Most Secret Hayagriva. I received the oral transmission of the three volumes that have the entire practice of Most Secret Hayagriva, as well as two volumes on that practice by the Fifth Dalai Lama. I received them in Dharamsala over about three months, along with some incarnate lamas in the lineage of that practice. Keutsang Rinpoche, who in his past life was a great practitioner in the lineage of Most Secret Hayagriva, was there, as well as Jhado Rinpoche and Pari Rinpoche, another incarnate lama, who came from Tibet quite some time ago. Bakula Rinpoche was also there from time to time when initiations were given. Lama Gyüpa, the old lama who takes care of the altars at Tushita and Geshe Tsering, Lama's relative, were also there.

When we generate special bodhicitta to practice tantra at the beginning of *Guru Puja*, there is the expression *nyur war nyur wa*, in Tibetan, which means "quicker and quicker." In the general definition, the first *quicker*

means quicker than Mahayana sutra, where you have to collect merit for three countless great eons. In tantra you don't need to do that. Since you can achieve enlightenment within one life it is quicker. Of course the lower tantras are quicker to achieve enlightenment than sutra, but Highest Yoga Tantra is even quicker than the lower tantras. This is the meaning of the second *quicker*. Not only can you achieve enlightenment in one lifetime, but you can achieve enlightenment in the brief lifetime of a degenerate time, when life is very short.

GOMO RINPOCHE'S WISDOM MOTHER

Gomo Rinpoche's wisdom mother is coming today. She arrived the day before yesterday, and today I want to show her LMB, especially the temple. It will make her extremely happy to see the many holy objects and the temple. I want her to pray for the success of the various projects here, the temple with the Medicine Buddha statues and the stupas.

She is now showing the aspect of being very old, but her qualities are beyond doubt. There is no doubt that she is extremely spiritual, extremely devoted. Since her prayers have much power, it will be very good if she can come on the land to pray. I think she was a nun in a nunnery in the early times in Tibet. She knows everything, but she sometimes appears as if she has a mental disorder. Her daughter says that she has Alzheimer's.

It might be better to place her chair where she can see the statues and the other holy objects, where she has a good view of them.

She is the wisdom mother of the previous Gomo Rinpoche. The present incarnation of Gomo Rinpoche is still very small.

I think she came to Dharamsala one time because in his will in his past life, Gomo Rinpoche asked for some teachings to be requested from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I think she sponsored a lam-rim teaching and a Vajrayogini teaching. I wasn't there at that time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LAMA CHÖPA

Geshe Senge used to say that when we do *Guru Puja* we should also recite the mantras of the three deities. That practice is also the integration of the three deities. After the guru has entered your heart, with that meditation you then recite the mantras of the three deities.

The reason His Holiness Song Rinpoche used to say that Gyalwa Ensapa,

unlike Milarepa, achieved enlightenment very easily and comfortably, by eating delicious food and so forth and without bearing much hardship, is because of this special practice in the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition of doing Highest Yoga Tantra practice by integrating these three deities.

Pabongka says:

The great accomplished yogi Chökyi Dorje, Gyalwa Ensapa and so forth did this *Guru Puja* as their heart practice.

Why are those two names mentioned? Because they are examples of practitioners who, like Milarepa, achieved enlightenment in the brief lifetime of a degenerate time. *And so forth* refers to the others who practiced *Guru Puja* as their heart practice.

Having done this as their heart practice, the great accomplished yogi Chökyi Dorje, Gyalwa Ensapa and so forth found the state of unification in that life.

All the previous holy beings (which means the lineage lamas) did this as their heart practice. Even though the words are few, this practice contains great meaning and brings great blessing. It has found the great vital points.

This means it has profound importance.

There is a text in which many different people—incarnate lamas, practitioner nuns and sometimes people from other traditions, such as Nyingma ngagpas—ask Pabongka questions by letter, and Pabongka then replies to them. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo usually emphasizes that even if one can't do much else in daily life, *Guru Puja* is the essential practice. I guess you begin the day with *Guru Puja* and then on top of that do the sadhanas of Yamantaka, Vajrayogini, Chakrasamvara and so forth. Because Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo himself was a great yogi of Chakrasamvara, he quite often emphasized Chakrasamvara practice.

You should do the daily practice of *Guru Puja*, even if you can't do the sadhanas of many other deities, such as Chakrasamvara.

This practice of *Guru Puja* is very profound, with many extra benefits, and is very quick to bring enlightenment. The lam-rim prayer, the prayer of the steps of the path to enlightenment, in *Guru Puja* has lam-rim and

also *lojong*, or thought transformation. Generally, the whole of the lam-rim, from guru devotion up to enlightenment, is thought transformation. If your mind is not transformed into the path, how can you have realizations of the path? There's no way, without transforming your mind. All the lam-rim realizations—guru devotion, perfect human rebirth (its usefulness and the difficulty of finding it again), impermanence and death and so forth—are *lojong*, thought transformation. When you say “general *lojong*” it covers everything, but when you say “lam-rim *lojong*” it specifically covers the part of bodhicitta, such as the paths of integrating the lifetime practice into the five powers and the five powers to be practiced near the time of death. The lam-rim prayer in *Guru Puja* has lam-rim, thought transformation and, after the six perfections, the generation and completion stages of tantra. There are verses that show those paths.

The lam-rim prayer also contains *powa*. Many lamas do *powa* with *Guru Puja*. They do the whole *Guru Puja*, then when they come to the verse on *powa*,⁷⁸ they do the “hic!” to shoot the consciousness of the person who has died to a pure land. They visualize Amitabha Buddha, Vajrayogini or another buddha on that person's crown, then shoot their consciousness to a pure land.

I haven't seen this done much, but an old lama who lives in Delhi, Rongtha Rinpoche, has done it. Naresh Mathur, the lawyer who is a member and former director of the Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre in Delhi, is married to an Italian woman, Antonella. When Antonella's father died in a Delhi hospital, they invited me to come but I suggested they invite Rongtha Rinpoche and another very good lama from Drepung, Gyalse Rinpoche. Rongtha Rinpoche just went straight through *Guru Puja* and performed *powa* at the verse on *powa*. He just did one “hic!,” though usually there are three or four.

The second incarnation of Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, the author of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, also does *powa* with *Lama Chöpa*. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo passed away a long time ago in Tibet, then reincarnated, escaped from Tibet and studied at Buxa in India, where I lived for eight years. He became a *geshe* then soon afterwards showed the aspect

⁷⁸ Should I not have completed the points of the path at the time of death,
I seek your blessings that I may be led to a pure land
Either through the instructions of applying the five forces
Or by the forceful means to enlightenment, the guru's transference of mind. (V. 112.)

of cancer and passed away in a place called Kashang, near Darjeeling. That incarnation was just about to spread Dharma, having completed his study in the monastery and received all the lineages of the sutra and tantra teachings from His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, who had received them from the previous Pabongka. He was just about to spread Dharma in the world like a flower opening or like the sun rising, but due to the lack of karma of sentient beings he took the aspect of cancer and passed away. There is now another incarnation, and we became close friends quite some time ago.

One time when we were talking about powa, Pabongka Rinpoche said that when somebody has died he just does *Lama Chöpa*. After the verse on the completion stage, with the clear light and illusory body, there's a verse on powa. Of course, if you have achieved the clear light of the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra, you don't need to worry about powa; you have overcome death and achieved the inner pure land. Such a practitioner can achieve enlightenment in the very brief lifetime of this degenerate time. However, if you didn't manage to actualize the completion stage realizations of clear light and illusory body, when you die you then do powa and try to achieve the outer khachö, the Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini pure land. If you are able to be reborn there, you will definitely become enlightened in that life. So, it's kind of the most profitable pure land. It's not so certain with Amitabha Buddha's pure land. When I asked my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, a question about this, Rinpoche said, "Yes, you can practice tantra there and achieve enlightenment." But Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche and some other lamas, including maybe Denma Lochö Rinpoche, don't accept that. They say that you have to reincarnate back in our world, this southern continent, then practice tantra here and achieve enlightenment.

That is the reason that verse on powa comes after the verse on the completion stage.

The lam-rim prayer in *Guru Puja* contains all the profound, vital points of the complete path of sutra and tantra.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo also mentions that when we do this practice we should think of the meaning of the words and meditate, not just recite the words blah, blah, blah, like an Indian express train—or an American express train. As much as possible we should reflect on the profound meanings. Doing this definitely leaves an extraordinary imprint of the complete pure path to enlightenment. In this way it makes it definite that we will achieve the very essence of life, which means that we will definitely achieve

the essence of the happiness beyond this life up to enlightenment, and especially enlightenment.

Doing the main practice of this *Guru Puja* is like hitting a target. When you shoot an arrow or gun or drop a bomb, your aim is to hit right on the target, your enemy or whatever you want to destroy. In the same way this practice hits the right point in an effective way. So, you should attempt to integrate everything in this way. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says “one hundred waters are contained in *Guru Puja*.” He probably means that just as all the many streams from the snow mountains and other places go into the ocean, all the important practices of sutra and tantra are condensed here in *Guru Puja*. If you do this practice every day, you don’t miss anything.

Since this is the very heart of the scriptures of the manifestation of the Joyful One, the blessing is unequaled by any other practice.

So, it has great importance.

On the basis of this, you then meditate on lam-rim and the tantric path of the main deity that you are practicing. This also contains all the important preliminary practices, the main one of which is guru devotion. Guru devotion is the root that enables you to receive blessings, the cause to achieve realizations of the path to enlightenment.

So, is it breakfast time? Not only is it time for a peepee break, but it’s maybe also time for breakfast. No? OK, pi-pi break.

Ven. Sarah: They don’t want one, Rinpoche.

Rinpoche: Oh, I see. Then the pi-pi break will be sad....

Because I always fall asleep, I haven’t been able to come for *Lama Chöpa*, but I thought to mention this advice from Pabongka, which emphasizes the importance of this practice. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo himself completed the lam-rim and tantric paths. I think it is an extremely rich practice that includes all the important points. If we begin the day with this practice and live our life in this practice, it’s incredible.

Maybe the tradition of not having a fixed practice is better, then at the end perhaps you can do Bönpo or Hindu practice. I think bin Laden’s religion may also be very strong and effective.

As to commentaries in English, there is an excellent commentary by His Holiness the Dalai Lama from the second Enlightened Experience

Celebration, which FPMT requested.⁷⁹ His Holiness has an incredibly broad view. He has read the guru yoga practices of many other high lamas and then integrated them. I don't know, but there may be other commentaries in English.

In regard to Tibetan texts, there are many from many great lamas. One of the most elaborate ones is by Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen, a great pandit in Tibet, who wrote many volumes of teachings on sutra and tantra. He was an unbelievable lama. From what I hear, that's the most elaborate commentary and the one that is normally used as the basis for *Lama Chöpa* commentary. However, in English, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's commentary is an excellent one.

I mentioned last time in San Francisco that the next time Chöden Rinpoche comes, Rinpoche should do a *Guru Puja* commentary, because we do *Guru Puja* all the time. It would be unbelievable to have that course.

I didn't get to do the practice, but I think I received my first *Lama Chöpa* commentary from His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche at Sarnath many, many years ago, and I then received another commentary from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche in Bodhgaya. I heard that at that time His Holiness Ling Rinpoche hadn't received the lineage, so His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche offered it to His Holiness Ling Rinpoche, who then gave it to the public. I received the commentary for the third time during the EEC. I have received the commentary many times, it's just that the practice is missing....

To practice *Lama Chöpa* and do the meditations, you need to have received a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation; to become a vessel, or container, to receive teachings on and to practice this, as a preliminary you need to receive any one of the Highest Yoga Tantra initiations. You are then qualified to receive commentary on *Guru Puja* and to practice it. I'm saying this in case there is somebody who wants to read the commentaries and practice *Guru Puja*, but who hasn't yet received a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation. You need to receive a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation; you are then permitted to study the commentary and do the practice.

EXTENSIVE OFFERING PRACTICE

So, we're going to make the extensive offerings.

First we will make charity of all the offerings here—every single light

⁷⁹ See *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness: Teachings on the Practice of Guru Yoga*.

and every single offering here on the altar—as well as all the offerings at the Aptos house—the many hundreds of water offerings, the many thousands of lights and the flowers inside and outside the house. Normally, wherever you are, even when you are at your home, you can visualize the offerings at the Aptos house and offer them when you do a sadhana or *Guru Puja*. Anybody can think of the extensive offerings there at the house and offer them. I give you permission to offer them. Wherever you are, whether in Afghanistan or any other part of the world, you can always think of the offerings there and offer them when you do a sadhana or *Guru Puja*.

Even at your own home, after you have set up the offerings on the altar and before you offer them, it's good to start by first making charity of the offerings to all sentient beings. You then offer the offerings you have on the altar, even if it's just seven water bowls, and all the lights in the house on their behalf. You make charity to every hell being, every hungry ghost, every animal, every human being, every asura, every sura and every intermediate state being. You make charity to every single one of them. This also helps you to practice bodhicitta. It's an antidote to thinking, "This is mine. This is my offering." Generally, after we have taken the bodhisattva vows, we're supposed to think that everything belongs to sentient beings. I don't think this is in the section of the entering vow, and it's not in the actual avoiding of the four black dharmas and practicing of the four white dharmas of the wishing vow. I've forgotten exactly where, but it's mentioned somewhere that part of the bodhisattva practice is thinking that everything belongs to sentient beings.

Before you offer, if you can, make charity of the offerings to all sentient beings, then offer them on their behalf. As I have mentioned in the past, it is then also as if you are doing puja for others. Here, by making charity of all the offerings you have performed on the altar to all other beings, you collect limitless skies of merit. You then make the offerings on their behalf, as if you are the manager. In a lojong text it says that you can offer on their behalf or make the offering together with all sentient beings. If you can make the offering on behalf of all sentient beings, everyone then gets the merit.

For example, when a family member has passed away, you make charity not for your benefit but for the benefit of that person who has passed away, so that they collect much merit. Or you make offering to the Triple Gem, Sangha and so forth on behalf of that person, so that they get much merit. It is similar here. It's a very practical way of helping sentient beings. For them to have happiness, they need to create merit. Without merit, they can't do

anything. They can't experience any pleasure, any success or happiness—even temporary happiness. Even the small pleasure that comes when a cool breeze passes over you when you feel uncomfortably hot depends on having collected good karma in the past. Even though we dedicate the merits at the end of the practice for other sentient beings, it's very beneficial even at the beginning to first make charity of the offerings to other sentient beings. It's more powerful.

At your home, there is a way to cheat the lazy mind that is unable to do the practice of offering many times a day. Put the guru's picture everywhere there's a light. Since you need to have light in your house, when you switch on a light, the picture reminds you to make offering of the light. The lights in your house aren't just for your comfort but also to make light offerings. And, of course, making offering to the guru collects the most extensive merit, more than from making offering to numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas and to the numberless statues, stupas and scriptures that exist in the numberless universes. Because you are using the light anyway, by the way you collect merit. This is a way to cheat the lazy mind that can't do the practice of offering many times a day. In this way it just gets done.

Ten benefits of each of the different offerings are explained in the sutras.

Now we can do the practice. Otherwise, making the offerings will never happen. The day will go, and we'll never get to make offering. We will have talked about it but never made the offerings.

In Mongolia there are two thousand offerings. I brought flowers from Malaysia or Hong Kong and bowls, some of which are huge, but I don't think they use them. When I was there I bought some bowls, and then sent many bowls from here to Mongolia. I think it's very good to have the offerings done there, because the six women who take turns to make the offerings at the center seem to enjoy doing it very much.

The Mongolian center is very good. It's a new building, with a room as long as this but not as wide, where extensive offerings can be made. They put tables all the way along both sides of the room and make the offerings on them. The whole wall is also covered with pictures of the Thirty-five Buddhas. The Mongolian economy is very bad. A doctor in the West gets a very high salary, but in Mongolia doctors get a very low one. People from the West are shocked when they find out how little they get. I even thought to pay a salary to the Mongolian women to make the offerings, because I think it's such a worthwhile thing. The money would help them to make a living. Of course, there's no comparison between the money you would

spend and the merit you would collect and the result you would get from the merit of each offering. What you would spend is nothing compared to the merit you would get.

However, Dr. Adrian, who is the teacher there, said that it wouldn't be good to pay them, that it would become a problem. Actually, they have been doing it voluntarily, and they're very, very happy to do that. I think Dr. Adrian taught them how to make water bowl offerings. As long as they think, "I am making offering to Buddha," they create the same number of causes of enlightenment as the number of offerings they make. It's different if you just set up water bowls on the altar without thinking that you are offering them to Buddha. During a teaching in the first Enlightened Experience Celebration, His Holiness Song Rinpoche said that if you just put the water there then empty it out, what meaning does it have? This means that if you don't do the meditation of offering to Buddha but just arrange the offerings on the altar, it becomes like a habit. It's not a very good practice.

Of course, since many students don't have space in their home to set up many offerings, they can't make extensive offerings. One time I was at Tara Institute, in Melbourne, Australia, which has a very large, very nice gompa with large stained-glass windows. It wasn't a church, but the building used to be owned by the Catholic Church. Many students were having difficulties with their businesses and they couldn't seem to improve the situation. In such cases, you need to create merit, because without good karma nothing works. One solution is to purify past negative karma, the result of which is all these hardships. The other thing is to create merit for success. My idea was that one person at the center could be in charge of setting up extensive offerings every day. That would be that person's main job. Many students could support the person by putting in just a little money each. When many students do that, it becomes a large amount, but the individual contribution would be just a few dollars each month. That person could make extensive offerings every day, then do the dedications. The dedications would be for all sentient beings, and in particular for all the people who sponsored the offerings. The person would make the offerings for them and then at the end dedicate all the merits for them. The person would need to be paid some pocket money or a small salary. If you were unable to do offerings at your own home, this person at the center could do the offerings for you. While you were driving along in your car, you could just remember all those offerings at the center and offer them to the merit field. All you would have to do is the mental action of simply remembering all those many hundreds

of offerings there at the center and just offer them to the *Guru Puja* merit field or to your gurus.

Also, when you did sadhanas at home, each of the many times you come to ARGHAM, PADYAM, PUSHPE..., you could remember those offerings and offer them. This would be especially good if you're unable to have clear visualization of the offerings. It would help very much the students themselves. While you were driving your car or in your office, you could just remember the offerings and offer them. You could do it many times. You think that each of the thousands of beings in the *Guru Puja* merit field (though I'm not sure there are thousands of them) is your root virtuous friend and make offering to them. Because you thought of each of them as your root guru then made the offering, you create the most extensive merit thousands of times; you create that many causes of enlightenment, and by the way, causes of liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives. There are many ways you can create much good karma. That's a very simple way to do it, and you just put in two or three dollars. Even if your house is very small, with no space for offerings, the center has a large space. It helps everybody. This way a lot of merit is created, which then makes life easy for the students and for the sentient beings. Life becomes easy rather than hard and painful, and there is also more opportunity to practice and create extensive merit.

Now we really are going to offer....

Make charity of the offerings here, the offerings at the Aptos house and the offerings in all the centers to every hell being.

There is a little bit of difference between saying "all sentient beings" and saying "every hell being," "every hungry ghost" and so forth. There are numberless hell beings, and saying "every hell being" or "every hungry ghost" or "every animal" makes it more personal. When you say "every" you feel closer. Saying "all sentient beings" is OK. You can say "all sentient beings," but the reason I often say "every hell being" or "every hungry ghost" is that it is a more personal giving, from you directly to that being. This is just my own thought, but I think when you say, "I offer this to all sentient beings," that feeling kind of disappears.

So, make charity of all the offerings here, at the Aptos house, and in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas to every hell being. When you say "every," do it with the idea of every one of the numberless hell beings. Make charity of all these offerings to every hungry ghost. Make charity of all these offerings to every animal and insect, to every human being, to every asura being, to every sura being and to every intermediate state being.

Think, “Now I am going to make offering to the guru-Triple Gem on their behalf.”

You can also think, “I myself am going to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all my kind mother sentient beings, to free from all their sufferings and bring them to full enlightenment.”

First offer all the offerings, every single light and water offering, here and at your own house. When you make offerings in this way, you can also play music, so you then have more offerings. Making any offering to Buddha is the same in being a general cause to achieve enlightenment, liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives, but each specific offering also has different results in terms of the happiness to be experienced. While you are making offerings in this way, you can also offer sound, an offering of religious music. You can also offer incense with whatever other offerings you have. You can offer all the many different offerings you have arranged. There are various offerings you can offer in this way.

Offer every single one of the offerings here, all the water bowls and other offerings, which appear in the nature of great bliss to the buddhas, to the merit field. Also offer all the offerings at the Aptos house, all the offerings in the rest of the FPMT centers’ gompas, including those in Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to the guru.

Put your palms together like this. You are then not only offering but also doing prostration at the same time. By putting your palms together to a statue or picture of Buddha you immediately receive eight benefits. You will have a perfect body in your next life. You will have perfect people to serve you, according to your wishes; everyone around you will be obedient to you. You will be able to live in morality. (That’s very important, because without that you have no foundation for realization.) You will have devotion. (Without devotion, again you have no foundation for attainment. You cannot receive blessings, so you can’t have attainment of the path to enlightenment.) You have the courage to do things in public. In your next lives you will be born with a deva or human body. You will then achieve the arya path, where you overcome death, old age, sickness and rebirth. When you achieve the Hinayana arya path, for example, you overcome all those sufferings of samsara. When you achieve the Mahayana arya paths, the Mahayana path of seeing and the Mahayana path of meditation, you no longer experience the sufferings of rebirth, old age, sickness and death; you have completely abandoned those sufferings of samsara. When you achieve the tantric arya path, the clear light of meaning, again you have overcome those sufferings,

the cycle of death and rebirth. So, the seventh benefit of simply putting your palms together like this to a statue or picture of Buddha is achieving the arya path, and the last benefit is achieving enlightenment.

You immediately achieve these eight benefits by putting your palms together to a statue or picture of Buddha. There are also ten benefits of putting your palms together; they include extensive body, retinue, wealth, remembrance, concentration and realization.

During the offering, it is very important to prostrate at the same time.

Whenever you go on pilgrimage to temples or holy places or even in your own shrine room, where there are many statues and pictures of buddhas, at least one time every day and, if possible, each time you enter the room, if you can prostrate to all the holy objects in this way, just by the way you collect causes of enlightenment according to the number of holy objects in your room. If there are a thousand, you create a thousand causes of enlightenment each time you enter the room if you put your palms together to all those holy objects, as well as a thousand causes of all the other types of happiness. At least one time each day you should prostrate with your palms together like this to all the holy objects.

If you also hold lit incense between your hands, it becomes prostration and offering. One particular advantage of offering incense is that you will always be surrounded by scented smells. One other very important benefit is that you will be able to live in morality, in this life and in future lives.

At the Aptos house, I made it a regulation that people who enter the offering room first have to generate a motivation of bodhicitta by thinking, "The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment; therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I am going to circumambulate, prostrate and make offering." *Prostrate* means put the two palms together. In the center of the room there's a stupa and tsa-tsas, and sometimes also relics. There are also relics in another room. I don't know exactly how many, but there are probably many hundreds of thousands of pictures of buddhas. Pictures or tsa-tsas cover all the walls. They then think, "My root guru manifested in the forms of these buddhas and other holy objects to purify my defilements and negative karmas and to enable me to collect extensive merit, which allows me to have realizations of the path to enlightenment." In this way they think of the purpose of those holy objects appearing to them as statues, paintings or pictures of buddhas.

In every picture of the *Lama Chöpa* merit field, there are so many beings, and you think that every single one of them is your root guru. You think that every single holy object is your root guru. With this mindfulness, you then think, “I am prostrating and offering incense to them.”

This is what I tell people to do when they come into the offering room. At the end, after they have gone around at least three times, depending on how much time they have, they then dedicate the merits. Because there are so many holy objects there, just going round one time and making offering in this way create many thousands of causes of enlightenment, liberation and the happiness of future lives, and the success of this life comes by the way because there is so much merit. Even though you don’t expect it, the success of this life comes by the way, while you’re working for enlightenment.

So, we’ll put our palms together while we’re making the offerings.

Also, your parents suffered so much to take care of you, to ensure your well-being. During the nine months your mother kept you in her womb, she bore so much hardship, so much pain, and especially during your birth. From then up to now, your parents have borne so much hardship and suffered so much. They have experienced physical exhaustion working to take care of you. They did their job to make money to take care of you. And they always worried about you, even at night. When people have children, even at night they have to experience so much hardship. They can’t even get a good rest, because their children are always crying or wetting themselves. Even if your mother asked somebody else to take care of you, it’s the same. That person who took care of you suffered so much and bore so much hardship to take care of your body. Because you have this body, somebody has to take care of it. If you didn’t have a body but only a mind, you wouldn’t need somebody to look after you, to give you food, clothing, shelter and education. But because you have this body, you need food, clothing, shelter and many other things.

Even if your mother left you and asked somebody else to take care of you, at least your mother gave you your body. If she had had an abortion, if she hadn’t created the good karma to give you this body, which you can also count as part of her kindness, you wouldn’t have had the opportunity to practice Dharma. Even if she went away after your birth and didn’t take care of you, her simply giving you this body is unbelievably kind, because it has allowed you to hear Dharma, to understand its meaning, to practice it and to have attainment. You can now see that the kindness of your mother

is as limitless as the sky. You might think, “Oh, she didn’t take care of me after I was born. She’s so bad, blah, blah, blah.” In the West, people say, “Oh, my mother is so bad,” as if she’s their worst enemy, worse than bin Laden, worse than hundreds of billions of bin Ladens. Just think of her kindness in giving you this body. It’s unbelievable. Her kindness is like the limitless sky, especially when you think that she gave you the opportunity to practice Dharma because of this body.

No matter who took care of you after your birth, somebody sacrificed their life to take care of you. They bore so much hardship for you. They suffered so much and created so much negative karma for your well-being, for your food, clothing, education and so forth.

Therefore, in your daily life you should use your body as much as possible to create good karma, to practice Dharma. This is the best way to repay their kindness. After that, you can then dedicate the merits for them. That’s one point. By collecting merit, you are able to develop your mind in the path to enlightenment, and you are then able to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. That’s the best way to repay their kindness. You should take every single opportunity to collect merit in your everyday life, doing whatever you can with your body, speech and mind.

Make offering to the guru of all the offerings here, all the offerings at the Aptos house and all the other offerings in the FPMT centers’ gompas, which are in the nature of infinite bliss. Offer them to the gurus by thinking that each one is the essence of all the buddhas.

Prostrate, make offering and generate infinite bliss within them.





Make all the offerings here, those at the Aptos house and all the extensive offerings in all the FPMT centers’ gompas, including the two thousand offerings in Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to all the *Guru Puja* merit field, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. Think in this way.


Prostrate, make all these offerings and think they generated infinite bliss within them. Do the meditation with these three.



Next, prostrate and make all the offerings here, those at the Aptos house and all the extensive offerings in all the FPMT centers’ gompas, including the two thousand offerings in Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to all the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of the ten directions, by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend.

Prostrate, make the offerings and think they have generated infinite bliss. With these three, make the offerings again and again. 

Prostrate and make all the offerings here, every single light and water offering, all the offerings at the Aptos house and all the offerings in all the FPMT centers' gompas, including Mongolia, to all the statues, stupas, scriptures and thangkas in all the universes in all the ten directions. (This covers every single holy object in every temple and individual shrine room. It covers everything.) From here, while you are sitting on this cushion, you make offering to every single holy object, including every single extra tsa-tsa that has been made anywhere. Every time somebody makes a new thangka, picture of buddha or tsa-tsa, you collect more merit by making offering to them. 

Prostrate, make all the offerings here, those in the Aptos house and the offerings in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, including Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to every single holy object in India, by meditating that the essence of each one is your root virtuous friend. Think that they generated infinite bliss within them. Also prostrate to them. Do these three practices again and again. 

Prostrate, make all the offerings here, those at the Aptos house and those in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, including Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to every single holy object in Tibet, including the Shakyamuni Buddha statue blessed by Buddha himself, the most precious one historically, which is in the Lhasa temple; the stupa that was built by FPMT at Sera Monastery; Meaningful to Behold, the precious Maitreya Buddha statue in Drepung Monastery; the most precious Most Secret Hayagriva statue in Sera Monastery; as well as all the rest of the many holy objects in Tibet. Meditate that the essence of each one is your root virtuous friend.

Prostrate, make all the offerings again and think they generated infinite bliss within them. Do these three: prostrate, offer, generate infinite bliss.



It's especially important to make offerings to that statue of Buddha in the Lhasa temple and pray for world peace. In the past this was done by the Dharma kings for success in spreading Dharma in Tibet. You can pray for world peace, as well as for other things.

Now, prostrate and make all the offerings here, those at the Aptos house, and those in all the rest of the FPMT centers' gompas, including Mongolia, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to all the holy objects in Nepal,

including the most precious one, Swayambunath Stupa, which contains a crystal stupa that spontaneously appeared from the lake when Kathmandu valley was still filled with a lake. It was predicted by Buddha as an embodiment of Buddha's holy mind, dharmakaya, which is inside that stupa. Think also of the Baudhanath Stupa, which is called "the all-encompassing, wish-fulfilling stupa." A mother with four sons started to build the stupa then after she passed away, the four sons completed it. While they were making prayers, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas absorbed into that stupa. That's why it's all-encompassing. Because they dedicated the merits of building the stupa for the spread of Dharma in Tibet, the four sons in future rebirths became the Dharma king, the minister, the powerful yogi and the abbot who passed the lineage of ordination. They spread Dharma in Tibet, enabling so many Tibetans to actualize the path and become enlightened. Dharma was thus preserved in Tibet for a long time, and has now spread all over the world, so that we are now able to make our lives meaningful by meeting Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, especially lam-rim. Every year many thousands of people in the West are able to meet Buddhadharma and make their lives meaningful. They have the opportunity to follow the path to enlightenment. So, it all came from Baudha stupa; it is due to that stupa.

Also prostrate and make offerings to all the rest of the holy objects in Nepal. Prostrate, make all the offerings to them and generate infinite bliss within them by meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend.




Prostrate and make all the offerings here, those at the Aptos house and those in all the rest of the centers, which are in the nature of infinite bliss, to all the holy objects that are in the rest of the world, including Sri Lanka and Burma. Meditate that their essence is your root virtuous friend, and think they generated infinite bliss.



As you have heard, by offering to Medicine Buddha, you get the same merit as having offered to all the buddhas. You have also heard that just by making offering to Medicine Buddha, you are always protected by Medicine Buddha's entourage, the twelve leaders of the groups of *nöjin*, each of whom has 700,000 in their entourage. They all protect you all the time, day and night. In this way all your wishes are fulfilled and all success comes.

Make offering to Medicine Buddha for success; to bodhisattva Kshiti-garbha, so that you become, like bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, able to instantly

fulfill the wishes for happiness of all sentient beings; and to Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, to develop great compassion so that you can liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. Make offerings to these three, meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend. 

We'll now complete the section of the offerings.

[The group chants *Lama Chöpa* verses 23–37.]

TAKING BODHISATTVA AND TANTRIC VOWS

I think it's good for whoever is leading the prayers to again remind everyone of the motivation before taking the vows.

Think, "The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from all their suffering and its causes and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Without living in the bodhisattva vows, I can't achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I'm going to take the bodhisattva vows for the benefit of all my kind mother sentient beings."

When *Guru Puja* is normally done at the centers, whoever is leading the puja can do the motivation and say that whoever has taken bodhisattva vows in the past can take the vows again. In this way the people who haven't taken bodhisattva vows don't have to feel uncomfortable. It is the same with the tantric vows. Those who have taken tantric vows can again take the tantric vows to revive whatever vows have been degenerated and make them pure. In this way the people who haven't taken tantric vows don't have to feel uncomfortable. I don't think it's a good idea not to do the prayers at all because there are people who haven't taken the vows. The people who have taken the bodhisattva and tantric vows then lose the opportunity to make them pure again. Whoever leads the prayer can clarify in that way.

[The group takes the bodhisattva and tantric vows then recites the Samayavajra mantra.]

[The group chants verses 38–39, followed by meditation on rejoicing.]

[The group recites *Lama Chöpa* verses 40–42, followed by the long and short mandalas, *Special request for the three great purposes*, recitation of the nine-line migtsema and *Visualization*.]

I think the verse that is recited three times was left out.

[Ven. Sarah recites *Requesting the Guru* three times, then repeats *Visualization*.]

REQUESTING PRAYER TO THE LINEAGE LAMAS

[The group recites the first verse of *Requesting Prayer to the Lineage Lamas*, then Ven. Sarah requests Rinpoche to lead the chanting.]

There is a way of chanting this according to Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. I'm not sure about it because I didn't hear it directly from Pabongka; it came through other people. I'm not sure whether this is the chanting from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's temple or from Dakpo monastery, but in recent times His Holiness has been chanting the lineage prayer in this way. It's a little faster than the Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo one.

[*Dren pa nyam me...tän päi sog shing sum la söl wa deb*]

The lineage of the profound path starts here. The previous one is the path of the extensive lineage. When you're about to start another group, you stop and then lead into each new group. It's a way to differentiate the different groups.

[*Ma wa da me dren chog...dzam ling gyän gyur nyi la söl wa deb*]

[*Näl jor wang chhug päl dän...nam kha gyäl tshän zhab la söl wa deb*]

The previous group, from Lama Atisha and Dromtönpa, integrated both paths, the profound and the extensive. The next group, starting with *näl jor wang chhug päl dän...*, is the Kadam Lam-rimpa, with Gönpawa in the center and the others around him. Now comes the Kadam Zhungpawa, with Kadampa Geshe Potowa in the center and the others around him.

I forgot to repeat the last line twice. We repeat the line ending *...söl wa deb* two times. With the first recitation, nectar beams are emitted and purify the obstacles to achieving realizations. Here there are both paths, the extensive and the profound, method and wisdom.

With the second request, *...söl wa deb*, a replica of that lama absorbs within you. You then achieve all the realizations and feel one with them.

I forgot to repeat the *...söl wa deb* line two times, but after this we'll do it.

[*Gyäl wäi dung tshob...päl dän la mäi zhab la söl wa deb*]

Now here the next group is Kadam Män-Ngagpa. The Kadam Lam-rimpa are usually introduced as the Kadampa geshe who go about achieving realizations and enlightenment without doing extensive study but mainly by studying lam-rim, the heart of the entire Buddhadharma. Without being scholars of the extensive philosophy, they practice lam-rim and achieve enlightenment. The Kadam Zhungpawa, while of course still practicing

lam-rim, do extensive study. They integrate their extensive study into the lam-rim, then practice and actualize the path to enlightenment. The Kadam Män-Ngagpa receive oral teachings and instructions from the guru and mainly meditate on them. They try to achieve enlightenment by understanding the guru's instructions and putting them into practice.

The highly attained Tsultrimbar is the Kadampa geshe in the center of the Kadam Män-Ngagpa, with the others around him.

[*Drub päi wang chbug...nam kha gyäl tshän zhab la söl wa deb*]

From here starts the lineage of the Kadam Sarmawa, or New Kadam tradition, with Lama Tsongkhapa in the center and the other lamas around him.

Here, just so that you know Pabongka's chanting and can see the difference, we'll do a few verses according to Pabongka's chanting.

[*Mig me tse wäi...wang gyur je tsun la ma söl wa deb*]

This is His Holiness Ling Rinpoche, and the next one is His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

[*Nga wang lo zang...sem la jug par shog*]

You can read the qualities in English.

[The group reads verses 43–53 of *Lama Chöpa* in English.]

The slow chanting is normally done first, then you do the quick ones after that. There are three repetitions. You do it slowly once, then quickly twice.

Ven. Sarah: I couldn't remember the chanting...

[Rinpoche leads the chanting of verse 53.]

Do the last two in English.

[The group recites verse 53 twice in English, then verse 54, the mantras and a short mandala.]

RINPOCHE'S NAME MANTRA

Ven. Sarah: There's a request for Rinpoche's name mantra.

[Rinpoche leads three recitations of *sang gyä chö dang...*]

Think, "At any rate I must achieve enlightenment quicker and quicker for the benefit of all the sentient beings; therefore, I am going to take the oral transmission of the guru mantra."

Of course, to tell people to visualize or think of me as a buddha is like telling them to think of kaka as gold. However, if a disciple, from their side, practices by thinking of the inseparability of the guru and buddha, that devotion causes them to receive blessings. If there is devotion, one receives

the blessings of all the buddhas. The blessings come because the disciple looks at the guru as one with buddha. It's not that I have blessings to give, but by thinking in that way, you receive blessings, which then become the cause to achieve realizations of the path to enlightenment. It is for that purpose that this oral transmission is given.

[Rinpoche gives the oral transmission of his name mantra: "OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA MUNI SHASANA KSHANTI SARVA SIDDHI HUM HUM."]

"VAJRADHARA" is added. The actual name is "MUNI SHASANA KSHANTI."

[Rinpoche recites the name mantra again.]

DEDICATIONS

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, may I, the members of my family, all the students and benefactors in this organization, those who give their life to the organization to serve others, as well as all the rest of the sentient beings, in all our future lifetimes meet only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus. From the side of each of us, may we be able to see the virtuous friend as only an enlightened being. May we never see the virtuous friend as an ordinary being but only as an enlightened being. May we do actions only most pleasing the holy mind of the virtuous friend. And may each of us immediately be able to fulfill the holy wishes of the virtuous friend. May we be able to do this from now on, in all future lifetimes."

By seeing the guru as buddha, as I mentioned before, one receives blessings and realizations. Doing actions most pleasing the guru brings the most powerful purification of negative karma and collects the most extensive merit. One then quickly achieves the realizations of the path and enlightenment. Fulfilling the guru's holy wishes is the best way to have success. It is the most powerful way to bring your success, the most important success being attaining the path and achieving enlightenment, so that you are able to do extensive works for other sentient beings.

"Jang chhub sem chhog rin po chhe...."

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by others, which are empty from their own side, may the I, who is empty from its own side, achieve Vajradhara's or Lama Losang Thubwang Dorje Chang's enlightenment, which is also empty from its own side, and lead all the sentient beings, who are empty

from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also empty from its own side.

“Ge wa di yi nyur du dag....

“Jam päl pa wö ji tar khyen pa dang....

“Dü sum sheg pai gyäl wa tham chä kyi....

“Chhö kyi gyäl po tsong kha päi....”

Dedicate the merits in the same way the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times dedicated their merits, in the way they admire most.

And dedicate the merits to actualize the pure teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, which unifies sutra and tantra, within your own mind and in the minds of all the students and benefactors, those who give their life to the organization. May this teaching spread in all directions and flourish forever in this world.

So, good afternoon. You can have lunch and breakfast together.

MANI PILLS

As you pass out of the gumpa, I want to give you mani pills. I meant to give them to you this morning but it didn't happen. This is not to keep, not to save for your next life, but to take now. If you are saving the pill to give to someone else, it's different. So, come quickly past.

It's good to take mani pills before you meditate on bodhicitta. The mani pills are blessed with the continuous chanting, day and night for seven days, of one hundred million OM MANI PADME HUM's. These pills have been blessed by His Holiness himself, the actual Chenrezig, as well as other meditators. In the morning, before you meditate on bodhicitta, you should take one or two of these pills, then think that you have purified all your defilements, in particular your self-cherishing thought and the emotional mind of anger, which are enemies to bodhicitta, and that your mind is transformed into Chenrezig's qualities of great compassion for all sentient beings and bodhicitta. It's very good if you can do that every morning before you meditate on bodhicitta. This is one way of using the pill for the development of your mind.

So, maybe take them as you quickly run for lunch.

[Someone asks a question about doing the Medicine Buddha sadhana.]

The sadhana? Oh, yeah! We'll do it before tomorrow.

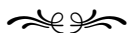
[Rinpoche hands out mani pills to the students.]



LYWA

*Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Geshe Jampa Gyatso and Lama Pasang
on the steps of the old Kopan gompa ca 1977.*

Final Session



GESHE JAMPA GYATSO

GESHE JAMPA GYATSO has had diabetes for a long time, but recently Geshe-la went for a checkup, and it seems the doctor told him that he has cancer.⁸⁰ I only heard about it today. So, we should dedicate all our merits as well for Geshe-la's quick recovery and very long and healthy life. I asked Geshe-la to do the next seven-year Masters Program. Geshe-la said last time that he now needs some help, perhaps another geshe to share the subjects.

I recently sent a letter to Geshe-la saying that he should accept an elaborate dakini long-life puja, and I also thanked him. I mentioned that it's very important for him to live even one day longer, because he is one of the old geshe who came from Tibet, which means he studied in Tibet. Not only that, but he is somebody who has the three important qualities: he is good-hearted, learned and pure in morality. Generally, as a geshe, especially one who has all these three important qualities, it's very important for him to live for even one day longer, because it's very beneficial for the world, for sentient beings.

So, I asked Geshe-la to accept this long-life puja, and it seems he did accept it when I asked the last time I was in Italy.

THE PROTECTOR ISSUE

I actually went to Italy two times. The second time was according to the program, but the first time I went to the Italian centers with a particular

⁸⁰ Geshe Jampa Gyatso passed away on November 27, 2007. For further details, see the February-March 2008 issue of *Mandala* magazine.

instruction about the protector issue. I didn't get to go to all the centers, but the directors from the other centers came to Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, the main center, and later I did visit one or two other centers. I don't remember what I said word by word, but I mentioned that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the source of peace and happiness in the world and the one object of refuge, from whom all us sentient beings receive peace and happiness. His Holiness, the leader of the entire Buddhадharma, has preserved the Hinayana teaching, the Mahayana Paramitayana teaching and the Mahayana tantric teaching. He is the leader who has accepted responsibility for the entire Buddhадharma in this world. He has been working particularly for the Tibetan people, to obtain freedom for them, and it has been very, very difficult. His Holiness has borne so much hardship and undergone so many difficulties for that. His Holiness's holy actions to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha are as extensive as the limitless sky. His Holiness's kindness and benefit to sentient beings is as extensive as the limitless sky. Therefore, we must obey and support His Holiness. We must follow His Holiness's wishes by thinking in a vast way.

I also mentioned during the geshe conference in Holland that when I teach, only sixty or seventy people come, but when His Holiness teaches, many hundreds of thousands of people come. Therefore, if we help support His Holiness, His Holiness can benefit sentient beings even more. In a way, this means that we can also benefit sentient beings more. I was trying to inspire them during the geshe conference.

Another point is that even though there are many religious leaders in the world, nobody else brings such great benefit to the world. And even though there are many other Buddhist leaders, nobody benefits the world like His Holiness. And even though there are many Tibetan lamas, no one else is able to benefit as much as His Holiness. And even among the incarnations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, no one else spread Dharma in the West. They spread Dharma in Tibet, but not even all over the East. However, this incarnation has spread Dharma all over the East and especially in the West, where there has been no Buddhадharma, where there has been darkness from the beginning.

Therefore, because of what His Holiness can do to benefit sentient beings and because of all his incredible qualities, we must support His Holiness and follow his wishes. We have to give up our own personal interests. (I

didn't say exactly that, but something like that.) I said to think in a very big way, not in very small, narrow way.

So far I have never brought up the issue of the protector in public or in *Mandala* magazine. But I now need to explain this issue because last year or at the beginning of this year we made a new regulation in the FPMT organization that before we invite a teacher to a center first we must examine whether or not the teacher is practicing the protector. The second time, I went to two centers in Italy, and at the end of the course, I told them about it. There are many centers in Italy, and in recent times, quite a few places have started to mention the protector. I explained that nowadays there is a regulation in the organization. There is the normal way of analyzing the qualities of a Dharma teacher before making a Dharma connection as explained in the texts, but now an additional point is whether or not the teacher is practicing the protector. This needs to be checked before a teacher is invited to an FPMT center.

I think I also mentioned at the geshe conference that from my side, as leader of the FPMT organization, I suggested following His Holiness's wishes. I especially have responsibility from that side. I mentioned that since I have the responsibility, I will explain the issue. I might also have mentioned the new regulation.

I told the people in Italy, "This is also for your own security, for your own individual safety, so that problems don't occur in the future." I mentioned that it is important even in individual cases. I also told them it is very important not to generate anger or heresy toward other gurus who do the practice or advised them to do the practice. It is very bad to get angry and generate heresy toward or criticize other gurus who do the practice or advise others to do it. I don't remember every word I said, but I said it would be extremely harmful to do this.

I said that they should continuously look at those gurus as Buddha and that Buddha can manifest in various aspects. I also read the letter that I wrote to the incarnation of His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, requesting Rinpoche to follow His Holiness's wishes and to support His Holiness. Because he's His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guru, it would then mean that many people, especially Tibetans, would be protected from falling into the lower realms; they would be protected from giving rise to heresy, or negative views, and from opposing His Holiness. If they have those negative thoughts, they will break samaya and go to the lower realms. Giving rise to negative thoughts

toward great holy beings and toward the guru creates very heavy negative karma, which would then throw them into a hell realm. If there is harmony with His Holiness, it will help to protect so many Tibetan people from the lower realms.

In that letter I also mentioned that different lamas give different advice not only on the issue of the protector but also on other issues. If you ask many lamas the same questions, not only on the issue of the protector but even on Dharma, you will get different advice. You will get different explanations. For example, Sera Monastery has Sera Me and Je colleges, Ganden has Shartse and Jangtse colleges and Drepung has Loseling and Gomang colleges, and within those colleges there are different explanations of Dharma. Of course the essence is the same, but there are different explanations when you debate, and some of the explanations are contradictory. So, not only do gurus give different advice on the issue of the protector, but on many other things. One says to do this and another says don't do that. That different lamas are giving different advice is nothing new. The issue of the protector is nothing new. One says to practice, another says don't practice—that's nothing new. Receiving different advice is nothing new.

However, even if you were practicing the protector before, you have to stop now for your own safety and especially to fulfill His Holiness's wishes, so that His Holiness has a long life. The main reason is that, because of His Holiness's special qualities, His Holiness is able to benefit sentient beings more, so by living long, His Holiness will be able to benefit the world even more. It's good to think in that way.

The conclusion is: think all of the gurus are Buddha, and that Buddha can manifest in various forms and reveal different methods and give different answers. Buddha even manifests showing mistakes, and that is according to one's own karma, one's own mistaken thoughts. You should use your own wisdom. You should analyze the situation, mainly relying on Buddha's teachings and the commentaries by the great pandits and yogis. Those valid references are your guidelines. You then use your own wisdom to analyze what is of greatest benefit to sentient beings. Use your own wisdom to choose, and choose what is of the greatest benefit. Choose what is not harmful, or less harmful, and is of greater benefit to sentient beings. Use your own wisdom to analyze that on the basis of Buddha's teachings. Again, here, it should not be up to what you feel or what you like but according to Buddha's teachings and those of the great pandits and yogis. You use your wisdom in accordance with those major teachings. Leaving it up to what

you feel or what you like can be misleading. If you are referring only to that, it can bring a lot of harm if you're not careful.

Anyway, I didn't mean to mention this issue here. I was talking about Geshe Jampa Gyatso, and my talk then went somewhere else.

Geshe-la did accept to do the next seven-year masters' program, the second one, even though he will need another geshe to help him. So, we will dedicate all our merits and the fire puja to Geshe-la's good health and long life and for him to be able to do the seven-year program, as well as to be able to continuously give teachings to sentient beings and guide them.

FIRE PUJA

The other thing is that it may be easier to generate a bodhicitta motivation here in the gumpa. Of course, we can again generate a motivation of bodhicitta at the beginning of the fire puja. We will dedicate at the end as well.

Has there been any discussion of the basic instructions for the fire puja?

Ven René: Yes, Rinpoche. Could Rinpoche say the mantra of Agni, because we're not clear about how to pronounce that mantra. Nobody remembers.

Rinpoche: Oh, I think OM AGNEYE SOHA. But then there is the other...

Ven René: ADIVYA ADIVYA...?

Rinpoche: OM AGNIA ADISHA ADISHA ABISHA ABISHA...SOHA. Well, that's the way Tibetans commonly recite it. I don't think it's correct according to Sanskrit,⁸¹ but that's how it's commonly said when Tibetans recite it.

I am going to use the Mitrugpa fire puja text, as Medicine Buddha is of the same class of lower tantra. That's what I did for the fire puja after my retreat. Jampa Chökyi has also translated the sadhana and fire puja for the Thousand-Arm Chenrezig retreat, so you can use that for Medicine Buddha and other Action Tantra deities.

The part of the motivation we can do later, and the substances can also be explained later. As in Dorje Khadro fire puja, you think that all your negative karmas and the negative karmas of all sentient beings are absorbed into that.

I'll mention just some basic things. As far as possible, visualize yourself as the deity, as Medicine Buddha. I don't remember all the details, but when

⁸¹ The mantra is written in Sanskrit as OM AGNEYE ADIVYA ADIVYA AVISHA AVISHA MAHASHRIYE HAVYA KAVYA VAHANAYE SVAHA.

the text comes, I will explain more before the fire puja. One fire deity has four arms and another has only two arms. I think this Mitrugpa one has one face and two arms and maybe the fire deity in Highest Yoga Tantra has four arms, though I'm not sure.

You make offering to the fire deity, then afterwards you make offering to Mitrugpa, the deity beyond samsara, by visualizing the mandala, and then again you offer to the fire deity. The fire deity is a worldly aspect. So, first you offer to the fire deity; then to the main deity, Medicine Buddha; and then again to the fire deity. However, His Holiness Ling Rinpoche said and the text of the fire puja says, it's one thing. You yourself are Medicine Buddha, and you then offer to the fire deity or to Medicine Buddha.

Because I didn't get to come here much during the retreat, we didn't get done the intensive meditations during the break-times. We didn't get to do the intensive walking meditation on emptiness, where you look at everything as a hallucination, as it is a hallucination. You can do this intensive meditation in the break-times while walking and also while sitting. Here, look at everything as being like a dream. At least think that everything, including you yourself as Medicine Buddha, is merely imputed by mind. All these things that appear to be existing from their own side are hallucinations. Look at them as hallucinations. You, Medicine Buddha, the holy body doing the fire puja, the offerings, the actions of offering—what exists is what is merely imputed by mind, but it appears to be existing from its own side, not merely imputed by mind. All these are hallucinations, so they are empty. Being a hallucination means it's empty. When you say, "I'm meditating that everything is a hallucination," the idea in your heart is that it's empty. That's what you meditate on. It brings the understanding, or awareness, that all these things are empty. All other things are also merely imputed by mind. The one who is offering, the offerings, the action of offering and the object to whom you are offering are merely imputed by thought; they are subtle dependent arisings. Again that harms the object of ignorance: the things existing by nature and not merely imputed by mind, the truly existent things. When you think of dependent arising, especially subtle dependent arising, it harms the object of ignorance. All this practice of offering burning puja becomes an antidote to samsara. It doesn't become a cause of samsara but an antidote to samsara. That's one thing you should think.

When you offer the grains, butter and other things to the holy mouth, think that it becomes an offering of transcendental wisdom nectar. You offer the kusha grass and crab grass as a seat for the deity. You offer the yam-

shing, the sticks, to the beams emitting from the holy body of the deity. That's what I remember is said in the text, anyway. The conclusion is that you are offering to the deity. If you can think you're offering to the deity, that's how you collect merit.

Here again you can bring the practice of guru yoga. With every single offering, whether to Medicine Buddha or even to the fire deity, always do the practice of offering with the guru yoga mind, by thinking of the guru. Whether you are offering to the fire deity or to Medicine Buddha, see them as the guru. In essence, you are offering to the guru. It then becomes a very rich offering, because with every single offering you make with this awareness, you collect the greatest merit. As I mentioned last night and also at other times, you collect much more merit than from offering to numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas; and you collect much more merit than from offering to numberless statues, stupas, scriptures and thangkas in the ten directions. So, every single offering you make collects much more merit than from having made offering to the numberless statues, stupas, scriptures and thangkas that are in all the universes and to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. It is like this with every offering you make, if you offer by thinking of the guru. This is the wisest, most skillful way to offer, because you collect the most extensive merit with every single offering. You don't waste your effort. That's one point.

You can meditate on the particular purpose, what is to be purified with each substance, once at the beginning. If you have a lot to offer, you can then just do it with the mantra. You can recite the mantra and abbreviate the part of the obstacle that is to be purified.

When I do fire pujas, I normally think of myself and all sentient beings. You can extend it to include teachers, students and patrons. You can mention those specific names; however, the main thing is to bring in all sentient beings. I think it's very beautiful when you include all sentient beings when you are purifying all the obstacles. I think that's very, very good. As much as possible, the aim of the fire puja should be for all sentient beings, to purify their negative karma and defilements and bring everyone to liberation from samsara and to enlightenment. I think that's what makes a fire puja great.

You can do the long offering verse at the beginning, then just offer with the mantra or something abbreviated, thinking that your obstacles to achieving liberation and enlightenment and those of all other sentient beings are purified. It can be shortened in that way, and then at the end when the substances are finished, you can do it one more time in this way.

There are instructions on how you hold the substances and how you sit, depending on whether the fire puja is pacifying, increasing, controlling or wrathful. The color of your clothes also depends on which action you are performing. For controlling, you wear a pure red scarf or dress; for pacifying, white clothes, and so on.

The two implements you hold symbolize method and wisdom. You hold them together and put them there like that. When the helper passes them both, you fill them up with butter, and pass them both together. This is how you do it according to the lower tantric college.

There are different ways of holding them, but I don't remember the complete details. I think the peaceful way is like that. During the first Enlightened Experience Celebration, I think Lama Yeshe gave teachings on this. Actually, Lama and I received the oral transmission of Lama Tsongkhapa's text of the commentary on the fire puja, *Jinsek Ngödrub Gyatso*. *Jin* means offering and *sek* means burn. When the Tibetan term *jinsek* is translated into English, it's not "fire puja" but "offering burning." *Ngödrub Gyatso* means oceans of realization. So, Lama Tsongkhapa's text is *Offering Burning, Oceans of Realizations*. It has extensive commentary on the fire puja. Lama requested it from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche, so then we received it. Of course, there's no way I can remember all the details of that.

When the helper passes the implements to you, they should do it like this. I don't remember seeing this in the text. When you take it, you then offer like this. I think Lama Yeshe explained this. I wasn't there but it seems it's like this. And I remember Harry Ram doing that. Does anybody here know Harry Ram? Anyway, I'm joking. I don't think I was there, but at that time many Sangha received the elaborate instruction from Lama. It seems that Harry was doing what Lama had explained. I don't think Ram Das does that, but Harry does. Anyway, I'm joking!

There is a text that describes the kind of attainment and also the obstacles indicated by the color of the fire, but I think there's no point in going over that today because it would take time. But there are descriptions of the colors of the flames and the number of points they have, with explanations of obstacles and attainments.

Lama liked fire pujas very, very much, because Lama thought that if you make offerings to monasteries, you feel pride, but here with a fire puja, the offering is pure; it doesn't make you feel pride. Lama used to praise fire pujas quite often. And there is so much benefit from the practice. Along with the

explanation about the fire, about its colors, how it burns and how many tips the flames have, many benefits are also explained there in the text.

So, as with a normal offering, you think the deity is the guru and that the guru generates bliss.

Ven. René: Do the people who have a bell and *dorje* hold them? Or does Rinpoche hold them for everybody?

Rinpoche: Maybe you can draw a bell and vajra on your hands. No, you can actually carve them. Or you could have a tattoo of them. I'm joking.

Yes, I think you should do that if you can. If you can manage, it's good. Thank you very much for reminding me. Actually, you should have a very big bell and a very big vajra. Once you begin the fire puja, though not for the preliminary prayers, you're not supposed to let the bell and vajra separate from your hands. Quite a few times I have dropped the vajra in the fire. Also, though I don't know the reason for this, if you're sitting, you're not supposed to pass them beyond your knees. Therefore, everything has to be quite close. That's what is normally advised. But if you are standing, as most people were for the Most Secret Hayagriva fire puja, it's different.

From when you begin the fire puja up until the ceremony finishes, the right hand does the work. It's very good to have a small vajra, which they sell in shops, if you are doing a fire puja after a retreat, especially after the long three-year retreat, when you do one hundred thousand fire pujas. It's very easy with a small vajra because you can tie it to your hand. It's easier than with a big one.

So, I think that's about it.

Ven. Sarah: Do we have to keep silence, Rinpoche?

Rinpoche: Yes, that's right. You also have to keep silence. You can't open your lips, so you have to recite the mantra from your nose. No, I'm joking.

The person who is actually doing the fire puja, whether after a retreat or as a puja, has to keep silence. But those who are just helping with the fire puja and not actually doing it don't have to keep silence.

Before we begin the fire puja we will do the motivation, and there are also some visualizations. It is not particularly mentioned in the text but I usually do that. It might be very helpful for the mind, and also for other sentient beings, especially for healing sick people.

[There is a request to offer a thanksgiving mandala.]

No, you can do it next year.

Everybody make a strong, particular request to the protectors for Lama

Ösel to come back to Sera Monastery as quickly as possible, for Lama's mind to change and be inspired to come back to study continuously in the monastery.

The other very urgent thing is for the Maitreya Project. This week and next week are a critical time for the Maitreya Project to receive funding. Make strong request for the funding to be received as planned without any delay and without any obstacles, this week and next week. That's extremely important. It's a very serious issue, not to be delayed any more. It seems there's a need for *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras*. The praises can be recited individually or as a group if people are able to give the time. When you do the Tara praises, whether in your daily life or in groups when you go back to your center, make requests to Tara for success in receiving the funding, as planned from our side, without any delay.

[The group chants the protector prayers, then Ven. Sarah tries to begin a long mandala offering.]

No, no! If you really want to do it, do the quickest one.

[The group does a short mandala offering.]

Ven. Sarah: I missed the dedications because I was making your tea. I wanted to make special dedications of all the merit from the retreat for Rinpoche's perfect health and long life and also for the elimination of all the obstacles to the many, many projects that Rinpoche has, especially the Maitreya Project.

Also, we actually got these eight Medicine Buddha statues when Rinpoche agreed to do this retreat as a thank-you offering for Rinpoche's agreeing to do the retreat. We got them at the end of last year, and they were blessed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. There have been many good signs with these statues, and gradually more and more gold has been offered to them. Angela very kindly offered gold to the robes recently. We then decided to do very extensive offerings, and we managed to keep up the offerings. This is also completely dedicated to Rinpoche's long life and health and for all his wishes to be fulfilled.

Rinpoche: For the long life of my nose, for its perfect health.

[The group recites Rinpoche's long-life prayer in English.]

Rinpoche: Is it easier to do the tsog now or after the puja?

Ven. Sarah: It's easier now, Rinpoche, because then we can clean the whole room.

Rinpoche: We can't put the tsog where the substances are?

Ven. Sarah: It's a question of tables. But if Rinpoche wants to do that, we'll do that.

Rinpoche: If there's space to put tsog there, we'll do it after the puja. But if there's no space, we can do it now.

Ven. Sarah: There's space, Rinpoche, there's space. Does that mean we can do the long-life prayer two more times?

Ven. René: Rinpoche, it's easier to do it here, because there won't be any light for reading the texts there.

Rinpoche: Right. I thought about that too. Maybe it's better if we do *King of Prayers* here instead of at the fire puja, since it may be difficult to read with the poor light. We'll do *King of Prayers* and the prayer for the spreading of Dharma. Does anyone remember which prayer it is today? Which one's turn is it today? Which prayer was done last night?

[There is a discussion about how *Final Lam-Rim Prayer* was done.]

Today we'll do *King of Prayers*. Since it's difficult to read there, we'll do the *King of Prayers* here and then the prayer for the spreading of Dharma after that.

[The group recites *King of Prayers*.]

Ven. René: The prayer for the flourishing of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings.

[The group recites *Prayer for the Flourishing of Je Tsongkhapa's Teachings*, then recites the two Lama Tsongkhapa dedications.]

Rinpoche: We're going to do the dedications after the fire puja....

BENEFITS OF MEDICINE BUDDHA RETREAT

So, I want to express this. We did a Vajrasattva retreat before, and I think that all those who gave time to do the retreat received great benefit from it. And before that we did a Most Secret Hayagriva retreat at Vajrapani Institute. Even though it's an uncommon, unfamiliar deity, somehow it had a lot of effect. It was noticeable that both new and old students were inspired very much to practice Dharma.

This time I wished very much to do Medicine Buddha retreat and also wished to spread the practice of Medicine Buddha more. This is the first time we have done a Medicine Buddha retreat. I don't know whether anybody has done an individual Medicine Buddha retreat, but I don't remember any individual person doing a Medicine Buddha retreat, even in the early times at Kopan. Sometimes an individual person did a Manjushri retreat,

but I don't remember anyone doing a Medicine Buddha retreat. I think you can see that it has incredible blessings. When you are doing the practice, doing the meditations, you can feel the purification and how it is blessing your mind. It's the first time we have done Medicine Buddha retreat in the organization. You don't normally hear about Medicine Buddha retreat. I think this has been a very good start, but it is only the beginning. Hopefully, this experience will help Medicine Buddha retreat to be done in many other places, in many other countries. Through Medicine Buddha practice, we will be able to offer extensive benefit to all sentient beings, enabling them to achieve enlightenment quickly.

I didn't get to explain much, as I didn't get to stay here and come to all the sessions. I would still like to develop further the way of doing retreat. But you experienced how it was done during this time. Of course, I still wish to develop it, to make it better, and to be able to help you. You yourself can do the retreat again, because if you do it strictly and with many sessions, you can actually finish the retreat quite quickly. It doesn't take a long time to finish that number of just ten thousand mantras, as you know. Since you have done the retreat here, you also know how to guide a Medicine Buddha retreat. It's part of your education, your training, so that you can help to organize and lead a Medicine Buddha retreat in your own country. I think that would be extremely good. A one-week Medicine Buddha retreat could also be done; you could even try that. If you do longer sessions, you could finish within one week. I think you know from your experience here that you could finish the retreat in one week. You just have to work harder.

I explained the skies of benefit of Medicine Buddha practice, so you can understand that it would be very good to see if it's possible to organize a retreat in your own country. You could even improve the way of doing the retreat. It can be improved; it can be developed.

I wished very much for this retreat, and now it has happened, so thank you very much. Thank you very, very much to every one of you. We did exactly what is needed in the world; we practiced the exact antidote. Like the exact medicine for a particular sickness, we did the exact practice that is needed now in the world. So, that's what I wanted to say. It has been a great blessing, very powerful.

This retreat is an offering to repay the kindness of, first of all, the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It's also an offering to repay the kindness in particular of Lama Yeshe, who founded this organization and who originally bought the Land of Medicine Buddha land.

It was bought for universal education; however, we're now using this land for many projects, not just for universal education. This is an offering to repay the kindness of Lama, as well as the kindness of all sentient beings. It's also repaying the kindness of your own parents, your father and mother, as I mentioned this morning. When I was talking about why we should use every limb in our daily life to purify our mind and to collect as much merit as possible, I mentioned how we should make our limbs and our whole body, speech and mind beneficial for our parents or the other people who took care of us, who bore so much hardship for us.

So, I think that's it. We'll now do the next thing, the fire puja.

Ven. René: We still need to prepare for the fire puja, Rinpoche. Maybe we need two hours?

Rinpoche: To arrange the substances? No, I don't think it will take two hours. Just put them in order according to the text. That's it. We already did a fire puja there, so you know that. And Tsering, the monk from Kopan, knows what to do. You can start.

[There is some discussion among the students and some announcements.]

Anthony Mark Lachlan, aged fifty years, died in England on Tuesday, November 6. So, we will dedicate for him at the end of the fire puja.



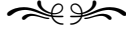
THUBTEN KUNSANG

Lama Zopa Rinpoche in France 2009

Appendix 1

OCTOBER 2001

An Open Letter to President Bush



Dear Mr. President,

Since war was declared, some people have been protesting against it and clamoring for peace. But if what those people really want is peace, then they should first come up with a clear practical idea how to stop the terrorist attacks in the United States and other countries. Otherwise, you shout for peace and let the United States be completely destroyed by terrorists? This is like the saying in Tibetan Buddhist texts: “A blind yak eating grass.” Or the Western saying: “To throw out the baby with the bath water.”

So many people are suffering now due to lack of awareness of what will come in the future. The problem is that common ordinary people are limited in what they can see, because of the lack of development of the mind. They do not have the power to see beyond, to read the minds of the terrorists and those in training. If Government intelligence had the power to see beyond, then they could foresee future dangers. They could see the harm in the minds of all those harmful people and terrorists. They could see what damage they could do to the United States and the whole world.

War is what ordinary people in the world regard as the solution. The problem is that war, even if it is won, is like medicine that has side-effects. It may temporarily help the situation but afterwards there will be continual complications. Why? Because the people you defeat generate hatred towards you and in future generations they harm you back. In the natural law of actions, called *karma* in Sanskrit, the action of harming leaves an imprint on the mental continuum and that imprint is like a seed. When it ripens later, the person experiences the result of receiving harm from others.

I understand that the situation is very difficult and that the American

public is very angry but there are ways to solve the problem other than by going to war. It is possible that these terrorists can be overcome by spiritual power rather than by using military power. War costs so many lives and so much money. Even one missile can be so expensive, costing millions of dollars. When spiritual power is used to solve the problem, it saves all this expense and costs hardly anything.

Buddhism, and especially Tibetan Buddhism, has so many methods to help bring peace and happiness to sentient beings. If the Government were interested in the possibility of using spiritual methods to solve the current problems, they would need to consult with the spiritual head of each of the different traditions. Then practices could be done for a few months of a year in order for them to be effective. This way is not like military war, which makes some people happy and some people upset. These practices are unseen, so they do not irritate or upset anybody; that means also nobody gets angry and plans to retaliate.

Another solution would be to have a war without anger, something that appeared violent but actually became positive. Just because something looks violent, that alone does not necessarily define it as negative, because there are actions that outwardly appear to be violent but in reality are most positive, pure and for inner peace.

Buddhism is based on not harming others and on benefiting others. But when an evil being is harming him- or herself and greatly harming many others and the world, then in Mahayana Buddhism great saints called bodhisattvas, who have the qualification of unbearable compassion, take the life of that being. They completely sacrifice themselves to happily experience whatever suffering consequences may come from taking that life, such as suffering in a hell realm. They do this in order to benefit that sentient being, to stop them from engaging in harmful actions, and also for the peace and happiness of others. When there is greater benefit to take the life of an evil being than not to, the Buddha permitted great saints who are qualified to do so.

Particularly in Mahayana Buddhism, the Secret Mantra, Vajrayana, on the basis of unbearable compassion, cherishing those evil beings, tantric wrathful action is done: the consciousness is split from the body and transferred to a pure land where there is no suffering. In reality, even though an externally wrathful or violent action is used, it does not harm the evildoer, it only benefits them. The wrathful aspect of mind is without any anger—the thought of harming others. An example is when a child is very naughty

and the parent has no peaceful means left to control it. The parent will then scold the child with a wrathful mind because this is the only way to control it so that it will have a good, successful future.

These terrorists' minds are trapped in so many heavy iron cages of wrong views that they cannot even see these views are wrong and their actions harmful. Their negative thoughts and actions caused so many thousands of people to be killed and so many firemen to sacrifice their lives to save others. Because of this, they will have to suffer for thousands of eons. From negative actions suffering results, from positive actions happiness arises, so it is unimaginable how much harm the terrorists did to themselves, to the US and to the rest of the world.

Numberless people have realized that reincarnation exists and that there is life both before and after this one. At the time of death the body finishes, but the mind continues; this is reincarnation. Reincarnation is not only Buddhist philosophy and experience; Christianity also talks about reincarnation because they talk about a heaven and hell after this life. That which experiences heaven and hell is not the body but the mind, therefore reincarnation exists. The Bible also talks about resurrection.

In this world there are believers and non-believers. An example of this is when the US put a man on the moon: some people in the East could not accept or understand how that was possible. Another example is the satellite interviews that we see on the television: one person is talking to somebody else who is thousands of miles away but can be clearly seen on the screen. Some primitive people would not believe this is possible.

As the mind continues after death, the negative thoughts also continue, so these terrorists will go on to harm others again and again without end until their negative emotional thoughts are ceased. Negative thoughts, such as anger and the dissatisfied mind of desire, are the chronic disease of the mind and the main cause of suffering. If the people in this world do not put effort into making the mind better, into ceasing the negative thoughts, then even when the body is destroyed and disintegrated, the mind, which does not cease, will continue alone with all these thoughts. Ceasing negative emotional thoughts is the ultimate solution—especially ceasing them by generating loving kindness, compassion and the ultimate good heart, which cherishes and benefits others.

I am sure that for most religions, each one has something good to offer mankind. Any religion that offers a complete method should bring sentient beings to ultimate happiness—the cessation of all negative thoughts, the

afflicted emotional mind including the seed of it. If your religion harms others, it harms yourself. Then there is no meaning to have religion. It is better to have no religion at all.

My suggestion and contribution for the present and future peace and happiness of America and the world is that people living in pure morality and especially the Sangha should read or recite the text called *The Sutra of Golden Light*. This is one of Shakyamuni Buddha's most precious holy teachings, and reading it has benefits like the infinite sky. It also helps eliminate other problems, including economic difficulties, and stops natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and so forth. The Government could ask Buddhist monks in America to recite this text for two to three years. Lay people and also non-Buddhists who have an open mind can also read it. Then there will be so much benefit for the country.

So here I am simply offering suggestions. There is a powerful short meditation on the Healing Medicine Buddha, which came from the enlightened yogi called Padmasambhava. The practice is to avoid catching sicknesses from others or, if one has already been infected, to be healed. It was recommended by another spiritual person who predicted that it could be very beneficial in protecting from the disease anthrax.

The Mantra Purifying All Negative Karma and Defilements not only protects from anthrax, but also if one can recite it daily, it will be a very good protection from life danger caused by earthquakes, fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, water and so forth—the dangers of the four elements. There are another two short mantras against anthrax, sickness and so forth, as well, which are proven to have healed cancer.

When natural disasters occur, Christianity might say that it is God's punishment. However, all I am saying here is that it is worth asking religious institutions and meditation centers to pray, and not only organizations but even individuals, because by praying they can help to stop or reduce these things. It may not be the case every time, but perhaps some times.

I have a few suggestions of things people can do to save the place they are living in from billions of dollars of damage to buildings and also to save human beings from death.

There is a practice of offering tea to the beings who control the weather and create disturbances. There is a tea offering prayer called *Ablution to the Eight Powerful Worldly Spirits* that is very effective. The practice itself is nothing—just reciting a short prayer mentioning their names and asking them not to create those disturbances.

Praying very strongly to the female buddha Tara, who is like the Virgin Mary in Christianity, is also very effective in stopping dangers. She is the embodiment of all the buddhas' actions and there is a mantra and a short and long prayer with Twenty-One Praises.

Even relying upon and praying to Shakyamuni Buddha with a full heart, reciting his name and mantra and making strong requests for these dangers to be pacified will be very effective.

The techniques are very simple but the result can be of great benefit to the area and to the country.

Other things that can be done are to recite *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, *The Sutra of Golden Light* and *The Heart Sutra*, with meditation on emptiness. Another very powerful method that can be helpful is to pray to the Compassionate-Eye Looking One, Chenrezig, when these dangers are going to happen. Recite the mantra, have total reliance and make strong prayers. The Buddhist tantras are full of so many methods for overcoming all kinds of disasters, including war, and for purifying the causes, but of course their success depends on how qualified the people doing the meditation are.

Even if there are no Buddhist centers in the area where the disasters are going to happen, it still may be possible for people in a Tibetan Buddhist center in another state to do the prayers. I want to emphasize that in situations where ordinary people cannot control disasters, they should rely upon spiritual means to prevent or reduce them. This does not just mean Buddhist methods but also those from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam or any other religion.

I have never heard any of the leaders, and others in the news, stress the need to take care of the mind, to guard the minds of the people living in the world. It is very clear that everything, good and bad, happiness and suffering, comes from the mind but there was not one word about the need to develop loving kindness and compassion. Nobody emphasized the need for everyone in the whole world to practice this. I only heard the word "compassion" twice and both times it came from President Bush, once in the context of "America is a compassionate country."

I was very happy to hear you and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, mention precisely that you are not attacking Muslims or Islam but the terrorists. If the media could also present it this way, there would be much less anger and confusion. The media can cause many millions of people to get angry just by saying a few unskillful words.

My final suggestion is that it would be so good if the whole world,

including Muslims, were to develop compassion, loving kindness and universal responsibility—to give special education on this in schools and at home for the parents to practice.

This way, one child can bring so much peace and happiness into his or her own life and also to the family, country and over time to the whole world. Then, when that child becomes a mother or father, they can educate their own children to practice universal responsibility, loving kindness and compassion so that the good heart goes on and on, from generation to generation. Cherishing others and putting effort into developing a good heart in the office, at work, at home, everywhere—this is the ultimate method to stop terrorism worldwide. It is very important, before the cause has ripened into a result and the problem is being experienced, to practice loving kindness, universal responsibility, tolerance, forgiveness and kindness towards others, instead of being careless towards them and only cherishing oneself.

The reasons and explanations can be taken from Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and any other religion—anything that helps the mind to develop universal responsibility, compassion and loving kindness towards others. Historically we can see that even just one person who is influential but lacks a good heart, compassion and patience can cause millions of people and other sentient beings in the world to be killed.

It is also important to have interfaith meetings, where all the religious leaders come together and pray, each according to their own traditional way. This should be made available for young people as well. If the youth of this world come together and pray together, it will contribute towards peace and harmony amongst the different religions in the world.

I am writing this because I have particular concern for the American people. This country gives so much freedom for peace and happiness. I do not know why Mainland China cannot give the same freedom to the Tibetan people and others.

Even though the methods I have explained here are taken from Buddhism, the tradition does not really matter, it is just a question of staying alive and saving others from danger. The main thing is how important it is for people to make use of these mantras and prayers. They have no side-effects and they can do no harm to the body or mind.

Finally, I dedicate the merits and I pray every day for the peace and happiness of all living beings, that everyone may generate loving kindness, compassion and the wish-fulfilling precious good heart. I pray that they may only benefit each other and that everyone's heart may be filled with joy and

bliss. I pray that the whole world may be filled with peace and happiness.

With my prayers and good wishes,

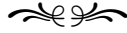
Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche
Kachoe Dechen Ling
Aptos, California

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Appendix 2

Benefits of Reciting the Seven Medicine Buddhas' Names



Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
May all sentient beings such as ourselves be freed
From epidemics, execution, criminals and spirits;
Have faculties fully complete; have the continuum of suffering and
negativities cut;
Not fall to lower realms; and experience the happiness of humans
and gods.
With hunger, thirst and poverty pacified, may there be wealth.
Without torments of body such as bindings and beatings;
Without harm of tigers, lions and snakes; with conflict pacified;
Endowed with loving minds and relieved from fear of flood as well,
May we pass to fearless bliss.
And when we pass away from this life,
May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
Renowned Glorious King of Excellent Signs,
And cause them delight.

King of Melodious Sound

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
For all sentient beings such as ourselves
May the distracted flourish in the Dharma;
Have wealth and goods of human and gods;

Without torment at conception, be always born human;
 Never be separated from bodhicitta; increase in virtuous Dharma;
 Purify obscurations; and attain the happiness of humans and gods.
 May we be freed from being separated from the spiritual guide,
 From dark ages, spirit harm, death and enemies,
 And from the dangers of isolated places.
 May we have enthusiasm for making offerings and performing ritual
 services.
 May lesser beings have *samadhi*, mindfulness, strength,
 The *dharani* of non-forgetfulness, and attain supreme wisdom.
 May tormenting fires be cooled.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
 King of Melodious Sound,
 And cause them delight.

Stainless Excellent Gold

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
 Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
 For all sentient beings such as ourselves
 May the short-lived gain longevity, the poor, full wealth;
 May combatants come to have loving minds.
 May we not be without training and fall to the lower realms
 But be bound by our vows and never without bodhicitta.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
 Stainless Excellent Gold,
 And cause them delight.

Supreme Glory Free from Sorrow

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
 Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
 For all sentient beings such as ourselves
 May sorrow and the like always be pacified, and life be long and happy.
 May the conquerors' light increase bliss and joy in the hells.
 May we have brightness, beauty and wealth, unharmed by spirits;

May we have love for each other; and may there be no disease.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
 Supreme Glory Free from Sorrow,
 And cause them delight.

Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
 Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
 For all sentient beings such as ourselves
 May we always have perfect view and faith,
 Hear the sound of Dharma and be enriched with bodhicitta.
 For the sake of resources may we give up negativities;
 May wealth increase.
 May we abide in love, have long lives and be content.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
 Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma,
 And cause them delight.

Delightful King of Clear Knowing

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,
 Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
 For all sentient beings such as ourselves
 May the distracted be free of malice and rich in goods.
 May those on evil paths to lower realms attain the ten virtues.
 May those controlled by others gain perfect independence,
 And all have long life, hear the names and be virtuous.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as
 Delightful King of Clear Knowing,
 And cause them delight.

Medicine Guru, King of Doctors

Through the force of hearing the conqueror's name,

Expressing it, remembering, prostrating and offering,
 For all sentient beings such as ourselves
 May each and every sentient being such as ourselves
 All become, like you, graced with marks and signs.
 May the light dispelling darkness, the enjoyment of wisdom and skillful
 means be inexhaustible.
 May those attracted to mistaken and lesser paths enter Mahayana paths,
 And all be beautified by their vows.
 May we be free from pain caused by immorality,
 Be complete in faculties and without disease and have abundant goods.
 May those disillusioned with the weakest conditions always have powerful
 faculties,
 And may we be freed from Mara's noose and perverse viewpoints.
 May those tormented by kings gain bliss, and those who,
 Out of hunger, support themselves through negativity
 Be satisfied with food received in accordance with the Dharma.
 May hardships of heat and cold be pacified and all good wishes be
 fulfilled,
 Endowed with morality that pleases the aryas, may we be liberated.
 And when we pass away from this life,
 May we be born from a lotus in that buddha-field, qualities complete,
 Become a vessel for transmitting the teachings of conquerors such as Med-
 icine Guru, King of Doctors, and cause them delight.

This is an excerpt from *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel: The Concise Essence Sutra
 Ritual of Bhagavan Medicine Buddha*, composed by Panchen Losang Chökyi
 Gyaltzen and translated into English by David Molk.

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Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

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Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970. Since then, their teachings have been recorded and transcribed. At present we have well over 12,000 hours of digital audio and some 75,000 pages of raw transcript. Many recordings, mostly teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, remain to be transcribed, and as Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of recordings in the Archive increases accordingly. Most of our transcripts have been neither checked nor edited.

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

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

Archiving requires managing the recordings of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche that have already been collected, collecting recordings of teachings given but not yet sent to the Archive, and collecting recordings of Lama Zopa's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. Incoming media are then catalogued and stored safely while being kept accessible for further work.

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

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

Dissemination involves making the Lamas' teachings available through various avenues including books for free distribution and sale, eBooks for at least eight different kinds of reader, lightly edited transcripts, a monthly e-letter (see below), DVDs, articles in Mandala and other magazines and on our website. Irrespective of the medium we choose, the teachings require a significant amount of work to prepare them for distribution.

This is just a summary of what we do. The Archive was established with virtually no seed funding and has developed solely through the kindness of many people, some of whom we have mentioned at the front of this book and most of the others on our website. We sincerely thank them all.

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

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Monthly e-letter

Each month we send out a free e-letter containing our latest news and a previously unpublished teaching by Lama Yeshe or Lama Zopa Rinpoche. To see nearly one hundred back-issues or to subscribe with your email address, please go to our website.

THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE MAHAYANA TRADITION

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) is an international organization of Buddhist meditation study and retreat centers, both urban and rural, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 145 FPMT activities in over thirty countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general and the Tibetan Gelug tradition, founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsongkhapa, in particular.

Every quarter, the Foundation publishes a wonderful news journal, *Mandala*, from its International Office in the United States of America. To subscribe or view back issues, please go to the *Mandala* website, www.mandalamagazine.org, or contact:

FPMT

1632 SE 11th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214

Telephone (503) 808-1588; Fax (503) 808-1589

info@fpmt.org

www.fpmt.org

The FPMT website also offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition, details about the FPMT's educational programs, audio through FPMT radio, a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world and in your area, a link to the excellent FPMT Store, and links to FPMT centers on the Web, where you will find details of their programs, and to other interesting Buddhist and Tibetan home pages.



FPMT ONLINE LEARNING CENTER



In 2009, FPMT Education Services launched the FPMT Online Learning Center to make FPMT education programs and materials more accessible to students worldwide. While continuing to expand, the Online Learning Center currently offers the following courses:

- ▶ MEDITATION 101
- ▶ BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL
- ▶ HEART ADVICE FOR DEATH AND DYING
- ▶ DISCOVERING BUDDHISM
- ▶ BASIC PROGRAM
- ▶ LIVING IN THE PATH

LIVING IN THE PATH is particularly unique in that it takes teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and presents them in theme-related modules that include teaching transcripts, video extracts, meditations, mindfulness practices, karma yoga, and questions to assist students in integrating the material. Current modules include: *Motivation for Life*, *Taking the Essence*, *What Buddhists Believe*, *Guru is Buddha*, *Introduction to Atisha's text*, *The Happiness of Dharma*, *Bringing Emptiness to Life*, *The Secret of the Mind*, *Diamond Cutter Meditation*, and *Refuge & Bodhichitta*.

All of our online programs provide audio and/or video teachings of the subjects, guided meditations, readings, and other support materials. Online forums for each program provide students the opportunity to discuss the subject matter and to ask questions of forum elders. Additionally, many retreats led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche are available in full via audio and/or video format.

Education Services is committed to creating a dynamic virtual learning environment and adding more FPMT programming and materials for you to enjoy via the Online Learning Center.

Visit us at: onlinelearning.fpmt.org

OTHER TEACHINGS OF LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY WISDOM PUBLICATIONS

Wisdom Energy, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Introduction to Tantra, by Lama Yeshe

Transforming Problems, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Door to Satisfaction, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification, by Lama Yeshe

The Bliss of Inner Fire, by Lama Yeshe

Becoming the Compassion Buddha, by Lama Yeshe

Ultimate Healing, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Dear Lama Zopa, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

How to Be Happy, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

About Lama Yeshe:

Reincarnation: The Boy Lama, by Vicki Mackenzie

About Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

The Lawudo Lama, by Jamyang Wangmo

You can get more information about and order the above titles at
www.wisdompubs.org or call toll free in the USA on 1-800-272-4050.

TRANSCRIPTS, PRACTICES AND OTHER MATERIALS

See the LYWA and FPMT websites for transcripts of teachings
by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other practices written
or compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

DVDs OF LAMA YESHE

We are in the process of converting our VHS videos of Lama Yeshe's teachings to DVD. *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*, *Introduction to Tantra*, *Offering Tsok to Heruka Vajrasattva*, *Anxiety in the Nuclear Age*, *Bringing Dharma to the West* and *Lama Yeshe at Disneyland* are currently available. More coming all the time—see our website for details.

DVDs OF LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

There are many available: see the Store on the FPMT website for more information.

WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA TEACHINGS

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this show you how to put the teachings into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings, the names of your teachers or holy images is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes such as propping up wobbly tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped in cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in the rubbish but burned in a special way. Briefly: do not incinerate such materials with other trash, but alone, and as they burn, recite the mantra OM AH HUM. As the smoke rises, visualize that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six samsaric realms, purifying their minds, alleviating their suffering, and bringing them all happiness, up to and including enlightenment. Some people might find this practice a bit unusual, but it is given according to tradition. Thank you very much.

DEDICATION

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may everything needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have love and compassion for all sentient beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

LAMA THUBTEN ZOPA RINPOCHE was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thami home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction*. At the age of ten, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found in *The Lawudo Lama* and on the LYWA and FPMT websites. In addition to many LYWA and FPMT books, Rinpoche's other published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Dear Lama Zopa*, *How to Be Happy* and many transcripts and practice booklets.

AILSA CAMERON first met Buddhism at Tushita Retreat Centre in India in 1983 and has since been involved in various activities within the FPMT, primarily in relation to the archiving, transcribing and editing of the teachings of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe. With Ven. Robina Courtin, she edited *Transforming Problems* and *The Door to Satisfaction*, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and *The Bliss of Inner Fire*, by Lama Yeshe, for Wisdom Publications. She also edited Rinpoche's *Ultimate Healing* and *How to Be Happy* for Wisdom. After working originally in India and Nepal, she went to Hong Kong in 1989 to help organize the electronic version of the LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE. Ordained as a nun by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1987, she has been a member of the Chenrezig Nuns' Community in Australia since 1990. She is currently a full time editor with the LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE, for whom she has edited many teachings, including *Teachings from the Mani Retreat*, *Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat*, *How Things Exist* and *Heart of the Path*.

