

The Bodhicaryavatara
Preliminary Teachings to the Kalachakra Initiation
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In an era where material development and advances in science and technology is so high, it is very obvious from the fact that we are having this teaching in an auditorium which is very modern, sophisticated. It seems very appropriate to hold this teaching in such a modern auditorium, which reflects the stage of development of the material world. To hold a teaching, which emphasizes essentially the importance of investigating, training, and enhancing the stage of development of spiritual and mental states within oneself, I think it is very appropriate to have this teaching in such an auditorium.

The Kalachakra Tantra is a practice of tantra belonging to the Highest Yoga class, Anuttarayoga which ideally speaking requires a certain amount of training in the preparatory practices and realizations on the part of the practitioners, not only the practitioners but also those who receive the empowerment or in fact just to sit in an empowerment ceremony. Ideally speaking that is the situation. In order to indicate this importance and also in order to give the message that the subsequent teaching which is the empowerment of Kalachakra, belongs to this Highest Yoga Tantra and someone who is sincerely and seriously interested in undertaking such a practice properly, that person requires these preparations on the part of themselves.

In order to indicate that message these preliminary teachings are being held. I thought it would be best if the preliminary teachings were based on Santideva's *Bodhicaryavatara*. Since we have only four days for the preliminary teachings, there is no way I can complete the commentary on the whole text so what I will do is extract appropriate verses from here and there and give the gist of the practices and practices which are outlined in this precious text.

As usual the teachings will be preceded by the recitation of certain prayers which includes taking refuge and making prostrations to the Three Jewels, reciting a sutra, reciting the *Heart Sutra* and followed by *Verses of Praise to Manjusri*. Finally will be a mandala offering to request the teaching from the teacher. There are different significance for making a mandala offering on the part disciples and also the part of the teacher. On the part of the disciple the mandala is being offered in order to request from the teacher the teaching you are to hear. Whereas on the part of the teacher, the teacher imagines in front of themselves all the masters of the lineage who are related to the transmission of the text and the lama requests from these Lineage Masters the permission to give the teaching to the disciples present.

It is useful when reciting the *Verses of Praise to Manjusri* to visualize in front of yourself an image of Manjusri.

Among the audience here are people who consider themselves practicing Buddhists and also people who do not consider themselves as Buddhists but have come to the teaching out of interest for Buddhist ideas and practices. Now those who consider themselves practicing Buddhists their attitude and motivation in listening and attending to the teaching should not be such that they are here merely to collect information or increase their knowledge of Buddhism. Rather the primary motivation or aim of attending this teaching should be to tame, discipline and train their mind. Transform an undisciplined state of mind into a disciplined, tamed and calm state of mind. This should be the primary motive of attending this teaching.

The reason being is that in Buddhist religion there is a belief in the fundamental goodness of all living beings. In other words we believe that all sentient beings possess within themselves an inherent nature technically known as the Buddha nature or the Tathagatagarbha. This is the seed that allows within all sentient beings the possibility to actualize within their mental continuum all the great qualities of Buddha's mind. It also allows the individual to overcome and remove the negative aspects of the mind such as afflictive emotions, negative thoughts, imprints and so on. By listening to this teaching one should undertake the practices in order to activate this potential, in order to activate the seed within oneself. Such should be the primary motive of those who consider themselves practicing Buddhists in attending this teaching.

Those who are not practicing Buddhists but are coming here because of interest in Buddhist ideas and practices; I would like to welcome you as a practicing Buddhist myself. I have always considered the crucial importance of a great harmony between the various different religions. In order to develop this harmony a key factor is to develop a genuine understanding of the values and the principal doctrines of that particular religion. I also believe that since all the various different religions are aimed at fulfilling the spiritual requirements and needs of people and since the mental dispositions of sentient beings are so diverse, the greater the religious diversity the better it is for people as it can serve the wider need of sentient beings. Therefore I have always held this belief and out of this belief I respect the diversity we observe in the multitude of the world's religions.

Underlying the diversity of the world's religious traditions there is a common aim, which is to produce a good human being, a warm-hearted person. A human being who would lead his or her life according to spiritual values in order to enable that individual to lead their life in a happy, satisfied and contented manner. This I see as the underlying, common aim of all the various world religions. So those who have come here out of interest to learn something of Buddhist ideas and practices, I welcome you and am very happy to see you here.

For four days starting with today, the preliminary teachings to the actual Kalachakra empowerment will have the format of the teaching followed by a question and answer period.

First we will recite the Refuge formula, the verses for taking refuge and generating bodhicitta, the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. We will recite these verses together. The significance of this is that because of the teaching we are conducting here is a Buddhist teaching therefore taking refuge in the Three Jewels is necessary. Since the teaching belongs to the Mahayana tradition generation of bodhicitta or the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings is necessary. Let us recite these verses together (in Tibetan).

Ideally speaking tradition also requires that when giving such preliminary teachings, the teachings should first begin with narrating the Lineage Masters, starting with the Buddha through Santideva, who is the author of this text. Since we are short on time and since my memory sometimes fails on the historical aspects of the Lineage Gurus, we will keep it simple.

To give a general introduction to Buddhism first I would like to quote a verse from Nagarjuna in which Nagarjuna makes salutation to the Buddha. He does not reflect upon the great qualities of the Buddha's body, speech or mind but rather concentrates upon one paramount quality of the Buddha, his great accomplishment in having realized the essence of the Doctrine; dependent origination, emptiness and the Middle Way. Buddha realized that these three doctrines are essentially the same having perceived dependent origination in terms of emptiness and emptiness in terms of the Middle Way. Buddha propounded this doctrine to his followers. Nagarjuna saw this greatest accomplishment of the Buddha and made salutations to the Buddha from this perspective.

The meaning of the doctrine of dependent origination is vast and profound. In a sense one could say the doctrine of dependent origination states that all phenomena in general come about not uncaused, but rather as a consequence of relevant causes and conditions. Particularly those phenomena which have direct relevance by giving rise to our experience of pain or pleasure, our experience of unhappiness or happiness, come about as a result of their related causes and conditions. Therefore so long as we remain as sentient beings for whom the experience of pain and pleasure matters a lot.. ...causes and conditions, which give rise to these experiences and that, is what is in a sense stated in the doctrine of dependent origination.

This doctrine of dependent origination and the underlying principle of causation was taught by the Buddha in his first Turning of the Wheel known as the Sermon on the Four Noble Truths. In the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths the Buddha explains two sets of causal chains. One is a set of cause and effects related to our experience of undesirable consequences such as pain and unhappiness. These two are our experience of suffering and the origin or source of this suffering. The source of the suffering being the cause and the suffering itself being the consequence. This is the first causal chain.

At the same time the Buddha taught a second causal chain the implication of which is that although in our ordinary experience we often come across experiences which we normally associate with pleasure and happiness but these experiences are essentially in the nature of suffering and dissatisfaction. Whereas the true happiness which can remain as happiness, a genuine happiness, is a state which is freed from suffering. In other words the cessation of suffering is the true happiness and this is the result. The path or causes, which lead to it, is the cause. Therefore Buddha also taught a causal chain which is related to our own experience of happiness, something we all desire.

The implication of the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths is that if suffering is something we do not desire then we must work hard to remove the causes which give rise to it. If the state of happiness is something which we seek and desire then we must work to accumulate the causes and conditions that give rise to it. This is what is implied in the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths.

Since the basic Buddhist approach as explained earlier is to realize the causal mechanism which gives rise to our experiences of pain and pleasure, suffering and pleasure, belief in an independent self which is permanent, single and indivisible conflicts with the basic Buddhist doctrine of universal causation. Similarly belief in a creator, an independent being who is the original creator of the entire universe conflicts with the basic Buddhist doctrine of universal causation. Within Buddhist thought and practice since the fundamental doctrine is a belief in universal causation, that everything which exists does so as a result of causes and conditions and it is only as a result of causes and conditions that things come into being, therefore Buddhists do not believe in the existence of an eternal person or self nor does it believe in a creator.

In the second Turning of the Wheel one can see it as an exploration of the implications of the first public sermon where Buddha talked about the absence of an independently existing self or person. All phenomena are explained as arising as a consequence of causes and conditions. The doctrine of universal causation and its implications are explored by taking it to a more profound level. Reflecting on the fact that if everything and all events come into being as a result of causes and conditions then they depend on other factors for their existence. Anything, which has the nature of depending on other factors for its existence then it, is obvious that it lacks the status of independent existence. Phenomena's existence and identity come into being as a consequence of the interaction of many factors. Because of this phenomena lack an independent or inherent nature and because of this all phenomena do not exist inherently, in and of themselves or objectively in their

own right. What is being stated here is by using the understanding of dependent origination to arrive at a deeper awareness of the nature of phenomena, where all things and events are seen as lacking an inherent or objective existent nature.

The understanding of dependent origination is being used as a ground on which all phenomena are perceived as lacking an inherently existing nature. Dependent origination can be seen in many different ways. One way phenomena can be understood is as a causal dependency as all phenomena are dependent on other causes and conditions. Another level of dependence is that phenomena depend upon their parts. In order for something to be whole its very identity and existence depends upon its parts. One of the parts can be called dependent relationship and this is another level of dependence. Furthermore another level of dependence is the identity of phenomena as things or objects depends upon our conceptual thought, our concepts and language.

What all these ways of viewing dependent origination indicates is that phenomena are empty of an inherently existing nature. Phenomena are empty of an independent status therefore emptiness of inherent existence is spoken of. This is how one should look at the doctrine of emptiness. One should not have the notion when Buddhists talk of emptiness that one is talking of the non-existence of phenomena. Emptiness should not be misconceived as a total negation of the very existence of phenomena but rather emptiness should be understood in terms of the emptiness of inherent existence or independent status. If your understanding of emptiness is interpreted in this way then you will be able to understand the essential unity or sameness of the principles of emptiness and dependent origination. This is how one is said to have understood emptiness in terms of dependent origination and dependent origination in terms of emptiness.

Through this way one will also be able to be freed from the two extremes. By realizing that phenomena lack an independent status and lack an inherently existing nature, one avoids falling into the extreme of absolutism. By realizing that things do come into existence as a result of the aggregation of many causes and conditions, one avoids falling into the extreme of nihilism.

In the second Turning of the Wheel the essential doctrine was the philosophy of emptiness, understanding emptiness in terms of dependent origination in which all phenomena lack an inherently existing nature.

In the third Turning of the Wheel, particularly in the *Uttaratantra* or *Sublime Continuum* of Maitreya and also the *Tathagatagarbha Sutra* or *The Essence of Buddhahood Sutra*, Buddha explains the nature of our mind. In these sutras Buddha explains that the negative aspects of our minds, the afflictive emotions like desire, hatred, anger and so forth, are not innate aspects of our mind but rather are adventitious. They are adventitious in the sense that they arise in our mental continuum as the consequence of circumstantial conditions but they are not essential or basic to the mind.

The pristine clarity and the luminous awareness is an innate aspect of our mind. The negative aspects such as the afflictive emotions as they are not basic to the mind are separable, can be removed from the basic continuum of our mind. This point has been underlined in the sutras that are related to the third Turning of the Wheel.

Another point we need to bear in mind is that irrespective of what might be the ultimate position of the Buddha himself, because there exists among the followers or practitioners of Buddhism such a diverse range of dispositions and mental capacities, one finds among the Buddhist scriptures different types of sutras. Certain of these sutras are interpretable, can not be taken at face value but rather require further interpretation. Whereas there is another category of sutras, which are definitive, do not require further interpretation. Therefore it is crucial to bear in mind that even within the Buddhist sutras there exists diverse scriptures.

One fundamental aspect of the Buddhist approach especially in the Mahayana tradition is to be able to distinguish among Buddha's own original sutras which are literal or definitive and can be taken at their face value, whose literal meaning can be accepted without any objection and those which can not be taken at their face value, which require further interpretation. These sutras were often spoken for specific purposes, not to be taken literally.

In the important sutras, which are the sources for the philosophical doctrines of the Cittamatra School or the Mind-Only School of Buddhism, distinctions are made between the three natures of phenomena. Imputational aspects of phenomena are according to these sutras stated as lacking an inherently existing nature. Whereas dependently originated phenomena and the ultimate nature of phenomena are said to be absolute and are said to be inherently existent and possess some form of objective reality.

This distinction from a Madhyamika point of view is something untenable. If the Cittamatra doctrine is subjected to Madhyamika reasoning then it is obvious that one can not maintain such a distinction. Therefore sutras which make such distinctions can not be taken at their face value but must be interpreted. One should look at these sutras as specifically spoken to benefit beings who share the philosophical sentiment and whose mental dispositions are such that they are more attuned to the doctrines of the Cittamatra or Mind-Only School.

A similar approach should be used for many other doctrines, which are found in the Buddhist scriptures. For instance, take an example of a verse from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa* or *The Treasury of Knowledge* in the third chapter where he discusses the cosmology of Mount Meru as the center of the universe. He also mentions the size of the sun and the moon and also the distances between them and the earth. If we were to take them literally, they contradict the measurements made scientifically. The cosmological views expressed in the *Abhidharmakosa* are refuted by direct observation and therefore can not be taken literally. They must be interpreted. Such must be the Buddhist approach because any doctrine or concept which contradicts either direct, valid perception or which an established inferential knowledge or has internal inconsistencies then that doctrine or concept can not be accepted as valid literally.

Another example, in the *Abhidharmakosa*, Vasubandhu discusses various types of mental states at the last moment of death. According to Vasubandhu the mental state at the last moment of death can be virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral. Whereas in Asanga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* or *The Compendium of Knowledge* he explicitly states that the mental state at the last moment of death can never be neither virtuous nor non-virtuous but always be neutral. The literature of Highest Yoga Tantra states that not only can the mental state at the final moment of death can be virtuous but in fact can be transformed into an entity of the path.

If we look at these diverse views on a single issue the question arises, on what grounds do we determine which text should be taken as valid? Personally I feel that this is an issue in which one can not reason or directly verify which is the valid stance. I feel one must approach this in a different manner by looking at it from various angles. Highest Yoga Tantra literature is an extensive body of literature where the nature of the mind and the various techniques designed for training and cultivating the full potential of the mind is presented in such a refined and advanced manner that there is no comparison with other classes of scripture like the *Abhidharmakosa*. One can infer or surmise, since it is the Highest Yoga Tantra literature, which is seen as authoritative when dealing with the nature of the mind, that the position on the state of the mind at death of Highest Yoga Tantra is valid.

These different examples show the need to look at scriptures not literally and not to believe in a certain doctrine just because Buddha said so in a sutra. In short, Buddha's having stated something in a sutra is not sufficient grounds for accepting its validity literally.

Investigation is very important not only in Buddhist practice and thoughts in general but especially in the Mahayana tradition. There are many external instruments, which can be used to investigate the external world, but ultimately the decision is made by the human mind. Since it is the mind or consciousness which is the ultimately deciding factor it becomes very crucial first of all to understand the nature of mind itself. The decision needs to be taken by a state of mind, which is valid and unmistaken in relation to its object. Decisions and conclusions arrived at by a distorted consciousness can not be considered as valid. Therefore in Buddhist literature one finds extensive discussion of the mind and mental factors.

Unlike the mere investigation of the external world, in investigating the nature of the mind, the primary aim is to bring about some form of positive transformation or change within one's own state of mind. One transforms the undisciplined and untamed state of mind into a disciplined and tamed state of mind characterized by calmness and serenity. Therefore in Buddhist literature one finds extensive discussion of the nature of the mind and mental factors. One also finds the process through which an individual's state of mind moves from an initial state of misconception to a state of knowledge or valid awareness.

Except in the case of superficial illusions such as misperceiving a simple object, when it comes to more profound aspects of the perceived object, one can not instantly change from a state of misconception into a state of knowledge. The process is gradual. For instance initially one might start from a state of total misconception single-pointedly holding on to the opposite, contrary to what it is. As one then proceeds on their investigation then after seeing reasons contrary to the originally held belief, then one may change from a state of total misconception into wavering doubt.

From the state of wavering doubt by further investigation one goes to the next stage which is a presumption where one sees that the previous conviction is wrong and at the same time has yet to arrive to a state where they are totally convinced of the conclusion. As one proceeds further in the investigation one arrives at a state where one is totally convinced of the validity of the conclusion. This is the state of knowledge where for the first time one has inferentially understood the conclusion. This inferential knowledge is not direct. When further developed through constant familiarity and reflection then it is possible through meditation to arrive at a state of non-conceptual understanding, which is direct and intuitive.

This process reflects how from a state of total misconception one can through a gradual process through investigation, through analysis, arrive at a direct and non-conceptual understanding. Because of the complexity of the process and the different levels of mind, one finds in the Buddhist literature extensive discussion of what one might call Buddhist psychology.

It is important to bear in mind that the whole purpose of investigation is to seek the truth. Truth is not something that is mentally constructed. In Buddhism when investigation is being undertaken, it must be based on an understanding of certain laws of nature. For instance when investigating the nature of the mind, one must accept that the mind is in the realm of subjective experience based on the mere luminosity and knowing nature of the mind itself. The mind is non-obstructed and non-physical. On this basis one can proceed with the investigation of mind.

Similarly when anger arises in our mental continuum, we can investigate what kind of experience it generates or what kind of emotional state does it generate. Also when an intense state

of desire arises in our mind, what kind of state does it give rise to or what kind of experience do we undergo? These are not facts but emotional states.

In the material world when different atomic particles come together, a new emergent property different from the separate particles comes about from the aggregation of the atomic particles. The whole field of chemistry is based on this principle. Similarly in the mind, certain mental events individually may not have certain capacities but when combined may have quite different effects.

It is upon understanding these natural laws plus the laws of dependence and function that one can employ correctly and appropriately logic or reasoning. An altruistic state of mind conflicts with hatred therefore by cultivating within ourselves and reinforcing the power of altruism and love within our mental continuum, we automatically reduce the force and intensity of hatred and anger within our mind. This is possible because of a contrary relationship between love and hate which naturally occurs.

All these indicate that when discussing investigation we need to base it on these various aspects of nature and then apply the reasonings and analysis appropriately. One should not have the notion, because Buddhism talks about all phenomena as being mere designations or labels designated by conceptual thought, that all concepts are equally valid. This is false. Although Prasangika Madhyamika philosophy states that all phenomena exist as labels designated by the conceptual mind, this does not imply all concepts are equally valid.

Since investigation and understanding are so crucial in engaging in the practice of Buddhism, one finds in texts such as the *Commentary to Abhisamayalamkara* mention of two general types of practitioners. The first type is a practitioner who emphasizes their own understanding through reason and the other type is one who follows or undertakes a practice mainly on the basis of faith. Of these two the first type of practitioner is said to be ideal. Such a practitioner does not accept a doctrine nor engage in a practice on the basis of faith but rather they investigate the doctrine or practice. If they see it does not contradict any valid knowledge or experience then they will undertake the practices.

This approach is in conformity with the general approach of many Buddhist texts where emphasis is placed on reasoning where the spiritual trainee develops an initial understanding through logical reasoning such as consequential or inferential reasoning. The ideal practitioner must be in a skeptical position so far as the issue at hand is concerned. Someone can not start an investigation with a foregone conclusion rather one must adopt a skeptical position. Therefore I always state that ideally speaking, for Buddhist practitioners, initially it is important to maintain a skeptical position on a given issue.

Because of the importance of maintaining a skeptical position when starting an investigation in a Buddhist way, I see it very important for Buddhists to learn and be aware of many of the facts confirmed through many centuries in many scientific disciplines such as cosmology, sub-atomic physics, neurobiology and psychology. Therefore I feel it is very important for Buddhist scholars to undertake comparative research into areas where there is a convergence of interest between science and Buddhism.

One distinction must be made here which I think is quite crucial, among the issues which are not accepted scientifically there two categories. First are issues, which have been established as negated as they contradict accepted fact. The second category of issues which science does not accept based not on negation established by fact but on the fact that they are not observable. This distinction between rejecting from having disproved something and rejecting because they can not see it is very important.

If there is an issue or doctrine where through scientific investigation it has been disproved, then as a Buddhist who emphasizes the importance of logic and investigation one must accept the conclusion of it being disproved. If there is any point which is mentioned in Buddhist literature and accepted generally but if it is proven not to be the case and that belief in the doctrine contradicts a body of established knowledge then as a Buddhist we must accept the conclusion of scientific investigation.

Dependent origination is the fundamental principal upon which the entire Buddhist practice and theory is based. Buddhist theory is the understanding of the dependent origination of all phenomena particularly the understanding of emptiness. Since phenomena come into existence, come into being, as a consequence of depending on other factors, causes and conditions, they lack an independent status. Because they lack an independent status they do not exist inherently or objectively in and of themselves. Rather their very existence and identity is a product of their dependence on other factors.

Looking from this perspective, dependent origination as a doctrine explains the Buddhist view of emptiness, which is the philosophical view. From a different perspective dependent origination lays the foundation for the Buddhist way of life, the Buddhist conduct of non-violence and non-harming. This is because the principal of dependent origination states that all of our experiences, be it desirable or undesirable, painful or pleasurable, come about as a consequence of causes and conditions. Therefore if suffering is something we do not desire, we must work towards cessation of its causes. If happiness and pleasure is something we seek then we must work towards aggregating its causative conditions.

When we talk about our experience of pain and pleasure, unhappiness and happiness, we are talking about phenomena, which are not isolated. Our experience of happiness and unhappiness are intimately linked and connected with the fate of other sentient beings. In fact all of our experiences of joy and happiness are very much linked with the fate of other beings' experience and happiness. Therefore it is unwise to work selfishly towards fulfilling one's own desire of happiness and avoiding suffering. In fact if one pursues one's own welfare totally oblivious to the welfare and well-being of other sentient beings, the result is one's loss of happiness. Whereas if the person works for the welfare of other sentient beings, one's own welfare is accomplished in the process.

Looked at this way, the principle of dependent origination underlines the importance of the Buddhist practice of non-violence and non-harming. Related to the two factors, the Buddhist view of emptiness and the Buddhist conduct of non-violence, are all the associated practices of meditation and so forth. One can say that the principle of dependent origination is the foundation of the entire Buddhist practice and theory.

The single syllogism that something is not inherently existent because of being dependently originated sums up all of Buddhist practice and theory. The principle of dependent origination as explained earlier underlies the Buddhist conduct of non-harming therefore it explains all the practices which are related to conventional truth, the factors of method or skillful means, compassion and so forth. The thesis of the non-inherent existence of phenomena outlines the entire Buddhist practice of wisdom, the understanding and insight into the ultimate nature of reality, emptiness.

The two aspects of the path, method and wisdom, are the key subject matter which is discussed in the text, Santideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. The text is composed of ten chapters. The ninth chapter deals with the practice of wisdom, particularly an understanding and insight into the nature of emptiness. The other nine chapters deal with the practices related to the skillful means or method aspect of the Buddhist path.

According to one of the traditions of Zapa (?) Rinpoche the ten chapters of the *Bodhicaryavatara* are divided into four parts. The first three chapters deal with the practices related to generating bodhicitta initially, the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. These practices deal with the initial generation of such a mind. The next three chapters deal with practices, which are aimed at maintaining such a generated mind and protecting it from degeneration. The next three chapters (seven, eight and nine) deal with practices essentially aimed at reinforcing the already generated mind and enhancing it. The last chapter is the dedication of merit. I feel this is a good way of dividing the text. I will give my commentary on *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* according to this division.

Bodhicitta or the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings is a state of mind which can not be cultivated or which will not be generated in one's mental continuum simply by praying for it to come into being. Nor will it come into existence by simply developing the understanding of what that mind is.

...generate that mind within one's continuum. In order to engage in meditation with sustained effort and for a long period of time, what is crucial is to first be totally convinced of the positive qualities, the benefits and merits, of generating such a mind. It is only when one has seen the qualities and benefits of generating such a mind that one will be able generate within oneself a genuine enthusiasm, perseverance, for engaging in the meditation which will enable one to generate the mind. Therefore in the first chapter Santideva explains the merits and benefits of generating bodhicitta.

Question: Can Buddhism be successfully transmitted to the West through its own arts and show business?

Answer: The essence of Buddhism as in other religions is altruism. In a special case in Buddhism is also the idea of interdependency. These can be expressed through art. Some modern art seems to me to be meaningless but some has deep meaning. Surely some artist could express these ideas through these mediums.

As far as show business in some cases I think this is more effective. I always believe that the purpose of becoming a warm-hearted person not only benefits the individual but also the world community. This should not be looked upon as only a religious matter but something concerning our own survival, our own future. I think artists and TV producers all have a responsibility to show the proper way to achieve a happier, human society; more peaceful, more friendly, and more compassionate. It is not only the responsibility of religious people, I think everyone has the responsibility.

Question: As you have stated, the mind innately has the qualities of awareness, clarity and luminosity. Are these qualities inherently existent or are they subject to dependent origination? In what manner does the enlightened mind exist?

Answer: When we talk of the luminosity, clarity and awareness as being innate qualities of the mind and at the same time stating that these are dependently originated, one should understand that the mind's qualities are not consciously created or deliberately constructed but rather are given aspects of the mind. The meaning that they are dependently originated is that that they are not static, not permanent but they are processes in the sense that from one instance to another, they change. They are momentary in the sense that the earlier moment gives rise to the later moment. They are in a dynamic process.

At the same time we find in some texts mention of these innate qualities of mind not produced by causes and conditions. Here we must bear in mind what is meant by this statement. Because the innate qualities of the mind are not the product of circumstantial conditions, they are in that sense not produced, in that sense not products. But if you look at it from another point of view because they are processes they are momentarily changing. They are composed of various instances and from this point of view, they can be viewed as dependently originated and view as products of causes and conditions.

One must bear in mind what is the meaning of certain terms used in a particular context. Sometimes permanence is defined in terms of a never-ending continuum. In this sense these innate qualities of the mind can be said to be permanent as in terms of their continuum they are beginningless and endless. From another point of view as they are processes they are composed of instances they can not be taken as permanent entities but rather impermanent and transitory.

Question: As a person of Irish heritage I ask this question, how does a person compassionately yet straightforwardly confront another person or group who have committed crimes of genocide against them?

Answer: When talking about compassion and compassionately dealing with such situations one must bear in mind what is meant by compassionately dealing with such cases. Being compassionate towards such persons or groups does not mean that you allow the other person to do whatever that person or group wishes to do such as inflict suffering on you or others. Rather compassionately dealing with such a situation has a different meaning. When a person or group deals with such a situation and tries to prevent such crimes, there are generally speaking two approaches or motivations. One is out of confrontation with hatred as a motivation. The other approach is even though the action taken may be the use of force or strength; the motivation is one of compassion towards the perpetrator of the crime. If you allow the other person to unjustly perform the crime out of their own negative habits, the other person or group will suffer the ill consequences of their negative action. Therefore out of consideration for that potential suffering on the perpetrator of the crime, one confronts the situation and applies equally forceful countermeasures.

I think this is quite relevant and important in modern society especially a competitive society. When someone who practices genuine compassion, forgiveness and humility, sometimes others may try to take advantage of them. At that times it is often important to take countermeasures, without negative emotion but through analyzing the situation, see the necessity for the countermeasures. Although the countermeasure may be the same but it is performed out of compassion and reason rather than negative emotion. This is more effective and appropriate.

For example in my own case with Tibet it is an international struggle against injustice without using negative emotion. It seems to be more effective.

Question: What is the Buddhist view of other life forms such as animals?

Answer: From a Buddhist point of view all living beings which possess the capacity to experience pain and pleasure, which has a subjective experience, innately possess the desire to enjoy happiness and to overcome suffering. Because of this innate or instinctive desire they have the right to be happy and overcome suffering. As far as this is concerned, all living beings are equal to humans in having this basic right.

There is a question as to on what grounds do we determine what is a sentient being and what is not. Empirically to determine this question is extremely difficult. I have heard scientists

have some sort of criteria such as mobility to determine this question. Buddhism accepts the existence of beings who are formless though there are differences of opinion as to what is meant by formless and what form of subtle material body these beings may have. One viewpoint such as from the *Abhidharmakosa* it is maintained that the Formless Realm is where beings are completely devoid of any level of physical existence. In this view when a being from the Desire Realm takes rebirth in the Formless Realm, at the moment of death they instantly take rebirth in the Formless Realm, as there is no sense of movement from one realm to another. According to this viewpoint in order to take rebirth in the Formless Realm there is no need to go through an intermediate state.

There is an alternative view from Highest Yoga Tantra where the Formless Realm is not understood to be totally devoid of any level of physical existence but rather is devoid of the gross levels of physical existence. As long as someone is a sentient being that being must possess the subtle energy which irrespective of its subtlety, is a physical entity.

Earlier I spoke of the importance of relying on reasoning, investigation and the reasoning developed through investigation but now we have a problem. On what grounds do we prove the existence of the Formless Realm? If this is posed to me I honestly have no answer. The existence of the Formless Realm in general is an extremely hidden phenomenon. By reasoning alone it is difficult to prove or disprove its existence but there is an alternative way to address the issue. This is by relying on a third person's authority.

Buddhism in general makes the distinction of three categories of phenomena; apparent or obvious, hidden phenomena, which are known through inference, and the extremely hidden phenomena. These latter phenomena can only be understood by direct experience of an enlightened mind or by relying on the authority of someone else. The difference here is that we don't accept this because someone says so but rather the authority upon which we are relying has been tested by us on other issues and found that authority to be reliable and valid. We also examine the motives of such a person to see if there is any reason they would lie or go beyond stating simple fact. Through such means having found the person as reliable and authoritative, one could take their word on the issue of extremely hidden phenomena.

Another way is to advance our own realization of meditative states. At a certain stage we might then be able to experientially determine the answer we seek. An example is the date of my birth, which is July 6, 1935. Why do I accept this? On the basis of statements from my mother and other people who have direct knowledge. On my own I can not state that this is the truth.

In our day to day lives we constantly deal with these three categories of phenomena. We deal with apparent phenomena through our direct experience of our sense faculties. We deal with hidden phenomena by reasoning and recollection of previous experience in which we infer from one thing within our experience to another beyond it. For extremely hidden phenomena because we lack any direct means of knowledge within our experience and rely on the validity and authority of a third person. If we examine our daily experience we are constantly dealing with these three categories of phenomena. (End of first day)

Second Day

For those who wish to meditate on bodhicitta and generate this altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, start by generating enthusiasm and great admiration by reflecting on the great merits and benefits of generating such a mind. This will enable the practitioner to successfully bring about the realization of bodhicitta within one's own continuum.

The merits and benefits of bodhicitta have been explained extensively and in great detail in Santideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. From the point of view of a single lifetime, one can realize or perceive the beneficial effects of a good heart. For instance if someone possesses this precious good heart, not only is that person's mind calm, happy, relaxed and serene but also such a good heart somehow allows that person greater success, prosperity and happiness in their life. Also the possession of such a good heart makes the person more courageous and broad-minded.

On the other hand if someone is always suspicious of others, fosters ill-feeling and hatred towards other sentient beings then because of that very polluted state of mind, that person projects that attitude towards others. Irrespective of others' attitudes towards the person, that person relates to others through the filter of negativity. So long as one is a human being one has to relate and interact with other fellow human beings, this is a natural fact. In spite of this unavoidable fact, such a person will relate and interact with others in a very suspicious and negative manner. Therefore in the end such a person will lack happiness, calmness of mind and serenity.

Even looking from the point of view of a single lifetime, if someone wishes to be happy, it is the good heart, which one must cultivate and generate. If someone wants to be successful and prosperous, it is the good heart, which must be generated and enhanced. If someone wants to bring happiness to others and share in that happiness, it is the good heart, which must be generated and enhanced. If someone wishes to enjoy both short-term and long-term happiness then it is the good heart, which must be generated and enhanced.

Also for someone who desires to attain favorable rebirth in successive lifetimes in the future, it is also a good heart which must be generated and enhanced within oneself. Higher rebirth comes by leading a way of life according to the principles of sound ethical discipline such as the observance of morality based on the ten positive actions. These are actions, which restrain from the ten negative actions, which are the main negative actions created by the three doors of the body, speech or mind of the agent. An example is the taking of the life of another sentient being. Stealing harms others' wealth and possessions. Causing dissension and discord among other people harms the friendships of others.

All these actions which are harmful for others' lives, physical bodies, wealth or relationships are negative in character. Therefore by leading a way of life which is based on observing a sound moral discipline which restrains from indulging in these negative actions lays the foundation for accumulating the causes and conditions which later lead the individual to take rebirth in higher states of existence. All of these ethical actions point to a fundamental need to respect and revere others' lives and welfare.

The importance of a good heart can not be underestimated in relation to one's progression on the spiritual path of the Mahayana tradition. According to the Mahayana tradition, bodhicitta or

the genuine altruistic aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings is considered the gateway to the Mahayana path. Generation of bodhicitta is the initial stage of having entered onto the path leading towards enlightenment. Bodhicitta is a state of mind, which is based on a foundation of having a genuine realization of universal and unbiased compassion towards all sentient beings. It is on the basis of whether or not an individual practitioner has generated within themselves such a state that they are determined to be on the Mahayana path or not.

All of the great qualities of the Mahayana path, starting from the initial bodhicitta stage all the way to the highest levels of the path, are ultimately dependent on the foundation of a good heart. Similarly all of the inconceivable qualities of the Buddha's compassion, activities and mind ultimately depend and are based on a good heart. The good heart is a very altruistic state of mind, which cherishes and considers others' welfare as more important than one's own. The entire Buddhist practice and path based on a single foundation of the great, universal compassion. Compassion is therefore said to be the root of the entire Buddhist practice.

If one looks at the multitude of the world's religions one sees that irrespective of the diversity of their metaphysical and philosophical assumptions they all converge on one point. The goal or aim of all the major religious traditions is to produce a good human being, a good person. Let us leave aside ultimate aims such as salvation or nirvana. On the practical level all of the various world religions converge on this single point and agree on the aim of producing a good human being. In this respect if you look from the result side we will see that they all share a common potential to bring about the same result. Therefore one could say that compassion is also the foundation of other religions.

From the point of view of one's own health, leaving aside health related to circumstantial issues, generally when we are ill and consult a doctor we are given general advice to rest and relax. The true meaning of this rest and relaxation should not be understood only in physical terms such as lying down on a bed. As long as your mind is not relaxed and calm there is little help in recuperating or get the rest and relaxation that the doctor advised you to obtain. It is only when you have the capacity to relax the mind, to have a calm state of mind that you can recuperate and relax properly.

If the mind is disturbed, afflicted with hateful thoughts, then instead of relaxation it will bring about more disturbance and unhappiness. Therefore from one point of view one could look at the doctor's advice to get rest and relax as saying to be a good-hearted person.

It is said that whenever one of the great Indian masters, Atisha, met a new person he would immediately ask them, "Do you have a good heart?" It is very worthwhile to try and improve one's own heart. This is definite.

Having realized the importance of generating such an altruistic state of mind, such a good heart, and having seen the great benefits and merits of generating such a mind then the next question is "Is it possible to bring about such realization in ourselves?" If so how does one go about generating it?

When we talk about generating a good heart in this context we are referring to bodhicitta which is the ultimate good heart. It has the infinite capacity to empathize with others' suffering and to seek to fulfill the welfare of other sentient beings. It also is an altruistic state of mind, which is complemented, with the factor of intelligence or wisdom.

Maitreya defines Bodhicitta in the *Abhisamayalamkara* as a state of mind, which is complemented with two characteristics. These two are an aspiration to fulfill the aspiration of other sentient beings which is the motivating factor and then the bodhicitta itself is accompanied by another aspiration which is to seek the state of enlightenment for others' benefit. So the definition

of bodhicitta is an altruistic aspiration which seeks the attainment of enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

I think I should explain by what is meant by bodhicitta being accompanied by the factor of wisdom. To give an example, when we take refuge in the Three Jewels we do so by entrusting ourselves, our spiritual needs and welfare, to the care of the Three Jewels; the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Such a refuge can be generated in two ways. One is by hearing about Buddha's qualities and feeling great admiration for Buddha's life. Out of great devotion and faith one can take refuge in the Buddha. This is one way of taking refuge in the Buddha.

There is another way however which is not simply out of faith or devotion but rather one examines the Buddha and if such a state can be achieved. Can the delusions and so forth, which pollute our minds, be removed? If so is there a state where all these deluded states of mind are ceased? Through such investigation and analysis one arrives at a point where one is convinced of the possibility of attaining a state which is totally free of all suffering, delusions and defilements. Thus realizing the possibility of attaining Buddhahood and through such realization taking refuge in the Buddha is much more stable, powerful and effective than through faith alone.

Similarly there are two ways in which bodhicitta can be generated. Certain practitioners' altruistic tendencies are so powerful and strong that they have a capacity to empathize with others' suffering. At the same time they may not have the intelligence or the subtlety to apprehend the realization of the identitylessness of all phenomena. By the intensity of their altruism alone, they can generate bodhicitta.

...reflects upon others' suffering nature and examines whether other sentient beings suffering can be removed, whether there is a path which leads to universal liberation and if so how does one go about bringing about the fulfillment of that aspiration. Through such reflection the person goes on to generate bodhicitta, it is said to be more powerful and effective. This bodhicitta is not only altruistic but is also accompanied by wisdom and intelligence. This is the type of bodhicitta that the main practitioners of the *Bodhicaryavatara* must generate.

These bodhisattvas have two distinct characteristics. Out of their compassion they direct their attention towards sentient beings and out of their wisdom they direct their attention towards Buddhahood, the attainment of enlightenment. Such bodhisattvas who possess bodhicitta complemented with the factor of wisdom have very great courage and enthusiasm. From the perspective of compassion one can also see the difference between mere compassion lacking the factor of wisdom and compassion which is complemented with the factor of wisdom penetrating to the deeper nature of reality.

There is a huge difference between the two types of compassion. In the first case although compassion can be very powerful and altruistic and have the practitioner constantly thinking of others' welfare and empathizing with them, seeking to bring about others' welfare, such an aspirational compassion is lacking true understanding. When compassion is complemented with wisdom penetrating into the deeper nature of reality, realizing emptiness, this compassion is very powerful. It not only empathizes with all sentient beings but it also has the awareness of the ignorance misconceiving all things as enduring, as inherently existing, which binds all sentient beings in the vicious cycle of life and death. If the sentient beings can develop the insight into the nature of reality then they will be able to start the process of removing themselves, freeing themselves from bondage. There exists such a path but sentient beings revolve in the cycle of life and death out of ignorance.

When this realization influences one's compassion, one's compassion is all the greater because one knows that sentient beings revolve in cyclic existence unnecessarily. Should sentient beings take the initiative there is the possibility for them to get out.

So when training the mind in generating bodhicitta these two aspirations need to be cultivated separately; the aspiration for all sentient beings to be freed from suffering and the aspiration to attain enlightenment for their benefit. The generation of these two aspirations needs to be cultivated and trained in separately.

Compassion is the foundation of bodhicitta and in order to train our minds in cultivating universal compassion we need two other factors. First we must be able to train our mind in such a way to be able to perceive all sentient beings as objects worthy of our affection. We must be able to develop a sense of closeness, intimacy, with all other sentient beings equally. The second factor is to be able to develop deeper insight into the nature of the suffering of other sentient beings. These two factors must be developed first.

Although I don't know if there is a definite sequence, traditionally it is recommended that before generating compassion one should develop in one's mind genuine renunciation which is a desire to free oneself from the bondage of cyclic existence. This renunciation or literally the definite emergence refers to a genuine desire to free oneself from suffering. The reason this is recommended first is as reflect upon your own suffering the feeling of unbearableness is more easily developed as one identifies with one's own suffering more easily and naturally. Once one develops insight into the nature of suffering in relation to one's own situation then one develops a sense of it being unbearable. When this feeling that one's own suffering is unbearable, one extends to include all sentient beings and this becomes compassion. Traditionally it is said that compassion and renunciation are two sides of a single coin.

It is in the context of cultivating genuine renunciation, the desire to be free from suffering that the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths becomes extremely important. Buddha taught in the Four Noble Truths two sets of causal chains. One is the effect, which is suffering, and the cause, which is the source or origin of the sufferings. If suffering is an experience which we don't wish to have then we must seek the causes which lead to it. Also we need to find out if there is a possibility of putting an end to the process of causation. If there were no way or possibility to break this causal chain then reflection and contemplation of the nature of suffering would be self-torture, self-torment. If this were the case it would be better not to think about suffering at all.

However this is not the case. Having taught the Noble Truth of Suffering and its origin including emphasizing the importance of generating insight into the nature of suffering and its causes, Buddha taught a second set of causal chains where the possibility of the cessation of suffering has been explained. Also the true path which has the capacity to lead individuals to that cessation has been explained.

This implies the need to reflect upon the nature of suffering and develop insight into the true nature of our experience of suffering. In this context Buddha spoke of three principle types of suffering. These three are technically known as the suffering of suffering which refers to situations commonly identified as painful and of the nature of suffering, the suffering of change which are experiences ordinarily identified as pleasurable but in reality if pursued to their limits one ends up with dissatisfaction and unhappiness, and the deepest level of suffering known as the pervasive suffering of conditioning. The suffering of conditioning refers to our very existence in this cycle of birth and death, which is the product of our own karmic actions. The fact that we are propelled in this cycle uncontrollably by the power of our karmic actions and delusions is the suffering of our

conditioning. As long as this nature exists, it serves as the basis for the arising of the first two sufferings.

When explaining the nature of suffering Buddha spoke of four specific characteristics of suffering. These four are impermanence, dissatisfaction, identitylessness and selflessness. In this context impermanence refers to the subtle impermanence which is that as long as something is the product of its causes and conditions, the very same causes and conditions are its basis for its destruction. Anything, which is the product or consequence of causes and conditions, can not possess a quality of endurance or permanence as the very fact that something caused it indicates that it is dependent on the causal factors. The causes themselves have not only brought about the existence of the product but also has about the potential for disintegration. This momentary nature of phenomena is the consequence of the causation as well. Understanding this nature of momentariness, this nature of transience, is seen as the understanding of the subtle impermanence.

In the context of our own physical existence, our own birth in the cycle of life and death, causes and conditions refer to karmic actions and the delusions which give rise to them. Fundamental ignorance particularly is seen as the primary factor, which gives rise to the whole chain of causation. Since this fundamental ignorance is a deluded state of mind how can one maintain that its effects or consequences could be otherwise? Since the causal factor itself is deluded, its consequences or products must also share the same nature. Since our very existence or birth is under the control of fundamental ignorance, it is in the nature of suffering and dissatisfaction.

If we reflect on the subtle nature of impermanence particularly in relation to our own aggregates, our own physical and mental aggregates, our own body and mind, then we will be able to trace its origin to this fundamental ignorance which is the primary cause. Through this contemplation we will be able to realize that irrespective of where we stay, irrespective of any circumstantial conditions, as long as we remain under the domination or control of this deluded state of mind there is no possibility for an enduring or everlasting peace and happiness. Through such contemplation we will be able to generate true insight into the nature of suffering.

If we train our mind in such a way then we will be able to develop from the depths of our hearts a conviction that delusions and afflictive emotions are the true enemy. They are the ultimate enemy, which by abiding in our mental continuum bring about our own downfall and cause our own sufferings. As Kadampa masters used to say we must resist our defilements no matter how small the effort. A deep conviction of the destructive nature of the delusions is important to generate.

We need to see what is at the root of all the deluded states of mind; fundamental ignorance which misconceives the nature of reality. By contemplating whether this ignorance can be removed, whether that misconception can be dispelled, does the context of the Third Noble Truth, true cessation become apparent. In this respect extensive discussion of the nature of true cessation can be found elaborated in the Second Turning of the Wheel. Buddha spoke at great length of the possibility of realizing emptiness and generating insight into the true nature of reality.

When the realization of emptiness is combined with the realization of the Third Turning of the Wheel where the Buddha spoke at great length about the subjective quality of our minds, in other words, the presence of the seed for Buddhahood or full enlightenment which exists in all sentient beings, then a genuine conviction will develop that it is possible to attain true cessation from suffering.

By true contemplation if one realizes the faults and undesirable aspects of life in cyclic existence then this will turn one's mind towards a cessation from the causal chain. One will be able

to generate a genuine desire to attain liberation from cyclic existence. This liberation is known as moksha or salvation. In order to attain such a state of liberation the obstructing factors are the delusions or defilements, afflictive emotions and thoughts that obstruct one from obtaining the state of liberation.

At the initial stage it is extremely difficult for the practitioner to directly confront these deluded states of mind, these defilements, and uproot them. Rather the process of eliminating these delusions and defilements is a gradual process. Ultimately it is the wisdom penetrating into the true nature of emptiness, true nature of reality, which sees through the illusion created by our ignorance and misconception. It is the realization of such emptiness or selflessness, which ultimately removes or eliminates the defilements from our mental continuum.

This wisdom which has the capacity and power to eliminate and uproot the delusions and defilements from our mind must be based on the attainment of single-pointedness and concentration of the mind. Therefore the practice of training in concentration becomes crucial. In the initial stages in training the mind to successfully attain such stages of concentration what is crucial is to lead a way of life which is based on the observance of sound ethical discipline. At the initial stage before we directly confront the delusions it is crucial to restrain our actions, our body, speech and mind from indulging in negative actions which are the effects of a deluded state of mind. By training in concentration and generating wisdom one eventually will eliminate delusions from one's mind.

The negative effects, which manifest in physical, verbal or mental actions are in summary known as the Ten Negative or Non-virtuous Actions. The three bodily actions are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. Telling lies, divisive speech, harsh speech and frivolous speech are the four negative actions of speech. The three mental negative actions are covetousness, harmful intent and wrong views. These ten actions sum up in a broad way all the physical, verbal and mental manifestations of the delusions. It is by restraining from indulging in any of these actions, which constitutes ethical restraint.

The Ten Positive Actions are the opposites of the Ten Negative Actions. In order to successfully observe such an ethical discipline initially it is crucial to develop a deep conviction in the karmic relationship between actions and their effects. Not only must the practitioner have in general some understanding of causal relationships between causes and conditions on the one hand and their effects on the other but also how certain causes and conditions give rise to their corresponding effects. The practitioner also must develop conviction in the nature of karmic causation; how certain actions and events which when engaged have a harmful potential or are destructive, give rise to consequences which are undesirable, in the nature of suffering.

Whereas certain types of actions and events are pleasant not only when one engages in them but also the beneficial potentials. These actions and events give rise to consequences, which are desirable and beneficial. By realizing such karmic causation and the relationship between corresponding causes and effects, one will be able to develop deeper conviction in the workings of karmic causation. To a certain degree aspects of karmic causation can be understood, how certain actions lead to their corresponding effects, but when it comes to the very subtle aspects of karmic causation these aspects are very hidden. This is the category of phenomena as discussed yesterday which remain beyond the scope of our understanding. Of these issues we must rely on an authority.

As explained earlier certain aspects of karmic causation can be understood or at least have some understanding of based on reliable scriptures, the authority of a third person. Karmic causation is explained in these in conjunction with the teachings on taking refuge. When talking about the practice of taking refuge, although there are three objects of refuge, Buddha, Dharma and

Sangha, out of the three it is the Dharma, which is the main object of refuge. Dharma here refers to true cessations and the true paths, which led to such cessations.

If one can take such a practice based on taking refuge and the belief and conviction in the law of karmic causation coupled with the observance of sound ethical discipline then such a practice is a guarantee for an individual to take a high or favorable rebirth in the future.

Our own physical existence as human beings provides us with the special faculties of intelligence, courage and determination though we are equal to all other sentient beings as far as life in general is concerned. If we realize this fact then we will appreciate the precious opportunity that as existence as humans accords us. Once we appreciate this preciousness of our existence then we will realize the need to utilize such faculties towards a more positive and beneficial direction. Therefore in the text, the importance of appreciating the potentials of human existence is extensively discussed.

In order to underline the destructive nature of negative actions such as killing, stealing and so forth, the suffering nature of unfavorable rebirths in other realms has been explained. For instance by simply observing the lives of animals we can realize the intensity of their suffering, the deluded nature of their existence. Through this we can develop a deep sense of the unbearableness and aversion to rebirth in such forms of existence. This will motivate the practitioner to restrain from indulging in actions, which have the potential to bring about such a rebirth in the future.

All these points are explained in the various chapters of Santideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Through such contemplations and reflections one will be able to develop a deep insight into the nature of suffering. Such a realization will lead to a genuine desire to free oneself from the cycle of existence which is tormented by experiences of suffering and dissatisfaction. This is what is known as renunciation. When this powerful and genuine desire to free oneself from suffering has been generated and realized then this realization can be shifted to other sentient beings. This leads to the cultivation of compassion and the aspiration to work for others' benefit.

When talking about generating and cultivating altruism one should realize that self and others should not be seen in terms of complete separation. Self and others should not be conceived in terms of no relation between them. In reality the fate of ourselves is totally and intimately linked with the fate and welfare of other sentient beings. The more a person works towards others' benefit, the more a person cherishes and works for the fulfillment of others' welfare, the greater the fulfillment of one's own aims will occur. Such is the nature of reality.

As a precondition for generating compassion towards all sentient beings is the development of a feeling of closeness and intimacy for all sentient beings, seeing them as all worthy of our affection. In order to develop such a realization one needs to train the mind towards this goal. For cultivating such a mind there exists among traditional Buddhist practices two major techniques. One is known as the Seven Point Cause and Effect method and other is known as Equalizing and Exchanging Oneself With Others.

In actual meditation one first cultivates a state of equanimity. The significance of generating a state of equanimity is to overcome our usual feeling of discrimination and inequality towards other sentient beings. Normally our attitudes towards other sentient beings are characterized by either a feeling of closeness towards those we consider our relatives or friends and a feeling of distance towards those we consider enemies or potential enemies. In the practice of generating equanimity one reflects upon the fact that ultimately there is no objective grounds for making such sharp and clear cut distinctions or discriminations on our part towards other sentient beings.

Those whom we consider relatives, friends and so forth and perceive as worthy of our special attention and care if examined deeply reveals that these people although they may be friends now at this very moment may have been our enemies in past lives. Even within this lifetime someone who is a friend now could turn into an enemy or person harmful to us in the future. There is no absolute sense in which they have to remain as our friends. Similarly those whom we consider our enemies may have been our best friends in the past and in this life, although they may be our enemy now due to a change in circumstances they could turn into our best friend. There is no guarantee that they will remain eternally as our enemy.

By reflecting on this one will be able to realize that the delusions and afflictive emotions are our true enemies whereas the people who harm us are under the control of these same afflictive emotions and thoughts. They are not enemies in the true sense of the word. Therefore although it is crucial to be compassionate towards all sentient beings, there is no objective grounds for which to feel particularly loving towards someone we categorize as our friends. This extra attention implies attachment or grasping. Similarly there are no objective grounds by which we should be particularly hateful towards those we categorize as enemies. Through such contemplation what we initially develop is a sense of equanimity towards all sentient beings.

This state of equanimity is then followed by what is technically known as the recognition of others as mothers but the use of a mother is only an example. What is required at this stage is to perceive all sentient beings in terms of someone who we hold most dear. All sentient beings at one time could have been a most dear one to us in a past life and every sentient being has the potential to become a most beloved person in the future as well. Thinking in such terms one develops a realization of all sentient beings as objects most dear to oneself.

The third stage is to recollect the kindness of all sentient beings. This is followed by the generation of the wish to repay their kindness. After this comes the training known as Equalizing Oneself With Others. This equality of oneself with others refers to a state of mind where one reflects that oneself has the instinctive wish to overcome suffering a be happy equal to that of others. Oneself and others are also completely equal in the right to fulfill the aspiration to be happy and overcome suffering. From all perspectives, from all points of view, one decides there are no grounds upon which one could objectively, justifiably, make a discrimination between oneself and others.

The sixth stage of this meditation is known as Special Recollection of Others Kindness. The uniqueness here is that all sentient beings have been kind to us not only when they were among the most beloved but also indirectly contributed to our happiness. Even our enemies upon deep reflection have the special potential to create for us the opportunity to develop certain spiritual qualities within ourselves such as tolerance and patience. From this point of view, irrespective of their attitudes towards us, enemies are kind to us. In this life our fame, shelter, food, clothing and everything else on deep reflection, all come about through others cooperation, others' participation in bringing about these factors. Others' kindness can not be overestimated.

When thinking in such terms recollection of others' kindness need not be confined to others when they have been beloved or dear to us. On the path to enlightenment all the spiritual realizations, progress and so forth, come about in reliance upon others. Without others' cooperation and kindness, there is no possibility to make any spiritual progress on the path. Similarly at the resultant state of Buddhahood, it is because of the existence of other sentient beings that the Buddhas possess great compassion and the motivation that propels their compassionate actions towards other sentient beings. Thinking in such terms there is not even a single moment in our entire existence when we are not indebted towards other sentient beings.

Two further stages come next. The seventh stage is reflecting upon the destructive effects and disadvantages cherishing one's own benefit, oblivious to others' welfare. The eighth stage of meditation is to reflect from various perspectives the merits, benefits and the gains of cherishing others welfare.

It is only by reflecting upon the advantages of cherishing others and the disadvantages of self-cherishing that will be able to ultimately succeed in what is called Exchanging Oneself For Others. The meaning of exchanging oneself with others is to be understood in terms of the attitude one adopts towards oneself and other sentient beings. As a result of our training and meditation we should be able to change our normal attitude where we put our own welfare uppermost in our mind. So far as others' welfare is concerned our normal attitude is mostly indifference.

As a result of our meditation and training of the mind what we should be able to succeed in doing is to be able to arrive at a stage where we will be able to consider others' welfare as equally important as we used to consider our own welfare. This is so much so that when it comes to our own welfare, we maintain a sense of indifference.

If you train your mind through such stages of meditation then what is achieved at the end, irrespective of the attitude of other sentient beings towards us, is the ability to perceive all sentient beings as objects worthy of affection. One will feel a sense of closeness and intimacy towards all sentient beings equally.

Two further stages of meditation follow this point. The ninth stage is a practice of training one's mind in what is called Taking Upon Oneself which in a sense is a practice of enhancing one's compassion. The tenth stage is training the mind in what is known as Giving To Others which is in a sense enhancing one's power of love towards other sentient beings. If one is successful in training one's mind through these stages of meditation, particularly the ninth and tenth which refer to the practice of Giving And Taking, then one will be able to arrive at a stage where one is able to generate within oneself an unusual sense of responsibility, shouldering upon oneself the responsibility to work towards the fulfillment of others' wishes, bringing about others' welfare.

This is how one's trains the mind in cultivating the aspiration to work for others' welfare. When this extraordinary sense of responsibility to work for others' welfare is combined with an earlier understanding of the nature of cessation and liberation as explained earlier then one can truly appreciate what is meant by others' welfare. Here in this context others' welfare refers to other sentient beings attainment of liberation, Buddhahood.

The combination of those two realizations will eventually or ultimately lead one to the attainment of bodhicitta, the genuine, spontaneous aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is a state of mind, which aspires to attain one's own enlightenment for the sake of working towards fulfilling the welfare of other sentient beings. Such a state of mind as described earlier is bodhicitta.

Therefore one realizes that bodhicitta or this altruistic aspiration is the special cause, the most precious cause for laying the seed for attaining the omniscient state of Buddhahood. In order to bring about the realization of such a seed within one's mind, what is required is an accumulation of great stores of merit. In terms of engaging in a system of practice, which has the capacity to accumulate, great stores of merit is concerned, the Seven-Limb practice is considered one of the most effective methods. In the *Bodhicaryavatara*, in the second and third chapters, this text outlines the practices of Seven Limbs.

As one engages in the practice of generating bodhicitta and as one begins to attain a slight realization of bodhicitta, in order to stabilize that realization the practitioner is advised to participate in a ceremony to enhance the generated mind. I will conduct this ceremony tomorrow.

Following the ceremony of enhancing the generated bodhicitta stabilizing the initial experience of it, then the practitioner is advised to train their mind and develop the enthusiasm to engage in the Bodhisattva deeds and practices. As a result of training one's mind and reflecting upon these facts, once one develops a genuine desire to engage in Bodhisattva ideals and practices then the practitioner is advised to take the Bodhisattva Vows. These vows I will give the day after tomorrow.

When we talk of bodhicitta there are two main levels of the generated mind known as the aspirational aspect and the active or engaged aspect. The distinctions between these two, although there are diverse opinions as to how one makes the distinction, one mainstream opinion held by Kamalasila's *Stages Of Meditation* or *Bhavanakrama* according to which the distinction is made on the basis of whether or not the practitioner who has generated that bodhicitta has taken the Bodhisattva Vows. From the initial stages of generating bodhicitta up to a point where the practitioner has taken the Bodhisattva Vows, this is known as the aspirational bodhicitta. The moment the practitioner takes the Bodhisattva Vows the practitioner's bodhicitta is said to have been turned into the practical aspect of bodhicitta.

With this brief summary, the essence of the practices, which are associated with the stages of training for the initial generation of bodhicitta, is completed. These are explained in the first three chapters of Santideva's *Guide to The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

The subsequent chapters deal with practices and stages of training associated with safeguarding the mind, which has already been generated. The fourth chapter is devoted to conscientiousness, which is a very important faculty. When cultivated and developed conscientiousness will safeguard one's body, speech and mind from indulging in harmful and negative actions. Conscientiousness is a faculty, which also ensures that mindfulness and introspection are never left behind. Therefore the cultivation of this faculty is very crucial.

The fifth chapter deals with the practices for guarding introspection or alertness. Introspection is a very crucial faculty and one of the principal factors for generating or cultivating such an introspective faculty is the faculty of mindfulness. Holding constant vigilance towards one's daily actions of both body and mind when combined with mindfulness enables one to develop and enhance one's own faculty of introspection.

To sum up an ideal practitioner of bodhicitta, an ideal bodhisattva practitioner, should be someone who having voluntarily developed a deep admiration in the value and merits of bodhicitta has generated the mind. Having generated the mind and having the genuine desire to lead a way of life in accordance to the principles and ideals, one takes the vow.

Such a person must realize that they have taken upon themselves a great responsibility, a responsibility to work for the welfare of other sentient beings. This must be voluntarily taken upon oneself. The awareness of this responsibility should always be present and this is what is meant by cultivating the faculty of conscientiousness. This awareness of the responsibility should always be present. In addition to this one should study what actions are in accordance with the Bodhisattva principles and which actions are contradictory to the Bodhisattva principles.

By studying one should in every action have the faculty of introspection and alertness ever-present so that even in dreams one will be able to consciously be aware if there is the slightest likelihood of transgressing any of the Bodhisattva Vows. One reminds oneself of the vows one has taken so that the individual does not indulge in these actions. Even in dreams one can apply the faculty of introspection and mindfulness. Such is the mode of practice of the ideal Bodhisattva practitioner.

The third faculty, the faculty of tolerance or patience will be explained tomorrow. Now we will have some questions.

Question: How do you feel Buddhism will have to change in order to be accepted in the West and by Americans?

Answer: Basically I feel that as Buddhism addresses fundamental problems of existence and of being human, I do not feel there should be any differences wherever Buddhism flourishes. At the cultural level I think it will definitely change. Even within one country as time and social structure changes, the cultural aspect of the religious tradition changes as well. I think it is very important to be able to extract the essence of the Buddha's teaching and leave the cultural aspects, which are not relevant to one's own setting.

Question: Do you mean to stress the benefit of reasoning over meditation? Could you talk about the relationship of the two?

Answer: Generally speaking the Tibetan word for meditation includes both the analytic and also the absorptive meditations. Also meditation can be of two different types generally speaking. There are certain types of meditation, which takes on certain objects as the focus of the meditation. It focuses one's attention or concentration on that. Then there is another type of meditation where there is not so much an object-subject relationship between the object of meditation but rather one's own mind is generated in that state.

For example when we talk of meditating on compassion we do not mean that here of taking compassion as an object and then observing it. Rather one generates in one's own mind, a compassionate state of mind. Similarly when we talk of meditating on impermanence, here we are talking of taking impermanence as the object of meditation and then developing its understanding or realization or insight. Then when we talk of meditating on a deity, we are talking about another type of meditation where meditation is in terms of visualizing oneself in that aspect. The main object of meditation in deity yoga, if one looks at it in terms of subject and object, is emptiness.

Analytical meditation refers to a form of meditation where the role of analysis is important and also the faculty of analysis is applied, whereas absorptive meditation is a form of meditation where analysis is not applied. There can be two types of absorptive meditation. For instance in the case of meditation cultivating single-pointedness of mind, in other words calm-abiding, samatha, in such meditation the application of analysis is in fact discouraged. Similarly there can be another type of absorptive meditation, which as a consequence of analysis one arrives at a conclusion and then at that point one ceases the process of analysis and simply focuses on the conclusion arrived at with a single-pointedness of mind. This is again an absorptive meditation.

Similarly when we talk of vipasyana or penetrative insight from a point of view common to Sutra and Tantra, special insight meditations are seen as being characterized by an application of analytic process. Whereas from the point of view of Highest Yoga Tantra then special insight meditations need not necessarily be analytic in character. This is also similar to meditation of the Mahamudra and also the Dzogchen style of meditation as well.

Question: What is inside the yellow pagoda?

Answer: Right now it is covered but there is a great spectacle inside it.

Question: Does an understanding of emptiness and dependent origination aid in the generation of bodhicitta? Or should bodhicitta be generated first in order to understand emptiness?

Answer: There are two types of practitioners depending upon their faculty of intelligence and wisdom. Those who have the greater faculty of intelligence and wisdom first generate the insight into the nature of emptiness and then the realization of emptiness induces them to generate compassion towards all sentient beings thus leading to the realization of bodhicitta.

Whereas practitioners who lack such a faculty of intelligence, initially emphasize the practice of compassion and then bodhicitta. Later they have a realization of emptiness. So there are two different modes of approach.

Question: If our guru makes a statement that contradicts our experience and reason or contradicts another teacher, what attitude should we take in order to maintain respect and devotion?

Answer: Personally I would suggest that one should be cautious from the beginning so that one will protect oneself from having getting caught in such a situation where one is relying on a teacher whom you later find out to be unreliable. But once you have already initiated the teacher-disciple relationship and then later you realize these contradictions then it is wiser if you could somehow insure that you don't take it seriously.

Generally speaking although guru's instruction and transmission is extremely important but at the same time it is always crucial to insure that the guru's instruction and transmissions accord with the general structure of the basic Buddhist path. If you find yourself in a situation where the guru's instructions contradicts with the general approach, the general structure of the Buddhist path then you should rely more on the general structure of the path than the instruction of the guru.

How one should proceed can be substantiated by many references from various scriptures. For instance in the Vinaya where certain procedures relating to one's spiritual guru are explained. There it is explicitly stated that if a guru gives advice, which does not accord with the Dharma, then it should not be carried out, it should be opposed. Similarly in Mahayana sutras it has been explicitly mentioned that if among the instructions of the guru are those which accord with the way of the Dharma should be followed and those which do not accord or contradict with the Dharma should be rejected. In the Tantric literature which outline the tantric way relating to a spiritual guru, it is explicitly mentioned that if an instruction is given which is something beyond your scope and ability to perform then you should explain to your teacher. You should not follow it but rather explain to your teacher the reason why you are incapable or unable to carry out that instruction.

However what I have stated here is the general mode of procedure of how the relationship between the disciple and teacher should be maintained. But this does not rule out extremely exceptional cases, for instance the case of the relationship between Marpa Lotsawa and his disciple Milarepa or Naropa and Tilopa. In these examples both the teachers and the disciples are extremely exceptional. In such exceptional cases although what might seem superficially on the surface as something contradictory to the general mode of procedure of the Buddhist path, but in essence, in reality these can be realized as extremely skillful means on the part of the teacher to enable the student to accomplish stages of the path in a very expeditious manner.

Question: How does one go from inferential knowledge to non-conceptual knowledge? Since analysis is used to arrive at total inferential knowledge, any more analysis would still be inferential.

Answer: As I stated earlier among meditations there are different types and in special situations such as certain levels of meditation in Highest Yoga Tantra, analysis is discouraged. But what I stated earlier is the general mode of procedure of the Buddhist path and as to the question on how one proceeds from inferential knowledge to non-conceptual knowledge, through constant

reflection on the knowledge which is initially inferential, through the process of constant familiarity that knowledge eventually becomes non-conceptual. This is because the mode of engagement of that knowledge in relation to the object becomes more and more subtle, eventually the knowledge become direct.

Generally speaking it is very true that there must be co-maturation between cause and its effects. There must be a correspondence between causes and effects. Any cause can not give rise to any effect; there must be some causal relationship and connection. But this does not mean that every effect must have completely similar causes. For instance in the case of the omniscient mind of the Buddha, if we insist that its cause must be completely similar in characteristics with the effect which is the omniscient mind then we would have to maintain that within us, since we possess the seed for attaining Buddha's omniscient mind, wisdom, then we must possess within us even to a slight degree some form of Buddha's omniscient mind which can not be maintained. Similarly as far as the non-conceptual awareness or wisdom of the Arya Beings are concerned their causes need not be also such high stages of realization. Therefore this non-dualistic awareness or wisdom of the Arya Beings, their causes can be said to exist even in ordinary beings. If we, for instance, examine our mind, within our mind, so long as we remain in an ordinary state of existence, it is characterized by dualistic perceptions, dualistic experiences. Now within this dualistic experience and perceptions we must be able to seek some kind of seed which can give rise to non-dual wisdom, non-dual awareness. Therefore the initial stage of knowledge is inferential which is dualistic which is characterized by duality between subject and object. As you train your mind, as you constantly reflect on it, cultivate familiarity with that object then that duality, that subject-object duality will gradually diminish in its intensity and gradually it will lead you to a stage where your realization, your knowledge of that object becomes direct, intuitive and non-conceptual.

Also when we talk of non-dual awareness in the context of dualistic appearances or dualism, one must bear in mind there are many different meanings of the term. Dualistic appearance could be understood in terms of the multitude of conventional appearances or subject-object duality, separateness as being dualistic appearance or having generated an image through which one conceives an object, that image can be seen as dualistic appearance.

Similarly when we come across the term non-conceptuality, we should not have the notion that there is only a single meaning which is universal in every single context. This is not the case. Non-conceptuality will have different meanings in different contexts. For instance there is the non-conceptuality that is common to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist practices. There is a non-conceptual state, which is common to both the Lesser Vehicle practices and the Great Vehicle practices. There is a non-conceptual state, which is common to both Sutra and Tantra practices. There is a non-conceptuality, which is common to all four classes of tantra. There is a non-conceptual state, which is unique to Highest Yoga Tantra. Even within Highest Yoga Tantra there is a non-conceptual state which is common to both generation stage and completion stage practices. Within the completion stage as corresponding to the different levels of realization, there are different meanings of the non-conceptual state. One therefore should not have the notion that non-conceptuality means only one thing in all contexts (End of second day)

Third Day

Today we will be conducting the ceremony of enhancing the mind, which has been generated, the altruistic mind to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, the bodhicitta. In order to participate in this ceremony first of all visualize in front of yourself the Buddha Shakyamuni as depicted on the thangka behind me. Visualize the Buddha Shakyamuni surrounded by his seven main successors and also surrounded by the great Indian masters like the Six Ornaments and so on. Visualize him also surrounded by the great Tibetan masters of all four major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and you, yourself being surrounded by all sentient beings. In all directions visualize the Directional Guardians who protect you and all sentient beings from obstacles that might interfere or hinder your generation of bodhicitta and participation in the ceremony of enhancing that generated mind. Imagine the lama conducting the ceremony as a messenger representing all the lineage masters of the past.

Focussing your attention towards all the sentient beings whom you have imagined as being all around you, reflect upon their fate that just like yourself they all have the innate desire to be happy and overcome suffering. But contrary to that innate desire they willingly engage in actions, which are detrimental, essential detrimental to their own happiness. They willingly accumulate factors, causes and conditions, which are potentially destructive and harmful to them. Whereas although it is happiness they seek, they avoid from engaging in actions, which would accumulate for them the causes, and conditions that give rise to the actual experience of happiness. So it is out of such ignorance that sentient beings willingly propel themselves in the vicious cycle of existence, life and death.

Reflect upon your own fate, thinking that today at this juncture I am in a position, although I myself am not free from cyclic existence but at least I am in a position to be aware of the situation. I also have the knowledge, the insight to seek the path which can lead these sentient beings from the bondage of suffering. At this point it is my responsibility to insure that these sentient beings are shown the right path and enable them, at least encourage them to embark upon this spiritual path which eventually leads to their own liberation in the future. With such motivation look at the examples of the past great masters whom you have visualized in front of you. Focussing your attention on them think that just as these great masters of the past have engaged in the Bodhisattva Deeds and have worked only for the benefit of other sentient beings attaining great enlightenment so too will I follow their example. I will attain enlightenment for the sake of all. So with this kind of motivation and attitude we will proceed with the ceremony. We will perform recitations associated with the practice of the Seven Limbs and the verses we recite come from one of the aspirational prayers known as the Good Deeds. (Recitation of verses)

Next is making a request to the guru to conduct the ceremony of enhancing bodhicitta. This will be done on the basis of doing a recitation after me. This verse that you will recite after me states that just as the great masters and Buddhas of the past have first generated the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings today I too shall follow in their footsteps. Please conduct the ceremony. (Recitation of verses)

Next is taking refuge. This is not a ceremony of the common practice of taking refuge but rather a practice of refuge that is uncommon to the practice of the Mahayana tradition. The meaning here is that one's attitude for taking refuge is not just entrusting yourself under the care of the Three Jewels but reflecting upon one's own Buddhanature, the potential that exists within all

sentient beings which allows through individual initiative and effort to actualize all the great qualities of the Buddha's mind and attain the state of Buddhahood, one seeks to emulate them. You should develop a sense of wishing to emulate their example that in order to fulfill the wishes of all sentient beings and work for their benefit, I shall attain the state of Buddhahood just as all the great masters of the past attained. With this type of attitude and motivation one takes refuge. Such a practice of refuge is said to be uncommon in that it distinguishes itself from the ordinary practice of refuge in three characteristics. The taking of refuge is motivated by working for the benefit of all sentient beings therefore the object of intention is all sentient beings. A person who takes such refuge their ultimate aim is to attain the fully enlightened state, not just liberation from cyclic existence. A person who undertakes such refuge is a being who has at least had some knowledge of the possibility of attaining a fully enlightened state. So with these three characteristics then this Mahayana refuge is said to distinguish itself from ordinary types of taking refuge.

The verses, which you will be reciting, the repetition of which constitutes the taking of refuge, begin with calling out for the attention of the Master. You then state that from now on until you attain the state of full enlightenment you will seek refuge in the fully enlightened Buddha. You then state that you will take refuge in the Supreme Dharma, which is the true cessation and the paths leading to such a state of cessation. One then states that from now on I will also take refuge in the Supreme Assembly, the assembly of the Sangha, particularly the Mahayana Sangha referring here to the assembly of Arya Bodhisattvas. Arya Bodhisattvas are beings who have not only realized genuine bodhicitta but also have attained direct realization of emptiness. This is the type of person we were speaking about yesterday, a type of person who has fully transcended all levels of dualistic appearances. For such practitioners in their realization of emptiness there is no appearance of a diversity of conventional phenomena nor is there a duality of subject and object nor is there a duality caused by a generated image of the object and not perceiving it directly. Such a person in their realization of emptiness is totally free from any level of dualistic appearances. (Recitation of verses)

After taking refuge we will again recite the verses of the Seven Limbed practice. (Recitation of verses)

We will now prepare our minds to generate bodhicitta. First reflect upon the sentient beings you have visualized around you and then focussing your attention on them, reflect on the fact that if you compare yourself to them you are both common and equal in having the instinctive desire to seek happiness and overcome suffering. Equally just as you both yourself and sentient beings have that innate wish, so do both of you have the natural right to fulfill that aspiration to enjoy happiness and to overcome suffering. Now from this point of view there is no difference whatsoever between oneself and others. The difference really lies in terms of numbers, no matter how important and how precious one's own well-being might be, if you compare it with the welfare of all other sentient beings who are limitless in number to the fate of a single sentient being, there is a vast difference in terms of numbers. In terms of having the wish to enjoy happiness and overcome suffering and in terms of having the natural right to fulfill those aspirations there is no difference. The difference lies in the number.

Secondly if we think deeply we will realize that if one were to give up the welfare of an infinite number of sentient beings for the sake of one single person that is quite an unwise action. Whereas to give up the well-being and happiness of a single person for the sake of countless numbers of other sentient beings is definitely a wise action and decision. Not only this even in reality in practical terms if a person indulges in the fulfillment of their own selfish ends and is totally oblivious to other sentient beings then in the end it is that person who will be the loser. On

the other hand the person while being indifferent to their own welfare and needs and rather puts greater emphasis on the fulfillment of others' welfare and works towards others' benefit, that person's own interests and needs will be fulfilled in the process. The fulfillment of one's own wishes becomes a by-product and that is something, which is an observed fact.

Not only that there is something called in ordinary language luck. Whether or not a person irrespective of their level of knowledge, background, ability, wealth, position and so forth enjoys a happy life depends very much on the level of what we call luck the person has. This term luck although it sounds as if it is a meaningless term but it is not just a mere word but luck can not be understood only in terms of something like a fluke. In Buddhist terminology we call it merit and if you look at it from this point of view then we will begin to realize that what we call luck can not be simply dismissed. It must have some basis; it must have some sort of ground on which we can understand it. There must be some factors, which would provide some people with more luck than others less. This we call merit and merit is something that you can accumulate. Merit is something that can decrease or increase.

The fact that there is a tremendous difference in terms of the level of merit between different types of sentient beings or different humans even though they are suffering the same fate, tragic fate. For instance let us take the example of recent events inside Tibet. The overall situation is so tragic that all the people there are suffering the same fate. But even under such similar circumstances due to different levels of merit between different individuals, it does seem that some people suffered more than others did. Some people had comparatively happier and luckier life than others.

So in talking about luck and merit, it seems quite obvious that I seem to be a person who seems to have accumulated quite a good store of merit in my past lives so I consider myself a lucky person. But as for how lucky I will be in my future life I can't say. In fact my merit is increasing so much that it is eating the hairs from my head!

When it comes to accumulating one's own store of merit, one can say that there is no greater force than the cultivation of the altruistic mind. Even a slight generation, even a slight level of the altruistic mind, the generation of which is said to have tremendous power to increase one's store of merit. This is something which one can see through one's own experience in life but also is something that has been substantiated and repeatedly mentioned in many scriptures. The power and ability of the altruistic mind and good heart to increase great stores of merit has been emphasized and extensively mentioned in the scriptures. The altruistic mind and good heart are something that not only create immediate effects, positive effects like bringing about calmness and serenity in one's mind but its effects can be maintained and experienced throughout many lifetimes. This is due to its power to increase the level of merit.

The preciousness of a good heart and altruism is something that I know from my own personal experience. When I talk of my experience I must tell you that I am a person who can not claim to have any high levels of spiritual realizations. I am a follower of the Buddha who has succeeded in not being just a disgrace to the Buddha and this is the level of my experience. But still I can state that as far my admiration and conviction in the preciousness and power of altruism and a good heart is concerned, even in my dreams from the depth of my heart I can always feel admiration towards the good heart and altruism. Also I have maintained that conviction in the power and preciousness therefore it enables me to increase the level of my merit. Sometimes when I think about that I feel myself to be very encouraged by the fact that I am born in a lifeform which is equipped with this wonderful human intelligence and capacity. This is so much so that it has the capacity to produce the good heart, this altruistic mind, a state of mind, which cherishes the welfare

of other sentient beings. When I think in such terms sometimes I feel that the human mind is really a wonder because of this capacity. We are here and we have this opportunity to generate that mind and participate in a ceremony, which enhances it. It would be very good if you could realize the great fortune yourself in having this opportunity to not only generate and develop admiration for the altruistic mind and good heart. We also have the opportunity to try and at least simulate the experience and generate it.

As stated by one of the great masters that if one's mind clear and sound and if one's heart is good then all the spiritual paths, the grounds and levels that one attains will become good and virtuous. Now this quotation indicates the crucial importance of the good heart and the generation of the altruistic mind. Every human action and every human thought is somehow governed by our way of thinking. If we can train ourselves in generating the good heart as a primary motive of our every action then it will have the power to turn every action and every single word we utter into a virtuous act, into a positive and beneficial act. If you have this fundamental primary motive as the basis of your actions then every single word you utter will be virtuous, gentle and beneficial. Every movement you make every behavior that you adopt and every conduct you engage in will be virtuous, good and beneficial. Therefore what is crucial is to somehow exert all your effort into generating this good heart, that altruistic mind and protecting yourself from fostering ill-feeling, ill-will and harmful intentions towards other sentient beings. Rather you must concentrate, single-pointedly in generating the good heart as the basis for one's motivation.

If we possess this basic faculty, this basic factor of the good heart as the basis of our every motivation then no matter what profession you engage in be it a teacher, a scientist, an economist or a politician. As long as you possess that basic motivating factor then you can transform every action into a positive and beneficial action. Through such concerted effort in these various human activities it is possible to create what we would all call a happy, human society, a happier world. On the other hand if we let this basic motivation of the good heart and kindness lapse, then it is very likely that all these human activities could become destructive or damaging to the very purpose for which they are meant to serve.

Even from a point of view of a non-believer so far as the good heart and altruism is concerned, it is something, which is most beneficial. Its benefits can be extended to every sentient being.

So what we are going to do here in this ceremony is to first of all generate that basic motivation of the good heart and altruism within our mind. Then we will generate the altruistic aspiration to attain a fully enlightened state for the benefit of all sentient beings. We will then take a pledge to generate this mind within ourselves and bring about its realization.

As I pointed out on the first day there are members of the audience who do not consider themselves as practicing Buddhists. So out of the audience those who do not consider themselves to be practicing Buddhists and also those who do not feel committed to take such a pledge for generating bodhicitta, for them there is no need to undertake these contemplations. For you it is enough to develop a certain degree of admiration for the good heart, altruism, and then think from today on I will try to be as kind and good-hearted as possible.

Taking the pledge to enhance the generated mind through ceremony is to first generate bodhicitta and then focusing your attention on that generated mind, you mentally take a pledge that from now on I will never give up this generated mind. This is the actual ceremony.

Although I spoke of the generated mind being enhanced through the ceremony, one must bear in mind that I'm using the term bodhicitta rather loosely. What I am referring to here is that under the present circumstances of participating in such a ceremony and due to other factors like

being in a community of fellow practitioners, it is possible there could be some effect within one's mind. This may lead to some form of slight experience of bodhicitta. Now when I use the term generated mind, I am referring to that because the genuine bodhicitta, the true bodhicitta, for that matter any aspect of the path, comes about as the result of long periods of meditation and practice. For instance in the case of bodhicitta, initially one has to develop an understanding of what bodhicitta is and also one has to develop an understanding of the procedure or the stages of meditation which train one's mind in cultivating bodhicitta. Having developed this understanding, the procedure of training one's mind, then one engages in the practice and at this point one will gain a level of certainty giving oneself the conviction that if one were to undertake the practice, some form of experience will occur. It is at this point that one is said to have developed a certain conviction in one's ability to generate bodhicitta. When this conviction is further reinforced by actually engaging in the practice of training one's mind, then one will get to a stage where as the result of one's long period of practice, a strong experience of having the aspiration or desire to seek the fully enlightened state for the benefit of all sentient beings arises. This is so powerful and forceful but again is not the true or complete bodhicitta as it comes about only if one engages in a meditative session. When one ends such a session that force or intensity is no longer there.

But if one still carries on with one's practice then as you progress along the path finally one reaches a stage where the generation of this altruistic mind does not require any circumstantial conditions like deliberately engaging in a meditation or consciously thinking about suffering sentient beings. Rather the wish to seek the fully enlightened state for the benefit of all sentient beings will come spontaneously as an automatic response towards the perception of other sentient beings' suffering. It is at this point one is said to have realized complete bodhicitta. You are said to have realized genuine bodhicitta, non-simulated genuine bodhicitta.

Fold your hands. As I explained earlier develop a strong determination that you will generate within yourself a good heart and altruistic mind. Motivated by such a good heart and altruistic mind you will spend the remaining part of your life in activities worthy, beneficial and helpful. You will then repeat some verses after me and the verses state that just as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past generated bodhicitta so do you. Due to the power of the merit and the positive imprints you have accumulated in the past, you shall also generate the altruistic aspiration to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. Motivated by that aspiration you will work towards alleviating all sentient beings who are suffering and liberate all those not consciously undergoing suffering but who's minds are stained and polluted by negative emotions and thoughts. You will also lead those who are not free from the obstructions to knowledge to the state of Buddhahood. During the third repetition you should deepen your commitment that you will from now on never abandon the mind which you have generated, this altruistic aspiration. (Recitation of verses in Tibetan)

Having taken the pledge through the ceremony of enhancing bodhicitta one must observe certain precepts. There are four principle precepts, which are design to protect bodhicitta from degeneration during this lifetime. First is that in order to increase one's admiration for bodhicitta and also to increase one's enthusiasm for the practices related to it, one must constantly reflect upon its merits and benefits. The second one is that one must renew or reinforce one's generation of the mind six times in twenty-four hours, three times during the day and three times during the night. The third precept is that since it is sentient beings for whose purpose we have generated bodhicitta, one should never have the thought of abandoning even a single sentient being. One should never abandon the good heart and kind heart towards even a single sentient being. It is possible that in one's day-to-day life one is bound to encounter situations where one loses one's

temper, people might frustrate you and so on. But even in such circumstances what is crucial here is that from the depth of one's heart never to abandon the feeling of compassion and kindness towards other sentient beings, particularly towards the person irritating one. The fourth precept is to exert one's effort in accumulating stores of merit and also increase one's wisdom. Out of these four precepts which are factors that are aimed at protecting one's bodhicitta from degeneration in this lifetime, the third precept which is never to abandon one's good heart, one's altruism towards even a single sentient being is the most important to observe.

There are certain precepts, which one must observe in order to protect oneself from degenerating bodhicitta in future lifetimes. The first one is never to tell lies knowingly. There are exceptional cases where for instance the situation is such that a hunter who is chasing a deer asks you where the deer went. If one tells the truth the deer will be killed and if one doesn't tell the truth, one is lying. Under such a circumstance it is permissible to tell a lie. There are exceptional cases where one has to take into account the consequences of one's actions. But what is important is to come up with a consistent story! (Laughter)

The second precept is to always be honest. The third precept is to always pay equal respect to the Bodhisattvas as you would respect a fully enlightened being thereby developing deep admiration towards Bodhisattvas and praise them. The fourth precept is to always encourage any sentient being you encounter to enable them to uphold their Buddhahood. (Break)

Among the practices that are related with protecting one's bodhicitta from degeneration, the practice of tolerance or patience is one of the most important factors. One's relationship with a person who inflicts harm upon one has the potential of destroying one's good heart and kindness towards others. What is crucial in order to successfully engage in the practice of cultivating tolerance and patience is to first of all realize what are the disadvantages and harmful effects of anger. One also needs to know what the beneficial effects and advantages of cultivating tolerance and patience. By realizing these advantages and disadvantages of anger and its opposite tolerance or patience, this will allow one to reach a point where one will encourage oneself to increase the force of tolerance and decrease the force and power of anger within oneself.

One of the most beneficial effects of cultivating tolerance and patience is that they will protect one's own mental calmness and peace of mind from being disturbed. Even though a very hostile environment might surround the individual if the person has the practice of tolerance and patience their mental peace and calmness of mind can not be disturbed. Not only this in future lives the effects of practicing tolerance and patience is manifest in terms of having greater courage, determination and strength of will.

Just as the *Bodhicaryavatara* states that there can never be a person who is angry and at the same time happy, the moment anger dominates one's mind there is no room for peace of mind, for happiness. It will destroy one's calmness; it will destroy one's peace of mind. Also even though a person might be normally quite gentle in character, quite gentle in nature, calm and peaceful, but the moment they lose their temper and become angry, at that point the person almost becomes totally uncontrolled. It is at that point that the person might engage in any action, might make any decision, which could be very damaging, or something that they will regret once the anger passes. Therefore anger also has the great destructive power to destroy even one's own closest friendships. So not only does anger destroy one's own peace of mind and happiness but also it destroys the happiness and peace of mind of your companions, those around you. As a result it creates a great deal of conflict and makes one's life miserable. Most importantly as a result of generating anger in one's mind it can manifest in actions, which are potentially very harmful. For instance the person might even go to the extreme of taking the life of another person. These types of actions, which are

very negative and destructive, will leave strong negative imprints on one's mind, the consequences of which will be taking rebirth in the lower realms of existence in the future.

When one encounters adverse circumstances, circumstances that are tragic which cause suffering upon us, one should think whether the situation is such that something can be done about it or not. Can it be overcome? Is there a way out of it? If one realizes that there is a way out of it then there is no need to be depressed, there is no need to worry about it. On the other hand if through investigation one realizes that there is no way out of it, there is no solution to the problem, no possibility of resolving the situation, then there is no point in being depressed or worried about it. One should think in such terms.

Also one should think that the normal, immediate reaction to such adverse circumstances, one's instinctive reaction is to blame the person who perpetrates or inflicts that harm. One should reexamine the validity of one's instinctive reaction towards such circumstances because if the reason why one feels angry towards the person who inflicted the harm, it is the person who is seen as the cause of the suffering. Why should one be particularly angry towards that person and hold that person responsible? If a person causes one the harm directly by hitting one with a stick, it is the weapon used that one should hold responsible. If one holds the person responsible because they are the indirect cause then one should hold the delusions, the hatred in that person's mind which motivated that person uncontrollably against their control, responsible for inflicting harm upon one. One should view the delusion or hatred in the mind of that person as responsible rather the person. So out of these three factors which cause that harm, the immediate cause (the weapon), the indirect cause (the delusion in the mind) and then the agent (the person holding the weapon), why does one discriminate and particularly hold the person alone responsible? By thinking along such lines one will be able to reduce the intensity of one's anger and hatred towards a person doing one harm. From all these various perspectives or angles one can contemplate so that one will be able to somehow take a precautionary stance or measure that can prevent the arising of depression or unhappiness which is in fact the fuel that induces feelings of anger and hatred.

The practices associated with cultivating tolerance and patience as explained in the sixth chapter of the *Bodhicaryavatara* are truly remarkable, something very admirable. Also the steps of reflection, the stages of contemplation which are mentioned in the sixth chapter are really remarkable and in fact they lay the firm foundation for the subsequent practice of bodhicitta. The training of one's mind in equalizing and exchanging oneself for others is explained in the eighth chapter. It is in the sixth chapter that a firm foundation is laid for allowing that subsequent practice to be possible.

Next follows the three chapters of the seventh, eighth and ninth which deal with practices related to enhancing the generation of bodhicitta in the mind. The first among these three chapters is the chapter on enthusiasm or perseverance. Perseverance or enthusiasm is a joyous effort which if one lacks it then no subsequent realizations of the path are possible whereas if one possesses this faculty then it will lead one to the attainment of higher realizations. So this faculty of perseverance or enthusiasm is very crucial.

In talking about the practice of perseverance or enthusiasm what is crucial is to be able to agitate the practice in a very skillful way. When engaged in the practice, to be very intense at one point and then very lax at another point is not wise. Rather one's enthusiasm and perseverance should be continuous; constant so that it is like an expression that one's enthusiasm should be so constant and continuous like a stream of water. The basic source from which one will be able to draw increasing inspiration to improve one's enthusiasm and perseverance is the realization or the awareness of the presence of Buddhature within the mental continuum of all sentient beings. If

we on our part make the necessary initiative then we possess the seed or potential to bring about the full realization of Buddhahood within ourselves. So far as the possession of that faculty is concerned we are equal with all sentient beings. Through such awareness and reflection one must be able to protect oneself from self-discouragement because a lack of self-confidence, thinking “At my level of realization or development what can I do? I am totally incapacitated” that type of thinking is most detrimental to one’s progress on the spiritual path. In order to successfully engage in the path leading to the fully enlightened state, what is crucial is to have a tremendous amount of self-confidence, confidence in one’s own capacity and ability to succeed.

One should think that all the Buddhas of the past were initially like oneself, full of sentient beings’ weaknesses, faults, delusions and afflictive emotions. But the only difference on their part is that through their own effort and initiative, they embarked on a spiritual path which eventually led them to the state of full enlightenment. Therefore on our part if we also make a similar effort and take the initiative and embark on a similar path, we also possess the potential that we lead us eventually to the attainment of the fully enlightened state. One must think along such lines.

Next I will make some comments on the eighth chapter, the chapter on meditation or concentration. It is in this chapter that the actual practice of the stages of training in developing bodhicitta is explained.

Meditation or concentration here refers to a state where the practitioner has attained a certain degree of single-pointedness of the mind. What is being aimed at here is to somehow train a faculty which already exists within one’s mental factors. If we examine our minds, we will find within our mental continuum that we possess a faculty of mind, which allows us to somehow retain attention on to a chosen object. Through a lack of training, through a lack of cultivating this faculty and developing it to its fullest potential, we are incapable of, we are unable to maintain that attention on to the chosen object for a long period of time. What is being aimed for here through the practice of meditation or concentration is to somehow develop this faculty so that we will be able to maintain our attention on to a chosen object for a very prolonged period of time in a single-pointed equipoise. This is the aim here.

Now to give an example. For instance when we talk about bringing about a realization of great compassion, universal compassion within us, what we are talking about is a development of a potential, which already exists within us. It is our natural capacity to empathize with other sentient beings in suffering and their problems. Although at the ordinary level that capacity to empathize is slightly mixed with attachment or a feeling of intimacy or closeness. Still there is a sort of natural empathy, a natural capacity that enables us to empathize with others’ sufferings and others’ problems. Now when we are training in cultivating great compassion what we are trying to accomplish is to somehow develop this pre-existing faculty to its fullest potential so that our capacity to empathize with others’ sufferings will become universal, unbiased and equal towards all sentient beings. This is the meaning of realizing great compassion. Similarly in training one’s mind in cultivating meditative states what we are doing is somehow developing the basis, the seed that already exists within our minds.

A state of single-pointedness of mind possesses two main characteristics, these are that at that stage one must be able to somehow maintain one’s attention single-pointedly on the object of meditation, abiding as it is called. Then at the same time the image of the object must be vivid, not only that but subjectively there must be clarity on the part of the experience. These two characteristics, the ability to abide and a vivid clarity of the object, must be present.

Since these two qualities must be present in a proper meditative state of mind, the ability to abide and to have vivid clarity of the chosen object. Therefore there are two main mental factors

which are reserved as the greatest obstacles that hinder one's cultivation of the faculty of single-pointedness. One of these obstacles is mental distraction, in general terms, and then specifically mental excitement, which deviates one's mind from the chosen object on to objects of desire. It is this mental distraction in general and particularly mental excitement, which destroys one's ability to abide on a chosen object therefore it, must be overcome. Since clarity and vividness of the image of the object is a necessary condition for a stable meditative state, the factor that obstructs this quality is known as mental sinking. Therefore these two obstacles, mental sinking and mental excitement or distraction must be overcome.

These two obstacles, mental excitement and sinking come about as a result of certain states of mind. If one's mind is too alert, if the alertness is excessive or one's state of mind is too high, at that point mental excitement comes in. On the other hand if one's mind is too low and if one feels mentally down then mental sinking creeps in. In the morning when we are fresh we feel very alert and in the evening when we feel exhausted, mentally you feel run down. At that point there is a danger of mental sinking coming in. Therefore by understanding how mental sinking and mental excitement arise one should be able to somehow in one's meditation maintain a sort of equilibrium where one's mental state is not too excited nor at the same time too low or down. One needs to find that middle point, find this equilibrium.

The training of one's mind and cultivating such single-pointedness of mind in a meditative state is being undertaken at the level of the gross mind and the gross mind contains mental states which are intimately linked with the states of one's physiological body. Therefore it is recommended for the practitioners to seek a very appropriate environment and place in which to practice. The altitude, the environment where one meditates and all such external factors make a difference on one's ability to meditate. One's physical health and the time of day, as one is fresher in the morning, also play a role. Judging upon all these various factors, one should seek whatever is the most appropriate time, place and environment where one can successfully begin to engage in meditation leading to the cultivation of single-pointedness.

As for the object of meditation in cultivating single-pointedness of the mind, one can take any object for one's meditation. In fact at the initial stage at the very gross level and in fact for some certain people it might be quite a skillful means or an effective method to have an image of something in front of you. Although in reality where meditation or concentration is cultivated at the level of mental consciousness not at the sensory consciousness at the initial stage, it is helpful to have something in front of you as the object of your visual perception. Then by single-pointedly gazing at it through your visual perception and letting your mind immediately follow whatever image is registered through your visual perception, to single-pointedly place your attention on to the image registered through your visual perception. It is possible to arrive through meditation at a stage where your visual perception will no longer have any effect on your mental attention or consciousness. You might be able to arrive at a point where whatever comes into your visual field becomes totally irrelevant as you have already transcended that level to a level where your image of meditation, the object of the meditation is retained only in the form of an image which is perceptible only to your mental consciousness. So it is possible to cultivate single-pointedness of mind by first using your visual perception gazing at an object in front of you, be it a flower or any other object. There are also other simpler objects of meditation for instance like focusing on one's own mind, take your own mind as the object of meditation and then cultivate single-pointedness focussed on that.

If you are taking mind as the object of meditation to cultivate single-pointedness of your mind then what is crucial is to first identify the object of meditation. Generally speaking when you

talk of mind you can use the term quite easily but when it comes to actually identifying what it is, it is quite a difficult task. It is almost impossible, as it is in our ordinary existence to really have an experience of what mind is because our normal, ordinary existence is characterized by constant following after our sensory impressions. Most of our mental states are dominated by thoughts, perceptions and experiences which somehow follow after powerful impressions that we get through the senses. This is so much so that one could almost say that we have forgotten what it is to actually feel the mental experience. So what is required is to somehow adopt a stance or position so that you would be able to engage in a meditative session where you temporarily prevent the arising of all past recollections or what you have done. At the same time you need to prevent any arising of thoughts, which pertain to future events, anticipations, hopes, plans and so forth, rather you must be totally present. Through this way we will be able to somehow withdraw our mind from being totally driven away outwardly by our sense impressions and at that point we will be able to experience a vacuity between the interval point, between having successfully prevented the arising of thoughts pertaining to past events and successfully prevented arising of thoughts related to future events. In this midpoint we will be able to experience a sense of vacuity. If we constantly carry on with our meditation practice, somehow prolong that experience then gradually we will be able to have some form of subjective experience of what is meant by mere subjectivity which is in the nature of experience. We will also have an inkling of an experience of what is meant by clarity and awareness, knowing, mere luminosity. Through this way we will be able to identify what is mind.

By prolonging the experience of the interval point, the experience of vacuity through constant practice and meditation and by also preventing the arising of mental excitement and mental sinking along with the application of mindfulness, one is able to maintain the single-pointedness on the object in this context for a period of one-sixth of a day. It is at this point that the practitioner is said to have attained single-pointedness of mind in a meditative state.

Once you have arrived at this point where you are able to retain your single-pointedness of mind on a chosen object in meditation for a period of four hours, then again by further meditation on the chosen object one arrives at a point where the ability to retain the single-pointedness becomes stabilized. One's experience of this single-pointedness becomes complimented with the factor of mental suppleness, physical and mental suppleness which makes both one's body and mind serviceable. It is at this point that the practitioner is said to have attained what is technically known as samatha or calm-abiding. When one still further meditates and practices the experience of samatha or calm-abiding can become conjoined with special insight and this leads to the attainment of the first level of concentration. As the subtlety of one's concentration increases then one transcends from the first level of concentration up to the fourth level, which is followed by another four stages of increasing subtlety. These are technically known as the Four Levels of Formless States of Mind; Limitless Space, Limitless Consciousness, Voidness and Peak of Existence. The level of mental consciousness at the Peak of Existence is said to be so subtle but at this point there is a side-effect to it, which is a loss of intensity and clarity. It is because of those that Highest Yoga Tantra techniques are said to surpass the meditative techniques of the Sutra tradition as in Highest Yoga Tantra. As the subtle states of mind are brought about by inducing great bliss within one's mental continuum, as the subtlety increases the consciousness instead of losing its intensity and clarity increases its power to cognize and increases its power of clarity and vividness. This is the unique advantage of using the meditative techniques of Highest Yoga Tantra.

As for meditative states there seem to be many different types of meditative states. One finds mention of different types of meditative states in the Theravada literature, the Lesser Vehicle

and also one finds a multitude of meditative states mentioned in the Mahayana Sutras and the tantric literature. Now there is time for some questions.

Question: What practices do you recommend for preschool children?

Answer: I don't know. Teachers would need to judge what is appropriate to be taught. What is important is to be kind and gentle towards the children.

Question: You said that we need to accept scientific fact. If we really doubt that fact, do we have to? For instance a long time ago we were told that the earth was flat and that the earth was the center of the universe, science was wrong. Might it not be wrong again?

Answer: As for the question of whether Mount Meru exists as the center of the universe or not, I don't know if it is something proven to be false by science or whether it is something science has not observed. What is clear is that in the *Abhidharmakosa* it mentions the distances between the earth and the sun and moon. If one compares those distances with the modern scientific calculations then there is a disparity between the two. The distance from the earth to the moon and sun has been verified precisely and since it contradicts the account given by Vasubandhu I can definitely say that the account in the *Abhidharmakosa* can not be accepted as valid.

For example I showed a photograph of the earth taken from on the moon and showed it to several Tibetan lamas who commented that perhaps they landed somewhere on Mount Meru. Personally I don't think we Buddhists should be so narrow-minded, we should be broad-minded. Whether or not there is a Mount Meru does not make any difference to Buddhists.

Question: Could you please give advice or suggestions on how we utilize daily practice in our lives?

Answer: As I explained earlier that what is crucial is to first thing in the morning cultivate a good motivation and a determination to spend the day in a beneficial way. One then engages in whatever work it is that you do with this motivation and outlook and try to be as helpful and beneficial towards other sentient beings. Maybe this is how one could make one's life most worthy.

The Kadampa masters also recommend one practice that before you go to bed you review your actions and thoughts during the day and see how much of it was according to the Dharma and how much against Dharma. This form of habit and practice is very remarkable. I think the true significance of counting beads is not to just to count mantras but rather to count your positive thoughts and actions. Otherwise if it were just to count mantras it would be just wearing down your nails. There is an expression, the implication of which is if you lack the right motivation then reciting mantras and counting beads would not help. The expression runs that instead of exhausting your negativities you wear down your fingernails. I can't claim to have counted mantras to the point where my nails have been worn off but I can definitely tell you that I've counted mantras to the point where my fingers begin to feel uncomfortable.

Question: When people hear of luminosity or clear light that dawns at the moment of death, they ask why is it called clear light? What has it to do with light, as we know it?

Answer: I don't think that the term clear light should be taken literally, it is more metaphoric. This could have its roots in our terminology of the mental realm. For instance according to Buddhism all consciousness or all cognitive and mental events are said to be of the nature of clarity and luminosity. It is from this point of view that the choice of term "light" is used. Also because the clear light is the subtlest level of mind which can be seen as the basis or the

source from which the eventual realization of Buddhahood comes about, therefore it is called clear light. Because clear light is a state of mind which becomes fully manifest only as a consequence of several stages of dissolution where the mind becomes devoid of certain types of obscurations which are described in terms of darkness, this experience of dissolution is metaphorically described in terms of sunlight or moonlight. The earlier three stages of dissolution are technically called including the clear light, the Four Empties. So at the final stage of dissolution the mind is totally free of all the factors of obscuration therefore it is called clear light. The terminology clear light is explained in this way in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*.

It is also possible to understand the meaning of the usage of the term clear light in terms of the nature of mind itself. Mind or consciousness is a phenomenon, which lacks any obstructive quality, it is non-obstructive.

Question: For a Western person with a materialistic, scientific education are there any examples which would be good arguments for reincarnation?

Answer: The main grounds on which Buddhists accept the concept of rebirth must be understood in terms of the continuum of consciousness. For instance in the case of the continuum of the material world according to Buddhism all the elements of the macroscopic world of the universe can be traced in terms of their origin back to an initial point when all the elements of the material universe were condensed into what were technically known as space particles. These in turn are the consequent state of a disintegration of an earlier universe. There is a constant cycle of a universe evolving, disintegrating, dissolving and then coming into being again. All the material elements of the macroscopic universe can be traced in terms of their origin to the space particles.

Similarly the fact that we possess something called consciousness, mind, is quite obvious to us, it is our own experience testifies to its presence. It is also evident to us from our own experience that what is called mind or consciousness is something that is subject to change when exposed to different conditions and circumstances. It shows the nature of momentariness, shows the nature of being susceptible to change. Among what we call consciousness or the mind, the gross levels of mind are intimately linked or dependent upon the physiological states of the body. This is very evident. However there must be some basis, some energy or some source, which interacts with the material particles and is capable of producing conscious living beings. This according to Buddhism must have its own continuum. So if you trace the continuum of our present consciousness, our mind, then just like with the material universe it can be traced back infinitely, beginninglessly. Therefore there must be successive rebirths, which allows the continuous chain to be present.

Also given that Buddhists believe in a universal causation, that everything is subject to change, causes and conditions, therefore there is no place for a divine creator, no place for a necessary being who is self-created. Everything rather comes into being as a consequence of causes and conditions. Therefore consciousness or mind must also come into being as a result of earlier instances. So when we talk of causes and conditions there are two principal types of causes. These are the substantial cause, the stuff from which something is produced and cooperative factors, which contribute towards this causation. In the case of mind and body, mind and matter, although one can be the cooperative factor the other but one can not be the substantial cause of the other as Dharmakirti states in his *Pramanavarttika* [*Compendium of Valid Cognition*]. Mind and matter, although dependent upon each other cannot serve as a substantial cause of the other; one can not turn into the other.

On these bases Buddhists accept rebirth. Also we come across a number of situations where there are people who vividly recollect their experiences in previous lives. When it comes to talking

about existence or non-existence even a single example is enough. But in order to prove the existence of something, a phenomenon even a single example is also enough. In order to prove the non-existence of something one example is not enough. So it is on these grounds that Buddhists argue for rebirth.

In a sense given the two choices between not accepting rebirth and accepting rebirth, the earlier position seems to leave less questions unanswered and mysterious whereas if one does not accept the phenomenon of rebirth, it leaves so many unanswered questions. From a practical point of view, there isn't really any point to be worked up over trying to prove the phenomenon of rebirth. For example in my case, I'm a person who explicitly maintains that it is better to have a multitude of religions, a diversity of religious traditions. This implies that it is better to have a greater number of people with a diversity of opinions and it is better to have many people who do not essentially believe in rebirth. (End of day three)

Day Four

Today is the last day for the preliminary teachings to the Kalachakra empowerment ceremony. Today I will conduct the ceremony for conferring the Bodhisattva Vows. As for the actual ritual for conducting the ceremony for the conferring of Bodhisattva Vows, according to the Sakya tradition there are two major systems of undertaking such a ritual. First is the system that follows the tradition of the Madhyamika School and the second that follows the Cittamatra or Mind-Only School. Today's ceremony will be based on the system of Asanga which is the school of Mind-Only and the text on which the ceremony will be based is a text composed by Asanga called *Bodhisattva Grounds* or the *Bodhisattvabhumi* in Sanskrit. The sequences of visualizations and the stages of meditation mentioned there is quite extensive and also quite good for performing the visualizations.

The ritual for the actual ceremony is composed of three parts, these being the preliminary practices, the actual ceremony and the concluding rites. The preliminary practices begin with making request to the guru. You will be doing several repetitions of some sentences the meaning of which is that first one calls out for the attention of the master. One then states one's name with a prefix of "I, so-and-so Child of the Family", Family here referring to the family of the Buddhas. One states that since you have the desire and wish to take the Bodhisattva vows if there are no obstacles that would interfere in one's taking the vows and if favorable circumstances are complete then please grant the Bodhisattva Vows. With these in mind, repeat after me. (Verses in Tibetan)

The second part of the preliminary practices is that the guru asks several questions. The significance of this is to determine whether there exist on the part of the students any adverse conditions, which would obstruct or hinder the student's receiving the Bodhisattva Vows properly. Principle among the adverse conditions is the self-centered motivation and attitude. If someone's primary intention for taking the Bodhisattva Vows is a self-centered attitude, thinking that if one attains the fully enlightened state one will be totally free from all sufferings, dissatisfaction and delusions, such an attitude and motivation is totally inappropriate. What is required on the part of the student is the altruistic aspiration, that it is for the benefit of all sentient beings that one seeks the state of Buddhahood. For this purpose one takes the vow. So the guru asks if one has the wish to free those sentient beings who are bound in the cycle of existence. Does one have the wish to assist those who are on the path to attain the fully enlightened state? So these question will be asked.

The first question is, "O disciples listen to me. Is your intention of taking the Bodhisattva Vows to assist those sentient beings who are not free from obscurations to knowledge to enable them to attain that freedom?" For example the Arhats, although they have obtained liberation from cyclic existence, they still possess obstructions to knowledge, full knowledge. When I ask you the question, "Do you wish so?" reply by saying that you do, *dur la*.

The second question is, "Do you wish to help those who are bound in the cycle of existence to be free from the binding factors, afflictive emotions and thoughts?" The third question is, "Do you wish to help those sentient beings who let alone are not free from obstructions to knowledge and also not free from the bondage of cyclic existence. But rather because of their being under the total domination of deluded states of mind, they indulge in actions which are negative and harmful and as a result they are living a state of existence which is totally characterized by undesirable experiences such as pain, suffering, dissatisfaction and so on. Do you wish to lead them from their suffering?"

The fourth question is, “In short do you have the aspiration to seek the liberation of all sentient beings, place them in the state of highest enlightenment and by becoming a bodhisattva do you wish to insure that the Buddha’s lineage always remains present?” Next the guru asks the question, “Are you taking these vows in order to compete with someone?” One responds by, this is not the case, me lam. The next question is “Are you taking these Bodhisattva Vows under duress?” I hope the answer is negative.

The next series of questions are asked since the main sources in the literature from which the practices of Bodhisattva ideals and principles are taught are in the collection of sutras known as Domba peboche (?). Among the commentarial literature the principal work on the Bodhisattva Vows is Asanga’s *Bodhisattvabhumi*. The guru asks if you familiar with this literature. At least have you heard a summary of the main Bodhisattva Vows? Do you have some understanding of these? Do you have an admiration in the Bodhisattva ideals and practices? Do you have the desire and the will to engage in such practices?

The guru then advises you that since on your part these conditions and factors are complete therefore you should now reinforce your enthusiasm for taking the vows and also rejoice in the fact that you have this opportunity. I will read from the twenty verses on the Bodhisattva Vows symbolizing exposition on the eighteen root vows and forty-six secondary vows of bodhisattvas. Those who are already familiar with the practice are aware that there are translations of these Bodhisattva Vows in English. The Bodhisattva Vows can be taken directly from a guru, a living person, which has the advantage of inspiring one and increasing one’s enthusiasm as well as conscientiousness. If it is difficult to find a qualified teacher from whom one can take the Bodhisattva Vows then the Bodhisattva Vows can be taken on one’s own in front of a representation of a Buddha.

There is a principal difference between Bodhisattva Vows on the one hand and the Pratimoksa, which are monastic vows and tantric vows on the other hand. The principal difference being that in the case of Bodhisattva Vows, prior to taking Bodhisattva Vows, the practitioner can study and read about the Bodhisattva Vows and decide whether or not they will take the vows. In the case of Pratimoksa Vows which are the monastic vows and the tantric vows prior to trying to actual take the vows, one is not allowed to study in detail all the precepts.

There is also another major difference between Pratimoksa Vows, including the layperson’s vows on the one hand and Bodhisattva Vows and tantric vows on the other. In the case of Pratimoksa Vows, Individual Liberation Vows, they are something that if you have already taken the vows and you confront a situation or find yourself under circumstances where you can no longer abide by the precepts you have taken, the system allows for you to return the vows, revoke the vows you have taken. In the case of Bodhisattva and tantric vows since when you took the vows you took all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in all the directions as witnesses to the actual taking of the vows and since you developed the determination to hold them until all sentient beings are placed in the state of full enlightenment, therefore once you have taken them you can not give them back.

But if in spite of having taken the Bodhisattva Vows you confront a situation where you have transgressed one of the root vows then it is possible through certain practices to restore the broken vows. In the case of the Pratimoksa Vows if you have broken one of the cardinal precepts of the vows then there is no possibility of restoring it.

In the following verse the essence of the Bodhisattva Vows or Practices is summed up. It states that if the action is such that by engaging in it if there is benefits both during the actual execution of the act and in the long term then it is an act the Bodhisattva practitioners must

definitely engage in. This includes the appropriate motivation as well. On the other hand if it is an act which when engaged in is harmful and uncomfortable but brings long term benefit and happiness then it is an act Bodhisattvas when confronted with the choice must engage in. If an act which when actually engaged in is not only harmful but also has long term destructive consequences then that is definitely an act which the Bodhisattva practitioner must avoid. Similarly if it is an act which when engaged in although has temporary benefits but in the long term its consequences are highly destructive and negative then Bodhisattvas if confronted with a choice must avoid engaging in such an action. This sums up the essence of the Bodhisattva Vows. (Recites verses in Tibetan)

Next is the accumulation of merit and this will be done on the basis of the Seven-Limb practice. Today I thought it might be good to do the recitation from the *Bodhicaryavatara*. The translation of the two chapters has been distributed. When you recite the text, as I mentioned yesterday, visualize in front of you all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, the Lineage Masters of the past and yourself surrounded by sentient beings. Reinforce your faith, conviction and admiration for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and reinforce your compassionate attitude towards all sentient beings. Also reinforce your determination to generate bodhicitta for the sake of all sentient beings. With these in mind then recite from the text.

Chapter II *Bodhicaryavatara*

In order to seize that precious mind
I offer now to the Tathagatas,
To the sacred Dharma, the stainless jewel,
And to the Sons of Buddha, the oceans of excellence,

Whatever flowers and fruits there are
And whatever kinds of medicine,
Whatever jewels exist in this world
And whatever clean refreshing waters;

Likewise gem-encrusted mountains,
Forest groves, quiet and joyful places,
Heavenly trees bedecked with flowers
And trees with fruit-laden branches;

Fragrances of the celestial realms,
Incense, wishing trees and jewel trees,
Uncultivated harvests, and all ornaments
That are worthy to be offered;

Lakes and pools adorned with lotuses
And the beautiful cry of wild geese,
Everything unowned
Within the limitless spheres of space.

Creating these things in my mind I offer them
To the supreme beings, the Buddhas, as well as their Sons;

O Compassionate Ones, think kindly of me
And accept these offerings of mine.

Having no merit I am destitute
And I have no other gifts to offer,
O Protectors, you who think of helping others,
By your power accept these for my sake.

Eternally shall I offer all my bodies
To the Conquerors and their Sons.
Please accept me, you Supreme Heroes,
Respectfully shall I be your subject.

Through being completely under your care
I shall benefit all with no fears of conditioned existence;
I shall perfectly transcend my previous evils
And in the future shall commit no more.

To very sweetly scented bathing chambers
With brilliantly sparkling crystal floors
And exquisite pillars ablaze with gems,
Having canopies above aglow with pearls,

I beseech the Tathagatas and their Sons
To come and bathe their bodies
From many jeweled vases filled with waters scented and enticing,
To the accompaniment of music and song.

Let me dry their bodies with incomparable cloths
Clean and well-anointed with scent,
And then may I present these Holy Beings
With fragrant garments of suitable colors.

I adorn with manifold ornaments
And various raiment fine and smooth,
The Aryas Samantabhadra, Manjughosha
Avalokiteshvara and all the others.

Just like polishing pure, refined gold
Do I anoint the Buddhas' forms that blaze with light
With the choicest perfumes whose fragrance permeates
A thousand million worlds.

And to the highest objects of giving I offer
Beautiful, well-arranged garlands,
As well as enchanting, sweet smelling flowers,

Such as lily, jasmine and lotus blooms.

Also I send forth clouds of incense
Whose sweet aroma steals away the mind,
As well as celestial delicacies
Including a variety of food and drinks.

I offer them jeweled lamps
Arranged on golden lotus buds;
Upon land sprinkled with scented water
Do I scatter delicate flower petals.

To those who have the nature of compassion
I offer palaces resounding with melodious hymns,
Exquisitely illuminated by hanging pearls and gems
That adorn the infinities of space.

Eternally shall I offer to all the Buddhas
Jeweled umbrellas with golden handles
And exquisite ornaments embellishing the rims,
Standing erect, their shapes beautiful to behold.

And in addition may a mass of offerings
Resounding with sweet and pleasing music,
(Like) clouds that appease the misery of all,
Each remains (for as long as necessary).

And may a continuous rain
Of flowers and precious gems descend
Upon the reliquaries and the statues,
And upon all the jewels of the Dharma.

In the same way as Manjughosha and others
Have made offerings to the Conquerors,
Similarly do I bestow gifts upon the Tathagatas,
The Protectors, their Sons and all.

I glorify the Oceans of Excellence
With limitless verses of harmonious praise;
May these clouds of gentle eulogy
Constantly ascend to their presence.

With bodies as numerous
As all the atoms within the universe,
I prostrate to all the Buddhas of the three times,
The Dharma and the Supreme Community.

Likewise I prostrate to all reliquaries,
To the bases of an Awakening Mind,
To all learned abbots and masters
And to all the noble practitioners.

I seek refuge in all Buddhas
Until I possess the essence of Awakening,
Likewise I seek refuge in Dharma
And in the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

With folded hands I beseech
The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Who possess the great compassion
And reside in all directions.

Throughout beginningless cyclic existence
In this life and in others,
Unknowingly I committed evil deeds
And ordered them to be done (by others).

Overwhelmed by the deceptions of ignorance
I rejoiced in what was done,
But now seeing these mistakes
From my heart I declare them to the Buddhas.

Whatever harmful acts of body, speech and mind
I have done in a disturbed mental state,
Towards the Three Jewels of Refuge,
My parents, my spiritual masters and others;

And all the grave wrongs done by me,
So thoroughly evil and polluted
By an abundance of faults,
I openly declare to the Guides of the World.

But I may well perish
Before all my evils have been purified;
So please protect me in such a way
As will swiftly and surely free me from them.

The untrustworthy Lord of Death
Waits not for things to be done or undone;
Whether I am sick or healthy.
This fleeting lifespan is unstable.

Leaving all I must depart alone.
But through not having understood this
I committed various kinds of evil
For the sake of my friends and foes.

My foes will become nothing.
My friends will become nothing.
I too will become nothing.
Likewise all will become nothing.

Just like a dream experience,
Whatever things I enjoy
Will become a memory.
Whatever has passed will not be seen again.

Even within this brief life
Many friends and foes have passed,
But whatever unbearable evil I committed for them
Remains ahead of me.

Thereby, through not having realized
That I shall suddenly vanish,
I committed so much evil
Out of ignorance, lust and hate.

Remaining neither day nor night,
Life is always slipping by
And never getting any longer,
Why will death not come to one like me?

While I am lying in bed,
Although surrounded by my friends and relatives,
The feeling of life being severed
Will be experienced by me alone.

When seized by the messengers of death,
What benefit will friends and relatives afford?
My merit alone shall protect me then,
But upon that I have never relied.

O Protectors! I, so unconcerned,
Unaware of such terror as this,
Accumulated a great deal of evil
For the sake of this transient life.

Petrified is the person

Today being led to a torture chamber.
With dry mouth and dreadful sunken eyes,
His entire appearance is transfigured.

What need to mention the tremendous despair
When stricken with the disease of great panic,
Being clasped by the physical forms
Of the frightful messengers of death?

“Who can afford me real protection
From this great horror?”
With terrified, bulging eyes agape
I shall search the four quarters for refuge.

But seeing no refuge there
I shall become enveloped in gloom.
If there should be no protection there,
Then what shall I be able to do?

Therefore I now seek refuge
In the Buddhas who protect the world,
Who strive to shelter all that lives
And with great strength eradicate all fear.

Likewise I purely seek refuge
In the Dharma they have realized
That clears away the fears of cyclic existence,
And also in the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

I, trembling with fear,
Offer myself to Samantabhadra;
To Manjughosha also
I make a gift of my body.

To the Protector Avalokiteshvara
Who infallibly acts with compassion,
I utter a mournful cry,
“Please protect this evil-doer!”

In my search for a refuge
I cry from my heart
For Akashagarbha, Ksitigarbha
And all the Compassionate Protectors.

And I seek refuge in Vajrapani,
Upon the sight of whom all harmful beings

Such as the messengers of death
Flee in terror to the four quarters.

Previously I transgressed you advice,
But now upon seeing this great fear
I go to you for refuge.
By doing so may this fear be swiftly cleared away.

If I need to comply with a doctor's advice
When frightened by a common illness,
Then how much more so when perpetually diseased
By the manifold evils of desire and so forth.

And if all people dwelling on this earth
Can be overcome by just one of these,
And if no other medicine to cure them
Is to be found elsewhere in the universe,

Then the intention not to act in accordance
With the advice of the All-Knowing Physicians
That can uproot every misery,
Is extremely bewildered and worthy of scorn.

If I need to be careful
Near a small, ordinary precipice,
Then how much more so near one of long duration
That drops for a thousand miles.

It is inappropriate to enjoy myself
Thinking that today alone I shall not die,
For inevitably the time will come
When I shall become nothing.

Who can grant me fearlessness?
How can I be surely freed from this?
If I shall inevitably become nothing,
How can I relax and enjoy myself?

What remains with me now
From the terminated experiences of the past?
But through my great attachment to them
I have been going against my spiritual masters' advice.

Having departed from this life
And from all my friends and relatives,
If all alone I must go elsewhere

What is the use of making friends and enemies?

“How can I be surely freed
From unwholesomeness, the source of misery?”
Continually night and day
Should I only consider this.

Whatever has been done by me
Through ignorance and unknowing,
Be it the breaking of a vow
Or a deed by nature wrong,

I humbly confess it all
In the presence of the Protectors,
With folded hands, prostrating myself again and again,
My mind terrified by the misery (to come).

I beseech all the Guides of the World
To please accept my evils and wrongs,
Since these are not good,
In the future I shall do them no more.

Chapter III *Bodhicaryavatara*

Gladly do I rejoice
In the virtue that relieves the misery
Of all those in unfortunate states
And that places those with suffering in happiness

I rejoice in that gathering of virtue
That is the cause for (the Arhat's) Awakening,
I rejoice in the definite freedom of embodied creatures
From the miseries of cyclic existence.

I rejoice in the Awakening of the Buddhas
And also in the spiritual levels of their Sons.

And with gladness I rejoice
In the ocean of virtue from developing an Awakening Mind
That wishes all beings to be happy,
As well as in deeds that bring them benefit.

With folded hands I beseech
The Buddhas of all directions,
To shine the lamp of Dharma
For all bewildered in misery's gloom.

With folded hands I beseech
The Conquerors who wish to pass away,
To please remain for countless eons
And not to leave the world in darkness.

Thus by the virtue collected
Through all that I have done,
May the pain of every living creature
Be completely cleared away.

May I be the doctor and the medicine
And may I be the nurse
For all sick beings in the world
Until everyone is healed.

May a rain of food and drink descend
To clear away the pain of thirst and hunger
And during the eon of famine
May I myself change into food and drink.

May I become an inexhaustible treasure
For those who are poor and destitute;
May I turn into all things they could need
And may these be placed close beside them.

Without any sense of loss
I shall give up my body and enjoyments
As well as all my virtues of the three times
For the sake of benefiting all.

By giving up all, sorrow is transcended
And my mind will realize the sorrowless state.
It is best that I (now) give everything to all beings
In the same way as I shall (at death).

Having given this body up
For the pleasure of all living beings,
By killing, abusing and beating it
May they always do as they please.

Although they may play with my body
And make it a source of jest and blame,
Because I have given it up to them
What is the use of holding it dear?

Therefore I shall let them do anything to it
That does not cause them harm,
And when anyone encounters me
May it never be meaningless for him.

If in those who encounter me
A faithful or an angry thought arises,
May that eternally become the source
For fulfilling all their wishes.

May all who say bad things to me
Or cause me any other harm,
And those who mock and insult me
Have the fortune to fully awaken.

May I be a protector for those without one,
A guide for all travelers on the way;
May I be a bridge, a boat and a ship
For all who wish to cross (the water).

May I be an island for those who seek one
And a lamp for those desiring light,
May I be a bed for all who wish to rest
And a slave for all whom want a slave.

May I be a wishing jewel, a magic vase,
Powerful mantras and great medicine,
May I become a wish-fulfilling tree
And a cow of plenty for the world.

Just like space
And the great elements such as earth,
May I always support the life
Of all the boundless creatures.

And until they pass away from pain
May I also be the source of life
For all the realms of varied beings
That reaches unto the ends of space.

Just as Santideva mentions in these verses, particularly the verse:

Just like space
And the great elements such as earth,
May I always support the life
Of all the boundless creatures.

This is the type of aspiration that the Bodhisattvas generate and pray that just as the elements earth, space and so forth always remain and support the lives of all sentient beings in the universe, similarly they make aspirational prayers to serve all sentient beings. We also find a similar voice in Nagarjuna's writings as well where he has an aspirational prayer to the effect that may he be able to serve all sentient beings continuously and eternally just as the great elements serve as the basis for supporting all life. Just as you make this aspirational prayers, a true Bodhisattva practitioner must be able to implement as much as possible into one's daily practice these ideals.

Next is making a request to the guru to quickly grant the Bodhisattva Vows. (Recitation in Tibetan)

Now is another question and answer section, which again is to determine whether the students have the necessary conditions to actually take the Bodhisattva Vows. I will ask, "Are you a bodhisattva?" and "Have you generated aspirational prayers to attain the fully enlightened state?" I will be asking for your name. Among the audience I am sure there are some who have within themselves the realization of genuine bodhicitta. In their case there is no problem in responding affirmatively without any hesitation but those in the audience like myself who can not claim to have a genuine realization of bodhicitta, so it is quite difficult for us to immediately say yes I'm a bodhisattva. So what is required is that from the depths of your heart generate a deep admiration for bodhicitta and then develop a very strong conviction from the depths of your heart to exert effort in cultivating bodhicitta within yourself. With such conviction and admiration when you say yes I am a bodhisattva it will at least better than telling an outright lie. (Recitation in Tibetan)

I will then re-emphasize that on your part all the prerequisites seem to be complete to take the Bodhisattva Vows and ask if you have the desire to take these vows from me. (Recitation in Tibetan)

With this the preliminary practices for the ceremony of taking the vows are complete. The next stage is the actual ceremony of taking the vows. This actual ceremony consists of a set of recitations on the part of the master who is imparting these vows. I will ask again if you wish to take the Bodhisattva Vows which are in a sense are summarized in the three principal ethical precepts of a bodhisattva practitioner. These being the ethical precepts of restraining from harmful actions, accumulating merit by engaging in positive actions and working for the benefit of other sentient beings. So I will ask you if you wish to lead a way of life which is based on the observance of those three ethical principles of bodhisattva practice. I will ask again if you wish to take such a vow from me which I will repeat three times. At the end of every repetition you should say yes I do. When you finish the third repetition and state yes I do, it is at that point you imagine that you have received the complete set of Bodhisattva Vows. Those who have already taken Bodhisattva Vows before should imagine that the vows which you have received, if they are broken are now restored and if none of them have been broken then your vows are enhanced.

Those who wish to take the vows, please fold your hands. (Recitation in Tibetan) Next is invoking the wisdom of all the Buddhas in the ten directions. The guru does this by making prostrations towards all of the ten directions, invoking the wisdom of the Buddhas in the ten directions. The master states that since at this place, at this particular time and in this assembly these disciples have taken the Bodhisattva Vows and as a result a great store of merit has been accumulated. Therefore an offering of realizations and practices towards all the Buddhas in the ten directions is made.

The guru making prostrations in all the ten directions constitutes the actual ceremony of invoking the wisdom of all the Buddhas. He imagines touching the feet of all of the Buddhas and the guru states, “I, a Bodhisattva by the name of Bhiksu Tenzin Gyatso, have been the witness to all this assembly of bodhisattvas taking the Bodhisattva Vows. I request all the Buddhas of the ten directions to observe the fact that such a ceremony has been conducted and that this entire assembly of bodhisattvas has taken the vows.” (Recitation in Tibetan)

As it is mentioned in the text here that as a result of talking these Bodhisattva Vows through taking the ceremony conducted here, when such a ceremony is conducted by the force of certain individuals who have taken the pledge and developed the determination to uphold the bodhisattva ideals there will be certain indications seen in the pure realms of the Buddhas. The bodhisattvas of those Buddhas in those pure realms will notice these signs and will ask the principal Buddha of that field why they are observing certain particular signs. The Buddhas will respond that it is natural if somewhere in some place a group of individuals take the strong pledge and cultivate the determination to engage in the Bodhisattva practices and ideals by taking the vows then those kinds of signs are observed. The Buddhas out of their great compassion and wisdom will perceive that in today’s situation on this date, on this earth, in this city and a bhiksu, a follower of the Buddha Shakyamuni, by the name of Tenzin Gyatso conducted a Bodhisattva Vow ceremony. At this ceremony certain individuals generated strong determinations to engage in the Bodhisattva ideals and practices and have made a pledge to undertake such practices on the basis of having generated the altruistic mind. It is because of that event that these particular indications or omens are being observed. As a result those great Buddhas out of their great compassion and wisdom will make a pledge to assist in the spiritual path of those practitioners and the Buddhas will feel delighted as if a new child had been born in a family. Similarly the bodhisattvas who realize that those individuals have taken the pledge will also rejoice in the fact that because these individuals have taken the pledge to engage in the bodhisattva ideals and practices, will feel delight in finding new companions or comrades.

At this point we will continue with reciting the text, Chapter III, verse 26:

Today my life has born fruit;
(Having) well obtained this human existence,
I’ve been born in the family of Buddha
And now am one of Buddha’s Children.

Thus whatever actions I do from now on
Must be in accord with the family.
Never shall I disgrace or pollute
This noble and unsullied race.

Just like a blind man
Discovering a jewel in a heap of rubbish,
Likewise by some coincidence
An Awakening Mind has been born within me.

It is the supreme ambrosia
That overcomes the sovereignty of death,
It is the inexhaustible treasure

That eliminates all poverty in the world.

It is the universal bridge
That leads to freedom from the unhappy states of birth,
It is the dawning moon of the mind
That dispels the torment of disturbing conceptions.

It is the great sun that finally removes
The misty ignorance of the world,
It is the quintessential butter
From the churning of the milk of Dharma.

For all those guests travelling on the path of conditioned existence
Who wish to experience the bounties of happiness,
This will satisfy them with joy
And actually place them in supreme bliss.

Today in the presence of all the Protectors
I invite the world to be guests
At (a festival of) temporary and ultimate delight.
May gods, demi-gods and all be joyful.

Next the guru advises the disciples not to speak about your having taken vows unnecessarily. The significance of this is that if you mention this unnecessarily without any particular reason then it might lead to situations where others who hear about it might begin to speak against it. As a result of this they would accumulate negative imprints. As it is part of the advice of the system known as Training of the Mind, Mind Transformation or the Lo-jong, one of the principal precepts there is that the transformation and change takes place within. There should be a change in one's attitude and a transformation of one's state of mind and way of thinking but so far as the external appearance is concerned the more normal you remain the better it is. In fact it is quite easy to bring about external change or appearance while still remaining the same person within. What is difficult is to bring about change and transformation within.

As a concluding rite for the ceremony of conferring Bodhisattva Vows, we have to again recite the verses on the practices of the Seven Limbs. The initial recitation was done in English and now this one we will perform in Tibetan.

Yesterday we spoke about the practices that are associated with enhancing the mind of the altruistic wish to attain complete enlightenment, enhancing the one you have already generated. Related to this practice are three chapters the first on enthusiasm was explained yesterday. I also spoke about a brief summary of the practices related to cultivating calm-abiding or samatha. As I explained earlier even if you haven't attained a genuine calm-abiding, a full samatha if you have attained a certain degree of single-pointedness achieved through training your mind and cultivating that single-pointedness then the greater the level of single-pointedness the more control you will have in being able to place your attention on to a chosen object of meditation as long as you wish. This will enable you to channel all of your energy and concentration towards a particular object of

meditation that you choose to undertake. It will also protect you from your attention and energy being dispersed or dissipated.

In the *Bodhicaryavatara* once having cultivated calm-abiding, the object here of meditation chosen is the practice of bodhicitta. Bodhicitta here is taken as the object of meditation. Bodhicitta, which is trained through the system as explained earlier, among the two principal systems of practice. One is the exchange, which equalizes oneself and others. As for the practice of training one's mind in equalizing and exchanging oneself with others, the essence of this practice can be found in two verses [129 & 130] which are in the eighth chapter of the *Bodhicaryavatara*. They read:

Whatever joy there is in this world
All comes from desiring others to be happy,
And whatever suffering there is in this world
All comes from desiring myself to be happy.

But what need is there to say much more?
The childish work for their own benefit,
The Buddhas work for the benefit of others.
Just look at the difference between them!

As these two verses state, especially the first, that all the joy we find in this world, the happiness, success and the prosperity, if one examines carefully, one finds at the root of all these favorable circumstances is the altruistic mind which cherishes the welfare of other sentient beings. However if one looks at all the sufferings, failures and tragedies, one finds at the root of all these undesirable events the root cause which is the self-centered attitude, the selfish desire that cherishes one's own welfare and is oblivious to the well-being of other sentient beings. So this is quite also obvious which we can appreciate from our own experiences. If we remain ourselves totally self-centered, selfish and work only for our own benefit, in the end it is we ourselves who stand to lose whereas if we regard others' happiness and well-being as more important and work accordingly, one's own self-interest is fulfilled in the process as a by-product. Particularly for practicing Buddhists what need is there is see the disadvantages and limitations of the self-centered attitude and the advantages and beneficial effects of cherishing others' welfare. One can appreciate the difference in the two, the contrast between the two by comparing one's own state of existence with that of the Buddha's. For the practicing Buddhist this type of comparison is very powerful.

We also find in the eighth chapter of the *Bodhicaryavatara* on meditation a unique form of meditation in training one's mind in equalizing and exchanging oneself with others. There are specific stages of meditation has been recommended where a certain type of jealousy, competitiveness and haughtiness or pride is to be cultivated. A sense of that meditation one could sum up in the following. One vividly visualizes one's old self, who was the embodiment of a totally egoistic, selfish and self-centered person. One places this vividly pictured "you" on one side. One then visualizes all the sentient beings undergoing suffering and undesirable fates. These sentient beings are weak and are caught up in suffering. One places them on the other side. Now imagine yourself as a neutral party observing the two sides. Focusing your attention on your old self, the embodiment of the self-centered, ego-centered selfish person, compare that person with all the other sentient beings. Compared to all the other sentient beings this single person is after all only one person. On top of this, this person is very arrogant, very selfish and does not deserve to be cared for but rather one must care for all the other sentient beings. In this way one imagines that the

old self, being very prosperous, wealthy, power and high position. In contrast from the perspective of the other sentient beings, they have a sense of jealousy towards one's old self.

One takes the side of the sentient beings and first imagines one's old self as being more powerful, more prosperous in worldly terms and develops a sense of jealousy towards that. Again by taking the side of the sentient beings imagine one's old self as being equal to oneself as the neutral observer along with the sentient beings. Try to form a sense of competitiveness. Again taking the side of the sentient beings imagine one's old self as being lower and inferior and develop a sense of pride or haughtiness towards one's old self.

Now this type of meditation, since it is yourself who is training their mind through such stages of meditation, it is very effective method of gradually generating within one's own mind a sense of repulsion towards the ego-centric attitude, the selfish, self-centered attitude. One also realizes the great value of cherishing others' welfare more than one's own.

Next I will give a brief summary of the ninth chapter on wisdom. In order for all these various skillful means of the path such as the practices of bodhicitta, the first five perfections such as generosity and so forth, for these various aspects of the method aspect of the path to fully express their potential to enable the practitioner to make progress on the spiritual path and work for the benefit of all other sentient beings, these factors must be complemented with the factor of intelligence or wisdom. In this context especially the wisdom realizing emptiness penetrating into the ultimate nature of reality is most important. This is one reason why wisdom is very crucial. Secondly, no matter how powerful one's realization of bodhicitta might be, one's realization of compassion might be, so long as the practitioner lacks the faculty of wisdom, the realization of emptiness, there is no way that those other factors of the path such as bodhicitta or compassion can ever directly confront and eliminate the root of ignorance. They can never directly eliminate or dispel ignorance from the mind and directly confront the delusions. It is only by generating insight into the true nature of reality, it is only by generating such an insight into emptiness that one will be able to directly confront and eliminate ignorance, the misconception grasping at the inherent existence of all phenomena that ignorance can be overcome.

Generally speaking except for one or two sub-schools of the Indian school of Vaibhasika thought all major philosophical schools of Buddhism accept the doctrine of selflessness, the principal of selflessness in the context of the sixteen characteristics of the Four Noble Truths. One of the characteristics of suffering is selflessness therefore the doctrine of selflessness is accepted by most of the major philosophical schools of Buddhism. In this context of the practice of the *Bodhicaryavatara* the selflessness of person alone is not enough. What is required is the realization of the selflessness of phenomena, the identitylessness of phenomena. It is on the basis of the acceptance of selflessness, the doctrine of selflessness that there evolved in India four major philosophical schools of thought.

Out of these four major schools it is the two schools of the Mahayana tradition, which accept the identitylessness of phenomena or the selflessness of phenomena. These two schools are the Yogacara, the Mind-Only School and Madhyamika, the Middle Way School. These two schools differ in their interpretation of what the selflessness of phenomena or the identitylessness of phenomena actually means. Within the Madhyamika school there are different ways of dividing that school but according to the mainstream Tibetan tradition is to divide the Madhyamika into two principal sub-divisions. These are the Madhyamika-Prasangika of Candrakirti and the Madhyamika- Svatantrika. Among the multitude of interpreters of Madhyamika philosophy, Candrakirti is considered one of the greatest authorities on the Madhyamika doctrine of emptiness by the Tibetan tradition.

The distinctive feature of Candrakirti's literature is that when he comments or interprets the doctrine or philosophy of Nagarjuna and his disciple Aryadeva, principally the two works *The Treatise on the Middle Way* and *Four Hundred Verses*, his commentary is very explicit, clear and lucid. Therefore practices and meditations on the two types of selflessness, the selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena, become very crucial in one's practice. Although in terms of subtleties in the object to be negated in the course of meditating on emptiness, there is no difference between the understanding of selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of person. But due to the difference in the object, on which the understanding of emptiness is developed, it is said that it is easier to develop an understanding of emptiness in relation to the person rather than phenomena. Therefore in many writings one finds that the exposition of the selflessness of person precedes the exposition on the selflessness of phenomena. This is also the order in which the practitioner is recommended to undertake the practice of meditating on emptiness.

As it is mentioned here in the ninth chapter of the *Bodhicaryavatara*, the chapter on wisdom, both in the context of developing an understanding of selflessness of person and selflessness of phenomena, if the meditation and contemplation is done on the basis of using an understanding of Dependent Origination then one will be able to develop an understanding of emptiness more easily and quickly. Generally speaking there are many different types of reasoning designed to establish the emptiness of phenomena such as the Diamond Slivers reasoning which examines the nature of phenomena especially from the perspective of causation. There is another type of reasoning, which examines the emptiness of phenomena from the perspective of their effects, the capacity to produce effects. There are also different types of reasoning which aims at establishing the emptiness of phenomena from the point of view of their numerical characters such as the absence of singularity and plurality. However all of these diverse and different forms of reasoning which are designed to establish emptiness are all based on the fundamental principle which is the understanding of all phenomena as dependently originated.

Now let us do a simple meditation on the steps to arrive at an understanding of emptiness. Earlier we went through the stages of meditation generating bodhicitta within ourselves. There is something which went through those stages of meditation which generated bodhicitta and at the same time when you felt that you had generated it you also experienced a sense of joy in having had that good opportunity. There is someone or something, which is the experiencer of that joy. The denial of such an agent, the denial of such an experiencer, the denial of a doer of such an act constitutes falling into the extreme of nihilism. It is because there exists such an agent, because there exists such a doer then there is the possibility to generate such states of mind. There is the possibility to free this agent; there is the possibility to attain liberation. If we were to seek the essence of that being through ultimate analysis then we may not be able to pinpoint a substantial entity which one can point to as the essential person. But the fact that such a being exists is validated by our own experience of existence.

The fact that such an experiencer, such an agent exists is obvious as indicated by our valid experiences. If we were to step beyond the bounds of convention trying to search for the essence of this being, not being content or satisfied by the validity of our conventions, if we were to search further for the essence of this being then we do not find such a being.

Similarly if we examine our own thoughts, our natural responses and reactions to events and so forth, we will find within our minds, within our consciousness that we make distinctions between our bodies and minds. Also this distinction is a valid one. There exists within our psychophysical constituents two distinct phenomena, matter which is body and the mental factors. Also if we examine we also find that if we try to identify that being, person or self among the

physical aggregates like our body, we do not succeed because as far as the physical constituents are concerned we if necessary will sacrifice certain parts of our body in order to save our lives or health. We are prepared to get rid of those parts of our body, which threaten our health. Similarly within our minds we are prepared again to rid of certain aspects of our minds, such as hatred or ill-feeling as they are harmful to our person. Why are we prepared to go to such an extent to get rid of certain constituents which are essentially our own aggregates? For one purpose, to make the self or person happy, for that being's happiness and satisfaction. This indicates that we can not identify our own self or being, neither in the body nor in the mind. So what is evident is that there is something, a being or person which is like the owner of the body and mind, something that governs the combination of body and mind. If we search for what this being is what this person is then we do not find such an entity.

Therefore just as in a case of optical illusion, for instance where one mistakes a coiled rope at dusk for a snake and develops fear, at that point the perception of the coiled rope as a snake is mistaken. Although one had the conception of a snake but there is nothing on the part of the basis [the coiled rope] which supports the perception of a snake. On the part of the coiled rope there does not exist even a single entity, either on the basis of the collective whole of the rope, nor the shape nor the continuum nor anything within the rope which can be taken as a true example of a snake, the existence of a snake there. Similarly although we have the notion of a self or being or person on the basis of the five aggregates (form, perception, volition, compositional factors and consciousness), there isn't on the part of the five aggregates neither in their continuum, individually or collectively even a single entity which can be justified as being the essence of one's being, one's true being or person. This is just as there lacks even a single entity objectively on the part of the coiled rope which justifies it as being the true example of a snake.

The difference between the two is that in the case of mistaking a coiled rope for a snake although one had the perception of a snake there that is obviously mistaken, it was an illusion and the denial of the existence of the snake did not contradict any established valid conventions. On the other hand if one were to conclude as a result of one's inability to find a substantial being from among the five aggregates that a person does not exist, obviously one will be directly contradicting the validity of convention and one's own experience. Therefore what is obvious is that the person or self must exist in some relation to the designated basis [the five aggregates]. Since one can not find the objective existence of such a being what one concludes is that it is a mere label designated on the basis of the five aggregates. The statement that the person or being, the identity of the person is a mere label should not be mistaken with the notion that the person is a mere term. That is not the meaning of the person being labeled. The person is neither the term nor a true referent, something existing objectively. Since it is neither the name or term nor is it a true referent which exists objectively out there, what one concludes as a result of this analysis is that a person exists by means of one's designation on the basis of the five aggregates.

Now having arrived at such a conclusion through analysis intellectually, that is realizing that since one can not maintain that person is only a mere term or name while at the same time realizing that it lacks an objective basis something which can be taken as the true referent of the term, therefore the only viable alternative of its status of existence is that it exists by means of designation. Compare this conclusion arrived at through analysis with your own normal perceptions of phenomena including your own self. When you think of yourself in your day-to-day life how do you relate to yourself? How do you identify with yourself? What type of personal identity do you have? Extend this comparison to other phenomena. How do you perceive things normally in day-to-day life?

In you examine these questions you will find that in our normal experience our perception of things does not accord with the conclusion we arrived at earlier through analysis. In our normal way of perceiving phenomena, phenomena appear to us as if they possess some form of objective reality. They appear to us or we perceive them as if they are the true referent of the term that we use including our own selves, our own personhood. We may perceive our own self as if there existed independently out there, objectively, something called the self or person which is the true referent of the term person. Similarly when we perceive other phenomena we perceive them as if they possessed objective existence, an objective reality, as they are the true referent of the terms. If you compare that perception with the conclusion arrived at earlier then you will begin to realize that there is a disparity, a gap between the two modes of thought.

In addition to our normal perception of phenomena and one's own self as being clouded by this misconception of perceiving them in light of possessing some form of objective reality, inherently existing "out there" in and of themselves, this mode of perception is further strengthened in certain experiences, particularly during intense emotional states. For instance in the case of the feeling of hatred and anger, the object of the anger is something undesirable to one, something destabilizing towards one. At that instant one feels as if the object of the anger exists "out there" independently, in and of itself. This experience takes for granted the objective reality of focus of one's anger and in a way one could also say that it also affirms the perceived validity or truth of the misperception of things. Similarly when one has intense attachment or grasping towards an object at that point the object of desire becomes as if it is independent, it is solid, concrete. This emotional intensity also affirms the believed validity or truth of the misconception, which perceives things as inherently existing. During these emotional states the fact that one normally misconceives things as inherently existing, things as possessing objective reality is made very apparent.

As I explained earlier if you compare the conclusion arrived at through the process of analysis examining your normal perception of phenomena or your ordinary world view, you find that although in your ordinary perception there is a perception of an objective world, a view of self and phenomena as existing "out there" independently and in and of themselves, in reality they lack any status of such existence. As you begin to make this comparison and develop through constant familiarity the ascertainment of the emptiness of phenomena then you will be able to reinforce and increase the force of your certainty, your conviction that phenomena do lack such a state of existence. You will also be able to increase your ascertainment of phenomena as existing only nominally by the force of designation and lacking an objective, independent status. You will also be able to realize that all phenomena because their status of existence can be understood only in terms of a nominal status, depend on the designating factors. Therefore phenomena depend not only their existence but also their very identity as things, but also on other factors and therefore lack an independent status. This absence of an independent status, this lack of inherent existence is emptiness. However the ordinary perception which perceives phenomena and self in the contrary is definitely ... Therefore as you keep on making these comparisons between the two you will begin to realize that although phenomena in reality lack independent and inherent existence but in our ordinary perception they appear in a contrary manner. ... appear in one way but exist in a different way, different manner. Therefore the realization of the illusion-like nature of all phenomena will be actualized.

Since the afflictive emotions and thoughts such as anger, hatred, desire and attachment are essentially based on the misconception of reality based on the independent or concrete existence of the objects of the emotions, therefore the realization of emptiness, the empty nature of all phenomena will directly effect, directly confront the root ignorance which misperceives the nature

of reality. This realization cuts away the root, the basis for the arising of the afflictive emotions and thoughts. At the same time it increases the force and power of the virtuous states of mind such as love, compassion, tolerance and so on. At the initial stage although one's feelings of love, compassion or tolerance may be induced by misperceptions of their object as inherently existing but ultimately these virtuous states of mind, the positive aspects of the mind do not require as their basis a misperception of reality. Therefore the greater the force of one's insight into the nature of reality, the greater one's realization of emptiness becomes, the more powerful the force of the positive aspects of the mind will become. At the same time the force of the negative emotional states such as desire, hatred or anger, which essentially require the misperception of phenomena, as inherently existent will decrease.

When such a realization of emptiness, such an insight is complemented with the factor of skillful means, method or bodhicitta then they support each other, strengthening the force of the other. One will then be able to successfully progress along the path.

Once you attain the initial realization of emptiness, which is inferential, therefore your understanding of emptiness is not direct; one approaches emptiness through its image. As you develop familiarity with this understanding, as one's power of understanding develops through meditation then eventually you reach a point where your understanding and realization of emptiness becomes so fused with the actual experience of emptiness that there is no longer any sense of duality. The understanding is no longer based on a mere concept but rather is a true experience of emptiness. This is experienced during meditative equipoise, meditative sessions. Still as you progress along the path as a result of constant engaging in the practice of the union of method and wisdom as I spoke of earlier, eventually you will arrive at a stage where you become totally freed from any form of dualistic appearance, from any form of duality. There is no influence from any level of dualistic elaborations. Your experience of emptiness becomes complete and from the point of view of your experience of emptiness you develop total equipoise in that meditative state. At the same time all the imprints, habitual imprints and all the delusions in your mind from all the successive occurrence of these deluded events in your mind, are all overcome, are all eliminated. It is at this point that the individual is said to have attained the fully enlightened state of Buddhahood.

This concludes a brief summary of the essence of the ninth chapter on wisdom. The essence of the tenth chapter on dedication can be understood from the fifty-fifth verse of the chapter:

For as long as space endures
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world.

The next three verses read:

May all the pains of living creatures
Ripen (solely) upon myself,
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha
May all beings experience happiness.

May the teachings, which are the sole medicine for suffering
And the origin of every joy,

Be materially supported and honored
And abide for a very long time.

I prostrate to Manjughosha
Through whose kindness wholesome minds ensue,
And I prostrate to my spiritual masters
Through whose kindness I develop.

I will leave at this today.

COLOPHON

Transcribed and typed by Phillip Lecso from audiotapes obtained from Buddhist Studies on Audio Cassette entitled *The Path of Compassion Teachings*. I take full responsibility for all mistakes that have occurred, through hearing and writing incorrectly what was taught, for these I apologize. May all be auspicious. May any merit from this activity go to the long life and good health of His Holiness. May all sentient beings quickly attain the state of the Glorious Kalacakra even through these imperfect efforts.