

Kopan Course 17
December 1984

Lecture 1

[Rinpoche explains reasons for delayed arrival at Kopan]

If I explain why I didn't make it from the beginning of the course, I think it will take months or years. In the beginning of the retreat in Dharamsala, there was some trouble for the people who want to do long retreat. They had trouble getting visa extensions, so I thought maybe if I go to see Indira Gandhi she might be able to help. That was the delay of the start of the retreat. Once you start retreat, you cannot break it. If you break it, you cannot do the completion. Even if you continue to do the rest of the mantra, since it has not been continued every day, it cannot count as having completed the retreat. So that took some time. Later on, it wasn't sure, but if I went there it might take some time in Delhi, maybe several weeks, so we were not sure whether the retreat could be done before coming here or not. Finally I sent one geshe, Lama Yeshe's brother, to meet Indira Gandhi. He tried, and some students went with him. Still the result of what happened is not clear. The long retreat was advised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, so I thought, since this was the one time that His Holiness has advised us to do retreat, if the number of the mantras doesn't get finished, it is kind of a shame, if the advice given by His Holiness doesn't get done.

One reason I relaxed was because Jon Landaw, the universal teacher, was here—I think in one way that made me relax. If I came here from the beginning I think half of you might be in Kathmandu gathering in the restaurants or would have gone trekking or to Goa. You would have come all this way, collected the money, working for many years, come all the way from there to here, and then missed all the opportunity to listen, to be able to hear more teachings and to be able to meditate, to be able to reflect on the meanings of the teachings. So I think from my side I am very happy in that way.

This morning if you have some questions with answers that I know, then I start to tell. Maybe everybody already became enlightened, became Manjushri, but just manifesting as ordinary human beings.

Is there something or not? Yes, go on.

Student: Could you explain the meaning of the *Heart Sutra*?
(Laughter)

Rinpoche: (laughs) I'll try. I don't know about the *Heart Sutra*. The opposite of the *Heart Sutra* I will try. The opposite of wisdom, I'll try (laughter). The opposite, the conception against wisdom and the view against the object of the wisdom, that I'll try, okay? I don't know about the *Heart Sutra*, but that I'll try, okay?

What about the actions done out of shunyata, out of the *Heart Sutra*—those actions are the remedy to samsara, is that right? Those actions are the remedy to samsara, isn't it? Heh? The actions that are possessed by the wisdom of shunyata cut off the root of samsara, is that right? Yes?

Student: Yes.

Rinpoche: I see. Then that doesn't cause samsara? Doesn't that cause samsara? It doesn't become the cause of samsara?

Student: No.

Rinpoche: Does that become the cause of samsara or not?

Britta: No.

Rinpoche: Why? (Laughter) Why doesn't it become the cause of samsara? Okay, then what about this: from that you can become enlightened; you can be liberated from samsara, right? But why can't you get perfect human rebirth from that? You can get liberated from that, you can become enlightened from that, but why can't you receive perfect human rebirth from this—if you can get the ultimate happiness, then why not the temporal happiness? Similarly, of course, you can receive the human body from that. No? Can't you receive the human body from that?

Britta: If you wish for it, yes, if you have the wish.

Rinpoche: Right. So with virtuous actions possessed by shunyata, the right view, you can get human body? Right?

Britta: Yes.

Rinpoche: So if that causes you to receive the human body, it causes samsara.

Britta: Not necessarily.

Rinpoche: What? (Laughter) Not necessarily?

Britta: If I wish to attain a human body and have the wish of bodhicitta trying to help others, then the perfect human body is not samsara, no? Isn't it just manifesting?

Rinpoche: Then all the bodhisattvas, whenever you generate bodhicitta, just by having bodhicitta you get liberated from samsara. Just having generated bodhicitta do you get liberated from samsara?

Britta: And with the right understanding of shunyata, having realized emptiness and then having realized shunyata, then you want to become...

Rinpoche: So if you have shunyata and bodhicitta, then just by that you are liberated from samsara?

Britta: Yes.

Rinpoche: To be liberated from samsara you don't need to approach the arya path, the higher path—if that were so, whenever you generated bodhicitta there would be no need for those five paths, no need to go through the five paths, the path of merit, path of action, the right-seeing path,

the path of meditation. So just by having generated bodhicitta, having realized shunyata, just by that, if you get liberated from samsara, it makes it unnecessary to follow this path of action, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation—it doesn't give any purpose. Then you become an arhat or you become an arya being, an arya bodhisattva. Whenever the path of merit is generated, according to the Theravada, according to the lesser vehicle path, then you become already an arhat, having the wisdom of shunyata. According to the Mahayana path you would become already an arya bodhisattva. Already it would be—without going through the first, second, third bhumi like that—it would already be the eighth bhumi bodhisattva. Just by having bodhicitta and shunyata, if one gets liberated from the delusion. Yes?

Britta: (inaudible)

Rinpoche: No, no, no. Even from the path of action, the second path, you have to have the realization of shunyata—even from the path of action, from there. The wisdom of shunyata is the one that is the direct remedy for the disturbing thought obscuration. So it becomes the direct remedy to first of all the gross, and then the more and more subtle... it removes the subtle, it is the remedy to the subtle delusions and it removes and ceases the subtle delusions, gradually. So that is the way you approach it, from one to the higher and higher paths, in that way. Without wisdom becoming the remedy removing the disturbing thought, with method alone you cannot go to the higher and higher paths. So just by having bodhicitta and shunyata, you don't get liberated from samsara, do you?

Britta: What always comes after the eighth bhumi?

Rinpoche: Once you have reached the eighth bhumi, you have removed the disturbing thoughts and obscurations according to the paramita path. One can eliminate the seed of the delusions. To cut and completely eliminate these you not only have to realize shunyata, but you have to have the wisdom directly perceiving shunyata. By developing that you will be able to completely eliminate the root of the delusion.

So just by having bodhicitta and the wisdom of shunyata one doesn't get liberated from samsara, isn't it? What? Does one get liberated from samsara just by that? With this human body that you receive, from the virtuous action possessed by the wisdom of shunyata, it is possible to receive human rebirth, actions done out of the wisdom of shunyata can cause the body of the happy transmigratory being, isn't it? One can achieve this; one can receive the perfect human body from that. One can achieve or one can't achieve?

Luke: Maybe not.

Rinpoche: Why?

Luke: Because the wisdom of emptiness will cut through delusions that can propel you into an unfortunate rebirth but will not cause a perfect human body. The merit you accumulate or virtuous karma from other past lives will propel you into a human body, but not the wisdom of emptiness.

Rinpoche: The wisdom of emptiness doesn't cause the human body, the merit causes it?

Luke: The merit causes it, yes.

Rinpoche: Mm, so merit causes it. So merit is accumulated by what? Isn't that merit accumulated because of the wisdom of shunyata? The action becomes virtue by the wisdom of shunyata. Heh?

Luke: The action becomes virtue by the wisdom of shunyata?

Rinpoche: Hmm. No? Then? Then? Then?

Luke: Karma, by following karma.

Rinpoche: By following karma? For example, let's say—when you recite mantra, when you meditate on the deity, with no motivation of bodhicitta, and no motivation seeking the perfect human body in the next life, no particular motivation like this, just simply meditating either on the deity outside, or oneself as deity—being aware of the nature of that. From the three principles of the path, it is possessed by the wisdom of shunyata. So that action, meditating on the deity with the awareness of shunyata, that is not virtue? You see, the person may not have much idea, the person may not particularly think of karma. It is like this, it could be like this. A person who makes charity doesn't know that from that good karma he will get a perfect human rebirth. The person doesn't know, but he does—out of sincerity he did the actual action, created the actual cause to receive wealth in the next life or even in this life, to be wealthy or to receive things, or to fulfill one's wishes. Things like that. He doesn't know about, he may think this is generally a good action, but he doesn't know so much about the results that he gets from that. He doesn't expect it, but anyway he practices good karma, even without knowing the details he practices it, he put it into action. So anyway, he gets the result because he does the action, creates the cause, without particularly knowing details about it.

Even without a particular motivation to receive a perfect human body in the next life, just meditation on oneself as deity, meditating on the deity, being aware of the nature of the deity. That is similar to meditating on the emptiness of the "I." That meditation, that action, it is virtue—no? Meditating on the absolute nature of the "I," isn't that virtue? That is virtue because that is the one that is a complete remedy to all the disturbing thoughts, especially to the root. That is the one that completely eliminates the root of all the disturbing thoughts, the wisdom of shunyata, the action meditating on emptiness. That which becomes the remedy to all the delusions, if that doesn't become virtue then it becomes difficult, I think. What do you think, Claudio? Hmm? It must be clear, because doing much *Chöd* practice (Rinpoche laughs).

I think that is pure virtue possessed by the wisdom of shunyata. It is said in the thought-training teachings that accumulated virtue, "without being mixed with poison"—the poison is the wrong conception of true existence. Any time we accumulate merit or virtuous actions, we should be aware of the three circles. Whenever we accumulate virtue, it should be sealed with the right view. This means that whenever we accumulate virtue, if we accumulate virtue with the awareness of dependent arising, with the awareness that they [subject, object and action] do not exist from their own side, that is what is called "sealed by the right view," non-truly existent, thinking and being aware that they are empty of existing from their own side.

The object to whom you make charity, the action of charity and also the subject, oneself, who makes charity: all three, be aware that they exist as merely labeled. Or the other way, be aware that, even if they appear as if they exist from their own side, in fact they are empty from their own side. In this way the virtuous action is not mixed with the poison of the wrong conception of true existence. The

virtuous actions that are done, other virtuous actions that are done even out of bodhicitta, without the recognition or without being possessed by the right view of shunyata, those virtues in the thought-training are recognized like food mixed with poison. So it says in the thought-training commitment, the thought transformation commitment, “Avoid the food mixed with poison.” That means this. I think virtuous actions done out of bodhicitta, the wisdom of shunyata—in that way the perfect human rebirth is, I think, like the fruit from good minerals or good soil—everything is gathered, the tree grows well, and then one gets very tasty fruit. Like that, from these virtuous actions, possessed either by all three of the principles of the path to enlightenment or any one of them, that perfect human rebirth that one receives is much more perfect, more powerful to follow the path.

Anyway, you can check. You can meditate, you can check whether they are the cause of samsara or not, okay?

Those virtuous actions done with the three principles of the path, there is no reason why one cannot achieve enlightenment or liberation with those. Why not? Either the action is done with the actual realization or even if there is no realization, it is done with effortful meditation. Even if there is no actual bodhicitta, with the effortful meditation of bodhicitta, the motivation of bodhicitta; even though there is no actual realization of renunciation of samsara, but with the effortful, creative renunciation of samsara. Actions done with those are virtue.

Anyway you can check if one can get a perfect human rebirth from those, whether they are the cause of samsara or not. So that you can check, okay? Meditate. Any other questions? Yes?

Doug: Would it be possible for one type of shunyata to be both in and out of samsara, in the sense that you might be having a direct experience of shunyata, whereas the content of, or the shunyata might be focused on some sort of content of the awareness, such as anger, but understanding that from the perspective of inherent emptiness. So you would be participating in samsara, but from the point of view of emptiness, I mean, of shunyata, there would be the knowledge of the sort of interdependence or of the emptiness and that would lead back to the bodhicitta and the differences that one would normally create between oneself and others would be fully understood as not being inherently existent. And so the bodhicitta would be natural, and in that case if that were fully realized the contents of the participation in shunyata would not really be shunyata at all.

Rinpoche: [coughs]

Doug: In the sense that it would be as fully, from the point of view, fully in the shunyata...

Rinpoche: In the beginning it was shunyata, then later on that didn't become shunyata any more. Anyway I didn't get your essential point I think. So would you repeat again please?

Doug: No—I suppose I am asking for clarification.

Rinpoche: Yes, what?

Doug: When you were talking about food mixed with poison, for example, the image that I had was of an understanding of shunyata which is direct, but which is also participating in some sort of

samsara in the sense that you might be using your wisdom of shunyata to look at something like greed or some other karmic formation that has arisen.

Rinpoche: The shunyata of wisdom which participates in samsara looking for some of the reasons for greed or something?

Doug: No.

Jon: The understanding of shunyata had been focused on the delusion.

Rinpoche: Yes. Then? Yes, then? Then?

Doug: That would be kind of like mixed with poison, in the sense that the shunyata is the pure understanding of emptiness but because the realization is not full, the conclusion can still be the object of one's awareness from the point of view of shunyata.

Rinpoche: If is not full, if it is not complete, if it is not wisdom, if it is not the wisdom that ceases the inherently existent... whatever is focused on the delusions, if that wisdom does not see, doesn't realize the attachment or whatever delusion as completely empty from its own side, then it is not—in that way I wouldn't call that the wisdom of shunyata. The wisdom of shunyata is the one that completely eliminates the root of samsara, the ignorance holding the "I" and things as truly existent.

Doug: So then, so my sort of clarification....

Rinpoche: Just half... being aware of, for example, anger, attachment and ignorance, and realizing that these are of an impermanent nature, helps at least to realize shunyata of these delusions, to see the complete emptiness of them. It leads to that. It benefits that, it leads to that but it is not the wisdom of shunyata.

The wisdom, even more subtle than that, that these delusions exist without depending on their continuation and parts, even the wisdom that sees the emptiness of such as that inherent existence of those delusions—or you can say "I" existing without depending on the parts, without depending on the continuation, the group of aggregates and the continuation of aggregates, the "I"—even the wisdom that realizes that the "I" that exists without depending on the group of the aggregates and the continuation of the aggregates is empty, even that is not... well, it could be the right view according to other schools. If you talk about these different levels of wisdom as shunyata, it depends on which school. But actually, in practice—this doesn't mean that those others are not practices, but that the ultimate, essential thing, which we should not miss, which we should understand and practice—that which actually, directly harms and eliminates the ignorance of true existence is the wisdom of shunyata according to the Madhyamaka School. There are four schools, the fourth is the Madhyamaka School or Middle Way School, which has two divisions the last of which is Prasangika. Realizing emptiness according to the way the Prasangika School explains it is the complete emptiness. That is the complete emptiness. Otherwise there is always something left out.

All the previous schools are very helpful and become steps towards realizing the complete emptiness, that which becomes the direct remedy to ignorance, the root of samsara. The previous ones, the shunyata of those other schools is not complete emptiness. According to them they are complete emptiness but in reality they are not. If you are going to talk about what is the ultimate, the

one that really, completely eliminates the root of samsara, it is the Prasangika view. That is what we should understand, practice and be aware of in our everyday lives.

So, according to those other schools, I don't remember the Sanskrit terms—what are they called? Sautrantika, the Mind-Only School and even the Madhyamaka School, *rang.gyu.pa*, the Svatantrika—their views of shunyata are not complete. They are half, something is correct, something is not correct. But the higher and higher schools... the Chittamatra, the mind-only doctrine, the Mind-Only School, their view, their shunyata is much more pure, with less wrong conception and so it becomes that much of a remedy to the root of samsara. There are two Madhyamaka schools, the *rang.gyu.pa* and the *tan.gyu.pa*, Svatantrika and Prasangika; the *rang.gyu.pa* view of shunyata still is not complete, there is something left that they have to realize as empty. Their view becomes that much remedy to the ignorance of true existence.

The best remedy, which can directly eliminate ignorance, is the *u.ma tan.gyu.pa*, the Prasangika. Their view of shunyata is complete emptiness, there is nothing left. The object of the wisdom of shunyata, according to the Prasangika, in the object of that actual wisdom of shunyata there is not one single refuting object left. Such as things appearing as permanent and clinging to that, and things appearing as existing alone—those very gross refuting objects, objects of those gross wrong conceptions. Such as the “I” existing without depending on the group of the aggregates or the continuation of the aggregates; and even “I” having some existence from its own side. Much more subtle than before, that it should have some existence from its own side—even that becomes completely empty in that wisdom of shunyata. It realizes that even what appears or what one clings to as having some existence from its own side is completely empty.

So what I am saying is you do actions with wisdom that sees impermanent phenomena as impermanent. Actions done even with the right view of those other, previous, schools, that the “I” and things are empty of existing without depending on the gathered base and its continuation; and empty even of having existence from their own side. Even [actions done with] the wisdom that sees “I” and other objects are empty of existing without being labeled, that the “I” existing from its own side without depending on the thought labeling, is empty; realizing just this emptiness. This is according to *u.ma rang.gyu.pa*, what is it called? Svatantrika.

As mentioned, the Madhyamaka has two schools; the wisdom of the first one, Svatantrika, their view of shunyata, is more subtle than the previous schools. Their refuting object is the “I” existing only from its own side. That “I” only exists from its own side, purely exists, completely exists from its own side, without the thought labeling it. That is their refuting object. So realizing the Svatantrika view of shunyata means realizing that the “I” existing only from its own side—completely existing from its own side, without depending on the thought labeling it—this “I” is empty. For them it is complete emptiness. This is their view of shunyata.

So now, for the Prasangika, the “I” existing completely from its own side, as it appears, only existing from its own side without the thought labeling it—realizing that that is empty is not sufficient, it is not full emptiness. Why do they believe that that Svatantrika view of emptiness is not full emptiness? Because that would leave some existence from the side of the “I.” The “I” is labeled but there should be some existence from its side, otherwise the “I” would become non-existent.

It is the Svatantrika's view that from the side of the “I” there should be some existence, there should be something, some existence from its own side, otherwise, how is it *possible* that it can exist? Okay?

This Svatantrika conception... sometimes, even though we talk about the Prasangika's view of shunyata, if we analyze, if we check our own belief, our own conception, if we watch it, intellectually we may accept the Prasangika's view—whatever is explained in the text we may accept intellectually because it is in the text—but if we really check, if we apply the Prasangika's view, their definition of the way things exist, dependant-arising, to our present view, the way things are appearing to us now and the way we cling, if we relate it to our own experience, our present ignorance, we will find it difficult to accept. It is difficult to see, difficult to accept the definition of the Prasangika's view, their definition of the way things exist. We have been trapped by the ignorance of true existence, we have been living in it, we are completely overwhelmed, we are completely obscured, like the energy of the drug that completely pervades the blood, bringing hallucination. Like that example, there is hallucination.

We were born with this simultaneously-born ignorance. As it has not been completely ceased in a past life, we were born with it. Like this, from beginningless lifetimes, from beginningless rebirths, we have been completely trapped inside, trapped in prison, like animals trapped in a net—what do you call it, where you catch birds and tigers? Yes, a cage. Like that. We have been trapped in this cage of ignorance, completely overwhelmed or completely obscured, from beginningless rebirths. We have always fallen into that as there is no Dharma wisdom, no wisdom of shunyata. So this view, “I” and the aggregates, the whole thing, even though they are dependant, even though the smallest atoms do not exist from their own side, existing as merely labeled, appear as if they have some existence from their own side. As we have been trapped under the control of this ignorance from beginningless rebirths, all the time until now, whatever appears, appears as truly existent. So we have become used to this view.

The conclusion is, for us it is hard to accept things—flowers, tables, persons—as existent but having no existence from their own side. How can they exist if we cannot point them out, if we cannot find them on that base?

For example, for this brocade to exist without having some existence from its own side, as it appears to me now. In order for this brocade to exist, it has to have some existence from its own side; it is not only merely labeled. It is not only *merely* labeled. It is easy to accept that it is labeled, this is logical—as long as the mind is not crazy, not wild, crazy, it is obvious that it is labeled, that is easy to accept—but we cannot accept that it is *merely* labeled. For us the belief or the appearance of things existing from their own side is so strong, when we hear “merely labeled” it looks the same as saying, “There is brocade on this microphone.” “There is cheesecake in front of you.” It is like that cheesecake in front of you, now. It is like that—when we hear “merely labeled,” when we add the word “merely,” this extra word, then it is very hard to understand. For us, it falls into the extreme. For one who doesn't have the infallible understanding of the meaning of the Prasangika view, who doesn't have the experience of shunyata, it is like falling into the extreme of nihilism. You cannot accept how the “I” exists; that the “I” exists on these aggregates or that the brocade exists on this base, you cannot accept it.

This subject will come again; it will be repeated, with more details.

The conclusion is the way things look to our perception, how things appear to us, according to our beliefs and perceptions in twenty-four hours daily life, for us and even for the creatures, the way things appear and what we cling to, you see, all these are truly existent—in our view. Things that are of an impermanent nature appear as permanent. We believe in them as permanent and, not only

that, things appear by themselves, without depending on a cause. Things exist alone without depending on parts. Things that are dependent on a cause appear as if they exist by themselves; they appear like this and we believe them to be so. Things that are dependent on their parts appear as if they existed alone, without depending on their parts, and we believe that they are like this, existing without depending on their parts, the gathering of the base and the continuation of that.

Also, there is the appearance, and there is the view, there is the conception of things existing without depending on the impression, which was collected or planted on the mind, being experienced. In reality, things are dependent on the impression that was collected in the consciousness and then was actualized, materialized or experienced. Even though things are like this in reality, [our perception is that] without depending on the impression that was collected on the consciousness, things exist from their own side. Even though they are labeled, they appear to exist from their own side, and we cling to them. We believe that things exist without depending on experiencing the impressions that are planted in the consciousness.

Also there is the appearance and we believe, that things only exist from their own side, without depending on being labeled by the undefective, valid mind. We believe that what appears to the mind is valid, completely existing from its own side—even though it is labeled, there should be some existence from its own side, which is not merely labeled. When we see people, when we look at people or at material objects now, we've got conceptions and appearances all piled up. All of these are gross, wrong conceptions; all of these are the gross and subtle refuted objects. In regards to how all sense objects appear to us and what we believe: we believe that something that doesn't exist, exists, and something that exists, we believe doesn't exist.

So that is how it is; that is the conclusion. The way it looks, if you analyze by understanding these teachings and the views of the different schools, the wrong conceptions, shunyata, and all that—if you relate it to your own experience, if you relate it to your own views, apply it and try to recognize it—it is like this. We are possessed by not just one hallucination but many hallucinations, so many different levels of hallucinating mind and wrong conceptions. There are hallucinations of oneself, the subject, the object and the action—the whole thing is an hallucination, piles of hallucinations, double, triple.

So now when you think well, when you meditate well like this, deeply, relating to one's own conception or views, you can see that one is completely crazy, possessed by the *mara* or the spirit of the wrong conceptions, completely crazy. This is the same as the person who is occupied by a spirit and sees various things around. Like a person who sees very beautiful gardens on a precipice. Or a person who sees a road where there is no road. Like that, we are completely uncontrolled, completely overwhelmed by piles of so many wrong conceptions; obscured and overwhelmed.

In this way, when you know how things exist in reality, and what appears to you, what one believes—it is something else, completely something else, completely something opposite to, other than the way things exist now, for you and others.

So what happens, according to our present [state], before we realize shunyata by training the mind in that, before seeing things as illusory, before realizing the subtle dependent arising, for us what exists—in reality, the way the "I" exists, the way the rice and the chapatti or the vegetables on the plate, the potatoes, the way things exist in reality, being labeled, being merely labeled—for us that is non-existent. And for us, what exists is only existence from its own side; anything that exists is

existent from its own side—besides this, besides true existence, there is no other existence. That is how it is according to our everyday life, our wrong conceptions, how things appear to us.

So all those different levels of the negated or refuted object—even though they do not exist in reality, even though these things are actually, in reality non-existent—to us one hundred percent they exist this way. If anything exists, it has to exist from its own side. That is how it is according to our wrong conceptions.

Some people who are not familiar with the subject may not have it clear, but I am thinking to explain details on this subject, not only talking but also to really meditate, relating to our own experiences.

Thank you so much. Please have a good lunch!

Lecture 2

Normally when the lamas give lam-rim teachings, they begin with the lineage lamas of the graduated path to enlightenment, the lam-rim, the *Heart Sutra* and then the preliminary practice. This is the traditional way. So here we will do a short preliminary practice before the teaching on the *Heart Sutra*, the *Essence of Wisdom*.

It is said in the teaching that meditating on shunyata is the best protection. There is nothing better than this for protection from dangers, from interference. And even for life danger, for any interference. This is also for the interference of not allowing the development of Dharma wisdom; explaining the teaching, listening to the teaching, reflecting and meditating. Meditation on shunyata is an excellent method to prevent these interferences.

As there are inner interferences, or inner *mara*, disturbing thoughts, so also there are outer *mara*. There are devas of the white side, who are helping Dharma practitioners, those accumulating virtue, and there are the black side—non-human beings of the black side—who interfere with those who are accumulating virtue, with those who are trying to develop the mind by practicing the holy Dharma.

Therefore, the Heart Sutra is recited to prevent all those obstacles. While we are reading this, as much as possible we concentrate on the meaning. Even if you don't understand the meaning, even just to hear it, even just to recite the words becomes a powerful method to eliminate interferences.

[Rinpoche reads the Heart Sutra.]

Lama Tsongkhapa, who is the Dharma king of sentient beings in the three realms, who is the crown of all the learned, realized ones of the Snow Land, said in the teachings, *The Three Principle Aspects of the Path to Enlightenment*:

The essential meaning of all the Victorious One's scriptures, the path that is admired by the Victors' sons, the door of the liberation for the fortunate beings, that, as I can, I will explain here.

The first verse; “victorious one” is Buddha, victory because Buddha has defeated all the disturbing thoughts. We are defeated by delusions and therefore are under the control of delusions, so not only are we not free from samsara but we have so much confusion, so many problems in everyday life. Even though we are trying to practice Dharma, even though we have met the Buddhadharma, we are unable to practice as we wish. It doesn’t happen as we wish because of so many obstacles. We don’t have complete control over the delusions, we haven’t achieved complete victory over the disturbing thoughts and the obscurations, which disturb us from seeing all the three times’ existence.

By practicing Dharma, not letting the mind come under the control of disturbing thoughts, Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the Buddhadharma, as well as Lama Tsongkhapa himself, defeated them. They kept the mind away from that, protecting themselves from disturbing thoughts by always, twenty-four hours a day, watching the mind. So through practicing like that, as it is said in the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

What is the use of many other practices, or many other activities, except the practice of protecting the mind? What is the use of many other things, many other activities, many other practices, except the practice of protecting the mind?

For example, let’s say this: one person may do many prayers a day, many sadhanas, long sadhanas, but watching the mind, controlling the mind is left out, that is not practiced. The actual practice is left out, that is not practiced. The actual practice is left out; the essential practice is left out. Controlling the mind, watching the mind twenty-four hours, thought transformation and lam-rim are not practiced, especially when one is with certain people and in such circumstances that cause the disturbing thoughts to arise, that make one completely crazy. Not only is one completely crazy with the ignorance of true existence, not only that, as I explained yesterday, but also crazy with attachment, crazy with anger, crazy with pride, jealous mind—double, triple hallucinations. Like this, crazy. Then the person can’t do any practice, leave aside remembering the lam-rim meditations or the teachings on thought transformation that one has received—one can’t remember, one gets completely overwhelmed by those things. The mind is completely like a water-flood, like a city that’s completely covered by water, flooded, like that. Or like a person who is covered by snow, by an avalanche.

Then, because the mind is so painful, the body is also not comfortable. Mentally one is not healthy, not fit, and there is much pain, much confusion, so the body gets sick. This is also a cause for the body to be unhealthy. There are heart attacks and many other things such as cancer and TB; worry and fear and disturbing thoughts become causes and conditions for these things.

We should think of lam-rim practice as the essential thing, or of thought transformation as the essential practice of Dharma. If one doesn’t think that this is the way to live the life—as important as eating or having a means of living, that incredibly important in everyday life—without it the danger of death will happen. We feel discomfort from not having a means of living, naturally we feel that it is extremely important to have food and drink; without that there is no comfort. So, like that, this is even more important. We have to think of the lam-rim practice, remembering the advice of the lam-rim meditations, the lam-rim teachings and those incredibly skilful methods of Mahayana thought transformation. We should keep this in our hearts as more important than place and food, more important than a means of living.

If one has not received or one has not met the teachings, then that is another question. If the person has no understanding, there is no opportunity to practice. Until he meets the teachings, until he comes to know the teachings, there is no opportunity to practice, to stop the life-confusion, the problems; to control the disturbing thoughts; to transform the undesirable things into desirable things, the undesirable conditions into desirable conditions; to transform problems into happiness, and suffering into happiness. That person has no opportunity to practice. For we who have met and received the Dharma, the graduated path to enlightenment, it not only brings some kind of peace of mind for a while, one or two hours, a little bit of calmness, like those psychological methods. Those people who help others to stop depression, aggression and problems are very kind and have this education to help others with what they know. While the person is playing in the sand or making a drawing, because the mind is distracted by that there is some kind of small calm; the fears and worries or the depression are a little bit weaker, whatever the person has, because the mind is distracted. But if just continuously doing sand-play for weeks and months and years and years, thirty or forty years, doing sand-play for life worked, then those who are artists wouldn't have attachment. If this really stopped mental confusion, being overwhelmed by various disturbing thoughts; if doing this made fewer and fewer disturbing thoughts, and more and more mental peace, then people who spent their whole lives being artists wouldn't have any attachment. They would have incredible peace.

The conclusion is that those methods are good and, with whatever the person knows, if he is able to benefit others for even a few days, even a few hours, make a depressed and aggressive person calm for even for a few hours, for one or two days, this is very kind and very good. But putting the lam-rim into practice, particularly the profound, highest, extremely skilful Mahayana thought transformation, immediately cuts off confusion, the dissatisfactory mind, the flames of anger burning inside. It pacifies those painful minds, the very tight mind, all the painful minds—jealousy, miserliness, pride—all these things, those wrong views, those different types of wrong views that lead only to samsara, that lead only to the unfortunate realms, the rebirth of the suffering transmigratory beings. The more and more one practices lam-rim, immediately the cause of the problem is controlled. The cause of the problem, disturbing thoughts, is controlled. By practicing lam-rim, you took the mind away from the disturbing thoughts, the cause of the problems.

Those Dharma practitioners, those lam-rim practitioners, with anybody and at any time, watch their minds, practice Dharma; their minds are oneness with Dharma, there is no gap, no space; there is no space between their mind and Dharma. Nevertheless, even if one has received the teaching on lam-rim, since one does not practice, since one doesn't put it into action, almost one person can fit in the gap between one's own mind and Dharma! There is a big space. Instead of the mind being oneness with Dharma, it is oneness with the delusions, oneness with anger. If it is not oneness with anger, it is oneness with attachment or with the uncontrolled dissatisfied mind. If it is not oneness with that, then jealous mind, if not that, pride.

As long as the actions, the cause of the problems, get controlled and pacified, and don't get the opportunity to arise, the more the practice is done, day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, the anger becomes weaker and weaker and weaker. Even in the case of a person who is unbelievably impatient, so impatient, incredibly impatient, so that in one day he spends most of the hours angry, whenever there is a small disturbance, the mind is so easily overwhelmed by anger. The person feels a kind of oneness with it, his mind is oneness with it, sort of mixed with it, sort of impossible to separate away from that, kind of impossible; similarly, with the dissatisfied mind, the attachment. The person feels, "This is life, this is how my life is, and there is no way that I can live

my life some way else. Without this dissatisfied mind and anger there is no way that I can live, that I can survive. Without this I can't survive." Like this. Complete oneness. He finds it impossible that this mind could be separated away from this confused mind, the disturbing thoughts.

However, if the lam-rim practice is done, gradually even the extremely dirty cloth, that is completely covered by dirt so that you can't see even the cloth, becomes clean. Sometimes you may see this in the East, if you go to Tibet. Nowadays I don't know but in the past you could find it. You can't see the cloth—it is completely covered by dirt but, with perseverance, knowing that the cloth can be separated from the dirt, the more and more you attempt to wash it, it becomes more and more clean. Afterwards the cloth is completely separated from the dirt and becomes completely clean.

So similar to this, by practicing lam-rim more and more, after a few years, even though there is still anger rising, while before it lasted for many hours or many days, months and month. Even after two or three years of practicing lam-rim, patience and thought-transformation, even though there is anger when there is some very undesirable thing happening, even though the anger arises, it doesn't even last one minute. For a few seconds your mind is controlled by the anger, but then it disappears.

As you practice more, you need less and less effort to remember thought transformation and lam-rim. Then after some years you can't even remember, it becomes natural when undesirable things happen, when other people criticize, whatever happens—a sudden disease like a heart attack—practicing Dharma becomes natural. Practicing the remedy, lam-rim meditation, becomes natural. In the early times, you found so many objects of delusion—whatever objects you saw. Later, there are fewer and fewer objects of delusions. That's how, by practicing lam-rim, and particularly by practicing shunyata, by eliminating the root of delusions, the ignorance of true existence, one eliminates all other disturbing thoughts. That's how by practicing lam-rim one achieves liberation: the great cessation of the obscurations, the great nirvana, sublime happiness, full enlightenment.

So, "I must go back to the root. What is the use of doing many other activities, doing many other things, doing sadhanas but finding no progression in the mind? Reciting mantras for many years—that isn't knowing how to practice Dharma."

What Shantideva is saying is that if one had been practicing Dharma, the mind would be getting better and better. However much retreat one did, however many recitations one did, many millions, all this, it shows that these things—saying prayers all day, all these long sadhanas—these things did not become Dharma. Something was wrong in the practice. Something went wrong, something was wrong, something was missing. When you did these things there was something missing in the mind. That is why the mind hasn't got better. It is supposed to get better day by day, month by month, year by year—less anger, less jealousy, less dissatisfied mind—but it doesn't happen; on the contrary, these even increase. So then, Shantideva has advised that what is missing is protecting the mind, watching the mind all the time, guarding or protecting the mind from the disturbing thoughts. That real Dharma practice, that practice of lam-rim, is missing. Lam-rim practice is missing. The practice of thought-transformation is missing.

So therefore, however much any outside things are done, there is not even comfort, there is not even peace—while one is saying the sadhana, while one is doing the prayers, there is not even comfort, not even peace in the mind. The mind is so distracted and overwhelmed by anger while one is saying the sadhana, or by all the other disturbing thoughts, even during the time of the sadhana. I don't get surprised when I see people doing prayers all day long, reading scriptures,

sadhanas, all day long sitting reading scriptures, doing the prayers. For me it is not a surprise, because it could be possible that the person is saying the prayer, doing the action out of worldly concern, which means that the action doesn't become Dharma practice. It doesn't become holy Dharma, it becomes worldly Dharma. The motive is worldly concern, done either with anger, with attachment, with poisonous mind—then the action is non-virtue. Doing meditation, fasting for months and years, living in a solitary place in the high mountains; that alone is not a surprise. If it becomes Dharma, if whatever that person does becomes holy Dharma, then that is good, that is what is needed. That becomes the cause of happiness, which he wants. So somebody doing this doesn't surprise me. Whether it becomes the cause of happiness, the cause to find the body of a happy transmigratory being, whether the person's action becomes the cause of liberation, whether the person's action becomes the cause of enlightenment, is dependent on the person's mind, dependent on the person's attitude when doing the action.

If the person doesn't do those actions with any of those attitudes and lives life just in a little bit different form, then only the outside of the person's life is different from the person who works in the city or those who are butchers—who do not practice Dharma, who do not know Dharma, who do not practice Dharma, whose life is lived all the time with worldly concern, living the worldly life. That one just looks different from the outside but actually, he is the same, living a worldly life, since the person is doing retreat and all those things with worldly concern. Whether the person recites mantra or not; whether the person does prayers or not; whether the person takes the traditional form externally—if he watches his mind, when his mind is overwhelmed by delusions then immediately, without delay, as it is said in the Eight Verses, he tries to defeat the disturbing thoughts, tries to make them weaker, tries to control them by whatever method he uses—I think, that is the main surprise. So practicing lam-rim is the main surprise. I have lost my point!

Anyway, I think, instead, those *lam-rimpas*, those lam-rim meditators, spend most of their time meditating on lam-rim during break times and session time. It is called “break time” because the person is not sitting, practicing like that, but the mind is continuously watching the mind and not letting it be under the control of the disturbing thoughts, while he is seeing people, while he is doing activities. Actually, he is continuously practicing lam-rim. It is like a session, the difference is just that one is sitting and one is not sitting.

The skilful lam-rim meditators, who actually want to have some achievement in the mind in this life—to finish some realizations, to approach as much as possible the attainments of this path in this life—what they do, how they spend most of their time is in meditation on lam-rim, training the mind in bodhicitta; this is the first thing. Then they do the commitments that they have taken from their guru—also, of course, that has to be done. I think when you have progression in *samatha*, tranquil abiding, when the concentration lasts longer and longer, even the commitment to recite long sadhanas and all these things—which are commitments, which you promised to do during the initiation time—once you have started a realization of samatha or tranquil abiding, once there is some progression so that it can last more than four hours, then it is allowed and more important to continue the concentration, rather than not doing the concentration and saying many prayers. At that time it is not so skilful to do many prayers and all those things. Once you have some realization, you can continue that and in that way you can accomplish realizations in this life. If you do those other things without continuing [that realization], that is unskillful, and you can't make progression. So it is allowed.

It is not by laziness that they cut down their commitment. Not by laziness. Because you continue this realization, you are able to accomplish, completely overwhelm the delusions and in this way, with great insight, you can have that realization—you receive all the realizations of the Mahayana path like rainfall. That way one achieves enlightenment quickly, and is quickly able to eliminate the obscurations and achieve enlightenment, so one can do quickly the works for other sentient beings, extensively. The final goal, the main aim, is to be able to do the extensive works for other sentient being quickly. So when you have some level of samatha realization, if you do these other things and you don't do the concentration, it takes a longer time on the path to generate the higher stages. Therefore it is not skilful, so one is allowed to cut down.

With the lam-rim practice—renunciation, bodhicitta, these things—with this practice, on the basis of this, saying prayers, doing sadhanas, reciting mantras, all those things easily become Dharma, extremely beneficial, and bless the mind, transforming the mind quicker. They help to have quicker lam-rim realizations—retreat, sadhana, mantra, all those things. The lam-rim meditations make these practices pure; the activities of each day become the cause of liberation, the remedy to samsara and the cause of enlightenment. Those mantras, prayers, retreats and meditations on the deity help one to have quick realizations, to complete the graduated path to enlightenment quickly in one's own mind.

So by watching the mind, if you find out that there have been many years with no progress, even though you are doing many other things, in that case you stop those other things and put the main effort into lam-rim, thought-training and lam-rim. Spend the life in the lam-rim, living life in the lam-rim practice rather than living the life in dry words—saying, reciting dry words. “Dry words” means the mind not becoming Dharma.

Now I will make the conclusion of what I started. This verse shows the renunciation of this life and the renunciation of all samsara. Worldly concern leads to the lower realms, causes rebirth in the lower realms. So renunciation refers to renouncing the cause, renunciation of the result, of the lower realm, and the renunciation of all samsara, the realms of the human beings and the devas, those who are under the control of delusion and karma.

Then the second line, entering the path admired by “the Victor's sons,” bodhisattvas, shows bodhicitta. Without renunciation one cannot achieve liberation; without the bodhicitta that is revealed by the second verse, one cannot achieve enlightenment. Without shunyata, which is revealed by the third line, the door of liberation for fortunate beings, one cannot cut the root of samsara. So therefore, especially if you don't have the tantric realization of the two stages, the most important thing this time is to practice lam-rim.

By practicing lam-rim, the three principles of the path to enlightenment, one is able to complete the realizations of tantra and then achieve enlightenment. In this way, by practicing lam-rim, all the wishes get fulfilled—all the temporal wishes and all the ultimate wishes get fulfilled. There is nothing that you can't accomplish; there is no happiness you can't accomplish by practicing lam-rim. There is nothing. What we want is happiness, what we do not want is suffering. To stop suffering, to obtain happiness we have to create good karma—we have to eliminate, we have to stop creating negative karma and we have to purify the negative karma that was accumulated in the past. So that is lam-rim practice. In this way life becomes highly meaningful.

I think I will stop here. I meant to do the motivation, but didn't!

Thank you very much.

Lecture 3

If the wish, the aim we have is happiness, if what we want is happiness and what we do not want is suffering, if we want to have freedom, to prevent and end the suffering, we have to know the cause of suffering and we have to purify the cause of suffering that has been accumulated.

One has to purify the negative karma, the disturbing thoughts and the ignorance of true existence by generating the remedy, the path. By knowing the cause, one stops creating the cause of samsaric suffering. Then, one has to recognize the infallible cause of happiness. Even if one doesn't accept reincarnation, future lives or happiness beyond this life, and even if one doesn't accept enlightenment, since one wishes for happiness in this life, one has to know how to develop it, how to practice. Those understandings are Dharma wisdom, so one has to know the holy Dharma.

Buddha's teaching contains the complete explanation—whatever happiness, temporal or ultimate, whatever one wishes—the whole method is explained in wisdom and method, by explaining these two. So if one's aim is to receive a good rebirth in next life or happiness in future lives, one should understand the teachings of lam-rim, the graduated path of the lower capable being. In that way, by closing the door of the rebirth of the suffering transmigratory beings, one is able to receive the body of the happy transmigratory being. If one's aim is to achieve liberation from the bondage of karma and disturbing thoughts, one has to follow the graduated path of the middle capable being. Then, if one's aim is to achieve full enlightenment, one should follow the graduated path of the higher capable being.

As it was explained in the three verses this morning, from the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, the *Three Principles of the Path to Enlightenment*, renunciation leads to the happiness of future lives and to liberation. Then these other two, bodhicitta and shunyata, the graduated path of the higher capable being, also lead to enlightenment. Just generally dividing the subject into three, like this, the way it is set up in the lam-rim. On the basis of the root, after having found the qualified guru then correctly devoting oneself with thought and action; then, by reflecting on the perfect human rebirth that is highly meaningful and that is difficult to find again in next life; then, even the perfect human rebirth that one has received now, which is highly meaningful and difficult to find again, generally doesn't last a long time, it doesn't last forever. It is even uncertain when we will separate from or leave it—it can happen at any moment. So when death happens, even though the body is completely disintegrated, ashes, the consciousness does not cease, it continues. As that continuation of consciousness didn't have beginning, it doesn't have end. The continuation of this doesn't have an end, where it completely stops. There is no time that the continuation of consciousness completely stops; there is no such thing, as it didn't have beginning.

So the consciousness migrates to one of the six realms according to karma. At the time of death if the good karma is stronger, more powerful, then the consciousness migrates to the body of the happy transmigratory being. If the negative karma is more powerful, the consciousness migrates to the body of the suffering transmigratory beings. There is not a third way for the consciousness to migrate. There are only two ways for the consciousness to migrate.

Knowing the sufferings of the evil-gone realms and those transmigratory beings—and having aversion, wanting to protect oneself from the suffering of those realms, then finding the body of a happy transmigratory being—one practices refuge and moral conduct, such as the ten virtuous actions. One completely relies upon Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and practices moral conduct. The essential thing is protecting karma, making the vow to not commit a certain number of harmful actions, to not do things that harm others, making the vow to not commit actions that harm others and harm oneself.

Then, reflect on the true cause of suffering, how even the realm of the human body and the deva realm experience true suffering, rebirth, old age, sickness and death—all these things, all those other problems—and are under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts. Then, with aversion for all of samsara, in order to achieve liberation, practice the essential path of the three higher trainings: the higher trainings of moral conduct, concentration and great insight.

Then, one has strong aversion, unbearable renunciation for one's own samsara; wishing to be free from this, seeing one's own samsara, oneself being in samsara like being in the center of a fire, and not having the slightest attraction for any of the samsaric perfections and enjoyments. One feels strong aversion to one's own samsara and such a strong wish to be liberated from this, then, by seeing how other sentient beings, from whom one received all one's own three times' happiness and perfections, who are kind in all the three times; by seeing how they, like oneself, are suffering in samsara, being obscured; unbearable compassion wishing other sentient beings to be free from the suffering of samsara, from the obscurations, and to cause that by oneself, arises. Like the mother who has a beloved son or daughter who fell into the fire. She feels it is so unbearable—right this minute, right this second she wishes the child to be free from the suffering of being burnt and to liberate the child from being in the fire. No matter how hard it is, no matter how long it takes, in spite of all that, she has the complete determination to save the child, to liberate the child from the problem of being burnt in the fire. So like this, feel great compassion for all sentient beings who equal the sky, every single sentient being.

Also, even if one achieves liberation by completely eliminating the root, true suffering and the true cause of suffering, karma, and even the seed of the disturbing thoughts—still there is *shedrip*, fully-knowing obscurations, obscurations that prevent one from fully and directly seeing all past, present and future existence. There is still dual view because of the impressions left by the disturbing thoughts, which are called the *shedrip*. Therefore, there is no omniscient mind. So arhats, even though they have incredible unbelievable psychic powers, clairvoyance and incredible realizations, still cannot see the inconceivable secret actions of the buddhas or subtle karmas that were accumulated an incredible length of time ago. There are karmas that they cannot comprehend or see, including subtle karmas. Like why, as it is explained in the teachings, the peacock has different colors, or butterflies' designs—different colors on the wings, various figures. The cause of each of those spots, figures on the wings, is subtle karma.

I think it must be similar, our enjoyments; this is my idea—it must be similar to the flowers that we have at the house, that we enjoy, our own karmic view of those flowers. They have particular shapes on the flowers and the leaves—very fine figures, many different figures. Each plant has a very different design—“design,” or what do you call it? Like for example [Rinpoche picks up a flower] something like this is completely different, and on this one, the leaves have so many different figures. So each has a cause—the reason we enjoy this flower, our karmic view of this flower, and such a particular shape, the leaves have particular shapes and very different figures inside, like that.

Why should it have such a particular leaf? Why is this particular one, and what is the karma of each different leaf?

It is so interesting when you look at the outside things. Our karmic views, our enjoyments, the results of our karma—if we watch, if we look at them in detail, it is so incredibly interesting; one wonders how one created the karma. It looks like these flowers have mind, wanting to be that way, kind of having mind, kind of manifested or created. They created it in that way; it was their own idea. Like the artist or like the architect, like the architect's mind. Each of these plants, these enjoyments, what we see in our karmic view, what we enjoy—all this came from our mind and all this came from our karma, so it is incredibly interesting that each plant, each flower, has a particular shape, all those details. How? For example, how did one karma make it grow like this? It is very interesting. It is related with one's own mind. It has to do with one's own present mind and past mind, past karma. So as it is said in the text, in a similar way those reasons for each one, the karma of each detail should also be subtle karma, for each different leaf. This is normally what I think, what I feel, what I think.

Then, by distance—there are examples, but I don't need to mention, anyway, there are stories—even though arhats have incredible psychic powers and clairvoyance, the arhat still has not removed the four causes of the unknowing mind, so he cannot perfectly guide the sentient beings. He cannot see the subtle karma or the karma that was created such an incredibly long time ago. Since he cannot see it, he cannot guide. Like the story about the old man who was over eighty and became an arhat; after he was over eighty he became a monk and practiced Dharma. He was unable to be guided by the arhat Sharipu but he was able to be guided by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Under Buddha's guidance he became an arhat.

Also, the two arhats, the Great Path and the Small Path; the arhat, the Small Path was so incredibly ignorant when he was a young boy that when he had memorized OM he forgot BU, and when he had memorized BU, he forgot OM. And SIDAM—when he memorized SI he forgot DAM. Even to memorize one stanza took months. Even the shepherds who looked after the animals memorized it by hearing it so many times but Small Path never learned. So he was kicked out by his elder brother, who was an arhat. He was unable to guide him. But Small Path met Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and he explained everything and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guided him. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha let him clean the shoes of the monks. When the monks went inside the prayer hall, doing prayers and meditation, the shoes were left outside. Then Guru Shakyamuni Buddha told him to clean the monks' shoes. He told the monks, as they came in and out of the prayer hall, to recite beside him, “Avoid dust and avoid stain.”

Just the words themselves are funny but they have meaning. “Avoiding dust” means avoiding the obscuring thoughts, obscurations; “avoiding stains” means avoiding the *shedrip*, even the subtle obscurations. So the monks recited it as they went in and out of the gomba and, as he cleaned the monks' shoes, he was able to memorize this.

He was told by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha to clean outside the monastery. When he finished cleaning the ground on the right side of the monastery and started to clean the ground on the left side of the monastery, the right side filled with dust. Then, when he has finished cleaning the left side and started to clean the right side, the ground on the left filled with dust. This was Guru Shakyamuni's blessing, way of subduing, way of guiding, way of purifying his ignorance. He kept cleaning back and forth like this, on and on, and while he was cleaning outside the monastery he was

able to remember this one stanza, which took him months to memorize. He also realized its meaning and realized shunyata. Then he gave teachings on that one stanza. He gave commentaries. He became the best among the arhats, among Guru Shakyamuni's disciples—the best teacher, explaining Dharma; a skilful teacher. Anyway, he became an arhat in that life. So like this, his older brother who was an arhat was unable to guide him but Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guided him and he became an arhat.

Like this, to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them into the sublime happiness, because what they want is lasting happiness, the best, that happiness that lasts longer, the best. So that is enlightenment. Among the happinesses, what they want is the highest, which lasts long, which never degenerates. That is enlightenment. So, to lead the sentient beings to this state, to accomplish this work for other sentient beings—now, one cannot guide even one sentient being. One has no ability to perfectly guide even one sentient being. As one is not liberated from all the fears or obscurations, one cannot liberate others from all the fears and obscurations.

The one who can perfectly guide other sentient beings is only Buddha. Therefore, there is no way to guide other sentient beings other than oneself achieving enlightenment. To achieve this aim one is practicing bodhicitta, the six paramitas practice. The conclusion is that, without talking about the previous aims, if one's aim is to achieve enlightenment, to accomplish the extensive works for other sentient beings, if the aim is to be able to perfectly guide every sentient being, then there is no way other than lam-rim practice. If this is the aim, what we want to accomplish, there is no other way except training the mind in the graduated path to enlightenment.

To achieve this goal, it should be the way of the fully enlightened one with the complete experience—by following the path, having achieved omniscient mind, completed all the realizations and liberated himself from all the obscurations—the teachings that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the fully enlightened being taught and the pandits analyzed. They checked whether it misguides one or not. They analyzed whether there was any mistake or not, they checked. Many great yogis put it into practice; they actualized the graduated path to enlightenment revealed by Buddha. As Buddha, they practiced and they also became enlightened. They had the same experience that Buddha explained.

In this way it is proven that, as we practice lam-rim meditation, as we study the teachings, as we understand and practice the meditation, we are able to control our mind, our disturbing thoughts. Great satisfaction and happiness comes in the mind, increasing, which wasn't there before. There is more and more happiness in one's life. In this way, doing even a little practice of lam-rim meditation, that much experience comes; there is that much mind control, there is that much peace. In this way, there is that much faith or devotion that the Buddha is a true founder, because as I practice his teachings, it works, it benefits the mind. Like this, it is proven. The pandits checked it. Many great yogis put it into practice and they also reached enlightenment. So like this it is identified or proven that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is the perfect guide, a true founder, by recognizing that the teaching is true, not misleading.

So if we follow and practice some other teaching that was not shown by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, by a fully enlightened being, which the great yogis and pandits have not practiced, which they have not analyzed then, without checking, we might reach somewhere that the yogis and pandits have not achieved. We might achieve something strange, some strange goals.

If such is our goal, then the path in which we should train our minds or should dedicate our lives to should be like this path. Then there is no misleading. Many others who practiced and reached it had the same experience, enlightenment. There are so many uncountable examples of those who practiced the teaching, who were able to separate the mind from the obscurations and achieved omniscient mind. There are so many proofs. If there is no such proof and, without checking, without analyzing before dedicating one's life to that practice, if one does that practice without checking, it could be a great loss or a great waste of life.

I am just going to start the part of the shunyata subject, then I will leave it there. In order to listen to teachings such as this on the graduated path to enlightenment, those that were revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, that have no betrayal at all from their own side—as long as one doesn't betray from one's own side—to listen to this teaching, the attitude of the lower capable being, wishing to receive temporal happiness or happiness in future lives, or even the attitude to achieve liberation for oneself, is not enough. One should have the bodhicitta attitude to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

To listen to the lam-rim teachings, the attitude should always be the attitude of bodhicitta, at least the creative attitude of bodhicitta. Think, “At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind in order to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them into the peerless happiness, enlightenment. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment.”

The subject that is after samatha is great insight. I thought at first to explain the *Heart Sutra*, the *Essence of Wisdom* but after I changed my mind, to give a brief explanation on great insight as it is explained by Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's disciple, Togden Rinpoche. This is one very effective lam-rim, short, not so many pages, but it contains so much and is very effective.

I heard some stories about this lama, Togden Rinpoche. I heard he was Nyingmapa in his early life. He was learned among the Nyingmapa in those early years. He thought that he was an expert on shunyata. He knew all the teachings on shunyata, he was an expert. In another place there was a lama called Denma Locho. I am not sure whether it was this present one, maybe it was the past life, I'm not sure. Denma Locho was also very learned. Togden Rinpoche came to see Denma Locho to debate or to check on shunyata. He asked questions and they discussed shunyata.

Before this, he thought that he was extremely learned in the shunyata teachings. He discussed it with Denma Locho. As he returned to his country, he thought all the time of the discussion that he had with Denma Locho Rinpoche. When he had gone halfway to his place, something made him return to see Denma Locho again. He then recognized that his understanding was wrong, what he thought about shunyata was wrong. He went back to Denma Locho Rinpoche, who told him, “If you want to realize shunyata, you go to Lhasa. There is a great lama in Lhasa, an excellent lama, Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. You go to see him.” So he went to Lhasa to meet Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. After that he lived the ascetic life; he lived so many years practicing lam-rim under the guidance of Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. He meditated, I guess, above Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's monastery.

Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo is one quite recent lineage lama of the lam-rim teachings. Many of the people here are familiar, but those who came here for the first time may not know. He is the root guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's root gurus, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche and His Holiness

Ling Rinpoche, and also many of our gurus, including His Holiness Song Rinpoche, a recent lama who did unbelievable work teaching sentient beings so widely in many places in Tibet. And unbelievably clear; uncountable numbers of beings, hearing teachings from Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo, so many disciples actualized the lam-rim path. They actualized the lam-rim path and became great masters, revealing extensive sutra and tantra teachings with complete experience to many disciples. Again, from these lamas, so many realized disciples happened. Again, many of these lamas gave teachings to so many thousands and thousands of disciples. It happened like this.

Togden Rinpoche meditated in the cave that belonged to Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo, above Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's monastery. I don't remember the name of the cave. He lived the ascetic life, meditating in the cave. Then, whenever he had an experience, he came down to the monastery to make offering of his realization to Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. Then again he went back to meditate. He did this for many years. One day, after some time, Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo asked him to come with him. Somewhere there is some kind of a water pool, where Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo took baths. That day, Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo asked him to come with him. So he went there with Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. He offered service, rubbing and cleaning Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's holy body in the swimming pool. While he was rubbing Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's holy body, offering service, suddenly the colors of his holy body transformed, changed, and there were kind of bumps or pimples coming out of the holy body. Little bumps came out of the holy body and while he was rubbing they became bigger and bigger. Then, after some time, he saw Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo completely in the particular aspect of Buddha called Heruka. He saw him completely in this aspect.

Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo told Togden Rinpoche, putting his hand on his back, "This is my present for you." Then, I guess, he dissolved or whatever it is. It could be like this. Maybe it was the right time. His karmic obscurations had become thinner by doing the practice correctly, as he was advised by Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo. And then he offered service and that purified his negative karma, the impure karmic obscurations. His seeing Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo as Heruka, as the actual Heruka, could be a sign that the impure karmic obscurations had become thinner.

Without understanding the teachings, without putting it into practice, you can't discriminate whether it is misguiding or not—without studying, without understanding, without analyzing. One should completely study, as extensively as possible. Completely study. Then you know, you have more wisdom to discriminate whether there is such a thing as enlightenment or not. Without studying, without understanding, you have no wisdom to judge, you have no wisdom to discriminate. I think a quick way is that the more one understands the Buddha's teachings, the more one has studied, the more one understands, especially by practicing; from that, experience comes. So I think one is also able to discriminate, prove through experience. The actual way to prove it is through practice. By putting it into practice, the experience comes. That way one gets proof. In that way one is able to judge other teachings not shown by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. One is able to judge those that are correct, those that are misguiding and those that are not misguiding. One is able to judge. Among all those various practices, any other teachings or religions, one is able to judge which are right, which benefit; whether they benefit, whether they cause happiness or not, without taking much time, wasting much life by studying other teachings.

To be able to discriminate takes much time, to have perfect wisdom, to be able to discriminate all the practices that can benefit others, which is the right and which is the wrong practice. Of course the best is that if one has intelligence one can study all the religions in the world; then, as one knows

all the Buddhadharma, just by knowing the basic lam-rim teaching, by knowing that and by having practiced, one has the basic wisdom to judge and discriminate which are right and which are wrong practices, so one doesn't follow blindly or get discouraged, or waste one's life. So, one needs continual study and analysis. The best actual proof comes by putting it into practice. Studying the words alone doesn't bring realizations.

Yes, I think I stop here.

Thank you.

Lecture 4

[Reading the Heart Sutra]

We are going to do the short preliminary practices. The reason is to purify the obstacles, so that the listening, reflecting and meditation practices may become effective for one's own mind, to generate the graduated path to enlightenment, to be able to complete it in this life; at least to be able to approach half of the realizations of lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment, in the mind; to be able to start to generate the realizations of the path to enlightenment in this life. To purify the obstacles to develop the mind and for the virtuous or positive mind, or the good heart to develop, to continue and to increase—for that we need to accumulate the cause, merit, so these different preliminary prayers or meditation contain essentially the method for purifying the obscurations and defilements, and accumulating extensive merit.

We are going to make the preliminaries very short. Refuge, then bodhicitta, then the four immeasurables, like the *Jorcbö*. The meditation is the same as the *Jorcbö*, just short prayers. With refuge, purifying those particular and general negative karmas accumulated by sentient beings; purifying the particular negative karmas accumulated with the holy objects, and generating the realizations of Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. And then, after the four immeasurable practices, you have generated bodhicitta and the merit field is extremely pleased.

The visualization is simply Guru Shakyamuni Buddha as the embodiment of all the Gurus, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. And then, according to whatever you are familiar with, your individual choice, you can do the elaborate visualization as it is explained in the *Jorcbö*. After the four immeasurables, having generated bodhicitta and made the strong determination to lead sentient beings to enlightenment by oneself, quicker and quicker, taking the whole responsibility, the whole job, the whole responsibility to work for others by oneself, to bear the hardships. This pleases the merit field extremely, and then the merit field—either as in the *Jorcbö* for the seven limb practice, if you are going to do another visualization—Guru Shakyamuni Buddha absorbs into your forehead and blesses your three doors. Your three doors become in the essence of Guru Shakyamuni's holy body, holy speech and holy mind. If you are not changing, like in the *Jorcbö* practice, into the second visualization, then just a replica of that absorbs into that. But still you are Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, in single aspect, just one merit field. You can keep it like that.

Then the seven limb practice.

By explaining details of these preliminary practices, there is so much—again, it will take much time. So perhaps those who are in lam-rim retreat, either one of the geshe or somebody can explain it elaborately, which is extremely important. These *Jorchö* practices are extremely important—these are the ones that bring realizations. So do the seven limb practice as much as possible, slowly and with meditation with each limb. Say them very slowly and meditate on each of the practices. If you are doing it alone, you should spend as much time as possible on those important practices—the seven limbs, mandala offerings—with details, as you can remember from the commentary. Not just saying the words, the seven limb practice not being just words, or the mandala offering just words. In this way, the more elaborate the visualization, the more details one can think of, one can meditate on, the more extensive merit one accumulates, the greater the purification that is done. So, say one line and think, meditate. Say one line, then meditate. That is extremely good, effective for the mind. Like when you have much pain, you take the tranquilizer, which kills the pain. Anyway, after the prayer, the practice that you do in this way, you also feel, “I have done.” You feel satisfaction. You feel, you find that what you did was meaningful.

Then mandala offerings, then the three requests for the three great purposes, then the prayer to the lineage lamas; here we do a very short prayer. Yesterday I think the lineage lamas’ prayer was the mahamudra lineage lamas’ I think so, but I think it was auspicious. Even though that is not the normal lineage lamas’ prayer that goes with the *Jorchö*, I think it is very, very auspicious to get the blessings so that we can quickly eradicate ignorance, the root of samsara. We do a short prayer, meditating, thinking about the meaning of the prayer, and white nectar beams emit and purify all the obstacles of the sutra and tantra path, to help us generate the realizations of the profound and extensive path of sutra and tantra.

Then a replica of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the embodiment of all the lineage lamas, up to the direct guru, absorbs into you and you generate all the realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment, all the extensive and profound paths within your mind. And also think the same thing happened with all other sentient beings. They are purified. A replica absorbs and they generate the complete realizations of the sutra and tantra, the profound and extensive path.

After that, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha descends onto your crown, and you recite the mantra TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA, purifying you and other sentient beings. You can do that. Also, those who have done the practice of generating yourself as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, you become Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and then you send beams from the syllable MAM to the sentient beings and purify them. After the special bodhicitta, immeasurable, special bodhicitta, those who have been doing this practice of generating yourself as a deity, those who have received initiation and have been doing this practice, then the same thing—you send out beams and at the tip of the beams you emit Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who sits on the head of each sentient being, purifies them, and then they become oneness with him.

Then you feel great rejoicefulness, “How wonderful it is that I have enlightened all the sentient beings in the essence of Shakyamuni Buddha.” After the special bodhicitta, just keep a little bit of space to think this. Something similar can be done at the end. Then the mandala offering, and the motivation, refuge and bodhicitta.

The lama says, “Due to the merit of explaining the Dharma [Tibetan...].” The disciples should say, “Due to the merits of listening to the Dharma may I receive enlightenment for the benefit of all the sentient beings.” Like that.

[Prayers]

[Mandala offering, requesting prayer]

Requests for accomplishing the three great purposes: “I am prostrating to the Guru, the Triple Gem, relying upon, taking refuge. I am requesting you to grant blessings to transform my mind. I am requesting you to pacify immediately all the wrong conceptions from the wrong views toward the Guru up to the subtle dual view, and to generate immediately all the right realizations, from devotion to the Guru up to the unified state of no more learning, enlightenment, within my mind and the minds of all sentient beings. I am requesting you to immediately pacify all the interferences, all the outer and inner opposing conditions that interfere with practice, to complete the graduated path to enlightenment.”

Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami. [End of mandala offering]

Without need to amplify the motivation with quotations, because it takes much time, please generate the motivation of bodhicitta, thinking like this: “At any rate, I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all the kind mother sentient beings. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment.” So please listen to the teachings by generating at least the creative or effortful motivation of bodhicitta.

This teaching on the graduated path to enlightenment is for the fortunate being to go to enlightenment. It is a teaching that was well expounded by the great propagators Nagarjuna and Asanga. It is very profound advice, the essence of Lama Atisha, incomparable, magnificent Lama Atisha, the great pandit, and Lama Tsongkhapa—as if the essence of their understanding had been taken out. This lam-rim teaching is set up as a graduated practice for one person to achieve enlightenment. It contains all the importance of all the 84,000 teachings shown by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha.

In this lam-rim teaching, in order to show the reference of Dharma, the qualities of the authors, the qualities of the lineage lamas are explained, particularly Lama Atisha, from whom the title, *lam-rim*, started, since Lama Atisha wrote *Lam.dron*, the “root,” or the “lamp,” of the path. It doesn’t mean that there was something missing, that there was some teaching missing until Lama Atisha came to Tibet. There were the complete teachings but there wasn’t such a teaching as the *Lam.dron*, the lam-rim, how a person can practice the three—the teaching on the lesser vehicle path, the paramita path and the path of secret mantra—without confusion to achieve enlightenment. [There wasn’t] one text that reveals this, that guides the practitioners without confusion, that gives a clear understanding.

So Lama Atisha wrote *Lam.dron*, all the teachings of the three vehicles revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, for one person as a gradual practice to achieve enlightenment. It was written according to the confusion happening in Tibet at that time, according to the request by the nephew of the king of Tibet. The king was the one who actually invited Lama Atisha. He was caught and put in prison by an irreligious king. He went to find gold offerings to offer to Lama Atisha in order to invite him to Tibet to give teachings, in order to stop the problems, all the confusion about not knowing how to practice sutra and tantra together, as a gradual practice for one person. People found much confusion. Those who practiced sutra thought that they could not practice tantra and they criticized,

and those who practiced tantra criticized sutra. There were many problems, much confusion—they found it contradictory.

The king felt these problems to be unbearable, so he went to find gold to make offerings to Lama Atisha. The king, maybe in one place in Tibet or Nepal, was put in prison by an irreligious king, who confiscated all the gold that he had found. The king gave up his life to invite Lama Atisha to Tibet, and to revive the Buddhadharmā. He gave up his life, he passed away in prison. He asked his nephew to invite Lama Atisha.

Then the nephew requested Lama Atisha. He didn't ask Lama Atisha to give tantra teachings; he didn't request Lama Atisha for teachings to fly or to make miracles. The nephew requested Lama Atisha to give teachings on refuge and karma—basic things, the root of happiness. He requested very important teachings, the essence of the Dharma, the root of the happiness of sentient beings. He explained all the problems to Lama Atisha about what was happening in Tibet so, according to that, Lama Atisha wrote the *Lam.dron*, the *Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment*. This was particularly concentrated or aimed to subdue the minds of the disciples, the sentient beings who are the objects to be subdued. That is why the lam-rim teachings, all the time, even though one may get interested in other very extensive philosophical teachings—like one can get interested in science, just talking about it, one may get interested—but actually to have fear of the delusions, to know the shortcomings of the delusions and to have the fear of creating negative karma, to get actual encouragement, seeing the shortcomings of negative karma and the disturbing thoughts and the condensed method; the advice that is easy to understand to control the mind.

In this way, by recognizing delusions and their shortcomings, by realizing the difficulty of attaining a perfect human rebirth, by realizing impermanence and death; knowing these things one sees that one has opportunity and one has met the teachings, so one feels encouraged to do the practice of pacifying the disturbing thoughts. It is extremely effective. Any lam-rim teaching that is set up on the basis of the *Lam.dron* is extremely effective to pacify the mind, which is under the control of delusions.

Then, also explaining the qualities of the authors and the lineage lamas, one sees how they are holy beings, and pure. Also, by knowing their biographies one knows how to practice Dharma.

His Holiness Serkong Rinpoche used to advise me this way on the question of how to practice Dharma. The answer to that question, how to practice Dharma, how to practice lam-rim, Rinpoche used to give a very simple answer: you just follow what those lamas practiced. It is very simple. How the lineage lamas such as Milarepa, all those great yogis and lineage lamas, practiced Dharma, you just follow that. “Isn't it? Isn't it?” Rinpoche was saying to me, “Isn't it? Isn't it?” That's all. There is nothing more than that. There is not something other than that. This is a very effective answer. Very condensed but it contains the whole path to enlightenment, because those lineage lamas of the lam-rim have generated the whole path, from beginning to end. A very tasty answer! Knowing their biography inspires us. As they have the actual experience of the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment, it gives great inspiration, because you find examples of others who have practiced and have achievement. You find examples, and it gives great inspiration for oneself to make strong determination.

I think the main point with Dharma practice is determination. The whole thing is dependent on determination, I think, determination. Just simply, one way of thinking, determination, I think the

whole thing is determination. In one way it looks very, very simple, so simple, incredibly simple. When you think one way, it is extremely simple. One way of thinking—it is so difficult. When your mind is near the delusions, when your mind is closer to the side of the delusions, then when you look at Dharma practice, it is very difficult, so difficult—you find it like rock. When your mind is a friend of, or more on the side of the delusions, then when you look at Dharma practice, you see it as very difficult, like a rock. But I think, the other way, when your mind is more Dharma, the Dharma wisdom, when you look at it from that side then, in a similar way, I think you will find it easy, very easy.

I think it depends a lot on the mind, the delusion or the Dharma wisdom—which side you take more, which side you are near. It depends which side you are taking, on which side you are. So, dependent on that, you can find it very difficult or also find it very easy. The more your mind is on the side of the Dharma wisdom, bringing it to that side, usually, when you look at the delusions and the shortcomings, the incredible waste of life, such as the human life, the precious human body that can do much extensive benefit for oneself and for others, temporal and ultimate, so much. One can accomplish the three great meanings, which other lower realm beings cannot do, cannot achieve, and the length of time, the opportunity that you have is so short, so short. So far it has been wasted and the time that is left is so short. It is not certain if you have even one year or even one month to practice. It is very uncertain. Even to make sure that you will be alive the next hour is difficult. To make one hundred percent sure that we will be alive the next hour—we will be human beings, practicing Dharma—we cannot say. Even in the next hour, even tonight, in the next hour, we cannot say.

If you think from the heart, it looks like that conception of permanence that you feel in the heart, here, that I will live long—without logical reason, even if death is going to happen tomorrow, even if death is going to happen today. Even if the car accident happens, when you ride in the car, or even when you get into the car, even that hour in that car when you are going to die—there is no opportunity to come back home, but when you start to drive from the garage of the house, there is still this wrong conception of permanence that, “I will live long,” “I will live for so many years.” Even though that was the last day to be a human being, whether it is a person practicing Dharma or not practicing Dharma, that is the end of driving the car, the last drive.

This wrong conception is there just before the accident happens, just up to the danger of the accident. Therefore, what you think is not logical. It is not logical, it is not true. So this conception is nothing to rely on, one can't use this as logic. You can't use this wrong conception for logical reasons.

I did one retreat here before I left for Dharamsala, by myself alone. Maybe there were spirits in the room—anyway, I didn't have other realizations, but it was very beneficial for my mind to realize that so far life has been wasted, relying upon the lam-rim teachings written by Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo or Lama Tsongkhapa's lam-rim.

We have had many courses so far, like this. I don't know which number you have started, I have no idea. Seventeen or? Yes, seventeen. That many human beings in the West met the Dharma and started practicing lam-rim, the infallible path to enlightenment. Then they developed their understanding starting from that. Then also they had the opportunity to practice tantra, by hearing lam-rim, by practicing lam-rim. However, actually, those are of no real benefit—no real benefit for sentient beings. When people are saying how good it is, all this is cheating, I discovered all this is

cheating. What good activity it is doing these things, all this, I discovered during the retreat, is all cheating, cheating oneself. That was my discovery in the conclusion of my retreat.

So you see, while there is such an incredible opportunity as this, having a human body, having met the virtuous friend, having met the teachings. The conclusion is that if you cannot have a better mind than the animals, if you don't have a better personality than these other creatures—who don't have opportunity to listen, reflect and meditate, and try to understand teachings—one can understand what one has, and if one does not put it into practice, it is very shameful. How does one say? With? With other creatures? Heh? “In front of them.” Yes, that is right, in front of them. If one doesn't have a better life, a better attitude, a better mind than them, then it is shameful in front of them.

Then comes qualities of the advice, the lam-rim teaching. Then, how to listen to teachings and how to explain the teaching, the correct way of explaining the teaching and the way of listening; in this way, by knowing the things that are explained in the *Lam.dron*, the correct way of explaining, the correct way of listening, the teaching becomes very beneficial for the disciples and the teaching that the disciple listens to goes inside the heart, it benefits. Like the effect of medicine. By taking it correctly as was advised by the doctor, as it was prescribed, the patient recovers from the disease. Then we recover from the disease of the disturbing thoughts. In that way, one is able to approach liberation.

Then how to lead the disciple: the actual advice of the lam-rim teaching. That starts with the root of the path, the way of relying on or devoting oneself to the virtuous friend.

Then following the graduated paths of the lower capable being, the middle capable being and then the higher capable being; this part is the subject of the higher capable being. The higher capable being's path contains both the general path and the particular path, of secret mantra. It is said in the Madhyamaka teaching, in the last part of the sixth chapter: the king of the swans who has developed the light wings of the two truths (the truth of the all-obscuring mind and the absolute truth; “developed” means having realized.) By flapping the wings in front of the other swans, the swans of the capable beings (these capable beings, in one way might be those lower bodhisattvas, the ordinary bodhisattvas.) With the strength and power of the wind of virtue, it crosses the ocean to the infinite qualities of the victorious ones (means buddhas.) So, this aryan bodhisattva, on the sixth bhumi, having developed understanding of the two truths, like two fully developed wings, and with the strength of the strong wind of much accumulation of merit, crosses the deep ocean of samsaric suffering, which has no beginning, and goes to enlightenment, which has infinite qualities.

Having understanding of shunyata, the three principles of the path to enlightenment and the general path in the mind—renunciation, bodhicitta and shunyata—we then practice the two stages of tantra. First there is the generation stage. By practicing these stages with the wisdom of shunyata, it will not become the cause of samsara but instead will become the remedy to samsara. Then there is the second stage that can be explained in five divisions: seclusion from body, seclusion from speech, seclusion from mind, illusory body, actual clear light and union of learning. “Seclusion” means seclusion from the ordinary body, ordinary speech and ordinary, gross mind.

Previously, with the gross wisdom understanding shunyata the mind concentrates on shunyata. Now in this second stage of tantra, the subtle mind concentrates on shunyata. Through this seclusion from the gross impure mind, one achieves the illusory body. The illusory body has two types, the

impure and the pure illusory body. It takes one or three countless great eons to accumulate the merit in the Paramitayana path to attain enlightenment. But this practitioner of tantra who has the impure illusory body is able, without the need of three countless great eons, to finish accumulating all that merit in that life with the impure illusory body. Then he achieves the clear light.

The clear light has two stages, two types: after the impure illusory body there is the clear light of meaning. This is the same as the Paramitayana right-seeing path, directly seeing shunyata. This is the substitute of that. Then, by training the mind in that, one achieves the pure illusory body. This wisdom, the clear light of meaning, cuts off the *nyon.drip*, the disturbing thought obscurations, and one achieves the pure illusory body. Then again one meditates on the clear light, then achieves the unification—the clear light and the illusory body are unified and one achieves the path of unification.

And then again one meditates on clear light, the vajra concentration, concentration like the vajra, and that cuts off the subtle dual view, which interferes with the achievement of omniscient mind. The absolute nature of the stream of consciousness at that time is completely pure, not even obscured by the subtle dual view, it is completely pure. So that is the actual enlightenment, what is called enlightenment: the cessation of the obscurations, of all the stains. That is the greatest nirvana, great liberation. The consciousness is able to see all the three times (past, present and future) existence; is able to read every single thought of the sentient beings at the same time, and is able to see all the three times existence at the same time—all the different personalities, the different capabilities and intelligence, every single method that fits each sentient being.

So not having subtle dual view, subtle obscurations, the Buddha, that enlightened being, has perfect power, the complete power to guide sentient beings. He does this effortlessly, without effort of body, speech and mind. Like the moon rising: it is only one moon but wherever there is water, oceans, streams and even dew drops on the grass, there are billions, uncountable numbers of reflections of that one moon appearing. Even though the moon does not have the motivation, “I will reflect in all the waters,” all the reflections automatically happen like that, as long as there is no cover on the water. If there is a cover then the reflection cannot happen.

So Buddha, without any effort, automatically does the work for the sentient beings by manifesting in various forms, hundreds of thousands of different forms, even to guide one sentient being. With various means, he reveals the teachings as is fitting or gives material things in various ways. Whatever fits—being a butcher, being a king, being a minister, being a judge; He is not only a Dharma teacher. He can be crazy, a prostitute, or even manifest as a spirit—there are many ways to lead sentient beings to enlightenment.

The conclusion is that all that can happen by understanding shunyata—the point is that. Now gross wisdom understands it, but then you will attain the second stage, the subtle mind. The obscurations that cut off the dual view are eliminated by developing the wisdom of shunyata possessed by the method. In the Paramitayana path this is done by bodhicitta and in tantra by the stage of generation and also the illusory body. With the support of method and wisdom, one achieves the dharmakaya and the rupakaya. The dharmakaya arises from wisdom and the rupakaya from method. This is how one has the possibility to achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime—within a few years.

This is due to the skillfulness of the method of bodhicitta, and the more skilful method of tantra.

Thank you!

[Dedication prayers of bodhicitta]

Lecture 5

...much more merit than making charity of one's own life to the sentient beings in the three realms, even more than leading the sentient beings of the three realms on the path of virtue, bringing them into the ten virtuous practices. With the idea to meditate on shunyata, making even a few subtle steps with the attitude to go to that place to meditate on shunyata, is much more merit than bringing that many sentient beings into the practice of the ten virtuous actions.

Even just bringing up a doubt on the subject of shunyata breaks samsara into pieces—I mean that even bringing up doubt harms the ignorance of true existence. Even bringing up doubt about the object of ignorance of true existence: whether what we see now here, what appears to our senses, the sense objects, the way that things appear as truly existent is real or not. Bringing up doubt about whether what you see with your experience is true or not—“Maybe this is false, maybe all this, the way things appear, the way these objects appear to me, maybe all these are false, maybe this is not real as it appears real, from its own side.” Even just bringing up doubt harms the root of samsara.

First I will go over the text. There are many quotations with the text, from great different Indian and Tibetan pandits, and highly realized yogis. Going over those, reflecting, reading those precious words and reflecting on their meaning, is very effective for receiving blessings, very effective for the mind. And relying upon their words is no mistake.

About great insight and wisdom: practicing this, explaining the selflessness of the person, then explaining the selflessness of existence, then how to generate great insight from that. At this point, when we hear about the two selflessnesses, those who have heard and studied Madhyamaka should remember and understand. Two selflessnesses: the selflessness of person and the selflessness of existence. The selflessness of existence means existence. When you talk about the two selflessnesses, this second one, the selflessness of dharma, of existence, doesn't mean the outside sense objects. It means the aggregates, the base of the “I.”

I remember, when His Holiness was giving teachings on this point, sometimes people would find it hard to translate this second one. It was just a matter of maybe this person couldn't remember. It just simply looks like you are saying the selflessness of all existence, the selflessness of existence, *cho.kyi dag.me*, selflessness of existence. The term looks like the whole. The selflessness of person, the “I” is mentioned, so it looks like [it refers to] all the rest, the other existences, sense objects; but it doesn't mean that. Here, in this case it means the base of the “I,” the aggregates.

Explaining the selflessness of the person involves two things: the way of doing the equipoise meditation and the second one, in the break time how to perceive everything as illusory—subject, object, action, everything, all the six sense objects, how to perceive them as illusory.

The way to do equipoise meditation like sky (laughs) like space: the first thing is the importance of realizing the *gak.cha*, the refuted object.

If the refuted object is put into words, there are many different terms, different ways of expressing it, relating to the “I” as truly existent, and each one has a great sense. Each one, if you think well—with correct translation, with correct words, exactly according to the Tibetan—gives clear identification of what that thing is that doesn’t exist, that which we have to realize is empty: true existence.

You see the “I” that exists from its own side as real, it appears to you there, if you look at the “I” now, if you watch your “I.” For example, if you don’t have the thought labeling the aggregates, “I am sitting here... I am sitting here,” if you don’t have this thought, first you see the aggregates are sitting. The sitting body appears, what it is doing is sitting—this is what appears. Then the thought labels the aggregates, “I am sitting.” So that’s how the “I” exists and what it is doing is sitting. The “I” that is doing the action of sitting exists. It exists depending on these aggregates; the body doing the action of sitting then, by this condition, the thought appears, labeled there on the aggregates, “I am sitting.”

Now, without that thought, without that motivation, there is no “I” on these aggregates. Without that thought there is no “I,” “I” doesn’t exist on these aggregates, there is no way the “I” can exist on these aggregates—okay? So as there is no way that “I” can exist on these aggregates, there is no way “I” can do the action of sitting. Even though there are the aggregates, the body is sitting, if there’s no thought labeling it, there is the base sitting but there is no thought, there is no motive labeling, “I am sitting.” So in this way “I,” the one who does the action of sitting, it looks like is not from the side of the aggregates, not from the side of the base, but it looks like it is from the side of the thought. From the side of the thought, “I am sitting.” The “I” that does the action of sitting exists from the side of the thought, from the side of the mind, under the control of superstition, by the force of that; under the control of superstition and this thought that labels. It is under the control of the thought, the superstition—the “I” imputed on these aggregates is merely labeled on these aggregates.

When the aggregate, the body, does the action of standing after sitting, it appears that the aggregate, the base to be labeled, the body, is standing. Again there is the superstitious thought, under the control of the superstitious thought, “I am standing. Now I am standing.” It is merely labeled on the base, on the aggregates, the body standing—on that appearance. So, according to the aggregates doing the actions, the thought of superstition labels, “I am doing this and that.”

The thought merely labels, “I am doing this and that” on the appearance of the aggregates doing different actions, according to that.

So that is the “I” that exists, the merely labeled one. That is the “I” that exists. Merely labeled on the aggregates by the thought, that is the “I” that exists, that is the “I” that does all the activities, experiencing happiness, experiencing suffering, practicing Dharma. So the “I” that exists is the merely labeled one, on these aggregates, by the thought. That is the reality, that is how “I” exists; but it does not appear to oneself in that way. How it appears to oneself is that it exists from its own side. That is how it appears. That is how it appears to oneself, as truly existent. This “I” that exists from its own side is one hundred percent true, real, so there is a truly existent “I.” The term is *den.par druk.pa*, in Tibetan, which means *truly existent*; or *rang.shin keyi druk.pa*, which means it also exists by its own nature. It exists naturally, spontaneously, which means without depending on other causes and conditions; without depending on the base of the aggregates, the base to be labeled, which is called *dak.shi*, and also without depending on thought, or, under the control of thoughts. Without

depending on the base, without depending on thought labeling, the “I” naturally exists; it exists by its own characteristics, *rang keyi tse.nyi druk.pa*, and *rang wang keyi druk.pa*; “I” exists from its own side. So there are four importances and the very first thing is the importance of realizing the refuted object.

For us, without depending on the base, without depending on thought labeling, there is no “I,” there is no “I” existing, okay? There is no “I” that does an action. In fact, even though the “I” appears in that way, as truly existent—the truly existent “I” is doing an action—this is what doesn’t exist on these aggregates. This is what is empty, in fact. The object of ignorance, the truly existent “I” is empty, but it appears as if it exists. So we have to refute this by using logic.

There are seven types of discriminating, clarifying logic, different types of logic. However, there is nothing that is not contained in the logic of dependent arising. By using logic we have to refute, we should see the object of ignorance, the “I,” the truly existent “I” that appears from above these aggregates, as empty. The truly existent “I” is empty.

This real “I” appears from its own side, and this is the *gake.cha*, the refuted object, okay? Realizing that this is empty—that, itself is realizing emptiness, the absolute nature of the “I.”

Then after this, develop this wisdom realizing the absolute nature of the “I.” The more one meditates on this emptiness, the more and more one gets a stronger, definite understanding of how the “I” exists. There is more and more definite faith or understanding that the “I” exists. So one realizes how the “I” exists. One realizes the subtle dependent arising of the “I.”

There are two truths. “I” has the absolute truth and the truth of the obscuring mind. By realizing the absolute truth of “I,” one is able to realize the “truth of the obscuring mind” of “I.” The whole thing is dependent on, at the very beginning, realizing the truth of the all-obscuring mind of “I,” the subtle dependent arising “I,” how “I” exists. To get a definite understanding of this, how the “I” exists on these aggregates, to create this result in your experience, to have this result, depends on having infallible understanding of the emptiness of “I,” the absolute truth of “I.” That depends on infallible recognition of the infallible refuted object—that which one has to realize is empty.

If you make a mistake from the beginning in terms of what you have to realize as empty, the refuted object that you have to realize is empty—if you didn’t recognize the infallible, unmistaken refuted object—then there is a danger of falling into nihilism. You cannot accept how “I” exists on the aggregates. You cannot make this conclusion after using the four analyses, these four important points of logic.

After using what is explained in the teachings, you have finished all the words but you don’t know what to do after that, you don’t know how to bring it to a conclusion. The truly existent “I,” the object of true existence, is left there inside like a rocky mountain—nothing touches it, not even a mark or a scratch, nothing happened. While going inside the heart, you have finished all the words, but you can’t bring it to the conclusion that the “I” exists. You are supposed to come to that conclusion, you see. Your meditation on shunyata, doing the four analyses, is supposed to help you have more faith in understanding that “I” exists; to bring up more and more definite understanding that “I” exists on these aggregates. That should be the conclusion, the result. The reason your meditation on shunyata didn’t lead to that conclusion is because you made a mistake, it shows that

the emptiness you are thinking of and meditating on is not the right emptiness. That is due to the mistake in the beginning of not having recognized the infallible refuted object.

Such a meditation, which doesn't lead to complete emptiness, which doesn't lead to the conclusion that "I exist," is the realization of the second truth: the truth of the all-obscuring mind. That is because of not having recognized the infallible refuted object. What you search to realize as emptiness is not the truly-existent "I." Not checking "is the truly-existent I really this?", whether the merely-labeled "I" exists or not, is what happened. Not the truly-existent "I" but the "I" alone, the labeled "I"—what you have been searching for as empty is something other than the truly-existent "I." That's the mistake.

Believing what you feel inside, the real "I," "this 'I' is the meditator"—this is not lost. "If this is lost, then no more meditator, then I cannot become enlightened. I cannot get chocolate if this truly-existent 'I' is lost, if it becomes empty. This cannot be, this 'I' inside is not what I have to realize as empty. This is me, this is me." Thinking, "This is not the one I have to realize, what I have to realize is something else." This is the mistake. "If this becomes empty, then there is no more I, I will be ceased," being afraid like this. That is the greatest mistake and interferes with realization. Even though it is so easy to realize emptiness, realizing emptiness is just a matter of recognizing the refuted object—that is the very first thing, the very first importance. It is just a matter of recognizing the correct refuted object, just a matter of that. Once you have recognized that you have got it; you have got what you have to realize as empty.

It is like having recognized the thief who has been stealing from your house since you were born until now, who is always stealing things. So far you didn't recognize him and then, among these people, once you have recognized the thief unmistakably, it is in your hands to do whatever you want to do—explode him or whatever. Once you have recognized him, you can make him not exist. Like that, realizing shunyata is just a matter of recognizing the unmistakable refuted object. Once you have recognized that, it is just a minute, it is just a second to realize the emptiness of the "I," relating to the existence of the "I."

His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche used to advise that bodhicitta is much more difficult to realize, that shunyata is just a matter of skill. Bodhicitta is very hard to realize, to generate but shunyata is just a matter of being a little bit skilful. If one is a little bit skilful in the way of thinking, immediately one can recognize the refuted object. One is able to realize it, thinking on the right point.

Lama Tsongkhapa's disciple Khedrup Rinpoche said in his teaching that by using the four analyses or the four importances, I think, word by word, exactly I think it might be a little bit, "reaching the emptiness, reaching the empty," which means empty of form, substantiality. It is not the emptiness realizing that the refuted object doesn't exist; it is not realizing that the refuted object is non-existent. This is not understanding emptiness, this is just understanding the words of the logic, analyzing the four important points.

We do the meditation on shunyata and using logic we search, and check the "I" with the four important points. Then, after finishing the words, we don't come to the conclusion and don't reach the complete emptiness, realizing that the refuted object is non-existent. This is the complete emptiness—not reaching that, not coming to that conclusion, you don't see the connection. In your meditation on emptiness, checking the "I," meditating that the emptiness and the "I" exist, you

cannot make the connection. The “I” existing is something else. Your meditation on emptiness, checking on the “I,” trying to see emptiness, is something else, there is no connection at all.

If the meditation is correct you should find the link, you should find more and more faith that “I” exists. That is why the question comes, “I used all the four analyses, everything that the book has, I used it, I finished and after, I don’t know what to do.” That is why this question comes.

If your meditation is correct from the very beginning, if the refuted object is correct—that is why, from among the four importances, the very first importance is to realize the *gak.cha*, the refuted object. If the very first importance is done well, if you didn’t miss the first importance, understanding the refuted object, if your meditation came to the right point, then all the rest, the analysis and checking, goes to the right point. In this way it leads to the infallible right view, emptiness; it comes. You realize the complete emptiness of “I,” that “I” is completely empty. The truly existent “I” is empty, completely, from all the parts. The truly existent “I” is completely empty. Not even an atom of truly existent “I” is left on these aggregates, completely, from all the parts.

Like when you see the emptiness of the truly existent mug, realizing and meditating on the emptiness of this mug. This mug appears from every atom, it does not appear from half—some part of the mug appearing as truly existent and some not. Not like that. As the table is completely covered by this brocade, like that the mug is covered by the truly existent view. From every part of the mug there is the appearance of true existence. So when you realize complete emptiness, as everything, the whole part appears as truly existent, so from all the parts, the whole thing, it is completely empty. The whole thing, which appears as truly existent, is completely empty of true existence. The whole mug, which appears as completely existing from its own side, is completely empty from its own side. Nothing, not even an atom exists from its own side. Complete emptiness.

When you see this complete emptiness, by that cause, without need to think, without need to push yourself, “Oh, I exist, I exist,” without need of effort, the answer comes in your experience. Realizing complete emptiness, that the truly existent “I” is completely empty, that “I” exists on these aggregates—the definite understanding of this comes within your mind naturally, as a result, without choice. Because you have realized the infallible emptiness of “I,” there is no choice. Without choice you get the answer in your mind, the definite understanding that “I” exists. Rather than being words, it becomes your experience. Rather than imitating what the text says, that “I” exists by being under the control of name—before it was just words, now it became your experience, it is real. It became so obvious there is no way to change this. It became your realization, your experience. So no matter how much others say that “I” doesn’t exist, no matter how much others misguide, teach wrong views, that the “I” doesn’t exist, you don’t get misguided. There is no way to change, no way to have wrong conceptions, falling into nihilism or accepting the philosophy that the “I” doesn’t exist.

One meditation you do like this. This is also helpful I think. It is a very simple meditation, but I think it is very helpful to realize or recognize the appearance of the “I.” First you can just do breathing meditation, if you want, then, after that, as you breathe in, you can think, “What am I doing?” You can question yourself, “What am I doing?” Then, “I am sitting.” Okay. Now this “I” that does sitting, how does it appear? I think there is no danger that we think that the “I” is outside. I think the main problem is inside, not outside. Some people say that but I don’t think it is true, I don’t think he watched his own “I” enough. Anyway, there is this kind of dark room. Then look at the “I,” that of which you believe “I am sitting.” Look at it for some time. I think you can spend as long as possible, then, after some time, think of having sunlight, the room having light after the sun

has risen. Then make pilgrimage inside the body with light, like the room having light in the daytime. Then just travel inside, where the “I” is. When you think that you have light inside, like light in a room, at that time also think “how does ‘I’ appear, what is happening to my experience?” As you watch, in regards the appearance of “I,” is there any difference from before, the previous one? When it was very dark?

Then you travel to the head and feet and hands, and check. If you feel like a helicopter going to the snow mountain checking for the person who fell down, in an avalanche, if you feel like that, that there is some “you” traveling around, going back and forth. If you feel like that, then you just concentrate right on top of that, on the “I” that is traveling. Right on top of that you focus your mind. Think, “This is what is called the refuted object.” You point to that. Then the more you try to be aware, be aware...

Like the appearance of one million dollars in your hand now. Look in your hand in the meditation mudra, in there is the appearance of one million dollars, there is an appearance which is in fact empty. Remember that example—even though there is the appearance, there is not even a small corner of a dollar, so remember that example and then apply that to that “I” that is traveling. Then put more awareness that this is actually empty, the recognition of this. Put more awareness that this is empty.

So maybe tomorrow morning there will be no “I”—so then you don’t have to take the ordination in the morning, freezing. The “I” has disappeared. There is no “I,” so there is no need to freeze and take the trouble of hunger in the evenings, and the fear of eating food after twelve o’clock. During the ordination time we say, “I won’t eat food after twelve-fifteen,” making the vow... I’m joking.

One time I think, Geshe Sopa Rinpoche said—this is not particularly related to the eight Mahayana precepts, this is speaking generally—Geshe Rinpoche said that the strict way is to eat before twelve o’clock, to not eat after twelve. Then the lighter way is, “One should never eat after one o’clock.” When one takes precepts especially, if it is more useful to talk, that is something else, otherwise it is good to not talk during the time of eating. You do meditation practice, making offerings, keeping silence, and try to transform all the actions into virtue. In this way, eating doesn’t take much time.

Thank you.

Lecture 6

[Begins with commentary on the Heart Sutra]

If you can relate it like this: it starts from the “I.” I think that in the Tibetan prayer there is also, “the five aggregates are empty by nature.” I think there is something like this, which contains the explanation that not only “I” is empty by nature, but the five aggregates are empty by nature. I think they are saying that the five aggregates are also empty. There is that word “also” in the Tibetan prayer. I’ll check later. I think I have seen something like that, which means the self, the “I” that is labeled on that is also empty. This one can relate also to the “I” in a similar way. “I” is empty, emptiness is “I,” emptiness is not other than “I,” “I” is not other than emptiness. So you can relate it like that. If you have the experience of seeing the absolute nature of “I,” then you can relate it like

that. You can relate it like this, and when you relate these words to “I,” as you have the experience, it becomes very real. For you the subject becomes very clear. It is like talking about your experience.

If you relate this “I” to the “I” here, on these aggregates, there is nothing clear. On this mind, this body, nothing is clear, the mind is mixed with it, like milk into water. On these aggregates, the “I” that exists is the merely labeled “I,” but something extra, something more than that. Something extra than what is merely labeled on this. It appears as truly existent. It looks like it is real, it is there. While one is not examining, when the object of conception is left as usual, it looks like it can be found, but as soon as one starts to search and analyze that, it becomes unclear, more and more unclear. Another way of saying, it is not exact but, like the water-bubble, kind of, what is the expression? Like the sky covered by fog. Even though what exists is merely labeled on this it does not appear that way. It appears that it exists from its own side. Like a water-bubble that rises up.

When one meets happy conditions, when one meets undesirable things, when one gets big shocks, when one is in a car accident or one is about to fall from a precipice, when one is in danger or when someone criticizes or someone bothers you, or when one starts to get angry. At those times, and also when one gets so excited by receiving degrees or by receiving presents, or having found a job, like a balloon, when you blow more and more it gets bigger and bigger—the emotional “I” is like that, I think.

In the West you talk about “the emotional I,” I think that is the emotional I. I think that is very helpful, that is correct, that is exact. I think what you call “the emotional I” is what we have to realize is empty. That is what is empty, and that is what we have to realize. By not realizing that it is empty as it appears, and clinging to that; clinging to the emotional “I” that exists one hundred percent, it becomes the basis for hundreds of problems to arise.

I don’t know whether there are any people here from one of the Manjushri retreats at Dharamsala, led by Tseyangla, one Tibetan nun. She guided it. Now she is in Australia translating for the geshe, Lama Yeshe’s brother. She was guiding the meditation course. I told her one day, “You should take a big stick, without the others seeing it, and keep it there, keep it with you. Then, when you reach OM SVABHAVA SHUDDAH SARWA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDAH HAM suddenly you bring the plank to the floor.” First she might have thought I was joking. I said that I meant it, to actually do it.

I think the Spanish nun may have seen her carrying it, picking up the plank outside, before the session started. She covered it with her *zen* while she put it next to her. I was waiting to hear the noise, because my room was nearby. I waited a few days, actually. My room is next to the group room where they do retreat, my room is just outside of that, in the corner. Each session I was waiting to hear it. One time it seemed that I heard but I think it wasn’t real.

So what happened was this: one boy was sitting way back. She was sitting in the front and one boy was sitting at the back. He was sitting with his eyes open, and the rest of the group had closed their eyes, so they couldn’t see her throwing the plank, banging, hitting the plank on the floor. This one boy was probably just having a break from the concentration. He saw that Tseyangla was holding the plank. So because he saw it, it didn’t do anything to him. It didn’t cause a shock because he saw that she was the one who made the noise. I think the rest of the people had closed their eyes, so I think it gave them a great shock. Most people thought that it was a mouse—that the mouse ran away and something fell down. They figured that out.

There was one nun; I don't know what nationality she is. Afterwards went to the Swami Baba, who can give enlightenment. I think she was sitting next to Tseyangla. She said that she recognized the emotional "I." She said that the emotional "I" came, that it made the emotional "I" arise. I think I sent that message later, "That is what we have to realize is empty." I told Tseyangla that even if it benefited one person, it is very good.

After she had thrown this, she was bursting with laughing. She tried to control, she tried to not make a noise, then she was laughing and covering it with her robes, so as quickly as possible she went outside and then she laughed. Then this nun came out, asking, "What did you do?" or something, she started to say something.

The purpose of this is the same—throwing a stick or giving a shock. *Slaying the Ego*, the *Chöd* practice, is regarded as a very quick way to realize shunyata because the meditation and the implements, and being in certain places cause fear to arise or the emotional "I" to arise. It creates a frightening situation, so fear arises, and that way one is able to recognize the refuted object.

Because the emotional "I," the truly existent "I," to which one clings, appears stronger when fear arises—much stronger, bigger—as it becomes more gross, it is easy to recognize this is what is empty. Similar to *Chöd*, quickly you can recognize what you have to realize as empty. So the "I" is empty, the "I" that appears from its own side. While you are looking right on top of that, you point out, "I is empty, I is empty." Like a balloon or like a water bubble, like the sky covered by fog. There is "I," but something more than that, something extra, the merely labeled "I," different from that. So the merely labeled appears to be not merely labeled, existing from its own side. Right on top of that, "I" is empty. Even if one doesn't recognize it, you just point out the self, the "I," not trying to point out something else, something different from that, but I the meditator, I who recites the *Heart Sutra*—you point it out on that.

Whether you recognize this truly existent "I" or not, you can point right on top of the self, "I" who recites the *Heart Sutra*, does the meditation—that is empty. Because for us, even though we do not recognize the "I" existing from its own side, even though we do not recognize it this way, even though we cannot discriminate between truly existent "I" and merely labeled "I," even though we cannot recognize the refuted object, you see the "I" as it is mixed with true existence. Anything, books, tables, when we look at our hands, we see hand, on this there is a hand existing from its own side. It doesn't appear as a hand that is merely labeled, it doesn't appear that way and also we do not think that it exists as a merely labeled hand. When we see the base, the fingers and so forth, the whole thing, on this there is a hand that exists from its own side. When we see the leg, the group, the toes and the shapes, is different from the hand or the arm, which has a different base that we call "hand." When you look at your leg, even though you see the base, that particular shape, coming down like this with pieces at the end, as soon as you see that base you have the thought that labels it "leg." Perhaps you can say that between your thought and that base the leg exists—between, or depending on, those two.

Even though that is the reality of how the leg exists, the way the leg appears to you is completely opposite to reality. It is completely contradictory, completely opposite to the reality of that leg existing on that base, merely labeled by the force, or under the control, of your thought. The leg is labeled "leg" on that base by thought. It is merely labeled on that base but this is completely contradictory to one's own appearance.

What appears and how it is in reality are completely contradictory. The reality becomes completely secret—the way the leg exists in reality, merely labeled, becomes completely secret, hidden. Not “cigarette” but secret (laughs.) It becomes completely secret for that person. Because what appears to him is only as truly existent from its own side, completely, and that is what he believes. So actually what appears and what he believes in doesn’t exist, that is a non-existent leg. It is a non-existent leg and he puts on non-existent shoes. Anyway, it appears as if the leg exists from its own side.

When His Holiness was giving teachings on the seven points of thought transformation, in Drepung Monastery, His Holiness Ling Rinpoche explained the refuted object like this. The base to be labeled... yes, put it this way. When you see Jon Landaw, on the body of this Jon Landaw do you see Jon Landaw existing from his own side, or do you see Jon Landaw mixed with it? Do you see Jon Landaw mixed with this body? Do you see it mixed with the base, the body, or do you see on Jon Landaw’s body there is Jon Landaw existing from his own side? His Holiness said that the definition of the refuted object is the inability to differentiate between the base to be labeled, or *dak.shi*, and the name that is labeled on that. You are unable to differentiate between the base to be labeled and the existence to be labeled. You can’t differentiate and they appear mixed as one.

Like this book, you can’t differentiate. When you analyze your view of this book, when you examine your view of the book, you can’t differentiate. Also, of course, somebody who has studied intellectually can say, “Oh, blah, blah, blah, these parts and this shape and material and then you call it ‘book.’” But we are not talking about, just following, the intellectual understanding of the teaching. We are trying to express how the book appears to you when you don’t analyze. If you put it into words, is it “undifferentiable?” No, you can’t say that—indistinguishable? Rinpoche said that the *gak.cha*, or refuted object, is seeing the base and the *dak.cho*, the existence to be labeled, as indistinguishable.

But I heard some sangha discussing this, and they heard that Geshe Kelsang doesn’t accept this refuted object. According to him, it is not possible for the base and the label to appear as mixed. Geshela is saying that the refuted object is like a cover. The base is there then the refuted object is on top of that. It is not oneness with the base, not mixed. But I think that it becomes different like this.

I think what Rinpoche said and what Geshela was saying was, when you do much Vajrasattva meditation, recitation of mantra, prostrations, much purification, mandala offerings, accumulating much merit, by doing those strong preliminary practices, purifying and accumulating extensive merit through the seven limb practice, the practice of correctly devoting oneself to the guru, seeing the essence of the guru as Buddha. As this gets developed, depending on this support in the preliminary practice, the root of the path, the guru practice, the way of devoting to the guru, continual, strong practice of this, then doing the practice of purification, such as Vajrasattva, prostrations and those things, purifying the obstacles to realizing shunyata. I think due to this support, when there is enough support the impression of shunyata that was left in the past is experienced. Like when there are very rich perfect minerals, everything well-organized, and the seed is planted, then it quickly produces the stem.

The conclusion is that when the person recognizes the refuted object, the truly existent “I,” the refuted object of true existence on the “I,” above the “I,” at that moment it may not appear as if it is mixed, as if the base aggregates and the “I” are kind of mixed, indistinguishable. At that time I don’t think so. Then especially after seeing emptiness but before recognizing the refuted object, he doesn’t

recognize the true existence that is on “I.” He cannot recognize it as it appears. He can’t recognize it, so the person may perceive or feel that the aggregates are mixed with “I.”

So it is with any objects. When you look at the table, the table is mixed with the base—the table is inside of that, inside the particles, sort of like that. His Holiness’s expression is that the table is kind of inside the base, inside the particles. He expressed it a different way, similar to what His Holiness Ling Rinpoche said, that the base and the label “table” are mixed, indistinguishable. That is the *gak.cha*, the refuted object. So what I think is that those two teachings are not contradictory—the table appearing as if it existed from its own side and the base and the label “table” appearing as if mixed.

From the beginning, even before we heard teachings on shunyata, even before we met the Buddhadharmā, for the perceptions, the table exists from its own side. That is what actually appears but the person doesn’t recognize it that way, so in the beginning, since he doesn’t recognize the refuted object on the table, he doesn’t recognize the refuted object of true existence, and for that person it seems mixed. The base and the label “table” are mixed.

You see, there is no blue snow mountain but, due to your perception, due to your defective senses, it appears blue or yellow. One sees the snow mountain. Then later, when the disease is recovered there is a truly existent white snow mountain, kind of like that.

So on these aggregates, the “I” that you point out, that you feel inside the chest, as if you have something there, a real “I” appears, existing from its own side: this is empty. “I” is empty. So when you actually realize that “I” is empty of existing from its own side on these aggregates, “I,” on the aggregates, first of all appears as truly existing, like a water bubble arising. So on top of that you point out the “I” that is empty. So when you realize, see the “I” as completely empty on the aggregates, completely, completely, the whole point of the “I” completely became empty. The “I” existing from its own side became completely empty, became completely empty just right there.

Then, by realizing this, by having this experience, the understanding comes. Realizing that the “I” is empty is a cause, and the result comes. What you understand is that “I” exists on the aggregates under the control of name. What comes without choice is that “I exist on the aggregates.” In experience “I” exists on these aggregates, without choice, under the control of name. So strongly, so powerfully, the thought that “I exist on the aggregates” comes.

By realizing emptiness, that cause, no matter how much you try to reject that “I” exists, there is no choice, no choice at all—the definite understanding that “I” exists on these aggregates under the control of name comes so powerfully, so strongly.

I can’t remember exactly the verses from the *Three Principal Paths to Enlightenment*. In the beginning it says, “Seeing the cause and result of all existence, samsara and nirvana, seeing all this as unbetrayable forever, whenever the [gap in tape] or holds *mig.pha de.su*, to which the ignorance clings, focuses—whenever this object is completely dissolved, that person has entered the path that pleases the Buddha.” That is the first one, seeing that the “I” is empty.

[Break in tape]

Lama Tsongkhapa says the definition of having realized shunyata, the definition of having finished analyzing the right view is when one sees, without alternative, without separation, one sees as together, unified—unbetrayable dependent arising and the object of ignorance, what ignorance holds, becoming empty. At that time analyzing the right view is finished.

What Lama Tsongkhapa is saying is that whenever, on the aggregates, you don't find confusion, you don't find separation; when you accept that "I" exists on the aggregates, that there is an "I," you cannot accept that "I" is empty of existing from its own side; you can't accept that. When you accept the absolute nature of "I," that "I" is empty of existing from its own side; when you accept that there is no existence from its own side, you cannot accept that on the aggregates, on this base, the "I" exists. When you accept the other, that "I" doesn't exist from its own side; when you accept that "I" is empty of existing from its own side, when you accept that, on the aggregates, you can't accept that "I" exists. When you accept that "I" exists on these aggregates, you can't accept the absolute nature of "I," that "I" is empty of existing from its own side. You can't accept it.

So without finding this separation or contradiction on one base, the aggregates, you see as unified. You see that the "I" that appears as existing from its own side is empty of existing from its own side but "I" is existing. You see, "I" exists but the "I" that appears to exist from its own side is empty—those two are unified. Dependent arising, dependent on the aggregates, dependent arising—because the "I" is empty on the aggregates, empty of existing from its own side, from that emptiness "I" exists. Because "I" is empty of existing from its own side...

[Break in tape]

... "I" exists. You see, "I's" existence came from emptiness. Or another way of saying, because it is empty of existing from its own side it exists, on the aggregates. "I" exists on the aggregates because it is empty of existing from its own side. These have the same meaning. By depending on the emptiness, from the emptiness "I" exists, unbetrayable. Because it is empty of existing from its own side it is unbetrayable that "I" exists on the aggregates. It is unbetrayable; as long as there are aggregates, "I" exists.

When the person sees no contradiction between the fact that "I" exists but "I" is empty of existing from its own side, from one base, when they see this, the person has finished analyzing the right view.

When you realize that "I" exists but is completely empty of existing from its own side, you experience the strong definite understanding that "I" exists on the aggregates under the control of name. This comes very powerfully. However much the person tries to reject this, however much he tries to accept the philosophy that "I doesn't exist," there is no choice, the experience tells him that "I exists on the aggregates." That understanding, that realization is very strong, as long as he realizes the incredible emptiness of "I."

So now that person, as Lama Tsongkhapa explained in the *Three Principal Paths to Enlightenment*, sees it as unified. There is a continuation of the understanding that "I" doesn't exist from its own side. There is this understanding, this experience. And there is the understanding of the "I" existing under the control of name on the base, the aggregates. These two things are unified: realizing the "I," which is merely labeled on the aggregates, is illusory, merely labeled, with the understanding that it is empty from its own side. So the emptiness of "I" and "I"—the absolute truth of "I" and the truth

of the all-obscuring mind—those two are unified. The person realizes, the person sees it in that way on that one base, the aggregates. So “I” is empty, and emptiness is “I.”

The second realization, which comes from realizing that “I” is empty, is the realization that “I” exists on the aggregates under the control of name; dependent arising, the base and thought, that is “I.” So emptiness is “I.” “I,” which is empty of existing from its own side, depending on the base and thought—that is “I.” So emptiness is “I.”

I think, in experience, when you first start to realize shunyata, first comes: “I is empty,” and second: “emptiness is I.” I think, relating it to experience, you first realize absolute truth and then realize the truth of the all-obscuring mind. If you relate it like that it is very clear.

I think I will just read this *Heart Sutra*.

You see, if the “I” that exists is a dependent arising—the thought labeling, dependently arising—the opposite is it being independent, existing from its own side. Therefore the “I” is not independent, not existing from its own side.

“Not existing from its own side” may become clear as we continue the following subjects. As “I” is a dependent arising, “I” is not independent. So therefore, the independent or truly existent “I” is empty. That is the nature of “I,” that emptiness. The base and the thought make “I” exist. Therefore, “I” is not independent, not truly existent. “I” is not an independent “I,” “I” is not a truly existent I. Same meaning. In other words, “I” is empty of independence and true existence, so separately from that “I” cannot exist.

The same thing is that you cannot leave the nature of “I,” emptiness of existing from its own side or independently, separate from “I.” You can’t split the nature of “I” and “I.” If one splits the nature of “I”—empty of existing from its own side—then “I” becomes non-existent on the base. If you separate the nature of “I” from “I,” there is no way that the nature of “I” can exist on the aggregates.

I shall read this one. “In the same way, form is empty, emptiness is form; emptiness is not other than form, form is not other than emptiness. In the same way feeling, recognition, karmic formation and consciousness are all empty.”

Similar to the experience of the “I,” one should relate all other aggregates. One should meditate as they are mentioned here.

“Therefore Shariputra ... all the way up to the sphere of mental consciousness.”

The emphasis that I wanted to make is that whenever you hear “emptiness”—whether you understood the unification of emptiness and dependent arising or not—when we recite the *Heart Sutra*, the main emphasis is that whenever you hear “emptiness,” you shouldn’t think of emptiness as separate from the view of our senses—the way things appear. You shouldn’t think of something else. For example, relating to the “I,” whenever you think “emptiness of I,” you shouldn’t think of something besides the way “I” is appearing now. If you think that emptiness is something besides the way the “I” appears to me now, if you think it is separate, that is an incorrect meditation on

shunyata. That is a big mistake. Whenever we talk about emptiness, we should relate it to the sense-objects.

When you talk about “the emptiness of I” it shouldn’t be anything other than the way “I” presently appears to you, otherwise it is not a meditation on shunyata. It is a wrong conception, wrong meditation on shunyata. You cannot realize emptiness. You shouldn’t think of something other than this. The “I” that is appearing now, the aggregates that are appearing now, the smell that is appearing now, the taste that is appearing now, the form—the way these are appearing just this moment, while we are reciting the *Heart Sutra*. When you are meditating on shunyata, emptiness, you should point out right on top of the sense objects, the way things appear now, so that whatever is appearing now is the refuted object. Perhaps it may not be quite one hundred percent right if somebody is debating, but this can be said from a meditation point of view, because it is more effective for the mind. From the debating side, maybe there would be some mistakes.

Anything that appears to you now, the way things are appearing to you now, right on that. We should not think of anything other than this present view. When we say these words, what we should think of are these sense objects that appear to us right now. Then it is right. They are actually empty, and this is their nature, the nature of the sense objects, and that is the way they exist. So in this way, it is correct meditation when you say the word “emptiness,” what you think is correct, okay?

“There is no ignorance praised the words of the Blessed One.”

[Dedication]

Lecture 7

“At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all kind mother sentient beings. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment.” So please listen to the teaching by generating at least the creative bodhicitta.

You see, when you do the meditation on the four analyses, analyzing with the four importances, what is the refuted object?

What I mentioned this morning, what the different lamas said is that having done the analysis of the four important points, after you have finished all the reasons why “I” doesn’t exist separately from the aggregates. When you finish all the quotations and everything from Madhyamaka, or from the root text *Tṣa.wa she.rab*, *Root Wisdom* written by Nagarjuna, after finishing all those quotations there is one “I” that is left there. Way inside there is an “I.” After you have finished all the logic, it is left there. So that is the refuted object. There is a meditator way inside there, doing all these analyses—that is what the refuted object is.

For example, you take a watch and you check its details. “This is not the watch. This is not the watch,” and so forth. Like that, you check the details. You have finished checking, “That is not the watch, that is not the watch,” and so forth, but after that there is a watch that exists from its own side. After you finished all that, there is a real watch from its own side. That is what the refuted

object is. Nothing touches the refuted object. If you still see that there is a watch that exists from its own side *that* is actually what the refuted object is.

Gen Jampa Wangdu, whom many people here might know and many people may not know, was also my guru, from whom I took teachings on “Taking the Essence,” *Chu.len*. I took this teaching just before Gen Jampa Wangdu passed away. We used to talk about the refuted object and things like that, about shunyata. That is Gen Jampa Wangdu’s advice on the way to recognize the refuted object, if you find it difficult.

Gen Jampa Wangdu is the one who passed on the advice of “taking the essence,” the pill retreat, to the sangha two years ago in Dharamsala, after they finished the Guhyasamaja retreat, after the Dharma Celebration.

After Lama Yeshe passed away in America I thought to return to Dharamsala. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was giving teachings on the eight commentaries of lam rim. I think one day was the bodhisattva ordination day and early the next day there was going to be the long-life puja for His Holiness. I took Gen by jeep up and down for two or three days. I didn’t have much time to go to Geshe-la’s room to speak, except Gen Jampa Wangdu came to Tushita. On the day of the bodhisattva ordination, Gen Rinpoche took the aspect—I think outside people could not see much, because he was still kind of healthy, so when I asked, “How are you today?”, Gen Jampa Wangdu said very quietly, “I got worse today”; very quietly. So I told Gen-la that for this heavy disease the best thing is to go to big hospitals. Just Tibetans may not take the responsibility. Maybe the best thing is the large hospitals. But Gen Jampa Wangdu would never accept to go to the hospital unless he was advised to do so by the private orders of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, no matter how heavy a sickness there was.

I had planned to ask the private office about this, to mention it. I didn’t expect that Gen Jampa Wangdu would pass away the next day, I didn’t know exactly. I think in the past, one or two years back, for two or three months, Gen Jampa Wangdu was taking the aspect of having pain in the legs and he had to use sticks. I think many weeks later finally the private office found out. Somebody must have mentioned it to His Holiness. Then His Holiness gave the advice that Geshe-la should go to Ludhiana hospital. The private office sent a translator with Geshe-la and took him down to have treatment in Ludhiana hospital. I think they did some surgery or something like that.

Geshe Wangdu explained to me how his mind was happy during that time. Gen Rinpoche said that, “I had much pain in my legs, but my mind was extremely happy, so happy.” This shows that he was well-trained in Mahayana thought transformation practice.

Once we were taking teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the lam.rim that has four commentaries. There was much rain. On the cement steps outside the private office, which were wet because of rain, Geshe-la slipped and fell down. Geshe Wangdu said that when he fell down on the cement floor he felt incredible bliss. Actually his head banged on the cement steps, but the experience was incredible bliss. Then Geshela stood up, and there was something running out, so he did like this and blood came out. I didn’t see it, but I think his Holiness prayed and immediately the blood stopped. He breathed on it, blew. Then His Holiness’ advice was to go immediately to the nursing school, which has a doctor, to have treatment.

Among the meditators in Dharamsala or Dalhousie Gen Jampa Wangdu was one of the...

[Break in tape]

At one time, His Holiness said that Gen Jampa Wangdu was "...my best friend in the east," which means, I think, that His Holiness did not find another one who had such success or achievement.

I don't think Geshe Wangdu had friends—maybe in a hermitage in Dalhousie or Darjeeling some meditators stayed together. Maybe the hermitages are close, so when they went to get water from the stream they met, in the mornings. One other meditator told Gen Jampa Wangdu one morning—I think the other meditator has some experience on the ninth stage of samatha so he was telling Gen Jampa Wangdu, "I reached such-and-such a stage." It seemed like quite quick progression.

So after that it was a great loss, coming back from America, a great loss that Gen Jampa Wangdu passed away in Dharamsala. He was extremely beneficial for the Western students who lived around Tushita in Dharamsala. He was the best, most inspiring example. If there were any problems in the practice, if they were not sure whether they were making mistakes, what is right experience and wrong experience, always there was somebody there who was a reliable, well experienced teacher that they could go to ask if there were any problems. Extremely beneficial.

Geshe Wangdu didn't have a reputation as a learned geshe or any kind of expert, or a Lharampa degree or anything, or having done extensive studies on the five root texts of sutra—he didn't have such things. He didn't have a story like this, but he had the experience of the very essential path, the essence, the very essential teaching, the most important thing; he had the experience of the essential path.

Even before I took the advice of "taking the pill," also for Lama, the best time was when Gen Jampa Wangdu comes to Tushita. It was the best party or the best time. You could hear a lot of information about other practitioners. There was very good gossip. It doesn't develop the delusions, but it inspires the practice, only inspiring the practice of lam-rim. It only inspires to practice controlling the mind, rather than the mind becoming confused. So also Lama's best time is when Gen Jampa Wangdu comes, this is the best time to joke. Gen Jampa Wangdu jokes with Lama, puts down Lama, and Lama puts him down.

Lama was joking with Gen Jampa Wangdu, "For you people who stay in the caves with nothing, it is so difficult to practice Dharma. I practice Dharma by having everything." Lama joked with Gen Jampa Wangdu, "The whole world comes to me." He put down other ascetic meditators. "But," Lama used to say, "You, I like; you stayed being content, leading a contented life, therefore I like you." Gen Jampa Wangdu used to make jokes to Lama, saying, "Having so many things is a cause of miserliness, and if you have more things, more attachment arises."

So often, when we are thinking or talking about Gen Jampa Wangdu, he just appears, he just comes. Gen Jampa Wangdu is like this. When some friend or somebody is having a very hard time, sick, almost dying or something then, even though it is quite far, and nobody tells Gen Jampa Wangdu, suddenly the thought of that person comes. This is what Gen Jampa Wangdu told me: "I was doing something, but the thought of that person came very strongly, and something suddenly made me go see that person." That happened many times, Gen Jampa Wangdu told me. So he goes to see that person and gives advice or whatever the person needs, according to the person's problem. Many

times Gen Jampa Wangdu comes like this. Whenever you think in the mind that you want to see him or something, suddenly he shows up. Then sometimes he used to bring two or three fruits.

For many years somehow, also Gen Jampa Wangdu likes us very, very much. He didn't go to the pujas at other people's houses, but when we had to do pujas Gen Jampa Wangdu used to accept. The point that I was going to tell is this—when Lama was there, and when I was there the last time, quite recently, Gen Jampa Wangdu brought three small fruits, oranges. Then, I don't know what the cause of this conversation was but Gen Jampa Wangdu checked back, "Did I go to other people to ask for something for myself?" He checked back and he didn't find that he went to see other people asking for help for himself.

Geshe-la said, "Perhaps six years ago." It was six or seven years since he last went to others to ask for help for himself. Seven or six years, I don't remember one hundred percent. One day Gen Jampa Wangdu checked back whether he went to see any people for himself, which means with self-cherishing thought. He could not remember anything since about six years ago. The number of years was six or seven, I don't remember. Isn't that amazing?

I am sure also you don't remember, many of you might be the same. Since many years you don't remember asking other people to do something for yourself. Anyway, it is very inspiring. It doesn't mean that Gen Jampa Wangdu didn't go to see other people, other monks in the hermitages—it doesn't mean that Gen Jampa Wangdu stayed in the hermitage without going out. What Gen Jampa Wangdu was talking about is the motive, the attitude. It means, in the general view, that for six or seven years there was nothing for himself, which means that no action was done out of selfish attitude. That is what it means. That is what was mentioned before.

The way this story started, when we were discussing shunyata, was that Gen Jampa Wangdu used to give this example of a vase. After you check the vase, deeply analyzing the four important points, even after finishing, there is a vase that exists from its own side. Gen Jampa Wangdu said, "This is what I think the refuted object is." That is profound advice, touching the right point.

Normally we do the analysis, but the "I" existing from its own side, the refuted object is left there all the time—we never touch that. As I mentioned yesterday, we never think that is what we should examine, this "I" that we feel inside, as a subject. We never think that is the "I" that one should realize as empty. We don't think. When we do the analysis we think something else; what to realize as empty, what to search for is something else, something else. Then it becomes just repeating the words of the analysis over and over, like reciting a prayer.

If there is a fear inside, "This cannot be the "I" to realize as empty. If you search this and if you realize this is empty, then the "I" ceases, the "I" stops," one feels like that. Changya Rolpai Dorje, one extremely highly realized lama—I think it is said in some teachings that this lama is the one who when, the second time, the whole world is conquered by barbarians from China or something, then there will be a Shambhala war, that time, this Lama Changya Rolpai Dorje, as a commander or general, will kill the head of the barbarians, who started the whole thing from the East, from China. During the Shambhala war, Changya Rolpai Dorje will be a general and kill the head of the barbarians with a spear, or something like that.

During that time of much anger, the Kalachakra teachings will spread. Those bodhisattvas will be soldiers of the army during the fighting but after that they will give teachings. During the fighting, I guess, they will be in the army form, but when that is finished they give teachings.

Changya Rolpai Dorje said in the teachings on shunyata—I don't know how to say it, but I think what it means is "truly existent." In Tibetan terms it is *ling ling*, kind of slang. It seems that the truly existent appearance is left just there, right at that place, and what you are seeking to refute grows horns. What you are seeking to refute is something that has horns. Horns?

Chuck: A rabbit?

Rinpoche: Yes, that is the actual meaning. Having horns means—actually, that is not the meaning, because there are no horns on the rabbit. The horn on the rabbit is a very, very common example in debate. "Flower in the sky," "horn on the rabbit," but I don't know whether you can say since it is a rabbit it doesn't have horns at all. You don't see all the rabbits on this earth. Like some human beings have horns and tails, so it is possible. So why not a rabbit? But what the learned ones are talking about is the rabbit that doesn't have horns.

Anyway, "In the face of the mother who is separated from the obscurations, it doesn't seem that there is this truly existent appearance." I think "mother" means shunyata. The whole existence of nirvana and samsara comes from shunyata, as I mentioned. I gave the example, the reason "I" exists is because "I" is empty of true existence. That is why "I" exists. What makes "I" empty of true existence is that "I" is dependent on base and thought. They make "I" exist. The thought labeling makes "I," that is the way "I" exists. So "I" is dependent. If "I" is not empty of independent or true existence, there is no way that "I" can exist.

So like this, similarly, all samsara and nirvana, all existence comes from shunyata. The reason it is called "mother," the reason Changya Rolpai Dorje calls it "mother" is because everything comes from shunyata. Like the similar explanation of the mother tantra practice, this vow of left side conduct—I think it has a similar explanation.

"In the face of the mother, who is separated from the obscuration, it doesn't seem that there is the truly existent appearance." You see, when you meditate on the infallible emptiness, for example on the "I," during that time there is no appearance of "I." Relating to us sentient beings, during those times as there is no appearance of "I," there is no truly existent "I," that doesn't happen. As there is no appearance of the "I," there is no appearance of the true existence; there is no truly existent appearance. While one is concentrating on the emptiness of the "I," during that time there is no appearance of the "I."

There should not be any thought, "I am meditating on I," while meditating on the emptiness of "I." During that time there is no appearance of "I." "I am meditating on shunyata," any thought, does not arise—not even thinking that this is... anyway. So there is no truly existent appearance of the "I." That is the meaning of this verse.

"If you talk too much without knowing the right point, there is the danger of the old mother escaping." You see, you talk much about all the logic, what is explained in the Madhyamaka, things being non-truly existent, you talk so much how one must refute the truly existent object, debating, talking so much, but you have not recognized the refuted object, "I," yourself, which you call "me,"

what you point out as “me.” “Somebody is treating me badly, somebody is criticizing me, somebody is helping me, somebody loves me.” This “me”—“I got angry, I am happy, I don’t like this, I like this.” This “I,” which is appearing as truly existent, is left there, as if this were the one that really exists in reality.

It is left there, nothing touches it. If you do analysis there is a danger of that. It is completely contradictory—if you analyze the one that cuts off the root of the danger, then there is the danger that you lose yourself. So you see, the appearance of all the six sense objects, nothing touches that, it is left as it is. The sound of coughing, all this, the noise of the birds, the smell, the appearance of the place, the people, feelings of rough and soft, all the appearances of the six sense objects are left as they are. Nothing touches them, there is not even doubt. Then you debate so much and talk about “non-truly existent” and “refuted object” and this and that, so much.

Similarly, we meditate but without touching anything that is “me,” that which you point out as “me,” the aggregates, the self and the present appearance of the six sense objects. Even meditating on the refuted object and all that, using all the logic, what Changya Rolpai Dorje says is if you talk too much, without knowing the right point, “There is the danger that the old mother may escape.” This means that nothing touched these things, they are left as they are, all the truly existent views, thinking that the refuted object is something else. We debate, we talk about it, and we meditate on it. In this way, “There is the danger for the old mother to escape,” which could mean falling into nihilism; it could also mean that. When you fall into nihilism, you cannot realize shunyata, you cannot see emptiness.

As long as you don’t touch, analyze or even doubt the “I,” the doer, the present existent object, then it’s just words. “Going to meditate on shunyata” is just words. The words are correct because you studied from the scriptures, but your way of thinking is wrong. Actually, the inner understanding is wrong. That’s the meaning of this. You can say the words but you don’t have the recognition. So you see in that way you cannot realize shunyata.

If you do the analysis and get at least a little doubt about the doer, and about the appearance of the six-sense objects; if you do the analyses right on top of using all the logic you know, and then meditate on emptiness. If you use the word “emptiness,” on these things, then even just doubt about it. When you read the *Heart Sutra*, empty this and that, you apply this to the present appearance of “I”, then at least some fear arises. At least, when you read the *Heart Sutra*, at least there should be some experience like this. Doubt, fear—that means your meditation, your way of thinking is correct. It’s hitting the point, the object of ignorance.

You see, why is there fear? Because we believe we have nothing other than this to believe in. From beginningless lives until now we have had no “I” other than the truly existent “I.” What appears to us and what we cling to is no other than the truly existent “I,” no other than the truly existent body, no other than the truly existent smell. No other smell besides the truly existent smell. No taste other than the truly existent taste. No form other than the truly existent form. From beginningless lifetimes so far, this is what has been appearing and this is what we have believed: if things and “I” exist, they should be truly existent, otherwise they don’t exist, that is how it is. That is why, when you get doubt right on top of the truly existent appearance, fear comes.

You see, this has been the way of our lives from beginningless lifetimes. Existing things appear only in a hallucinating, illusive way and then the way of believing is only in the hallucination. In this way

you can see and feel very clearly what Lama Tsongkhapa said in *The Three Principal Paths*, the path of bodhicitta. You can see very clearly that we are trapped in the iron net of the *dag.dzjin*, clinging to “I” as truly existent. We are trapped in the iron net, the iron cage of the wrong conception of the truly existent “I.” In this way, what Lama Tsongkhapa expresses becomes real—you can see very clearly that it is completely true.

In this way the old mother doesn’t run away. You become close to meeting the old mother, shunyata. It is said by Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen, who put together *Lama Chopa*, the *Guru Puja* text, “By training the mind like that, whatever appears as the object of the six consciousnesses, realizing well the way that things are appearing, the actual reality will appear naturally.” What he is saying is the way the objects of the six sense consciousnesses appear—which means the truly existent appearance, the refuted object—if you analyze well and recognize this appearance, the refuted object, which is actually empty, the emptiness of the object appears without choice. For example, objects of the eye consciousness. Actually it is a bush but from a distance you see it as a person, when you walk outside at dusk. It is a bush but from far away you see it as a person. When you come nearby or when you are told by another person, after checking whether there is a real person there or not, the appearance of a person naturally becomes empty. Asking other people or yourself going near, naturally there is the emptiness of that person. There is no person, it is a bush. There is no snake on the piece of rope at dusk time. If you put a light on that rope or you get nearer, the actual reality appears naturally, which is emptiness.

So Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen is saying that this is the importance of the right view. To recognize whatever appears to the object of the six consciousnesses is the importance of right view. The whole thing, realizing shunyata, is dependent on this very first one—recognizing whatever things appear.

Furthermore, Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen is saying, in short, one’s own mind, “I,” the mind and any other existence, whatever appears, don’t cling to it, don’t cling. It means this—right now to think that this “I,” self or doer doesn’t exist, to think that these objects of the consciousness don’t exist. If you say these words, the words themselves are not correct. What I am saying is, saying “I don’t exist” and that “the objects of the consciousness don’t exist” is not correct—according to the words it is not correct. But related to our experience it is very effective to think in this way; relating to our level of mind, to think this way, if you don’t know so much. Those meditators who experience shunyata, who actually realize shunyata, sometimes give the answer in this way. That meditator thinks that the table not existing itself is emptiness or shunyata—the emptiness of the table. But you see, he is relating it to his own experience. If you debate, just the words themselves are not correct, not right—you can debate a lot. But for a certain meditator’s level of mind, for those of us who don’t recognize the refuted object, who have no idea what the refuted object is and don’t recognize it, this way is effective. We are not talking about which words are correct or not according to the teaching, we are talking about it in terms of effectiveness for the mind, to destroy the wrong conceptions of true existence; in terms of the benefit and effectiveness for the mind, to break the wrong view.

It is like the example that for some people everything is created by God. This benefits that mind more, to think that everything is created by God, everything is created by somebody else. For that person it makes more sense, it is more beneficial, and he cares more, because everything was created by God, by somebody, so you have to listen to him. If you don’t listen, if you don’t do what he says, then you will get punished. So you should practice the ten commandments, the ten virtuous actions,

the moral conduct. Then that person practices moral conduct, not harming others. In that way this person creates the thought of loving kindness and compassion for others. Even if the person doesn't have the motivation of the lower capable being, middle capable being or higher capable being, even if he doesn't know about the different levels of motivation, he stops a certain number of actions that harm others. Stealing, which harms others; killing, which harms others; sexual misconduct, which creates disharmony for others; he stops these many harmful actions, which are harmful to him and others. So at least there is peace for others, for the people around where this person lives. Even though there is not a creator, somebody creating the whole thing, creating you and creating everything, even though this is completely wrong in reality, it is very beneficial for many people.

I am forgetting... so he says, "Don't cling, don't cling." By thinking of dependent arising, practicing the awareness that this "I" is merely labeled, the aggregates are merely labeled, these people are merely labeled, these human beings are merely labeled and noises, kaka, birds and dogs and all those things are also merely labeled, existing as merely labeled.

Like this, practice the awareness that you and all the objects of consciousness are merely labeled, dependent arising, by thinking of the meaning of dependent arising. Not just throwing around the words "dependent arising" but thinking about the meaning of it. This way you don't cling—you think that it is dependent arising, merely labeled, and then the truly existent appearance becomes weaker. The clinging to that becomes weaker. In one way, think like this. The way Panchen Lobsang Gyaltzen says to not cling to appearance is to practice dependent arising.

Another way is to think, "I am dreaming." He explained that if you don't know how to meditate on shunyata, then look at things, your life, or subject, object, action as a dream. If you don't know how to meditate on shunyata, then meditate on it as a dream. Practice concentration, the awareness that "I" and the objects of the six consciousnesses—all this is a dream. When some other people are talking about dreams to you, about doing a meditation course at Kopan, when you are having a dream about doing a course at Kopan like this, when you talk about it and when other people hear about your dream, when you are talking, sometimes there could be the thought that it is not real. At the same time there is the awareness that it is not real. When other people listen to the dream, when you talk about dreams—either something very dangerous or something very pleasant, that you went to parties or you had a fantastic car that your friend gave you, and you rode on the very nice mountains or something, found a million dollars—there is the awareness that it is not real.

So bring that dream onto yourself and onto the appearance. Do one-pointed concentration just on that, a dream. Just simply like that. You are not using the words "refuted object," or "truly existent," but it fits—things don't appear as something different from true existence, so therefore, even though you say that these things do not exist, that these things are a dream, I think, it comes to the same conclusion. Then some fear arises, because this is something you have believed one hundred percent so far and now there is doubt in your view. That is what is needed. That is what is supposed to happen. That is the way to lead to shunyata, emptiness.

[Dedication]

So tonight maybe we can do this last part: that you are dreaming of doing a meditation course at Kopan. You may find there is not Kopan. Kopan is empty, empty Jon Landaw, empty Lama Zopa, empty you, empty discussion, empty teachings.

Thank you!

Lecture 8

Please listen to the teaching by generating at least the creative bodhicitta, thinking, “At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all kind mother sentient beings. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment.”

By going over some quotations of the different highly realized lamas of Tibet, some of the work of Lama Tsongkhapa’s disciples, the teachings taught with their experience, each word has much taste and has much importance to express. Just reading it gives one a clear experience or, even if it is a few words, since it is spoken with the experience of having found the infallible right view, just to go over or just to read it or think about the words is very effective for the mind.

So Lama Togden Rinpoche gave this teaching, “The wonderful method to realize the refuted object, to have a definite understanding of the refuted object, is said from the advice of the great pandit tutor, Yeshe Gyaltzen.” I think Yeshe Gyaltzen was the tutor of the Eighth Dalai Lama. This advice comes from ear to ear, from Lama Tsongkhapa, from ear to ear of those great, highly realized lamas. What is said is, “Understanding that the person, *kang.sa*, is merely labeled by thought...” Sometimes it is hard to translate *tak.yo*, labeled existence? *Tak* is labeled—*tak.yo*, a very tasty word. The way the “I” exists is as *tak*, labeled, and *yo*, existing. Labeled existence? That is not correct English?

Jon: You can say it, Rinpoche.

Rinpoche: Out of compassion, even though it is not correct (laughs), what?

Student: (unclear) ...imputed existence.

Rinpoche: Oh, imputed existence, that is the same. Imputed existence. The person is thought, the person is *tak.yo*, imputed existence—what he is saying here is that it is not only labeled, not just labeled, but merely labeled on the aggregates, not just imputed existence.

It could have a different meaning, it could have a different explanation in different schools, in the lower schools—in the Mind Only School and the Svatantrika, it could have a different meaning. However, in the higher Prasangika, imputed existence is not just labeled, not just existent by thought labeling but by thought merely labeling on the aggregates. So the person, in the Prasangika School or in reality, is imputed existence, and not just that but *merely* imputed existence. “Lama Zopa” or “George” or “Paul” or “Pam” or “Dick” or “Janne,” the whole thing is *tak.yo*—imputed existence and even that is merely imputed existence.

It is similar with the things in the supermarket, everything that you see in the supermarket, all the different stuff in the supermarket are *tak.yo*, merely imputed existence on the base that is a certain color or shape. The thought of the people who buy them and of the people in the factory who make these things, and of the people who see these things is merely imputed on those things. Such and such a person, what other people call oneself, what one calls others, the person to whom we are so attached, the person with whom we get so angry, “he” or “she” or “George” or “Roger” or

something, the person with whom one gets so angry or to whom one gets so attached—all this in reality is imputed existence, merely imputed existence. As well as this, every single and all existence, samsara and nirvana, is merely imputed existence.

Yeshe Gyaltsen is saying, “Realize the person is the imputed existence of the thought, merely labeled.” The reason he is saying “of” is because *tak*, imputed existence is different labels. The imputed existence of the thought, merely labeled. “This is the best method to generate the right view realizing the selflessness of the person or the absolute truth of I.” The conclusion of what Yeshe Gyaltsen is saying, advising us is that the best way, without danger, to realize the infallible right view—without falling into the extremes of nihilism and eternalism—the best meditation technique is to meditate on dependent arising, how things exist, having the understanding as much as possible of how things are *tak, yo*, merely imputed existence, dependent arising.

In this way, meditating how things are merely labeled by thought on the aggregates, by training the mind in dependent arising, the way to shunyata, also one is able to recognize the refuted object quickly and more and more clearly. It becomes clearer and clearer for that person. As I mentioned yesterday, once one has recognized the infallible refuted object, there is no danger of falling into nihilism. But, I think, if the person doesn’t have complete understanding; if the person didn’t do extensive listening to Madhyamaka, shunyata; hasn’t studied in full, and doesn’t have enough information, no extensive logic of Madhyamaka or the *Root Wisdom*, written by Nagarjuna, but somehow having the complete teaching on shunyata, even condensed in regards the experience of shunyata. Even for one who has only half understanding of shunyata it could be possible that when he has recognized the refuted object, he did so very strongly. While he was doing very strong preliminary practices such as Vajrasattva mantras, prostrations, and many other things, and also the guru yoga meditation—the way of devoting to the guru, doing the meditations on the lam-rim developing very strong devotion that the essence of the guru is Buddha—then due to some teachings, due to one or two words from the guru’s advice that express the refuted object, that are spoken by the lineage lamas, the *lam-rimpas*, one recognizes the refuted object.

Either start from outside, from the refuted object on the material—from the very beginning on the “I” or outside on the object. Then especially, colors. They are kind of an easy example because they are so bright to you. The blue color is so strong, blue from its own side; red color, red from its own side. They are strong, in some ways, if you look at this color of the brocade, like when you look at the sunlight you are one hundred percent sure, so strong is the appearance that they are existing from their own side. When you look at the sky, the tangkas, with these bright colors, like that, it is very easy to recognize the refuted object.

However, depending on the person, he either starts to recognize the refuted object on the “I” or on the outside object. If the person is able to recognize the refuted object on outside material then he can immediately relate it to “I.” Immediately, right after that he is able to recognize the refuted object on the “I.” Then, as soon as you know that this is what doesn’t exist, this is what is empty—immediately it cannot stay, it cannot support itself, it cannot stay by itself. As you recognize that this is what doesn’t exist, there is no choice—it cannot stay by itself. Also by using the logic of dependent arising it cannot stay by itself.

So right there, where the “I” appears it becomes empty. It becomes empty of existing from its own side; it became empty right there. If you don’t have the full teachings on lam-rim or shunyata, about the complete experience, you may think that even though what you are experiencing is correct, the

“I” has become completely empty. If you go through the fear, if you let it be complete, let the experience of losing the “I” happen, then one sees or realizes the absolute truth of the “I.” One is able to find the infallible right view, what Shakyamuni Buddha and Lama Tsongkhapa have realized, what made them liberated from samsara and what made them have this capability, the perfect power to guide and liberate sentient beings from suffering and with experience reveal the teachings. It is extremely important; you are accomplishing something that makes samsaric fear end, which makes your samsara have an end. This is something that didn’t happen from one’s own beginningless samsaric rebirth so far. It is happening now, a great achievement.

But then, because you have no teaching on shunyata, you don’t have the complete teaching on shunyata, when you have those experiences you think, “I am falling into nihilism, shunyata might be something else. The right view of shunyata might be something else.” You think it is something else. “This is too much!” What is happening there is too much, so shunyata might be something else, because the fear arises. Because it is a new experience, one you never had before: the “I” became completely empty, losing the “I” completely, the self. You didn’t know about it before, this experience, why it is happening—either you didn’t hear or you didn’t know, so then that is one reason that fear arises.

It is said in the mahamudra teachings by one lama, Kelsang Rinpoche, “When you have this experience, why you feel the ‘I,’ the self itself, become completely empty, lost, as if there is no doer of the action, no doer or meditator, like the doer or meditator is completely lost, that shows that there is no true existence on the ‘I,’ it is a proof that there is no true existence on the ‘I.’ Even though you experience it like that, as if the ‘I’ has ceased, stopped or become empty, it is not realizing that ‘I’ is non-existent, it is not realizing that ‘I’ doesn’t exist.” That is what this lama said in the mahamudra teachings, “It is not realizing that ‘I’ is non-existent.”

You see, even if the person doesn’t have half his body, still there is the base, the aggregates, so “I” exists. Even if there is no body at all, no aggregate of the physical, even if there is only the consciousness left, only the fifth aggregate, the consciousness exists. The aggregate of the consciousness exists, so there is “I.” The reason there is “I,” the reason there is self, is that before this life, the stream of this consciousness entered and migrated into a dog’s body, so the previous life’s “I” existed on that aggregate. Then that body was left at death-time while the consciousness continued. That is how “I” left the dog body—the consciousness took the intermediate state being’s body, the intermediate state being of this human life. The consciousness left the dog body and migrated into the intermediate state being’s body.

So there is continual consciousness and therefore there is continual “I.” The consciousness didn’t stop so the continuation of “I” didn’t stop. So then again the consciousness migrated to a human body and entered the fertilized egg in the mother’s womb, which is the continuation of this present body, the fertilized egg. So there is continual consciousness, and therefore there is the continual “I.” So the previous life’s “I” was a dog, but this life’s “I” is a human being. There is no other reason for this than that the consciousness has taken a different body. It is according to the aggregates. The continuation of consciousness didn’t have beginning, so the continuation of “I,” which exists on the continuation of the consciousness being merely labeled, also didn’t have beginning. So this stream of consciousness, this gross consciousness doesn’t go to enlightenment, but...

[break in tape]

...even animals, even us, even ordinary people who are not meditating on tantra, when death comes, when the white vision, red vision and dark vision happen, the consciousness becomes more subtle. Then clear light happens, and it is much more subtle, then the most subtle. So when the gross consciousness starts leaving at death time, nothing can make the person come back. After the clear light the three visions happen in reverse order and gross consciousness starts again. This is similar to rebirth time—in the intermediate stage of entering the womb, during that time of rebirth, the consciousness takes place on the egg and again the same thing happens. Then again the gross consciousness starts, and becomes more and more gross after the three visions.

What goes to enlightenment is the subtle consciousness. Therefore, even when you become enlightened, the continuation of “I” that exists on the aggregates, on the stream of consciousness being merely labeled, it does not cease. “I” does not cease. As the stream of consciousness goes to enlightenment, the subtle consciousness goes to dharmakaya, and when it reaches dharmakaya there is the continuation of this “I.” As there is the continuation of this consciousness, as there is this stream of this consciousness, subtle mind, the subtle consciousness, therefore... and Buddha does the work until every sentient being becomes enlightened. After one has achieved enlightenment then one does the work until samsara ends, until every sentient being has become enlightened. So the stream of consciousness has no time. You can use this reason: the subtle consciousness has many seconds, many hours—and one second of the subtle consciousness depends on the previous second’s subtle consciousness and that is dependent on the next second of consciousness. The previous subtle consciousness causes this one, benefits this one, and how it benefits is by resulting in this one. The definition of a cause is one that benefits, so it benefits the next second of consciousness, and results in this.

This exists by being under the control of this cause, so this exists. Like that it continues. The gross consciousness ceased while you were training in the second stage of tantra, like death-time, in the equipoise meditation when the yogi of the secret Maha-anuttarayoga Tantra path meditated on the clear light. So anyway, how can the subtle consciousness be stopped? You just think about that. What makes it stop? The nature of that is that without practicing the Maha-anuttarayoga Tantra path, it only stops temporarily at death time, especially during clear light. During that time it stops, and then again it is experienced after that, because of the previous impressions. Previous impressions are left on the consciousness, so again it is experienced. The gross consciousness arises.

There is no end to the consciousness so there is no end to “I.” If the consciousness ceases completely, completely ends, then the continuation of “I” ends. As long as there is consciousness existing, there is no way that “I” ceases. You are thinking that the “I” is something “I am losing.” As if the “I” is ending, kind of ceasing. That is just an experience. The reason that “I” is not ceasing is that there is consciousness. There is the consciousness, there is the aggregate, the mind, and that is scared that “I” is lost. The mind is afraid that “I” is lost, that you are lost. There is the base, mind. If your past lives’ bodies were kept, either in church or Switzerland, was it in Switzerland? In England, I think. It could be possible. In England there is an old graveyard. I went to see it. I think it is recently opened. It is old, where they kept bodies. I think they don’t allow tourists to come, but it recently opened in England—the London Manjushri Centre people took us there. There was a crowd of people coming to see it on that day. I think maybe it was open two times a week. There was a crowd of people coming to see it. There is a whole place with coffins containing bodies, but it looks very old. I think the names are written on the side of the coffins. I heard you still could see the bodies there in the coffins. They were cleaning, a man was washing them. I don’t mean cleaning inside, the body, but just outside. There were crowds of tourists coming and one person was

explaining—like in the tourist place there is a guide who explains. There is a story of the person or whatever it is; I think he was explaining all the important ones around there.

So if the human body or the animal body has been kept—let's say it has been kept. There is the body, you recognize it. Either you know, or other people explain this, those who know that that is your body. You wouldn't say, "This is me." You wouldn't say, pointing at the body of a dog, "This is me." You would say, "This is my past life's body," whatever that body was. But you wouldn't say, "This is me."

Other people, when the father is dead, when you come to the funeral or the house after the consciousness has separated from its body, you won't say, "Oh, I met father." You won't say, "I met father at the house." You would say, "I saw father's body," but you wouldn't say, "Oh, I met father at the funeral." Then, in that case, if there are too much problems in the life, they could go much earlier into the coffin, very easily. If the father was still able to be in the coffin at the cemetery, if the father still could live there in the coffin, with the flowers around, he doesn't need to wait until the consciousness separates. Anyway, my conclusion is this: because your consciousness has migrated into a human body, your consciousness is not with that previous life's dog body or that human body. You don't point out "me," and other people don't point out, "This is yourself." We only say, "This is your past life's body." So mainly, from the body and mind and the consciousness, the base, the aggregates on which the "I" always exists you can see is the stream of consciousness. Body and mind, and among those, mind.

Anyway, when you have this experience, the "I" appearing as completely lost, it means that there is no true existence of the "I." There is no truly existent "I." Even though there is the appearance of "I," the experience or appearance as if the "I" is completely lost, it is not that "I" became non-existent, it is not realizing that "I" is non-existent. There is no way to realize that "I" is non-existent, because "I" exists. "I exist on the aggregates. I exist." Why? Because the aggregates are existing. As I mentioned just before, whenever the consciousness migrates to a different body, "I" exists on that, being merely labeled by thought.

One thing, why the fear arises, I think I mentioned this yesterday—it is said in the lam-rim teachings and, I think, also in Madhyamaka, that when the highly intelligent bodhisattvas realize shunyata, extreme bliss or extreme happiness, great happiness rises. And when the lower intelligent bodhisattvas realize shunyata, then fear arises. Fear arises because we have nothing; we have no other appearance or belief than the truly existent "I." We have no other appearance to believe in, no other than the truly existent "I," nothing except the truly existent "I". You got so accustomed, you got so used to it, believing so much in the truly existent "I." From beginningless lives, there was so much clinging to eternalism, the truly existent "I," so much clinging to that. Therefore, we cherish this so much and it is so precious, more precious than other sentient beings, so when something happens to this we get fear. So this becomes empty and, for the lower intelligent beings, they are losing something most precious that they have been taking care of as most dear. For the fortunate, higher intelligent beings, it is like receiving some precious thing, some precious treasure. When they see the emptiness of the "I," great happiness rises, having found some very precious treasure.

Meditate this way, on this basis. If you meditate in this way it is very clear how things are merely labeled, how things exist as merely labeled. You see, a person is called "Dorje." The couple doesn't have the baby's aggregates; the consciousness has not even taken place in the mother's womb. There is no fertilized egg. But they have the thought to give the name "Dorje" if they have a child. They

have the thought to label. Much earlier they have the thought labeling “Dorje,” but they don’t have the child—there are no aggregates, there is no base to be labeled “Dorje,” to point out. They have the thought to label “Dorje,” but there is no Dorje that you can point out. Not in the stomach or outside. There is no way to point out this Dorje, “This is our Dorje.” When the consciousness takes place on the fertilized egg inside, and comes out with a complete body, okay—but now, before the base, even if they have the thought to label Dorje, there is no way Dorje can exist. Dorje doesn’t exist. When they have the thought to label Dorje, without a base they don’t have Dorje to point out. Dorje doesn’t exist.

So now, the baby came out with a complete body. There is the base, but they don’t have a thought labeling “Dorje.” At that time, even if there is a base, Dorje doesn’t exist. You see, before the parents or anybody labeled that baby “Dorje,” before they agreed to label it, before they agreed and labeled “Dorje” on that base, there is no “Dorje” before that. There is no Dorje to point out. “Dorje” doesn’t exist. Before that, Dorje doesn’t exist on that body. Think about this well. Now, after some time, the parents, friends, lama or somebody decides to label “Dorje” on that body. The base is there, so they think one day to label “Dorje” on that base. So now you can see—when you think this way, you can get some idea. “Dorje,” their thought merely labels “Dorje” on this base. Now you can see that “Dorje” exists under the control of name. By the force of thought, Dorje exists on the base.

In this way, if you think well of this example, you can see just from this, above the base of Dorje—this may not be the correct experience, but you should relate it to your experience. The English may not be correct—above the base of Dorje. In this way there is Dorje on the base, there is no Dorje *from* the base. From the base there is no Dorje! From above the base there is no Dorje but there is Dorje on that base. Dorje exists on that base by the force of the thought, under the control of thought. So if you think well, if you just meditate well on this, you can see that Dorje doesn’t exist from his own side. You get the clear idea of merely labeled; Dorje exists being merely labeled on the base. There is no Dorje other than this, not something else, there’s not anything more than this, merely labeled; nothing other than this.

Those who are happy, unhappy, those who wish to achieve enlightenment, those who are meditating, those who are crying, who are laughing—it looks like something more than what is merely labeled, but it’s not.

However, when Dorje appears in our conception, we are not satisfied that he is merely labeled by thought, but think that there should be something more than that. We are not satisfied with the Dorje that is merely labeled by thought, but think that there should be something more, something real, something real, something more. This is not real. There should be something more, something extra. This is another explanation of the refuted object. We have to realize this as empty. We are satisfied with the Dorje that is merely labeled by the thought on the base, but there is a conception, a belief, that this is not real, that this cannot be, that it is not true. How could it be just merely labeled, the one doing the job and doing all those things? How could it be? How could he exist just like that—his existence should be more than what is merely labeled. It should be more than that. We believe that there is something extra on that.

So that itself, believing that there is something more, that the way that Dorje exists is something more than what is merely labeled, that, which you believe, that itself is the refuted object. That itself

is the opposite, contradictory to the absolute truth of Dorje. That is what we realize is a hallucination.

So the example that you should use, as I explained now, is that you should exactly check your name—yourself. “I, Lama Zopa”; meditate like that. You should use the “I,” “I,” on all the aggregates—how they are. Meditate, practice awareness of dependent arising, how each of these things exists as merely labeled. There is nothing other than that. There is nothing else, nothing the slightest bit more than what is merely labeled. In the way things exist, there is nothing the slightest bit more than that.

All the five aggregates, “I,” the group of aggregates, then each aggregate, or just the body and mind, starting from “I,” your name, Lama Zopa or whatever one is called, that “I,” everything, the whole base, the whole aggregate—everything is merely labeled. So practice awareness, one-pointed concentration. After you go through one after another, meditate, spend more time on “I,” that I is merely labeled on the aggregates by thought. Spend as long as possible on that awareness. That is extremely important. You see, if one is fortunate, just simply from this you can realize shunyata—just by thinking this. Then, after you go through all of this, practice the awareness of dependent arising of everything. The whole thing is merely labeled. Yes, like this, okay.

[Dedication]

Lecture 9

Please listen to the teaching by generating at least the creative bodhicitta, thinking that “At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all kind mother sentient beings. Therefore I’m going to listen to the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment.”

The listening subject is the Mahayana teachings for the fortunate ones to approach enlightenment. These are teachings well-expounded by the great propagators Nagarjuna and Asanga. These are profound teachings, the essence of the understanding, the essence of the holy minds of the incomparable, glorified pandit, Lama Atisha and the Dharma king of the three realms, Lama Tsongkhapa. It is as if the essence of their holy minds has been taken out. In other words, this is the essence of their understanding of the Buddhadharma. It is set up as a gradual practice for one person to achieve enlightenment. There is nothing missing. All the importance of the 84,000 teachings are revealed—the whole teaching that was revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is contained in the lam-rim teaching. It is set up as a graduated practice for one person to achieve enlightenment.

This lam-rim teaching has four outlines: the qualities of the author in order to show the pure reference of the teaching, and also the qualities of the advice in order to bring up devotion for the teachings. And then, how to listen and how to explain this advice, which has two qualities. Then, how to lead the disciple: the actual advice of the lam rim teaching to enlightenment, the way of devoting to the guru as the root practice, then the graduated path of the three—the lower capable being, the middle capable being and higher capable being. So this part of the subject is the higher capable being, the great insight.

When you meditate on dependent arising, when you practice awareness on dependent arising, and when your mind gets scattered from that meditation and you watch the “I,” do you find it different? Do you find that the way “I” is appearing is different? When your mind is distracted and comes back and when you look at the “I,” after the dependent arising? If you find that something is different while you are practicing awareness that “I” is dependent arising—how the “I” is appearing at that time. Then, when you don’t meditate or when your mind is distracted from the awareness that this “I” is dependent arising. If you find that the “I” is appearing differently, if you recognize it differently, stronger and stronger, while you are meditating on dependent arising—like when you switch on a light in the dark room, when you put on the flashlight, you don’t see the snake, you can’t find the snake at all. The snake that you used to see before doesn’t go anywhere. It doesn’t run into the bushes, it’s not that when you put on the flashlight the snake that you see on the piece of rope that has a certain shape and color at dusk runs away in the bushes or enters the holes of the earth. Where the snake appears, just there, it becomes empty. Like that, when you switch on the light, the darkness in the room doesn’t go anywhere. It doesn’t go to another room. It doesn’t hide in the cupboard, but it becomes empty.

So when you meditate on dependent arising, “I” appears from its own side above the aggregates, then, like throwing an atomic bomb, you use dependent arising right on top of that. That “I,” that emotional “I” appearing from its own side, the real “I,” that which we point out as the real “I,” becomes non-existent just there. Before using dependent-arising it looked like it could be found, but after using dependent-arising right on top of that, you completely see that it completely doesn’t exist, and you see that it is false. By using the logic of dependent arising right on top of that you see more and more that it is false. The more you meditate on dependent arising in a gross way, emptiness is that much—not subtle, not complete; gross right view, not infallible right view; there is something left.

So practicing awareness, as it is said in those quotations, on subtle dependent arising, the imputed existence of what is merely labeled, is extremely important. Subtle dependent arising is what we need. In this way we can recognize the infallible right view. In this way one can realize completely whether there is some existence from the side of “I.” We have the opportunity to realize that it is completely empty. That which appears to exist from its own side is completely empty from its own side.

Even if you meditate on dependent arising, it depends on *how* you meditate on dependent arising. It is dependent on that. And if you just think about causes and conditions, just the gross way, then shunyata, the refuted object, I think I have mentioned many times what you recognize is gross; and also, what you realize as empty just by gross dependent arising, the emptiness that you realize is not complete, not the Prasangika view. If you find a difference in the appearance of the “I”—that is the purpose of practicing the meditation on dependent arising, that is the purpose. To see the “I” that exists and to realize, to be able to distinguish or to be able to realize the “I” that exists. In other words, you start to realize or start to feel, it gives some idea about the “I” that exists and the “I” that doesn’t exist on the aggregates. It gives some idea, even just from this, even though we haven’t realized completely that the truly existent “I” is empty.

Practice awareness constantly that the “I” exists by depending on the base and thought, just considering that, the meaning of that, without the mind wandering.

Then sometimes you change to other words. Do the same meditation, but make it more subtle. You use different words. “The ‘I’ is merely labeled on the aggregates.” Sometimes just meditate on this, simply in this. Just continue the awareness of this. You see, one who has recognized the refuted object knows what has to be refuted. He knows so immediately, as soon as he looks at the “I,” he sees the truly existent “I” on the aggregates.

To realize shunyata there are many different sets of logic in the Madhyamaka subject, however, the most powerful, essential logic, the king of logic is this. You point out “I,” the base, one existence, such as the “I”—I don’t know how to say *cho.chen*, the “I,” then true existence appears; on the “I” the refuted object, true existence appears. So “I” is—I think it is translated as “I” is non-truly existent. “I” is or am? What about others’ “I?” Okay. I am non-truly existent.

Or you can do like this—if you have recognized the refuted object, then “I am non-truly existent,” and you just meditate on there. When you say, “I am non-truly existent,” even just by saying these words, if you have recognized the refuted object, then just by that, without need to use the logic of dependent arising; because you know the meaning of “non-truly existent,” besides the words, besides the intellectual understanding, you have the actual understanding from your own experience. So when you say, “I am non-truly existent,” when you say “non-truly existent,” this truly existent “I” immediately becomes empty on the aggregates without the need to use the logic of dependent arising on top of that. Then you can meditate on that emptiness one-pointedly.

It is stronger, of course, for that person who has realized shunyata, who has got at least the infallible understanding of shunyata, the thorough experience. That person doesn’t need to use the logic of dependent arising. By saying “I am non-truly existent,” he doesn’t need to use the logic of dependent arising, to see that the truly existent “I” is empty on the aggregates—“I” as a dependent arising just naturally comes in the experience. The experiences tell the person, as it is in reality, that it exists under the control of name and by the force of thought.

Then, you use the logic of dependent arising, saying “I am non-truly existent.” If it doesn’t do anything here, if it doesn’t make any change to yourself, to the way it appears, you use dependent arising, and then definitely, depending on how subtly you think of dependent arising and its meaning, you realize the truly existent “I,” the refuted object, emptiness, that much.

So just these few words, “I am non-truly existent, because it is dependent arising,” is a sufficient meditation on shunyata. That itself is a sufficient meditation for shunyata. It is incredible, unbelievable. There are few words, but when you get the explanation it contains or the experience it gives, it is incredible.

You see, especially for somebody who has a very distracted mind, somebody who can’t control the mind, somebody whose mind is very distracted, it is very good to meditate on shunyata with few words. The most important thing is concentration. Even analysis, analyzing the four important points, and many other logics, so many words, so many things, what happens for somebody whose mind is very uncontrolled, very distracted—from the beginning may have started with the correct meditation, by pointing out the self or the truly existent “I,” you may have started the logic to check whether it can be found or not, whether it is empty or not. You may have started but after some time, there are so many logics, so many words, and then you, probably, like this example: you recognize the thief at the beginning, and you have the aim to destroy him, you have planned for a long time that you will do something. You find the thief on the way, then after a long time reaching

that certain place, then, “I will destroy him,” something like that. You may have started to travel with the thief in the beginning, but now, after some time the thief has escaped. So when you reach that place where you had planned to destroy him, there is no thief. You cannot find the thief there.

Like that, you can start using the reasons on the “I,” on the self or the truly existent “I,” but now after some time your logic becomes just words. The mind is so distracted, unable to accompany the truly existent “I.” Without losing this, you are supposed to do the analysis, you understand? Without losing this truly existent “I” that you recognized at the beginning, this self, without losing that you are supposed to do the logic. The mind is so uncontrolled, so distracted, and then after some time it becomes just reciting the words of the meaning of the logic. That is why there is no effect at the end, when you have finished. So for that kind of mind this is very good. Short, very simple, but very tasty, very powerful. Meditate using this short technique, which has only a few words.

Whether you recognize the refuted object or not, right on the self, the meditator, the one who wants to achieve enlightenment—that one who doesn’t want to be in samsara, just there, on that self, is non-truly existent, because it is dependent arising. The point that I was saying is this. During the dependent arising meditation, even if it has not become completely empty, the “I” has become thinner. The idea of the “I” has become thinner; this is another way of saying it. Your idea of the “I” became thinner, became unclear. But when you don’t meditate on dependent arising it becomes more real. As if it is findable, more real. So after the meditation on dependent arising, on these aggregates seeing “I,” the idea of “I” is stronger, real—that is what the refuted object is.

Again, another way of recognizing the refuted object: do the meditation on how the “I” is a dependent arising and when your mind is distracted, watch how the “I” appears. Then again do the dependent arising right on top of that. Then again, when your mind is distracted, watch the “I.” Doing this, even though the refuted object, the “I” that does not exist, is not so clear at the beginning, it becomes clearer and clearer and clearer. The refuted object becomes more and more and more clear for your mind. And while you are practicing awareness of dependent arising, it becomes less and less findable. The emptiness gets stronger and stronger. The emptiness of the truly existent “I” becomes stronger and stronger and stronger. So the stronger the truly existent “I” appears, the more definite, the quicker one realizes shunyata.

This meditation, practicing awareness of dependent arising is itself... you see, there are two things: meditation on dependent arising has two words: it protects one from falling into the eternalism of a truly existing “I,” and it helps one to realize that the truly existent “I” is empty. It helps one to recognize the truly existing “I” that doesn’t exist, so it protects one from eternalism.

The meditation on dependent arising helps one to recognize eternalism, the truly existent “I.” One realizes that the truly existent “I” is empty. So that is how it helps to protect one from falling into eternalism. One realizes that the truly existent “I” is empty, that “I” is empty of true existence and independence, and that there is no third choice: anything that exists has to be either truly existent or non-truly existent, either independent or dependent, which has the same meaning. There is no third way for something to exist. Every existence is either independent or dependent.

If you just think about the meaning of existence, what existence means, if you just meditate on the meaning of “exist,” “existing,” even that is sufficient. Even just meditating on the meaning of “exist” and “existence,” even just that is sufficient to realize that they are not independent, that they are not truly existent. If you just think about the meaning of “existence,” I think, just simply even by

that. That itself explains that it is not independent. For example, the sky: the sky exists by depending on its parts—the eastern sky, the western sky, the different directions of the sky. Those parts make the sky exist—how do you translate *me.gak*? *Me* means non-existent, not having; *gak* is negation, contradiction or negation—*me.gak*, negative words, two opposite words. Do you know? Hm. Non-affirmative negation, yeah. The sky, the phenomenon whose nature is a non-affirming negation, merely not having resistance, the mere absence of substantiality and tangibility, a mere absence of resistance, *to rang me ka pa?* *to.rang* means resistance, tangible. *To* is resistance, *rang* is tangible—something that doesn't have these things; the mere absence of tangibility, of resistance.

On such a phenomenon, which has such characteristics, thought labels “sky.” So that is how the sky exists. So you can see if you know all the characteristics of the different phenomena, just hearing the word, when you hear just “the sky exists,” the understanding that comes in your mind is dependent arising. It exists, why? Because it is a dependent arising. It is empty of independence. There is no other way that sky exists. On the base of such characteristics the thought creates, makes up, labels, and the “sky” exists.

Just thinking of the definition of “existence”: when a valid mind discovers any object, it is dependent on the object having a name that is imputed, labeled on that base. Without that, without being dependent on name, that which is labeled, there is no way that the mind can realize or discover that object. For example, even if the baby hasn't got the name “President” or something, hasn't got “Tashi” or “George” or something like that, even if the baby has not been given a name, to realize that it is a baby is dependent on having labeled it “baby.” To realize that baby as “Dorje” or “George” is dependent on the label—having labeled, having imputed it. So that is the way of things being objects of knowledge. I don't think hallucinating mind is called “knowledge.” Is the hallucinating mind called knowledge—no?

After you have taken drugs you see all the earth, all the dust as worms moving; all the dust, everything moving, like piles of worms. Or when you see an Indian lady wearing a red dress, you believe there is a monk coming from there. I don't think that is called “knowledge,” the person having knowledge. Anyway, anything that is an object of knowledge, such as the lady who is wearing a red sari, as she comes nearby the valid mind discovers that there is no monk there. The previous appearance is a hallucination, the person realizes. Without this being introduced by other people, by others, the person himself can discover this, being near—there is no monk on that base. So realizing there is no monk on that, that it is not a monk, exists. That is not a monk, there is no monk on that—this exists. That is an object of the valid mind. The previous one, when the person used to see a monk because of distance and unclear perceptions, that doesn't exist and that perception is not knowledge—not valid mind, because even without being told by others, he himself can realize that that was false.

This is found in *du.ra*, the debating subjects—the different names for existence, *she.cha*, the object of knowledge; *yer.pa*, having existence; *she.cha*, the object to be discovered; *she.cha she.drup*, existing on the base *she.drup*; object, *cho*, phenomena—they have same meaning. These are the subjects that very small boys study in the monasteries. The very first subject, kind of like the ABCD, like the alphabet—this is what they study, the beginning subjects. Even though the boys are very, very small, even though they don't know what they are saying, at least they have got the correct answer. The very small, little boys don't know how to make *kaka* and all those things, how to keep their bodies clean—some intelligent ones would know the meaning. At least they have got the meaning of *she.drup*, the meaning of “existing on the base,” the meaning of “the object of knowledge.” If you

ask, at least they have got the correct answer, the total answer, explaining their characteristics. That is why the study of the debating subjects, studying the debating philosophical subjects, makes it very clear and deepens the intelligence or the understanding of Dharma.

Anyway, the conclusion, that is the definition of existing, of things becoming the objects of knowledge of the valid mind. Just by thinking of the meaning of “existence”—otherwise there is no way to say “existing,” existing has to have support, it is a dependent arising, by depending on something it exists—so even just thinking about the meaning of “existing” makes the object of ignorance empty. It makes you discover that it is false. You see, now, in this way there is nothing truly existent. When you think of the meaning of “existence” you can understand there is no true existence, there is no independent existence. Like dependent arising and independence, another way of saying it is that existence and independence are completely opposite.

I think I am just repeating different quotations, but it’s talking about the same thing, emphasizing dependent arising.

So “I” is merely labeled. The way “I” exists is as merely labeled on these aggregates. Then, what is called “aggregates,” even that, the gathering of the five aggregates, exists by being merely labeled by thought. Then the *skandha* of form, the part that has color and shapes, the object of the sense of “I”—on that too, the thought merely labeled “skandha of form.”

Then feeling, the sense meeting an object, then sinking experience and rough experience; when there is sinking experience or sensation it is called “happy feeling”; on that the thought merely labeled “happy feeling.” The one that is the opposite to the sinking sensation—sinking is like water sinking into cotton; it could maybe also be said that when you are satisfied or happy—against the sinking, the rough sensation, unsinking; such as that aspect of experience, the sensation—suffering feeling. The thought merely labeled “suffering feeling.”

If you meditate on the suffering of changes it makes it very clear how feelings exist as merely labeled. How they are merely labeled, you can meditate on the suffering of changes, it makes it very clear. You see, yesterday you had a big headache, but today, by taking pills, by sleeping or something, the headache became smaller. Still there is pain, still there is discomfort, but it is much smaller today, compared to yesterday. “Today I am better, more happy, better than yesterday, more comfortable.” The only reason is that yesterday’s greater pain became less—because of that it is called “better,” “happier,” and “more comfortable.” Then tomorrow the headache becomes much smaller, and I am more comfortable, more healthy than today. So you can see in that way thought merely labels. Yesterday there was a strong headache, but in dependence on some other person who has a headache and a toothache and a stomach pain, all three, so many problems experienced together, the first person is much happier. He is healthier than the other person who has many pains all over the body.

Yes, I think I stop here.

[Dedication]

Lecture 10

[Togden Rinpoche says] in his teaching, “That base just merely appearing to the mind is a dependant arising. The understanding of non-true existence is able to arise on that base without depending on others.” This could mean without depending on other logics. What he is saying is, simply, as I was saying this morning, that base that appears is a dependent arising, and that brings a definite understanding that the base, such as “I,” is non-truly existent.

“There is nothing more profound than understanding that all existence is labeled by thought, there.”

Each lama presents a slightly different thing, talking about the same thing and emphasizing dependent arising, but the way each of them says it is a slightly different presentation, although they are talking about the same thing. Khedrup Sangye Yeshe says, “There is nothing more profound.” This refers to being able to derive the definite understanding that “I” is not truly existent, from the appearance of the base as a dependent arising. “Nothing is more profound than understanding that all existence is labeled by the thought on there.” “There” you should think of as the base. The Tibetan words are *par tak tsam*, and each word has meaning—*tok.pe par tak tsam*, *tok.pa* is superstitious thought. *Par* means there, *tak* is label, *tsam* is merely—so, “thought merely labeled there.” “There” has great meaning. This word “there,” *par* means there. I think it is similar. Perhaps it may sound a little strange in English, while you are talking about here, you are saying “there,” while you are talking about your aggregates, saying “there.” It may sound a little bit strange. I think *par* has the meaning of “there” and also I think it has the meaning showing the force of the thought labeling the object—*par tak tsam*.

So when you hear *par*, there, kind of with strong force from the thought, which you can understand, which you can feel from the word—when you see your mother among other people, when you see your enemy, your friend among them, do you see the mother first or do you see the base of the mother first? Which one do you see first? Do you see the enemy first or the base of the enemy first? Without seeing the base on which you label “mother” there is no way to point out “mother.” If you didn’t see the base first, then you would be able to call out “mother” to anybody there—all of those coming toward you would be your present-life mother.

Anyway, what I am saying is that first you see the base on which you label “mother.” The base has certain physical characteristics and gave birth to you. You see the base first. Among these many other people, first you see that base, then thought, superstition labels, “mother.” I don’t know whether it is the same in English—I think *par* has both meanings—“there” and it also means “the force of the thought imputing there.”

Par tak tsam or *par tak*, labeled there by thought. The understanding that comes in your mind by thinking in this way, by the force labeled there—no mother exists from there. Mother doesn’t exist from there, from that base; that clear understanding comes. “Mother” doesn’t exist from there; “mother” doesn’t exist from its own side. I think this makes us understand both—“mother” doesn’t exist from there and “mother” doesn’t exist from its own side. Perhaps maybe *tog.pe par tak*, “on the thought,” “with the force labeled there”—maybe something like that. You get a very clear understanding, a very strong understanding: it exists there, but it doesn’t exist from its own side. So each word has meaning, *tog.pe par tak*. The mother exists on that particular base.

Similarly, there is a base of a particular figure, and by reasoning that he harmed me in the past, that he disliked me, on that particular base thought with force merely labels “enemy.” Then similarly,

among these people there is a particular base who likes you, who helped you in the past, and so the thought with force merely labels “friend.” So like this, what is called “mother,” what is called “enemy,” “friend,” “I”—all existence is labeled on the base by the thought with force, under the control of thought.

Referring to the commentary on *Madhyamaka* called *Clear Explanation of Lama Tsongkhapa’s View*, “In this school [meaning the Prasangika school], if you understand how things exist being merely labeled by the force of the thought, then you will immediately understand the *den.dzin*,” the wrong conception of true existence, which holds things to be truly existent. The way these wrong conceptions hold or cling to the object is opposite to dependent arising, things existing by being merely labeled by the force of the thought. So this has two: how things exist under the control of thought, imputed by the force of thought; and showing the wrong conception of true existence, which holds existence in a contradictory way, opposite to the previous one, things being imputed by the force of thought.

In the small lam.rim, the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment written by Lama Tsongkhapa, it is said, “The being, the self, is imputed existence, imputed by thought. The self is mere name. After saying that, this recognition of the self is the particular peerless quality of this Prasangika School. So, understanding this well, realizing this well, is a particularly good method to realize the selflessness of the person.”

It is explained in the—putting together, how do you say it, *Duk Dupa*—compiled? How *The Essence of Wisdom* is compiled—condensed. The condensed teachings, *The Precious Quality*: “Also all those existences are well known to be mere name. Those existences are able to be imputed by name.” What he is saying is that all existence is dependent on individual bases, then each individual, valid thought, which does the action of labeling, with force, merely labels.

You see, this book has its own base. You don’t call this one “book.” You don’t call any object “book.” It has its own individual base. The individual valid thought that does the action of labeling merely labels, with force, “book” on this base, and that is how the book exists. The base and the thought label this by connecting these two, and then “book” exists.

Similarly, you just don’t call anything “calculator.” You label “calculator” on its own base, you don’t label “calculator” just on anything. So by depending on its own base, the valid thought, its own valid thought, which does the action of labeling, merely labels it “calculator.” So, on the connection of the base and the thought labeling it, the calculator exists.

Like the book exists, the calculator exists in this way, and the rose exists, the brocade exists, the table, everything exists—the whole thing exists, the whole thing is the existence of the connection, the two things, the base and the thought labeling.

Before the person is called “Prime Minister,” the person got the vote of Prime Minister. Before the person was labeled by the valid thought, the government people agreed and labeled “Prime Minister” on that person. Before he was labeled “Prime Minister” there was the appearance of the base, but afterward they all agreed and labeled “Prime Minister,” then there was the appearance of Prime Minister. Similarly, the abbot of the monastery, before he was just a simple geshe, then after the monks voted and His Holiness accepted the Abbot, the label, the Abbot. After His Holiness

accepted and gave him the title of “Abbot” there was a different appearance than before—the appearance of the abbot on that.

So that is what Togden Rinpoche is saying here in the commentary on that verse. All existence is the connection of the base and the thought that is labeling. Depending on the individual base, there is the mere appearance, the connection of the mere appearance, the mere appearance connected to that base, to each valid base. What he is saying is this: this is not a valid base for the book, and this *is* a valid base for the book. By depending on the valid base, there is an appearance connected to this base.

Just to finish this, “If one understands imputed existence like that, then one will understand the opposite, the refuted object, ‘I,’ well.” Perhaps you may think when you hear “thought labeled,” or “it is merely labeled by thought,” or “things exist being merely labeled by thought” that, without need to depend on the particular characteristics of the base, you can label an object anything. It is up to the mind, it is only up to the mind, it is only up to the thought, thought can label anything and you can use it—it is not like that. In that way it would be very easy—without depending on the particular characteristics of the valid base, it is just up to the mind, the existence of things is only up to the mind, thought labeling. Then even if you are living in a mud and bamboo house or a grass hut, you can think, “This is a diamond palace.” You can label it “Diamond Palace.” If it doesn’t need its own valid base, then it is only up to the mind, the thought that labels, and just in the moment when you believe, when you label, “This is a diamond palace, where I am living is a diamond palace, a diamond house,” then it would be a diamond house. You could label piles of kaka gold. If gold could exist on the base of kaka just by labeling, then you should be able to use it, to sell it.

Similarly, if things existed only by labeling, without depending on the valid base, only on the mind labeling, then if you wanted dollars, you could label “a billion dollars” and you would be able to invest it in the bank. But if you go to the bank or to the shop to buy things with this, people will think you are crazy, there’s something wrong. Then it may lead to retreat in an institution. The reason other people do not accept this is because there is something missing there—you labeled but there is something missing, so other people don’t accept it, no matter how much you explain, “This is a billion dollars.”

There are three things. Things that exist have to be qualified by three qualities or three adjectives. If they are qualified with three qualities, three particular labels, then they exist. Otherwise, they cannot exist. We just use the same example—the reason other people cannot accept that kaka is not gold is because there is no gold on that base. The base on which you label “gold” is not a valid base. And even though you believe it is gold, other people’s valid minds find mistake—that is not gold, they find mistakes. There is harm from the other valid minds.

You see, there are two things: first of all it is not a valid base, it is not the actual base on which you label gold, and second thing, because of that, other people’s valid minds find mistakes, find that it is not gold. So now how the actual gold exists, how it is qualified with the three particular labels: one is that it has a valid base, another is that it is not harmed by other people’s valid minds, and it is also not harmed by absolute wisdom.

You see, if it were harmed by absolute wisdom, it would be truly existent, but it is not. The absolute wisdom sees that the gold is empty of existing from its own side, that is, it sees the absolute nature

of the gold. So that is how the gold exists. It is not harmed by the absolute wisdom, so the gold exists. The gold is not harmed by the absolute wisdom. The absolute wisdom sees that the gold is empty of existing from its own side. So the gold is a dependent arising, the gold exists. Also, it is not harmed by other valid minds. Other valid minds don't find that it is not gold.

So you see, there are three things; you can use this gold, which is qualified with the three particular labels. You can use it for your own means of living. Whatever value it has, you can get. It is qualified by the three particular labels. The other one cannot be used, because even though you have labeled it, it is not qualified by the three particular labels. If the existence of things did not depend on having a valid base and other people's valid minds not finding mistakes, qualified by the three particular labels, then there is no need to vote because everybody would wish to become Prime Minister or President. Everybody wishes to become President or Prime Minister, so you just label on yourself, "I am Prime Minister." Each person in that country labels himself "Prime Minister," "President," "I am the President of America"—it would be sufficient. Everyone becomes President in that country, or Prime Minister, or king—there are no ministers left. Then there is no need to give all these lectures, competitions. Or one doesn't need to study for years all those politics things. So do you understand that there are three things? Those things that exist have three particular labels.

To go back to where I stopped this morning, the dependent arising of the aggregates; it is said in the *Abhidharmakosha*, the happy feeling, which has the aspect of sinking, in some ways can be "satisfied," a more peaceful feeling—the aspect of sinking, but peaceful. That experience or sensation is labeled "happy." Then, against that, the other sensation or experience, a discomfort feeling is a suffering feeling. Then there is a feeling or experience that is indifferent, not peaceful in nature, not in the aspect of sinking. It is neither a peaceful feeling nor a discomfort feeling—on that thought we merely label indifferent feeling.

Like this, what we call the aggregates of feeling, is how they exist in mere name. They exist by merely labeling on those particular bases.

Then the compounding aggregate: the month, year, those things, the person, the self are compounding phenomena. Existence is divided into permanent and impermanent. One brings a result; one does not bring a result. The one that does not bring a result is permanent phenomena. So impermanent phenomena, which brings a result, has three divisions: one is the knowing phenomena, then substantial phenomena, and then compounding phenomena, which are neither knowing phenomena nor substantial phenomena, matter.

The aggregate of compounding phenomena: the person, the month, the year, those things, and also the impression left on the consciousness, or whatever it is called, left on the "I," on the consciousness; those impressions are not mind, not knowing phenomena, nor are they substantial matter. "Compounding phenomena" or "compounding aggregates" are labeled on these things.

Then the aggregate of recognition: recognition of, "This is mother," "This is enemy," and "This is friend." The object and the senses meet and there is recognition of the object. The knowing phenomenon that does this particular function—clean and dirty, good and bad, ugly and beautiful—on that which does these particular function we label "aggregate of recognition."

Then, consciousness: that which continues from one to another life, from the past life to this life and from this life to the next life, is the consciousness of the mind, this particular consciousness, the

mental consciousness. The other five consciousnesses mainly comprehend the essence or the meaning of the object. That is just the gross, rough meaning of the five consciousnesses. The essence, the nature or the meaning, and the qualities of that object—from those two, the knowing phenomena that mainly comprehend the qualities of that object, on that we label “senses.” Just very grossly speaking, the consciousness senses. Like the meaning of the flower and the qualities of the flower—one is mainly the meaning, and one is the qualities of that—mainly doing that function. The complete characteristics are explained in the debating subject, *lo.rig*, not in the general explanation.

To those different characteristics, those different functions of the mind, different labels are given. On an unpeaceful mind that wants to harm to others, that wants to hurt others, “anger” is labeled. Then the mind that stops anger from rising, the peaceful, relaxed characteristics of mind, which transforms by remembering the kindness of the enemy—on that we label “patience.”

So like this, ignorance and wisdom: on the one that is unknowing of the absolute nature of mind, on that particular characteristic of mind we merely label “ignorance.” The other realizes the absolute nature of the “I,” and we label that “wisdom.” When you study *lo.rig* it becomes a very wonderful meditation of shunyata; the fifty-one secondary thoughts, the twenty delusions, and the four changeable thoughts. You can do shunyata meditation on *lo.rig*, like this, how all these different types of thoughts, virtuous thoughts, non-virtuous thoughts, all those things exist by mere name, merely labeled. This itself becomes meditation on *lo.rig*, and becomes a powerful cause of renunciation of samsara, especially renunciation of the true cause of suffering. One can use the meditation for renunciation, one can use it to realize emptiness; one can use it in many different ways, for example, to generate compassion for others. As you yourself have all these wrong conceptions, and knowing others are under the control of these disturbing thoughts and karma, it becomes the cause of generating compassion and the cause to develop bodhicitta. It becomes the inspiration or reason for oneself to achieve enlightenment for the sake of others.

Anyway, from the “I” up to whatever you are called, all the five aggregates, everything, the whole thing, exists by mere name. It exists by being merely labeled. So like this, all existence is dependent arising, depending on the base and the thought, existing by being merely labeled. Thinking like this is very useful.

First the dependent arising part: The “I,” the merely labeled “I,” born from the merely labeled father and mother; born from the merely labeled parents and living in a merely labeled house. It plays with merely labeled toys and eats merely labeled food—lunch, dinner, breakfast, tea, coffee, merely labeled chocolate, merely labeled milkshake, all that. And then it goes to a merely labeled school, studied from a merely labeled teacher. Then it learned a merely labeled language, merely labeled science or whatever, all that. It got a merely labeled education, a merely labeled degree, and became a merely labeled PhD or professor. Then it met a merely labeled wife and had merely labeled children. It has merely labeled happiness and merely labeled problems.

Then it drives a merely labeled car to the merely labeled office, then to the merely labeled supermarket, and buys labeled food. We don’t have to think of other people labeling. One can think that one’s own thought labels, “Now I am going to the supermarket and then I am buying food.” Then one collects merely labeled money. Then one comes by merely labeled airplane to merely labeled Kathmandu, then to merely labeled Kopan. And one is doing a merely labeled course. Like this, in reality it is also like this. In reality, the way things exist is like this. But for our view, according to how things appear or what ignorance holds, the whole thing is truly existent. The whole thing,

what I just mentioned, the whole thing is truly existent. Not labeled. Not merely labeled. That is the appearance, what ignorance believes.

According to ignorance, the belief in how things appear is like this. You see, the truly existent “I,” which doesn’t exist, is born from truly existent parents who do not exist. It lives in a truly existent house, which does not exist. It plays with truly existent toys, which do not exist. It goes to a truly existent school, which doesn’t exist. It learns from a truly existent teacher who doesn’t exist. It learns a truly existent language, science, those things, which don’t exist. It lives with the truly existent husband who doesn’t exist. It eats a truly existent breakfast, a truly existent dinner, lunch, truly existent coffee and tea, chocolate, truly existent cake, which do not exist at all, which you can’t find anywhere on this earth—even when there is a trillion dollars you cannot find it. Then, truly existent happiness, which doesn’t exist, and truly existent problems, which don’t exist; truly existent problems in life, in relationships, truly existent disharmony, which does not exist; it has truly existent friends, which don’t exist, or truly existent enemies, which don’t exist. It has truly existent strangers, which don’t exist. It has truly existent anger, which doesn’t exist, and truly existent attachment, which doesn’t exist. It has truly existent ignorance, which doesn’t exist. You see, I’m talking according to our present view.

It goes to work by truly existing car, which does not exist; works in the truly existing office, which does not exist. Same thing, get truly existing ticket, which does not exist, go by truly existing airplane, which does not exist, come to Kathmandu, which does not exist, as well as the Kopan course, which does not exist.

You see the reality and what we believe are completely contradictory. It’s completely opposite.

So you do all this, from birth until now. First of all you meditate on dependence from morning until night, from this morning until tonight. I did this, I did that. I am happy. I did this. I did meditation. I ate food. I slept. I did all this, all this story of today. I did this. I am happy today. I had pain. Whatever experience or action that you did today, from morning until night, first of all you meditate on dependent arising. Meditate on how things exist as merely labeled. Then, from birth until death, you meditate, “I did this, I do that, I am happy and I am not happy,” all those things. “I meditate, I don’t meditate,” all that; how the whole thing is merely labeled. Try to have a clear understanding of this.

Then, after that look at your normal beliefs, try to remember and watch your normal view—from birth, from this morning until tonight, from birth until death, your view of life—the truly existent appearance, the truly existent life, which doesn’t exist. Happy or trouble or whatever it is, which doesn’t exist, one meditates. This stops worry and upset, and also fear. Also, in this way it pacifies. You don’t find objects to cling to. Also, it becomes the opposite of ignorance. It is a direct remedy to ignorance.

Preparation for taking the bodhisattva vows

[Rinpoche reads the Heart Sutra]

[Preliminary prayers, long mandala, *sangye cho dang*...]

The great bodhisattva Shantideva said in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, “However much happiness there is in the world, all this came from wishing others to be happy. However much suffering there is in the world all came from wishing oneself to be happy. What need to talk a lot; the child does the work for itself and the mighty one does the work for other sentient beings. Look at the difference between the two.”

You see, it is very clear how all the suffering, all the problems arise from cherishing oneself. Even those who are trying to practice Dharma, who have met the Buddhadharma so many years ago, even one who has received so much teaching, so many lam-rim teachings, teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment, those extensive sutra teachings, *Madhyamaka* or *Abhidharmakosha* or the *Abhisamayalamkara*, even though one has received all those teachings, even though one has heard them many times, over and over, and received all the extensive tantra teachings, the Guhyasamaja or Chakrasamvara, all the extensive, famous tantra teachings, however much one has received of the most secret, most profound, there is nothing left—what is spoken among the Tibetan lamas, what they keep secret or what they talk about, what you can hear, nothing is left, everything is received, there is no secret teachings left that we have not heard, everything is received. Nothing more profound, nothing more secret is left.

Even if we have received these things again and again, over and over—even then, in practice, not only from the time of birth but even after one met the teachings, most of our time has been wasted, as the actions of body, speech and mind did not become Dharma. Most of our time, our life has been wasted—that became Dharma and that did not become Dharma—there was so much more of life that was wasted or didn’t become Dharma. And so very little, if one precisely checks up, very little of life actually became Dharma. In one day’s life, even one day’s actions, one day’s life, because of following self-cherishing thought, the actions of body, speech and mind in twenty-four hours actions do not become Mahayana Dharma, did not become the cause of enlightenment. So that is how life has been so wasted. The infinite merit that one can accomplish in each second with the practice of bodhicitta—one has lost all that. No actions became the cause of enlightenment, so life has been unbelievably wasted.

Before, one or two years back, when I recited mantra, if suddenly the motivation was not strong, if there was no continuation of the energy of the motivation, doing for others, then I was not satisfied with reciting the mantra. This made me start all over again, it made me start from the beginning of the rosary, because I was reciting mantra but it was wasted. It was done out of self-cherishing thought, so it was kind of wasted. So I went back to the beginning of the mala and started the mantra again. But now I don’t feel anything.

The actions have not become the cause of liberation. By following the selfish attitude, clinging to samsara, cherishing the self-cherishing thought so much, clinging to samsaric happiness and perfection, even if one tries to practice Dharma it does not become the cause of enlightenment, it did not become even liberation. Even the Dharma that one tries to practice did not become Dharma. There is so much cherishing oneself, such strong worldly concern—it is done purely for reputation, for the happiness of this life, for reputation and things like that. Even if one tries to practice Dharma, it did not become holy Dharma, it became only worldly dharma. Even the Dharma that one tries to practice didn’t become Dharma.

So all this is a great waste; we have been unable to accomplish the three great purposes. Having this perfect human rebirth, one can accomplish the three great purposes. And however many times one

wishes to accomplish the great purposes, one can accomplish them. Within one hour one can create so many causes of enlightenment. Any great purpose one wishes, however many one wishes, one can accomplish within this one hour. This incredibly precious perfect human rebirth being wasted, one being unable to obtain the great meaning or unable to accomplish the great purpose with this perfect human rebirth, is due to the mistake of following the self-cherishing thought.

One has received the teaching on thought-transformation so many times, again and again, so many times. And even if one has received it, and even if one can remember all the words of the teaching, however many times one has received it, nothing has benefited one, there has been no change in the mind. The teaching is set up mainly to subdue the mind, to subdue the mind—this is the heart of the teaching, the heart of the whole Buddhadharma, and it is set up, it is explained mainly to subdue the mind, to destroy and eliminate the self-cherishing thought, the wrong conception of true existence, clinging to samsaric happiness and perfection. If other teachings do not benefit, then the lam-rim is the teaching that is left to benefit the mind. There is the possibility to subdue the mind, to benefit the mind by hearing the lam-rim teaching.

But even by hearing this many times, nothing happens to the mind. Self-cherishing thought becomes even stronger than before, the wrong conceptions, more impatient instead of less anger. Lam-rim is only to benefit the mind but it doesn't do anything, it is unable to benefit because of following the self-cherishing thought, not renouncing oneself for other sentient beings. Not cherishing other sentient beings. Not having changed the attitude, renouncing self and cherishing others, only following, doing the wrong practice. What one thinks is practicing Dharma is the wrong practice, the wrong practice of the Mahayana teachings, renouncing others who are the object to cherish, cherishing the object to be renounced. Even if one thinks, "I am practicing the Mahayana teachings," it did not become the Mahayana teachings. Even if one believes it is Mahayana teachings in reality it is not the practice of Mahayana teachings.

So thought transformation, lam-rim, is the only thing left to benefit, to subdue the very cruel, impatient, self-centered ego—like the whole body is filled with self-cherishing thought, from feet up the head, completely filled—what exists is only self-cherishing thought. Like when you see the Dalai Lama and others, you feel the holy body is completely filled with compassion, with bodhicitta, the whole body completely filled, in the nature of compassion. But one's own body is completely filled with self-cherishing, nothing else besides "I," "my happiness," very unpeaceful, unhappy mind.

There is no space to think of others, except oneself alone; unhappy, very unpeaceful mind. No space to think of others. No space, except oneself alone. No space to think of the happiness of others or dedicate oneself for others' happiness. The thought that others are important, other sentient beings are as precious as oneself does not arise; one cannot give up completely to that person. One cannot even give up one's own happiness to the other person, or comfort to the other person—one's place, belongings, surroundings, whatever—one cannot even completely give one's own comfort, one's own happiness to other sentient beings, to that person, or take the defeat, the loss upon oneself and offer the victory to that person. One cannot even think that "the other person's happiness is more important than what I want."

Even if one cannot think this at least see, "As I am important, as I think my life is precious, my body is important, precious, the other person is also important, his body is precious, his life is important, precious." You should have the feeling of great equanimity, having the same wish for happiness, and

not having the wish for suffering. Even if one can't completely renounce oneself for that sentient being, at least think, "As I want, the other person also wants, so he should have."

You see, they are exactly equal, having the same wish for happiness and not wishing for suffering. As you have the right, the other person also has the right to obtain happiness and to eliminate problems. We do not even have the thought of equanimity, not having even the thought to share, day and night, all the time—nothing else to think about except oneself. Even if one lives in the city, what one thinks about is only oneself; even if one lives on the mountain, what one thinks of is only oneself; even if one lives in the Dharma centers, what one thinks of is only oneself; in the monasteries, what one thinks of is only oneself—nothing else.

Even if one lives in places, which are not a Dharma center, it is the same. It doesn't make any difference whether one is in a Dharma environment, how many holy beings one has met, one saw, that one can find on this earth, whatever holy being, the highest that one can find on this earth, even if one meets, even if one hears the teachings, still it doesn't do anything, still it is the same mind. That most sentient beings, that most human beings on this earth cannot see and don't have the opportunity to see, to receive teachings, even though one receives such a great opportunity, however many holy beings one meets, however many hear teachings, nothing happened to the mind—it is still the same, it is even getting worse.

The conclusion is that since the lam-rim cannot benefit, there is nothing left to benefit the mind. So it becomes more and more solid. However much one is around Dharma environments, centers, however many years, one never tried to change the attitude, one never tried to do the practice, one never did the actual, real practice. The actual practice, the real Mahayana practice one didn't do, so even if one has heard teachings since many years ago, always around Dharma environments, centers or monasteries, nunneries, the mind has been like a stone that has been in the ocean for many years. It is a little bit wet outside, but inside there is no wetness. It is still very solid, even though it has been there since one hundred years ago.

All this is the mistake of not actually having practiced the Mahayana teachings, not actually having put it into practice. Even if the person does many prayers, lot of other things, when somebody says a little bit bad thing the person gets completely freaked out. He can't control the mind, he becomes completely crazy. When somebody behaves with slight disrespect in front of you, it makes you completely crazy. The whole body gets completely filled with anger just that second, so unhappy.

That is the mistake of not actually having practiced the Mahayana. Even though one is reciting the Mahayana teachings, one has not practiced, so there are no changes in the attitude. One completely takes refuge in self-cherishing thought—relying on and following that. The conclusion is this: the stronger self-cherishing thought there is, cherishing oneself, those other disturbing thoughts are stronger; stronger attachment, stronger anger, so easy to rise, stronger pride. The weaker the self-cherishing thought is, those other disturbing thoughts are less and thinner, and more difficult to arise.

So that is how the life problems, the life confusion is related to or comes from the selfish attitude. One is unable to obtain or practice the teachings, unable to obtain the advice given by the gurus. All those things are the mistake of the self-cherishing thought, taking the side of the self-cherishing thought. One finds it so very difficult to practice Dharma and to practice moral conduct. One finds

it difficult to take, to practice, to keep—all this is by the self-cherishing thought. This is what made it hard, what made it difficult.

If that is what one likes, there is no difficulty. If it is something in which one doesn't have interest, then that makes difficult, that makes it kind of solid, kind of hard, difficult. It is nothing physical; it is not a physical action. The determination is not a physical action. As the person follows the self-cherishing thought, the person finds it very hard. Even though it is just a matter of a way of thinking; whether our daily life was transformed into non-virtue or into Dharma is not determined physically, it is a way of thinking. It is mere thinking, just a way of thinking. One way of thinking, it becomes non-virtue. One way of thinking, one day of one's life become virtue, becomes Dharma. So it is just a matter of the way of thinking. It is up to just the way of thinking. One way of thinking becomes the cause of samsara. The actions of body, speech, and mind, one way of thinking, become the cause of liberation.

It is not like an iron mountain or a rocky mountain—something like huge iron, a diamond mountain, something very solid that one has to make slices in. It is not like that, you know, so solid, but even though it is just a way of thinking, just a conception, just a way of thinking, it becomes the cause of enlightenment, and one way of thinking becomes the cause of the lower realms. Even though it is just a matter of one way of thinking, of the mind—which you cannot see, which is not physical, which you cannot see at all—by not following the self-cherishing thought, by following the thought of cherishing others, Dharma practice, everything, becomes so easy. One is able to do all the practice without difficulties, with much happiness, with rejoicefulness, with much happiness. By following the self-cherishing thought all the practice becomes so difficult, so hard. Much harder even than breaking a mountain. Also in general life, even for one who doesn't practice Dharma, all the problems, all the confusion, how much confusion there is, is dependent on that, arises from that.

Therefore, if this attitude is not changed this year, this month, this week, even today, if this is not changed, when can one generate bodhicitta? When can one become a bodhisattva? You see, there is no way. So by thinking of all the shortcomings from the depth of one's heart one should think, one should examine oneself, one's own life: which has more advantage, following the self-cherishing thought or following cherishing others? You should make the determination to transform the mind to be able to do the pure Mahayana practice. Yes, I stop here.

[Dedication]

Lecture 11

As we always find, we always hear—we see many people and also it is one's own experience—the times when your mind is so selfish, there is nothing else to think about, except only to concern oneself, when one's mind is so very selfish like this, it is very hard to get along with others. It is very difficult to become harmonious with others. And when your mind is very good, when your own mind is a little softer, a little less concerned for self and more concerned for others, you're happier. You get along even with those whom you don't usually get along with. You can tell this from your own experience. When life becomes more difficult it is when the mind has stronger self-cherishing thought. When the selfish attitude is weaker, however, you are able to dedicate yourself more, share things more with others and have more space to think of others. You are able to give yourself more for others, and that's why there is more happiness and harmony in life.

You see, when we see other people who are very selfish, and when you stay with a person who is very selfish, who has nothing else to think about except himself or herself, his or her own comfort, even wanting to use one's own belongings, even though it doesn't belong to him or her, and trying to take advantage of you. You find it very painful when you ask that person to help and that person doesn't help. When you ask them to share something or do something—physical or material help or whatever—and the person doesn't help even though he could. This becomes a big disturbance to you; it becomes painful. So when we stay with that kind of person we find it so difficult, we find that person so difficult. Even just to be near that person, your mind becomes unhappy.

In a similar way, as we recognize other people like that, as we see it is harmful when someone is so selfish like that, when someone can't accept the loss for oneself, we should also see our own personalities, the nature of own mind. Only knowing others and never checking one's own mind, never analyzing or being aware of one's own personality, not having any understanding or recognition on how greatly harmful all this is to others, to the people who live near us, who are around, how it is a big disturbance, how it is harmful for them—not recognizing this, not realizing this shouldn't happen; it should not happen this way.

One's own mind, one's own selfish attitude is as high as Mount Meru, like Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, thinking, "I am very good, I am pure and I am always right, I'm always right, one hundred percent, all the time," then always think how others are so selfish. Your own selfishness is perfectly all right, your own selfish attitude is very pure, it's a very good selfish attitude, thinking, "I am one hundred percent right. What I want is right, but what he wants, what she wants is not right. What I want is one hundred percent worthwhile. I should have it. They shouldn't have it. The other person, the other sentient beings should not have it, otherwise I lose. He gets happiness, I lose my happiness. So as long as I get it, it's okay, doesn't matter whatever happens to others—if they are happy or if they are unhappy, as long as I am happy it's okay. In this world, among all these human beings, among all these creatures, all these sentient beings, among all these numberless sentient beings, as long as I am happy, then it's okay, then that is sufficient."

So that is a very poor attitude, an extremely poor attitude of one who has never tried to change his attitude, or tried to change the source of his own problems. Of course, without having received teachings, there's no method to transform it; that person doesn't know, but after having received all these unbelievable teachings one only cheats oneself. Apart from one's own side, if one does not practice, from the side of the infallible teaching, which is so profound that one can immediately, without doubt, without any danger of misguiding one can accomplish all the wishes, temporal and ultimate—such an unbelievable teaching that one has received, from the side of the teaching there's no misguiding at all. Only from one's own side, one does not practice.

If one wishes to practice Dharma, there's nothing much to talk about, nothing much to say, nothing much to talk about—just follow Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's life story. In the bodhisattva's time, what great dedication Guru Shakyamuni Buddha did for other sentient beings. Just read those stories, the different bodhisattvas' life stories—put that into practice.

You see, what I'm saying now is that the main emphasis is this—I don't remember the particular names, it's the end of the *Chöd* practice, but I don't remember. I find these prayers so effective, the last part of the *Chöd*, praying to be able to follow Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's biography—all the sacrifices that were done for other sentient beings during the bodhisattvas' lifetimes. I find that

prayer extremely beneficial, even without chanting. I think it is a prayer that you should actually practice; you should recite it and pray every day. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was a king, had everything, gave it up and made charity for sentient beings, and even the surrounding people, even the family made charity for other sentient beings, completely. Then when he was born as prince, he sacrificed the holy body to the hungry tiger. As soon as he saw the tigers, he completely made the determination to make charity, to put it into practice immediately. Then also the tigers, to whom Guru Shakyamuni Buddha made charity, afterwards became his close disciples.

Anyway, my main emphasis is this—there's nothing much to say, nothing much to talk about, not so much to talk about it. Simply put, if one wishes to practice Buddhadharma, wants to have less problems in life, if one doesn't want interference, if one wants to practice Dharma, if one wants to have successful a Dharma practice, then put those Guru Shakyamuni Buddha life-stories into practice—that's my conclusion. The main emphasis is this those tigers ate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's holy body; they chewed the bones, ate the flesh, drank the blood, all those things, but Guru Shakyamuni Buddha prayed that those tigers who ate his body be able to, in the future, become his disciples, to turn the Dharma wheel, to lead them to enlightenment.

The spirits, the *yakshas*, *rakshas*, five brothers or sisters, five brothers, I don't know—anyway, the relatives, the five relatives, the spirits, the yakshas, during the bodhisattva's time sucked the fresh, warm blood. They did this, but Guru Shakyamuni Buddha made prayers to benefit them in return—the benefit is not giving materials but making prayers to be able, in the next life, to be born as a human being and reveal the teachings to them. Those five yakshas became the first disciples for whom Guru Shakyamuni Buddha turned the first wheel of Dharma at Sarnath.

When Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was the business trader Kyiwu Chubeb, the lake dried and so many fish died. By reciting mantra to them, all those fish were liberated from samsara. The mantra was DE.ZHIN SHEG.PA RIN.CHEN TSUG.TOR.CHAN LA CHAG.TSEL LO. By reciting Buddha's name—I think Khunu Lama Rinpoche often used to teach this to other people, because by hearing this name at the time of death you don't get born in the lower realms. I think this is a particular function of this Buddha, Rinchen Tsugtorchen—so by reciting that Buddha's name he liberated many, and saved them from the lower realms and liberated them from samsara, making Dharma charity to those who are devoid of Dharma, those who have poverty in Dharma.

I see the English of this dedication prayer. “When he was Prince Great Meaning of Virtue, he was able to bear betrayal with compassion. In the same way may I cherish with great compassion those around me who disturb with bad manners and perverse behavior.” Perverse? Perverse behavior? Yeah, this is what we need to practice (laughs, general laughter.) I wasn't one hundred percent sure of the English. These are the points that I want to emphasize. If you want to practice Dharma without interference, this is it—if you don't want interference, if you want success in Dharma practice. There's nothing much to say, nothing much to talk about.

Then the next one: “When he was the bodhisattva monkey, he rescued the evil man from the well. In the same way, may I be able to benefit evil beings without discouragement, and compassionately guide them without expecting favors in return.”

Especially this verse, verse 67: “When he was Prince Great Meaning of Virtue, he was able to bear betrayal with compassion. In the same way may I cherish with great compassion those around me who disturb with bad manners and perverse behavior.”

That's what we need, what we need to practice—then there's no interference to practice Dharma. Especially for those who give harm, who disturb, for those who you help and then in return they harm you; especially to those who hurt you most, you generate greater compassion. The compassion to that person is not made up—there's a reason. I don't have compassion but I think the reason is enough to generate compassion. Just seeing that person with a bad personality is a reason to cause great compassion to arise. But it is difficult for us to generate strong compassion.

You see, the arya bodhisattvas do not have the suffering of rebirth, old age and sickness. They do not have the strong selfish attitude or a vicious personality, so therefore it is very hard for us to have great compassion, unbearable great compassion does not rise for them.

Just seeing that person who bothers you, who criticizes you, who's angry at you, who you helped and he in return only harmed you, he got angry. In return that person badly treated and criticized you, or even kills you in return to giving him help. He is under the control of karma; the evil, vicious actions that he does are the result, the ripening result that is similar to the cause. This is the result of his past life, his past life action, his evil actions that harmed others. And that is because of disturbing thoughts. He's overwhelmed; he's completely overwhelmed, without freedom at all. The person himself has no freedom at all, he is completely overwhelmed by karma and the disturbing thoughts such as anger, dissatisfactory mind. He is completely overwhelmed, so he himself has no freedom at all. He is completely used, he is a servant, a slave, used by the disturbing thoughts—he has no freedom at all.

So his giving harm, when you think in this way, arises from the fact that he has no freedom at all, that he himself is completely trapped, in the control of others and disturbing thoughts, karma and disturbing thoughts. So even though he harms you, while he is criticizing, harming you, if you remember this, that he has no choice, compassion has to rise, there is no choice. When you think this way, just simply like that, he's not doing this, he's not harming you because he has freedom from karma and disturbing thoughts, you see? He's doing this out of control, like the person who is completely possessed by a spirit who does harmful actions. You don't get angry at the mother who is possessed by a spirit, completely occupied by spirit, and then does harmful actions. You don't get angry at that mother; the thing that you feel is pity, compassion. There is no way for anger to arise, so it is similar to that. It is similar to that, and even worse. The spirit harm is just for a certain time, for some years, maybe one year, or just this life. It's a limited time. That person has not been possessed by spirits from beginningless lifetime, but the sentient being who harms you, who badly treats you has not had freedom at all from beginningless lifetimes. From beginningless lifetimes he has suffered under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts. It is difficult to see the end—that sentient being's suffering has no beginning, it is a continuation, and it is difficult to see that it has an end—so you can generate stronger compassion for that person than for one who is possessed by spirits. It is difficult to see when that person will be liberated from this suffering, it is very difficult to see this, difficult to say, you know? It may have an end, but it is such an incredible length of time that the sentient being has to suffer.

So when one thinks in this way, the more the other person is vicious, harmful and evil, more harmful to oneself, more vicious, it becomes a reason, or an object toward which to generate greater compassion, without choice. When you see how that other sentient being is under the control and there is no choice, compassion has got to arise.

It is similar when you look at dogs, chickens, buffaloes, those animals who live nearby, who live around human beings. The monkeys, you look at snakes, scorpions—just seeing their body becomes an object of compassion, just seeing their body itself is enough reason, a sufficient reason for compassion to arise. Without choice compassion will arise. You have a human body like this which is an incredible opportunity. Without talking about Dharma practice, there is so much temporal happiness and comfort. Poisonous snakes, scorpions and spiders, sheep and goats didn't take this body having planned in the past, "I'm going to take a scorpion body; how to take a scorpion body, how to take spider body, I want to get a spider body, how to get it?" Making many lifetimes' projects, making plans. Any human beings who see their body get frightened, just by seeing their body others get frightened and want to kill them immediately. Everybody tries to kill that poisonous snake immediately—very harmful, very dangerous. Without delay, they kill them immediately, everyone thinks they are dangerous. If you had such a body, how would it be? Meditating, visualizing, putting oneself in their place, you can get compassion, you can feel compassion from that. All the animals didn't take that body with a wish, with a desire, they didn't take it purposely. They got caught, out of ignorance they created karma in the past so that consciousness migrated into that body; they got caught in samsara. Without choice, they got caught in this body.

There is a Chenrezig prayer that we do in the *nyung.ne* practice that says, "The narak beings, the preta beings, the sura and asura beings, those who are caught in the lower, evil-gone realms, the *nyen song*..."—*nyen* is bad, *song* is gone. These Tibetan words have a big meaning. *Nyen* is the cause, *song* is gone, the result. So *nyen* is bad karma, having created bad karma, gone to the lower realm. So *nyen song*, being caught in the evil-gone realms, which are very difficult to be liberated from—and then, "You, the great compassionate one, please look at me with your compassionate eye."

So, as it is said in the Chenrezig prayer, how ugly it is, how terrifying it is, the bodies they have. How much suffering there is. Think of crocodiles, those unbelievable bodies. Anyway, it is unbelievable, amazing, those creatures that live in the oceans, in the forest, on the land, in the desert.

Just look at those horses in India, those cows or buffaloes, those horses, on that very solid road, very hard road, their legs are nailed with iron and they have an incredibly heavy load. Every day they have to run for so many hours, and even if they have wounds on the body, even if they have pain, there is no way to express anything that they wish. "I want this, I don't want this. I am sick," this and that, hunger and thirst. There is no way to express the wish, no freedom to express the wish at all. If there is only something physically outside, some injury or something that can be seen by the eye—even if the person sees that, still there is no compassion. They use them as much as possible until they stop, until their body collapses, until the breath stops. And being completely under the control of that person, being beaten and all that, until the body collapses, the breath stops. No matter how painful it is, no matter how hard it is, there is no choice, they completely get caught in that samsara, in that body, in the evil-gone realm body, and they have to suffer.

However many years he lives, he has to suffer, there is no choice—it is so difficult to liberate from the lower realms. Even just from the lower realms, it is extremely difficult. Without choice they have taken this body, without freedom. If they had the freedom immediately to leave that body to go to another body—but they don't have this freedom, so until death, they have to suffer.

Sentient beings like the spider or the poisonous snakes don't mean to harm others like this, but without choice they receive a body that frightens anybody who sees it, and immediately they will kill it. Those animals, those spiders, those creatures that have thousands of legs, just look at them, how

pitiful they are. They are so deeply ignorant, unbelievably deeply ignorant, and they have such an incredibly pitiful body, a suffering body; they are deeply ignorant and whatever action they do is non-virtue. So just this is enough reason—without choice, compassion has got to arise. Without thinking about the other details of suffering, the other problems, what they experience, just seeing them with that body without choice, that itself is an unbelievable reason for unbearable compassion to arise.

So towards the sentient beings who harm us we should practice in this way, as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha practiced. And then, especially in the case of the one who harms oneself we should generate greater compassion. And in return for the harm from those who are badly treating you, you should benefit. You should benefit them, you should practice patience. The more vicious the person is, the more uncontrolled the person is, it is that much harmful for himself, but for you the person is extremely kind, unbelievably kind. Having found such an evil, vicious personality, as it is mentioned in the *Eight Verses of Thought Transformation*, I think in the fourth verse, when you see others overwhelmed by negative karma, suffering, great heavy negative karma, problems, a person whose mind is full of heresy, full of anger, an unbelievably strong selfish attitude, when the mind is like this, the action is only heavy negative karmas, body full of leprosy disease, so vicious, great harm, giving great disturbance to you, to oneself, “Like having found a precious treasure, may I be able to cherish that sentient being, who is extremely difficult to find.”

It is only harming him, great harm for himself, the more vicious he is and more under the control of karma and delusion—it is greater harm for himself, no good at all for himself. But for you, by thinking in this way about how he is suffering, great unbelievable compassion arises, and in this way one is able to generate bodhicitta quickly, and in this way one is able to achieve enlightenment rapidly. One is able to do extensive works for all sentient beings, quickly. So therefore, for you, that suffering sentient being is unbelievably kind, unbelievably kind. He is much more precious than diamonds piled up, this sentient being who is so vicious, who is so cruel to you, that one suffering being. There is no comparison between him and diamonds the number of the atoms of this earth—there is no comparison.

Without depending on suffering sentient beings there is no compassion, no great compassion, no bodhicitta, no way to become enlightened, no way to receive the infinite qualities that the Buddha has. No way. You cannot offer extensive benefits to all sentient beings. Even if you own that many diamonds equaling the number of atoms of the earth, that alone, without depending on the kindness of such suffering sentient beings, you cannot achieve the great purpose, enlightenment. There is no way. Without depending on the kindness of sentient beings you can't even achieve liberation. Even if you have that many diamonds, that many dollars, you cannot achieve liberation; they cannot help. Even rebirth—without depending on the kindness of sentient beings, even if you have that many possessions, it cannot help you find a perfect human rebirth, a body of a happy transmigratory being in the next life. It cannot save you from the lower realms.

For example: a person who has degenerated moral conduct but has practiced charity. By having degenerated moral conduct, even if the person has accumulated much charity, that person gets born as a naga, having much wealth because of having made charity in a past life. Because of having degenerated moral conduct he doesn't find the body of the happy transmigratory being; only of the animal realm, of a naga. Moral conduct is the cause of the body of the happy transmigratory being, and that is practiced on the object of sentient beings, depending on the kindness of the sentient beings. Because sentient beings exist, suffering sentient beings exist, you have the opportunity to

practice moral conduct—to not kill others, to not take others' lives, to not steal others' possessions. One has the opportunity to practice on the object of sentient beings, so that is why sentient beings are extremely, unbelievably kind. That is how the happiness comes from the sentient beings.

When we find a treasure, the treasure we cherish so much, we take the best care of it, seeing the value of it and the advantages we can get from it. So you see, you are taking the best care. And also this is rare, so you are taking the best care. It is rare to get, rare to find, and you see that much value, the enjoyment you can get from that, by using that. This is how to apply the example of “difficult to find,” to the meaning, putting it this way.

Buddha doesn't get angry, Buddha doesn't have anger, Buddha doesn't have obscurations or suffering, so there is no opportunity, no way to generate compassion for Buddha. There is no way to practice patience on Buddha. With Buddha there is no opportunity to practice patience, because Buddha doesn't have anger towards oneself and doesn't have suffering. With arya beings, arhats and higher bodhisattvas, there is no opportunity to practice. They don't have anger towards oneself, dislike towards oneself. There is no opportunity to practice patience at all with them. They don't have suffering, they don't have anger; they don't have the true cause of suffering, true suffering; so there is no opportunity to practice, no opportunity to generate compassion. There is no way to generate compassion for them. We cannot generate this unbelievable, unbearable, great compassion. It is difficult to generate this for them, we cannot generate it. There is no opportunity.

For those who have less problems, those who are not that vicious, so cruel, those who have less problems—for example, normally, it is very easy to generate compassion for a beggar, who doesn't have food, who doesn't have a house, who doesn't have anything, who is sick—it is easy to generate compassion. When you see wealthy people who have everything, compassion does not arise. Just generally speaking, this is a common experience. When you see a very wealthy person, generally speaking, it is difficult to bring up compassion for general people. For the beggar, somebody who is very poor, somebody who has leprosy disease, or is very sick, or poor, it is very easy for compassion to arise. For somebody who is wealthy, somebody who is healthy, it is difficult to generate compassion. Therefore, for you, it is easy to bring up compassion for the sentient being who has the poverty of not only Dharma but of means of living, one who has more problems.

Similarly you can see that it is easy for compassion to arise if that sentient being is extremely kind. It is easy for you, depending on the kindness, depending on that object, the root of bodhicitta, compassion is easy to generate, for one who is so extremely kind. Just his existence is extremely kind for oneself.

If you think in this way, for most people you don't feel compassion. You feel compassion for only certain persons, for somebody who is very badly injured or somebody who is sick or poor—but for most people that you see you don't feel compassion. In the office, for the employers, one doesn't feel compassion; for those objects compassion does not arise easily. Every sentient being is not like this example that I mentioned—the mind so vicious, incredibly heavy negative karma, much suffering, with much sickness, unbelievable, so that for you it is very easy to have compassion for that. Since every sentient being, every human being is not like this, it is so difficult; therefore the person who has disliking thoughts to you, anger towards you, is like a precious treasure that is very difficult to find.

There is no opportunity to practice patience toward the friend who gives help, who doesn't have thoughts of dislike toward oneself. Strangers do not dislike or have anger toward you, so there is no opportunity to practice patience with them. All sentient beings fall within these three divisions, so we have friends and strangers, and what is left is the enemy, one who has anger toward oneself, the one about whom one finds, "This is my enemy, because he doesn't like me," who harms one or whatever. If we do not have patience for that, then there is no object for us to practice patience at all. There is no possibility at all to practice patience if you don't practice on that person who has dislike for you; forever the practice of patience doesn't get done, so then there is no bodhicitta, no enlightenment. No end of one's own samsara.

This enemy, this person won't be angry until you die, he won't be angry until you become enlightened. He won't be angry and he won't have dislikable thoughts toward you until you become enlightened or die, he won't have dislikable thoughts all the time toward you. You see, if his anger toward you, his dislikable thoughts toward you last for many years, he is extremely kind! Then you have many years, in which there is the opportunity to practice patience. This gives a great, very long opportunity—for many years you can practice patience, you can develop patience toward him. As many years as he has dislikable thoughts towards you, it won't last. The shorter his dislikable, harming thoughts toward you, the less opportunity there is to practice patience. The fewer sentient beings there are who have dislikable thoughts toward you, the fewer sentient beings who have anger toward you, who dislike you, and the shorter the duration of anger—the opportunity to practice patience becomes correspondingly rarer and rarer.

His anger may not last until tomorrow, so there is only today. Tomorrow when he does not have anger, he is not your enemy. Tomorrow, when his mind likes you, he is not your enemy, so tomorrow your opportunity to practice patience is stopped. What is left is only today, only today. Even today there is only this present hour. If you wait, "After some hours I am going to practice patience. After some hours I'll read some Dharma books on my bed." But by that time he may have become a friend to you. So your reading a book is not so effective because you don't have an enemy.

Therefore, this minute, while you have found the precious treasure, the extremely precious, extremely kind sentient being, who has dislikable thoughts towards you, you have the opportunity to practice patience. Right this minute, while he is the enemy, it is extremely important to practice patience without delay. The opportunity is so unbelievably precious. It is such a loss, it is a great, unbelievable loss if you don't get to practice patience while you have somebody who dislikes you. If you don't get the practice done it is an unbelievable loss.

For example, if you have a job that brings a thousand dollars—I don't know whether that is small or big—anyway, something that you like, as much money as makes you happy. Some job you have found. If you miss it, if you come late to the job, you won't get that much, you won't get your salary, you'll miss your thousand dollar salary. We are so very aware of that, generally speaking, so very aware; the whole thought is there. The whole thought, the whole action is there. You are doing some meditation in the morning but the whole attention, the whole awareness is there to not miss the job, to not lose the money, what you can get. It is unbelievably important to not miss the job.

So just one time, this person who has dislikable thoughts toward oneself, the angry mind, this person gives you the opportunity to practice patience. You have found out that he dislikes you, then you practice patience by remembering, by thinking of the reason that I just explained, how it is sort of rare, "He is the only one who gives me the opportunity to have the realization of patience, the

path to enlightenment, particularly patience—he is the only one. And thinking of his particular, special kindness, that which others cannot help, that is patience—this peaceful mind, calm mind, he is the only one.”

As it is said in the teachings, looking at the teaching of the paramita of patience, completing the paramita of patience, the path to enlightenment; by practicing patience, we create enlightenment. With his help in practicing patience, we create enlightenment. One creates one’s own enlightenment with these virtuous thoughts. If he didn’t have anger and dislikable thoughts toward oneself, then there is no patience. There is no realization of patience and the anger never ceases. It never gets stopped. In that way bodhicitta does not come and also compassion doesn’t come. Bodhicitta doesn’t come. One of the main enemies or interferences to bodhicitta is anger. Without bodhicitta, there is no enlightenment.

So now you can see, the one whom you point out as enemy, who has dislikable thoughts, he is the one who gives enlightenment quickly. The more you practice patience on him, the nearer you are to enlightenment. That is how he puts enlightenment in your hand rapidly, the more you practice patience. By thinking of his kindness, practicing patience like this. He gives this mind peace, this calmness, mind peace, by controlling the anger; this patience. I think the value of how precious it is, this peaceful mind, this patience that you receive from him—there is no comparison to as many diamonds as the number of atoms of this earth. There is no comparison at all between the value of that and the value of this person that you point out as the enemy. Compared to this, the material value is completely lost. It is nothing compared to the value and preciousness of a person who has dislikable thoughts, the suffering sentient being. And also the value of the compassion that the suffering being gives you, which leads to enlightenment, and gives you the opportunity to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them into sublime happiness. This gives the perfect power, omniscient mind.

So the few seconds, one minute that he gives you this peaceful mind, patience, is much greater, more incredible kindness than him giving you that many dollars, that many diamonds the size of this earth. I think you cannot finish repaying the kindness of that person—even if you give him food and clothing filling the earth. Still you are unable to repay his kindness. Even that many dollars, that many precious treasures you give—still it is nothing, not enough to repay his kindness.

It is good to think like that; like this he is extremely unbelievable. The kindness is much greater than that. If you can practice thought transformation with the enemy, then you can practice thought transformation with everyone. It is so easy. The most difficult one is the person who has anger, who dislikes you. So if you can practice and train your mind with that, then it is very easy to transform suffering and problems into happiness.

When there is danger that you will hurt others, at those times you should remember, “As I do, if this person is doing exactly what I am thinking, so selfish and so impatient, insulting like this; as I am doing it, if this person does it back to me, how painful is it? How is it? What would I think? What would I think of him? Heh? Do I like that or not? Am I happy with that or not?” You can put these questions. Do analytical meditation like this, “I don’t like it. I hate it. As I do to him, the way I treat him, if he treats me in the same way me, am I happy? Do I like it? No.” So then, why do you treat him that way? That one verse that I just read, “That is nothing to talk about...”—if you want to practice that one you should put it into practice.

Sorry, I think maybe a little break, no? Break and then have tea, then maybe at six o'clock, six o'clock is not meditation time or not? After that? Okay, five-thirty. Okay, we believe in five-thirty.

[Break in teaching]

Yes, even if one doesn't have the actual realization of bodhicitta, normally in the life a person who has a very good heart, even if one is living in the family, has much harmony. As I often use this, as I often say, in one couple, if both of them have strong self-cherishing thought, even if they don't split, when they don't escape away from the other person, if they live longer at the same house, their life finishes by fighting, day and night, not finishing fighting and quarreling. Then, they end up killing each other, injuring each other. Even if they are able to live together, as soon as they meet each other, either outside or inside the house, at lunch time, or dinner time, as soon as they gather in the evening, coming home from work or in the morning before going for work, they start fighting. Except if they don't meet. Then maybe, when they don't meet, they are mentally fighting, but when they meet, they fight with speech and then sometimes with the body. They have to live a life like this, even if they live together; a very sad life. Even in the family, with the whole family like this.

One who has very strong self-cherishing thought—everybody, all the surrounding people, even the family, do not like that person. In a couple, if the other person has very strong self-cherishing thought, but at least one person has weaker, there is some more space to think of the other person. There is some space to be concerned about the other person. If there is less self-cherishing thought, then there is that much loss taken on himself and that much victory is given to the other person, that much help and service to the other person. If it is the wife who has a less selfish attitude, then there is that much peace in her mind, and also there is peace for the other person, because of not retaliating to the other person, not being angry back, not hurting back.

Even if the other person hurts you, if you have some space in the mind to think of the other person, you can give your profit or happiness to the other person, renounce, give it up to the other person; experience trouble and difficulty for the sake of the other person. This makes less problems for the other person, even though he doesn't change his mind. Even though he has strong self-cherishing thought, what he thinks of is only himself, you, the other person has less self-cherishing thought. What he thinks of is only himself, but the other person has less self-cherishing thought, so there is much more happiness in the mind, and comfort. There is that much more of a happy environment in that house, and similar in that family.

So like this, the other one has an incredibly sad life, an unbelievably sad life. Of course, if both the persons have less selfish attitude, there is no question how much harmony there is.

The person who has a very strong impatient mind, the self-cherishing thought, wherever he goes, whichever country, wherever he travels, east, west, in the countryside or in the city, wherever he goes, to whichever place he goes, there is no happiness. With whomever he accompanies, with whomever he lives, always there are people criticizing. When the person comes to a new place he may have some friends. He may find some friends and be able to make some connection, but then, soon, after several hours, by seeing the personality of that person, the way he speaks, after one or two days, or even after a few hours, even those who are friends turn out to be the enemy, criticizing the person. Then even if he goes to a new place, where there are new people who didn't know him or her before, even if he goes back to old places where the person lived before, then people there talk about, "Oh, this person, that bad person came, he came back." Then everybody is upset about

him coming to that place. That person is going to see other people, and when he comes to see other people in the house, even though he is brought there by somebody else, brought by their friends, the other people in that family criticize their friend who brought this bad person. They think, they criticize, “Why did you bring this person to our house?” Even if they don’t criticize in front of him, they criticize behind. People hate to see such impatience, so much self-cherishing thought, people hate it. The known people hate to see him, and even in the road they try to escape away. If the person is coming along, they turn back to somewhere else, they go somewhere else, they go in another direction. Just merely seeing that person makes everybody unhappy.

All this is the mistake of not having changed his attitude from self-cherishing thought. Even if the person has much problems, sick, so many problems, less people helping, finding it very difficult to receive help from other people, nobody comes to help. They are happy that he is sick, “Oh, that is what is needed,” they will say, “Oh, that is exactly what he needed. It is great!” Maybe they thank god. Anyway, they pray for him to die soon, in order to have a shorter life. Everybody wishes him to have a short life. They are so happy when they hear that that person is dead. When they see it in the newspaper, or when they hear it from the telephone, when that person is dead, they clap their hands and they are so happy. This is a very sad life.

The conclusion is: he is born as human being but has a very sad life. No benefit to oneself, no benefit for other sentient beings—a completely empty life. He goes to the lower realms, leaves the human body, and the human life becomes completely empty, completely wasted. He used the human body to accumulate only negative karma, heavy negative karma, then goes to the lower realms, with the heavy burden of the negative karmas. Also, he has much fear at the time of death. Everywhere that person goes, he has so many enemies, even if he stays alone with no other people around, because of that personality of only cherishing oneself, just having the self-cherishing thought is painful. If you look at the characteristics of that mind it’s not comfortable, not a happy mind, and because of that it finds so many problems, so easily, even alone. And those which are not problems become problems for that person.

However a person who has a good heart, even if he doesn’t have the bodhicitta realization, doesn’t find an enemy. For that person with an incredible good heart and much thought of loving kindness, wherever he goes he doesn’t find an enemy. For him there is no enemy. There is no enemy, only friends. There are only helping friends wherever he goes. The person who has a very good heart makes others be a good person. By staying with other people, the person who has a very good heart, with much strong thought of loving kindness, much concern for others, living among people, he changes other people’s bad personalities into good personalities. He changes bad thoughts into good thoughts, into thoughts of loving kindness and compassion, because of his example, his influence. Like this.

The other one is completely opposite—he only makes others worse, more impatient, creating more negative karma. But this person only benefits others to create more good karma. Even those who were very selfish before become less selfish by staying with this person, and learn from this person. They have got to change their attitude. By staying, by seeing this person’s nature of mind and characteristics, the others have to change. Somehow it makes them think of themselves, how they are bad. How their minds are so cruel, so selfish. So automatically, just being with that person, their minds become better.

For example, just one example, most of us here have met Lama, Lama Yeshe. Because of Lama's great thought of loving kindness and bodhicitta, and good personality, even though other people whom Lama meets, normally they do not have a good heart, are very strong selfish and very impatient, with uncontrolled minds, vicious people, those same people, when Lama meets them, those people become good people toward Lama. But those people could be bad toward other people. This is one reason you can understand. So Lama does not find a bad person, doesn't find an enemy—we are not talking about the level of buddha, we are just talking about having bodhicitta or the good heart. He doesn't find enemy; wherever Lama goes he doesn't find this. Any people that Lama meets, everyone, Lama finds good people, kind people—why? Because Lama himself is in that personality, kind to everyone, only concerned for others, with many thoughts of loving kindness—because of that others become like that toward Lama. They become kind. Others become kind, good people toward Lama. Not only that, but by just seeing Lama, hearing Lama's words, just by seeing Lama's holy body, just by that, especially by hearing his holy speech, their bad thoughts get subdued.

But when these same people meet some other people who have very strong selfish thoughts, very impatient, completely contradictory personality to Lama, those people react differently to that person, because of his personality. That person, that she or he, that personality, those other people who are good to the people who have good hearts act in a different way, towards the other type of person they are harmful, enemies. So it is completely dependent. In this way you can understand enemy and friend—all these things that we believe in come from one's own mind, the different characteristics of mind.

Like this, the person who has a very strong, very impatient selfish thought, and even the other person who had a good personality before, even that will ruin, degenerate the other's person mind. But for one like Lama, one who has the great thought of loving kindness, if even the other person, the surrounding people have bad thoughts, if their earlier life has been very bad, an ungenerous person, with bad thoughts, that person benefits their mind to become better.

So you see now, the whole thing, as I mentioned, as I talked this afternoon about enemy, kindness and all that, the conclusion, now you can see, you can make right now, right now, by one way of thinking you can make yourself to not have friend, to not have friend! [Rinpoche laughs] to not have enemy, right now you can make, right within this hour, this minute you can make for you to not have enemy, by one way, by changing your mind. By transforming your mind you have no enemy. By following the self-cherishing thought you have full of enemies. So it shows how extremely important it is the change of the attitude, changing from selfish attitude to the attitude of cherishing others.

It is so important—whether one accepts reincarnation or not, whether one accepts Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha or not, whether one has a guru or not—as long as you want happiness, you don't want to have enemies, only friends. Everybody wishes that person who has a very good heart to have a long life. One who is very kind to others, who has a good heart, even though he doesn't have material wealth, even though he is a very poor person, everybody likes him. Even if there is nothing to expect from him, such as material help, even though he is a beggar, he is a very poor person, since he has a good heart, everybody likes him and they wish him to have a long life. They even feel sad if he is dying, to hear of his death.

However, we should know that we have the freedom, the complete freedom, especially after having met the Buddhadharmā, the complete freedom to stop having undesirable things and to have only desirable things—there is complete freedom to do this. If the person doesn't practice, that is another thing. That is another thing. There is freedom but as long as the person doesn't practice, then it does not happen. Not having undesirable things, only having desirable things, happiness—that doesn't happen.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha generated bodhicitta, and then accumulated extensive merit for three countless great eons for sentient beings. You see, even in front of one tree, uncountable times, so many times, his holy body made charity to other sentient beings.

One lama of the lam-rim lineage Je Drubkang Gelek Gyatso said in his teachings—he had one guru called Azara. Azara, I think, is a kind of sadhu, outward looking. Maybe he is Indian, I don't know, but anyway, I think it was in Tibet. So Je Drubkang Gelek Gyatso received teachings on bodhicitta from this lama, from this guru. Then he saw his guru, living in the bush, nearby the hermitage, living in the bush and reading Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's life story. His guru cried very much, so much, and he did this with his thumbs, himself alone. Je Drubkang Gelek Gyatso saw this from a distance. He didn't bother to ask at that time what his guru was doing. Later, when they met each other, at a suitable time, he asked, "What were you doing at that time? I saw you crying very much and doing like this, alone?" His guru Azara told him, "I was reading Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's life story and it says..." (I don't remember the name of that bodhisattva's life, Sonam something, I don't remember exactly) so anyway, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha made charity to others' eyes and limbs, to other sentient beings, and only this part of the holy body was left. So the surrounding people in the city thought, "This is useless," because he didn't have limbs and no eyes, so they threw him out of the city. They threw him in the dump. They took him away from the city and threw him away. Then, even after this part of the holy body was thrown there, he did so much work for other sentient beings, making charity for the flies and other creatures to eat. Then the devas came down from the sky and made offerings to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's holy body.

Azara, Je Drubkang Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche's guru said, "Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is also his mother's son. I am also my mother's son but look at the differences! He is also his mother's son; I am also my mother's son; but look at the differences. We are the same, but what incredible sacrifice and dedication he made for sentient beings and look at me! Look at me! My, look at me, what did I do? What do I do for sentient beings? Look at my personality! We are the same. He is born from mother, his mother's son. I am my mother's son. But Guru Shakyamuni Buddha did incredible work for other sentient beings, sacrifice and dedication. Look at my personality!"

What he is saying is, "Look at my personality." Seeing this, he cried very much. He pointed it out like this to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, "You are worthy to become the son of the mother. You are worth being born from the mother. Sentient beings are born from their mothers, and you are worthy. You are worthy to become the son of the mother." He pointed it out like this. Then he cried very, very much, knowing that he was unable to do it as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha did.

Gandhi is similar. I went to see the movie of Gandhi in Delhi, with Lama's brother, but most of the hours he slept. I cried very much in that movie, seeing his incredible dedication for all the people of India, for independence for everybody, to be harmonious and all that. And you see how much—each time he told the people, "Do not fight and be harmonious," and people didn't listen and fought because of different things, religion or nationality or I don't know, whatever it is. So each time when

there was fighting like this he sacrificed, he gave up his life, living in starvation to stop the fighting. So many times he did this. Then, when it is near independence, when it was agreed to give independence, then people didn't listen, they wanted to be separate. They didn't want to be one, unity, so difficult. Then, seeing his great dedication for others, unbelievable sacrifice... I couldn't even do my prayers for others. I saw that I do nothing for others, for other sentient beings, nothing. So by seeing these differences, it made me cry very much. It is incredibly inspiring for to dedicate the life for others.

Like this, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened, finished all the work, completed the merit, and purified all the obscurations. He achieved full enlightenment, then revealed the three levels, the teaching of the three vehicles. Then an incredible, unbelievable number of pandits, great yogis happened in India, in many different countries. Then, also in Tibet, there were uncountable numbers of the yogis and pandits, who achieved enlightenment by practicing the teachings that were revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Then in each sect, uncountable numbers happened who achieved enlightenment—their minds approached very high attainments. Uncountable numbers happened in each sect: Nyingmapa, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug, so many.

During Padmasambhava's time so many happened, and after during Lama Atisha and Lama Tsongkhapa's time so many became enlightened in one brief lifetime. Even now there are so many in Tibet who have reached a very high level on the tantric path, so many in Tibet, and in India.

Then nowadays, not only Tibetans who practice Dharma have meaningful lives, even in one day accomplishing so much temporal and ultimate happiness. Relating to us, some years back, even twenty-five years back, we had no idea what the meaning of life is, no idea; the mind was completely dark. We didn't know the cause of happiness, the cause of suffering, nothing. As there was no Dharma wisdom, there was no opportunity to abandon negative karma, or to practice good karma. Before it was like this, relating to us, but now we have that much Dharma wisdom, not only the lam-rim practice, but we even have the opportunity to practice the Maha-anuttarayoga Tantra path and to achieve enlightenment in one brief lifetime. These teachings have been practiced by all those great yogis in India and Tibet by Naropa, Tilopa, Saraha, Marpa and Mila, the great yogis of the different sects, and we have the opportunity, the ability to plant at least the seed. The whole twenty-four hours we have the opportunity to create the cause of happiness. We have the opportunity, we have the freedom.

All this is by the kindness of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who is benefiting, enlightening numberless sentient beings, enlightening us now, every day benefiting us so much, enlightening sentient beings now and also in the future. All this advantage, all this benefit, the work that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha does, all came from bodhicitta; all this extensive benefit for sentient beings by becoming enlightened, all this came from bodhicitta—from the root, from compassion.

It is said in the teachings, when one of the continuations of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's past lives was in the narak realm, in the hot hell, he was pulling a carriage on the red hot iron ground with another person. Then Guru Shakyamuni Buddha got incredible, unbelievable compassion for the other being who was pulling the carriage. He thought, "I'll pull this by myself instead of him suffering by pulling it. I'll experience his problem, his suffering pulling it, I will take it on myself, I will pull this carriage by myself, and also for any sentient being who has to experience this karma, for all negative karma to ripen and to experience myself, and for others to be free from those sufferings."

When Guru Shakyamuni Buddha generated compassion to suffer on behalf of all, thinking, “I will take the suffering for myself,” when he generated this great compassion, the guardians of the carriage put their hands on his head and said, “You have a good heart.” Just by that, right in that minute Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was born in Tushita through consciousness transference from the hot narak realms. It is said in the teachings that this was the first time Guru Shakyamuni Buddha generated great compassion. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself became enlightened, leading numberless sentient beings into temporal and ultimate happiness, and all this came from that great compassion, which Guru Shakyamuni Buddha generated in the narak realms. So you see the benefits of the thought of cherishing others.

The present life’s perfect human rebirth of all sentient beings, as I mentioned this morning, is caused by the kindness of sentient beings. That we have the opportunity to achieve the three great meanings, the opportunity today to practice Dharma, to practice moral conduct—all these things with this perfect human rebirth came because of the kindness of all sentient beings. You have to think of the cause, and then you can understand. If you think of the cause then you can see how it came from sentient beings.

Similarly, even if we wish to achieve the perfect human rebirth in the next life; that result and its cause, moral conduct, charity, all these things, are received by the kindness of sentient beings. Even if we wish to achieve liberation, the essential path is moral conduct, higher concentration, great insight; the foundation is moral conduct. So the whole path, liberation, is received by the kindness of sentient beings. As I mentioned this morning, without sentient beings there is no way to practice moral conduct. We can understand from this that completely we have received it by depending on the kindness of sentient beings.

Same thing—the root, great compassion, bodhicitta, the path, the six paramitas, the resultant enlightenment—the whole thing, even if we wish to achieve it, we accomplish this by depending on the kindness of sentient beings. Great compassion, this Mahayana compassion, the Mahayana thought of loving kindness is, first of all, if one sentient being is left out from the object of compassion it does not become Mahayana compassion. If the enemy is left out and you have compassion for everyone else, it is not Mahayana compassion. It should cover all the suffering sentient beings. Not only that, but we want to cause, want to liberate sentient beings from suffering by oneself. That is Mahayana compassion. So you see, great compassion and the Mahayana path, achieving enlightenment, is completely dependent on the kindness of each sentient being. Like this the sentient beings are extremely kind.

Not only that, but each day of life our comfort, happiness and enjoyment—everything comes from other sentient beings. They are creating negative karma by killing others, by harming others; some other sentient beings are killed, are dead, while all the comfort and happiness and every enjoyment that we experience in everyday life, and all the means of living, come from sentient beings, by the kindness of sentient beings. Therefore, our being alive today, our being able to be human beings, is by the kindness of sentient beings, completely by the kindness of sentient beings—as is having the opportunity to practice Dharma.

So remembering the enemy—as I explained—and every sentient being, feel their past, present and future kindness from the depth of the heart. Think, “Even if they know the cause of suffering they cannot practice. Even though what they want is happiness, they are devoid of happiness. They are

ignorant of the cause. Even if they know the cause, they can't practice, they are unable to practice. So what they want is happiness, the best, highest, longest happiness—that is enlightenment. This is what is needed.

“This time, I have this perfect human rebirth, which is highly meaningful and difficult to find again, and as it doesn't last a long time, it is very uncertain when I will separate from this perfect human rebirth. This can happen at any moment.”

There is no profit in following the self-cherishing thought, only loss, only problems, even interference in the works and happiness for the self. Besides interfering in the works of other sentient beings, it interferes with fulfilling your wishes for your own happiness. It disturbs you to succeed. So the self-cherishing thought is an object to renounce forever. Since the thought of cherishing others is the source of all happiness, since all success comes from that, and all the wishes, your own and all other sentient beings wishes are fulfilled by cherishing other sentient beings, from that thought, therefore, cherishing others is the object to be practiced forever.

What are called other sentient beings are numberless, who want happiness, who do not want suffering; who are devoid of all happiness and are suffering. What is called “I” is one person, so it is completely lost. When you think of this one person, this one person and uncountable other sentient beings, however much oneself is happy, there is nothing to be excited about, and however much oneself is suffering, there is nothing to be surprised or shocked about. It is one person. Others are uncountable numbers, so oneself is completely lost when one thinks of other sentient beings. In regards how important it is, whether one should dedicate the life to work for oneself or to work for other sentient beings—which is more important? Working for oneself is completely lost. You don't find even the slightest importance.

“However, to lead sentient beings to enlightenment I must reveal the path to them. In order to reveal the path to sentient beings, I must understand clearly all the different personalities and capabilities, and then also should have understanding of the entire method, all the different methods that fit them at different times, all the different methods to be revealed at different times to the different sentient beings. It is only omniscient mind that understands all this, so therefore there is no other method except achieving omniscient mind. Achieving omniscient mind for the sake of all sentient beings, to fulfill extensive benefits, to accomplish extensive benefits for all sentient beings—there is nothing more important than this in my life, there is nothing more important than this, nothing more beneficial than this in my life.”

Ceremony of taking the aspiring bodhisattva vows

Then, with this strong attitude, wishing to reach omniscient mind not for “my happiness,” but only for the sentient beings, I think that is very good like we used to do before, in Lama's time, to do prostrations in each direction. First of all, you visualize the guru surrounded by all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and then make three prostrations to the eastern side, then the south, the west and the north, and then make prostrations to the buddhas who are above—three prostrations to each direction. I think maybe first to the merit field, the lama who gives the wishing vow, the bodhisattva vows—first make three prostrations. Then to the east, make prostrations to the buddhas.

Lama Yeshe used the words, “Open the heart toward all the sentient beings, to those who are in the east.” Think that. “Open the heart” means to have thoughts of loving kindness, to cherish all those sentient beings who are in the east and benefit them.

Then south, the same thing: think, while you are doing prostrations to all the buddhas, to cherish all the sentient beings who are in that direction, to benefit and work for them. Then to the west, all the buddhas and at the same time remember, think of all the sentient beings in that direction, and cherish them and sacrifice yourself for them or benefit them. Then the north; then also thinking of the buddhas above, make prostrations. Again think the same thing, to dedicate the life for sentient beings. Also remember the lower direction buddhas, then make prostrations and again think of sentient beings, to sacrifice one’s life to benefit them.

Then please kneel down with palms together like this. Strongly remembering the kindness of other sentient beings, remembering, as I explained the different kindnesses before, and also the numbers of others who are uncountable, how important it is to work oneself, to sacrifice one’s life for others, to practice Dharma, not only for oneself, but for all sentient beings. Whatever action of body, speech and mind one does, to do it for others—how that is extremely important. Bring that feeling of kindness. Feel from the depth of the heart, “There is nothing to do in my life other than this.” And it is incredibly enjoyable to sacrifice your life for uncountable numbers of sentient beings; for those who are devoid of happiness to have happiness; for those who are suffering to be devoid of suffering; to sacrifice one’s life for them. No matter how hard it is to work for them, how long it takes, how many billion of eons, how long it takes, how hard it is: “I will do it. However difficult it is I will do it, sacrifice my life for others to achieve omniscient mind. Therefore, I am going to take the wishing vow and practice, and not separate from this until I become enlightened.”

Then repeat that prayer. The first one is refuge, “I go for refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.” So, when you take refuge in Buddha, who has achieved the greatest cessation of the two obscurations, remember this—relying upon Buddha, remember all the lineage lamas of lam-rim. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, you can remember all the different sects, those who were enlightened, those who completed the path, all those great yogis who became enlightened.

Then the Dharma, the true path, the true cessation of suffering, which is what the absolute Sangha, the bodhisattvas, have in their mind—one can think of the five paths, the bhūmis, the tantric path.

Then, those who have the arya path, the bodhisattvas, the Sangha, completely relying upon them, like relying upon the chief person in that country, the king or somebody who has the power to save you from problems. You are asking for help, for someone to save you and rescue you from those life problems. One has an incredible problem and the king is the only one who can help, who has the power to help. You are relying upon him. No others can help, no other lower people can help you and all sentient beings to be free from the lower realms, to be liberated completely and to never be born in the lower realms; to be saved from samsara, to be free from samsara, to be free from falling into lower nirvana, to achieve enlightenment relying upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are the only ones who can help to achieve these three great successes.

So, with this, with such a complete reliance on Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, please repeat the prayer, “I am taking refuge in the Guru, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. *Sang.gye cho dang*... I take refuge until I achieve enlightenment. Due to the merits of practicing charity and so on, and all

the other merits, may I achieve enlightenment. I will achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. Therefore I am going to practice bodhicitta, and never give up the wish to achieve enlightenment, until I achieve enlightenment.”

[Tibetan... repeating aspiring bodhisattva prayers]

Now think, “I have received the wishing bodhisattva vow.” Then feel great joyfulness, happiness in the heart—as we repeated three times, as we generated bodhicitta three times, we made the vow, and each time there was infinite merit, equaling the infinite sky and space, that we received.

It is said in the sutra teachings that by putting the palms together and simply thinking, “I am going to practice bodhicitta for the sake of sentient beings, to achieve enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings,” the merit that we accumulate is so much greater than offering to the buddhas’ equaling the number of sand grains of the Ganges River, worlds equaling the number of sand grains of the Ganges River filled with all the seven precious jewels, for eons equaling the number of sand grains of the Ganges River. Making offerings to that many buddhas is nothing compared to the merit of having taken the bodhisattva vow, to always have the wish to achieve enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings and to practice bodhicitta. Taking this again and again becomes the cause to generate bodhicitta in this life, to get nearer and nearer to this. If not, then in the next life; even if we don’t generate it in this life, in the next life sooner or later we receive the name, “Son of the Victorious One.” We receive that title. Then we even overwhelm those arhats who have many psychic powers, many realizations. We conquer them even before becoming enlightened, and we do extensive works for other sentient beings.

So, by having taken the wishing vow, there are four things, four black dharmas to avoid and four white things, white dharmas to practice.

First, to not cheat the guru, who is the object of offering. Then, one should avoid the black dharma of feeling wrong regret—feeling regret about other people practicing Dharma, other people accumulating virtue. That is wrong regret. Feeling regret for somebody who is creating negative karma is right regret. One’s own created negative karma, feeling regret is right regret. But if one is creating virtue, if one feels regret then it is wrong regret. Feeling regret when others are practicing Dharma is one black dharma.

Then, even for the life, not telling lies [about one’s attainments?] even if it causes one’s life danger—the whole thing depends on the attitude, the do with a selfish attitude. There is an exception, if an action becomes beneficial for others, with strong bodhicitta, renouncing oneself and cherishing others, if it becomes beneficial to others. Yes, please sit down (laughter, everyone still kneeling).

One black dharma is insulting and saying rude words to other sentient beings [bodhisattvas?] out of anger. That is one black dharma. That is the third one to avoid. The fourth one is cunning and it involves two things, being cunning and hiding from other sentient beings.

Then the four white Dharmas—the method to not degenerate bodhicitta, to be able to develop bodhicitta.

Being sincere, not cunning and hiding. And respecting the bodhisattvas, those who have bodhicitta, as Buddha and expressing their qualities. And then leading sentient beings to enlightenment by

revealing the method, whatever fits others—the main aim is to lead them to enlightenment. It is also said in one text, I think, to recognize the other sentient beings as Shakyamuni Buddha, to look at them as the guru or something, I don't remember one hundred percent. And to respect those who have bodhicitta as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and to always talk about their qualities to others, express their qualities to other sentient beings. Then manage the sentient beings, to lead to enlightenment.

Then the secondary ones: practicing patience as much as possible. One's body, possessions, and everything belongs to other sentient beings, as much as possible trying to practice this. When we do six session yoga, those who have the commitment to do six session yoga, there is a word, there is a prayer, there is a word there in that prayer that says, "I am giving up, I am dedicating the whole thing to sentient beings—body, possessions and merits, everything, to sentient beings." So that is recited three times at night and three times a day. As one recites the prayer one should think of the meaning. Think, "They belong to the sentient beings, I have given them to sentient beings." As much as possible practice against the self-cherishing thought.

Then please dedicate the merits that in this life one is able to generate bodhicitta, without delay—a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour, able to generate bodhicitta, renouncing oneself and cherishing other sentient beings, able to benefit all sentient beings like the lineage lamas of lam-rim, like the bodhisattvas, like Maitreya Buddha, like Manjushri, like Shakyamuni Buddha, like the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, all the bodhisattvas, like His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then remember Lama, to be able to benefit for all sentient beings, dedicate the merit very strongly from the heart in this way.

Then, "Due to all these merits may any sentient being who sees me, who hears me, who remembers me, who touches me, who talks about me, just by other sentient beings seeing me, remembering me, touching me, hearing me, talking about me, immediately in that second may all their sufferings be pacified and have happiness."

So please dedicate strongly in this way. [Rinpoche chants in Tibetan]

"Due to all these merits may I achieve Guru Chenrezig and lead every sentient being rapidly into Guru Chenrezig's enlightenment."

[Dedication]

Please do three prostrations with the same visualization.

I think the refuge will be maybe tomorrow morning or afternoon or whatever, which is suitable

[End of bodhisattva vows]

Refuge and Precepts

...then feeling compassion for all sentient beings. In this way one is highly skilful to guide sentient beings, to liberate others from all the obscurations. Then one is able to have compassion for every sentient being without discriminating thoughts of far and close, discriminating some sentient beings as very far and others as very close. Without this discrimination it doesn't matter how much evil they

do, wealthy or poor, whatever they look like—have compassion to every living being without discrimination.

Because of that, the third reason; you guide those sentient beings who make offerings to Buddha, who benefited; then those who didn't benefit, who didn't worship or make offerings you don't guide, you kind of renounce them, you don't work for them—it shouldn't be like this. It is said in the teachings, there is someone who makes offerings and puts on ointments, with thought of loving kindness, doing service and so forth, a person who likes Buddha and puts ointments or perfume on the Buddha; and then there is one sentient being who cuts Buddha's flesh piece by piece—from the side of Buddha there is no discrimination. Both sentient beings, those who like him and those who dislike him, who cut him piece by piece—from the side of Buddha there is no discrimination, feeling one is distant and the other is close. He has the same compassion for this sentient being as for that. So Buddha's work, with the holy body, speech and mind, is done with equal compassion for all sentient beings; without discrimination, whether they are benefiting, worshipping, liking or not.

For us to be a perfect guide like Buddha, having these four qualities to guide sentient beings, there is no other way except lam-rim, generating realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment. Even the wish to practice lam-rim, itself, is the actual refuge. That is the best refuge. Then, similarly, by hearing shunyata teachings, about the object that the wisdom realizes, which exists, and the object of ignorance of true existence, which doesn't exist: by recognizing these things, by knowing these things, hearing Buddha's teachings, wanting to realize shunyata in order to cut off the root of samsara—that is taking refuge to Dharma.

Then, the same thing, knowing that the root of enlightenment is bodhicitta and that to have that realization in the mind one should renounce the self-cherishing thought. It is like this, taking refuge in order to achieve liberation, in order to achieve enlightenment, one should have bodhicitta, and for that one should have the renunciation of samsara. In order to be free; we are suffering, bound by attachment, clinging to samsaric perfections, samsaric happiness, temporal happiness, so, practicing renunciation of samsara, to be free from this craving that binds us to samsara, is the actual taking refuge in the Dharma, the main taking refuge in the Dharma, the Buddhadharm. In order to be free from the root of samsara, the ignorance of true existence, we practice shunyata. That is the actual taking refuge in Dharma.

Then, in order to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of other sentient beings, we practice bodhicitta. To accomplish this one should be free from self-cherishing thought, which is the main interference to complete success in the works for self and works for other sentient beings. Also to not be bound to the liberation for self, the lower nirvana, to not be bound by that, to not fall into this.

If, without practicing bodhicitta, generating renunciation of samsara, one follows the lesser vehicle path, then even if one achieves liberation, the release from the bondage of karma and disturbing thoughts binding oneself to samsara, even if one achieves the release from this, one cannot achieve enlightenment soon. For many eons one abides in this state of ultimate peace; one is completely distracted by this blissful state of peace, completely caught in this, bound by that. Then one stays there for many eons. Then, after a long time, after many eons Buddha sends light, there are some verses in which Buddha says... I don't remember exactly. Then they follow the Mahayana path, after so many eons, after an incredible length of time. In that way, if you don't achieve enlightenment

soon, you don't get the works for other sentient beings done. Leading sentient beings to enlightenment is not done quickly.

To guide those sentient beings to enlightenment, with whom you have a connection, to lead them to enlightenment, as long as it takes for oneself to achieve enlightenment that much longer the other sentient beings have to suffer in samsara. So therefore, there is the need to achieve enlightenment quicker and quicker, because others are obscured, suffering in samsara, and it is so unbearable, so unbearable. So unbearable, even one hour in samsara, in the lower realm is so unbearable. Even to be a human being and have all these problems, so many problems, from all directions, almost from the ten directions, so many problems. There are so many problems from outside and from inside. The person, from his own mind, has so many problems from outside, and it is so unbearable to be under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts. It is so unbearable to be caught in samsara. It is so unbearable even for one hour, even for a minute, even for a second—for those in samsara, so unbearable.

Therefore, by taking refuge in the Dharma, by taking refuge in the Buddha, by taking refuge in the Sangha we should complete the realization of the whole path in our mind. Then, in that way, we have the actual refuge of Dharma within us, the true path and the absolute Dharma; the true path and the true cessation of suffering. Then, generate the whole realization of the path to enlightenment. When we have absolute Dharma, the true path and the true cessation of suffering within us, we are the Sangha. In that way we become the Sangha, absolute Sangha. When we have the absolute Dharma, true path and true cessation of suffering, we become absolute Sangha.

Then, when we achieve the Mahayana true path, which is bodhicitta, the Mahayana true path, the wisdom fully, directly perceiving shunyata, possessed by bodhicitta—when we have this Mahayana true path and achieve the true cessation of suffering, the great cessation from all the obscurations, the cessation of obscurations, that is the purity, which is the omniscient mind. Separation from all obscurations, from all the stains, that is what is called “nirvana,” “great nirvana”—separated from even the subtle dual view, the subtle obscurations. That is the great nirvana.

When we become an arhat, there is purity; at that time the stream of this consciousness becomes pure. This present consciousness becomes pure, separated from the *nyon.drip*, the disturbing thought obscurations, and even their seeds. That is what is called “nirvana.” The absolute nature of the mind or separation, separated from the disturbing thought obscurations. That is what is called “nirvana,” cessation of suffering. Then, similarly, the separation of the omniscient mind from the obscurations, including even the subtle dual view; that is what is called the actual, great nirvana, the non-abiding sorrowless state. “Non-abiding sorrowless state” means enlightenment. So, when we achieve this, we become the Buddha. One becomes Buddha and Sangha by having the Dharma, the actual refuge, in one's mind.

Like that, then, we are able to perfectly guide other sentient beings in this way. By taking refuge in Dharma, by practicing these lam-rim teachings, from this you can understand how the Dharma guides us. Dharma guides us from attachment, clinging to samsaric happiness and perfections, so in that way Dharma saves us from the lower realms, from samsara. Then, by taking refuge in Dharma, particularly the Mahayana teachings, bodhicitta, it guides us from falling into the lower nirvana, from that danger and even from the subtle obscurations. This is how the Dharma guides us. Simply talking, like this.

By hearing the teachings, by reflecting and by doing meditation practice and having the realizations in the mind, Dharma guides us. Like taking medicine from the doctor, who prescribes how to take the medicine; if the patient does not take the medicine, the patient's disease doesn't get recovered. It is the same thing in the case of the teaching that is revealed by Buddha, such as the lam-rim teaching: without putting it into practice, our mental disease, our disturbing thoughts are not repaired. If you don't put it into that practice, even if Buddha has taught it... actually, what helps the person recover from disease is the medicine, so therefore Dharma is like medicine. So by putting that into practice, actualizing it, we recover from the disease of the disturbing thoughts. We recover from the true cause of suffering; we are liberated from the true cause of suffering and all problems.

In order to practice this Dharma, this teaching on the graduated path to enlightenment, it should have a founder who reveals the path. Therefore, automatically we are dependent on the founder who reveals the path. When we practice the Buddhadharma, automatically we are dependent on the founder who reveals the path. So therefore, automatically we are taking refuge in Buddha. Even though with the traditional ceremony, from the abbot or from something, even though we didn't take the refuge vow, in practice we have taken it already. Automatically we have taken refuge in Buddha, because it should have a founder who reveals the teaching, and that is Buddha. Taking the medicine is dependent on the doctor who knows the disease and who knows the right medicine to give. You have to rely upon the doctor, his advice and his medicines. This is similar.

That's how Buddha is revealing the path to us sentient beings, revealing the teaching. That itself is the way Buddha guides us. Putting that into practice, we get liberated from all the obscurations and we achieve peerless happiness. That is how Buddha guides us. By relying upon the doctor, his advice or the medicine he gives, and putting that into practice, the patient recovers from his disease. It is similar. That is how the doctor guides and that is the way Buddha guides.

Now, by taking refuge in the Sangha, how does the Sangha guide us? The Sangha guides us like this. For example, so many people, reading Milarepa's life-story, got interested in Buddhadharma, having seen the great yogi Milarepa's life-story and having such a strong wish to become like that, to practice what he practiced and to become like Milarepa. Seeing the incredible peace, control and liberation, the qualities Milarepa has and the incredible benefits he gave, what he did to other sentient beings, knowing this, wishing to be like that. That is how the Sangha guides. Then, by seeing the life-story of the great yogis, Milarepa, Naropa and Tilopa, those great yogis, such as Lama Tsongkhapa, the life-stories of bodhisattvas, the biography of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha—wanting to become like that. They achieved the graduated path to enlightenment, having all these qualities, and they become the example for us, giving inspiration, giving us the wish to be like that, to practice the same way they practiced.

Then we practice, we seek the teachings that they have practiced, that they have brought, which made them possible to have enlightenment within a few years, in a such brief lifetime in these degenerated times. So we seek those teachings, and by practicing those we get liberated from all the wrong conceptions, from all the obscurations. We reach the same state as those great yogis have reached and we are able to benefit others as they did. That is how the Sangha guides us. The Sangha is the example, then we practice the Dharma that they practiced, so Dharma guides us from all the wrong conceptions. Then we become the Sangha, and in that way we become the Buddha.

Like this, when we hear the life-story of some meditators, how they have realizations of lam-rim and how they practiced so strongly, how they did pure practice by cutting off the distractions, living an

ascetic life, all those things; when we know the life-story of a meditator it inspires us to be like that. That is how the Sangha guides. That is the way all the Sangha guides us and that is the way that we, having the actual refuge of Dharma in our mind, practicing the actual refuge of Dharma in our mind, become Sangha and we benefit other sentient beings.

By taking refuge in the Dharma, we should renounce harming, hurting other sentient beings, intentionally or purposely harming other sentient beings. That is a very fundamental practice of Buddhadharma. Often His Holiness the Dalai Lama says that even if we cannot benefit other sentient beings, we cannot solve their problems, we cannot help them, at least we should not harm others. In these two words, “not harm” and “benefit,” all the teachings of Buddha, the teachings of the lesser vehicle path, the Mahayana paramita path, the path of secret mantra—all the teachings of Buddha are contained in these two words: to not harm others and to benefit other sentient beings.

In the Theravada teachings of the lesser vehicle path, the main emphasis is to not give harm to others. Then the bodhisattva’s path, the paramitayana path is to benefit. It is not enough to not give harm to others; we should benefit others. We should benefit other sentient beings skillfully, as it fits. At the level of one’s capability one should benefit others. Then, the actual benefit is to free them from all the stains, to achieve and lead them to enlightenment. That is the actual benefit, the ultimate benefit for other sentient beings. To rapidly accomplish this ultimate benefit for sentient beings, for this to quickly happen, one should practice tantra, the teachings of secret mantra. Like this the whole teaching is contained in those two.

If we don’t do the practice to not harm others, then there is no Dharma practice left. If you don’t even do this last Dharma practice, to not harm others, if you don’t do this, there is no Dharma practice left. There is no practice. There is no Dharma practice, the practice of holy Dharma is no other than this.

The greatest harm is taking others’ lives. Among the harms, the greatest harm is taking others’ lives. So therefore this is fundamental. But if, without having the intention or without knowing, creatures get killed, or those things, that is not called the four root vows of not killing. It means intentionally, purposely killing. It is not counted in this. This means to stop intentionally, purposely killing.

It is said in the pratimoksha vows, in the Vinaya teachings, “Even when you sit on your cushion, watch well if there are any creatures there. You look well before you sit. You watch well and see if there are any creatures, insects or any creatures, then you lift them, you take off that creature and then you sit down.” Like this, when one uses things, as much as possible it is important to not harm the ones that you can see with the eye—as much as you can, do not harm them. It is explained like this. If we don’t practice this, not taking the lives of others, that is the very first thing to practice. You begin the meditation on lam-rim from perfect human rebirth; you begin the practice of Dharma from karma. Without protecting karma there is no other Dharma practice. So to not kill, not take others’ lives, is the fundamental practice.

By taking refuge in the Dharma what one should renounce is harming others. Killing others, taking others’ lives is the most harmful thing, so therefore it is more skilful to take the vow. Even if one doesn’t take other vows, to take this vow to not take others’ lives is more skilful. Anyway, taking refuge in the Dharma, this one automatically comes, not harming others; practicing this advice comes automatically. So if one does not take the vow to not kill others then it doesn’t make sense. If

one takes the vows against the other secondary or lighter harms, then the greater harm, of course, it doesn't make sense to not take that vow.

One might think, what is the point of taking a vow? If you don't do it, it is okay. As long as you don't do it, it is okay. It is the same as living in the vow. What is the point of making a promise in front of a lama or something, the abbot, in front of Buddha? There are big differences between these two. The second that person took the vow that, "I won't kill until death-time," from the second he received the vow, received the upasika ordination until death, even if he lived thirty years, even if he lives one hundred years, even if he lives one thousand years, even if he lives a billion years, there is that merit all the time. Even though he is unconscious, even though he is in a coma, unable to die, still the consciousness lives with the body, even though he is in a coma for years, unconscious, as long he lives there is this good karma all the time. He is accumulating good karma day and night, all the time, while he is eating, while he is shopping, while he is sleeping, all the time.

So even though you don't do much other practice, even though you don't do retreat, even though you don't do many other things, by just simply living in these basic vows all the time you are creating good karma. Even though you are going to the office, even though you are doing a job, you have a busy life, you don't have time for others but since one is living in these basic vows, your life is that meaningful. You accumulate as much good karma as the precepts you have taken, like this.

The person who degenerates the root vow by killing human beings, purposely killing creatures, can confess it in front of a monk. It is said in some teachings, such as those of Kachen Yeshe Gyalsten, one very high lama, that even though the root vows are degenerated, you can take the upasika, the five precepts ordination, again. I think for killing creatures you can just confess in front of one monk and that will be sufficient. I think you don't need to take the vow again.

For the one who didn't make vow, no matter how long he lives, even though he doesn't kill creatures, if he doesn't live in the vow, if he didn't take the vow, then even though he lives one hundred or five hundred years or however long he lives, there is no merit. Just not doing the action doesn't mean that there is merit. The trees, the stones and rocks don't harm others—it doesn't mean that they have merit, that they accumulate merit. Like this, there are big differences. The other one is an empty life, empty, no merit.

Similarly, the person who made the vow to kill humans, who made the vow to be a butcher, the moment he decided to become a butcher or to kill human beings in the military, took vow to do that, from that moment until he stops, until he changes his attitude, continuously there is negative karma that he is accumulating. So there are differences.

The reason Buddha is a worthwhile object in which to take refuge is, as I explained before, that he himself is free from all the fears; that he is highly skilful in guiding other sentient beings; having compassion for all sentient beings without discrimination; and benefiting, working for all sentient beings without depending on whether they benefit him or not. Those are the four main reasons that taking refuge in Buddha is worthwhile. This means that there is no misguiding. By relying upon Buddha, by practicing what the Buddha advised, definitely Buddha guides.

Then please make three prostrations, first to the guru—there should be a Guru Shakyamuni Buddha statue there. By thinking of the actual Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the Buddhadharma, make three prostrations. Then please kneel down with the palms together in the mudra of

prostration. Is there anybody who is taking all the five precepts—just raise a hand—you are taking five? Okay, okay. As long as there is just one, it is okay. Just thinking of the prayer.

In this samsara, as long as we are not liberated from samsara, whatever enjoyment we have, it is all enjoyment of suffering. Even though in the beginning there is temporal pleasure, this pleasure is merely labeled on the base, which is suffering. That is how, as enjoyment continues it turns into the suffering of suffering. So whatever enjoyment we have, all the enjoyments are the enjoyments of sufferings. What worldly people, who haven't heard of Dharma, even regard as happiness, pure happiness, actual happiness, actually however, even from the beginning is a problem. Even from the beginning, what one labels "pleasure," what one clings to, itself is a problem. Then from that problem other problems come. The gross, heavier suffering, the second problem comes, which those who don't know Dharma, who don't know the lam-rim teaching, is the problem that they can recognize, discomfort.

Like this wherever one goes, any place where one lives, all the places are places of suffering. In a similar way, as I mentioned in the example of enjoyment, like that, with whomever we keep company, as long as we are not liberated from samsara, any friend, whomever we accompany are friends of sufferings. Similarly, you can recognize the whole thing as enjoyment. There is the beginning problem, and then it can end up with the heavier problems, for those who do not understand Dharma, haven't heard Dharma, which they can recognize as problems. Any friend that one accompanies is a friend of sufferings.

There is no ultimate happiness as long as we are not liberated from samsara, so therefore, "I must achieve the non-abiding nirvana, the sorrowless state, enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings. The ultimate, the ever release, enlightenment, the ever release from this samsara, these aggregates, to which we are bound by karma and the disturbing thoughts. The ever release from the samsara, which is caused by karma and disturbing thoughts, which is completely only in the nature of suffering—for that, by relying upon Buddha as a founder, Dharma as the actual refuge, and Sangha as a supporter to actualize the refuge, I am going to take refuge and the upasika vow."

Then you think of whatever number of precepts you are taking. If you are taking just one, then you think of one precept. If you are taking five, you think five, if you take three, think three, like that, okay?

"I am going to take and keep them until death-time." You should have such a motivation as this, renunciation of samsara.

Then please repeat this prayer of taking refuge to Buddha. You feel the Buddha. First of all take refuge in Buddha.

The Ceremony

[Rinpoche speaks in Tibetan]

When you repeat this, you are taking refuge in Buddha. You should feel like you are the patient who has a disturbing, unbearable disease; how the patients cannot wait, they need the doctor. Those patients have unbelievable pain, and that patient is relying completely upon that doctor—you should feel like that about Buddha, the founder of Dharma.

Those who have taken thirty-six vows shouldn't take upasika vows, the lower ordination. This causes one to not have the higher ordination, the thirty-six vows ordination, so one shouldn't take upasika ordination. You can sit there, but you don't need to think, "I have received upasika ordination." You don't need to think, "I am going to take upasika ordination," because that makes to not have the higher vow, the ordination that one has taken.

Make prayers requesting, "Please grant the upasika, the only refuge, upasika ordination," with whatever number of vows that you have taken, requesting to have this ordination until death-time, okay?

Generally upasika, *gen.yen* means all the five precepts. Then one, two, or three are not called complete upasika; they are not regarded as the actual upasika. Generally it is like this. In the Vinaya teachings it is said that even though you don't take all five you can take one, two or three, like that; this is said in the refuge-upasika ordination. It is numbered like this in the root text of Vinaya. So it is not something that you can't take; you can take it. But the complete upasika is the one that has the five precepts. The other is not the actual upasika; it is the ordinary upasika or something like that. This might help to stop doubts, to stop wrong thoughts about your own vows.

So please repeat. Then when I say loudly, [Tibetan], think, "I have received the vow." Then feel great rejoyness, as I have explained before, in all the merit, the differences and how, from now until death, life becomes highly meaningful. This is the real protection from the lower realms, the real protection from the problems, even the realm of the happy transmigratory beings.

[Ceremony]

When we take refuge in Buddha, Buddha is the absolute Buddha and the conventional truth Buddha. Absolute Buddha is dharmakaya and conventional truth Buddha or the truth of the all-obscuring mind is the sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. Then, when we take refuge in Dharma, there is the absolute truth of the all-obscuring mind. The absolute Dharma is the path of the true cessation of suffering, the truth of the all-obscuring mind, the conventional truth. That is the Tripitaka—not the realizations but the words of the Tripitaka, the lam-rim teachings, the scriptures. That is the conventional truth Dharma. Take refuge in both. It is the same thing with Buddha.

Then one should feel very strongly how there is a great need for the medicine for the patient. A Dharma need, a greater need because the disease came from karma and disturbing thoughts. Without this disease there is no cause, so the disease doesn't arise. There is no sickness without disturbing thoughts and karma. So Dharma is the greater need. We are the actual serious patients, having the serious disease of the disturbing thoughts, which didn't have beginning. There is a greater need than medicine for the Dharma.

[Ceremony]

Now taking refuge in Sangha: the patient feels a great need to have a nurse, to receive help from the nurse. Then, we should feel the need for the sangha, the example of the Sangha, to be much greater than that. We need help from the sangha to actualize the actual refuge in Dharma, founded by Buddha. We should feel like this for the Sangha. If even one person, living, a monk, nun, or even lay, has absolute Dharma, then that is absolute sangha. The relative Sangha or the truth of the all-

obscuring mind Sangha is four ordinary monks, who don't have absolute Dharma. If there is one, it is not called "Sangha"; only if there is absolute Dharma in that mind is it called Sangha. Therefore we are taking refuge in both, the absolute Sangha and the relative Sangha—or the Sangha of the truth of the all-obscuring mind—who are living in the two hundred and fifty-three vows.

[Ceremony]

Then think, even if one has received the vow, if one doesn't protect it, then one doesn't receive the great benefits but receives the shortcomings. So therefore, one should keep it. The way of keeping it is as the arhats avoided such things as taking the lives of others—then think of the number. If you have taken five, then think, "As they avoided all five, mentally and then with body and speech transformed, changed from those negative karmas, I am also going to practice."

[Ceremony]

By taking refuge in Buddha, one should renounce relying upon or following the wrong founder. The wrong founder is one who shows the wrong path, contradictory or opposite to the path that is revealed by Buddha; in that way Buddha cannot guide you. For example, if you want to follow the wrong doctor while you are following the doctor who gives you the right medicine, who has all the understanding, who knows the diagnosis, everything about your health, who could give the right medicine; if at the same time you follow the wrong doctor who has a wrong understanding of your diagnosis and gives the wrong medicine, you cannot recover from your disease. So it is similar. Like this but more dangerous. That is a physical thing. That mistake you did is just a physical harm, not so much mental harm. But now, following the wrong founder has great damage or great harm for the mind and, through that, also physical suffering and problems come. There is greater harm than following the wrong doctor.

By following the wrong founder who shows the wrong path, one is led to the lower realms and for many lifetimes will follow the wrong path. It makes one lose many lifetimes of temporal happiness and ultimate happiness, enlightenment. Instead of achieving happiness beyond this life up to enlightenment, there is suffering in so many lifetimes. That is what one should renounce by taking refuge in Buddha. Why? Because that way, Buddha cannot guide us.

After taking refuge in Buddha what one should practice is, regarding Buddha statues and tangkas, paintings, even broken or old tangkas, even if there is only a half figure of Buddha, a statue, you should respect it as the actual Buddha, remembering the qualities of Buddha: "This is my guide, who liberates me from samsara, the guide to enlightenment." Remembering this, you always put them on a clean place, on a higher place, even if it is a broken statue.

Now we see just a statue. We have very thick karmic obscurations, so we don't see it as an actual Buddha but when we have entered the five paths, when we have achieved the path of merit—I think this path has three levels, three or four, so when you achieve the level of the concentration of continuous Dharma, even the statues speak to you. You see the actual Buddhas and you receive advice and teachings from them. Like this, it is dependent on our mind whether we see these things as real Buddhas or not, and being able to communicate is dependent on how thin our karmic obscurations are.

Then, by taking refuge in Dharma, what we should renounce is what I explained before: as much as possible to stop giving harm to others, to stop hurting others. Then, even besides not giving harm, if you find two animals fighting, you try to help, to separate them. Two insects eating, fighting—if there is a way to help, you help. If somebody is carrying a very heavy load, if you can help, even for a small comfort, then try to help. Besides not giving harm, as we are practicing the Mahayana teaching, if we can give even a small comfort, if we have the capability, then we should do so.

Practicing Dharma, what we should practice is this: keep Dharma scriptures, even one page, even though they are not complete, even a few lines, in a higher, clean place. If there are missing pages of Dharma scriptures or they are old-looking or torn, we should not throw them in the garbage. We shouldn't put them on the dirty ground, in a lower place. We should think, "These words reveal the path. This Dharma, these teachings, these words reveal the path. Practicing these things, by understanding, reflecting and actualizing the path, it liberates me from samsara, from samsaric sufferings, and leads me to enlightenment." You should think like that and put them in a high, clean place.

If you have many torn Dharma books—in Tibet they build a small stupa or a small square house somewhere near monasteries, and then they put all the missing pages and so forth inside, so in that way they don't go in the street or outside. Then people won't create the negative karma of stepping over the holy Dharma texts. We won't create negative karma and others won't create negative karma.

Even if you don't have a table, at least you should put some cloth first. Don't put Dharma texts on the same cushion on which you sit, or lower than you. Also, put them in a clean place. Like that, respect these things as the actual, absolute Dharma, which liberates one from suffering. Then, if there is no place, if you cannot find a place to put all the missing pages that you don't use, the very last thing is to burn them in a clean place, reciting OM AH HUNG. Burn them if there is no other method.

Don't carry your book and your cushion together, and you shouldn't step or cross over the Dharma books or use the book to sit on as a cushion. You see these karmas, these things... I'll explain later.

Then Sangha: by taking refuge in the Sangha one should renounce criticizing—this is very heavy karma, criticizing one who is living in celibacy. The more the person is living in higher vows, and the higher level of realization the person has, I think, the more negative karma we create in relation to this being. It is explained like this in the teachings. The more the person has a level of higher realizations, the more negative karma there is. So therefore, normally with anybody, with any human being, with any other being, we don't know who has a higher realization or not, who has a higher realization than ourself. So there is a great danger if you get angry, if you harm, if you insult. We cannot say who is a bodhisattva, who is a Buddha and who is not a Buddha. We don't have clairvoyance, to read the mind, to understand the mind of the other person, so there is danger of very heavy negative karma.

Particularly the ones living in celibacy, with vows; even if we see the robes, besides criticizing the person, being angry with that person, we should not even create the negative karma of crossing over the robes, stepping over the robes of those who are living in celibacy. We should not cross over them. If there is no other way to go, we should put them in another place, a little higher place, and respect them like this. We should think, "Those who wear these robes have more qualities than me.

They live in many precepts, which I cannot do. They have realizations, understanding of Dharma, many things that I don't have." By thinking of the qualities, we should respect the robes and not step over them.

When the Kadampa geshe, Lama Atisha and his disciples, those lam-rim practitioners, those lamas, saw a piece of red or yellow cloth on the road, they put it on their crown, thinking, "Those who wear this robe have many qualities." By thinking of it as absolute Sangha, they put it in a high place. This is how they practiced the advice of refuge. So normally whenever we see celibacy, people wearing robes, we respect them by thinking, "This is the absolute Sangha, this is my guide from samsara, my guide to liberation." We should think, "This is my guide." By thinking and feeling this, we respect them as absolute Sangha. This is the advice, what we should practice.

One may think sometimes bad karma can be created from carelessness. Even if the person knows and has heard the explanation, sometimes he is careless. Out of ignorance he creates negative karmas. Sometimes it can be out of anger, but basically it is out of ignorance. Even if there is no anger, it is done out of ignorance, not knowing the result, the problems, that he will receive. Even if it is not a human being, even if it is a creature, same thing, even if it is an animal who goes over Dharma texts, the Buddha's holy object, he creates negative karma out of ignorance. For example, the animal or the child doesn't know that the electricity will burn. By touching the electricity, biting the wires, it will burn, and he doesn't know that. He is ignorant about that, but doing that, even though he doesn't know, it burns. It is not that if somebody who doesn't know the danger of electricity touches it, it doesn't burn. It is the power of the electricity that burns, that damages, that endangers your life. It is not a question of whether you know or don't know.

It is similar in relation to holy objects. Why should we renounce such and such things? Because it is similar. Just as the electricity has power, by disrespecting, putting holy objects in dirty places, the mind gets polluted, the mind gets obscured, the mind becomes unclear. Then when you meditate there is no clear mind, there is a very disturbed mind, fogginess, and you cannot think about the meditation subject. You get very sleepy. Whenever you start to meditate you sleep. Like this, sleepy mind. When you read Dharma texts you get pains, you get diseases or you get sleepy, fogginess; you cannot understand clearly, it is difficult to comprehend the words. It is difficult to comprehend the teachings.

That electricity burns is a dependent arising. The power of the object is burning, it happened by dependent arising, because of being under the control of dependent arising. It is the same thing; even though we don't have clairvoyance about karma, it works. There is mental damage due to the power of the object and dependent arising, like that.

Then there are general practices of taking refuge. You should rely upon the holy beings and listen to the teachings, reflect on the meaning of the teachings. You should not use the senses in a negative way; try to stop creating negativity, and take the vows also as much as you can. Then, whenever you eat and drink, make offering to the triple gem, either by visualizing them in front of you or visualizing Buddha in your heart and then making offerings. If you know the prayers to be said, you can say the prayers and make offerings. Then, you should follow the holy Dharma, having compassion and love toward sentient beings generally. These are the general upasika precepts.

If one has killed a human being, broken a root vow, then there is no ordination, but one can take it again. If all the four root ones are broken, you can take the ordination again. Then, if there is alcohol

or killing other creatures, not human beings, one can confess in front of one monk. Just confessing is okay, saying that, “I have done this.” Then, relying upon this, “I will try, I will practice to not do.”

Then, slandering and these other negative non-virtuous actions, insulting, heresy, ill will, miserliness, covetousness. If those things happen, then again one makes this decision, “Oh, I won’t do it”; oneself deciding. If these bad thoughts or things happen again, think, “Oh, I shouldn’t do that.” Like that.

Yes, I think that’s all. So then make three prostrations. It is not necessary to have a Dharma name, for refuge, for upasika, as some other ordinations do. But if anybody wishes, they can have. The purpose of having a Dharma name is to remember the practice; that is the main purpose. So if somebody wishes to have a Dharma name it can be given.

Student: Do you change your actual name or do you receive an additional name?

Rinpoche: It can be both, depending, but basically, it is to change the name. Not additional; to change the name. That is the basic thing. When you take the higher ordination, they only call the Dharma name. But anyway, the main purpose is to just remember the practice. Those who feel to have one can take. This is not making the person Tibetan, okay? I am not asking you to become Tibetan (laughter). All right, thank you so much.

[End of ceremony]

I thought to do the *lung* of the *nyung.ne* text first, then the 35 Buddha prayers. Otherwise it may not be done. So I thought to do the *nyung.ne* first, then, if there is time, maybe a few words. Since many people wish to do the practice and to receive the oral transmission of the *nyung.ne* text of Buddha, I am also very happy to do it.

So please listen to the oral transmission of the *nyung.ne* practice, handed down from Chenrezig to Gelongma Palmo, the bhikshuni, the full nun Gelongma Palmo. She was Indian. I think in Nepal there is one place, on the way to Parping, the Vajrayogini holy place, where you cross the other mountain. From the city, when you reach the other mountain, where people say that the mountain was cut by Manjushri and the whole Kathmandu valley was filled with an ocean before. So by cutting the mountain, the ocean went through and then it became the city. On top of that hill they say that Gelongma Palmo’s family lived. I don’t know many details about it. There is one red Chenrezig there.

I don’t remember, probably it might be in the collection of the more than twenty different aspects of Chenrezig—it might be in the Rinjung Gyatsa initiation.

There are two places where Gelongma Palmo did the practice. She had leprosy disease. She practiced at one place, and then she was advised by King Indrabhuti, who became enlightened in three years, something like that, I don’t remember. He is one of the examples of someone who received enlightenment in a very short time, only in a few years, three years or twelve years, or something like that. This king, it is said in the teachings, in Guhyasamaja or Chakrasamvara, I think the Chakrasamvara commentary, it is said that in this place where King Indrabhuti lived, all the village and all the people became enlightened or were born in pure realms. The whole village became empty. The whole village, the whole town became empty; there were only empty houses left. In the

beginning of the Chakrasamvara commentary this is said. I think probably everybody in that town had practiced very strongly and then was born in the pure realm, and achieved enlightenment.

So King Indrabhuti advised her. There is another place where there is supposed to be an intuitive OM MANI PADME HUNG appearing from a rock. She did many prostrations there, as she was advised. So anyway, due to leprosy disease I think her body became thinner and thinner and very dangerous looking, almost to fall down. She became very thin due to leprosy disease, very tiny. She did much practice there, prostrations and also recitations of mantra.

In the early morning of the 15th, the special day that Buddha became enlightened in Bodhgaya under the tree, combining two or three special days of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, in the early morning Gelongma Palmo saw Chenrezig. Then Chenrezig gave her the *nyung.ne* practice. He gave her the elaborate initiation then these teachings.

This went from Gelongma Palmo to many other pandits and great yogis. In the biographies of the lineage lamas they had much pain in the eyes or leprosy disease or something happened. Then, by doing *nyung.ne* practice they recovered. Each lama did so many *nyung.ne* practices. There are amazing, wonderful biographies of those lamas, which causes unbearable devotion to arise. How they had great attainment by doing much *nyung.ne* practice. I did not finish translating the stories of the lineage lamas, the whole thing. There are some in English, which I did at Lawudo, on the mountain when I was doing *nyung.ne* there with other people. But there are still some more stories of the following lamas to be translated.

The reason the *nyung.ne* has benefited all these lineage lamas who practiced it so much, the reason they had great attainments from this practice and that they even recovered from those problems they had by doing *nyung.ne* practice—*nyung.ne* practice involves many things, the Mahayana ordination, prostrations to Chenrezig, reciting the admiring prayer to Chenrezig twenty-one times with prostrations, then prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas. Each Buddha is different; the absolute guru, the dharmakaya of the all-buddha, the holy mind of all the buddhas manifested, each one to purify a particular negative karma of sentient beings. So by reciting each of the Buddha's names, many eons of negative karma, karma accumulated for 40,000 eons—there are so many infinite stories of the benefits of these practices.

For example, people in the world doing business always have the aim, the hope to get success, good result, profit, happiness. Even for the person who is very smart, so smart, the smartest, it doesn't work, it doesn't happen as he expected. It doesn't turn out as he planned. It turns out completely the other way, the way the person never wished it to happen—it is uncertain to get the result that you want.

These virtuous actions, good karma, prostrations, mandala offerings, the practice of these offerings, as long as they are offered to Buddha, even if you offer it with worldly concern—without Dharma motive, without bodhicitta motivation, completely with worldly concern, for reputation, for you to be wealthy in this life, to be healthy—or under the force of somebody; without depending on a Dharma motive, a virtuous motive, as long as you think “Buddha” when you make offerings, as long as you think of offering to Buddha, it becomes merit, virtue. Any of these actions—prostrations, if you offer, if you throw some grains at a stupa, some flowers—even if there is no statue, no material, no substantial holy object, you just remember Buddha, then you offer.

For example, in the family, in the house, if an altar creates confusion, if it is the cause of displeasing others in the house, if it becomes disturbing and displeasing to others, you don't need to have the objects of the triple gem. You can cover it or even if you don't have any pictures or statues, still you can make offerings. Even when you give food or tea to the family people or something like that, you can think you are offering to Buddha; either you visualize them, thinking of them as Buddha or visualizing Buddha at their heart. In place of the person you think of Buddha, you remember Buddha, then you think of offering. Whether you are serving tea or whether you are serving food or whatever it is, even though you don't have a particular altar, if that is kind of funny looking, there are so many ways. If one knows how to practice Dharma, from morning until night, whatever you do, without changing your activities, these actions can become virtue.

My main emphasis is to tell you that generally, for any actions that you do to become virtue, it depends on the motive. It depends on having a virtuous motive. But there are some actions that are exceptional. Manjushri advised Lama Tsongkhapa that most of the actions become the cause of samsara, except some exceptional actions. If one doesn't have realization of the three principles of the path to enlightenment, if one doesn't have at least the creative renunciation of samsara, bodhicitta or shunyata, if the actions are not possessed by any of the three principles of the path, most of the actions become the cause of samsara, except some exceptional actions. That means these actions, prostrations and making offerings to Buddha, these things, even Buddha's paintings that are done on the wall, just even looking at them becomes purification. By looking at tangkas, statues, even just looking at them, this becomes purification. It is said in the sutra teachings that even if you look at the drawings of buddhas on the wall with anger, they become the cause to gradually see ten millions of buddhas.

The arhats who are always with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, serving him, such as Sharipu—there is a story like this. The reason Sharipu was always with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, able to receive teachings from him, offering service, is because a long time ago, in one past life he saw a Shakyamuni Buddha figure on the wall. When he was traveling, one night he stopped at a temple, and then he was fixing his shoes and he had a light in front of him, and while he was fixing his shoes he saw a Buddha painting on the wall. It was so wonderful that he got a strong wish to become like that. He looked at the painting of Buddha again and again. From that cause he became Guru Shakyamuni's disciple and then he was able to receive teachings and offer service. The cause is nothing, the cause is so small, but the result is unbelievable. Like this.

If you have food on the table, tea or whatever it is, either at your heart or in front of you, think, "I am offering this to the Buddha." Simply by that, even though the motive is completely worldly concern, just by thinking "Buddha" these actions become virtuous. The way it becomes virtue is by the power of the holy object. These exceptional actions, each of these offerings, each of these actions, making offerings to Buddha or prostrations, become the cause of enlightenment. Every single one of these actions becomes the cause of enlightenment; to achieve liberation, to achieve enlightenment; besides all those samsaric perfections, happiness, which one can enjoy for many hundreds of lifetimes while one is in samsara. Each offering has about eight or ten condensed benefits, as it is explained in the sutra teaching.

So you see, these mandalas and prostrations, these offering practices, with these things there is no betrayal. There is no cheating. No cheating. If one doesn't do the actions, one doesn't experience the result. As long as the work is done, as long as the action is done, it is definite—definite that you will experience the result, definite that it has the result of happiness. As by planting corn it is definite

that it brings the result of corn, not bananas (laughter, Rinpoche laughs) like that, it is definite. It is unbetrayable, it is definite happiness. However many eons it takes, it doesn't get wasted, it doesn't get lost. So therefore to receive the good result, happiness, it is definite, definite, one hundred percent reliable.

The business, what worldly people believe in, even though somebody is so smart, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. For some people most of the time it doesn't work. So it is not reliable. And also, the value of the material goes up and goes down. It goes up and goes down. Sometimes it gets very small and sometimes it gets high, but not always. Sometimes the value of that material is so little. But, these virtuous actions, good karma, these offerings, prostrations and mandalas, these offering practices, for these there is no such thing as the value, the good result—those various results, temporal perfections and happiness, and the ultimate, enlightenment—the good karma becoming of less value. There is no such thing as the benefits of prostrations becoming less, the results becoming less. There is no such thing, no such thing. There is no such thing forever. The result of these virtuous actions becoming smaller, sometimes greater, like the value of the material: no, not like that. So therefore, it is always one hundred percent reliable.

We can do very simply, even just with water. Even by visualizing, we are accumulating merit. Unless from one's own side one doesn't practice virtue, otherwise, from morning until night, as much as we want to accumulate the cause of happiness, from morning until night we have the freedom, we have the opportunity; except if from our own side we don't do it.

By knowing the teachings of karma, relating to one's own life, relating to the lives of others, we can understand. With those methods with which you can accumulate extensive merit, the great virtuous actions, even the small ones, even making charity to an ant, even giving two or three grains of rice, making charity to the ant, the creatures, the birds, the dogs; even speaking some nice words to another person to make them happy, to make charity; even a small merit, as we find the possibility, in any actions that we do, if we find any possibility to accumulate any great or small merit, we should. Even if it is small, we should try. Because it is small we shouldn't feel careless, we should practice. Because we want even a small comfort, we want even a small happiness; therefore even a small merit we should practice, how important it is. By knowing the lam-rim teaching more and more, whatever action we do, living in the city, living in the family, there is always possibility to accumulate merit.

Nyung.ne combines prostrations, the eight Mahayana precepts, then Chenrezig meditation, purifying all sentient beings, reciting mantra. This tantra practice, purifying other sentient beings by sending beams, you as the deity sending beams, purifying other sentient beings, accumulates much more merit than tonglen practice. The tantra method of being the deity, sending beams, practicing pure view in the mandala, seeing sentient beings as Chenrezig, all these things, the practice of the four purities, the four pure results, four purities—all those are the tantra method. Even if it is a method explained in kriya tantra, you accumulate so much more merit in such a short time than those other previous methods in sutra. The tantra methods are much more skilful than the sutra methods. Then, there are even more skilful methods in Maha-anuttarayoga Tantra. So that is how one is able to finish the work, accumulating merit and receive enlightenment soon.

There are combined so many skilful methods, very powerful methods to purify, so that is why *nyung.ne* is very effective. Normally, for people who have cancer, it always comes in those cases that to practice *nyung.ne* is very helpful. To do ten, eight or fifteen *nyung.nes*—there are one or two

students who got better by doing *nyung.ne* practice. I don't know their names, I don't remember. When the medicine doesn't help at all, when the expert doctors don't know, then you practice, because it is a karmic obscuration. The disease came from karmic obscurations, and by purifying the karma you get better, you recover from that disease. These are common experiences of many, many people, including my uncle; many Tibetans, many monks.

So then please concentrate on the oral transmission, on the sound of the words. Please listen to the oral transmission by generating the motivation of bodhicitta, thinking, "At any rate, I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all the kind mother sentient beings. Therefore I am going to listen to the oral transmission of the *nyung.ne* and the Thirty-five Buddhas prayer."

[Oral transmission]

You must be very exhausted sitting a long time, so I thought—the practice for life, generally while living in the West, how we can practice lam-rim, something just enough for each day's life not to become empty. I think maybe, perhaps maybe just some advice, generally for life. I think maybe tomorrow morning. Is it dinner time, seven o'clock? Than maybe tomorrow morning before the puja, okay? Good night! Otherwise sitting a long time you may not hear. First of all you may not hear my English and secondly it may get harder to hear, you may get more distant (laughter). Anyway, I think that's all, good night.

Gelongma Palmo's traditional practice—I have received this oral transmission at Swayambunath many years ago from His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche. Rinpoche is the one who originally gave inspiration to do the *nyung.ne* practice retreat. Rinpoche gave the whole commentary of the Chenrezig Kriya Tantra practice, the commentary of this *nyung.ne* and all the stories of the lineage lamas, the elaborate commentary. Rinpoche kind of gave a lot of inspiration, so Rinpoche is the one that, by Rinpoche's kindness, seeing the stories of the amazing, inspiring lineage lamas of *nyung ne. nyung.ne* practice was done many times.

We started at Lawudo on the mountain, where the original monastery was, where the school was started the first time, the original place. That's how the *nyung.ne* practice spread to other centers in the West. One thing is by Rinpoche's kindness and then, of course, originally by Lama Yeshe and the great yogi His Holiness Serkong Rinpoche whose life story is the incarnation of Marpa's son, who is the embodiment of the deity Heruka, inseparable from Heruka. Rinpoche was extremely kind to me, always caring for me so much, always giving advice for personal practice and in general; there was nothing that Rinpoche did not accept to not give, initiations or teachings. Rinpoche accepted to give the whole collections of Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, these long eighteen volumes, and many initiations. When I requested in Dharamsala, Rinpoche accepted to give them. While Rinpoche was busy doing other things, in the break times, as Rinpoche had a little bit of free time, Rinpoche would give them to me. In every minute that Rinpoche found, Rinpoche would give the oral transmission. He accepted many initiations, besides Rinpoche giving those collections of initiations in Bodhgaya, last time, during the Dharma Celebration. But I think I ran out of merit, so I didn't have time, didn't have the opportunity to receive, even though Rinpoche accepted.

So anyway, dedicate the merits.

[End of teaching]

Final Lecture

The essential thing to do in our life, to make our life not wasted, to make the precious human body that we have found highly meaningful, the perfect human body that we have found once—that is what Lama Tsongkhapa explained in the *Hymns of the Experience of the Graduated Path to Enlightenment*. “This body having freedom is much more precious, much more precious than a wish-granting jewel.” It doesn’t matter whether you have a wish-granting jewel—in some ways you could say diamonds or some other precious thing from which you get means of living and enjoyments, some kind of wish-granting object, but it doesn’t mean just diamonds. It means the precious stone that the very fortunate ones find, by the power of which material one is able to get any temporal enjoyments or possessions one prays for.

What Lama Tsongkhapa is saying is that the perfect human rebirth is here and here is a huge mountain of wish-granting jewels—so which one are you going to choose, which one? Without having the precious human body, even if you have that many wish-granting jewels, mountains, the whole earth, you cannot achieve the three great purposes with that. But without possessing at all even one diamond, one piece of gold, with the precious human body you can accomplish all the three great purposes, you can fulfill all the wishes. All your wishes for happiness can be fulfilled with the precious human body. Therefore there is no comparison between a perfect human rebirth and mountains of wish-granting jewels, diamonds or dollars the size of the earth, that many atoms. There is no comparison between the value of that and the value of this precious human rebirth, no comparison at all.

So we should not renounce the perfect human rebirth and cherish something that is essenceless, something that doesn’t have that much value. We shouldn’t use it for that; we shouldn’t use it as a slave to take care of essenceless things. This perfect human rebirth is only this time. It is difficult to find again and so easy to decay, because death is definite and the actual time of death is uncertain. There are more conditions for death than living. Even the living conditions become causes and conditions for death; therefore, it is so easy to decay, so short.

The lifespan is so short; the appearance of this life is so short. Even though we believe we will live for a long time, so many years, thirty, forty, fifty, so many years but, actually, in reality, it is very short. It is as short as lightning, like the appearance during lightning. When there is lightning you see yourself and you see the road, the trees and things for just a very short time [snaps fingers] and then it stops, you see. It stops. The appearance started and stopped. So quickly it stopped. It started, but so quickly it stopped. Like that, when death happens to us, that is how we see our life, like the appearance during the lightning time. From birth until death that is how we see it; it finishes within a few minutes. Like that, how much we have trouble, a difficult life, how much we have been wealthy or whatever life we had, it is like this. Happy or suffering, whatever it is, it is like this.

Relating the example of lightning to our life, what appears to you during the lightning time is so short and also during those times, whatever it is, you see the base and then you label this and that, “I see this and that.” Similarly, whatever we see—friend, enemy, stranger, possession, house, everything—as we see the base, it is merely labeled. And it is so short; we cannot take any of these things with us to the next life, we cannot take them, we don’t have freedom. So therefore, what we have is merely labeled and so short, so there is no reason to cling so much. There is no reason to get

angry and there is no reason to cling so much. It is nonsense, if you do that, it doesn't make sense. It is childish, crazy or childish. The conclusion is that.

By reflecting like this on the nature of life, by realizing all the worldly works are like a husk, essenceless—there is nothing to eat, nothing to enjoy in the works done out of worldly concern; there is nothing to enjoy in this life, there is nothing to enjoy beyond this life, there is no result to enjoy—essenceless. We need to take the essence day and night. So what Lama Tsongkhapa is saying, “Therefore we need to take the essence day and night, by renouncing the worldly work.”

This means works done out of attachment clinging only to the comfort of this life. If you do not understand what the worldly works are, then confusion may arise. If one understands then one will not be confused, then one knows clearly how to practice and what to renounce. If one doesn't know, it may cause conflicts if one generally discriminates worldly works, without checking the motive, as just outside activities. “We need to take the essence day and night, by renouncing works done out of worldly concern. The venerable Guru did the practice in this way. I am requesting also myself to be like that”; to be like the venerable guru, Lama Tsongkhapa.

So my emphasis is this: to take the essence, the greatest essence. Even if one realizes shunyata, it is still not the greatest essence. The greatest essence of this body is bodhicitta. One can take the greatest essence if one has bodhicitta. If one has bodhicitta, if one practices bodhicitta. Generating bodhicitta, obtaining enlightenment is the greatest essence. Obtaining enlightenment with this perfect human rebirth is the greatest essence, the highest, most meaningful thing of life.

So, how to practice bodhicitta? By integrating all the practice, the five powers. All these have to do with bodhicitta practice. So nothing much to say, except to practice the five powers, which are related to one's own life. That contains the entire answer of what to do. All the answers are contained in the practice of the five powers. When there is a problem, when there is unhappiness, what to do; to transform the unhappiness into happiness; for interference to not become interference; for the interference to Dharma practice to become the necessary conditions to practice Dharma, the beneficial conditions to practice Dharma; to develop and generate the realizations of lam-rim, to develop the good heart.

As the great bodhisattva Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, who is my Guru, from whom I received teachings on the *Bodhicaryavatara*, commentaries and many other teachings on bodhicitta, said, in twenty-four hours, as much as possible try to do the actions out of a good heart. As Khunu Lama said, “If one stands up, stand up with bodhicitta. If one sits down, then sit with bodhicitta. If one eats, eat with bodhicitta. If one walks, walk with bodhicitta. When one looks, look with bodhicitta. If one wants to examine, examine with bodhicitta.” There are many verses like this.

So bodhicitta is the most kind; most precious, most beneficial, most kind. Any time, any time, when we are happy and especially when we are suffering, when we are sick, when we are dying, bodhicitta is the best. When we are in danger, any place, any time, any circumstance, bodhicitta is the main thing, the most skilful thing to practice. Khunu Lama said, “When you are happy, remember bodhicitta; when you are unhappy, remember bodhicitta. When you are sick, remember bodhicitta. When you are scared, remember bodhicitta. When you are dying, remember bodhicitta.” That makes all the experiences of life, happy or suffering, whatever happens, to not come under the control of the disturbing thoughts. Then, whatever one experiences becomes highly beneficial. It becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment and highly beneficial for all sentient beings.

So this is what we should keep in the depth of our hearts. Even today, if our breath is stopping, if the heart stops functioning, this is what we should remember. As you have heard from the *Bodhicharyavatara*, by practicing bodhicitta as the utmost, as the essential practice, the *first* thing to think about in our life, the most important thing in our life to think about, the *first* thing, the most important thing, more important than our means of living, than our job. In this way it purifies all the negative karmas. It is the most powerful purification and the method to finish accumulating extensive merit, unimaginable merit in such a short time.

Without bodhicitta, no matter how much *dzogrim* or *dzogchen* one practices, there is no way to achieve enlightenment. You accumulate so much merit, so by the way from this, also you can easily realize shunyata. You can easily realize shunyata by practicing bodhicitta. If your practice is mainly bodhicitta, then so much merit is accumulated and so much purification done, so therefore, it makes it very easy to realize shunyata. All the success, all the wishes get fulfilled by practicing bodhicitta, by practicing good heart.

Then practice tonglen. Do these meditations; apply these meditations to your life. Happiness, suffering, problems, whatever there is, transform them into the path to enlightenment.

One of the powers is to blame the self-cherishing thought. That is extremely important. So whenever there is a problem, whenever there are life difficulties, any problems, anything, you should remember that it came from the self-cherishing thought. And then you give the problem to the self-cherishing thought. Instead of taking the trouble on yourself, you give it to the self-cherishing thought. The self-cherishing thought gave you the trouble and you return it! You use it as a weapon to destroy the self-cherishing thought. Whatever difficulty, criticisms, bad reputation, anything—having found a very powerful antidote, you use it to destroy the self-cherishing thought, which is the greatest interference for your success and the success of other sentient beings. You destroy that.

So when you go to work, whether work in the family or whether you go to work in the office, even if you cannot remember all the kindness of sentient beings, at least you remember the kindness of these people, the employers. You remember their kindness. You are able to be alive with the money that is given by them. So by their kindness, you are able to have comfort, you are able to be alive. You are able to be a human being, able to be alive, able to practice Dharma. Even if you cannot think of all sentient beings, at least remember their kindness. Then, with this attitude, remembering their kindness, go to work. Not thinking, “I am going to work for my happiness,” but completely renouncing that, making no place in the mind for that selfish attitude, thinking, remembering the kindness, from the morning, from the house, as you start to prepare for work, then go to work for the happiness of these people, these sentient beings, these kind sentient beings, to stop their undesirable problems and difficulties, and then to obtain the happiness that they wish for. Think of yourself as a slave, as a servant, as their limbs, as their hands, as their legs. Like that, with this pure attitude go to work in the office.

Even if one is working in the family, it is the same. Even if one is taking care of a child, of children, same thing. They are all kind mother sentient beings, the object that we generate bodhicitta on, that we become enlightened from, from whom we receive all our three time happiness, so then you think, try to feel happiness, rejoice in your mind, “Even though I cannot help all, even though I cannot give temporal pleasure to all the sentient beings, at least I can give temporal pleasure to these people in the office, to these people in the family. At least my limbs, at least my body, which has two

or three feet, whatever, this body that I am able to use, I will dedicate, use to give comfort, happiness, to at least one or two, even one sentient being, one kind sentient being, at least. How wonderful it is!” You should feel rejoyfulness, having received this opportunity, to be able to use myself, body, speech and mind, to take care of and offer service and obtain happiness for even one sentient being. So great! So lucky! So great! You should feel rejoyfulness. Then it becomes the bodhisattva practice, the actual practice of the bodhisattva’s action. In this way, depression does not come, if you practice like this, always thinking of the kindness of others.

Otherwise, however happy you are, however wealthy you are, there is no surprise, nothing. Using these limbs for yourself is kind of wasted. We have taken this body to serve others, to work for others. The meaning, the purpose of your taking this human body is to work for others, to pacify, to free others from suffering and to obtain happiness for them. You should remember this. Whether we do meditation or not, this is what in everyday life, twenty-four hours, this is what should be done. Then there is no aggression, depression, these things, and also less delusion, less anger, less delusion. We practice that much good heart.

Then, on top of that, if you are able to practice in the morning whatever you did during the meditation course, do those short preliminaries. Then after that read this prayer, do direct meditation by being thoughtful of the meaning of the prayer. Then, during that time one can do the meditation on lam-rim, a more specific meditation—you can expand the meditation. So like this. For a new person, for somebody who doesn’t know the complete lam-rim, you should do like this. On the basis of the direct meditation, you expand first the perfect human rebirth. Then whatever is not finished, expand the next day. Then the usefulness and, gradually, you go down to bodhicitta and shunyata. Then again come back and again go down, again like that.

The purpose of the direct meditation... even if you don’t get a more expanded meditation on lam-rim done, at least do the direct meditation on the whole path. That is extremely important to do. Each day if we are able to do direct meditation on the whole lam-rim, just read the prayer, it plants the seed of the whole path every day, so we become closer to the realization of the path and closer to enlightenment. Each day we become closer to enlightenment by planting more seeds. That is extremely important to quickly generate realizations. Then after some time, when you know the whole lam-rim well, when you think, “Now, if I really spend my time on one meditation for one month, two months, or even one week, if I put effort, I will get the realization,” when your mind has reached that state, then you make effortless experience, it means the realization of each meditation, step by step.

However, the most important thing is bodhicitta, anyway. Even if one doesn’t have the realization of bodhicitta, the most important thing is that. Even to practice tantra, the most important thing to have as a foundation is that. In that way we can succeed in tantra practice. So first try to understand the whole thing.

When your attitude is different from previously, before more concerned of this life, not so much feeling for the next lives, but now, working for the happiness of future lives becomes very important in your heart, so important, and the work for this life doesn’t matter. The happiness of this life doesn’t matter—it is only a few years, a few months, it doesn’t matter, whether you are happy or not, whether you succeed or not. The works for the happiness of future lives are so important, up to enlightenment, so important. The happiness of this life, the comfort of this life, if it happens, it is okay, even if it doesn’t happen, it doesn’t matter. When it is like this you have generated the

realization of the graduated path of the lower capable being, when your mind is in such a state, changed from the previous idea. But still, it needs to be stabilized. Otherwise, if you don't still meditate on impermanence and death, then it will degenerate. Still you need to stabilize the realization.

Then renunciation of samsara: in a simple way of talking, not only just wanting to be free from the true cause of suffering and the true suffering, only that is not renunciation. This is actually having some kind of creative renunciation, it is renunciation, when you want to be free from that, but it is not enough. Realize that samsara is like being in the center of a fire. Then, wishing to achieve liberation day and night, all the time, to be free from this, is the actual effortless realization of renunciation of samsara.

Then similarly, any sentient being that you see, without thinking much of logic or anything, just automatically you feel kindness. Any creature, human being, any being you see, you feel so much kindness. And then, the thought to achieve enlightenment for that person—you see snakes, you see scorpions, you see human beings, or enemies—like how a mother feels when her one beloved son or child fell in the fire. Naturally, automatically, all the time feeling that it is so unbearable seeing others suffering and wishing to free them from that, like the mother feels naturally, so strongly to have happiness for the child. Like that same feeling, the thought naturally comes to achieve enlightenment for this person, for this snake, for this very vicious person. The thought to achieve enlightenment naturally comes from the depth of the heart. When there is such like this, then you have the realization of bodhicitta. Until that happens very powerfully, unbearably, we should train our mind.

Then *nyung.ne* practice is very good to do while you are working in the city. It is only two days. And Mahayana ordination; even without *nyung ne*, taking Mahayana ordination at a certain time is very good. I am just suggesting what you can do. There is unbelievable opportunity and unbelievable benefit, causes of happiness. One time in a week, which means four times in a month, or one can take it frequently, whenever one wishes.

And dedication is extremely important. To receive enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings that is extremely important. If we don't dedicate in this way, even though we accumulate merit, it may not become the cause of enlightenment. Even if the motive is not bodhicitta, if we dedicate the merit for enlightenment, then it doesn't become the cause of a lower realm being's enjoyment, like nagas having wealth. That is extremely important.

As one gets the opportunity, hear lam-rim again and again, subdue the mind, and retreat. If possible, each year plan retreat.

Then, one of the most important things, the direct meditation, very, extremely important, Vajrasattva mantra in the evening time, before going to bed: OM VAJRA SATTVA HUNG, the short one twenty-eight times or the long one twenty-one times. In this way, it stops multiplying the karma day by day, month by month, year by year. So even if you don't do meditations, only reciting Vajrasattva mantra in the evening times, when you die the negative karma will have become very thin. You have purified past karmas, so life has become very meaningful and there will be a very happy death.

Having a happy death is the result of good practicing Dharma in life. We should aim, we should try, we should prepare for that. Pray all the time to the Triple Gem, the Guru-Triple Gem. Then as

much as possible accumulate merit, as I mentioned last night. I think that's all. I have mentioned many things that you can practice. If there is time, if you find you have time read the *Bodhicharyavatara*, the lam-rim teachings, rather than reading many other books, wasting life, rising delusions and again binding oneself longer in samsara.

Today is, I think, some kind of a long life puja. I don't have interest to do that kind of thing, to perform things. Also there is no worth because I don't benefit sentient beings. I have not, and I do not even now, so there is no reason, no worth to offer long life. And also I don't have control over karma and disturbing thoughts, control over the lord of death. But this is what they wanted to do, their wish, and it may become accumulating merit, so in that case maybe it can be done, maybe in that case. Those who wish to do, then.

So anyway, all this advantage, all this merit during this one month, all this Dharma wisdom, the light that we have in the mind, and all this merit that we accumulated, the cause of enlightenment was done by the kindness particularly of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, then particularly of Lama Yeshe. There must be many people here who have received the last teaching [from Lama Yeshe], who were here last course for the bodhisattva vows, which was the last teaching, there must be many people from that. So you can remember.

During this puja, the thing is this, the prayers and wishes of the students may have some good result, because all things are dependent arising, whether things will be beneficial or not. So please dedicate the merits, pray well, during the puja time, and remember the kindness of Lama. Even though you haven't met Lama, remember as I explained now, please dedicate the merits to fulfill Lama's wishes, for all the centers, all the students to be able to practice Dharma as Lama wished, as well as His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes. Then, those who know His Holiness Song Rinpoche and His Holiness Serkong Rinpoche, pray for that. So that is one of my requests or emphasis to do during the puja time.

Also for all the centers to be able to reveal the complete, pure teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, unifying sutra and tantra in the minds of all sentient beings; and for all those students working very hard, not even having time to eat food comfortably, even no time to eat food, running the centers, running to fulfill Lama's wishes—for them to have a meaningful life, to be able to have lam-rim realizations in this life, and for everyone, oneself and all others, to achieve enlightenment soon.

So yesterday I did the dedication, I did the prayer for the merits that you have accumulated, last night, those different prayers—normally I do prayers for all the students, all the hard workers at the centers to be able to do correctly. I pray also [for them] to be able to correctly devote to the Guru and to meet gurus in all lives as Lama Tsongkhapa, and enjoy the teaching, to never separate away from Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings as a path. Then to have pure moral conduct, great compassion, bodhicitta, to enter the tantra path, Maha-anuttarayoga Tantra, bliss and voidness; then whenever death happens, to be born in a pure realm, to have lam-rim realizations in this life. I did pray in the past also, that is my responsibility, so also in the future the same.

So I think that is all, thank you so much! That's all (laughter).

[End of course]