

the
PRACTICING
UNMISTAKEN PATH

LAM-RIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 1991 ■ VOLUME ONE

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

PRACTICING THE UNMISTAKEN PATH

Lam-rim Teachings from Kopan, 1991
Volume One

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Archive #872
Lightly edited by
Gordon McDougall & Sandra Smith



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Bringing you the teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche



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Introducing the Kopan Teachings Series

This is the first volume in a new series presenting previously unpublished teachings from Lama Zopa Rinpoche's teachings given during the 24th Kopan lam-rim course in 1991. This new series will consist of four volumes starting with this volume entitled *Practicing the Unmistaken Path*. These are lightly edited teachings that we hope will convey the feeling of receiving the teachings while attending Kopan's one-month course in Nepal. For more information about attending the yearly lam-rim courses at Kopan Monastery please visit KopanMonastery.com

You can also find many other Kopan teaching course transcripts for reading online or for downloading as a pdf for offline study published on our website at LamaYeshe.com.

-LYWA Director Nicholas Ribush

How the Kopan Courses Began

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

You may not have heard of the great lama Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen [1713–93, tutor of the 8th Dalai Lama] but like the sun illuminating the world, he was well known in Tibet and offered unbelievable benefit to sentient beings and the Buddhadharma. Even now his teachings benefit the world. I have spoken before about how the Kopan meditation courses started but actually, it was Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen’s teachings that inspired them.

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

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

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

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

At this Dharma Celebration we also received many initiations and teachings from His Holiness Song Rinpoche, starting with the chöd initiation and commentary because it's considered inauspicious to do it last. Lama also wanted to show that the Gelug tradition contains the chöd practice. Then Rinpoche gave the Guhyasamaja and Heruka Body Mandala initiations and commentaries and a Vajrayogini initiation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Because I had TB, I often had to go to Darjeeling for treatment and I used to stay in Domo Geshe's monastery in Ghoom, near the Ghoom railway station. I also lived there

for a long time with Lama and the monk who took care of me in Tibet, who was originally from Domo Dungkar Gompa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We stayed at Chini Lama’s place for the next year or so. I think he was Chinese but the story I heard was that he had been sent by the Tibetan government to take care of the Boudha stupa because of its strong connection with Tibet. Many years ago a woman had

undertaken the task of building this stupa but passed away when it was only about half done; however, her four sons undertook the job of completing it. One prayed to become a Dharma king to spread the teachings in Tibet; another to become a minister to help the king; the next to become an abbot to pass on the lineage of the vows; and the fourth prayed to become a powerful yogi to pacify any obstacles that arose in the dissemination of Dharma throughout Tibet. What happened? In their next lives their prayers came true.

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

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

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

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

Ang Nyima gave me Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen's great lo-jong text, Lo-jong Chen-mo[also called Losang Gongyen], which is basically a lam-rim text but greatly elaborated in the lo-jong section. He also offered Lama Yeshe the Heruka Body Mandala commentary written by Dagpo Rinpoche, Pabongka Rinpoche's root guru, and ever since then Lama was always reading the completion stage of that practice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

all came from Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen's teachings, the Lo-jong Chen-mo, The Great Thought Transformation text.

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

Archive # 1748

Edited by Nicholas Ribush

Last updated Aug 27, 2013

LECTURE 1



[Chenrezig Institute 1994](#)

PRACTICING DHARMA

I'm very happy to meet all of you again this time, those I've met numberless times in this life and also other lives. And those who've come here for the first time and those who've been here before, or I've met in other places. To be able to meet again together here, in

this hall in Kopan—especially in this five-star gompa. Before it was a one-star gompa, now this is a five-star gompa! A five-star meditation hall. Maybe the previous one was a one-star or a half-star meditation hall but now this is a five-star or maybe a six-star meditation hall.

What we are going to do during this time is to realize how precious this human body that we have received is, how precious this body we have at this time is. To realize this, and how fortunate we are. The whole point is to make this precious human rebirth that we have at this time most meaningful, most beneficial. Most beneficial, but for whom? Beneficial for ourselves or for other sentient beings? If our life becomes most beneficial for others, even to one sentient being, it becomes most beneficial for ourselves. To make this life most beneficial is to make it most beneficial for all the sentient beings.

What we're going to try is something new. It's not something that we've done numberless times, repeating over and over. Normally we do things with the hope, with the expectation, to get satisfaction, but the result is only dissatisfaction, the result is only problems. During this time what we're going to do is recognize that these kinds of things that we've done numberless times haven't helped. Leaving aside freeing us from all the entire problems and causes, they haven't even given us any satisfaction, any inner peace. We have to recognize this and we have to analyze it, to think in such a way. Studying—listening—reflecting and meditating, through this analysis, with these three things together, then we get our own experience. It depends on if it's proved through our own experience; if it's proved by our own mind. We discover it and then we live in that experience, in that peace, in that satisfaction.

For those who are hearing this meditation subject for the first time, you should expect to hear many new things. For somebody who's already heard it, who's become free from all these whole entire problems and causes, somebody who's already enlightened, then there's no need to be here. Because you've accomplished the whole path, you have the wisdom to directly perceive all existence.

Analysis is very important. Study is very important, extremely important. Through study, we can develop our own wisdom, it helps to develop wisdom. Then as more wisdom gets developed within us, as we do meditation and practice, we accumulate more and more causes, more and more conditions, for realizations. Through our own effort, through our own experience, it is proved, and the path becomes our own experience. So we need to study and then on top of that, especially, to practice, and then there's the experience.

It's extremely important to know the reasons we're doing this and that the method, the meditation, the practice is unmistakable, reliable; it can definitely lead us to the goal, the happiness we are trying to achieve, which is to liberate ourselves, to reach the cessation of the whole, entire suffering and causes. Then, even greater than that, the liberation that is the cessation of even the subtle imprints left by the disturbing thoughts, the cessation of ignorance, those wrong conceptions, the concept of true existence.

Whether we are just seeking the happiness of future lives or ultimate happiness—the cessation of the whole, entire suffering and causes, or full enlightenment, the cessation of even the subtle obscurations, the subtle imprints—the method, the path we practice should be unmistakable. It should be one we can trust, that is reliable, unbetraying. By practicing it we see it can lead us to that goal.

It's the same thing, even if our goal is to free everyone from the whole, entire suffering and causes and lead them to full enlightenment, which is cessation of all the mistakes of the mind, and complete all the qualities of the realizations. It's an extremely worthwhile thing.

ACTUALIZING THE PATH

With clothing, this year's fashion clothes we won't wear next year. What I'm saying is that in the world people always look for new things. Every year there's a new fashion or a new dress, even songs. There's always a new style. Even from that point of view, it is very worthwhile to see that all those other external experiences, in reality, are nothing new.

In the teachings taught by Omniscient One, the reality is that the continuation of the consciousness does not have a beginning. With reincarnation, one particular reincarnation has a beginning, but the general continuation of consciousness has no beginning. Therefore, all these external things, all these experiences with the external objects, all these are nothing new, in reality. We have had everything; we have had all these experiences numberless times in the past.

The inner experience, the experience of the path, this is the unmistakable, complete, graduated path to full enlightenment. We generate the determination to be free from samsara, from the circling aggregates which are defiled, which are the container of all problems. We determine to be free from this samsara and then we generate the altruistic mind to achieve full enlightenment, by taking the full responsibility to free everyone from all the mistakes of the mind, from all the sufferings, and lead them to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment. We determine to actualize bodhicitta. Then, the wisdom realizing the ultimate nature, the absolute truth, the right view.

So, we actualize this common path, then the particular path, the uncommon path of tantra, the secret mantra, such as the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra, the generation stage and the completion stage. By completing this common path and the particular path of the secret path, we then achieve enlightenment. *This* inner experience, *this* is very new.

Actualizing the true path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, we experience the cessation of the disturbing thoughts and karma, action, the cause of suffering, and all the sufferings, such as rebirth, death and so forth. The cessation of these sufferings, *these experiences* are new. For ordinary beings like ourselves these experiences are very new.

This is the one time that we have the opportunity to do this, the one time that we have all the necessary conditions to make it possible to have this experience within us. And, through this then to make our life most fruitful, most beneficial, for all sentient beings—for all those whose minds are obscured, who want happiness but are devoid of happiness, who do not want suffering but who continuously experience suffering.

For the success of the practice, to eliminate outer and inner obstacles, and to create the causes, the necessary conditions, for the success of the practice, for the success of experiencing the path, we're going to do some meditation prayers. Those who are not familiar with the subject, just concentrate on the words, just be mindful of the words of the meditation that explain the path, just be mindful. Just concentrating itself leaves such a special imprint, a particular imprint, much more special than the imprints we leave on our consciousness in our everyday life.

[Rinpoche recites *Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha* in Tibetan.]

Do not commit any harmful actions to yourself, to other sentient beings.
Enjoy life by creating perfect beneficial actions to yourself, to other sentient beings.
Subdue your own mind:
This is the teaching of the Buddha.

[Recitation of the *Heart Sutra*.]

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem. Thus did I hear...

COMPASSION: REASONS TO DEVELOP



Chenrezig Institute 1991

As a motivation for doing this meditation course, for listening, reflecting and doing the meditation practice, the basic motivation, the attitude, has to be compassion. Here, we're not just talking about partial compassion toward somebody we like, somebody who loves us, but not when that person has a problem—not just partial compassion to a friend, but to strangers and enemies as well. We should have compassion toward all sentient beings. That should be the motivation for why we're here, why we study. That should be the motivation for all the twenty-four hours or twenty-six hours, or whatever. As much as possible.

Compassion is so important in order to achieve peerless happiness, full enlightenment, for the sake of sentient beings. Even without talking about enlightenment, just concerning even the day-to-day life's happiness, there's the need for compassion. If we want happiness in our day-to-day life, that depends on compassion; if we want to have peace, that depends on compassion, on us having compassion toward others and others having compassion toward us. Generally speaking, happiness depends on each other.

Why does each of us need to generate compassion? First of all, what other sentient beings want is happiness, what they do not want is problems, sufferings. And that is dependent on conditions, on whether we have compassion or not for them, whether we stop giving

them harm, stop actions that disturb them. And whether we do actions that benefit them. Without compassion, with the ego, the self-centered mind, or the self-cherishing thought, out of that mind we do actions that harm them. So others' peace, others' happiness is also dependent on our own attitude, our own actions. That's why there's a need to develop compassion within us.

The second reason why there's the need to generate compassion is because we want happiness. We don't want problems; we want happiness, we ourselves want happiness, peace, success. The second reason is that.

If we have compassion within ourselves, everyone becomes our own friend. Everyone becomes close to us. We see everyone as close to us; we don't feel others are distant, far from us. If we have compassion in our heart toward others, then we feel everybody is in our own heart. There's a great feeling of that. If we have compassion within us, we feel everybody is in our own heart, like the son or the daughter who respect the parents, who knows the kindness of the parents, how incredibly kind they are. Realizing they are so kind and precious, he or she feels the parents in the heart. Similarly, like the mother who has compassion toward her beloved only child, how the mother feels with that child, she feels them in the heart. That child is so precious and so important, and she has compassion toward him or her.

If we have compassion toward all sentient beings, nobody's far from us, nobody's distant from us; everyone's close to us. We feel that in our own heart. Even if they're enemies, since in our own mind there's compassion generated for them, we don't see them as an enemy; we see them only as a friend, only as most kind. They are the most kind, most unbelievably kind person, the spiritual friend, unbelievably kind to stop our own bad thoughts, to stop our own cruel mind, the self-cherishing thought. They are so kind to destroy the ego that constantly interrupts our success, the most important success, the development of the mind, the positive attitude, the good heart. The ego always interferes with us generating the realizations of the path. Even if from our own side we try to practice, the ego, the self-cherishing thought, always interrupts, making us unable to practice, unable to progress.

Not just that, the ego invokes all the problems. It creates, it produces, it brings all the problems. The ego controls us, it invades the mind. Like the Communist Chinese invaded Tibet, the ego invades our own mind. The ego completely takes over our mind and then makes us become its servant, its slave. All the time we become the servant of the ego, helping the ego, supporting the ego; the ego that brings relationship problems, the ego that brings financial, economic problems, all these problems. We become the disciple of the ego, we become the slave of the ego, making it stronger, developing this ego that is the creator of all of life's problems.

We follow this ego but this person that we call "enemy" is destroying the ego. What this person is doing is helping to destroy this ego that brings all the problems. The ego not only interrupts our spiritual progress, blocking us from achieving the realizations of the path, the development of the practice, it also interferes in our day-to-day life, not

allowing us any peace, happiness or satisfaction. We are following the ego but this person we call “enemy” is actually helping us to destroy the ego. That’s the kindest, most precious thing. By diminishing and then eliminating the ego, all success comes, especially the most important success, developing the mind to achieve the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

COMPASSION: UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

Therefore we should have compassion, like a son or daughter with a crazy mother. Even if the mother becomes crazy, completely uncontrolled, possessed by spirits, wild, from the side of the son or the daughter who sees how incredibly kind and precious she is, they see that she herself has no freedom, and so she becomes only the object of compassion.

This person is completely overwhelmed by ego, completely used by ego, controlled by ego, the self-cherishing thought, the disturbing thoughts, especially anger. Being under the control of these disturbing thoughts, of ego, the self-cherishing thought, he creates negative karma, negative actions that result only in problems, now and in the future. That person becomes only the object of compassion. There is no reason why anger should arise and why we should harm that person. There’s no single valid reason to become angry and harm him. That person’s situation—the nature of his mind, his character, the life of that person—only becomes the cause of compassion to arise for him.

If we generate compassion, we become a friend to everybody and everyone becomes our friend. With this positive attitude, compassion, toward everyone, others also become friendly toward us so we receive no harm from them, only benefit, only help. This way, there’s success in our life. Happiness and peace depends on others helping us. Our day-to-day life’s happiness is dependent on others, on others having love and compassion toward us, not giving us harm but benefiting us. Others love us, they have compassion toward us, so they help us. That is dependent on what kind of attitude we have toward others in our everyday life and how we behave toward others.

First of all, our happiness, our peace is dependent on others, what they think of us, how they act to us, and *that* is dependent on how we think toward them, how we behave toward them. This second reason is the fundamental one, why even for our own success—having happiness ourselves and not having problems—we need to practice compassion toward others.

I quite often say this. Historically it happens that there is one person in the world who has power. If that person who has power lacks compassion, then millions of people can be killed. Many millions of people are killed or tortured. This is without counting the animals that are much more, on the land and in the ocean, that are killed and suffer; there are so many more than human beings. This is without counting them.

If this one person who has power and influence were to practice compassion, instead of harming many millions of people, it would be the *opposite*, the complete opposite. He could bring incredible benefit, peace, so much happiness, to many millions of people. It’s

the complete opposite. Because of compassion, that one person's power could be used for unbelievable benefit and happiness, for thousands and millions of sentient beings.

When there is power, it makes a huge difference, it makes a *huge* difference if there's compassion, what it can do to the world. But if there's no compassion, what danger there is. This one person's power can bring such danger to the world. It makes a huge difference, not just to one country but to the whole world.

Similarly, if we don't practice compassion, if we don't generate compassion, there's a danger that we harm other humans and other sentient beings from birth until death. Because of the self-cherishing thought, many other disturbing thoughts arise: ignorance, anger, attachment and so forth. We do many harmful actions toward others. From birth until death we give so much harm to others—and like this from life to life. From life to life we give harm to all sentient beings, like the example of this one person.

Now if we ourselves have compassion, we benefit others, starting from the family, starting from this one person we live with in our everyday life, those we work, eat and live with at home, to the people in the office, then all the people in the country—however many millions of people there are in the country—then all the sentient beings on this earth, then even the sentient beings on the other planets, in other universes. However, starting from the nearest sentient being to all the rest of the sentient beings, if we have compassion, none of them receive any harm from us. If there's compassion, whatever action we do, we stop giving harm. Even if we gave harm before when there was no compassion, now that harm is stopped. Therefore, starting from the nearest person, that sentient being, to all the rest of the sentient beings, they don't receive harm from us. And *that* absence of harm, if they're not receiving harm from us, *that* is the peace. That is the peace they receive from us. That peace they receive is dependent on us.

If we have compassion what comes with the action is benefit. When we do something, it not only stops giving harm but on top of that, we try to benefit others and we do something for others, either directly or indirectly. The very least thing is we stop giving harm but out of compassion we benefit others, therefore, from that all sentient beings receive happiness, success and peace. The peace and happiness that they receive by us benefiting them is dependent on us.

Each of us here is completely responsible for everybody's happiness, for every sentient being's happiness. Not only human beings, not only that, but for all the rest of the sentient beings. Each insect we see on the road, each fly, each bird, each dog, each worm we see on the ground, we are responsible. Each of us here is responsible for the happiness of every single sentient being that we see around us in everyday life, starting from that to all the rest of the sentient beings. So, if we don't practice compassion, if we only follow the ego, the self-cherishing thought, there is danger to others, starting from the family, starting from the people nearest us to all the rest of the sentient beings. They receive harm from us, directly or indirectly, from life to life.

Therefore, it is completely in our own hands whether we want to cause this peace, to give this happiness to all sentient beings or whether all sentient beings receive harm from us. That's completely in our own hands. It's completely dependent on our own attitude, what kind of attitude we generate.

I think maybe I'll stop here. Today's meditation is basically to feel this universal responsibility.

During break time, feel this while you're eating, walking, also when you do one-pointed concentration. Think of the reasons why you are responsible for all sentient beings' happiness. How that is dependent on your own mind, on your compassion, on whether there's compassion or not. Then try to do a fixed meditation on that. One pointedly, the mind that feels this, continuously try to keep the mind in that feeling. You can do a fixed meditation like this.

So I'll stop here.

LECTURE 2



1990

COMPASSION: THE BEST WAY TO BE SELFISH IS TO CHERISH OTHERS

Even if other sentient beings don't love us or even if they hate us, we ourselves are one person. Even if our whole family dislikes us, even if everybody in the city, everybody in the country, doesn't love us but hates us, we ourselves are one person. Even if all sentient beings hate us, that person they hate, that I, is one. That self is one person. So it's nothing much to be shocked or depressed about. This person we call "me" they hate. We think,

“They hate me!” But that is just talking about one person, ourselves. That’s nothing much to be shocked or depressed about.

However, if this one person doesn’t practice compassion, doesn’t watch the mind, doesn’t protect the mind, there is danger that this one person, that this I, will give harm to many others—in the family, in the office, to many other sentient beings. There’s the danger of harming all sentient beings. Those we give harm to are numberless. Numberless.

And at the same time, we and everyone else are exactly the same. We are all equal in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering, problems. While we ourselves and everyone are exactly equal in wanting happiness and not wanting problems, if we feel we are important and precious, then everyone else is also important and precious. Everyone else is also important and precious. Every other sentient being, even the tiniest insect, the very tiniest ant, is important and precious. At this time they have such a tiny body, but the mind is the same. They have the same attitude as we have, wanting happiness and not wanting suffering.

Even those tiniest insects are always looking for protection, always looking for food, for a means of living. That is exactly the same as us, keeping their life so busy. That’s exactly the same as us. They’re always running around trying to obtain a means of living, looking for protection. That’s exactly the same as us. They want happiness; they don’t want suffering. That’s exactly the same as us. It’s just that at this time we have a bigger body. We have a human body, a better body, one that has incredible opportunities—such a precious human body—and they have a different rebirth. They have taken a different body, such a tiny body, due to their past unsubdued mind and the actions motivated by that unsubdued mind, the unpeaceful actions or the nonvirtuous actions.

Just as we feel we ourselves are so important and precious, then everyone else is so important and precious. There’s not the slightest valid reason why we are more important than this tiniest insect, that our need to pacify our problems and to obtain happiness for ourselves is more important than the needs of this tiniest insect. There’s not one single valid reason. Except, like a dictator, without any beneficial reasons, like a dictator who brings problems to the people, not the dictator who brings peace. Not the dictator who brings peace and happiness to the people, but the dictator who brings the opposite, so many problems, who leads the people in the path to suffering, with no freedom.

Only the self-cherishing thought that becomes the dictator can find a reason that shows we are more important. The egocentric mind, the self-cherishing thought acts exactly like a dictator and, abiding in our heart, gives us non-valid reasons, illogical reasons why we are more important. It just gives invalid reasons, simply doing a power trip, without valid reasons, saying “I’m precious. I’m more important than this insect, than this person. Among all the people, I’m the most important, most precious. Among all the holy beings, among all the ordinary sentient beings, I’m the most precious, the most important. It’s most important to obtain happiness for *me*, to pacify the problems of this *me*, for this I is the most important.” There are no valid reasons for this; it’s just the self-cherishing thought, the dictator, doing its power trip.

The real dictator who is living inside us, denying us peace in our everyday life, denying us success, even temporary happiness, is the self-cherishing thought, the ego.

But even if everybody hates us, even if nobody loves us, we ourselves are nothing; this I is nothing. This ego, this self-cherishing, is one. It doesn't practice compassion, it doesn't look after us, which means not taking care of the mind, which means not subduing the mind, which means not practicing compassion, not transforming the mind into altruism.

By not practicing the good heart, compassion, there's no peace, no happiness, there's no success in our life. Without a good heart, compassion and so forth, what there is, is egoism, the self-cherishing thought, and that constantly creates problems, obstacles—obstacles for temporary and especially ultimate happiness, especially peerless happiness, full enlightenment, the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind and completion of all the qualities of realizations. Therefore, following the self-cherishing thought, following the delusions, is not the way. That only harms us; that's not the way of taking care of ourselves. That's not the way of looking after ourselves. That's not the way of attaining peace for ourselves.

Only by changing the attitude in our daily life, by changing the mind from self-cherishing into altruism, into cherishing other sentient beings, only this brings all the opposite results, all the success, all temporary and ultimate happiness. All the wishes seeking happiness are fulfilled, the wish to obtain happiness for ourselves and to obtain happiness for all sentient beings, by ourselves. All those wishes get fulfilled by subduing the mind, by developing the mind, by generating altruism, compassion and so forth. Therefore, the best way to take care of ourselves, looking after our own life, is to watch the mind and to take care of the mind.

This way there's success. This way the aim of happiness can succeed. The other way *looks like* we are taking care of ourselves, loving ourselves, but actually we are harming ourselves. The other way is constantly creating the obstacle for success. This way there's peace and happiness; we obtain peace and happiness for ourselves and we obtain peace and happiness for all other sentient beings.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama often says, the best way to cherish ourselves is this. If we want to cherish ourselves then we should do it in an intelligent way, and the intelligent way to do it, the best way to do it, is to cherish other sentient beings. In other words, His Holiness is saying is that if we are really concerned for ourselves, for our own happiness, for our health, for our body, for our mind, then the best way is to cherish other sentient beings.

BODHICITTA: THE DISADVANTAGE OF ANGER

I think there are some problems with the advice given by some areas of the psychology in Western culture. I quite often mention this. But I think nowadays as people's minds are more open, maybe you use your own wisdom more rather than accepting the psychology,

the guidelines written in [psychology] books. Nowadays maybe you should use your own wisdom more, rather than what is written in the books, the methods taught in the past or that have been used.

As I often mention, I've heard so many times that the basic psychological method that is advised for those people who are in an emotional state, such as anger, is to say whatever they want to say. The idea is this. Whatever hurting, bad words we want to say, we feel in the heart; whatever the mind wants to feel, we should express it to the other person, telling them whatever we think. Whatever comes out of anger, we just tell everything to the other person. Probably, that method is more based on us, we who have the problem, for our own interest, for our own happiness.

Expressing whatever the angry mind wants to say, whatever the selfish mind wants to express, the words that come out are only undesirable or hurting words, only hurting others. When we are able to say these things that we have kept inside us, we feel some kind of release. We feel release and rejoice that we have been able to hurt the other person by saying those harmful words to them. We feel that it's good that we are able to do that, able to hurt them. This method is basically concentrated on being able to show the anger, being able to express the anger. There's kind of rejoicing or feeling good, especially that we are able to hurt the other person using some powerful words. We label this as happiness and we simply focus on this.

With this method, when we see a person doing something we dislike in the family or in the office or wherever, inside or outside, when the person acts or has a way of speaking or behaving with the body that we dislike, then anger comes. Then we express that anger. We are advised like this to completely, immediately express our anger to that person. Then again in the afternoon, we see either the same person or another person doing something that we dislike, and again anger comes, and again we express that anger, completely, totally. Whatever we have to express with the mind, body and speech, whatever has manifested we express everything. Then again in the evening, somebody—either that same person or whoever—does something that we dislike, and again that anger comes. So again we express it, we let that anger arise, we let that anger explode, to that person or whoever. We say things. Then, it's the same thing the next day, and this goes on and on. This goes on and on, this week, next week, this month, next month, this year, next year—the same, with no change to the mind. We've expressed our anger many times, numberless times, but there's no development, no change to the attitude. There's no end to the anger; there's no end to hurting others.

And as we express our anger to the other person, that becomes the condition for the other person to get angry with us. So, besides ourselves, creating all those various harmful actions or negative karma out of anger [the other person does too].

It goes on like this from year to year. There's no development, no change at all, with anger becoming less. [If we were to change our attitude,] even if it were still not possible to destroy anger, for there to be the cessation of anger, even if the mind were not developed to that degree, it would be much cleaner, much lighter. Even if anger were to

arise, it would be much lighter and shorter, lasting a shorter time. This other way, however, there can't be this development.

With the same mind it constantly interferes, because we're not trying to change our own mind. Since we're not trying to develop our mind, to make it pure, positive, we constantly have the same impure mind looking at things. The same mind constantly interprets because we're not trying to change our own mind, not trying to develop our mind, to make the mind purer, more positive. Constantly the same impure mind looks at things impurely. The ordinary mind looks at everything as ordinary; the mistaken mind looks at things as mistaken. We look at others' mistakes or we interpret things the wrong way, the negative way. The mind constantly judges the way others act in the wrong way, as harming us. We interpret the way others act to us as harmful. This ordinary mind, this impure mind, this negative thought looks at things as negative, judging or labeling and believing others' actions as harmful to us.

Since there's no mention of developing the mind, purifying the mind, transforming the mind into the positive attitude, what mind there is in life is constantly only the negative, impure, ordinary mind that looks at everything as negative, interpreting others' actions as bad, as harmful to us. The mind projects these things.

Since there is no change to the mind, the nature of life is always the same, constantly filled with problems. Our life's experience is constantly filled with problems. This is because our ordinary, impure, negative thoughts, the wrong conceptions, judge or project, labeling things as harmful or bad and believing it. From year to year it constantly goes on like this. Again there is anger, so it's the same. In early life it's like this; also in later life it's the same—the same or maybe worse in the later part of life.

All this happens because the one practice, what is called patience, is not mentioned there. That advice is mentioned nowhere. That one positive attitude, that technique, patience, is never mentioned in the [psychology] guidelines. That's the problem. That's why there's no progression, why we constantly experience the problems again and again. Instead of our anger becoming lighter, briefer in later life, it doesn't change by the year or month. There's no development of the mind in a month, a year, even in the whole life.

BODHICITTA: THE BENEFITS OF PATIENCE



[Chenrezig Institute 1991](#)

When what is called “patience” is practiced, once the mind is transformed into patience, right at that second, anger—this unhappy emotional mind, this harmful thought—is stopped. The absence of that mind is peace, happiness. It’s tranquility, relaxation.

With this method, with patience, there is peace in everyday life; there is happiness in our own mind. And as much peace as there is, with the absence of these negative thoughts, by the way, there is better health. Even concerning health there’s better health, even physical health. By the balancing of the four elements [1] the circulation of blood and all these things are improved, these are all controlled or relaxed, balanced, peaceful, healthy. And by the way, the heart is also healthier. Many of these health problems don’t arise. Our life has much peace and there’s much harmony.

Not only that, because we don't express anger but only kindness and generosity toward others, we don't become a condition for others to become controlled by the emotional, negative mind of anger, and out of anger to create nonvirtuous actions, the cause of sufferings that the person has to experience in this life or in other lives. That's one peace that we are causing them, that's the one peace. The absence of all this is the peace for that other person. That is what we are giving the other person by practicing patience.

Another thing is that with patience we express kindness to the other person. As I mentioned yesterday, we see that person as unbelievably kind. By practicing patience with that person, we see how he is so precious. From our realization of patience, all the peace and happiness that we feel inside our heart, at the very core of our heart, the big peace that we feel, the tranquility, has been given to us by this person. It has happened because of this person, depending on this person being angry at us, disliking us, disrespecting us. By doing those actions we have been made to practice patience. Disrespecting or criticizing, doing those actions makes us practice, makes us develop our mind.

By knowing that the realization of patience that we have—the quality of the mind that we have achieved and the incredible peace that we feel in the depth of our heart—is by the kindness of this person, we feel that this person is extremely, unbelievably kind, and so precious, so important for us. For us, he is so precious and so kind. What comes out of that thought of patience, that feeling of kindness, is that we then want to make offerings to that person. We feel the kindness so strongly and we want to offer something, we want to repay the kindness. So what comes is generosity toward that person.

In some ways, we become a teacher, an example to the other person, helping the other person learn. Instead of getting angry when somebody harms us, we practice patience, and we become his teacher, an example, an inspiration. Even if we don't teach meditation, we don't give teaching, our attitude and our actions become the best teacher to the other person.

Even if our anger doesn't diminish much month by month, within this short period, by continuing this practice, practicing patience, within some years there will definitely be some progress. This can definitely happen, which means that we have peace in our life, we are able to obtain more peace in our life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION

There are basically two main things missing in Western culture. The reason problems don't get solved with these psychological methods, why the mind doesn't develop, is that there's no mention of the happiness of the other person. Here it's only concentrated on our own gain. What about the other person's happiness? That's never mentioned. If we express our anger, it hurts the other person who also, like us, wants happiness, who also doesn't want suffering. What about that? The other person's happiness is never brought up. That is never questioned; it's never brought up as an object of concern.

The one big thing missing is advice on compassion. In this culture or form of education, the one big thing that is missing is compassion for others.

The other thing is karma, action and result, explaining that this kind of motivation creates such an action that results in happiness. With a positive attitude, a good heart, and the positive actions motivated by that, the result is happiness. Because the attitude is not one of anger, ignorance or attachment, but a positive, pure attitude, we produce a pure action, a virtuous action, and the result is happiness. On the other hand, the attitude possessed by the three poisonous minds—anger, ignorance or attachment—the actions motivated by that are nonvirtuous, and that brings the suffering result, problems now and in the future.

That happiness or suffering comes from our own mind. In our own life, it is created by our own mind; it comes from our own mind. We ourselves are the creator. Because we ourselves are the creator, we have the complete freedom to abandon, to eliminate the cause of suffering, of all our problems, and to obtain all the happiness.

So the advice, the education about compassion and karma is not there. And because of that, the psychological methods don't really eliminate the problem. They can't completely eliminate the problem, including the cause.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

As I mentioned when I started this talk, it's extremely important to practice compassion, to live our life with compassion. Without that, how dangerous it is, how dangerous it is. That itself means it is extremely important that we ourselves practice compassion, because with this everyone receives peace from us and nobody receives harm. Like this, we ourselves are fully responsible for all sentient beings' happiness; they are dependent on us practicing and keeping the mind in the nature of compassion.

As the reasons, as I mentioned before, who should we practice compassion on first? Should it be the one we call "enemy," the person who disrespects us, who doesn't love us? Who should we practice compassion on first, that person or ourselves? First ourselves. From those two, first we should practice compassion on ourselves. Because, as I mentioned yesterday, basically if we're concerned with our own happiness, then in our life each day, that is dependent on having a peaceful mind, on keeping the mind subdued, so the most important thing is to practice compassion. Now, from morning until night, for each twenty-four hours, we should live our life with this compassion toward others, with the feeling of universal responsibility, not only for our family, for the people in our life, not only for friends, but for enemies and strangers—especially enemies—for all sentient beings. All the sentient beings are included in these three: stranger, enemy, friend.

So, in the morning when we get up, the first thing we should do is generate the thought remembering the meaning of life, the purpose of life. We should remember why we have this precious human body, why we take so much care of this body, why we spend so much money on this body. It costs so much money to take care of this body, to have a

place for this body. We spend so much money on the house, so much money on food, so much money on clothing and medicines. We have to work so hard day and night for that. Why are we doing this? We have to remember the purpose. Why is it important to take care of, to cherish this life? Why is it important to take care of this body, why? To free everyone, every sentient being, from all the obscurations, from all the sufferings, and to cause them happiness and especially to lead them to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment.

To do this service, this is the meaning of our life, this is why we have a human body—to feel that we are responsible for every sentient being's happiness. Because whether they receive peace and happiness or harm from us is dependent on our attitude, on whether we have compassion toward them or not. Therefore we are fully responsible for all sentient beings' happiness.

We should remember this the first thing when we get up in the morning. What is life for? What are we living for? Why do we survive? Why are we living? This reminds us why; this lets us understand the importance of life, especially this precious human body. By beginning with this meditation we remember it the whole day. When we eat breakfast, we remember it before we eat; we remember what we're eating this food for. Before we eat our breakfast we remember the meaning of life, that we are responsible for all sentient beings' happiness. Then, before eating lunch, we remember this; before eating dinner, we also remember this; before going to sleep, we remember this. Like that, this way it lets us understand, lets us be aware that what we're doing here—eating food, sleeping, doing meditation, studying, and all these things—is not for us but for other sentient beings. It's for sentient beings. This understanding naturally comes. This awareness, this change of attitude, naturally comes, that our life is not for ourselves but for others, for other sentient beings. This helps us to naturally change our attitude. This is the reason we need a long, healthy life, the reason we need to survive. This life is used in order to be able to serve others. If we take care of ourselves, of our body and mind, then we can serve other sentient beings.

With this mindfulness of the meaning of life, that we're responsible for all sentient beings' happiness, then all actions become Dharma, pure Dharma, unstained by the self-cherishing thought. All these actions become Dharma, which means they are the cause of happiness [for all sentient beings]. The main thing we should concentrate on in our everyday life is developing the attitude of compassion. We should study about compassion, how to develop it, its evolution, the graduated practice we need to do in order to develop compassion. That is the main attitude, the main practice. As I mentioned yesterday and today, the importance of this is that by studying compassion, by meditating on compassion, by training the mind in compassion, it becomes greater, and gradually the mind becomes transformed. The realization of compassion then comes, and gradually we can attain great compassion toward all sentient beings.

This is the great contribution we can make that is missing in many systems of education, particularly in common education, especially in the West, in the subjects taught in schools or universities. The practice of compassion, *this* education, what we're doing

here, becomes a great contribution to the world peace. Not just in this one world but in all the numberless worlds. It becomes a great contribution to the peace of all sentient beings.

When we have compassion, through this we are able to bring everyone to happiness, to temporary and ultimate happiness. That's how it becomes a contribution. Each person's meditating on compassion becomes a great contribution toward all sentient beings' happiness.

I'll stop here.

LECTURE 3



1992

DEDICATING OUR LIFE FOR OTHERS

Why are there so many problems in the world? Why is there so much unhappiness in life, in society, in the family, even in an individual person's life? No matter how much wealth

and education there is, how many friends, what seems to be missing in education, particularly in the West, what is missing is the teaching, the education of compassion and universal responsibility. Education about these two things is missing. That's why there's so much depression, so much suicide, so much dissatisfaction. Even if we have so much other education and wealth, all these things that we have tried and achieved on one hand, but still there is not the education on compassion and universal education, in our daily life and in the general education of our society. It's missing for the young and for the old, for both. The most important quality of the mind is missing, the mind that is the very essence of life, the mind that really gives happiness, satisfaction, even if we live alone. It gives happiness, it gives satisfaction, it gives peace of mind, and we can enjoy it. Even if we become a slave to others, we can enjoy doing that. Even if we live with others, we can enjoy life. This is the very source of life, the very purpose of life, but this education, or this attitude, is missing. To transform the mind, to live life like that is not a common subject to practice.

People receive so much harm from each other because they lack these things, compassion and universal responsibility, not having thought of how they themselves are responsible for all sentient beings' happiness, starting from the family, the parents, then all the rest. Feeling this. This is the great attitude, this is what gives so much peace and happiness in life. This is the purpose of life. With this attitude everything we do is dedicated for others. With this attitude all things—enjoyments and so forth—are made to live our life for others, not only for our own sake, not only for our own happiness, but it helps to make life happier for other sentient beings, to obtain happiness for all sentient beings.

What offers more happiness than this? What is there in the life that offers more peace, more satisfaction, than living our life for other sentient beings, working for other sentient beings, pacifying the sufferings of other sentient beings, and obtaining happiness for other sentient beings as much as we can? As much capacity as we have, as much intelligence as we have, as much capacity as we have, we must dedicate our own life to other sentient beings. As much as we can, whatever we can do. Each twenty-four hours or for our life, we must try to dedicate, to live our life for other sentient beings.

Of course, the best service for sentient beings, the most perfect service for every other sentient being is only when we become fully enlightened. Becoming fully enlightened is the perfect service without any mistakes toward all sentient beings. Even to one sentient being, to do perfect service without mistake, life to life, that can only happen after we become fully enlightened, only after we have achieved the perfect mind and perfect power, and completed the mind training in the compassion to all sentient beings. Only then can we do perfect service without any mistake to even to one sentient being, and then, from there, to all the sentient beings, to every sentient being.

But we should feel happy even in our day-to-day life that we can become useful for even one sentient being, that we are found useful by even one sentient being, that we become needed by one sentient being. Even if we're taking care of an old person or looking after a baby, doing service in that way, we should feel happy that we are useful to that person, that we are needed by at least one sentient being.

Even for *that*, we should try to feel happy. How good, how wonderful it is, like this. That our body, speech and mind have become useful even for one sentient being. We should rejoice at how wonderful this is, that we are able to serve even one sentient being, that we have become useful to even one being. There are numberless sentient beings, but being useful even to one sentient being, how wonderful it is. How wonderful it is.

We can get satisfaction, we can enjoy life, on the basis of this attitude, thinking like this, that our life is for other sentient beings—on the basis of *this* attitude, and that universal responsibility and compassion. This is the purpose of life, on the basis of this attitude, thinking, “My life is not for me. This life, my life is not for me, it’s for all sentient beings, to pacify their suffering, to obtain happiness, to do this service. My life is for the enjoyment of other sentient beings. I am here to be used by the sentient beings.”

All this practice, all this attitude, all this service is completely the opposite to the ego, the self-cherishing thought. When our attitude, when our service becomes like this, completely against the self-cherishing thought, then there’s much happiness in life; there is real satisfaction in the heart. When our attitude of body, speech and mind is the opposite to the ego, when it becomes altruistic service for other sentient beings, then the sun of happiness has risen in our heart.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF SELF-CHERISHING: WORKING JUST FOR THE SELF

The problem is at present we do something for others, but our attitude doesn’t change. All the time we do work for others, in the family, in the office, in the company, in the factory, doing government work, even as a musician or singer or whatever, even making jokes, as a comedian—the one who tells jokes on and on and on—we always do work for others, but the main problem is our attitude never changes.

Even though we spend all our time working for others, our work is always related to others, still we face problems in life because our attitude is still selfish, egoistic. When the attitude is egoistic, self-cherishing, only concerned our own happiness, doing this work to make money for our happiness and comfort—when our attitude is only like this, my comfort, my happiness, constantly, day and night, day and night, this becomes the practice of the self-centered mind, the self-cherishing thought, rather than the practice of altruism or bodhicitta. Our constant concern, the main aim in our life is only happiness for ourselves.

First of all, our main concern is our own happiness, to have enjoyment, to have a good reputation and so forth. The happiness we are concerned about is not ultimate happiness, the complete cessation of the whole, entire suffering and causes. It’s not even the happiness of future lives, not even that long-term happiness. It’s the happiness of just this life, which is only a few years’, a few months’, a few days, a few hours’ happiness. It’s very short-term happiness. The happiness of the self that we are concerned about is very short-term happiness.

How we live this life with the self-centered mind becomes the basic problem. The work that we do doesn't get dedicated for others. The work that we do in the office, in the family, for the government—wherever—none of these things are dedicated from the heart so they don't become service for others. For the mind it becomes work for the self; we are working for ourselves alone.

Even if we work in a hospital, looking after people, since this is the attitude, in reality it becomes work for the self. We are working for the self. That's why there's no happiness in life. There's a blockage for happiness, for the enjoyment in the life. There's always dissatisfaction. Especially when there's a failure, we become unbelievably depressed, crazy, having a nervous breakdown—all these things, even committing suicide.

The work we do could have so much benefit, but because of our attitude we don't enjoy life; there's no enjoyment. It becomes a job. The work becomes a burden to us because our attitude is concerned only with our own happiness, even though the work we do gives benefit to others, because others' happiness is dependent to us. Their success depends on us. For example, the employer. Is the one who gives the job an employee or employer? [*Student: Employer.*] Then, one who does the job? [*Student: Employee.*] So, the employer's success, happiness, depends on the employee. Is that correct? So, even just in a very narrow way of thinking, the employer's success and happiness depends on the employees. The employees are part of that. The employers are dependent on their work and the quality of their work.

Even though there is benefit, giving some comfort, some happiness, some success, for others; even though these things are happening, because the attitude is for our own happiness, the main aim of life becomes just our happiness, that way the work becomes simply a job. It's just a burden.

Therefore, even if at the beginning there's some interest, we try so hard to find a job, sooner or later it becomes boring. Sooner or later it becomes very boring. Life becomes very, very dissatisfying, very sad.

DEDICATING OUR LIFE FOR OTHERS



[Chenrezig Institute 1991](#)

It's all to do with the attitude. On the other hand, even if we don't have all our limbs, even if we have an imperfect body, there is still something we can do. Even if it's small, there's still something we can do to benefit others. So we can feel happy. Even if the benefit is very small, if our attitude is that our life is for others, to pacify their sufferings, to obtain happiness for others—even if the benefit we can offer others is small, we can have happiness.

Even if we get money from people by working, if our attitude is like this, we are working for others. We feel universal responsibility and compassion, by thinking of the meaning of the life, which is to free others from the undesirable sufferings and causes, and help them to obtain happiness. Even if we get money from others, our work becomes for others; it's dedicated to others. The money we get from others is also basically for other sentient beings.

With this attitude, living in a comfortable apartment with every luxury—house, food, clothing, all these things—with this attitude, then all these enjoyments are used for others, all the things we do are done for others, for the sake of other sentient beings. We ourselves are able to offer service to other sentient beings, and we are able to develop our own mind to be able to continue the practice. With this attitude everything becomes dedicated to other sentient beings and so all these things become beneficial for other sentient beings. Even if we are not working, even that is for the benefit of other sentient beings.

The bodhisattva saint has completely renounced the attitude of working for the self and only has the attitude of working for others. Whatever work he does, with body, speech and mind, it becomes only the work for other sentient beings. He takes on the responsibility to work for other sentient beings. He voluntarily takes upon himself the work for other sentient beings. This being is called a bodhisattva, a saint, a holy being unstained by the self-cherishing thought, the thought of working for oneself.

The attitude of the bodhisattva, the saint, is that whatever he possesses—food, clothing, place, whatever enjoyment, whether the saint is a king, a millionaire or a beggar—in the mind of the bodhisattva, everything is for others, everything belongs to other sentient beings. Everything is others', including his own body, speech and mind. Everything is others', for the use for others. He uses things solely for others. He takes care of them as a servant, like other sentient beings are the master and he is the servant. The other sentient beings are the ones from whom he receives all success and happiness.

It's very important on the basis of this attitude, which is the meaning of life, to dedicate our own life for others, thinking, "My life is for others, to pacify their suffering, for them to obtain happiness." We use our life for others, like the four elements—water, fire, earth, wind—are used by the sentient beings for their happiness. It's up to the sentient beings how they use them. However they want to use the elements for their happiness is up to them. In exactly the same way as the four elements, our life is the basis of the means of living for other sentient beings. We should think and pray this way in our everyday life, to be used like the four elements, completely used by the sentient beings for their happiness, to obtain temporary and ultimate happiness. That's how our life should be, to become the basis of the means of living for other sentient beings, to be beneficial for other sentient beings in our everyday life. We should pray like this and try as much as possible to live our life with this attitude.

With this attitude then, whether other sentient beings are able to use us for their happiness, and when we are able to do work for other sentient beings, to offer service, we

can feel happiness. Without this attitude in our life, however hard we work, we can't feel happiness, because the work becomes for the self, because the attitude becomes the self-centered mind, the self-cherishing thought.

This is important. If a beggar asks—if even one sentient being asks—for food or something, or money, then to be able to give even that little help, giving food or money or whatever, even to give that little service, that little help, we should feel happy that we have found this opportunity, that we have been in any way useful to others. We should think that other sentient beings have needed us and have found us useful.

It's very important to know, as I mentioned before, that the most perfect, the most complete service—even for one sentient being—is only when we become fully enlightened. We must be enlightened to be able to do perfect service without the slightest mistake, even for one sentient being, from life to life, to lead sentient beings to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, which is the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind, having completed all the qualities of the realizations.

Even so, we should feel happy with whatever service we are able to do for others in our day-to-day life. Whatever we're able to do we should feel happy. We should think, "Even this much I'm able to do. Even this much I'm able to benefit others. Even this much service I'm able to offer to others, or that others have found me that much useful, how wonderful it is. How good it is." So we should rejoice. We should rejoice. This way, there's satisfaction. Even this is very good. Even this much we're able to do is very good. This way we give ourselves satisfaction.

Otherwise, we don't see our qualities, we don't see the good things we're doing in life. We only see the suffering. We only see the suffering life, only the negative part of life. This helps to encourage us, to give us courage, to give strength within ourselves. To rejoice in the benefit we are able to offer others, even if it is tiny, is wonderful because it gives strength, encouragement within our mind. We are able to see our own potential.

And so, no question about taking care of many people, serving many people, many other sentient beings, no question serving the country or society, a great number, no question. But even if it's not like that, even if we're working to take care of just one person or one animal, even taking care of a baby, we can think, "How wonderful it is that my five limbs have become beneficial for one sentient being. How wonderful that I've become needed by one sentient being for their happiness."

BODHICITTA: THE BENEFITS FOR OURSELVES AND FOR OTHERS

The basic thing to know is that this is the purpose of life. This change of attitude is the most important one; it's the source of all happiness in life. It's also the door that stops depression. It's the solution to stop depression and loneliness, these things. Because loneliness, depression and such things basically come from the self-centered mind, the ego, the self-cherishing thought, therefore, when we change our attitude, that is the best

solution to close the door on depression and loneliness and all those emotional, mental problems that lead to physical problems.

As I also mentioned yesterday, this change of attitude, living our life with this positive attitude, is a new mind. The other attitude is not new; it's very old. It's from beginningless lifetimes. This old attitude is not only from this rebirth, not only from this present life's rebirth, but from beginningless rebirths.

This new attitude becomes the best way. This way, the mind become very healthy, it becomes the healthiest mind, not having the chronic disease of the self-cherishing thought, this uptight mind whose continuation has had no beginning. This mind becomes the healthiest mind, which then becomes a great support for the physical body. It's also the best way to be physically healthy.

As I mentioned, this altruistic attitude is the meaning of life. The other thing is how other sentient beings are so precious and so kind. The more we realize how other sentient beings are so precious and so kind, the more we are happy to serve them, naturally, without feeling it's a burden. Then, we're so happy to do even a small help for others, and even a big responsibility, even a big job, even some work that's very hard, we're so happy to do for others. Something that is a very heavy job, very hard work, very difficult to succeed in, even that we are so happy to do for others. No matter how hard it is, the more we realize how others are so precious and so kind, the happier we are to do whatever they need. That's another one. Again there's enjoyment, happiness in the life, the more we realize how they are so kind and precious.

The purpose of the life is to pacify others' suffering, to free everyone from all the suffering and causes and to obtain happiness for them, to benefit for other sentient beings. That's the purpose of life.

Now in regards to benefiting other sentient beings. One way to benefit other sentient beings is by giving them material support, giving them the comfort of this life, the happiness of this life. That is one way. More important than that is long-term happiness. I might repeat that again. One way is giving food, clothing, medicine and such things. This external help gives others comfort, happiness, like for example, giving a lot of external support for the people in Ethiopia and so forth. Another way is causing them to have the long-term happiness of future lives, not just for this one. That becomes more important because it's long-term happiness. Even though it's temporary happiness, it's long-term happiness. It's like comparing the importance of one day's happiness and many years' happiness. The difference is like that. There are big differences between this life's happiness and the happiness of many future lifetimes. There are big differences. The second one becomes more important than the first one, short-term happiness.

Then, the third way is more important still. It is of greater benefit than the second one. This way is to completely eliminate the cause of the suffering that is within their minds, to completely eliminate the action and the disturbing thoughts, the all-arising truth. By completely eliminating this in their minds is the only way that they can be completely

free forever from the suffering of death, rebirth, old age, sicknesses and so forth, from all the problems.

As regards the problems, there are different types of problems, such as the suffering of suffering and the suffering of change, that suffering which appears as pleasure but which is still a suffering, a problem, only called pleasure because it's unnoticeable. Then, the third problem is [pervasive compounding suffering], which means that the association of the body and mind, that which is called the aggregates, is defiled. The aggregates are not free, not pure; they are defiled.

Because of disturbing thoughts, wrong conceptions, we apprehend things—the I and the aggregates and all things—not according to reality, but completely the opposite to reality, which is a hallucination. It's a wrong conception. Ignorance apprehends the I and aggregates and phenomena not according to reality, but completely hallucinated, that which do not exist *at all*.

So, this association of body and mind which is defiled by this wrong concept—disturbing thoughts and the seed of these disturbing thoughts—because of *that*, these aggregates compound another suffering realm, another samsara. It creates, it compounds, another association of body and mind, which again is defiled, which again joins to, circles to another life, to another samsara, the suffering realm.

This is the third problem, and this is the fundamental problem. Because of this third problem, then the suffering of suffering comes with rebirth, death, all these things, and then the suffering of change and all those other problems arise. By completely eliminating the cause of suffering which is within the mind of sentient beings, and then bringing them to the ultimate happiness, ultimate liberation, so that they are forever free from all the entire sufferings and problems, *this* benefit is much more important than even the previous one, the second one.

An even greater benefit than this third one, an even bigger benefit, is to bring everyone to enlightenment, to make their mental continuum completely free from even from the subtle imprints left by the disturbing thoughts and dualistic view. This benefit is to cause their mental continuum to be completely free from all these subtle obscurations. Then, when their mental continuum becomes completely free from these stains, even from these subtle stains of mind, then all the qualities of the mind, all the qualities of the realizations, are completed. Their enjoyment is completed; there's no higher enjoyment to experience. This is peerless happiness, full enlightenment. To bring all sentient beings to this state is the greatest benefit we can offer all sentient beings. This is the greatest benefit for all sentient beings and this is what we should offer.

I thought we might talk a little bit about reincarnation, since we talked about future lives. And about the mind a little bit. Just something to think about.

So I think I'll stop here anyway.

LECTURE 4



[With Lama Osel Rinpoche at Labrang Monastery](#)

THE REALIZATION OF IMPERMANENCE AND DEATH IS THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS IN LIFE

All causative phenomena are changing within every second, within every second, by cause and conditions. Just pay attention, just practice awareness, on this subtle impermanence, on the nature of these subtle transitory causative phenomena, on their

subtle impermanence. Just concentrate on this point. That it doesn't last, that these things do not last even within a second, that these things do not last even within a second.

Because of this, these things can be stopped at any time—either the object of anger, the object of attachment, the object of any of the three poisonous minds, and those beings who are separate from us. Even ourselves, our own life, our own body, all these things, there is nothing definite in anything; it can all be stopped any time.

This is the reality. Because these things are in the nature of change, they cannot last, cannot stay, cannot exist, without changing even within a second, because they are under the control of cause and conditions. The person we are angry with or attached to, that person, that object does not last forever; it can be stopped at any time. And also we ourselves who get angry, who get dissatisfied, who develop the dissatisfied mind of attachment, who have these disturbing thoughts arise about the objects, this can also perish, as death can happen at any time. This is the nature of phenomena; this can happen any time.

In the same way, material objects can be stopped any time. This is the reality of how they are. We should just concentrate a little bit on this.

By reflecting on the reality of these things, immediately it gives peace in the heart; it releases our mind from the prison of attachment. It releases us out of the prison of the dissatisfied mind, attachment. When we reflect on this, suddenly there is no point in getting angry at the object. Suddenly we don't find any purpose, any point in becoming angry. Then it also frees us from the concept of permanence; it breaks the concept of permanence.

One of the fundamental problems in our life is the concept of permanence, apprehending these phenomena—which are in the nature of impermanence—as permanent. We ourselves, our own life, our body, enemy, friend and stranger, the sense objects and so forth—all these things are in the nature of perishing, in the nature of changing within every second and can be stopped at any time. However, we apprehend them all the time as permanent, as unchangeable. We apprehend that they will last, that they will be like this all the time. They are like this now and they will be always like this, forever. By incorrectly apprehending how they exist, we think, “I will have these things forever. I will have these possessions, I will have these friends, I will have this and that.” We think that they will continue to exist, that they're going to be like this all the time, as it is now.

We live our life with this concept of permanence, looking at these things in a way that is not true, believing in it. Looking at these things in the wrong way, seeing things that don't exist as existent, is a hallucination; this is not reality.

Therefore, when we discover the gross changes, when we come to understand the gross changes when these things get stopped, when they cease to exist, it becomes a great shock. It becomes a great shock. Suddenly life becomes a great shock and we have great fear. When these things happen, when we discover these things, which are opposite to our

concept of permanence, we see they don't exist in reality. Suddenly life becomes kind of depressed or crazy. We are unable to cope with the situation, unable to handle it. When these gross changes happen, when we see them, these problems arise.

This concept of permanence becomes the basis for the dissatisfied mind, attachment, anger and so forth to arise. This concept of permanence becomes the basis of life's problems, the basis of life's pain. It's the basis of relationship problems, loneliness and so forth, all these problems that constantly cause people to ring up, day and nighttime, to talk about their problems. What's it called where people ring up? Social service? Talk-back radio? Talk-back radio program.

I listened to a little bit of that in Sydney, where people rang up with their various problems. In the nighttime, you go to one place and then people ring up constantly to talk about their problems, while one person listens. They want to express their problems to somebody; they need to talk to somebody.

All these things are based on this, the wrong conception, the concept of permanence, apprehending these causative phenomena as permanent. Looking at these things in the wrong way, in a way that doesn't exist.

First of all, if we live our life with the concept of permanence, having the concept of permanence, that mind under the control of the concept of permanence is itself a painful mind. When the mind is controlled by the concept of permanence, life becomes confused, and that brings suffering into our life. Then those other, different disturbing thoughts arise and that brings our life more problems.

On the other hand, practicing awareness, living our life with awareness, with right understanding, brings freedom. Seeing causative phenomena—the self, our own possessions, our body, the surrounding people and so forth—seeing these causative phenomena are in the nature of impermanence, we see them as they are. Seeing them in the nature of impermanence, we see them as they are in reality. This gives us freedom. This way of seeing gives freedom to us. The other one doesn't give us freedom. The other one ties us into the prison of anger, attachment and so forth. It keeps our life in suffering, with problems.

Now here, with this awareness, with the thought of impermanence and death, it gives freedom. It releases us from the confused mind, the afflicted mind, from the discriminating thought, anger, attachment, ignorance and the concept of permanence. Because it frees us from the cause of suffering it frees us from life's problems. This comes as soon as we pay attention to, as soon as we meditate or reflect on the impermanent nature of these phenomena, how they are in the nature of changing within every second, and how they can be stopped at any time. As soon as we reflect on this, desire, the dissatisfied mind, stops immediately. Immediately it stops that. Immediately it stops that. Because of that, immediately there's peace in our heart. Immediately there's peace in our heart, there's happiness or relaxation in our heart.

What is peace? What is happiness in life? Real happiness in life, peace of mind? That is the absence of the dissatisfaction, of desire. Real peace of mind is that. Real happiness is that—the absence of dissatisfaction, the absence of the desire. Therefore, when we reflect on the nature of impermanence and death, the nature of the life, the nature of the causative phenomena, impermanence—that these things can be stopped any time—the dissatisfied mind of desire, attachment, immediately gets stopped. There's no place in the mind for it.

That's why the meditation on, or the realization of, impermanence and death is the source of happiness in life. That is the fundamental method or source that gives us great freedom in life. If we really want freedom, if we really want liberation, we need to practice the awareness of this. We should achieve the realization of the impermanence and death if we really want real peace of mind in life, real happiness.

FOLLOWING THE DISSATISFIED MIND BRINGS PROBLEMS

This is the point. It will come more later in the different parts of the lam-rim when there will be more detail. However, the point is that following the dissatisfied mind, desire, the mind seeking suffering, is not the method to seek happiness. The way of seeking happiness in life is *not* following the dissatisfied mind, desire. This is the basic thing. It's like if there's a wire, for example, where electricity comes from in order to have light and that wire is burned or something, not connected, then the light doesn't come. Or if the pump is broken or something, then there's no water. Some mechanism we need for something is broken, it doesn't function, bringing only obstacles, the opposite to what we wish.

It's like that. Since the practice of *not* following the dissatisfied mind, desire, is not there, it's not happening, there are constant problems in life, there's constant unhappiness in life. Because that practice is not happening, there is constant unhappiness. No matter how much wealth we have, no matter how many friends we have, no matter where we travel—in the water or in the sky, to the highest mountain or the lowest place or whatever, to the countryside or inside a city—there are problems.

When the wire is connected there's no obstacle to having electricity; when the pump works there is plenty of water. We use all these machines to get what we want, to go where we want to go. That's their function. Similarly, if there is the practice of *not* following the dissatisfied mind, desire, then there's happiness, there's peace of mind.

As I often say, as soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, desire, attachment, immediately there is peace. Wherever we are—in the office, in the family, even in the prison, in the place where we get punished—the minute before when we were following the dissatisfied mind, desire, there were unbelievable problems. We saw only problems in our life, like gloomy, bad weather, with the sky completely filled with dark clouds. Like those days when it is completely dark, very dark, kind of very depressed weather. We can't see one positive thing in life; we don't feel there is any peace. We are so miserable, so unhappy, with our mind thinking there are only problems. The minute before, when

we are following the dissatisfied mind, it's like this. We've either failed in business, we've lost a big amount of money, or particularly we have relationship problems, a friend we expected so much from suddenly changes and starts disliking us. That person doesn't love us anymore, maybe they have left us or something.

We are not born in hell yet, but it's like being born in hell. What comes out in the mind is nothing positive. No positive thought comes. There seems no possible solution and so the thought comes that it is better to die, to commit suicide. First we can kill the other person and then kill ourselves. If we are unable to kill the other person, then we kill ourselves.

I met a man at Singapore airport—not the new one, but the one before. He was a very, very old man and he said he had an incredibly important thing to tell me. He said he was not sure whether he would survive today. He could not say why. He asked to meet, so after one or two days, I think we met. Then he said that he had taken care of his wife for so many years, but then she went away with somebody for quite a long time. She wrote she was coming back. He told me that he had promised in front of the Buddha that he would kill himself and he would take her also. He said, "I will also take her with me." What I think he meant was he would kill her also, then kill himself. I think, in some ways he thought that he would be able to take her with him, something like that, by killing her. Because he promised in front of the Buddha to do that he said that his life was not sure any day. Later I rang him to try to talk about how precious life is and so forth, but I don't know what happened after that.

So anyway, the minute before it was like this, when we are following the dissatisfied mind, desire, but as soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, desire, wherever we are, at that moment, immediately on the same seat, immediately, there is great peace. As soon as we stop, by knowing this is the problem, this is the main suffering and this is the main creator of the problems. This happens as soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, desire, looking at it as poison, not looking at it as a quality of mind, not thinking that this is what we are. Not looking at it and identifying it as ourselves. "What I am is this dissatisfied mind, desire." We see it as poison rather than identifying ourselves as that mind, thinking this dissatisfied mind, desire, is what we are and without that we don't exist.

Rather than using it as our own identification, as the definition of our existence, we look at it as the creator of all problems, as the fundamental suffering. We look at it as poison, as a disease of the mind, *the* chronic disease of the mind, which is much worse than cancer, AIDS or any other thing called disease by people in the world.

THE DISSATISFIED MIND CAUSES ILLNESS

This dissatisfied mind, desire, is a much more severe disease. It is much more serious than all those other physical diseases because all those other physical diseases are based on this, they come from the dissatisfied mind, desire, attachment. Diseases such as cancer, AIDS and so forth that are regarded as frightening by the people in the world are based on this; they come from this.

Actually, the dissatisfied mind, desire, is a much more severe disease, a much more dangerous disease, than all those other diseases. By having this we then experience those other diseases again and again. Even if we recover, we have to experience them again and again even in this life. They come back again and again because we create the cause out of having this dissatisfied mind, desire. Even if we recover in this life, as this cause of the disease, this dissatisfied mind, desire, is not eliminated, is not changed, we create action, karma, and that brings the disease again and again, from life to life.

I myself don't remember seeing the term *cancer* in Tibetan medical texts. Probably that exact name wouldn't be there. It might have a different name or different symptoms might be given, but with all those different things, it's possible to call it cancer. This was explained by an educated doctor who studied with His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, who is my root guru, from whom I received the first teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment, at Sarnath, which is the place where the Buddha turned the first Wheel of Dharma, the four noble truths. This man was a well-educated doctor. He explained that the female spirits called *mamo* breathed poisonous breath into people who had degenerated samayas, [2] who had done unrighteous actions, which means having done certain heavy, harmful actions toward other sentient beings. As they breathe, the poisonous breath goes into them. Then that breath somehow becomes the condition for tiny, tiny germs or tiny worms to develop. These tiny worms then go through the blood or through the body and eat the cells; they go through the body.

This is what he said but it's related to cancer. I think I saw a description in the text explaining about some of the conditions of the disease. After that comes the medicine, the remedy. It's something related with Vajrapani, but I don't remember that part a hundred percent clearly. However, it's like when we talk about a disease such as TB, tuberculosis. When people who have TB breathe, the breath goes into somebody else's lung, then they catch the contagious disease, TB. In the text there are those descriptions that are similar to other conditions of cancer. It is explained like that.

In the West, karma—having done some harmful action toward others—as the cause of disease is not discussed. That part—the mind and the motivation, the attitude and the action—is not talked about, guilt as a cause is talked about. Western texts talk about somebody having guilt and then getting cancer. Somebody feels guilty, or has the thought of having done something wrong in life, and then cancer results. Still, the texts don't talk about the cause. There's still something missing. Guilt is a result not the cause.

The motivation and the action that cause the guilt are not talked about. Whereas, understanding the cause gives us the chance to change the root, the cause—wrong motivation and wrong action—because the real cause is not explained there is no chance to change. The real cause is not explained, and even if there is an explanation, only conditions are explained, only the conditions of cancer, only the secondary things, the conditions of the disease. The conditions are explained as if they are the main cause. Wrong attitude and wrong action, which are the main cause of cancer, the main cause of disease, unwholesome action, that part is not described, not explained.

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN BEINGS AND SKIN CANCER

There are many conditions, but if we don't know the real cause we don't know how to change, and we don't stop. We constantly create the conditions. Because the cause is there, once we have the cause, then there are the conditions for the disease to happen. We constantly create the conditions for the disease. If there's no cause of the disease, if there's no cause of cancer in the mind, if there's no cause within us, there is no possibility to have the conditions for the disease. To have the conditions for disease, there has to be a creator. For skin cancer, for instance, something has to make the hot sun become a condition. It has to have a creator. Something has to make the hot sun become a condition for skin cancer. Whatever those other conditions are, something has to make them become the conditions for that disease.

The external things becoming conditions for disease depends on having the internal cause. It depends on having the cause within the person. As I often say, if the hot sun is the main cause of skin cancer, then everybody who lies down in the sun should have skin cancer. Everybody whose body is exposed to the sun should get skin cancer. If that is the main cause, how many eons, how many centuries has it been since human beings happened on this earth?

Whether human beings happened from the monkeys or whether the original human beings happened on this earth; for the majority of the original human beings, their consciousness came from the higher realms, from the form realm. After the earth evolved, their consciousnesses took place on light, on sparks of light, and then they had a light body. The original human beings had a light body.

Then, gradually because of the imprints from past, [they lost their light body.] Even though they were born in the higher realms, with their past lives born in the form or formless realms, still they were not free. They were unable to completely remove disturbing thoughts, ignorance, anger, attachment, karma. They were unable to abandon, to remove the imprint, the seed. Much later, they saw an object, some earth, and by seeing those certain objects, because the imprint of attachment was not removed from past lives, attachment for it arose. Even though they had such a body in the nature of light, by meeting these certain objects, like humidity or certain other things, such as the earth, then attachment arose.

Then, by eating those impure substances, their bodies became gross. This is similar to us today. Even though we don't have a body in the nature of light, we have a gross body, but depending on what kind of diet we eat, with some diets our body feels very light, and our mind feels very fresh, very aware, very clear. Our body kind of feels very light and healthy. But due to some heavy diet, such as eating some black food, [meat, fish, eggs, onion, garlic and so forth] then our body can feel very heavy and our mind can also be kind of unclear. So, the kind of food affects our body and mind.

Because the gods' past lives' imprints of attachment were not removed, by meeting certain objects attachment arose, and then, having taken those impure substances, their light body degenerated and became an ordinary body. Their body became gross.

Before, there was no sex organ, but then after that, the sex organ developed due to past karma, due to past action. Then again, the same thing. Because of the past habit or imprint, by seeing the object then attachment arose for each other. Then, after having sex, these things happened. Because of that, they needed to build a house, kind of for privacy. This just happened.

The main point is that whether human beings started from monkeys or from consciousnesses that came from the higher realms, gradually they degenerated and their bodies became gross.

How many centuries ago has it been since human beings started on this earth? [If the sun is the cause of cancer] then there should have been skin cancer from very beginning. From the time that the body has been exposed to the sun, there should be skin cancer from the very beginning. If the sun is the main cause of cancer, if there's no other cause for skin cancer, if the sun is the only cause, there's no other evolution before that, then skin cancer should have been there from the beginning.

The conclusion is that everybody who exposes their body to the sun doesn't get skin cancer. Only some people get skin cancer. That proves that the hot sun is not the main cause, it's a condition. It's not the main cause. Those who have the causes to get cancer within them will get it. For *them*, the hot sun becomes a condition to experience cancer. For those who don't have the cause within them, the hot sun doesn't become a condition of cancer.

By having the very root cause within us—the ignorance not knowing the ultimate nature of the I, phenomena and so forth—our hallucinated mind apprehends things completely the wrong way. Even though everything is empty of inherent existence, we apprehend all phenomena, all existence, as inherently existent. This ignorance is the very root then, the cause of the dissatisfied mind, attachment. This is the basic cause of diseases such cancer.

It's explained in the Tibetan medical texts that all diseases are based on the three diseases: phlegm disease, bile disease and wind disease. Those three diseases have mental causes, caused by ignorance, anger and attachment. It's explained like this in the scriptures, the medical texts, about the evolution of disease. So, basically there's ignorance and then, on the basis of that, attachment rises, and then, having done some heavy nonvirtuous action, this disease happens. That's the cause.

It seems that there are holy beings who are completely free, by having actualized the very highest path of tantra, the Secret Mantra. They have complete control over the elements: the inner elements and the outer ones. Those who have complete control over the inner elements of inner fire, water, air, earth, in this way also have control over the outer elements. Those who are free, who have completed the whole path and who have ceased

all the mistakes of mind, all the cause of the sufferings, they're different. How those enlightened beings appear to have such a thing [as disease] is only the appearance according to the minds of sentient beings. For the sake of us ordinary sentient beings, there's usually some story that relates to some nonvirtuous action. We hear a story, how something happened and then this thing happened.

For instance, there is a story about arthritis. The great yogi, the enlightened being, Padmasambhava, who was the one that who purified the land of Tibet, who first spread the Buddhadharma in Tibet, was invited by the king of Tibet. During that time, when Padmasambhava was at Samye, the first monastery to be built in Tibet, there was a queen who had a child with one of the ministers. I think the child was buried in the wrong place. Due to this pollution, many people in that area got sick, and the king also got sick, not having a clear mind, feeling very polluted. The ministers checked with the astrologists who said the king had become polluted. Then they checked with the doctors who said the same thing. The queen herself got arthritis. All her limbs were completely deformed with arthritis. She was very scared that the king might kick her out or torture her or punish her.

The ministers couldn't figure out how it happened so one went to check with Padmasambhava. He said, "I have the solution. I'm the yogi who sees everything, who sees everything is empty. I'm the yogi who has these realizations, and I have the solution." So Padmasambhava told her she didn't have to worry. He told the king not to torture her, not to punish her. He advised them to collect many different types of incense that stop pollution being received from different beings. He told them to take it all on the next morning to Hepori, a mountain near Samye.

Then Padmasambhava wrote a meditation text, a puja to eliminate all the pollution, the harms, done by different beings, by offering incense first to the Three Jewels, then to the protectors who are beyond samsara, then to the worldly protectors, the landlords, the nagas and so forth. Because of the pollution those different beings received, the place became polluted and, due to that, many people in the whole area became diseased.

Padmasambhava wrote this text with the story about how the disease happened from the queen's sexual misconduct and the baby being buried in the wrong place. Due to these things, it happened that the queen herself got arthritis in the limbs and was deformed. Due to this puja, the king, the queen and the people in the area all recovered.

Stories like this show that even things like arthritis, diseases that are so difficult to cure, are based on, are related to, attachment, the dissatisfied mind of desire. The conclusion is that.

Life's problems, including diseases such as these, don't come from the outside. Life's problems come from the mind, they come from our own mind. Similarly, happiness doesn't come from outside but from our own mind. Where happiness comes from is our own mind.

Therefore, as long as we put the blame for our suffering on external things, as long as we point to the outside, seeing suffering as coming is from outside, and happiness coming from outside, there's always a problem.

RENOUNCING DESIRE FREES US FROM PROBLEMS



Bern 1993

Therefore, because happiness and suffering come from within our own mind, since we dislike problems, we should eliminate the problem from our own mind and we should seek happiness from within our own mind.

As I mentioned before, following the dissatisfied mind, attachment, only causes endless suffering. It is not the method for real peace of mind, for life's happiness. It's the method or the cause of life's problems. As soon as we stop following this dissatisfied mind, attachment, immediately, right at that second, immediately, there's tranquility. There's inner peace, there's happiness in life, happiness in the heart. There's relaxation, there's rest. There's rest in the mind, rest in life. When we are free from the dissatisfied mind, desire, there's real rest, a real holiday. That is the real holiday! When the mind is in a state of peace, free from the dissatisfied mind, desire, that is the real holiday. That time you're having the real holiday, the best holiday. Otherwise, even if it's called a holiday, it's still suffering.

So much expense, all done for that suffering. But here, wherever we simply free ourselves from problems, from the dissatisfied mind, desire, attachment, that is the best holiday. Even if we live in a grass hut or a ruined house—even if we are homeless, without shelter—if our mind is in such a peaceful state, we are free from the problems.

This happens immediately, as soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, desire. Before, there were relationship problems, unbelievable problems. Before, we lost our business or our company broke down or whatever, all these things, there was so much unhappiness, so much unhappiness. What came into our mind was only problems, driving us to the point of committing suicide to finish our life.

We don't need to do that. As soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, that is the key, like changing channels on the TV. The key to happiness and suffering is our mind. We choose, like we choose which channel to watch. Whether we want to see fighting, people killing each other, or whether we want to see musicians singing and entertaining us, that depends on which channel we choose. Similarly, whether life is happiness or suffering depends on which channel we choose in our mind. With one way of thinking we see suffering in life, we create suffering, problems, in life; with the other way of thinking we create happiness in life.

As soon as we stop following the dissatisfied mind, desire, immediately there's peace. There's freedom, peace, within our heart, within our own life. Therefore, immediately the problem is stopped, there's no longer any problem in life. We don't see a problem in life. Therefore, this is what practicing Dharma really means. This is what meditation, Dharma, really means. That's why there's so much happiness practicing Dharma.

What happens in our life if we don't practice Dharma? What happens in our life if we practice Dharma? There are big differences in our life between the two, like between the sky and the earth. There are big differences. The other way is suffering; this way is peace. The other way there are problems; this way there are no problems. There are huge differences.

I didn't get to continue the other subject!

This morning, the main point of the subject is that everything—happiness, suffering—is dependent on our own mind, the way we think, what we do with our own mind, how we treat our own mind. I gave the example of the TV channel, which we turn this way or turn that way.

The point to understand is that we have great freedom. We have great freedom, we have great freedom. Therefore, there's no reason to despair. It's not hopeless; life is not hopeless. Life is not hopeless, it's full of opportunities, full of hope, full of potential. Therefore, we should strengthen our mind to practice, to develop our mind.

So, I'll stop here.

LECTURE 5



1990

THE WRONG CONCEPT OF PERMANENCE

Practicing awareness, we should look at things as they are, not just looking at them in a hallucinated way, seeing things that don't exist. We should look at these causative phenomena, such as ourselves, our own body, our life, our possessions, the people surrounding us—friends, strangers, enemies and so forth—we should see that these things are causative phenomena, being in the nature of impermanence. Being aware of things as they are, realizing the nature of these phenomena as they are, we give ourselves freedom, we give ourselves liberation, real freedom, real liberation. We free ourselves

from the whole entire sufferings, from all problems. We free ourselves from all the causes of the problems, which is within the mind.

The other way, the concept of permanence—apprehending these things in completely the opposite way, as permanent—is the basis of life's problems. It's the basis for all those other problems to arise. This concept itself is the cause of problems. This wrong conception itself produces other disturbing thoughts, anger, attachment and so forth, and therefore it becomes the basis for creating many harmful actions or negative karma—actions that result only in suffering. This becomes the producer of so many of those negative karmas, those actions.

This wrong conception is the creator of so many of the problems of life, the sufferings of samsara. There's a huge difference in the effect depending on whether we look at these things according to their nature or whether we look at them in the wrong, hallucinated way, seeing them in a way that doesn't exist, as permanent—as a permanent I, a permanent life, permanent things, seeing the surrounding people as permanent, the objects as permanent. We think that it's always going to be like this, as we see it now, as it appears now, but this is not true. All these things appear to our hallucinated mind as unchangeable, even though they are causative phenomena and are changing within every second, by being under the control of cause and conditions. That's why all this decay happens, why things perish or are stopped—because of cause and conditions. Even though this is the nature of these phenomena, to our hallucinated mind they appear as permanent, and then our own mind believes that these are true.

This concept becomes our greatest obstacle. Even if we know that a meditation practice is something useful, beneficial to our own mind, to our own life, something that is needed, still we are unable to develop it. Even if we think that Dharma practice is worthwhile, beneficial, for ourselves and for other sentient beings, somehow we are unable to practice, unable to begin the practice, unable to continue, unable to develop. This concept of permanence blocks us, stops us from doing all these things.

Even if we try to practice meditation or practice Dharma, it stops it becoming pure. What interferes with all this is this wrong concept of permanence, looking at impermanent, causative phenomena as permanent. Believing this concept cheats our life; following this wrong concept of permanence cheats our life. We ourselves follow this wrong concept, we cheat our own life. We cheat our own life. That's what makes life empty.

Here, we're not saying that seeing permanent phenomena as permanent is incorrect. Emptiness, space and so forth, are permanent phenomena, and so to see them as permanent is correct. We're not talking about this here. We're talking about seeing impermanent phenomena as permanent. These impermanent phenomena appear to us as permanent and then we believe in that appearance. This is the mind that cheats our life.

This concept of permanence doesn't allow us to open our heart to a new method, to a new way of life, to seek a spiritual path. It doesn't allow us to open our heart to the spiritual path, to the right path, to Dharma. It doesn't allow us to open our heart, our mind to right

path to happiness, to liberation, to full enlightenment. It makes the mind closed, narrow; it gives us a very limited view of life. It gives us a very limited view of what happiness means, a very limited view of peace of mind. It even gives us a very limited view of the method to achieve happiness. There is no space in the mind to look for other methods. So, even the method we choose is a complete hallucination, completely the wrong method, one that only leads to problems, only leads to suffering. The mind itself gets stuck on it and there's no space to go beyond that concept, to hear about and learn other methods. This wrong concept of permanence, apprehending impermanent phenomena as permanent, doesn't allow us to open our mind.

FACING DEATH WITHOUT THE DHARMA

I heard about a Japanese boy in America—I think in Santa Cruz. I think maybe he had cancer, I'm not sure, but he suddenly came to know he was going to die. He got very upset with the world, so angry with the world. "Why do I have to die? Why do I have to die?" He got very angry with the world. He was breaking things; he was breaking tables, he was breaking the objects around him. He was so upset, thinking that the world cheated him.

He was a young, intelligent boy but somehow, I guess, he never thought about death, he never thought about this part of the phenomena, about death, the fact that we have to die and we have to make preparations for death. We have to study about death, to learn about death, and to make preparations in order to not have suffering at death. Even though we have to experience death, we don't have to suffer at death, to have a suffering, unhappy death. We can have a beneficial death.

So, anyway, even though he was young and intelligent he didn't really get to think about the real part of life, what is really needed for ourselves, what is really needed for our own life. It seems the way he thought was that the world cheated him. I think it has some meaning. I think, if we relate this experience to the ordinary experiences of our daily life for us ordinary people, I think this has some meaning. As I mentioned, for us, the surrounding people and the material possessions, our own life, body and so forth, even though their nature is impermanent—changing within every second, by cause and conditions—they don't appear this way to our mind. They appear as something concrete, something permanent.

I think the way this Japanese boy thought is related somehow to this, to these kinds of hallucinations, these appearances of life. Somehow, rather than putting the blame on himself, pointing to his own mind and its wrong concepts, he put the blame on the outside. Rather than pointing to his wrong concept as that which cheated him, to his wrong conception, to the hallucinated mind, he blamed external things. If he had pointed to his own mind, he could have also understand the solution, which is to not follow that wrong concept, not to listen to that wrong concept, that concept of permanence. But instead he just put the blame on outside phenomena, on the world around him and because of that he died with much anger.

I've heard many stories of people who have cancer. A student at the Vajrapani Center in Santa Cruz, a nurse who looked after dying people, told me the story of the Japanese boy. I've also heard from nurses and other people who deal with cancer patients, how so many people get angry, saying, "Why do I have to die?" In this way, even at the very end of life, rather than having a calm, peaceful life, in the very last part of life [there is so much suffering.] Even if in their earlier life they suffered so many problems, on and on, even if they spent most of their life having problems, at least at the very end of their life, they should have some peacefulness, to die with some peace of mind. However, besides their whole life being spent that way, even at the very end of life, they die with a lot of anger.

All this is because, having not studied during their lifetime, they always resented death. While they had the time and the capacity; while they were young and physically healthy and there was no mental degeneration; while there was intelligence to learn, they didn't study. They were not like many old people, who have lost their memory. They didn't have these problems, but while they had the time and opportunity they didn't get to study about death. They didn't get to study about death and they didn't really get to learn about their own life. And so they always resented those very important points of life which have to be understood. It doesn't help by just simply rejecting them; that doesn't solve the problem. Not thinking of it doesn't solve the problem.

They didn't get to make any preparations for death. They didn't get any work done to make death beneficial, beneficial for themselves and for all sentient beings. In other words, they weren't able to make death a happy experience, rather than a terrifying experience. They weren't able to become a good example for other sentient beings, an inspiration for other sentient beings, rather than depressing them. They didn't get to learn, to practice, to work for, to prepare for death while they were young and healthy and everything. They didn't get to open their heart; they didn't get to open their mind to those things, to those parts of the spiritual practice.

Then, suddenly, finding out that now they had to die, they think, "Why me? Why do I have to die?" I've heard this from many people who take care of these patients with cancer, AIDS and so forth. Not having done the meditation, they didn't get to study Dharma, they didn't get to practice during their life, so when they come to know that now life is going to end, they become so angry. They are unable to use the news as a practice, as a meditation to create the cause to achieve not just temporary but ultimate happiness, to achieve full enlightenment, the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind, and all the qualities of realizations. They are unable to use the death experience for that, in order to free every sentient being from all the obscurations, sufferings, and lead them to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment.

To simply accept impermanence is the nature of phenomena cuts down emotional problems, giving that much peace. So, for them, even at the very end, life ends with violence, violence within their mind, violence to their own life. Basically, their life is cheated by this wrong concept of permanence, this hallucinated mind.

THERE IS NO ANGER WHEN THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF IMPERMANENCE

We just have to concentrate a little bit to see all these causative phenomena—our own life, our body, our possessions, the surrounding people, all these things—are changing within every second.



Because these causative phenomena are changing within every second by cause and conditions, these things can be stopped at any time—including our own life, our own body, all our possessions, the surrounding people, friend, enemy, stranger. All these things can be stopped at any time.



Not only are these phenomena in the nature of impermanence, they and all existence, while existing, are empty from their own side. All of existence, while they exist, appears as real, existing from their own side, existing by themselves—all these are empty, all these are a hallucination, all these are empty. While all these exist—subject, I, action, object—while all these things exist, they are empty from their own side. While they exist, they're completely empty from their own side.

This is the second reason. There is not only the first reason, impermanence, that these phenomena I mentioned before are in nature of impermanence; not only that, all existent things, while they exist, they are empty from their own side.

Therefore, there's no basis at all for anger to arise, for ignorance to arise; there's no basis at all for the dissatisfied mind, attachment to arise. For all these other disturbing thoughts, there's no basis, there's no reason.

When we look at these phenomena according to their characteristics, according to how they are, suddenly there's no reason for anger, ignorance, the dissatisfied mind, attachment, and all the rest of the disturbing thoughts to arise. When we reflect on their characteristics or their nature, the nature of their existence, the nature of these phenomena, it's complete nonsense for wrong concepts such as ignorance, anger or attachment to arise. We see it's complete nonsense. It's unreasonable, complete nonsense; it's childish.

When we leave our mind out, in the view of the hallucination, the wrong conception, at that time it looks like there's reason for anger, attachment, those disturbing thoughts, but when the mind is not following the wrong concept, when the mind is brought into reality—when we focus the mind and bring it to the reality of things, of existence, there is no reason at all for these wrong conceptions to arise. Suddenly these wrong conceptions

are stopped when we bring our own mind to this understanding, to this awareness of the reality of these existent objects.

With this concentration we see all these existent objects as such. The prayer, the Heart Sutra, the Essence of Wisdom, says all phenomena, starting from the I, all these things exist but at the same time are empty of existing from their own side. So, as much as possible, with that meditation or with that awareness, we go over the prayer, which becomes a meditation on the ultimate truth, in order to realize the ultimate truth so that we can eliminate the cause of the suffering. We can only eliminate the cause of suffering and the whole, entire suffering by developing this wisdom, this particular wisdom, the wisdom realizing the ultimate truth of the reality of the I, of all existence and so forth.

THE HEART SUTRA RECITATION

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem. Thus did I hear...

[The group recites the *Heart Sutra*; Rinpoche chants *Lion-face Dakini* prayer.]

Chant the first verse, the first stanza, then recite quickly.

THE MEANING OF LIFE IS TO BENEFIT OTHERS IN THREE WAYS

As I mentioned the day before yesterday in regards to the benefits of offering to sentient beings, first we're going to go over what is the meaning of human life. What is the meaning of human life and how each of us has universal responsibility, how we are all responsible for every sentient being's happiness, to free them from all the sufferings and to obtain happiness for everyone. Each of us is responsible for that, starting from the nearest sentient being, the nearest person, the family, and extending to all the rest of the sentient beings. Each of us is responsible all their happiness, for both their temporary happiness and ultimate happiness—not just their temporary happiness but especially their ultimate happiness.

I'm going to go over the benefits of giving only external help, giving benefit to others, comfort, happiness, by giving only external help, with external means. And starting from there, the different levels of benefits that we can offer. What is more important? To cause them to have long-term happiness, or the previous one, giving only external help, material help, causing them to have some short-term happiness and comfort?

Causing them to have the happiness of future lives, even though it's temporary happiness, is still long-term happiness, whereas the previous one is just to do with this life, just one lifetime's comfort, which means some years, some months, a few days, or even some hours. But here, the second benefit, causing the happiness of future lives, is long-term happiness, even though it's temporary happiness. Therefore, this one is more important than the first one.

The second benefit is more important but the third one, causing them to have ultimate happiness, to lead sentient beings to liberation, is more important still. To cause them to have liberation, to completely cease the cause of suffering that is on their mental continuum, making it impossible for them to experience suffering again. To free them from the cause of the entire suffering of samsara, the defiled aggregates that join us from one life to another life, to this suffering realm, to be free forever from this whole, entire suffering and its cause and to bring all sentient beings to ultimate happiness. This is more important than the previous one, causing the long-term happiness of future lives, which is temporary.

The even more important benefit we can offer the sentient beings, more important than even the third one, is to cause them to cease completely all the imprints left by the disturbing thoughts and to cease even the subtle imprints which are left on their mental continuum, to cease them all completely. In this way their mind is completely free from all the obscurations, the mistakes of the mind, which has two aspects: the disturbing-thought obscurations, that mainly interfere with achieving liberation, ultimate happiness, and the obscurations to full knowledge, the subtle imprints, the subtle obscurations, that interfere with the mind being able to see all existence directly. This is the main interference, the main obstacle to causing the mind to be perfected in all the qualities of all the realizations and achieving peerless happiness, full enlightenment. This is what is called full enlightenment, great liberation. Bringing sentient beings to this peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, this is the greatest benefit. This is the greatest benefit to sentient beings.

These are the answers to the question, “What benefit should I offer other sentient beings?” “How should I help other sentient beings?” The whole of the lam-rim, the whole graduated path to enlightenment, the whole of the teachings, the whole meditation practice, the whole subject of this course, is the answer. That is the answer how to benefit others, and even concerning our own happiness, how to live our life.

Already the main talk of the last few days has been basically how to live our life. A simple way to understand it is how to live our life, how to make our life most beneficial, most meaningful. Whatever different style of life we live, we need to know how to make it most beneficial, most meaningful toward ourselves and especially toward all sentient beings.

All the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment are an elaborate, essential answer on how to benefit other sentient beings, how to help other sentient beings. It is a very extensive subject. To be able to help others, to be able to benefit other sentient beings, we should avoid giving harm to other sentient beings. If we give harm to other sentient beings, we can't benefit them. This is a very extensive subject, to avoid giving harm to other sentient beings and to benefit other sentient beings. Even though this is the very essence of the whole practice, the whole of Buddhadharma, the teachings of the Buddha, the very essence of the whole of meditation, it's still a very extensive subject. To abandon giving harm to other sentient beings and to benefit other sentient beings is a very extensive subject. The whole lam-rim, the whole teachings of the graduated path to

enlightenment is contained in this. The whole teaching of the Buddhadharma is contained in this—to stop giving harm to others and to benefit other sentient beings.

THE THREE LEVELS OF PRACTICE

Before mentioning that, as far as the teachings revealed by the Omniscient One, by the kind, compassionate Shakyamuni Buddha, there are three levels of teachings. The teachings of the Lesser Vehicle path were revealed to those sentient beings who have less capacity, or a lower level of mind. The Lesser Vehicle teachings, that path is revealed, taught to them. For those who have a higher capacity than them, the teachings of the Great Vehicle or Mahayana were taught by the Buddha.

Within those teachings there is Sutra and Secret Mantra. So, among those disciples who have an even higher level of mind, with more intelligence, more merit, more capacity, for those who have more capacity of mind, from the Mahayana teachings, the teachings of the Secret Mantra was taught. Among those who have the highest capacity of the mind, the teaching of Secret Mantra was taught to them by the kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha.

To avoid giving harm to other sentient beings includes abstaining from outside conduct, by abstaining from committing those negative karmas, those harmful actions on the object, sentient beings. All that part of the practice is contained in the first teaching, the first instruction, to not give harm to other sentient beings. That is the main emphasis in the Lesser Vehicle teaching. From these three levels of teaching, avoiding giving harm to other sentient beings is all included in the Lesser Vehicle.

Then from the Mahayana teachings, there is the path of gone beyond, the Paramitayana, the Sutra teaching, and the teaching of the Secret Mantra. These two teachings are contained in the second instruction, to benefit other sentient beings. Both the Paramitayana teachings and the teachings of the Secret Mantra, that are taught to the beings of highest intelligence, who have the highest capacity of the mind, are included in the second instruction, benefiting other sentient beings.

So the whole path—the Lesser Vehicle path, the Paramitayana path and the Tantra or Secret Mantra path—is all included in this: avoiding giving harm to other sentient beings and benefitting other sentient beings. It's a very extensive subject.

WE NEED TO ACTUALIZE THE WHOLE LAM-RIM



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And as far as the essence of the whole Buddhadharma, the lam-rim, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, this again comes in three divisions: the graduated path of the lower capable being, the graduated path of the middle capable being and the graduated path of the higher capable being.

The first instruction, to not give harm to other sentient beings, is included the teachings of the graduated path of the lower capable being and the middle capable being. This part of the teachings is included in the first instruction, to not give harm to other sentient beings.

Then the teachings of the higher capable being, that part of the lam-rim, that subject of the graduated path of the higher capable being, is contained in the second instruction, to benefit other sentient beings. So again, the whole entire essence of the Dharma, the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment, goes into these two instructions: to not give harm to other sentient beings and to benefit other sentient beings.

To be able to abandon all the harm to other sentient beings and to be able to offer all the benefit to the sentient beings, we have to actualize all these paths. We have to actualize the entire lam-rim, the whole graduated path to enlightenment, otherwise, there's no way to do all these things.

At the moment we can't help, we can't guide, even one sentient being perfectly. We can't enlighten even one sentient being; we can't lead even one to the peerless happiness, the cessation of all the mistakes of mind and having all the qualities of the realizations. We can't do perfect work, perfect help, perfect benefit, for even one sentient being.

One thing is because there's no compassion. And even if there's compassion, there's no perfect power, there's no perfect wisdom, so there's a limitation in understanding. We can't see the level of the other person's mind; we can't see the other sentient being's karma, what kind of karma, action, this sentient being has created in the past. And so as well as having a limitation in understanding the level of the other sentient being's mind, their action, their karma, we can't see what method needs to be revealed that fits the other sentient being's mind in order to bring them from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. Right now, what is suitable? So, there is a limitation in the wisdom, a limitation of understanding the methods.

Then, there is a limitation in the power to reveal the suitable methods, the unmistakable methods, to sentient beings. Because we ourselves don't know what the right path is, there's no way to reveal other sentient beings' right path, to save them from the cause of suffering, and from the whole, entire suffering. In order to free them, we need to reveal the right path, the path that definitely leads to that goal. If we don't know it, there's no way we can help even this one sentient being, to bring him to the ultimate happiness, the cessation of the whole, entire suffering and its causes.

For example, when the mother is in danger of being drowned, her armless daughter or son can't rescue her. They can't immediately go there and save the mother from being drowned. There's a limitation in the capacity, so we can't perfectly help even one sentient being.

Therefore, in order to offer the greatest benefit to other sentient beings, to bring all sentient beings to the peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, first we ourselves should achieve full enlightenment. First we should achieve full enlightenment. When we have achieved full enlightenment, at that time, we have completed the mind training of compassion for all sentient beings as well as having completed the wisdom training,

directly seeing all the past, present, future existences, and there's perfect power to reveal the methods.

THE QUALITIES OF A BUDDHA

A buddha, a fully enlightened being, has completed the mind training in compassion. The amount of love and compassion an enlightened being has is many hundreds of thousands of times greater than the love and compassion we have for ourselves. No matter how much love and compassion we have for ourselves, a fully enlightened being's love and compassion is many hundreds of thousands of times more. Comparing a fully enlightened being's loving thought of compassion—how much that enlightened being has for us—and what we have for ourselves, it's much more, hundreds of thousands of times more. There's no comparison. When we become enlightened, we have that amount of compassion toward all sentient beings.

Then, when we have an omniscient mind we can see, we can read, every sentient being's mind; we can see all the different levels, the capacities, without the slightest mistake. The omniscient mind sees every single method that fits each sentient being, to gradually to bring them to full enlightenment.

It's mentioned in the teachings that people tested the Buddha by collecting trees from various parts of the world and chopping them into very tiny pieces, cutting them up into very tiny pieces, and then putting the pieces in the ocean and stirring for hundreds of years, for a long time. Then, somebody took out each tiny piece and asked the Buddha where it came from. The Buddha could explain exactly from which country, from which place, from which part of the tree, that tiny piece came from. He could see and explain everything exactly.

There are so many examples of the Buddha's life story in the teachings proving to other sentient beings that the Buddha has an omniscient mind and is able to see all the past and present and future, all existence, every single existence, directly, without the slightest mistake.

Then, also, by having perfect power, to guide even one sentient being we are able to manifest in various forms. With the holy body, holy speech and holy mind, with even each pore, we are able to manifest in various forms. Even in one second, each beam that comes from the holy body liberates numberless sentient beings and leads them to happiness. It frees them from suffering and leads them to happiness, even in one second. Even to guide one sentient being, a buddha manifests in so many different aspects.

Of the twelve deeds, while the Buddha was performing the deed of taking birth in India, in other worlds the Buddha was living in the teachings and then in other worlds, he was passing away. In yet other worlds he was performing the deed of living the life of austerity. So while the Buddha was doing one action here, in other different universes he was performing different actions.

When the Buddha was revealing the Dharma, each person heard according to the level of their mind. To one disciple, the Buddha revealed the teaching of impermanence but another disciple heard teachings on emptiness. How many thousands, billions, of sentient beings there are listening to the teaching, they all heard according to their level of mind, exactly the one that fits. He has perfect power to guide other sentient beings.

The point is this. How is it possible for this mind of ours to become an omniscient mind? How is it possible? It even looks impossible for this mind to live life without attachment, so how is it possible? Even that is difficult to understand. How can we live our life without attachment? Even that is difficult to understand, difficult to figure out. But it looks like that, it looks like it's possible, because this mind has a clear light nature. The nature of the mind is buddha nature. That is buddha nature. That is buddha nature, and our mind has all the potential to be like that. The clear light, the nature of the mind is buddha nature, so therefore this mind has all the potential to become like that, to be developed. Even during our life, sometimes our mind is in a very bad state, sometimes it's in a good state, with a more positive attitude, more patience, more compassion. In this life, even in one year, even in one month, even in one day, the mind changes, the state of mind changes.

At this time, the reason we have this precious human body is because this mind has all the potential. That's why we have received this precious human body, which has all the opportunities to develop, to achieve any happiness we wish.

So, I'll stop here.

LECTURE 6



Instituto Lama Tsong Khapa 1988

MEDITATION ON IMPERMANENCE AND EMPTINESS BEFORE THE HEART SUTRA

Friend, enemy, stranger and so forth, all these causative phenomena are changing within every second, because they are under the control of other cause and conditions.



That's quite interesting. Because of their impermanent nature, they are changing within every second, decaying. These causative phenomena, within every second they are decaying. They don't last.



And because of this reason, these things can be stopped any time. We cannot trust that they can exist all the time; that every day they will continue to exist. We cannot trust that they exist, every day.



With the previous concept, the concept of permanence, before we meditated, before we brought our attention onto the nature of these causative phenomena, while we held the concept of permanence, there was suffering in our life. With that result there was only samsara. With this thought, the thought of impermanence, looking at phenomena according to their nature, there's peace in the mind, freedom. There's the result, liberation, ultimate liberation.



We are giving ourselves human rights. With that, we are giving human rights to ourselves. By freeing ourselves through meditation, through the realization of impermanence, we're giving ourselves peace, giving ourselves liberation by becoming free from the whole, entire suffering and causes. We free ourselves from the confused mind. We protect ourselves, we guide ourselves with the practice of awareness of impermanence and death, with the realization of this meditation.



Then, the next [meditation] is that all existence—I, action, object—all existence, while they exist they are empty from their own side. While all these things—I, action, object, everything—exist, at the same time they're empty from their own side. That they appear to exist from their own side is a hallucination. It's completely empty. These truly-existing things cannot be found if we analyze. These things cannot be found there if we analyze, therefore they don't exist. These things do not exist as they appear to—real from their own side. All these things are not true. So, just concentrate on this.



The I is like that; the action is like that; the objects are like that. They are all empty from their own side. Nothing of this is real from its own side.



So, while these things exist, at the same time they are empty. They are empty from their own side. Therefore, there is no reason at all for the deluded mind to arise, for anger, ignorance, and the dissatisfied mind of desire, attachment, to arise. There is no basis for these things.

So, as much as possible with the same awareness, we go over the different phenomena that have been explained, trying to look at them as empty, looking at their ultimate nature. Going through the prayer, going through the different phenomena, again we meditate, meditating by looking at their nature, which is empty from their own side.

[The group recites the *Heart Sutra* in English.]

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem. Thus did I hear...

THE PRAYER TO THE LINEAGE LAMAS

Without [merit] it's not possible to have realizations, just as only by planting a seed in the ground, without minerals, without water, without the necessary soil and protection from the obstacles, the seed alone can't produce the crop. Simply reflecting on the teachings, meditating on the path, just knowing the teachings of the path and then just meditating on them, that's not sufficient. It depends on the necessary conditions, accumulating merit, with practices such as the seven-limb practice, the mandala offering, then pacifying the obstacles through confession and so forth. We need to pacify the obstacles, to purify them through the practice of confession and so forth. By using the various practices of purification, such as Vajrasattva, prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas and so forth, by confessing our downfalls, we receive the blessing of the guru within our own mind.

Receiving the blessing of the guru is like how the crops are nourished by the rain. If there's water or if there's rain, then the crops, the plants, can grow well, otherwise they remain dry and can't grow. To be able to use the mind, to be able to change it, to transform it into the path, to make it possible to generate the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment within our own mind, depends on receiving the blessing of the guru within our heart and then creating the other necessary conditions by accumulating merit and pacifying the obstacles, the negative karma, the obscurations.

More explanation might come later but here I'll just introduce why these prayers are recited. This particular prayer, the following prayer is *The Requesting Prayer to the Lineage Lamas*. This is from the kind, compassionate Buddha, the fully-enlightened Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who is the founder of the present Buddhadharma, who revealed the

extensive path, the method, and the profound path, wisdom. The graduated path to enlightenment has two aspects: the extensive path and the profound path—method and wisdom. The extensive path is the method side.

Starting from the founder of the present Buddhadharma, the kind, compassionate Shakyamuni Buddha, from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha then down to my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, and other gurus, from whom I have received the commentary of the lam-rim teachings and the commentary of the *Jorchö*, the preparatory practices, which enables us to generate realizations, which gives the necessary skillful means to generate realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment within the mind. From the heart, we make a strong request to the lamas up to our gurus—those who have completed the whole path to enlightenment, those who have gone through the path, those who have completely pacified the obstacles and generated the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment, the profound path and extensive path—we make a strong request within our own mind and in the mind of other sentient beings.

The last verse is repeated twice. With the first request particular obscurations are purified. From the common path, the particular obstacle for wisdom is the concept of true existence, ignorance. The concept of true existence is purified. From the common path, the main obstacle to actualizing the method, bodhicitta, is the self-cherishing thought. So those two fundamental obstacles are purified, and from [the uncommon path] Highest Yoga Tantra, the main obstacles—the impure, ordinary appearances, the ordinary concepts and the subtle dual view—those things are purified.

With the first request the general obscurations and then these particular obscurations that interfere with generating the method and wisdom aspects of the common path and the particular obstacles that interfere with generating the method and wisdom from Highest Yoga Tantra are all purified. Then, with the second request, you actualize the whole graduated path to enlightenment, and in particular from the common path of method and wisdom, from the method, you actualize bodhicitta, the altruistic wish to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, as well as the wisdom realizing emptiness, and then from the Highest Yoga Tantra, the extremely subtle wisdom, the clear light and the method, the illusory body. These things are generated within your own mind.

The result of these two paths, method and wisdom, is the dharmakaya and the rupakaya. After that, you generate within yourself that which is in the holy mind of the merit field. It's also a replica; it doesn't matter. This is the basic visualization, the meditation that goes with *The Requesting Prayer to the Lineage Lamas*.

This requesting prayer to the lineage lamas is called *The Requesting Prayer Opening the Door of the Supreme Path*. It was composed by Lama Tsongkhapa. I don't remember a hundred per cent but maybe the place he composed it was his hermitage, the cave, Wolka, where Lama Tsongkhapa did many hundreds of thousands of prostrations or mandala offerings on the stone. In the hermitage, the cave, Lama Tsongkhapa did many

hundreds of thousands of prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas. Maybe it was composed there, I don't remember a hundred percent.

This requesting prayer is regarded as very precious, very blessed. Uncountable numbers of practitioners of the graduated path to enlightenment have generated realizations by doing this, by doing the *Jorchö* preparatory practice, which includes this special requesting prayer, this very blessed, very precious requesting prayer to the lineage lamas composed by Lama Tsongkhapa. By doing this practice every day they received the blessings of the gurus, then by receiving the blessings of the gurus they were able to generate the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment. Through this, uncountable numbers of the practitioners of the graduated path to enlightenment have completed their Dharma practice, completed the path to enlightenment.

With the second repetition you can also visualize that the replica absorbs into yourself. You can also do that.

This is how the practice is done. Those who are familiar with this practice should make a strong request. The main thing is to purify all the obstacles with nectar beams then generate realizations of the whole path to enlightenment, developing all the qualities that are needed to free all the sentient beings from all the sufferings and obscurations and lead them to full enlightenment. That is the main point, the main aim. You are trying to visualize the qualities, the realizations, that you're trying to achieve.

So, at the moment I'll say that much.

When we recite the refuge and bodhicitta prayers, we say, "To the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, I go for refuge until I achieve enlightenment." As I mentioned yesterday, the Buddha, or enlightened being, is one whose mind is completed in having compassion for all sentient beings as well as having perfect power to guide sentient beings to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment, and having the omniscient mind, fully, directly seeing all of existence, even in every second, in every split-second. In every split-second the omniscient mind can see directly every single existence—all the past, present and future, all together, seeing everything all together, seeing everything at the same time. The mental continuum is completely free from all obscurations, all mistakes of the mind. Because of that the mind is able to function like this.

CONVENTIONAL AND ABSOLUTE BODHICITTA

We ordinary people can't see what's going to happen even this afternoon, even in the next hour. Even in the next hour we can't tell what's going to happen. To recognize a disease we have to go to see a doctor, we have to rely upon somebody else, even to find out about our health. We can't even see the things inside the body; we don't understand them completely. Even those very gross phenomena in the body we can't see clearly.

We can't see what's behind us, can't see what's at our back side. We can't see what the back side of the head looks like. For the front, we also use mirrors. Even for the front we

have to see by taking refuge in the mirror. If the shopkeepers didn't sell mirrors, if the companies didn't make mirrors, I think it would be very difficult to be able to judge.

A buddha has two aspects, the conventional buddha and the absolute buddha. The absolute buddha is the omniscient mind, that wisdom, the omniscient mind, the dharmakaya. That is the absolute buddha. And then the conventional buddha is the truth for the all-obscured mind. That is the rupakaya, the form which that wisdom, the dharmakaya, manifests into. That is the conventional buddha. When we take refuge, we rely upon the absolute Buddha and the conventional Buddha, the absolute, the enlightened mind and the conventional buddha, the conventional enlightened being.

CONVENTIONAL AND ABSOLUTE DHARMA

Then, there is the conventional and absolute Dharma. The wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, the true path and the true cessation of the sufferings, the delusions, the obscurations, that is the absolute Dharma. The conventional Dharma is the scriptures: the Tripitaka or the three baskets of teachings or the teachings of the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment. That is the conventional Dharma.

The Dharma is the actual refuge, like the actual medicine that allows us to recover from a disease, that fights the disease, that cures the disease. We are cured from a disease by taking the medicine. Similarly, the actual refuge is the Dharma, that which removes all the causes of suffering within us and within sentient beings. It is the mind or it is on the mind. The Dharma is that which completely separates the mental continuum from the cause of the suffering, the disturbing thoughts and action, karma. The Dharma separates the consciousness from this, making it pure, separating it from the mistakes of the mind.

What actually removes the obscurations, the delusions, is the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which is called the true path. The true path, the true cessation of suffering, here particularly means the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. This is the main one that removes the defilements, the obscurations.

THE FIVE HINAYANA PATHS

Actually here, within the Dharma, the actual refuge, comes the whole path to liberation, to the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path, and the whole path to great liberation, full enlightenment. The whole path comes here.

Without bodhicitta, without the altruism to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, we just generate the renunciation of samsara and then enter the Lesser Vehicle path. There are two types: the hearer-listener and the solitary realizer or self-conqueror. These are the two types of Lesser Vehicle path to achieve liberation for the self. The difference is that the solitary realizer has accumulated more merit than the hearer-listener.

There are five paths to achieve liberation for the self. Each of these paths for the hearer-listener and solitary realizer has five categories [?] to achieve liberation for the self, the

complete cessation of all the disturbing-thought obscurations and the whole, entire suffering.

The first path is *path of merit*. That means that during its duration, by entering the path the very first time, we accumulate merit. To enter in the path, first we have to generate the renunciation of the whole, entire samsara, the whole cycle, the defiled aggregates that circle from one life to another life. These present aggregates, the association of body and mind, which are defiled, being under the control of the karma and delusion, join, circle to the next life's aggregates, then they circle to the *next* life's aggregates. The continuation of these aggregates circles from one life to another life like this. This gross body itself doesn't go to the next life, but the aggregates, the consciousness, circle to the next life, joining from the previous.

These aggregates, which are defiled, which join to the next life's aggregates, this cycle is called samsara. They are that which become the basis for all problems: death, old age, sickness, rebirth and so forth, the whole entire problems.

However, by not having the slightest attachment to this, to have the determination to be completely free from this, from this samsara, from this cycle, from these aggregates—having generated this realization, then we enter in the first path of the Lesser Vehicle path, the path of merit, the first time through, accumulating merit, which is why that path is called the path of merit. This is the realization that the meditator has. This first path has three categories: the small path of merit, the middle path of merit and the great path of merit.

Then, after that one, through concentration, we actualize the *path of conjunction* [preparation]. When we have achieved the great path of merit, before actualizing the path of conjunction, during that time we realize emptiness. We have to have the realization of emptiness in order to enter in the path of conjunction.

This path of conjunction has four levels, four categories: *heat*, *tip*, *patience* and *supreme Dharma*. Before the actual flame comes that burns the wood, there has to be heat. There has to be heat, then through heat the flame comes that can burn. The first category, *heat*, is similar to this.

The third path, the *right-seeing path*, is the wisdom that directly perceives emptiness. That is the actual one that during this time burns the delusions, the disturbing thoughts. So, this path of conjunction is preparatory, this is a kind of sign of the preparation to actualize the right-seeing path, to actually, directly, burn the delusions, the obscurations. This second path, the path of conjunction, has four categories and after achieving the second one, *tip*, it's impossible for heresy to arise again, heresy in connection with the Three Jewels, with karma and so forth, thinking that such things are not true. Before this level, there's a possibility for heresy to arise, but after this level, heresy never arises. So, it's called "tip."

After that, the third one is *patience*. Before that, there's no confidence to never be reborn in the hell realm, to never be reborn in the hungry ghost realm, as a spirit, to never be reborn as an animal. There's no confidence before that. It *is* possible, due to strong good karma, that for example in one life we create much good karma, positive actions, having a kind-hearted mind and then at the time of death, we don't have to worry about being reborn in the lower realms. We are confident to receive a better human or deva rebirth in the next life. But that doesn't mean all future lives are going to be like this. It doesn't mean in all future lives we will never be reborn in the lower realms. It just means that we have the confidence that in the next life we won't be reborn in the lower realms. But there's no confidence that in all future lives we will never be reborn in the lower realms. But here, if we achieve this third category of the path of conjunction, patience, then we have full confidence that from now on we will never be reborn in the lower realms. Even if we are still not completely free from death and rebirth, from here on there is full confidence, there's no fear of being reborn in the lower realms.

After having completed these four categories, we join the right-seeing path, which is why this second path is called the path of conjunction. It allows us to join to the third path, the right-seeing path.

Then this *right-seeing path* has the *duration of equipoise meditation* and then the *duration after attainment*. After attainment? The *subsequently-attained duration*.

The equipoise meditation also has two: the *uninterrupted path* and the *liberated path*. Within the equipoise meditation, there are two aspects: the uninterrupted path and the liberated path. Then there is a path that is neither of these two, which is the wisdom realizing emptiness, which is in the mental continuum of that meditator. Then there's a path which is neither the equipoise meditation nor the subsequently-achieved duration, such as the realization which is within that meditator's mind of the four immeasurable thoughts.

During the uninterrupted path, this wisdom which is in equipoise meditation becomes the direct remedy to the disturbing-thought obscurations, which are to be abandoned during the right-seeing path.

Due to doctrines we have wrong views, disturbing-thought obscurations, such as the concept of true existence. There are [also] simultaneously-born [wrong views] which are views we are born with from beginningless rebirths, such as the concept of true existence. So, due to wrong doctrines, we have these beliefs, then the simultaneously-born concept of true existence. Here, during the right-seeing path, the disturbing-thought obscurations are removed, that is, the wrong views that happen due to wrong doctrines. There are about a hundred and twelve disturbing-thought obscurations and they get removed or abandoned by this right-seeing path. This is how much delusion gets removed by this path.

Then, through equipoise meditation during the third path we achieve the fourth path. This is how the mental continuum transfers from the right-seeing path to the path of

meditation. It is called the right-seeing path because this is the first time emptiness is perceived directly.

In the same way, through equipoise meditation, the mind is transferred to the *path of meditation*, and again there is the *duration of equipoise meditation* and the *subsequently-attained duration*. Then, within the equipoise meditation, again there are two types, the uninterrupted path and the liberated path. The uninterrupted path is that which becomes the direct remedy to the delusions, but the liberated path is the one that actually removes the disturbing-thought obscurations, those which are to be abandoned by the path of meditation.

The disturbing-thought obscurations that are abandoned by the path of meditation are the simultaneously-born disturbing-thought obscurations, such as the wrong concept of true existence that has been in the mind from beginningless rebirths, the wrong concept that we are born with.

This path of meditation removes, I think, the sixteen disturbing-thought obscurations. Then after that, by completing this path, we achieve the path of no more learning. By completing this path, we have completely removed the disturbing-thought obscurations, the seeds, all together. By having completely removed even the seeds it is impossible for delusions to arise. This cessation of the whole, entire suffering and causes, the disturbing-thought obscurations, which exist on that mental continuum is liberation. That is nirvana, the sorrowless state.

THE FIVE MAHAYANA PATHS

By actualizing the renunciation of samsara as a preliminary, if we then generate bodhicitta we enter the Mahayana path, the Great Vehicle. The categories of the path, the *path of merit* and the *path of conjunction*, are similar to those of the Lesser Vehicle path.

A bodhisattva who has achieved the first Mahayana path, the path of merit, who has completed the small path of merit, the middle path of merit and the great path of merit, this bodhisattva is able to directly see numberless buddhas. Wherever the bodhisattva is, outside or inside the meditation room, he is able to see buddhas in their nirmanakaya form, in the holy body of the supreme transformation.

From the path of conjunction, the mental continuum of the meditator transfers to the *Mahayana right-seeing path*. That is similar to before, with the equipoise meditation in two aspects: the duration of equipoise meditation and the subsequently-attained duration, and two levels: the uninterrupted path and the liberated path. When the meditator achieves the liberated path, after having abandoned the disturbing-thought obscurations which are to be abandoned by the right-seeing path, he achieves the first of the ten bhumis. The first bhumi starts from there.

During the Mahayana right-seeing path, he not only removes the hundred and twelve disturbing-thought obscurations, but also the subtle obscurations, the obscurations to full

knowledge, those obscurations that interfere with the mind fully seeing all the existence, directly seeing. These hundred and eight subtle obscurations are removed by the Mahayana the right-seeing path.

When the mental continuum transfers from there to the *Mahayana path of meditation*, then it's the same thing. The sixteen delusions and then the hundred and eight subtle obscurations are removed by the Mahayana path of meditation. This is also similar in the equipoise meditation having duration of equipoise meditation and the subsequently-attained duration, and two levels: the uninterrupted path and the liberated path.

As far as the ten bhumis, the meditator will reach the eighth bhumi, at which time the disturbing-thought obscurations are completely removed. Therefore, from the first bhumi up to the seventh is called the *seven impure bhumis*. Then the last three—eight, nine and ten—are called the *three pure bhumis*. *Bhumi* is Sanskrit for “ground” so we can say the seven impure grounds and the three pure grounds. The last three are called pure because the meditator's mind is unstained by the disturbing-thought obscurations.

By completing these eighth, ninth and tenth pure grounds, the very last one on the path of meditation is called the *concentration like a vajra*. This is the direct remedy to the subtle obscurations so at this stage the meditator has completely removed the subtle obscurations, the obscurations to achieve omniscient mind. At that time the mental continuum is free from all the disturbing-thought obscurations and subtle obscurations, so the mental continuum becomes the omniscient mind, the dharmakaya. That is what is called enlightenment, that mind that is completely free from all the obscurations and completed in all the realizations.

THE LOWER AND HIGHER TANTRAS



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According to the lower tantra, there are two paths, with wisdom is called *not having a sign* and the method side is called *having a sign*. Meditating on emptiness with the yoga practice of the deity is the yoga of not having a sign, whereas without meditating on emptiness, the yoga of the deity is called the path having a sign, which is the method. So in the lower tantras method and wisdom are both needed to achieve enlightenment, the dharmakaya and rupakaya.

In the Highest Yoga Tantra, there is the *generation stage* and the *completion stage*. The generation stage is like this. Before practicing tantra, we receive the four initiations from a qualified vajra master, which definitely plants the seed of the four kayas on the consciousness. It makes the mind a receptacle to meditate on the generation stage and the

completion stage, to meditate on the path of the Secret Mantra. Without receiving an initiation that plants the seed of the four kayas, the mind cannot become a receptacle to meditate on the path of Secret Mantra.

During the generation stage, through visualization we use death, intermediate state and rebirth to achieve the three kayas, the dharmakaya, the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. Doing this practice of the generation stage leaves a potential on the mind to achieve full enlightenment with the three kayas and it leaves the potential to purify the ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state and ordinary rebirth, the suffering death, the suffering intermediate state and the suffering rebirth. It leaves potential to purify these things. It also makes preparation, during the generation state, to achieve the path-time three kayas, the path-time dharmakaya, the path-time sambhogakaya and the path-time nirmanakaya.

So, practicing the generation stage sadhana of all the Highest Yoga Tantra deities has these benefits, these advantages, on the basis of purifying the impure concepts, the impure appearances.

Then during the completion state, we actualize the path-time dharmakaya, the path-time sambhogakaya and the path-time nirmanakaya. The completion stage path-time dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya are the ones that actually stop, that actually remove the ordinary death, ordinary intermediate state and ordinary rebirth. The completion stage is the one that actually stops the suffering death, the suffering intermediate state and the suffering rebirth. By achieving the path-time three kayas, we then achieve the result-time three kayas, the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. Then, without the slightest mistake we are able to do perfect work for all sentient beings, by manifesting in innumerable numbers of forms, according to the minds of the sentient beings.

CONVENTIONAL AND ABSOLUTE DHARMA AND SANGHA

All of these paths are contained in the Dharma: the true cessation of suffering, the actual refuge, Dharma. These contain all these paths, including the whole path to enlightenment. So, the Dharma that we take refuge in is not just the subject of the four noble truths, not just the subjects that only reveal the four noble truths, not just that.

In tantra, the generation and completion stages, which completely cease the gross mind, completely cease the dualistic view—all that is contained in the Dharma. The true path to the cessation of the suffering, all that is included in this.

Absolute Dharma is the true path that reveals the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. In the Sutra Path this is the gross wisdom, in the Tantra Path, the subtle wisdom. Then there is the cessation of suffering, of the obscurations. Conventional Dharma refers to the scriptures, which explain the whole path, so we take refuge to both conventional and absolute Dharma.

Then, in order to completely pacify the obscurations through the actual refuge, the Dharma, we need to rely on the Buddha. Just as in medicine, in order to take the medicine we have to go to see a doctor to tell us what medicine to take. In order to get the right treatment we need to rely upon the doctor. It's the same here, we have to rely upon the Buddha, who revealed the path, who revealed the Dharma. That's why taking refuge in the Buddha, relying upon the Buddha comes here. The Buddha is the one who revealed the path.

Then, the Sangha. There is the absolute and the conventional Sangha. We take refuge in the absolute Sangha and the conventional Sangha. The absolute Sangha are the ones who have the realization of the absolute Dharma, the true cessation of suffering. The conventional Sangha are four fully-ordained members living in pure vows but who don't yet have the realization of the absolute Dharma. That's conventional Sangha. The Sangha is the one who is the helper, like the nurse, helping us actualize the actual refuge Dharma within our own mind. When we take refuge we rely upon both the absolute Sangha and the conventional Sangha. It's like that. That's why we respect the Sangha, how they are involved. This is one reason.

Anyway, I didn't get to finish the prayer. Sorry.

So, I'll stop here.

VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE

At this time, before going to bed, I thought it might be very good to do prostrations or to do the Vajrasattva mantra, to recite the mantra at least twenty-one times slowly, with intensive meditation. Also for the new ones to learn the mantra, by chanting slowly. This way the new ones are able to learn the mantra by heart.

The Vajrasattva meditation-recitation is the most powerful practice to purify all the obstacles, not only for the success and happiness for this life, for long life and health, to not have disease or to recover from disease—it's not just for these things. This is a very small, very limited purpose. It's not just for this, but especially to actualize the whole graduated path to enlightenment, to purify all the obstacles.

Doing the Vajrasattva meditation-recitation is one solution for happiness. The other one is to create the cause for happiness. This one is to purify obstacles we have already created, the negative karma, the negative actions, which brings problems, which results in problems blocking us from developing the mind. Failure in business, disease, relationship problems, all these life problems that we have gone through so much and that we are continuously experiencing, are the result of the ten nonvirtues. They are the result of committing the basic negative karma, such as the ten nonvirtues.

The other solution for happiness is to purify the cause of problems that we have already created. What to do is to purify. There is a solution. There is a solution. The solution is to purify them, before we experience the result, before we experience relationship problems,

before we experience cancer, AIDS, before we experience untimely death, life shortage. This is just to give an idea, but the main point is to purify the obscurations that interfere with achieving realizations, to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings.

The second method is the Vajrasattva practice. The second method, the second solution, for happiness, is a practice such as the Vajrasattva practice.

Please generate a motivation of bodhicitta, thinking, “I’m going to take this oral transmission of the Vajrasattva mantra in order to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. In order to develop the mind on the graduated path to enlightenment, my mind needs to be purified, therefore, I’m going to take the oral transmission of the Vajrasattva mantra.”

[Rinpoche recites the long Vajrasattva mantra twice.]

If you recite the long one twenty-one times, it has power to stop the negative karma multiplying day by day. Then the short one is OM VAJRASATTVA HUM. Sometimes OM VAJRASATTVA AH, but His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche advised that it is more comfortable to recite OM VAJRASATTVA HUM. You recite it twenty-eight times in order to stop multiplying today’s negative karma, to stop it becoming double tomorrow, then triple the third day, then a mountain the size of the earth. If you recite the short one twenty-eight times it doesn’t become like this; it doesn’t increase.

Then say, “May I achieve Guru Vajrasattva’s enlightenment and lead all sentient beings to Guru Vajrasattva’s enlightenment.” Please dedicate the merit in this way.

LECTURE 7



[Bern 1993](#)

MEDITATION ON THE REALITY OF LIFE

We enjoy life by creating perfect wholesome actions that are beneficial toward other sentient beings and beneficial toward ourselves. That is the best benefit, even toward ourselves.

[Do not harm others;
If you can, help others.]
Subdue your own mind.
This is the teaching of the Buddha.

Again we reflect on the reality of things. From the various hallucinations, we bring our attention onto the reality of things. From those distractions, from those wrong concepts, we bring our concentration onto touching reality, looking at the reality. The meditation means looking at, recognizing what are the wrong concepts, wrong understanding and what is right understanding; what is hallucination and what is reality. By practicing awareness, we recognize what is hallucination. Practicing awareness is looking at the hallucination as a hallucination. That is one meditation, being aware of what a mistaken view is and then recognizing it. Recognizing it that way. That is one meditation.

The other meditation is looking at reality. By seeing what is right understanding, what are these Dharma understandings, these right understandings, these wisdoms, then we can guide ourselves. Only *then* there's a chance to guide ourselves. Then we can protect our own life by ourselves. If we don't recognize these various wrong concepts, these various hallucinations, there's no way we can realize the realities. We can't recognize what is right without recognizing what is wrong. We can't recognize what is the truth. Truth, right is the same thing. If we can't realize what is wrong, the wrong part of life, we can't realize what is right.

These analyses of life, of our own concepts, our own views, these are very essential meditations. Studying our own mind, studying our own views, seeing what is right and wrong. There are big piles of hallucinations. They are like piles of garbage. There are different types of hallucinations. There are big piles of gross hallucinations and subtle hallucinations. If we analyze our views, our concepts, we will come to know the reality of different phenomena, the reality of things.

We can see that through the Omniscient One's explanations of life, of our life or our mind. We can understand our sufferings and the evolution of suffering, the causes, through the explanation of the four noble truths. Through that, we can see all these wrong concepts, the wrong views and their opposites, the realities, what is right understanding, what is right view, what are all the different levels of right view.

This is the only way to escape from suffering, to completely end the whole, entire problems of life, the problems of the six realms. Just as we have gone through these six realms in meditation, to never experience at all the problems of the six realms, not only the problems of the human realm. To completely end all these problems, to never experience them at all, the only way is by recognizing all our own various wrong thoughts, wrong views, which are the cause of the problem, and by understanding what is right understanding and right view. Only through realizing those right views, which means actualizing right understanding, can we eliminate the wrong conceptions.

Therefore, in order to have this chance to completely eliminate the cause of the whole, entire problems, it's extremely important to do the listening, reflecting and meditation practice of the teachings that show the unmistakable path, that explain all the right views, that explain all the wrong views, the wrong concepts, and all the right realizations. The teachings that reveal the right path, the complete path without missing anything, in order to achieve the highest goal, full enlightenment, the cessation of all the mistakes of the mind and the completion of all realizations.

For that reason, the Omniscient One, the kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, has explained everything. His teachings contain the complete unmistakable path, complete from beginning to end, from beginning to end, to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment. To meditate with the understanding of the Omniscient One's teachings is fundamental.

Again we focus our mind, bringing our attention to the reality of life, that the I, our body, our possessions, our friends, the surroundings, enemies, strangers and so forth, all these things are changing within every second by cause and conditions. They are decaying within every second.

Because of subtle impermanence, these things can be stopped at any time. There's no way to trust that these things will exist like they do today. These things can't be trusted to exist every day. As these things that exist as they are existing now, there's nothing to trust that they will exist all the time, every day. These things can be stopped at any time.

By this reason of the nature of the phenomena, of the impermanence and death, there is no reason, no valuable reason, no worthwhile reason at all for anger, ignorance, attachment, all these disturbing thoughts to arise.

THE REAL I CAN'T BE FOUND

And the second thing is that while the I, action, object and so forth—all these things, all the rest of existence—while they exist, all these things are completely empty from their own side.

As I mentioned yesterday, what appears as real—the I, action, object, all of existence—what appears as a real one, which means in the sense of existing from its own side, inherently existent, if we look for it, if we analyze, it can't be found. If we search for it, if we analyze whether it really exists or not, it can't be found anywhere. This real I cannot be found. Generally, the I can be found, the I, the self that is imputed by the mind, that can be found, but the *real* I, which appears as not labeled by the mind, if we search for it, it can't be found anywhere. It can't be found. Not only that it can't be found on this base, the aggregates, the association of the body and the mind, not only that—in the sense, unlabeled by the mind, uncreated by the mind—not only that it can't be found on the base, the association of body and the mind, not only that it can't be found from the tip of the hairs down to the toes, anywhere. Neither inside nor outside. It can be found nowhere. Besides *that*, it can't be found, not only that it can't be found here, on this base, not only

that it can't be found on this base, it can't be found anywhere. It can't be found in the world. It can't be found at Kopan. It can't be found in Nepal. It can't be found anywhere, in the East or West. Nowhere it exists. That I, nowhere it exists. If we searched for it, it can't be found anywhere.

We can get an idea from listening to the wisdom teachings, listening to the unmistakable teachings of the right view, the ultimate nature of the I and so forth. The best one is through meditation, through our own experience or analysis. Through our own meditation, through our own analysis, which is the meditation on the ultimate nature, the emptiness of the I, gets proved to us. The ultimate nature of the I, that which is empty, gets proved to us through our own analysis, our meditation.

By analyzing, by meditating, in this way, what is realized, what is discovered is that it is not found. It is unfindable. It is empty. This real I, which is in the sense of being unlabeled, has nothing to do with the mind, it is unlabeled by the mind, uncreated by the mind. Through analysis, through meditation, by checking, what is discovered is that that I is completely empty. That real I, that real mind, that real body, *any* phenomena that appears to exist from its own side, is discovered through analysis, through meditation, to be empty. This is what is realized.

There is nobody who has ever realized, who has discovered through meditation, through analysis, that the unlabeled mind exists, the unlabeled I exists. There hasn't ever been one person who has realized through analysis that the inherently-existent, real I exists, or that any other phenomenon inherently exists. Nobody has realized this. And all the numberless buddhas, the numberless omniscient ones—those whose minds are completely free from all defilements, all mistakes, all wrong concepts, all the obscurations—how they see things, including ourselves and everything, is that it's completely empty from its own side. Even though they exist in mere name they don't have the slightest inherent existence from their own side. They don't have even an atom of inherent existence. Nothing, not in the slightest. All this existence, nothing in the slightest exists from its own side.

This is something that can be proved by our own mind through our own analysis, through our own meditation.

So, to repeat again. Everything, including the I, action, everything is completely empty from its own side. That is the reality. That is the ultimate nature of things—the I and so forth. However, what appears to our mind is something contradictory. The I does *not* appear to us as empty from its own side, as merely imputed by the mind. Even though that is the reality, it does not appear to us in that way. So the I does not appear to us according to the reality of how it exists. The way it appears to us, to our own mind, is contradictory, it's completely the opposite to the reality. That is the definition of false; that is the meaning of false. While it doesn't exist in that way, it *appears* as if it exists in that way, that one is false. The other false view is that while it exists, it appears as if it doesn't exist at all. So, there are differences in regards the false view, what is false.

The I exists being merely imputed by the mind and because of that it is empty of existing inherently. That I doesn't exist from its own side. But it doesn't appear that way; it appears to our mind as if it exists from its own side. As if it exists from its own side, as if it is not merely labeled by the mind. That is a false view. The I doesn't exist as it appears, as inherently existent, as existing from its own side. This is the appearance that we have now, of a real self, an inherently existent self. That real self is doing things: that real self is talking, that real self is listening to teachings, that real self is now meditating. A real I is at Kopan now. This real I is doing a meditation course.

*That I, and all the things that appear to us as real, as existing from their own side, all these activities being done, these are all hallucinations. All that is a complete hallucination. It's completely empty. All that is completely empty *right there*. From where it appears, it is completely empty *right there*.*

Like the example of the I, in reality it's empty but it appears as if it is independent, existing from its own side. Like this, action, object, all existence, are all empty; in reality, they are empty from their own side. In reality, they exist being merely labeled by the mind. The way all these things exist and how they appear to our own mind is completely contradictory, the opposite. They appear as independent, existing from their own side, not merely labeled by the mind.

LIKE A DREAM



[Nagarjuna Madrid](#)

That's why the Buddha said in the quotation we have just recited that we should look at all existence as like a dream, like an illusion that a magician performed. Like how a magician transforms an object, causing an illusion. The Buddha said we should look at all existence like a dream, like an illusion. That is related to our view, to our hallucination, that which blocks us from seeing reality. By having this hallucinated view and by

believing in it, this blocks us from seeing the reality of the I, of the action, of the object, of all existence. The instruction from the Buddha is that we should look at all existence as being empty, like an illusion, like a dream.

In a dream, there's the I, action, object; there's the appearance of the I doing various activities—having a party, traveling, getting married and getting divorced, being happy meeting a friend, fighting, becoming enemies—but all this is in the dream. There are these appearances but they are not true. They don't exist.

In a dream, we can dream that we get married, that we have a wedding, a big party, going to church, praying, anyway, all those things, and after all that we feel we are married to the person we like, but when we wake up the next morning, we're not married to that person. We don't have that person. There are differences.

If the dream in which we find a million dollars—either we win a lottery or somebody gives it to us or we find it on the road—if that million dollars were true then there should be a million dollars when we wake up. Then we can stop worrying or immediately we can quit our job. Then we can start to worry about how to spend the money. Where to go for holidays. What is the best holiday we can do on this earth? What is the best holiday?

Then there are more interesting things. After having tried all that, there are more interesting things, there are more interesting experiences. After having tried what's explained, even if we could make some plans, some more interesting experiences because of the nature of samsara, we just have a more dissatisfied mind. The more interesting the experience, the more dissatisfied the mind.

The I, action, object, everything, all these things appear as real, as existing from their own side. It's the same. There's the appearance like this but it's not true. There is the appearance like this, but it doesn't mean that it's true. It's just exactly, exactly like a dream, like the things we see in a dream.

We need to completely eliminate the cause of suffering, ignorance, the concept of true existence. This is like the king of the hallucinated minds. Among many other wrong concepts, among many other hallucinated minds, this hallucination, this concept of the truly existent I, is the king of the hallucinated minds. To completely eliminate this cause of suffering and the whole entire suffering, to achieve liberation, then to achieve the great liberation, full enlightenment, the Omniscient One advised us to listen, reflect and meditate on the teachings that explain the ultimate nature, emptiness. The ultimate nature. We need to practice awareness, to live our life with this awareness of the reality of things, to realize the ultimate nature of things and to develop this wisdom.

So we reflect on this just a little bit.



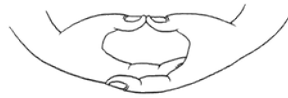
Everything, including the I, action, object, everything exists by depending on the base and the thought that labels. While the I, action, object, everything exists by depending on the base and the thought that labels, all these existences are empty, empty from their own side.



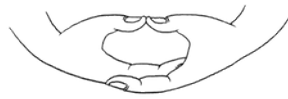
While the I, action, object, everything, exists, while all these things are existing by depending on the base, they are empty. So concentrate on this.



While the I, action, object, while all these exist by depending on the mind, while all these things are existing being merely labeled by the mind, they are empty. So again, concentrate on this.



While the I, action, object, all these existences exist being merely labeled by the mind, by depending on the mind labeling them, at the same time all these existences are empty from their own side.



So, concentrate on this. That itself is the meditation of the *Heart Sutra*.

JORCHÖ LAMA CHÖPA

[Rinpoche recites Lion-face Dakini prayer.]

I explained yesterday about the meaning of the prayer. The first two lines are taking refuge or relying upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and the next two lines are generating bodhicitta.

Yesterday I just gave some general idea, some rough idea of the whole path: the procedure, the Lesser Vehicle path, and the Paramitayana path, then the particular, the Secret Mantra, Highest Yoga Tantra, in order to achieve the ultimate, full enlightenment. This was just brief, like walking in the forest in the dark. Without the realization of the path, it's like walking in the forest in the dark.

The idea was to explain it during this course, but maybe it becomes the next course. Anyway, I'm just joking. Maybe it becomes the idea for next year's course.

Anyway, the idea is that in the mornings we practice the preparatory practice, the *Jorchö*. Many of the old students are more familiar with doing the *Guru Puja*, *Lama Chöpa*, than *Jorchö*, except the earlier Sangha who did it as a group every morning when they were here. Even after they were kicked out, by the kindness of the police office, and had to go to Dharamsala, when they were together, they did *Jorchö* in the morning for a long time. They did the practice for a long time, which is very important, especially for monasteries that offer retreats, those that are ascetic monasteries, that put all their effort, day and night, all the time into the lam-rim. Particularly, many of those monasteries begin the day with this practice. They do extensive and strong practice of purification and accumulating merit, the intensive guru yoga practice, this request in order to receive the blessings of the guru. On the basis of that they meditate on the lam-rim, on the graduated path to enlightenment.

Since there are still many people who are familiar with the Lama Chöpa, the Guru Puja, the idea is to put the *Jorchö* and the Lama Chöpa together. By putting them together, then do the practice. Also to do the traditional chanting, the way it's done traditionally, to do it elaborately in that way, with all the necessary things, with those different practices which are in *Jorchö* for purifying the mind, offering bath to the merit field and so forth. But there's no going to the beach. Anyway, I'm joking. Offering bath to the merit field, but there's no going to the beach with the merit field.

The idea is to become familiar with how the lineage lamas practiced the causes for developing the mind, how they did all these various preliminary practices in everyday life, the practices in which they lived their life and developed their mind, and then achieved enlightenment. To become familiar with this and also to know the chanting as well.

Many of the people who have already heard Dharma before can learn these various practices, to become familiar with them, and also for those who have commitments, the commitments get done by the way. For those who have commitments like the Six-Session Guru Yoga, then this becomes one extensive Six-Session Guru Yoga practice.

There was one particular very secret meditation for wind disease. It happened to be the time to take this initiation, because of advice from Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, from whom I took many teachings, initiations, after Lama passed away. There's one, very special, very secret meditation practice to do. So there was one student who did this, the director of the Central Office. He did some retreat at Tushita. He had wind disease, and so he was somehow looking for this practice. It was found out that Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche had this lineage, so he received the oral transmission. I don't think he received the explanation, just received the lung, the oral transmission, but I don't think he received the commentary. I'm not sure whether he got the actual practice done. But even just by receiving the oral transmission his lung, his wind disease, got better. This was the main

cause, this was the main reason I went to request to receive the lineage of this practice. That's how it started.

Then more and more I asked questions about general sutra or tantra, and spent more and more time with Rinpoche, and gradually found out more and more how Rinpoche gained experience or knowledge like the oceans, with such a clear understanding of the Dharma. Then I took many initiations and teachings. There are some initiations in danger because of the rarity of the lineage. They are very rare, very rare in the Gelug sect. There are four Tibetan Mahayana sects, Gelug, Sakya, Kagyü and Nyingma. In the Gelug some of these initiations have become very rare because those who are still alive, especially outside of Tibet, don't have the lineage, so they're kind of not available in the Gelug sect. From the four Tibetan Mahayana sects, one sect is called Sakya. His Holiness Chobgye Rinpoche is the guru of the head of the Sakya sect, His Holiness Sakya Trizin. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche told me to take the initiation now, because His Holiness Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche, who was in Boudha at that time giving it, was taking the aspect of being very old. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche said, therefore, if I didn't take the opportunity at that time, because of old age, it might not be possible in future, so therefore it was better to take the opportunity now. Rinpoche was also going, so we invited Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche to teach at almost every meditation center in the West, to give teachings, initiations, whatever people needed. If the initiations were delayed, then I think that gets delayed, so that's why it happened at this time.

In that way, Rinpoche could spread the lineage of this collection of initiations to many high lamas, to many other geshe, those who have full knowledge of Dharma, those who are able to preserve the whole, entire teachings in all the different aspects, to preserve and be able to spread them. So that Rinpoche can pass the initiations to them is the main thing.

THE NEED TO PRACTICE

So I thought to explain [the more general?] Dharma, but maybe for the more technical things, to ask either Geshe Lama Konchog or Lama Lhundrup, who are excellent teachers, who can be relied on a hundred percent, to explain them. Whether you understand or not, whether the subject fits your mind or not, the most important thing is that the person who teaches should be completely reliable, somebody that you can trust. That's the most important point.

Whether you can understand the subject or whether the subject fits your mind at the moment or not, it's an unmistakable subject, it's the right path, the path that numberless pandits, yogis, have studied, practiced and achieved enlightenment using, including Shakyamuni Buddha.

The person is more important than the words. I'm not sure whether it follows like that in the West or not, but in the East or in Dharma practice, the person is more important than the words. Even with regards to talking about the guru, that is the main analysis.

The idea is not just for inspiration, for encouragement, but so all students learn more, and then do more practice, in the morning, in the evening, to get more practice done with awareness of the main point of the subjects.

For example, if the subject is emptiness, however much you know about emptiness, such as the Madhyamaka explanation of emptiness, if you don't meditate, if you don't practice, if you don't relate it to your own daily life, then problems are still there. Of course, if you have even the intellectual understanding of all the subjects, you have so much freedom in life, you have so much freedom of choice, whether to live in the problem or whether to free yourself from the problem. Even if the wisdom you have is just intellectual wisdom, because of that you still have incredible freedom whether you want to keep your own life in problems or immediately to put the understanding you have learned into the practice and immediately free yourself from the problems. You can immediately free yourself from the problems, it's completely in your own hands.

But if you don't even have the intellectual understanding, there's no freedom in life. If even the intellectual wisdom isn't there, there's no freedom to practice, there's no freedom to liberate yourself from these sufferings.

Meditation, practicing awareness, is very important. That is extremely important. The reason our mind has an absence of realizations is because of not having meditated enough, of not having meditated perfectly. Even if there's understanding, we have not meditated enough, and not correctly.

Anyway, I think I'll leave that part today, going over the prayer of *sang-gye cho-dang*. I'll just go to where I stopped the other day, the nature of the mind. I'll speak a little bit on that and then stop.

THE FOUR KAYAS

Maybe I'll mention this one first. When we become enlightened, what we achieve, the result, are the four kayas. The omniscient mind, the holy dharma body, is the dharmakaya, and within this there are two: the transcendental wisdom dharmakaya, and the holy body of the self nature. Self nature? The holy nature body, *ngo-wo nyi-ku*. The transcendental wisdom dharmakaya is, for example, the omniscient mind, which is the conventional truth. Then the ultimate nature of that is called the holy nature body.

The general definition of the dharmakaya is the wisdom that is free from, or devoid of, all subtle and temporary obscurations. The wisdom that is free from, or devoid of, the temporary obscurations or stains means the disturbing-thought obscurations and obscurations to full knowledge, the obscurations that interfere with the mind being able to fully see all the past, present, future existence. That is the general definition of the wisdom dharmakaya.

The general definition of the holy body of the self nature or nature body is the ultimate sphere of the two purities. In other words, the emptiness of the omniscient mind. The

emptiness of the omniscient mind that is pure, being devoid of the two obscurations. That's why the definition mentions the ultimate sphere of the two purities, meaning that emptiness of that wisdom is pure, free or having ceased the two obscurations, the two stains, the two obscurations.

What you have to understand is this. The omniscient mind itself is called the wisdom dharmakaya and the ultimate nature of the omniscient mind is holy nature body. So the main point here is to try to recognize what it is or on which we are putting these labels.

Then, the holy form body is called rupakaya. The rupakaya, the holy form body, has two aspects: the holy body of complete enjoyment and the holy transformation body. Again within the holy transformation body there are three different types. However, at the moment to have some focus, to have something to think about, look at the four kayas: of the form body, the rupakaya, look at the holy complete enjoyment body and the holy transformation body and of the dharma body, look at the wisdom dharmakaya and the holy nature body.

THE MEANING OF RIG

Here we were talking about what *rig* means. Within *rig* are differentiated two types: essence and potential. Within the *rig* of the Buddha there are two. It is explained in two ways, essence or potential.

I don't know what different translations there are for *rig* but it seems one translation is "lineage." But somehow I thought, for the ear, for the concept it may not sound good. It might seem like you're talking about racism, black and white, things like that. But with the Tibetan word, the meaning is different but a similar word is used, *rig*, is used for the race. For example, the children who are born to the king are said to be of the king's race. This race is to do with the blood generation. They are the generation of the king's blood and so the king's race. Because this is the son of the king he has the potential to become the king. Even in his mother's womb, even though he hasn't come out yet, he still has the potential to become the king. This baby inside the womb of the mother, the queen, has the potential to become the king and to guide the people later.

Although *rig* is the same as the word in the Tibetan language for "race" the way it's used here has nothing to do with the blood, with the blood generation. It has nothing to do with the physical body. Here, *rig*, "race," is related to the nature of the mind, the essence of the mind, and the mind's potential. So, *rig*, the race of a buddha, the race of the fully enlightened being, has two types. Any causative phenomena that becomes the cause or which takes any of the Buddha's causative holy body, such as the holy body form or even the wisdom itself, that is called the *developing* or *increasing race*.

The other one is the *natural abiding race*. The natural abiding race is the ultimate nature of the mind. This is the one we meditate or reflect on more. Here now we are talking about the ultimate nature of the mind, our mind, the mind of us sentient beings that is not free from the two obscurations. The definition of the nature abiding race is the ultimate

nature of the mind that is stained and that is interrelated to the mind, that becomes the cause of the holy nature body. We're not talking about the mind itself here but the mind's ultimate nature.

So, a buddha's race, *rig*, has two types like this, which gives us the opportunity to become enlightened, to achieve the four kayas.

Yeah, I'll stop here.

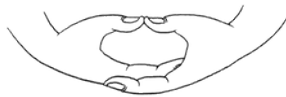
LECTURE 8



[Cherok Lama's Cave 1990](#)

EMPTINESS: LIKE A DREAM

You yourself, your own body, your possessions, the surrounding people, friends, enemies, strangers—those that are objects of attachment, anger, ignorance and so forth—these causative phenomena are changing even within every second by cause and conditions.



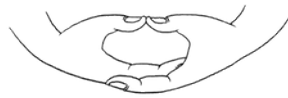
They are decaying in every second.



Because of these reasons, these causative phenomena can be stopped at any time.



This human body that you have, this particular life, the I, the possessions, the objects of attachment—friends—the objects of anger—enemies—the objects of ignorance—strangers—these objects can be stopped at any time.



Because of all these reasons, this is the reality.



With this awareness, with this realization of impermanence and death, there is freedom in life. There's peace. Without this awareness of the reality of the causative phenomena, its impermanence, there are only problems. There are only obstacles in life, in the practice.

So, there is no reason at all for ignorance, anger or attachment to arise. There's no point.

On the top of this, just like the dream-time life, life in a dream, the concepts in the dream, when you are dreaming, everything looks real, even though what appears to your mind is a projection of the hallucinated mind. It's an appearance of the hallucinated mind.

Without the mind, there are no appearances in a dream. Without the mind, there are no appearances of things in a dream. There's no way for these appearances to happen.

In a dream, without the mind there's nothing, there is no subject which puts all these labels: I, action, object, I, action, object; this is a friend, this is an enemy, this is a stranger; this is a house, this is my child, this is my husband, this is my wife, this is my possession, this is the office. Without the mind there is no subject that puts all these labels, all these names to the things. Without the mind there is no subject that labels, that gives names to the base.

That is one example of how things that you see in a dream are a creation of the mind; they come from the mind. They come from the mind.

The other thing is that appearances are productions, projections, of the mind. One way to understand it is this. The label is put on the base by the mind, and then, after the label is put, it appears that way. Whatever label you put, it appears like that, you see it that way. This is how the things that you perceive in a dream come from the mind. The other thing is what you see in the dream are projections of the mind, according to the imprints that are on the mind. Because they are projections according to the mental state, according to the quality of the mind, all this comes from the mind. It is very clear that what you see in a dream is nothing, even though it appears to your mind as real, independent, inherently existent, existing from its own side. It seems to have nothing to do with the creator, the mind. According to appearance, according to your belief, during the dream, it's exactly like this.

Now you can see what the reality of the dream is, how it happens, you can see what the actuality is and what the hallucination is. Even the dream itself is like this. By analyzing you can see what you normally believe is completely wrong, completely false.

The reason I'm bringing up the dream as an example, in the dream there's the appearance of a concrete house, an independent, inherently existent house. If you dream of Kopan, then it's an independent, inherently existent Kopan—the hills, the monasteries, the houses, the dormitories, the places where you eat the food, the road and so forth, the difficult parts of the road and the dust and so forth, all the houses—everything's very real. It's real in the sense of existing from its own side, inherently existent, or independent.

When you're dreaming of Kopan, there's you, the I, the real one, the inherently-existent one, the action, the object. This is there. This appearance is also in the dream. It is there, this ordinary appearance, so real, so concrete, something, inherently existent from its own side, this appearance also happens in the dream. And also, not only is there the appearance but there's also the belief. There is not only the appearance but there's also the belief in these things. On these appearances there's the strong belief that it's true. These things are also there in the dream, during the dream life, when you're dreaming.

As I explained before, it doesn't mean it's true, it doesn't mean it's true. Because things appear this way, it doesn't mean it's true to you. Because you believe it, doesn't mean it's true. This instinctive mind is the ignorance that you're born with. This is another term. It might be called "instinct" in science or psychology, what's there without being taught, the concepts that come from your own side. This is the ignorance that you're born with, abiding within your own mental continuum from the beginningless rebirths, the simultaneously born concept of true existence.

Such a strong appearance of concrete, inherently-existent, independent existence is also there in the dream, which is not true at all. Then the strong belief that it's real is also there. This strong wrong concept is uncontrollably happening. Believing that these things are true is there. Using the things you see in a dream as an example, it's easy to understand that it's not true, that they don't in reality exist.

EMPTINESS: WE NEED A VALID BASE

Even though it's the same, that they are merely labeled by the mind, just that alone doesn't mean things exist. Just that alone doesn't mean things exist. That's not enough reason, that's not the complete reason for things to exist. Not just by the mind labeling.

If just the mind labeling something were enough for it to exist, if it were sufficient, then millions of people who want to become prime minister, who want to become president, wouldn't have to put any effort or expense, such as spending money on the campaign, or having somebody sponsor them, all these things. They wouldn't have to worry so much about giving all those speeches. Going to all the different states, and then debating, to check who is better. If just the mind labeling were enough to make things exist, then almost everyone in that country might become president. Except those who don't want to be president, who just want to have a good time. Those who want to be free, who want to have a free life.

If just the mind putting the label were sufficient, then in one small country almost everybody would become the king, would become the prime minister, the president, would become a millionaire. If you want to become a millionaire you just have to label yourself, "I'm a millionaire." That should help you become millionaire.

In the same way, if we simply think we're enlightened, then in that case, we wouldn't need to generate all the realizations of the path, we wouldn't need to take all the trouble to purify and to accumulate merit in order to achieve the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment. We would just simply think, "I'm enlightened" and the minute, the second we thought we were enlightened, we'd become enlightened.

In order for things to exist, it not only depends on the mind—the mind merely imputes—not only that, there needs to be a valid base. There needs to be a valid base for the mind to label, it depends on that. Only then can things exist.

In a dream, it's exactly like this, like we see here. Now we have to question whether what we see in the daytime is true. Is that true or also not true? It's a question; we have to analyze.

To repeat again, in a dream things appear as real, as existing from their own side, and the strong belief in that appearance is there. But when we analyze all this, the concept, what we see is that in the dream it's not true. First of all, the things we see in a dream do not exist. As I gave the example yesterday, if you found a million dollars in a dream, if that were true then, when you woke up, you should have the million dollars. In the daytime you should also have the million dollars, if what you saw in the dream existed, if that was true. But it's not.

It's *exactly, exactly* like that for us, except for those people who are able to recognize a dream as a dream, those meditators, those practitioners of Secret Mantra, who use the

dream path to achieve enlightenment. Even ordinary people who are able to recognize the dream as a dream, during that time there's no concept that it's true. Since there's recognition that this is a dream, there's no belief that what appears is true, that it exists in reality. There isn't this concept, this belief, because of the understanding that this is a dream. Except for these people, there is a strong belief that what appears in a dream is true.

The difference is in the object that we see in a dream and the object we see in the daytime, the I, action, object, all these things. The object of the dreamtime—buying a lottery ticket and winning many millions of dollars and so forth—that doesn't exist at all. But in daytime, buying a lottery ticket and then winning many millions of dollars, when that happens, that exists, because the lottery ticket itself also exists. The buyer—we ourselves—exist, the action of buying exists, and the object—the lottery ticket—exists, and receiving millions of dollars, that also exists.

All these things exist because there is a valid basis, the aggregates, and the mind that labels the I, and there's a valid base, this paper we receive that has numbers and explanations, then the action of paying money to seller exists, because there's the valid base, and there's the mind which labels the action. There is the valid base, that particular official or that particular paper with all those numbers. Based on the paper with all the designs or the figures, depending on that valid base, the thought labels it "lottery ticket." This is the valid base that can allow us to win the lottery. It has this function. If we choose the right number, it can do this function.

Then, with all those pieces of paper, all those valid bases of the millions of dollars, all those officially recognized pieces of paper which have all the necessary designs, the numbers and so forth, then the thought labels the "dollars." There are this number of dollars. When we have those pieces of paper with those designs and those numbers, we are then able to buy a million dollars' worth or five million dollars' worth or whatever, of things that cost that much. The pieces of paper are able to function in this way.

These things that the mind labels depending on a valid base, these things exist. The things we see in a dream, even though they are the same objects, don't exist because there is no valid base to be labeled. The valid base does not exist. There is no valid base. The base upon which we label is a hallucination. In a dream the bases that the mind labels, what appears to the mind, are all hallucinations. They don't exist.

So, this is just to make it simple or short, to finish this part of the subject, to get some idea, to give you something to think about at the moment.

Because the valid base—the aggregates, the association of body and mind—exists, because of that reason, the mind merely imputes the I onto them and then believes in that. This is because of the valid base. Therefore, the conclusion is that the I doesn't exist from its own side. The I is empty.

The same with the action of buying. Because of the valid base—paying money, buying that official piece of paper that receives the name “lottery ticket” which can function to win us money, which has all the prerequisites, the printing and the figures—because of that valid reason, the mind labels, the mind merely imputes “buying” onto that and believes in that. Therefore, buying is empty from its own side. There is no real buying from its own side.

Then, the object we buy, the lottery ticket, because of the valid base, the reason—the official paper that has all the necessary numbers or the designs, that allows us to officially win or lose money—because of that valid base, the mind merely imputes “lottery ticket” and believes in that. Therefore, the lottery ticket exists, but it’s empty from its own side. There is no real lottery ticket from its own side.

Then because of the valid base—all those pieces of paper that have all those numbers and designs that are officially accepted, agreed by the people, by the government, as money—because of this valid base, then the mind merely imputes “millions of dollars” and so forth, and then believes in that. Therefore, there is no real millions of dollars. Even though the millions of dollars exist, there’s no real millions of dollars existing from its own side. The million dollars is empty from its own side.

These are the realities. These are the realities of subject, action, object.

Therefore, we can see that there is no true, unlabeled, independent I, no real I from its own side, doing the real action of buying the real lottery ticket, buying the independent, inherently-existent, real lottery ticket, and gaining independent, inherently-existent winnings, the independent, inherently-existent millions of dollars, something concrete, something real from its own side. All these things are completely empty, all these appearances are completely empty *right there*. All these are completely hallucinations. All of these are exactly like a dream, the appearance in the dream.

So, it is the same thing, it’s the same thing, it’s like this. Now you are here in Kopan, in the gompa, in this new gompa. You are here in this gompa, in Kopan, listening to teachings from this crazy boy called Lama Zopa with a lot of noises. In one sentence there are many hundreds of noises and many pauses.

This is the same. All these things that are merely labeled by the mind, because of the reason of these valid bases, these all exist, they are happening, they are existing now. *But, but* this *real* I, this inherently existent, independent I, this something that is real from its own side, and the action of listening which again is inherently existent, real from its own side, and the teachings, the concrete, real teachings, in the sense of being independent, inherently existent, from Lama Zopa, the real one, in the sense, inherently existent, independent, not being merely imputed by the mind, something concrete, [none of these exist]. The place, the new hall, appears as not merely labeled, as real in the sense of inherently existent, independent, having nothing to do with the mind, nothing to do with the perceiver, it looks like these have nothing to do with the perceiver, the mind—all these parts are completely empty. All these parts are exactly the same as the objects in a

dream. It's exactly the same as if we are dreaming now, exactly the same as what we see in a dream. It's as if we're having a dream now, of the real I taking real teachings from a real Lama Zopa at the real Kopan, the real monastery, in the real new hall. It seems something concrete, real from its own side. These two are exactly the same; they do not exist. They are exactly the same; they are empty.

EMPTINESS: THE THREE WAYS OF SEEING A MAGICIAN'S ILLUSION



[Cherok Lama's Cave 1990](#)

Since I went over this, it's explained in the teachings using the example of the magician. When a magician transforms some material, such as wood, through the power of mantra, it causes the audience's eye sense to become affected and see what isn't there. The magician transforms the material into the form of a beautiful man or a woman or different things, a beautiful palace, whatever, and that makes the audience see the things in that way. The power of the magician's mantra affects the eye sense of the audience, causing the eye sense to become hallucinated. That's why they see the things. Even though it's a piece of wood or something, they see the beautiful palace, the beautiful apartment or beautiful man, woman or something.

Among the people who see this, there could be one type of person who actually believes that what they see is real, that it exists in the reality—this beautiful man or woman, this beautiful apartment, all these things that the magician has transformed. Then there's another type of person who has the same appearance, but they don't believe in it. They

don't believe it because they know the magician has transformed an ordinary object, so they don't have the belief that this is real.

Then there's a third type of person whose eye sense is not affected by the magician's mantra. Because the eye sense is not affected, what they see is just a piece of wood or whatever, the basic thing that the magician used for transformation. They don't see it; they don't have the hallucination. They don't have that appearance.

So, there are a few types of people. There are three groups: one has appearance and believes that the hallucination is true, real; one has the hallucination but there's no belief and the third one doesn't have the hallucination because the eye sense is not affected by the power of mantra of the magician.

Similarly, things—the I, action, object, all these things—appear as real, as inherently existent, independent, something concrete from their own side, and among beings, there are three different groups. Even though the way everything exists is being merely labeled by the mind, everything appears as concrete and independent, inherently existent, real from its own side. Some sentient beings believe a hundred percent that this is true.

Then, another group of sentient beings have realized emptiness, have realized the ultimate nature of phenomena, the ultimate nature of the I, the ultimate nature of the action, the ultimate nature of the object. For those who have realized emptiness—the reality of subject, action, object, all these things—even though they still have the dualistic view, seeing the things that exist being merely labeled by the mind, appearing as something real, concrete, inherently existent from their own side, for them there's no belief in these things. There's no belief that these appearances are true.

For those arya, transcendent beings who have realized emptiness, except when they are in equipoise meditation, with their wisdom one-pointedly concentrating in emptiness, then again they have appearance, they have the hallucination, the dualistic view, the truly-existent appearance. This will continue until the subtle imprints, the subtle obscurations, are purified by generating the remedy path, by completing the remedy path. Only when the subtle imprints left by the disturbing thoughts, the concept of true existence, are completely purified, will there be nothing that projects, that decorates true existence onto that which exists being merely labeled by the mind. There's nothing that projects, there's nothing that decorates this concept of true existence onto the merely labeled I, action, object and so forth. Only then, only at that time, when the subtle imprints left by the concept of true existence are completely purified by completing the remedy path within the mind, then the person is completely free from the dualistic view, the hallucination, the appearance of true existence. At that time then the mind becomes fully enlightened, and that person becomes a buddha, a fully-enlightened being.

Among living beings, the third group is the enlightened beings. Enlightened beings don't have this appearance of inherently-existent objects, objects that are truly-existent, independent, concrete, real from their own side. They don't have even this hallucination.

EMPTINESS: HOW WE SEE THINGS IS JUST ONE VIEW OF MANY

So, you can see how things appear is according to the level of the perceiver's mind, according to the quality of the mind. What external things we see, how we see things, what we see, how things appear to us, is according to the level of our mind, according to the quality of our mind. So, the whole thing comes from the mind. This is one way to understand this.

Because we see things one way doesn't mean everybody sees it that way. Everything—the I, action, object—everything for us seems like this, something real, concrete, from its own side, but that doesn't mean everyone sees this, that everyone has to see it this way, it doesn't mean that. Even relating to one person, one sentient being, ourselves, we are in the first group, where belief and appearance are similar. We have the appearance and we believe in that, we believe in the hallucination, that the hallucination is a reality. We believe that it's true.

Even if we are in this first group now, later, through meditation, by realizing emptiness, by developing wisdom, we then become part of the second group that doesn't cling to these things. Even though there's still the appearance, we don't cling. Even though there's this appearance happening, we don't have the belief, the clinging. Since everything is like a dream, there's no clinging. Again, by developing this wisdom still further, by completing this wisdom realizing emptiness, by completely removing the stains of the mind, we become part of the third group, enlightened beings who don't even have the hallucination, the dualistic view. Therefore, the way things appear changes as we develop our mind.

Even in day-to-day life, how things appear to us depends on how we look at them, how we judge them. For example, how we see a person depends on how we judge that person. If it's a place, whether it's a pleasant or unpleasant place, whether it's comfortable or uncomfortable, clean or dirty, all depends on how we judge it. We judge it and then it appears that way.

Normally, in our day-to-day life, how things appear, how things exist, is that way. The view of the object we now have, the view of the five sense objects that our senses experience, what appears to us right here and now, this is just one view. The view we have now, how things appear to us, this is just one view. This is not all the views. This is not the only view that exists, this is just one of the views, according to our present quality of mind, the level of mind.

Therefore, we can't think that if something exists it should only be this way—the way we see it—otherwise, it doesn't exist. How we see it, it should be this way; how we believe it to be, it should be this way. That reason doesn't cover, that reason does not cover. That is simply related to one type of mind.

Anyway, I didn't mean to talk long on this. It happened without choice. So, to go back to yesterday's subject. Just to finish that part.

This is very useful in our daily life. This is one of the thought transformation practices. Looking at these appearances I've just gone through, all these appearances that are pure, impure, beautiful, ugly, clean, dirty, good and bad, all these things, when we practice awareness, when in our life we bring our attention to how these things appear to us, now we understand that how we see things is just one view according to the level of our mind, the quality of our mind. As we develop the wisdom realizing emptiness we see that these things that appear as inherently existent, existing from their own side, are not true, they're empty. Not having that understanding, our mind apprehends that they are true. As things appear this way, then they're true. If we haven't realized emptiness, not developed wisdom, we can't see things as an illusion, as a dream, where there is no basis for clinging, no basis for anger to arise.

The degree to which our mind, that is the perceiver, is impure, there is that degree of impurity in the appearance. As the mind that projects, that produces the appearances—that produces the objects, the appearances—as it becomes that much purer, the appearances become purer. As the mind becomes cleaner, then the objects the mind sees, the appearances, become cleaner. It's a dependent arising.

We can use this in relation to any object we find problems with. It could be various objects, many different objects at different times, or even in one day. By bringing the attention to the object, by practicing awareness, we see how this object—this person, this place—is only one view. This is our view according to the quality of our mind. This is one view. Other beings have different views of that person, that living being, that place, whatever it is. Other beings have different views, possibly purer than ours. Different. In others' minds, in others' views, this object doesn't appear a problem as it appears to our view, to our mind.

EMPTINESS: FIRST RECOGNIZE THE HALLUCINATION

This is extremely beneficial, this is extremely beneficial. The very first meditation of the graduated path to enlightenment, guru devotion, involves trying to achieve the realization, the devotion, of seeing from our own side that the guru, the virtuous friend, is a buddha, having this realization, the devotion of seeing the guru as a buddha. To have that realization for guru yoga practice, we need this awareness that how we see it is our own view, that other people, other beings who have a different level of mind, a different quality of mind, see it in a different way. That point shows, that proves the realization of guru devotion, which is the root of the path to enlightenment.

Then, also, in daily life problems, it's the same with the person we call an enemy, the one we dislike, we get angry with, the one we hate. That meditation also works with that. And also even non-living objects, it's the same. The whole idea is that all this good and bad, pure and impure, all comes from our own mind; it's all dependent on the mind. So the emphasis comes to subdue the mind. The emphasis is on the mind, to subdue the mind that makes us see other sentient beings as our enemy. Other beings can include buddhas, it can include sentient beings. It's our own mind that makes us see others as our enemy, so the emphasis comes on the mind, to subdue this mind. The emphasis comes on the

mind that projects, that makes us see things as impure, that makes us see things as difficult. Again the emphasis comes to subdue this mind.

Even when there's no problem in life, this mind creates problems. This mind makes other people become problems for us. This mind makes the conditions, it makes the outside phenomena become problems for us. This mind makes a friend become a problem for us, making the friend become our enemy. This mind makes material possessions become problems for us; it makes wealth become a problem for us. All living beings, all non-living things become problems for us and this all comes from the mind. This mind made it, this mind made it. While we can use things for peace, instead this mind makes them become problems for us. So the whole emphasis comes to subdue the mind. The basic key, the basic thing is to subdue our own mind, to transform our own mind, to eliminate all the thoughts that create the problems, all the wrong concepts. That's why the Buddha said, "Subdue your own mind; that is the teaching of the Buddha."

From this we can understand how we get incredible freedom by practicing Buddhadharma, how we give ourselves peace in our life.

Maybe I'll excuse myself here. Maybe I'll stop here, anyway.

I thought maybe to talk on the mind tonight a little bit. This way, hopefully there'll be some small benefit, particularly for those who have some lack of clarity or some difficulties in regards to the continuation of the mind, to the idea of a life before this or a life after this. In this way, it doesn't take more time away from the other parts of the introduction. At this time I thought to maybe mention about the buddha nature a little bit, to just get through some of that part of the subject.

Then the actual lam-rim course we can do in the dream. We can do another course in the nighttime. Anyway, I'm joking. So you have to go to bed early and have many hours sleep. Anyway, joking. So it becomes two-month course. I'm joking.

So maybe today, as I mentioned, practice strong awareness of the things you see in a dream and the things you see at other times, putting the emphasis in what exists and what doesn't exist. What exists and what doesn't exist: yourself, the action, the object, what you see around you—the people, the place, the food, whatever—on that basis, what exists and what doesn't exist. Apply the example of the dream, putting the dream on top of daily life. The things that do not exist: the I, the action, the object, all those concrete, real, independent things that are not true, that are completely false. Put the dream on the top of your daily life in order to realize, in order to recognize what is a hallucination, or a hallucinated appearance—the hallucinated I, action, object, all these things—and through that what is the ultimate nature of these things. This brings you to the conclusion, to see the ultimate nature of the I, action, object.

In other words, look at the I, action, object, look at the people, look at the place, look at things around you, the five sense objects, one after another, then analyze how they appear

to you, whether they appear unlabeled or labeled. How they exist in reality is merely labeled by the mind, but they don't appear that way.

Think of yourself. For example, I say I am Zopa and I believe it, but before the abbot who granted the ordination gave me the name "Zopa," Zopa did not exist. It didn't exist. Zopa only existed after the abbot's own mind merely imputed "Zopa." Similarly, you can relate that to yourself. You can tell yourself that before your parents gave you your name, George or Barbara or Nicholas or whatever, before your parents gave you that name, in your mind Barbara didn't exist. It only existed after your parents merely imputed on the body and mind. This is how things exist, by being merely labeled by the mind, in this case, the parents.

So, use these examples to understand how this exists being merely labeled by the mind, depending on the valid base. However, it doesn't appear this way. We don't see it that way, we don't realize it that way. In the same way, our mind constantly merely imputes the I, by depending on the valid base, the aggregates, but even though that is the reality we don't see it this way. We don't realize this, we don't see it this way, according to reality. We see completely the opposite, which is not true, which is not true.

From there, you can expand, doing a similar analysis with all the rest—action, object, the things around you, the five sense objects. Then, with all these objects, form, sound, smell, taste and so forth, try to practice awareness, try to recognize what is the thing that doesn't exist. First, the I, you, what is called that person, then the objects. Recognize that thing that is a hallucination that doesn't exist, and then, similarly with the things that you see in the day, put the dream on top of this. Try to realize, try to see how all these things are empty.

It might be quite early for you do this meditation, but, without these basic teachings, for some people this can help to understand karma. It helps to understand, by recognizing what is a hallucination, to do this scientific analysis—the Buddha's, the Omniscient One's, science—explaining how things are not independent. Except for explaining very subtle points such as subtle dependent arising and ultimate right view, to a certain extent, even the top scientists talk about how things are not independent. Famous scientists talk about how things are dependent on the mind, how things are not independent. And I guess especially how things exist by depending on the parts. To a certain extent they talk about dependent arising, the absence of independence.

So today, do a strong meditation in the break time, while you are walking, eating, lying down, while you are enjoying the sun, whatever. Whatever you do, do this meditation practice strongly, analyzing what is a hallucination, what is reality. The conclusion is to practice awareness of the reality, the reality of the whole thing. But if you don't recognize the hallucination first, the thing that doesn't exist, then there's no way you can recognize reality. There's no way to think about, no way to meditate on, no way to touch on the reality of things, if you don't know what is false.

So then tomorrow at break time again do a meditation practice very strongly, this time on universal responsibility. Break times are also meditation. Begin each meditation with strong mindfulness. Generally, whatever subject comes up, practice strong awareness of that, not only during sitting meditation but also at other times. Everything is related to that; the whole of life is related to that. That is very intensive but it's the best way to do the course.

That way the mind is transformed into Dharma. With the practice of mindfulness the mind is continuously kept away from ignorance, away from wrong concepts.

So, I'll stop here.

LECTURE 9



[Bern 1993](#)

MOTIVATION: UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

As I mentioned, each of us has universal responsibility. Each of us is responsible to free all sentient beings from all the sufferings and causes and to lead them to happiness, especially to lead them to ultimate happiness, the everlasting happiness, especially full enlightenment, the peerless happiness.

So now, remember this again. Feel the responsibility and then with this attitude listen to the teachings, to the discourse. With this attitude do the meditation, do the course. Whatever activities you do in each twenty-four hours, do it as much as possible out of this attitude. That means all the activities you do with the body, speech and mind are dedicated for sentient beings, are done for the benefit of sentient beings. That means that you live your life for other sentient beings; you live your life in order to obtain happiness for all sentient beings.

With that attitude the action of listening, of explaining, becomes Dharma. It becomes spiritual, it becomes Dharma, which means the unmistakable cause of happiness. It becomes a virtuous action, a wholesome action that only results in happiness. It is definite that the result is only happiness, now and in the future. So, that's the motivation.

DIRECT AND INFERENTIAL VALID COGNITION

There are three categories in regards to the way to realize things. If there's smoke coming from a chimney of a house, in this way we realize that there's a fire in the house. This is the easy one. Then, the more difficult one is to understand about a person who lives in that house, how old that person is. That is more difficult. Then, more difficult than that is to understand the mind of the person living in that house, what she or he is thinking. To realize that is more difficult, much more difficult than the two previous ones. So there are different categories, the three levels, the way to realize the existence.

Our wealth, our apartment, the food, clothing, car, and so forth, these things we discover, we realize, with direct valid cognition. We can see these things, we can realize these things, with our own direct valid cognition. We discover, we realize, that we have wealth.

Now the second thing is that this wealth is in the nature of impermanence. This wealth, these surrounding people—family, friends and so forth—are in the nature of impermanence. To realize that they are in the nature of impermanence, we have to realize this by depending on logic, by using the inferential valid mind, the inferential valid cognition. We have to depend on logic, we have to realize with this mind how these things are in the nature of impermanence, how they are changing within every second. With the inferential valid cognition we realize how these things such as our wealth are in the nature of impermanence. These things cannot be realized with direct valid cognition, without depending on logic.

EMPTINESS: THE NYI OF TONG-PA-NYI

This wealth that we have, as we talked about today and other days, its nature is also empty, only empty, only emptiness. Its nature is only emptiness. The Tibetan term for that is *tong-pa-nyi*. *Tong-pa* is “empty,” *nyi* is “only,” so it cuts off something. Adding the word *nyi* after *tong-pa* makes it particular, it cuts off something, it cuts off something. Only emptiness, it cuts off something. It cuts off some other empty that we might make a mistake with, that we might get a wrong understanding from, some other emptiness. It cuts off some other emptiness that we might get mixed up with, that we might think that

way. So, to avoid a wrong understanding of emptiness the Tibetan adds *nyi* to the word, *tong-pa*. It's not just *tong-pa*, "empty" but *nyi*, "only." That makes it particular, that makes it specific. It's not talking about ordinary empty, but a particular emptiness. By adding *nyi* to *tong-pa*, which is empty, that makes it specific.

When we become poor, when we become homeless, when we lose everything, at that time there's an absence of the wealth. Put it this way, when there's no money in the purse, the purse is empty. The purse is empty of money. No matter how much we want to buy a cappuccino, no matter how much we want to buy chocolate or ice-creams, the purse is empty of money. So with *tong-pa-nyi*, *nyi* cuts off ordinary emptiness. By putting the word *nyi*, "only," it cuts off the ordinary emptiness, which is, for example, the absence of the money.

Here, we're not talking about that kind of absence of phenomena itself, we're not talking about that kind of emptiness. We're talking about how, while the money is in the purse, it's still empty. While the million dollars is in the bank, it's empty. While we have wealth it's empty. Here we're talking about that particular emptiness, that which is the reality of the money or the wealth. It's the emptiness that becomes the reason for the money to exist. Here the emptiness helps the money to exist. So it's different from the usual empty, the empty that people talk about, which is the absence of phenomena that exists. Here, *because* of this particular emptiness, because of *only* emptiness, the money exists in the bank or in the purse.

THE EMPTINESS OF LETTERS AND NUMBERS

Who created the English letters? Do you know? Who created the English letters? Who first started it? Was the idea started by a group of people or just one person? Maybe it was started by a monkey? No, I'm joking. Since human beings came from monkeys, then monkeys maybe made A, B, C, D. Who made up the A, B, C, D? From England, or from where? [Students respond.] Yeah? From Rome, from Italy? From Rome. You mean the Roman Empire? He made A, B, C, D? Yeah? Before the Roman Empire there's no A, B, C, D? Oh, no. There was? [Students respond.]

Probably there was something before. I'm not sure whether the Roman Empire did this or not. It must have come together with the A, B, C, D when it happened.

So, this line means "one." [Rinpoche draws a line in the air with his finger.] You draw like this, and then label it "one." Then you put a round circle next to it and you label it "ten." Then you put another circle, "hundred" and another circle, "thousand." So my question is these labels must have started at the same time as A, B, C, D happened, eh? No? What? So when did it happen?

[Students respond.]

You mean this particular number? This particular number?

[A student responds, mostly inaudible, but something about how the zero came from India.]

Nothing came from Tibet? No, I'm joking. What? Anyway, so you mean the ideas came from different countries and were put together? Is that what you're saying? But there must have been a time when somebody put the label, saying this means "ten." There was a time when the label "ten" was put. There was a beginning of the time for the label "ten." There was a beginning of that time.

Since this creation has a beginning, since the label has a beginning, there was a time the label started, there was a time the label "ten" was first given to these figures, then the label "one hundred" to these figures and "thousand" to these. So, there was a time the label "thousand" was given, depending on this figure. First there were these drawings, then somebody decided to label them "ten," "hundred" and "thousand." So there was a time where these particular figures didn't exist. There was a time this particular drawing didn't exist on this earth. And there was a time, *after* they were created, after these drawings happened, that the labels came, "one," "zero," "hundred," "thousand." The label, the name was put by the mind depending on these drawings.

Just from this example, you can see that one, zero, ten, are labels put depending on these drawings, these lines. So this one, zero, ten, hundred, thousand, these came from the mind. Came from the mind. As I mentioned this morning, whatever you are, Zopa or whatever—I've forgotten what names that I used this morning, anyway—whatever name you have your parents gave you. It's your parents' idea. They decided the label and imputed that label depending on the base, the aggregates, your own association of body and mind. As I mentioned this morning, that also came from the mind. These things came from the mind. One, ten, hundred, thousand, these existences came from the mind. That's clear, that's clear. They were created by the mind; they came from the mind, labeled by the mind, because of the reason of these particular drawings.

THE EMPTINESS OF MONEY

So this money in the purse, that which is labeled \$1, \$10, \$100, \$1,000, it came from the mind. The mind has merely imputed this, because of the reason, that this piece of paper has these particular designs—these numbers, these lines, these circles—and is officially recognized.

Because of the reason that this piece of paper has these particular designs—these drawings, these numbers, these lines, these circles, meaning one, ten, hundred, thousand—this money is merely imputed by the mind and it's believed. It's believed that this is what it is. This is what is \$1, what is \$10, what is \$100, \$1,000. This is the reality. To repeat again, because these pieces of paper have particular designs—lines and circles and so forth—because of the reason of that base, the mind merely imputes \$1, \$10, \$100, \$1,000 and believes in that.

Now you can see the difference between the piece of paper that is the base and the money, the \$1, \$10, \$100, \$1,000. Now you can see they're different, they are not separate but they're different. The piece of paper that has all these designs and the label that you put on it "money," and such and such, they're not separate but they're different.

Now you can see what *really* it is. What really \$1 is, what really the \$10, \$100, \$1,000 are. It is simply, it is just that which is merely imputed by the mind, because of the reason that this piece of paper has these designs that have been decided by the government. With this analysis you can see \$1 is empty, \$1 is completely empty, it doesn't exist at all from its own side. \$10 is completely empty. \$10 is nothing, it is nothing, except what is merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, it is empty; it doesn't exist at all from its own side. The \$100, \$1,000, all these do not exist at all from their own side. That is the reality. By meditating, by analyzing this, this is what comes to be realized.

The actual \$1 or \$10 or \$100 or \$1,000 from its own side that is there on this piece of paper, from above this piece of paper, that is a total hallucination. Because if it exists you should be able to find it when you look for it. Where is that real \$1? Or the real \$10 or \$100 or \$1,000 existing from their own side. If you search for it you should be able to find it there, on that piece of paper. You should be able to find it, but if you try to point to where it exists, you can't find it. If you point it out, there's nowhere you can find that, not on any part of that piece of paper, not even the whole group of the piece of paper, you cannot find that one. You cannot find that real \$1, \$10, \$100, \$1,000 existing from their own side, you cannot find them anywhere. There you cannot find them at all, not on any part, not even on the whole group, you cannot find.

The real one, existing from its own side, the \$1 from its own side, the \$10 from its own side, the \$1,000 from its own side, that one cannot be found anywhere. That one cannot be found anywhere. It exists neither on that piece of paper nor in your purse, nowhere, neither inside the purse nor outside, nowhere it exists.

While there are these pieces of paper that have the officially-agreed design, with numbers like this, one circle, two circles or three circles, while they are in your purse, there is money in your purse, *but* there's no money, *but* there's *no* money on the piece of paper! There is money in your purse but there's no money on the piece of paper. There is money in the house but there's no money on the piece of paper, on that particular thing. You cannot find money there. But you *can* find money in the house, you can find money in the purse, while there are those officially-agreed pieces of paper.

So, what is the money? It's empty; it's merely imputed by the mind. The money is empty, empty of existing from its own side. Because it's empty of existing from its own side, it's empty of independent existence. It's empty of existing without depending on causes and conditions, without depending on the basis, the piece of paper, without depending on the mind labeling it, without depending on any of these things.

Does it mean it's completely nonexistent? Is it completely empty even in name? Not existing even in name? Is it nonexistent? It is not. The money's not nonexistent. It is

empty of independence, existing without depending on the base and existing without depending on the cause and conditions, that which is independent, which means existing without depending on cause and conditions, the base and the mind which labels.

Because the money is a dependent arising, it exists because of the valid base, these officially-agreed pieces of paper that exist in the purse with all the necessary designs. And how that happened is because the mind merely imputed, merely labeled it. That is how it exists. This is the way the money exists, being merely imputed by the mind because there is this piece of paper that has all the designs that have been officially decided.

So you can see now that the money that exists is a dependent arising; it's not independent. Independent money doesn't exist. That is completely nonexistent. That's completely empty. The money is emptiness only, this emptiness, only emptiness, which doesn't mean the absence of money but being empty of inherently-existent money, independent money, this particular emptiness. Because of that, the money is able to exist, it is able to function.

What I was going to say, the point is this. So you see, the money is empty. Money is empty. You can see the reason it is empty by looking at dependent arising, how it's dependent arising, which is the explanation of how it exists. From there, you come to understand what money really is. Through analysis, you come to see it's something completely different to what we normally think it is. It doesn't appear to us in that way without analysis, for those of us who don't meditate on emptiness, who haven't realized emptiness. When we analyze, it's something else completely than what we normally believe.

Realizing that money is empty from its own side is the ultimate nature of money. So this depends on logical reasoning, that it's a dependent arising. The emptiness of phenomena such as money, the ultimate truth or emptiness of money or wealth, this has to be realized, discovered, by the inferential valid mind, by depending on reasons.

These things are much more difficult than our senses realizing a sense object, such as our hearing realizing a sound. You are realizing my sound. I'm constantly making noises. [Rinpoche snorts.] That one. Or the eye sense seeing, realizing, a flower, these things that can be realized with direct valid cognition.

Now the third type of phenomena, that is *most* difficult to realize. Actually, that is the main point. That is the main point of the subject tonight, the third one. That is the main point of the subject to discuss when you fall asleep. I'm joking, anyway. Hopefully, it may not happen after that.

HAVING FAITH IN THE BUDDHA AS A VALID SOURCE



Kopan Monastery 1987

Now, wealth. The fully enlightened Omniscient One, who is completely free from all mistakes of the mind, who has not the slightest mistake in the understanding of phenomena, who sees every single existence directly, the Omniscient One said of wealth that a person is poor, having a difficult life, because in the past he didn't create the karma, he didn't create the cause, making charity. He didn't practice generosity, he didn't practice giving to others. Then he was also miserly with his possessions, with his wealth. And for a person who has wealth, that came from the inner cause, from the charitable mind. It came from the inner cause, charity, which is defined as the thought of giving. That is the definition of charity. So wealth comes from the inner cause, which is our own mind, the thought of giving, charity.

The thought of protecting is the definition of morality. Morality is the cause of having a body of the happy migratory being, a human body or the body of a deva, a worldly god. There are different levels of devas or worldly gods, where there's more opportunity to experience happiness, temporary happiness or ultimate happiness. This is called the body of a happy migratory being. There is more happiness, and even though there's suffering, it is much less than the animal beings, the hell beings or the hungry ghost beings. The body of the happy migratory being—the deva or human body—comes from the inner cause, morality, that is in our own mind, the thought of protection, to protect ourselves from the cause of the suffering and problems, nonvirtuous actions, unwholesome actions.

How to realize this? How to realize this? By faith. This subject of karma shows we are experiencing the result in this life of actions we created in the past lives. The cause of the happiness we're experiencing in this life was created in other lives. The way to realize this is by having faith in valid quotations such as this. Not just any quotation but a valid quotation, a true quotation, a quotation that is pure, that is free from three mistakes, that is pure with three analyses. If I explain "pure with three analyses" you'll get the idea.

It's not saying that you should have faith in any quotation. It's not saying that. Here it's talking about particular quotations, ones that are valid or true. True, as the word says, means you can see like that in reality, you can realize *exactly* that way in the evolution. Not something different. It's not that the quotation says something but then you realize something else, not like that.

Like in science, even nowadays in Australia there is a lot of debate about when the conception starts. Oh, I made a mistake. When does the life of a being start? Some psychologists, some professionals, have a lot of disagreement. Even with doctors, the previous definitions are being changed as they discover more and more things. I think there are also maybe changes in the definition of AIDS as they discover more and more that what they thought in the past was true, was limited understanding or was wrong. This happens so many times with scientific knowledge, that things change the more they study. They discover more new phenomena, and then some of the definitions that were believed before are seen to be wrong. Suddenly there are new explanations. There is much blockage, but there is great development; it's happening all the time. They discover more and more, their knowledge becomes deeper and deeper.

As I mentioned this morning, when the top scientists analyzed atoms, they discovered that the atom is related somehow to the mind perceiving it. It's the way the mind perceives it, rather than something from its own side. Some of those top scientists discovered this, concluding it's to do with the mind.

Some of the top scientists explained that cancer is related to negative thoughts. There's one book where a person interviewed many top scientists and put it all together. The more they discover, the deeper they go, the more subtle the object, the closer to Buddhism they come; the closer to the Buddha's teachings that it is more relating to the mind. They are coming to understand this point.

Oh, I lost my point. Disappeared. I think it's gone to bed. It went to bed early. Before the body went to bed, I think the mind went to bed. So, anyway, it doesn't matter.

Valid quotations, such as this quotation of the Omniscient One, this quotation is a valid quotation, and this is pure, with three analyses. In other words, pure means it is free from three mistakes. In this quotation faults, mistakes, can't be found by direct valid cognition, so it is pure. And this quotation is pure because faults, mistakes, can't be found by inferential valid cognition. And thirdly—it's something to concentrate on—this quotation is pure because faults, mistakes, can't be found by referring to another valid quotation. The other quotation has to be valid, not a quotation in which faults can be found, one that is not true. It can't just be any quotation, not just because some philosopher has said it, not just because somebody has written it, not like that. For this quotation to be seen as faulty, to be wrong, it has to be compared to another quotation that itself has to be valid. That quotation has to be valid means.

In other words, let's put it this way. The very point is this, anyway. Whether I talk for a long time or not, the very point is this quotation can't be found as faulty from another valid quotation. Let's put it this way. If the other quotation says there is no reincarnation, or wealth doesn't come from charity and the body of a happy migratory being doesn't come from morality, from good karma, these sorts of quotations [will not invalidate a valid quotation because they themselves are wrong.] As I mentioned before, for the Omniscient One's quotation to be seen as mistaken using another quotation, first of all that quotation has to be valid. That means, *means*, it has to come from somebody who has realized that there is no reincarnation, that there are no past or future lives, or who has realized that wealth does not result from this virtuous action, charity, the result of wealth doesn't happen. Or from this good karma, this virtuous action of morality, the body of the happy migratory being doesn't happen. It has to come from somebody who directly sees that way. In other words, another omniscient mind, another buddha. It has to be one who has an omniscient mind, meaning a buddha. Buddha is Sanskrit meaning "enlightened" so whoever has an omniscient mind is an enlightened being. For this quotation to receive harm—that's the correct word?—the quotation that disproves it can only come from another enlightened being, from another omniscient one. But, this quotation doesn't receive harm, there's no harm at all from another omniscient one.

That is the main point of subject I meant to discuss.

The question is, is there anybody who has realized there's no reincarnation? That is the question. So then maybe we'll stop for now.

Is there anybody who has *realized*, not just who *believes*, not just who believes because somebody said so. Is there anybody who has realized that there's no reincarnation, that there are no past or future lives? That's my main question. That's the main point. Is there? Have you heard of anybody?

[Inaudible comment from a student.]

My question implies that's there's nobody who has realized that there is no reincarnation but there are people who have realized that there is reincarnation. So, nobody has realized that there's no reincarnation. Is it right? There's nobody who has realized that there's no reincarnation.

Maybe we'll stop here. Then maybe continue a little bit some time.

I'm sorry, I'll just begin again, but this doesn't need to continue. The point is this. We ourselves don't have clairvoyance, we ourselves don't have the knowledge, don't have this capacity of mind to foresee the past and future, the past and future to do with this life, with ourselves and with others' past and future lives. We ourselves don't have the clairvoyance to see these things: past and future, karma, action, the particular causes of the particular problems and happiness. We are creating causes right now but we're unable to see the exact result that will happen, exactly, clearly. We are unable to see the result of this nonvirtuous action, unable to know exactly what kind of problems it will bring in the future. Or now, if we are experiencing happiness or problems now, we are unable to see exactly what kind of virtuous or nonvirtuous causes were created in the past, at which place, at what time, all these specific things, with everything precise. Because we don't have clairvoyance, the capacity of mind to see such things, because we don't have an omniscient mind, to fully see all existence, then, then how can we realize that these things—karma, reincarnation, good results from morality and so forth—don't exist?

What's left is by having faith in not just any quotations, but these valid quotations that are pure, that don't receive harm from these three things—from a direct valid cognition, from an inferential valid cognition and from other valid quotations. Another omniscient one cannot harm this quotation, cannot say this is a mistake. So, this quotation is pure with these three analyses. It has to be such, like this. If it receives harm from any of these then it's not right. Then it's not worth having faith in. That's the point I didn't clarify before. That's the point I'm trying to make. Since we ourselves don't have those mental capacities, that clairvoyance, the omniscient mind, how can we realize these things?

Even for a person who doesn't meditate, even for a non-religious person, life is full of faith. It has so much to do with faith, with believing somebody. Faith, living life with faith, believing what somebody says. Life is filled with that. So this is not the first time. This is not the first time. Even a non-religious person, who never accepts anything spiritual, like the Communist Chinese, who never accept any religion, but life is full of faith, full of belief in what somebody says. We grow up with that. So, it's wrong to think this is the first time in our life we have been called on to have faith. That is completely wrong. This is a new phenomenon that we didn't know about before, a new phenomenon that existed but we weren't aware of. It's new to our mind, not in general existence, but new to our mind, we haven't realized it before.

So, please think more, reflect more on this point. Especially the last point, about how without this omniscient mind, clairvoyance, it can be realized. This is the point to think more about, to analyze more.

Hello? No, I'm not going to ask anything. No, I'll just give my idea, not ask another question.

Just to mention what I was going to say. If you assert that there's only one life without past or future lives, that it's true that there's no reincarnation, but that doesn't mean somebody has to realize it, then the question I was going to ask is this. What is your definition of "existing", of "not having reincarnation?" If you said there doesn't have to be somebody to realize it, it exists but it doesn't need somebody to realize it, there's only one life, no past or future lives, then the question I was going to put, which is way back in my mind is, what is your definition of existing if that is true? That was my question. That is just to meditate on, okay.

That's all. Yeah, that's all.

So, thank you very much. Good night.

LECTURE 10



[Chenrezig Institute 1994](#)

EMPTINESS: REAL APPEARANCE AS A HALLUCINATION

A star, a visual aberration, the flame of a lamp,
An illusion, a drop of dew or a bubble,
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud—
See causative phenomena as such.

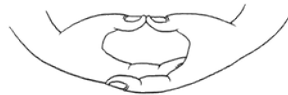
Look at all the causative phenomena, including yourself, your own life, your own body, your possessions, the surrounding people—friends, enemies, strangers—and see that by being under the control of cause and conditions they are changing within every second, that they do not last even within the second, that they are decaying within every second. Please concentrate on this.



Because of this, these causative phenomena can be stopped any time.



We cannot trust that these things will be the same every day, that these things will last, that we will always have these things, that these things will exist all the time like today, like this minute.



So, there is no basis for anger, ignorance, the dissatisfied mind, attachment, to arise. Not just that, all existence—these causative phenomena and un-causative phenomena, permanent phenomena—all existence, while existing, they are empty from their own side. While appearing as real, they are empty. All things, including the I, action, object, all these things, while they are existing, they are empty from their own side.



Because what they are is nothing other than what is merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, they do not have inherent existence. That which appears to exist from its own side, or to exist inherently, that is a hallucination. That is totally a hallucination. What appears as a real one from its own side is totally a hallucination. It's a projection of ignorance, it's a decoration, it's a projection that is put there, that appears, that is projected by ignorance, the concept of true existence, the hallucinated mind, which is the king of the wrong concepts. Due to the imprint that's left by ignorance, things that are merely labeled appear to be unlabeled, independent, existing from their own side. This appearance comes from the hallucinated mind. Therefore, all the existence is like a dream, like an illusion.

Concentrate on this just a little bit. Now concentrate on the reality, what they are, what all these things mean. Concentrate on the reality, without being caught in the hallucination,

without being caught on the surface. The surface or the hallucination, the projection. Without being caught in this, you should concentrate, you should look at the reality.

This is how things are, this is how things are—the I, action, object, all these things. It's never the way they normally appear to us. It's never normally the way we apprehend them. When we analyze they're completely contradictory.

So again, there's no basis for this wrong concept to arise. There's no reason to have these hallucinations. There's no reason to have all these various hallucinations by following these various wrong concepts, the concept of true existence, the concept of permanence and so forth. With these wrong concepts, with apprehending and believing that these hallucinations are true, that they exist in reality, that only ties us to problems. It only keeps us in the problems. These wrong concepts are the cause, they are the foundation for the sufferings of the body and mind, for all of life's problems. These wrong concepts never [allow us to] transcend our life, to transcend our mind. They don't allow us to free ourselves from true suffering and the true cause of suffering.

Only right understanding, the realizations how these things are in the nature of impermanence and empty of true existence, these wisdoms, the awareness in these things—only this eliminates the cause of the suffering and the whole entire suffering.

Now we will recite the *Essence of Wisdom*, the *Heart Sutra*, with the same continuation of the understanding or awareness, looking at the things according to the reality.

I prostrate to the Arya Triple Gem. Thus did I hear...

ONLY THE MIND CAN REMOVE THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS

Just to finish what I started explaining, the meaning of the first two lines of the refuge prayer, how the first two lines, relying upon Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, is taking refuge, and last two lines is generating bodhicitta.

Maybe put it this way. Even though external materials can cure a disease, even though they can stop the pain, that doesn't mean we will never experience it again. For example, taking medicine to stop fever, or aspirins to stop a headache or some tranquilizers to stop the immediate pain. That doesn't mean that from now on we'll never get a headache. Even if we recover today it doesn't mean that once recovered we'll never experience fever again, in this life or in future lives. From now on we'll never experience fever, we'll never experience headaches, we'll never experience diarrhea, we'll never experience colds, we'll never cough. It doesn't mean that. Even if there's an external cure for cancer and AIDS, even if we can recover from them, that doesn't mean that we will never experience cancer or AIDS from now on. Forever, we'll never experience them. It doesn't mean that.

Diseases are not all the problems of life. Diseases are just one tiny part of life's problems. Illness is one problem among so many problems. There are the problems of the suffering

of rebirth, the suffering of death, there are these major problems. The biggest ones are the suffering of the rebirth that comes at the beginning of this life and the suffering of death that comes at the end, and the many other problems that come in between, sicknesses, old age and so many others: fear, worries, separating from desirable objects, meeting undesirable objects and so forth. Meeting undesirable objects, living beings and nonliving things, and separating from desirable objects. After we find the desirable object, then there's the worry and fear of being separated from it. Even after we have found the desirable object, we are still unable to find satisfaction. So there are so many other problems between these two big problems in life, the suffering of rebirth and suffering of death.

First of all, to get an idea. Why do these diseases—fever, colds, coughs, headaches, diarrhea and so forth—recur? Even though by taking medicine we recover, why do they come back again, in this life and in other, future lives? Why do they come back again? Because nothing was done to eliminate the cause, that which is within the mind. That was not abandoned. That wasn't removed, not ceased. What is the cause of these problems that are in the mind? That is the karma, action, and the disturbing thoughts, such as the concept of true existence, ignorance, and then anger, attachment and so forth. These disturbing thoughts and action, karma, make outside phenomena become conditions for the disease. Normally, ordinary people—this is the Western nations' culture—regard the outside things, which are only conditions, as the main cause.

However, as I mentioned last night, there are some scientists who relate to the mind. Some expert scientists relate things such as the cancer to our own negative actions, and mind. This shows that external medicine, external things, cannot remove the cause of the problems which is rooted in the mind, which is within the mind, which is the mind.

External phenomena cannot remove the cause of the problem, the inner cause of the problem, that is in the mind, that is the mind. What can remove, what can eliminate the inner cause of the problems? It's only by the mind. It can be eliminated only by the mind. The cause of the problem is within our mind. It's our own mind. Therefore, what can eliminate the cause of the problems is also only by our own mind. It's only by our own mind. Not by the cause of the problem. Not by the same one, like anger. I'm not saying we can use anger to eliminate the anger. It's not like that. Anger purifying anger, it's not like that. Not talking that way. Attachment eliminating attachment, not talking that way. Here, it's our own mind, but another mind, the opposite to those wrong concepts, the positive, right realization, right understanding, that can eliminate them.

So, it's like this. The root of the samsara, the root of the whole, entire suffering, is ignorance, the concept of the truly-existent I. This can be eliminated by our own mind, by the wisdom realizing emptiness, realizing the ultimate nature of the I, our own self. That which is Dharma. Our own mind that is Dharma can eliminate the root of the whole, entire suffering. The whole, the defiled circling, these aggregates, the samsara, circling from one life to another life. So this one, the root of samsara, this ignorance, the concept of the truly-existent I, can be eliminated by our own mind, by that which is Dharma, the

wisdom realizing the ultimate nature of our self. Another thought, another mind, which is our own mind, has to eliminate that.

It's the same thing with attachment, the dissatisfied mind, which ties us to samsara, the defiled, circling aggregates, which ties us to this suffering realm and which interferes with us achieving liberation. This dissatisfied mind, this attachment, can also be eliminated by our own mind, by that which is Dharma, by the determination to be free from these defiled, circling aggregates, from samsara, this suffering realm.

Then, the self-cherishing thought interferes with us achieving full enlightenment, from ceasing all the mistakes of the mind and completing all the qualities of the realizations. It interferes with us having the realization that allows us to perfectly work for other sentient beings, to guide other sentient beings, without the slightest mistake. The self-cherishing thought that interferes with us achieving these realizations can also be eliminated by our own mind, that which is Dharma, by bodhicitta, the altruistic mind to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

HOW REALIZATIONS PROTECT US

A few days ago I gave just a very rough idea of the five paths to achieve the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path and the five Great Vehicle paths, the five Mahayana paths, with the ten bhumis, through which the mental continuum approaches full enlightenment. And then tantra, the path of the Secret Mantra.

All these are our own mind, all these paths are our own mind, the positive, right realization. They are the positive minds that eliminate all the mistakes of our mind—all the causes that produce all the suffering—and the imprints left on the mental continuum by the disturbing thoughts. All those are eliminated by our own mind, which is Dharma, the right realization.

When we have this disease of the mind, this pain of the mind, the dissatisfied mind, attachment, when we have this mental pain or this mental disease so much, this is eliminated by meditating, by realizing impermanence and death. That is also our own mind and that is Dharma. Dharma is that which protects us from the cause of suffering, the concept of permanence, from this dissatisfied mind, attachment. Meditating on the thought of impermanence and death protects us from this cause of suffering, it protects us from these delusions that create the unwholesome action, the nonvirtuous action, the harmful action, which results in problems in this life and problems after this life, experiencing rebirth in the suffering realms of the animals, the naraks or hell beings and the pretas or hungry ghosts. The thought of impermanence and death protects us from the cause, from the wrong concept, and from karma, action, and the whole entire result, the sufferings which arise from that cause. So, it protects us from the whole thing, cause and result, from the cause, the disturbing thought, karma, and the whole entire suffering result. It protects us from this whole thing, from this whole evolution. This thought of impermanence and death, this awareness, this meditation, this realization protects us from those heaviest suffering experiences of the animal, hungry ghost or narak beings.

That's why our own thought of impermanence and death, this right understanding, this right realization, is called Dharma; it's because the meaning of Dharma is protecting ourselves from the sufferings. It holds ourselves up and holds the suffering of the lower realms down. It protects us from both the cause and the result, suffering. That is the meaning of Dharma. This is just one example.

Meditating on impermanence and death, the thought of impermanence and death, immediately cuts off the emotional mind, the painful mind, the dissatisfied mind, attachment. It immediately cuts this off. It immediately protects the mind from that and so immediately there's peace. It immediately gives peace to the mind. The thought of impermanence and death, this is Dharma, which is our own mind, Dharma. This mind immediately gives peace, tranquility, calmness, relaxation, rest in our mind, rest in our life. The real rest in our life is rest from that mental confusion, from those problems of life. It gives real rest, a real holiday, in our heart, in our mind.

The wisdom realizing emptiness protects us from the concept of true existence, ignorance, the root of the samsara, then the whole entire suffering of samsara, the whole six realms' sufferings, including all human beings' problems. That wisdom does the function of Dharma, protecting us from the main cause of suffering, of problems, from the whole entire problems. That wisdom is real Dharma, that which is our own mind.

So, the same thing, bodhicitta, renouncing the self and cherishing other sentient beings, and on the basis of this, wishing to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings—this bodhicitta protects us from the self-cherishing thought and from all the obstacles that arise from the self-cherishing thought. It protects us from all the remaining obstacles, including the greatest obstacle, to complete the path to enlightenment. It protects us from falling down into the lower liberation, the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path, which binds us to the blissful state of peace. It protects us from falling down into the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path which binds us to that state.

So, bodhicitta, which is our own mind, protects us from the self-cherishing thought, from all the obstacles to achieve enlightenment, from falling down into the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path. It has that function, protecting us from all these obstacles, from the risk, from the dangers, from all these problems. Therefore, that is Dharma. Our own mind, which is bodhicitta, is that which protects us from all these things—that is Dharma.

Just relating to the complete path, basically, it's the same. What does Dharma mean? What does Dharma mean? Another meaning of Dharma is when we have cut the mind that causes suffering, when we have cut the wrong concept. That is Dharma. When we have cut those minds or those wrong concepts that bring unhappiness, that result in harm to ourselves and to other sentient beings, that is Dharma. It fixes up something that is wrong in the mind. That is Dharma.

This is basically the same as I explained before, but maybe just a little bit wider idea.

Relating to the lam-rim, the whole path, it's fixing up the mind, fixing up the mind, in other words, creating devotion in the mind. It's fixing up the mind by creating devotion in our mind by seeing from our own side the virtuous friend with whom we have a relationship, from whom we have received Dharma contact, as an enlightened being.

That cuts the wrong concept, the thought of mistakes, heresy, the non-devotional mind that is the opposite of devotion. The non-devotional mind becomes the greatest obstacle to the development of our own mind in the whole path to full enlightenment. That means it's the greatest obstacle for us to have all the qualities of the omniscient mind, perfect power, to complete the mind-training in compassion for all sentient beings—this as a basic—then to have all the qualities that allows us to free everyone from all the obscurations and sufferings and lead them to peerless happiness, full enlightenment. This non-devotional mind, or this thought of mistakes toward the virtuous friend, is the greatest obstacle. Therefore, by fixing up the mind into this realization, this devotion, we cut off those wrong concepts, those obstacles. Our own mind, this devotional mind, protects us from that greatest obstacle. That's how it is Dharma.

Then that brings all success. That brings all the success for the happiness of this life, for actualizing the path, all the way up to leading each sentient being to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment. It brings success up to that point, where we can bring each and every sentient being to peerless happiness, to full enlightenment. We are able to do that.

This is the first Dharma, relating to the lam-rim, the graduated path to enlightenment. This is the first Dharma; this is the root of the path to enlightenment.

The mind is fixed up by meditating on the lam-rim, by meditating on the perfect human rebirth—its usefulness, the difficulty finding it again, the eight freedoms, the ten richnesses—on impermanence and death, on the sufferings of the lower realms and from there up to karma. This is the mind training in the graduated path of the lower capable being. With this the mind is fixed up, the determination, the renunciation of this life, is created. In that way we have cut off this painful mind, attachment, clinging to this life, which is the basis of our life's problems, disease, relationship problems and so forth. Even when we try to practice Dharma we are unable to. Attachment interferes with us being able to practice Dharma or if we try it doesn't become pure, it doesn't become successful. With this realization, however, we cut this, the attachment clinging to this life.

Then, by meditating, by training the mind in the graduated path of the middle capable being, the true sufferings and the true cause of suffering, by meditating on the evolution of the self, on samsara, on the shortcomings of samsara, the mind gets fixed up in the realization, in the determination to be completely free from the whole entire samsara, not finding the slightest attraction to samsara, to samsaric perfections. This way we have cut off the attachment that finds attraction to samsara, to samsaric perfections, that attachment that continuously ties us all the time to samsara, to these suffering realms, that doesn't allow us to achieve liberation, everlasting happiness, peace.

That mind relating to the lam-rim is the second Dharma.

Then the third Dharma relates to the mind training in bodhicitta, the graduated path of the higher capable being, such as the seven techniques of Mahayana cause and effect. By this, the mind is fixed up in bodhicitta, renouncing the self, cherishing only other sentient beings, day and night, constantly, wishing to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. We spontaneously wish to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings. The mind is transformed by this, the mind is fixed up in this bodhicitta. We have cut off the self-cherishing thought. Then also, by training the mind in the six paramitas, [3] by fixing the mind, as I mentioned last night, we fix the mind in various realizations. Charity means the thought of giving. Morality means the thought of protecting. Fixing the mind in these six paramitas, we cut off those other obstacles, miserliness, laziness, ignorance, the concept of true existence and so forth. We cut off those obstacles, those disturbing thoughts.

Then, by training the mind in the generation stage and the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra, the mind is fixed up in pure thought and pure appearances, in pure thought that has pure appearances. In that way, we cut off the impure, ordinary concepts and appearances. And by training the mind in the completion state, the mind is fixed up, mended, so that the wind enters into the center channel and abides and absorbs there. Then we actualize the clear light, the extremely subtle consciousness, the extremely subtle mind. We actualize what is called clear light and illusory body. Then, after the unification of those two, the clear light and illusory body, which is the direct cause, we achieve enlightenment, the unification of no-more-learning, that completely pure clear light, the holy body, the rupakaya, the pure illusory body that is completely free from even the subtle obscurations.

By fixing the mind in the clear light, by developing this extremely subtle wisdom, we are able to cut off the gross and subtle dual view, that subtle dual view that arises even during the appearance of the white path, the increasing red path and near-attainment dark path. Those dualistic minds that arise during these times all get completely ceased.

Then, like the sun and sunbeams, there's the sun, the completely pure holy mind, the dharmakaya, and the sunbeams, the holy form body, the manifestations. Like there are so many millions of beams which function to eliminate darkness in the world, everywhere doing the function, eliminating darkness. Like this, the dharmakaya—the ultimate fixed mind, the completed one, the dharmakaya, having ceased all the mistakes of the mind and completed the qualities of the realizations—is the sun and [the rupakaya] is like the sunbeams, innumerable numbers of forms that manifest according to the level of mind of sentient beings, to eliminate the darkness of the sentient beings' mind. They eliminate the mental darkness, the obscurations, the darkness of mind, such as the ignorance of true existence, ignorance not knowing the nature of the I and so forth. All these obscurations are dispelled by various means, including revealing the highest, Dharma, and by manifesting in various forms according to the level of mind of sentient beings.

This last one, the completion stage, is how our own mind is ultimately fixed up; it becomes the fully fixed up mind. This way then we have cut off all the mistakes of the

mind. This is the meaning of Dharma. The Tibetan term is sem chö-pa, to fix up the mind.

In our day-to-day life, when somebody bothers us, when somebody disrespects us, then by practicing patience, that's fixing up the mind, cutting off the anger. When there's danger of anger arising due to somebody doing something we don't like, and then practicing loving-kindness and compassion is fixing up the mind, cutting off those wrong concepts, those harmful minds: anger and so forth.

WE NEED TO RELY ON THE BUDDHA, DHARMA AND SANGHA AS OUR DOCTOR, MEDICINE AND NURSE

In our daily life, when we try to listen to the teachings, try to do the meditations, when we try to live our life—eating, sleeping, walking, sitting, and so forth—doing the actions with the attitude of universal responsibility, by the motivation of cherishing other sentient beings, then whatever activities we do with such a motivation, again this mind becomes Dharma. The mind is fixed up. And this way, we have cut the self-cherishing thought.

The explanation has gone on and on like this but, I think, this is the conclusion! This is the medicine. These external things can't remove the cause of suffering. And as long as the cause of suffering is not removed, that which is in the mind, or which is the mind, as long as that is not removed, then the problems will come back again and again, such as the suffering of rebirth, death and so forth. They all come back; we have to experience them again and again and again without end. As long as we don't remove the cause of suffering, that which is within the mind, then these problems become endless.

Therefore, the method that can eliminate the cause of suffering, that is within the mind, is *only Dharma*, only Dharma. As I described just before, it's that which is our own mind, not somebody else's mind, which is our own mind; it's the right realization, the right understanding, the right path. This is the fundamental thing that we have to analyze, that we have to understand and recognize. Only then can we understand the importance of Dharma, of why there's a need for practice, for meditation. Why there's still a need for a meditation practice, even though we are healthy now, even though we don't have problems of poverty, relationship problems and so forth, even though we don't have these problems. This gives the reason why there's still a need for meditation practice. Even if we are a millionaire, there's still a need for meditation.

So, you can see that the Dharma is an incredible protection. That is the real, that is the ultimate medicine. That is the real medicine, the ultimate medicine. The Dharma is much more important—a million times more important, more precious—than external medicine. The inner medicine, the Dharma, becomes a million times more important than external medicine, because without the inner medicine, the Dharma, there's no end to the problems, and there's no end to taking medicine.

If we become free from the whole entire cause of the suffering by practicing Dharma, then we don't experience at all the true suffering, disease and so forth. So medicine is no

longer needed. All this surgery, doing operations again and again, all these expenses, all these worries, fears, become unnecessary. No matter how precious external medicine is, even if it can cure the disease, when we compare it to the inner medicine, the Dharma, the outside medicine is nothing. When we compare the value of those two, the value of external medicine and the inner medicine, the Dharma, the benefit of the Dharma is infinite. It's where all temporary happiness comes from and all ultimate happiness comes from.

In order to actualize this inner medicine, this Dharma, within us, we need somebody to reveal it to us; somebody has to reveal the Dharma. There has to be a founder. So that is the Omniscient One. Therefore, we need to rely upon the Buddha. There comes the reason to rely upon the Buddha, the Omniscient One. Similarly, in order to receive treatment, medicine, we have to rely upon the doctor who gives the treatment. There is the need for a doctor; we need to rely upon a doctor. So, in the same way, here we come to rely upon the Omniscient One.

Similarly, for a severely ill patient, just having the medicine, just having a doctor is not enough. There needs to be a nurse who takes care of him, who looks after him. Like that example, we need to rely upon the Sangha, those who are intending to virtue. The term Sangha means "intending to virtue." This virtue means liberation, the liberation of the Lesser Vehicle path and great liberation, full enlightenment.

We need help from the Sangha. The Sangha is the helper who helps us actualize the actual refuge, the Dharma, like the nurse who takes care of the sick person, helping to give the daily medicine and so forth. We need to rely upon the helper, the Sangha, in order to actualize the actual refuge, the Dharma, within our own mind.

Besides the problems of this life, even to save ourselves from rebirth in the naraks, which means the hell realm, the hungry ghost or preta realm or the animal realm, to be saved from being born in one of those realms and experiencing the sufferings there we don't need to rely upon all three Jewels. Just for that, even just for that, we don't need to rely upon all three. Just the Buddha alone is enough. Just the Dharma alone is enough. At the time of death, if we're able to transform our mind into the Dharma, taking refuge in our own mind, by transforming our mind into the Dharma, we are saved. By generating compassion for other sentient beings or devotion to the Buddha, devotion to the virtuous friend, our own spiritual master and so forth, by transforming our mind by meditating on emptiness, transforming our mind into those positive thoughts, just relying upon our own mind as Dharma, then we don't get born in those suffering realms. Or just taking refuge in the Sangha alone, we don't get born in the lower realms.

But here, in order to be completely free from the whole, entire samsara, the defiled aggregates, circling from one life to another life, from this suffering realm, to be completely free from this whole, entire suffering realm, relying upon one is not enough. Like there's need for three—doctor, medicine and nurse—this is the same, for this we need all these three. We have to rely upon the actual refuge, the Dharma, then the founder of the actual refuge Dharma, the Buddha, the Omniscient One, and then the helpers, the

Sangha, who help us to actualize the actual refuge Dharma within our own mind. We need to rely upon all these three, otherwise we can't be completely liberated from the whole, entire samsara and achieve ultimate liberation.

Now I'll just go over the prayer. This one took ages. It almost took three countless great eons to explain.

CAUSAL AND RESULTANT REFUGE

“To the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,” that shows the causal refuge. “Until I achieve enlightenment,” that shows resultant refuge.

So, here we are practicing both together, the resultant refuge and the causal refuge. The resultant refuge is having actualized the precious Dharma, the precious Dharma jewel, that which is the actual refuge within our own mind. Then we become the Sangha. Then we become the Sangha. Then by developing, by completing the actual refuge Dharma within our own mind, we become a buddha. The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha from our own experience. This is the resultant refuge. Our wishing to achieve, to experience these things, that is resultant refuge.

The ultimate purpose is to bring all suffering sentient beings into full enlightenment, therefore, we can't experience the resultant refuge by ourselves alone. We cannot do it by ourselves alone. To succeed we need to rely upon the causal refuge, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha that is possessed by others' minds, by minds separate from our own.

That's why there's need to practice both causal and resultant refuge. By taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha possessed by others' minds, that becomes the cause for us to experience the resultant refuge, to actualize the Dharma, to become the Sangha and to become the Omniscient One, the Buddha. So, “I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha” is the causal refuge and “until I achieve enlightenment” is the resultant refuge.

SAYING THE REFUGE PRAYER

How is the refuge practice done with the two causes? According to the Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle path, without compassion for all sentient beings, just having the determination to be free from the whole entire samsara that is the nature of suffering, to have the fear of samsara, and to have faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, seeing they have the capacity to free us from samsara, we can achieve liberation.

The first cause, the determination to be free from samsara because of fear of samsara, is like having fear of a disease making us take medicine. We fear the disease and then have reliance on, have faith in, the doctor, the medicine and the nurse who have the power, the capacity to make it better, to make us healthy. With these two—fear of the disease and faith in the doctor, medicine and nurse, we rely upon them.

It's the same here. With the determination to be free from samsara, due to the fear of samsara, we develop faith in the Triple Gem because they have the power to free us, to save us from the samsara. With these two causes, our heart relies upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. That is the way of taking refuge according to the Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle path. It is done without compassion for all sentient beings.

According to the practitioners of the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle, besides these two causes—fear of samsara and devotion to the Triple Gem—there is a third thing, compassion for all sentient beings. With these three reasons, then our heart continually relies upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. That is the Mahayana way of taking refuge.

With such an attitude, we meditate on the meaning, saying the prayer, which reminds us of the practice.

Then, the last two verses, “Due to the merits of having created charity and so forth, may I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all migratory beings.” This way it becomes a dedication and also generates bodhicitta. When we are listening to teachings we say, “Due to the merits of listening to the teachings and so forth, may I achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all migratory beings.” This means the merits of having practiced the six paramitas and so forth, and listening to the teachings, in order to achieve enlightenment to benefit all migratory beings.

When we say “migratory beings” those who have heard the teachings on dependent arising—dependent origination, the twelve branches—before should remember the meaning of “migratory being.” Sentient beings, by being under the control of disturbing thoughts and delusions, such as ignorance, anger, attachment and so forth, then karma, by being under the control of these causes, they continuously migrate in the six realms. One after another, continuously. They continuously migrate in one of these realms, without freedom. Without freedom because they are controlled, their mind is controlled by the karma and disturbing thoughts. Without any freedom, they continuously migrate in one of these suffering realms. We need to remember the meaning of “migratory beings,” how they migrate due to the twelve links. Then we need to remember how samsaric sentient beings are experiencing the general sufferings, the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change—those temporary pleasures that are labeled “pleasure” on the suffering and that appear as pleasure—and pervasive compounding suffering, being under the control of karma and delusion, pervasive compounding suffering, again creating future samsara, future suffering realms. Because of being controlled by karma and delusion, sentient beings' minds are contaminated with the seed of disturbing thoughts. This is pervasive compounding suffering. So, sentient beings experience these general sufferings.

Then, the six types of suffering: nothing is definite, not finding satisfaction, leaving the body again and again, joining again and again, again and again becoming higher and lower. After becoming higher, then they become lower, always changing like this, with nothing definite. Then the shortcoming of not having a companion. At the time of rebirth we are born alone, and when we die we have to go alone. Even this body has to be left.

Only the bare consciousness goes. Even this body that we have been together with for so long, that we have cherished so much and taken so much care of, even this has to be left.

So remember how samsaric sentient beings experience true suffering: the general sufferings and the particular sufferings of each realm: the hell beings', pretas' and animals' suffering, then the human beings' suffering and the devas' suffering, those sufferings, those problems particular to those realms.

If we can remember how migratory beings—*dro-la* in Tibetan—are suffering so much with the true cause of suffering, true suffering, then it helps to develop compassion. There's no choice. When we reflect on all these sentient beings, how they're migratory beings and how they're suffering, there's no choice, compassion has to arise. There's no choice. Compassion has to arise in our mental continuum. So, "In order to benefit them, may I achieve enlightenment."

After this it's good to think, "I'm going to practice bodhicitta." Put your palms together and think, "I'm going to practice bodhicitta." This is the main source. Without this there's no possibility to achieve full enlightenment. With this, by having bodhicitta, then there's every possibility to achieve full enlightenment.

When we think like this, "I'm going to generate bodhicitta," just in this second, we accumulate infinite merit, good karma, the cause of happiness and success. It is explained by the Buddha in the sutra text called *ting-nye-dzin-gyi gyal-pö do* [4] —I don't remember the name exactly—that if we do it like this we accumulate infinite merit, right now, in this second.

So I'll stop here.



[With Lama Osel Rinpoche at Labrang Monastery](#)

Footnotes

- [1.](#) According to Tibetan medical theory, the four elements of earth, wind, fire and water should be in balance within our body to maintain health.
- [2.](#) The pledges made by disciples during a tantric initiation to keep tantric vows or to do certain activities, such as a daily sadhana for the rest of their lives.
- [3.](#) The six paramitas (Skt) or perfections are the practices of a bodhisattva: the perfections of generosity, morality, patience, enthusiastic perseverance, concentration and wisdom.
- [4.](#) This is *The King of Samadhi Sutra* (Skt: *Samadhirajasutra*; Tib: *ting-nge-dzin-gyi gyäl-pö do*).

Images

- [Lecture 1](#). CIN Chenrezig Institute 1994 (LZR negs) (35428_ng.jpg)
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[Lecture 4](#). Lama Zope Rinpoche with Lama Osel Rinpoche at Osel Labrang (Labrang Monastery is one of the six great monasteries of the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism) (Photographer unknown) (08807_ng.jpg)
[Lecture 4](#). Bern 1993 (Donor-photographer Ueli Minder) (04143_ng.jpg)
[Lecture 5](#). Possibly in Switzerland 1990 (Donor-photographer Ueli Minder) (02348_ng.jpg)
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[Lecture 6](#). Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, 1988 (Donor-photographer Ueli Minder) (05646_pr.jpg)
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[Lecture 7](#). Bern 1993 (Photographer-photographer Ueli Minder) (35444_ud.jpg)
[Lecture 7](#). Lama Zopa Rinpoche painting a Buddha statue in Nagarjuna-Madrid (Date unknown) (Unknown photographer) (18460_ud.jpg)
[Lecture 8](#). Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Cherek Lama's Cave 1990 (Donor-photographer Merry Colony) (21811_pr.jpg)
[Lecture 8](#). Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Cherek Lama's Cave 1990 (Donor-photographer Merry Colony) (21812_pr.jpg)
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[Lecture 10](#). CIN Chenrezig Institute 1994 (LZR negs) (35436_ng.jpg)
[Lecture 10](#). Lama Zopa Rinpoche with Lama Osel Rinpoche at Osel Labrang (Labrang Monastery is one of the six great monasteries of the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism) (Photographer unknown) (08813_ng.jpg)

Glossary

aggregates (*Skt: skandha*). The association of body and mind; a person comprises five aggregates: form, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and consciousness.

Amitabha (*Skt*). One of the five Dhyani Buddhas, red in color, representing the wisdom of analysis and the fully purified aggregate of discrimination.

anger. A disturbing thought that exaggerates the negative qualities of an object and wishes to harm it; one of the three root delusions.

arhat (Skt). Literally, foe destroyer. A being who, having ceased their karma and delusions, is completely free from all suffering and its causes and has achieved liberation from cyclic existence.

arya (Skt). A being who has directly realized emptiness.

asura (Skt). demigod.

Atisha, Lama (982–1054). The renowned Indian master who went to Tibet in 1042 to help in the revival of Buddhism and established the Kadam tradition. His text *Light of the Path* was the first lam-rim text.

attachment. A disturbing thought that exaggerates the positive qualities of an object and wishes to possess it; one of the three root delusions.

Avalokiteshvara (Skt). See *Chenrezig*.

bhumi (Skt). Literally, stage or ground. Bodhisattvas must traverse ten bhumis on their journey to enlightenment, the first being reached with the direct perception of emptiness.

bodhicitta (Skt). The altruistic determination to achieve full enlightenment in order to free all sentient beings from suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

bodhisattva (Skt). One who possesses bodhicitta.

buddha, a (Skt). A fully awakened being. One who has totally eliminated (Tib: *sang*) all obscurations veiling the mind and has fully developed (Tib: *gye*) all good qualities to perfection.

Buddha, the (Skt). The historical Buddha, Shakymuni. See also *enlightenment*, *Shakyamuni Buddha*.

Buddhadharma (Skt). See *Dharma*.

capable being (lower, middle or higher). See *three levels of practice*.

chakra (Skt). Energy wheel; the focal point of the wind energy channels within the body.

Chengawa, Geshe (1038–1103). One of Dromtonpa’s main disciples.

Chenrezig (Tib; Skt: Avalokiteshvara). The Buddha of Compassion. The male meditational deity that embodies the compassion of all the buddhas. The Dalai Lamas are said to be emanations of this deity.

compassion. The sincere wish that others be free from suffering and its causes.

conventional bodhicitta. The altruistic mind that wishes to attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. The word “conventional” is used to distinguish it from “ultimate” bodhicitta, the realization of emptiness with a bodhicitta motivation.

dakini (Skt). Literally, “female sky-goer.”

Dalai Lama, His Holiness (b. 1935). Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso. Revered spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and tireless worker for world peace; winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989; a guru of Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

deity (Tib: yidam). An emanation of the enlightened mind, used as the object of meditation in tantric practices.

delusions. The disturbing, negative thoughts, or minds, that are the cause of suffering. The three root delusions are ignorance, anger and attachment.

Denma Lochö Rinpoche (b. 1928). A learned Gelugpa lama, a former abbot of Namgyal Monastery, who is one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus.

desire realm (Skt: kamadhatu). One of the three realms of samsara, comprising the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demigods and the six lower classes of gods; beings in this realm are preoccupied with desire for objects of the six senses.

Dharamsala. A village in the north-west of India, in Himachal Pradesh. The residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Dharma (Skt). In general, spiritual practice; specifically, the teachings of Buddha, which protect from suffering and lead to liberation and full enlightenment.

Dromtönpa (1005-64). Lama Atisha's heart disciple and chief translator in Tibet; propagator of the Kadampa tradition.

eight freedoms. The eight states from which a perfect human rebirth is free: being born as a hell being, hungry ghost, animal, long-life god, when no buddha has descended, as a barbarian, being born with defective mental or physical faculties or as a heretic, holding wrong views. (See also *ten richnesses*.)

eight Mahayana precepts. One-day vows to abandon killing; stealing; lying; sexual contact; taking intoxicants; sitting on high seats or beds; eating at the wrong time; and singing, dancing and wearing perfumes and jewelry.

eight worldly dharmas. The worldly concerns that generally motivate the actions of ordinary beings: craving material possessions and to be free from lack of possessions; craving happiness and comfort and to be free from lack of happiness and comfort; craving a good reputation and to be free from a bad one; craving praise and to be free from criticism.

emptiness (Skt: shunyata; Tib: tong-pa-nyi) Literally "emptiness only." The absence, or lack, of true existence. Ultimately, every phenomenon is empty of existing truly, or from its own side, or independently. Lama Zopa Rinpoche explains the importance of the syllable *nyi* (Tib) or "only" in cutting off ordinary emptiness, for example, a purse being empty of having money. Without this final syllable the term falls short of indicating the total lack of inherent existence.

enlightenment (Skt: bodhi; Tib: jang-chub). Full awakening; buddhahood; omniscience. The ultimate goal of a Mahayana Buddhist, attained when all obscurations have been removed and all the qualities of the mind have been fully actualized. It is a state characterized by perfect compassion, wisdom and power. Lama Zopa Rinpoche points out that the Tibetan, *jang-chub*, is much more precise than the English as the two syllables encompass what enlightenment is: *jang* meaning "elimination" as in the elimination of all gross and subtle obstacles and *chub* meaning "development" as in the development of all perfect qualities.

eon (Skt: *kalpa*). A world period, an inconceivably long period of time. The life span of the universe is divided into eons.

faith. There are three kinds: believing, or pure-hearted, faith; lucid, or understanding, faith—faith based on logical conviction; and yearning, or aspirational, faith.

five lay vows. The vows against killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and taking intoxicants taken by lay Buddhist practitioners.

five paths. The paths along which beings progress to liberation and enlightenment; the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation and no more learning.

form realm (Skt: *rupadhatu*). The second of samsara's three realms, with seventeen classes of gods.

formless realm (Skt: *arupyadhatu*). The highest of samsara's three realms, with four classes of gods involved in formless meditations.

four means of drawing disciples to the Dharma. The second of two sets of practices of the bodhisattva (the other being the six perfections); they are giving, speaking kind words, teaching to the level of the student and practicing what you teach.

four noble truths. The subject of Shakyamuni Buddha's first teaching, or first turning of the wheel of Dharma: true suffering, true cause of suffering, true cessation of suffering and true path leading to the cessation of suffering.

four opponent powers. The four-part purification practice; the power of the object (refuge), regret (having done a specific negative action), resolve (not to do the specific negative action again) and remedy (a practice such as Vajrasattva).

Gelug (Tib). One of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it was founded by Lama Tsongkhapa in the early fifteenth century and has been propagated by such illustrious masters as the successive Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas.

Gelugpa (Tib). A follower of the Gelug tradition.

geshe (Tib). Literally, spiritual friend. The title conferred on those who have completed extensive studies and examinations at Gelugpa monastic universities.

Geshe Chengawa. See *Chengawa*.

god. See *deva*.

gompa (Tib). Usually refers to the main meditation hall, or temple, within a monastery.

graduated path to enlightenment. See *lam-rim*.

Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment. See *Lam-rim Chen-mo*.

guru (Skt; Tib: *lama*). Literally, heavy, as in heavy with Dharma knowledge. A spiritual teacher, master.

guru devotion. The sutra or tantra practice of seeing the guru as a buddha then devoting to him or her with thought and action.

Guru Puja (Skt; Tib: *Lama Chöpa*). A special Highest Yoga Tantra guru yoga practice composed by Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen.

hearer (Skt: shravaka). Followers of the Hinayana, who strive for nirvana on the basis of listening to teachings from a teacher.

Heart Sutra aka Heart of Wisdom Sutra (Skt: prajnaparamita-hrdaya). The best known of a series of sutras on emptiness classified as *prajnaparamita (perfection of wisdom) sutras*. See also *prajnaparamita*.

hell. The samsaric realm with the greatest suffering. There are eight hot hells, eight cold hells, four surrounding hells and various occasional hells.

heresy (Tib: log-ta). Also called “mistaken wrong views,” one of the five afflicted views that are part of the root afflictions. Heresy is a deluded intelligence that rejects the existence of something that exists, such as karma, reincarnation, the Three Jewels and so forth, and ascribes existence to that which is nonexistent. It is also holding incorrect views about the guru.

Highest Yoga Tantra (Skt: Anuttara yoga tantra). The fourth and supreme of the four classes of tantra, which mainly emphasizes internal activities.

Hinayana (Skt). Literally, the Lesser Vehicle. The path of the arhats, the goal of which is nirvana, or personal liberation from samsara. Although not synonymous, the term Theravada is often preferred. (See also *Theravada*.)

hungry ghost (Skt: preta) One of the six classes of samsaric beings, hungry ghosts experience the greatest sufferings of hunger and thirst.

ignorance. A mental factor that obscures the mind from seeing the way in which things exist in reality. There are basically two types of ignorance, ignorance of karma and the ignorance that holds the concept of true existence; the fundamental delusion from which all other delusions arise.

impermanence. The gross and subtle levels of the transience of phenomena.

imprints. The seeds, or potentials, left on the mind by positive or negative actions of body, speech and mind.

inherent existence. See *true existence*.

initiation (Skt: abhishika; Tib: wang). Or empowerment. The transmission of the practice of a particular deity from a tantric master to a disciple, which permits the disciple to engage in that practice.

Kadampa geshe. A practitioner of the Buddhist tradition that originated in Tibet in the eleventh century with the teachings of Lama Atisha. Kadampa geshe are renowned for their practice of thought transformation.

Kagyü (Tib). One of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, having its source in such illustrious lamas as Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa and Gyalwa Karmapa.

karma (Skt; Tib: lä). Literally, action. The working of cause and effect, whereby positive actions produce happiness and negative actions produce suffering.

Kasyapa. The third buddha of this eon.

Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen (1894–1977). A renowned bodhisattva born in northern India, who wrote *Vast as the Heavens, Deeps as the Sea: Verses in Praise of Bodhicitta*; a guru of Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche (1926-2006). A highly attained and learned ascetic yogi who lived in Dharamsala, India, and who is one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus.

Kopan Monastery. The monastery near Boudhanath in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, founded by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

lama (Tib). See *guru*.

Lama Atisha. See *Atisha, Lama*.

Lama Chöpa. See *Guru Puja*.

Lama Tsongkhapa. See *Tsongkhapa, Lama*.

Lama Yeshe. See *Yeshe, Lama*.

lam-rim (Tib). The graduated path to enlightenment. A presentation of Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings as step-by-step training for a disciple to achieve enlightenment.

Lam-rim Chen-mo (Tib.) *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. Lama Tsongkhapa's most important work, a commentary on Atisha's *Lamp for the Path*, the fundamental lam-rim text.

liberation (Skt: *nirvana* or *moksha*; Tib: *nyang-dä* or *thar-pa*). The state of complete freedom from samsara; the goal of a practitioner seeking his or her own escape from suffering (see also Hinayana). "Lower nirvana" is used to refer to this state of self-liberation, while "higher nirvana" refers to the supreme attainment of the full enlightenment of buddhahood. Natural nirvana (Tib: *rang-zhin nyang-dä*) is the fundamentally pure nature of reality, where all things and events are devoid of any inherent, intrinsic or independent reality.

lineage lama. A spiritual teacher who is in the line of direct guru-disciple transmission of teachings, from Buddha to the teachers of the present day.

loving kindness. The wish for others to have happiness and its causes.

lower realms. The three realms of cyclic existence with the most suffering: the hell, hungry ghost and animals realms.

Mahayana (Skt). Literally, Great Vehicle. The path of the bodhisattvas, those seeking enlightenment in order to enlighten all other beings.

Maitreya Buddha (Skt; Tib: *Jampa*). The Loving One. The next buddha, after Shakyamuni, and fifth of the thousand buddhas of this present world age.

mala (Skt; Tib: *threng-wa*). A rosary of beads for counting mantras.

mandala (Skt). The purified environment of a tantric deity; the diagram or painting representing this.

mandala offering. The symbolic offering of the entire purified universe.

mantra (Skt). Literally, mind protection. Sanskrit syllables usually recited in conjunction with the practice of a particular meditational deity and embodying the qualities of that deity.

meditation. Familiarization of the mind with a virtuous object. There are two main types of meditation: analytical and concentration, or fixed.

merit. The positive energy accumulated in the mind as a result of virtuous actions of body, speech and mind. The principal cause of happiness.

merit field. Or field of accumulation. The visualized or actual holy beings in relation to whom one accumulates merit by going for refuge, making offerings and so forth and to whom one prays or makes requests for special purposes.

method. All aspects of the path to enlightenment other than those related to emptiness, principally associated with the development of loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta.

Milarepa (1040–1123). A great Tibetan yogi and poet famed for his impeccable relationship with his guru, Marpa, his asceticism and his songs of realization. A founding figure of the Kagyü tradition.

mind. Synonymous with consciousness. Defined as “that which is clear and knowing”; a formless entity that has the ability to perceive objects.

mind training. See *thought transformation*.

Mount Meru. The center of the universe in Buddhist cosmology.

mudra (Skt). Literally, seal. Symbolic hand gestures used in images of Buddha or in tantric rituals.

naga (Skt). Snake-like beings of the animal realm who live in or near bodies of water; commonly associated with fertility of the land, but can also function as protectors of religion.

Nagarjuna. The great second-century Indian philosopher and tantric adept who propounded the Madhyamaka philosophy of emptiness.

Nalanda. A Mahayana Buddhist monastic university founded in the fifth century in north India, not far from Bodhgaya, which served as a major source of the Buddhist teachings that spread to Tibet.

narak (Skt). Hell, either an overall term for the hell realm, or a specific term, as in the hot hells or cold hells.

negative karma. See *nonvirtue*.

nirvana (Skt). See *liberation*.

nonvirtue. Negative karma; an action that results in suffering.

Nyingma (Tib). The oldest of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it traces its teachings back to Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche.

obscurations (Skt: avarana; Tib: drip-pa). Also known as obstructions, these obscurations block the attainment of liberation and enlightenment. They are: the grosser

kind, called *disturbing-thought obscurations* or *obscurations to liberation*, and the subtle obscurations, the imprints left when those are purified, called *obscurations to knowledge* or *obscurations to enlightenment*.

om mani padme hum. The *mani*; the mantra of Chenrezig, Buddha of Compassion.

omniscient mind. See *enlightenment*.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo (1871–1941). The author of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, and a very influential teacher and root guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Senior and Junior Tutors.

Padmasambhava. The eighth-century Indian tantric master mainly responsible for the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, revered by all Tibetan Buddhists, but especially by the Nyingmapas.

Panchen Lama. Lineage representing incarnations of Amitabha Buddha; the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama are the two highest spiritual leaders of Tibet.

pandit (*Skt*). A great scholar and philosopher.

paramitas (*Skt*). See *perfections*.

Paramitayana (*Skt*). Literally, Perfection Vehicle. The bodhisattva vehicle; a section of the Mahayana sutra teachings; one of the two forms of Mahayana, the other being Vajrayana. Also called Bodhisattvayana or Sutrayana.

perfect human rebirth. The rare human state, qualified by eight freedoms and ten richnesses, which is the ideal condition for practicing Dharma and attaining enlightenment.

perfections (*Skt: paramitas*). The practices of a bodhisattva. On the basis of bodhicitta, a bodhisattva practices the six perfections or paramitas: generosity, morality, patience, joyous perseverance, concentration and wisdom.

pervasive compounding suffering. The most subtle of the three types of suffering, it refers to the nature of the five aggregates, which are contaminated by karma and delusions.

Prajnaparamita (*Skt; Eng: Perfection of Wisdom*). Shakyamuni Buddha's second teaching, or turning of the wheel of Dharma, in which the wisdom of emptiness and the path of the bodhisattva are explained.

preliminaries (*Tib: ngön-dro*). The practices that prepare the mind for successful tantric meditation by removing hindrances and accumulating merit.

preta (*Skt*). See *hungry ghost*.

prostrations. Paying respect to the guru-deity with body, speech and mind; one of the tantric preliminaries.

puja (*Skt*). Literally, offering; a religious ceremony.

pure realm. A pure land of a buddha where there is no suffering; after birth in a pure land, the practitioner receives teachings directly from the buddha of that pure land, actualizes the rest of the path and then can quickly become enlightened.

purification. The removal, or cleansing, of negative karma and its imprints from the mind.

Rajgir. A town in Bihar, northern India; ancient capital of Magadha kingdom. Vulture's Peak is nearby.

refuge (Skt: sharana; Tib: kyab). The door to the Dharma path. Having taken refuge from the heart we become an inner being or Buddhist (as opposed to an outer being). There are three levels of refuge—Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana—and two or three causes necessary for taking refuge: fearing the sufferings of samsara in general and lower realms in particular; faith that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have the qualities and power to lead us to happiness, liberation and enlightenment; and (for Mahayana refuge) compassion for all sentient beings.

renunciation. The state of mind not having the slightest attraction to samsaric pleasures for even a second and having the strong wish for liberation.

Rinpoche (Tib). Literally, precious one. Generally, a title given to a lama who has intentionally taken rebirth in a human body to continue helping others. A respectful title used for one's own lama.

Sakya (Tib). One of the four principal traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, it was founded in the eleventh century by Drokmi Shakya Yeshe (933–1047).

samsara (Skt; Tib: khor-wa). Cyclic existence; the six realms: the lower realms of the hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals, and the upper realms of the humans, demi-gods and gods; the recurring cycle of death and rebirth within one or other of the six realms. It also refers to the contaminated aggregates of a sentient being.

Sangha (Skt; Tib: ge-dün). Spiritual community; the third of the Three Jewels of Refuge. In Tibetan *ge-dün* literally means intending (*dün*) to virtue (*ge*). Absolute Sangha are those who have directly realized emptiness; relative Sangha refers to a group of at least four fully ordained monks or nuns.

Sarnath. A small town near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, India; the site of Deer Park, where the Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma, giving his famous discourse on the four noble truths.

secret mantra. See *Vajrayana*.

self-cherishing. The self-centered attitude of considering one's own happiness to be more important than that of others; the main obstacle to the realization of bodhicitta.

sentient being (Tib: sem-chen). Any unenlightened being; any being whose mind is not completely free of ignorance.

Sera Monastery. One of the three great Gelugpa monasteries near Lhasa; founded in the early fifteenth century by Jamchen Chöje, a disciple of Lama Tsongkhapa; now also established in exile in south India. It has two colleges, Sera Je, with which Lama Zopa Rinpoche is connected, and Sera Me.

Shakyamuni Buddha (563–483 bce). The founder of the present Buddhadharm. Fourth of the one thousand founding buddhas of this present world age, he was born a prince of

the Shakya clan in North India and taught the sutra and tantra paths to liberation and full enlightenment.

Shantideva (685–763). The great Indian bodhisattva who wrote *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, one of the essential Mahayana texts.

single-pointed concentration. The ability to focus effortlessly and for as long as one wishes on an object of meditation.

six realms. The general way that Buddhism divides the whole of cyclic existence, with three suffering realms (hell, hungry ghost and animal) and three fortunate realms (human, demigod and god).

spirits. Beings not usually visible to ordinary people; they can belong to the hungry ghost or god realms and can be beneficent as well as harmful.

stupa (Skt). A reliquary symbolic of the Buddha's mind.

sura (Skt). Another term for deva or god.

sutra (Skt). The open discourses of Shakyamuni Buddha; a scriptural text and the teachings and practices it contains.

Sutrayana (Skt). the pre-tantric division of Mahayana teachings stressing the cultivation of bodhicitta and the practice of the six perfections. Also called Paramitayana or Bodhisattvayana.

tantra (Skt). Also called Vajrayana, Mantrayana; the secret teachings of the Buddha; a scriptural text and the teachings and practices it contains. Tantric practices generally involve identification of oneself with a fully enlightened deity in order to transform one's own impure states of body, speech and mind into the pure states of that enlightened being.

Tara (Skt; Tib: Drolma). A female meditational deity who embodies the enlightened activities of all the buddhas; often referred to as the mother of the buddhas of the past, present and future.

ten nonvirtues. The three nonvirtues of body are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; the four nonvirtues of speech are lying, slander, harsh speech and gossip; the three nonvirtues of mind are covetousness, ill will and wrong views.

ten richnesses. The ten qualities that characterize a perfect human rebirth: being born as a human being, in a Dharma country and with perfect mental and physical faculties; being free from the five immediate negativities; having faith in Buddha's teachings; being born when a buddha has descended, when the teachings are still alive, when there are still followers of the teachings and having the necessary conditions to practice Dharma, such as the kindness of others. (See also *eight freedoms*.)

thought transformation (Tib: lo-jong). Also called *mind training*; a powerful approach to the development of bodhicitta, in which the mind is trained to use all situations, both happy and unhappy, as a means to destroy self-cherishing and self-grasping.

Three Baskets. See *Tripitaka*.

three doors. Body, speech and mind.

three great meanings. The happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment. See also *three ways a perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful*.

three higher trainings. The higher trainings in morality, concentration and wisdom.

Three Jewels. Another term for the Triple Gem.

three levels of practice. Also known as the three scopes, the three levels of lower, medium and higher capable being, based on the motivations of trying to attain a better future rebirth, liberation or enlightenment.

three poisons. Attachment, anger and ignorance.

three principal aspects of the path. The essential points of the lam-rim: renunciation of samsara, bodhicitta and right view, or emptiness.

three ways a perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful. The happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment and making this life useful in every moment. See also *thee great meanings*.

torma (Tib). An offering cake used in tantric rituals. In Tibet, tormas were usually made of tsampa, but other edibles such as biscuits and so forth suffice.

Tripitaka (Skt). Literally, “three baskets”, the way the Buddha’s teachings are traditionally divided: the *Vinaya* (monastic discipline and ethics), *Sutra* (the Buddha’s discourses) and *Abhidharma* (logic and philosophy).

Triple Gem. The objects of Buddhist refuge: the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

true existence. The type of concrete, real existence from its own side that everything appears to possess; in fact, everything is empty of true existence.

tsampa (Tib). Roasted barley flour, a Tibetan staple food.

Tsongkhapa, Lama (1357–1419). The revered teacher and accomplished practitioner who founded the Gelug order of Tibetan Buddhism. An emanation of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom.

twelve deeds. The twelve deeds that each of the thousand buddhas of this eon perform, including Shakyamuni. They are: 1. descent from Tushita heaven, 2. conception in the womb, 3. being born, 4. training in the arts and sciences, 5. enjoying palace life, 6. renouncing the life of leisure, 7. practicing austerities, 8. sitting under the bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, 9. victory over the maras, 10. the attainment of enlightenment, 11. teaching the Dharma, 12. passing into Paranirvana.

vajra (Skt; Tib: dorje). Literally, “adamantine”, often translated as “thunderbolt” but usually left untranslated, the vajra is the four- or five-spoke implement used in tantric practice.

Vajrasattva (Skt; Tib: Dorje Sempa). A male tantric deity used especially for purification.

virtue. Positive karma; that which results in happiness.

virtuous friend (Tib: ge-wai she-nyen). See *guru*.

wheel-turning king (Skt: chakravartin). A monarch of an entire continent who rules by the Dharma and encourages his people to practice the Dharma. Ashoka is a prime example.

wisdom. All aspects of the path to enlightenment associated with the development of insight into the nature of reality, often specifically referring to the realization of emptiness.

wish-granting jewel. A jewel that brings its possessor everything that he or she desires.

Yeshe, Lama (1935–1984). Born and educated in Tibet, he fled to India, where he met his chief disciple, Lama Zopa Rinpoche. They began teaching Westerners at Kopan Monastery in 1969 and founded the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) in 1975.

yoga (Skt). Literally, to yoke. The spiritual discipline to which one yokes oneself in order to achieve enlightenment.

yogi (Skt). A highly realized meditator.

zen (Tib). The upper robe of a monk or nun.

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Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970. Since then, their teachings have been recorded and transcribed. At present we have well over 12,000 hours of digital audio and some 90,000 pages of raw transcript. Many recordings, mostly teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, remain to be transcribed, and as Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of recordings in the Archive increases accordingly. Most of our transcripts have been neither checked nor edited.

Here at the LYWA we are making every effort to organize the transcription of that which has not yet been transcribed, edit that which has not yet been edited, and generally do the many other tasks detailed below.

The work of the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive falls into two categories: *archiving* and *dissemination*.

Archiving requires managing the recordings of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche that have already been collected, collecting recordings of teachings given but not yet sent to the Archive, and collecting recordings of Lama Zopa's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. Incoming media are then catalogued and stored safely while being kept accessible for further work.

We organize the transcription of audio, add the transcripts to the already existent database of teachings, manage this database, have transcripts checked, and make transcripts available to editors or others doing research on or practicing these teachings. Other archiving activities include working with video and photographs of the Lamas and digitizing Archive materials.

Dissemination involves making the Lamas' teachings available through various avenues including books for free distribution and sale, eBooks on a wide range of readers, lightly edited transcripts, a monthly e-letter (see below), DVDs and online video, articles in Mandala and other magazines and on our website. Irrespective of the medium we choose, the teachings require a significant amount of work to prepare them for distribution.

This is just a summary of what we do. The Archive was established with virtually no seed funding and has developed solely through the kindness of many people, some of whom we have mentioned at the front of this book and most of the others on our website. We sincerely thank them all.

Our further development similarly depends upon the generosity of those who see the benefit and necessity of this work, and we would be extremely grateful for your help. Thus we hereby appeal to you for your kind support. If you would like to make a contribution to help us with any of the above tasks or to sponsor books for free distribution, please contact us:

Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive
PO Box 636, Lincoln, MA 01773, USA
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Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive Membership

In order to raise the money we need to employ editors to make available the thousands of hours of teachings mentioned above, we have established a membership plan.

Membership costs US\$1,000 and its main benefit is that you will be helping make the Lamas' incredible teachings available to a worldwide audience. More direct and tangible benefits to you personally include free Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche books from the Archive and Wisdom Publications, a year's subscription to Mandala and a year of monthly pujas by the monks and nuns at Kopan Monastery with your personal dedication. Please see www.LamaYeshe.com for more information.

Monthly e-letter

Each month we send out a free e-letter containing our latest news and a previously unpublished teaching by Lama Yeshe or Lama Zopa Rinpoche. To see more than one hundred twenty back-issues or to subscribe with your email address, please go to our website.

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) is an international organization of Buddhist meditation study and retreat centers, both urban and rural, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 160 FPMT centers, projects and services in over forty countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general and the Tibetan Gelug tradition, founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsongkhapa, in particular.

Every quarter, the Foundation publishes a wonderful news journal, Mandala, from its International Office in the United States of America. To subscribe or view back issues, please go to the Mandala website, <http://www.mandalamagazine.org>, or contact:

FPMT
1632 SE 11th Avenue,
Portland, OR 97214
Telephone (503) 808-1588;
Fax (503) 808-1589
info@fpmt.org
www.fpmt.org

The FPMT website also offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition, details about the FPMT's educational programs, an online learning center, a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world and in your area, a link to the excellent FPMT Store, and links to FPMT centers—where you will find details of their programs—and other interesting Buddhist and Tibetan pages.

FPMT Online Learning Center

In 2009, FPMT Education Services launched the FPMT Online Learning Center to make FPMT education programs and materials more accessible to students worldwide. While continuing to expand, the Online Learning Center currently offers the following courses:

- Meditation 101
- Buddhism in a Nutshell
- Heart Advice for Death and Dying
- Discovering Buddhism

- Basic Program
- Living in the Path

Living in the Path is particularly unique in that it takes teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and presents them in theme-related modules that include teaching transcripts, video extracts, meditations, mindfulness practices, karma yoga, and questions to assist students in integrating the material. Current modules include: Motivation for Life, Taking the Essence, What Buddhists Believe, Guru is Buddha, Introduction to Atisha's text, The Happiness of Dharma, Bringing Emptiness to Life, The Secret of the Mind, Diamond Cutter Meditation, and Refuge & Bodhichitta.

All of our online programs provide audio and/or video teachings of the subjects, guided meditations, readings, and other support materials. Online forums for each program provide students the opportunity to discuss the subject matter and to ask questions of forum elders. Additionally, many retreats led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche are available in full via audio and/or video format.

Education Services is committed to creating a dynamic virtual learning environment and adding more FPMT programming and materials for you to enjoy via the Online Learning Center.

Visit us at: onlinelearning.fpmt.org

Other teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche currently available

Books published by Wisdom Publications

Wisdom Energy, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Introduction to Tantra, by Lama Yeshe

Transforming Problems, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Door to Satisfaction, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification, by Lama Yeshe

The Bliss of Inner Fire, by Lama Yeshe

Becoming the Compassion Buddha, by Lama Yeshe

Ultimate Healing, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Dear Lama Zopa, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

How to Be Happy, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Wholesome Fear, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche with Kathleen McDonald

When the Chocolate Runs Out, by Lama Yeshe

About Lama Yeshe:

Reincarnation: The Boy Lama, by Vicki Mackenzie

About Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

The Lawudo Lama, by Jamyang Wangmo

You can get more information about and order the above titles at wisdompubs.org or call toll free in the USA on 1-800-272-4050.

Transcripts, practices and other materials

See the LYWA and FPMT websites for transcripts of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other practices written or compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

What to do with Dharma teachings

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this show you how to put the teachings into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings, the names of your teachers or holy images is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes such as propping up wobbly chairs or tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped in cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in the rubbish but burned in a special way. Briefly: do not incinerate such materials with other trash, but alone, and as they burn, recite the mantra om ah hum. As the smoke rises, visualize that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six samsaric realms, purifying their minds, alleviating their suffering, and bringing them all happiness, up to and including enlightenment. Some people might find this practice a bit unusual, but it is given according to tradition. Thank you very much.

Dedication

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may everything needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have love and compassion for all sentient beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

About Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche was born in Thangme, Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thangme home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction*. At the age of ten,

Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found in *The Lawudo Lama* and on the LYWA and FPMT websites. Rinpoche's published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems, Virtue and Reality*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Heart of the Path* and *How Things Exist*.

About Dr. Nicholas Ribush

Dr. Nicholas Ribush, MB, BS, is a graduate of Melbourne University Medical School (1964) who first encountered Buddhism at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1972. Since then he has been a student of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and a full time worker for their international organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). He was a monk from 1974 to 1986. He established FPMT archiving and publishing activities at Kopan in 1973 and with Lama Yeshe founded Wisdom Publications in 1975. Between 1981 and 1996 he served variously as Wisdom's director, editorial director and director of development. Over the years he has edited and published many teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other teachers and established and/or directed several other FPMT activities, including the International Mahayana Institute, Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre, the Enlightened Experience Celebration, Mahayana Publications, and now Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies and the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive. He was a member of the FPMT board of directors from its inception in 1983 until 2002 and currently serves on the boards of LYWA and Maitripa College.

About Gordon McDougall

Gordon McDougall first met Tibetan Buddhism in Hong Kong in 1986 and was the director of Cham-Tse Ling, the FPMT center there, for two years. Since then he has been involved with various FPMT centers and projects. In 2001 he became the spiritual program coordinator of Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London, where he worked with the resident teacher, Geshe Tashi Tsering, to develop the Foundation of Buddhist Thought, the two-year campus and correspondence course that is part of the FPMT core education program. He administered the course and worked at Jamyang for seven years, editing the six FBT books, first as study books for the course and then as "stand-alone" books for Wisdom Publications. He has also led lam-rim courses in Europe and India and was involved with the creation of the Discovering Buddhism program. After moving to Bath

he became a full time editor with the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive in 2008, managing the Publishing the FPMT Lineage project and editing the books in this series.

About Sandra Smith

Sandra Smith, BCmn, met her teachers Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche in New Zealand in 1975. Later that year she joined the community at Chenrezig Institute, Queensland, Australia, where she has offered service in various roles. Sandra has studied with many lamas, including Geshe Loden, Zazep Tulku Rinpoche, Geshe Thinley, Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Tashi Tsering, H.E. Chöden Rinpoche and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. While raising her two children, Sandra became coordinator of the Dharma Club at Chenrezig Institute for several years. This role led to the creation of FPMT children's practice materials, including [Meditations for Children](#) and [Plays for Children](#). She currently writes feature articles for an Australian parenting magazine. Sandra served as Director of Chenrezig Institute from 2004 to 2006 and then worked at Mandala Books, a project of Karuna Hospice Service, Brisbane. In 2007/08 she held the positions of FPMT Australian National Coordinator and Tour Coordinator. Sandra commenced work as a web editor for Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive in 2009.

