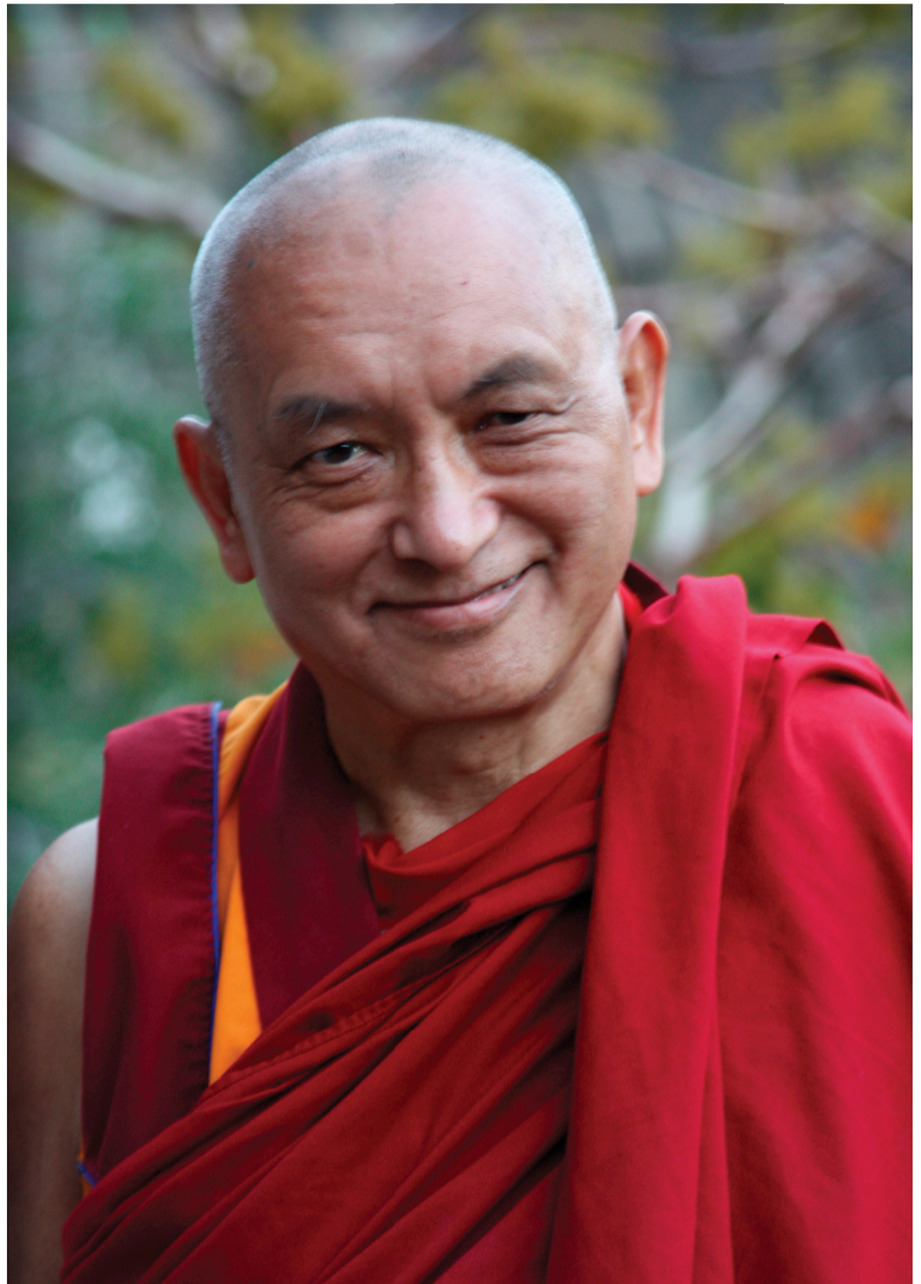


Lama Zopa Rinpoche



THE PATH TO ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

LAMRIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 2009

LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

THE PATH TO ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

Lamrim Teachings from Kopan 2009

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Edited by Gordon McDougall & Sandra Smith



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



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Introduction

This book presents previously unpublished teachings from Lama Zopa Rinpoche's teachings given during the 42nd Kopan lamrim course in 2009. These are lightly edited teachings that we hope will convey the feeling of receiving the teachings while attending Kopan's one-month course in Nepal. For more information about attending the yearly lamrim courses at Kopan Monastery please visit KopanMonastery.com

You can also find many other Kopan teaching course transcripts for reading online or for downloading as a pdf for offline study published on our website at LamaYeshe.com. An ebook series which presents teachings from the 24th Kopan lamrim course in 1991 is also available. [Visit our website](#) to find out more about the 24th Kopan series and to access ebook vendor links.

How the Kopan Courses Began

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

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

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

Even though all these buddhas exist, we don’t have the karma to see them. For example, from my side, I can’t see the numberless past, present and future buddhas or deities in their pure aspect because my mind is blanketed by impure karma. Therefore I can’t receive direct guidance from them. However, by their manifesting according to my level of mind in human form as Lama Yeshe, in an ordinary aspect showing mistakes and faults that my obscured mind can perceive, I can receive their guidance directly.

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

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

At this Dharma Celebration we also received many initiations and teachings from His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, starting with the *chöd* initiation and commentary because it’s considered inauspicious to do it last. Lama also wanted to show that the Gelug tradition

contains the chöd practice. Then Rinpoche gave the Guhyasamaja and Heruka Body Mandala initiations and commentaries and a Vajrayogini initiation.

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

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

When we do this meditation we should consider our gurus as the rope and single-pointedly put our complete trust in them. If we do that we can get out. If we don't hold the rope firmly, if we don't devote to the guru with complete reliance, but instead have doubt and keep examining him with a superstitious mind, then even though numberless buddhas are trying to help us, we can't be guided. Even though all the buddhas have compassion and loving-kindness for us and constantly want to liberate us from samsara, if we don't have devotion for our guru there's no way they can help us out. So that's a great way to practice guru devotion meditation.

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

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

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

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

Wheel of Life: The Autobiography of a Western Buddhist]. Zina read about Domo Geshe Rinpoche in *The Way of the White Clouds*.

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

Many of those people were taking drugs, but in some cases drugs could have been the Buddha's skillful means to help break those people's concepts. They had such unbelievably fixed minds, fixed ideas—strong, unchangeable beliefs that there was just this one life; no understanding that the mind can exist without the body. Their thinking was unbelievably gross. People like this needed something external to break their concepts and enable them to see things more deeply. Drugs gave them many experiences such as the mind being able to travel without the body, which shocked and surprised them, because it was completely opposite to what was taught and believed in the West.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were a couple of movie theaters in Darjeeling and she lived near the upper one in a very big house that I think had once been owned by a previous maharaja. A rich Indian family lived upstairs and she lived below. Lama and I lived in a tiny one-room glass house in the garden that previous residents had probably used for taking tea. Lama's bed was on one side, mine on the other and there was a small table between us. The only other things in there were a chair and some drawers. It was small but very pleasant.

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

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

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

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

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

to protect the Buddhadharma in Tibet. He did this not only around Samye but wherever in Tibet they were.

As a result, Buddhism was sustained in Tibet for many centuries. The main goal of the government and the people was always to preserve and spread the Dharma. Consequently Tibet gave rise to many bodhisattvas and enlightened beings. And when the communist Chinese colonized Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many great, learned lamas were able to leave Tibet, reestablish monasteries, educate thousands of monks and produce many qualified teachers. Every year, those qualified teachers go to different countries, especially the West, to teach the Dharma to hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. Even in the FPMT, there are many people who can teach Dharma and introduce it to others. So this benefit received by everybody, including us, is due to the kindness of Padmasambhava, who purified Tibet, allowing the Dharma to be established and last such a long time, and the power of the Boudha stupa and the prayers made to it.

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

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

Ang Nyima gave me Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's great *lojong* text, *Lojong Chenmo* [also called *Losang Gongyen*], which is basically a lamrim text but greatly elaborated in the lojong section. He also offered Lama Yeshe the Heruka Body Mandala commentary written by Dagpo Rinpoche, Pabongka Rinpoche's root guru, and ever since then Lama was always reading the completion stage of that practice.

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

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

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

Around 1970 we went to Bodhgaya to receive a Yamantaka commentary from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's senior tutor, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche. At that time there was a Scottish Zen monk there giving a one-week meditation course, so we went along with Zina. She liked to see lots of lamas to ask them questions or just talk, so because of her we got to meet several lamas of other traditions, like Kalu Rinpoche, Chetsang Rinpoche, the Karmapa and others. Lama would tell her what to ask and she would then ask them that question.

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

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

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

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

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

Archive # 1748

Edited by Nicholas Ribush

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LECTURE 1



DHARMA IS ONE-TIME WORK

I'm not sure what I'm going to say. I'm not sure what you are going to hear. The thought that came into my mind is that every one of you came from different parts of the world, very far, from beyond the Atlantic Ocean, beyond the Pacific Ocean, by crossing those oceans. You've come so far, from beyond the Pacific Ocean to Nepal, to Kopan Monastery. It's amazing. It's kind of unimaginable.

You came from very far away, from beyond the Pacific Ocean. Amazing. From very far countries, from the other end of the world. *Is there the end of the world?* You can go right around the world, so is there an end? Most of you came from very large cities where many millions of people live. For example, in Mexico City there are twenty million, right? Is that correct? In other cities maybe there are fifteen million, ten million, five million. So, it's really amazing, from places like that, this one person comes *all* the way across the ocean to Nepal, to Kopan Monastery.

I was just thinking of Boston. I have been to Boston quite a number of times. One time, the person who was driving the car was an old student, Tim, who now runs Wisdom Publications. Before, it was Dr. Nick, the Australian doctor who became a monk for some time before he achieved arhatship. He achieved arhatship and now he no longer runs

Wisdom Publications but Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, the archive that collects the teachings of Lama, who is kinder than all the three-time buddhas and who founded this organization, FPMT. Dr. Nick is collecting all of Lama's and all of my berserk teachings and he's putting them together, making them available to the world.

Anyway, Tim was driving the car when suddenly the thought came into my mind of how well-developed Boston was, with so many external things developed. It is such a city. And yet this person came *all* the way from there. Among so many millions and millions of people this person came *all* the way to Nepal and then Kopan, so I was very surprised. He came here to attend this course in order to benefit his mind and then go back to try to help his friends, there in his country, to introduce Dharma to them, to help others get the same benefit he got.

There is so much more to happiness, what can be achieved, what to look for, than what people in the West believe it is, which is only the happiness of this life, nothing else other than that. That is only very short-term happiness. Everybody is looking for very short-term happiness. We can achieve much greater happiness than this, the happiness beyond this life. That is the happiness that needs to be achieved, the happiness of all the future lives and ultimate happiness, liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause, karma and delusion.

The mistaken thoughts we have, our obscuring, disturbing attitudes, our obscuring, disturbing thoughts—what they do to our mental continuum is to cause only suffering. We can even obtain ultimate happiness, total liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes. Imagine how, once the causes of the karma and delusion have ceased, we experience only everlasting happiness, a happiness that never changes, that never diminishes. Then the cause of suffering can never arise because we have completely ceased the cause of delusion, the negative imprints which are left on the mental continuum. Because there is no cause for delusion to arise there is no cause for suffering to arise.

So, this is one-time work; this is one-time practice; this is one-time accomplishment. It's not at all like the work for this life, seeking to achieve the happiness of this life. Working for samsara has no end; it goes on and on without end, continuously, and then it results only in continuously suffering. Working for future lives' happiness is one-time work. Attaining the path to liberation is a one-time achievement. Once we've achieved that, we are forever in the state of the liberation, the total cessation of suffering and its causes. Since the cause of delusion, the negative imprints, have been removed, there is no cause for delusion to arise so there's no cause for suffering to arise. Because Dharma practice to achieve liberation is one-time work, it's most worthwhile to bear any hardship to accomplish this.

Not only that, we can achieve the total cessation of even the subtle mistakes of the mind, the subtle defilements, the cessation of the dualistic view, and attain this perfect state, with the completed qualities of realizations, achieving peerless happiness, full enlightenment. When we have perfect qualities of the holy body, perfect qualities of the holy speech and perfect qualities of the holy mind then we can do *perfect* work for all sentient beings without the slightest mistake. We can bring happiness to each and every single sentient being—to each and every single hell being, to each and every single hungry ghost, to each and every single animal, to each and every single human being, to each and every single *sura*, *asura* and

intermediate stage being—to every sentient being. We can bring them from happiness to happiness to the full enlightenment.

There is so much happiness we can achieve—all these different realizations included in the five paths: the path of merit, the path of preparation, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation, and the path of no more learning. There are five paths to achieve liberation from samsara, bringing greater and greater peace and happiness, but there are also the five paths to achieve full enlightenment, great liberation, the five Mahayana paths. Then there are the ten bhumis. There is so much greater peace we can achieve, so many higher realizations we can achieve, where we have greater and greater power, greater and greater qualities, greater and greater knowledge to benefit other sentient beings, to bring deeper and deeper benefit to other sentient beings.

And that's just talking about the Sutra path, the Paramitayana. There is also the tantric path, Secret Mantra or Vajrayana path, which contains greater and greater realizations, deeper and deeper knowledge. Then, we can offer deeper benefit to sentient beings. So, life is never hopeless. There's so much we can do to benefit ourselves and to benefit other sentient beings. There are so many ways we can benefit other sentient beings, we can help other sentient beings. It's just amazing.

The happiness we should be looking for is not just for this short-term life, the happiness of this very short-time life. It's not only that. If we analyze through meditation, we'll see that this happiness is only suffering. To the hallucinated mind it's happiness, but with Dharma wisdom, with inner wisdom, we see only suffering. If we analyze we see it's just temporary samsaric pleasure, which is only suffering. The hallucinated mind apprehends it as pleasure. Because in the view of the hallucinated mind it appears as pleasure, and that's what we believe, we become attached to that.

This view only cheats us; it only deceives us. Then continuously, that attachment makes us become caught in samsara. Like a drug addiction, the more we take the more we need. With desire, attachment, having more grasping doesn't make us free from attachment; it only causes us to become more caught up in attachment, trapping us in that whole package of problems. It brings a whole package of problems. Just using that as an example, it doesn't make us free from that; it only makes us become more caught up in it.

We need to study the path to achieve liberation, those five paths I mentioned before. To achieve liberation we need to study all the details that each path contains, so we can achieve the antidotes to the cause of suffering, delusion and karma. Then later, by ceasing the cause of delusion, the negative imprints, it becomes impossible to be reborn in samsara and to experience suffering. We achieve the total cessation of suffering and its causes. Of course, it's much more worthwhile to achieve full enlightenment. For that, we need to study these five paths and the ten bhumis and then the tantric path. By practicing the Paramitayana path we can achieve full enlightenment, and then we are able to liberate the numberless sentient beings in each realm from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment.

If we don't practice tantra but only the Mahayana Paramitayana path, the gone-beyond path, we have to collect the two merits—the merit of wisdom and the merit of virtue—for three

countless great eons in order to complete the amount of merit that is needed to achieve the goal, the Buddha's holy body, the rupakaya, and the holy mind, the dharmakaya. To complete the merit of wisdom and the merit of virtue is like having a huge project where we need a billion dollars to be able to complete it. It's like the Maitreya Project that many of you know about. That project needs many millions of dollars to be accomplished.

Similarly, to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings we need to complete all the merits—the merits of wisdom and virtue—which takes three countless great eons, during which time sentient beings have to suffer. While we are becoming enlightened sentient beings have to suffer for an unbelievably long time. Thinking about how sentient beings have to suffer for three countless great eons, our mind feels this is unbearable. They need to be liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and brought to full enlightenment quicker than using the Mahayana Paramitayana path. We need to bring them to enlightenment quicker, therefore we need to practice tantra, which has greater skill than the Mahayana Paramitayana path and leads to enlightenment quicker.

Even within tantra we need to practice the fourth of the four levels: Kriya Tantra, Charya Tantra, Yoga Tantra and Maha-anuttara Yoga Yantra. Even by practicing the lower tantras we can achieve full enlightenment in one lifetime. Then we are able to liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment quicker. By practicing Maha-anuttara Yoga Tantra correctly we are able to achieve enlightenment much quicker than through lower tantra. We can achieve full enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerated time, within a number of years. That means we are able to liberate sentient beings from oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment in the quickest possible time, much quicker than by using the lower tantras.

That is more and more amazing! The things we can achieve, how we can use our life, how we can dedicate our life, not just for ourselves but to benefit numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless suffering human beings, numberless suffering gods, demigods and intermediate state beings—that is unimaginable. We can't imagine how we can make our life so beneficial, so useful for these numberless sentient beings. Most amazing!

Therefore, we need to learn all this, to learn and hear and reflect and meditate on all these paths. By doing that correctly, all the realizations come. It's like a mirror covered by dust. The mirror already has the potential to reflect things back. That does not come from outside. The potential does not come from outside; it is there already. All that is needed is to remove the dust that covers the mirror, that obstructs the mirror from reflecting. All we need to do is clean the dust from the mirror. The cleaner we make it the more it can reflect back. Our mind is exactly the same as the mirror. It has all the potential to achieve all those realizations I have just mentioned, to bring the most unbelievable benefit to all sentient beings and to cause them all happiness—the happiness of this life, the happiness of all the future lives, liberation from samsara and ultimate happiness, full enlightenment. We are just one person but we have that potential to cause all that happiness to numberless sentient beings, even full enlightenment, and we can do it quicker and quicker. All the potential is within our mind. Our mind is most amazing.

The more we learn the Dharma the more we know about our mind. The more we learn the Buddha's teachings, the deeper our understanding of our mind. It's most amazing what this mind can do. We can't see this mind. There's nothing to touch. It has no color, no shape; it's formless, colorless, shapeless, but what it can do—the happiness, the benefit it can offer to numberless sentient beings—is like the limitless sky. Can you imagine the benefit we can offer because of this mind?

There are skies of happiness and benefits we can offer others but if we close our mind, not learning, not reflecting, not meditating, we are fools. To cover the mirror with dust, there is nothing more foolish than that. An animal can't do anything because it's trapped inside an animal body. Because it doesn't have a human body, it can't communicate, it can't understand our words, it can't express itself. But we have a human body. That gives us the opportunity to take away the dirt from the mirror, to see all the reflections, to gain all the realizations and to have all the unimaginable qualities of the Buddha's holy body, the unimaginable qualities of the Buddha's holy speech and the unimaginable qualities of the Buddha's holy mind. All this comes from this mind, which is like a mirror. The more we clean the dirt from it, the more it can give a reflection back.

That's why I am saying how amazing our mind is, just amazing. We have to learn about the potential of our mind, that it can bring greater and greater happiness and peace, and especially ultimate peace and happiness for all sentient beings. This human body gives all that opportunity, so we can use the mind to benefit others, to offer all these skies of benefit to sentient beings. By having this human body we can use the mind, we can clean the mind, and then manifest all the realizations and benefit numberless sentient beings.

Therefore, while we have this human body and we can do this, if we don't do it there is nothing more foolish. If we were born as an insect that would be different, but while we're born as a human being we have this incredible human body that we can use in this capacity. We have this opportunity to purify our mind, like cleaning dirt from a mirror. By actualizing the remedy, by cleaning all the defilements, all these amazing, wonderful things come. Therefore, this human body is precious; it's *rinpoche*. In Tibetan "rinpoche" means precious. This human body we have is called "precious"—this precious human body.

WE CAN ATTAIN GREAT MEANING IN OUR LIFE

There was a great lama who studied and practiced all the four traditions—Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Gelug—who said that by receiving this human body we can achieve all the happinesses and all the great meanings. We can achieve whatever future life happiness we wish for as well. If after death we wish to be born in pure land of a buddha, where there's no suffering and especially where we can achieve enlightenment, this can happen. If achieving enlightenment doesn't happen in this life, we can be born in a pure land, such as the pure land of Chakrasamvara, Heruka or Vajrayogini, and we can definitely a hundred percent become enlightened there.

With this life, based on guru devotion—the root of the path to enlightenment—and then with renunciation, bodhicitta and right view, we can create the particular cause to be born in one of those pure lands and become enlightened there. Or we can become reborn in Amitabha Buddha's pure land. Once we are born there, it's impossible to be born in the

lower realms again, as a hell being, a hungry ghost or an animal. Many lamas did it this way. I wrote to my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's younger tutor, asking whether you can practice tantra there and achieve enlightenment.

With regards to the happiness of future lives—the first of the three ways a perfect human rebirth is meaningful—if we wish we can attain the seven qualities, such as having a high caste. Not every country discriminates according to caste but generally the higher the caste the more people will respect us and listen to what we say, so we can help them by bringing the Dharma, allowing them to enter into the path to liberation and enlightenment. Having other qualities like wealth, a perfect body with nothing missing, freedom from sicknesses and such things makes it easy to practice Dharma and to have realizations. All these conditions—the seven qualities of the higher rebirth—together enable us to benefit other sentient beings.

Lama Tsongkhapa emphasized the eight ripening qualities—a long life, a handsome or beautiful body, noble caste, wealth and so forth—in his short lamrim. He wrote *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (Lamrim Chenmo)*, the *Middle-length Commentary on the Stages of the Path* and a short lamrim text called *Hymns of Experience of the Graduated Path*. In the short lamrim he explained that if we achieve the seven ripening qualities of the human body it's very easy to achieve realizations, to have great attainments on the path to enlightenment. It's very easy to advance our mind and have higher realizations. He also explained the cause of each one. Perhaps you may have gone through that already. That's good to know. You might be doing that already, especially by attending this course. It's good to recognize this in order to create the cause of the eight ripening aspect qualities and so make it very easy to gain the high realizations. Lama Tsongkhapa emphasized the eight ripening qualities as well as the four Mahayana Dharma wheels, the four external qualities we need in order to achieve a favorable future life.

I'm talking about the future lives but we can make many of those qualities happen during this life. I want to say that.

Anyway, we want to achieve the four Mahayana Dharma wheels, where we have all the conditions that make it very easy to have realizations on the path to liberation and enlightenment. These four are: having met a Mahayana virtuous friend who shows us the path to enlightenment and gives us advice; having a harmonious place that supports our practice, where there is water and nothing harmful to our meditation or retreat. Also, having a family, and lastly, having collected merits and having done prayers. Thus, the four Mahayana Dharma wheels make it easy to practice and achieve realizations.

The prayers that come at the end of the extensive, most secret, profound *Guru Puja, Lama Chöpa*, dedicate to achieving the four Mahayana Dharma wheels in all the lifetimes, to be able to complete Mahayana training in the renunciation, bodhicitta and right view and to achieve the unified state of Vajradhara, full enlightenment. And to receive a perfect human rebirth which has eight freedoms and ten richnesses to practice Dharma—five received from our own side and five received from outside. The Tibetan *jor wa* literally means “wealth,” what we have received, so we can say the ten receptacles or ten richnesses. To achieve these again in the future lives, the Mahayana guru reveals not only the lesser vehicle teachings, but also the Mahayana teachings, both the Sutra Paramitayana teachings and the Secret Mantra

Vajrayana teachings, which reveal all three different levels of the path to enlightenment, allowing us to listen, reflect and meditate and actualize the path.

On the basis of keeping the pratimoksha vows, bodhisattva vows and tantric vows, we have the opportunity to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, not only in one life but even in a few years, by practicing the result vehicle, Maha-anuttara Yoga Tantra. This is based on practicing the causal vehicle, the lamrim, the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment, all of which are based on the root of the path to enlightenment, guru devotion. Like this we can also create the cause to achieve a perfect human rebirth next time, which gives us the opportunity to achieve enlightenment. That is the first great meaning.

THE PRECIOUS HUMAN BODY IS LIKE A WISH-GRANTING JEWEL

The second great meaning is to achieve ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment, great liberation.

The third great meaning is that in every second of this human life we can create the cause to achieve those happinesses. Those are the three great meanings. Because we have this human body and because of what it can do, we can achieve these three great meanings. We are able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment quickly. By attaining the lower tantras we can do it quickly and even more quickly by attaining the highest tantra, Maha-anuttara Yoga Tantra. Through that we are able to liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment extremely quickly.

A great lama, Tsokdrug Rangdrol, said that this human body we now have is more precious than a wish-granting jewel. In other words, diamonds are more precious than gold, skies filled with diamonds are more precious than skies filled with gold, but nothing compares to the value of this human body that we now have, that we have today, that we have this hour, this minute, this second. Compared to that, skies filled with gold and diamonds are nothing.

What this lama and many other teachers have mentioned is a wish-granting jewel possessed by wheel-turning kings. Not everybody can have one! People can have gold and diamonds but not everybody can have a wish-granting jewel. In the past wheel-turning bodhisattva kings, who had collected unbelievable merits, were able to find wish-granting jewels in the ocean. You have to clean the jewel in three ways, and the last one is for the stain of smell. You clean the jewel with cotton and then put it on top of a banner on the roof of the house on the evening of the full moon. Then, whatever prayer you make is immediately actualized. But what you achieve from that is only material possessions, external enjoyments. By praying, that is all you get. From that alone you don't get a good rebirth in your next life, you can't purify past negative karmas, you don't get liberation from samsara and you won't get enlightenment. You won't get all the realizations just from that.

But, we can still achieve enlightenment if we have this precious human body, even if we don't have a single jewel, even if we own no gold, no diamonds, no money, nothing. We can be penniless like Milarepa. I don't know how many of you know about Milarepa. He was not Indian or Nepalese but a Tibetan man. In Tibet there were women who achieved enlightenment, but here I am just talking about Milarepa.

Milarepa had nothing. He just lived in a cave, eating nettles and nothing else. There was no salt, no chili, no olive oil, no peppers, nothing—just nettles he boiled in water. That’s all he ate for years. He didn’t even have one rupee, he didn’t even have one Tibetan coin, but he had received a perfect human body that he used to practice Dharma, exactly as he was advised to by his guru, the enlightened being Marpa. He completely sacrificed his life with total faith and devotion to his guru and he achieved enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerated time.

Of course, it wasn’t only Milarepa. Lama Tsongkhapa’s disciple, Gyalwa Ensapa, also achieved enlightenment very easily. There is also Drubchen Chökyi Dorje, who is still supposed to be on Mt. Everest. His Holiness Dalai Lama mentioned this when we requested a commentary on the *Guru Puja* and, I think, some mahamudra teachings at the First Dharma Celebration. Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than all the three times’ buddhas, was there, so we requested it. There were maybe three hundred people from many countries, but at that time there weren’t any Chinese people from Singapore, Hong Kong or Taiwan. It was a long time ago. Anyway, at that time His Holiness Dalai Lama said Drubchen Chökyi Dorje, the practitioner who achieved enlightenment in one lifetime, was still on Mt. Everest. So if you are planning to climb Mt. Everest you should expect to meet him!

Anyway, many have achieved full enlightenment in one brief lifetime of degenerate times. You have to understand how they practiced. You have to read, you have to study, then you can understand what made them achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times. It is very important to study their life stories and then you will know it was all from the same cause. They all had unbelievable dedication to the virtuous friend. Their way of correctly devoting to the virtuous friend was to cherish them more than their own life.

For all those who achieved enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times it’s like that. Reading their life stories, you can see the similarities. There was always so much sacrifice, so much dedication. Their guru devotion was unbelievably strong. The essence is that. They all cherished the virtuous friend more than their own life; they all followed the advice and the teachings *exactly* and practiced without any anger or heresy arising. Their strong guru devotion protected their life from anger and heresy, from all those negative thoughts that are obstacles to achieving realizations and enlightenment.

As I was saying, Milarepa had nothing. He didn’t have even one Tibetan coin, but he used his body to practice Dharma and achieved full enlightenment. Therefore, our human body is unbelievably precious. It’s most amazing. Our precious human body is more precious than a wish-granting jewel. With a wish-fulfilling jewel we can’t achieve the three great meanings but with this human body we can. Therefore, this human body is more precious than the sky filled with wish-granting jewels. The value of all those is nothing compared to the value our human body gives us.

We can’t give ourselves any freedom if we never explore this, like the scientists who are experimenting all the time. Meditators are called “inner scientists.” We give ourselves freedom to explore what things in the world are useful for life, are beneficial for our mind. We give ourselves freedom to open our heart. Without examining, without exploring, we are closed, we don’t give ourselves a single freedom. Having attained this human body we have this unbelievable opportunity to benefit ourselves and other numberless sentient beings as

well, by exploring Buddhism, by learning and meditating and seeing what happens to our mind through meditation, through practice. There are huge differences between having an intellectual understanding and not practicing, and the big discoveries we can make through our experience of meditation. His Holiness the Dalai Lama often says that after learning, after examining, then our choice is whether to practice or not. But even just having an intellectual understanding helps a lot and brings so much peace in the mind.

We have a monk here called Thubten Sherab. He was here for many years and was one of the best students. He could memorize and was a good debater. We sent him to translate Dharma at Nalanda, our Western Sangha monastery in France. I haven't really heard of other real Western Buddhist monasteries but our organization has one, Nalanda. Lama gave it this name, the same name as the great monastery in ancient times which Lama Atisha, Shantideva and over three hundred great pandits attended. They were highly attained beings, not just scholars who were wise in the words but had no experience. It was not like that. The Nalanda pandits gained realizations on the path to enlightenment. So Lama gave the same name as Nalanda University to the monastery.

We sent Thubten Sherab to interpret for the resident teacher there and to translate the Dharma for the Sangha. He translated for many years and then after some time I think he was unable to stay as a monk, so he went to Spain and worked for many years. He told me that the Spanish people working around him had many problems, many difficulties, but because he had heard some Dharma he didn't have any problems. Because he had studied so much Dharma philosophy here, so many texts, so many scriptures and he had a good intellectual understanding, he said, "Because I had heard so much I have peace, but the people there suffer so much." That is what he said. This is true not only for him but it has also been many other people's experience.

Even just having an intellectual understanding of Dharma makes a big difference in our life. There are a lot less problems because our problems come from concepts, how we label things. We label something one way as a "problem" but if we change the label there's no problem. We put on a negative label and there is a problem; we put on a positive label and there is no problem. By thinking of the benefits of the problem we can put on a positive label, and then we see happiness. That is not the only story. I think this is the experience of many people who have learned the Dharma even if they haven't practiced. In our life we can see the difference between ourselves and other people who do not know Dharma. Even just an intellectual understanding makes a big difference in our life.

The conclusion is that this human body is more precious than the whole sky filled with wish-fulfilling jewels. Tsokdrug Rangdrol Rinpoche said that's why the human body is called rinpoche—precious.

This is the great discovery that is needed in the West. The big problems that face the West are relationship problems and so much depression, the feeling of being hopeless. Is that correct? Anyway, relationship problems and depression are due to a lack of this knowledge, how our human body is very precious, not knowing that it is rinpoche. We need this human body to have successful realizations of the general graduated path of the lower capable being, the general graduated path of the middle capable being and the general graduated path of the highest capable being, the whole path to enlightenment, the three principal aspects of

the path and the two stages of tantra. To have successful realizations of all this depends on discovering how this body is so precious, so rinpoche.

This Rinpoche is going to have chai!

You have to know that having chai here at Kopan Monastery is a result of the past karma, of the virtuous actions we have done in the past. It's all the result of past good karma, the virtuous actions we have done, having made offerings to Buddha Dharma and Sangha, or charity to sentient beings.

[Rinpoche chants offering prayer]

DR. NICK AND THE BEGINNING OF THE AUSTRALIAN DHARMA CENTERS

What I was trying to tell you before was that it was not only Tim who came to Kopan. That was just one example. Dr. Nick also came. He was an Australian doctor who decided to do a world tour with his friends and that's how he and his friends appeared at Kopan in about 1971—I'm not sure of the year. They came to the third one-month course and then for the fourth course his mother came, maybe his and somebody else's mother came. There was Nick and his friend, Yeshe Khadro, and two other friends, Tom and Kathy. They had decided to go around the world. They had bought an investment property in Queensland—I don't know the particular area—and then they started their world tour.

They were lying on a beach in Thailand when a person came with a coconut and a knife. As they were cutting the coconut and drinking its milk, somebody came along and told them about a meditation course at a place called Kopan. Just from that they decided to come to Kopan. That's it.

The world tour didn't happen! I think they had just started the tour but the rest that they had planned didn't happen. During the first course Nick gave Lama Yeshe treatment. At that time many courses were done in the Chenrezig gompas, there outside. We were staying in an old British-style house built by the Nepalese king for his astrologer. Nick was giving treatment to Lama. Even during the first course and then right after the course he became very busy with the course book. So, with the course book, he was already starting to be busy working on the Dharma books. I worked with him for some time to add more subjects. After that year, he kept busy totally running on the Dharma books.

He did the fourth course with his mother. Yeshe Khadro was there, and I think Tom and Kathy, his friends, came to the fourth course. After that, they invited Lama Yeshe and me to Australia. That might have been the first time we went to the West, I'm not sure. They organized the course in Diamond Valley. Roger was also there. There were about two hundred people on course. I think I probably spent more than a week on the eight worldly dharmas. The eight worldly dharmas is a very sweet subject, very sweet, more delicious than ice cream. I'm just joking. The eight worldly dharmas and the lower realms. When we meditated on the hells I said, "If you don't meditate now on hell, there won't be any time to meditate." The next evening when I came, we did a meditation on hell and then the next day when I came back there were some empty spaces, some empty spaces there and some empty spaces over there! The people who weren't at the teachings were at the back with their

backpacks ready to leave. As the teachings started and I saw their backpacks, I tried to think, “Merely labeled by mind, merely labeled by mind.” That brought some peace.

There were a lot of people on that Diamond Valley course. We then went to the mountain where four of these people had bought a lot of land, which they offered for a center. That became Chenrezig Institute, the very first Dharma center in Australia. Very soon after that there was Tara House, the big center in Melbourne. For many years there’s been a resident teacher there, Geshe Doga, who is very learned and also a very great meditator on the tantric path.

Many great teachers went to Chenrezig Institute. Geshe Loden, a great teacher from Sera Je, taught there for three years, with an incarnate lama, Zasep Rinpoche, translating. After that, Geshe Lama Konchog went there. You’ve seen all the relics down there. He was a great yogi who had completed the path to enlightenment. He was supposed to be there for a year, but he stayed for six months. He taught the complete *Liberation in the Palm in Your Hand*, Pabongka’s lamrim. Geshe Loden taught Madhyamika and lamrim, Lamrim Chenmo. Many teachings were given. After that Lama Yeshe’s brother, Geshe Thinley, who had a very good understanding of Dharma, taught for five or six years before he passed away.

And then there was Geshe Tashi Tsering, also a very learned teacher from Sera Je, who taught there for many years and also started the Masters Program. The Basic Program has also been given three or four times. Geshe Tashi Tsering had to leave because he was appointed by His Holiness Dalai Lama to be the abbot of the Lower Tantric College. After he left another younger teacher went there.

So, Chenrezig is a key meditation center that has been teaching Dharma—sutra and tantra—offering so many teachings for many years, benefiting an unbelievable number of people. Each year so many people benefit, getting the opportunity to purify their negative karma collected from beginningless rebirths and to collect extensive merits and make their life meaningful by receiving teachings, studying and meditating, bringing their life closer to enlightenment. It has been unbelievably beneficial to so many sentient beings.

Many other centers started in Australia. Those two centers are a kind of root and then there have been many others in Australia. Vajrayana Institute in Sydney, started by Roger, has benefited many sentient beings up to now. There have been great teachers up to now. The organization has had great fortune to receive very qualified teachers. That’s been extremely important for sentient beings to receive the correct teachings, not only lamrim but also the commentaries on lamrim, to really understand the philosophy on a deeper level.

Nick’s life has been extremely busy since the time of the first course, working on Dharma books, making them available for people and later working at Tushita Centre in Delhi for quite a number of years. In Australia and in the West he has mainly worked on the books, first with Wisdom Publications, making Dharma books available, spreading the Dharma to the rest of the world. Now he does the Archive and Tim does Wisdom Publications. Like that, he has been benefiting so many sentient beings.

The conclusion is this. What I am talking about is karma. We are gathered here at this time because we have created the karma to come to Kopan to do the course. There’s a seed

planted. I don't know, it could have been sometime in a past life as a human being. It could have been while in an animal form as well. Maybe at a different time something happened.

PADMASAMBHAVA SUBDUES THE SPIRITS

I just remembered a story. Maybe it doesn't relate much but anyway, it's just some story of when I was in Dharamsala, just before I left for here. There was Pari Rinpoche, a high lama, who in his past life was the guru of Lama Yeshe and many other great lamas. He was with a young Tibetan lady who came to offer service to His Holiness Dalai Lama. She was called a dakini, Khadro. She's an actual living dakini, somebody who is a highly-attained being.

I forgot the story! So Pari Rinpoche was talking about the daughter of the Dharma king of Tibet, Trisong Detsen. I don't know what the story was about, I don't remember now, but something happened to the daughter. The king was down below at the stupa that was built by the mother, Machig Sema, who looked after chickens. Externally looking, there is no way she could build a stupa. She had no wealth, nothing; she just looked after chickens. She was poor; there was no way you could judge externally that she would be able to build this large stupa.

She sent a petition to the Nepalese king asking if she could get land for a stupa and from the mouth of the Nepalese king slipped out the word, "OK." The Tibetan means something like, "It can be done" and it just slipped out of his mouth. Generally, whatever comes from the mouth of the king is law, even to kill somebody. Once it had come from his mouth it had to be done. I don't know but my brother, Sangye, said that. If the king told a bodyguard or somebody to kill somebody, if they couldn't find the person they would have to kill something once the king mentioned killing, even a chicken or something. Anyway, that's what he said.

However, generally it's impossible to get the land, but her request went to the king who just said quickly, "It can be done," and the ministers later found out about it so what was usually impossible had to happen. That's why the name of the stupa is something like, "Can be done, slipped from the mouth," in Tibetan.

Anyway, the mother built up to the vase base of the stupa and then passed away. She had four children and they completed the rest: the thirteen dharmachakras and on top the banner, umbrella, sun, moon and all that. While the four brothers were standing, making prayer to the stupa, numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas entered the stupa, and their wisdom absorbed into it. Because they built the stupa the elder brother made a prayer, dedicating the merits collected by building the stupa to be born in the Snow Land, Tibet, and to become the Dharma king of Tibet. Then, hearing the first brother's prayer, the second brother made a prayer to be the abbot, to be able to pass the lineage of the vows, the ordination. The third one, who was going to become Padmasambhava, prayed, "If there are any obstacles to the king, to Dharma activities, to spread Dharma in Tibet, may I be the powerful yogi to pacify the obstacles, the interferers." The fourth brother prayed to become a minister to help the king.

In their next life, the brothers became these things; the first one became the Dharma king of Tibet, the second became the abbot who passed on the lineage of vows and so forth. The

Dharma king tried to build the first monastery in Samye but at that time the humans built it in the daytime and at night the spirits came and tore what they had done down. This happened many times.

A minister or the king mentioned that there was a powerful yogi in India called Padmasambhava who they should invite. So, Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet to tame all the spirits that were harming the building of the monastery and to spread Dharma in Tibet. He came and, by arising as a wrathful deity, hooked the spirits. According the karma of the Tibetan people, three ran away, leaving twelve, who he subdued, giving them orders to become Dharma protectors. After that there were no obstacles and the monastery could be completed. Not only that, in many different parts of Tibet landlords laid down arms or knees or different parts of their body, like the heart, so Padmasambhava went all around and subdued all the spirits who interfered with the spread of Buddhadharma in Tibet.

Buddhism was able to last for so many years and many enlightened beings—many buddhas and bodhisattvas—happened in Tibet by practicing Buddhadharma. For many years, in different parts of Tibet many caves or mud houses in the mountains, like ants' nests, even whole mountains, even the earth, were blessed so much by all these unbelievably strong Dharma protectors. Now so much has fallen down or been destroyed. But even the place is very blessed.

Due to His Holiness' kindness, monasteries have been established in India and Nepal and not only that, Buddhadharma has spread all over the West where there was none, where it was completely dark. Now the light of Dharma shines all over the West and now tens of thousands of people including us are able to meet Buddhadharma every year, with the opportunity to wake up and follow the path to enlightenment. This incredible opportunity, like a dream, is based on Buddhism being preserved in Tibet by the Tibetan people and achieving the realizations of path to enlightenment. This is all due to Padmasambhava's kindness by purifying the land of Tibet, in order for Dharma to be able to spread. He was the third brother who said, "If there are any obstacles to the king, to Dharma activities, to spreading Dharma in Tibet, may I be the powerful yogi to pacify the interferers." This is what happened due to the prayers said at the stupa.

I'm telling this story because we have the intention of visiting Swayambhunath. We did it last year but before, in the previous courses, there wasn't the structure set up to allow us to do it. But seeing that people have come all the way from so far, it is a wonderful experience to go to Swayambhunath, this unbelievably powerful, holy object, to circumambulate and pray where these four brothers made prayers that were actualized in their next life exactly as they had prayed. This stupa has benefited the world so much, bringing Dharma and unbelievable peace and happiness to others, including us. This is the benefit of the stupa, of their making prayers. We are still receiving the benefits, by meeting the Dharma, coming to Kopan and all that.

Therefore, it's very good to go around the stupa and make prayers; it's something very small which brings very powerful purification. Many years' negative karma gets purified and all the prayers for success become very powerful, like those four brothers.

During that time, one of the brothers, the future king of Tibet, had a mosquito going around him, landing on his face. When he saw that the mosquito had died, he made a prayer for the mosquito to be born as a human being in his family. Due to his prayer, the mosquito's consciousness was born in its next life to his family and became his daughter, the daughter of the Dharma king of Tibet. I just remembered that, so I thought to mention it.

Our karma has ripened here to come to Kopan, to meet Buddhадharma, and our life that was turning toward the lower realms, samsara, is now turning upward toward the happiness of future lives and not only that, toward liberation from samsara and then enlightenment. Our life is turning upward, the correct way, rather than turning toward samsara and the lower realms. By learning the Dharma here and meditating, our life will change. What I'm saying is this is the karma, the very interesting karma from the past, either created while we were a human being or as an animal. I think this is very interesting karma; this itself is a teaching, this itself is a karmic story about ourselves, our own life. This teaching on karma is most amazing.

PRACTICING AT BREAK TIMES

I thought at this time to do oral transmission of the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* with the lamrim prayer. This meditation is maybe something auspicious. Have you done this meditation before—how things come from mind right now, how things come from karma? OK, it doesn't matter. I'll just give you an example. I want you to do a very intensive meditation on what Neil has been talking about—true suffering, the true cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the true path—the four noble truths.

The other thing, when you go out at the break times and in the times before sessions try to recollect what I sometimes explain: how what you see comes from your mind, what you hear comes from your mind, what you smell comes from your mind, what you taste comes from your mind, what your mind thinks comes from your mind.

This is the practice of mindfulness. This is not to intellectually understand but to really meditate on it. You can practice mindfulness like that in the session and also when you go out, when you are eating, when you go to the toilet, when you go out and so forth. I think this is very, very, very, very, very important. When you meditate on this, that itself becomes an antidote to anger. When somebody looks down at you or speaks rudely to you; if they are thinking negatively toward you in some way, showing they don't love you or whatever, normally it immediately affects your mind, making you get angry, upset or sad. But when your mind is in this mindfulness meditation it won't happen. When you know it comes from your mind it doesn't depress you, it doesn't make you angry.

It's like watching a movie of your mind. Your life, what you see, what you hear, all the things, is a movie of your mind. It's like when you're dreaming, all these things come from your mind. It's just like that. When you're aware, it's like that. As much as you can, continuously practice mindfulness, then your mind is continuously in peace; it's not up and down. This is not just a boring mindfulness meditation; it becomes very interesting, a very interesting mindfulness practice.

THE EMPTINESS OF THE A

The example for emptiness I normally give, which is easy to understand, is this. When you were a child, you haven't learned ABCD, OK? Then somebody, a teacher or somebody, writes three lines on the blackboard. [Rinpoche draws the three lines of the letter A in the air.] At that time, you had no idea that this meant anything; you didn't see this as an "A" *at all* because there was no appearance that this was an A. There was no appearance that this was an A to you at all because your mind hadn't labeled it "A" yet. Why? Because you had not yet been taught this was an A by your teacher. You had not yet been taught the label "A."

You saw the design, but you had not yet been taught that this was an A. First, make that very clear. You could see the design there, but you had no idea what it was. Understand?

Now, when you see those three lines you think, "Oh, there is an A," but you need to go back to your childhood and see that before you were taught the meaning of the design, the A was not there. That makes it clear.

Now, somebody introduces you to this design, telling you it is an "A." Somebody teaches you the label and then you believe in that. Then, in your mind you make up the label "A" and you believe it because of that particular design. After you have been taught the meaning your mind makes up the label based on the design and you believe it.

After that, the A appears to your mind. If your mind had labeled it but you didn't believe in the label, then I'm not sure whether there would be the appearance of the A. That's something you would have to analyze.

When the A appears back to you in the next second, it should appear back to you as merely labeled by mind. That is what happened the second before. Your mind made up the label; it was merely imputed by your mind. That's what it is—it is nothing more than that. The A doesn't exist more than that, what is merely imputed by mind. The A *cannot* be more than that which is merely labeled by mind. Just the second before, your mind had merely imputed it as that. So, when it appears back to you, it *should* appear as merely imputed by mind, but that is not what happens. That is the reality, but it does not happen to you.

That's the big question to analyze. The reality is that it is merely labeled by the mind, but it will only appear to a buddha as merely labeled by mind. There can be some discussion but I think, generally speaking, this mere appearance that is according to reality, merely imputed by the mind, only happens for a buddha, except when you have achieved the exalted path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. With the exalted path, this happens when you have achieved the third level, the right-seeing path.

There are five paths to achieve liberation and enlightenment: the path of merit, the path of preparation, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation and the path of no more learning. When you achieve the third Mahayana path, the right-seeing path, and the fourth Mahayana path, the path of meditation, there is equipoise meditation and post-meditation. During the equipoise meditation, that wisdom directly seeing emptiness in the equipoise meditation does not have a dualistic view; it doesn't have a truly existent appearance. Things appear as mere name only to a buddha because a buddha doesn't have the cause which projects the dualistic

view of the truly existent appearance, the subtle negative imprint. A buddha doesn't have the negative imprint that projects the concept of true existence onto the merely-labeled object. A buddha has totally ceased the subtle negative imprint, therefore there is no projection, there is no truly-existent appearance. Everything that appears to a buddha has to appear in mere name, merely imputed by the mind.

The second after we see that the design has been merely labeled by the mind as an A, it should appear back as merely labeled by the mind, because that is the reality, but that is not how it appears to us. The A appears back to us as something *totally opposite* to the reality. The reality is that it is merely labeled by mind but when it appears back, it appears as a *completely false* A.

The purpose of our coming here is to discover what we haven't discovered in the past, what we haven't discovered in all our past lives from beginningless rebirths. Here, a *totally false* A appears due to our hallucinating mind, due to ignorance. Not all ignorance but this particular ignorance, the ignorance believing in things as truly existent, that phenomena are truly existent. Due to that ignorance.

You can take time to analyze but this is how it happens. When the A appears back, it is totally false; it is completely the opposite of reality. In Tibetan this is *nang ne me tim pa*. *Nang* is "appearance," *ne* is "reality" and *me tim pa* is the opposite, not harmonious, not the same, contradictory to each other. That is the definition of "false"—how the appearance is totally the opposite of the reality. How the A appears to us is totally false, completely the opposite of the reality, which is merely imputed by the mind. The A that appears to us is *slightly* more than what is merely imputed by mind. That is the false A, that is the *gag cha*, the object to be refuted, which is mentioned in the teachings on emptiness. That object to be refuted, *gag cha*, is the false object that we should realize is empty; it doesn't exist there at all.

The A appears to us as a real A existing from its own side, which means it is not merely imputed by the mind. This is the total opposite of what happened a second before; the appearance is totally the opposite of the reality. This totally false A comes from ignorance. The ignorance believing in true existence leaves an imprint on our mind. Then immediately after our mind merely imputes the "A" it projects the hallucination, true existence. This is decorated or projected onto the merely-imputed A. This is how the A appears as something real from there. Now you can see how it happens.

In the first second our mind merely imputes A but in the next second the A appears as something *totally* wrong, nothing to do with our mind, as if it never came from our mind, it exists from its own side. There's the appearance of A but this came from our own mind. That is very clear. This appearance of A that is not merely labeled by the mind is totally false. It does not exist at all. If we analyze we can see there is not even a single atom of existence there.

There are two things we need to understand. The basic thing I am trying to say is that the appearance comes from our mind. Whether it's merely imputed or not merely imputed, both come from our mind. After our mind merely imputes this, we believe that.

It's very important to realize this truth because we don't want to suffer in samsara; we want this suffering to cease, we want to be liberated from this forever. We want to cease the cause, karma and delusion, therefore we need to cease the ignorance that holds phenomena as truly existent whereas they are not; they are totally empty.

The way we cease that ignorance is by realizing the truth, which is emptiness or shunyata. This is a very important meditation in Buddhism. The realization of emptiness, especially the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, ceases the disturbing-thought obscurations, the defilements. Then we can be free forever from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes, even the subtle defilements which interfere with the achievement of enlightenment. The wisdom directly perceiving emptiness ceases all this with the support of bodhicitta, which collects inconceivable merits and helps us complete the merits. Then, we are able to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings.

Now you can see how important it is to attain the realization of emptiness, shunyata. To eliminate the root of all the suffering and karma and delusion, the ignorance holding true existence, we need to recognize that the object ignorance believes in is totally false. That is the object to be refuted, *gag cha*, the one we have to recognize. By recognizing this we are able to see that in reality it doesn't exist at all, that it is a total hallucination. We see that the object which ignorance believes is truly existent is totally non-existent. This ignorance is a wrong concept and what we have believed is true—what we have believed from beginningless rebirths and from the beginning of this rebirth—we can now see is totally false.

When we meditate on this and develop this wisdom, we are able to cease not only ignorance but the cause of ignorance. Even the negative imprints are completely ceased, and at that time we are free forever from the oceans of samsaric suffering.

THE I AND ALL PHENOMENA ARE EMPTY

We can consider the I in the same way that we looked at the A. The I is exactly the same, merely labeled by our mind. Our mind thinks of the aggregates and then merely labels "I" and believes in that. Then, in the next second, there are all the hallucinations. There is a real I falsely appearing—false in the sense that it appears to exist from its own side, by its own nature, not merely labeled by mind. Like the A, this real I is totally false, *completely* false. There is no such thing there.

The merely-labeled I which exists does not happen. What appears is totally false. Holding on to this false appearance as true becomes the root of samsara. It's the same with the aggregates. The mind thinks of the aggregates, the bases of the aggregates, then merely imputes "aggregates" and believes that. In the next second the aggregates appear back as real, as nothing to do with our mind, as never having come from our mind, as existing from their own side. They appear as real aggregates, not merely labeled by mind. Holding onto this, believing all this to be true, is the root of samsara, the root of all karma and delusions, of all the sufferings of samsara.

In the same way, everything appears as real: the body and mind, all the mental factors, all the different parts of the body. Everything appears real, not appearing as merely labeled by mind

but appearing as not merely labeled by mind. All this is a total hallucination, starting from the I down to the atoms of the body. The way it appears is a total hallucination. Similarly, all the different mental factors—there are fifty-one mental factors—are the same, all appearing as real. They are all merely labeled by the mind but appear back as real. All these are hallucinations, total hallucinations.

It's the same with this place: the form, the colors, the light, the pillars and the thangkas and so forth, and outside, the trees, the sky, the sun and the animals—the dogs and cats—and people. Whatever we see, the evolution of how they appear to us is exactly the same as I described for the A. They do not appear back to us as merely labeled by the mind but as something existing from their own side, as real—real trees, real sky, real houses, real food, real toilets. Everything appears to us as not merely labeled by the mind. Much grosser than that, it appears as if it has never come from the mind, it has nothing to do with the mind. That is very, very gross. That is a total hallucination.

The characteristic or definition of sound is what the ear sense hears or listens to. Then what happens is that our mind labels it as “bad sound” or “good sound” and so forth. If we're listening to music there is bad music or good music, however, first we have to hear the sound, then the label comes afterward.

After this, I'll stop. When the A appears to us, that real A, that hallucination, is the object to be refuted. What appears to us is a real A, meaning existing from its own side, not merely labeled by the mind. When the A appears to us it looks like it has been always like this, from beginningless time. It just started now, our mind has just merely imputed it and then it appeared, but it appears as if it has always been there, permanent, which is totally false. We have this permanent, true appearance just now, a second after our mind has merely imputed it, so *that's* the hallucination, that is completely untrue. If it were true, it should exist before our mind labeled it “A.” The A should be there before our mind labeled it “A.” It shouldn't depend on our mind labeling it, but it should be there from very beginning, maybe even before the person wrote it for us.

It's the same thing with sound. What we hear is the object our ear sense hears, then after that our mind merely imputes “sound.” *That* is the base and *this* is the label, the base and the label, two different phenomena. They are not the same, they are not one; they are two different phenomena. You can understand from that. Therefore, again, it has to come completely from our mind. Our mind merely imputed it, but it appears back as something real—a real sound existing from its own side with nothing to do with our mind. It's like it never came from our mind. That is a total hallucination. That's the *gag cha*, the object to be refuted, the false sound. The sound that exists is what is merely imputed by the mind.

And it's the same thing with taste, smell and tangible objects. We need to analyze these things in the same way. It's not only truly-existent appearance that comes from the mind, but all these also come from the mind: form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects and objects of the mind.

With this mindfulness practice, there are two things. One is how everything that appears to our senses comes from our mind. That includes ourselves, the I, the action, the object, the mental factors—everything comes from the mind. The other one is this. First there is the

appearance, then specifically there is the truly-existent appearance, the real appearance from its own side. This is totally false. The *absence of this* is emptiness. This is the truth we have to realize. This is how we get liberated from samsara, from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes.

I'll stop here. Thank you very much.

This is the mindfulness practice you can do in the break times or within a session. It is very, very good to do.

LECTURE 2



COLLECTIVE KARMA IS STILL A PRODUCT OF THE MIND

At the beginning of the course I guess all of you heard about the importance of motivation, how to make your actions become the cause of happiness. This is not only when you meditate, not only when you study Dharma, but even when you are doing everyday actions like eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing your job and so forth. How to stop any activity of body, speech and mind become the cause of suffering and instead become the cause of happiness. That is the big thing, to become the unmistakable cause of happiness.

The causes of happiness and suffering are totally different from what common people in the world think—the worldly people educated in schools and universities, except where Buddhism is taught, whether it's intellectually taught or taught with experience. What most people in the world think is that the causes of happiness and suffering are totally different. I want to say this before I say what the Buddha explained. Their concept of where suffering comes from—what kind of mind suffering comes from—is totally different from reality.

First of all, both suffering and happiness come from the mind. Our happiness and our suffering come from our mind. Something that is global comes from the people living on this earth, human beings and the animals and so forth. Something good affects them and something bad affects them, like global warming and so forth. It affects not only human beings but also animals, such as the polar bears that live on the ice. Their environment is getting smaller and smaller. So, I think there's a great effect on the animals as well, not just the people. This comes from the collective karma of the animals and the people. What the many animals and many human beings experience altogether comes from their collective karma, from their mind, from that mental factor that is the intention.

In the mind there are the principal consciousnesses and the mental factors. There are many different types of mental factor but this one, intention, is one of the five mental factors that always accompanies any principal consciousness. Karma is that mental factor, intention. So, of the body and mind, everything comes from the mind. The five omnipresent mental factors are: contact, discernment, feeling, attention and intention. Intention is one of these five.

With collective karma, if something good is happening globally, that is our collective karma; it comes from our minds, from our intention. If there is something negative happening, like global warming or whatever, that is also from our collective karma. When there is a war in a country and many millions of people suffer, that is the collective negative karma of that country. Happiness and suffering come from the mind. Each individual being's happiness and suffering come from that individual's mind.

HOW BUDDHISM IS UNIQUE

This is the explanation according to the Dharma, as explained by the Omniscient One, whose holy mind is totally free from all the mistakes of the mind, all the gross and subtle defilements. There is not even one negative imprint of subtle delusion, ignorance; the Buddha's holy mind is totally free. Because of that, there are no obstacles at all to directly seeing all the past phenomena, directly seeing all the present phenomena and directly seeing all the future phenomena.

Generally speaking, for example, here in Kathmandu there's somebody who has more understanding than the rest of the people here and similarly in Nepal there is somebody who has more understanding than anybody else in Nepal. In the United States it's the same, there is somebody who has more understanding than anybody else in the United States. In the same way, there is somebody who has more understanding than anybody else in the whole world, than the common people in the world. There is somebody who has the greatest understanding. There is somebody who has greater loving kindness than common people,

who has greater compassion for living beings than the majority of the people in the United States.

This is simply showing the evolution without going through the entire path of developing the realizations. There is somebody who has developed compassion for the numberless human beings, the numberless gods and demigods, the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, the numberless sentient beings who have defilements, who are suffering, who are under the control of karma and delusion. Because their life is completely under the control of karma and delusion they themselves don't have a single freedom at all. There is not even one second free from that. Not only each day, each hour, each minute, but even each second they are totally under the control of karma and delusion, totally under the control of past karma. That's pervasive compounding suffering.

There is somebody who has generated compassion for all the sentient beings who are under the control of karma and delusion and who are experiencing suffering. They have compassion even for those sentient beings who are free from the cause of suffering and karma and delusion but still have subtle defilements; they have compassion for the arhats and arya bodhisattvas who are free from disturbing-thought obscurations and who have achieved the eighth, ninth or tenth bhumi. They also have compassion even for those on the three pure grounds, who still have subtle defilements. Usually there are people like that, who have compassion in varying degrees, starting with somebody who has compassion for everybody in a small village, then everybody in a city, then in a country and then in this whole world.

Then, there is somebody who has completed the understanding, whose mind is completely free, having less and less ignorance until even the subtle defilements are eliminated. There is nothing left to develop, the training in understanding is completed and the training in compassion for all sentient beings is completed. They have also completed the development of perfect power to benefit all sentient beings without the slightest mistake, exactly as it fits their karma, their level of mind or intelligence.

This is the Omniscient One, who directly sees all past phenomena and at the same time directly sees all present phenomena as well as directly seeing all future phenomena. The Omniscient One explained that all suffering and happiness come from the mind, that the suffering and happiness of each individual suffering sentient being come from their own mind. If we analyze our own life, we can see that this is so exactly. It is not just belief, not just faith. We can understand it by analyzing our own life, our way of thinking—we can see which way of thinking brings suffering and which way of thinking brings happiness to ourselves and to others. We can identify this. It is not just that somebody said something and we believe it, we have faith in it, but we can't ask any questions. It is not like it is something which is illogical or that God has said but we can't question it because if we did there wouldn't be a correct answer. It's not like that here.

Of course, as His Holiness says, not everybody can understand Buddhism. Not everybody has the karma to understand Buddhism and to have faith through analysis. We study the teachings and through analysis we are able to recognize, to understand our life, our mind, past, present and future. By understanding what's happening now we can understand the past and we can judge what will happen in the future, what it's going to be like. By studying

and analyzing more and more we will see the proof, the reality. This is what His Holiness means when he says that not everybody has the karma to learn Buddhism. First, they need the opportunity to hear Buddhism and not everybody has that opportunity, and then after that they need to understand and to develop faith from that understanding, from that wisdom. Not everybody has that karma.

But this does not mean that because that person or that animal or insect doesn't have the karma now that they will never have the karma in the future. It's not talking about that, because all sentient beings can achieve enlightenment. Every sentient being can achieve enlightenment because every sentient being has the nature of the buddha, the potential to become a buddha.

As Holiness says, there are people who don't have the karma, the merit, the fortune to hear and understand Buddhism but there are people or sentient beings who can generate faith in God. They believe there is an external creator, one that created the world and all life. There are people who can generate faith in that, who can believe in that and such a doctrine is helpful for them. For example, in Christianity there are the ten commandments. I don't know whether it is exactly the same or not, but the general idea is to not harm others, to not kill, tell lies and so forth. If a person follows that, by believing that this is what God said, of course it reduces harming others and also themselves. Not giving harm to others is not giving harm to ourselves, and giving harm to others is the cause of receiving harm ourselves in the future. Therefore, reducing harm to others means reducing receiving harm so it helps us. Anyway, believing in God and his commandments means reducing harm to others which is a protection; it protects us that much from receiving harm from others.

By practicing morality, abstaining from those negative karmas of harming others, we get a higher rebirth. We don't get reborn in the lower realms, the realms of the hell beings, the hungry ghosts or the animals. This is not something specific to Buddhism; it is not a specific quality of Buddhist practice. It is also there in Christianity and some other religions. By practicing morality, abstaining from harming others, we get a higher, better rebirth in our next life.

I think you have gone through the three types of suffering, right? We need more than this; we need to be free from the whole of samsara forever, from the suffering of pain and the suffering of change, the temporary samsaric pleasures which by analyzing we find are only suffering. They appear as pleasure in the view of the hallucinated mind and they are regarded as pleasure but with wisdom we can see they are only suffering. Because of attachment and maybe ignorance as well, we label "pleasure" onto the suffering feeling because the suffering has temporarily become less. It is not that it has completely gone, that it no longer exists—the suffering is still there but it is less. When it was too much it was the suffering of pain, but when it is less it is called "pleasure." We need to be free forever not only from those but also from the very foundation of those two sufferings, pervasive compounding suffering.

My talk is going all over like this, like water spilling on the ground, going all over the place. Maybe if it is of benefit to somebody, it's OK.

THE DIFFERING VIEWS OF EMPTINESS OF THE FOUR SCHOOLS

Last night, at the end, we talked about how everything comes from our mind—what we see, what we hear, what we taste, what we smell, the objects of mind, body, the tangible objects—how they appear, how we believe them to exist, all comes from our mind. I used the example of the letter A. I hope you have been meditating on that. This is extremely important, *extremely, extremely* important. This understanding of reality is a special thing about Buddhist philosophy.

In the rest of the world, things are believed to come from the outside, to exist from their own side, to be inherently existing and therefore completely self-sufficient. There are many wrong views, such as permanence and existing alone and existing with its own freedom and so forth. In Hindu philosophy there's a belief in the "protected." The very foundation of Buddhism, however, is that everything comes from the mind. That is very important.

Any problem we have, any happiness we experience, by analyzing we can see it has come from our mind. The I that exists is what is merely imputed by the mind; it exists in mere name. Anything that exists in mere name comes from the mind; it is merely imputed by the mind. It is labeled by the mind, imputed by the mind, so it comes from the mind. Therefore, there is no question about the false I. That is definitely a mental publication. Ignorance has printed this false I, ignorance has published this false I.

As I mentioned last night, after somebody teaches us the A we believe in it and then the way the A appears to us is not according to reality. It appears *totally the opposite* of reality, which is merely imputed by mind and is totally empty from its own side. That's what exists but it appears to us as totally the opposite, as existing from its own side. If you examine it in a subtle way, this is the very subtle object to be refuted.

There are four schools of Buddhist philosophers: Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra or Mind Only, and Madhyamaka, which has two divisions, Svatantrika and Prasangika. According to the Prasangika school, the extremely subtle object to be refuted is the A that appears to us. When the A appears to us we hold on to the way it appears, how we apprehend that, and we believe that the A is not merely labeled by the mind. This very subtle object that is not merely labeled by the mind but is slightly more than that, this is the false A, the object to be refuted, according to the Prasangika school.

I should make it short. The base of the A appears to the non-defective mind. Then, our mind labels it "A" and sees it as completely existing from its own side. That is the false A, the object to be refuted according the Svatantrika Madhyamika school. That is grosser than the object to be refuted posited by the Prasangika school, the subtle object to be refuted. We can also say the subtle hallucination.

Even grosser is the Cittamatra school's object to be refuted or false A. The Cittamatra school posits that phenomena exist. They believe in the seven or even eight consciousnesses, including the "mind basis of all." This is a principal or main consciousness that is the base of all, which means the base of both the whole of samsara and liberation. Liberation is not only liberation from samsara but it can also refer to great liberation, liberation from the subtle defilements. With the seventh consciousness, the mind basis of all, anything that exists is left on this consciousness, planted as an imprint. The mind that has the function of knowing

objects, that perceives objects and the object of perception left on this seventh consciousness manifest at the same moment—one is the mind perceiving the object and the other is the object.

The example often given is the mind that perceives the color blue. One manifests as the object, the blue color itself, and one is the mind that knows this. Both manifest at the same time. Therefore, according to the Mind Only School, Cittamatra, when the A appears to us, we have this very gross hallucination, this object to be refuted, this false A. It is much grosser than the one before, the A that exists without the imprint of the substance, what is left on the seventh consciousness. It exists without depending on that. This hallucination is very gross. There can also be self-sufficiency without depending on the parts, without depending on the base, the continuity of that and then existing as self-sufficient, depending on the continuity of the base.

When this extremely gross one appears, it appears as permanent while it is totally impermanent, under the control of karma, under the control of cause and conditions. It doesn't last. Anyway, to put it very simply, it decays, even within a day, even within an hour, even within a minute, even within a second, then there are split seconds, it doesn't last even within a second. It degenerates, even within a second or a split second. What exists in this minute doesn't exist in the next minute. What exists in this second doesn't exist in the next second. What exists in this split second doesn't exist in the next split second. Although it is impermanent like that it appears as permanent. We see it as permanent, without depending on cause and conditions, with its own freedom.

Of course, there is karma, there's a cause. The A exists because of karma. That's the very first answer. There are many conditions such as somebody writing it on a blackboard or with a pen or whatever. While it depends on cause and conditions, it appears to exist without depending on cause and conditions, existing with its own freedom and without depending on parts; it appears to exist alone. It has to depend on parts—the first line, the second line and the third line—but when the A appears to us it looks like it doesn't depend on any parts, like it's something truly existent, existing from its own side. This most unbelievably gross hallucination of a false A is there.

In the same way, we should analyze the I, the self. The way the I appears to us, there are so many hallucinations. There's a false I that is the object to be refuted, the very subtle one, according to the Prasangika Madhyamaka school's view and according to the Svatantrika school. Then there are the views of the Cittamatra school, the Sautrantika school and the Vaibhashika school, all the points of view that posit how the false I appears. There are so many piles of hallucinations we have when the I appears to us and when we hold onto that; there are so many wrong beliefs about the I. It's not just one! There are extremely gross wrong views and less gross, and then the Prasangika school's view, the extremely subtle wrong view of the object to be refuted, the false I.

This meditation on the correct view is an extremely important meditation. Each school has its own point of view of the correct view and they all help our understanding. They are all stages we climb one by one. The first stage helps us to climb to the second stage, the second stage helps us to climb to the third stage and the third stage helps us to the fourth one. It's all to help us understand the last one, the Prasangika Madhyamika school's view, the

extremely subtle hallucination, the object to be refuted. Only then can we see the real truth, the unmistakable truth, emptiness according to the Prasangika school's right view.

WITHOUT EMPTINESS THERE IS NO WAY TO CUT THE ROOT OF SAMSAHA

Without realizing that final correct view there is no way to cut ignorance, the root of samsara, the root of all the sufferings we have ever experienced from beginningless rebirths—the oceans of suffering of the hell realms, the oceans of suffering of the hungry ghosts, the oceans of suffering of the animals, the oceans of suffering of the human beings, the oceans of suffering of gods and demigods. This is the very root of all these suffering that we have been experiencing from beginningless rebirths, all the suffering that we are experiencing now and all the suffering that we will experience in the future. The main reason we have to suffer is because of karma and delusion, karma motivated by delusion. The root of all the delusions—all the delusions to do with anger, all the delusions to do with attachment and all the delusions to do with ignorance—the root of all three poisonous minds is ignorance of the ultimate nature of the I.

Why do we have to suffer? Why do we have to die? We could suddenly be in a car accident, our whole life could totally change and we could go from being well to having our body in pieces. Our life could change in many ways; we could suddenly become paralyzed or incapable of looking after ourselves. Normally we don't have to worry about how we make a living, our food, the place we live, our job and so forth. Even if we don't work we still have a place to live and food to eat so we don't have to worry. Then suddenly something happens one day, an earthquake or some heavy sickness or something, and we have nothing. Everything's gone; we become a beggar. Our entire life is totally changed. I've heard this many times from people, how their limbs which were beautiful suddenly become changed, with the hands twisted this way, the legs crooked, the body changed. I'm just giving you an idea.

There was nobody who came overnight to make their hands, legs and body like this. It's not like that. Something happens and many people say, "What have I done? I haven't done anything bad in my life. Why do I have to suffer like this?" The person feels this has happened without any cause. I have met many people like this, even students.

The very root reason is this ignorance. It's because we haven't eliminated it by realizing emptiness, by developing wisdom. We haven't removed the negative imprint of this ignorance. From this root, there are the poisonous minds—attachment, anger and ignorance—and the negative karmas collected in the past. That is the particular cause of these sicknesses but the cause of everything, the root, is ignorance.

We don't see this because we haven't thought well about karma, how everything comes from our own mind. That is the very basic philosophy, the very basic evolution of suffering and happiness, but we don't think that it comes from our mind and, of course, we don't see that it involves the root, the ignorance, where all that evolution comes from.

When a problem comes it's so heavy and so unbearable and we naturally think that we don't deserve it. Of course, there is no question about other people who don't know the Dharma, who don't know the lamrim teachings about karma and reincarnation. Even those of us who

have heard many sutra and tantra teachings—the condensed and extensive Buddhadharma and on top of that the most secret and higher tantra teaching—even though we have received them so many times, when a problem comes, we completely forget that it comes from our mind, that it comes from karma, from the root, this ignorance.

There's also self-cherishing, the self-cherishing thought. This is what these problems come from, but we never relate them to that. We never think they come from ignorance, the concept of true existence. Because of that we think we haven't done anything wrong. It's because we haven't thought deeply about karma, about how many of each day's activities—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing our job, without counting meditation, doing prayers and so forth—become virtue and how many become nonvirtue. For somebody who has realizations of impermanence death, of renunciation of this life, of renunciation of future lives, and of course, who has realization of bodhicitta, that is quite different.

For somebody who does not have a realization of emptiness but has a stable realization of impermanence and death, then whatever activity they do in that twenty-four hours becomes Dharma. Whatever they do—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing their job—becomes Dharma, becomes the cause of happiness of future lives. Everything is done with renunciation, the very healthy mind that is free from attachment to this life. That is the first level of healthy mind. The second level of healthy mind brings even greater peace and happiness. That is the mind free from attachment to future lives' samsara, to samsaric happiness, samsaric perfections. The mind does not have attachment, clinging, grasping to all that.

Of course, for even greater peace and happiness, on the basis of loving kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings, we generate the realization of bodhicitta. We attain incredible, unimaginable peace and happiness when we develop the mind that works for sentient beings, taking full responsibility on ourselves to liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment: the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings, the numberless gods and demigods and intermediate stage beings—the numberless sentient beings from each realm.

An arhat achieves liberation, the blissful state of peace for oneself, the total cessation of suffering because it is the total cessation of karma and delusion, including the negative imprints of delusion, the seeds of delusion. An arhat is free from suffering forever. The happiness, the bliss that such a meditator attains is unimaginable. Like when people who are playing soccer score a goal, they throw their arms about and express the most incredible emotion at having scored. However, I never see them smiling. Their faces are very intense and yet they never smile! The emotion is so strong just scoring a goal in football so imagine somebody who has just achieved liberation. This is not just for one lifetime but for eons. The happiness is unimaginable. They are totally free forever from the cycle of death and rebirth, totally free from the oceans of suffering of the hell beings, the hungry ghosts, the animals and the human beings. Compare this to the footballer who is very happy, even though they just get a few dollars and maybe a reputation.

For a bodhisattva, no matter how difficult it is to help other sentient beings, no matter how complicated it is, their mind has unbelievably great joy, much greater joy, much greater

happiness than the person who achieves liberation. The bodhisattva has totally renounced the I, the thought of cherishing the I, the thought of seeking happiness for themselves. They only have the pure, holy thought of cherishing the numberless other sentient beings and seeking happiness only for them. Can you imagine such an incredible great holy being? Their mind is totally pure, unstained by the self-cherishing thought. It doesn't arise for even one second. No matter how difficult it is to work for sentient beings, no matter how complicated it is, no matter how many problems, there is such joy and happiness—far more than that of an arhat, who is achieving liberation from samsara.

Even to protect one sentient being from engaging in heavy negative karma and experiencing a lot of suffering in the lower realms for an unimaginable length of time, the bodhisattva takes on that suffering of rebirth in the lower realms themselves. In its place, they give that person all their happiness and freedom. They want to be born in the hell realm themselves for the sake of that person. To suffer like that brings greater joy and happiness than achieving liberation for themselves—the total cessation of the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, and the attainment of the blissful state of peace forever.

The bodhisattvas who desire very strongly to be born in hell even for sake of one sentient being's happiness are unbelievably happy. They realize how every sentient being is the most precious, the kindest and dearest being in their life; they have received all their present happiness from that sentient being and will receive all their future life happiness including ultimate happiness, liberation and enlightenment from them. This is all received from the kindness of that sentient being. The bodhisattva sees this, so there is unbelievable joy and happiness when they are able to offer any benefit, any help, to that sentient being.

I'm sorry. My talk went all over the place. I'll come back to the point quickly.

UNDERSTANDING EMPTINESS BRINGS PEACE

Only Buddhism has the method to be liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. Why? Because of emptiness. Not only are the five paths to achieve liberation explained only in Buddhism, but also emptiness. The very root is the wisdom realizing emptiness that cuts the root of all the suffering, this ignorance. Emptiness is a very special quality of Buddhism, and is not explained in other religions.

As I mentioned before, other religions like Christianity explain how we can achieve a good rebirth by living in morality, abstaining from certain harms to other sentient beings. There are many different religions like Hinduism that explain this. But only Buddhism explains the five paths to achieve liberation, with all the details about each path, and then the very root, emptiness. And of course, bodhicitta—the altruistic mind wishing to achieve full enlightenment to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment—is not in the other religions, it's only in Buddhism.

I am talking about the foundation here, not about Buddhist tantra and those other things, the tantra taught by the Buddha, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana. I'm just talking about the foundation.

My plan was to meditate on the special verse on emptiness from the seventh Dalai Lama, but I think maybe since I started talking this way I may as well finish it quickly.

This gives you an idea how everything comes from our own mind, including this perfect human rebirth, as well as what I mentioned before, the way things appear and how we hold onto and believe in that appearance. What exists comes from our mind and what doesn't exist—all the false objects—also comes from our mind.

First the mind thinks of the aggregates, the base to be labeled "I." The mind makes up the label "I" and that is the merely-imputed I. That happens in the first second. Then, in the next second, what appears back to us, rather than an I that is merely imputed by the mind, that exists in mere name, is an I that is totally contradictory to reality. It is totally the opposite of reality. That is what the Prasangika school says is the object to be refuted, the *gag cha*, the very subtle I that does not appear as merely imputed by the mind but is something slightly more than that.

Why has that happened? Why is there this hallucination? Why does I appear back as a hallucination, not according to the reality, not merely imputed by mind? A good example is the I that appears when we get angry, when somebody scolds us or puts us down or spansks us. If at that time we were to think, "Oh, they are angry at this merely-labeled I. They're insulting this merely-labeled I. They're spanking this merely-labeled I," we would never get angry. *For sure* we would never get angry, I can guarantee that. That is reality and if we were to think like that we would never get angry. So, we are making a *big* mistake in life, an unbelievably *huge* mistake in life by not thinking like this. We need to practice mindfulness—how the I is merely imputed by the mind, how our actions are merely imputed by the mind, how the objects are merely imputed by the mind. Practicing mindfulness like this becomes a meditation on emptiness. It also becomes a meditation on patience.

Then, what others do around us that would normally make us angry or irritated no longer disturbs our mind. Our mind remains at peace. We see no reason to become angry so there's incredible peace and happiness in our life. Our life becomes like watching very interesting scenery go by, or like watching a wonderful movie, twenty-four hours a day every day. There's deep inner peace with this mindfulness. Whatever we are doing—not only meditating or studying Dharma but even eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing our job—no matter how busy our life is, we can do all these other activities but part of our mind remains in meditation, in mindfulness.

Without it, delusions can so easily arise—anger, uncontrolled desire and so forth—driving us crazy and driving other people crazy. And when we don't get what we want, what the selfish mind wants, we drink, we take refuge in alcohol. Instead of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we take refuge in alcohol or drugs. We take refuge in buddha grass! I don't know whether everybody knows about buddha grass, but anyway, we take refuge in these things, and then that makes matters even worse.

With this meditation there are no ups and downs; we have great peace in our heart, great stability in our life. We can watch the wonderful scenery, the great movie of our life. No matter how busy we are in our life, part of our mind is always in this mindfulness meditation, this one type of meditation, how everything is imputed by the mind. This becomes an

unbelievable protection from those delusions like jealousy that rain down like a hailstorm, constantly torturing us, constantly making us suffer. We are free from these wrong concepts and so we cease to harm ourselves and others. Eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing our job—whatever we are doing becomes Dharma, everything becomes Dharma, everything becomes the most powerful Dharma. Everything becomes the antidote to samsara, to these aggregates continuously circling from life to life and having to experience all the sufferings of the hells, the human beings and so forth. This is the antidote to *all* the delusions and especially the root, ignorance.

Maybe I'll stop here. I started something, I started one bag, one package, so I think I'll stop there. Anyway, by developing and directly realizing this we're able to cease all these delusions, this ignorance, the seed of ignorance, and that's how we achieve total liberation. This type of practice of mindfulness is one type of meditation. What I'm saying is how important it is, how powerful it is.

Maybe I'll stop here.

DEDICATIONS

[Rinpoche and students chant mandala offering]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized within my own heart and in the hearts of my own family members.

You must pray for your parents. You probably haven't yet reached the meditation on the kindness of the parents. They are not only your parents of this life but also from beginningless rebirths. Like that, every sentient being has been your own parents, so there's unbelievable kindness to meditate on. You are repaying their kindness by what you have been doing this time, coming here to do the meditation course—not just any kind of meditation but lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment—and learning how to go about attaining enlightenment, how to be free from the oceans of suffering of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion, and how to help others.

You have been learning to become free from samsara yourself by realizing emptiness, and then to generate compassion for the numberless sentient beings who are suffering like you, and then to free them from suffering and its cause, and to do all that by yourself alone. To bring them to enlightenment you need to be enlightened. You need to have the state of omniscience, the complete mind of compassion for all sentient beings and perfect power to be able to do perfect work for sentient beings without any mistakes.

Because you need to achieve enlightenment you need to generate the bodhicitta motivation from the very beginning and then to meditate on bodhicitta itself, so the mind can train in it. These are the basic things here. Along with the preliminary practices, there are many practices to purify the mind of all the negative karma, the defilements that are obstacles to realizations, and to collect extensive merit, such as dedication and rejoicing in order to stabilize the practice and increase the merits and things like that. This is the best way to repay the kindness of your parents and, not only that, to repay the kindness of all the

sentient beings. There is the extensive kindness of all sentient beings having been our mother and there are the four limitless kindnesses. This is the best way to repay them.

Why is it the best way to repay them? Because if you learn Dharma then you know how to help others, you can educate other sentient beings, you can give them Dharma wisdom, so they will engage in the correct cause of happiness and abandon the cause of suffering. In this way you can cause them to achieve happiness, even temporal happiness. Then, of course, there's ultimate happiness, liberation and enlightenment. The more you learn Dharma, the more you can help sentient beings, the more you can educate them. Only then will they have the opportunity to practice the path to liberation and enlightenment. It's only possible then, otherwise it's not possible. That is why repaying the kindness of all sentient beings, including this life's parents, means studying and practicing Dharma and attaining realizations.

By achieving enlightenment you understand everything and there's not the slightest mistake when you help others. You are able to do perfect work for sentient beings. Coming to the Kopan meditation course here and doing not just any kind of meditation but lamrim meditation, meditation on the stages of the path to enlightenment, is extremely worthwhile.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized in my heart, in the hearts of my own family members and in the hearts of all the sentient beings. Sentient beings means not only people and animals, and not only this world. This is one universe where there are four major or great continents and eight small continents and then there are the lower realms of this universe and the realms of the gods and demigods on Mount Meru. There are numberless universes like this, so when we say "sentient beings" it means even the sentient beings who are in other universes, everybody in the six realms.

May bodhicitta to be generated in everyone's hearts, and in those whose hearts bodhicitta has already been generated, may it be increased.

[Rinpoche chants the dedication prayers]

The second one. Due to all the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized especially in the hearts of the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China and any other countries. People suffer so much under leaders who have bad motivations, who don't have a good heart, because of a lack of compassion and loving kindness, a lack of bodhicitta, because of the self-cherishing thought. People suffer so much; there are so many problems. Not only the leaders themselves suffer but also the other people suffer so much. Therefore, it is very important to pray for bodhicitta to be generated in the hearts of all the leaders, especially the leaders of mainland China, and all those other countries that have so much suffering daily.

[Rinpoche chants the dedication prayers]

Then thirdly, due to all the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of everybody who follows different religions. May bodhicitta be actualized in all their hearts. Only in this way can the world have perfect peace and happiness. May everybody live their

life only benefiting each other and not harming each other, and may what everybody does only become the cause of enlightenment, the cause of happiness for other sentient beings.

Please pray like this.

[Rinpoche chants the dedication prayers]

I think we might dedicate for His Holiness' long life and all those things at the end, probably after Vajrasattva. So, I'll just leave it there.

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

[Chanting of prayer *For Lama Tsongkhapa's Teachings to Spread in the Hearts of All Sentient Beings*]

Good night.

LECTURE 3



THE THREE LEVELS OF TEACHINGS ARE CONDENSED INTO THE LAMRIM
[Group recitation of practice in English]

Lama Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri, the embodiment of all the buddhas' wisdom, what should be done to achieve enlightenment quickly. Manjushri answered these three things: purify the defilements that obstruct the transformation of the mind on the path, transform the mind to become Dharma, to become the path, and complete the path without obstacles.

That advice contains the whole path to enlightenment that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha taught, all the inconceivable teachings, the 84,000 teachings for the various types of sentient beings. There are numberless sentient beings the Buddha has taught, and he has given teachings like the limitless sky, but that advice is the essence.

These 84,000 teachings of the Buddha come in three levels, because sentient beings have different levels of mind, levels of intelligence, levels of karma. The first is the lesser vehicle or Hinayana teachings, which is the path whose goal is to achieve for oneself the blissful state of peace, the total liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. The next is the great vehicle, or Mahayana, the Paramitayana teachings, the sutra path. By practicing the path revealed by that we can achieve full enlightenment, great liberation, completing the qualities of cessation and realizations for the benefit of sentient beings, in order to liberate numberless sentient beings from each of the six realms and bring them to enlightenment.

Benefiting sentient beings is more than healing their diseases or making them laugh. I guess each country might have them but in the United States on television there are many comedians who make people laugh. There are a few—one in New York and one in Los Angeles—who make up stories and make people laugh or maybe hire some people to laugh. Anyway, benefiting sentient beings is not just that, not just making people laugh or healing sicknesses.

Then within the Mahayana there are the Secret Mantra Vajrayana teachings, which reveal the path that we can take to achieve enlightenment in one lifetime. I've already mentioned this. We can complete the two merits—the merit of virtue which is the cause of the rupakaya, a buddha's holy body, and the merit of wisdom which is the cause of the dharmakaya, a buddha's holy mind. In the Paramitayana path, it takes three countless great eons to complete those two merits, but by practicing tantra, even the lower tantra, we are able to complete all those merits and achieve enlightenment within one lifetime.

As I mentioned before, by practicing the fourth level of tantra, Highest Yoga Tantra, we can achieve enlightenment more quickly because it has more skillful methods than the lower tantras so we can actualize the primordial clear light, the great bliss. It has more skillful methods to achieve enlightenment than the lower tantras, and the lower tantras have more skillful methods than the Mahayana Paramitayana path. By practicing Highest Yoga Tantra and attaining enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times, sentient beings don't have to suffer for a long time; we are able to liberate them from oceans of samsaric suffering more quickly. Compared to the Mahayana Paramitayana and the lower tantras, it's the quickest path and like that we are able to bring the sentient beings to enlightenment most quickly.

These three levels of the path are condensed into the lamrim teachings which are divided into three: the graduated path of the lower capable being, the general graduated path of the middle capable being and the general graduated path of the higher capable being.

I forgot the reason why I mentioned this.

Anyway, Lama Tsongkhapa requested Manjushri to advise him what was the quickest method to attain enlightenment and Manjushri advised him to purify the obstacles, the defilements, and to collect merits, which are the necessary condition for realizations.

Now I remember! In order to achieve realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment we have to understand the importance of doing all these various practices like Vajrasattva, retreats or daily recitations. Doing recitations of the Vajrasattva mantra and so forth are various methods for purifying the mind, while offering mandalas and so forth are various methods for collecting extensive merits.

There are many other practices for collecting extensive merits in order to transform the mind from not seeing any qualities in the guru and only seeing mistakes. Even though the guru is an enlightened being, from the disciple's side they only see mistakes. The guru has done all the work and purified all the defilements and negative karma. There is nothing, no subtle obscurations left, and all the qualities have been perfected, but from the side of the disciple, they see only mistakes; they are unable to see any qualities.

THE BUDDHA SHOWED THE PATH THROUGH THE TWELVE DEEDS

My talk is getting longer, but anyway, for example, in reality Guru Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened inconceivable eons ago. Showing the aspect of getting enlightened in Bodhgaya was for our sakes. Bodhgaya is the very center of the world, the holiest place. It is where all the thousand buddhas of this eon have shown or will show the holy deeds such as achieving enlightenment. So far, there have been Krakucchandra, the first Buddha, then Kanakamuni and Kashyapa. They have already shown achieving enlightenment, as did Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the fourth one, the founder of Buddhadharma in this world. The fifth one will be Maitreya Buddha who will descend to this world and show the twelve deeds, including achieving enlightenment in Bodhgaya, the same place.

The reason Guru Shakyamuni Buddha showed the aspect of becoming enlightened in India over two and a half thousand years ago is to show us sentient beings why we need to practice Dharma and how to practice Dharma. There is suffering, but suffering is not permanent. Suffering is a dependent arising, it comes from a cause; it has a cause. Buddha showed us the cause and what we can do to eliminate it, because it is a dependent arising—it's not independent, it's not permanent. If it were independent we couldn't do anything, but it's not like that. We can remove the cause of suffering, the cause of the cycle of death and rebirth that we have been going through from beginningless rebirths, making us experience all the sufferings of samsara one after another, in all the different realms.

According to Christianity, if we are born in hell, that's it forever; there's nothing we can do. We are forever in hell. We have caused the suffering and there's nothing we can do. It's not like that. The cause of suffering is a dependent arising; it exists by depending on causes and conditions therefore it can be removed. We can achieve everlasting or ultimate happiness, the blissful state of peace, forever. What is the method, the true path, to achieve that?

This was shown by the Buddha with the twelve deeds. The path is contained in that. When the Buddha revealed the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, the four noble truths, at Sarnath, he had already shown some of the other twelve deeds: descending from Tushita

pure land, taking conception and being born, playing competitively like ordinary people do. He was born as a prince and resided at the king's palace, where he grew up competing in competitions and playing. Then he discovered suffering—the suffering of birth, the suffering of sicknesses, old age and death. After he had discovered the suffering of samsara for the first time he left the householder's life, showing renunciation. Then, he went to the forest to look for a guru, living an ascetic life in meditation for six years.

I don't know which Western month it is but in the Tibetan calendar, in the fourth month on the full moon night—the fifteenth—he became enlightened. He meditated that day and then into the early morning of the day he was going to be fully enlightened. The night before at dusk millions of maras, evil-doers, tried to attack the Buddha to prevent him from becoming enlightened. Unless they could do that, they would be under the control of the Buddha, so millions of maras tried to attack the Buddha. They filled the whole ground and the whole sky with all kinds of mischievous, angry forms, sending all kinds of weapons and creating thick fog and blackness, thunder and lightning. Whatever arrows or bullets they threw at the Buddha were unable to harm him at all. The Buddha didn't receive any harm. They not only tried to harm him with weapons but also to distract him by manifesting as naked old women and very beautiful young women, completely naked with organs showing, in order to disturb him from his meditation, but they were unsuccessful.

First of all, there was no cause to suffer, no karma and delusion, in the Buddha's holy mind; it didn't exist, not even subtle defilements. It had all been totally purified. For that reason, from the Buddha's side there was no cause to receive all this harm. So the bullets and whatever they threw all became flowers for the Buddha. Without even the slightest movement, the Buddha kept abiding in equipoise meditation. Then, by generating loving kindness for those millions of maras, they were completely conquered; their minds were completely tamed.

The next day at dawn he achieved full enlightenment. After that he turned the Dharma wheel three times. The first time was at Sarnath, then at Rajgir, the middle wheel, with the teachings on the *Heart Sutra*, on emptiness. He turned the Dharma wheel for the third time at Vaishali. This last turning of the wheel was for those who could not understand the middle way he taught in the third turning, even though that was the reality of the teachings. In this turning he revealed the Dharma according to what they could understand, and these became views held by schools such as the Mind Only school.

The Buddha showed these twelve deeds in order to show us sentient beings why we need to practice the Dharma, because of suffering and the cause of suffering and because we can achieve the cessation, and not only that, we can achieve enlightenment, the perfected quality of cessation and realizations, to benefit other sentient beings. In other words, he revealed the teachings to human beings, showing how we can use our human rebirth, how with it we can achieve the greatest meaning, not only the happiness of future lives, not only liberation from samsara, but full enlightenment. With this human body we can complete the path to enlightenment and liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. With the twelve deeds, the Buddha showed the great meaning of having a human body to sentient beings. However, at Bodhgaya two thousand five hundred years ago was not the first time he had achieved enlightenment; it was not the

first time he had discovered suffering. He had already become enlightened numberless eons ago.

WE NEED PURIFICATION PRACTICES

During the time the Buddha was in India there was a fully-ordained monk called Lekpai Karma. He was not just some distant disciple but actually the Buddha's attendant for twenty-two years. In all the years he was the Buddha's attendant he didn't see any qualities in the Buddha, even though the Buddha had been enlightened for countless eons. However, Lekpai Karma had devotion to his own Hindu guru.

One day the Buddha predicted that those who had done something good would achieve enlightenment but Lekpai Karma couldn't figure that out at all. He couldn't accept that. As the Buddha was going on his alms round, a young girl put a handful of grain into his begging bowl and the Buddha predicted that the result of that good action was that the girl would become a buddha called Sangye Chenme in the future.

Whenever we make offerings, do prostrations or circumambulations toward not only the Buddha but even to statues, even just seeing a statue of the Buddha, we collect inconceivable merit that will result in enlightenment. Just seeing a statue has the power to do this, causing us to complete all the qualities of the realizations of omniscience and to develop compassion and perfect power to benefit sentient beings. It plants the seed of enlightenment in our mind, in our heart, and it brings us to enlightenment. This is just seeing a statue, without even circumambulating or prostrating to it. Even without faith, without devotion, there are such amazing benefits for sentient beings.

Anyway, when the Buddha predicted that the girl who offered a handful of grain would become this buddha, Sangye Chenme, Lekpai Karma thought it was impossible and assumed the Buddha was just flattering the girl, just trying to make her happy. I guess he thought like this every time the Buddha explained karma.

Once the Buddha advised Lekpai Karma to tell his guru he should not eat sweets. I think the guru was sick. Maybe he had diabetes like me. I know I'm not supposed to eat sweets! But Lekpai Karma thought that the Buddha wished to harm his guru, so he told his guru he must eat sweets. He thought the Buddha was lying and was saying the opposite in order to harm the guru. He interpreted the Buddha's intentions like that. As a consequence, the guru ate sweets and died. Lekpai Karma was the Buddha's attendant for twenty-two years but he didn't believe the Buddha when he explained that his guru was born as a hungry ghost on the road. I've forgotten what he did after that.

Anyway, from the Buddha's side he was enlightened inconceivable eons ago but Lekpai Karma only looked at the mistakes. When the Buddha gave a prediction like this, Lekpai Karma's negative mind projected him as lying, telling lies. Unable to understand, he called the Buddha a liar.

I am using that as an example of how to our mind the guru appears to have mistakes, therefore we need these purification practices.

DIFFICULT OR EASY DEPENDS ON KARMA

Some people find it difficult to understand the Dharma but for some people everything's easy to understand, everything feels like coming home. I remember that particularly because we have been doing these Kopan courses for a long time—this is the forty-second—and I've seen it here.

At the beginning we did the one-month courses twice a year but then Lama Yeshe and I started traveling to the West, to Australia and everywhere, and we were unable to continue doing it twice a year. I'm not talking about the week or fifteen-day courses but the one-month ones.

Some people, even when they first hear the teachings, they feel at home, they feel like they have come home. They feel like there is nothing strange there, nothing coming from outside. That feeling of coming home is not the same for everybody. Some people feel that Buddhism has nothing to do with them. It's something exotic, with nothing to do with their life. Reincarnation and karma and all these things are something outside, not related to their mind. To them it seems difficult to understand; they can't imagine how it's possible. But that doesn't mean that everybody has the same problems.

All this is due to karma. The feeling that people have of coming home is because they have met the Dharma in the life before this or some time ago. They have heard those teachings and that's why they feel at home when they hear about bodhicitta, compassion or renunciation or whatever the subject. It is something they are familiar with from the past. Whatever Buddhist subject they haven't heard or studied much in the past they find more difficult to learn, to understand.

There is the story of Vasubandhu and the pigeon. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha had two heart disciples and what were called the Six Ornaments, six great, highly-attained scholars. Vasubandhu was one of them. They were not like scholars at university nowadays, not only intellectually expert. These great pandits were highly-attained beings who had actualized the path and had gained realizations of all the lamrim subjects. Not only renunciation, bodhicitta, right view, guru devotion, not only that, but even those five paths to achieve liberation and the five Mahayana paths to achieve enlightenment, with the ten bhumis. They studied and actualized the entire path like that.

Once, while Vasubandhu was reciting the *Abhidharmakosha*, there was a pigeon on the roof of the hermitage. Every day the pigeon heard Vasubandhu reciting this text and after the pigeon died, Vasubandhu checked with his clairvoyance where it had been born. Seeing that the pigeon was born as human being in a family nearby, he went down to the family and asked whether he could have that child as a disciple. The family offered him the child—they must have been a very obedient family. He became a monk called Lobpön Loden and because of the teachings he had heard in his past life when he was a pigeon he became an expert, learned in that subject. He wrote four commentaries on that text. But then, when he heard the Madhyamaka teachings, he had difficulties understanding that because he had not heard much of it in the past.

It's similar when you hear Buddhism. Some of you find it easy, some find it difficult. It depends on how many imprints were planted on your mental continuum in the past.

Understanding this story you can understand the point I am making. It depends a lot on how many imprints you have, whether you have heard Buddhism in past lives, and whether this has left positive imprints on your mental continuum. Whether an imprint was left and how strong that imprint is determines what happens in this life, how much you are able to learn and understand and have realizations.

Knowing that, you can see it doesn't mean that if you find something difficult to understand it is wrong. It's just that, even if you had heard it in a previous life, it hadn't left much of an imprint on your mental continuum. You can understand this through the story of Lobpön Loden, who heard the *Abhidharmakosha* in his previous life as a pigeon, then became a monk and an expert in the subject.

If you can put a lot of effort into studying, reflecting and meditating as much as possible, then even if you don't understand the subjects very well, you are leaving positive imprints by listening and studying. Of course, the goal of all this is to have realizations. That's the conclusion we are all working toward, to bring the path into the heart.

Therefore, what I am saying is that no matter how difficult it is to understand, no matter how hard the subject is, you must make yourself as familiar as possible with it, and study it as much as possible. The goal is to put it into practice and to actualize the path so that you can overcome the suffering of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion. Not only that, you can liberate other sentient beings from suffering. Not only that, you can achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. The main goal is to benefit other sentient beings.

You shouldn't give up because you don't understand something. If you don't understand it now, through study you'll be able to understand it in the future. If, from your heart, you give up because something is difficult it becomes very heavy negative karma, the karma of avoiding the holy Dharma. If you completely give up from the heart having respect for the object of devotion, that teaching, you receive the unbelievably heavy negative karma of abandoning the holy Dharma. This is heavier than having destroyed all the statues, stupas and scriptures in this world—not just in one country like Tibet but in the whole world. Completely destroying all the holy objects—the statues, stupa, scriptures and temples and everything in this world, every single holy object—the negative karma of abandoning the holy Dharma is far heavier than that. It is advised in the teachings that if at this stage you find something very difficult to understand, think that you will learn and understand it in the future. Leave it like that, instead of abandoning it.

If you put as much effort as possible into understanding the Dharma in this life, not being lazy, being wise and skillful, then when you hear the same teaching later, in this life or a future life, it becomes unbelievably easy to understand the words and the meaning. Then, you become very learned in the next life. So, there are huge differences. Even if you didn't understand the subject in this life, in the next life just by hearing or reading about it you can understand and become extremely learned in it. Then, of course, by putting it into practice, by meditating on it, you are able to have realizations. Like that, from life to life, by developing the mind on the path you are able to achieve enlightenment.

If you don't listen to the sutra and tantra teachings or study much in this life, then in the next life it will be very, very difficult to understand the Dharma and to practice it because no

preparation was done in this life. You shouldn't cheat yourself; you shouldn't deceive yourself. You should think like that.

The seven-limb prayer is a practice of seven parts that creates enlightenment. The seven limbs are like seven very important parts of a car or an airplane that carries people to whichever country they wish to go. The essence of the seven practices is collecting all the means to have realizations and purifying all the defilements, all the stains on the mind, that are obstacles to realizations.

Maitreya Buddha achieved enlightenment practicing the seven-limb practice every day, three times during the day and three times at night. So, these seven practices are extremely important.

As I have mentioned, the mind is like a mirror covered with dust and the more merit you collect or the more you purify with these seven practices the clearer the mirror becomes, the more clarity your mind has. Just as the mirror has the potential to reflect everything back perfectly once it is cleaned, by cleaning the mind you are able to memorize the words and understand the meaning, even though this has been too difficult in the past.

The more you purify the mind the easier it is to understand and realize reincarnation, karma, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and their qualities, emptiness and all these subjects. The subjects you found too difficult or unbelievable for a long time you can now see very clearly and you are able to understand them. This is exactly like the example of the mirror. Or the weather. When the sky is covered in cloud or fog you can't see anything, neither the sun nor the moon, but when those conditions go away you are able to see them very clearly. The mind becomes clearer and clearer and you are able to understand more and more.

PROBLEMS COME FROM FOLLOWING THE EIGHT WORLDLY DHARMAS

Therefore, you need to purify and collect extensive merits. From that, realizations will come, even though at the beginning you think it's impossible. For example, at the beginning you probably think, "Without attachment how can I live my life?" "How can I even *survive* without a selfish mind?" That's very common in the West.

Of course, even without being Buddhist, there are many people in the West who have a good heart in their daily life. I have met many really good people. They have no knowledge of Buddhism but they are very kind to others: their family, those around them, animals and so forth. When I say they have a good heart, I mean a kind of selflessness. There are different levels, but for these people, they always think of others before themselves. Others' happiness comes first. There are many people like that even without meeting Buddhism.

But overall what people believe is that without a selfish mind there is no way you can live. There is no life without a selfish mind. If you are living, you have to have a selfish mind, you have to have attachment. I don't know whether you agree or not, but I think this is the general attitude in the West. You have to have attachment, anger and all these things! How is it possible to have life without attachment, without desire? People don't see that attachment is delusion.

This is how people think at the beginning. How is life possible without attachment, without a selfish mind? Impossible! But then later, by studying and meditating on those incredible, unbelievable teachings of the Buddha—and not only the Buddha but also those great pandits, and the great Tibetan lamas like Lama Tsongkhapa, Milarepa and many others—we find that it is possible. Milarepa is known a little in the West from people who have read his life story or have heard about his amazing experiences and all the tantra realizations he had based on bodhicitta.

Only later, by listening to the teachings, by reading, analyzing and meditating, your mind changes and you understand life—how practicing the good heart, the selfless attitude, living life without attachment but with renunciation, brings about a really healthy, peaceful mind, free from worries and fears. You no longer have the ups and down caused by worldly concern, by attachment to the comforts and pleasures of this life. I'm not talking about enlightenment or liberation here, I'm not even talking about future lives' happiness. I'm just talking about grasping onto today's pleasure; grasping onto reputation, wanting to become famous in the world; wanting praise, wanting people to praise you; and grasping onto material objects such as gifts. These are the four desirable objects of the eight worldly dharmas.

When you don't get any of these four things there is dislike, unhappiness. This is the opposite of the four desirable things, and so you have all the worries and fears about these four undesirable things happening: not having comfort, not having reputation, not having people praising you and not having material possessions. When you have the four desirable things your life goes up and when you don't have them, when it's the opposite and you have the four undesirable things, your life goes down. Your mind becomes negative, worried, angry. These worldly concerns lead to unhappiness and depression. There is so much depression in the West because of this.

Now you can see what kind of mind creates depression. With all the attachment to this life, grasping onto these four desirable objects, when this doesn't happen, then depression comes. Depression doesn't come from outside; it comes from your own mind. What kind of mind does depression come from? It doesn't come from the mind of wisdom realizing emptiness nor does it come from bodhicitta, from loving kindness or compassion. It comes from the evil thought of the eight worldly dharmas, this attachment that grasps onto these four desirable objects. Not getting what attachment wants, what the self-cherishing thought wants, triggers depression. It happens in this way more than getting depressed in the evenings or mornings.

It is mentioned in the teachings by the Buddha that getting depressed at certain specific times is related to having committed sexual misconduct in the past. The person can't tell why there is depression at these particular times, but this is due to past negative karma of having done actions of sexual misconduct with this evil thought, the eight worldly dharmas.

This is an extremely important subject, even on a purely psychological level, without thinking in a Dharma way about it. If you analyze where depression comes from you will see it is this and, once you know that, you have a method to cure it. You are able to use the technique to heal this evil thought of the eight worldly dharmas, this wrong concept, this mistaken way of thinking.

The conclusion is this. With the evil thought of the eight worldly dharmas, you always suffer; you always have problems in the life. You suffer when these four undesirable objects happen, the opposite of the four desirable objects. When the four desirable objects don't happen, you get into problems. They are created by your own mind, this attachment clinging to this life. This worldly concern, that concept, gives you problems, such as depression, unhappiness, anger and so forth and because of that you create negative karma again and have to experience the same thing again in the future.

That's when you receive the four undesirable objects, but even when you receive the four desirable objects, the mind that grasps onto those objects is suffering. That clinging mind itself is suffering, is a problem. You still have problems in your life; your heart is still without peace.

When you analyze whether the mind clinging to these things is peaceful or not at that time, you will find that it is not peaceful. The clinging causes disturbances on your mind. There's no peace, no satisfaction. The only thing you get is dissatisfaction, so that's a huge problem.

What you want is a healthy, peaceful mind. That's what Dharma means—a totally healthy, peaceful mind, a mind filled with inner peace and satisfaction. It is a mind free from this evil thought of the eight worldly dharmas, this attachment, this worldly concern. When there is Dharma there is incredible stability in your heart, incredible stability in your life. You are peaceful and calm.

I want to mention this. With the eight worldly dharmas, if somebody praises you, saying nice things about you—"You are so wise." "You are so kind." "You are so beautiful." Or something like that—you cling to that praise so much. Grasping onto that, you put yourself in prison. You put yourself into the prison of attachment. Conversely, if somebody says you are ugly or selfish or even fails to thank you when you give them a glass of water or a napkin, you get very angry. It hurts you so much.

These two extremes don't happen when your mind is Dharma. You really have to understand what Dharma is. It's not praying, not doing all these actions. Of course, that can become Dharma but real Dharma, virtue, is in your heart. When your heart is Dharma, if a person praises you a lot, it's nothing; it doesn't disturb your mind. You're not under the control of that attachment. And if somebody doesn't thank you or abuses you, it's nothing. It doesn't bother you because you are free from this grasping mind, this attachment. Your mind is in a state of peace. With these two, praise and criticism, your mind is balanced, equalized.

This is what Nagarjuna explained. When you are practicing the real Dharma, when you experience what for worldly people would be either the four desirable or the four undesirable things, they cannot disturb your mind. Whatever happens cannot bother your mind; your mind is always in a state of peace.

This is the very first Dharma that Milarepa talks about in his life story. He explains that the unbelievable peace and happiness he always experienced came from this very first Dharma, this very fundamental Dharma. It brings a state of great peace to the mind; it creates a totally healthy mind. Then, everything else is built on this. All the realizations are built on this, the

whole lamrim, all the stages of the path to enlightenment are built on this, including renunciation, bodhicitta, right view and the two stages of the tantric path. That's how you achieve enlightenment.

Maybe I'll stop here.

DEDICATIONS

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by numberless sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all my own family members, in the hearts of all the sentient beings, in the hearts of all the students of this organization and in the hearts of all the benefactors of the organization, in the hearts of all those I have promised to pray for, those who have died and those who are living. May bodhicitta be actualized in all their hearts, in the hearts of all the sentient beings without delay of even a second. In the hearts where bodhicitta has been generated may it increase.

May bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China, and the other countries where there are so many problems and sufferings, and may those leaders achieve enlightenment.

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me and numberless sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of everybody who follows different religions. May bodhicitta be actualized in all their hearts. May everybody in this world have perfect peace and happiness.

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

I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas, the numberless past, present and future buddhas and bodhisattvas like Samantabhadra and Manjugosha dedicated the merits. I dedicate all my merits in the same way as they did.

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me and collected by others, may Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings be actualized in my heart and in the hearts of all the kind sentient beings, in the hearts of all the students in this organization, all the students who offer service to the organization and to the spiritual friend, and in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

Thank you very much.

LECTURE 4



THE POWER OF PRAYERS

[Rinpoche and students chant mandala offering and refuge prayer]

Maybe I'll go over how to meditate when you do this refuge and bodhicitta prayer. We do this prayer at the beginning of sadhanas, meditations and practices, therefore it's very important to know how to meditate on it. It's the most essential thing, so this is just to get some idea.

To be able to meditate, you feel something in the heart and you transform your mind into this refuge and bodhicitta and then you recite the prayer. Then the prayer doesn't just become words recited from your lips, it is harmonized with your heart. What you recite and what you feel, what the mind feels, is harmonized. Then, it becomes very meaningful. This is not a prayer just to recite, it's a meditation. In Buddhism, any prayer you do is a meditation. When people don't understand it is meditation they think it's a ritual, probably due to some previous background in Christianity or whatever. With their previous religion they saw prayers as just ritual and maybe even felt aversion for them and then, with these Buddhist prayers, their prejudice has continued.

Whenever you do a sadhana or recite any prayer, the most important aspect is the meditation, your mind meditating in the meaning. That's the most important thing, the main thing. The idea is that as you recite, you meditate on the meaning. Therefore, this is not just some ritual as some people think, not something empty, something without meaning, just some just blah, blah, blah. It's not like that. Every word in Buddhism is for meditation; every word is to subdue the mind, to rid it of attachment, anger and ignorance and all those delusions to do with attachment, all the delusions to do with anger, all the delusions to do with ignorance, to pacify all that and the selfish mind.

Then in tantra, you stop the ordinary appearances and the ordinary concepts. You have pure appearance, pure thought. You visualize that the four purified results you are going to achieve in the future when you become a buddha are happening now. You visualize transforming your completely purified body into the deity's holy body and the completely purified place into the deity's mandala, the manifestation of the deity's wisdom, and the completely purified actions into the deity's holy actions. When you become enlightened, with the deity's holy body, every beam emitting from every pore of your holy vajra body, in one second, liberates inconceivable numbers of sentient beings from suffering and brings them to enlightenment. The pure actions you do when you become enlightened for the sentient beings is utterly unimaginable. What a buddha's holy body, holy speech and holy mind can do to benefit numberless sentient beings even in one second is utterly unimaginable.

For example, when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was in India, there was a woman called Magadha Sangmo living near Saravasti, where the Buddha had a monastery and lived for three years. The actual place is still there and you can see the Buddha's room and all those different things. There was a family in Magadha where the husband was Hindu and the wife, Magadha Sangmo, was Buddhist. She wanted to offer lunch to the Buddha but the husband didn't believe the Buddha would come. He couldn't see how it was possible. But she just said, "The Buddha will come."

She cleaned the house and made a very expensive meal and then she stood outside holding incense in her hand and recited the prayer that is part of the preliminary practice when we do the eight Mahayana precepts in the morning. She chanted [the invocation] *Ma lü sem chän kün gyi* ..., "You who are the guide of all sentient beings, the divine being who destroyed the hosts of maras."

As I mentioned, just before he became enlightened, at dusk time, the Buddha destroyed the millions of maras who were attacking him to stop him achieving enlightenment. This also includes the four maras: the mara of the Lord of Death, the mara of delusions, the mara of

the contaminated aggregates—how the aggregates are always in the nature of suffering, with the continuity from one life to the next—and the mara of the deva’s son. The mara’s son refers to the maras manifesting in various forms, shooting the five arrows of delusions at people trying to practice Dharma—the arrows of pride, miserliness, attachment, anger and ignorance. So, when somebody tries to practice charity as the antidote to miserliness, the mara shoots the arrow of attachment, and then attachment and miserliness arise, interfering with that person’s practice of charity. Or if somebody is trying to live a pure, moral life such as renouncing desire and being celibate, the mara shoots the arrow of attachment, then desire arises, not allowing that person to live in pure vows. These are just examples.

They shoot the five arrows of delusions that then disturb your heart, not allowing you to practice Dharma. You want to practice Dharma but there are obstacles. This understanding is very useful. In your daily life, when you’re trying to practice Dharma, trying to live a pure life, suddenly these delusions arise. It’s good to remember that there’s somebody influencing your mind, your life. It’s not just you but somebody else influencing your mind. Remembering this helps you overcome the delusion so you no longer follow it, you renounce it. If you don’t think that, but instead think this delusion is *yona*, this is what you really want, then you are totally overwhelmed by the delusion and you are unable to practice Dharma, unable to achieve realizations, unable to make your life meaningful. Your life is wasted and you engage in many negative karmas that are liable to become harmful to you and to other sentient beings.

So, when you are trying to practice Dharma and delusions arise, it is useful to remember that those evil beings are influencing you. In that way, you don’t allow yourself to become influenced by them. Because you are being controlled by somebody else, you want to be free from that. Especially in the West, people never want to be controlled by somebody else! It is very worthwhile to escape from that, to give yourself freedom from such influences.

The four maras I’m referring to here are the gross ones. There are also subtle ones related to the subtle negative imprints. I have read about these, but I don’t remember more about those four subtle ones.

Anyway, Magadha Sangmo chanted the invocation, “You who directly, perfectly, understand all phenomena.” That means all past, present and future phenomena. “You who are the destroyer of the enemy, the delusions.” That means the Buddha had already destroyed his own maras, his own enemies, the delusions, and then he is the destroyer of the delusions of us sentient beings. I’ve translated it as “destroyer” rather than “destroyed” and not only his own enemy, delusion, but he is also the destroyer of our delusions, our enemy, where all our suffering comes from.

There are six qualities related to worldly beings and devas, and six particular qualities related to the Buddha, such as having transcendental wisdom, having dharmakaya. There are two aspects of the dharmakaya: the transcendental wisdom body and the ultimate nature body. Then there is the rupakaya, the form body that also has two aspects: the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. Only the arya bodhisattvas can directly see the sambhogakaya, the body adorned with the holy signs and exemplifications. Ordinary bodhisattvas can see the nirmanakaya. Of the five Mahayana paths to achieve enlightenment, the first, the path of merit, is divided into three: the small, middle and great path of merit, then the contemplation

of the continual Dharma. Once the bodhisattva has achieved the third, the great path of merit, he can see numberless buddhas in the nirmanakaya aspect, what manifests for ordinary beings.

Magadha Sangmo chanted “*chom dün*” referring to these six qualities of the Buddha and calling the Buddha and all his *surrounding* entourage, and then she chanted, “Please descend to this place.”

Her husband didn’t believe that the Buddha would come. It’s not like nowadays. It’s not like she sent an invitation many days before. She just arranged the place and prepared an extensive meal and waited outside with the incense, chanting this prayer. But, despite her husband’s disbelief, the Buddha’s disciples came, not on the ground but flying between the mountains, riding on snow lions or elephants. They were unbelievably glorious and magnificent, so the husband thought, “Oh, is this the Buddha?” Each time somebody came, he asked, “Is this the Buddha?” but his wife replied, “No.” Then the next one, “Is it the Buddha?” and she said, “No,” and so on.

After all the disciples had come the Buddha came at the very last. From where the Buddha was to Magadha was very far; it would take weeks to walk the distance, but the Buddha came in the time it took to stretch your arm out. As he came, during that short time, all the sentient beings in the forests and on the roads were liberated from suffering by the Buddha. It was most amazing. Many insects and of course ants in the forest or on the ground were all liberated. When you become a buddha, it’s like this.

No matter how far a phenomenon is the Buddha can see it. He sees all phenomena. That’s why the Buddha came, even though Magadha Sangmo had not sent an invitation. She didn’t even phone or fax him!

Actions of the buddhas are one of the four completely purified results that you visualize in tantric practice, results you will experience in the future for all sentient beings that you visualize as happening now. Doing this practice, you collect inconceivable merit in such a short time and you purify inconceivable negative karma. Many eons of negative karma are purified—many tens of millions of eons of negative karma are purified by doing the tantric practice of visualizing the four purified results you will achieve in the future as happening right now. You visualize yourself as a deity and you visualize the place as a pure mandala, the manifestation of the wisdom of the buddhas, thus stopping impure thoughts and impure vision. That’s how the tantric path becomes the quick path to enlightenment. These practices are the foundation of tantra. Then on this basis you do many other unbelievable practices.

I lost what I was talking about.

You should remember how to meditate like this whenever you say prayers. This is unbelievably important. You should not just recite, just saying the words. That doesn’t benefit your mind much. All the prayers are meditation, every word is meditation, so when you recite you should keep your concentration as much possible. Even when the mind gets distracted, you should try to bring it back by practicing remembrance—remembering the object of meditation—and awareness—recognizing the distraction. You should bring the

mind back as much as possible and keep the concentration on the meaning of the prayer so that it becomes a meditation as much as possible. Otherwise the words are recited but you are not meditating. If you are not meditating then sometimes you are not paying attention; you don't hear the sound you are making. Your mind is too distracted, too preoccupied with other things, especially nonvirtue, such as the objects of desire or of anger and so forth.

Without paying attention, if you don't hear even the sound, you can spend your life praying for hours every day with your mind completely distracted. Then, you are not collecting good karma, you are not collecting merit. In that way, your life gets completely wasted; you don't even hear the prayers. Without hearing the prayers, they cannot leave positive imprints on your mind. Even that doesn't happen when your mind is preoccupied with external objects of desire and so forth. Therefore, whether you understand or not, it's very important to keep the mind on the prayer you are reciting and to do the meditation. Even if you don't understand the prayer, it leaves positive imprints on your mind that will allow you to understand it later and then to achieve enlightenment.

ABSOLUTE AND CONVENTIONAL BUDDHA, DHARMA AND SANGHA

The first two lines of the refuge prayer are: "I go for refuge until I achieve full enlightenment / To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha."

There are two types of refuge: *causal refuge* and *resultant refuge*. "I go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha" shows the causal refuge and "until I achieve full enlightenment" shows the resultant refuge. These two types of refuge are explained in the commentary of Maitreya Buddha's *Abhisamayalamkara*, the *Ornament of Clear Realizations*, one of the roots of the sutra teachings.

I think I mentioned some time ago that when we say the word "buddha" we should think of what that actually means. A buddha is a being who has perfected all the qualities of cessation of the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause, karma and delusion, and even the cause of delusion, even the subtle defilements, the negative imprints left by the disturbing-thought obscurations, the ignorance holding true existence. Because of that, the holy mind is perfected in all the qualities of realizations.

As I explained before, from *sang gye*, the Tibetan for buddha, *sang* means "eliminated," having eliminated all the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause, karma and delusion. When that happens, because of that, then *gye* happens, which means "developed." Here it means to have fully developed all the qualities of the realizations. This is the peerless one. There is nothing more to achieve; there is no higher happiness to achieve, no higher understanding or realization to achieve. This is the meaning of *sang gye*.

Then, there is the absolute Buddha and the conventional Buddha. The absolute Buddha is the dharmakaya and the conventional Buddha is the rupakaya, the buddha that appears to the obscured mind. In Tibetan it is *kun dzob sang gye*, the "Buddha known to the all-obscuring mind." It is generally translated as "conventional Buddha" but that is not quite correct. *Kun dzob* means "all-obscuring" so it is that which appears to the obscured mind. That is the rupakaya.

The Dharma also has the absolute Dharma and the conventional Dharma or the Dharma of the all-obscuring mind, the Dharma that is the truth for the all-obscuring mind. The absolute Dharma is the cessation of not only suffering but also the cause, karma and delusion, and the cessation of the subtle defilements. The wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is the absolute Dharma.

The conventional Dharma is the Dharma for the all-obscuring mind, that which is also truth for the all-obscuring mind. There are two truths: absolute truth and conventional truth. These two truths are truth for the absolute wisdom and truth for the all-obscuring mind, for the illusory mind. This refers to the Tripitaka, the three baskets of teachings of the Buddha—the Vinaya, the Abhidharma and the Sutra baskets. All the 84,000 teachings of Buddha are condensed into these three baskets and they are the conventional Dharma, the Dharma for the all-obscuring mind or the illusory mind.

There is also the absolute Sangha and the conventional Sangha or the Sangha for the all-obscuring mind. The absolute Sangha is one who has attained the cessation of the suffering and defilements, and the path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. That can be an ordained person or a lay person; it can be anybody who has this realization of the absolute Dharma.

The conventional Sangha is a group of four fully-ordained nuns or monks living in pure vows but not having the realization of the absolute Dharma. From the two truths, this is the truth for the all-obscuring mind.

I think you may have gone through refuge and have heard about the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is the very essence, something very brief. The buddhas have all the qualities, the power, to liberate you and all sentient beings from the oceans from samsaric suffering and the cause, karma and delusion.

REFUGE IN ONE REFUGE OBJECT PROTECTS US FROM THE LOWER REALMS

We can be liberated from the lower realms—the hells, the hungry ghost or the animal realm—by taking refuge in *one* object of refuge, the Buddha, the Dharma or the Sangha.

For example, when we are dying, in the very last minute of our life, the very last thought, if we develop compassion or bodhicitta for sentient beings, or emptiness, or even remember a text like the *Heart Sutra* and have devotion to that, even *that* protects us from reincarnating in the suffering lower realms. If we remember a nun or monk, somebody we have faith in and devotion for, and if that person is in our thoughts in the very last minute, when we die with that thought we will be totally saved from reincarnating in the lower realms.

I normally mention this when you take refuge vows. We can explore the whole of science and we won't find one thing that will protect us from reincarnating in the lower realms, that will save us from these terrible sufferings. But if we die with devotion to a monk or nun, that will definitely protect us from being reborn there.

Or if we remember a mantra, like OM MANI PADME HUM. For the Tibetan people, chanting this mantra is very common, but now also in the West more and more people are chanting it. We are unbelievably fortunate to be able to chant OM MANI PADME HUM,

this wish-fulfilling mantra. We are not only able to fulfill all our own wishes but also the wishes of the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, gods, demigods and intermediate stage beings. We're able to fulfill all their wishes for happiness up to enlightenment by this practice of OM MANI PADME HUM. Most importantly, we are able to develop compassion for each and every single sentient being. Then we are able to bring peace and happiness—not only temporary happiness but the happiness of future lives, including liberation from samsara and enlightenment—to numberless sentient beings. We are one living being, but we are able to bring to numberless sentient beings all this peace up to enlightenment, the cessation of all the suffering, of all the defilements and the realizations of all the qualities. We are one person, but we can become wish-fulfilling for all sentient beings by chanting OM MANI PADME HUM. This mantra contains the whole entire Dharma. It's most amazing. If we can remember the mantra in our last thoughts, there is no question; we are completely safe, so there is no worry *at all*.

Now our life is most critical. Depending on one way of thinking, the lower realms; depending on the other way of thinking, the higher realms—in a pure land where we can become enlightened or in the human or god realms where there is more happiness. The birth we take depends on whether we think in a negative way or a positive way, whether we create nonvirtue or virtue. As far as refuge, meditating on a text, there's no question, but praying with devotion to one member of the Sangha, we will never get reborn in the lower realms. We become fully protected.

Even with the entire knowledge of science about death, there is nothing to protect our mind as we are dying from reincarnating in the lower realms, where there is the most unimaginable suffering. Science is completely empty on this subject. I am not talking about emptiness here. I am not talking about the ultimate reality but just ordinary empty, the lack of anything.

BECOMING THE ABSOLUTE BUDDHA AND SANGHA

Even if we owned the whole world, at the time of death there would be nothing else we could depend on. Even if we owned all the wealth in the world, nothing could help us; everything has to be left. We can't even take an atom with us. Even if all the human beings in this world were our subjects, neither they nor our family or friends could help us. Even this body that we cherish the most has to be left.

Anyway, “I go for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha” is the causal refuge and “until I achieve enlightenment” is the resultant refuge. By studying the Dharma, that which is the truth for the all-obscuring mind, by studying the scriptures, we actualize the absolute Dharma within us. Then we become the absolute Sangha. And then, by ceasing all the defilements and completing all the realizations, the absolute Dharma, we become a buddha. This is the resultant refuge, the meaning of “until I achieve enlightenment.”

We have gone through the general sufferings, the six types, the four types and the three types. From beginningless rebirths we have experienced the general sufferings of samsara, particularly the sufferings of the lower realms. We need to feel that. We need to start with our own suffering and recognize that. Then, we go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha so we ourselves can be liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause. That is the Hinayana refuge, generated by having a useful fear of the suffering of the lower

realms. I say “useful fear.” This is a useful fear because it liberates us from samsara by making us practice Dharma and by doing so overcoming suffering.

As well as fear there is faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Because they have all these qualities, we can rely on them with our whole heart. That’s the other aspect of the Hinayana refuge.

The Mahayana refuge is this. Having the useful fear of our own samsara we then think that numberless other sentient beings are also experiencing those general sufferings of samsara. Numberless hell beings have experienced the general suffering of samsara, particularly the lower realm suffering, not only now but numberless times from beginningless rebirths. Numberless hungry ghosts have experienced the general suffering of samsara, particularly the lower realm suffering, not only now but numberless times from beginningless rebirths. Numberless animals have experienced the general suffering of samsara, particularly the lower realm suffering, not only now but numberless times from beginningless rebirths. Numberless humans have experienced the general suffering of samsara, particularly the lower realm suffering, not only now but numberless times from beginningless rebirths. Numberless gods and demigods have experienced the general suffering of samsara, particularly the lower realm suffering, not only now but numberless times from beginningless rebirths.

We try to get the idea that it is not only us who have been experiencing the general sufferings of samsara from beginningless rebirths, particularly the lower realms, but all sentient beings. When we think like that then naturally we think we must free them all from those sufferings. We must free the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, gods and demigods from all the oceans of samsaric suffering and the causes, karma and delusion.

With our whole heart, we totally rely upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and then generate compassion. The third cause of Mahayana refuge is compassion for all sentient beings. With the understanding that the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have all the qualities, all the power, to save ourselves and all sentient beings, from the bottom of our heart we go for refuge.

These three causes—fear, faith and compassion—are the causes of taking Mahayana refuge. There is also tantric refuge as well.

The next two lines of the refuge prayer are: “Due to the merits I create by practicing charity and so forth / May I become a buddha in order to benefit all transmigratory beings.”

All sentient beings are completely under the control of karma and delusion, and because of that they always reincarnate in the six realms and experience all the oceans of suffering of each realm. Like this they continuously suffer and have been suffering from beginningless rebirths. We need to understand this very deeply. The Tibetan word *dro wa* can be translated as “transmigratory being.” By being under the control of karma and delusion, they always transmigrate into one of the realms and have to suffer. Although *dro* principally means “to migrate,” another meaning is “continuously” as in to continuously run toward death. There is not one day, one minute, when they are not constantly running toward death.

The benefits of generating bodhicitta are limitless. Every time we meditate on this, every time we generate bodhicitta, we collect so much merit. If it manifested as form, the merit we collect would be greater than the limitless sky. Then, for whatever practices we do after that, if they are done with bodhicitta and refuge, the merit increases a hundred times. To chant a mala of a mantra of one of the buddhas, if it is done with bodhicitta, we collect limitless skies of merit with each mantra. If we go from here to Boudhanath stupa with a bodhicitta motivation in order to circumambulate for all sentient beings, then we collect limitless skies of merits with each step we take. It's like this for whatever activity we do. It's most amazing.

I'll stop here.

LECTURE 5



THE QUALITIES OF LAMA TSONGKHAPA

Good evening everyone. I thought I'd mention a few words about Lama Tsongkhapa because today is a special day commemorating Lama Tsongkhapa's passing.

Before that, I want to thank everyone. I heard there are five centers, especially Losang Dragpa Centre, who made offerings today to the Sangha, to Kopan's monks and nuns. From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank everyone for that as well as for your daily

practice, your good heart. No matter how much prayer or meditation you do, the most important thing, the most important Dharma, is the good heart. Thank you very much.

Lama Tsongkhapa is actually Chenrezig, the embodiment of all the buddhas' compassion. Lama Tsongkhapa is also Manjushri, the embodiment of all the buddhas' wisdom, and Vajrapani, the embodiment of all the buddhas' power. That is the reality of what Lama Tsongkhapa is.

That Lama Tsongkhapa is Manjushri was shown by some external signs after his birth. He was born to a very poor family. His mother had gone out to look after the animals and so the birth happened on the road. Then, his mother left the baby and went to look after the animals. When she returned she thought the baby must have been eaten by animals because he was not there on the road. However, she saw that he was being protected by crows or ravens. Quite a few of them were protecting the baby with their wings. His mother then took him back home and raised him.

Where the birth happened, a sandalwood tree grew where some blood from the womb was spilled, and on the leaves of that sandalwood tree Manjushri images appeared. A total of one hundred thousand Manjushri images appeared on the leaves of the sandalwood tree as well as the syllable DHI. I think that's why Lama Tsongkhapa's monastery in Amdo, Kumbum, is called *One Hundred Thousand Statues*. I think the name started from that.

Later, the tree was cut down and was put inside a stupa in the temple of Kumbum Monastery that contains Lama Tsongkhapa's relics. I went there twice on the same pilgrimage and did extensive *jorcbö* or *Lama Chöpa*. Geshe Lama Konchog, who completed the path to enlightenment and whose relics are down in his stupa, was there with us. All morning we did the practice.

The sandalwood tree was still growing outside the temple. It was cut down but the root was still there under the ground and so it grew again. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Rinpoche went there when they had to go to mainland China, many years ago, when Tibet was still independent. People believe that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Rinpoche are in essence one because when they were going to China a new sandalwood tree grew from the root. These are some of the external signs that show Lama Tsongkhapa is a manifestation of the Buddha Manjushri.

There may be other stories, but this is just one story of how he is Chenrezig. Before his mother conceived, she had a dream that she invoked Chenrezig, the great Compassionate Buddha, and requested him to come down. Many devas, dakas and dakinis made offerings to Chenrezig. Then Chenrezig become smaller and smaller and absorbed within her body. During the time of the birth, she had a dream that somebody came and asked, "Where is the Compassion Buddha?" Then a man came with a key and opened a silver door and brought out the great Compassion Buddha.

When Lama Tsongkhapa was traveling to India to receive teachings he stayed at the place of a great yogi of Vajrapani. He had a dream in which Vajrapani advised him that the next day he should take teachings of Shantideva's text from Maitreya Buddha. While he was receiving the teachings from the great yogi Vajrapani, above Lama Tsongkhapa's head was Maitreya

Buddha, to his right side was Manjushri and to his left side was Saraswati, who is similar to Manjushri but in a female aspect. He saw all this, thus proving from the advice given by Vajrapani that Lama Tsongkhapa is also Maitreya Buddha.

There was a prediction that after passing away he would become the heart disciple of Maitreya Buddha in Tushita. That's why, when we do the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, we visualize his two heart disciples coming from Maitreya Buddha's heart.

As I normally say, Lama Tsongkhapa very thoroughly studied and checked on the teachings of the Nyingma, Sakya and Kagyü traditions, all the teachings that happened, as well as all the direct teachings from the Buddha and all the commentaries by the Six Ornaments, the highly-attained great scholars, their extensive scriptures and commentaries based on the Buddha's teachings.

He completely actualized the whole path to enlightenment that the Buddha had revealed. He experienced the entire path, what is revealed in the sutra path, the essence, guru devotion, and the three principal aspects of the path advised by the Buddha. He put them together in the lamrim, with the foundation of tantra and then accomplished the generation stage and completion stage of tantra. The generation stage has two levels, gross and subtle, and the completion stage has five. Lama Tsongkhapa completely actualized all that and became enlightened. He could have attained enlightenment in one very brief lifetime of degenerated times but he especially chose to be enlightened in the intermediate state to help ensure that the teachings of the Buddha would stay pure and not become corrupted. He chose to achieve enlightenment without depending on the action mudra, the wisdom mother. This requires becoming enlightened in the intermediate state.

Lama Tsongkhapa wrote the most unbelievable teachings and commentaries. He wrote several texts on emptiness, the ultimate nature, explaining different views of the four schools: Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra and Madhyamaka, with Madhyamaka divided into two, Svatantrika and Prasangika. All the previous schools have their different views of the self, different explanations of emptiness, what ultimate reality is. They all have different points of view.

By realizing the most subtle level of emptiness we are able to cut the very root of samsara, ignorance. There are many types of ignorance, but this is particularly the ignorance holding the I, the self, as something real in the sense of existing from its own side, not merely labeled by mind. The I that exists from its own side is something that is not there at all; it totally doesn't exist. But this ignorance holds onto such a false I, not the I that does exist.

There is an I that exists, but it is empty. While it exists it's empty, unifying emptiness and dependent arising, unifying ultimate truth and conventional truth, the truth for the ultimate wisdom and the truth for the all-obscuring mind. There are these two truths, ultimate truth and conventional truth, and emptiness and dependent arising unifies the two. That is how the I exists.

This ignorance that holds onto the non-existent I as existing is the root of all karma and delusion, and all the oceans of sufferings of the hell beings, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the human beings, the gods and demigods and the intermediate state beings. The wisdom

that realizes emptiness can cut this root, eliminating the root of samsara and even the seed of that ignorance, ceasing all karma and delusion. Then, we become totally liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering and never experience suffering again. We achieve ultimate happiness, the blissful state of peace, for ourselves.

That is the view of the Prasangika school, the wisdom realizing emptiness that is explained by that school, by recognizing the subtle object to be refuted, the very subtle hallucination. This does not happen by realizing the emptiness explained by the previous schools, only by the Prasangika's explanation. There is only one emptiness and only by realizing that can we cut the root of samsara, ignorance.

Besides these four schools that happened in India during the Buddha's time, there are many other schools that taught different views of emptiness that Lama Tsongkhapa wrote commentaries on. You can see now how important this subject is. Without learning this, without realizing this, we have no way to escape, to be free from samsara. It's impossible. That particular emptiness, the Prasangika school's view, *that* we have to realize.

All that the Buddha taught can be divided into two levels, the lesser vehicle or Hinayana and the great vehicle or Mahayana. The Mahayana can further be divided into Paramitayana or Mahayana Sutra vehicle and the Secret Mantra, Vajrayana. You must understand that the Mahayana has two: one is the teachings of the Paramitayana, the Sutra vehicle, and one is Mahayana Secret Mantra, Vajrayana. This comes to three levels in all within the Hinayana and these were all condensed by Lama Atisha into the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment.

Lama Tsongkhapa made an extensive commentary of the lamrim, the *Lamrim Chenmo*, the *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. He talked about very important points where many learned meditators had made mistakes that became obstacles to achieving the complete path to enlightenment. Because there were many wrong ideas about emptiness, he made a special effort to make the clearest, most elaborate explanations of that. Where many learned ones had previously made mistakes, Lama Tsongkhapa put effort into correcting those mistakes, which were obstacles to realizing the unmistaken, Prasangika school view and thus being able to cut the root of samsara. By explaining the subtle points, Lama Tsongkhapa made the teachings of the Buddha very clear.

Besides the *Lamrim Chenmo*, there's the *Middle-length Commentary on the Stages of the Path* and the short lamrim text, *Hymns of Experience of the Graduated Path* which is about Lama Tsongkhapa's own experience on the stages of the path to enlightenment. So, these are the foundation. The extensive scriptures have been explained but there's also the essence that makes it very clear, like food that has been made ready and is set out on the table by the cook ready for you to just sit there and eat. Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings are like that.

Lama Tsongkhapa wrote on tantra in the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*. This text has the most unbelievably extensive teaching on the five completion stage practices with all the subtle points expressed so clearly.

Lama Tsongkhapa wrote eighteen volumes in all. Maybe people who don't understand Dharma well may criticize him but for those who are really learned, whose mind is very

straight, when they study these teachings by Lama Tsongkhapa they find them very clear, very beneficial. The head of the Nyingma tradition, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, who has passed away and reincarnated now, wrote about the four Tibetan Mahayana traditions: Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Gelug. He wrote about how these came about and in the text, after talking about how the Gelug tradition emerged, at the end he said in a comment that Lama Tsongkhapa made the clearest teachings of the Buddha. That's what His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche wrote. Others who are really learned see Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings as unbelievable.

Many people who criticize Lama Tsongkhapa haven't studied his teachings; they haven't checked. They listen to somebody else's criticism and believe that, spreading the criticism without checking. But if that person had actually studied Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings it would be totally different. The learned ones, on the other hand, really rejoice; they highly appreciate Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings.

What I want to say in conclusion is that we are most unbelievably fortunate. It's a miracle to have met Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, to have heard Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, and to be able to study them with qualified teachers who for many years in monasteries have studied the extensive teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa and his disciples, all those who completed the path to enlightenment. We are not only able to study but we are also able to practice and meditate in order to have realizations. I think this is most unbelievably fortunate. It's like a dream. How we created the cause in the past is hard to believe.

Therefore, my conclusion is that every day we should rejoice. We should feel incredible joy and happiness that we have met Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings and have the opportunity to study with qualified teachers and to meditate in order to have realizations. We must rejoice every day. That's what I am doing. This life is very short, so we must put as much effort as possible to study, learn and take the essence, and put it into practice through meditation and then realizations. We must do this as much as possible in our life. Then, sooner or later, we will be able to complete the path and achieve enlightenment and like Lama Tsongkhapa, we will be able to offer extensive benefit like the sky to sentient beings and to the teachings of Buddha.

LECTURE 6



ENLIGHTENMENT IS NOT JUST A VACATION

I didn't finish the other day what I was explaining about the meditation with the refuge and bodhicitta prayer.

When Lama Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri what the quick method to achieve enlightenment was, Manjushri answered that we must purify the obstacles, the defilements, and collect extensive merit. Those are the necessary conditions, then, secondly, we must make one-

pointed requests to the guru. Thirdly, there is the actual body of the practice, the mind training on the path to enlightenment, from the root of the path to enlightenment—guru devotion—and then renunciation, bodhicitta and right view. That's the causal vehicle and there is the resultant vehicle, which are the two stages of tantra, the generation stage and the completion stage.

Of the resultant vehicle, tantra, the generation stage has two levels, gross and subtle, and the completion stage has five paths: the isolation of the body—which also comes partly in the generation stage—the isolation of the speech, the isolation of the mind—which is the clear light—the illusory body, and then the unification of those two, the unification of no more learning. So the actual body of the practice is training the mind in the root of path to enlightenment, from guru devotion up to the unification of no more learning. This is the advice that Manjushri gave about how to achieve enlightenment quickly.

I've been talking these last few days about achieving enlightenment. Everything is about achieving enlightenment but it's not just that. It's not just to have a vacation for ourselves, to have a holiday. The attitude is not that, to become kind of blissed out and stay like that. It's not like that.

Achieving enlightenment is not the final goal. The final goal is to liberate the numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless human beings, numberless gods, numberless demigods and numberless intermediate state beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, karma and delusion. Not only that, we then bring the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, gods, demigods and intermediate state beings to full enlightenment. *That* is the ultimate goal. That is the purpose of our life, what life is for. That's what we should have inside in our very heart. What should be deep down in our heart is not just happiness for ourselves but for the numberless others—the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings, the numberless gods and demigods, and the numberless intermediate state beings—and not just their temporary happiness, which is what all worldly people are trying to achieve.

DEATH CAN HAPPEN AT ANY MOMENT

This life is very short. We can't really tell how many years we have left or how many months, how many weeks, how many days, how many hours, minutes or seconds. There are a certain number of seconds, a certain number of breaths from right at this minute up to the time of our death, and those breaths are constantly running out; they are going very fast. There are a certain number of seconds from right now until death, and they are finishing very fast. Whatever is left over is constantly finishing very fast as we go toward death.

We can't really tell who will die next in this world. A child who has just come out of womb—or even in the womb—can die without the opportunity to grow up. So many sentient beings die in their childhood, so many when they become middle-aged and of course there is no question of when they become old.

It's not that we can only die if we have cancer or something like that or if we are physically very old. There are some people who are young in age but who are physically very old, with

wrinkles all over the skin and aging signs happening. I guess it depends on how much merit they have collected in the past, how much good karma, whether they have had an easy or a hard life, how much they have mentally suffered. There are people who although still young in years are old physically.

We really can't tell. Within another ten or twenty years, and certainly within another fifty years, many of us here will be gone. Can we be certain that we will still be OK for another year? It's difficult to say, even regarding our own wellbeing.

I heard about a student in the United States who a few years ago was walking one day, completely OK, without any disease like cancer or whatever, and suddenly she fell down. She was just walking along, then suddenly she died.

At the same time an old student, Thubten Pende, told me about his parents. Pende is no longer a monk but was for many years and studied philosophy extensively. He is very intelligent and when he was at Nalanda Monastery in France he was the leader of the pujas. We are very fortunate to have a monastery like Nalanda in the West. Even in the East, when we held the Enlightened Experience Celebration in India he led the prayers we offered during the Celebration. It wasn't only that I gave initiations, there were other great lamas, my gurus, teaching and giving initiations and at the end we requested an initiation and teachings from and offered a long-life puja to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which Pende led. He's not a monk anymore; he's liberated. Of course, you have to analyze what liberation is! That was a joke for the old students. Maybe some of you didn't get it.

He told me that one day his parents were at home talking. Neither had any life-threatening illness at all like cancer. His father was standing talking to his mother and he turned his head away for a moment and then when he looked back she was dead. She died just like that. I think many times we don't have to have some sickness like cancer or some heavy, life-threatening disease. There are many people who die like this. We can't really tell. It can happen any time.

Even last night there were many people who went to bed and died. There were many people on this earth, without talking about other universes, other human worlds, who died. This is one of four continents, the southern continent; there is also an eastern, northern and western continent in this world system, with eight small ones besides these four major continents. The human world is not just this world divided into East and West; there are numberless universes and each has a human world with human beings, as well as gods and demigods, animals, hell beings and hungry ghosts. It is said that for those hell beings whose karma is not finished when even the lower realms in this world end, they still have the karma to suffer in hell, to be reborn in another universe's hell realm and experience suffering there.

Even last night, many people went to bed but this morning their body has become a corpse. They no longer have the opportunity to be a human being let alone having the opportunity to practice Dharma. It is extremely rare, there are very few people who meet and understand the Dharma, and especially small are the number of people who practice it, who have the karma to practice it.

You have gone through the meditation on impermanence and death. This is a very important meditation that inspires us to practice Dharma. We begin our Dharma practice with this meditation. You have also gone through the nine-round death meditation with the nine points and the three roots: how death is definite, how the time of death is uncertain and how nothing helps at death except the Dharma. Our body, possessions, the *surrounding* people, even if we owned the whole world, nothing of that can benefit when we are dying. We can't even take an atom with us to the next life. Even if all the human beings became our family or our bodyguards or our subjects, nobody could go with us, nothing could benefit us at the time of death. The only thing that can help is the Dharma.

THE CONTINUITY OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS

The basic reason we need to practice Dharma is the continuity of the consciousness. This body doesn't go to the next life but the consciousness does. There's a continuity of the mind. There's body and mind, but it is the mind that continues to the next life.

The principal cause of the mind is not the physical body; the principal cause of the mind has to be mind. The cause must have exactly the same nature as the result, the mind, which is formless, colorless and shapeless. Similarly, the body, this physical thing with color, form and shape, has its own cause which is physical. Of course, the mind can be a condition of that but not the cause.

This second's mind is caused by the previous second's mind; this hour's mind is caused by the previous hour's mind; today's mind is caused by last night's mind; last night's mind is caused by yesterday daytime's mind. Then yesterday's mind is caused by the day before yesterday's mind. This second's consciousness or mind is caused by yesterday's consciousness, caused by the consciousness of the day before and so it goes on like that. This year's mind is caused by last year's mind and all the way back to when we were conceived.

That's why we can remember what we did this morning or last night, what we did last week, last month, last year and what we did in our childhood. Of course, we've forgotten some things but we have remembered some. We can remember things that left a big impression, like the times we were very frightened or excited or when we were very happy whereas other things that didn't have a big impact on us we have forgotten.

The consciousness of the very first second we were conceived in the fertilized egg in our mother's womb is the result of the consciousness that existed the second before. A previous consciousness was the principal cause of this consciousness of the first moment of this life which means that before this life there was the continuity of consciousness.

Some people can remember quite a lot from when they were a baby but most of us have forgotten almost all of that time, when we were crawling on all four limbs like a frog. Very few of us can remember that time. Some of us can't even remember our early childhood well, when we started standing and walking; when we were aged one or two or three, or four or five. Probably all we can remember is when there was some trouble that had a strong impact on our mind or some great excitement, when something really big happened. How

much we remember basically depends on how clear the mind is, how few obscurations cloud it.

Because of the continuity of consciousness, the consciousness that joined with the fertilized egg in the first second of this life must be the result of a previous moment of consciousness, which must be the consciousness from the previous life. That is why the continuity of consciousness has no beginning and birth has no beginning. There is no such thing as the very first birth. There are those whose mind is clearer, who can remember past lives. Those with a clear mind can also remember much more of their early childhood time, when they were very young.

We can't remember crawling on the ground on all four limbs or our mother giving birth to us. We can say, "This is my mother," but we have no memory of coming from our mother's womb. We can't remember being in our mother's womb for nine months or coming from it. We can remember some of our childhood, when this woman was caring for us, and some of the things she told us. Other people have told us she is our mother and she has told us she is our mother, but actually we have no proof of it. We can't remember being in her womb or being born to her. We who don't have a very clear mind can remember very little of our early childhood, however, those who have a clearer mind can remember much more of their early life, their childhood time.

Because of the continuity of the mind, our mind existed before we were conceived in this life, before we entered the fertilized egg in the womb. There was a life before this one and before that life there was another life. There have been beginningless lives. We have had beginningless rebirths. The clearer the mind, the easier it is to remember the story of our childhood. The more deluded we are, if our mind is clouded with delusions, we are unable to remember such things. Those with an extremely clear mind can vividly remember not just their childhood but their past lives, and they can also see others' past and future lives.

Conversely, there has never been anybody who has realized there are no past and future lives. Nobody has realized that. Others have made up their own philosophies from their own thoughts. Because they don't have the clarity of mind to see past and future lives they have assumed they don't exist, without having the qualifications to prove anything. But there have been numberless sentient beings and numberless holy beings who have discovered past and future lives. Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the eighth, ninth or tenth bhūmis can not only see their own past lives going back billions and trillions of lives as well as into the future, but they can also see that for others as well. The Buddha can see the numberless past lives of all us sentient beings.

I have two stories. My guru, His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, told us of a man in Tibet in Pagri where I lived for three years. I did pujas every day. We would go to do pujas to help people; that was the job of the monastery I stayed at, a branch of Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery in Domo. We had a break of one day a year and that day used to be a very strange day, a long, strange day. Anyway, His Holiness Zong Rinpoche said he saw a person in Pagri without a head. This would be considered impossible by Western biologists or scientists who think the brain is everything.

Many years ago, I remember a man from Thailand debated with Lama Lhundrup upstairs in the old gompa for over one hour about this. He was quite intelligent. He didn't say the brain is the mind or atoms are the mind, but he said that there is a wave in the brain and that is the mind. Anyway, this is a factual story that might change what is being said in the West. This person in Pagri didn't have a head. He managed to make gestures to communicate. When he was hungry he rubbed his stomach and when he wanted to be out in the sun he made gestures and people understood. There was some place in his neck where people could spoon in tsampa or other food. This was seen by His Holiness Zong Rinpoche himself, who is highly attained, who is the deity Heruka.

I saw something similar in a text by Kundak Konchog Tenpa Donme, a very great Amdo lama who wrote many texts. He saw a man in Amdo without a head who was able to *survive*. This must have something to do with past karma, something very rare that the person did. Two great lamas have witnessed this, so it is not just something that somebody has made up and then expected people to believe. This actually happened. You need to check up about this, then it makes an impression on Western philosophy.

One of the most senior monks in the FPMT is Dr. Adrian, a doctor from Australia. He's maybe six or seven years senior to Venerable Neil, who's also from Australia. He says that the normal definition of death given by Western doctors is when the heart stops beating and the nerves stop functioning. If that happens a person is recognized as being dead. But he says there are meditators whose heart stops and then later restarts, so he just doesn't know about that general definition, that he couldn't use that definition himself.

WHY THE GURU APPEARS IN AN ORDINARY ASPECT

Lama Yeshe was kinder than the numberless past, present and future buddhas to us, to me and to the students. When I say "kinder than the numberless past, present and future buddhas" that includes Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the present Buddhадharma. That is because although there have been numberless buddhas in the past, present and future, I have been unable to see them and to receive direct guidance and teachings from them. To receive the teachings directly from them, to be able to see them in the aspect of a buddha, I need to have a pure mind. My mind is not pure, so I can neither see them nor receive teachings directly from them. They cannot guide me directly; there is nothing they can do to help me directly. Lama Yeshe, on the other hand, manifested in an ordinary aspect. "Ordinary" here means showing having mistakes.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama explained this during the First Dharma Celebration or the Second Dharma Celebration. We requested His Holiness to give a commentary on the extensive *Guru Puja*, the most secret one, which has not only the entire lamrim, the stages of path to enlightenment, and not only Highest Yoga Tantra, but also *lojong*, mind training. His Holiness gave extensive commentary and a book has come out in English from these teachings that we requested earlier at Dharamsala. There were maybe two hundred or three hundred Westerners there at the teachings. I received an interview with His Holiness in Delhi or Dharamsala after that and we talked about the ordinary aspect. His Holiness said that "ordinary" means showing the aspect of having mistakes in actions, having delusion and having suffering. That is the meaning of manifesting in an ordinary aspect.

The Buddha said in a sutra, “There is real light; there is real darkness.” This is a very useful quote for meditating on emptiness. There is no darkness in reality except what is merely imputed by the mind and there is no light in reality except what is merely imputed by the mind. In reality, there’s no darkness and light existing from their own side. It appears to our hallucinated mind that way and we always believe it to be that way, but it’s a total hallucination, totally false. “There is real light; there is real darkness.” That’s a very good example of the object to be refuted, *gag cha*, the object we need to refute in order to realize the ultimate truth, the emptiness of the Prasangika Madhyamaka school.

There are four Buddhist philosophical schools—Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra and Madhyamaka, and the fourth school has two sub-schools, Svatantrika Madhyamaka and Prasangika Madhyamaka. The real light and the real darkness are real in the sense of existing from their own side, not merely labeled by the mind. They never came from our mind; they have nothing to do with our mind. They appear to be not merely labeled by our mind, so this is the very subtle object of refutation. This is a very good example of what *gag cha* means. We need to realize the real light and real darkness are simply hallucinations, they do not exist *at all* from their own side; they are empty. The total absence of that real darkness and real light is ultimate nature—the ultimate nature of the light and the ultimate nature of the darkness. With dependent arising, seeing it is merely imputed by the mind, it becomes unified with emptiness and therefore doesn’t become a contradiction. When subtle dependent arising is unified with emptiness in this way, they don’t harm each other. This becomes the middle way view, *u ma*, devoid of eternalism, where things exist truly, and devoid of nihilism, where nothing exists.

Lama Yeshe showed the ordinary aspect, the aspect of having mistakes, and because of that I was able to see him and communicate with him. My mind is very deluded and very impure, very obscured, full of mistakes, so he appeared exactly according to my mind, according to my concepts, by showing delusions, by showing suffering, by showing mistakes in his actions. Only by showing this aspect to me was I able to directly communicate with him and receive guidance from him, taking teachings and initiations from him and so forth. Only then, following what Lama in his ordinary aspect taught me, *only then* can I keep the vows, *only then* can I practice and achieve the happiness of future lives and, if I practice, achieve liberation from samsara and then achieve enlightenment.

OUR OWN FAULTS APPEAR AS THE GURU’S ACTIONS

Not only in this life, not only today, but even in this one second, we can see that by showing this ordinary aspect to us the guru is unbelievably precious. By showing this ordinary aspect to us for even a second, having delusions, making mistakes in their actions, showing suffering, this is more precious than the sky filled with gold and diamonds or even wish-granting jewels. The sky filled with wish-granting jewels is nothing; the value is nothing compared with the value of this, the guru showing us this ordinary aspect.

Even with all this wealth, with wish-granting jewels filling the sky, we can’t achieve the happiness of future lives; we can’t achieve liberation from samsara or enlightenment; we can’t liberate numberless sentient beings in each realm from the oceans of samsaric suffering and it causes; we can’t bring them to enlightenment. But through the guru showing us this ordinary aspect we are able to do all that, we can achieve all that. We are able to benefit the

numberless sentient beings in each realm: all the hell beings, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the humans, the gods and demigods. We can liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to ultimate happiness, enlightenment. That is what we can do by having met the ordinary aspect of the guru and directly receiving teachings from them. It is most amazing that we can get all these benefits.

Therefore, by showing us this ordinary aspect, the guru is the *most precious one* in our life, more precious than all this wealth, the whole sky filled with gold, diamonds, hashish, buddha grass, the whole sky filled with wish-granting jewels. The value of all that is nothing compared with how important the guru is. So, the guru is most precious, most precious.

It is very good to meditate in this way, “How precious, how precious, how precious, how very precious,” and so forth. Count in this way with a mala as you meditate, keeping the mind one-pointedly on how precious the guru is for you. This is very good. It is yum yum, yum yum! When you eat ice cream, it makes you feel, “yum yum, yum yum.” This is the equivalent in your Dharma practice to receiving the blessings of the guru in your heart. Receiving the realizations from the beginning of the path, from the perfect human rebirth up to enlightenment, actualizing all these in your heart is due to receiving the blessings of the guru. Reciting this—“How precious, how precious,”—for half mala or a mala or more is very, very good. It’s extremely good.

Giving refuge or vows such as the pratimoksha, bodhisattva or tantric vows, giving oral transmissions and commentaries, giving teachings on sutra and tantra and initiations, this is the kindness of the guru. By revealing the graduated path of the lower capable being to us, we can achieve the happiness of this and future lives; by revealing the graduated path of the middle capable being to us, we can achieve liberation; and by revealing the graduated path of the higher capable being to us, we can achieve enlightenment. This is all due to the kindness of the guru. By his great kindness we are led through each stage up to full enlightenment. With Highest Yoga Tantra we can even attain enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times.

Meditate on the kindness of the guru like that. Again, with the mala, recite, “How kind, how kind, how great his kindness, how great his kindness,” and so forth. You can do both. At the beginning recite, “How precious, how precious, how precious, how very precious,” for a mala or so and then, after you have considered the reasons, recite, “How kind, how kind, how great his kindness, how great his kindness,” for a mala like that, filling the mind with positive devotion.

This is most amazing. This guru yoga is really nectar; it is medicine for our mind. It is an especially powerful method because, when we see the guru making apparent mistakes, instead of seeing them as mistakes it only brings courage to our mind, helping develop guru devotion in our mind. From that we receive the blessings of the guru and from those blessings we receive all the realizations from the beginning of the path, from the perfect human rebirth up to enlightenment, in our heart. It allows us to fully perfect ourselves and to be able to liberate numberless sentient beings and bring them to enlightenment. Meditating in this way, thinking in this way, when we see mistakes in the actions, when we see the delusions, the suffering, we are *fully* protected, we are *completely* protected, and it only helps us. It doesn’t give rise to heresy or anger toward the guru, or to criticism or complaints

or giving up. We are fully protected from this heaviest negative karma, the heaviest obstacles to realizations. It only becomes the cause of developing devotion and realizations.

The other method whenever we see mistakes is to understand that this is only the appearance of our mistaken mind. Think, “This apparent mistake is only the appearance, the view, of my ordinary, mistaken mind.” Every time we see something that appears to be some delusion or suffering or mistake in action from the side of the guru, when we see it this way it will never cause heresy or anger to arise. We will avoid the danger of engaging in the heaviest negative karma that will cause us to never find a guru in future lives. I’m not just talking about one future life but hundreds and thousands of lives; for an unbelievable length of time we will be unable to find a guru, even though there are gurus in our country and others can find them. It is due to this karma, which affects us for hundreds and thousands of future lives. It’s unbelievable. We won’t be able to find a guru and this becomes the cause of making mistakes in our future lives. By making this mistake in this life—by seeing the guru as having mistakes—that leads to making the same mistake in hundreds and thousands of lives because it leaves a negative imprint on the mind, and so the story starts again in future lives, making mistakes again in devoting to the guru.

Sorry, I didn’t mean to talk on these subjects but it just happened, like water running on the ground as I mentioned the other day.

Since I mentioned this subject, I want to mention what the fifth Dalai Lama advised:

In the view of your hallucinated mind, your own faults appear as the guru’s actions. All this shows is that your heart is rotten to the core. Recognizing them as your own faults, abandon them as poison.

We must realize that the mistakes are the view of our own hallucinated mind and immediately abandon that like poison. If there’s poison or something that is very negative, very harmful for our life, that causes death, we immediately throw it away. We don’t keep it, we immediately throw away the poison because it’s unhealthy and dangerous to our life.

By thinking that all these apparent mistakes are due to our own impure appearance, we don’t apprehend that there is a mistake in the guru. This means we don’t see the guru as mistaken. By accepting that it is our mistake, we don’t see the mistake in the guru and so we are fully protected from the negative karma of developing heresy and anger toward the guru. This is the heaviest negative karma that causes us to be reborn in the lowest hot hell, the inexhaustible hot hell, and to experience the heaviest suffering of samsara for the longest time, for an intermediate eon. Then, if the karma is not finished, we must experience that again and again. That’s one thing—that by thinking and meditating in this way we are fully protected from developing heresy and anger, and from criticizing or giving up on the guru.

The other danger is that because we are not a bodhisattva, if we become angry with a bodhisattva we destroy one thousand eons of merits. In *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* Shantideva said,

*Doing virtuous actions
Such as charity or making offerings
Accumulated for a thousand eons
Is destroyed by one second of anger arising.*

All happiness comes from merit. All the happiness and success of this life, the happiness of future lives, and liberation from samsara and enlightenment, all come from merit. The merit we have collected over a thousand eons is destroyed in one second if we become angry with a bodhisattva. Another quotation I can't remember says the same thing.

Here, we are not even talking about the guru. This is when we are not a bodhisattva and we get angry at a bodhisattva for a second. Therefore, the advice is that we just don't know who is a bodhisattva—it could be any sentient being—so we must be very careful never to allow anger to arise. We need to develop patience with everybody, even those we are working with. There is great emphasis on practicing patience. We must pay attention to that otherwise it destroys our path to enlightenment.

The third danger is that our realizations will be postponed. I am not giving any details but just talking in a very general way. If we get angry with a bodhisattva, not only are a thousand eons of merits destroyed, any realizations we might be about to have are delayed for a thousand eons. We might be just about to realize emptiness or bodhicitta or great compassion or impermanence and death—so close, just this week or this month—but one second of anger will delay that realization for a thousand eons.

If these are the results of a second's anger toward a bodhisattva, imagine if we were to become angry with a buddha, how much longer and more intense the suffering would be. A second's anger toward a buddha would destroy an unbelievable number of eons of merit; our realizations would be delayed for an unbelievable number of eons. Anger or heresy toward a buddha causes all this for many thousands of eons.

More powerful for us than a buddha is the guru. The guru is the most powerful, holiest object for us, so imagine how much more we must suffer by developing heresy and anger toward the guru. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* says one second's anger destroys a thousand eons of merits so we can just stick with that. Imagine how much more this would be for a buddha, a much more powerful object, and then for the guru, the most powerful object. It's an unbelievable number, so much more than for a buddha.

These two meditations that I have explained are the very key. The first is Lama Tsongkhapa's technique, where we see mistakes in the guru as our own. This prevents us from destroying our devotion and so destroying our merit, which means destroying our enlightenment, our liberation, our ultimate happiness and even our temporal happiness. We are not only fully protected from that, it also becomes beneficial for our development of guru devotion, in order to receive the blessings of the guru and to achieve realizations of the whole path from the perfect human rebirth up to enlightenment.

Perhaps you haven't fully gone into the subject of guru devotion, but what I spoke about is the very heart. I didn't even go through the outline, the details, but this is the very essence, the aspect of guru devotion that fully protects us from destroying all our happiness.

I was going to talk about Lama Yeshe, but this side talk happened. Sorry.

LAMA YESHE

Lama Yeshe was kinder than all the three times' buddhas. For the tantric meditators, when you bring the wind into the central channel, the in-breath and out-breath are equalized, without one being stronger than the other. When the wind abides in the central channel the belly does not move; it stays calm. There's no breathing through the nostrils during the absorption when the gross mind stops and only the most subtle mind is actualized.

That meditation on emptiness is like an atomic bomb, the quickest way to cease the defilements and achieve enlightenment. That becomes the direct cause of the dharmakaya. My guess is that when the mind becomes extremely subtle, when the gross mind stops, at that time the heart stops beating, there is no rising or falling of the belly and no breathing through the nose. I'm not sure; that's just my guess.

Externally, what Lama Yeshe manifested was a heart problem. That's what people saw; that's what the doctors diagnosed it as. Lama actually used this heart problem that outside people saw for his meditation session. Lama's meditation sessions were often Lama lying down and people took that to be him resting or sleeping; that was the view of other people. Actually, for Lama Yeshe that was a meditation session. It was a very high tantric meditation, part of the completion stage practice, the practice of clear light and the illusory body, the direct cause of the dharmakaya and the rupakaya. He did this at night and always after lunch. To other people he was resting or sleeping, but it was actually a meditation session.

Lama didn't show much sitting in a formal meditation posture with eyes closed and so forth. He did sometimes, later, but it wasn't normal for him. He was a very high yogi, a very accomplished master, so his way of doing this was kind of secret. That is what was happening internally.

Outside, whoever he was with, he fitted in with them. If he was with children, he fitted in with them; when he was with old people he fitted in with them. Whoever came he fitted in with them, acting in a way that was best for them, in order to make everybody happy. Therefore, everybody saw Lama differently. Some people even saw him as a big businessman. But in reality he was a great meditator who had realizations of emptiness and bodhicitta. He realized emptiness while still in Tibet. He said he realized emptiness while they were debating Madhyamaka philosophy many years ago in Tibet. And I remember something happened while we were in Delhi and Lama said he could never get angry at even one sentient being, he could never renounce even one sentient being. That shows he had the realization of bodhicitta a long time ago.

I pushed Lama to come to Kopan to help with the course. Usually I talked about the eight worldly dharmas and the negative attitude and the lower realms, and I'd spend about two weeks or so on that, then everybody got very depressed, by hearing all the negatives. Then

Lama Yeshe came and made them laugh, releasing them from that sadness and depression. This is how we did it.

The last time I pushed Lama to come from Tushita to Kopan. Then he took the aspect of sickness and he went to a hospital in Delhi. There was an Afro-American student, a benefactor, called Mummy Max, a very qualified teacher of Lincoln school, the American school in Kathmandu. She taught there for many years. This was after the very first Western student, the Russian lady, Princess Zina Rachevsky, who went to the mountains to meditate. Lama sent her to meditate there and she passed away there in meditation. After that, Mummy Max took care of us for many years and helped to build things here as well as the monastery at Lawudo.

After Lama had been in hospital in Delhi, she took him to a farmhouse in a village very far away to rest. Lama Lhundrup and I went there. By this time Lama's aspect had changed; it was a little bit darker. We did a puja every night with tormas. It was a Kalarupa puja where you have to hook the evil-doer that is harming you. There is a wrathful way of hooking the consciousness and Lama said that every time he did this wrathful practice his heart stopped beating, which I think meant the gross mind absorbed into the subtle mind that arose. This is what you can experience through these very high tantric meditations.

What is normally considered as dead in the West doesn't cover everything. It doesn't relate to meditators who have these powers. This is worth checking. I saw in the paper how people have been taken to a cemetery because they are believed to be dead—the Western definition of dead—but they had been incorrectly placed in the coffin and they weren't dead at all. At the cemetery people would hear scratching on the coffin lid and realize the person was still alive.

I heard one time that here, in the famous Hindu temple, Pashupatinath, a person was laid out for cremation Hindu style. The feet were washed to purify negative karma and grass was spread around and the fire was lit, when he sat up. Because his family had believed he was dead and because they thought it very inauspicious for this to happen they beat him with sticks until he really was dead and then continued the cremation. This may not have happened just once, but from time to time. Anyway, I think the Western definition of death needs to be analyzed.

OK, I'm going to stop there.

What I left out the day before yesterday is the subject of the requesting prayers to the lineage lamas. You have to understand why we make requests to the lineage lamas of the past who completed the path to enlightenment, starting from the Buddha and normally up to the root guru. So we request all the lineage lamas starting from the Buddha up to His Holiness Dalai Lama and many of my gurus who have actualized the path. That's not saying I have actualized the path. It's not saying that at all. This is very, very, very important to practice as a basis for the actual body, the mind training in the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment. I want to introduce this but my talk's going around.

So here, today, request with devotion to receive the blessings of the guru. Guru devotion is the root of the path to enlightenment. By receiving the blessings from the guru, you can then

receive the realizations of the path to enlightenment. As I mentioned before, Manjushri explained that requesting the guru one-pointedly is the foundation and then there is the actual body. To develop realizations we have to learn all these practices that make achieving realizations possible. That is my main point for introducing them.

DEDICATIONS

[Mandala offering]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta, the source of all success and happiness for me and all sentient beings, be actualized within my heart. May this bodhicitta be actualized, may it fulfill all my wishes for happiness, including enlightenment and fulfill all wishes of all sentient beings for their happiness, up to enlightenment. May this wish-fulfilling bodhicitta be generated within my heart and in the hearts of my own family members and everybody who has a connection to me, animals, people, everybody, and may it be generated in the hearts of all the students and benefactors of this organization, FPMT, all the supporters, also all the people who offer service to this organization, who have served in the past, who are serving now and who will serve in the future. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts as well as those who rely on me, whom I promised to pray for, whose names have been given to me to pray for, who have died and who are living. May bodhicitta be actualized in all their hearts and in the hearts of all the sentient beings without delay of even a second.

[*Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...*]

Secondly, due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China, and then also the other countries who have so many problems, so much suffering because of the leaders' motivation, because of their self-cherishing thought or lack of a good heart, not having compassion and loving kindness, causing the people of that country to suffer so much. We should pray that bodhicitta is actualized in the hearts of all the leaders so even in one city where there are many millions of people they get so much peace and happiness and then of course also in the country where there are so many more, they get so much peace and happiness.

[*Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...*]

Thirdly, due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by all sentient beings and the buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the people who follow the different religions, so that this world is filled with perfect peace and happiness and everybody lives their lives only benefiting each other, without harm. May whatever they do only become the cause of enlightenment, and the cause of happiness for all sentient beings.

[*Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...*]

[His Holiness' long-life prayer]

All the opportunities you have received to meet and practice the Dharma—how much Dharma understanding you have received since you came here, how much Dharma wisdom you have received, how much negative karma you have purified since you started attending this course, by meditating on the lamrim bringing your mind closer to the realizations of the path to enlightenment—every single one of these benefits you have received by the kindness of His Holiness Dalai Lama. He’s the embodiment of all the buddhas’ compassion, so you have received this by the kindness of Avalokiteshvara, the Compassion Buddha.

For example, when the Tibetans escaped to India after the uprising when mainland China took over Tibet, at that time Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru decided to send all the Tibetans back to Tibet. If His Holiness had not requested that the Tibetans who escaped be allowed to remain in India, Nehru would have sent them back to Tibet. If that happened, there wouldn’t be Kopan Monastery and there wouldn’t be all these courses. How many courses now? Forty-two? None of these forty-two courses would have happened because Kopan Monastery wouldn’t have happened. Similarly, none of the meditation centers, services, projects, hospices and so forth of the organization—about one hundred and sixty-four or something—would have happened. There would have been none of this, the centers serving the people, serving the sentient beings of this world. This would not have happened in the different parts of the West.

You can see from that, it’s completely through His Holiness’ kindness. He sent a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru to not send the Tibetans back to Tibet and then all these things happened. Besides His Holiness, so many lamas were able to go to the West and spread the Dharma and help so many people, turning their faces toward enlightenment. Therefore, it’s very important to do this prayer to fulfill His Holiness’ holy wishes. Now is an extremely difficult time for the Tibet issue; there are unbelievable obstacles. Then, for His Holiness to have a long life.

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

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds in the same way that Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three times’ buddhas dedicated their merits.

Please pray to be able to completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa’s teaching within your own heart, in the hearts of your family members, in the hearts of all the students and supporters and in the hearts of everybody in this world.

LECTURE 7

VAJRAYANA IS NOT A SEPARATE VEHICLE FROM MAHAYANA

The great Indian scholar and highly attained yogi, Lama Atisha, was the crown of the great monastic university in India, Nalanda, which was established almost fifteen hundred years ago. As I mentioned before, Lama Atisha wrote the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* in Tibet, which contains the essence of the 84,000 teachings taught by Buddha. Of course, it is not everything the Buddha taught sentient beings but it's the essence. The teachings come in three levels—the lesser vehicle or Hinayana teachings and the great vehicle or Mahayana teachings, which is divided into the Mahayana Paramitayana teachings and the Mahayana Secret Mantra Vajrayana teachings or tantra.

You have to understand that the Mahayana comes in two—one is sutra, one is tantra. It's OK to think of the Hinayana, the Mahayana Paramitayana and the Mahayana Vajrayana, but if you think there are three separate vehicles—Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana—then you are wrong, totally wrong. That suggests that Vajrayana is not part of the Mahayana, that the Mahayana is only Paramitayana. When you say, “Hinayana teachings, then Mahayana teachings, then Vajrayana teachings,” if you present it like that, you are saying that the Vajrayana is not part of the Mahayana teachings. That's completely wrong because if you practice the Vajrayana without bodhicitta, it doesn't become the cause to achieve enlightenment. If you practice Vajrayana without renunciation it doesn't become the cause to achieve liberation from samsara, liberation from the oceans of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion.

Renunciation has two parts. First, there is the renunciation of this life and next, the renunciation of the future lives' samsara, seeing that it is only in the nature of suffering. Renunciation of future lives means having no attachment to the future samsaric rebirth, the future samsaric happiness, or the future samsaric wealth and perfections. When we have no attachment to the happiness and pleasure of future lives and we want to be free from that, that is the renunciation of future lives.

Why do we need the renunciation of this life? Without the renunciation of this life, with the attachment clinging to this life, if we practice tantra it doesn't even become Dharma. I'm not talking about Hindu tantra here but Buddhist tantra, the tantra taught by the Buddha. The name “tantra” is the same but its meaning is different. Whatever the Hindu meaning of tantra is, here it means the Secret Mantra Vajrayana. We must practice Vajrayana with the renunciation of this life. The very first Dharma is the renunciation of this life. It is the totally free, satisfied, healthy mind, the inner peaceful mind, free from attachment grasping to this life. Without this, when there is attachment grasping to this life, that mind is nonvirtuous. It is what causes nonvirtuous actions, disturbing our mental continuum and not allowing us any peace.

If you practice tantra, Secret Mantra Vajrayana, with this attachment, it doesn't even become Dharma. You have to understand it doesn't even become Dharma. The Vajrayana practice

you are doing, the meditation on chakras, winds and drops—whatever you’re doing—doesn’t even become Dharma, doesn’t even become the cause of happiness of future lives; it doesn’t even become the cause of temporary happiness. To become the cause of a good rebirth and the happiness of future lives, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana you practice has to be Dharma. To do it with attachment, clinging to this life, with worldly concern, your action of practicing Secret Mantra Vajrayana becomes nonvirtue and is the cause of rebirth in the lower realms.

This is illustrated by the story of two meditators in Penpo in Tibet. Maybe they were monks, I’m not sure, but they were doing a Highest Yoga Tantra Yamantaka practice. Yamantaka is the extremely wrathful aspect of Manjushri, the buddha of wisdom, the manifestation of all the buddhas’ holy wisdom. It was a long retreat and one passed away but the other continued doing the retreat. In the evening with this practice you burn tsampa over a fire and make *sur* offerings, making charity. There’s a prayer where you visualize filling the whole sky with objects of the five desires, and then you make offerings to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and then you make charity to the six realms’ sentient beings. Particularly here, you offer the smell of the burning tsampa because that smell is needed for the smell-eaters, the intermediate state beings.

Since I mentioned this I’ll explain it so you can get an idea in case somebody wants to practice it, to help them. There are numberless intermediate state beings who will come when you burn some tsampa. They come to get the smell. Their suffering is unbelievable, unimaginable, and getting the smell helps them. After you made them satisfied with the smell of the food, which becomes food for them, you give them teachings about bodhicitta, the good heart and about not harming others and so forth—such as, if you benefit others you receive happiness back; if you harm others you receive harm back, things like that. For example, if you plant something hot, like a chili, the result will be hot, but if you plant something sweet, like a raisin, the result will be sweet. Like that, by harming others the result is suffering and you receive harm. And by benefiting others, you receive happiness. You give teachings to them like that to inspire them to practice the good heart and to not harm other sentient beings. There is an unimaginable number of these sentient beings enduring the most unbelievable suffering and it helps them so much if you can give teachings to them like this.

A Tibetan person told me about the time when he was in prison in Tibet. Each day he and the other prisoners got a tiny amount of white flour that was made into dough and steamed. That was all they had to eat each day, so they were unbelievably hungry. They were in prison, they weren’t free, but they could go out into the fields, so they used to do that to look for other people’s *kaka*. The Chinese who were running the prison ate a lot of beans and the prisoners could find the beans when they opened up the kaka with sticks. If they found any beans, they ate them. They also looked for old bones to chew and these helped sustain the body. The Chinese warders had a kitchen somewhere and the smell from the kitchen was also helpful in sustaining the body.

Because this man had gone through that experience and knew how invaluable the smell of food was in keeping him alive, he never missed doing the *sur* practice, offering the smell of burning tsampa to the smell-eaters. Those beings suffer hunger that is thirty, forty, fifty times worse than any human could ever experience, it’s much more unbearable, so of course they find the practice very beneficial. But it is also beneficial for us, because when we do the

practice it helps us attain a pure land in our next rebirth and helps pacify whatever obstacles we have and assure the success of whatever projects we have. They are the benefits from our side but of course for the smell-eaters, the intermediate state beings, who are numberless, there are the most amazing benefits.

This *sur* practice was what the *sur*viving meditator in Penpo was doing as part of his Yamantaka practice when one day a hungry ghost appeared, looking a little like Yamantaka, with many arms and heads. When the meditator asked who he was, the hungry ghost explained that he was his friend, the other meditator who was doing the Yamantaka retreat. Although he had done it for many years, because he had done it *without* the lamrim, which means without bodhicitta, the practice failed to become the cause for enlightenment. There was also no right view, the right view of the Prasangika school, that cuts the root of samsara, that is an antidote to ignorance, and so the practice also failed to become the cause to liberation. And there was no renunciation even for that life, the very beginning of Dharma. Whenever he did the meditation on the deity and chanted mantras he did so with attachment clinging to that life, without any lamrim at all, which is why he was reborn as a hungry ghost.

Lama Atisha explained that you can be learned in tantra but if your practice does not even become Dharma then you will be reborn in the lower realms. It's not only that your practice fails to be a Mahayana one and is a Hinayana one instead, you will be reborn in the lower realms.

In the teachings by the lineage lamas the example is given of a Tibetan food that is made for special celebrations with powdered cheese and lots of butter and made into a ball that becomes quite hard. It's white and very delicious. It's said to be delicious due to the kindness of the butter. I guess cakes and ice cream are delicious due to the kindness of the sugar. The main ingredient in a cake is flour but it is delicious because of the sugar. So it is said that the tantric path becomes rich and meaningful by the kindness of the lamrim, the three principal aspects of the path.

Unlike in places like Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan or I'm not sure, China, in Tibetan communities you never hear people say that Hinayana's OK but then there is Mahayana and Vajrayana. If you mistakenly think that the Paramitayana path is Mahayana and Vajrayana is something separate then you are very wrong. You have to say Mahayana Vajrayana otherwise it gives people the wrong understanding, that Vajrayana is not Mahayana.

That is why I have emphasized this. If we practice tantra, Secret Mantra Vajrayana, without bodhicitta, it doesn't become the cause of enlightenment; if we practice it without right view, it doesn't become the antidote to samsara, the antidote to ignorance. It becomes the cause of samsara; it only causes us to develop ignorance. If it's done without the renunciation of the next life, it doesn't become the cause to achieve liberation. And then without the first renunciation of this life, it doesn't even become Dharma, the cause of the happiness of future lives. That's why I gave you those stories.

We must practice Secret Mantra Vajrayana, tantra, with a lamrim motivation, with renunciation, bodhicitta and right view. Then we can practice tantra correctly. Only with right view does it become Vajrayana, where our mind is inseparable from method and wisdom. When we visualize ourselves as the deity, even though the aspect of the deity's holy

body appears to us as a real one, existing from its own side, we understand this is not true. Even if we don't have the actual realization we have the intellectual understanding that this is not true. We have this hallucination, this appearance, but our mind meditating sees that it is not true; it doesn't exist from its own side. Visualizing the deity's holy body is the method side and understanding that, looking at it as empty, is the wisdom side. Because this happens in one mind, not two separate ones, this is the inseparability of method and wisdom. Practicing method and wisdom without separation like this, it becomes Vajrayana.

When we do that practice, visualizing ourselves as the deity or visualizing the mandala, we stop the ordinary appearance and thought of the place, and we visualize pure appearance and pure thought. This is the pure appearance, the mandala, the celestial mansion, that appears to the deity's pure wisdom. While our mind is focused on the mandala, that's the method. Because we are a sentient being it appears to us as truly existent, but at the same time we have the understanding that it's like a dream, it does not exist from its own side. It's like when we are dreaming and we recognize the dream as a dream. We have the appearance but at the same time we understand it's not true; it's a dream. Whatever appears like this, we don't hold onto it as true. Similarly, even when we visualize the mandala, we have the appearance of a real mandala, which means existing from its own side, but from our heart we understand it's not true. That is the wisdom.

Therefore, to say Hinayana, then Mahayana, and then Vajrayana, that is incorrect; it causes big misunderstandings for people. However, if you say Hinayana and then Mahayana, the Paramitayana teaching, and then you say Mahayana Vajrayana, that's correct. That doesn't cause misunderstandings.

This is the *most* important thing, the very first thing in life. In regard to Dharma, this is the first thing to understand, so we don't cheat ourselves for our whole life, believing we are practicing Dharma but nothing becomes Dharma. For our whole life we have been doing prayers and mantras and this and that and many things, believing we've been practicing Dharma, but when we come to understand what is and what is not Dharma, we discover we have not been practicing Dharma. We have been doing many things but nothing has become Dharma. There's a danger that our whole life has been wasted.

Even living in a cave, in a solitary place, without knowing exactly what Dharma is we can waste our whole life by incorrectly believing we are practicing Dharma. We can live our whole life in a monastery but not know what Dharma is. Even learning very vast subjects, nothing becomes Dharma. So, there's a great danger that all or most of our actions—listening, reflecting, meditating, whatever we're doing—becomes nonvirtue. This is the very first thing to understand, the most important thing, to wake the mind up from a deep sleep, the deep sleep of ignorance.

I'll stop here.

DEDICATIONS

[Mandala offering]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized within my own heart, in the hearts of my family members, the animals and people—in the hearts of anybody who has a connection with me as well as in the hearts of all the students and all the benefactors of this organization and those who have offered service to the organization in the past, are offering service in the present or who will serve in the future, and those whom I promised to pray for, whose names have been given to me, and in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

[Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...]

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by all sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, and especially the leaders in mainland China, then the leaders in the other countries in this world who have so many unbelievable problems. There is no peace in those leaders' hearts because of a lack of good heart, a lack of compassion and loving kindness, because of their self-cherishing thought, and then many problems happen in their countries. One country has many millions of people who get so much peace and happiness when the leader has a good heart, therefore this prayer, praying to generate bodhicitta in all their hearts, is very important.

War, famine, disease, torture and poverty, as well as the dangers of fire, water, earth and wind, none of these things will happen if everybody generates bodhicitta, the ultimate good heart. Whatever they do only becomes the cause of enlightenment, the highest Dharma, and only the cause of happiness of all sentient beings. Therefore, they don't create the cause for dangers of fire, water, earthquakes, war, famine, economic problems and so forth. With bodhicitta there's prosperity and everything is plentiful, without scarcity or inflation. With inner development it becomes very easy to give rise to all the positive thoughts, and then all the realizations happen.

[Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...]

And may the bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of everybody who follow different religions, then there's also so much peace and happiness in the world if that happens.

[Jang chub sem chog rinpoche ...]

As I mentioned last night, recite the prayer for His Holiness Dalai Lama to have a stable and long life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Long-life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama]

Due all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, that which are merely labeled by mind, which do not exist from their own side at all, but are totally empty; may the I, who is also merely labeled by mind, who does not exist from its own side at all, who is totally empty; achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is merely labeled by mind, which does not exist at all from its own side, which is totally empty; and lead all sentient beings, who are merely labeled by the mind, who do not exist from their own side, who are totally empty from their own side; then bring

them to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is merely labeled by mind, which is totally empty from its own side; by myself alone, who is also merely labeled by mind, who does not exist at all from its own side, who is totally empty.

Due to all the three times' merits collected by me, collected by others, may the stainless teaching of Lama Tsongkhapa, like refined gold, be completely actualized within my own heart, in the hearts of my family members, in the hearts of all of us here, in the hearts of all the students in this organization and the supporters and those who serve the organization, in all their hearts, in the hearts of everybody in this world.

LECTURE 8

SEE ALL CAUSATIVE PHENOMENA LIKE AN ILLUSION

The verse just before the dedication was what the Buddha taught at the end of the *Diamond Cutter Sutra*. It is a very important teaching on the perfection of wisdom, the heart of the Buddhadharma, the heart of the 84,000 teachings taught by the Buddha.

*A star, a defective vision, a butter lamp,
An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble,
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud—
See conditioned things as such!*

It didn't happen this time but usually I advise people to recite this verse slowly with meditation. The Tibetan starts with "see conditioned things as such" but that comes at the end in the English. Then there are the examples—like a star, then like a defective vision, a butter lamp, an illusion, a drop of dew, or a water bubble, a dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud.

To meditate on this, take each example and stop to examine it, seeing how all conditioned phenomena are like that. Look at a star and compare conditioned phenomena with a star; stop a little bit and then look at defective vision and see how conditioned phenomena are like that and so forth.

To meditate like this is an extremely powerful way of looking at causative phenomena, especially your life, especially yourself, the I, which is a causative phenomenon. Under the control of cause and conditions, it decays, it changes all the time, not only day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second, even within a second, a split second. That is the subtlest impermanence, that things do not last, even minute by minute. What exists in this minute doesn't exist in the next minute; what exists in this second doesn't exist in the next second or even within a split second. It constantly changes, it constantly decays, even within a split second. It's the same with your life, your body, your possessions, your family members, friends, enemies, strangers, all the people around you.

That is the basic meditation. You should use these words to see their nature. In some parts it's the nature of impermanence; in some parts it's that they're empty, that they appear to your hallucinated mind as something real, existing from their own side, not merely labeled by mind. That is not true, that is totally false, because they do not exist at all from their own side. All these phenomena that appear as something very real, existing from their own side, not merely labeled by mind, are totally false; there's no such thing there. In reality they are totally empty.

The first way of looking at causative phenomena is *like a star*, looking at it as empty.

Then *like defective vision*, when you have a hallucinated, defective view, like the vision of hair dropping down into the food but there is no hair there. When the eye sense is not clear, due to things like taking drugs or sicknesses or fever, all kinds of visions can happen. Those are examples related to things that appear but are not actually there, so this is a way of meditating on emptiness, the very nature of phenomena, the very nature of the I.

With *a butter lamp*, there's a person who makes the butter lamp, then there is the butter, the container and many things, many causes and conditions, that cause it to come into existence. Like all causative phenomena, a butter lamp comes into existence by depending on many causes and conditions. The I, these aggregates and the material possessions you have in the family, are all dependent arisings; they depend on many causes and conditions to exist. Being under the control of causes and conditions, they change; they do not last. That is the nature of impermanence. You can also meditate in this way.

Like an illusion, it's the same as when a magician uses mantras or certain substances to illusion the audience's senses into seeing a golden palace, a beautiful man or woman or all sorts of phenomena. The audience has the illusion and believes it to be true. The magician also has the illusion, but he understands it is not true, that it's an illusion. Of course, some people in the audience understand that it's not true, but those who don't know believe it's real.

Here, right now, we haven't realized emptiness. We haven't realized the emptiness of the I; we haven't realized the emptiness of the aggregates, the emptiness of our material possessions, our house, money and so forth. We haven't realized the emptiness of the family or the *surrounding* people: friends, enemies and all these people around us. All these phenomena are merely labeled by mind but in the next second the hallucination of true existence is projected, decorated, on the mere name from the negative imprint left on the mind by ignorance. The projection, the decoration, comes from there. We project this hallucination of true existence on the mere imputation; we have the sense that there is something real existing from its own side on the merely-labeled I, the merely-labeled aggregates.

The body and mind, the real mind and real body, are hallucinations projected onto the mere name, the merely-imputed mind, the merely-imputed body. The material possessions are the same; onto the mere imputation, this hallucination, we see something real appearing from there, we see this hallucination decorated from there. It's the same thing with the merely-labeled friend. In the next second there is this big projection, the truly-existent, real friend; "real" is decorated from there.

And then there is the merely-labeled enemy. In the next second the real enemy appears as truly existent, something real, not merely labeled by mind. That hallucination is decorated there, projected by this ignorance. Like that, the whole family and the people *surrounding* us—ignorance makes everything real. This is a total hallucination. All these phenomena—house, cars, whatever—are like illusions. Everything is this hallucination of true existence, inherent existence, not merely labeled by mind, something real from its own side, decorated there from the negative imprint left on the mind by ignorance, making everything real.

When you do this prayer, the main meditation is to apply these examples in the same way to objects such as the I, the aggregates, the body and mind, your possessions, your family members and those surrounding you: the enemy and friend. Those are the main ones.

Seeing phenomena as illusions—illusioned by a magician—is a very good meditation on emptiness. Your ignorance is like the magician. The negative imprints left on your mind are like the mantras that the magician recites or the substances he uses, causing the audience to have all kinds of illusions, like cities and so forth. Ignorance is the magician and you are the audience, illusioned into believing these things are real. The I, the aggregates—the body and mind—everything about the body and everything about the mind, all these things that only exist in mere name, that are merely imputed by the mind, these are made real by the ignorance. From the I, the aggregates, the six consciousness, the fifty-one mental factors, all the different parts of the body, everything down to the atoms, down to the very last atom, everything appears as real.

Ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you. Everything is totally false in that way. It doesn't mean you don't exist; it doesn't mean the aggregates don't exist; it doesn't mean the body doesn't exist; it doesn't mean the mind doesn't exist. They exist but they exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. But you don't see them that way; they don't appear to you in that way. Illusioned by ignorance, the magician, what you see is a total hallucination. Your material possessions are the same, totally illusioned by ignorance. Everything, including money, car, house and so forth, all these things exist. They exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind but these things are not real, in the sense that common people use the term “real,” meaning to exist from its own side, to exist by its own nature, to be truly existent.

In the view of the hallucinated mind you not only see everything in that way, you generate the wrong concept, the ignorance, that holds onto these phenomena as being true, as the reality. In reality they are totally non-existent, totally empty, there are no such things. While they exist, the reality is that they are empty. While they are empty, they exist as merely imputed by mind. This is what you have to realize; this is the truth you have to see. It is only when you have completely removed the subtle defilements, when you have no more hallucinations, that phenomena can appear as merely labeled by the mind according to the reality. For a buddha's holy mind, there's no false appearance.

Ignorance, like a magician, illusioned you to all this. So, that is one meditation technique you can use in daily life to practice mindfulness. You can use this technique all the time or use a different technique each day.

You can use this technique for one day—while you're at home or at the office doing your job, or while you are shopping, you constantly have mindfulness like this. Like watching a movie, you are watching a movie of your life. All the hallucinations that appear to you and you believe in, you hold onto, are not there; they are totally non-existent, empty. While you're driving a car you can do this meditation on emptiness. While you are having a meeting, while you are having a consultation, while you are teaching or studying, cooking or cleaning or writing, being a secretary or working manually, whatever it is, you can practice mindfulness like that. While you are working, your mind is in meditation, like this.

You can do this while you're shopping, in the market, in the department store or supermarket. For instance, when you go to the clothing section, there is all kinds of clothing: hats, pants, dresses, shoes and all kinds of things, for children, for young adults, for middle-aged people and old people. You don't even have to buy these things but you can just go there to meditate. You can go around and see how they appear to you. All these are hallucinations, all these are like illusions. You have been illusioned by ignorance, like a magician, into thinking they are something real existing from their own side. All these hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dresses exist merely imputed by the mind but they appear as something real, existing from their own side. Like a magician, ignorance, has illusioned you.

The aggregates are the same. They exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, but that doesn't appear to you and you don't see that. You see real aggregates, illusioned by ignorance. As I mentioned before, down to the tiniest particle, down to the atoms, they exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, but this ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you, making you see them as real—even the atoms you see as real, existing from their own side, not merely labeled by mind.

All the six kinds of consciousness and the fifty-one mental factors are merely labeled. For example, the phenomenon which is formless, shapeless and colorless, whose nature is clear and able to perceive an object, that phenomenon exists, and for that phenomenon your mind makes up the label "mind." That label "mind" is merely imputed by your mind. Then you believe in that label. That phenomenon which is formless, colorless and shapeless and whose nature is clear and able to perceive an object is the base and "mind" is the label. They are two different phenomena. They don't exist *separately* but they exist *differently*.

All the mental factors are like this. Depending on what activities they do the label is given, merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, all these six consciousnesses and fifty-one mental factors exist—of course they exist—but they exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, therefore they are empty. *Because of that they exist*; they exist in mere name, merely imputed by the mind. That's why they are empty. That's why they are empty of being real entities existing from their own side. They are empty of how they have been appearing to you, to your own mind, and what you have believed in. Ignorance holds onto that as true, but it's a total hallucination. Ignorance, like a magician, illusioned you like that.

It's the same with all the material possessions—the house, the car and whatever—and all the *surrounding* people, family, everything. While all these things are totally empty, ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you to see them all as real, existing from their own side. You have been believing this to be true, not only from this morning, not only from birth, but from beginningless rebirths. From beginningless rebirths you have been believing they are true, but in reality they are not true at all. In reality they are totally false; these real phenomena do not exist even in mere name, even something the size of an atom doesn't exist.

I mentioned looking at clothing while shopping. You look at the clothes and they appear real but in reality ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you. In reality all those hundreds and thousands of dresses that all appear as something real to you are not real. They are totally false; they are totally empty right there. You can meditate on that, recognizing the illusion as

an illusion rather than holding onto the true appearance. Then, you don't create the ignorance holding that is true. Then, anger, attachment and those other delusions do not arise and you don't create karma, thus it becomes the cause to achieve liberation from samsara, from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes. It becomes the antidote to the root of samsara, ignorance, the foundation of all our delusion. You can do this wherever you are—in a dress shop, a department store, a supermarket or wherever.

Being aware of the appearance of the real I and the aggregates and all those things is one thing. You can also watch your actions in the same way, watching how they are also merely imputed by the mind. There is a watcher, there's an object to watch and there's the action of watching. All three are merely imputed by mind; all three are dependent on each other. Just as Nagarjuna explained in the very extensive, very detailed teachings given in the root of wisdom, watching is also merely imputed by the mind. What are you doing now? Watching. There's the action—real watching, truly-existent watching, inherently-existent watching. Again, ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you. It is totally non-existent in reality. And the object being watched is the same. Ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you, putting a cover over everything that exists merely imputed by the mind, a hallucination is put on this, an illusion. It is totally false; in reality there's not even an atom of it which exists.

In department stores there is always a huge section for make-up, with all the different colored bottles and all sorts of things. You can meditate there in the same way. I don't have to repeat it again; it's the same as before. Ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you into seeing all this as truly existent, decorating that true existence over it all, so everything is like an illusion. Meditate that in reality there's no such thing. That becomes a meditation on emptiness.

In supermarkets there are thirty or forty types of cheese in the cheese section. They all appear to you as not merely labeled by mind, as real cheese. But what appears to you, what you believe, has nothing to do with the reality. Ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you. All that is totally false; there's no such thing in reality. It's all empty.

It's the same when you are walking in the street, with all the cars, buses and motorbikes—especially those that make a huge noise driven by guys in black clothes! Everything you see—the road, the houses, the people—again, while you are walking you can do this meditation, that ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you into seeing all these are truly-existent, not merely labeled by the mind.

What they are is what is merely labeled by the mind, but they appear as truly existent and you believe in that. You totally, completely, a hundred percent believe in that. This is amazing. This is how we have all been living our life. Can you imagine? This is how we have all been living our life, in a total hallucination. This is how it is twenty-four hours a day. This is how it has been every day, day and night, from birth, and not only in this life but from beginningless rebirths. Because of ignorance, not only the illusion, the hallucination of the object, appears as not merely labeled by mind but we also let our mind hold onto that as a hundred percent true. We never doubt it and that becomes the basis for attachment, anger and all these other delusions arising.

Each delusion arises and each has its own wrong views. Projected on that, we create karma that only results in samsaric suffering. This is how we have been circling in samsara. We die and are reborn, then we experience all the sufferings and problems of that realm, then we die and are again reborn and experience all the sufferings and problems of that realm, and so on, like that from beginningless rebirths.

You can do the same meditation at home, while you are cleaning, while you are cooking, even while you are reading books—how ignorance, like a magician, has illusioned you.

Everything that exists, exists in mere name, merely imputed by the mind, but it appears as truly existent, as something real, existing from its own side. Then you let your mind hold onto that as true. Every time you do that you are creating ignorance. You are creating ignorance, holding onto everything as true. Then by exaggerating this thing as beautiful, attachment arises after that. And by exaggerating this thing as ugly, as no good or harmful, anger arises after that. Each delusion has its own hallucination. Attachment has its own hallucination; anger has its own hallucination. Anger's projection is something to hurt, to harm; attachment's projection is something to grasp onto. That creates karma, the cause of the future rebirths, future samsara.

In the *Lamrim Chenmo*, Lama Tsongkhapa said,

On the basis of ignorance the concept of true existence arises; on the basis of true existence you then exaggerate good or bad. On that basis attachment and anger arise. Because this object that ignorance holds onto is a wrong concept you can realize it is empty.

What I want to clarify is that none of this exists. What attachment apprehends, what is projected by anger, what it holds onto, does not exist; it's not there. Why is it not there? You have to understand, this is very important. Because it is built or projected onto true existence. What attachment apprehends, what anger apprehends, is done on the basis of the projection that is decorated by ignorance holding onto true existence. Everything is done on that basis. When all those other different delusions occur, their view is on the basis of the hallucination projected by ignorance, true existence. Everything's built on that basis. Do you understand?

Those projections don't exist. The view of our attachment or anger is built on that. They do not exist because the basis is the hallucination of true existence projected by ignorance and that truly-existent object is not there.

The conclusion that Lama Tsongkhapa reached is that because this object that ignorance holds onto is a wrong concept we can realize it is empty. When we realize that it is empty, we get full confidence that we can achieve liberation from samsara. Lama Tsongkhapa explained this according to Aryadeva, one of the Six Ornaments, the great Indian pandit scholars, the highly attained beings who wrote commentaries based on the Buddha's teachings. There are the root texts by Nagarjuna, Asanga, Chandrakirti and so forth, and then there are commentaries written by these pandits like Aryadeva. Lama Tsongkhapa and many other great scholars, highly attained beings in Tibet, then wrote commentaries on them. This is what has been studied in the monasteries since Buddhism was established in

Tibet until now. All these extensive teachings were integrated into the lamrim and then put in the practice. Like that they teach enlightenment for sentient beings.

We can be mindful of emptiness in our daily actions with this meditation technique of seeing how ignorance is like a magician, a person who creates a hallucination by using mantras or substances. Likewise, ignorance has illusioned us into believing all the hallucinations are truly existent. It's very helpful to remember this at all times, especially when you are meeting people and there is the danger of anger or other negative emotions arising. The whole thing becomes like watching a movie.

Seeing how everything is false and in reality it's all empty, your mind feels incredible peace, freedom and happiness. When those delusions such as attachment, anger and so forth arise, the mind is overwhelmed, life goes up and down, and sadness, fear and all those emotions happen. But now there are no ups and downs. You can use this meditation when you go travelling, when you go sightseeing or on a pilgrimage.

The next way to see causative phenomena is *like a drop of dew*, which shows the impermanence of causative phenomena. Just as a drop of dew can fall at any time and so can't really be trusted to be there all the time, in the same way all phenomena can cease at any time, including life.

The next way is *like a water bubble*. The reflections and colors you can see in a water bubble look very beautiful but you can't really trust it. It too can cease any time. It's the same with form, sound, smell, taste and tangible objects. These causative phenomena are like a water bubble because they can be stopped, they can be popped, at any time. So, this is a meditation on impermanence.

You should see causative phenomena as *like a dream*, which again is another extremely powerful meditation on emptiness. While you are dreaming everything appears as not merely labeled by mind, as existing from its own side. In a dream everything appears real but when you wake up it's all not true. Even you yourself realize all this is totally false after you have woken up. While you are dreaming, if you're able to recognize the dream as a dream, you still have all these hallucinations but at the same time there's the understanding that it's not true, it doesn't exist. So, it's like that.

You can look at everything in your daily life—form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, you yourself as the doer, the subject, and your actions and the objects—you see all these things as like a dream, as if you are dreaming twenty-four hours a day. If you can do that then, exactly as in a dream where you realize you are dreaming, even though you still have the appearance of things being truly existent, not merely labeled by the mind, you understand that this is totally false, totally hallucinated.

Subject, I, action, object—all these things that appear to exist from their own side, when you look at them as like a dream, you see they do not exist from their own side, they do not exist in reality, they're all empty. You have that understanding at the same time and while you hold that understanding none of the negative emotional thoughts can arise; there's great peace in the heart.

With this mindfulness, when you look at everything as like a dream—at home, in the office, at the shops, whenever you're driving—everything becomes an antidote to samsara, an antidote to all the delusions, to karma and delusion, and an antidote to the root, ignorance. It helps you to not hold onto these hallucinations of true existence. Whatever you do then becomes the cause for the cessation of suffering and the cessation of the cause of suffering. This one meditation, looking at everything as like a dream, is a very powerful meditation.

The next way to look at causative phenomena is *like a flash of lightning*. This is again to remind yourself of impermanence. Like a flash of lightning, causative phenomena do not last a long time. During the very brief flash of lightning, road and trees and whatever appear to you very clearly, then they are gone. It happens then it's gone. Like the appearance due to lightning, all causative phenomena can cease at any time, appearing one moment and gone the next. This is a reminder of the nature of impermanence.

Finally, you should look at all phenomena as *like clouds*. While you are looking at clouds, they are changing constantly. Like that, phenomena are constantly changing and decaying, hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second, even within a second. When you look at a cloud, it has soon either changed into something different or vanished completely. Meditate on causative phenomena as like this, that they are impermanent in nature.

The first way of looking at causative phenomena mentioned in the verse is *like a star*. We can't see a star in the daytime. The I, action, object and all phenomena exist but they exist in mere name. They are merely imputed by the mind, but we can't see this. Nothing exists from its own side; everything is totally empty. Therefore I, action, object, all phenomena are totally empty, totally empty of existing from their own side, empty of the real one, the one that appears to us, that we hold onto.

As I mentioned before, although they are totally empty, ignorance leaves a negative imprint on the mind, thus decorating this hallucination of true existence onto the empty I, onto the empty action, onto the empty phenomena, onto this hallucination of a real one, a truly-existent one, not merely labeled by mind. Everything is covered. The truth of emptiness is covered by this hallucination of true existence, which is a projection of ignorance. We not only make that mistake but we let our mind hold onto this as really true. We see this as reality. This is how we live our life and because of that we have been suffering in samsara from beginningless rebirths up to now. If we don't realize emptiness and eliminate the root of samsara, we can't become liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering. If that doesn't happen, we will continuously, endlessly suffer in samsara with this hallucination, believing it to be reality, believing it to be true.

There is no question that arya bodhisattvas, arhats and buddhas see this real I—what appears to us as real and what we believe in a hundred percent—as totally non-existent, totally absent. They see the truth. They see our actions—what appear to us as real and truly existent and we believe is true—as totally non-existent. And they see objects such as form, sound, smell and taste—all that appear to us truly existent, as real, as not merely labeled by mind and that we hold onto as true—as *totally* non-existent, *totally* empty.

Because of having removed the subtle defilements, the dualistic view, buddhas especially don't have the hallucination of truly-existent appearance. They see the whole of phenomena as totally non-existent, as empty.

We have to imitate how buddhas and arya bodhisattvas view causative phenomena. For us, everything seems real, existing from its own side, whereas they see it as completely empty. We need to meditate on seeing all phenomena as like a star in the daytime. We can't see that star; we can't see emptiness. This first way of looking at causative phenomena, as like a star, is an unbelievably profound meditation. It's like an atomic bomb destroying delusion, destroying ignorance.

VAJRASATTVA INITIATION INTRODUCTION

Next I want to give a Vajrasattva *jenang*, a permission to practice, that allows you to do the practice of Vajrasattva. This is very important, very powerful, like an atomic bomb. It's a very powerful means for purifying negative karma and defilements, and the *jenang* allows you to do the meditation and recite the mantra.

It is mentioned,

*To the wise man, even a great negativity becomes small;
To the fool, even a small negativity becomes huge.*

For a foolish person, even though the negative karma they have created might be small, it becomes very heavy because they don't know how to purify it. However, even though a learned person's negative karma might be huge, it will become very small, very thin, because that wise person knows how to purify by means such as the Vajrasattva meditation, with the remedy of the four powers and a perfect confession. The foolish person might only do small negative actions, but they don't know these various purification practices, such as Vajrasattva practice and the remedy of the four powers.

Everyday negative karma, not just the ten nonvirtues, depends on the motivation. No question about anger and ignorance being negative, the common motivation we have is attachment clinging to this life, such as attachment to reputation. There are the four desirable objects I have mentioned: reputation, praise from others, receiving gifts and material things, and comfort—attachment clinging to this life, to this life's pleasure. That is nonvirtue. Any action we do—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, doing our job—whatever activity we do, even meditating or reciting prayers, if it's done with that motivation, it becomes negative karma.

If we don't purify the negative karma at the end of the day before we go to sleep, if we don't purify with the Vajrasattva mantra, then every single negative karma collected with the body, speech and mind today becomes double the next day. I think Kyabje Tsenshab Rinpoche mentioned this. Then, the next day it increases four times and on the third day eight times and on the fourth day sixteen times. It goes on like this, increasing day by day.

A foolish person's negative karma might be small, but it becomes big. If they killed a tiny insect, for example, and never purified it at the end of the day with Vajrasattva, it becomes double the next day then so on, until after fifteen days or maybe eighteen days, it becomes

something like a hundred and fifteen thousand times bigger. As the years go by it multiplies more and more until at the time of death, what might have been the size of an atom becomes as big as a mountain, the size of the earth.

That's just one negative karma, but there are so many negative karmas collected with the body, speech and mind in just one day. It depends on the motivation and, as I have said, the most common motivation is attachment clinging to this life, which is nonvirtue. Any action done with that becomes negative karma. Negative karma doesn't have to be only one of the ten nonvirtues. One negative karma increases over the weeks and months and years until we die, but we are collecting so many negative karmas every day, and each one increases every day. We have collected so many negative karmas in this life, an unbelievable number. It's inexpressible how heavy all this is, sending us to the lower realms and making it very difficult to get back to the human realm, to get a higher rebirth and so, no question, there is no opportunity to practice Dharma.

Reciting the Vajrasattva mantra before going to bed stops negative karma from increasing. You can do the hundred-syllable mantra twenty-one times or the short mantra OM VAJRASATTVA HUM twenty-eight times. There is also OM VAJRASATTVA AH but my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, wrote in a letter that OM VAJRASATTVA HUM is much better. If you are going to recite the short one, OM VAJRASATTVA HUM, then do it twenty-eight times. But if you are going to recite the long mantra, then do it twenty-one times.

If you do that at the end of the day with the meditation on the four opponent powers, then today's negative karma stops becoming double the next day and, not only that, it purifies today's negative karma and it purifies the past negative karmas collected in this life and in previous lives.

Depending on whether you are able recite it with emptiness or a bodhicitta motivation, you can purify many eons of negative karma, collected from beginningless rebirths. The more purification you do the easier it is to have realizations. There are less obstacles and it is easy to become free from samsara and to achieve enlightenment.

I'll stop here. Thank you so much.

LECTURE 9

VAJRASATTVA PREPARATION: GIVE UP STRETCHING THE LEGS

You should give up stretching your legs. There is a verse that says,

*Give up stretching the legs,
Give up entering samsara.
Generate bodhicitta to achieve Vajrasattva,
The Great Victorious One, for all sentient beings.*

Because the human body that you have received with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses is the most precious one, you can accomplish the three great meanings. This perfect human rebirth is extremely difficult to find, but you have received this. You have it now but it doesn't last a long time, it doesn't last forever. Death is definite and death can happen at any time. The time of death is very uncertain; death can happen at any time and at that time nothing can benefit except the holy Dharma. After death, the mind continues on, to either a rebirth in the lower realms or in the higher realms, as a god or human being.

As I mentioned before, even for somebody trying to practice Dharma, in one day there may be some virtue but most actions—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working and so forth—become negative karma. Sometimes even reciting mantras, saying prayers or meditating becomes nonvirtue.

By analyzing one day of your life like that, you see that you create more negative karma, even if you are trying to practice Dharma. Therefore, the negative karma of this one day is more powerful than the positive and so when you add that to all the negative karmas from this and past lives, can you imagine? There is no third alternative, only these two. Either you are reborn in the lower realms because of negative karma and have to experience the most unimaginable sufferings, or you are reborn in the upper realms because of positive karma.

Shantideva said,

*If, when I have the chance to live a wholesome life
My actions are not wholesome,
Then what shall I be able to do
When confused by the misery of the lower realms?*

The essence of this verse is that although you have the most unbelievable opportunity in this life to collect virtue you only ever engage in nonvirtue, so of course you will be reborn in the lower realms. Once you are born there it will be almost impossible to collect any virtue at all and it will be impossible to come back to the upper realms. It's very unsure when that could happen.

For that reason, you must give up “stretching the legs,” which means abandoning laziness, abandoning the attachment clinging to this life, abandoning not practicing Dharma. This advice is very important.

You need to understand that samsara and samsaric perfections, samsaric happiness, are only suffering and not look on them as real happiness. Samsaric happiness is only suffering; samsaric perfections, wealth and so forth, are only in the nature of suffering. Samsara itself is in the nature of suffering.

Neil has already explained this and you have meditated on the three types of suffering, including pervasive compounding suffering. I might have mentioned it, I’m not sure. Anyway, pervasive suffering refers to these aggregates being under the control of karma and delusion. That’s why they are in the nature of suffering and are pervaded by suffering. There is also the contaminated seed of delusions, pervaded by suffering. It compounds the suffering of the body and mind of this life, and it also creates karma. From the seed of delusion, delusion arises and that motivates karma, which leaves a negative imprint on the mind that compounds future rebirths and future lives’ suffering. So, besides this life, this seed of delusion also compounds the future lives and future lives’ suffering. Because of pervasive compounding suffering these aggregates are only in the nature of suffering.

I might have mentioned this already but I’ll repeat it just so you can understand the words. After feeling very hot because the body was exposed to the hot sun, when you go in the cold water the greater suffering is stopped by having stopped the action of exposing the body to the hot sun. The action of being in the cold water is compounded discomfort already but it’s so small that it’s unnoticeable. The more you continue the action of being in the cold water, the more this compounded discomfort grows. Another greater discomfort has stopped and a smaller discomfort—the discomfort of being cold—has begun, but because it starts from being small, you label that feeling “pleasure” or “comfort.”

That’s one example. All the rest of the samsaric pleasures are like that—the pleasure of sleeping, the pleasure of sex, the pleasure of music, whatever—every samsaric pleasure is like that. The experience you label “pleasure” is only suffering. That’s why samsaric pleasure doesn’t continue and, not only that, it doesn’t increase. But you can continue your Dharma happiness and you can complete it, so it’s totally different. You can now see how unbelievably worthwhile it is to practice Dharma. Samsara is total nonsense; the eight worldly dharmas are total nonsense. Samsara is only in the nature of suffering and all the samsaric pleasures are only in the nature of suffering. Material possessions, everything, is in the nature of suffering.

It’s like this. If there is honey on the sharp blade of a knife and you lick the honey, you will cut your tongue. Samsaric pleasure is like the honey. Every time you try for samsaric happiness thinking it is real happiness, you grasp onto it with attachment, which is the blade of the knife. It harms your mind and creates the cause for further samsara, the cause to be reborn in samsara, in the lower realms. It constantly deceives you; it cheats you. In that way, you keep yourself in the prison of samsara, having to be continuously reborn in samsara and experience all the sufferings again and again. This is how it is unless you can see that samsaric pleasures are in the nature of suffering—like honey on a knife blade—that cause

you to wander in samsara, continuously circling without end. This is the result if you don't practice Dharma, if you don't generate renunciation for samsara.

The *Guru Puja* says,

*Having abandoned the mind that views this unbearable prison
Of cyclic existence as a beautiful park, I seek your blessings
To hold the three trainings as the treasure of the aryas' wealth
And, thereby, to uphold the victory banner of liberation.*

It is very important to recognize that what cheats you is this attachment to samsaric pleasure, which is only in the nature of suffering but looks as if it is real happiness. Looking like something wonderful, beautiful, it constantly cheats you, tying you to samsara from beginningless rebirths up to now. If you don't change, if you don't realize it is suffering and develop renunciation, you will be tied to samsara continuously.

One of the Kadampa geshe, Lama Atisha's followers, said,

Because the I is the root of all negative karma, of all suffering and problems, of all the undesirable things, what is called the "I" should be cast out; it should be thrown far away. And without delaying even a second you must cherish others, dedicating your life to them.

All the oceans of the hell beings' sufferings, the oceans of the hungry ghosts' sufferings, the oceans of the animals' sufferings, the oceans of the human beings' sufferings, the oceans of the gods' and demigods' sufferings, the oceans of the intermediate state beings' sufferings—all these oceans of suffering in each realm come from karma; and karma comes from delusion, it is motivated by one of the three poisonous minds such as attachment. The root is ignorance, holding the I as truly existent while there is no such I at all. This real, truly-existent I is totally non-existent, it's totally empty.

Due to the ignorance that holds the real I, existing from its own side, the selfish mind arises. This is the mind that sees the self as the most important one, more important than the numberless buddhas, bodhisattvas and sentient beings. The selfish mind thinks that this I that is totally non-existent is more important than the numberless buddhas, bodhisattvas or sentient beings. But it's *not there*, it *doesn't exist* at all. All these sufferings come from the selfish mind, therefore, because it is the root of all negative karma, it should be "thrown very far," meaning it should be completely abandoned.

Only if you do that will you be able to generate bodhicitta, the mind that fulfills all your wishes for happiness up to enlightenment. And with bodhicitta you are able to fulfill the wishes of each and every single sentient being: each and every hell being, hungry ghost, animal, human being, god, demigod and intermediate state being, including their wishes for the highest enlightenment. This bodhicitta is the most precious wish-granting jewel, more precious than the whole sky filled with diamonds, gold and wish-granting jewels. All your past, present and future happiness comes from bodhicitta.

Bodhicitta comes from cherishing other sentient beings. In short, you receive all your happiness from beginningless rebirths, all your present happiness and all your future lives' happiness up to enlightenment, from other sentient beings. I'm not only talking about your

friends, those who praise you, who give you money or things like that. It includes your enemies, those who get angry at you, who don't love you. All your happiness comes from the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings, the numberless gods and demigods, from every single sentient being without leaving one sentient being out. Every single sentient being from each realm, without leaving out even one insect, is the root from which you receive all your past, present and future happiness, including all your realizations up to enlightenment, everything.

As the Kadampa geshe said, without delaying even a second, immediately, you must cherish others and dedicate your life to serving them, to freeing them from suffering and bringing them happiness. Every sentient being is the most precious, the most kind, the most dear one in your life—every single hell being, every single hungry ghost, every single animal, every single human being, every single god and demigod. Therefore, the happiest, most meaningful life is cherishing sentient beings, serving them, helping them to be free from suffering and obtain happiness. That is why each one is the *most* precious, the *dearest*, the *kindest* one in your life.

Therefore, you should help others in whatever way you can, no matter how small. As His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche said, help every being that has a problem, even saving an insect from drowning or one that is fighting by pulling it from the other insect. Or carrying a heavy load for an old person, helping to make their load lighter. This is besides practicing Dharma, taking the eight Mahayana precepts or living within the five, four, three, two or one lay vows in order to attain enlightenment for yourself so you can bring peace to your family, to your country and to the world and finally to enlighten other sentient beings. Besides that, whatever service you can offer others is the greatest joy in life, the happiest thing you can do, because you are doing it for this being who is the most precious, the dearest, the kindest.

Not only that, when you serve others, when you cherish others, that's what pleases all the buddhas and bodhisattvas the most; it's what makes them the happiest. Even a little service, whatever you can do to help, is the best offering to the buddhas and bodhisattvas; it's what pleases them the most. When you do this sincerely from your heart, this is the greatest purification. You purify negative karma collected not only from this life but from past lives, from beginningless rebirths, and you collect extensive merits.

What others need is to purify, in order to be free from the suffering of samsara and its cause, karma and delusion, and to achieve the peerless happiness, enlightenment. Therefore, you should think, "I will do this by myself alone." What makes it possible for you to help others achieve all this without any mistakes is by becoming enlightened yourself.

For that you must develop bodhicitta and that requires the special attitude. Now, Dorje Sempa Gyälpoche, the Great Victorious One, refers to the special attitude to practice tantra, to achieve enlightenment in the quickest possible time.

Think like this. "Only practicing Mahayana Paramitayana it takes three countless great eons to complete the merits of virtue—the cause of the rupakaya—and the merits of wisdom—the cause of the dharmakaya. During those three countless great eons sentient beings have to suffer. Even one sentient being trapped in samsara for one second is like eons, the suffering

is most unbearable, but there are numberless in each realm, so this is much more unbearable. Therefore, I must liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. Therefore I must achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

This is the motivation to practice tantra and not only the lower tantras but also the higher tantras. To achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible, you need to achieve the realizations on the path to enlightenment, and for that you need to purify the defilements. The whole question comes to purifying the negative karma, like cleaning a mirror that has accumulated a lot of dust, then it can reflect very clearly because it has all the potential. Similarly, you need to purify all the defilements and all the obstacles. Think, “For that I am going to take Vajrasattva jenang for the benefit of all sentient beings.” You must generate the purest attitude like this, thinking to benefit all sentient beings.

VAJRASATTVA INITIATION PREPARATION

Visualize the same as before, with all the lineage lamas, all the direct and indirect gurus, bodhisattvas, dakinis, protectors and so forth. Now, repeat the prayer for taking the bodhisattva vows.

With the bodhisattva vows, there are the entering vows and the wishing vows. With the entering vows, there are abstaining from the eighteen root falls and abstaining from the forty-six vices. Even if you can’t take the entering vows there are the wishing vows, which are abandoning the four black dharmas and practicing the four white dharmas. The four white dharmas are opening the heart to the guru—not telling lies to the guru; not being cunning to sentient beings; and praising the bodhisattvas instead of criticizing them. The last one is inspiring sentient beings who are around you, who rely on you, to follow the Mahayana path to achieve enlightenment.

The four black dharmas are the opposite of these but the last one is different. It is feeling regret when you hear that somebody is doing a lot of retreat, but you don’t have that opportunity. This doesn’t mean a business retreat, going to a resort area and making very profitable business, not that kind of retreat! Here, retreat is abstaining from nonvirtue, the cause of suffering, and keeping the mind in virtue, the cause of happiness; keeping the mind in Dharma, in bodhicitta, in renunciation, in right view, all based on guru devotion. Then there’s tantra.

When somebody does a lot of retreat and is able to learn so much Dharma, or somebody’s attending many teachings but you yourself can’t, and then you feel regret, you feel unhappy, this is the last one of the black dharmas. It is different from just being the opposite of the white dharmas. I have actually seen that among students.

Once, in Australia we were staying at a student’s house where there was a nun doing her preliminary practices. She had a very busy life but every few minutes she made another water bowl offering in order to finish her preliminary practices. Every time there were a few minutes free, she did a water bowl offering. The student at whose house we were staying felt unhappy to see her doing all these offerings because he himself could not. Instead of rejoicing, he felt envious, sad.

If you can't take the entering vow, you can take the wishing vow. Then, if you can't even take the wishing vow, you can think, "I am going to practice more compassion, more good heart for other sentient beings than I did in the past." At least think that.

[Rinpoche and students recite part of the seven-limb prayer]

If you have refuge in your mind, in your heart, then you are an inner being. Otherwise you are an outer being. Having refuge in your heart is the basis for all the different pratimoksha vows and the bodhisattva and tantric vows.

The next one is confessing all the negative karmas, in order to purify them. If you want to plant crops you have to clear away all the rocks and trees, whatever obstacles there are for the crops, otherwise you can't plant the crops and you can't get food from them. In the same way, in order to grow realizations from your heart, from your mind, you need to purify the obstacles, all the negative karma, all the defilements. To actualize bodhicitta and to live within the bodhisattva vows, you need to purify any obstacles to that. Therefore, think that all the negative karmas collected with your body, speech and mind from beginningless rebirths are purified; they no longer exist in your mental continuum.

[Rinpoche and students recite part of the seven-limb prayer]

Not only other human beings but even many Buddhists don't have the karma to hear the name "bodhicitta." You need a lot of merit to be able to take and live within the bodhisattva vows. The easiest way to collect merit is rejoicing. If you do any practice and then rejoice, you collect the most extensive merit. That is why rejoicing comes here in the prayer.

While you are repeating this, first rejoice in all your own past, present and future merits, where all the causes of enlightenment, liberation from samsara, happiness of future lives and all such things come from. Think that is very precious. Feel happiness in your heart. Rejoicing means your mind has to feel happiness otherwise it doesn't become rejoicing; it's merely words. You have to feel happiness, joy, in your heart.

The next way to rejoice is, while you are repeating the prayer, you rejoice in all sentient beings' past, present and future merits from which they can receive all the happiness including enlightenment. How precious that is, how wonderful that is. By thinking of your own merit, you think, "How fortunate I am," and by thinking of the three times' merits of others, you think, "How wonderful that is."

After that, you do the same with the buddhas. When you do the first rejoicing and you think about all the merit you have collected from beginningless rebirths and how amazing that is, your merit is doubled. With the second rejoicing, in the merits of all sentient beings, the merit you have created with the first rejoicing is again doubled, which makes four times. When you rejoice in the actions of the buddhas, this third rejoicing means the merit is now eight times greater. It's so easy to create the most unbelievable merit each time you rejoice. Each time you say, "How wonderful it is," or "How fortunate I am," everything is doubled and doubled and doubled.

When you rejoice at the merit of other sentient beings whose level of mind is lower than yours, you collect double the merits; for those whose level of mind is equal to yours, you

collect the same amount of merit; and for those whose level of mind is higher than yours, you collect half the merit. However much merit they collect, you collect half of that just by rejoicing. This is most amazing when you think about the details like that. In your daily life, when you do your practices, there is always the seven-limb prayer, so if at that time you don't rejoice, you just say the prayer, can you imagine how much you lose? By just reciting the words alone, you have missed out on all these merits, on this incredible opportunity.

I've been telling the students of the FPMT that when you lead the Medicine Buddha puja, when it comes to the lines in the prayer where you rejoice, you must stop there a little bit and meditate, you must give everybody the opportunity to meditate. This brings the most unimaginable merits. It reminds everybody to practice rejoicing. Everybody gets a chance to collect the most unimaginable merits by coming to the center. Can you imagine the skies of merit they leave the center with? It makes their life so easy; with fewer problems—fewer financial problems, health problems and so forth. It makes their life unbelievably easy. It becomes easy to achieve realizations.

In the FPMT organization we have this opportunity. Meditating in this way makes it easier and quicker for everybody to achieve enlightenment. It's so wonderful. This is such an easy, simple thing but you create skies of merit. It's most amazing, amazing, wow.

If you don't do it, can you imagine how much you have lost? If you had planned to have a business that made a million dollars profit but then your plan didn't succeed, imagine how sad you would be. If you lost one million or one billion dollars you'd probably become crazy and want to die, maybe you'd jump off the roof or something. Many business people do this, and Chinese people are similar to Westerners. If their business collapses, life becomes very hard and they think about suicide; they want to jump off the roof. It's very common for suicidal thoughts like this to arise when people don't make money. This is one example. Imagine how you would feel if you lost a billion dollars, a zillion dollars, a whole sky filled with gold and diamonds. Even the sky filled with wish-granting jewels is nothing. All this wealth comes from merit, good karma, and here, by rejoicing, you can collect the most unbelievable merit, the cause of total liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and, most importantly, of enlightenment. All those material things are nothing in comparison. So, please meditate.

Next is taking the bodhisattva vow. Those who are taking the entering vow think you are taking the vow to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. By taking the bodhisattva vow you are able to actualize the path to enlightenment and then achieve enlightenment and then be able to liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. This is what you are able to do by taking the bodhisattva vow. Without taking it you can't generate the realization of bodhicitta and those realizations of the Mahayana path to enlightenment and therefore you can't achieve enlightenment and bring sentient beings to enlightenment. So the bodhisattva vow is *the* most precious thing.

For those who can't take the bodhisattva entering vow, there's the wishing vow. For those who can't take the wishing vow, think that you are going to practice the good heart to other sentient beings more. Of course that is the very heart, the essence, of the Dharma. Practicing a good heart toward other sentient beings is what pleases all the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas and what makes all sentient beings happy.

[Rinpoche recites and students repeat]

At the end of the third repetition, without a wandering mind, in the presence of all the lineage lamas and the lama who is Vajrasattva, with all the numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas around, those who are taking the vow think, “I have received the bodhisattva vow.” Whichever of the two types of vow you are taking, think like that. And those who are unable to take either type of vow, think, “I am going to practice more compassion and good heart toward sentient beings.”

[Rinpoche recites and students repeat]

Those who have taken the bodhisattva vow, every second you collect limitless skies of merits, so you are the most fortunate being. That’s what is mentioned in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*. However many hours you are sleeping you collect this, while you’re eating, while you’re walking, all the time, since you have taken and are living within the bodhisattva vow, you are collecting skies of merit. So, feel great joy, happiness.

You can liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment by taking the bodhisattva vow, so rejoice, feel great joyfulness. And the same for those of you who have taken the wishing vow. You are also able to be of unbelievable benefit to sentient beings and cause them to achieve enlightenment, so rejoice in all that. Even those who have made the vow to practice the good heart more, to have more compassion and loving kindness toward others than before, that makes all the buddhas and bodhisattvas very happy and brings so much happiness to your family and to other sentient beings. When you remember to practice compassion and loving kindness it brings peace to everybody—to your family, to those you work with and to the world. It brings peace to the world. That’s most amazing. It’s the best offering to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, to all the holy beings. A good heart is what makes sentient beings most happy.

[Rinpoche gives the initiations, not included]

THE GURU IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE BUDDHA

In Vajrasattva, *vajra* represents the definitive meaning, which is manifested into the interpretive meaning, represented by *sattva*. *Vajra* is the ultimate guru. The guru has two aspects: ultimate guru and conventional guru, or guru for the all-obscuring mind.

Even though “conventional guru” is often the term used, I don’t think it’s exact. Better is “guru for the all-obscuring mind.” This is the guru that appears to the all-obscuring or conventional truth. Actually, mentioning the name “ultimate guru” is very secret; it is the dharmakaya of all the buddhas, the transcendental wisdom of non-dual voidness. It’s the non-duality of method and wisdom, although not the path-time method and wisdom but the result that you achieve. That is *vajra*, the definite meaning. That is who Vajrasattva really is, the ultimate guru manifesting into all the other buddhas and into the mandalas and different deities. So, all the buddhas come from that, the ultimate guru.

Generally we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, but in practices such as the extensive, most profound *Guru Puja*, *Lama Chöpa*, and certain other practices the guru comes first and then afterwards come the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The reason why the guru

comes first is not only because the guru is kinder than all the buddhas. Some people might think that but it's not the only reason, it's not the main reason why the guru comes first. The real meaning is because all the buddhas come from the absolute guru. All the buddhas—peaceful, wrathful, male, female, whatever—and their mandalas and so forth, are manifestations of the ultimate guru. That is a very good, very extensive way of understanding. It means a whole lot. It's like sugar, the essence of things like ice cream or cakes, what makes them flavorsome, what makes them sweet. It's not just the cream or flour, but the sugar that is the essence.

When your mind is thinking in this way it's really fantastic. That's the reality and that's what we have to realize and always understand. Khedrub Sangye Yeshe said,

Before the guru exists, there is not even the name of what is called "Buddha."

Not only Khedrub Sangye Yeshe, another great yogi has said much the same thing. This comes from their own experience, their own realizations. The Dharma comes from that, the Sangha comes from that. There's an extensive teaching in the *Guru Puja* during the seven-limb practice section on prostration where this is explained. Also again, not only at the very beginning, the refuge, but also during the prostration, this is talked about in detail, showing its extremely profound and deep meaning. The guru embodies all these things; everything comes from the guru.

For example, Lama Atisha, who made Buddhism pure in Tibet, had one hundred and fifty-seven gurus. He was invited from India by the Dharma king of Tibet Lha Lama Yeshe Ö. At first he sent the translators Rinchen Zangpo and Legpai Sherab to Atisha with a lot of gold but they didn't meet him. The king, Lha Lama Yeshe Ö, was captured by an irreligious king who demanded a ransom but when his nephew had almost all of it and the captor demanded more, Lha Lama Yeshe Ö told his nephew to take the gold to Atisha and ask him to come to Tibet. He decided to die in prison for the sentient beings in Tibet to actualize pure Buddhism, so he sent a message to Lama Atisha, "May I meet you in the next life."

I forgot what I was talking about; it's suddenly gone. I must have been thinking of Australia. Neil's from Australia so I was thinking he must be thinking of Australia; he must be mentally visiting his home place.

In the extensive explanation one section shows how everything comes from the ultimate guru and another shows that everything is an embodiment of the guru. Lama Atisha had one hundred and fifty-seven gurus but however many gurus we have, two hundred or a thousand, they are all manifestations of this ultimate guru, who is manifesting for us in all these different ways to guide us, revealing the teachings to us, giving oral transmissions, initiations or whatever.

By saying that, I am *not* saying that I am a buddha. I'm not saying that at all. But by revealing the teachings and giving initiations and so forth, whatever the guru does that leads us to enlightenment, these have manifested from the ultimate guru. The prayer, *Lama sang gye lama chö, De zhin lama ge dün te*, "The Guru is Buddha, the Guru is Dharma, the Guru is Sangha also," that prayer only makes sense when we look at it in this light.

Let's say you have a thousand gurus and there is one you have difficulties with. You become angry with him, have many negative thoughts about him, and get upset when you are around him. Without that one guru you have difficulties with, there would be no Buddha, there would be no Dharma and there would be no Sangha. There would not even be a buddha statue or any scriptures for you to read and have the opportunity to learn from. You have less negative thoughts about some gurus and more about others; it depends on how you think from your side.

Although you have all these negative emotions about this guru, at the same time another student sees the guru as very pure, as a buddha. Unlike you, that student doesn't have the hallucination that projects negative thoughts about the guru. It's good to understand that not everybody has the same view as you. It helps you to be inspired and to transform your attitude into one of pure guru devotion, seeing the guru as a buddha.

You need to make your own mind healthy, not full of disease, not full of sicknesses, not full of superstition and junk that make your mind like a garbage can. You must try to have a pure mind. When others see the guru as a buddha and are able to transform their mind, this will inspire you. If you only think of your own view, looking at the mistakes and believing that is true, then your mind becomes like a garbage can.

The entire Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that you take refuge in come from that ultimate guru. Even though you have thousands of gurus, this one particular guru comes from that. This is how precious the guru is. This shows the extensive kindness of the guru. Without this guru, there wouldn't be any Buddha, any deities, any of the four levels of tantra, Kriya, Charya, Yoga and Anuttarayoga tantra. There wouldn't be any of the sutras or any of the deities, such as the thousand buddhas or the Thirty-five Confession Buddhas who, by reciting their names just once, many eons of negative karma are purified. This wouldn't happen. For example, by reciting Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's name, you can purify eons of negative karma. Normally forty thousand eons is mentioned in the texts but there are different texts that give different figures. A common one is eighty-four thousand eons and I saw in the Kangyur where a hundred million eons is mentioned.

Saying the Buddha's name purifies one hundred million eons of negative karma. So, if you recite *La ma tön pa chom dän dä ... sha keya thub pa la chag tshäl lo*, this very first verse has Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's name and it is said in the Kangyur that a hundred million eons of negative karma are purified. Also, by reciting this you are able to meet tantra teachings, which are extremely rare, in future lives. Even if you meet the Mahayana teachings you won't necessarily meet the tantra teachings, those by which you can achieve enlightenment in one lifetime or even in a brief lifetime of degenerate time. To meet those teachings is extremely rare. So there's incredible benefit in reciting the Buddha's name. When you see a statue of a buddha, for example, your mind becomes very happy and you chant *La ma tön pa chom dän dä ... sha keya thub pa la chag tshäl lo*. Going a few steps with this happy mind while reciting this stops you from being reborn in the lower realms for so many eons. Therefore, reciting this very first one, *La ma tön pa chom dän dä ... sha keya thub pa la chag tshäl lo*, has unbelievable benefits.

It would be impossible to do this without that particular guru you were angry with, who you found difficulties with due to your mistaken way of thinking. Without that guru there would

be none of these buddhas and deities, not even the Thirty-five Buddhas or the Medicine Buddhas, where if you chant the seven Medicine Buddhas' names all your wishes come true and all your prayers succeed. You can even purify every negative karma. It makes everything possible. It's most amazing. Your life is made very easy, even up to achieving enlightenment for sentient beings, so there's no question about other things such as achieving realizations. There wouldn't be a Medicine Buddha at all without this guru. You wouldn't have the unbelievable opportunity or fortune to receive all this. That's the kindness of the guru in the extensive way.

Then the Dharma. There wouldn't be any scriptures you could learn or see. There wouldn't be any Sangha to see. All these come from that guru. Whether you have one thousand or a billion gurus or whether you only have one, it's the same. This is what you have to meditate on and what you have to realize. With guru devotion, with the mind seeing the guru as pure, as enlightened, you receive all the blessings of the guru and from those blessings you receive all the realizations on the path to enlightenment. Cherishing this more than your own life and obeying the guru's instructions and practicing them is what leads you to enlightenment in the quickest time. That's the main thing.

MILAREPA'S GURU DEVOTION

That's what made Milarepa achieve enlightenment in one brief lifetime of degenerate times. When he was young, he and his mother were very badly treated by his uncle and auntie. They were very poor and had such great difficulties that they couldn't stand it. His mother advised Milarepa to go away to learn black magic. When he had studied black magic with a lama he returned to the area where he lived and, on a mountain, dug a hole and meditated in it for seven days. Then he did black magic and logs fell down the mountain and his uncle and auntie's house completely collapsed, killing all the people and animals. There was a wedding happening on the upper floor with about sixty people, dancing and drinking, and they were all killed.

Milarepa felt extremely sad he had done that and went to the lama who had taught him black magic. The lama advised him if he wanted to practice Dharma he should go to see Marpa. Even though Marpa was already an enlightened being, Heruka or Hevajra, he appeared as an ordinary being, ploughing the field. He and his wisdom mother were covered in dust from their work and on the outside looked just like an ordinary couple. That was how Milarepa saw Marpa the first time. He offered his body, speech and mind as well as place and food to his guru, Marpa, and asked Marpa to be his guru.

Marpa accepted and asked him to build a nine-story tower. The tower still exists in Tibet, in Lhokha. There were no porters, no other people helping, so Milarepa built it entirely by himself. After he had built the nine-story tower, Marpa told him to tear down every stone and put them all back where they came from. Then Marpa asked him to build the tower again and again tear it down. He did this three times. Milarepa's back became hard, with bluish skin, burnt from the sun and bruised from carrying so many stones.

Even so, Milarepa didn't receive teachings or initiations from Marpa for many years. Marpa refused to give them to Milarepa. Once, when Milarepa saw Marpa giving teachings to other students he approached him, but Marpa immediately scolded him and kicked him out. He

sometimes even beat him. This was all part of the very special guru-disciple relationship, his special way of guiding his disciple. Nowadays if a teacher gives even a spank or a scold then the disciple sues! I don't know about here but it's like that in the United States, with the low economy and everybody looking for easy ways to make money.

After some time, because Marpa never gave Milarepa teachings, only hard work and scolding, Marpa's wisdom mother took him to one of Marpa's disciples, Lama Ngokpa, to learn meditation. Milarepa tried but after many months failed to have any realizations. Then Lama Ngokpa went to offer Milarepa back to Marpa, bringing an offering of one limping goat. Milarepa had failed to have realizations because it wasn't his guru, Marpa's wishes. He hadn't followed his guru's advice but the advice of the guru's wisdom mother.

Then Marpa's wisdom mother pushed Marpa to give Milarepa teachings and initiations. Sometime later Marpa decided to give him teachings and, because he was an enlightened being, he manifested a mandala in space and initiated Milarepa. Marpa was very skillful. In a very short time he purified Milarepa's negative karma of killing those sixty people and all those animals and then gave him all the initiations and teachings. This was his method for Milarepa.

He then sent Milarepa to the mountains to meditate. Milarepa lived an ascetic life in different caves in the mountains, meditating on the Secret Mantra Vajrayana path, which is based on the lamrim, renunciation, bodhicitta and right view, which are all based on guru devotion, realizing the guru is Buddha. He exactly followed the advice of Marpa, just living on nettles. There was nothing else to eat, not even tsampa. Tibetans' main food is tsampa, which is either ground flour or barley. All he did was boil nettles in water without salt, chili or anything. Doing that, he attained enlightenment in a short number of years.

Due to his attitude of bodhicitta Milarepa become known to the world, even in the West. But, of course, Milarepa is not the only one who has achieved enlightenment. There have been many others. Much later Lama Tsongkhapa's disciple, Gyalwa Ensapa, achieved enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times without many hardships. Milarepa had eight disciples who achieved enlightenment and Padmasambhava had twenty-five. All those who achieved enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerate times made unbelievable sacrifices and cherished their guru more than their own life. Actually, Marpa wanted Milarepa to continue bearing more hardship so that he could become enlightened even quicker, but his wisdom mother persuaded him very strongly to give teachings and initiations earlier. I saw that mentioned in Marpa's or Milarepa's life story.

That's just a side talk, giving an example of somebody who achieved enlightenment in the quickest possible time, in a brief lifetime of degenerate times, by doing incomparable practice with very stable devotion to Marpa, looking at him as Buddha, seeing Buddha.

I've already told you about Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's attendant Gelong Lekpai Karma, who looked after the Buddha for twenty-two years but saw him only as a liar for that entire time. Nothing happened. I think he had to be born in the lower realms for an unimaginable number of eons, even though from the Buddha's side he was an enlightened being. Because Gelong Lekpai Karma did not practice guru devotion, he did not change his mind.

If you have never heard the Dharma before—I'm not talking about in previous lives but in this life—this might be a new subject for you, something you've never heard before. It might seem very strange, but it's something you need to explore, understand and realize. You need to discover it. In the West people like to explore, going into the mountains and the deserts, under the ocean or even to the moon, to discover new things. They spend years learning about tiny insects or they take boats out and spend years studying sharks and dolphins.

Therefore, I think exploring Buddhism is amazing; exploring Buddhism is very deep. Each day, each hour, each minute you are exploring Buddhism, gaining experience through listening and meditating, is just amazing. Even each minute is amazing; it makes your life most meaningful, most productive. The result is liberation from samsara, in which you have been suffering from beginningless rebirths, and finally enlightenment, in order to liberate the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. That's the ultimate benefit to each and every sentient being. Nobody's left out. Numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless human beings, numberless gods and demigods receive extensive benefit from you. Just imagine one single insect, like an ant. Even in one nest there are thousands and thousands of ants, and all over the world there are countless nests. By exploring Buddhism you are bringing temporary happiness to each and every single ant as well as ultimate happiness, freedom from suffering, and full enlightenment.

This isn't even talking about all the numberless other species of insects or all the animals or birds or fish. Think of the different species of fish in all the oceans of the world and their numbers. One shoal of sardines is unimaginable in number, and there are numberless shoals in the oceans. Sardines have very interesting karma. When they are attacked by a shark, because of their fear, they come together making the shoal much smaller and more compact and making it much easier for the shark. With one bite the shark can take so many in its mouth. All these sardines and all the fish in all the oceans can be enlightened by you.

You can enlighten all the numberless earthworms, those little creatures that come out when there has been rain. I remember one time I had asked His Holiness Sakya Trizin, the head of the Sakya sect, to give a series of more than a hundred initiations that had been lost in the Gelug tradition. Where we were doing them, I went for a walk each morning with an old friend, Pari Rinpoche, who was helping me because of my diabetes. On the road there were always many red worms, many killed or half-squashed by the cars. We blew on the worms and chanted mantras over them and then took them off the road and put them back on the ground, whether they were dead or alive. We tried to do that as much as we could, and we went on different roads to find more. In certain places there were so many.

There was an old man collecting the worms in a plastic bag, maybe for food. I offered him money for them, but he said he could get even more money from another organization, so anyway I finally paid him something like sixty rupees and we bought the worms. Then we chanted mantras and blessed them with water we had already blessed. I thought as we were doing it that these worms came out onto the road with no idea of the danger.

There was one thing I missed out when I was talking about Milarepa's guru devotion. Even if in your view the guru is very selfish, very impatient and very angry, with many mistakes, without much understanding of the Dharma and so forth—this is in your view of course—if

you have already established a guru-disciple connection, a Dharma connection, from your own side you should devote to him just as Milarepa was devoted to Marpa, seeing him as Maitreya, Manjushri or Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Having established that Dharma connection, by devoting to him and respecting him as if he were Maitreya, Manjushri, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, Tara or another buddha, you are creating the karma that in future lives you will meet that guru in the aspect of Maitreya, Manjushri or Tara, exactly like that. I was going to mention that before but it didn't happen. This understanding is very important.

With Vajrasattva, *vajra* refers to the definitive meaning, the ultimate guru, the dharmakaya and *sattva* refers to the forms that the ultimate guru takes, the rupakaya. So many deities' names are like this, such as Dorje Jigje and the Cittamani of Tara Cittamani. It refers to the very essence and the aspect that it takes. If you can understand in this way who Vajrasattva is, it has a very deep meaning, something you feel in your heart rather than as something outside.

When the arhats and arya bodhisattvas have wisdom directly perceiving emptiness and are in equipoise meditation, the dualistic appearance is not completely destroyed, it is temporary absorbed. When you become enlightened, with bodhicitta, and you complete the merits of method and wisdom and cease the subtle defilements, then the dualistic appearance is cut forever. Buddhas abide in equipoise meditation nondual with emptiness forever. That's the vajra of Vajrasattva, the ultimate guru.

At the same time as their holy mind continuously abides in equipoise meditation, immovable from emptiness forever, the holy body manifests in numberless forms, pure and impure—pure for those beings with a pure mind and impure for those with an impure mind. It manifests as the nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya to benefit all the numberless sentient beings, to guide them from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. While their holy mind is in equipoise meditation, forever free from the dual view, at the same time they manifest in various forms and guide numberless sentient beings. So, a buddha's omniscience, his holy mind, at the same time directly sees the ultimate truth of the self, the ultimate truth of yourself, and the truth for the all-obscuring mind. Directly seeing both together, the whole of phenomena, is the special quality of a buddha.

THE BENEFITS OF VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE

The benefits of reciting the Vajrasattva mantra are unbelievable. You need to practice Vajrasattva more than you need money. Of course, for worldly people the most important thing is money. I guess that's true for most people. Now here, Vajrasattva is more important; there's no comparison with the importance of money.

Here, during the course, we are trying to practice mindfulness as much as possible, not just during meditation or when listening to the teachings but at other times as well—eating and walking and so forth. This doesn't usually happen at other times, when we are leading our normal, daily life.

Early in the morning when we get dressed the motivation is just for this life, for the happiness of being well-dressed, so the motivation is nonvirtue. Washing is again simply for the happiness of this life; there's no thought of the happiness of other sentient beings or of

purifying the defilements of other sentient beings. We don't do that meditation while washing; we just wash for our own happiness. So, again the action of washing becomes nonvirtue, negative karma. We have the same motivation while we are having breakfast, for this life to be happy—not even future lives' happiness but just this life. With that attachment, the action of eating breakfast becomes nonvirtue. However much we drink, however much we eat, everything becomes negative karma. Like that, whatever we eat or drink during the day—for breakfast, lunch and dinner —becomes like that. Because the motivation is nonvirtuous everything becomes nonvirtue, negative karma.

Walking or driving a car, doing our job, whatever activities we do, if we check the motivation it's just for this life's happiness. There's no motivation to obtain future lives' happiness or liberation from samsara; there's no motivation to achieve enlightenment, no thought of the happiness of others. Our only motivation is the happiness of this life. Again that becomes nonvirtue. Whatever we do with this motivation becomes nonvirtue. Everything becomes negative karma. Working at home it's the same. And what's the motivation of the last action of the day, going to sleep? There's no bodhicitta mind to benefit all sentient beings, there's no thought to achieve enlightenment for them, there's no thought of even achieving liberation for ourselves. There isn't even the thought of future lives' happiness, no wish for long-term happiness, just some comfort for ourselves and for this life. So, however many hours we sleep we create that many hours' nonvirtue. The longer we sleep the more nonvirtue we create. In that way, our entire twenty-four hours becomes only nonvirtue, only creating negative karma. Generally speaking it's like that.

As I have already mentioned, on top of that every single one of those negative karmas increases day by day, every week, every month, every year, for the whole of this life, not to mention those accumulated in beginningless previous lives. Without purifying our negative karma, it becomes double the next day and then it multiplies day by day, four times, then eight, then sixteen, increasing until it becomes huge. Can you imagine how that one single negative karma will have increased after one year? And after two years or more? Even one small negative karma becomes like a mountain and then, after some time, it becomes the size of this earth. By the time of death one negative karma the size of an atom multiplies to become the size of this earth. Can you imagine how many negative karmas we collect in one day or one week? How many we have collected from the time we were born or from all the previous lives, from beginningless rebirths? Can you imagine all those negative karmas we have not purified and we have not finished experiencing?

That's why I say that Vajrasattva becomes more important than money, more important than a job. Can you imagine how important the practice of Vajrasattva is? Even if we broke the root pratimoksha vows and the root tantric vows, even that very heavy negative karma can be purified by reciting one hundred thousand Vajrasattva mantras. As I mentioned before, a wise person might have heavy negative karma but they can make it small by purification, whereas a foolish person might only have a small amount of negative karma but it becomes huge because they fail to purify, they don't know the Vajrasattva practice with the four opponent powers. They don't understand negative karma can be purified. Therefore, we should become the wise person, not the foolish one.

That's why we have taken this *jenang*, this permission to practice. Now, think that this place is not an ordinary place. If possible think of it as a pure land, as a celestial mansion, in the

appearance of transcendental wisdom. Where there's a tormo, think of it as Vajrasattva and the Lama who is giving the initiation as the actual Vajrasattva. Then, above the Lama there are all the lineage lamas of the direct and indirect gurus from whom the initiation has been received. I have received this initiation from Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than all the three-time buddhas, as well as from His Holiness Zong Rinpoche.

LECTURE 10

WHITE TARA INITIATION PREPARATION

Now there are the preparations in order to grant the White Tara long-life initiation. There are the graduated things to do from the side of the Lama such as a mandala offering and giving tormas offering to the interferers who interfere with granting the initiation, and there are graduated things to do from the side of the disciples, such as cleaning the mouth with the blessed water, doing prostrations, distributing flowers and so forth.

[Rinpoche chants]

It's very worthwhile to take the long-life initiation. It's not that I have some power, but because of Tara, who is the manifestation of all the buddhas' holy actions, and White Tara in particular to grant long life and wisdom to sentient beings.

In the past, my guru, His Holiness Zong Rinpoche, explained that in the past the great pandits first did a long-life retreat and then did a retreat for attaining wisdom, so that they could have a long life and complete their studies to work for other sentient beings. That's how they began, doing White Tara long-life meditation.

Especially at this time your life has changed. It's not as before. By coming here and attending this Kopan meditation course there has been some change for the better, for a better life. A better life means developing more compassion, patience, loving kindness and bodhicitta as well as wisdom and so forth. Even if there's no tantric practice, this lamrim practice is the most important foundation.

In your daily life in the past when you encountered a situation that would normally cause you to easily become angry or jealous or any of those negative emotions, you engaged in negative karma and so have been continuously reborn in samsara and experienced all those sufferings—not only the sufferings of the lower realms for an inconceivable length of time but even the sufferings of the higher realms such as the human realms. You have had to experience all these problems over and over again. But after coming here and attending this Kopan course there is more awareness of life, more understanding about life, more understanding about the mind. So you become more careful creating karma, especially to not harm others and to be as beneficial to others as possible, depending on the degree of wisdom, compassion and loving kindness you have developed.

Therefore, there are many good things happening now. In your life you can practice patience, to practice compassion and loving kindness in the difficult times. Instead of being depressed, thinking you are hopeless and so forth, bringing yourself down, it's very worthwhile to take the long-life initiation and by developing a good heart with this practice you can bring peace—at least peace in your life, in your heart and to your parents and family members, those closest to you, and the animals that are close to you, by not giving them

harm and only bringing benefit to them, bringing peace. Like that you can bring peace to the world.

[Rinpoche gives the initiation, not included]

LECTURE 11

TAKING REFUGE EVERY SECOND

Student: I have already taken refuge last year with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, so I don't know if I should take refuge again. Also, last year I took three of the five lay precepts, and this year I would like to take the other two.

Rinpoche: Yes, yes. When you take the refuge vow you take refuge all the time, every second. And there is no problem taking refuge vows again; it doesn't make you lose the previous one. Every time you take whatever different level of pratimoksha vows, it begins with refuge. When you take the bodhisattva vows, it begins with refuge. That doesn't make you lose the previous vows. For example, if you take the two hundred and fifty-three vows of a fully-ordained monk or the three hundred and sixty-five vows of a fully-ordained nun, if you then take the lesser ordination, the getsul vows, with thirty-six vows, it makes you lose the higher vows. Or if you have taken the thirty-six vows and then take the lay vows, the five precepts, it makes you lose the higher vows. But taking refuge again doesn't make you lose the refuge you have taken in the past.

DEVELOPING PURE COMPASSION

Student: How do we transform indifference into compassion?

Rinpoche: Changing indifference into compassion? Changing the indifference of others or your own indifference? If somebody gets angry at you, if somebody abuses you or scolds you, if somebody looks down on you or doesn't thank you when you helped them? Are there other examples?

Student: Being detached from strangers is an example.

Rinpoche: Friendly attached?

Student: Just detached.

Rinpoche: There's no word "friendly?" I thought the way you said it was very nice. "Friendly detached," not just detached.

Friendly detached is very nice. Friendly but no problem, with no bondage of sticking problems. Friendly but no sticking problems, not sticking like glue. Or at certain times when you light a candle and there are flies that get stuck in the wax of the candle so they can't walk. That's similar to us with the attachment, when we get into that. Our limbs can't move, our eyes can't see, we are completely covered by the attachment. Were you saying that the other person is detached from you or you are detached?

Student: I am detached.

Rinpoche: You are detached to the stranger? Oh, I see. How to turn that into compassion?

I would say that being detached helps even more pure compassion to arise. When there's no attachment, there's more pure compassion. When there's strong attachment, I can't say there's no compassion at all for that person. Wishing that sentient being to be free from suffering would be there, that can arise, but it's kind of mixed with attachment. But without attachment then compassion is very pure. When there's attachment there is an expectation to get something back. You're helping but you expect to get something back, to fulfill what your attachment wants. It becomes conditional love, not unconditional love, because you expect to get something from that person, what attachment wants. There can be some compassion but I think it's not really pure.

Without that attachment pure compassion can arise. There is no expectation to receive praise or for somebody to say something nice to you or whatever the attachment wants. There's no expectation at all; you purely want that person to be free from suffering. That's all your wish is; that's what compassion wants. You purely want that person to be free from suffering and if that happens you are satisfied. Otherwise it's not enough; you're not happy until your attachment gets what it wants.

In *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* Shantideva said,

*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.*

What he's saying is that in a past life you gave such harm to that sentient being and as a result in this life you receive harm from them, therefore you deserve this harm. It doesn't make sense to say you harmed that person in the past but now you can't be treated like that by them. You killed them, stole from them, criticized or abused them in the past and because of that you are now receiving harm from them. Shantideva said you deserve to receive that harm.

Even if we haven't heard any teachings on karma, we can intellectually understand that if you harm somebody then you will receive harm from them in return in the future. Anybody can intellectually understand this but in our daily lives what generally happens is, without practicing mindfulness, the mindfulness of karma, we don't remember the past harm we have done and we are hurt when that person harms us by disrespecting us, abusing us, not thanking us or whatever. Then, we immediately get angry back and scold or harm them back in some way. We don't see that this is the result of the karma of harming that person in the past. Because we are not practicing mindfulness we don't remember, we get angry and we create more negative karma.

As the great bodhisattva Shantideva mentioned, we deserve this harm because we treated that person in a harmful way, it's the result of karma, and so we should accept it. The minute we accept that the harm we are receiving is the result of our past negative karma, our anger is gone. If there was anger before it immediately disappears. Immediately there is peace in our

heart and there's peace for the other person. They no longer receive harm from us, so there is also peace for them.

If you are able to practice like this, you can bring world peace. You can create peace at home, with your parents and brothers and sisters, with the people around you, those you are living with at home. Whenever they get angry or however they treat you, it's the same. Being able to practice like this, you can bring peace to those outside the home—the people in your office, or anybody in the area, in the country, in the world. In this way you're able to bring world peace. One by one like that you're able to bring world peace.

It is unbelievably important to immediately recognize that receiving this harm is your karma, the result of your past negative action of harming another sentient being. Then, immediately there's no anger toward that person; there's nothing negative toward that person. Immediately there's a connection, there's peace between you. With a peaceful mind you can develop a good relationship.

Another quote from Shantideva is,

*My karma persuaded him
Therefore, I received harm from him.*

The meaning is you gave harm to that sentient being in the past; you created that karma and so that sentient being has no choice whether to give harm back to you. Your karma persuaded them and now you are receiving this harm.

Shantideva then asked,

Didn't I make the sentient being become lost in the hole of hell fire?

The sentient being is now in the human realm but because they harmed you, when they die that negative karma of harming you means they will be reborn in the lower realms. They will be lost to the human realm and will fall into the hole of hell. In this way, the harm you did has caused them to create negative karma and be reborn in hell, therefore you are responsible for that sentient being's rebirth in hell. The root of their suffering is the harm that you did.

When you think like that it's impossible to stay angry with them; it's impossible to not have compassion arise. Why did they harm you? Because you harmed them in the past. Understanding that, the only thing you can do is help protect them in whatever way you can, to try to protect them from being lost to the human realm and being reborn in the hell realm. Unbearable compassion arises when you think about the situation of that person and how it was caused by you.

In the first place you harmed them and then, whatever they do in retaliation—cheating you, abusing you, lying to you, saying nasty, hurtful words or whatever—you can use that to develop strong compassion within yourself.

It's very good to write down quotations like this in your notebook and carry them everywhere. Then, in daily life when you suddenly encounter a person or a situation that

makes you angry and you wish to harm them or say nasty words or whatever, you know you are creating the cause to receive harm back from them later. From that one negative karma of harming that sentient being, besides the immediate result of being harmed back by that person, for hundreds of thousands of lifetimes you will continue to receive harm; that sentient being will continue to harm you.

The great pandit, the highly attained being, Aryadeva, one of the Six Ornaments, gave the example in the *Four Hundred Stanzas* that if you cheat one sentient being, from that one negative karma you will be cheated for a thousand lifetimes. It's not that the sentient being cheats you back once and the result is finished. From that one negative karma of cheating another sentient being, you will be cheated for one thousand lifetimes.

The teachings about karma are very, very important. If you remember this in your daily life you will become very careful, not only avoiding negativities, not harming others, but also being kind, generous and gentle to them. You are able to practice this because you see its importance. You are able to abandon the negative karmas that cause you to receive harm from sentient beings for hundreds or thousands of lifetimes.

Conversely, when you do one act of kindness for a sentient being, you will receive help from that sentient being for hundreds and thousands of lifetimes. From your one act of kindness you receive the benefit from that sentient being for hundreds, thousands of lifetimes. Therefore, if you want to be happy, if you don't want to receive harm from others, you need to practice the good heart, you need to be kind to others, not only to your friends but even to your enemies and strangers. Practicing kindness, you receive the result—happiness, enjoyment—from that sentient being for many hundreds, thousands of lifetimes.

The conclusion is that every day of your life, day and night, practice kindness to others, thus causing others to have happiness. That is essential; it's the cause of your own happiness, not only in this life but in thousands of future lifetimes.

If you want your wishes to succeed all the time, you should make others' wishes succeed. Causing others' wishes to succeed is the cause of success of your wishes every day of your life. As much as you are able to do that, the result will be that in this life and all the future lives, all the time your wishes will succeed. Without any effort, without any worry or fear, whatever wish you have will just happen, exactly like that, including achieving enlightenment. Practicing kindness, as much as you can, you should fulfill the wishes of others. From one act of kindness your wishes are fulfilled for hundreds of thousands of lifetimes.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama always says, if you want to live your life with a selfish attitude it's better to live it by being intelligently selfish. By helping others, being kind to others, the result is that you will get happiness. From one act of fulfilling one wish of a sentient being, your wishes will succeed for hundreds of lifetimes, thousands of lifetimes. This is being intelligently selfish, thinking of how to get all your wishes fulfilled. This is correct but the main reason for helping others is still for your own happiness. For bodhisattvas there is never a thought for their own happiness. It doesn't arise even for a second. There is always the thought of cherishing others, of seeking happiness for the other sentient beings: the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings and the numberless gods and demigods. Only

practicing kindness, fulfilling others' wishes for happiness, thinking of others' happiness, the bodhisattvas' attitude is very pure. This is what we should all try to practice in our daily life.

FOR PEACE, PRACTICE A GOOD HEART

Student: Nowadays in the West many families have very unhealthy relationships, everybody only thinking of themselves. Do you have any advice for how lay people can have beneficial family lives, in marriage and things like that?

Rinpoche: The foundation of understanding that question is understanding karma, how you have benefited others in the past and harmed others in the past, and as a result you are experiencing all the different results in this life, all the happiness and problems.

That is the foundation. On the basis of that, you need to practice a good heart. First of all, understand that all happiness and problems, the many ups and downs that happen in even one day, are the result of past karma. You have created various karmas by harming some and benefiting others and so you are experiencing the many different bad or good results. Seeing that, from your side you must then practice a good heart toward others, toward those in your home or at your office. When you practice a good heart, when your mind is kind, whether others are angry with you, disrespect you or argue with you, it doesn't bother you much. Without a good heart it bothers you; with a compassionate mind, with a mind in bodhicitta, it doesn't bother you. When your mind is in wisdom, looking at it as empty, how others behave doesn't bother you.

If you practice a good heart, the people around you will learn a good heart from you. They will become inspired and develop courage. Then, they will have so much peace and happiness and many other people in turn will learn a good heart from them. In this way, you're giving peace and happiness to those people and they are giving peace and happiness to other people and like that, you can spread peace in this world.

I just want to mention one thing. One of the students in Australia was organizing a meeting about world peace, I think in Sydney, which His Holiness Dalai Lama was coming to for just a short time. Everybody was making flags to put up in the venue, to fill it with and she asked me to make one. I didn't get to draw it myself but I had an idea. There was an artist who usually went to Geshe Sopa Rinpoche's courses in Madison, Wisconsin, a Sakya-pa who was a good artist, so I asked him to do it.

The idea was to have the sun with a smiling face shining down with beams of light on the globe which was full of sunflowers with one sunflower standing out. He finished it and sent it to me by computer but the beams of light, which were supposed to be long, were quite short. The sun represented compassion and loving kindness with the beams of light representing peace and happiness. This is no peace that comes from being afraid of a bomb. "If you don't do this, I'll throw a bomb at you!" There is no real peace and happiness when there is the threat of a bomb. But here the sun of compassion is shining on the world, on all the sunflowers, which are the sentient beings of this world. Sunflowers need the sunshine; they all face the sun, like in Italy where there are whole fields of sunflowers all facing the sun. Anyway, compassion and loving kindness, like the rays of the sun, bring peace and

happiness to all sentient beings. The idea was to have a mantra that would purify the heavy negative karmas of anybody who looked at it. Anyway, I just thought that.

So, to your question I'm going to give this answer. You have all these experiences of happiness and problems, all the good and bad even in one day because of all the positive and negative—the virtuous and nonvirtuous—actions you have done in the past, benefiting and harming others. On the basis of knowing this, practice having a good heart, having compassion and loving kindness, cherishing others. In this way, your good heart itself becomes a protection for your life, from receiving harm from others. For example, when millions of maras attacked Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, trying to stop him from achieving enlightenment, without the slightest movement he generated loving kindness to all of them and they could not harm him at all. Their minds were tamed and they stopped attacking him. There are many stories of holy beings doing this, but this is one example.

Others might try to harm you, but you don't get angry and you don't harm them; you only practice a good heart and you help them if you can. At least don't harm them back. By doing that you're developing greater and greater peace and happiness in this life. Because you're creating more and more good karma, you will experience the results of that good karma in the future, either later in this life or in future lives. It's kind of like a miracle. Even without thinking about it, good things will happen to you; whatever you wish for just naturally happens. Practicing a good heart and being kind to others in this life leaves positive imprints on your mind, and as a result in future lives you are able to benefit sentient beings even more, giving much greater benefit. From this positive imprint planted on your mental continuum by doing virtuous actions, being kind to others, you are five times, ten times, more able to benefit others.

If you want to have a good, peaceful relationship you should practice a good heart from your own side. That's the simple answer, practice a good heart. Then, if you practice a good heart, the other person will also practice a good heart. You become the example, the inspiration, and the other person will also develop a good heart. Even if the other person has a very selfish, very bad nature, that can slowly change and they can develop a good heart.

The other thing is transforming problems into happiness. When you have problems, the best psychology is to transform those problems into happiness by thinking of their benefits, by practicing those thought transformation meditation techniques as much as possible. If you're able to practice thought transformation, bodhicitta and the right view of emptiness—especially bodhicitta—with the person you're living with; if you're able to use that person to practice thought transformation for your inner development, and especially transforming problems into happiness, then living together becomes very meaningful. It becomes incredibly meaningful for yourself and for that person. There's a book produced from teachings I gave in Bodhgaya many, many years ago called *Transforming Problems into Happiness*. If you read that and see there are things in it that you want to practice, write them down in your diary and prepare your life like that. Whenever a problem arises, such as somebody being upset with you or cheating you, practice these things. Then, that's really fantastic; you will really enjoy life with that person. That's my idea.

I think maybe that's enough.

Both those questions are important. One is changing indifference into compassion and the other is transforming relationship problems into compassion. Basically, the essence is the same.

If you are living life thinking only of your own happiness you will create many problems, you will find many problems. Whether you are alone or living with somebody you will find many problems. Wherever you are—on a mountain or in the city; you might be living under the ocean or on the moon—with a selfish mind there are always problems. Selfishness itself is the problem. Where there is a strong selfish mind there can be no peace and happiness, only tension or the uptight mind of attachment. With so much tension you are overwhelmed with the pressure of the many problems you face. On the other hand, if your motivation in daily life is concern for others' happiness, you will have so much peace and happiness and others will have so much peace and happiness. Living with somebody, if your attitude is to only think about your own happiness and your partner's attitude is only to think about their own happiness, then it doesn't work. Two selfish minds don't work.

When you first meet somebody you never think there can be problems. Externally you only see the body—you don't see the mind very much—and it looks very good, it looks fantastic. It makes you think if you could only be with that person then all your problems would be over; you would instantly enter nirvana. You never consider that there might be problems with that person. But then, after you start living together you start to see your partner's mind more and more, and gradually you start to see more garbage. Slowly, slowly you see more and more garbage—the jealousy, the selfishness, the dissatisfaction, the unhappiness—and day by day in your heart your partner appears less and less interesting. An Italian student told me that he lost all attraction for his girlfriend when he saw her doing *kaka* and *pipi*! That's how life is. The excitement you had in the beginning is no longer there. It starts to diminish the minute you start to live with that person and really learn about them. Then, as the weeks go by, you might still be living together but the mind isn't really there any longer.

Then, you look for somebody else, somebody who likes *me*, who loves *me*. Soon you discover somebody who seems to love you more than your current partner and you start living together. But sooner or later you see it's the same story and life becomes one big hell. Even if you eat food costing a thousand dollars it's tasteless for you. You can no longer sleep. This is the person you prayed so hard for in the beginning, wanting to live together forever, *forever*, forever, forever, forever, even until after this world has ended. If you are wealthy you have spent many hundreds of thousands of dollars, a million dollars, and you have actualized your wish but then you see that person for what they are. Soon you are praying to God to be free from them as quickly as possible. You think that happiness is being free from this person, never having to see them again. But you can't even go to sleep without seeing this person you despise. Whenever you see their face you are so unhappy. Your mind is in hell when you see their face, especially if there's somebody else who loves you more.

However, if you have a good heart that means you think of others, you are concerned about their suffering, you want to bring them happiness and, with compassion, you want them to be free from suffering. If you have a good heart, your life is totally different; there is so much happiness and joy in your life, and you also see the meaning of life. You're serving every sentient being. Even taking care of just one sentient being, just benefiting one, helping one, your life becomes much more meaningful.

By understanding karma, you practice a good heart and things don't bother you as much. Whether the other person loves you or not doesn't bother you much. Therefore understanding karma is the foundation. It helps you stop things from becoming big problems.

The purpose of life is to benefit sentient beings. If you are able to benefit even one sentient being, that's unbelievably precious. You can see the value of having the opportunity to take care of and to offer service to even one sentient being with a good heart. While you are doing that there's great inner peace in your heart, and that good attitude also helps the relationship last longer. Even if the other person doesn't have a good heart, if you do it helps bring so much peace and happiness in the family. Then you become an example, an inspiration, and the other person will learn from you.

If you don't know how to live a married life then you become married just to suffer. To live a married life you have to know how to, which is by seeing that with your partner you are training your mind in patience, you are training your mind in compassion, you are training your mind in loving kindness, you are training your mind in bodhicitta. Then, your partner becomes a kind of practical teacher. Your guru gives teachings explaining the Dharma to you, but your partner actually makes you practice it.

Training in the inner development of the Dharma, the path to enlightenment through your partner, training your mind with this person, you can then benefit many sentient beings, inspiring them, teaching them, becoming an example to them. Like that, you help the world by training your mind through living with this person, even though they might be very selfish, cold and even very nasty. If you are able to use your partner for your Dharma practice, you can develop your mind day by day, week by week. But if you don't take that opportunity to use your partner to practice Dharma, you are just creating the heavy karma to be continuously born in samsara, in the lower realms.

REFUGE AND THE KARMA OF LIVING IN VOWS

Now, we will have the refuge ceremony. You have already meditated on, and I myself have explained a bit, how samsara is in the nature of suffering, how samsaric pleasure is only in the nature of suffering, how it's true suffering. I already mentioned how just to be free from the suffering of the lower realms you don't need to take refuge in all three refuge objects, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You can be free from rebirth in the lower realms with just one of these, but to be free completely from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes, karma and delusion, you need to rely on all three, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. One is not enough; you need all three. For example, severely ill patients need help from the doctor, the nurse and the medicine. The doctor diagnoses the disease and prescribes the medicine to be taken, the medicine you need to actually recover from the sickness. Then, the nurse gives you the medicine and the treatment exactly according to what the doctor has explained. For a severely ill patient, you need all three. Like that, to be free from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes, karma and delusion, you need to take refuge in all three refuge objects, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

[Rinpoche gives refuge, the ceremony is not included]

You can take one, two or more, or all five upasaka vows, or none. Taking just one, such as abstaining from killing or from sexual misconduct is very beneficial.

For example, one act of the negative karma of sexual misconduct, done not only with attachment but behind that the self-cherishing thought, becomes negative karma. That complete negative karma of sexual misconduct has four suffering results: the ripened aspect of rebirth in the lower realms and then the three suffering results that you experience in the human realm. Due to another good karma you may be reborn as a human being some time later, maybe right after this life or after a billion, zillion, trillion eons, an unimaginable number of eons, you experience the result of sexual misconduct.

Experiencing the result similar to the cause, your partner has the opposite mind to yours so, even though physically you're living together there is no happiness, there's no harmony in the relationship. There are many fights. And the family or the people at work oppose your wishes; you don't get along with others. Due to that, you separate from your partner and many problems happen.

The next result is the *possessed result*, which is to do with the place. When you're born as a human being, you are born in a very unhealthy, very unhygienic place, a very dirty place with lots of kaka, lots of the bad smells. Somehow you have to live in such place. Even in this life sometimes, when you have to drive or walk through such a place, *even that* experience is the possessed result of sexual misconduct. Even though it's only for five minutes, it's still the result of a past life's negative karma of sexual misconduct.

The last result is *creating the result similar to the cause*. The past negative karma of a sexual misconduct action has left a negative imprint on the mind so again you engage in the same negative karma, creating sexual misconduct, creating negative karma again in this life because of the past negative imprint.

Each time you engage in one act of sexual misconduct, each completed negative karma produces these four suffering results. The fourth is engaging in the action of sexual misconduct again, and then again, with this second instance, this completed negative karma of sexual misconduct produces the four suffering results, including creating the result similar to the cause, and so it goes on and on and on and on. There's no end.

That's why I say that this fourth result—creating the result similar to the cause—this karma is much more terrifying than being born in hell. Being born in hell, you're born there, you experience it and then that karma finishes and that's it. But here, creating the result similar to the cause leaves an imprint on the mind and again in a future life it produces the four suffering results, including creating the result similar to the cause. Again you have to do that and it creates the endless suffering of samsara unless you can somehow purify those negative karmas, abandoning them so you don't have to experience the suffering results. Without purifying, without stopping this negative action by living in the vows, you have to suffer endlessly in samsara. I'm using sexual misconduct here as an example.

That is how one completed act of sexual misconduct is unbelievably harmful to life and doesn't allow you to achieve liberation from samsara and to achieve enlightenment. Therefore, here it becomes most unbelievably important to take the vows. Without taking

the vows such as abandoning sexual misconduct, what happens in your life is that you experience the unimaginable suffering of samsara. What you have experienced from beginningless lifetimes up to now you will have to experience endlessly.

By living in this vow of abstaining from sexual misconduct you experience the result, the four happinesses: rebirth in the higher realms as a god or human being and so forth. Then, the possessed result is living in extremely beautiful, clean place. Experiencing the result similar to the cause is to live very harmoniously. Your partner thinks exactly the same as you and shares your wishes. You are harmonious with everybody, with your family, at the office and so forth. That's experiencing the result similar to the cause of living in the vow of abstaining from sexual misconduct. Then, creating the result similar to the cause means in future lives you will again take the vow, which means for hundreds and thousands of lifetimes you experience all these four happinesses.

This has quite a big explanation. [Rinpoche is referring to a refuge leaflet the students have been given] I included the prayer of St Francis, the Christian saint. He was a great saint who led an ascetic life, dressing in very poor, patched robes. I saw that robe in Assisi in Italy. It's about an hour and a half drive from Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, the main center we have in Italy. You can see covered in glass the body of St Francis' chief disciple, a nun who had three hundred disciples. That was seven hundred years ago. You can see her body but not the body of St Francis. I don't know why, but they put his body in something round. When I was there with Lama Yeshe, Lama sat down and meditated in front of St Francis' body for a little while.

On the mountain there was water running. The disciples complained to St Francis that they couldn't meditate because of the noise of the water, so St Francis went to the water and called to the water, "Sister, please stop because my disciples cannot meditate." Then the water stopped and has not run since that time. There are many bodhisattvas in Buddhism who, when they were crossing a river, actually stopped the river due to the power of their bodhicitta, allowing them to cross. This is recorded in the life story of many bodhisattvas, so we can see from this story that because St Francis has similar power he has actual bodhicitta.

Similarly, there was a wolf that harmed many people. St Francis told people that he would go into the forest and talk to the wolf. People told him not to go, but he went. When the wolf saw him it was like a dog seeing its master. It was so happy that it laid down and licked St Francis' legs and feet. He told the wolf, "Don't harm others. I will beg food for you and bring it to you." From that time the wolf stopped harming others. St Francis then collected food and took it to the forest to give to the wolf.

There are amazing, wonderful stories like that about the Kadampa geshe. And St Francis didn't like being praised by others; he liked to be criticized. He begged his disciples to criticize him but they couldn't find anything to criticize him for, only good things. That is exactly like the Kadampa geshe. That's a real saint. He saw Jesus up there because his mind was very pure, so of course he could also see the Buddha. Because his mind was very pure he could have a vision of the Buddha, according to whatever aspect, whatever karma was appropriate. I think the picture of Jesus spoke to him and gave him advice.

With refuge there are three things to abandon and three things to practice. Those are very important to pay attention to in daily life. Then, there are the seven or eight general pieces of advice, to take the teachings and to generate compassion and to rely on holy beings, meaning the virtuous friend. There are things like that so you can control the mind when there's the danger of anger arising.

For instance, when you eat food you should first make offerings to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. There are things like that. The Buddha is very skillful. In our daily life you eat and drink so many times, so first you make offering to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and then eat it. It just takes a minute. Can you imagine the inconceivable merits collected, like the atoms of a mountain, like the atoms of this earth? When you do these things, it makes your life very meaningful. When you get up, you should do at least three prostrations to the Buddha and the holy objects—the statues, the scriptures and the stupas. And before going to bed, again do three prostrations to the Buddha. It's a very simple thing but it makes life very meaningful. It's incredible purification and it collects inconceivable merits, helping you achieve enlightenment.

Please stand up and do three prostrations.

DEDICATIONS

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings and buddhas, may my paramita of morality be completed by keeping the vows purely without mistake and without pride. Please pray like this.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings, may bodhicitta be actualized in my heart and in the hearts of all sentient beings without delay of even a second and in those whose hearts there is bodhicitta, may it be developed.

[Rinpoche chants]

May bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China.

[Rinpoche chants]

May bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of everybody who follows different religions without delay of even a second.

[Rinpoche chants]

Dedicate the merits of having taken these vows—the refuge vow and upasaka vows if you have taken them as well—for His Holiness Dalai Lama to have a stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Rinpoche chants]

Dedicate all the merits so that the extensive prayer for Tibet made by the Compassion Buddha in the presence of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas may be actualized as quickly as possible. That means there's freedom for Tibet. This independence for Tibet is what His Holiness is asking mainland China. May Tibetans have total religious freedom and may they be completely free in the land taken over by China. This is what His Holiness asks for, so pray that these things are actualized.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may I have the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and offer extensive benefit to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha from now on, forever. Please dedicate like this.

[Rinpoche chants]

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

[Rinpoche chants]

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

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds which Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all my merits in the same way as the three times' buddhas dedicated their merits. This is the abbreviation of the *King of Prayers*.

May Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, like refined gold, be completely actualized within my heart and in the hearts of my family members, and in the hearts of all the students of this organization and all the benefactors of this organization and all the people who offered service at the beginning to this organization, who are offering service now and who will be offering service in the future, to meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings and to actualize them, as well as in the hearts of the sentient beings who rely upon me, whom I promised to pray for, whose names were given to me, in all their hearts, in the hearts of everybody in this world, to meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings and actualize the complete path in all their hearts.

[Rinpoche chants]

This is a photo of the statue of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha that is in Bodhgaya, where all the thousand buddhas will achieve enlightenment. Inside the hundred and fifty-foot stupa there's this statue of the Buddha. This is where His Holiness Dalai Lama and everybody from all over the world goes to pray. This is to use for your altar to do prostrations and make offerings to. That collects merits like the atoms of this whole earth, maybe more, just to give you an idea. Every day when you circumambulate, make offerings, prostrate, offer flowers or incense, whatever you can do, you collect inconceivable great merit, good luck. Good luck is created by the mind, as I mentioned before; it's not something truly existent from its own side.

LECTURE 12

RINPOCHE'S PREVIOUS INCARNATION AND EARLY LIFE

You've asked me about my previous incarnation. I think the past life sentient being did a good job because I have been able to meet the Dharma in this life and have had the great opportunity to meet His Holiness, the actual Compassion Buddha in human form. I have met so many extremely qualified teachers and heard teachings on the path to liberation and enlightenment from their experience—not just from books but from their own experience. They are completely learned and totally pure and good-hearted, with all the qualities. I have met many great gurus and I have met not just the Buddhadharma Hinayana teachings but the Mahayana Paramitayana teachings that reveal the five Mahayana paths and ten bhumis where you can achieve full enlightenment and liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. And especially I have met the Mahayana Secret Mantra Vajrayana teachings, especially the Maha-anuttara Yoga Tantra teachings that have the greater skill, allowing you to achieve enlightenment in one brief lifetime of degenerated time.

I have met all those teachings and particularly Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings that are unmistakable and include sutra and tantra, all the stages of the path to enlightenment. They are unmistakable in how to achieve renunciation, unmistakable in how to achieve bodhicitta, and unmistakable in revealing the Prasangika school's view on emptiness. In reality there is only one truth of emptiness, that of the Prasangika Madhyamaka school. By meditating on emptiness unified with shamatha, calm abiding, this brings the experience of the rapturous ecstasy of the body and mind. This is special insight. To achieve this, you need to achieve shamatha as the foundation.

To achieve shamatha correctly, you need to cut the two distractions, sinking and the attachment-scattering thought. This is not just the scattering thought but the attachment-scattering thought because there are also virtuous scattering thoughts. The scattered mind that can be virtuous is called *wa* in Tibetan. The attachment-scattering thought (Tib: *go pa*) has attachment clinging to this life. There are both the gross attachment-scattering thought and the subtle attachment-scattering thought. And then there are both the gross sinking thought and the subtle sinking thought.

Many learned meditators of the past were mistaken in thinking that they had achieved perfect shamatha because they were unable to recognize the subtle sinking thought and so were unable to remove it.

Gross sinking is mental foggy, like bad weather, like the sky covered with thick fog. Like that, the mind is foggy; you can't really meditate, the object of meditation doesn't come to the mind. Or the mind can hold the object but there's no clarity. That's the gross sinking thought. With the subtle sinking thought the object is perfectly clear but you lose the intensity; the way of intensively holding the clear object is not there.

Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, both on sutra and tantra, are like refined gold, with extremely detailed explanations of the generation stage and completion stage of tantra, then the illusory body. Such detailed explanations didn't happen before Lama Tsongkhapa.

I have heard all those inconceivably profound extensive teachings on sutra and tantra that will undoubtedly leave a positive imprint. So, I think my incarnation in the past life did a good job. But I think this life's incarnation is not so good! My past life did a very good job, so I have to thank the past life for leaving all those positive imprints that make it possible for me to achieve all the realizations. However, I didn't get to actualize them, so this life is not very good.

Everything is dependent arising, depending on cause and conditions. Hell is dependent arising, enlightenment is dependent arising. Hopefully I can make my life more meaningful, more beneficial for sentient beings, if it's possible in this life. I try to collect merit on the basis of correctly devoting to the virtuous friend and I hope to have some realizations and then in the next lives, in future lives, I hope I can benefit sentient beings even more. I think that's about it.

It's not that I can remember past lives, if that's what you were asking about. In my case my belief in past lives is because I must have done some meditations on the certainty of past lives, not because I have had realizations. This is the result of past effort.

There was a lama who lived in a cave at a place called Lawudo. He wasn't a monk but a lay yogi, a lay practitioner. Other people said that the lama came from Tibet, close to the snow mountains, and he lived in the cave for many, many years. By that time he was old and had knee problems, knee pain. He meditated and lived a simple life, living in the cave and from time to time giving initiations and teachings to the people. The other lamas who knew him seemed to respect the way he lived.

People say that when I was a small child, around three or four or five, I mentioned that I was his reincarnation and I would often try to go to the cave, not completely up the road, just some of the way.

There are three ways of checking on possible reincarnated lamas. The first way is that the child says something that make people suspect, and then some high lamas use their subtle wisdom to check. The mind has three levels: gross, subtle and extremely subtle. They check with the subtle mind, the one that functions in sleep. They normally meditate with that mind, what is called utilizing ignorance on the path, but what that really means is using sleep on the path to enlightenment by stopping the gross mind and allowing the subtle mind to arise and then meditating on emptiness and achieving enlightenment. That's putting it in a simple way, without describing much of the secret points. Anyway, some lamas check about reincarnations through their subtle wisdom.

The other way is by giving the child a choice of various religious implements, malas and cymbals or whatever, that were used by that lama or his monastery in a previous life, mixed with others. While people are watching, the child is supposed to then choose the correct implements, the ones his previous incarnation or his monastery used. I don't know if this happened all over Tibet but in Solu Khumbu, the Himalayan ridge near Mt. Everest, this was

very common practice, to bring things and spread them out on the table and ask the child to pick up the correct ones, to check whether they can remember.

When I was a very small child at home, I ate food made by my mother and then spent all day long playing outside with other children. I had a friend who was mute, who couldn't speak. He was the child who played most with me in the fields and then there were some other children who came to play from time to time. Much of the time I pretended to be a lama giving an initiation! The other children played being my students, bowing down. I pretended I was giving initiations or doing pujas in the fields where there was water and many small stones. I mixed the earth and water to make mud for tormas and then made offerings to the Sangha or things like that.

There was a monastery quite close to my family home in the village of Thangme. The monastery was a little bit up, the home was down in Thangme. Because of that my mother sent me to the monastery when I was very small to learn the Tibetan alphabet. She sent me to my uncle, who was a monk in Thangme Monastery. He was very good, he knew how to carve mantras on the rocks and there were many rocks by the roads in the upper part of Solu Khumbu which he had carved with many mantras: Padmasambhava's mantra, OM MANI PADME HUM, Manjushri's mantra and some other buddhas' mantras. A family would sponsor it and it took a few months to finish but when it was finished it was very beautiful with the mantras painted black or white on the rock. Then, whenever people passed it on the road on the way up they would circumambulate it and the same on the way down. They did that to collect merit, to benefit many sentient beings who were travelling, such as the people and the animals, like the dzo, yaks or cows or whatever. All the time they received great benefit and purified negative karma collected from beginningless rebirths and planted the seed of enlightenment.

When the carving was finished they had a celebration, drinking wine, which was as common as drinking coffee in the West, at home, in the office, everywhere. Up there, wine was made from different grains, but unfortunately it became sort of degenerated. There were some monks who didn't drink wine at all but many did. It became a habit but there were some who didn't drink. They put grain into big containers made of wood and it became alcohol, then people drank it by sucking the alcohol with glass or bamboo pipes. Then they did pujas and performed tsog offerings. When that was finished usually all the lay people danced, joining hands and moving around in a long line, singing ancient songs that had words mostly praising the lama, so it was more or less Dharma.

Nowadays nobody does that. When I was in Solu Khumbu, those songs usually praised the lama or the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha or the five Dhyani Buddhas, things like that. The tunes were very good. It kind of brought peace and made the mind very calm and peaceful. Then, everybody offered scarves and danced and everybody went away happily. My uncle teacher did that for much of his life.

I escaped to home from my teacher two or three times. I was very naughty; I wasn't a good student. I think that's why my understanding of the Dharma is very limited and what there is, is nothing. I think that was from being very naughty. Anyway, I escaped to home two or three times. As a child the thought just comes without analyzing whether it's beneficial or not, whether it's harmful or not. The thought came and I did it.

I have many uncles and because I had escaped a few times my mother sent me away to another uncle in an even more hidden, more undeveloped place. Actually, all these places are Padmasambhava's holy hidden places where there are many of Padmasambhava's caves. The other hidden place was Rolwaling. To get there from the other side of Solu Khumbu you had to cross the snow mountains, which for common people took three days, but the Sherpas themselves didn't take that long. On the mountain there was no particular road so somebody who knew where to travel guided you. Sometimes you walked over the rocks and sometimes on snow. There was a rope tied to each person's waist because there were many cracks in the rocks covered by snow that might cause you to slip and fall down into the water. If somebody slipped, the person behind could hold the rope and that person would be saved. Once you fell down it was very deep. You had to put the stick first before you placed your foot on the ground. Therefore, the guide must be somebody who knew the route.

As a small child I was always carried; I never walked. One time my teacher—my uncle who was my second teacher not my first—carried me back from his home to this side of Solu Khumbu. It was common to carry cooked meat for the journey there and back. The people of Rolwaling, that more hidden place, were mostly not very intelligent and much more primitive than those in Namche Bazaar near Mount Everest. As I was sitting on his back, on the luggage, with the blankets and food and things my teacher had to carry, he passed pieces of meat to me. In that way I was taken care of.

The first time I was taken to the other more hidden place, Rolwaling, I fell down, not on the ice but just on snow. My uncle slipped and I fell down. When you come from Rolwaling to Namche Bazaar, there's a snow mountain—I don't know the name—and quite close to the ground there are lakes of different colors between the snow mountains. That's all you saw up there. There were no flowers except one that looks like cotton. Those of you who have been on the mountain might remember a high plant all covered with flowers like cotton. That's all you see. Down below, there's a lake.

When we were there an avalanche happened. There were quite a number of people, maybe thirty people, and when the snow from the avalanche came they lost all their luggage. One man, when he lost his luggage, went with it, falling down the cliff. I don't think there was danger of falling into the lake because of the rocks, but he only fell a short distance anyway and then picked himself up, got his luggage and sang a song. I guess he must have enjoyed falling down! We weren't at the center of the avalanche, we were at the side, and the snow wasn't so thick you would disappear if you fell. Of course, you can completely disappear in one second, and that happened to many people, but when I fell down people could see me. I also screamed!

Anyway, I escaped three times from the monastery to my home. As I mentioned, as a child the thought comes and you just do it. After one of my escapes my mother made pants for me. I never saw my father. I think around the time I was being carried in a small container of woven bamboo he must have died. My family was very, very poor. We owed money to many, many people but we could not repay it. There was only my mother with all the children. Nobody could help her except my sister who became a nun. My mother didn't want her to become a nun but to stay and look after the family, because you need one elder

child to look after the family, but from her side she wanted to become a nun. She was ordained by a great lama and she now lives up there at Lawudo.

All my mother could do was bring the animals out and take them up into the mountain; she had no time to make us food, clean the house or do anything else. Morning and night she did everything as well as going into the forest to collect wood. You had to either go up or down to do this and either way it was very hard work. After our father passed away there was nothing we could do. We were all very small and couldn't help with anything; she had to do everything. Sorry, my story is going on and on.

One time, when my mother went to get firewood, it had become very late, maybe nine o'clock, and she still had not returned. It was very dark because the moon had not risen; the house was completely dark and we were all children. Of course there was no electricity. Our light was a bunch of burning bamboo twigs. We used the flame of the bamboo to go outside or to see what was cooking. There was also resin from a particular tree that could be put on the stones near the stove and burnt to give some light for cooking.

One of my brothers is Sangye who now lives near Boudhanath. I asked him to be the director of the Lawudo project to rebuild the monastery because the walls developed cracks. An American Peace Corps worker advised us where to dig and where not to dig, so on his advice we built the new gumpa. I wanted to make sure that the walls would be sound so the gumpa wouldn't collapse and kill people. At that time there were no monks there but we started building anyway. In the winter we came here [to Kopan], then in summer we went back up there, but that way we lost many children because they went back home in the winter and never returned. It was very expensive because all the food had to be transported. My brother Sangye built the new monastery separately but kept and fixed up the old one because there were many precious statues and it was difficult to find a place to keep them. He thought the monastery was very precious. It was very high up, but people offered many days of free labor, bringing rocks and wood from another mountain, meaning every piece had to be carried on their backs down from their mountain and up ours. There were no animals, let alone cars. There were unbelievable hardships to build that monastery.

At that time we had a second student benefactor. The first one was the Russian lady, Princess Zina Rachevsky. She became a nun in Dharamsala, ordained by the great lama from Ganden Monastery, Lati Rinpoche, who was an attendant to His Holiness Dalai Lama. Lama Yeshe sent her to meditate in the mountains, which she did for a few years and then she passed away there in meditation. She was reincarnated in France. A very high lama from the Sakya tradition, His Holiness Sakya Trizin, predicted that there was an incarnation of this very first student. I think the mother or the father had some connection with Zina, but somehow it didn't happen that the reincarnation was brought up in Buddhism, to make life beneficial.

That night our mother didn't return until very late but all we could do was sit on the doorstep and watch the moon come over the trees and talk. After a long time our mother came home with a huge load of firewood but she was not well. The next day she lay against the wall, which showed something was wrong because we all had our fixed place to rest and this was where my brother, sister and I usually rested. She was in pain and unable to eat and because she was too weak to make the fire there was no fire. She just called "Ama, Ama,"

calling to her dead mother, our grandmother. We could just look at her helplessly. There was nothing we could do.

Anyway, it was very hard work taking care of us. I hope I have been of a little benefit to the world and to sentient beings to make her life worthwhile, after all the sacrifices she made: carrying me in the womb for nine months and taking care of me as a baby and a child. I knew nothing, just crawling on the ground, and she taught me how to walk, how to stand up, how to speak.

Of course, she didn't teach me English, the language I'm speaking to you in, she didn't teach me directly but even my knowledge of English is due to her kindness. When I was a child she protected me from harm and sacrificed herself for me day and night, always working, always fearful for my safety. She cherished me like a wish-granting jewel, and because of that I was able to learn English, travel to other countries and teach the Dharma a little in English. All this came from my mother's kindness.

Four times a day she always prayed, "May I become like a sun shining in the world. May I become like a snow mountain. May the three realms be controlled by me." I told her, "Your prayer doesn't make sense; it has no meaning. The sun rises all the time over the snow mountains." But later I discovered almost the same prayer in an initiation text, referring to a goddess that protects you when you are traveling or involved in a court case.

There is an old student called Karuna who lived here for many years with his wife, Pam, teaching the monks. They built a house just below here. His daughter and one of his sons are here. When Karuna lived here, whenever he wanted to find a taxi at Boudha he recited that mantra and he got a taxi every time! That's what he told me.

There was another student who did a retreat in the mountains, not in Solu Khumbu but down below, maybe in Padmasambhava's cave. He bought some buddha grass or maybe hashish in Kathmandu, and completely filled a briefcase with it. He dressed well, then he chanted this mantra many times, I think in the cave, and then he left. He went to the United States or somewhere and nothing happened on the way, nothing happened at customs. He told me that's what he did and that was the mantra he chanted, the one that was in the initiation text that was very similar to the one my mother chanted. I was very surprised.

One thing I missed out. One time, after one of my escapes from the monastery at Thangme to home, my mother made me these pants from very cheap cloth that was used for prayer flags, joined at the upper part. That was the first time I wore pants so I didn't know how to open them! In the afternoon there was maybe a little bit of snow. I was outside and my alphabet teacher went inside to make food, so I was alone. Then, the thought came to go back home so I suddenly ran away. I had one plant—I don't know the name—that was hollow that I liked to blow like a puja trumpet, so I ran along the road blowing the plant. Sometimes, at the side of the road there were dark caves, but I ran down, nonstop. I had no idea how to open the pants. Where the parts were sown together the seams were full of the eggs of lice, nits. Because we didn't wash, it was very easy to have lice. Anyway, I didn't know how to open the pants, so I ran all the way from the teacher's house to my home with my pants full of kaka. When I reached home, my mother was outside with quite a few people. She opened my pants and cleaned everything.

Anyway, I hope I have made her sacrifice for me for so many years a little worthwhile by learning the Dharma, and by having learnt a little Dharma, to have brought a little benefit to the world, to sentient beings. I hope any positive thing that has happened has been a little worthwhile to help repay her life's sacrifice for me for so many years with all the worries and fears she had. I hope there has been some positive result from that.

I'm very sorry. You asked one question and then I went on and on and on!

RINPOCHE'S MOTHER'S INCARNATION

My mother passed away and then reincarnated. She was born in Galupa, the next hermitage from Lawudo. There was a lay tantric practitioner, a *ngagpa*, whose father was the great lama who founded Thangme Monastery. He is not a monk but lay, with long white hair down below like this and a very bald head, like a long-life man. He was very good-hearted and gave teachings and initiations many times, helping people, doing pujas and things like that. He himself did retreats for much of his life. He was a very, very good lama. His son lived in this place called Galupa, the hermitage where there was a great yogi in the past. My mother was reincarnated to his wife. The child, a boy, was a very wonderful child. When my sister went there, there was a monk who did very accurate divinations and she heard that this boy was the incarnation of my mother. After some time, my sister offered a scarf and the child put the scarf on his neck for seven days, even at night, and never wanted to take it off.

The child always talked about Lawudo when he was very young but his parents didn't allow him to go to see it even though it was quite close. Then my brother went to see him. The child had been waiting a long time to receive my brother who went there to invite the incarnation to Lawudo Monastery to hold a celebration. The incarnation went to Lawudo and many people came to do puja, to celebrate, as well as nuns from a small monastery below Lawudo in a village called Thamo. When the incarnation of my mother came at Lawudo, he circumambulated the temple seven times, which is what my mother used to do every day in the past life. Then he went into the gompa and respectfully touched his head to His Holiness Dalai Lama's throne, which was carved when we were building the monastery. He bent his head to the low, small throne that was mine and then he went to the altar and bowed his head. This was exactly how my mother used to do it all the time, every day.

He received and returned scarves from everybody, except his father and another monk from Lawudo, an elderly Kopan monk called Tsultrim Norbu. Why didn't he give his father a khatag, a scarf? I think because of an imprint from the past life. When my mother was living at Lawudo, many people would do nyung näs, the two-day Chenrezig retreat, and we would have to get the water from the next hermitage where there was a stream. When there were two or three people staying at Lawudo there was enough water, but when there were more people we had to get water from there.

When my mother was living at Lawudo, the father of the incarnation—of course at that time the incarnation hadn't yet happened; my mother hadn't died—saw that we put the pipe from that stream to bring the water closer to Lawudo, so the Western students could wash when they were there. When he saw that he blocked the water to stop it from coming through the pipe and my mother got very upset. So, I think because of the imprint left from that, even though the very small child didn't know about this, he didn't give a scarf to his

father. And he didn't give a scarf to the monk because my mother used to whisper to me that the monk always got very angry.

Later the little incarnation went to the kitchen where my mother had lived and searched until he found the things that my mother used. One very *surprising* thing was that my mother, being very frugal, collected the plastic shirt buttons in a bottle and my sister had made a shirt for him using those buttons. In very old times, you wore spoons and things on strings because spoons were very precious. There were no shops and no people who could make spoons; they came from very far away, so people wore the spoons on a string. It was the same with buttons. When my sister put the shirt with the buttons from my mother's bottle on the little incarnation, he said,

"Oh, these are my buttons." Buttons were very precious.

At that time there was no sugar, no coffee, no sweet tea. Even rice only came three times a year. Now rice has become an everyday food, but when I was there we ate it once at New Year, and another time when my teacher received a Nepalese man who had walked up for maybe seven days, very far, carrying his heavy load. We had rice then because he brought it. Then, on the fifteenth day of the Tibetan fourth month, the Buddha's day of enlightenment, a full moon night, my teacher uncle went down to the monastery to do a two-day nyung nä, the Chenrezig retreat. Because you can't have black food such as garlic, onions, meat and so forth, you have to have white food, so they offered curd and rice, and maybe vegetables. My teacher ate half the rice and brought the other half to me, so I got half a plate of rice with curd. In the past, the place was very clean, very pure. Now it's totally degenerated, totally overwhelmed by businesses and restaurants. It's totally changed.

So that was one thing. The incarnation could immediately recognize the buttons he had collected and saved in a bottle in his past life. The other very *surprising* thing was this. The first time my brother went to see him at his home he went with another Sherpa, Ang Puwa, somebody my mother had a very close connection with. The minute they entered the house and sat down, and the incarnation's mother offered them a drink—I'm not sure if it was tea or wine—the incarnation mentioned Ang Puwa's name and invited him to drink. This very small child who didn't know he was coming at all mentioned his name immediately. Then Ang Puwa grabbed the incarnation and placed him on his lap and he himself cried so much. Because my mother was very close to this man in the past the incarnation could remember his name.

There were many instances of proof like this that the boy was the incarnation of my mother. It seems maybe the conception was there a little bit before my mother passed away, however, the child could remember many things. On top of that he was recognized by my guru, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, a great lama from the monastery in Tibet near Solu Khumbu. Behind Mt. Everest is Tibet, so his monastery was there. He checked and proved that this was the incarnation of my mother.

We enthroned my mother's incarnation here at Kopan Monastery when he was four years old. Whenever he spoke it was unbelievable. His voice was so sweet that hearing it, no matter what he said, brought so much peace to the heart. Anyway, that was my experience. Whenever he said something I waited for him to say something else. As we were doing the

enthronement, my idea was that he would study extensive Buddhist philosophy in Kopan: the Buddha's teachings and commentaries by Nagarjuna, Asanga and the other highly-attained great Indian scholars, both sutra and tantra studied in all the four traditions, Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Gelug. In each tradition highly-attained lamas have written commentaries and some lamas study not just their own tradition but all four. My idea was for him to study all four traditions at Kopan and then after that, he could choose whichever tradition he wanted and practice that. It was up to him.

That was my idea but his parents did not listen to me. They wanted to send him to south India, to the monastery of a very high Nyingma lama. They have nuns as well as monks there and there's also one section for meditation.

He was only there for fifteen days when there was a storm. He was playing outside and as he ran to go inside to shelter from the storm, he tripped and fell. There were some concrete steps and he banged his head and cracked his skull. He was taken to a small hospital and his parents in Solu Khumbu were called. I was in the West at that time so they didn't ring me. His parents couldn't do anything. The person who took the telephone call in Solu Khumbu rang Sangye, my brother, and then he told me. They still didn't want to listen to me because I was from another monastery. I was disappointed with that. Later he was taken to a bigger hospital and then brought to Nepal. Because the wound was very old nobody wanted to look after him but my brother's wife knew a doctor, a friend, who checked and saw there was still a piece of bone left in the fracture. He got better for one or two days but then he passed away. So that's it. The story's finished.

WHEN RINPOCHE WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE LAWUDO LAMA

I was talking about the examination with religious objects. When I was very small, the lama Karma Tenzin who was supposed to have recognized me from my previous life when I was called Lama Yeshe—another Lama Yeshe—brought religious objects, silver inside and wood outside, to my home. They were spread out on a table at home with some small Tibetan objects and a few different things, but on that day I didn't point to anything. The next time I was taken to the monastery. In the gompa there was puja. There were many monks there and the lama of that monastery was sitting on the throne, so a big puja was happening. On a side wall there was a life-sized Buddha statue on an altar and in front of that was a very good monk who lived in a cave. I was put on his lap. There were several monks and other people watching, examining. A pile of cymbals from both Lawudo monastery and from other people was placed there. When this lama whose lap I was sitting on asked which cymbal was mine, I pointed in the direction of one and he said, "Yes, that's correct." I pointed somewhere but I had no idea! Anyway, the lama said it was correct. I think it's my karma it happened this way.

Ngawang Chöphel, the heart disciple of the past life's Lawudo Lama, was there when he was passing away. The Lawudo Lama could recognize all the stages of the death evolution as they happened. He was able to see because of his experience in meditation during his lifetime. He was able to recognize what element was absorbing, what inner and outer signs were happening and so forth. He and his disciple discussed all this as it was happening to him. His disciple told me this when I met him.

After the Lawudo Lama passed away, Ngawang Chöphel went to Tibet and asked a particular lama—I don't remember the name—if it was correct that I was the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama. He said it was, but he should go to see another lama, who did a divination and then told him to see *another* lama. I think he told me he saw six lamas but others have said there were only three. The last lama, Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, confirmed that I was the Lawudo Lama.

Ngawang Chöphel did many retreats, many practices and received many teachings and initiations. At one time, following the Buddha's example, he practiced the paramita of charity by sacrificing his body to the insects for seven days. He built a monastery, this great holy place, like a magical place, where Padmasambhava achieved immortal realizations, in Maratika, which is in Nepal but near to India. Each time they did pujas there in the evening, near sunset, blowing their religious instruments, all the clouds went away and the villagers didn't receive the rain they needed for their fields. The villagers were Hindus and maybe some other religion and they wanted to burn down his monastery. The queen was Hindu and she wanted to burn down the monastery and kick Ngawang Chöphel out. He ran away before queen came. At the end there was a court case and the government allocated half to Ngawang Chöphel and half to the queen. He was allowed to keep the monastery but he wasn't allowed to develop it. Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche told me about him—that he was a Dharma practitioner but he was involved in a court case. Anyway, he passed away sitting in meditation. That happened because of all the practice he did.

Rinpoche said that when he was informed by the attendant that Ngawang Chöphel had died Rinpoche went down and placed a very famous Nyingma prayer on his head. The minute you wear this you're free from the lower realms. This is what *ngagpas*, the lay tantric practitioners, those who have their hair rolled up, wear in a silver container. Of course, if you are meditating while you're dying, you're completely guided by yourself, you're completely protected by yourself. He was very lucky that his guru, Trulshik Rinpoche, was there and then he put the prayer on his head. Generally, if you die in meditation—whether lying down or sitting in meditation—depending on your wishes you can get reborn in a pure land or take a perfect human rebirth to gain any realizations you haven't achieved in the past, and continuously benefit other sentient beings again. Even if there are no other lamas around praying for you, if you die in meditation you can completely take care of yourself.

The disciple of the Lawudo Lama, who built the monastery there, reincarnated. The last time I went to Maratika to do a few days' retreat, the incarnation came. It was very nice, very wonderful. Maratika, where Padmasambhava achieved immortal realization, is most amazing. The whole area is like somebody has transformed it into something very magical, even the mountain around it. On the main rocky mountain there's a vast cave, where there's a huge, smooth rock like a Buddha Amitayus long-life vase and sometimes nectar comes from it, depending on who prays there. Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, a very high Nyingma lama, went there and nectar came from this huge vase rock. A Japanese Buddhist who wanted to help the monastery and had strong devotion, made a very strong prayer there and again nectar came.

People go there to do long-life retreats. His Holiness Sakya Trizin, the head of the Sakya sect, said that even though astrologically the number of years of your lifespan is finished you can still live five more years. That place has the power to bless you to have a long life.

Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche goes there every year for maybe two or three months to do a long-life retreat for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

A young Tibetan lady, a dakini who came from Tibet to serve His Holiness, goes there every year to do a retreat for His Holiness. The time before last she did a retreat in a small Padmasambhava cave. I didn't see her last time because the son of the lama who built the monastery told me not to. You have to climb up a ladder made of tree branches so although everybody else who accompanied me went—a lady, a man and some Kopan monks—because it was late I didn't go. She did a retreat for one or two months and maybe she didn't even have food. She saw Buddha Amitayus there for weeks while she was meditating and then she made blessed pills.

I'd better stop here.

[Dedications]

LECTURE 13

ORAL TRANSMISSION OF LAMA TSONGKHAPA GURU YOGA

Tonight, it's difficult to do the preparation. It will take a long time and, I think, it will go too late, so I thought to cancel it and maybe do the preparation and initiation on the same day, tomorrow. There has been that system.

His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche was His Holiness the Dalai Lama's tutor in Tibet, not his actual guru but helping him, offering him an education in sutra and tantra and the extensive understanding of the philosophy through debate and very deep study. He is called "Tsenshab" but that is not actually a guru, not as in guru-disciple. Later in India, His Holiness took the commentary on the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* composed by Lama Atisha, which integrates the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha that comes in three levels: the Hinayana, the Mahayana Paramitayana and the Mahayana Secret Mantra, Vajrayana, teachings. These three levels of teachings are taught because there are sentient beings who have different levels of intelligence and karma, different merits. All that is integrated into the few pages of the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. The lamrim, the graduated path to enlightenment, started from Lama Atisha's prayer.

It clarified all the wrong concepts, all the confusion that was around then, that if you practiced sutra you could not practice tantra and if you wanted to practice tantra you could not practice sutra. In those days many people regarded these as like hot and cold, complete opposites. There were a lot of misconceptions about tantra. By composing the *Lamp for the Path*, Lama Atisha cut all those wrong concepts in Tibet and made it very clear that these three different levels of teachings taught by the Buddha were for one person's gradual practice to achieve enlightenment, therefore they were for everybody.

After that came many commentaries. Lama Tsongkhapa wrote the most extensive commentary, the *Lamrim Chenmo*, as well as the middle length one, by leaving out all the debates that negated the wrong views in the section on special insight. Then he wrote the very short one, *Hymns of Experience*. Many great lamas who completed the path to enlightenment wrote commentaries from their own experience. Then, so many bodhisattvas, so many enlightened beings, happened in Tibet and the countries around Tibet.

Because Kyabje Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche was the incarnation of Marpa's son, Darma Dodé, he was always called by people Tugse Rinpoche, meaning Marpa's "*tugse*," his holy son, his holy mind son, Darma Dodé.

There is a story that Marpa advised his son Darma Dodé not to go to some public function but he went anyway. He rode his horse, but he fell off and knocked his head on a stone, breaking his skull. Evidently, when somebody said something not pleasing to His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche's holy mind, Rinpoche's head changed a little bit. I don't think common people could see it, but the part of skin on the aspect of the head that was bald—where Darma Dodé cracked his skull—changed slightly. That was an interesting thing.

Rinpoche passed away in Ladakh. When I was in Dharamsala relics were brought in a vase, so I went to see them at the McLeod Ganj bus station.

The last time I met Rinpoche was in Delhi. Rinpoche advised me to do good. He was extremely kind to me all the time, giving me many teachings and initiations and teachings. No matter how busy Rinpoche was, even during lunch, he tried to answer questions on philosophy that confused normal people. Rinpoche helped me to understand them. He was very, very kind.

I haven't seen his incarnation much, only in pujas and teachings, but the young Tibetan lady who is a dakini had a lot of connection with Rinpoche and she told me that his skin goes up and down in the same way that Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche did in his past life. It's not everybody who can do that! So, that's very interesting. They are totally different aspects but there are some external signs like that.

I don't why I was talking about Rinpoche. I've forgotten. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

I thought tonight to do some *lung*, the ones that you have asked for. The first *lung* is very important because every day when you meditate on the lamrim, the fundamental practice should be guru yoga. The most extensive guru yoga is *Lama Chöpa, Guru Puja*, but there is another shorter one, *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, that you can practice. For people who haven't received a great initiation, there are tantric practice meditations within the *Ganden Lha Gyäma*, the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, you can do. There's a very special, very secret meditation that goes with the prayer, *Mig me tse wäi ter chen chän rä zīg*, and then the guru entering at the heart. You need a highest tantra initiation for these things. Even a lower tantra great initiation is not enough; it doesn't qualify you to receive this very secret meditation that goes with the *migtsema* and also the guru entering the heart.

These are not in the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha daily meditation that I put together many years ago for somebody who really wants to seriously meditate every day, to receive the guru's and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's blessings in the heart and from there to generate guru devotion, in order to receive the realizations of the path to enlightenment. Along with the listening, reflecting and meditating you need to have the guru yoga practice. It's aimed for people who really want to seriously meditate every day, maybe after having done courses like the main one here at Kopan, or in India, at Tushita Dharamsala or at Root Institute in Bodhgaya or in the West. After having done courses, if somebody wants to meditate every day, to have realizations, to make life meaningful by develop the mind on the path to enlightenment, this book is also for that.

Those who are able to practice the extensive one, *Lama Chöpa*, that's unbelievable, but there is also the other very common one, *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*. This is not something that is very hard, although some people might take it that way, but it is something inside your heart, the very heart of the practice. Maha-anuttara tantra, the highest tantra, has many secret practices to achieve enlightenment most quickly. It has guru yoga to develop devotion and receive the blessings of the guru and to receive the realizations of the path. And then there's the lamrim, the basis, the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment based on guru devotion, and lojong, thought transformation. Even though the entire lamrim is lojong, specific lojong practices are also there. It's incredible; it's different from other guru yoga

practices. All the important things, the practices, are contained in it, therefore it makes life most meaningful, most productive.

The first *lung* is the oral transmission of *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*. This is different from other guru yogas. This has very special qualities that you will understand from the benefits. By practicing *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*—by listening, reflecting and meditating on it—it becomes very effective for the mind, for the heart. It hits the ego, the self-cherishing thought, it pacifies that and whatever other delusions you have. Then, listening, reflecting and meditating, whatever you're doing becomes pure Dharma and the cause to achieve realizations, leading to the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment.

Then, in every second, you are able to achieve the three great meanings. It pacifies all the obstacles to gaining realizations, the obstacles in your life and to your Dharma practice. Another benefit is that if you practice *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, beside this *migtsema*, you don't experience paralysis through pollution, through being harmed by the spirit king and tsen, the landlord or the nagas, or from spirits called *za* or *de* that cause paralysis. It's not just from some condition of the blood, there are external beings also that are connected, that become conditions and cause harm. Whoever practices *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* does not receive these harms.

Originally, this *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* was only given privately but later it was put together and made public. There is the story of a family living in the mountains whose child was possessed by a spirit. Many lamas tried to stop the spirit, doing many pujas and other things, but that only made the spirit completely wild and violent. Nothing helped. They finally asked a lama who practiced *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* and, after checking if it would be beneficial, he sent a shoe and some beads from his mala, not even the whole mala. The beads were placed around the windows and the shoe was hung from the ceiling above the child's bed. When they did that the spirit was terrified. It saw the beads as the ten very wrathful guardians and the shoe as a mountain pressing down on it. The spirit was screaming and wanting to leave but the lama made it promise never to harm any place where somebody recited *migtsema*.

There's the nine-round one and the five-round one.

*Vajradhara, lord of sages, source of all realizations;
Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of nonobjectifying compassion;
Manjushri, master of stainless wisdom;
Lord of Secrets, destroyer of the entire host of maras;
Losang Dragpa, crown jewel of the sages of the Land of Snow:
To you, Guru-Buddha, embodying the three refuges,
I make requests respectfully with my three doors.
Please grant your blessings for myself and others to be ripened and liberated.
Please bestow the supreme and common realizations.
[Please bless me to become quickly like you.]*

In Sera Monastery, they recite *migtsema* to Chenrezig, the Compassion Buddha, the great treasure of objectless compassion; to Manjushri, who has stainless understanding; and to Vajrapani, the Owner of the Secrecy, who destroys the entire host of maras.

As I mentioned, there are four maras, both gross and subtle, and this is related to the subtle one and the negative imprint. After you remove the disturbing-thought obscurations, there are the subtle defilements left by the concept of ignorance holding things as truly existent. If you remove that you have no dualistic views. You're also free from the appearance of true existence. Only at that time have you removed the dualistic views and your mind is fully enlightened.

So, it's related to Manjushri, the one who has stainless understanding, and to the Owner of the Secrecy who destroys the entire host of maras, which here means subtle maras. The *mara of the aggregates* refers to the continuation of the cycle of existence into the next life under the control of karma and delusion. Karma and delusion are what cause us to circle, like the driver. Because the aggregates, which are in the nature of suffering, are under the control of karma and delusion—the *mara of aggregates*—we are forced to experience so many problems. There are the *mara of the delusions*, the *mara of the Lord of Death* and the *mara of the deva's son*, who is said to shoot arrows of the five delusions at people who are practicing, trying to harm them. Vajrapani, the Owner of the Secrecy, is the one who destroys the entire host of maras.

Then, the text says Tsongkhapa is the crown jewel of the sages, the learned ones of the Land of Snow, which means Tibet. There are so many learned ones, highly-attained practitioners who are pure and good-hearted and the crown of all of them, who has all those qualities, is Lama Tsongkhapa, whose teachings they respect and admire. There are many hundreds of disciples of Lama Tsongkhapa, like the stars in the sky, so learned, pure and good-hearted. There have been many disciples up until now, and now there is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the fourteenth and present Dalai Lama. And there are many of my gurus, those with inconceivable qualities, with great understanding, with realizations of sutra and tantra. Such great holy beings in this world are extremely rare to find. And Lama Tsongkhapa is the crown of them all.

His disciples, up to the present gurus and His Holiness Dalai Lama, are like the sun shining in this world with their teachings, giving extensive benefit to sentient beings and extensive benefit to the teachings of the Buddha. This is most amazing.

Then, “Losang Dragpa, at your holy feet I make requests.” Although there is a five-line *migtsema*, normally at Sera they recite it as four lines because Vajrapani is Lama Tsongkhapa himself, so they leave out the line about Vajrapani. That's the kind of story.

The spirits made a vow that they would not harm anybody who recites *migtsema*. It is also very effective for healing. Also, by practicing *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, all your wishes are fulfilled.

The other special thing about this practice is that you are able to develop the seven wisdoms: the four major wisdoms—great understanding, clear wisdom, quick wisdom and profound wisdom—as well as wisdom to explain the Dharma, debating wisdom and writing wisdom.

When you do the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* you develop these wisdoms. The other guru yoga practices don't have the particular meditation to develop these wisdoms, so this has the benefits of the other guru yoga practices and on top of that, you develop wisdom and don't receive harm from those different spirits. Without having those obstacles, sicknesses, diseases, you are able to complete the practice of Dharma.

The next benefit of practicing the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* is that in your next life and all your future lives you'll meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings. That's the very special benefit. Practicing other deity guru yogas don't necessarily have this particular benefit, but practicing *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, again and again you'll meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, like refined gold, in your future lives.

Lama Tsongkhapa studied the Buddha's direct teachings, the Kangyur, as well as all the commentaries by the Six Ornaments and those other highly-attained pandits. He studied them all extremely well, as well as checking and studying teachings from the other traditions, the Nyingma, Kagyü and Sakya.

Then he wrote those most unbelievable clear teachings of the words of the Buddha, both sutra and tantra. Many learned ones praised the clarity, profundity and extensiveness of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, the special quality of his teachings. When you read them, they go very wide and very deep. No matter how many other lamrim texts you read, if you read Lama Tsongkhapa, it has that kind of feeling of being very deep and very vast, something different from the other commentaries. It touches all the important aspects and so is very beneficial. There are no mistakes there and because of that, following his teachings you can have a correct practice and have correct realizations and are able to achieve enlightenment quickly.

The last benefit is that when you die you will be born in Tushita, the pure land of Maitreya Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa. This is not Tushita Dharamsala or Tushita Delhi! This doesn't refer to the FPMT centers called Tushita in Dharamsala and Delhi. Maybe that can be the interpretive meaning! When you die, your consciousness is very easily able to transfer to Tushita pure land. And then you will see Maitreya Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa, Maitreya Buddha's heart disciple, and be able to receive teachings.

I think I'm going to do this *lung* and a few others tonight. So generate the motivation like this.

"No matter how long it takes, no matter how hard it is, I must free sentient beings from the oceans of the samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore I'm going to take the oral transmission of the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* and the others."

Think in your heart that taking the oral transmission is also for the benefit of the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings, the numberless gods, demigods and intermediate state beings.

[Rinpoche chants]

When you listen to an oral transmission it is very, very important to put as much effort as possible into not missing even one word, in order to receive the complete transmission. You have to hear the sound; it's not that you have to understand the meaning of the words. For an oral transmission that is not required. Of course, if you understand the meaning it also becomes a commentary, but for an oral transmission it's enough just to be able to hear the words.

I have taken many oral transmissions and many teachings in recent years from many unbelievably great, pure and good-hearted lamas, like the sun shining in this world. I've realized that receiving an oral transmission is more difficult than an initiation because with an initiation, even when the lama explains a lot, there's an elaborate understanding, a middle one and then a short one, the essence. If you're able to think about the essence, then you have received the initiation.

His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche used to mention when he was giving those many hundreds of initiations very quickly every day that even if we couldn't follow everything he said it was OK just to believe whatever the guru said had happened to us. However, to receive an oral transmission, you have to hear every single word. If you miss any words, if you don't pay attention, then it doesn't become a complete transmission. This is how I think. You have to pay attention. If you're doing something else, such as doing other prayers, your attention isn't there and then you miss the oral transmission.

When we were receiving the oral transmissions some of the lamas were talking a lot. If you can listen at the same time as you are talking then that's OK, but if you can't hear the teaching then you miss out. So, I think in some ways receiving an oral transmission is more difficult.

That's why I'm asking you to try to pay attention to every single word. An oral transmission is something you hear that leaves a positive imprint on your mind. It says that in the text. It leaves a positive imprint and then in future lives you meet Dharma again, when you hear the words or read the text, you're immediately able to understand the meaning. You're also able to practice, cease the defilements and have realizations and then achieve liberation and full enlightenment. You can't imagine—just listening leaves a positive imprint that has unimaginable benefits, incredible benefits in the future, even if you don't understand the teaching, whether it's a commentary or an oral transmission.

Usually for Western people if you don't understand something you have no use for it. It's like "Oh, these teachings aren't useful for me," so you give it up. If you do that, if you give it up from your heart, losing your respect and devotion, you create the very heavy negative karma of abandoning the holy Dharma, a karma that is heavier than destroying all the statues, stupas, scriptures and temples in this world. This is mentioned at the beginning of the Lama Tsongkhapa's lamrim, that the karma is heavier negative karma than having destroyed all the *chorten*.

Chorten is the same term as stupa so it's very easy to get limited understanding, thinking it only refers to stupa, that the karma is heavier than destroying all the stupas in this world, but it's not only that. Chorten refers to any holy object, such as stupas, scriptures, statues—anything that is an object to worship, to make an offering to. You need to check in the

books how the term chorten is translated. It's not only stupas. According to Kyabje Chöden Rinpoche's commentary, abandoning the Dharma like this is heavier negative karma than destroying all the holy objects in the world. Don't do that. Even if you don't understand the topic now, you can leave it until the future to understand it. Keep your respect and devotion to it so you don't create the very heavy negative karma of abandoning the holy Dharma.

Even if you don't understand the teachings, the special benefit of Buddhist teachings is that just reading and listening to the teachings purifies your negative karma and ensures you get a higher rebirth in the next life. You can be born as human being and meet Dharma again and practice it. It has that benefit, even if you don't understand the teachings. Just by listening like that, for the time being it leaves positive imprints on the mind and eventually that will definitely bring you to liberation from samsara and enlightenment. That's the special benefit of listening to Buddhadharma.

[Rinpoche chants]

The *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* says,

*You strove for much learning and practice in this degenerate age,
And made your freedoms and riches meaningful
By abandoning the eight worldly concerns.
Savior, we sincerely rejoice in your extensive deeds.*

In these degenerate times, there is the *degeneration of the mind*, where delusions increase and our mind is very stubborn and difficult to tame. In these times it's difficult to even hear the Dharma and more difficult to understand it. With the *degeneration of delusion* everything becomes extremely rough, gross, and then there are the *degeneration of sentient beings*, the *degeneration of time* and the *degeneration of life*, where life becomes very short. With the degeneration of time there is no peace; there are wars, many problems, many sicknesses, famine and many things like that. It's such a difficult time. There are many obstacles for anybody who attempts to listen extensively to the Buddhadharma and to practice.

When Lama Tsongkhapa was giving teachings to so many learned disciples, bringing extensive benefits to sentient beings, his guru Manjushri, the manifestation of all the Buddha's wisdom, advised him that it was more important to stop teaching and go to a secluded place in the mountains to meditate, to live an ascetic life, renouncing attachment to this life. Right while he was giving teachings Lama Tsongkhapa immediately left for an isolated place to meditate. He just stopped teaching and left with eight disciples. They all lived an ascetic life and did intensive preliminary practices, meditating on the path and achieving great attainments.

At the beginning, his guru, Lama Umapa, went to see Manjushri. Lama Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri questions through his guru but later Lama Tsongkhapa himself was able to see Manjushri directly. There are different ways of having the appearance of a deity: the appearance of the transcendental wisdom and experiential appearance, through the senses, guru and disciple sitting next to each other and the disciple receiving teachings. It was like that. Lama Tsongkhapa saw Manjushri with his senses, sitting very close. He received teachings and he could ask all the subtle questions about emptiness and other things directly,

and he received all the answers from Manjushri. Therefore, it is said that all of Lama Tsongkhapa's lamrim teachings, the stages of the path to enlightenment and many of the other teachings Lama Tsongkhapa wrote, are the same as Manjushri teaching them because so much is what Lama Tsongkhapa received from Manjushri.

Like this, Lama Tsongkhapa abandoned not just the eight black worldly dharmas but the other two types, the mixed worldly dharmas and the white worldly dharmas. He abandoned all three types. His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche has a very different explanation of what the three types are, but I don't remember now. The black ones are attachment clinging to this life, grasping, feeling attached to the four desirable objects, and becoming unhappy, sad or angry when the four undesirable things happen.

I'm not a hundred percent sure but I think the eight mixed worldly dharmas refers to not having these eight black worldly dharmas but still having the ignorance holding true existence. For our whole life we believe and we make our mind hold onto all this as true. We live our life in that hallucination, believing the hallucination to be reality. The eight white worldly dharmas might be that, even if we don't have that, we still have the thought seeking happiness for ourselves, the self-cherishing thought.

When Lama Tsongkhapa practiced Dharma, he did so unstained by the three types of eight worldly dharmas. However, in these degenerate times it's very difficult to practice Dharma. Whatever Lama Tsongkhapa himself achieved, by listening to Dharma and then attempting to practice, his human body was made very meaningful.

The best translation of the last line is, "In the savior's extensive actions we rejoice sincerely from the depths of our heart." Normally people say "protector" but I think "savior" is the correct translation. The Tibetan for savior is *gon* whereas the word for protector is *sung ma*. If you use "protector" for both, then what's the difference?

You can understand how extensive Lama Tsongkhapa's holy actions were by studying his philosophy, his commentaries on the sutra and tantra paths. The more you study those extensive teachings, the clearer all the difficult points become, points that even many great meditators have made mistakes over. Lama Tsongkhapa has given very clear guidance; his explanations have this flavor, like cream or sweets. That's a special action of Lama Tsongkhapa, benefiting sentient beings by showing the sutra and tantra teachings of the Buddha very clearly where a great many meditators have made mistakes. I think I mentioned this some nights ago.

Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, a very high lama and the head of the Nyingma tradition, wrote a text in his previous life about the four Tibetan Mahayana Buddhist traditions: Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya and Gelug. After talking about the Gelug tradition, he expressed that Lama Tsongkhapa wrote the clearest explanations of the teachings of Buddha. That's what he said. Lama had this text and he showed it to me, so I saw that myself. Like Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, the learned ones who have experienced the path themselves have seen this aspect of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings when they have inspected them with a straight mind, not a curved mind.

A curved mind means you don't really pay attention, you don't read it thoroughly. You might read it but you follow your own tradition and don't really take in what you are reading. With a straight mind you read it, check up on it and then you really understand it. And especially when you have a realization, then that's the real flavor of the Gelug, the special advice of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings. Many learned ones who read Lama Tsongkhapa and checked his teachings saw how unbelievable they were. "In the extensive teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, which are like pure refined gold, I rejoice." That is one of the special qualities of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings. That's one thing, the teachings themselves.

The other thing is that, having studied the teachings, when you explore them and meditate on them, you really get the experience. Studying them is one thing but when you meditate you get the experience. Then you really see the benefits of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings.

WITH A LOT OF MERIT REALIZING EMPTINESS IS NOT DIFFICULT

For example, in the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment, Lama Tsongkhapa talked about renunciation of this life and of future lives, and bodhicitta and then he said we need to realize emptiness and dependent arising. Here he is not talking about gross dependent arising but subtle dependent arising.

There are two points of view on this. According to Kyabje Denma Lochö Rinpoche and Geshe Lamrimpa in Tibet, this dependent arising is emptiness; it means emptiness. Kyabje Chöden Rinpoche—or maybe Kyabje Pabongka Rinpoche, I'm not sure—says this is the dependent arising of cause and conditions, the gross dependent arising. So, there is a little bit of a different view there. Rinpoche, who was kind of expressing big *surprise* or shock, said, "Oh, some people say this is subtle dependent arising but it is gross dependent arising."

You can see how samsara is a causal result but nirvana and even enlightenment are also causal results, so this dependent arising is "unbetraying" as the text states. There are some specific English words that I translated which express this point, but I can't remember them now. Getting the translation exact is very important as it is the object that your mind focuses on, that your mind is entrusted to and then, suddenly you see that you have been believing in things as truly existent. All phenomena—the I or outside phenomena like the colors or these *thangkas*—have appeared to the mind that way, and not just from this morning, not just since birth, but from beginningless rebirths. After you have discovered one object of refutation, the *gag cha*—for example, the colors of the brocade of the *thangka*—then wherever you look, you will see everything as a hallucination. Once you've discovered the hallucination the first time, everywhere you look, the ceiling, the floor and so forth, you will see it that way, and particularly you will see the I that way.

Before that, you didn't realize the *gag cha*, the false way the I appeared. You didn't see the I as *gag cha*. Now, you see the I as *gag cha* after all and then, when you look at the I you see it that way. There's the I existing on the I. The first I is the truly existent one, and you see that on top of the merely-imputed I. The truly-existent I is projected onto the mere I imputed by your mind, merely imputed by your mind, by the negative imprint left on your mind by ignorance, the concept of true existence. That is the I on the I. Then you see it that way.

If you have a lot of merit then for just a second you know that this is not true, that this is the false I. For just a second you see all this, that it doesn't exist, that it can't be true because the I is a dependent arising. This understanding of dependent arising is the very simple kind of logic for those who have a lot of merit. Of course, that's not me at all; there is no success. But I think those of you who have great merit, immediately, after that, for just a second, you see as empty that which you haven't seen as empty from beginningless rebirths. Only now, only today, this hour, this minute, you see that the real I is empty. There's nothing to hold onto. Even though you have held onto it from this morning, from birth, from your past life, from all the beginningless rebirths you have had, now you have this realization, due to having collected all these unbelievable merits and due to strong guru devotion, obeying your gurus, never criticizing them, doing extensive practice of purification and collecting merits, meditating on emptiness and so forth.

This only happens when all the conditions come together. It can't happen with a mind critical of the guru—thinking the guru doesn't like me, and this and that, and this and that. It can't happen then; your mind is far from the experience. You made all the problems; your own mind thinking the wrong way made all the problems, made everything negative. Because of that you don't even have any interest in the teachings or in the prayers you recite. You recite the words with your lips but your heart isn't in it; there's no feeling in your heart. It becomes the opposite of practice.

However, when such positive conditions come together—strong guru devotion and having done extensive purification and meditated on the lamrim—with all that together and with imprints from past lives maybe, then it just clicks. You suddenly see the object of refutation clearly and emptiness clicks, just like that, like clicking the fingers. First you need to have collected all the right conditions, and when you have, it's a question of clicking the mind. Suddenly there's nothing to hold onto. You have been holding that real I from beginningless rebirths and then, suddenly, there's nothing there to hold onto. The real I doesn't go anywhere. It doesn't go through the window or out the door; it doesn't go to Tibet or China or Africa or some other place. Just *there*, suddenly you see there's nothing there to hold onto.

For that to happen, you need a lot of merit and you need to hear the teachings from a teacher with the experience and the skill to guide you. Then, while you're going through the experience you know what's happening to you. When you have a clear idea, you don't have to worry about falling into nihilism. Otherwise there's unbelievable fear. The fear of losing the I is even greater than seeing a tiger, it's a very deep fear.

When this is happening to you, when you have your own experience like this, no matter how many learned teachers explain emptiness to you in a way that contradicts Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching, you have had your own experience. Nobody can cheat you because you have your own experience. You have seen the emptiness that Lama Tsongkhapa explained; it actually happened to you *exactly* as he explained. Your mind cannot change by reading some other philosophical text or by hearing some other famous learned teacher telling you that Lama Tsongkhapa's way is wrong and you should do it that teacher's way. Nobody can change you; nobody can deceive you. There are many positions on emptiness but Lama Tsongkhapa's explanation has been completely proven by experience.

This has been the case with many meditators who have had a lot of merit. Their mind has suddenly clicked when all the conditions have come together. You need a lot of merit to have that experience exactly as Lama Tsongkhapa explained it.

Maybe I can mention one of my gurus, Gen Jampa Wangdu, who completed the path in this life. He achieved shamatha in Dalhousie then he achieved bodhicitta when he was living high up in the mountains near Dharamsala. He realized mahamudra, emptiness, further down, under a rock in the place His Holiness Ling Rinpoche lived. He lived there for seven years and Geshe Rabten told me that this was where he realized emptiness. He had great success with the Six Yogas of Naropa, with clear light and illusory body.

We had received teachings from His Holiness, where His Holiness talked about that, and after that, one time when we went back to my room Gen Jampa Wangdu described his own experiences to me. His great success in attaining the path was due to having accumulated unbelievable merit. He was known to other meditators and was extremely close to His Holiness. When he went to see His Holiness from time to time, he didn't ever have to go to His Holiness's office to make an appointment. The only appointment he ever made was because I requested His Holiness Dalai Lama to give a secret Chenrezig initiation, Gyalwa Gyatso. He said that one had to go through the office. Usually he didn't have to go through the office; he went straight to His Holiness. I think with his clairvoyance he could see from his cave when His Holiness had time. I think this was probably because he had achieved *shi nā*, calm abiding.

He guided certain geshe, lamas, who lived around him and there were quite a number who had great realizations. He said if you have a lot of merit then realizing emptiness is not difficult. It's a question of how much merit you collect. By correctly devoting to the guru you collect the most extensive merit—by obeying their advice, by offering service and pleasing them. Obeying the guru's advice is the main thing and then correctly devoting with thought and action. With thought means looking at the guru as a buddha, without mistakes, with only qualities; with action is obeying and offering service with respect.

The next one is if you have material possessions then you make offerings to collect merit. Depending on how well it is done, everything happens from that—doing the greatest purification, collecting the most extensive merit and receiving the most extensive blessing. So, by paying the most attention to this, you can achieve enlightenment, otherwise you can't. If you haven't discovered that this is the most important practice to do in order to achieve enlightenment, then you are simply doing whatever you like. If you are like that, following the selfish mind in that way, breaking the guru's advice, then nothing happens; there are only obstacles. When you practice or try to do a retreat there will be a lot of problems. You will get lung, which might be unfamiliar for those of you who are new here. When you have lung, you can't really do meditation; there are many obstacles and you are overwhelmed by problems.

The text goes on to say that when this experience of realizing the object of refutation happens, what you have been holding onto is lost; suddenly there's nothing to hold onto. You realize it is empty; it doesn't exist. Then the text says at that time the person has entered the path that pleases all the buddhas.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REJOICING

When we do the *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*, it's very important to stop, at least for a few seconds or a minute, and to rejoice in Lama Tsongkhapa's past, present and future merits and in all the skies of qualities of his holy body, holy speech and holy mind. How wonderful! He's an enlightened being, so rejoice. After that, rejoice in Lama Tsongkhapa's holy activities, these eighteen volumes that are the clearest teachings on the entire path, both sutra and tantra. Rejoice that, due to these teachings, Lama Tsongkhapa's many disciples and their disciples up to the present have achieved enlightenment. Each of Lama Tsongkhapa's disciples, up to the present guru, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has been of unbelievable benefit to the world, building monasteries and teaching sutra and tantra.

Can you imagine how His Holiness the Dalai Lama continuously brings peace and happiness in this world, even just by giving a one-hour talk? Just by seeing his holy face we get inner peace and receive blessings. Whether it's an hour or a day or two we can learn very extensive, very deep Buddhadharma in such a short time. Can you imagine? It's amazing. Many people in the West think life is meaningless and they are depressed, but by bringing peace and inspiration, by showing how to make life meaningful, His Holiness gives millions of people hope and peace, inner peace and happiness, making their lives meaningful. Unbelievable transformation in their hearts comes through listening to teachings from His Holiness, allowing them to achieve enlightenment quickly. He causes millions of people to turn their life toward enlightenment. That's amazing. Before it was only samsara, only the lower realms, but now they turn their lives to liberation and enlightenment. In the same way, many other great lamas bring the most unbelievable benefit to sentient beings. All this has come from Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings. That is a real reason to rejoice.

For you, after coming to the Kopan course and studying lamrim, every single Dharma understanding has come from Lama Tsongkhapa. Every single purification you have done by practicing lamrim has come from Lama Tsongkhapa. Every single merit you have collected with bodhicitta, with renunciation, whatever, has all come from Lama Tsongkhapa's kindness. No question if you have had your own experience. Therefore you can rejoice in this.

When you come to that place in the recitation, stop there and meditate on rejoicing. That's it. Then, sooner or later you will develop all the qualities that Lama Tsongkhapa has and you will be like the limitless sky in the benefit you can bring to all sentient beings and to the teachings of the Buddha. When you finish rejoicing, think in your heart, "May I have the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and in all my lifetimes offer extensive benefits to sentient beings and to the teachings of the Buddha." Think like that when you stop rejoicing. Whether you do the prayer alone or as a group, I have been telling the centers that the special thing about FPMT is to take the opportunity and meditate on rejoicing. In that way, everybody going to the center from their home collects inconceivable skies of merit. Afterwards, they return home with all that merit and that makes it very easy to achieve enlightenment.

[Rinpoche chants]

I'm not sure if it is in the present *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga* book, but after the mandala there should be a prayer to meet Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings again. That's very, very

important. This was composed by the fifth Dalai Lama. There are a few long prayers expressing the qualities of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings which the fifth Dalai Lama condensed into four lines that contain it all.

[Rinpoche chants]

ORAL TRANSMISSION OF SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA'S MANTRA

The aim of all the teachings the Buddha taught is to actualize wisdom, which means the ultimate wisdom realizing emptiness. The text says "wisdom gone beyond" which refers to the path and also the result, the transcendental wisdom, the dharmakaya. The *Prajnaparamita* is the result and the *Prajnaparamita* also the scripture. There is also the *Prajnaparamita* that is nature, the emptiness of phenomena.

The perfection of wisdom comes in three ways, as the elaborate one of a hundred thousand lines in twelve volumes; as the middle one of twenty-five thousand lines in three volumes and as a short one of eight thousand lines in one volume. Then, there is a very condensed one, which directly reveals wisdom and indirectly reveals method. The essence of all these Prajnaparamita texts is the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*, the essential wisdom. After that comes this one, the Prajnaparamita, the wisdom gone beyond, in a few syllables.

I'm not going to go through it in too much detail but just give the general meaning.

"The bodhisattva Compassionate Eye Looking One stood up from his seat and placing his robe over the shoulder, knelt down on his right knee where the Buddha, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, was. He turned toward him and put his palms together, and smiling, he asked the Buddha, 'Please explain the Prajnaparamita in a few syllables that just by hearing collects great merit and purifies all the negative karma, all the defilements of action, definitely bringing us to enlightenment. For those who are practicing tantra, there will be no obstacles to accomplish the Secret Mantra. Please explain this.'

"Chenrezig asked the Buddha this and the Buddha replied, 'Yes, yes,' to the bodhisattva, the exalted, the Arya Compassionate Eye Looking One whose holy mind is enriched in the power of control. 'You are a child of the race and it is good that you attempt to benefit for sentient beings for a long time. Therefore, listen well, son of the race, listen extremely well and keep this in mind.'"

This Prajnaparamita has only a few syllables but just by listening you collect incredible merit and all the obscurations of karma are purified, and you will definitely achieve enlightenment. And those who are attempting the Secret Mantra, by reciting it, will achieve the tantric path without any obstacles.

"The great bodhisattva, Arya Compassionate Eye Looking One, whose holy mind is enriched with control or power, asked the Buddha, 'Please explain the benefit for sentient beings.' Then the Buddha's holy mind went into the concentration of meditative equipoise called *liberating sentient beings*. At that time, from the center of the two eyebrows, where there's a white hair curled toward the right, many hundreds of thousands of beams came out and covered all the buddha realms. Any sentient being who received this beam, even in the hell realms, would definitely achieve peerless, complete enlightenment. All the buddha realms

moved six times, like earthquakes and there was a rain of devas' sandalwood powder in the presence of the tathagatas, at their holy feet.”

At that time, the Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha, taught the Prajnaparamita, saying bodhisattvas should have equal thought, loving kindness and the wish to repay the kindness. To be free from all negative karma, they should train to have that kind of mind, and also recite this Prajnaparamita, the wisdom gone beyond. He then gave this mantra for them to recite:

TADYATHA OM MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHAMUNAYÉ SOHA

Today I'm not going to go through the meaning of the Buddha's name mantra word by word because it takes time. Maybe I'll explain it tomorrow or another time.

The *Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha* calls him the “endowed transcendent destroyer” and “the completely perfected, fully awakened being.” The term for buddha, *sang gye*, means “eliminated” and “developed” thus he has eliminated all the gross and subtle defilements and developed the entire realizations of the path to enlightenment. “The subduer from the Shakya clan” refers to the caste the Buddha was born into in Lumbini, India, at that time. *Chag tshäl lo* means “I prostrate.”

The Tibetan word *chag* is very commonly used, generally meaning to wash with water or to clean the dirt from something. *Tshäl* means to express your wishes. What is that? That's the happiness of future lives, then liberation from samsara and full enlightenment. Your ultimate wish is to achieve full enlightenment, the unification of no more learning which has seven qualities. Therefore *chag* in this context means to contain or purify, specifically all the defilements relating to the lamrim, from mistakes toward the guru up to the subtle defilements, the very last defilement to be purified, the subtle dualistic view of the white appearance, the red appearance and the near-attainment dark appearance. *Chag* refers to the purification of all the wrong concepts, all the obscurations, including three poisonous minds, self-cherishing, not only all the gross minds but all the subtle minds, because what goes to enlightenment is not the gross mind but only the subtle mind. So *chag* and then *tshäl* contain all the realizations we need to achieve up to enlightenment.

Before that is *Lama tön pa chom dän dä* but it has a very profound meaning therefore maybe I won't mention that today as it takes time.

Then, there is the mantra TADYATHA OM MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHAMUNAYÉ SOHA. In many of the Tibetan texts it says TAYATA OM MUN-I MUN-I MAHA MUNIYE SOHA but Khunu Lama Rinpoche said that's a mistake. In Bodhgaya when Rinpoche was teaching *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* to disciples from different traditions he explained that was a mistake in many texts because Sanskrit is not commonly studied. MUN-I MUN-I should be MUNÉ MUNÉ. When I asked a monk from Sarnath University, Geshe Jampa Gyatso's brother, who's supposed to be expert in Sanskrit, he didn't say it was wrong whereas Kyabje Khunu Lama Rinpoche said that was wrong.

This mantra contains the entire graduated path of the lower capable being, the middle capable being and the higher capable being— MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHAMUNAYÉ —the

whole path from guru devotion up to enlightenment. Everything is there. SOHA means the base is established in your heart by having guru devotion, devotion to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. By establishing the base in your heart, SOHA, you then actualize all the realizations of the lower, middle and higher capable beings, MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHAMUNAYÉ. You can also relate this to the Hinayana path, the Mahayana Paramitayana path and the Mahayana Vajrayana path. All these paths are contained in this. Having actualized all these paths, the OM purifies your impure body, speech and mind and you achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech and vajra holy mind. Then you are able to do perfect work for sentient beings. That's the purpose. There is an A in TADYATHA which means "like this."

The Buddha said, "Having achieved the wisdom gone beyond I have achieved peerless, fully-completed enlightenment. All the buddhas also come from this." This mantra has been received from the great tathagata Shakyamuni, therefore from these few syllables, this one mantra, the Buddha's name mantra, the bodhisattvas will become tathagatas, arhats, fully completed buddhas, the light, exalted for all the ordinary beings, called the Victorious Ones.

The Buddha told the bodhisattva Chenrezig, "Anybody who listens to your name, anybody who memorizes your name, anybody who reads your name, anybody who tells others about it extensively or writes it into a text and makes offering, all those sentient beings will become buddhas in the future."

If you recite this mantra just once, how much negative karma gets purified? It says here in the Kangyur ten million eons of negative karma is purified. That many eons of negative karma collected during all those eons is purified by reciting this mantra. So, it has limitless benefit. This is what the Buddha explained.

I might have received the *lung* of this, I don't remember a hundred percent. There's also a short prayer I mentioned before that my mother used to say which was similar, but now I don't remember it by heart.

By receiving the oral transmission, when you practice or when you recite it for yourself, it has great benefit for your mind, and when you recite it for others—when you teach others or when you give an oral transmission—there's a much greater effect; it's much more beneficial for other sentient beings. They receive the blessings, the continuity, because this name mantra came from the Buddha. There is a continual lineage from Shakyamuni Buddha so when you recite it for others they receive the benefit like that.

I think maybe we'll stop here tonight.

DEDICATIONS

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the three times' merits collected by all sentient beings, may bodhicitta be actualized in my heart, in the hearts of my own family members, in the hearts of all the students and all the benefactors of this organization and also the people who offered service to the organization in the past, who are offering service now, who will be offering service in the future to this organization, FPMT, and those who rely upon me, whom I promised to pray for, whose names were given to me,

and all the sentient beings—may bodhicitta be actualized in all their hearts and for those in whose hearts bodhicitta is actualized, may it be increased.

[Rinpoche chants]

May not only yourself but also all your family actualize bodhicitta.

Now, the second one. Due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all the sentient beings and buddhas, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China. May there be bodhicitta in countries where there are so many problems due to the leaders' lack of good heart, lack of bodhicitta, lack of compassion and loving kindness for the people in that country. One city has many millions of people, and the whole country has many millions of people. They all suffer so much due to the lack of a good heart and wisdom, not knowing what is the right thing to benefit oneself and others and what is the wrong thing that harms oneself and others, not having this wisdom. If there's bodhicitta they will also have the wisdom to be able to see these things. Please pray like this.

[Rinpoche chants]

Then the third one. Due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the people who follow the different religions in this world. Only then can this world can be filled with perfect peace and happiness so that everybody can lead their life only benefiting others, not harming them, and whatever they do becomes the cause of enlightenment, the cause of happiness for all sentient beings.

[Rinpoche chants]

May everybody realize emptiness due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all the sentient beings and buddhas.

[Rinpoche chants]

And may everybody actualize the two stages of tantra.

[Rinpoche chants]

Next, we dedicate for His Holiness to have a stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Rinpoche chants]

Then there's the particular special prayer to fulfill His Holiness' holy wishes.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all the sentient beings, may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen to me. May whatever happiness and merit I have ripen on all sentient beings.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all the sentient beings, may all the father, mother sentient beings have happiness. May the three lower realms be empty forever and may all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by all the sentient beings and buddhas, may I be guided by Lama Tsongkhapa, the direct Mahayana guru, in all the lifetimes and may I never be separated from the pure path which pleases all the buddhas.

[Rinpoche chants]

The dedication is done to achieve enlightenment because then the merit becomes inexhaustible; it can't get completely destroyed by heresy, anger, ill will and so forth. That's why you seal it with emptiness when you dedicate the merit. If you don't do that, even if you dedicate the merit to achieve enlightenment, later if heresy or anger arises toward the guru or toward the teachings of Buddha and so forth, it can destroy all your merit.

The great enlightened being Pabongka Rinpoche gave this example. Even though many travelers may come to a mountain and take many stones away, the mountain is still there. Like that, the merit becomes weaker, it becomes less. If you seal it with emptiness and then later heresy or anger arises it cannot harm the merit, it cannot make the merit less. However much extensive merit you have collected and dedicated to achieve enlightenment, it is fully protected. Therefore, you can see how extremely important it is to seal it with emptiness.

When the merit is not dedicated to achieve enlightenment, the example is given of a tree that in one year gives fruit once and then is finished; it doesn't give fruit again and again. Merit not dedicated to achieving enlightenment is completely destroyed if heresy or anger arise. Even if you have the time or opportunity to collect extensive merits by doing practice or making offerings to the Sangha, by making charity to many sentient beings and so forth, if you're not careful, if you don't dedicate the merit to achieve enlightenment by sealing it with emptiness, and if heresy or anger arises, especially if you're not practicing patience, it destroys all the merits.

It's not easy for the mind to become virtuous and so it's difficult to collect merit. Even if that happens and you collect merit, if you don't dedicate it or you dedicate it in some other way, not for enlightenment, then the merit gets destroyed again. That's why it's not easy to develop your mind on the path to enlightenment or to have realizations. Even if you try to collect a lot of merit; even if your mind actually becomes virtuous, the merit is not necessarily protected. It is very, very important to pay attention to how you dedicate, otherwise the mind stays the same or even becomes worse, never achieving realizations.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by other numberless sentient beings and buddhas, which are merely labeled by the mind, which means they do not exist from their own side, they're totally empty, they exist but they're totally empty from their own side. Try to recognize that, try to feel that. Due to that, may the I, who is also merely labeled by mind—that means the same thing, it does not exist from its own side, it is totally empty—achieve Guru Lama Tsongkhapa's enlightenment, which is also merely labeled by mind, and then lead all the sentient beings, who are also merely labeled by mind, to Lama Tsongkhapa's enlightenment, by myself alone, who is also merely labeled by mind.

I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the extensive deeds realized by Buddha Samantabhadra and Manjugosha. I dedicate all the merits in the same way that the numberless past, present and future buddhas dedicated their merits. I dedicate all the merits in the same way.

Then the last one. Due to all the three times' merits collected by me and by all sentient beings, may Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings like refined gold be actualized within my own heart and in the hearts of my own family members—all my family members and anybody who is connected to me, even the pets, the dogs and cats— and meet and actualize Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings in all their hearts and in the hearts of all the students in the organization and those benefactors who help the organization and the centers, all the benefactors who helped in the past, who are helping now and who will be helping in the future, especially here at Kopan, the nunnery and Kopan Monastery. There are so many students who have offered service to the organization in the past, and those at the individual centers who have offered service in the past, who are offering service now and who will be offering service in the future, in all their hearts, to completely actualize Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching, and in the hearts of everybody, those who rely upon me, whom I promised to pray for, whose name was given, and everybody in this world, may they all flourish.

[Rinpoche chants]

Good night, or maybe it's good morning! Thank you.

LECTURE 14

CHENREZIG INITIATION PREPARATION

I would say that among the many initiations, generally speaking, taking this Chenrezig great initiation is the most important thing, the first initiation to take. Why? Because even if we don't have the opportunity to learn all the extensive philosophical texts, studying and meditating on the lamrim is the most important thing in the life. As mentioned in the *Guru Puja*,

*Cherishing myself is the doorway to all loss,
While cherishing my mothers is the foundation of all qualities.
Hence I seek your blessings to make my heart practice
The yoga of exchanging myself for others.*

Cherishing other sentient beings, whether it's *numberless* sentient beings or even *one* sentient being, is the base of all the qualities. Even if we are cherishing one insect, even if we are cherishing one person, that becomes the base for all the qualities. The earth is the basis for people and animals to live on, to live and grow crops and build houses and to have swimming pools and roads and factories and businesses and airports and all the other unimaginable things that are a means of living and happiness for people. This earth is used in many different ways for people's happiness. Like that, cherishing others is the base for all the qualities, all the realizations from the root of the path to enlightenment, guru devotion, up to enlightenment itself. It's the base of everything—the lesser vehicle path, the Hinayana; the Mahayana Paramitayana path with all the five paths and ten bhumis; and the Mahayana Vajrayana path, the tantric path with its two stages, lower tantra and highest tantra. Everything up to enlightenment comes from the base, cherishing others.

All the happiness we've experienced from beginningless rebirths, that we are experiencing now and all the happiness that we will experience up to enlightenment, all comes from cherishing others, from bodhicitta. That means all our past, present and future happiness comes from sentient beings; it all comes from the numberless hell beings, the numberless hungry ghosts, the numberless animals, the numberless human beings, the numberless gods, the numberless demigods and the numberless intermediate state beings. Every happiness has been received by the kindness of every single sentient being.

That includes everybody here, everybody who is around us here in this building. All our past, present and future happiness up to enlightenment, all the infinite qualities of a buddha's holy body, holy speech, holy mind, all the unbelievable qualities a buddha has, like the ocean, and even the unimaginable qualities of the bodhisattvas—are all received depending on the kindness of every single hell being, hungry ghost, animal, human being, god, demigod, every insect, including our enemy, including the person we don't like. This is all received from those beings, even the enemy. It all comes from the kindness of the enemy. The qualities of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha have all been received by the kindness of every sentient being, including our enemy.

We need to understand how precious sentient beings are, how unbelievably precious, how important they are, how unbelievably kind they are. All the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha come from every single being, including the mosquito who bothers our ear and then bites us, drinking our blood, or the enemy we hate or who is angry with us, who criticizes us. By taking refuge we not only achieve a good rebirth in the next life, but also liberation from samsara and, not only that, all the realizations on the path to enlightenment and enlightenment itself. By taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha we are able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. This is based on having refuge, reliance on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha but then all their qualities, all their power, comes from the kindness of sentient beings, from the kindness of every single sentient being. This is how sentient beings are most precious, most kind.

And all the sufferings come from the self-cherishing thought, the thought cherishing the I. All the obstacles and all the sufferings, all the undesirable things, everything comes from cherishing the I, so that means everything negative comes from the I. Even if somebody performs black magic or gives us harm, this all comes from the I because we harmed that sentient being in the past and now we are receiving the harm back as a result. Because we harmed them due to the self-cherishing thought, with attachment, anger and so forth, all this suffering comes from the I.

Therefore, our essential practice is to exchange oneself for others. Instead of renouncing others, giving up others, we let go of the I. Instead of cherishing the I, which only becomes the source of suffering, from which all obstacles come, we cherish other sentient beings. We totally exchange the mind of self-cherishing for the mind cherishing other sentient beings. Before we cherished the I; now we cherish other sentient beings. Before we gave up on other sentient beings, renouncing them; now we let go of the I. It's a total exchange.

When His Holiness explains this he often says that in the West, when people hear teachings on bodhicitta, they think, "Oh, in Buddhism you're not taking care of yourself. You're abandoning yourself." That's because they have heard some of the teachings, but they haven't understood them completely therefore they think maybe the teachings are wrong.

If we do not exchange ourselves for others, but always live our life selfishly, cherishing the I and renouncing others, we can never achieve enlightenment because we can never generate bodhicitta. If we don't achieve enlightenment, our qualities are not completed. We don't complete the qualities of cessation and we can't do perfect work for sentient beings without any mistakes. Therefore, we can't liberate others from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. We can't do this perfect work for the numberless sentient beings in each realm: the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, gods, demigods and intermediate state beings. We are not talking about only enlightening two or three people, or two or three insects or something, but all sentient beings.

While we are in samsara there is no happiness. There is no happiness now or in our future lives. When we cherish the I, we constantly create the negative karma that causes the lower realms to become our home. Leave aside the happiness of future lives, even doing the work for this life we won't be able to achieve any happiness if we always live our life with a selfish mind. Anyway, that's the essence.

The last thing I want to mention is that when some people in the West hear about bodhicitta, they think it is looking at the negative, asking you to abandon your own interests, to not look after yourself. However, to give just a simple example from everyday life, the minute we have a selfish mind we are unhappy; when the motivation is selfish we are unhappy. Whenever we are with a friend, we want this, we want that, we want so many things but it never happens the way the selfish mind wants. Because what attachment wants is not happening, the mind is very unhappy. Watching people in the street in the West, like New York or somewhere—not everybody but there are some people who are walking in the street with very unhappy faces, thinking only of themselves. While they're walking along the road they are thinking only of themselves, nothing else.

Whether it's to do with a friend or whether it's to do with a job, there are so many things that the selfish mind wants that it doesn't get. Because of attachment, mainly the self-cherishing thought, there are so many problems that we can think of nothing else and when we are walking down the road we have a frown on our face. We are overwhelmed by the problems all around us. With the selfish mind it's like that, we see many problems; we find many problems in our life.

The minute we change our attitude there is happiness. "I'm here to serve others. My life is for others. My life here is to offer service to the other sentient beings." When we say "others" there are numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless human beings, numberless gods, demigods and intermediate state beings. Can you imagine? We can make our life beneficial for numberless beings, to cause them happiness. Before, with the selfish mind that among all these beings seeks happiness for only one sentient being, ourselves, happiness didn't happen. We weren't getting happiness; our mind was very dissatisfied. The minute we changed our attitude, thinking, "I'm here to serve other numberless beings," suddenly there is happiness in our heart, just by thinking that. Suddenly there's peace in our heart, suddenly there's joy in our heart; we see the meaning of life, we see our life has purpose now.

Before, there was no purpose; there were many obstacles, many problems. What we wanted was not happening and we were very dissatisfied. Now we see the purpose of life, the meaning of life. We are here to cause happiness for all sentient beings. That's really unbelievable! That's the best thing in our life when we think like that. We find peace and joy, the meaning of life, so with this we can smile. Our heart is relaxed, without disturbance, no longer bumping in our chest. Our mind is relaxed and there's peace, by thinking of others, cherishing others.

Even if we have problems with our job or at home or with somebody who doesn't love us, now with this new attitude of thinking of others, it doesn't bother us much. It bothers us less the more we think like this, cherishing others, thinking our life is to cause happiness for all sentient beings. Even better, "My life here is to be used by other numberless sentient beings for their happiness." These problems that would have tormented our selfish mind no longer bother us; they seem unimportant.

This is exchanging oneself for others. Immediately we find peace, happiness and satisfaction in our life, no matter where we are. We don't necessarily have to be on a meditation cushion. Wherever we are—at the beach or in a restaurant, in the bathroom or wherever—the minute

we change our mind, we find great peace and happiness there. With a good heart our mind becomes healthy.

When our mind is healthy, our blood circulation also becomes peaceful and our wind, the vehicle of the mind, is not disturbed, it's no longer turbulent. When it becomes peaceful that helps the blood circulation, so there is no chance of blood clotting or becoming unbalanced. Our four elements are balanced, at peace, and when they are balanced that doesn't create sickness. When the elements are imbalanced, disease comes. So, our good heart takes care of our body, it makes our body healthy as well. Nowadays there are people in the West who have written books on how a healthy life comes from a good heart. Some psychologists and doctors have mentioned that in reference to cancer and AIDS.

To actualize bodhicitta, just learning the teachings and meditating alone is not sufficient. You need to receive the blessings of the special deity of compassion in order to develop compassion, in order to develop bodhicitta towards sentient beings. Because bodhicitta is the only door to the Mahayana path and to enlightenment, you need to have this realization. And for bodhicitta, the root to achieve enlightenment, you need compassion toward numberless sentient beings. To gain these realizations, just studying the texts, receiving the teachings and meditating is not sufficient. You need to receive the blessings of the special deity of compassion and bodhicitta.

To receive the blessings of the special deity of compassion and bodhicitta, you need to do the meditation of the deity and the recitation of the mantra of the deity. For that you need to be qualified; you need to receive a great initiation. If you have received the great initiation of Chenrezig, then you can receive the *jenang*, the blessing of the holy body, holy speech and holy mind to do the practice. You are qualified to receive the *jenang*, the permission to practice Chenrezig, by having received a great initiation. If you haven't received a great initiation, then you are not qualified to receive the *jenang*, the permission to practice the blessing of the holy body, holy speech and holy mind, so you can't generate yourself as deity on that.

Therefore, taking the great initiation of Chenrezig becomes unbelievably important in order to develop compassion toward numberless sentient beings: numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless human beings, gods, demigods and intermediate state beings, to develop compassion toward all sentient beings. You develop bodhicitta from that. Then, you can even achieve all the works for the self through to enlightenment, completing the qualities of cessation and realizations and, from that, you are able to complete the works for others, the numberless sentient beings of each realm. You're able to free them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

Because you need to practice Chenrezig, the Compassion Deity, this initiation becomes essential. If you have taken the initiation, you can do the *nyung nä*, the Compassion Buddha's two-day fasting retreat, where one of the benefits is that, during one *nyung nä*, forty thousand eons of negative karma are purified. Depending on how much of a good heart you have and how much you are able to meditate on emptiness, you can purify much more than that. Many hundreds of thousands of eons, millions of eons of negative karma are purified—hundreds of millions of eons of negative karma are purified, depending on how

you do the retreat. However, generally it's said that forty thousand eons of negative karma are purified if you do one two-day nyung nä retreat.

The retreat has prostrations and recitation of the names of the thirty-five Confession Buddhas and recitation of the *Praise to Compassion Buddha*. By reciting the name of each buddha you purify many eons of negative karma—not years, not lifetimes, but eons—many eons of different negative karma are purified. And not only that, you also chant the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM with meditation, so again an inconceivable number of eons of negative karma are purified. You also take the eight Mahayana precepts which creates the cause of enlightenment, liberation from samsara and the happiness of future lives. All that comes from each precept you have taken and as well as that, if it's done with bodhicitta, it creates the cause for the happiness of all the sentient beings—all those in this world and in your own country.

This two-day retreat is extremely good for those who have very busy life. You can do it on a weekend—on Saturday and Sunday—when there's no work. It fits very well with the weekend or anytime you have some time. This is another unimaginable benefit it has. It's extremely good to join any nyung nä your center has or to do one yourself at home. However many you can do in a year—three, four, eight or whatever—is unbelievably good. Especially when you don't have time to do a long retreat such as a two-week or one-month retreat, doing a nyung nä is unbelievable. Doing at least one nyung nä a year is very good. To be qualified to do a nyung nä, you need the Chenrezig great initiation, otherwise you can still do a nyung nä but you're not qualified to actually visualize yourself as the deity. That's the very basic practice on which other practices are done.

I'll just quickly do the preparation now. Then maybe I'll do the initiation next year or the next night. I'm not going to talk about more things.

THE STORY OF GELONGMA PALMO

The tradition of the path of Thousand-arm Chenrezig is according to Gelongma Palmo, the highly attained bhikshuni.

There's a whole life story about this nun, Gelongma Palmo, whom this initiation came from. She had leprosy, with her left hand almost dropping off or something like that. She was advised by King Indrabhuti to practice Chenrezig very strongly in a place where OM MANI PADME HUM naturally manifested from a rock; it was not carved by people. Chenrezig manifested into the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM. She went there and did the practice, and then in the Tibetan fourth month, on the early morning of the fifteenth—which means at night time there was a full moon—she directly saw Chenrezig, who gave her the initiation and teachings. This initiation that I'm giving and you're taking, she received from Chenrezig directly, along with many other teachings.

Gelongma Palmo practiced and I'm not sure, but maybe she achieved a spiritual body. Anyway, her body totally changed, she became totally young and very beautiful, and her sickness completely healed. At the time she was living near a monastery. Because she was very beautiful, the people living in Kathmandu complained that she was not pure, that she

had degenerated the vows. They criticized her because she was living near a monastery or something like that.

One day, she came down to the city and cut off her head and put it on a spear, telling the people, “If what people said is true and I haven’t kept my vows purely then my head will go and never come back, but if it’s not true, and I have kept the vows purely, then it will come back.” The head came back, and she flew in the clouds and danced in the sky. All the people in the city had unbelievable devotion and their wrong view, their heresy, was completely dispelled, completely eliminated.

Gelongma Palmo actually achieved Chenrezig. Geshe Lama Konchog, who attained the complete path to enlightenment, who was a very inspiring example, said that Gelongma Palmo was secretly Dorje Phagmo. There’s a female deity who has no head but whose head is on a spear—we received this initiation from His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche—secretly she was this deity. Externally Gelongma Palmo was a bhikshuni but maybe inwardly she was Chenrezig.

What happened, I had been waiting to find out where this mantra was because I wanted to build a small temple where many people could go to develop their devotion and bodhicitta and plant the seed of enlightenment. I waited, checking around, not going there but asking some lamas about it. I asked the head of the Buddhists in Nepal but he wasn’t sure where it was. Later, just two or three years ago, the mantra was found. It seems there’s a very high mountain where Urgyen Tulku Rinpoche’s monastery is. There’s a big monastery down below but also one that is up there. On the top of the mountain—whether the same mountain or another one, I am not sure—there is a rock where the mantra is.

There were some swamis living around there and what happened was that the mantra, which had been on a small rock, moved up a few steps onto a mushroom that was growing nearby. So, the mantra moved onto the mushroom. That mushroom had OM MANI PADME HUM on it, so then somebody took it and offered it to His Holiness. I found out this information from one young Tibetan lady who came from Tibet to offer service to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

This young Tibetan lady went to that place and to Nagarjuna’s cave. There’s a high mountain next to Swayambhunath and Nagarjuna’s cave is down below. She wanted to go inside but the attendants grabbed her. When she went to holy places she had her own visions—she was able to see many pure things according to the attainments of her pure mind. Other common people didn’t see anything, just a worn-out place, maybe some bricks, some ruins or plants, but for her, she saw it totally differently, as something extremely pure. For example, when she came here and saw Swayambhunath mountain, she saw the whole mountain as scriptures, texts, so she didn’t go up. Similarly, I think maybe when the seventh Dalai Lama went to Rajgir in India, whereas common people only saw the mountain he saw piles of Dharma texts, the long Tibetan texts. The whole mountain was Dharma texts, so he didn’t go up.

However, she went to Nagarjuna’s cave and saw a red flower which came from the cave. Then she went to this mountain where there was the OM MANI PADME HUM mantra that went onto the mushroom. Anyway, a Tibetan man had taken the mushroom and

offered it to His Holiness Dalai Lama. Maybe the flower went to Dharamsala or something, I don't remember completely. She had some visions, that's how she saw these things.

When I went to Dharamsala, I said to her, "I want to see this mushroom." The mushroom was not downstairs but upstairs where the Namgyal Monastery pujas were done. You enter the door and go straight to where His Holiness' throne is; you go up there and you turn down this way then there's an altar in that corner. The corner of the altar doesn't touch the other wall, so there's an empty space. The mushroom was there on that side. She saw that the mushroom was there and the story was correct.

Some lamas bought the land [at the place where the mantra was found] but they didn't know that the rock had that mantra, where Gelongma Palmo did the practice and attained Chenrezig, where her leprosy had been completely cured. The lama who bought that place didn't know the story, but he had a feeling about this rock and didn't throw it out. But I haven't seen it yet. I think after the Tibetan lady had this vision she went up there to see it. Anyway, this is the story.

CHENREZIG INITIATION MOTIVATION

If you pray to Chenrezig, you can eliminate the obstacles of this life and follow the path in the future lives. This means all the various happinesses in future lives—being reborn in a pure land or having those different human rebirths where you can practice Dharma and thus achieve liberation and enlightenment. You can pacify obstacles and have success in these things; you can achieve the happiness of future lives up to enlightenment. It is more effective and you will have more success if you pray to Chenrezig rather than to other deities. Chenrezig is the special deity of Tibet.

Now Buddhism has also spread to the West, because His Holiness always goes to the West and gives initiations and teachings. His Holiness has given inconceivable, unbelievable teachings in many parts of the West, so Chenrezig is also becoming a special deity in the West.

There are many stories of people who pray to Chenrezig. One is of a woman who died and was wandering in the intermediate state, utterly terrified, trying to escape from all the unbelievably fearful, dangerous things there. Then she saw a white light in front of her and on the tip of the white light was Arya Compassion Buddha's holy body, white, with a smiling expression on his face, his right hand in the mudra giving sublime realizations, his left hand holding the stem of a white lotus, adorned with scarves and jeweled ornaments, and adorned with the holy signs and exemplifications. The glorified one, the very blessed one, Chenrezig, actually directly appeared to her and said, "Don't be afraid. Come here. I am here. I am Arya Chenrezig, the Compassionate Eye Looking One. I have come to guide you on the path." *Arya* means "exalted." He told her this.

All her hair stood on end, tears came to her eyes and devotion came to her. Then, after prostrating at the holy feet of Chenrezig, she was shocked and surprised to see Chenrezig in the intermediate stage, and she asked, "Why did you come here to guide me, this pitiful person? What is the cause of that?" She couldn't believe Chenrezig had come to guide her because she was just a very ordinary being, a very pitiful, suffering being.

Chenrezig told her, “In one of your past lives, you were born as a person looking after an animal”—either an elephant or an ox, I’m not sure—“belonging to a king. When the elephant gave birth you took the elephant’s baby to a precipice and threw it over. Due to that karma, in your next life you fell from a mountain. At that time you made a prayer, ‘May the Arya Compassionate One please understand me.’ You made that request. Immediately after you made that request to Chenrezig, Chenrezig saved you and you didn’t fall down completely. Since that time, I have been guiding you in all your lives.”

Then Chenrezig said, “Ever since that time I have guided you in all your lifetimes. Anyone who makes just one prayer, just one request for me to guide them, I will guide any sentient being like this.” This is what Chenrezig told her.

Therefore, at this time we are most unbelievably fortunate. Even if we only make one request to Chenrezig, because Chenrezig said that he will guide all those sentient beings, that means because of our one request he will guide us in all our lifetimes. That’s the proof.

THE MEANING OF OM MANI PADME HUM

There are many different prayers requesting Chenrezig, or from your side you can recite OM MANI PADME HUM and make a prayer to Chenrezig. It seems very, very important to make a prayer to Chenrezig, and then Chenrezig will always guide you, now and when you die and even after this life, at any time. So, you should feel unbelievably fortunate and you should feel great happiness to have this opportunity. In all future lifetimes Chenrezig will guide you.

In the past there was a very foolish person, a goatherd, who knew absolutely nothing, but he kept on reciting OM MANI PADME HUM while he was looking after the goats. He didn’t know Dharma; he knew nothing, but he just kept on reciting the mantra while he looked after the goats.

Then one day, when this goatherd was dying, many people saw different colors come from his body like rainbows, going to the east and his body absorbed to the pure land, Dakpa Kachö. And then, when his consciousness had gone to the pure land, OM MANI PADME HUM appeared on his skull. In that country his skull became a holy object which everybody worshipped, making prayers and prostrating to it.

Similarly, in Solu Khumbu, there was a very old, very simple couple. The husband used to spend his life carving mantras on the rocks. He did many carvings. He didn’t have any Dharma education, nothing; he just carved mantras on rocks, spending his life like that. When he died and they offered his body to the fire, his skull sprang into the sky and people saw it had OM MANI PADME HUM on it. Since then it has been kept in the temple, and people worship it as an object of devotion. That means his consciousness definitely went to Chenrezig’s pure land.

There are many stories like these. Even if someone has no understanding of Dharma, no lamrim, nothing, just by chanting OM MANI PADME HUM or carving it on the rocks, this can happen. Of course, because you are chanting OM MANI PADME HUM so much, you would have a good heart by the way, even if there’s no intellectual Dharma understanding.

That's why I mentioned my mother's story the other day. My mother's incarnation had a very clear memory and was able to recognize old friends and all the family members. With new people he showed shyness and didn't talk but there was no shy feeling with the family, even with the head of the Kopan nunnery. My mother spent three months at the Kopan nunnery, going to the stupa every day, where she was helped by the head of the nunnery and two other nuns. When the incarnation came there was no shyness at all; he talked to that head nun immediately. But with other people it wasn't like that.

The incarnation had the benefit of such a clear memory because my mother recited OM MANI PADME HUM all day long. She said she recited fifty thousand mantras every day. She told me the year she passed away, "Now I can't recite that number anymore." That was when she was here at Kopan. Then she went to Varanasi and passed away during His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Kalachakra initiation and teachings, which we requested and sponsored. The night before she died we took her to see His Holiness, outside the house where he stayed, but her eyes were very kind of sticky or something, so I'm not sure if she saw His Holiness. Then, that night, maybe at one or two o'clock, she passed away.

So, the chanting of OM MANI PADME HUM has skies of benefit, like the atoms of this earth. For example, this table has many atoms. The incarnation's clear memory is like a small part of this table, whereas the benefits of reciting OM MANI PADME HUM are like the atoms the size of this earth in comparison.

The mantra has many explanations. PADME is wisdom; MANI is method. That contains the method path of the Hinayana, renunciation, the path to achieve liberation. MANI PADME is the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, the method and wisdom to achieve liberation, the blissful state of peace for oneself, the total cessation of suffering and its causes.

MANI PADME also contains the Paramitayana path, the five paths and ten bhumis. These are all contained in the method path, MANI. The wisdom realizing emptiness, including the direct perception of emptiness, is PADME. Therefore, the whole path to achieve enlightenment is contained in MANI PADME, the Paramitayana path.

Within tantra, the lower tantra has the path with sign and the path without sign, so again there is method and wisdom and that is all contained in MANI PADME. In the highest tantra, there is the generation stage and the completion stage. In the completion stage, the method path is the illusory body—the impure illusory body and the pure illusory body—and the wisdom path is clear light—the clear light of example and the clear light of meaning—and then the unification of these two. So the whole path of tantra is contained in MANI PADME.

The whole of Buddhism is like this: the *base* or ground, which means the two truths; the *path*, which means the method and wisdom; and the *goal*, which means the dharmakaya and rupakaya, a buddha's holy mind and holy body. This is the whole of Buddhism and it is contained in this MANI PADME.

If you go through the details of the path there's so much to talk about with OM MANI PADME HUM. There's so much explanation to be given related to it: the Hinayana, the Mahayana Paramitayana and the Mahayana Vajrayana.

The HUM is establishing the root of the path to enlightenment in your heart, with such devotion to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The HUM also means when you do prayers such as protector prayers that start with HUM, it's like calling out, like saying, "Hi Mum!" When you say, "Hi Mum" no matter how busy she is she has to pay attention to you! So HUM means you are calling to Chenrezig to pay attention to you.

Then with MANI PADME you actualize the entire path; the method is contained in MANI and the wisdom is contained in PADME. From that all the gross and subtle defilements are ceased, your ordinary body, speech and mind are purified.

You achieve Chenrezig's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech and vajra holy mind because OM is made of three sounds: AH, U, MA. These three sounds put together become OM and signify that your ordinary body, speech and mind is purified and you become Chenrezig's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech and vajra holy mind. After you achieve the meaning of OM, you are able to do perfect work for all sentient beings. Therefore, OM contains the entire Buddhadharma. Everything in the 84,000 teachings is contained in this OM MANI PADME HUM mantra, so any heavy negative karma can be purified by reciting this.

That especially means developing compassion. Usually people who recite OM MANI PADME HUM have a good heart even though they don't have any intellectual understanding. In Solu Khumbu, old men and women who chant OM MANI PADME HUM a lot in their lives have very good hearts but they have no intellectual understanding. In this life, you are most unbelievably fortunate to have come to know the Chenrezig practice and to be able to recite OM MANI PADME HUM. You have this opportunity and especially the opportunity to take the initiation and become qualified to do the practice.

As I mentioned before, a nyung nä is a most powerful means to purify. There are a whole lot of stories but then there won't be time for the initiation.

If you recite ten malas of OM MANI PADME HUM every day, when you go into the street and talk to somebody, even if your breath touches that person's body, their negative karma gets purified and they don't get reborn in the lower realms. When the wind blows and touches your body and then touches insects and people, all their negative karma gets purified and they get a higher rebirth. This is because your body is blessed by visualizing Chenrezig and reciting the mantra; you receive the blessing of Chenrezig. Therefore, when you shake hands with somebody, their negative karma gets purified; when you touch someone on their body, people or animals, their negative karma gets purified. And when you massage someone, their negative karma gets purified. It has special benefit when you are doing massages or healing.

Whoever looks at you, you are meaningful to behold. In a restaurant, at a cinema or on top of a hill, wherever many people are gathered and can see you, however many hundreds of thousands of people there are, by looking at you their negative karma gets purified, so you become meaningful to behold. Even if they touch you, their negative karma gets purified;

even if they look at you from a distance, their negative karma gets purified. It's amazing! You become meaningful to behold for sentient beings.

It is said that if you go in the ocean, in a lake, a river, a pond or whatever, when water touches you, all the water gets blessed and becomes holy. Then, all the numberless creatures—the insects, the fish and so forth—all the sentient beings living in that river, pond, lake or ocean, all their negative karma gets purified. Even the people who are riding over the waves or playing on the water, anybody who the water touches, their negative karma gets purified. This is the most amazing benefit it has.

When you die and your body is offered to the fire, when the smoke that comes from that touches anybody—any person or any animal—their negative karma gets purified. It's a most amazing thing.

However, the most important benefit is to develop compassion and bodhicitta. That's the root of the path to enlightenment.

We are taking the initiation for that reason, especially to develop compassion for all sentient beings. World peace depends on compassion. If there's no compassion, world peace cannot happen, but if there's compassion, if many people generate and practice compassion, practice Chenrezig, there will be fewer and fewer global problems and more and more peace and happiness. For example, if one influential person has power but does not practice compassion, what happens? They can kill many millions of people on this earth. This has happened historically many times in different countries, where one person has killed many millions and millions of people—children and old men and women—without even counting the animals.

Recently, an Indian lawyer who has been helping us get permission for the Maitreya Project asked me a question in a restaurant about getting angry with people. Dagpo Rinpoche, the ex-abbot of Sera Mey, was there so I passed the question on to him. Rinpoche replied that because he had given them harm in previous lives, they were now harming him. He created the cause by harming them, and from that cause he was receiving harm from them, not only in this life but also in future lives, on and on. Dagpo Rinpoche's reply was something like this. The next morning the lawyer rang the people he was often angry with and apologized. They were completely shocked, completely surprised, because he was always wrathful, showing anger, but that morning, he apologized to everybody. That was similar to compassion.

At another time, this man had trouble with his neighbors. He had bought land and built a large house on it, then bought lots of art to put in the house. After that, he asked his neighbors to keep the art pieces for him, but they kept them for a long time and then didn't want to give them back. When he finally returned and asked for them they refused, saying he had to buy them if he wanted them back. He got very upset. I've forgotten now what I advised him but I think I said he should apologize or generate compassion or something. So, he rang the neighbor to apologize and they were completely happy and they gave the art back to him.

I'm telling you this here just to show you that sometimes when you have a problem, solving it can be very simple, but compassion is the most important solution for all our daily problems. I'm just using this man as a recent example. Therefore, in our daily life, whenever you talk to somebody—they don't have to be Buddhist, it could be anybody, young old, whoever—try to bring compassion into the conversation; let them hear about compassion and practice compassion. This is unbelievably important; it brings world peace. Therefore, we're taking the initiation.

[Rinpoche gives the initiation]

If possible, practice guru devotion every day for ten or even fifteen minutes or longer, depending on the time, by following the outline of that meditation. Then, for one year concentrate on the small scope, from perfect human rebirth up to karma. Do that for one year and try to achieve each realization. Then, the next year, study the middle path: renunciation, the shortcomings of the delusions and the three types of general suffering of samsara, the twelve links and all that. Then, spend the next year on bodhicitta. When you have bodhicitta, spend the next year on emptiness.

Basically, that is just a general idea of what you can do, but the main meditation is like this. What I'm saying is to do this every day as much as possible. You might miss sometimes but the general idea is like that, to read and meditate in that way. It doesn't mean you can't meditate on other things, but I'm saying here this is the main focus. This way you have some awareness, you have some development and experience.

By taking the initiation you can learn and meditate on the tantric path, but first you need the realization of bodhicitta. That's the one to focus on. The aim of this life is to realize bodhicitta.

If you are here for the first time, you must read one lamrim text from beginning to end in order to study it. That's very important. You should even do it two or three times. After that, you can do one year on the renunciation of this life and future lives and then one year on bodhicitta and one year on emptiness. I think that's very good. Then your life is always meaningful and what you do in your daily life—not only in the session time but even during the rest of the day—you can relate that to what you meditated on. Try to live your life in that way. Everything should be done with the motivation of bodhicitta from the beginning to enlightenment. That makes your life like gold, most meaningful, most beneficial to all sentient beings. That means collecting merits and purifying, all those things, what you are supposed to do in everyday life to help you have realizations.

So that's it. Also, that means the next lives are like that.

Thank you very much.

THE EMPTINESS OF THE I

At the very beginning, on the first day, I didn't manage to complete what I started; I didn't finish it the very first day. I just want to go through the quotation of this great teacher, the seventh Dalai Lama, so you know how to do the meditation. If you write it down, you might remember it correctly. Then, if you know the quotation, you can use that for a meditation on

emptiness. In the quotation the seventh Dalai Lama expressed his experiences, so it's very tasty; it's like a hot apple pie with cold ice cream on top.

One time, many years ago, *so* many years ago, in Australia, a student in Sydney—she was a nun, we had a lot of Sangha there at that time—and her father, who was Attorney-General of the Australian government, invited Lama and me to their house for dinner. After we finished dinner, the mother served dessert. She was watching us from behind and she said, “Hurry up. Eat.” You have to have two forks: one to open the bottom, the hot part, and one for the cold part on top! We only had dessert like that at her parent's house. I've had apple pie and ice cream in other places, but never like that. Sometimes I have a bad memory so it's difficult to remember.

This is what the seventh Dalai Lama said. There are two quotations, not exactly the same. There is *kor*, meaning circling, which refers to samsara, and there's gone beyond that, the total cessation of the oceans of samsaric suffering and the cause, not outside but within each individual samsaric being's mind. This is not a principal consciousness but a mental factor, one of the fifty-one mental factors, from the five mental factors that always accompany the principal consciousness. This is intention, *sem pa*, the karma and delusions, part of each individual being's mind, not the body but the mind.

What kind of mind? Those types of mind that are beyond samsara. That could be not only nirvana but also great liberation, full enlightenment, the cessation of even the subtle defilements and the completion of all qualities that we can achieve by actualizing the Mahayana Paramitayana path's bhumis, and then also the Secret Mantra, Vajrayana path.

All the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, the state gone beyond, never, never existed from the beginning from their own side. That includes the self, your own self, your actions, the objects of your actions and so forth. The whole thing—samsara and nirvana—the whole thing: form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects.

You may have done some meditation on this, but I didn't get to speak much on the subject of emptiness. At different times some talks were given, so now you must have some idea, not like at the beginning. So, the self and the aggregates—the mind and the body—the mind, the perceiver, that which is knowing, which is perceiving, discovering, the mind and then the object of the mind: form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects, and the objects of mind. From the very beginning none these things *ever existed*, they *never* came into existence *from their own side*. They never existed without depending on the aggregates, without depending on the mind, without depending on the label; the mind which is labeled, the mind which is merely imputed and then also the label.

To make it short, all these phenomena—samsara, nirvana and all that I mentioned before: self and aggregates, body and mind and all these objects of mind, form, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects—for the hallucinated mind they have always appeared as if they existed from their own side without depending at all on the mind merely imputing them.

It is as if they always existed according to how they appear to our hallucinated mind and how we believe them to exist. It looks like this is the reality—it looks as if they have existed like this from the beginning. It appears that things have never depended on the mind merely

imputing them, that they exist from their own side. Not only from today, not only from this life, but from beginningless rebirths we have had this hallucination, and we have had this total wrong belief apprehending it is true, that it's a hundred percent true. We have been living our life in that way from beginningless rebirths.

Why are we born into our life like this at this time? There's a continuation because in our past lives we haven't removed the ignorance and the cause of the ignorance, the negative imprints from where the delusions arise. We never actualized the remedial path in the past; we never removed the ignorance. That's why even in this life, where we have been born as a human being, we have all these hallucinations of true existence that cover the whole of phenomena, that which exists in mere name, which is merely imputed by mind. All these phenomena are totally empty of existing from their own side. They have never had any true existence from their own side. Phenomena have never, ever existed, even for one second, from their own side without depending on the mind merely imputing them.

That's the reality of how things are: I, action, object, all the phenomena. That's how all of samsara and nirvana—everything—is totally empty, but it is all covered by this hallucination of true existence. The hallucination of true existence is projected by the negative imprint left on our own mental continuum by the ignorance, the concept of true existence. It makes the self which is empty of existing from its own side seem very real. It makes the body, the aggregates, which are also totally empty from their own side but are decorated or projected by this hallucination of true existence, it makes them seem very real.

As I mentioned in the past, from the I down to the atoms of the body, when you go finer, finer, finer, suddenly when you look at the I, there's a real I, but it's not in the nose or in the brain—you don't feel there's an I in the brain—or in the toes or the fingers. You don't feel that there's an I in there in your fingers or in your thumbs. (I don't think there's an I there. If somebody else thinks there's an I in the thumbs, then I'm not sure.) It's not in the legs, not in the toes, not in the stomach. You don't believe there's the I in the stomach with all the junk, with all the smell? It's not in the neck.

You don't think the I is inside, all over the body, that there's a body filled with the I. You don't think that, nor do you think that the I is outside the body. So it's neither inside nor outside. What I'm saying is that you have covered the whole body and you don't think that the I is either inside or outside. But when you're not examining, then it appears to be inside the body and you believe that. Putting it in a simple way, there seems to be an I inside this body—not inside the stomach, not inside the neck, but somewhere above the stomach and down below the neck, somewhere there. Not particularly where there's a bumping heart, the bumping heart where operations are done. You don't think that there's an I there, not even there. Not in the stomach, above the stomach or down below the neck, but somewhere there, inside the chest somewhere.

But if you really looked, if you really analyzed or if a doctor did an operation and looked for the I, you could not find the I there. If you looked in more detail there, down to every atom, you still couldn't find it there at all. What seemed clear this morning, or from birth, doesn't seem clear any more. You have had this belief, even from life to life, even if in a past life you were an animal or a deva or a human being or whatever. There's still this belief. There has

been this ignorance apprehending that there's a real I that experiences suffering, that experiences happiness, that experiences the intermediate state before taking birth.

When the consciousness was conceived in the mother's womb on the fertilized egg, at that time there was this ignorance holding that there is a real I. There's the appearance of the real I and then it holds that there's a real I. The ignorance was there at that time and up to now. But if you look where you believe the real I is, if you check, the minute you start to check, it becomes unclear. Then you discover it's not there.

Somehow, it's very strange. You check many outside things. In business you check so many things. When you go shopping you check the quality of the food, how it's made, you check many things. There are so many things in life that you check but somehow—it's very strange—you don't check about this real I, this I that the ignorance believes in. You're doing everything for this I. You sacrifice your life for it. You live your life for this I that you believe is inside this body, in the chest somewhere. You do everything for this I, you live your life totally, completely, for this I. Do you understand what I'm saying? But it's not there. The minute you look for it, you can't find it. The minute you start to look for this I, it becomes unclear.

Then, what you discover is that it doesn't exist there. It's unbelievable. It's very interesting how we live our life. We check everything else, but we never check this one. We live with this ignorance continuously. That's not wisdom. Wisdom, the mind that checks and sees, is not there. Wisdom is totally the opposite of ignorance. While there is no such real I there, ignorance holds it to exist. There's a hallucination and then it completely holds that as true. But with wisdom the object of ignorance is totally non-existent, right there. There's no such thing at all. This I has never existed from the beginning, and yet ignorance has believed it exists from this morning, from birth, from beginningless rebirths. To our mind, to our ignorance this is a hundred percent true. It appears a hundred percent true and the mind totally holds it as a hundred percent true, as a reality.

But actually, it's totally false, completely false. Wisdom sees this. All the buddhas' wisdom, all the arya beings' wisdom, even your wisdom through analysis and through meditation, sees there is no such thing as this I which ignorance holds as a hundred percent true. The numberless buddhas, arya bodhisattvas, all the arya beings, they all see that there's nothing there to hold onto, that the I is empty.

By following the ignorance, the root of samsara, like a guru, this is where all the suffering comes from—all the delusions and karma, ignorance, anger, attachment, then karma, then all the rebirths in the six realms with all the six realms' sufferings. As you have gone through these sufferings of the six realms, the experience all comes from this, the ignorance holding the I as truly existing. To the hallucinated mind the I appears that way but it is the ignorance believing this to be so that creates all this suffering.

But wisdom sees that there's no such thing as the I that ignorance believes in. Wisdom sees that one is totally non-existent. When you generate this wisdom, you discover that there's no such thing there; it's totally empty. It never existed. From beginningless rebirths, it has never come into existence for even one second. It is extremely important to discover this and to meditate in this way.

THE PROBLEMS OF BELIEVING IN THE REAL I

First, I'll mention this. When you look at the I without examining it, it looks like it's there. It looks like it's there inside the chest or somewhere here. So, now analyze what you've been believing in and trusting in from this morning, from birth, from beginningless rebirths—without losing what you've found—this real I. Without losing that, you analyze. Form, the body, is not the real I; feeling is not that; discriminative awareness is not that, compounding aggregates—the forty-nine of the fifty-one mental factors—are not that; consciousness is not that. None of the five aggregates is the I and even the whole collection of the five aggregates is not that I. You cannot find the real I, from the tip of the hairs down to the toes; nowhere can you find it. If anything exists it has to be either one with these aggregates or it should exist separately from them.

This real I is not there anywhere. This is the real I that you have believed in from beginningless rebirths, that you have done *everything* for, that you have served with your body, speech and mind. As a small child in kindergarten, then in primary school, high school, college and university, getting a degree—so many years of education were done for this I, but it's not there. Analyze how *everything* has been done for this I that is not there at all. After getting a university degree for this I that is not there, there was marriage for this I that is not there.

I'm not sure in the West but here in Nepal and India, the wedding is the most important thing in life. The very poor people save money for many years. If they have a girl, then the family has to give so much money to the family of the son, to whom their daughter is getting married. There are huge expenses and there is a lot of worry and fear that they will be unable to get the money that is needed. That's what it's like in India and Nepal, and I'm sure weddings are very expensive for people anywhere in the world. However, it's all for this real I that is not there.

Can you imagine? If you analyze it, this is exactly what it's like! You get scared because you believe in this I and you have to serve it, but when you analyze and you find that this real I isn't there at all you still get scared because you want to believe there's a real I. Maybe there's somebody like that. All those unbelievable expenses for that wedding are not for the merely-labeled I; they're not for the I that does actually exist; they're only for the real I.

Then you have children for this I, for the happiness of this real I that is not there. You want to make this real I that seems to be somewhere in your chest happy, you understand? So, maybe for that purpose you have children. I'm not saying everybody, but for the majority of people this is their motivation for having children—so this real I can have happiness by enjoying the children. Even that is for this real I which is not there. “If I have children, I will enjoy my life. I'll have great peace and great happiness.”

In the same way, if somebody spans you or scolds you or says some nasty words to you, or if somebody cheats you or takes your money or something, then you think, “This person did something so bad to *me*. That person did something terrible to *me*, to *me*, to this real I.” When you say, “to me” you are not thinking of the merely-labeled “me.” You don't think that the person harmed, cheated, stole money, said nasty words or didn't respect this merely-labeled I. You think the person harmed the real I; you believe this happened to the real I.

You think, “I gave that person a glass of water or some fruit or something, I gave him some money but he didn’t thank me.”

“Me” means this real I that you believe is there somewhere inside your chest. On the basis of believing that there’s this real I in your chest—while there’s no such I *there*, that’s the truth—you get angry, thinking they are terrible, or you get jealous and then you sue them! Why are you suing them? Because you believe there’s a real I there, however, it is not there. It’s totally non-existent but you believe it’s there, and you sue that person. You spend a lot of money, a million dollars, many hundreds of thousands of dollars, to put them in the prison. All that is done for this real I which is not there.

If you watch your life, if you analyze it, it’s like that. Can you imagine? It’s completely funny! It all makes you laugh; it’s all unbelievable funny. Jeffrey Hopkins mentioned this. I don’t remember exactly whether he said “phenomena” or “truly-existent phenomena” but he said something like “truly-existent phenomena are a joke.” When you discover that all these things that you assume to be real don’t exist at all, you see your life as a huge joke. I think that was probably what he was referring to. Your entire life, which you take so seriously because you strongly believe everything is a hundred percent real, existing from its own side, is a huge joke.

Then, attachment arises. Do you know why attachment arises? It’s the same reason. Because you want happiness for this real I. That’s the key; that’s the main reason. The whole root reason is believing that there’s a real I there inside chest and needing happiness for this I. You believe it is there, but it’s not there at all. Attachment arises, looking for happiness for the I. The selfish mind is looking for happiness for this real I, so then attachment arises, looking for happiness, grasping for happiness.

And then all the relationship problems occur; the most unbelievable problems with relationships occur. All these problems happen because you believe there’s a real I there and you want to achieve happiness for that. You’re not satisfied with the friend or companion you have, even though that relationship is to make this real I happy. Everything’s done for this. Even before you finish one package of relationship problems, you start another package of problems. You collect another package, another box of relationship problems that are similar to the previous ones. Then, you finish that problem and take another one. So, your whole life is a retreat in suffering, not a retreat for happiness. You are retreating from happiness into suffering.

Now listen! Why are you afraid of death? It’s the same thing. This real I is going to die. This real I is going to die but it’s not there. This real I is going to die and so you become afraid of death, you’re scared of death. That fear of death is connected to the ignorance believing that there’s a real I there, but in reality it’s not there; it doesn’t exist anywhere. Not only does it not exist there, it doesn’t exist anywhere at all, neither in this body nor anywhere else. If it existed anywhere it has to be either within the aggregates or separate from them. This real I that your mind has been holding onto as a hundred percent true from beginningless rebirths doesn’t exist within the aggregates or separate from the aggregates, therefore it is totally non-existent.

Because of this, much of your life is either up or down. You are either grasping the four desirable objects or, when that doesn't happen, there's the opposite, you have to experience the four undesirable objects: lack of comfort or discomfort, having no reputation or having a bad reputation, not receiving praise or receiving criticism, or not receiving material gifts. Because of the four desirable objects there is attachment, clinging, and then there's unhappiness when you encounter the four undesirable objects—unhappiness, depression, anger and all these things. All of life's problems are like that.

All this is to do with believing there is a real I there. Everything is connected with this. The root is a hundred percent believing that there's a real I there inside this body, inside the chest. That is introducing this concept in a simple way.

What's mentioned in the text is that there are the five aggregates, but these are explained in a general way and this point is not particularly clear.

There's the I and, on top of that, there's the I not merely labeled by mind, the real I existing from its own side. That is how it appears and then you believe it; you let your mind believe it. It's not God, it's not somebody else, *you* let your mind hold onto that as true. That's ignorance, the wrong concept. Why is it ignorance? Because while there is no such I there in reality—it is totally non-existent right there—ignorance believes it is there. Ignorance doesn't see that it is totally non-existent, that it's totally empty. It believes it really exists, that it's really true as it appears.

By realizing the total non-existence of the object that ignorance holds to be truly existing, by the wisdom realizing that, and especially the wisdom directly seeing emptiness, you are able to cease that ignorance, the delusions and the seed of delusion, the negative imprints. Then you're able to achieve total liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes.

THE EMPTINESS OF PHENOMENA

The same applies when you think of the aggregates. When you don't analyze, the aggregates appear to you as real, existing from their own side, not merely labeled by mind. Again, it's the same: when you check the aggregates—the aggregate of form, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of cognition [discriminative awareness], the compounding aggregates [compositional factors] and the aggregate of consciousness—none of these are the real aggregates. Even the collection of these five are not the real aggregates. You cannot find the real aggregates on these at all; they don't exist at all. So, it's the same thing when you do this analysis of each of the aggregates. The real form, real feeling, real discrimination, real compounding aggregates, real consciousness—each of these aggregates that appear to you as real and you believe to be real, you can see that they are not real at all. The parts of the form—the limbs, the head and the many parts—none of these parts are real and even the whole body—the whole form aggregate together—is not real at all. You can't find it anywhere. Even looking at the parts in finer and finer detail, down to the atoms, you can't find it at all, according to the Prasangika school.

The atoms are made of particles and so there are no real atoms at all from their own side, but even the collection of particles is not the real atom. You can't find it at all. The collection of parts is the basis and the atom is the label; the basis cannot be the label. Those two

phenomena exist. They do not exist separately, but they do exist *differently*. So, you can't find the real atom on the collection of parts. You cannot find the real atom existing from its own side. Even the particles that are the basis of the atom are merely imputed by the mind, they come from the mind. The atom and the particles of the atom are nothing except what is merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, it's mere imputation, merely imputed by the mind.

After that, after the mere imputation, ignorance, the concept of true existence, by leaving a negative imprint on the mind, then projects true existence on the mere imputation. In reality, this is completely, totally empty. There's no such thing as a real atom or a real collection of particles existing from its own side. In reality there's no such thing there. What exists is what comes from the mind, what is merely imputed by the mind, just that. That is totally empty. It exists but it's completely empty of existing from its own side. Like that, from the I, from the self, down to the particles of an atom, all are totally empty of being the real ones, existing from their own side.

Of the different mental factors, what is feeling, the mental factor that experiences happiness, suffering and indifference? Your own mind merely imputes "feeling." Feeling is nothing else except what is merely imputed by the mind, therefore feeling doesn't exist from its own side; it is totally empty. Every second of that mental factor, every split second of that mental factor, it is totally empty.

It's the same with the discriminating cognition, the mental factor that discriminates the object—this and that, this is a table, that is a book, this is a vase and so on. Your mind discriminates this from that and then your mind merely imputes the aggregate of discriminating cognition. Then, it's the same thing for all those other forty-nine mental factors labeled compounding aggregates. This is a compound, it's a result. In the consciousness that discriminates the object, there is a quality and an essence there and what the mental factor does, you can call the quality and the essence. There are more things mentioned but anyway this is very rough. From those two which mainly focus on the essence of the objects, there's the consciousness. So that mind is labeled "consciousness." All these are labels imputed on the base. Therefore, nothing exists from its own side; everything is totally empty.

All phenomena, all of samsara and nirvana, are empty. The I, action, object and all of samsara and nirvana, all phenomena, are empty; all are totally empty from the beginning. They are empty of existing from their own side but that does not mean they don't exist.

Meditate on that. They're empty from the beginning, so meditate on that. Do one-pointed concentration on that: the I, action, object, and all the phenomena, all of samsara and nirvana, are totally empty from the beginning. Just meditate on this emptiness as one-pointedly as you can.

Next one is your own superstitious thought, the conceptual thought. If you use this I, this self, first your conceptual mind makes the drawing. This not-merely-labeled I never existed from the beginning; it has been totally empty from the beginning. Although it's like that, your mind, your conceptual thought, labels the merely-imputed I. Think about this. After the mere imputation—right after that second—the negative imprint left on your mental

continuum by past ignorance projects, decorates, true existence. After the mere imputation, in the next second this is what happens.

Now, your mind conceptually made the drawing like that of this totally false I. What happens now is that you let your mind hold onto this as true; you believe this is true, this is reality. Then this cheats you. Holding this to be true you are cheated for your whole life. As I mentioned before, you do everything for this real I which is not there.

Whether you are eating candy, chocolate or ice cream, or drinking a glass of water, there is discrimination in everything you do. You discriminate some sentient beings as good and some as bad, and then you create karma—with attachment you create negative karma with your friends and with anger you create negative karma with your enemies. Like that, you create all the negative karmas. Conversely, you create virtue so this real I won't be reborn in the lower realms. You create virtue so this real I will get a higher rebirth.

But of course, you can't achieve liberation without eliminating this ignorance, this belief. You can't achieve liberation; you can't achieve enlightenment. So, it cheats you. For your whole entire life this ignorance holding the truly-existent I has been cheating you, it has been deceiving you from beginningless rebirths, not only today, not only now. That's why we are still suffering, why we don't have liberation or enlightenment.

This is what the seventh Dalai Lama said,

*Every second this concept holding the truly-existent I cheats you totally.
It is vital that you see the concept of true existence as your most terrifying, most harmful enemy.
You must cut the root of this hallucination.
This is my advice.*

You need to see where this hallucination comes from and you need to cut this ignorance. This not only refers to this truly-existent appearance but also, on the basis of that, the attachment and discrimination that comes from it, thinking, "How beautiful this is, how nice this is," and so forth. From this, attachment arises with its own hallucinations. Or we think, "How bad this is," and then anger arises with its own exaggerations, its own projections, seeing that thing as something bad, ugly. Attachment has its own hallucinations and anger has its own hallucinations; each projects their own view. It's the same with jealousy. Whatever delusion arises, it has its own wrong view, hallucination. All these incredible piles of hallucinations that we have in our life come from the fundamental hallucination, true existence. They have been decorated, created from that ignorance. This is what we need to cut; this is what His Holiness the Seventh Dalai Lama advises.

You cut the ignorance by realizing emptiness and then by achieving great insight. When you achieve the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness you achieve the arya exalted path. That is the one that directly ceases ignorance and its cause, the seed of ignorance, the negative imprint. Then you are free forever from the oceans of suffering of each realm. Of course, with the support of bodhicitta, you collect extensive merits and with this wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, you are able to cease all the subtle defilements and then achieve enlightenment.

I started with the letter A but I still did not complete that talk. Your concept, the ignorance, holds the real A as existing from its own side, but if you look at it, if you look at these three lines that make a letter A, that you see as a real A, you can't find it at all on the first line or the second line or the third, or on all three lines together. If you check the details, you can't find that real A anywhere. That proves that the appearance is a hallucination; there's no such thing there.

That is another analysis. The A that exists is what is merely imputed by mind. The real A doesn't exist on the first line, on the second line, on the third line or on the whole group. There's no real A. The A is the label and the pieces together are the base. These are two different phenomena; they are not one. By analyzing this you can't find that real A. That proves that it's a hallucination, that it's totally non-existent.

I'll stop here and start the Chenrezig initiation.

[Chenrezig initiation not included]

LECTURE 15

BOOK SIGNING: THE BEGINNING OF THE FPMT

We did the seventh and eighth Kopan courses in the old gompā, the Chenrezig gompā where the initiation was. There's quite a bit of space, so we did many courses there. They put a sheet of some cheap cloth on the top and covered this part of the hill. Below there was some bamboo, woven by the villagers, which we put around. Then, there were many paintings done by the young monks.

There used to be art classes for many years but we didn't have a professional art teacher. There was a New Zealand girl called Maureen who was the teacher. They did art for maybe an hour and then she let all the children sit on the steps of the old gompā, outside the door, and she led the dedication with prayers like *Jang chub sem chog rinpoche*, dedicating the merits and so forth. She did that for quite a number of years. Then Jampa Chokyi, the Spanish nun, also taught for a bit but it was mainly Maureen. They were not professional artists but the boys needed somebody to look after them. They painted mountains and houses and anything they wanted to.

Over many years, a lot of paintings that decorated the course, from the back room, were done by our young monks. All their paintings were stuck around. There was a door there that led to where the king's house was—the Chenrezig gompā didn't exist at that time. The old house was built in the British style by the king. Between there and the gompā there was a temporary sheet and then a back door at this side, and then, all the way around, they stuck the young boys' paintings. It was like that, so many times.

Is Karin here? I can't see enough without glasses. The first course she did was the seventh, right? And we did it behind the old gompā? How many courses did we do there? Many courses. Anyway, what was I talking about?

The Panchen Lama and Marcel. I was talking about the Panchen Lama but why did it come to Kopan? What course did Marcel start with?

Student: Maybe the fifth.

Rinpoche: The fifth? I see. So, that was the first course which we did outside, behind the old gompā, where there was ground between the hills. We left for Australia and I think Marcel led the course a few times and the retreat after the course. I think that was the first time there was a lamrim retreat after a course, and he was the first person to lead one. He's very good at teaching and at leading retreats, very concentrated and very serious. Anyway, that's what it was like.

He helped at the monastery, in the school, and then Lama asked him to start a business in Kathmandu, which he did, but from time to time he still led courses here and in the West. He still does from time to time in Holland and other places. He has totally dedicated his life

to Lama Yeshe and to us, completely with body, speech and mind. He is one of the members of the FPMT organization who has been like gold. For so many years he has offered service to Lama Yeshe and helped Nalanda, where we are very fortunate to have a monastery for Western monks.

It seems very difficult to have a monastery for Western monks. Somehow, I didn't really hear of a real Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the West. When His Holiness the Karmapa came to the West, because he's a highly attained being, there's not even one second when his mind is not in the Dharma. That's how he wrote, because I saw some book, I'm not sure what it was. That's how he wrote, because every second his mind is in Dharma. Of course, he has achieved very high realizations in the sutra and tantra. He's a great, incomparable lama, such as those high lamas of Tibet. I forgot again why I mentioned the Karmapa.

Student: Marcel was organizing the Maitreya land.

Rinpoche: Yes, you are right. His Holiness the Karmapa went to the United States, I don't know whether it was the first time or not. There are many Kagyü centers and many other Kagyü lamas, but the very first person who made His Holiness the Karmapa known in the West was this English lady who became a nun in the end, Freda Bedi. Her daughter used to go to the same university as Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's son, the one who became prime minister after her. They became very close friends.

When the Communist Chinese took over Tibet, many monks from Lhasa and the other parts escaped to Misamari, a most unbelievably hot place. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister, asked Freda Bedi to look after the monks at Misamari. Because of her connection with Sri Lanka she became a Theravadin nun. The monks who wanted to continue with their study went to Buxa, where for eight years I lived and had the opportunity to hear the teachings on philosophy from Geshe Rabten Rinpoche, my first teacher; secondly from Gen Yeshe and then thirdly from Lama Yeshe. Both of them were Geshe Rabten's disciples and from them I received the basic philosophical teachings, *dura*, the very beginning subject, something like ABCD.

That's the place where Gandhi-ji and Prime Minister Nehru were imprisoned when India was under British rule. So many people were killed there. Because it had been a prison and the monks needed a very quiet, very isolated place he thought it might be suitable. The prison had been empty for quite some time, since India got independence from the British, so the monks who wanted to study went there. India was making many roads near Tibet for protection, and many monks went to make the roads.

I'm sure Freda Bedi must have had very strong karma from a past life because she came to know the monks very well and she became very close to them. She came to Buxa twice to see all the incarnate lamas and then she started a school to teach English to the young lamas from the four Tibetan traditions: Kagyü, Nyingma, Sakya and Gelug.

It first started in Delhi and I was there but I got TB, so I spent a lot of time in hospital. At that time I had so much desire to learn English. First I got smallpox, as did Lama Trungpa, who started the monastery in Scotland [Samye Ling], and his relative, Akong Tulku. Akong Tulku's brother, another Lama Yeshe, has a huge amount of land to do retreat in Scotland.

At that time he wasn't a monk when he was at school and we both got smallpox, so we had to leave the school and they put us in a hospital very, very far away. After we were there for fifteen days, first my smallpox got better and then he got better. Then we went back to school and, when we were checked, they found out I had tuberculosis.

There was a Sakya-pa lama, Thupten Tulku, staying in the hospital who maybe also had TB. I thought I could learn English from him. Trungpa Rinpoche has passed away but Akong Rinpoche is still there now. His brother also got TB, so we had to be in the same hospital, but he was with the elderly people while I was with teenagers. Anyway, I was alone.

We went to see the highest doctor in the hospital. It seemed the Sakya lama who had been translating was leaving, so then I cried in front of the chief doctor and he gave me a banana and candies. I was then given a choice whether to stay in a single room or with other boys. I took the room with the boys. After you go inside, the first part has four beds for girls and in the middle is an aisle that leads to the toilet. After some time, there was a place for the boys. There were three boys and there was an empty bed, so I chose one. I was crying so much my pillow became all wet. When it was time to sleep the nurse came to check my blanket then left and later returned, sometimes checking, going back and forth like this. I didn't speak for three days.

You had to change your clothes and wear the hospital clothes, the Punjabi pants. I took a book and went outside to stretch my legs. There was a gate with a lot of cars passing through, so I stretched my legs there. The Indian boys who were in the same room came and told me, "Lama, don't cry. Don't cry." I didn't speak, I didn't reply for three days. Then I think my mind became peaceful after that.

The school sent an examination, but I didn't do the exam. Then, they invited me to see Prime Minister Nehru. At that time he was very old and he was lying down on his bed; his body had become a kind of blue color. All the lamas were around him and he was brought outside. At that time his daughter Indira Gandhi was outside. There was a table with something you don't see these days; it had pictures of Nehru's trip to the United States in a machine that you turned to see them. [*Student: A view finder?*]

Indira Gandhi gave each of us one of these, about Nehru's life. I then went back to Buxa to study with another young lama from Sera Je Monastery. A Tibetan policeman who had joined the Indian police, called Tenzin something, picked us up and took us to Buxa.

While I was there studying for a few years, Freda Bedi asked again and again for me to come to her school. She had started the first school in Delhi and then a school in Dalhousie and then, the last one, near Dharamsala. It was very, very cold in the wintertime, so the school was only for six months in the summer, not the whole year. I went there, not for the last year but the one before, for six months but the school didn't help me much because, being in the second or third class, all the teachers were Westerners, English, there was no Tibetan, and I didn't have enough language to understand what they were saying or to understand the books. It was a complete waste of time.

The classes were one hour in the morning, something like that, but it was a complete waste of time because I hadn't reached that language level and none of the other lamas in the class

could really translate. There was nobody who really understood what the teachers were saying. There was one lama, Thupten Rinpoche from Sera Je, who was very easy-going. He led a very relaxed life, not putting effort into studying and memorizing. While I was trying to learn to read and not succeeding at all, when there were exams he always passed, even though he was so relaxed and didn't really study. Anyway, I received from one lama a Tibetan book that explained English and only that helped me to learn English; I received nothing from the class.

Anyway, this is just a side talk. Afterwards, there were many lamas from the Kagyü tradition who started centers in the West and that was what made the Karmapa famous in the West. They came from the schools started by Freda Bedi. She went all over, even to Africa. I don't know whether she went to Afghanistan or the Muslim places, but she even went to Africa to talk about His Holiness the Karmapa's life story, to let people to know about the Karmapa. That was the origin. His Holiness the Karmapa went to America and by seeing him people got so inspired. I think maybe a hundred people became monks during his first tour but the next year, when he returned to the United States, they had all disrobed. Maybe there was only one left or not. That's because no monastery had been established where they could stay together and learn.

Therefore, I think we are very fortunate in the FPMT to have a monastery for Western men called Nalanda in France. The place is very, very, very beautiful; it's a really nice place. The nuns started a nunnery; not all the nuns came but for a while there was a nunnery. Thubten Chödrön, who now has a center called Sravasti Abbey, started it. She was the sort of the guide; she was sort of in charge of the nuns there. The center where it was in France had the name of a deity, Vajrayogini, so it was called Dorje Palmo. She was in charge but somehow it didn't really come together. The nuns didn't come and somehow there were a lot of problems. It didn't really happen like with the monks.

At the moment, the largest number of nuns we have is at Chenrezig Institute, in Queensland, Australia. What's the name of that particular area where it is? [*Student*: Sunshine Coast] Sunshine Coast.

Here's Peter. If you want to know his name, it's Peter Wildoats. I have a very bad mind, so I sometimes call him Peter Wildnuts! Maybe last time I called him Peter Wildnuts. I think maybe I have created a lot of karma to be born as a nut. It's possible! Anyway, Peter lived at Chenrezig Institute for many years. There are caves down below there that belong to the Aborigines, so he lived in those caves and also in Solu Khumbu. When he goes to the Himalayan Mountains, to Solu Khumbu, there's a very hidden place called Mount Lung Sampa. He lived in those caves for five months, trying to do retreat. Anyway, Peter does very good meditation.

There are about twenty-one nuns at Chenrezig now, working at the center or in different parts. That's the largest number, at Chenrezig Institute in Queensland, Australia. Then we have some nuns in Spain and different countries. There are also some in Taiwan from different countries such as the United States. So far, it hasn't happened for the nuns the way it has happened for the monks in Nalanda monastery. Somehow, they haven't been able to come together in just one place, in a nunnery.

In Italy, there are both monks and nuns staying at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa. They all stay at the center so there's no separate nunnery or monastery. But they have heaps of land close to the center and they plan to build a Tibetan Buddhist monastery there. They started the project maybe two years ago. At one time, because there were a lot of nuns in Italy somebody helped with some land and they were going to restart Dorje Palmo that had been started in France, but in the end I think maybe there wasn't the inspiration and it didn't happen again. Now, it seems a second monastery is going to be built on the mountain. So, there are two plans for the land, where one part of it will be for the monks and one part will be for a nunnery. That's the idea for that land.

Anyway, it's very rare. I haven't really heard of any other real monasteries even for the monks, but we are very fortunate because we have Nalanda. It has been very good there. They had Geshe Jampa Tegchok. Now, he's the ex-abbot of Sera Je which has several thousand monks. Generally, there are four thousand monks at Sera Je but not everyone is there—they are in different parts of the world or in different parts of India. I think maybe there are about three thousand monks to whom we have offered all three meals—breakfast, lunch and dinner—for many years.

The original monks came from Buxa. They were the main monks to go from Buxa to south India. Many monks came from Tibet and from the Tibetan settlements in India, but they have mostly been from Tibet up to now. The teacher would have one plate of food which he would have to share with his disciples and if there were four or five or six disciples, there wasn't be enough food to go around. Nobody got enough food. There was never, never, never enough food. One plate of food was shared with several or many different disciples. Therefore, quite a number went back to Tibet because they couldn't get enough food in the monastery. The situation was very sad.

We wanted to send Lama Ösel Rinpoche to Sera to learn philosophy. Lama Ösel is the incarnation of Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than the three times' buddhas. The abbot was a teacher of the Kopan monks who went there to study. He is one of the main teachers who gave our monks here a very good understanding of Dharma. Some of them have been teaching here now for many years. His name is Geshe Losang. He also became abbot, now ex-abbot. Geshe Sopa Rinpoche from Tibet, a well-known teacher, an outstanding teacher, became a professor in the Wisconsin Madison University. He retired quite a number of years ago, I think, maybe seven years or more than that. He's just finished building a very beautiful monastery with Tibetan art. He still does courses every year on Sundays and at other times if there's a geshe then there are teachings. Geshe Losang was the main person who made sure the Kopan monks had a good education, learning the extensive subjects of Buddhist philosophy. Now he doesn't teach, but before he taught for many years. Of course, some of the boys had other teachers as well.

Anyway, we have been offering food now for many years—maybe fifteen years, maybe less—and that helps so much. Now, they don't have to go away because there's enough food. The money to offer food mainly comes from Taiwan and now in recent years from Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

What I did say about the Karmapa? [*Student*: He came to the West.] That's right. People got so inspired because of his realizations, what he has achieved. As I mentioned before, there's

not even one second when his mind is not Dharma. There's not even one second when the actions of his body, speech and mind are not virtue. This is not talking about high realizations but having renunciation of this life. If you have that realization every action you do becomes virtue—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, whatever. His Holiness the Karmapa is, of course, very high realized, having completed the path to enlightenment. However, because there were no monasteries, despite people being so inspired, when he returned the next year, all but one had disrobed. Therefore I think the FPMT is very fortunate to have that monastery, Nalanda, a place where monks can live and study together.

Nalanda had Geshe Jampa Tegchok, the ex-abbot of Sera Je, as their teacher. Not only has he been the abbot of Nalanda and Sera Je, he is also a well-known teacher in the Tibetan monasteries, for all these many thousands of monks. He was at Nalanda teaching the monks for nine or ten years, or twelve years, something like that. Now he's teaching at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa because Geshe Jampa Gyatso, who had been teaching there, passed away. Geshe Jampa Gyatso was in the same class as Lama Yeshe. He was very learned and knew many, many scriptures, and many different texts even about one subject. He was a very good teacher. Even if he got upset about something, his face just changed a little and then that was it; it stopped. He taught there for many years. Before, there were many monks but then quite a few gradually disrobed. Now, there are maybe more Sangha there again, I think.

Geshe Jampa Tegchok was the abbot of Nalanda and then he became the teacher at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, teaching the seven-year Masters Program. Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa does the Basic Program in two years whereas all the other centers do it in five years because they are mostly in the city and people can only come at night and they come from different places. In Italy everybody is there at the center and so they can do it in two years. Geshe-la teaches the Masters Program and is now teaching Madhyamika, which is not only on emptiness but also on the bhumis and the whole Mahayana path. He's very good at teaching emptiness; it seems he's kind of special. I heard he developed his knowledge when he learned the Madhyamaka subject in Tibet.

The previous teacher, Geshe Jampa Gyatso, was also very learned and was in the same class as Lama Yeshe; in fact he was the leader of Lama Yeshe's class. Everybody had a connection with him, everybody felt close to him. He was like a father for all the students of the many centers in Italy. For all those people near Geshe Jampa Gyatso, he was not only a Dharma teacher but also like a father. Whenever they had problems, they went to see him to get a solution. It was a great loss when he passed away two years ago. Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa was very lucky when Geshe Jampa Tegchok accepted to be their teacher. Now I hear they are receiving incredible teachings from him. Anyway, this is just a side talk!

I think it's very difficult without a monastery because you don't have the conditions. Keeping the vows for a long time is very difficult, especially living in the West. If you are returning to the West, it really challenges your mind. Practicing Dharma there is a challenge, because all around you are the best advertisements for the objects for the delusions. There is the best advertising, especially for the objects of attachment. It's all around you, it's unbelievable. If you think you can go back to the West to overcome your delusions, instead you might find they overcome you. If you are totally determined to overcome them, with that kind of determination, with that kind of strength, maybe you can keep your vows a little longer.

If you don't do that, if you don't have that preparation and the determination that you're going to really be victorious, like a champion in a sporting competition; if you allow your mind to become weak for just a minute, then the delusions will take over and your vows will be gone. But you can keep them if you try to be a champion, like the soccer stars. Now, I see on TV, there are even more competitions coming up.

Here, it's the same thing. The competition is in your mind, in your heart, in your Dharma practice, and you can plan to conquer those objects of delusion. If you always plan like that, of course, nothing can disturb you; nothing can interfere with your Dharma practice, because you have continuous practice of Dharma whether you're in the city or whether you're outside the city. But particularly in the West, all around you, the objects of attachment are advertised in the best way. The West is a very interesting place to practice Dharma, really. If you win there, you can win anywhere. When you go there you can watch your mind and see how it reacts. It becomes very interesting.

Can you imagine all those hundreds of monks who took ordination from His Holiness the Karmapa? Then, the next time he returned, I heard that everyone had disrobed. You can understand that it's because they didn't have a monastery. Therefore, Nalanda has been extremely beneficial. Of course, after many, many years of ordination, depending on how the monastery goes, quite a number of the old monks have disrobed, but now there are many more monks there.

THE PANCHEN LAMA

What happened was this. After the Panchen Lama passed away, the Chinese Communists chose the boy by themselves. In the temple they put a few names in a container, making the slip of paper with the name of the boy they wanted as the Panchen Lama long and the slips of all the other candidates short and then they let a lama choose, telling him to take the long one. The Tibetan people aren't stupid enough to believe that proof. Normally, as I mentioned, high lamas check with the deity or with their clairvoyance. They go to bed and then they check with their subtle mind. If the one who checks is not a valid lama, if he doesn't have those qualities, you cannot have a good prediction, an exact prediction. Sometimes mistakes happen, but usually it's done by very high lamas who have clairvoyance or who can do the examination through the subtle mind, who check through dreams or divinations, and so it's very exact. Even if the boy hasn't predicted the past life, you can still trust the lamas.

Then, the other way of checking is Palden Lhamo, the Tibetan government's and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's protector. There's quite a big lake you can go to and you don't even have to say the question out loud, you just think the question and then constantly watch over the lake. There can be many people there, each with their own individual question, and each will see in the lake the answer to their question. This lake that makes predictions is really Tibet's TV! For example, when they were checking where His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had reincarnated, the lake showed the green roof of the house and the mother and child. It also showed letters in the sky, on the lake. That's a very special thing. It's impossible to make a mistake. It's the protector itself who predicts.

There is also the Twenty-one Taras lake, which is a very deep blue, and around the mountain there are many different protectors' lakes, such as Mahakala's lake. That mountain has no green, nothing. Wherever that protector is situated on the mountain, there's a lake of that protector. This is a totally different mountain, kind of dark, where nothing grows. The monks said that at night flames go from there in the different directions. Sera Je Monastery's protector is called Yangsang [Skt: Hayagriva] and is red in color. The mountain where the spirit or consciousness of the protector abides is kind of red, because the protector is red. It doesn't have a lake but there are many lakes around, where predictions can be made. Some lakes are very violent.

I have one teacher, a Mongolian lama, Geshe Sengye, who became the abbot of both Sera colleges. After Mao Zedong died, they gave some freedom to the monasteries, so he became the abbot of both colleges, Sera Mey and Sera Je. Because he was a great practitioner of the most secret deity, Hayagriva, when he went to this lake, the protector, Yangsang, was not violent at all, so Geshe Sengye did a puja there. But when common people go there, the protector becomes very violent, very fearful. When two Tibetan men went there they saw a yak on top of the lake running toward them. They were so frightened they ran away. They ran and ran and ran and one of them broke his leg. This is an example.

In Tibet there are many holy places like that. So it totally doesn't make any sense what the Communist Chinese government did, publicly choosing which boy was the Panchen Lama by writing names on a list themselves and making a lama choose the long slip of paper.

When I saw the boy on a video in recent years, I don't know, I can't say, but there was no way I could discover the mind. I didn't get the feeling he was the reincarnation and I think he himself expressed that he's not the Panchen Lama. That picture of the small baby you saw, the other one with the bigger face, that is the real one, the one recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama with his omniscience.

The previous Panchen Lama is my guru, the *huge* one, the one who passed away in Tibet. On our pilgrimage we returned through Shigatse where there is the Panchen Lama's monastery, Tashi Lhunpo, so we went to see the Panchen Lama. There was a meditator monk with us who wanted to receive teachings. I asked the Panchen Lama to give some advice, some teachings on the prayer to be born in Shambhala, the Kalachakra deity's pure land. If you're born there you can practice tantra and achieve enlightenment there, so it has that special advantage whereas if you're born in a pure land like Amitabha's pure land it's impossible to be reborn in the lower realms. I'm not sure, maybe it's not quite like that. But the benefit is that the tantra teachings exist there, so you can practice and achieve enlightenment there. Because that's the quick way to achieve enlightenment, you recite the Shambhala prayer if you want to be born there. The meditator asked to receive the oral transmission of that prayer, so I made the request.

I hadn't received teachings before from the Panchen Lama. When he came here to Kopan, he gave a long-life initiation but only Geshe Lama Konchog and a few others went. At Tashi Lhunpo I myself wasn't sure whether I should take teachings and so make the guru-disciple connection with the Panchen Rinpoche because later politically, if His Holiness and the Panchen Rinpoche became opposed and something happened, you kind of suffer or get confused. So I thought I might get into that problem. As I started the mandala offering to

request the Panchen Lama to give the oral transmission of the Shambhala prayer and advice, I was thinking whether I should make the guru-disciple connection or not. Then, the thought came in my mind, “Panchen Rinpoche and His Holiness the Dalai Lama—if I look at them as one being, not as separate beings but as one being in different forms, then there is no problem.” While I was chanting the mandala, I was thinking like this. Just before the mandala finished, this conclusion happened and then I took the oral transmission and advice. So, he is my guru.

When [the previous] Panchen Rinpoche passed away, I was in Australia and I had dream. In my dream, his holy body was very tall and very strong. I don’t remember whether he was wearing robes or a red dress, but I was wearing robes although I didn’t have a zen. We were in the street and he was holding my hand. That was the time Panchen Rinpoche must have passed away, so he was showing a sign. Panchen Rinpoche is recognized as Amitabha Buddha. His Holiness is Chenrezig and Panchen Rinpoche is Amitabha Buddha. This is how people see the story and recognize it and pray like that.

The story that Panchen Rinpoche gives is sort of like a guide-book or guide. You carry it and, if you follow that and you have the karma, then you can reach Shambhala. If you don’t have the karma, then maybe you go round and round and round the mountains!

We tried to go to Lapchi in Tibet, but it was very cold and icy. Some of the Sherpas went on the ice but they said it was not good to go there. There’s a special mountain quite close by that you can circumambulate called Sipri that is Heruka’s holy body, holy speech and holy mind, all three. In the past the mountain had one hundred monasteries but now they have been completely destroyed and only a few have been revived. Lama Atisha was there. A monk did research on that for two years and wrote a book about the story of each hermitage and the life stories of the many different lamas. Many of them achieved the rainbow body there, so it’s a very good place for attainments. He asked me to help revive all those hermitages on Sipri so I promised to do that. His idea was that there are many thousands of monks at Sera Je and when they finish their studies they could go there to actually experience the path to enlightenment. Other people could also go there. That was his idea of how to use the place. There could be a small temple and a few statues and a few rooms, something like that.

I said I would do it but first maybe build a Maitreya Buddha statue there. There was a Maitreya Buddha statue there before. There was a rock which causes anybody who touched it, animals or people, to die immediately. It had some poison. A lama advised to build a two-story Maitreya Buddha statue on top of the rock so it would no longer be dangerous. The statue that was there was completely destroyed during the revolution. So, the idea was to first build the Maitreya Buddha statue, but it took quite some time. Even after a year it wasn’t happening quickly. So, they would build the temple and I would build the statue. But what happened was, we didn’t do it quickly enough. Then, the Chinese found out that the leader of the area who was going to help us was receiving money from outside Tibet. We hadn’t sent the money, but the Chinese put him in prison. That is what I heard last time. That is sad. Nothing happened, but he was put in prison.

Sipri is a very special holy place, with Heruka’s holy body, holy speech and holy mind, all three. The whole mountain is totally different from other mountains. A road goes around

and then on this side, where the mountain is, every stone has a special figure, a conch shell or an auspicious sign. I have a stone where I have put the Buddha's relic, like a grain. It is not the actual grain but shaped like that. Every stone is interesting; there are all kinds of figures like that.

I'm hoping to make a pilgrimage there one day. I think many local Tibetan people go around the mountain, taking seven days. The animals carry all the food and the people chant mantras while going around the mountain, in order to purify negative karma and collect merit.

I've heard that if you circumambulate Mount Kailash fifteen or eighteen times, something like that, then it's totally done. It's like going to do a retreat to recite a number of mantras; it depends if it's a retreat to finish a certain number of mantras, a nearing retreat or a great nearing retreat. I mean there are retreats until you get a sign or until you get the experience. Recently I heard maybe from Dharamsala that if you circumambulate Mount Kailash maybe fifteen or eighteen times that's totally done. There's also the Vajrayogini lake where, if you wash your body there, when you die you get reborn in Vajrayogini's pure land and then you'll definitely get enlightened there. It's a most amazing thing.

[Rinpoche signs books]

LECTURE 16

LONG-LIFE PUJA

I want to say thank you very much for organizing the long-life puja. It's also a long-life puja for you; in reality it's everybody's long-life puja. Now that I've become millionaire and billionaire, I want to go to the beach, maybe a very famous beach like Tahiti or somewhere! Maybe I'll build a celestial mansion at the beach!

As I mentioned, all the money that's offered here goes to Kopan Monastery and nunnery, and also to Sera Monastery, which has many expenses; there's the food and so on. There are special offerings to those who memorize many hundreds of thousands of pages of Dharma texts, the philosophical texts. We have been offering special gifts to thank them and to help with their expenses and so forth. There are also the expenses of the examinations, the very special studies, the special training and debates. Some monks have to go from Sera to the other monastery in Mongolia, so there are also travelling expenses. Then, there are many other projects, so the donations are divided in that way.

And then I think there can also be some money for Solu Khumbu, down below Lawudo, where there were some monks and nuns, but now they've all left for the pure land, they've all passed away. The rinpoche who founded their monastery, who really was like one of those ancient Kadampa geshe, has built a new monastery for those who have reincarnated. We try to offer them a donation of food, but just one meal. Then, there is also a donation for the Maitreya Project as well. There are many projects. So that's it.

I myself am a totally ordinary person, with no freedom over death, no control over death and rebirth. However, the little I can to benefit the world, to benefit the Buddhadharma, I try to do. So, thank you very much. That's it.

LECTURE 17

THE MEANING OF *JETSUN* (DURING A TEA OFFERING)

One thing Chinese people like to chant is a mantra that's in the Ksitigarbha sutra. That particular one has benefit if a country is being attacking or something; it protects the leader, giving them power and they won't be bothered by others. Maybe the mantra is more to do with that; when other countries are attacking your country, it assures some kind of peace. The short mantra is what Chinese people commonly chant. We don't know how this Chinese master chanted it. Actually it's in the sutra; probably it's the last mantra.

I'm going to read it again, OK. The purpose of having it in Tibetan is because if you chant it, that helps with the energy. When you do the chanting in English or Chinese, then it's different.

First, the motivation.

“The purpose of my life is to free all sentient beings from all the suffering and its causes and to bring them to enlightenment by myself. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment. Therefore, I'm going to make the tea offering.”

If you have received a great initiation, generate yourself as the deity first. You purify in emptiness, and then you generate as your own deity, the one you practice in everyday life. Then, the tea is purified in emptiness. If you have received a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation, then you can do the meditation, blessing the tea with the Highest Yoga Tantra method. If you haven't received an initiation, just leave it.

Visualize a container the size of the world, and inside that the tea is transformed into oceans of nectar. Then, “*jetsun tsa wai lama*”

Je is when you have the first realization of Dharma, the renunciation of this life, the total detachment from this life; that's the first level of *je*. The total detachment from this life is more special than any renunciation that the majority of ordinary people have. The next level of *je* is the total renunciation of all the future lives' samsara. The next *je* is total liberation from the oceans of samsara. The next *je* is bodhicitta, one of the three principal aspects of the path. The next *je* is the dharmakaya, full enlightenment, total freedom from all gross and subtle defilements, which project dualistic appearance, truly-existent appearance, that make everything appear as real—the I, action, object, all the phenomena appear as real, in the sense of existing from their own side—and decorate this hallucination on every phenomena that is merely labeled by mind. That dharmakaya which is totally free from this dualistic view and the negative imprints, the subtle defilements, is the ultimate *je*. That's the meaning of the first syllable, *je*.

The second syllable, *tsun*, means “pure.” The first level of *tsun* is being pure or free from attachment to this life; the second level is being free from attachment to all future lives'

samsara and the next level of *tsun* is being free from the self-cherishing thought, attaining the wisdom realizing emptiness, one of three principal aspects of the paths, the causal vehicle. This *tsun* is being pure or free from ignorance, the root of samsara.

Relating to highest tantra, *je* is the realization, the completion of the generation stage, but for the lower tantras *je* means the two realizations of wisdom and method. In the lower tantras *tsun* can mean being pure, not having the impure appearances and the concepts. In the highest tantra generation stage, it means the ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state and ordinary rebirth are purified. That ripens the mind for the path-time dharmakaya, the path-time sambhogakaya and the path-time nirmanakaya. When the twenty-four absorptions happen at the time of death, during meditation you're able to do that, like experiencing the death. You stop the gross mind and actualize the subtle mind, and then use that to meditate on emptiness. That's a very secret highest tantra subject, so you can't really have that explained without having received a great initiation. The sambhogakaya means doing the practice of the illusory body. The path-time nirmanakaya means you enter back into the old body, the nirmanakaya, and do the activities. That's how to do the practice. Ripening the path-time dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya is planting the seed to achieve the result-time dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. That's in the highest tantra generation stage.

Je here also means the extremely subtle mind, clear light, the simultaneously-born great bliss. That's like an atomic bomb, with *tsun* helping the mind become totally pure. During that equipoise meditation you don't have that dual view; *tsun* is like that. When the gross mind ceases, that's *tsun*, pure. The great enlightenment, the cessation of the subtle defilements, is *tsun*.

So, *je* is all the realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment and *tsun* is the cessation of all negative thoughts, from the ordinary mind's mistakes toward the guru up to the cessation of the subtle dual view.

You can see now, *jetsun* refers to having perfected the qualities of realizations and the qualities of cessation. *Je* means being perfected in the qualities of realizations and *tsun* means being perfected in the qualities of cessation. That is another meaning. Without talking about all that, *jetsun* means the result-time dharmakaya. That's the ultimate guru—the guru of the ultimate truth—and the guru of the truth for the all-obscuring mind.

Then, *tsa wai lama*, the root guru, who is the manifestation of the ultimate guru. I have been using the term “conventional guru” but I think “conventional” is not exact. In Tibetan *don dam lama* means “ultimate guru” and *kün dzob lama* means “guru for the all-obscuring mind.” That's more exact. “Guru of the all-obscuring truth” or “guru which is the truth for the all-obscuring mind”—both these terms are more exact. When you say “conventional” it doesn't become an exact translation of this. Anyway, with *jetsun* the ultimate guru then manifests in the root guru.

The root guru is the one who in the first place helped your mind, which was not Dharma, to become Dharma, to be transformed into Dharma. Another way of seeing the root guru is the one, among all your gurus, who benefits you the most. Lama Atisha had a hundred and fifty-seven gurus but the one who benefited him the most was Lama Serlingpa. It took him

twelve months to go by boat from India to Sumatra, in Indonesia. This was a very long time ago, a thousand years ago. Even though Lama Atisha was already a completely learned great pandit he went to receive teachings on bodhicitta from Lama Serlingpa in Indonesia. I think he studied there for about twelve years, receiving the complete teachings on bodhicitta from Lama Serlingpa. Of all his gurus, the one who benefited him the most was Lama Serlingpa, so he is regarded as Lama Atisha's root guru. Even though he had a hundred and fifty-seven gurus, Lama Serlingpa was his root guru. There was another one, Lama Dharmarakshita, so Lama Atisha had these two root gurus.

You mustn't think that because there is a root guru, you cut off all the other gurus. It's not like that. They're all one. You have to have that kind of idea, that all the buddhas arise from the dharmakaya, which is the ultimate guru. The dharmakaya manifests into numberless buddhas, deities and the different aspects of the buddhas. From that Dharma, the Sangha comes, so that one manifests as all the gurus. So, it's all connected; the root guru is connected with all the gurus. That means it's all one being. The conclusion is that it is just one being. When you say, "root guru," if you feel that it kind of abandons all the other gurus, it's not like that.

"I offer these oceans of nectar, these oceans of great bliss, all this good, pure tea offering."

This causes you to develop simultaneously-born, simultaneously-attained great bliss. While that's happening, this is simultaneously accomplished, which means without effort. While the simultaneously-attained great bliss is increasing, make the offering. It doesn't mean they don't have great bliss; it's not saying they don't have simultaneously-attained great bliss, that only when you make the offering they experience this. It's not like that. You do this meditation, then this simultaneously-attained great bliss increases within them. Visualizing in that way, you create the karma to experience simultaneously-attained great bliss, which is the dharmakaya.

Having actualized the generation stage, you are able to actualize the completion stage great bliss. From that, there's the result dharmakaya, the simultaneously-attained great bliss to actualize the dharmakaya. To create the cause for you to experience that, you visualize that it increases within them. But you shouldn't think it increases only when you make the offering; otherwise they don't have it. That's wrong to think like that. You are doing the visualization here for their holy mind to remain in the experience of simultaneously-attained great bliss all the time. There's nothing more; there's no greater bliss for them to achieve at all.

Doing this meditation in this way, increasing the bliss, you are creating the cause to achieve this highest tantra simultaneously-born great bliss, the path that ceases the gross mind. Then, you are able to achieve the dharmakaya, the simultaneously-attained great bliss. Then, you are able to do perfect work for sentient beings. That's the whole point. While this simultaneously-attained great bliss is happening, think, "Please bless me to achieve this, for my mind to be mixed, to become one with your holy mind." That means your mind becomes one, and then becomes mixed with the holy mind. "Becoming one with your holy mind" means enlightenment, it means your mind becomes the dharmakaya. This has a very profound meaning.

Now I am going to chant this.

[Rinpoche chants the tea offering prayer, then drinks tea]

Jetsun is usually translated as “venerable.” You can see how with that all the meanings are totally lost. Is “venerable” only for monks and nuns? Can you call a Christian priest that? Isn’t there a priest who is not a monk? You can call them “venerable” too, can’t you? It’s a term for anybody you have respect for. It can be “venerable mosquito.” “This venerable mosquito’s bite is very painful,” or, “This venerable mosquito is drinking more blood.” That sort of thing.

[Rinpoche drinks more tea]

You can use this prayer for tea and also for offering food.

THE BENEFITS OF RECITING THE OFFERING CLOUD MANTRA

Now I will explain the benefits of reciting the Offering Cloud Mantra. It has nine benefits, blessing the offerings and multiplying them. It multiplies them like clouds in the sky, like covering the sky completely; the offerings are filling the sky. That’s what it means, multiplying the offerings like skies, numberless, to each buddha and bodhisattva. If you offer one light, one stick of incense, one piece of candy, one cup of tea or whatever, when you chant this mantra what the buddhas and bodhisattvas receive is skies of offerings. One light multiplies into skies, one stick of incense multiplies into skies. If you are doing a water offering and you bless it with this mantra, it multiplies into skies of offerings. Each of the numberless buddhas and bodhisattva receives skies of offerings. Can you imagine?

If you don’t chant this mantra, you don’t get all that benefit—when you only offer one thing, the buddhas and bodhisattvas only receive that one thing, even if you say OM AH HUM. But if you chant this long mantra, each buddha receives skies of offerings. What you actually offer is just one thing but if you bless with this mantra, if you chant this mantra, it blesses the offering. If you don’t have time or you don’t have anything to offer but one bowl of water or one stick of incense, if you chant this, it increases like skies of offerings to each buddha and bodhisattva. Can you imagine? It’s the same with the gurus. That means you create numberless causes of enlightenment, numberless causes of liberation from samsara by the way, and numberless causes of the happiness of future lives by the way. Then, there’s no question about the success of this life; it happens without even thinking about it.

If you don’t chant this mantra, all that is gone; it’s lost. It’s like you’ve lost dollars filling the whole sky, the whole sky filled with hundreds of dollars. A thousand dollars is nothing, one dollar is nothing, but it’s like you can achieve the whole sky filled with gold, diamonds and wish-granting jewels. You could get that, but you didn’t do it. Do you understand?

The next of the nine benefits is that the minute you remember this mantra, it becomes an offering to the buddhas abiding in the ten directions. The ten directions means all four sides, the corners and up and down, so that means all the buddhas. How many buddhas abide in the ten directions? There is not just one, they equal the number of atoms of the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. That’s the first benefit. Just with this first benefit you feel faint! Just

remembering the mantra, the benefit that you get is amazing. Can you imagine? It's most amazing.

The second benefit is that it is equivalent to having prostrated at the holy feet of all those buddhas abiding in ten directions, equaling the number of atoms of the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. You have prostrated to the feet of that many buddhas. That's the second benefit.

The third benefit is that it becomes an offering to the many buddhas; offerings of incense, garlands of flowers, ornaments, robes, umbrellas, banners, pointed flags, seat covers, clothes for the holy body and animals. "Offering animals" means animals that are enjoyable to look at; the term used is "eye-looking." It says "eye-looking" but it means animals, for example, in Tibet there is a place where deer and other animals were offered.

Food and ornaments, all these things, are cleaned and become not just offerings but once offered you get the benefit of having offered all these things to the buddhas abiding in the ten directions. How many? That many times equaling the number of atoms of the sand grains of the Pacific Ocean. Amazing!

Then you become free from all the negative karmas. That is the fourth benefit. The fifth benefit is that you have all the root of the virtue. And the sixth is that you are able to see all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

The seventh benefit is that they all give you breath. That means that they liberate whoever is in the lower realms enduring a lot of suffering. They liberate you from the lower realms, then you're able to breath; you have freedom. When you look at being in samsara, of course, there is unbelievable suffering: the suffering of pain, the suffering of change—which means all the samsaric pleasures—and pervasive compounding suffering, which are the aggregates, the body and mind which are in the nature of suffering, and the contaminated seed of delusion. Then, delusion arises which creates karma, which in turn creates the cause of samsara again. That's how you die and are reborn continuously from beginningless rebirths.

What I was saying was that with this benefit you are given breath, meaning you are free from that suffering and you achieve liberation. In that way they give breath to you. When you are liberated from samsara, they give breath to you. Also, when you are brought to enlightenment by them revealing the Mahayana path, they give breath to you. That's the seventh benefit.

The eighth benefit is that you are protected from all nagas and harm-givers by *nu jin* or protectors. I don't know exactly, but I think it means they protect you from harm. I think maybe Dzambhala is also called *nu jin*. It doesn't mean they are harm-givers, but probably they give refuge to you, they free you from harm. Similarly, there are beings such as gods and demigods and garudas, the ones who fly in the sky, and the eight worldly gods. Then there is Dorje Chenpo, the great stomach. That is maybe some kind of worldly devas, I'm not sure, or it could mean they are snakes. I'm not sure whether this refers to just snakes or some devas, I have to check.

The next benefit is called Vajra in the Hand, meaning Vajrapani's hand and so forth. Vajrapani, the Owner of Secrets, and the four guardians will follow you and protect you, and they will guide you and hide you. To hide here means that if some harm is happening to you, if other people are causing harm, they will protect you and hide you. Although the eighth benefit is called "protecting" I think that it means protecting, guiding and hiding, all three in one.

The ninth benefit is that after you die you will be born in the blissful realm of the world, which means Amitabha Buddha's pure land.

It says of these qualities, even without actually practicing, just remembering this Offering Cloud Mantra once, you will achieve all this. That's what it says. Without actually working for this, you will be born in a pure land, just by remembering this mantra.

I'll do the *lung* of this mantra.

[Rinpoche recites short mandala offering, refuge and bodhicitta prayers]

"No matter how long it takes, no matter how difficult it is to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, I *must* achieve enlightenment. I must do it. Therefore, I'm going to take the oral transmission to be able to do the *sur* practice, and also the oral transmission of Buddha Ksitigarbha's mantra and the oral transmission of the Offering Cloud Mantra, thus making my life unbelievably meaningful."

Can you imagine? All this merit, all this unbelievable success, comes unbelievably easily, like that.

[Rinpoche begins the oral transmission]

Usually when I do the [Offering Cloud] mantra, it blesses any offering. If it's food that's already blessed, I offer the food as numberless oceans of nectar, that's the first thing. The second one is all the offerings in the FPMT center gompas which are in the nature of great bliss. Then, in the Aptos house, all the extensive flowers outside and inside, and the many thousands of light offerings outside and inside, and all the many water offerings—big, big water bowl offerings—in the different rooms. There are also food offerings, tea offerings, and all the offerings at Buddha Amitabha Pure Land retreat place [the FPMT center in Washington State.] Also here in this room there are offerings and in the next room there are offerings, and then in the next room, there are many offerings there.

If you have offerings done at your own house, you have to include that, wherever you are. If there are offerings of flowers or whatever you normally set up, you have to remember that. Normally, when I do the mantra, I try to think of all that. Here, with these offerings, when you say "all the extensive offerings in the FPMT center gompas," that may include all that, but I also think of all the offerings in these three rooms separately.

For the last few years I've been telling people, whether they're outside or inside FPMT, when you do a sadhana, when you do the practice in daily life, you must think you can offer all these. Whether a student or not, it doesn't matter; anybody can offer like this. For example, in the Aptos house sometimes there are lay people but mostly there are nuns and

monks, usually nuns, who spend a few hours every day making offerings. That makes it very worthwhile. It gives everybody a chance to collect merit.

However many offerings there are, everybody who remembers these offerings in their daily practice gets a chance to create great merit. Depending on how many offerings there are, there are that many causes of enlightenment, that many causes of liberation from samsara. However many thousands of lights there are, there are that many thousands of causes of enlightenment and, by the way, liberation and, by the way, the happiness of future lives. However many water offerings there are, there are that many causes of enlightenment, that many causes of liberation, that many causes of the happiness of future lives, then no question about this life. Without even thinking about that, it just happens.

If you remember all that when you chant this mantra, if you think of all that, wow, it's amazing. That one offering increases and becomes numberless offerings to each buddha and bodhisattva. One offering becomes numberless like the clouds in the sky, to each buddha and bodhisattva. Can you imagine? So, one offering becomes numberless causes of enlightenment, it becomes numberless causes of liberation from samsara, it becomes numberless causes of the happiness of future lives. Just by chanting this mantra, it becomes numberless causes of enlightenment, numberless causes of liberation, numberless causes of happiness. Can you imagine all these offerings and how chanting this mantra blesses all these? Wow, wow, wow, wow, wow. Can you imagine?

You can visualize your body as a wish-fulfilling gem, instead of blood and bone, like this. You can visualize your body as a gem that fulfills all wishes and then chant the mantra. Think like that. With this mantra, one offering to each buddha and bodhisattva becomes numberless.

The next prayer is the *Extensive Power of Truth*. You have to visualize, for example, the whole sky filled with offerings. As I mentioned before, visualize all the offerings at FPMT centers and gompas, in the Aptos house and in Washington and here. By thinking of all that, if you offer, then the buddhas and bodhisattvas receive that. Visualize the whole sky filled with offerings: water offerings, water for drinking and water for cleaning the feet, and then flowers, incense, light offerings, scented water offerings, food offerings and music offerings. There are five objects of desire, and there are the eight auspicious signs, the eight substances and the eight royalties. If you think of the whole sky filled with all these offerings, the buddhas actually receive however much you visualize. This is the words of truth, the *Extensive Power of Truth*.

With this second prayer, as many offerings as you visualize, the buddhas and bodhisattvas actually get them. The first one, the Offering Cloud Mantra, blesses the offerings when you chant the mantra, then each offering becomes like clouds in the sky, numberless, to each buddha and bodhisattva. So there's a little bit of a difference. When you say the Extensive Power of Truth, then at that time it's good to think the whole sky is filled with all these offerings.

The present book, not the old one, has the *Extensive Power of Truth* prayer. Maybe you can get a copy of that.

Now, the *sur*. No, the commentary. Doing *sur* is easy. That's not difficult, so we're just doing the *sur* commentary.

[Break in taping]

Now we're going to do the *sur*.

You can understand why, although it's not necessary to chant this mantra with every food offering, I like to chant it as much as possible, not only while offering food. During that time, when I do the mantra I offer everything: first of all, thinking the food becomes oceans of nectar covering the sky, as much as I can think. Then all the extensive offerings at the FPMT center gompas, then in the Aptos house or the ones I have arranged in the Washington house that the Sangha there have been offering. There are two houses, one for retreat and the Aptos house, but actually they basically have two purposes. One is a place for Sangha to live; it helps some Sangha to live and to practice. The other one is for extensive offerings. So, these two houses are for these two purposes. Although the aim of the Washington house is for retreat, there are also Sangha there doing extensive offerings. They need a place to live and it also makes their life meaningful by making the extensive offerings. It also helps the success of the whole organization when you dedicate for all the centers and all the projects. They make offerings and I also try to make offerings. Of course, sometimes I miss but I try.

Both houses fulfill these two purposes even though it costs a lot of money each year. I think it costs one hundred thousand dollars at least, minimum for sure, definitely no question, but I think it's more than that with the expenses. So, one purpose is to give the Sangha a place to stay and to practice and make extensive offerings. That's the main purpose. They make offerings and I make offerings; they also dedicate for the whole organization and for all those who have died, the students and everybody who has offered service to the organization, and students who rely upon me, whom I promised to pray for, those who have died and those who are living. Basically, it's like that.

Actually, I'm thinking of Tara Melwani in Singapore. I asked her to make extensive offerings every day, so her maid does crystal water bowl offerings but only in the room where I was staying. I was also offering at another student's house before. I was doing offerings there in the past but then somehow it didn't happen in recent times. I think at one of the ABC dinners I didn't mention the offerings in that student's house, maybe he realized I'm not doing them anymore. Anyway, I asked him to make extensive offerings in the shrine room, so he's made many, many water bowl offerings upstairs in crystal bowls. I'm not sure whether he is doing that now or not, but actually I'm thinking to have it like that even more!

In the past, I started this extensive arrangement in Taiwan. I led a Medicine Buddha retreat there and then I said we must have extensive offerings. So, the abbess and nuns went shopping and bought very expensive flowers such as orchids and very beautiful offerings. The nuns cleaned the bowls late at night. Then I came back and started upstairs. We had a Chenrezig gumpa upstairs and two rooms; one of these was a dining room with a table and chairs. When I came back after the retreat they had transformed it with offerings. The lunch table was filled with very beautiful offerings. They built another one on the side which may be for light offerings.

Student: Do we have to do the offerings ourselves or can the maid do it?

Rinpoche: In Taiwan, one student had two maids and they were making water offerings at her house. One maid had some sickness and was making offerings and prayers to Medicine Buddha then somehow her sickness was gone, just by making water offerings to Medicine Buddha.

I think it's very good for the maids to do it. Of course, generally, I should be doing it also. If not all, at least I should do a few, but somehow that didn't happen. I think I got completely lazy. If you can do some, that's very, very good, fantastic. They can do most of the offerings, but you can do some, or a few anyway. That's very, very good.

After the offerings are set up, you recite this mantra, to bless and offer. That's very important. If you don't do that, then you don't collect merit—the offerings are just arranged, like a display, but you don't collect merit. But if you had thought to make the offering and even if the others did it, it's very important for you to recite this mantra and actually offer. At the end, reciting the mantra and making the offering is essential. Otherwise, it's possible that it just becomes décor. It can become just decoration, but not actually an offering. There is danger it might become like that.

If the maid thinks of making offering to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha or the holy objects there, then they get merit. Then if they dedicate for you, of course, that makes a difference. At least they can do that, but you must chant this mantra at the end and make the offering. If you have memorized this mantra, you can recite it even while you are driving a car, while you're traveling, wherever you are. Since the maids are doing the offerings, you can recite that mantra wherever you are. You don't have to be at home.

SUR COMMENTARY

OK, now we're going to do the *sur*.

First of all, understand the benefits of *sur*. If you make *sur*, what it does is eliminate obstacles. It eliminates temporary obstacles. Whatever you are doing—whether you are on a retreat, doing a project or helping other sentient beings or whatever—whatever attainment you want, it eliminates any temporary obstacles to that. And when death happens you get born in Amitabha's pure land, the blissful realm, and all your wishes according to Dharma are successful. That's very, very important, extremely important. All your wishes according to Dharma are fulfilled. Then, ultimately you collect the two types of merit—the merit of wisdom and the merit of virtue. So, everything is there.

If you want to do *sur* at night time, it says the *sur* pot should be clean and unbroken; and the fire shouldn't have smoke. If you're using firewood there shouldn't be any wood smoke. What it's saying here is important. You are making the charity of the smell of food not of smoke. Only if it smells of food do they get the benefit.

In Taiwan, they make a whole package for *sur* and sell it. I think probably everybody buys that. I don't think they use the correct substances because you never get the smell of food from that. It looks like powdered plants and doesn't have the smell of food. It should have a smell like when you burn tsampa. Do you know tsampa? When you put tsampa in the fire,

for example, you can smell the food. There is some smoke coming out but there is the smell of food. That's what's needed for this particular practice. Actually, here you make offering to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and all the six realms' sentient beings—the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, gods, demigods and intermediate state beings—but this is particularly for the smell-eaters, the intermediate state beings. This is food for the intermediate state beings; not the tsampa itself but the smell.

If the fire is made of wood, then let it burn first. There will be smoke but let it burn completely and when the smoke stops or there is very little smoke, put the tsampa on, then the smoke that comes will be the food. There should be the smell of food, not the smell of the wood smoke. Like for example, when you burn incense you smell the incense. So here, the *sur* should be the food. That's very important.

Usually, as it's described here, you make a small sack of tsampa, mix all the ingredients and then with a spoon sprinkle them on a small fire you have made. It doesn't matter whether you have a big fire or a small one. I usually make a big fire and put lots on, so they can have it for many hours. I make it big.

With a fire like that, you can put the tsampa on the edge and it will burn continuously. The other way is to put a lot of tsampa and there should be a place where the smell of the food that is burning comes from. You put tsampa down first and then you can touch the fire to it with something that is burning and then the smoke comes and the smell of the food comes. I think the air needs to go through it from behind otherwise, if you completely cover the fire with tsampa, the fire might die. Or you can leave some fire at the edge, then put the tsampa in the middle.

Student: If we do the *sur* offering at home, will all the smell-eaters and all the intermediate state beings come to our house?

Rinpoche: You burn in the house?

Student: We do it in the garden.

Rinpoche: This is for those beings. There's no need to be scared. It becomes charity for them. They are suffering.

I'll tell you a story. There were Tibetan prisoners in Tibet, and in one day they only got three *momos* this size, so they were always very hungry. The Chinese people who were looking after the prison cooked meals for themselves. They made food, they fried food and the smell would come to the prisoners, who got incredible benefit in that way. It helped the prisoners so much because they were very hungry. They were allowed to go outside a little way, just around in the fields, where they looked for bones. If they found any very old dry bones, they chewed them and that helped them so much. The Chinese who were looking after the prison ate a lot of beans and when they did *kaka*, the prisoners opened up the kaka with a stick or something and looked for the beans which came out. They ate those beans from the kaka, they were so unbelievably hungry.

There's one Tibetan man who had so much experience of how the smell of the food from the kitchen helped that since he left the prison he has been doing *sur* every day for many

years. He experienced how it benefited so much; he knows this. The suffering of the intermediate state beings is hundreds of times greater than any human beings' hunger, so they really need help. It is unbelievably beneficial for them to do this *sur*.

In the *Arya Sanghata Sutra* the Buddha said that if you make charity the size of a hair to a sentient being, you enjoy benefits such as incredible wealth for eighty thousand eons. You receive that much benefit from making charity even as small as the size of a hair. It's amazing.

So, it's very important to have fire without smoke. You must let the fire burn completely until the smoke stops. Once you've put the wood or charcoal or coal on, then add the kerosene or whatever to make it burn well, and then wait for ten minutes or so until the fuel is white on the outside and the inside is completely on fire. Then you put tsampa on top. Then, when there's no smoke smell, only tsampa smell, it is very good.

THE TWENTY-FIVE SUBSTANCES TO BE MIXED WITH THE TSAMPA

It says the tsampa should be mixed with lots of butter, like eating *pak*. This is dry *pak* not wet *pak*. There are five grains, five medicines, five scented smells, five essences, five jewels, so there are *five times five ingredients* which I will explain. I will go through the five things you need to make it perfect.

This already exists; I've translated it a few times in English.

First, I will explain their benefits and what they are.

These five things are quite important not only for *sur*. If you have these, when you do a puja or a retreat you can put them in the torma that you offer. Normally, if you have them, when you do a puja you mix these substances in the torma which is externally how to make the torma offering to the deities perfect, for attainment, for success. Internally, it's your own realization, but externally you make the torma perfect by having these substances mixed with it. With just a general torma offering to the deities, it brings unbelievable benefit for success. This is not only for *sur* practice but if you have it, when you do a tea offering to the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and the protectors you can also add this. You don't need a lot, not even a spoonful. It's the same as when you mix it with the torma, you don't need a lot, just a little.

What are the *five jewels*? Gold, silver, coral, pearls and lapis lazuli, the blue stone. It's blue but sometimes lapis lazuli has some white, like small flecks of gold. In Tibetan it's called *mu men*. This stone is also for healing, and that's why they use it for rings. Why these five jewels? Because these five jewels were offered in the past to the Buddha by the goddess Nalgyuma. There's Dzambhala who is male and Nalgyuma who is female for giving wealth. So, the goddess Nalgyuma offered these five things to the Buddha and the Buddha blessed them into the substances of the auspiciousness, meaning everything became auspicious.

Next are the *five medicines*. What are the five medicines? The first is *kandakari*. You have to get this from a Tibetan medical center. You can get it in Dharamsala or Nepal. You can go to the Tibetan medical center in Nepal where there are different Tibetan doctors, private ones

from the Tibetan government who make medicine, so you can get it from there. Get it before you go back to Singapore, it's the best place.

The second one is *le ti*. The text says these first two were offered to the Buddha by a snow lion. The third one is *shu thag kar po* and then there's the claw of a water lion, you know, a vajra claw. This was offered to the Buddha by the goddess of the forest and the Buddha blessed it, and the same with the snow lion. The fifth is *wän log* which was offered to the Buddha by Indra. It's a medicinal plant and is also for wisdom. The substance goes into wisdom pills. You can get it in the Solu Khumbu mountains. If you dig it up, what you find in the ground resembles a hand with five fingers and it's sticky, like glue. You can use it like glue to stick paper and things. I don't know how the plant looks, but [the root] looks like a hand in the ground. That was offered by King Indra to Buddha and then Buddha blessed it into the auspicious substances. So, these are the five medicines.

Now, the five *scented smells*. The first is *kabush* or camphor, which is square and looks like sugar but it's not sugar. It's camphor, offered by Ochajuma, the Goddess Keeping the Light, to the Buddha, who blessed it as a substance of auspiciousness. And then *sandalwood* was offered by Dongtse Lhamo, the Goddess of Taking Care, to the Buddha who blessed it as a substance of auspiciousness.

The next is *saffron*, which was offered by the Princess of Scented Smell to the Buddha who blessed it as a substance of auspiciousness. Then, the Goddess of the Golden Pinnacle offered the Buddha *akaru*, incense wood, which grows in south India and is blessed by the Buddha. Finally, there is *zadi* [nutmeg] which is kind of red in color. It was offered by a cannibal to the Buddha who blessed it as a substance of auspiciousness. I don't know what they call it in English. You'll have to check it in a dictionary. Do you have a dictionary in your computer? Maybe you can find *zadi* in the computer's dictionary.

So now the *five essences*. The first one is *liti* or *sindhura* powder. You can get it from Dharamsala or you can go down to the Vajrayogini or Heruka holy place, Kangra. You can get a lot of it in a shop there. It's *liti* but I don't know what it's called in English. [Student: vermillion.] Is that always red? Because with *sindhura*, there's red but there's also orange. Anyway, *liti* is the essence of earth. I think it might be *sindhura*. Sometimes *sindhura* comes like the color of clay, not all the time. This one was offered by Brahma Namyang to Buddha who blessed it.

The second one is salt or *gyatsa*, which is the essence of water. This was offered by the naga king Gyatso, the naga King of the Ocean. I think *gyatsa* means Indian salt. I think it must be much stronger than normal salt. There is *gyatsa* and also *lentsa*, the two, and I think the idea might be something much stronger than normal salt, which is *lentsa*. That was offered by the naga King of the Ocean to the Buddha, who blessed it as a substance of auspiciousness.

Next is the essence of flowers offered by the business leader, Khagon, to the Buddha. What is that? It's *honey*. Then there is the essence of the plants. I'm not sure what this is but it could be butter or milk. It was offered to the Buddha by the girl called Lagkyinga. My guess may be milk, and the essence of milk is butter. It was blessed by the Buddha as a substance of auspiciousness. The essence of fruit was offered by the monkey king Hanuman, the Hindu god. What is that? It's *brown sugar*. You can get that in any shop in Nepal.

[Rinpoche checks in a dictionary with Ven. Sangpo]

Here it says *zadi* is a medicine with a strong taste, and after it's melted in the mouth it generates heat within you. It allows you to digest fruit and eliminates *nying lung*, heart wind disease. That's quite useful for people who have that type of lung, *nying lung*. Nutmeg is for this heart disease. It's very good to know. Write that down in big letters!

Zadi also means a type of a jewel that has the power to make the consciousness be received in the womb, to ensure pregnancy and also to protect the child from spirit harm.

Now the *five grains*. What are they? *Ne* is barley, and there is wheat, beans, mustard seeds and the last one is *mu ga*. I'm not sure what *mu ga* is called in English.

So, these twenty-five substances all go inside when you bless the vase for initiations or pujas. They also go inside a wealth vase. I mean, this is besides *sur*. This has great benefit. I also mentioned tormas. If you can put them in the torma, offering to the protectors or deities, the torma externally becomes very powerful. So for retreat; torma for retreat.

What are the benefits of offering these? In a tantra text called Kiria Pungzang it says in order to eliminate the eons of sicknesses you put the five medicinal substances in the vase; in order to be able to live in pure morality you put the five scented smells in the vase. In order for your wishes to be fulfilled and to eliminate eons of weapons you put the five jewels in the vase. To become the essence of all, to become the heart of all and fulfill the needs and wishes of others you put the five essences in the vase. It is also said by Khedrub Je, one of Lama Tsongkhapa's two heart disciples, the one on the left side with the wide-open eyes, that if you put the five medicinal substances in the vase and so forth, then it reduces sickness. There was also a very high lama in Amdo, who founded a large monastery, Labrang Tashi Kyil, who said that the five medicinal substances not only heal sicknesses, but you also generate bliss and happiness.

The five scented smells cause you to achieve pure morality so you don't get reborn in the lower realms. The five jewels cause you to receive whatever you desire—everything—and pacify wars, disharmony and fighting. The five grains cause wealth and enjoyment to increase and pacify famine and so forth. Then, the five essences cause the potential for the essence of samsara and nirvana to increase, not only the essence of samsara but also the essence of having gone beyond samsara, which means the realizations of liberation from samsara and its causes, and also enlightenment.

So, these twenty-five substances have these benefits. They also fulfill the wishes, desires and hopes of other sentient beings. Each five has these benefits. This has been fully explained in tantra.

So, about *mu ga*, one of the five grains. We didn't find it in these dictionaries. Maybe I can check here, in the nyung nä text. Let me check what it says. There, it is rice, I think.

And here, if you can't get coral then you can also use conch-shell, so there's a choice: coral or shell. I guess you could put both.

In the teachings it says *mu ga* but we couldn't find what *mu ga* is from the dictionary. *Mu ga* not *mu ka*. If you say *mu ka* that means other people harm you by talking to you. In the nyung nä text it says rice, but another text says *mu ka*, so I'm not sure what it is. I guess you can put rice.

You can ask a doctor at the medical center about the "claws of the water lion." That's what one text says, where it talks about what to put into the vase and the torma, but in the nyung nä text it says bubbles of the ocean. I don't know whether it's a sentient being or not.

In America there is a very famous ocean near Shiné Land [Land of Calm Abiding Retreat Center]. What it's called?

Student: Great Ocean Road.

Rinpoche: Great Ocean mood? Before you go to Shiné Land you drive alongside the ocean. It's a very famous spot that people go to see. Where the ocean is I have seen lots of huge bubbles, not hot springs, but huge bubbles at the side of the ocean. That's the first time I have seen this, though whether it's sentient beings or not, I'm not sure. Anyway, the nyung nä text says, "bubbles of the ocean." You could ask them what that means. If you get this and keep it for many days, maybe it becomes harder and harder.

There are some differences between the texts, so whatever you can find you can use. So, they are the twenty-five substances explained in the nyung nä text that you put in the vase. For a nyung nä you need the vase. Or you can put them into the torma. That's about it.

MANTRAS AND PRAYERS FOR *SUR* PRACTICE

I've explained the benefits, so I guess that's it now. The first time you do it, you put these twenty-five substances in the tsampa that has been already mixed, then every time after that you add a little bit.

Having made the substances of the *sur*, you then sprinkle the water. What you can do is, if you have received a Chenrezig great initiation, visualize yourself as Four-arm Chenrezig, after you have purified with the wisdom understanding emptiness.

When you sprinkle the water, recite OM VAJRA AMRITA KUNDALI HANA HANA HUM PHAT, or you can recite the Most Secret Hayagriva mantra or the Secret Hayagriva mantra, which is OM PADMANTAKRIT HUM PHAT. Then you sprinkle the water. Keep the water in a bottle with a lid so insects can't get inside. Then, using a plant or something, sprinkle water and say OM PADMANTAKRIT HUM PHAT. As I said, if you have received a great Chenrezig initiation visualize yourself as Chenrezig. Otherwise, if you haven't received a great Chenrezig initiation, you can't do that. From your heart as Chenrezig comes the wrathful deity, Padmantakrita, Hayagriva. Either one or many come out, dispelling the interferers who are abiding in the *sur* to beyond the oceans. Those who interfere with doing the *sur* never come back. You still sprinkle the water and maybe a drop of water becomes Hayagriva and dispels the interferers.

Then do the refuge prayer and generate the bodhicitta motivation by thinking of its meaning. The first two lines—"I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sublime Assembly"

(meaning the Sangha) “until enlightenment is achieved.” The first part is the causal refuge and the second part —“Until enlightenment is achieved” is the resultant refuge. So, you achieve Dharma, your mind becomes Dharma and then you become the Sangha. By completing the Dharma, you cease all the defilements and complete all the realizations and then you become a buddha. That’s the resultant refuge. Then you’re able to do perfect work for sentient beings.

After that, you generate bodhicitta. Think, “The purpose of my life is to benefit other sentient beings, from whom I have received all my numberless past, present and future happinesses—all the happiness. Those sentient beings have been suffering from beginningless rebirths. I must liberate them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment by myself alone, therefore I must achieve enlightenment, and therefore I am going to practice *sur*.”

If you’re going to do *sur* to heal some people who are sick include that here, saying, “May such-and-such a person (or people) who are sick, as well as all others who are sick in the world, be helped by this *sur* practice; may it become a puja for them.” Mention the people you know and then all the rest.

If you are doing it for the center then think that you are going to do *sur* for the success of this center and the center’s students, as well as for the success of all the rest of the FPMT projects. There are many Dharma activities we have to do to benefit sentient beings, many very important things to accomplish for sentient beings, so you can think of that when you do *sur*. Besides all the FPMT centers, first think of all the things that you have to do yourself, and next include the Maitreya Project and all the projects of the FPMT—for them to succeed immediately.

Then, do refuge and bodhicitta three times.

Having visualized yourself as Chenrezig, light comes from the syllable HRIH at your heart, invoking the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, all the guests of the object of compassion—the text says “for whom I have karmic debts.” This is an important word in Tibetan, *leng cha*, meaning “for whom I have karmic debts.” For example, in the house suddenly many, many ants come, eating your food and all your things. Why? Why are they there when you live many stories up, in a high-rise building? Still, the ants come up there and fill the kitchen, eating bread, fruit and honey, whatever, because you had karmic debts you owe them from the past. In the past you received something from them, so you owe them karmic debts. That’s why they are there eating your food.

It’s the same if you have a farm and rabbits or whatever animals are eating your crops. Why doesn’t this happen to somebody else’s field? Why is it only yours? It’s because you have karmic debts in the past, you owe them. You received something from them and so you have karmic debts to them. That’s why they’re there; that’s why they’re eating your crops. This is an example. So, you visualize every single guest, every object of compassion, that you owe karmic debts to, you invoke them and invite them to sit on the seat they desire.

Then recite OM VAJRA AMRITA KUNDALI HANA HANA HUM PHAT. Actually, this is the mantra to dispel interferers. It’s mentioned here for the *sur* and maybe not the

Hayagriva mantra. There's a wrathful deity called Amrita, which is in the mantra OM VAJRA AMRITA KUNDALI HANA HANA HUM PHAT.

Then with the *srr*, you meditate that the *srr* is purified in emptiness, and recite OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HUM. This is a very important subject.

SVABHAVA is “nature.” Nature, not from the point of view of ignorance, not that one. Not from the point of view of ignorance, thinking everything is truly existent—thinking the I is real, the action is real, form, sound, smell, taste, attachment, everything is real; hell is real, enlightenment is real, samsara is real, liberation is real, everything is real in the sense of existing from its own side, not merely labeled by the mind. That is what ignorance thinks is reality, what ignorance holds to be the truth, reality. Here, it's not talking about that nature.

Here, this nature is the nature of the phenomena, the nature of the I, which is emptiness; the nature of the action, which is emptiness; the nature of the object, which is emptiness; the nature of hell is emptiness; the nature of enlightenment is emptiness—the nature of everything is emptiness. Emptiness. That's not what ignorance thinks is nature. What ignorance thinks is nature is totally false. This nature, SVABHAVA—the nature of the I, action, everything—is emptiness. This is the wisdom seeing the nature of all phenomena, the wisdom realizing emptiness. So SVABHAVA is nature.

SHUDDHA means “pure.” This is one way to understand the I. There are two types of emptiness: the emptiness or the selflessness of the person and the emptiness or selflessness of phenomena. Here it shows the selflessness of the person.

SVABHAVA SHUDDHA shows that the nature of the I is empty. SVABHAVA is nature and SHUDDHA is *tak pa*, meaning “pure.” So, the nature of the I is totally empty; it does not exist from its own side.

SARVA DHARMA means “all phenomena” including the aggregates. Here, it shows the selflessness of phenomena, particularly the aggregates on which the I is labeled.

The second one, SVABHAVA SHUDDHO, means all the phenomena are pure in nature. So, the nature of the aggregates on which the I is labeled is emptiness. SVABHAVA means “nature” and SHUDDHO means “pure.” Here, the nature of the aggregates is empty, pure. Pure means empty. The nature of the aggregates is emptiness.

SARVA DHARMA means all the phenomena, so this contains the selflessness of the aggregates. SHUDDHO means pure because it is unstained by true existence, it is empty of true existence. You can think the nature of every single phenomena is pure because unstained by true existence,

There's a highest tantra way to think of SHUDDHO HAM but although some of you haven't received a highest tantra initiation, it might be OK to mention with the lower tantras, that this is your wisdom seeing emptiness, non-dual with emptiness. That's how you need to meditate. The highest tantra way to meditate is quite secret, so I can't mention it now. In highest tantra the way to meditate on this is your wisdom seeing the emptiness of the self

and the emptiness of the aggregates and all the phenomena are non-dual with emptiness. While you are meditating on that you just label the merely-imputed I, HAM.

There is another meaning of OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM.

SVABHAVA SHUDDHA means the emptiness of the mind that perceives the object. The mind which perceives the object is empty.

SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO means the nature of all the objects of mind is empty. That's one way of meditating on the meaning of this.

By realizing emptiness, with the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, you cease the delusions, the defilements—the gross defilements and even the subtle defilements. Then what happens?

OM is made of three sounds, AH, U and MA. OM means you purify your ordinary body, speech and mind, and they become Chenrezig's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech and vajra holy mind. This is what you're going to achieve in the future.

Then there is TONG PA NYI DU GYUR. With the *sur*, how does the *sur* appear to you? Merely labeled or not merely labeled by the mind? Of course, merely labeled by the mind is only for a buddha. We sentient beings don't have the appearance of being merely labeled by the mind. We only have the appearance of *not* being merely labeled by mind; we only have that hallucination, that appearance. So, when you look at the *sur*, how does it appear to you? The *sur* appears to you not merely labeled by mind, as a real *sur* existing from its own side. That is totally false; that is the object to be refuted. That becomes totally non-existent, totally empty right there.

While it's empty, BHRUM appears. You can think that your wisdom seeing emptiness appears as BHRUM. This BHRUM becomes a very extensive, very expansive jeweled container. In this there's OM AH HUM, which melts into light, becoming the perfect smell, that has the five desirable objects. Then, the entire earth and space becomes completely filled with the *sur*. The perfect smell that has the five desirable qualities totally fills the whole of the earth and space. Then you say OM AH HUM three times and then NAMA SARVA TATHAGATA AVALOKITE OM SAMBHARA SAMBHARA HUM seven times.

This mantra is unbelievable. By chanting this mantra the smell-eaters get skies of enjoyment, skies of smell enjoyment, this perfect smell of the five desire enjoyments. The mantra has unbelievable power, so it's very precious. The Buddha is so kind, so compassionate to us, creating this mantra that makes it very easy for sentient beings to fulfill their wishes, to get skies of enjoyment by this mantra.

This same mantra is also used when you make water or food charity to the pretas. This is the most amazing mantra. I've forgotten its name.

Then, there is the tormas offering for the smell-eaters, with OM GÄNDE KAME GUNA PUJA IDAM KHA KHA KHAHI KHAHI. You do this seven times.

I guess this is lower tantra rather than highest tantra, so there is OM ARGHAM with the nyung nä mudra, keeping the thumbs down like this. Then with PADYAM, cleaning the feet so you place each finger like this. And PUSHPE, sprinkling flowers, is like this. With DHUPE, the fingers meet each other like this. [Rinpoche explains the mudras for ALOKE, GANDHE, NAIVEDYA and SHAPTA.] But the highest tantra is ARGHAM, PUSHPE, DHUPE, ALOKE, GANDHE, NAIVEDYA. With these offerings—drinking water, water for cleaning the feet, flowers, incense, light, scented water, food and music—you can think the whole sky is filled with all those offerings. The mudras are the same as with the nyung nä and any of the lower tantras mudras.

Next, prostration while reciting the four tathagatas' names, with your hands like this. Does it say that here? You must write this down. When you recite the buddhas' names, you must do this. Can you read the names of the four buddhas here?

I prostrate to the Tathagata Many Jewels
I prostrate to the Tathagata Holy Beautiful Form.
I prostrate to the Tathagata Very Gentle Body.
I prostrate to the Tathagata Victorious One, Free of All Fears.

This is very, very important. You have to actually visualize who you are prostrating to: Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the present Buddhadharma; Chenrezig, the embodiment of all the buddhas' compassion; Manjushri, the embodiment of all the buddhas' wisdom; and Vajrapani, the embodiment of all the buddhas' power. You are prostrating to these four. You could do it like this; first to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, next to Chenrezig, then to Manjushri and next to Vajrapani.

DE ZHIN SHEG PA RIN CHEN MANG LA CHAG TSHÄL LO. What benefits come from reciting this? You should think that the benefit is that it purifies all the six types of sentient beings—the hell beings, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the human beings, the gods and demigods. They are purified of all their miserliness and so forth; they are purified of all their bad karma due to miserliness and so forth. It pacifies all their suffering of poverty. This means all the six realms and especially the smell-eaters, the intermediate state beings. Then, they are all fully satisfied by the enjoyments. After you say, “pacified all the sufferings of poverty,” you say, “they are all fully satisfied by the enjoyment of the qualities of desire.” You think that, and that's what happens.

As you are reciting DE ZHIN SHEG PA ZUG DZÄ DAM PA LA CHAG TSHÄL LO, during this time you have to put your hands in the prostration mudra. Then, it pacifies all the sentient beings—their ugly bodies and all their sufferings—and they all receive a perfect good body, adorned with the thirty-two holy signs and eighty exemplifications.

The next one is DE ZHIN SHEG PA KU JAM LÄ LA CHAG TSHÄL LO. What benefit do they get by reciting that? What happens is that all the sentient beings' sicknesses of the body are completely healed, they receive the supreme taste and all their obscurations are purified. The six realms' sentient beings and the smell-eaters all achieve bodhicitta.

Reciting DE ZHIN SHEG PA GYÄL WA THUG JIG PA THAM CHÄ DANG DRÄL WA LA CHAG TSHÄL LO eliminates three things for all the sentient beings. What are

those three things? All the sentient beings that are controlled by others, for example, even the pretas, are able to find any spit that somebody has done. If a good monk spits and chants the mantra, the pretas can find the spit. Otherwise, if you don't chant the mantra they can't find the spit. Because they can't find even a drop of water or even the mark of water on the ground for hundreds of thousands of years, they suffer most unbelievable hunger and thirst. What human beings suffer is nothing; what the pretas suffer is most unbelievable. They can't find a drop of water or even the mark of water on the ground for hundreds of thousands of years.

There is a story of a monk who put spit on the ground and then chanted the mantra so the pretas could see it. This mantra has come from the Buddha so by chanting it they can see the spit. But then, even though they can see it, it's like a football match where everybody goes like this. Can you imagine? There are thousands, millions of pretas looking for food, unable to find even a spoonful in hundreds of thousands of years. So when somebody chants the mantra and they can see it, still they have to get it.

Animals are also like that. For example, if you throw some food in the ocean, in the water, whichever animal is the most powerful will get the food. Therefore, animals are controlled by others. This is also the same in the human world—whoever is most powerful gets what they want. The weak are controlled by the more powerful ones.

The other benefits of reciting the mantra are that all fears and sufferings are pacified. Being controlled by others and having all the fears and all the sufferings—these things are pacified; these things are purified.

I'll tell you a story about this. It's incredible. The first time I went to New Mexico, we hadn't yet reached the farmland where I was supposed to do a retreat, and the lady who was driving the car was filling it with petrol. Then a rabbit crossed the road from one side to the other and then a dog crossed the road, following the rabbit. I didn't know what to do because I thought the dog was going to eat the rabbit. Then I remembered this mantra. I didn't know what to do, but I remembered this last buddha's name and I chanted it a few times and then the dog returned looking very disappointed. He didn't seem to have enjoyed himself at all!

Once, at Geshe Sopha's center in Madison, Wisconsin, there was an ant that had captured a fly. You can't really rescue it with your finger, but I said, if it is true that reciting the name of this buddha has this benefit, then it should happen. So, I chanted the name and the ant suddenly let go of the fly it was holding. I didn't touch the ant, but it suddenly let the fly go. I chanted the name thinking if it was true it should happen, and the ant suddenly let the fly go. Amazing. This wasn't the whole mantra, just the name of the fourth buddha.

The same sort of thing also happened at the Aptos house. I think it's hard to say; maybe it has to do with the karma of the insect. It happened with that dog and then twice with insects, so I think maybe it was through the karma of those animals, I'm not sure. When you can't help with your hands, when there is fighting or something, with one being controlling another but you can't really help, then you can chant this buddha's name, doing a mala or something really strongly, with very strong devotion, with very strong refuge, and it might help. You should try.

As far as the explanation of the commentary, that's the main thing and the rest is easy to understand; it's just the prayer. After the four buddhas' names you can read in English.

[A student reads the *Extensive Offering Verses* in English, with Rinpoche offering suggestions and corrections occasionally.]

It says here, *kon chog sum*, the Three Rare Sublime Ones. That means the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Of course, you can understand it as the Three Jewels, but the very precise translation of the Tibetan is Three Rare Sublime Ones. There's nothing about jewels; these are the three rare sublime ones. *Kon* is rare and *sum* is sublime. So, if you are going to translate it word by word like that, that is how you should do it.

There are not many sentient beings who take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; they are the smallest number, whereas those who don't take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are plentiful. There are numberless taking refuge in unqualified objects but those taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are very few. Such beings are extremely rare to find.

"Sublime" means sublime from the ordinary. So, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are sublime from the ordinary beings. Among all the founders of the many religions the Buddha is sublime. The Buddha is the highest among all the founders. And the same with the Sangha. By living in the 253 vows for monks and 364 vows for nuns, they are sublime. They are sublime compared to the followers of Hinduism and many other religions, who have fewer vows. Sangha are sublime through having many qualities.

Student: "To the entirety of regional deities and landlords"

Rinpoche: To the assemblies of country devas, not deities. If you say "deity" there, they will become those who have achieved enlightenment, whereas with "country devas" it's not necessary.

Student: "... Especially, to all the intermediate state beings of those who were / Killed or committed suicide and have died between yesterday and today."]

Rinpoche: No, no, "... who have left the previous body and have yet to find the next body"

Student: "... these intermediate stage beings who having abandoned the previous life form and not yet having found the next life form"

Rinpoche: Abandoned may not be the correct translation. "Those who have left the previous body and have not yet found the later body."

Student: "After having satisfied the guests with the rain of wish-fulfilling offerings, may all my obstacles be pacified. May I have a happy long life without sickness and" From here we personalize it. For me, it's "May I always be blessed with extensive academic success." That's for myself.

Rinpoche: I know, you can recite what is said there, then you can add your own thing.

Another student: Mine is, “May my financial material wealth increase so that I can benefit all sentient beings.”

Rinpoche: That’s what it says here, “A long life with no sicknesses and an increase in wealth.” After “May all my obstacles be pacified,” then “increased long life, no sicknesses and wealth.” That’s how it should be said. Then you can say whatever you want. For example, if you are doing it for the center and all the students there or if you’re doing it for the whole organization, it’s up to you how you say it, for yourself and for the whole organization. You can expand from here.

[Student continues reading until, “Please accomplish as I sincerely wish all my desired goals.”]

Rinpoche: No, “Please accomplish *exactly* according to my wishes.” This is related to yourself and however many others you want to include. You can elaborate.

[Student continues reading until, “At the time of my death, may I be free from pain and suffering and upon taking rebirth”]

Rinpoche: “Also myself, when the time of death happens”

Student: But Rinpoche, here it says “*my* death.” “At the time of *my* death.”

Rinpoche: The previous one is talking about what others do, the happiness and this and this. Here, you are talking about “I myself also.” It should be “I myself also.” This is how it is in Tibetan. Before, you were talking about intermediate state beings being free from suffering and so forth, remembering the guru’s instructions to be born in a pure land and for karmic debts to be purified and to have happiness; all the sentient beings, all the migratory beings and then the country devas and landlords, to always help them without distraction. So then, in Tibetan, “I myself also,” because before you were talking about others, that’s why it’s “I myself also.”

[Student continues until, “Free from pain and suffering.”]

Rinpoche: Free from what?

Student: Pain and suffering.

Rinpoche: The translation is not quite right. At the time of death, the time before you die, what you go through is unbelievable, kind of like torture, in a way.

Student: Torment?

Rinpoche: Torment’s a better word. Because of the karmic appearance, before you get reborn in the lower realms, there are some kinds of signs, the very terrifying karmic appearances. For example, although you are not yet born in the lower realm it’s almost like that. There are unbelievably terrifying scenes.

For example, in Dharamsala, one of my teachers, Gen Jampa Wangdu, the one who had great success and attained realizations, told me that he was living in this one cave and because he had achieved shamatha, he could see somebody who was suffering so much. Not many of you have been to Dharamsala, right?

There's an old palace where His Holiness Dalai Lama stayed before, then you go up to Tushita. There was a Tibetan family down by the road and there was a businessman who was dying. In the room where he was, not one single goat could enter, but he was unbelievably terrified, screaming, saying he saw goats coming and attacking him. But neither his family nor anybody else could see any goats inside. This was his sign that he was going to be born in the lower realms, so he experienced that.

The meditator, Gen Jampa Wangdu, went inside the room and talked to the man who was screaming. Then he asked his family or friends, "Did he kill any animals in Tibet when he was young?" It seems he had killed many sheep when he was young in Tibet. I guess this was how he had lived his life, killing many, many sheep, and so as he was dying, there were signs, these karmic appearances, to be reborn in lower realms. He had not yet been reborn in the lower realms but it was happening in the signs, with so many goats attacking him, but neither his family nor anybody else could see even a single goat there. When they die, many people have signs like that, showing they will be reborn in the lower realms.

Before some great practitioners die they have some heavy experience but at the actual time of death they get better. For one or two days they get better, then at the actual time of death, it is very good; they go to a pure land. But beforehand, they have to experience some very heavy karma from a past life in that life. Somebody who is very heavily sick before death can have a positive death. There's a negative result and then a positive result. The positive result is that there's something very heavy from their past life that they have to experience. Then at the time of death—for two days, three days or one day—they are completely OK. This is a very good sign that they will go to a pure land.

Dying in meditation is very, very good. You experience some heavy karma from your past life; you experience it and then it's finished. That's a good sign. If that's not experienced, then you can't go to pure land. I heard it happened like that with some lamas.

The other one is you experience all these very heavy signs, and while you are experiencing this, you die. Then you will be reborn in the lower realms. For example, there was a very well-known man in Kathmandu, a great benefactor of Serkong Dorje Chang's monastery in Swayambhunath. He was a great benefactor of the monastery, but he became famous and wealthy by selling statues. Every year he invited the monks to do one hundred thousand Twenty-one Tara praises at his house.

When he was dying he was unable to drink, he found it difficult to drink even a drop of water in the hospital. Then when he returned home and had to go upstairs, it took an hour to climb each step, his body was so heavy. That's what I heard. When he got to his bed he saw ants coming through the windows and doors, attacking him, but his family could not see one ant in the room. That was his karma. He was experiencing karma, the signs that he was going to be born in the lower realms. It was unbelievably difficult.

So anyway, the best term is “torment and suffering,” to be free from torment and suffering.

[Student continues the prayer]

Here, you recite this mantra. There are two mantras. This one is of the bodhisattva eliminating obscurations. What mantra do you have there? Do you have one mantra there?

So, now here, listen. This is very important. If you recite this mantra, the mantra of the bodhisattva eliminating obscurations, then when you are going to die, you won’t experience torture, you’re won’t experience torment. That’s the benefit. The mantra’s not there in the text but I added it. When you die you won’t experience all these karmic torments, this incredible, unbelievable fear. So it’s very good to recite this mantra a few times, seven times, each day. It might come in your heart! There’s another mantra. There are two.

OM SARVA NIVARANA VISKAMBINI HUM HUM PHAT

The second HUM is longer.

Student: Rinpoche, is this called the mantra of the bodhisattva Sarva-nivarana-viskambini eliminating all defilements?

Rinpoche: Eliminating defilements. Yeah, obscurations.

You just recite it a few times, seven times or something like that. If you do that, then the heavy karmic torture and karmic torments at the time of death won’t happen. You’ll have a very happy death, a very peaceful, good one. Once you get into the habit of reciting the mantra, it’s good.

After that, you teach Dharma to the smell-eaters and to other sentient beings but particularly to the smell-eaters. First, you make food and all this to make them happy and satisfied, and then you teach Dharma to them. You have to say, “teaching Dharma to them.” “Teaching to Dharma to sentient beings, particularly the smell-eaters.” You’d better write that down.

Before the multiplying mantras, there’s this. Before you give them the teaching, recite this.

*A star, a defective vision, a butter lamp,
An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble,
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud—
See conditioned things as such!*

That’s the Dharma teaching to give the smell-eaters, the sentient beings and the smell-eaters. You have to write down this Dharma teaching for sentient beings and especially the smell-eaters.

This is also very good to recite. “By planting hot seeds like chili, what grows, the result, is something hot; by planting a sweet seed, what grows, the result, is a sweet fruit. The result of benefiting others is happiness; the result of harming others is suffering. It means if you benefit others, you receive the result of happiness. If you harm others, you receive the result of suffering. Look at your own body as an example and don’t harm others.”

Normally, after this I add this one. “By having generated bodhicitta, letting go of the I and cherishing other sentient beings, I shall do only extensive benefit for sentient beings.”

After that it says, and this should be in small letters, “By having explained the Dharma and satisfying them with miscellaneous charity, I have liberated their mind, their mental continuum, and all the smell-eaters and whoever came can now return to their own place.”

Then, do the dedication like this. “Due to the power of my attitude, the power of charity of the tathagatas and the power of the sphere of existence, by making offerings to the arya beings may this benefit the sentient beings. 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 and wishes succeed and be actualized immediately.”

That’s after having finished reciting the Medicine Buddha mantra, the last part, the prayers for the success of what you have done. The Medicine Buddha is the second buddha, whose particular function is to actualize all our prayers.

“Due to the power of my attitude and due to the power of charity of the tathagatas and the power of the sphere of existence, making offerings to the arya beings and benefiting sentient beings, may all I have thought, all that is worthwhile, be received without any obstacle, without any resistance.”

Now, another dedication. “Due to these merits may I achieve the state of omniscience and subdue the enemy of mistakes.” That means the delusions. “May I liberate transmigratory beings from the oceans of samsara.” How do you say this? The waves? It’s not the ocean going very slowly, very peacefully, more like this—the turbulent waves of old age, sickness and death.

OK? That’s one thing. The next one is: “May there be happiness and goodness in the daytime and happiness and goodness at night. Even at noon may there be happiness and goodness.”

You can say, “May there be the auspiciousness of the Three Rare Sublime Ones all day, day and night forever, for others to be happy and good.”

These prayers are very commonly recited dedications.

ORAL TRANSMISSION OF KSITIGARBHA PRACTICE

Now I’m going to do the *lung* of Ksitigarbha, the lung of CHHIM BHO CHHIM BHO. Where’s the Ksitigarbha book?

Buddha Ksitigarbha is another unbelievably powerful practice for success, I think especially when there’s an earthquake but also when there is any danger of fire, water, earth or wind. If there are any of those dangers, it’s very good to recite this Buddha Ksitigarbha mantra. It’s extremely powerful. You make offerings to Buddha Ksitigarbha and then make the prayer. It’s one hundred million times more powerful for success than praying to other bodhisattvas. If you read the Ksitigarbha sutra, it brings unimaginable benefit for sentient beings.

The long mantra is:

CHHIM BHO CHHIM BHO CHIM CHHIM BHO / AKASHA CHHIM BHO /
VAKARA CHHIM BHO / AMAVARA CHHIM BHO / VARA CHHIM BHO /
VACHIRA CHHIM BHO / AROGA CHHIM BHO / DHARMA CHHIM BHO /
SATEVA CHHIM BHO / SATENI HALA CHHIM BHO / VIVA ROKA SHAVA
CHHIM BHO / UPA SHAMA CHHIM BHO / NAYANA CHHIM BHO / PRAJNA
SAMA MONE RATNA CHHIM BHO / KSHANA CHHIM BHO / VISHEMA
VARIYA CHHIM BHO / SHASI TALA MAVA CHHIM BHO / VI AH DRASO TAMA
HELE / DAMA VE YAME VE / CHAKRASE / CHAKRA VASILE / KSHILE PHILE
KARAVA / VARA VARITE / HASERE PRARAVE / PARECHARA BHANADHANE
/ ARADANE / PHANARA / CHA CHA CHA CHA / HILE MILE AKHATA
THAGEKHE / THAGAKHI LO / THHARE THHARE MILE MADHE / NANTE
KULE MILE / ANG KU CHITABHE / ARAI GYIRE VARA GYIRE / KUTA
SHAMAMALE / TONGYE TONGYE / TONGULE / HURU HURU HURU / KULO
STO MILE / MERITO / MERITE / BHANADHATA / HARA KHAMA REMA /
HURU HURU

We'll stop there. Maybe you can chant one long mantra together.

[Students recite the mantra]

That's better than the reciting I did. Very good. I think you can make a tape of what you chanted. There is also a picture of the Tibetan-style Buddha Ksitigarbha holding a wish-fulfilling vase with wish-granting jewels, fulfilling the wishes of all sentient beings. You can get a picture and the tape, then you can give them to many people.

Student: We have actually already done it for the Malaysians.

Rinpoche: How many people?

Student: Five hundred. They are ready for twenty thousand people.

Rinpoche: So, you can make a picture, whichever you like, and the tape, and you can all chant together. It's very nice. Give it to many people.

DEDICATIONS

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized in my heart, in the hearts of all my family members and in the hearts of all the sentient beings without delay of even a second.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to the three times' merits collected by me, collected by all sentient beings, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts of all the leaders of the world, especially the leaders of mainland China and also the leaders of Nepal—especially, as you can see, there are so many problems in Nepal—and in all the countries that have so much suffering.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to the three times' merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized in the hearts all the different people who follow different religions, so that the world becomes filled with perfect peace and happiness. May everybody live their life only benefiting each other, with no harm, and may whatever they do become only the cause of enlightenment and the cause of happiness for all the sentient beings.

[Rinpoche chants]

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

Then the next one is: whatever sufferings sentient beings have, may it ripen upon me; whatever happiness I have, may it ripen on all the sentient beings.

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merit collected by others, may all the family members, students and all the benefactors, all the people who have offered service to this organization in the past, are offering service now, and who will offer service in the future, and those who rely upon me, whom I promised to pray for, whose names were given to me, in all the lifetimes may they never be separated from being guided by Lama Tsongkhapa, the Mahayana direct guru, and in all their lifetimes may they never be separated from the pure path admired by all the buddhas.

[Rinpoche chants]

Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three times' merits collected by others, all the sentient beings that exist but do not exist from their own side, that are totally empty, may the I who exists but does not exist from its own side, that is totally empty, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, that exists but does not exist from its own side, that is totally empty, lead all sentient beings, who exist but do not exist from their own side, who are totally empty, to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, that exists but does not exist from its own side, that is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty. May Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings spread in all directions and flourish forever in this world by being completely actualized in the hearts of all the students and all the supporters, whoever serves the organization, and all those who rely upon me—whom I promised to pray for, whose name is given to me—in all their hearts and in the hearts of everybody in this world.

[Rinpoche chants]

May all the merits increase a hundred thousand times.

[Chanting of multiplying mantras]

May all the prayers that you do succeed.

[Rinpoche chants]

OK. Thank you very much.

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TRANSCRIPTS, PRACTICES AND OTHER MATERIALS

See the LYWA and FPMT websites for transcripts of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other practices written or compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

VIDEO OF LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

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

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

LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

The Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive (LYWA) is the collected works of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, its spiritual director, who founded the Archive in 1996. The Lamas began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970 and since 1972 their teachings have been recorded and transcribed.

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

Archiving requires managing the collection of recordings of teachings and images of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and collecting recordings of Rinpoche's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. We organize transcription of the recordings and make transcripts available to the general public.

Dissemination involves making the Lamas' teachings and images freely available on our website and through various avenues including books for free distribution and sale, ebooks for a wide range of e-reading devices, lightly edited transcripts, multimedia presentations, on DVDs and in online video, through published articles in Mandala Magazine and other magazines, on our social media platforms and through our monthly Dharma e-letter.

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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, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 160 FPMT centers, projects and services in over forty countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general and the Tibetan Gelug tradition—founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsongkhapa—in particular.

The FPMT website www.fpmt.org offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition, details about the FPMT's educational programs, an online learning center, a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world, and a link to the FPMT Store.

The FPMT Online Learning Center makes FPMT education programs and materials more accessible to students worldwide. All of the 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. See more at onlinelearning.fpmt.org.

What to do with Dharma teachings

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like the one in your hand 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 or the names of your teachers 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 Zopa Rinpoche

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche was born in Thangme, Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thangme home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction*. At the age of ten, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found in *The Lawudo Lama* and on the LYWA and FPMT websites. In addition to many LYWA and FPMT books, Rinpoche's other published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems*, *The Door to Satisfaction*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Dear Lama Zopa*, *How to Be Happy*, *Wholesome Fear* and many transcripts and practice booklets.

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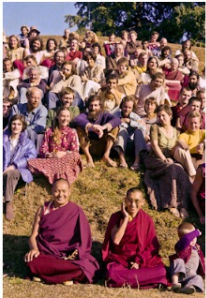
Monthly E-Letter 164: February 2017



Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive
The Archive of the FPMT

"Every day, our life experience, Buddhism actually talks about life."

Dear Friend of LYWA,



Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche in a group photo from the 8th Meditation Course at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, 1975.


Losar Tashi Delek everyone! Happy New Year to all our friends and supporters! May this be another year of countless meritorious activities we engage in together, spreading the precious teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche far and wide for the benefit of all.

Losar and Lama Yeshe

This year, *losar* (Tibetan New Year) is on February 27 and the holiday is traditionally associated with making a fresh start. At this time we rejoice over past accomplishments and make extensive offerings for the peace and prosperity of the coming year.

Losar is followed by *Monlam Chemo* (the Great Prayer Festival inaugurated by Lama Tsongkhapa), which runs for the first fifteen days of the new year. Lama Zopa Rinpoche has explained how important [these fifteen days](#) are for doing practice and making offerings, as during this period the merit we create is multiplied one hundred million times.

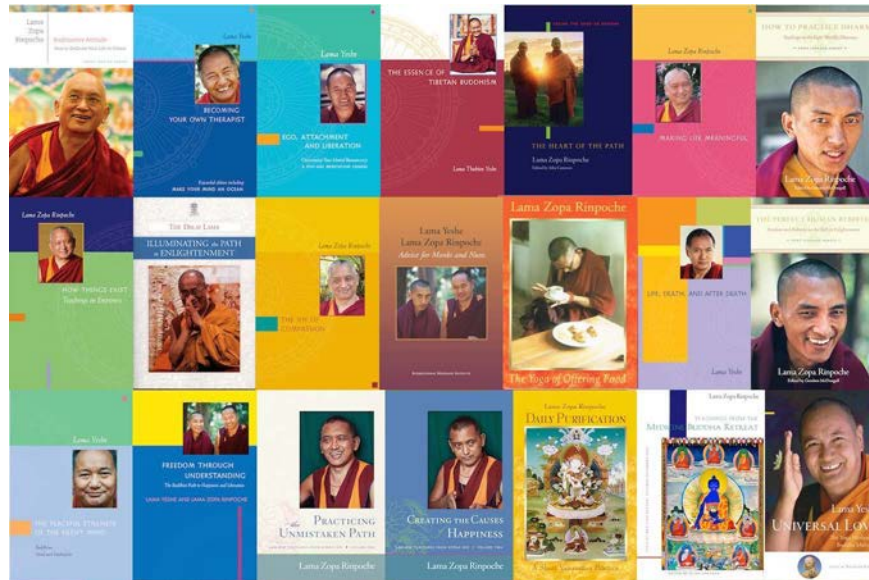
Losar is also an extremely special day for the FPMT family as it marks the passing of our supremely kind founder Lama Yeshe on losar, 1984. Rinpoche recommends that centers continue or start the tradition of telling stories about Lama Yeshe every losar to keep his memory alive, for example, by inviting older students who knew Lama to share their favorite stories, such as those being compiled for the forthcoming biography of Lama Yeshe, [Big Love](#).



Lama Yeshe, Lake Arrowhead, 1975. Photo: Carol Rayce-Wilder.

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