

KOPAN COURSE NO. 38
LAMRIM TEACHINGS FROM KOPAN 2005

BY

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LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

Contents

Lecture 1	1
<i>Not understanding karma, we suffer</i>	1
<i>The experiences of the early Kopan students</i>	3
<i>Dharma in Italy</i>	6
<i>Attachment makes life so expensive</i>	11
<i>We have no concept of “mother” in the womb</i>	14
<i>We believe in the hallucination</i>	16
<i>The mantras on Rinpoche’s car</i>	20
<i>The object of anger does not exist</i>	21
<i>Every time we hold on to the I as true we are creating ignorance</i>	22
<i>Believing in the real face, attachment arises</i>	24
<i>Dedication</i>	25
Lecture 2	28
<i>Pervasive compounding suffering is samsara</i>	28
<i>There is an I on this cushion but not on the aggregates</i>	32
<i>The root of samsara according to the four schools</i>	36
<i>The object of refutation for the Cittamatra school</i>	38
<i>True existence is decorated on to the merely labeled I</i>	40
<i>Practicing the mindfulness of emptiness in daily life</i>	43
<i>The causal and resultant refuge in the refuge prayer</i>	45
<i>The three causes of refuge</i>	47
<i>Dedication</i>	51
<i>The mindfulness of emptiness while sitting and at breaktime</i>	54
Lecture 3	56
<i>Working only for this life, we are the same as the animals</i>	56
<i>Buddha nature means we have the potential to become a buddha</i>	60
<i>The story of Milarepa</i>	63
<i>When our mind is clearer, we can see the buddhas</i>	67
<i>Four people recite the Tara prayers (back to)</i>	70
<i>There is no satisfaction with the eight worldly dharmas</i>	72
<i>With this precious human rebirth, we can achieve any happiness</i>	74
<i>The Dharma is universal</i>	75
<i>The lung of the Heart of Wisdom Sutra and the Thirty-five Buddhas prayer: Motivation</i>	79

<i>The lungs of the Heart Sutra and Thirty-five Buddhas</i>	81
<i>To practice you must first analyze</i>	83
<i>Dedications</i>	85
Lecture 4	88
<i>Refuge ceremony motivation: The benefits of offering to the Buddha</i>	88
<i>Never waste this human body</i>	92
<i>Only with this human body can we do the body mandala practice</i>	94
<i>The benefits of offering to the Buddha (back to)</i>	95
<i>Refuge ceremony motivation: A Buddhist is an inner being</i>	98
<i>The twelve links and the three realms</i>	98
<i>The three types of suffering</i>	102
<i>The suffering of the six realms</i>	105
<i>Refuge ceremony</i>	107
<i>The importance of taking the vows</i>	108
<i>Dedication</i>	112
<i>The four harmonious brothers</i>	114
<i>Dedications (back to)</i>	115
Lecture 5	117
<i>Tara initiation motivation: About all the Dharma projects</i>	117
<i>Tara initiation motivation: The guru is all the buddhas</i>	121
<i>All problems come from self-cherishing</i>	123
<i>Mistakes of not devoting to the guru are due to self-cherishing</i>	130
<i>Lack of all success comes from self-cherishing</i>	131
<i>Tara initiation motivation: Having stable guru devotion</i>	134
<i>Tara initiation motivation: Tara and Atisha</i>	138
<i>Tara initiation</i>	140
Lecture 6	146
<i>The oral transmission of the Praises to the Twenty-one Taras</i>	146
<i>The oral transmission of the King of Prayers</i>	148
<i>Vajrasattva initiation motivation: Purifying sexual misconduct</i>	150
<i>Vajrasattva initiation motivation: Purifying covetousness</i>	152
<i>Vajrasattva initiation motivation: The four opponent powers</i>	160
<i>Dedications</i>	167

Lecture 1

Please note: As the tapes were not dated, the dates here are approximate.

December 4, 2005

NOT UNDERSTANDING KARMA, WE SUFFER

[Rinpoche and the students chant *The Foundation of All Good Qualities*]

Good afternoon to everyone. Sorry I didn't come earlier. But all of you who have been continuing the course to learn and experience here, I think has been extremely worthwhile. It seems it has been worthwhile coming for this course all the way from afar, with all the expenses, having to make money and then quit your job and coming here to Nepal, to Kopan, to do this course.

There are so many problems in the world. The individual beings on this earth suffer; the whole globe suffers with the war, torture, famine, disease. Last time there was SARS, now there's bird flu. All those many millions and millions of birds being killed. Human beings have so many opportunities. If we are sick, we can go to a hospital or see a doctor. There are so many possibilities, whereas animals just get killed. In many places, many millions are put in plastic bags alive and put in the fire or things like that. Even though they are the same as us; they also have a mind like we have and like us they do not want to suffer and they are looking for happiness. It's very pitiful.

There is torture, sicknesses, famine and on top of these things there is so much danger from fire, and water, such as either floods or the scarcity of water, drought, with no crops growing and no water for people and animals to drink. I saw on TV a few times how in Africa, because the water had dried up, the animals had to go very far to get water but when they reached the water holes, they had dried up. There were very skinny monkeys around trying to get water. I heard that when they didn't find food, they ate each other. Many other animals came from afar to get water—elephants came, buffaloes came—but there was no water, the water had dried up. It is very pitiful, very sad.

In many parts, human beings either don't get water or they don't get healthy water, or there's too much water, with floods and so forth. Then, there is the danger of fire and water, like in the United States. I have been living there, and there's always the danger of fire. I never heard it's like that in Nepal or even in Tibet. In different parts of the United States, there is always the danger of fire and then tornadoes. Not tomatoes, tornadoes! A whole city can be destroyed within an hour, everything, with pieces everywhere. You can't do anything.

What was the city that was completely destroyed in the United States? Huh? New Orleans. You can remember that; you all saw it on TV. New Orleans was completely covered by water. Hundreds of thousands, or maybe millions, were made homeless and so many problems happened. The state asked them to leave and everybody had to pack into one large house, doing *pipi* and *kaka* there. There was no other place for them to stay, so they stayed in the same house. It was so difficult; they didn't know what to do.

And then there was the tsunami that happened some time ago in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka.

More recently, after New Orleans, I think something else happened in the United States. Now I'm forgetting. Something else happened! Disasters, one after another. Then also in other places. India, Pakistan, near Kashmir there were earthquakes. Anyway, there are the dangers of fire, water, air, earthquakes, besides all the sicknesses and the other dangers of violence or dangers of the elements.

These are due to the lack of understanding of karma, the lack of understanding of the unmistakable cause of happiness and unmistakable cause of suffering. In other words, the actions that result in suffering, and the actions that result in happiness. There is the lack of this understanding. What's the right thing to practice? What's the right thing to practice that benefits ourselves and others? What's the wrong thing that is harmful to ourselves and others? It's a lack of understanding of these things. That's the biggest mistake; that's where all these problems come from. All the problems come from the ignorance. Ignorance, not knowing this is the most important point.

When we understand this, we can achieve happiness and abandon suffering. This lack of understanding of karma comes from the ignorance. All these problems come from ignorance of the

living beings who are experiencing the problems. It comes from their own mind, from their own impure mistaken mind and mistaken action.

The other thing is that none of these problems come from compassion; they come from the opposite of compassion, the self-cherishing thought. All these problems come from the self-cherishing thought, from lack of compassion. All the global problems, all individual personal problems, come from the self-cherishing thought, from the selfish mind.

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE EARLY KOPAN STUDENTS

That's why I say [it is so good that you] came all the way from home to here, to Nepal. It might seem primitive compared to West but maybe twenty or thirty years ago it was much more primitive, both Nepal and Kopan! Compared to so many years ago, now it's five-star! Five or six-star? The only choice is five-star. Now Kopan has become five-star. The facilities have gradually been getting better, being developed year by year.

It started many years ago with the help of a nun who was the benefactor, called Mummy Max. An American. How do you say it? Huh? Black American, Mummy Max. With her help, Lama Yeshe, who was kinder to us than all the three-time buddhas, quickly built the first building. Now that building, Norbulingka, the old house, is only a memory. Those who were at Kopan at that time might have seen it, right?

[To Venerable George Churinoff] Which year did you first come to Kopan? Seventy-four. Venerable George came to Kopan for the seventy-four Kopan course. Anyway, they quickly built a building down below there, below the office. They didn't even have a cover. People were staying in the room but even the door or the windows didn't have a cover.

It's not there now but we did the course at the back. Before there was some ground behind the temple where we put a tent and some grass inside the tent. Our monks slept on grass, on the hay.

We did the course there. After that, for a number of years, we did courses above the stupa, I think, just here where there are rooms now. They maybe put a sheet around and the tent and on the other side of the hill they put some old cloth around. We did courses there for many years.

One of my favorite subjects in those early courses was the eight worldly dharmas. I spent weeks on that. I think Venerable George introduced me at the beginning! I talked on cutting attachment, on the lower realms, on the eight worldly dharmas. Then it was lunchtime, so the students went for lunch under the bodhi tree. And while they were eating lunch, all the smells were coming up from the toilets! The toilets were down below, and all the smells came during lunchtime. It was an interesting combination! After my subject, what happened when they went out—all enjoying their lunch when all the bad smells came from the toilets.

At that time, the facilities were poor, very, very poor. It took a very long time to get better, with better facilities and more comfort.

In the past all this happened. I don't know which number course this is.

Thirty-eight. I'm sure Karin knows very well. Thirty-eight? But this is without counting the other short courses. This is only counting the one-month courses. In early times, when Lama Yeshe and I were not traveling so much to the West, we used to do the one-month course twice a year. But then we started traveling more and it became just once a year.

In those early times, the students really had to bear a lot of hardships. The facilities were very, very poor. People really had to make a big sacrifice to do the course, to meditate. But I think because of that, because they had to sacrifice their life to practice Dharma, they were able to develop themselves, their inner selves, and to benefit others.

When we benefit others, when we renounce all these sensual distractions and look for the Dharma, we experience inner growth. Our mind that has been empty, not only from birth but from beginningless rebirths, has some experience. Coming here to Kopan there can be inner growth. The heart, which has been empty, begins to fill up, to experience the path to liberation and

enlightenment. The main purpose of being here is to benefit other sentient beings who are numberless, who want happiness and who do not want to suffer, the same as us.

Those early young people coming from the West had to sacrifice their life and I think really study, meditate and practice as much as they could. And they found so much peace and happiness. They found the meaning of life, and when they went back, they found it so useful for their life.

They wished other people in their country could share the same experience, could achieve the same experience of peace and happiness, of having a meaningful life. So many people in the West think their life is meaningless; it has no meaning. They have no idea why they are alive, why they survive, and not only that, there are so many problems.

They might be materially rich, externally rich, which is not so much the cause of the problems. The problem is the mind, the negative emotional thoughts that they are always tortured with. Nobody tortures them but because the person doesn't know meditation, doesn't know the lamrim, doesn't know karma, doesn't know bodhicitta, they have no idea, no method [to overcome their problems]. They are completely overwhelmed, completely lost like in a thick fog, like that city in the United States covered by the water. New Orleans? Like Indonesia when the tsunami happened, when even the hotels and the people were taken by the water. They are totally overwhelmed by the negative emotional thoughts and they have no method to overcome them. They don't know what to do. There is so much suffering and this is not through the lack of material possessions. It's not like the suffering in Africa, where there is no food or water.

For you people of the well-developed countries in the West, the suffering is due to the wrong concepts. You suffer with your wrong way of thinking. You are constantly tortured by that. In other words, you torture yourself by keeping the wrong views, by keeping the wrong concepts, the wrong way of thinking. Constantly. That's the fundamental suffering.

Why is there no real inner happiness? We try to get satisfaction, but the heart is still empty. We try one thing and then another, another style of life, another excitement, but we are still not happy. Then, we try *another* excitement. But even trying a different one, we still don't get any happiness! Life goes on like that. We continue to suffer, with one thing after another, dis-satisfactory.

I was saying before how those young people came to India and Nepal. Of course, life started with the drugs, with buddha grass. Buddha grass? Maybe only Australians know buddha grass, anyway, LSD, buddha grass, what else? That's due to karma in the West, without some external thing that breaks this fixed mind, this very fixed, hard concept. It's due to karma.

Some external conditions like that happened! It led to all kinds of experiences—that the mind can travel out of body or things like that, or the mind can exist without the body. All these kinds of experiences were due to karma.

At that time there were only a very few books on Tibetan Buddhism. One was the *Bardo Thodol*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. That existed. One was Milarepa's life story, which I think also still exists. There were only two or three books. There was one book written by a German professor, Lama Govinda, called *The Way of the White Clouds*, which was kind of mystical, something like that. I think he tried to put together Western science or psychology or maybe Western science [with the spiritual path], I'm not sure. I haven't actually read it. Maybe there was something on the death experience and maybe a little bit on tantric subjects, how, when you're dying, you can use those high tantra practices to meditate, maybe those. Anyway, there were only a few books like that available.

So, due to the individual's karma, they took drugs and had all those experiences, and then went along and saw Milarepa's book in a shop. And some had *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and Lama Govinda's book.

DHARMA IN ITALY

We had an Italian student who had taken drugs before that, of course! Then, he read the book of Milarepa's life story and gave up everything. All his possessions, whatever he had—he gave away everything and he came here. I think he understood some things but he didn't understand completely. He gave away everything and came looking for a guru so he could become Milarepa, I think. He traveled in India and Nepal. As far as I can remember, we had one Italian student who did that. According to his karma, the first thing that made him interested in learning Buddhism was Milarepa's life story.

Originally, there were three or four Italian students. They came here, did the course and studied, and then they went back to Italy. Then, they invited Lama and me there. That's how Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism was spread in Italy, through these two or three original Italian students. There was one geshe, one very top learned geshe from Tibet, who was very famous from Tibet, teaching at the Rome University. But he only taught at the university; he did not teach Dharma outside.

They organized a course in a church. I'm not sure if it was called a church or not. It was where Catholic people went to do a retreat. Catholic nuns cooked for us and there were priests who sometimes attended our teachings. Then, at the end of the course we attended the Sunday church. Some students were circumambulating outside while we were inside doing the Sunday mass! They didn't attend but circumambulated outside the building. Some joined. When we had to go up there on the stage, we had to take a piece of radish and some alcohol. Lama and I were the last people to go up, so there was no alcohol, the bowl was empty. Lama didn't have any superstitious thought of the radish being dirty, or [black food], so Lama went into the bowl like this. But I grew up with a lot of superstitious thoughts, so I just did like that!

This was the first course in Italy. That's how the main Buddhist center, called Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, started in Italy, near Pisa. You know Pisa, where there is this building about to fall down? Then, many branches happened from that gradually in many different cities. Since that time, Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism has spread very widely.

In that way, so many Italian sentient beings have been able to meet the Buddhadharma and make their lives meaningful. They have been able to find the answer in their lives that they could not find in Western culture. There were holes, meaning they could not find any answers, any peace. Now they have the opportunity to follow the path to enlightenment, the state which is the completion of all the qualities and the cessation of all the mistakes. In many different parts of Italy they have the opportunity to follow the path to enlightenment, to make their live meaningful, to benefit numberless sentient beings. That is because of these two or three Italians who came in early times here. Because of them, this is what happened in Italy.

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa has just finished a seven-year program studying Buddhist philosophy, which was put together by Lama Yeshe with the resident teacher, Geshe Jampa Gyatso. It was made by Lama along with him. Lama really wanted this to happen. It was his wish to actualize this study course and he really put effort into it. Now, it's already finished, and it's been very successful. I think there were about thirty graduates. They will start the second one soon.

Besides that, a five-year program is happening, still studying the extensive teachings of the Buddha, the philosophy, the path to achieve liberation and enlightenment, taught by Buddha. It's a five-year program and, because the center is not in a city but isolated, the students can live there. Because of that, they have made the five-year course into a full-time two-year course. But in other centers where there's a city, because people have to do jobs and can only come in the evenings to study, the duration is five years. [At Instituto Lama Tzong Khapa], however, they are just there to study and they can do the five-year program in two years. I think it's doing very well with another younger resident teacher, a good teacher, and there are also senior Western students helping with the subjects and guiding them. It's doing very well.

With the seven-year program, there are these very extensive philosophical teachings on the path, on the four noble truths, on the path to liberation, how to achieve liberation and enlightenment, with extensive teachings on the Madhyamaka. They study the root text commentaries: the *Abhisamayalamkara* taught by Maitreya Buddha; the Madhyamaka teachings composed by Lama Tsongkhapa; Chandrakirti's teachings on Madhyamaka, and the teachings written by Nagarjuna, with the root teachings taught by the Buddha.

Then, there is the *Abhidharmakosha* and the very extensive teachings on tantra, the graduated Secret Mantra, the clear light of the five stages, the completion stage path to achieving enlightenment within the highest tantric path. This very intensive way of learning the highest tantric path is the quickest means to achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime of the degenerated time. These are the main subjects they study in the seven-year program.

During the study, those who are lay students have to observe the five lay vows. It is not only intellectual study but, at the same time, they must lead an ethical life, observing the five lay vows. That's the idea. And then, at the end of the day, they check their life, seeing from that morning

when they woke up how many actions they did for others and how many actions they did for themselves. They write this down in a diarrhea! They make a diarrhea book [diary]. But they don't have to report that; it's just for their own understanding.

This is similar to the Kadampa geshes, those early practitioners, such as the Kadampa geshe, Ben Gungyal. When he began to practice Dharma in the hermitage, when he began actualizing lamrim, at the end of every day, he reviewed his life from morning until night, checking every action. Any action that became Dharma, he put down a white stone; any action that did not become Dharma, that was nonvirtue, he put down a black stone. At the beginning there were hardly any white stones, mostly black, but then gradually there were less and less black stones and more and more white ones. Through that, we can see how our mind develops. It's a little bit like that. We ourselves can discover how our mind is doing, whether it's going down or going up, whether it's progressing this way.

The other thing I just added is that they have to report how they combine study and practice. They are studying but at the same time practicing. Rather than, "I'll study now and practice later. I'll practice patience next year or I'll practice patience in the future!" Bodhicitta, patience, these are put off until the future. Instead of that, while studying they do real practical practice, training the mind at the same time. I said that if they get angry twenty times a month, they've failed! It means if they've missed out practicing patience that many times, if they've become angry that many times, they have to report to the spiritual coordinator, not the actual teacher, but whoever is doing the job of spiritual coordinator. At the examination at the end of each year, when they do the examination, that is also included—how many times they became angry and were unable to apply the meditation techniques to practice patience.

That goes together with the other examinations, then that student gets their degree. The idea is that later, when they finish all these studies, either they spend their life doing retreat or they go into the world to teach, having become a qualified teacher. They become a good example for others, good-hearted and tolerant, rather than a bad example, where they get easily irritated or disturbed or angry. That is not a good example for the other sentient beings, the students. They become not only rich in the words to teach the Dharma, but also rich in good feeling, and the students are inspired by their good example, their good heart and tolerance.

These are the three qualities [they should have]: being learned, being good-hearted and pure; and leading an ethical life. They should try to have all the three qualities. Sometimes billions of words don't mean much, but our example, our good heart, does. People may criticize us, saying nasty things, but our mind remains calm, compassionate, patient. That is so effective; many people get much more inspired by that than by billions of words. Seeing the teacher is practicing, living in the practice, living in that experience of what they are talking about, the student gets so inspired and they become like the teacher.

So anyway, this is talking about the subjects at the Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, how that center is able to benefit so many sentient beings there in Italy, not only Italian people, but also the other countries' people who go there to learn.

What I was saying before, in those early times many young people who came to India and Nepal sacrificed their lives with poor conditions, bearing all the hardships to learn the Dharma, to meditate. Then they went back and started centers. They taught others. That's how the Buddha's unmistakable teachings, the teachings of the one compassionate to all sentient beings, the omniscient one, how the Buddha's unmistakable teachings and especially Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism was spread in the West by the young people, after they broke their biggest concept about drugs! I'm talking about generally. I don't mean everybody, but generally. Like Spain and many countries.

Basically, it was like that. They invited lamas and resident teachers to spread the Dharma. And of course, another great thing was that His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave teachings. Like that, the unmistakable teachings of the Buddha were spread, particularly Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, the teachings that were taught by the Buddha and practiced by all those great yogis, who analyzed them and brought them to Tibet, translated into the Tibetan language. They not only preserved the scriptures, the texts, but by learning extensively, many Tibetan people achieved the path. Many buddhas and bodhisattvas happened in Tibet. These teachings, which so many Tibetans themselves practiced, studied and attained, then spread in the West due to these young Western students, due to their effort, their devotion and their compassion to help others.

Anyway, chai time.

Do you need to go for a pipi?

ATTACHMENT MAKES LIFE SO EXPENSIVE

[Rinpoche chants prayers]

I didn't mean to talk about all that, but it just happened!

What I want to say is this. You know how much the world is suffering globally. Even if we look at individual human beings or animals, even just one sentient being, we can see how much they are suffering, we can see how much even one human being is suffering.

You have already gone through the various subjects [of the two lower scopes]: impermanence and death, the lower realm sufferings, karma, as well as the general sufferings of samsara—the six types, the four types and the three types—and the individual realms' suffering, particularly the human beings' suffering, the eight types of sufferings. Even if we are born as a god, in the form realm, that is still in the nature of suffering. The desire realm gods don't have the suffering of pain but like all samsaric beings they have pervasive compounding suffering. Our body and mind is in the nature of suffering, it experiences suffering, because it is the product of karma and delusions, the obscuring, disturbing negative attitude. This body and mind is in the nature of suffering and, because of this, it is contaminated.

This pervasive compounding suffering—these aggregates contaminated by the seed of delusions—is compounded; it produces delusions, the mental and physical problems of this life, and it produces future lives' sufferings. That's how it compounds suffering. It is both pervasive and compounding. Not only does the aggregated, contaminated seed of delusion compound this life's sufferings and compound future lives' sufferings, it creates future suffering rebirths that are in the nature of suffering, whether it's only the consciousness [as in the formless realm] or the body and mind. So, this body and mind are both pervaded by suffering and compound future lives' sufferings also. That is the fundamental suffering. If we look at one sentient being, one human being, that is the fundamental suffering.

On the basis of that, there is the suffering of change, which are the temporary samsaric pleasures that doesn't last because the nature of that feeling is only suffering. It appeared as pleasure to our hallucinated mind, but when we analyze that feeling, our wisdom sees that it is only suffering. Because it appears to our hallucinatory mind as pleasure, we label it "pleasure" and believe it to be pleasure, pure happiness. That is just our hallucinatory mind, our attachment. In reality there's no such thing as real happiness there; it is only suffering. If we examine the feeling, what we discover is only suffering, no happiness. However, in the ordinary beings' view of attachment, it is pleasure. But the exalted beings, the arya beings who have the realization of the renunciation of samsara, have discovered that these feelings are only suffering. From the point of view of unrealized beings, from their attachment, it seems pleasure. That is one type of suffering.

On top of that, there is the suffering of pain, the heaviest, dissatisfied mind. Whatever we do, we can never get satisfaction. As I often say, there's that famous rock and roll singer. Not rocking roll, what is it? The Rolling Stones, sorry, I must memorize that one. Rolling Stones. So, it is as that Rolling Stone, that famous man said. I think he was killed right at the end, he committed suicide? [Aside to students] What? Not that one? What I heard was in the end he committed suicide, or somebody killed him. [Student: Kurt Cobain. He was a singer.] Kurt Cobain! Sorry, it's too profound for me! However, the Rolling Stone said, "I can't get satisfaction" or "I can't achieve." How is the word? [Student: "I can't get no satisfaction."]

Oh, sorry, I can't get no satisfaction! I mean, that's a great teaching! That's great lamrim. That message is an *exact* lamrim teaching, a very important one. It's the very first lamrim teaching, the very first one. Because when we follow the eight worldly dharmas, we can never get satisfaction. So, that's the first lamrim, to free ourselves from the eight worldly dharmas, these negative emotional thoughts. That's the first lamrim of the graduate path of the lower capable being in general.

That's the mental suffering that is the suffering of pain. There are various gross sufferings, but that's the suffering of pain. There is loneliness and depression, and it's very difficult to let go of all the pain of attachment. It drives our life crazy. And attachment builds a lot of debt in our life, money we don't need to spend. But because of attachment, we make many million-dollar debts. Actually, there is no need; it's just attachment that makes life so expensive.

Attachment is so unnecessary; it makes us work so hard. We have all these worries and fears because we want this and we want that. Even leaving aside our house and food, even just for this body; how much money is spent for the body? For the eyes, for the nose—I don't know, are there expenses for the nose? I don't know. There are *a lot* of expenses for the hair. There are unbelievable expenses for the hair and unbelievable expenses for the mouth—all these expenses from the top of the head and down to the feet, with the toes and nails. There's so much.

And because of the many expenses, we have to work very hard day and night. We worry about not finding a job, and even if we find a job, we don't get enough money. But we have all these expenses that attachment wants. We *think* we need them, but actually it's our attachment that says we need them! Attachment tells us we should have this and this and this—many beautiful cars and one apartment after another, always a new one again and again. And a new TV, a new car, a new whatever, all that. Attachment makes life so expensive!

[Whether we consider somebody beautiful] depends on the size and shape of the face. It's a concept, an idea. The eyes shaped this way means nice, beautiful. This is just an example. A nose like this means beautiful, a mouth like this means beautiful. This is the idea that sometimes [comes from] the culture. It's what people of a particular culture believe. Big muscles mean beautiful, big arms. Or skinny arms! Skinny is beautiful. It's the culture of the country. It's not the idea of the people of a different country. There's no real true beauty existing from its own side. You can see that very clearly. This is culture; this is people's belief. When you follow the same culture, you think that thin means good or fit, or whatever you call it, or big muscles means beautiful or handsome, something like that.

Maybe I'll give another example. In a country where most people don't have goiter, goiter is considered ugly by the people. But in a country where most people have goiter, it's considered beautiful. Most people have goiter [so it seems beautiful], but in that other country, most people don't have goiter, so it seems ugly. You can see it's people's belief, it's the culture. There's no truly existing good and bad, there's no thing that is real, existing from its own side. It's just people's belief; they make up the label. You can see that very clearly. Nothing is there. Beautiful and ugly are like that.

If a face is small like this, with eyes like that, this way means it is beautiful but if it's that way, that means it is ugly. A nose like this is beautiful; a nose like that is ugly. A mouth like this is beautiful; a mouth like that is ugly. Hair like this is beautiful; hair like that is ugly. Some people think this face is beautiful but the same face, in the view of other people, is bad, is ugly. Not everybody believes it is beautiful.

This is an example. What appears to us, what we believe, is something beautiful existing from its own side or something ugly existing from its own side. That's not true at all, *at all*! That totally doesn't exist. It's only a creation of the mind. It's our interpretation and we believe in it. After we believe that, it appears that way. Our mind labels it, we believe in that, and then it appeared that way. It's not true. If it were to appear as merely labeled by the mind, that would be the reality. But it does not appear merely labeled by mind, it appears as if it never came from our mind, it never depended on our mind labeling it. That is totally wrong. You can see very clearly that that view is totally wrong. While we were looking at the object, we labeled it. Our mind made up the label and we believed in it.

It proves that the way something appears to us, as something real—as real beautiful or real ugly existing from its own side—is not there at all, in fact. That is a total hallucination; it is nonexistent. If it did exist from its own side, it should appear the same to everybody. That ugly should appear ugly to everybody, to *everybody* in the world; and that beautiful should appear beautiful to everybody in the world, but it's not like that. Not even for animals! I mentioned the animals. I'm joking!

From just this common experience, that face appears ugly to some people's mind and beautiful to some people's and for some it appears neither ugly nor beautiful. So, you can see, it comes from the mind. What we see is what our mind labels.

WE HAVE NO CONCEPT OF “MOTHER” IN THE WOMB

For example, when our consciousness took place on the fertilized egg in mother's womb, we didn't know at that time that this was our mother. Even after our consciousness took place on the fertilized egg in the womb, even when we came out, we still had no idea this was mother. Some

beings know, but that's not the common experience. That's not what common people recognize. So, when we are a baby, we don't recognize it. I mean, when I was just born, I had no idea who my father and mother were.

Say, we are taken from our parents when we are a baby, and then later we meet them. We wouldn't recognize them as our parents unless somebody tells us this is our father and our mother. Before that, we would have no idea; they would just seem to be two human beings, a woman and a man. When somebody later tells us they are our parents, then we are educated or introduced to the label.

After we are educated by being introduced to these two people as our parents, after we are taught that, we believe what the person said. We believe in the label we have been given of "father" and "mother." Our mind labels, "This is father, this is mother." Our mind thinks like that, and right after that [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] we believe in our own label. Right after that second. [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] Right after that second, we have the appearance that this is our father and this is our mother.

Before we believed what the other person said, before our mind labeled "This is my father; this is my mother," we didn't have appearance at all that this was our father and mother. Because we didn't have the appearance, this is my father and mother, we didn't see them as our father and mother. "This is my father, that this is my mother"—we didn't see that.

Seeing them as our father and mother comes from appearing as our father and mother. And that appearance comes from the preliminary, our mind making up the label just there. Just there making up the label, "This is my father, this is my mother," because this is what we were taught. This is what we were told by somebody else. So, you can see, it comes from our mind. It is a creation of our mind.

That's why I'm saying that what we see is something that just comes from our mind. In our daily life, what we are looking at is something that comes from our mind, something our mind has labeled. But when we are not aware of this, when we are not meditating and not aware of the evolution, how it has come from our mind, it looks like it has come from its own side. This is totally

wrong, totally false. This is a hallucination. It is totally empty. The absence or emptiness of that is the ultimate reality of phenomena.

So, now going back to the introduction of what is false and what is the truth in our life. That's a very big subject.

WE BELIEVE IN THE HALLUCINATION

As I often say, why we are suffering? It's because, due to ignorance, we are unable to discover what is truth and what is the false in our life. To our hallucinated mind, truth doesn't exist. To our hallucinated mind, the emptiness doesn't exist. I gave a few examples of what is false, of things that have nothing to do with our mind. What we see, what we hear, what we smell, what we taste—all these tangible objects, the sense objects, never came from our mind; they seem to have nothing to do with our mind.

Having nothing to do with our mind includes karma; they have nothing to do with our karma, they never came from karma. It's the same. They seem to have nothing to do with our present mind, our present concept, the way we think. The present right now labels something and what we have labeled appears back to us; that is what we see. It neither appears as labeled nor that it comes from karma, due to our mind. There are these two things: how things come from mind. Right now, there is this present mind, that which constantly labels, and the other one is the long evolution that is karma, which is our own mind, the mental factor of intention.

We never think this has come from karma, never. Nor do we see that it comes from this present state of mind that is always labeling, from the discriminating thought labeling "this" and "this" and "that" constantly. It seems to exist from its own side, without depending on either the present mind labeling or on karma. That thing that really exists from its own side is not there at all.

The Buddha's omniscient mind, whose holy mind is free from all the defilements, cannot see that. He can see the sentient beings' appearance, the view, but he doesn't have that hallucination. Somebody who has clairvoyance can see the other person's hallucination but they themselves do not have the hallucination. This is similar. It is like somebody who can see our dream even though they

themselves are not dreaming, that we are falling down from a mountain! We are skiing and falling down from the snow mountains! Somebody can see our dream.

The Buddha sees all this, the Buddha and those exalted arya beings, the bodhisattvas and arhats. They see what we see—people, pillars, flowers, all these things—but whereas we see them as something real, in the sense of existing from their own side, they realize all these are total empty, totally nonexistent. In our view, they appear truly existing and we believe a hundred percent that their appearance is true.

There are people who are able to recognize a dream as a dream, but most of us don't recognize that a dream is a dream when we dream. When we're dreaming, everything seems real. Things really exist. When we are not aware we're dreaming, the dream objects seem real in the sense of existing from their own side. But when we are aware that it's a dream, even though we have an appearance of things that are real, we realize it's not true. We see it doesn't exist. We still have the hallucination but we have the realization that it's not true. We discover that it's not true and we don't cling onto it.

Perhaps in the dream somebody criticizes or provokes us, or somebody beat us, shouts at us, whatever they do, when we recognize the dream is a dream we don't get angry at all. We don't see the point of getting angry because there's no such thing there. Even though there's the appearance, it's not true. There's no such thing there. We discover that.

Even if somebody highly praises us, saying we are a god or omniscient or something! They praise us, saying how beautiful we are, how sweet we are, how generous we are, how kind we are, and this and that. However much that person praises us, when we recognize the dream is a dream, it doesn't bother us at all. It doesn't disturb our mind at all. Our mind is calm, peaceful. We have this hallucination, but we are able to recognize this is a dream. That means we know this is nonexistent even though we have the appearance.

Whatever happens—somebody praising us, somebody criticizing us, somebody making offerings, somebody cutting our flesh or limbs or beating us—because we recognize the dream is a dream, we have the appearance but we don't have the clinging, believing that it is real. The moment we believe it is real as it appears, when the belief is there, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] that the concept is real, it

destroys our mental peace, our calmness. Then we get angry or attachment arises—either angry or attachment—robbing us of all peace. Then, it involves some karma.

When we are not sleeping, it's like this. In the dream, when we believe that it's real, that it's true, it affects us. In the dream, we are unbelievably scared or so attached! When we wake up, we don't have that friend or whatever and we miss it so much. Not realizing it was a dream, we were so attached or so frightened because of believing it was real.

We haven't realized emptiness, that all phenomena are empty, so the way things appear—the I, action, object, forms, all these things—is something real. The white light, the red color in the paintings, the yellow flowers, those colors, the white, the red, the yellow, all appear as something real, in the sense of existing from their own side.

The minute we analyze them, we can't find them there. What we discover is that they are nonexistent there. They are totally empty. When we analyze, this is what we discover. When we *don't* analyze, it looks like they are there. When we analyze and can't find them anywhere; we realize they are *totally* nonexistent. That shows they are false. When we analyze they exist nowhere. That's what we discover. What we apprehend as true is totally nonexistent. There's no such thing there.

When all these hallucinations appear to us, especially those of us who haven't realized emptiness, we believe the apprehended object as reality. That is the reality according to our ignorance. Not according to wisdom. According to ignorance, we believe it as reality, as the truth. We don't see the actual truth, that it is like it doesn't exist. We don't see the emptiness, the dependent arising, how things exist being merely imputed by mind, depending on the base and depending on the mind that labels them. They exist depending on these things, but we don't see it. That's the reality but we don't see it.

Things appear as independently existing, without depending on any of these things. They appear that way to our hallucinated mind and we believe that is the reality. Although it is false, we believe it is reality. That concept, that delusion, is the basis of all the other obscuring, disturbing negative attitudes that arise, such as anger, attachment, and then there's ignorance. These are the basis, but there are many other delusions as branches from this.

Now I'm coming back to the face! I'm returning to the face. This face, this small face, we don't hold the feet as the face. We don't call our feet "face." We have to see a particular shape. We don't call this thing the face. This is the eye, this is the nose, this is the mouth, and like this. These things together [make the face]. Well sometimes not necessarily all of them. Sometimes some are missing! However, that's the base. This shape is the base. Seeing the eyes, mouth, nose and so forth causes the mind to make up the label "face." Seeing this phenomenon that has a certain shape causes the mind to make up the label "face," and then we believe in that.

In reality, the face is merely imputed by the mind, and we believe in that. We look at the face that our mind has labeled, and after that comes discrimination, "This is beautiful," due to the shape of the eyes, the hair, the nose, cheeks or ears or whatever. Then, attachment clings on to that, grasps on to that.

For example, if somebody praises us or give us a gift, something that our attachment likes, we call them "good" or "nice," and attachment arises from that. And if somebody criticizes us, behaving in a way that our attachment doesn't like, we call this "harm" or "bad." By thinking that the way the person acts toward us is bad, anger arises. That is how it works.

First of all, the mind labels "friend," and in the next moment there's the appearance of a real friend. Then there's the concept of a truly existent friend. On that, attachment exaggerates "beautiful" or "nice," or something like that and we grasp on to it.

The mind merely imputes "enemy," because this is what our attachment doesn't like. We are following attachment and it is bad according to our attachment. Our attachment says it is harmful, bad. If we were not following attachment, this would not be bad for us. When somebody gets angry at us, criticizes us, physically brings us down or disrespects us, it doesn't bother us. It is nothing if we are not following attachment. But because we are following attachment, because we are friends with attachment, we are shaking hands with attachment, when that person acts in that way, what is the bad one? This one? Oh, this is the bad one, right?

THE MANTRAS ON RINPOCHE'S CAR

Our car has messages all around it—mantras, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and many different deities. One side has the message by His Holiness, “My religion is kindness, kindness to others.” They added the word “others” to make it clearer. The other side says, “Cherishing others is the source of happiness.” There are many mantras in front of the car because there are many insects that crash on the glass and die. When you drive along, at certain places many insects get crushed.

The first time it happened, I thought we created so much negative karma to be born in a hell realm, the hell of being alive again and again, or the black line hell or the third one, gathered and being crushed, where there are big mountains that come together and crush the hell being in between. Then the blood of the crushed being comes like a waterfall from between the two mountains. So maybe it was that one because when you drive a car, so many insects are crushed on the car. I thought we had created so much negative karma to be born the third hell, the gathered and crushed hell. I was driving to Geshe Sopa's place to take a course. It was a very long drive, and in some places this happened a lot and some places not.

Sometimes I tried to visualize sending wind from the car to chase them away. I don't know, but sometimes it looked like hell. I asked Roger, who suggested we put something around the car. When there are a lot of those powerful mantras for purification in the front of the car, if insects crash into the car, they touch the mantras. Then, even if they die, their negative karma is purified.

Inside the car, there are quite a number of Namgyalma mantras and mandalas. If you have this in the car, any animal you don't see who is crushed under the wheel and killed, because the mantra is inside the car, the car is blessed, so the minute it touches it, the being's negative karma gets purified. Even if they die, they get some benefit because it is a very powerful mantra. It is said that if that mantra is on top of a mountain, the people and animals climbing the mountain or touching the mountain with their body have their negative karma purified. It saves them from being reborn in the lower realms. If it's inside a banner, even when the shadow of the banner touches anybody, their negative karma gets purified. It's the same when it's in a house; everyone in the house gets blessed. Even when the shadow of the house touches anybody, their negative karma gets purified. It's the same if you have

these mantras in the car, because there are so many insects, especially ants, on the road that we can't see, we have no choice. At least their negative karma gets purified and they get some benefit.

Anyway, when we drive the car, many people see it and rejoice; they're so happy to see the car with those messages. Some people—some young but all sorts of different people—copy the messages when we park the car. They are so happy.

Once, somebody in a car drove all the way around while we were driving. Maybe that was some student. I'm not sure.

From time to time, you see people who pass making a rude gesture. Maybe [they follow another religion] or something. You can see the deities, the buddhas, all around, so maybe they think we are Buddhists. From time to time, through their car window, they bring their arms out! [Rinpoche demonstrated a gesture]

Sorry. It's become a long talk. I wasn't sure what that meant.

THE OBJECT OF ANGER DOES NOT EXIST

Anyway, because at that time we are following attachment, we are the friend of attachment, whenever some angry person does what attachment doesn't like, we label it "bad" and the person as "enemy." But as I said before, if we do not follow attachment, this is nothing. It doesn't bother us; it doesn't hurt us.

What the harm actually hurts is the attachment. It's good to know it's not hurting us; it's just hurting our attachment. It's good to think that way. This is very good psychology. It's not hurting us, it's hurting our delusion, so that person is very kind. They are very kind because they harm, they destroy our delusion. In this way, this person is the most kind because they are the antidote to delusion, the destroyer of delusion. By destroying delusion, we can achieve liberation and enlightenment. By practicing patience with that angry person, we can achieve liberation and enlightenment. This is what the person is giving us.

By following attachment, we label that person “enemy.” The moment we believe the label, they appear as the enemy; we see them as the enemy, as an enemy who doesn’t appear to be merely labeled by the mind but who appears to be *not* merely labeled by mind, which is totally the wrong view. On top of that, thinking they are harmful, bad, we get angry and we wish to harm them.

In reality, the object of anger doesn’t exist. What anger projects, there’s no such thing there. Because there’s no foundation, there’s no such real enemy there, no real enemy not merely labeled by our mind. The foundation is totally false. First there must be a foundation, but that is totally false. There’s no such thing there; it’s totally empty. How can the object of anger be true? No way.

In the same way, the “friend” from the point of view of attachment is not merely labeled by mind. There’s no such thing there. Then, on top of that—the real friend, not merely labeled by mind—attachment projects that and exaggerates the qualities, clinging on to that. How can the object of attachment exist? It doesn’t exist at all.

That’s the reality of life. In life, all this that is false we believe is true, *that* is the problem. All the problems of life build on that. The whole problem of our life is believing that the false view is the right view, believing false phenomena as truth, as something that exists. And what exists—emptiness, things existing merely labeled by mind—that becomes nonexistent. It *exists* but it becomes nonexistent for our ignorant, hallucinated mind. It’s like that.

EVERY TIME WE HOLD ON TO THE I AS TRUE WE ARE CREATING IGNORANCE

By listening to the Buddha’s teachings—the lamrim teachings, the teachings on the perfection of wisdom, the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment, right view—and then reflecting on the meaning and meditating on it, we actualize it. So, you can see how important it is to practice the Dharma in our daily life, how it is so essential, especially to learn and meditate on the Buddha’s teaching of the perfection of wisdom, as well as the lamrim teachings on the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment: the practice of renunciation, the practice of bodhicitta and the practice of right view.

Now, the conclusion! Life without Dharma practice is suffering. You can see that very clearly. Life without the lamrim practice, life without the practice of the right view, is suffering because we believe all that is false as the truth.

The I and the aggregates exist; they are what is merely imputed by the mind. The basis of the I, the basis to be labeled “I,” are the aggregates. The I and the aggregates exist in mere name, merely labeled, merely imputed by the mind. They exist in this way, in mere name, merely imputed by our mind. There’s no such “I” existing from its own side, *not* merely labeled by mind; and there are no aggregates *not* merely labeled by the mind, existing from its own side.

While there is no such thing, while it is empty, completely empty, totally nonexistent, every day of our life, when we let our mind hold on to this as true, we are creating ignorance, the root of samsara. How many times do we do that in one hour, letting our mind hold on to this as true? How many times do we do that in one minute? This concept is the wrong concept because there’s no such object that exists.

Each time we let our mind hold that it is true, we are creating ignorance; we are creating the root of samsara. We are creating the root of all the karma and delusion and all the suffering results each time we do that. That’s where all the problems come from; that’s where death comes from.

Death does not come from outside; death comes from our mind. It comes from that ignorance, that hallucinatory mind, that concept. Instead of meditating that the I is empty, that the aggregates are empty, that they exist in mere name, merely imputed by mind, instead of that, we let our mind hold on to this I that appears as something real from there, not merely labeled by mind. We believe in the truly existing I and aggregates that appear as real in the sense of existing from their own side, not merely labeled by the mind. We hold onto that as true.

Holding that concept, the suffering of death is very frightening. Even if we don’t think about death, [all our suffering] comes from there, including the fear of death. Old age comes from there, all the sicknesses come from there, even the bird flu, SARS, or whatever, whether they are curable or incurable. Even diabetes comes from there! (I have diabetes.) Colds come from there. (Actually, my cold came from Tibet! Not from Iraq or Africa, from Tibet.) I’m joking.

What was I talking about before? So, you can see that Dharma practice, lamrim practice, is like money, like food. It's more important than money, more important than food, more important than our job. It's the most important thing in life. Just from this brief explanation, you can see this is the most important thing in life, more important than anything else if we want happiness, if we want liberation, if we want to be free from death, free from the cycle of death and rebirth, from karma and delusions, and there is no question about enlightenment for sentient beings. There's no question if we want to liberate sentient beings from suffering. That's one thing to emphasize.

BELIEVING IN THE REAL FACE, ATTACHMENT ARISES

So, going back to the face! It took a long time, but we are going back to the face. Now, you can understand clearly, the merely labeled face, the face that has been labeled by our mind, after it appears to us as the real face, not merely labeled by mind, and after we hold onto this and this [as true], and think, "This is good," due to our exaggeration, attachment arises. This small face becomes very expensive! We end up spending a million dollars on it.

This is just describing what happens to our life by following attachment. The reality is like this. From the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment, this also becomes a teaching on renunciation. We can see how this is incredible suffering when we think of others, how other sentient beings are trapped in this wrong concept of true existence. The mind is possessed by this, trapped in this hallucination, trapped in the hallucinated view projected by attachment, as well as the hallucinated view projected by anger, causing so much suffering.

Without thinking about animals, when we look at other humans, we see how there is so much suffering. That makes compassion arise. We want to help them. We want to liberate them. From there comes the thought to achieve enlightenment so that we can do perfect work for sentient beings.

If I speak about how this is what happens, it goes on and on, like water in a river. OK, I'll stop there.

DEDICATION

“Due to all the past, present, and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may bodhicitta—the source of all the success and happiness, of all success for ourselves and all sentient beings—be actualized within our heart, in the hearts of our family members, in the hearts of all the students in this organization and all the supporters, those who give up their lives for the organization, doing service to human beings and the teachings of the Buddha. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts, as well as in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

“May bodhicitta particularly be generated in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

[Rinpoche and the students chant more dedication prayers]

Then most urgently, “May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all the leaders of the world and in the hearts of all the terrorists, all those people who have vicious thoughts to harm others.” That is most urgent. Pray for that very strongly.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others ...” Here we have this incredible opportunity to learn, to meditate, to actualize the unmistakable path as shown by the Buddha. Within Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, the essential teachings are the lamrim, and we can learn, meditate and actualize these and be able to liberate all sentient beings from all the oceans of suffering—from the oceans of suffering of the hell beings, the oceans of suffering of the hungry ghosts, the oceans of sufferings of the animals, the oceans of suffering of the human beings, suras and asuras, from all their sufferings—and bring them to enlightenment. That is all by the kindness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is embodiment of all the buddhas’ compassion, and particularly by the kindness of Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than all the three-time buddhas. So, “May His Holiness have a long life and may all his holy wishes succeed immediately. Whatever holy wishes he has, may they succeed immediately, for us, for the organization and for the world.” Then, similarly, “May Lama Ösel Rinpoche have a long life and show the same aspects as Lama Tsongkhapa, offering extensive benefit to sentient beings and the teachings.”

[Rinpoche and the students chant more dedication prayers]

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me and collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefits to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within myself as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on in all the lifetimes.” This prayer is extremely important.

Then, please dedicate the merits. “Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may the five-hundred foot Maitreya Buddha statue, which helps the teachings of the Buddha last a long time in this world and which shortens the suffering of the world—the eons of famine, the eons of disease, the eons of war—may it be able to be actualized, able to be constructed, able to be completed as quickly as possible, and may it abide in this world until Maitreya Buddha comes. May it be most beneficial to all sentient beings, causing them to purify all their negative karma and defilements and to collect extensive merit. May it especially cause bodhicitta to be generated in everyone’s heart and, through that, to bring perfect peace and happiness in this world, and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. May the Maitreya statue receive all the funding it needs to be completed as quickly as possible and to continue to be of service to the monasteries, to preserve and spread the Dharma for sentient beings, to build up monasteries in different parts of the world to benefit for sentient beings.

“May the various social services in different parts of the world lead to sentient beings generating the good heart.” That is the most important. “May the sentient beings who are receiving help from the organization’s social services generate a good heart.” Otherwise, it’s not much help. It just helps them survive, but until they practice the Dharma from their own side and actualize the path, they cannot overcome death. They have to die anyway. So, if everything becomes the cause to generate a good heart, that makes life meaningful. Young or old, rich or poor, if they generate a good heart, it makes life meaningful; their life becomes beneficial to the world, starting with the family, or even starting with themselves.

Then, “May all the holy objects in different parts of the world be able to be completed because they are the quickest way to purify sentient beings’ minds of defilements and negative karma and to collect extensive merit and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May whatever projects the centers have be actualized and do the most benefit for all sentient beings. May they be the cause to generate faith and refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and [an understanding of] karma in the hearts of sentient beings. May they be able to generate bodhicitta in the hearts of all sentient beings, and in particular spread the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa in the hearts of all sentient beings and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to the three-time merits, by actualizing the path, by dedicating the merits, by actualizing bodhicitta in the hearts of everyone in this world, may war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sicknesses, the dangers of fire, water, air, earthquakes—wherever these are happening—may they be stopped immediately. May nobody in this world experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sicknesses, danger of fire, water, air, earthquakes, forever.” Dedicate this very strongly.

“I dedicate all these merits to be able to follow holy extensive deeds as Samantabhadra and Manjugosha realized. I dedicate all my merits in the same way all the three-time buddhas dedicate their merits. May the general teachings of the Buddha, and in particular Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, spread in all the directions; may they flourish forever in this world by completely actualizing them within my heart, and in the hearts of my family members, in the hearts of all the students and supporters of this organization, and those who give up their lives to the organization, doing service to sentient beings and the Buddha, and in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

Good night. Thank you very much.

Lecture 2

December 5, 2005

PERVASIVE COMPOUNDING SUFFERING IS SAMBARA

[Rinpoche and students chant *The Foundation of All Good Qualities* and the mandala offering]

Good afternoon. Before we recite the prayer of going for refuge and generating bodhicitta, especially for those who are attending a course for the first time, I thought you might find some benefit if I gave some explanation of that.

Before mentioning that, it's quite common that in courses such as these there are a lot of teachings. There's a lot to learn; it's not just listening to a few words and then closing your eyes and meditating on those few words for weeks or days. It's not like that, just doing breathing meditations, just basically having a peaceful time watching the breath, without much learning, much wisdom, much compassion. Here, it's not quite like that. In meditation centers within the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition, there are usually a lot of teachings, showers of teachings! Maybe not quite a hailstorm, but a lot of teachings, a lot of things to learn. But I understand that with your present state of mind, you want just to be quiet. You've come from the West, from a high-speed life. You've come from very busy cities—not siddhis but cities! Siddhis are not busy. Anyway, I'm joking.

Your life has probably been extremely busy, taking care of your family and your job. You've never had the chance to have a relaxed life, so of course, you would now find it very good to just sit and think of nothing, to stop thinking or stop dreaming. I'm just joking, but anyway, to stop thinking. It would be good to just stay quiet and watch the breath. You have never had that experience before; life has been extremely hectic, busy with a lot of problems. Not just busy but you've had a lot of problems on your mind. So here, you don't want to think, just rest. There's no message on this course, just resting!

And when there's a lot of explanation, you find it too much. You just want to be quiet. It's good to look for peace. Yes? Of course. There's a need for some relaxation, some peace in the mind. You have been in turmoil, with all the problems, with the busy life and all that. But that's not enough,

that's not sufficient at all. After a very heavy massage, which means a painful one, you feel relaxed. Your muscles are relaxed. Or if you carry something very heavy and after some time you put it down and take a rest, you finally relax; you have some peace.

If that's all that you want, that's different. As I mentioned, if just some relaxation and peace is all you want, that's different. But [what we study here] is to have real peace, everlasting, pure happiness, totally free forever from the suffering of pain, totally free forever from samsaric, temporary pleasures which are only in the nature of suffering, to be totally free from even this suffering, where we can never get satisfaction, no matter how much we try, making us go on and on, trying again and again. Never being satisfied is the biggest problem, the biggest suffering, in samsara. Because of following the delusions, because of following desire, we can never get satisfaction. That happiness we seek by following delusion is not pure happiness and we can never get satisfaction.

We also need to be free forever from the third type of suffering, which I mentioned yesterday, pervasive compounding suffering. As His Holiness usually explains, pervasive suffering is the aggregates, this body and mind, which are under the control of karma and delusions. That's why its nature is suffering, why we experience suffering. It's mentioned in the texts that these aggregates contaminated by the seed of delusions is pervasive compounding suffering.

At any time, suffering can arise or manifest from that seed of delusion. From that, at any time depression can come, loneliness can come, the compounded mental and physical sufferings can come. Even if there's no pain, sooner or later, it's compounded by pain.

If I talk any longer, if I keep you here any longer, soon there will be pain in your head, pain in your nose, pain in your back, in your knees! Pain will start all over soon!

We don't know the reason for some depressions and there are some we do know the reason, such as being depressed because of relationship problems or not succeeding in what we wanted, in business or whatever. But depression can come in the evening, making our mind unhappy, and we don't know why. In the morning, when we wake up, we don't know why we were depressed. The seed of delusion has compounded that, the imprint left by the past karma.

It is pervasive and then it compounds suffering. This life compounds future lives' sufferings, it produces future rebirths in the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm. This life produces a human body in the next human rebirth, or the body of a hell being, a hungry ghost and animal. It produces, it compounds all those sufferings that the aggregates experience.

This is the main suffering we should look for; this is the one we should strive to be totally free from. Then, we will be totally free from the suffering of change and the suffering of pain forever. This is what we should strive for. By actualizing the remedy, the path, karma and delusions will be totally ceased, including the seed of delusion. There will be no cause, no reason to experience suffering again. Then, it will be impossible to suffer again. This is what we should work for; this is something we have never achieved from beginningless rebirths until now.

We haven't achieved this from beginningless time, and that's why we have been suffering from beginningless rebirth up to now. We have been bound by karma and delusions, these obscuring, disturbing negative attitudes that arise from the negative imprint, the seed, which abides on the contaminated consciousness.

If we want to be free from suffering, we must free ourselves from pervasive compounding suffering. This is the one we need to look for. Not being free from pervasive compounding suffering means being in samsara; it's the same thing.

The continuity of the rebirth of the aggregates means the contaminated seed. Contaminated by what? The seed of delusion, caused by karma and delusions, which conditions future samsara. In the *Lamrim Chenmo*, Lama Tsongkhapa's great commentary on the lamrim, it is mentioned that pervasive compounding suffering is the part of the continuity of the contaminated aggregates that conditions the future samsara, the future rebirth. Why "part"? He specifies part rather than leaving the entire continuity because there are five paths to achieve liberation: the path of merit, the path of preparation, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation and the path of no more learning. The meditator who actualizes the path of meditation, whose aggregates don't continue to the next life, will have ceased samsara caused by karma and delusions. They will never again take rebirth under the control of karma and delusions. So, adding the "part" excludes that but refers to the part of the continuity of the contaminated aggregates that conditions future samsara. It clarifies that the

meditator who is on the path of meditation, their continuity of aggregates doesn't go to the next life, they don't circle. There's no continuity or rebirth caused by karma and delusions.

The great lama, Denma Locho Rinpoche, said the continuity of the rebirth of the contaminated aggregates is what samsara is. So anyway, we need to be free from pervasive compounding suffering if we want to really achieve the peace that is free forever from suffering, not just temporary pleasure but everlasting happiness, pure happiness, real liberation. Real liberation is liberation from karma and delusions. When we have overcome our delusions, the cause of the suffering, that's real liberation. Anything other than that might be called liberation but it's not.

The liberation we should achieve is not just freedom from the suffering of pain—from old age, sickness, death, heat, cold, hunger, thirst, all these mental and physical sufferings, those emotional pains—and not just free from the suffering of change, but completely free even from the foundation, pervasive compounding suffering. That's the real liberation we should look for and achieve.

But even when we have achieved that liberation free forever from every suffering of samsara, including the cause of samsara, karma and delusions, even if we have achieved that, our work is still not completed. The quality of cessation is still not completed. There are still subtle defilements, the subtle mistakes of mind. It's like the heavy dirt has been washed from the cloth but there is still a smell. The heavy part is gone but still there's subtle dirt or smell left. We have not yet completed the works for the self or the works for others; the realization is not completed. This only happens when we achieve full enlightenment, buddhahood, when we have completely ceased even the subtle mistakes of the mind, the subtle negative imprints left by the past concept of true existence, grasping the I, the aggregates and so forth as truly existent. We have removed the seed that causes delusion to arise because we have already achieved liberation from every suffering of samsara and its cause, karma and delusions.

When we achieve liberation, the cause of delusion—the seed that gives rise to the delusion—is completely removed. That's the actual liberation; it makes it impossible for delusion to arise again; it makes it impossible to experience suffering again. But there is still the subtle defilement, the subtle negative imprints left by the concept of true existence.

THERE IS AN I ON THIS CUSHION BUT NOT ON THE AGGREGATES

I want to bring up something I mentioned yesterday. I want to make it clear. Last night I mentioned that our mind twenty-four hours a day continuously labels “this” and “that.” Whatever subject we are learning in university or college, what we are actually learning is labels. We are learning names, labels. The teacher is teaching us labels, introducing us to the names of phenomena. Every time we learn something, we are learning the name, the label—this phenomenon, that phenomenon, this and that. That’s why everything exists. Therefore, no phenomenon exists except in mere name, except being merely imputed by the mind. Every phenomenon exists in mere name because it’s merely imputed by the mind. Therefore, every phenomenon that exists is empty of existing from its own side. Empty of existing from its own side or by its nature, empty of independent nature, empty of independency, empty of being independent. I’m pushing little bit! I’m joking. Anyway, it’s the same.

That which is perceived by us, by our hallucinated mind, is empty of being independent or empty of independency. It’s empty *of* that. The way it is perceived by our hallucinated mind is empty *of* that, empty *of* true existence.

Being real in the sense of existing from its own side is the description from the point of view of our ignorance. That is the view of our ignorance, the projection of our ignorance. So, phenomena are empty *of* that.

Understand? We can’t find the slightest atom of that. It looks so solid and so real and as if it exists from its own side, but if we look for it, we cannot find it anywhere. The I which exists is merely imputed by the mind because there are the aggregates, which are the base. Relating to that, the mind merely imputes the “I.” This mere imputation from the mind, *that* exists. This I that is a mere imputation from the mind exists. But *even that*, we can’t find. We can find it in this world, we can find it in Nepal, we can find it in Kopan, we can find it in this gumpa, we can find it on the cushion, but we *cannot* find it on the aggregates. We can find it on this cushion but *not* on the aggregates. It *exists* on this cushion but we can’t find it on these aggregates. This I that exists, this merely imputed I, it exists on this cushion, but we can’t find it on the aggregates, on the base to be labeled “I.” It is unfindable.

There is an I on this cushion, on this chair, on this throne. Why is there is I on this cushion? There's no other reason! It is simply that the aggregates are there on the cushion. That's it. That's all. Nothing else. Just because the aggregates are there on this cushion. And so we believe there's an I sitting on this cushion. The I is labeled by the mind and we believe it's there sitting on the cushion. Not the slightest [atom] more than that exists; not even an atom of the I exists. The one who is sitting on the cushion, the one who is writing, listening, talking, eating, sleeping, making problems! The one who is making problems or who is benefiting ourselves and others, being useful for others, there is no I there, not even the slightest atom, other than what is merely imputed by the mind. There's no other I, nothing that is something extra, even an atom extra, than what is merely labeled by mind. The I that is even slightly more than that is totally empty. That is the Prasangika school view.

Of the four schools of Buddhist philosophy—the Vaibhashika school, the Sautrantika school, the Cittamatra school and the Madhyamaka school with the two sub-schools, the Svatantrika and the Prasangika school—this is the second Madhyamaka school, the Prasangika. This is the object to be refuted of the Prasangika school. It is something very subtle.

Sometimes we think, “Yes, I agree. The I is labeled by mind,” in the same way our name is labeled by mind. “But it's not possible to be *merely* labeled by mind. There has to be something from its own side. For the I to exist, there has to be something there from its own side. It cannot be *merely* labeled by mind; there should be something from its own side.” Sometimes we think like that. The philosophy of the Svatantrika school, the first Madhyamaka school, is like that. It accepts that the I is labeled by mind, but there should also be something existing from its own side. They believe that the I is labeled by mind but that it exists from its own side, it exists by nature. The Svatantrika school also believes that the I is findable on the base. It can be found on the base, which is the same as accepting it exists from its own side, it exists by nature.

According to Madhyamaka Prasangika, if the I were findable on the base, on the aggregates, that would mean the I becomes truly existent. Because according to the Svatantrika school it is findable, it exists from its own side or it exists by nature, which to the Prasangika school means it is truly existent.

The Svatantrika school's definition of truly existent is different [from the Prasangika's]. Their definition of truly existent is that which [does not depend on] appearing to an undefective valid mind. By labeling it, then it exists. The I, for example, does not exist particularly from its own side. Their connotation of truly existent is that which does not depend on appearing to the undefective, valid mind and being labeled by it. Without depending on this, the I seems to exist completely from its own side, that's truly existent. That is the definition of truly existent according to the Svatantrika school. So it's different. Even though they talk about "truly existent," it's a different definition than the Prasangika school's.

The Svatantrika school believes that the I is findable on the base of the aggregates, so it exists by nature, it exists from its own side. This means, according to the Prasangika school, that it is truly existent. Therefore, all these objects the Svatantrika school philosophers believe are, according to the Prasangika school, objects to be refuted; they are all hallucinations, all objects to be refuted. They are not the objects to be refuted for the Svatantrika school but for the Prasangika school.

Even though we might accept that the I is labeled by mind but still believe that there should be something from its own side, findable on the aggregates or existing by nature, we have not reached the Prasangika school's view of emptiness, which is that it is *totally empty* from there, from where it appears. This something from its own side is totally nonexistent. That's the right view. That's the Madhyamika Prasangika school's view of emptiness. If we realize this, that's what pleases all the buddhas.

So, in reality, even though the previous schools—the Vaibhashika school, the Sautrantika school, the Cittamatra school and the Madhyamaka Svatantrika school—even though they talk about emptiness from their point of view, there is only one emptiness. That is the emptiness explained by the Prasangika school. Although there are different presentations, in reality it's just one, the Prasangika school view of emptiness.

To clarify just a little bit: the very root of samsara is ignorance. I mentioned some parts of this yesterday, but to clarify once more, the very root of samsara, where all our sufferings, all our problems come from, is ignorance.

There is the base, the aggregates, which are also merely imputed on the collections of the five aggregates of form, feeling, cognition, compounding aggregates and consciousness. In Tibetan there is *pung po* and *dag shi*. *Pung po* refers to the aggregates and *dag shi* is the base to be labeled. The collection of the five aggregates exist because they are merely imputed. On that label “aggregates,” which is imputed on the collection of the five, the mind which sees the aggregates, the base, makes up the label “I.” It merely imputes “I.”

The next moment, when it appears back, it should appear back as merely labeled by the mind, which is what it is. It should appear back to us as a mere imputation. But it doesn’t appear in that way. It doesn’t appear back to our mind as it is, as merely imputed, in as a mere imputation, merely imputed by mind. It doesn’t appear to us that way. In the first moment, the mind sees the aggregates and merely imputes “I,” and in the next moment [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] it appears back as something totally different, as a total hallucination, a false I, an I *not* merely labeled by the mind. The I that appears as not merely labeled by the mind is the Prasangika school’s object to be refuted.

Then, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] although the previous thought imputed the I, in the next moment, the continuity of that same thought holds on to that I as not merely imputed but as true, apprehending it as completely true. It’s the same continuity of thought. The next moment of the same continuity of that thought holds on to the I as true. The way the I appears to us is not merely labeled by mind.

So, it is something very subtle. The I that is not just merely labeled by mind but is something slightly more than that, something extra, that is extremely subtle. The continuity of the same thought that labeled the I before, now apprehends it as true. That concept is ignorance. Why? Because there’s no such I. The I that we believe, apprehended by that concept, the I that is not merely labeled by the mind but is something extra, something slightly more than that—there’s no such thing. This wrong concept is ignorance.

What is the I? It is merely imputed by mind. Therefore, it is empty of existing from its own side. While the I exists in mere name, imputed by mind, it is empty of something *extra* than what is merely imputed, which means existing from its own side. The I is empty of that. This is the very

nature of the I, but the mind cannot see that. It is ignorant, believing it exists from its own side, it is something extra than what is merely imputed by mind.

That wrong concept alone is the root of samsara; it is the very root of all the sufferings. As I mentioned yesterday, it's where all problems come from: war, famine, disease and all those tortures, where many millions of people get tortured and killed, which has happened many times in this world. These all came from this. I also mentioned all the dangers of fire, water, air, earthquakes—all the same. Then, rebirth, old age, sicknesses, death—all the same. The unbelievable hell of relationship problems, where we are not born in hell but it's like living in hell, all the unbelievable suffering where we cannot eat, we cannot sleep, we cannot work properly, we want to take so many tablets, and then life becomes very expensive, as I mentioned the other night! Here today it's ignorance; the one yesterday was attachment!

Because of that, we really suffer for many years; there are so many years of pain in our heart. We can't let go of that hurt. There is no happiness at all. Wherever we go, even to the mountains, we still have problems. Even if we go the countryside, to Tahiti or Goa, wherever. If we live at home, if we work in an office, even if we go to Mount Everest or to the moon, spending many millions of dollars to go to the moon, it's all the same—we still have problems there. The hurt is there; the pain is there. This all comes from that concept, ignorance.

THE ROOT OF SAMBARA ACCORDING TO THE FOUR SCHOOLS

Maybe I'll mention this and then we'll have a break.

When the I appears back to us not merely labeled by mind, within that, there are also other very gross hallucinations. The Vaibhashika school has eighteen schools, and for one of the schools the root of samsara is that the I, which is impermanent in nature, appears permanent, and we hold on to that. That concept of permanence is a wrong concept. Then the I exists alone without depending on parts. We hold that concept as true. Then, the I appears to be independent, existing with its own freedom; it appears like this and we hold on to that as true. According to this part of the Vaibhashika school, this wrong concept is the root of samsara, the root of suffering, but the reality is that, although this is a wrong concept, it is not the root of samsara.

The I also appears to be self-sufficient, without depending on the collection of the aggregates and their continuity. The I appears self-sufficient, like a king or president or whoever, without depending on the population. But if there were no population, if nobody was there, how could that person become the president or king? So, like that, without depending on the population, it exists, self-sufficiently. When the I appears back to us in this way, this is also a wrong view. The emptiness of *this* is the selflessness of the person according to the Vaibhashika school, the Sautrantika school, the Cittamatra school and even the Madhyamaka Svatantrika school.

But that I appearing as self-sufficient and us believing that to be true, that concept is still not the root of samsara. Even though it is believed to be the root of samsara by the previous schools, from the Prasangika school's point of view, it is *not* the root of samsara. From the Prasangika school's view and *in reality* it is not the root of samsara.

The object to be refuted—the hallucination—according to the Svatantrika school is the I that appears without being labeled by the undefective valid mind, that it appears to exist from its own side. This hallucination is also there. According to them, holding on to that as true is the root of samsara. It might be holding on to the I as self-sufficient.

This concept of the I particularly existing from its own side without appearing to the undefective mind labeling it and the mind holding on to this, this concept is also not the root of samsara [according to the Prasangika].

The root of samsara is only what I mentioned before, when the I appears back after the mere imputation as something extra, something slightly more than that, as existing from its own side. The moment [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] the continuity of the previous mind that has labeled the I holds on to it as true, holds on to that very subtle object, that ignorance is the root of samsara. This is the Madhyamaka Prasangika school's root of samsara. This is the unmistakable one.

From that, all those other disturbing thoughts, such as ignorance, anger and attachment arise, which motivate karma, and from those arise the true cause of suffering and all the true sufferings: all the oceans of sufferings of the hell realm, the oceans of sufferings of the hungry ghosts, the oceans of

sufferings of the animals, the oceans of sufferings of the human beings, the oceans of sufferings of the sura and asura realms, and so on. This all comes from there.

From this, we should get some slight idea which suffering we should be liberated from, what we should look for and what is the root we need to cut, to eliminate. We should get some small idea of that. I think that realizing emptiness is the heart of all Buddhadharma, all 84,000 teachings of the Buddha, the graduated path to enlightenment, the lamrim.

It can be said that 84,000 teachings are contained in the Tripitaka, the three baskets of teachings, that they are all contained in the lamrim, the graduated path to enlightenment, and the heart of all that is the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment: renunciation, bodhicitta and right view. Here, emptiness is our daily life's practice. We can see how urgent it is to learn about emptiness, to meditate on it and to realize it.

THE OBJECT OF REFUTATION FOR THE CITTAMATRA SCHOOL

For all those successes I mentioned last night, I would like to recite the *Praises to the Twenty-One Taras* once.

[Rinpoche and the students recite the praises]

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me and others, may I quickly achieve Tara’s enlightenment, and lead all the sentient beings to Tara’s enlightenment.”

One thing I left out before when I was talking about how the imputed I appears back to us. Maybe this can be called the Cittamatra school’s object to be refuted. The Cittamatra school, the Mind Only school, believe that there are not only six consciousnesses, but seven or eight. The eighth consciousness is called the afflictive mental consciousness and the seventh consciousness is called the mind-basis-of-all, meaning it is the base for all phenomena in samsara and nirvana.

There is an imprint of the substance left on the continuity of that consciousness, and that substance, that imprint, manifests into the knowing phenomenon perceiving the object, *she pa*, that which

perceives an object, like the eye sense perceiving blue is the knowing phenomena. The blue, the substance, the imprint left on that seventh consciousness that manifests out is the knowing phenomena. I wouldn't say "knower" because that means the person. I have seen this translated as "knower," but that would mean the person, like a writer or a driver. Here I would call it the "knowing phenomenon." The eye sense that perceives blue, that substance, the imprint left on the seventh consciousness manifests out in two ways: one is the object blue, one is the subject of the eye sense. Not the capital I, not this I. I'll mentioned this because there may be the danger of confusion.

I first went to Mexico many years ago right after His Holiness had first been there. I was invited to introduce His Holiness, but I thought it was better that Geshe Sopa Rinpoche introduced him. I came after his Holiness left. I was invited by a professor who had come to Kopan in the early times. I think he was also one of the people who invited His Holiness and organized the trip.

I did a few days' teaching in a Japanese temple, maybe two or three days, I'm not sure. Anyway, an old couple were translating for me, and I was talking about the I, the self I, but it seems they translated all the time as this eye. I found out the next day that they translated the I as the "eye." A girl who had come from Dharamsala for a time was more familiar with the teachings and so she corrected the old couple who were translating. So, it wasn't this eye sense! Anyway, I just remembered as we were talking about this eye.

So, that's how phenomena exist according to the Cittamatra school. No phenomenon exists without depending on the substance, the imprint left on the seventh consciousness manifesting from that, experiencing out from that.

So their object to be refuted is this hallucination, this wrong view, the I that exists without depending on the substance left on the seventh consciousness having projected that. Without depending on that, the I appears to completely exist from its own side.

Holding on to that as true is not the root of samsara. When I was talking about the four schools, I left that out before.

This is just to clarify that there are so many different levels of wrong concepts that we have, but they are not the root of samsara. That's what I was trying to say. Only this very last one, this very subtle one, this wrong concept, this ignorance, according to the Prasangika school, is the root of samsara.

It can be helpful if you concentrate on this. Then, you can see how everything is a hallucination. Still, this is a commentary on that ignorance that is the root of samsara that I left out before.

TRUE EXISTENCE IS DECORATED ON TO THE MERELY LABELED I

The mind sees the aggregates and labels and merely imputes the "I." The moment this happens, what manifests is the negative imprint left on the mental continuum by past ignorance that holds the I as truly existing. From the I being merely imputed by the mind, the moment after that [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] the hallucination, the real, truly existent I is projected there due to the imprints left by the past wrong concept of holding the I as truly existent. Right after the mere imputation, the I appears as real, as existing from its own side, due to that negative imprint. The previous moment of the continuity of that thought apprehending the object merely imputed the I and then, this moment apprehends it as true, believes it to be true. It's totally a joke! It's nonsense!

This concept becomes the root of all our problems: the suffering of rebirth, old age, sickness and death. All the hells are a creation of that. It is the creator of the whole of suffering, the producer. Maybe the movie producer? Ignorance is the producer of our samsara movie! But whether it's a good producer or a bad producer, I'm not sure.

Now you get the idea of what made everything like this. All phenomena starting from the I, the merely imputed I, and the aggregates, the merely imputed aggregates—the merely imputed form, feeling, cognition, consciousness, compounding aggregates—everything about the mind, the fifty-one mental factors, the six consciousnesses, all these are merely imputed. Then the body and all the parts of the body that have names, all the limbs, every piece of the body down to the atoms and the subatomic particles. And then consciousness, where we don't talk about atoms, but the continuity of the consciousness.

According to Prasangika, I think, there is a continuity of consciousness, from life-to-life, from past lives to this life to future lives and within the continuity of consciousness of this life, there is the continuity of consciousness of however many years, the continuity of consciousness of one year, of all the months, of the weeks and days, the continuity of consciousness of the hours, minutes and seconds and of the split seconds.

Within the four different schools, there are different ways of discriminating the parts of the continuity, and with the Prasangika school, it goes down to the seconds and the split seconds. These are all merely imputed by the mind. Everything is, from the merely imputed mind, the merely imputed I, everything down to the split seconds of consciousness and the subatomic particles. Everything is a mere imputation.

But everything, like the I, appears to be real due to the negative imprints left by the concept of ignorance projecting, decorating true existence on to it, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] making it real to us, to our ignorance, to the hallucinating mind. Everything that is a mere imputation is made to seem real. True existence is projected from this negative imprint, like a roll of film you put in a movie projector which then projects the image onto a movie screen.

It's like when we wear blue glasses, we see snow mountains and everything that's white we see as blue, or if we wear red glasses we see everything as red, not white. These negative imprints make everything real: these pillars, ceilings, lights, flowers, floor, carpet, scarf, our book, our pen, our hand, our feet, our nose—everything is made real, existing from its own side. When we look at the sky, we see a real sky, existing from its own side; we make it real. Trees appear real from their own side. All these are projections, hallucinations. When we walk on a hard road, it appears hard from its own side.

That's the object to be refuted, *gag cha* in Tibetan. Again, we label the road, but make it real. When we eat food, the real I eats real food, there is real eating. All these are mere imputations but this negative imprint projects a reality, making everything real. When we go shopping, when we go into a department store or supermarket, there is a real shopkeeper, a real building, real food, real vegetables, sixty or seventy choices of real cheese! All those fungi things? I'm not sure; I got mixed up. What are fungi? Hairs growing from the cheese? Fungi!

The example I normally use is the real I giving real money to the real shopkeeper. All these are mere imputations, but the negative imprints make everything truly existent, so we get real goods, real clothing, real makeup. When we go into a department store with all these billions of goods, when we go into the clothing part, there is all that truly existent clothing, all those different jeans, coats and billions of shoes, all those truly existent shoes. Nowadays, they make shoes very long, with the bottom part very pointy! Probably you need quite a lot of practice to walk. When we go into a makeup shop, there is all that truly existent makeup in all those truly existent bottles. Everything is truly existent, everything is real. The whole thing is a total hallucination, a projection, the negative imprint decorating the mere imputation, which exists but is made real like this.

In reality, there's no such thing as the real I, the real buyer, the real money, the real shopkeeper. There's no such thing as the real ice cream we get. We believe it but there's no such thing! The mere imputation is there but the real thing, the thing we very heavily believe to be real—this real I giving this real money to this real shopkeeper to get this real ice cream—in reality there's no such thing; it's all empty. The real I driving the real car, doing the real driving on the real road, real in the sense of existing from its own side, is projected by the negative imprint. There's no such thing. That car is empty, that road is empty, that driver is empty; everything is empty. Then, this real I is caught by real police and put in a real prison. It's all empty! It's projected by these negative imprints that make everything real. In reality, there's no such thing. It's all empty.

It's the same with birth and death. Birth, old age, sickness, death are merely imputations, but made real by the past negative imprints, real birth, real old age, real sicknesses, real death. When we believe in real death, then we become afraid. When we believe that the real death, which is mere imputation, exists from its own side, when we make it real, we are afraid. In reality, there's no such thing. It's all empty. It's the same with the merely imputed mother, the merely imputed father, the merely imputed children, the merely imputed house, the merely imputed possessions, the merely imputed wife, the merely imputed husband.

This negative imprint left by the past concept of true existence makes everything real; it projects this true existence. In reality, in essence, it's all empty. This is how we should meditate.

PRACTICING THE MINDFULNESS OF EMPTINESS IN DAILY LIFE

This is how you should practice mindfulness in daily life, while you are driving a car, while you are shopping, and so forth. You should plan when you leave home to go shopping to use this shopping time for lamrim practice. Which one? Here, you can focus on right view, emptiness. Plan to use the shopping as a Dharma practice, a lamrim practice, right view, to cut the root of samsara, that which ceases the defilements, making you achieve liberation and enlightenment. You should plan from your bed, from your house, how you are going to meditate. Then, while you are shopping, while you are in the supermarket or the department store, practice mindfulness.

While you are shopping, meditate that it is like watching TV, like watching a movie, seeing all the things around you as like watching TV or a movie, then it becomes exactly like that. It's the best TV, the least expensive, because you don't have to pay for it! It doesn't rely on a TV station, just the station inside you, the station in your mind!

Even in your room, think like that. Meditate like this. As you watch your scenery, consider what the reality is, how it's empty. There's no such thing. This is how the omniscient mind sees the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. There's no such thing. Watch the view of your hallucinated mind, the movie of your hallucinated mind, projected by your ignorance. Watch that. Watch how ignorance makes everything real, existing from its own side. When you walk somewhere, you're walking on the hallucination. When you are eating, you're eating the hallucination. You are wearing the hallucination dress. Everything is like that.

This is another method of practicing patience. When somebody is angry with you, provokes you, disturbs you, if you meditate like this, what looked real, the real anger, the real bad words, yourself, the other person, everything you believed to be real, it's all projection of your own negative imprint left by ignorance. Just watch. Just watch the scenery; and consider what is reality, There's no such thing; it's all empty.

It's very good to use emptiness to practice patience. There are six techniques of the Kadampa master. I don't know which Kadampa, but one of them, the last method is using emptiness, looking at yourself and the other person as empty, and then anger will not arise.

When somebody blames you or you have bad news in the newspaper, when many people say bad things about you, see it like that. If you believed everything that appears to be real, holding to be true everything created by your ignorance, you would want to commit suicide, you wouldn't be able to stand it. But when you look at all this that appears as real—all these people complaining, all the bad news or whatever—as empty, it cools the mind; it becomes medicine for peace.

Maybe I'll stop here.

I remember one thing that I forgot to mention yesterday. I think it's very important. Recently His Holiness was at Stanford University giving a talk, a teaching. There was a program for one or two weeks, at least one week, with different programs of one- or two-day teachings, I can't remember. In one of the teachings, there was some very practical advice.

One thing was that different people see other people in different ways; nobody sees somebody in the same way when they look at the person. That shows the person doesn't exist from their own side, they are not truly existent. What each person sees is not truly existent—if they were, then they should appear the same to everybody. They should appear true, in the sense of real, truly existent, and they should appear the same to everybody, but they don't appear that way. Therefore, they are a dependent arising. Therefore, they are empty of independence, empty of true existence.

I don't remember whether His Holiness mentioned this at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. His Holiness strongly emphasized that we shouldn't rush; we shouldn't immediately hold onto things, believing in them without analyzing, without checking. It's a very vast subject. It can be related to many things. We mustn't hold on to things, believing in them immediately without analyzing, without checking first.

His Holiness said we shouldn't act like animals. Animals don't check; whatever appears to them, they believe immediately. They don't check the object to see whether it's true or not, whether it exists or not. What appears, they believe. [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] They immediately hold on to that. So, His Holiness said, "Don't act like dogs. Don't act like animals, without analyzing, just

immediately believing.” That is very good advice, because when we don’t analyze an object, anger, attachment and all these emotional problems come. Life becomes gloomy with problems.

I thought to mention that. His Holiness used this, saying how this is how animals act. We must not act like an animal; we must always check the object. We should not immediately believe without analyzing the object. I think this is a very big subject. It could be related to many things. In the world, so many problems arise because of not analyzing, just immediately believing what we see.

THE CAUSAL AND RESULTANT REFUGE IN THE REFUGE PRAYER

I’ll go over this prayer; then we’ll stop:

I take refuge until I am enlightened
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.

“I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha” shows the causal refuge. “Until I am enlightened” shows the resultant refuge. When we say, “I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,” we are practicing the causal refuge, and when we say, “Until I am enlightened,” we are practicing the resultant refuge.

We achieve the resultant refuge by actualizing the true path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, and achieving the cessation of the suffering, the absolute Dharma. By actualizing the Dharma within ourselves or, in other words, our mind becoming the Dharma, at that time we become the absolute Sangha. Then, by depending on actualizing the Dharma, we become the Buddha. When the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is supported by bodhicitta, we cease even the subtle defilements, and we become the Buddha.

Why? Because the purpose of our life is not just to achieve happiness for ourselves, not just to achieve liberation for ourselves. Even that is not the real meaning of our life, the real purpose of our life. The purpose of our life is to benefit others. Benefiting others means causing them happiness in this life. A more important benefit to others is causing the happiness of all the coming future lives. This life is a very short one, so the second one is a much more important service. Then the third

way we can benefit others is to liberate all sentient beings from all samsaric suffering, karma and delusions. Then, even more important than that, is to bring them to full enlightenment by ceasing the subtle defilements. That is the highest benefit we can offer sentient beings.

To do this perfectly without even the slightest mistake, first we ourselves must completely developing the path, the Dharma, within ourselves, which is the remedy to completely cease all the mistakes of the mind, both gross and subtle, as well as all the subtle defilements, becoming completely pure. When we complete all the realizations, we become omniscient. We have perfected our mind in compassion for all the numberless sentient beings: each and every single hell being, hungry ghost, animal, human being, sura, asura and intermediate state being. We have perfected all the power to reveal any method that each and every single sentient being needs, that fits them. With an omniscient mind we know every single sentient being's mind, their character, the mistakes of their karma, their level of intelligence—*every single* detail. We can read everyone's mind and be able to see every single method that exactly fits them, that is exactly useful for that level of mind.

To be able to do *perfect* work for sentient beings without the slightest mistake becomes the foundation; it becomes the preliminary motivation for the mind to develop, allowing us to progress to higher and higher methods.

Working for others is the real purpose of our life, freeing them from all the sufferings and bringing them to enlightenment. That's why we need to become a buddha. For that, we need to actualize the Dharma and become a Sangha.

This is the resultant refuge. In order to achieve the resultant refuge, we have to rely upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha possessed by others' minds. It's like becoming a fully qualified doctor—if we want to become the best, fully qualified doctor, we have to rely on very expert doctors, studying with the experts, those with the best qualities, learning from them so we too can become expert. Similarly, in order to actualize the resultant refuge we have to rely on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha possessed by others' minds. That's the causal refuge.

THE THREE CAUSES OF REFUGE

Refuge should be done with three causes. We are practicing Mahayana, following all the practices of the Mahayana teachings, engaging in the Mahayana teachings, therefore, to the Hinayana's two causes of refuge, we need to add a third. In the Hinayana, we take refuge by having the useful fear of our own samsara, how it is in the nature of suffering, and we have faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, that they have the qualities and power to liberate us from samsara. With those two causes, we then totally rely upon the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with our whole heart. That mental factor is refuge.

With the Mahayana way of taking refuge, besides those two causes, having the useful fear of our own samsara, seeing how our own samsara is in the nature of suffering, this is the same. On top of that, we develop compassion for all other sentient beings. Just as we feel unbearable aversion to our own samsara, having a useful fear to our own suffering of samsara, this is the same. We can say, "Samsara itself is in the nature of suffering," which is same for us and all sentient beings. Or we can say, "The suffering of samsara." Either way. Then, whenever we look at other beings, we feel how they are in samsara and how their suffering is unbearable. Then compassion arises, wishing them to be free from suffering.

Of course, we can say "great compassion," which means besides wanting them to be free from suffering, to be liberated, we ourselves want to free them from suffering, to liberate them. With these three causes—aversion to suffering, faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and compassion—we totally rely on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Having that mental factor is the Mahayana refuge.

We can think like this. When we generate the useful fear of our own samsara and compassion for others, we determine to not only be liberated ourselves from the suffering of samsara we have been experiencing from beginningless rebirths, but also to liberate the numberless sentient beings, not only from the suffering of pain and the suffering of change, but also from pervasive compounding suffering, from all the sufferings. Then we see that the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have all the qualities.

After we have transformed our mind into this refuge, we do the prayer. Then, what we say and how we feel are harmonious, it's not just taking refuge from the lips. So, the first two lines of the refuge prayer is, "I take refuge until I am enlightened in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha."

The next two lines are:

By my merit of generosity and so forth,
May I become a buddha in order to benefit all transmigratory beings.

There are here two types of merit: the merit of virtue and the merit of transcendental wisdom. In Tibetan, the merit of transcendental wisdom is called *yeshe keyi tsog*. *Tsog* translates as "collection" but I don't think it's always the case of collection. *Tsog sa keo* means to "collect merit," so with this translation we would "collect a collection."

When we think of the merit of virtue and merit of transcendental wisdom, if we think of the three-time merits collected by us and by all others, we put everybody's merit together, which makes it very powerful. It's like when we only have one dollar to donate but there are millions of peoples also donating one dollar, it becomes millions of dollars, a huge fund that allows us to do a big project. It's very powerful.

Then, "in order to benefit all transmigratory beings". *Dro wa* [or *dro la*] here is translated as "transmigratory beings." It has two meanings: one is that, "transmigratory beings," and the other is "one who is going," which means going anywhere, and in this context, going throughout the six realms. You have already studied the twelve dependent related limbs. Having gone through that meditation, "transmigratory being" is easy to understand.

There are six realms of sentient beings and they migrate from one realm to another, completely overwhelmed, under the control of karma and delusions. They have no freedom at all, migrating to the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, the animal realm, the human realm, the sura realm and the asura realm, one after another. One after another, continuously, and they have to experience all the sufferings of each realm again and again and again, from time without beginning. When we think about this, there is no choice; compassion has to arise.

When we think of the meaning of transmigratory being, compassion has to arise, because we see how they are suffering. I mentioned before, it is due to ignorance. So, it is very important that we have the understanding of ignorance. So here you see it's so important. Under the control of ignorance, sentient beings are suffering. They are suffering so much. This world is suffering so much due to ignorance, following this concept of true existence, this root, ignorance. There are many other types of ignorance: not knowing karma, not knowing Dharma and so forth.

When we see how much sentient beings are suffering, how this world is suffering, even just human beings, without thinking about animals in this world, we come to know how our Dharma practice is so important. Practicing Dharma is so essential. That's the ultimate answer to help others. To help to liberate sentient beings, to actualize the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment. It becomes so important for us to liberate others.

You have gone through all the sufferings already, each realm's suffering: the hell beings' suffering, the hungry ghosts' suffering, the animals' suffering, the human beings' suffering, the devas, the suras and asuras' suffering, the suffering of the form and formless realms and pervasive compounding suffering, which is the main one. "In order to benefit" means to liberate these transmigrators from the oceans of each realm's suffering and its cause, karma and delusions, and bring them to full enlightenment.

"Transmigratory being" is one translation of *dro wa*. The other is "one who is going." That refers to how sentient beings, immediately after birth, are constantly running non-stop, without stopping for even a second, going toward death. That's the meaning of "one who is going." This also causes compassion to arise. Thinking on that, we determine we must achieve full enlightenment. "May I become a buddha in order to benefit all transmigratory beings." So, make the strong determination in your heart and dedicate like that.

I didn't remember the name until today. At Sera Je Monastery, there was this great lama, Je Tukanpa, who always emphasized bodhicitta whenever he began teaching. According to his instruction, we should always see the I who is seeking enlightenment, the action of seeking enlightenment, and the sentient beings we are going to achieve enlightenment for, that all these are empty of true existence.

We should look at everything as empty. When we do that, even from the *very* beginning when we do these four lines, we are already practicing the lamrim within that: refuge is there, renunciation is there, bodhicitta is there, the right view of emptiness is there—the three principal aspects of the path are there already as we meditate.

This is very important. Of course, we should not just say the words. I want to emphasize it is very important, when we can, to first transform the mind into this refuge and then say the prayer. Even while we are saying this, wishing to achieve bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, if we put our palms together, with the prayer, “I take refuge until I am enlightened in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,” we collect limitless skies of merit. We collect much greater merit than the universe filled with the seven precious jewels, gold, diamonds, everything. How many universes? Equaling the number of atoms of the Pacific Ocean, but these sand grains or water atoms, whatever, are something extremely fine, not ordinary sand that we see, but something very subtle. So anyway, how many universes? Equaling the number of atoms of the Pacific Ocean. That many filled with the seven precious jewels and offered to the buddhas. But here, by generating bodhicitta, we collect much more merit. This is explained in the *Sutra of the Ten Bhumis*.

So anyway, we’ll do this three times and then stop.

[Rinpoche and the students chant the refuge prayer]

Emptiness.

In emptiness, there’s no I, there’s no enlightenment, there are no sentient beings. In emptiness there’s no I, there’s no seeking, there’s no enlightenment, there are no sentient beings.

[Rinpoche and the students chant the refuge prayer]

Emptiness.

Now, the last one.

[Rinpoche and the students chant the refuge prayer]

Look at it as empty.

DEDICATION

So now dedicate the merits.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated in my heart, in the hearts of my family members and in the hearts of all of us here, in the hearts of all the students, benefactors, in the hearts of all the supporters and all those who sacrifice their lives for the organization, doing service for sentient beings and for the teachings of the Buddha through this organization.” Then think, “May it also be generated in the hearts of all the sentient beings.”

[Rinpoche and the students recite prayers]

Then, “May bodhicitta be generated especially in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

[Rinpoche and the students recite prayers]

“Especially, may bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all the leaders of the world.” If a leader has a bodhicitta realization, the millions of people in that country will have so much peace and happiness. They are guided in the correct way. “May bodhicitta to be generated in the hearts especially of all the terrorists, all those people who have vicious thoughts to harm others, without delay even a second.”

[Rinpoche and the students recite prayers]

We have this unbelievable life, like a dream, with the incredible opportunity in this life. Not only have we received a perfect human body, but we have met the Buddhadharma, the Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, which is the complete Buddhadharma with nothing missing. We are able to learn the

whole path to enlightenment and to practice, to actualize to benefit all sentient beings, to liberate them from all the oceans of suffering of samsara and bring them to enlightenment. All this is solely by the kindness of His Holiness Dalai Lama, the Compassion Buddha, Chenrezig.

Dedicate the merits for His Holiness to have a stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately.

[Rinpoche and the students recite prayers]

Then, dedicate the merits for the wishes of Lama, who was kinder than all the three-time buddhas, to succeed immediately. And for Lama Ösel Rinpoche to have a long life, show the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha.

[Rinpoche and the students recite prayers]

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may all father and mother sentient beings have happiness May the three lower realms be empty forever. May all the bodhisattvas’ prayers succeed immediately. May I be able to cause all this to happen by myself alone.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me and collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings and the teachings of buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on in all the lifetimes, in every second to be like that.

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by all the buddhas, may any sentient being who sees me, touches me, remembers me, thinks about me, talks to me, who praises, who criticizes, harms or helps, whatever they do to me, just by that may it be the cause for those sentient beings’ negative karma to get immediately purified; may they never ever get reborn in the lower realms and may they generate faith in refuge and karma, actualize bodhicitta and achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.” Think this is not only human beings, but also every animal,

any sentient being, spirits or anyone. You should relate this to yourself: “Anyone who sees me, touches me, just by seeing me, touching me, remembering me, thinking about me, talking about me, harming me, who criticizes or praises me, who harms or helps, whatever they do, even those who make fun of me, those who dream of me, who see me in pictures, may it only become healing; may it only become purification, only bringing peace and happiness, especially enlightenment to them.”

Then, please dedicate the merits to receive all the needs and complete all the funding for the five-hundred-foot Maitreya statue to be constructed as quickly as possible, for it to completely abide in this world until Maitreya Buddha comes, and for it to be most beneficial for all sentient beings. May it be the cause to collect extensive merit for sentient beings and purify all their defilements, and especially to actualize bodhicitta in everyone’s heart and then bring perfect peace and happiness in this world and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible. As well as that, dedicate for all the rest of the projects that I mentioned yesterday, serving the Sangha and making offerings to the monasteries and nunneries in different parts of the world, to the social services in different parts of the world, to building various holy objects in different parts of the world, which is the quickest way to purify and cause sentient beings to collect merit and bring them to enlightenment. And also dedicate for all the centers, to help to provide funds for all their projects, to be most beneficial to sentient beings, to cause them to generate faith in karma and refuge and bodhicitta, and especially Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, in the heart of all sentient beings, and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

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

“I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three-time buddhas. I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow all the holy excellent deeds of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjugosha as they realized, those eight bodhisattvas. I dedicate all the merits in the same way as the three-time buddhas dedicate their merits.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, collected by others, may the general teachings of the Buddha, particularly Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, flourish forever in this world, and spread in all the ten directions by completely actualizing within my heart and the hearts of my family members, in the hearts of all of us, in the hearts of all the students, benefactors, supporters and all those who give up their lives to the organization, to actualize in all their hearts and in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

So good night.

THE MINDFULNESS OF EMPTINESS WHILE SITTING AND AT BREAKTIME

What I explained before is very good to do when you are in a retreat. This is how to retreat using the emptiness meditation, while doing the sitting meditation, but it is also very important during breaktime—not breaktime from the Dharma but breaktime from the sitting meditation—while eating, walking, and so forth. This mindfulness meditation on emptiness is what I explained before.

By either looking at the subtle dependent arising, the mere imputation, or by looking at it as a hallucination, seeing that which is hallucination as a hallucination, just that mindfulness on the hallucination, which in your heart means it is always empty. It comes to the same point.

The other one is looking at it as a hallucination and thinking that it’s empty, as I mentioned before. You can do the mindfulness meditation, doing those different analytical meditations, by sitting or while you are doing something active, walking or doing things, at the same time doing what I explained before, the mindfulness on the right view. Then, it becomes a *very* good retreat, very rich, very powerful to destroy the delusions. Even if you have doubts, “Maybe this is empty, maybe it’s a dependent arising,” so even that doubt breaks your samsara in pieces. [Rinpoche snap his fingers] The texts mention that.

Each time you meditate on emptiness like that, it prepares you to actually realize emptiness quickly. And also at that time what you are doing becomes the antidote to the root of samsara, ignorance. It

harms ignorance and makes you achieve liberation, and then, supported by bodhicitta, also enlightenment.

Tomorrow, maybe we will do the mindfulness on bodhicitta, which is similar to this, but especially during breaktime, when you're dealing with people, while you're active, keep in mind bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the best retreat. Not only sitting in a session, but also when you wake up, when you get up! Wake up or get up? For some people it can be wake up. Then, banish the self-cherishing thought. When you're going around or eating or talking with people, or whatever, don't allow the self-cherishing thought. Not like that. Even the breaktime should be with bodhicitta.

Anyway, I'll mention that tomorrow.

I was thinking to do the *lung* of some of the preliminary practices. You need some of the *lung*s, the oral transmissions of the *Heart Sutra*, and Dorje Khadro. Those are different, very powerful practices of purification. And maybe I'll do the oral transmission of the Thirty-five Buddhas prayers, so everyone can get it. Then, there will be no difficulties or if you want to practice but you need the *lung* and you can't get it or something. If I do those different practices in public like this, it helps everybody, because if you don't do it now, later you will have to do it anyway. Those practices are very worthwhile to do.

I think that's all. Thank you very much.

Lecture 3

December 6, 2005

WORKING ONLY FOR THIS LIFE, WE ARE THE SAME AS THE ANIMALS

Good afternoon. I think you have already done the lamrim prayer this morning, but we are doing it again! That way, it leaves a more positive imprint on the mind. These preliminary prayers are not just prayer. It's a meditation—the prayer goes with the meditation to collect merit. For the listening, reflecting and meditating to become effective, to become beneficial, that depends on having collected the necessary conditions, having collected the merit. If we have a lot of merit, then by listening to teachings and reflecting on them and analyzing them, we not only understand the meaning, familiarizing them with our mind, but also becoming the path explained by the words in our heart.

What is written in the text, the path, we have in our heart, in our mental continuum so our mind becomes that path to enlightenment from the root, guru devotion, and the graduated path of the lower capable being, the graduated path of the middle capable being [to the graduated path of the higher capable being.] “Capable being,” which is *kyi o* in Tibetan, has great meaning. Much of the time it's not translated, it's just “lower scope” or “higher scope.” That's OK but the actual translation is “graduated path of the lower *capable* being,” the “middle *capable* being,” or the “higher *capable* being.”

People who are living life with the attitude that is attached to the thought of the eight worldly dharmas, which is basically the attachment clinging to this life, their objective, what they want to achieve, is just the happiness of this life: the pleasure of food, clothing, shelter, being praised by others, having a good reputation, being famous. Nothing else, just that. This is just very short-term happiness, just for some years, some months, some weeks, some days. It is very uncertain. Life is in the nature of impermanence and death, and we can never tell when it will happen.

Generally, in the world, nothing is definite in life, particularly in these degenerate times. Now the times are over-degenerated and life in these degenerate times is even more indefinite. There are so many conditions for death and so few for living. And even the conditions that we arrange for the

benefit of our living become the condition for death, such as food becoming poisonous or medicines having side effects. Many people die because they are unable to digest food or as a side effect of having taken medicine. People eat fish for pleasure and a bone gets caught in their throat and they die. I've heard stories of this happening. Many people die when their house collapses during an earthquake or it burns down. Cars are made for pleasure, but so many people die in car accidents.

Anyway, [wrapped up in worldly concern] we are only looking for very short-term pleasure. Our objectives are just the pleasure of this life which is something very short-term—the pleasure of a few seconds or minutes.

This is the same attitude as the pigs, the ants, the worms, the mosquitoes, even all those insects. In the same way, they keep so busy, running around—especially the ants. What is their motivation? Nothing special, just the happiness of this life. Nothing more than that, just the happiness of this life. I don't think the ants have attachment to becoming famous! What do you think? Do you think they have attachment to becoming famous? To becoming well-known? Do you think they're looking for that? I don't think so. I don't think the pigs have that motivation either, the attachment to becoming famous! Even though they are so fat, I don't think it's for competition!

Even those tiniest white insects we can see on the old trees when they became damp. I don't know what you call them. When it's damp, there are tiny insects you can see. [Student prompts] Termites! They have the same attitude. They don't have the attitude to seek enlightenment for sentient beings! They don't have the attitude to seek liberation from samsara! They don't have the attitude to seek happiness of future lives. Only to have happiness in this life.

This includes all those fish, all the sharks or dolphins in the water, all those billions and billions of fish that are constantly moving around looking for food. There are billions of them together in the water. What do you call them? What do you call their names? [Student prompts] School of fish. Maybe they're in school. Anyway, I'm joking! It's the same. Their attitude is nothing else but looking for the happiness of this life, to achieve happiness in this life, to be constantly free from the problems of this life and just get comfort, to survive. That's it.

Now you can see that all the rest are like that, even those tiny insects I mentioned that live on the damp wood. So, human beings who have that same attitude as all those other creatures who are called “animals” do not belong to [the path of] the small capable being. They don’t belong to the middle capable being or the higher capable human being. These three are special capable beings. Ordinary people—those who live their lives with only this attitude—don’t belong to any of these. They are the same as the animals; they are nothing special, nothing more than those tiny insects, the worms or the flies, or the birds. While the worms are looking for food to eat, the birds are looking for worms to eat! For birds, eating worms is their comfort and for worms eating other things is their comfort. Humans with this same attitude might have a human body but mentally they are no different from the animals. It’s like they are wearing the mask of a human being.

A human being with this attitude might be an ordinary capable being, but they are only capable of achieving this life’s happiness, nothing else. They are not capable of what is mentioned in the lamrim, in the paths of the lower capable being, the middle capable being or the higher capable being.

Maybe I should mention this since I brought up this issue! You can understand why we need to practice Dharma. Even *logically*, even just from experience, the reason we need to practice Dharma is very clear. You can understand why we need to do something else, something special in our life.

If a person’s attitude is not the bodhicitta attitude of achieving enlightenment for sentient beings, nor the renunciation of samsara—seeking liberation that is free forever from oceans of samsaric suffering—nor seeking happiness of future lives with a good rebirth, if it is none of these, then the motivation of living is only the attitude of seeking the happiness of just this life.

You have gone through this motivation, seeing what is Dharma and what is not Dharma. Within the Dharma there are different levels of Dharma that result in different levels of happiness. You have already gone through all this. You have already gone the whole lamrim, so you should have a clear idea.

Pabongka Dechen Nyinpo, that great enlightened Tibetan lama, explained how four people can recite the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* prayer with four different motivations. Of course, you can also

say there are four people making charity with four different motivations, using different activities, but he mentioned reciting the Twenty-one Taras prayer.

Tara is the female aspect of the Buddha, representing all the Buddha's holy actions embodied into this female aspect, particularly to grant all the sentient beings' wishes for success and happiness. There are twenty-one aspects of Tara and there's a verse of praise to each Tara.

So, the first person recites the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* with the motivation to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. That person's action of reciting the prayer becomes the cause of achieving enlightenment for sentient beings.

The next person does not recite the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* with bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings but just to achieve liberation from samsara for themselves. That second person's action of reciting the prayer doesn't become the cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings but only becomes the cause to achieve liberation, the ultimate happiness for themselves.

Then, the third person recites the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* not with bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings, and not to achieve liberation from samsara for themselves but just with the motivation to achieve the happiness of future lives. [That person's action only becomes the cause of the happiness of future lives.]

The fourth person recites the prayer only to achieve the happiness of this life—to live long, to be healthy, to be wealthy or have power in this life, and so forth, just for that. They don't pray for others, just for themselves. As I mentioned before, this is no different than an animal's motivation. It's nothing special. Even though they might be living in a five-star hotel or a five-star house, being driven around in, what do you call it? A limousine.

In the United States I saw a lot of these long cars. They are very long cars; they look a little bit strange. When I went to Florida, where we have a center—I've forgotten the name of the center. What's the name? [Student prompts] Thubten Kunga Center. I had to go to a university to give a talk and I was surprised when the director, a gentleman, arranged this long car! I think I later

mentioned to him it was not necessary to arrange that. There was a cocktail bar in the car, where you could drink anything. There was no shower! It would have been nice to have a shower in the car, and a kitchen! Anyway, the director arranged this car on that day to go to the university to give the talk.

I just remembered as I was just talking about the long car, the limousine. Basically, the way of living of a rich person is no difference from those tiny creatures. The aim is just this life's happiness, the actions they do is just for their own happiness just for this life, nothing else. All the important happiness is left out. It is unknown to them because they lack enough knowledge of the mind.

If we have more knowledge of the mind, we will know all those different levels of happiness. It's all a mental state. Whatever happiness we have, we achieve from the mind. So, it's just this lack of education. Education here doesn't mean a school education, how to make things. This is education of the mind, understanding the reality of the mind. Understanding its nature, what it can do, its continuity—it's a very extensive subject.

Lama Yeshe used to say that learning about the mind is much more extensive than learning about outside phenomena. There are all the five paths needed to achieve liberation: the path of merit, the path of preparation, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation and the path of no more learning. There are five paths to achieve liberation, the ultimate happiness, and five Mahayana paths, with the ten bhumis, to achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings, the state which is total cessation of all gross and subtle mistakes, and which has all the qualities, all the realizations. Then there are all the tantric paths, such as the lower tantric path, the path having the sign, the path not having the sign, and then the graduated generation stage and the graduated completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra.

BUDDHA NATURE MEANS WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME A BUDDHA

All those meditators who have attained each of the five paths to liberation have so many unbelievable qualities, especially the Mahayana practitioners, the bodhisattvas who have attained the five Mahayana paths, the ten bhumis. As each path goes higher and higher, they gain unbelievable qualities.

When a bodhisattva achieves the first bhumi, they are able to see the past hundred eons and a hundred eons into the future. At the same time, they are able to reveal the different Dharmas to the sentient beings by manifesting a hundred bodies and they are able to go to a hundred different pure lands of the buddhas. By going to the pure land, that many bodies can do prostration to the buddhas. I think there are eleven different things they are able to do in these hundred manifestations.

In the second bhumi, the number increases to a thousand. So, they can manifest in a thousand bodies and go to a thousand different pure lands and with their thousand bodies do prostrations and make offerings to the buddhas. And they can reveal the different Dharma subjects to sentient beings. So, these qualities increase more and more. I think, when it comes to the ninth or tenth bhumi, they are able to manifest in billions and billions and billions and zillions of bodies and with their billions and zillions of bodies go to the pure lands and do prostrations to the buddhas to collect merit, then to give teachings to sentient beings. The number increases unbelievably.

So, even before they become a buddha, they can manifest as a bridge or as water, whatever they want. They can even manifest those forms for the sentient beings. It is unimaginable, beyond our ordinary beings' concept of what the mind can do if it is developed on the path.

What is this mind, this mind you cannot see with the eye? It doesn't have color or shape, it is formless, but its nature is clear and it perceives objects. The mind has buddha nature, all the potential to become a buddha. That is not saying it is already a buddha, that it is already enlightened. Buddha nature means it has the potential to become a buddha. It is a question of developing the mind. If we develop our mind, we can do unbelievable things, like those bodhisattvas even before they become buddhas. We can offer unbelievable benefit to sentient beings, so deep, like the oceans, freeing them from sufferings and bringing them from happiness to happiness, all the way to enlightenment. Bodhisattvas can offer benefit like the oceans, like the sky. We all have this potential; everybody has, even the ants, the mosquitoes, every sentient being has this potential, this buddha nature.

As it's mentioned in the teachings, when a gong meets a stick, the gong is able to produce sound. The gong has the potential to produce sound but it has to meet the stick. The stick is like the guru, the virtuous friend. We sentient beings meet a virtuous friend who reveals the path to liberation, to enlightenment. Then, because the potential is there, the realizations come and we are able to remove all defilements. That is because all the potential is there. It is compared to being on a road in the dark of night. We can't see the road, the place, or where we wish to be, but then a torch gives us light to see, and we can progress without mistakes, without difficulties. It helps us go to the place where we wish to be. The virtuous friend is like the torch, showing us the path clearly, allowing us to walk to the place we wish to be.

Even before becoming enlightened, after having achieved *shamatha*, calm abiding meditation, which makes the mind so clear, by developing that, we are able to see very clearly even every single atom of a mountain. The mind is so clear we can see like that. Or later, as I mentioned, when we attain those higher bhūmis, we can manifest our body like many atoms of a mountain to benefit for sentient beings.

Going back, everyone has this potential to have a mind so clear like that. Everyone has all this potential that can manifest to benefit numberless sentient beings. The Buddha's holy mind can see all phenomena directly, not just seeing from afar, not seeing it from a pure land or something like that. The Buddha's holy mind covers all the phenomena. The actual explanation is very secret, coming from highest tantra. Why the Buddha's holy mind covers all phenomena is because the body covers all phenomena. Buddha's holy body covers all phenomena. Experience comes from that side; not from the mind but from the side of the body. That body is not like our body, which is caused by karma and delusions and is gross. Because it is not like that, there are no obstacles, no resistance. Having removed the two types of delusions—disturbing-thought obscurations and subtle obscurations—there is no resistance, so it can cover all phenomena. With no blockage, the holy mind covers all phenomena. That is made very clear in the highest tantric explanation, which is very secret.

THE STORY OF MILAREPA

When our mind is purified, we see the Buddha wherever we are, *right there*. It doesn't matter which place. The minute our mind is purified we see the Buddha there, right in front of us.

For example, the Kadampa Geshe Jayulpa was offering service to his guru, Kadampa Geshe Chengawa. His guru devotion practice, correctly devoting to the virtuous friend, was unequalled, incomparable. In the teachings it is explained that we make prayers to be able to practice guru devotion like Kadampa Geshe Jayulpa and Milarepa.

There are quite a few, such as Milarepa, who did incomparable guru devotion practice. Because they had been very badly treated by their aunts and uncles, his mother advised Milarepa to learn black magic from a lama, which he did. He went to a mountain, I think, maybe a monastery, a hall, I'm not sure, and meditated for up to seven days to do black magic to harm their uncle's family. The uncle's family were having a wedding in a house, with so many people upstairs and all the horses downstairs. (At that time, there was no cars in Tibet.)

Milarepa did black magic from the mountain and the whole house collapsed. All the pillars downstairs broke and then the whole house collapsed, and all the people and animals died. I'm not sure how many people there were, maybe thirty or forty. His mother, who had been waiting for revenge, came out and went onto the roof, placing a pair of trousers on a stick, shouting "Victory" or something like that.

I'm sure Milarepa felt regret, so he went back to the black magic lama, who told him if he wanted to practice Dharma, he had to go to see Marpa. The lama who taught Milarepa black magic advised that. So, Milarepa went to see Marpa.

Marpa himself is Buddha Vajradhara, Heruka, the already enlightened being, but when Milarepa came, he appeared to be working in a field with his wife, as a married couple, like an ordinary being, his body hot and dusty, plowing in the field, drinking wine. This is how it appeared. There are verses but I don't remember them. Milarepa said, "I have nothing, so I offer my body, speech and mind to

you. Please give me Dharma and also give me food.” Marpa accepted, but he didn’t give teachings or initiations to Milarepa for a long time, for years and years.

Marpa asked him to build a nine-story tower alone. He was not allowed to hire other porters or other people to help build it. Only Milarepa himself could do it. So, he built this nine-story tower. And after that, Marpa asked him to tear it down again, putting each stone back in the place he brought it from. So he did that. The skin on Milarepa’s back became very hardened, very bluish, from carrying all those stones. And then after that, Marpa told Milarepa to rebuild the tower, and after finishing it to tear it down and put the stones back. And then again to do this a third time. I guess the third one still exists in Tibet, in Lhokha, the southern part of Tibet. You can still see Milarepa’s nine-story tower there. I haven’t been there yet.

There was a statue of both Marpa and Marpa’s wisdom-mother in this tower. I don’t remember clearly but it seems the statue was there when Tibet was invaded by the Communist Chinese army in 1959.

I came to know about the statue from one of my gurus, His Holiness Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche. I received hundreds of initiations and many teachings from Rinpoche. He was extremely loving and always took care of me, guiding me like his child. His attendant was with him when they escaped from Tibet.

Besides His Holiness Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche, my guru, there is also Serkong Dorje Chang, who is the reincarnation of Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche’s father who was great yogi in Tibet. He became extremely learned in the Buddhist sutra and tantra teachings, becoming a Lharampa geshe, the top level of geshe, He took the geshe examinations in Lhasa in the presence of thousands of learned monks of Sera, Ganden and Drepung. Then, I think he went into a cave, a hermitage, to actualize the path. So, he is somebody who completed the path to enlightenment, a great yogi who achieved the unification of clear light and illusory body, who actually completed the path with the wisdom-mother. He passed away in Tibet and then reincarnated. Serkong Dorje Chang, the reincarnation, studied again in the monastery and completed the whole path again. There is no question that the past life’s great yogi, Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche, was the father of Serkong Dorje Chang.

When they were escaping from Tibet with a group of people, the Communist Chinese army was coming from many directions and it was very difficult for them to get out. Without telling other people, both of them just went quietly into this tower, and His Holiness Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche verbally talked to the statue. Because he was the reincarnation of Darma Dodé, the son of the great yogi Marpa, when he saw the statue of Marpa, he called it “father,” and asked the statue to guide them. Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche had either a bell and damaru or a bell and mala that had belonged to Marpa so many years ago, so he offered it to the statue of Marpa and to the wisdom mother, saying, “Father, mother, please help.” I think maybe the mala belonged to her, I’m not sure. Anyway, that’s how I found out there was a statue in the nine-story tower that Milarepa built.

So anyway, Marpa asked Milarepa to build the tower three times. Not only that, during those years, Marpa never gave him teachings, and if he came along very quietly with the other disciples to seek teachings from Marpa, when Marpa saw him there in the group, Marpa immediately scolded him and kicked him out. So many times he beat and scolded him without a nice word or any praise, only scolding and beating. If this had happened now in the West it would be called abuse! Maybe the police would be called!

Anyway, for years and years Marpa never gave any teaching to Milarepa, only scolding and beating him. Finally, Milarepa’s wisdom-mother, feeling great pity for Milarepa, couldn’t bear it and she pushed Marpa, insisting he give Milarepa teachings. Then, Marpa gave teachings and initiations to him, and guided him to a mountain where he could go to meditate and actualize path. So Marpa even pointed out the place he should go and guided him in everything.

Then, Milarepa went to that isolated place and practiced exactly as Marpa advised. He achieved total control, total freedom of his mind, of the chakras, wind and drops. He gained control over his speech. From his realizations, the Dharma came to him very naturally, without any effort, in the form of songs or hymns. He had total control over such things as the psychic power to fly from place to place. He achieved full enlightenment in that life, in a brief lifetime of degenerated time.

This happened because of his guru Marpa’s skillful guidance, such as asking him to build the tower three times which was like doing all the preliminary practices, the many hundreds of thousands of

prostrations, the many hundreds of thousands of mandala offerings, the many hundreds of thousands of Vajrasattva mantras, the many hundreds of thousands of refuge prayers. There are many different preliminary practices to do, a hundred thousand of this, a hundred thousand of that. Letting Milarepa build the tower three times by himself was all preliminary practice for Milarepa. Building it three times contained the many hundreds of thousands of prostrations, the many hundreds of thousands of Vajrasattva mantras, of mandala offerings, of all these things. Each time Marpa scolded Milarepa was an incredibly powerful purification, purifying Milarepa's negative karma. Each time Marpa beat Milarepa it was incredibly powerful, purifying so many eons of negative karma.

Milarepa became enlightened in a few years, in one brief lifetime of degenerate time, because of his guru Marpa's most skillful way of guiding him. Because it was the quickest way to purify his negative karma and to collect the most extensive merit, he was able to achieve the realizations of the path to enlightenment very quickly. And the very important thing is that, during all those years when he was never given any teaching, only hard work and scolding and beating, from Milarepa's side he never had a bad thought about Marpa. From Milarepa's side, he never developed any heresy, any negative thoughts towards Marpa. He was such an incredibly devoted disciple, a perfect disciple. He never thought Marpa was abusing him or taking advantage of him. He never had a single thought of heresy, never one negative thought about Marpa. Because of that, he never created an obstacle to hinder his realizations.

He followed every single piece of advice that Marpa gave him exactly. That's how he was able to achieve the unified state of Vajradhara, full enlightenment, in a number of years in one brief lifetime of degenerate time. That's why Milarepa is always used as an example when we pray to be able practice guru devotion. Among the names of those who are incomparable in devoting to the virtuous friend, Milarepa is the name most used.

Reading Milarepa's life story is extremely beneficial. If you haven't read it or even if you have read it before, to read it again is very good, especially if you are training your mind in order to have a realization of guru devotion, that which is the root of the path to enlightenment. It brings the success of the whole path, beginning with the graduated path of the lower capable being, the realization of how this human rebirth is qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses, how it

is so precious, or of the graduated path of the middle capable being or the higher capable being, all the way up to enlightenment, including the tantric path.

The realization of guru devotion is what makes actualizing the whole path to enlightenment successful, from the beginning of the path, the realization the graduated path of the lower capable being, how our own body which is qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses is so precious. If you are training the mind to have this realization, it is very good to read the great yogi Milarepa's life story, how he practiced guru devotion, how he sacrificed his life, how despite all the many hardships he bore, he remained totally devoted, never giving rise to any negative thoughts, any heresy or anger.

There are many other life stories of great yogis that are extremely inspiring. Reading them gives us insight, courage, it makes us happy. No matter how hard it is, in our mind, in our heart there is so much happiness, so much incredible joy, bliss, to follow the advice of the guru, to do the practice.

I wanted to mention this before going back to what I started to explain.

I think maybe it's chai time.

WHEN OUR MIND IS CLEARER, WE CAN SEE THE BUDDHAS

What I was saying before was to elaborate on Milarepa's life story by mentioning the Kadampa Geshe Jayulpa, whose way of devoting to the virtuous friend was incomparable.

What I was talking about before is that when our mind is purified, we can see all the buddhas. For example, Kadampa Geshe Jayulpa had incomparable devotion to the virtuous friend. Even while he was offering mandala, the minute his guru, Chengawa, called him, as soon as he heard his guru's voice calling him, he immediately stopped the mandala, even though he was in the middle of it, and ran to offer service. Even if he was writing a syllable *na*, or something like that, in the middle of that, he stopped and immediately ran to offer service to his guru, Chengawa.

Every day he cleaned this guru's house. One day, after he had cleaned the room, he wrapped all the dust and garbage in his robe, and he was on the way to throw the garbage out. I think the house must have had two stories, so as he was going down the steps, when he reached the third level of steps, he immediately saw numberless buddhas. They were just there, in the nirmanakaya aspect. As soon as he reached the third level, the third wooden step going down—I'm not talking about the step toward liberation and enlightenment this time—he saw the numberless buddhas there in nirmanakaya aspect, adorned with all the thirty-two holy signs and eighty holy exemplifications. Why? Because through his guru devotion, his level of mind had reached the Mahayana path of merit, the first of the five paths to the enlightenment.

On the path of merit, there are three categories: the small path of merit, the middle path of merit and the great path of merit. The concentration that is called the concentration of Dharma continuity occurs on the great path of merit. So, by offering service to his guru, Chengawa, by cleaning the guru's room, he purified his mind of defilements and, when he reached the third step, his level of mind reached the third level of the first path, the great path of merit. The bodhisattva who achieves the great path of merit usually sees numberless buddhas in nirmanakaya aspect.

There are many other similar stories. Even ordinary people, when their mind is more purified, are able to see like that; they are able to have pure appearance and see the buddhas. There are many stories, like when people go for pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy places, they see the buddhas. That happens to those who have a purer mind.

The buddhas are always there with us. Wherever we are there are numberless buddhas. They always see us, they always look at us. From our own side, however, because the mind is temporarily obscured, we are blocked; we cannot see them. But when we have purified more, we have a purer appearance and are able to see them.

Even among ordinary beings, those who not yet reached that level of the path, there are many whose mind is purer through living purely, through doing the practice of purification every day, who are also able to see the buddhas. From time to time, I meet people like that, even students.

There's a lady in Singapore, a student, whose main practice is Chenrezig, the Compassion Buddha. She chants the very long mantra, which is very, very powerful purification. She has statues in her room and some of those statues speak to her. She gave me one Dzambhala, which is Compassion Buddha, Chenrezig, manifested into the wealth-giving deity to relieve the suffering of poverty of those sentient beings who are suffering poverty. That statue spoke to her.

Because she wanted to help the Maitreya Project, the five-hundred-foot Maitreya statue that Lama Yeshe advised, she wanted to get the lottery numbers! So, she asked and the Dzambhala statue gave her the numbers and every number came out correctly. But I think it must have been my obstacle because somehow she didn't believe the numbers. Anyway, later every single number came out exactly as the statue said. She gave the statue to me to help with the Maitreya Project, so now that statue is in the United States in the Aptos house and I'm making offerings there every day. So like that, the statues communicate—she asks questions and Chenrezig answers—and normally she sees many buddhas. When she goes to pray where people are dying or sick, she sees so many buddhas.

This can happen even among the community, with people who are leading a pure life and then doing a strong purification practice. People whose mind is clearer, purer, can see pure appearances like that.

When we achieve the bodhisattva's path, the great path of merit, at that time even all the statues appear as living buddhas. The bodhisattva meditator who has attained the great path of merit sees all the statues as actual living buddhas and all the statues speak to them. It will be the same when we achieve the bodhisattva's great path of merit. At that time, we will see all the statues in the nirmanakaya aspect, as actual buddhas. Then, when we achieve the exalted right-seeing path, having the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, because our mind is much more purified, at that time all the statues that we now see just as statues, we will see them as buddhas in the sambhogakaya aspect.

Then, after completing the path, when even the subtle defilements are ceased, at that time we mentally become one with all the buddhas. Before that, we see the buddhas as separate, but at that time, after we complete the path and cease even the subtle defilements, we mentally become one with all the buddhas. That's the time we become the guru. What that actually means is that then we

achieve the absolute guru because we achieve the dharmakaya. I think when the disciple's mind is purified and reaches those levels, this is similar to how that disciple sees the guru.

FOUR PEOPLE RECITE THE TARA PRAYERS (BACK TO)

What was I talking about before, before Milarepa's story? I've lost my talk!

[Students prompt]

OK, we'll go back to the subject I started from. I don't know how I came along this way!

The first person who recites the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* has the bodhicitta motivation to achieve enlightenment. Their action of reciting the prayer becomes the cause to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. The second person recites the prayer, not with bodhicitta to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings but with the motivation to achieve liberation from samsara for themselves. Their action of reciting the prayer becomes the cause to achieve not enlightenment but just liberation from samsara for themselves. The third person recites the prayer not with the motivation to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings or to achieve liberation for themselves, but just to achieve happiness in future lives and the good rebirth. That person's action of reciting the prayer does not become the cause to achieve enlightenment, nor does it become the cause to achieve liberation from samsara for themselves, it just becomes the cause of the happiness of future lives, to achieve good rebirth and so forth, just that.

What I was trying to say before is that all these three people's motivations become Dharma. The person who recites the prayer with the bodhicitta motivation to achieve enlightenment can be said to be the Dharma of the higher capable being. The person who recites the prayer with the renunciation, to achieve liberation from samsara for themselves, that action becomes the Dharma of the middle capability being. Then, the one who is detached to this life and then seeking the happiness of future lives, that person's action of reciting the prayer becomes the Dharma of the lower capable being. The motivations of all three people are Dharma.

Now, the fourth person recites the prayer only seeking the happiness of this life, to have a long life or be healthy or to have power, wealth, pleasure, fame, a reputation and so forth. That fourth person's motivation is simply attachment, clinging to this life, so that becomes totally nonvirtue. That motivation is totally nonvirtue.

Even if we analyze it scientifically, we can see there are big differences. If the mind is detached, totally free from attachment to this life but has attachment seeking the happiness of future lives, while that motivation, that state of mind, is still attachment seeking future samsaric pleasure, it is totally free from attachment to this life's happiness. There's no clinging or grasping to this life's happiness and pleasure.

So, there's a great peace. Even if somebody praises us or gives us a present, the mind remains comfortable; there's no disturbance to our mental continuum. And if somebody criticizes us, disrespects us, gets angry with us, no longer loves us, whatever they do with their body, speech or mind, it doesn't bother us, it doesn't upset us or make us angry. This is because we have no attachment, no clinging to this life's happiness, to this life's pleasures. There's no grasping if we receive praise, reputation, material gifts, comfort, all those things, and there's no aversion to the opposite, to the four undesirable things. When we encounter four undesirable things and when we receive the four undesirable things, it doesn't bother us; it doesn't make us upset or angry.

Our mind is peaceful, happy. This is real inner peace, real happiness, satisfaction, contentment. Whatever happens around us—receiving the four desirable objects, encountering the four undesirable objects—doesn't bother us. As Nagarjuna said, the eight worldly dharmas are equalized. The four undesirable things and the four desirable things are equalized in our mind. So, there's a big difference. With detachment to this life, even though there's attachment seeking future samsara, we have so much incredible peace and satisfaction. It makes a *huge* difference to our daily life.

Wherever we go, to the East or West, whether we are alone or with people, there is great peace, there is so much happiness inside. Even if we wear rags and just live in a house made of hay, even if all we have to drink is water—no chai, no coffee, no chocolate! Anyway, I'm joking. However, the mind is incredibly peaceful; there is such joy in our life. Nothing bothers us. So, there are huge differences to our heart, to our life, like the earth and the sky.

THERE IS NO SATISFACTION WITH THE EIGHT WORLDLY DHARMAS

This is hugely different from the person who has the thought of eight worldly dharmas, the attachment clinging to this life. For that person, there is so much suffering in their inner life, in their heart. Maybe I mentioned that. There is so much misery and suffering in life. When a person has the attachment clinging to this life, they grasp the comfort and pleasure of this life—the material gifts, the praise, the reputation. They crave the praise from others or the reputation where so many other people say nice things. Even just having attachment grasping these four desirable objects, that itself is such suffering. There is no peace. That mind is a suffering mind.

Even when they receive the four desirable objects, it affects their mind, it disturbs the mind. Because the grasping mind is attachment, they can't get satisfaction, so that's big suffering. No matter how much they get these four desirable objects, by being attached, by following attachment, the grasping never ends; they can never get satisfaction. They try again and try again and try again; it's endless. The suffering has no end. Even if they achieve those four desirable objects so much, following attachment causes so much worry and fear.

I heard of somebody in America who's so famous that everyone in the world knows them: children, old people, everybody. But I heard through a friend that that person is so worried something is going to happen to them, like their name might go down. They have so much worry.

It's the same thing for others. We go higher, then later we become less famous. Whether it's wealth, reputation, whatever of these four desirable objects we have received, because of the attachment clinging to them, this causes so much worry and fear. Then, life has no peace. Even if we have achieved all these four and we are already so famous in the world, there's no peace in our heart. That's very clear among the many famous singers or actors. Many commit suicide because although they are famous with all this wealth, everything, they didn't achieve satisfaction. There is much misery; they are even more unhappy because they achieved all these things but didn't get satisfaction. Without any inner peace, they are even more unhappy, more miserable than the beggar who's begging for food in the road every day. So, achieving the object of desire doesn't bring satisfaction. It causes life to be filled with expectations, with worry and fear.

Then, when we don't know how to handle the emotional problems in our life, we commit suicide. We don't know what to do, we don't have a method, we don't know how to practice meditation, then the immediate thing to think is to kill ourselves.

Of course, there is then no question when we encounter the opposite, the undesirable objects, such as when we encounter criticism or do not receive a birthday present! Anyway, not receiving material possessions, getting a bad reputation or when there's discomfort—when we don't receive the four desirable objects but only encounter the opposite, of course we get angry and all the negative emotions arise. The mind becomes so unhappy. This is all because of the attachment clinging to this life.

Then, we go to a psychologist. Because of the thought of eight worldly dharmas, we have all these emotional problems and we have to go to a psychologist. Maybe that benefits the psychologist, who has studied psychology and has a degree. They get our money, so they benefit. Anyway, for years and years we go to a psychologist.

There is the loneliness, that's one big suffering. And we think we are bad, hopeless. When we cannot be like others, we think, "I'm bad. I'm this and that." We bring ourselves down. What's the opposite of self-esteem? Low self-esteem! Then we suffer from a lot of depression. Many people suffer from depression. Again, this is due to the attachment, the thought of eight worldly dharmas.

The thought of the eight worldly dharmas particularly brings relationship problems. One day, the object of our attachment, our friend, leaves us. Even if we are physically living together, we find they don't like us. We feel unbelievably sad and get depressed. We feel some very precious thing has been lost in our life. Then we find they have left us and got together with somebody else, and so as well as depression there is jealousy and anger. This can lead to all kinds of other negativities for those involved, telling lies, even killing—getting angry with the one who was a friend and then killing them. You always see this on TV, how the wife kills the husband or the husband kills the wife.

With the thought of the eight worldly dharmas clinging to the happiness of this life, there is no question if we encounter the opposite—the four undesirable objects—but even if we have found

the four desirable objects, we can never get any satisfaction, because when something happens to that desirable object, when we lose it or something, we experience unbelievable depression, worry, fear, all these incredible problems in life.

In Sydney, Australia, there is a big bridge where many people go to jump off. And San Francisco also has a big bridge where many people go there to jump, to commit suicide. In Spain, was it Spain? No, I think Brazil, Rio de Janeiro. How do you say? Rio de Janeiro. I said ‘re-degenerated’! In Brazil where there’s the huge Christ statue. Anyway, there’s a mountain and a kind of tunnel going up in that mountain where I heard many people go to commit suicide.

WITH THIS PRECIOUS HUMAN REBIRTH, WE CAN ACHIEVE ANY HAPPINESS

We can make this human body, which is so precious, qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses, achieve whatever happiness we want. We can achieve all the happiness of future lives with this, a good rebirth, wealth, long life, being born in a pure land—whatever we wish in the future we can achieve with this precious human body. Even liberation from samsara. And we can achieve the ultimate happiness, full enlightenment. Each moment, every second we can create the cause for any of these happinesses. As much as we want, we can create the cause with this precious human body twenty-four hours a day. Even within one hour, even within a minute, however much we wish to achieve any of these happinesses, we can create the cause for this.

And with this precious human body we can cause other sentient beings happiness: the happiness of this life and the happiness of all the coming future lives, liberation from samsara and the ultimate happiness, the great liberation, enlightenment. We can cause others to obtain all these four levels of happiness.

This life is something so precious and this happens about once. This is not what we achieve every life. We attain this just about once. It is extremely, extremely rare. Even if we have mountains of diamonds and gold, that alone can’t stop the rebirth in lower realms. Even if we have wish-granting jewels that give us whatever we pray for, all the sense enjoyments, the material enjoyments, whatever we wish for.

The bodhisattva wheel-turning kings in the past, those who had merit, could find these wish-granting jewels under the ocean. They cleaned them in three ways of the mud and smell, and put them on the top of a banner on the full moon day of the fifteen of the month. Then, whatever people prayed for, they would receive. But even if we had a wish-granting jewel, that alone cannot stop our rebirth in the lower realms. There is no way to achieve a good rebirth in the next life and liberation and enlightenment just from that. But having this precious human body allows us to practice Dharma. Then we can stop rebirth in the lower realms and we can achieve a high rebirth, liberation from samsara and enlightenment. Therefore, this precious human body is much more precious than a wish-granting jewel. Even if the whole sky were to be filled with wish-granting jewels, even if we owned that many, it would be nothing compared to the value of what we can do with our precious human body, how much it can benefit us. Having it gives us the opportunity to practice Dharma, to achieve everything up to enlightenment.

THE DHARMA IS UNIVERSAL

Therefore, the thought of the eight worldly dharmas—grasping the happiness of this life, grasping the four desirable objects—never brings satisfaction. When we lose them or don't get more and better, then there is so much worry, fear, depression. In just a minute we destroy our precious human life. There's no space in the mind, nothing but the thought to kill ourselves. We can't see anything. The mind is totally foggy.

And now the last thing. Here, you can see that if we don't let go of this attachment clinging to this life, this thought of the worldly dharma, there is no happiness at all in life, no real peace in our heart, only misery, only problems, as I mentioned before. It is the Dharma that protects us from suffering.

The meaning of Dharma is "holding up," as Geshe Sopa Rinpoche said. We hold ourselves up, protecting ourselves from falling down to the lower realms. That's one way to say it. Protecting ourselves from *all* this confusion and suffering.

So, what is the Dharma? It is letting go, freeing ourselves from this mind of attachment clinging to this life, the thought of the worldly dharmas. That is the Dharma. So, there is no question about abandoning anger and ignorance.

The mind that is detached from this life, the mind that is free from the thought of the eight worldly dharmas, that is the real Dharma. When we practice the real Dharma, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] we achieve satisfaction, inner peace, inner happiness, right there in our heart. We achieve total freedom from all the fears, worries and all the problems that most of the people in the world suffer from in their daily life. They suffer unbelievably, having to take so many medicines for this and for that, needing sleeping pills to fall asleep—so many things.

So, you can see very clearly why there's need for Dharma practice. Psychologically you can see the need to practice Dharma. It's medicine; it's basically like taking medicine. Because we want happiness, we have to practice Dharma. The Dharma is our positive, healthy mind, our renounced mind; it is this healthy, peaceful mind, this detached mind. Scientifically or psychologically, we have no choice if we want happiness; we need to practice Dharma. If we don't want problems, we need to practice Dharma.

When there is this motivation of attachment clinging to this life, there are always negative minds like anger that are nonvirtuous. Then, actions done with those motivations—eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, working, studying at university or college, even reciting prayers, even meditating—these are all done with this thought of worldly dharma, this attachment clinging to this life.

The big difference is that, even though studying Buddhism with this attitude might be a nonvirtue, it leaves a positive imprint on the mind. Then later, because of that imprint, in the future or in the next life, we are able to understand the Dharma much, much more easily and we are then able to practice and actualize the path, to cease defilements and achieve liberation and enlightenment. Our actions done with the attachment clinging to this life become nonvirtue but from the subject's side, the Buddha's teaching leaves a positive imprint. That's a big difference.

The only exception is doing things like making or offering to statues of the Buddha, to scriptures and stupas, circumambulating, doing prostrations. Doing such things, due to the power of the holy object, even though the motivation is nonvirtue, the action doesn't become nonvirtue but rather becomes the cause of enlightenment. That's the exception, due to the power of the holy object. These actions become virtuous, not because of our motivation, which is nonvirtuous, but because of

the power of the holy object. Otherwise, all the other activities done with the attachment clinging to this life, with anger or ignorance, there is no question that all these are all nonvirtuous.

Therefore, what I want to say here is that what we study at university or a professional college, even learning how to clean professionally or how to become a secretary or waiter professionally, whatever, learning to work well in the professions, all this education is how to do these things externally. Externally is not enough. For happiness, that's not enough. We might learn how to do all these things externally but we never learned how to do them internally, how to live our life, how to achieve happiness in our mind. That's not learned. That's the biggest mistake. We might have learned from a college or university how to work professionally [externally] but we didn't learn how to work professionally with our mind. To live our life or to work professionally with our mind, inwardly, our motivation must be positive, it must become Dharma. When our action becomes Dharma, the cause of happiness, of a good rebirth in the next life, even in this life there is so much peace and happiness. Because of our virtuous thoughts, our detached mind, we have moment-to-moment peace in our daily life.

When we have an external profession, we also need the inner profession, transforming our mind into Dharma, into the healthy, pure thought, the detached mind. We can also say into non-anger, non-ignorance and non-attachment. As Nagarjuna said in *The Precious Garland*,

Desire, hatred, ignorance, and
The actions they generate are nonvirtues.
Non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance,
And the actions they generate are virtues.

From nonvirtues come all sufferings
And likewise all bad transmigrations,
From virtues, all happy transmigrations
And the pleasures of all lives.

What I was saying is if we have a profession, along with that we need to know how to work professionally, inwardly, with our mind, meaning our mind must become Dharma. Then our actions

become virtuous and only result in happiness. In our daily life, our moment-to-moment life, there's peace, happiness, satisfaction, as well as the happiness of future lives.

Otherwise, everything becomes nonvirtuous, negative karma. In our everyday way of living, besides all the problems I mentioned before that our mind creates—problems to ourselves and others—we continuously create the cause of the lower realms, of the hell, hungry ghost and animal realms. It becomes utterly terrifying if we really examine the nature of life, how all the actions are done. Without Dharma, life becomes incredibly frightening because whatever we do causes the lower realms, where the suffering is most unbearable and continues for an unbelievable length of time.

If the mind is renounced, if our attitude in living life, in doing work, is with the renunciation of samsara, all our activities become the cause of liberation. And then, if our attitude is bodhicitta, how we live our life, all our work, all our activities become the cause of enlightenment. That means *all* our activities—working for many hours, sleeping, eating, doing prayers, meditating—everything becomes the cause of the happiness of *all* sentient beings.

Therefore, we can see that an external profession that is done for happiness is not enough. Without the Dharma we can't have happiness; there is no way our life can be happy. If we want happiness, we need to practice Dharma. Scientifically or psychologically, it's very clear. The need to practice Dharma is not dogma or a custom; it's not that we are following the custom of some other country. Not like that. It's all about transforming our mind, making it purer and purer.

So, I think that's about it.

An action becomes virtuous or nonvirtuous depending on which type of mind we have, which type of motivation. Therefore, we need to practice Dharma. From the other type of mind, one with attachment clinging to this life, we experience all the problems. This is where all the problems of the people of the world come from. So, you can see that to practice Dharma is universal; it's not just a Tibetan thing. When we come to know what the Dharma is, it's universal. It's like medicine that everybody can take. It's not that there's Catholic medicine and Muslim medicine; it's just medicine. If you take it, it helps. Now, you can see that the Dharma is universal.

THE *LUNG* OF THE *HEART OF WISDOM SUTRA* AND THE THIRTY-FIVE BUDDHAS PRAYER: MOTIVATION

So, I'll do a *lung* and then stop. Maybe the lung of the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*, and then the lung of the Thirty-five Buddhas prayer, the *Confession of a Bodhisattva's Downfalls to the Thirty-five Buddhas* practice, and then a few *lungs*. This is especially for those who need to do the practice now or who will do practice in the future, so that everybody gets the lineage.

The purpose of receiving a *lung*, an oral transmission, is that is if you receive the *lung*, when you practice it's more powerful, it carries the blessing. If it's from those highly attained great pandits or yogis, wherever the teachings come from, there's a lineage. Without the lineage, you cannot do the *lung*, the transmitted teaching. To give the lineage to others, you yourself first have to receive the lineage of the oral transmission. So, it carries the blessing. If it's from the teachings of the Buddha, the blessing is from the Buddha. Whoever composed the teachings, there's a lineage of blessing from that great highly attained pandit or great yogi, from that bodhisattva. That means there's more power, it is more effective when you practice. And also, when you teach others, it has more effect, it carries more power, it is more beneficial for others' minds.

That's one thing. The other one is that hearing it leaves a positive imprint on the mind. Then, as I mentioned before, either later in this life or in future lives, it becomes much easier to understand the words and the meaning, and then to be able to actualize realizations. Then, we are able to actualize the path, to cease the defilements and to achieve liberation and enlightenment. As much as we can read the Buddha's teachings, even if we don't understand them. provided they have been correctly translated, there's no cheating sentient beings, there's no misleading sentient beings. There's no such danger. They only leave positive imprints on the mind, therefore it makes it so much easier and quicker in the future to achieve enlightenment.

Even if we don't understand the teachings of the Buddha we are listening to or reading, there are these incredible benefits, these limitless skies of benefit. Even if we don't understand, even if it's a very hard subject to understand, just listening to the teachings or reading them has all these benefits. There is no misleading, no cheating. We achieve skies of benefit. Each word of the Buddha's teachings liberates us from the oceans of samsaric suffering. When we read the teachings, each word

brings us to liberation and enlightenment. By listening to the teachings of the Buddha, even if we don't understand them, one of the benefits is that in our next life we will achieve a higher rebirth, as a god or human.

There were three monks in Tibet that had a dog, and when the monks were reciting prayers, the dog always heard them. Because of that, when the dog died, it was reborn in the very high deva realm, the Heaven of the Thirty-three. Or when the great pandit, Vasubandhu, was reciting the *Abhidharmakosha*, the pigeon living on the roof was able to hear it. When the pigeon died, Vasubandhu checked with his psychic power and saw that the pigeon was born as a human in a valley below to a family, so he went down there and asked the family if he could have the child. The family offered the child to him, then he brought him up. The child became his disciple, a monk called Lobpön Loden Dempa, who became an expert in the *Abhidharmakosha*, the teaching he heard in his past life when he was a pigeon. He wrote four commentaries on it. Even though as a pigeon he didn't understand the text, when he was born in his next life as a human being, he became an expert in that subject. But when he heard a Madhyamaka subject, because he hadn't heard much in the past life, he had more difficulties to understand it, whereas he easily understood the *Abhidharmakosha*. So, even if we don't understand the teachings of the Buddha, even if they are in another language, not even in English, since it's Buddha's teachings, it has this benefit.

Of the path of merit and the preparatory path, the second path, the preparatory path, has four categories: heat, tip, patience and sublime Dharma. When we achieve the sublime Dharma, we remember any oral transmission we have received in the past. This is before we achieve the arya path, the right-seeing path. Achieving the fourth level of the path of merit, the sublime Dharma, we remember every single word of any oral transmission we have ever received. This seems to be part of the quality before you enter in the exalted path.

So, set up the bodhicitta motivation.

[Rinpoche and the students chant the mandala offering and refuge and bodhicitta]

Think, "The purpose of my life is not just to achieve happiness for myself, to solve only my problems, but to benefit sentient beings, to free them from all the suffering and its causes and to

bring them to enlightenment by myself alone. Therefore, I must achieve enlightenment, therefore I'm going to take the oral transmission of the teaching." Think like that. Then, when you listen to the teachings, it's good to think, "I'm receiving the teaching from Shakyamuni Buddha in this teacher's form. I'm receiving the teaching from Manjushri, I'm receiving teachings from Tara, from all the buddhas. All the buddhas are giving me the teaching through this form that I have a karmic connection with. Through this, all the buddhas are guiding me." You can feel that. It's good to think like that when we listen to the teachings, when we study or when we listen to the teachings from the guru. In this way, we feel connected to all the buddhas. All the buddhas are looking after us. Then, as I mentioned before, each word stops oceans of samsaric suffering that we would have to experience without end, each word brings us to enlightenment. We can see that each word is most precious to us, wish-fulfilling for us. Thinking like that helps us keep our mind on the sound of the words and not be distracted.

I'm just going to do the *lung*. I'm not going to talk much on the benefits of this, the introduction or anything; just do the *lung*. Because the *lung* has so many benefits, I'll just get it done without the introduction.

THE LUNGS OF THE HEART SUTRA AND THIRTY-FIVE BUDDHAS

[Rinpoche begins the *lungs*]

Now the *Confession of Downfalls [to the Thirty-five Buddhas]*, the purification practice.

The *Heart Sutra* is an abbreviated teaching that directly revealed emptiness, the path to achieve enlightenment, wisdom. It also indirectly revealed the method to achieve enlightenment. The main thing of this teaching on the perfection of wisdom is to realize emptiness. Without the wisdom realizing emptiness, having any other realization—bodhicitta or even a high tantric realization, psychic powers where we can fly—we cannot cut the root of samsara, we cannot cease the gross and subtle defilements, we cannot achieve liberation and we cannot achieve full enlightenment. That's why it is so important to recite this sutra and to meditate on it.

It is a very powerful method to purify the obstacles to achieve realizations, the path to enlightenment for sentient beings, to liberate ourselves and to liberate the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to enlightenment. When Lama Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri, “What is the method to achieve full enlightenment?” Manjushri advised him to purify the obstacles to achieve realization of the path to enlightenment, to collect merits that are a necessary condition for having realizations of the path to enlightenment, and to pray to the guru with single-pointed devotion. That one is to receive the guru’s blessing in our own heart. Through single-pointed devotion, by looking at guru as the Buddha and seeing the Buddha, we receive the blessings of the guru. And from the blessings of the guru, we receive the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

The fourth part is the actual body, meditating on the path to enlightenment. Here, this is practicing confessing the downfalls. This is part of what Manjushri advised Lama Tsongkhapa on how to achieve enlightenment through the practice of purification.

[Rinpoche continues the *lung*]

Some of the lamrim lineage lamas add the names of the seven Medicine Buddhas after the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas’ names. This makes the recitation extremely powerful. By reciting the Medicine Buddhas’ names, all our wishes and all our prayers succeed. It’s a very powerful purification. Even though each one has so much benefit, the essence is that.

[Rinpoche continues the *lung*]

The coughing is not part of the oral transmission! It’s just an extra! In case somebody thinks that.

Now the general confession, and in particular confessing the broken pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows.

[Rinpoche continues the *lung*]

Another very powerful practice is the Dorje Khadro burning offering practice that Manjushri gave to Lama Tsongkhapa with one of the golden Dharmas. It's so powerful for purifying negative karma and restoring degenerated samaya vows. This practice is highly admired for that and to eliminate obstacles. This is the instruction from Buddha Vajradhara; it is one of the heart practices of Lama Tsongkhapa, so it has great blessing.

[Rinpoche continues the *lung*]

Some other parts of the *lung* we'll do at another time. That's enough tonight.

TO PRACTICE YOU MUST FIRST ANALYZE

Yesterday, I started to explain why it's important to learn as much as possible, why so many teachings are given, rather than spending the whole time just sitting in meditation. I started, but then I went somewhere else! It sort of expanded. I didn't get to finish that part.

The essence of the advice is that whatever we practice, we must first analyze the practice we are going to spend our whole life doing. We must analyze, we must check. Of course, unless we have wisdom, we can't check. With ignorance, we can't check. The more we learn Dharma, Buddhist philosophy, the more wisdom we acquire. Then, we can judge the practices.

When somebody teaches us a practice, we can judge whether it's correct or not because we have wisdom. When someone teach us any religion, even what's called Buddhism, we can judge which is right and which is wrong. So, even just having an intellectual understanding of Buddhism is so helpful because we have the wisdom to judge, even if we are not practicing. In that way, nobody can cheat us, nobody can mislead us. If we don't analyze, if we don't check, we can easily get interested [in other things] and we get cheated. Like His Holiness' quote yesterday, "Don't act like dog." I think that was also in relation to things appearing as something real from their own side and the fact we immediately grasp onto that. I said "dog" but it should be "animal." I don't know why "dog" came into my mind, but His Holiness said "animal." Without examining, we should not immediately believe in it.

It's the same in politics. Even if we are practicing Dharma, it's the same. What His Holiness said was very extensive. Don't act like a dog. I'm sorry! Like an animal! Don't believe something immediately without analyzing it. My advice is the more you learn Buddhist philosophy, the more wisdom you have to discriminate, even what's called "Buddhism" that somebody teaches you or that you read in a book, you can see whether it's right and wrong. And the same with other religions. In that way, nobody can cheat you. The more wisdom you have, the less danger and more safety you have and the less chance that somebody can cheat you. As far as Buddhism is concerned, even having an intellectual understanding without practicing is still so beneficial.

There was a Kopan monk called Thubten Sherab, one of the very intelligent ones, who left many years ago. He translated at Nalanda Monastery in France for many years for one of the great teachers, Geshe Jampa Tegchok. I don't know how many years he translated for him. Then, he disrobed and went to Spain, working there. He's the kind of person who hides nothing; he tells people everything, bad, good, anything. He told me that working in Spain, he saw so many people with so many problems, with so much suffering. And he told me that because he has some Dharma knowledge, something that allowed him to think, he didn't suffer in the way many other people in Spain did. Because the people didn't know the Dharma, there was so much emotional suffering, but because he had learned something [about Dharma], he was able to think about that and he didn't have the problems that those other people had.

Analysis is very important; studying is very important, I think, because if we don't study we don't have much wisdom, then we will follow anything that looks interesting. Then our life goes in the wrong direction. Then, so many years of our precious life goes on the wrong path. We meditate for so many years without much result. Nothing happens. We waste our life, this precious human body that comes once.

I don't think there's such a thing as momentary enlightenment, enlightenment for just a minute. I don't believe in that. I don't accept that. How is it possible we can become enlightened and then after that we become a suffering being again. How is it possible? That means, if we become a suffering being again, we were never enlightened. If there was no cause of sicknesses, either externally or internally—due to karma—how is it possible to get sick? Not at all, if we have purified karma and delusion, the cause of suffering, and those subtle defilements.

I started to talk about this yesterday, but I left out some clarification, so maybe sometime tomorrow I'll clarify it when we talk about the Buddha. The Buddha is the only one where things appear merely labeled by the mind, where they appear back merely labeled by the mind. Not even the higher bodhisattvas have this. Even if they have the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, except in equipoise meditation, there's still the hallucination of true existence.

Anyway, what I was saying before? After we have actualized the whole graduated path that ceases all the defilements—first the gross, then subtle—we become fully enlightened. Then, it's impossible that we become a suffering being again; there's no cause. Believing we can become momentarily enlightened, enlightened for a minute, is due to not having studied even the four noble truths well, about the cessation of suffering and the true path, the whole process. To believe we can become momentarily enlightened is illogical. That's impossible.

It's very easy to be drawn into these wrong, illogical kind of teachings. They sound nice, but there's great danger our whole life can get wasted. Nothing gets achieved; nothing happens, even collecting extensive merit doesn't happen. This is just to let you know to be careful after this course. Maybe you will be tempted to engage in another practice, even if it's also called "Buddhism." Before you do that, analyze it well; that's very important. I was going to mention that the other day, but I went on to another subject.

I think this is the first time George [Churinoff] has led a Kopan course. It's not the first time he's come to Kopan. How many years have you been a monk. Twenty? Thirty? Twenty-eight? He has been monk for twenty-eight years. He's an antique! He's one of the FPMT antiques. I'm not sure whether he accepts that or not. I'm not sure. He studied with many great teachers for many years. He is one of the old Sangha, and not just one with that many years as a fully ordained monk, he has also studied for many years and he is a very good teacher. That's all. Thank you very much.

DEDICATIONS

[Dedication prayers in Tibetan]

That we have this incredible opportunity to make our lives so meaningful to follow path to enlightenment is solely due to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Therefore, we dedicate our merits to His Holiness having a stable life. May all his holy wishes be successful immediately and may they be fulfilled. Then, we have received guidance from Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than all the three-time buddhas, even though we don't see him in that form. Coming to Kopan Monastery and attending the course, learning all these teachings of the Buddha that help our mind, so in the future we can achieve enlightenment and enlighten all sentient beings, all this is by the kindness of Lama Yeshe. Even though we don't see him in that aspect, his guidance is happening to us; we are receiving guidance from Lama Yeshe. So, we pray for whatever wishes Lama had to be actualized for sentient beings in this organization, and that Lama Ösel Rinpoche shows the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and offers skies of benefit to sentient beings, the same as the Buddha.

[Dedication prayers in Tibetan]

“May all the father and mother sentient beings have happiness and may the three lower realms be empty forever. May all the bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately and may I be able to cause all this to happen by myself alone.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings, just like Lama Tsongkhapa, by having the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has from now in all the future lifetimes.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I and my family members, all of us here and all the students and supporters in this organization, those who have given over their lives to the organization, doing service to sentient beings, may we and all the sentient beings, in all our lifetimes, meet only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus, and from each sentient being's side, may we see them only as enlightened beings, as pure. May we only do actions that please the holy minds of the virtuous friends, from the side of each sentient being and from our side, and may we and all sentient beings be able to fulfill the wishes of the virtuous friend. May this happen in all lifetimes.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may all the needs of the entire organization be completed without delay of even a second. May we be able to complete the five-hundred-foot Maitreya Buddha statue without any obstacle. May it abide in this world, and when Maitreya Buddha comes, may that cause all sentient beings to collect extensive merits, purify all the defilements, and especially be the cause to actualize bodhicitta in everyone’s heart. May it bring perfect peace and happiness in this world and bring all sentient beings to enlightenment as quickly as possible.”

“May all the other projects I mentioned last night be actualized immediately. By actualizing bodhicitta in everyone’s heart in this world, may nobody experience war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, the dangers of fire, water, air or earth. Wherever it is happening now, may it be stopped immediately, and may nobody in this world experience any of these problems forever.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, that which are merely labeled by mind, merely imputed by the mind, may the I, who is also merely imputed by the mind, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also merely imputed by the mind, and lead all sentient beings, who are also merely imputed by mind, to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, which is also merely imputed by mind, by myself alone, who is also merely imputed by mind.

“Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra realized things as they are, I dedicate all these virtues in the best way, that I may follow their perfect example. May the general teachings of the Buddha, and in particularly Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings, flourish forever in this world. May they spread in all the directions and be completely actualized within my own heart and in the hearts of all of us, of all the students and benefactors in this organization, in the hearts of all of those who devote their lives to doing service to sentient beings and to the Buddha, and in the hearts of everyone in this world without delay of even a second.”

[Dedication prayers in Tibetan]

So, good night. I talked for a very long time!

Lecture 4

December 7, 2005

REFUGE CEREMONY MOTIVATION: THE BENEFITS OF OFFERING TO THE BUDDHA

It is mentioned in a sutra we should put our palms together and prostrate to the Buddha. In the prayer, *Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha*, it says,

To the founder, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the one gone beyond, the foe destroyer, the completely perfected, fully awakened being, perfect in knowledge and in good conduct, Sugata, knower of the world, supreme guide of human beings to be tamed, teacher of gods and human beings; to you, the completely and fully awakened one, the endowed transcendent destroyer, the glorious conqueror, the subduer from the Shakya clan, I prostrate, make offerings, and go for refuge.

The transcendent destroyer means the one who has destroyed the enemy, meaning the inner enemy, the delusions including all the negative imprints. *De zhin shog pa dra chom pa* means fully enlightened, fully awakened being, one who has fully completed the realization, the Buddha, *sang gye*. *Sang* is eliminated all the defilements, gross and subtle, with nothing left, and *gye* is fully developed. So a buddha is somebody who has fully developed all the realizations, all the understanding, with nothing missing. The Tibetan word *sang gye* shows that—*sang*, completed the qualities of cessation, and *gye*, completed the qualities of realizations. This meaning is very rich. I guess that's what is contained in the Sanskrit "Buddha" and is clarified in the Tibetan.

Simply reciting that and putting our palms together; the Buddha says, "I will guide that person." It reminds me a little bit of the Bible! The sutra says that the Buddha will guide anybody who simply puts their hands together and recites the Buddha's names like this, that he will guide that person to achieve the sorrowless state, cessation, liberation from samsara. It can also mean great liberation, full enlightenment, the cessation of even the subtle defilements. That is the benefit of reciting this. We end of the suffering of samsara; we are able to achieve that. We finish the oceans of samsaric suffering, the continuation which has no beginning.

So simply by reciting Buddha's name and putting the palms together like this, we achieve the sorrowless state, and it also brings the great liberation, full enlightenment. The Buddha said, "I don't have much worry for that sentient being who recites the Buddha's name and simply puts their palms together. I will guide them so they will achieve the cessation of all suffering and its causes. They will achieve great liberation." So, reciting the Buddha's name has benefits like limitless sky. We create the cause to achieve the whole path to liberation and enlightenment. We achieve all the realizations, all those different levels of the path that are detailed in the scriptures, the philosophical texts that monks and nuns study in the monasteries for so many years.

One thing I didn't get to mention the other day that I want to mention now. This is like a person studying an entire airplane: all the machinery inside, every single nail, everything. That person studying the whole thing is like studying the whole path to enlightenment, not only liberation but also enlightenment, including all the Buddha's qualities. We can't do this just from books. Even an arhat who is free from karma and delusion, from all the sufferings of samsara, even a tenth bhumi bodhisattva who is close to achieving enlightenment cannot see every single quality of the Buddha or the secret actions of the Buddha. They are inconceivable.

It's mentioned in the sutras how making offerings to the Buddha, doing prostrations, all these things, bring unbelievable benefit. We collect unconceivable merit with every single one of those actions, even just putting our palms together to the Buddha. Any respect given to the Buddha becomes the cause of enlightenment, even if the motivation is ignorance, anger or attachment clinging to this life. Even if it is nonvirtue, by the power of the object, everything becomes the cause of the highest achievement, enlightenment.

That means if we offer one stick of incense to the Buddha, it has that result. Even if the motivation is nonvirtue, it still becomes the cause to achieve liberation from samsara. We shouldn't think liberation from samsara is easy. Liberation means being free from every single problem of human beings forever, and from all the oceans of hell beings' sufferings, the oceans of hungry ghosts' sufferings, the oceans of animals' sufferings. We are free forever from those unbelievable, unbelievable sufferings, as well as the oceans of sufferings of the intermediate state beings, the gods and the demigods. We are free from karma and delusion forever. Just from offering a stick of

incense, we achieve that. That's without talking about enlightenment! It's just unbelievable we can achieve these results.

That means offering just one small stick of incense causes us to achieve the whole path, the renunciation of this life and the renunciation of future lives' samsara, then we enter the five paths: the path of merit, the path of preparation, the right-seeing path, the path of meditation and the path of no more learning. There are so many details, so much to study, but one small stick of incense offered to the Buddha, to a statue or picture of the Buddha or just to the Buddha visualized causes us to achieve all this. Not only that, we achieve the entire Mahayana path, with the five Mahayana paths and the ten bhumis. Again, this is unbelievable. There is so much to study. And gradually it causes us to achieve full enlightenment, to attain a buddha's holy body, holy speech and holy mind, which has skies of qualities. All from this one tiny stick of incense.

The two kinds of the Buddha's holy body, the rupakaya or form body and the dharmakaya or truth body, have infinite qualities. The holy speech has infinite qualities and the holy mind has infinite qualities. Even the tenth bhumi bodhisattva cannot see every single quality of the Buddha, only a buddha can. Offering that stick of incense causes us to achieve all this.

Similarly, offering one tiny flower and putting our palms together, even with one hand, respecting a picture or statue of the Buddha, or the visualized Buddha, even just put our head down respectfully has all these unimaginable benefits, all these results up to enlightenment.

You can say it this way: we can achieve all the qualities of the Sangha from this. All the qualities of the ordinary Sangha and the absolute Sangha, the arhats, those exalted beings who have wisdom directly perceiving emptiness within the Hinayana, and the Mahayana Sangha, those great bodhisattvas who have achieved various levels of bhumis and have those unbelievable qualities, abiding in either the seven impure bhumis or the three pure bhumis, the eighth, ninth and tenth. With this offering we achieve all the qualities of the Sangha, and the Dharma, and all the qualities of the Buddha. It's just amazing.

Offering before we eat is part of the refuge practice, after having taken the refuge vow. Before we eat and drink, we first make offerings, even if it's just a glass of water or some fruit or candy. We

remember the Buddha and offer. And it's the same; it has all these benefits up to liberation and up to enlightenment. It causes us to achieve all the qualities of the Sangha, Dharma and Buddha. It's amazing.

Why is there such a benefit? Because the Buddha's qualities are unimaginable, limitless, unfathomable. There are four: limitless, unfathomable, unimaginable, and there's one more that I don't remember. Maybe we'll keep it for later!

Therefore, practicing Buddhism is incredibly joyful; there's no need for depression. These practices are so simple and yet they have limitless skies of benefit. It is so easy to collect this extensive merit and to achieve all these realizations, to attain all these temporary and ultimate benefits. This is talking about the path and the result—enlightenment—but while we are in samsara, from these practices that I mentioned, we have a good rebirth, long life, health and wealth, we attain so many temporary needs before we achieve liberation and enlightenment.

Those who can complete the path in this life, that's different, but otherwise, for the rest of us, we need to have a good rebirth, either being born in a pure land and completing the path there, or receiving another perfect human rebirth, which give us the opportunity to practice the Dharma again. That's temporary; it's like a bridge to go to the other side of the river. By achieving another perfect human rebirth or a higher rebirth, we can practice the Dharma and develop our mind more in the path. Then again, if it's not completed in that life, we need to take another good rebirth—a perfect human rebirth is best—then again we can develop the qualities of the mind that we haven't developed in the past. In that way, we gradually achieve enlightenment.

In the meantime, we need to reincarnate in a higher rebirth where we can practice the Dharma, one that has the conditions to practice the Dharma. All these temporary needs such as long life, health and all the needs of the future life, all this comes by the way. I'm not going to repeat it again. Whatever I mentioned before, it includes all this. It comes by the way. Not only in the next life but also in this life, all the benefits we haven't looked for, if we are not attached to them, if we don't cling to them, they come, just as if we plant a seed in the soil and water it, it grows. Even if we plant the seed in the ground and pray that it won't grow, it still grows because all the causes and conditions are there together. Similarly, once we do these practices and create the karma, when we

have more and more merit, our wishes are actualized very quickly and easily. In the big way, any wishes we have to benefit other sentient beings happen.

If we think of all these benefits, our life is not hopeless, it is full of hope. There is no need for depression, only joy. Life is a reason to rejoice; it is full of joy day and night. Practicing like this is so easy and it brings skies of benefit. Of course, if we don't practice, that's our great loss. It's our mistake; nobody else's. From our side the only question is whether we learn. Without listening to the teachings, without learning, we will not have all these benefits. We will not have all the advantages we can get in this life. It is unbelievable what we can achieve by having this precious human body that we have received at this time.

NEVER WASTE THIS HUMAN BODY

Anyway, since I mentioned it, I would like to mention this one thing! Where this subject of karma belongs in the lamrim is very important to understand. Then, we can see how we are so fortunate, how this human body is so precious. Because of this human body that we now have, we are able to understand the Dharma, whereas animals can never understand either the words or the meaning. Even if they were to listen for billions of eons, having it repeated over and over, day and night, all the time, nonstop, there is no way they could understand. No animal could—not turtles, cats, dogs, cows, horses, pigs or chickens, even chickens! Well, small chicks anyway! There is no way they could understand, but at this time we have received this precious human body and we can.

Normally, I say it this way. It's important to remember, so you know. Your human body is so precious, therefore you must not waste it. It's not that you have it all the time. No, you have this body about once. So, you must not waste it by doing meaningless, nonvirtuous activities, which only result in suffering. You should only use it for virtuous actions that only bring the result of happiness for you and for others.

I often say that. Normally, I would mention this in the section on the perfect human rebirth, on being a human being with the eight freedoms or endowments and ten richnesses. The first one is being a human being. As I just mentioned, if we explained to dogs or cows or horse or turtles—let's take a turtle—that the cause of happiness is virtue, and that virtue is action that results in

happiness—that's the shortest definition of virtue—and if we expanded it to make it clearer, how it is an action motivated by non-ignorance, non-anger and non-attachment, if we repeated that day and night for billions of eons continuously to the turtle, there is no way it could understand this. It couldn't understand the meaning, but if somebody explained this to us, even within a minute, even within a few seconds, we could understand the cause of happiness is virtue and virtuous actions, actions that result in happiness motivated by non-anger, non-attachment, non-ignorance. For us, it's easy. That's because we have this human body whereas those other animals do not. If we explained it to them for billions of eons continuously day and night, there is no way they could understand.

Therefore, how could they ever practice? *Impossible, impossible*. Now, you can see why in Buddhism it's emphasized so much that this human body is very precious and that we shouldn't waste it. You can understand from this simple example, without talking about all the rest of the path, just this, just talking about the cause of happiness and the cause of suffering, about what is Dharma and what is not Dharma.

It's the same thing. What is Dharma, what is virtue is the same thing. We can understand it within a few seconds [Rinpoche snaps his fingers], and from that time we have total freedom in our life. Anytime we want to practice Dharma, by knowing the definition of Dharma—what is Dharma, what is virtue—we can transform our mind into Dharma [Rinpoche snaps his fingers], not allowing ignorance, attachment or anger to overcome the mind, but letting the mind become pure, virtuous, positive. Then, our actions become virtuous and only result in happiness.

Once we have the wisdom knowing what is the cause of suffering and what is the cause of happiness, what is Dharma and what is not Dharma, then we have total freedom. We can practice at any time in the heart. However much we want to practice, day and night, we have the freedom. That's an example. Therefore, by having this human body, it is so unbelievably easy to learn the entire teachings to actualize the path to achieve liberation and enlightenment. It makes it so easy to learn and to have realizations through practice.

As I mentioned before, there is no way animals can do this, even animals living with the human beings, it's impossible. The difference is that they don't have a human body whereas we have a human body. That shows how easy it is to achieve liberation, how easy it is to achieve

enlightenment, how easy it is to be fully qualified to liberate the other sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and to enlighten them. To achieve all this, to offer extensive benefits to sentient beings, it is so easy through having a human body.

While we have this precious human body this one time, it is so unbelievably precious, because it offers unbelievable limitless skies of merit. What it can do for us is to be the cause of all the happiness for ourselves and for the numberless other sentient beings.

ONLY WITH THIS HUMAN BODY CAN WE DO THE BODY MANDALA PRACTICE

And the other thing is this. Who can achieve enlightenment in one lifetime? Not the hell beings, not the hungry ghosts, not the animals, not the suras or asuras; *only* human beings, only beings in the human realm. And that is not all the human realms. For example, in this one entire universe, there's the eastern human continent, the southern human continent, the western human continent and the northern human continent, and then there are the branches. Those other human beings do not have the opportunity to achieve enlightenment in one life; only the human beings of the southern continent, where we are now. At this time, being born as human beings in the southern continent is *so* precious, because with it we have the opportunity to achieve enlightenment in one lifetime. Other human realms don't have this opportunity.

In this southern continent where we are, there are twenty-four holy places of Heruka and Vajrayogini, these enlightened deities. There are numberless dakas and dakinis in these holy places in Nepal, India and Tibet. When we take a Heruka, Vajrayogini or Tara Cittamani initiation and so forth, they all have the body mandala. The meditations [of each practice] are a little bit different but they are the same in that they all have this very special meditation called the body mandala. When we do this tantric meditation on the body mandala, those numberless dakinis in those holy places see us meditating and at the same time enter our body and bless our chakras, winds and drops.

Then, that makes it easy to succeed in the meditations of the Six Yogas of Naropa like the *tummo* meditation, where the wind enters the central channel and abides and absorbs there. Then, we are able to actualize the extremely subtle consciousness. We have gross, subtle and extremely subtle minds and this is the extremely subtle mind, the clear light. That is the direct cause of the

dharmakaya, so the meditator who has that realization of the clear light will achieve enlightenment in a brief lifetime of degenerated time.

Because those dakinis in those holy places are immediately able to see us doing the meditation, they enter our body and bless the winds, drops and chakras, making them functionable. As we meditate, they are able to function, and we are able to complete the tantric path. Like an atomic bomb, this is the quickest way to cease the subtle dual view, the quickest way to cease even the subtle negative imprints. That's how we can achieve enlightenment in the quickest time by practicing highest tantra.

Again, with this human body that we have received in this world, in this southern continent, and particularly in these countries where there are these holy places, that is why this body that we have is so unbelievably precious. It's good to understand the many advantages of having this body, otherwise we can spend our entire life using this incredible precious human body, which is wish-fulfilling like the jewel, for meaningless activities, just for the works of this life, for nonvirtue. We might sometimes do something virtuous but normally we use it to create negative karma to be born in the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm or the animal realm. We use it to create the cause to be born again in the lower realms where we came from before. It's very important to know how this is so precious.

THE BENEFITS OF OFFERING TO THE BUDDHA (BACK TO)

What I was going to mention before was this. If we offer one grain of rice or one tiny flower to a picture or a statue of the Buddha or a visualized Buddha, it is mentioned in the sutra, I think *The Sutra of Heaped Flowers* or something like that, it says the benefit we get from offering once that tiny flower or grain of rice to a stupa—it may not be a stupa; it means an “object of offering” which could be a statue, a stupa, a scripture, a picture of an actual living buddha, whether it's big or small, as long as it's offered to the Buddha—the benefit is equivalent—now, you have to concentrate—to all the happiness that we have experienced in the past from beginningless samsaric rebirths up to now, as well as all the samsaric pleasure in the future. So that much is contained in offering one grain of rice or one tiny flower to a picture or statue of the Buddha or a visualized Buddha. Now, on top of that, from that we can achieve liberation from samsara, the sorrowless state. It is commonly said in the teachings, as I mentioned at the beginning, offering, prostrations, all these actions done

to a statue, stupa or scripture, besides an actual living buddha, everything immediately becomes the cause of enlightenment. That's common. Here, it not only mentions liberation from samsara, but on top of all that I mentioned before, all the samsaric pleasure we experienced from beginningless samsara up to now and what we will experience in the future, on top of that, there is liberation from samsara, and on top of that, there is great liberation, enlightenment.

Then, I think the results of the benefits still don't finish, because after we achieve enlightenment, we then liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering. That's unimaginable! We liberate the sentient beings who are numberless from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. All this comes from this offering of one grain of rice or one tiny flower to a picture or statue of the Buddha or a visualized Buddha, or to a stupa or scripture. Can you imagine the benefit? This unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable benefit is what we achieve from this tiny offering. There's that power because the Buddha has unimaginable qualities, which I mentioned before. Therefore, it is unbelievably easy to create the cause of happiness. Due to the Buddha's kindness and compassion for us sentient beings, he fully completed all these qualities for *us* sentient beings, to make it so easy for us to achieve all this unbelievable happiness. That's one aspect of the subject of karma we must understand.

Therefore, in our everyday life we should take advantage of making offerings. We cannot see the actual Buddha but we are so lucky to be able to see statues, stupas and scriptures. Many human beings don't have the karma to see them and it is said that animals cannot see them. We can see a statue of the Buddha but animals cannot; they don't have the karma. Therefore, it is mentioned that even the holy objects are manifestations of the Buddha.

There was somebody who went to Lhasa from Kham, to the famous temple in Lhasa where there is a Shakyamuni Buddha statue. The common people could see that statue, but that particular person could not see it; he just saw darkness. He must have been so heavily obscured. Then, he did a lot of purification. Then what? I forgot the story a little bit. I messed it up a little bit. After that, he saw piles of meat instead of the statue or something like that. Anyway, later he saw some light. So, the example is like that. Even though there are many human beings, not everybody has the karma to see holy objects. There are human beings who never see holy objects.

So, in our everyday life, we must take the opportunity every time to make offerings. Even if we don't have an altar at home, we should visualize the Buddha and make offerings. If we can't set up an altar because our friends might get upset, we can still collect merit by offering to a visualized Buddha.

After we have taken the refuge vow, there are eight pieces of general advice. One of them is before we eat and drink, we first make offerings to the Buddha. Another is before we go to sleep and when we get up, we do at least three prostrations to the Buddha. The benefit is unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable. When we know this, we can't wait to do the practice. By understanding these benefits, it's something that we want to do all day and night, non-stop.

When we are outside and we see a beautiful flower in the market or on the roadside when we are travelling, we should immediately remember Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and offer it. And if we make offerings to Buddha who is in oneness with the guru, even in the aspect of the Buddha, we collect much more merit, the most extensive merit. By thinking of the guru as one with the Buddha, we collect more merit than having made offerings to the numberless Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the numberless statues of the Buddha, the numberless stupas and scriptures. That's amazing. Before I was just talking about offering to the Buddha. Now, even though we are offering to the Buddha, when we think of the guru, that creates much greater merit. Even if we see a beautiful flower, we immediately see the deity or the Buddha as oneness with the guru or root guru. By looking at it, we see that's all the buddhas in the aspect of the root guru. The Buddha-Guru or the Guru-Buddha, whichever way we say it—here, the Guru-Buddha—the minute we see something, we think that's the root guru, that's all the buddhas. Then, we make an offering. Even if it's somebody else's flower, we can offer our karmic view of the flower.

I'm using this as an example in the daily life of how we should take advantage of that to collect merit, and not just merit but extensive merit. Whenever we collect merit, we should think how to collect the most extensive merit, like a businessperson, who even while travelling always thinks how to make the largest profit, in which country they can make the largest profit. This just became side talk!

REFUGE CEREMONY MOTIVATION: A BUDDHIST IS AN INNER BEING

Now, we'll go back to refuge. Whenever we do a practice in our life, such as a sadhana, it always begins with refuge. If we do the practice with refuge in the meditation, if we begin with refuge, the benefits are much greater, a hundred times greater if we begin with refuge. That's one thing.

It's said that the benefits of refuge, if they materialized, even three thousand galaxies, that many universes, would become too small a container for all the benefits of refuge. Or maybe it's the three realms: the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm. I think it might be the three realms.

And by having refuge in our heart, we become an inner being, not an outsider but an inner being. What is the benefit of being an inner being? Because of that, we can take the pratimoksha vows to achieve liberation for ourselves, we can take the bodhisattva vows to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings and we can take the tantric vows to achieve enlightenment quickly so that we can enlighten sentient beings quickly and they don't have to suffer for a long time. Being an inner being has all these advantages. On the basis of refuge, we are able to have all the realizations of the path to liberation and to enlightenment. That's why we should be an inner being.

I guess in English "Buddhist" means somebody following Buddhism, something like that, but in Tibetan there is *chipa*, which means "outsider" and *nangpa* which means "insider." The benefits of being an insider are all these. The realizations to liberation and enlightenment, ceasing all defilements, being liberated from all the suffering, all these are based on having refuge in the heart, being an insider.

THE TWELVE LINKS AND THE THREE REALMS

Relating to this life, this human rebirth with all its sufferings—the suffering of pain, the suffering of change that are the temporary samsaric pleasures and pervasive compounding suffering—is the result of the twelve dependent related limbs or twelve links. The first limb of this particular human life is the root of that, ignorance, which I've been talking about the last few days. This is the mind that is ignorant in that it is unknowing of the ultimate nature of the I, the self, unknowing of the ultimate nature of the mind, holding onto the I as truly existent, as existing from its own side, as not

merely labeled by the mind, while the I is totally empty of that. While there is no such truly existent I, existing from its own side, not merely labeled by mind, ignorance holds onto it as such and believes the I to be like that. And it's the same with the aggregates. While they are empty of that, empty of independence, empty of not being merely labeled by mind, the mind holds onto the aggregates as being truly existent, as not merely labeled by mind. From that, the three poisonous minds arise. Karmic formations, compounding action, is the second limb. The first is ignorance and the second is compounding action. This leaves the karmic seed on the mental continuum, the continuity, and there are the six consciousnesses. Of course, the Cittamatra school believe there are seven or eight, but here there are six.

The sixth one is the consciousness of the mind. [The karmic seeds are carried] on the continuum of that consciousness. Ignorance, the first limb, and the second, karmic formations, could happen in the life before this or a long time ago. However, in the life before this, craving and grasping form the twelve dependent related limbs of this human rebirth. Grasping is when craving becomes much stronger. It's like the difference when we go shopping. First, there's craving what we want to have, and then, when we actually very strongly decide to have the thing, we grasp onto it. So, these two, craving and grasping, from the karmic seed left on the mental consciousness make the consciousness ready to produce a future rebirth, which is called "becoming."

So, from these twelve dependent related limbs of this human rebirth, the three delusions and two actions happened in the past: ignorance, craving and grasping (the three delusions) and two actions (compounding action and becoming).

Then, the consciousness takes place on the fertilized egg, and after that there's "name and form." Then, there are the six sources or six bases, and contact and feeling. Then birth and old age and death. Old age and death are put together, not separate, because death can happen even in the mother's womb after consciousness took place on the fertilized egg. Did I count six or seven? I got confused. Seven?

[A student prompts]

And then birth and old age and death.

There are two ways of counting the consciousness. Some of the monasteries like Drepung count the consciousness as a cause, when the karmic seed is left. Some don't count that; they count the birth-time consciousness. There are differences depending on the monastery and the scripture used. So, there are three delusions and two actions before, and in this life there are seven results. This is to get an idea of how these aggregates—this collection of this body and mind that we have now—are caused by karma and delusion.

Before that, I mentioned two actions and three delusions. That's why our body and mind is in the nature of suffering, because it comes from karmic delusions, from impure causes, from an impure mind. This body and mind that we have is in the nature of suffering; it is pervasive compounding suffering, pervasive because, as His Holiness says, it is under the control of karma and delusion.

Being caused by karma and delusion is one thing. That's why all the aggregates are in the nature of suffering, why they experience suffering. That can be one meaning of "pervasive." A third meaning of pervasive is that these aggregates are contaminated by the seed of delusions. They are pervaded by the seed of delusions. That's another meaning of pervasive, that these aggregates are the contaminated seed.

We are in the desire realm. The realm higher from ours is the form realm, the deva realm, where there is no suffering of pain, but there is still the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering. Then the form realm has four levels of firm contemplation. It's like the log of wood you place across the door to lock it. As Choden Rinpoche used to explain, in Tibet, in Solu Khumbu, which is primitive, when you close the door, because there are no locks, if you are travelling for many days, you put a long log of wood inside that keeps the door closed from behind. Rinpoche used to use this example for strong contemplation meditation.

Three of the four levels of the form realm have the suffering of change, but the fourth level doesn't; it just has pervasive compounding suffering. Now, in the formless realm, the highest realm of samsara, there are four levels: limitless skies, limitless consciousness, nothingness and the tip of samsara. The beings of this highest realm of samsara do not have the suffering of pain or the suffering of change, but they are still not free from pervasive compounding suffering. In the

formless realm, there is no physical form, only the four aggregates of consciousness, but they are still contaminated by the seed of delusions. So, the desire realm, form realm and formless realm are all pervasive, contaminated by the seed of delusions.

Therefore, only when we realize emptiness, the wisdom directly seeing emptiness, can we directly eradicate the seed of delusion. Only then can we cut the cause of delusion. With that realization, we achieve the exalted path, which means we have actualized total renunciation.

For example, when we are in the formless realm, at the tip of samsara, we have total renunciation of the desire realm, totally seeing it as only suffering, with so much sickness, with so many problems, like the inside of a septic tank. Like [we might think of] Africa or somewhere like that, where there are so many diseases, so many problems, and have total renunciation [from ever going there], seeing only suffering. Then, the formless realm being even sees the form realm as only in the nature of suffering. Then, the being who has reached the highest level, the tip of samsara, sees even the other three levels of the formless realm as only in the nature of suffering.

A being is born in the form realm because they look at the desire realm as gross, with so much suffering, and they see that the form realm is better, with more happiness and a long life and peace. Analyzing in that way, they become detached from the desire realm and get reborn in the form realm. And in the same way, they realize the formless realm is better and the form realm is comparatively gross; that it too is in the nature of suffering. Understanding that, they become detached from the form realm and, with attachment, are born in the formless realm. It always comes about by seeing the next stage as better.

When they reach the tip of samsara, the highest level of the formless realm, there's no higher samsaric realm to compare it with, which would cause them to discover that the tip of samsara is also in the nature of suffering. Therefore, they can renounce every level of samsara as suffering except the tip of samsara, because there is no higher realm, nothing to compare it to that seems grosser and the next, higher realm seems better, with more peace. There's nothing to compare it to. Therefore, there is no antidote for the attachment to the tip of samsara, and that being in the tip of samsara cannot have renunciation for the whole entire samsara. They have gained renunciation for

the rest of samsara, but not for that realm. Because of that, they cannot enter the path to liberation and cannot attain the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which ceases the seed of delusion.

Therefore, when the karma finishes for their time in the tip of samsara, they reincarnate again in one of the six realms. And it goes on like this, they circle again and again. We have been like this.

Through meditation, we have achieved *shamatha*, calm abiding, which is perfect meditation but without the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, without the total renunciation of samsara. And through shamatha, through perfect meditation, we have achieved all that. We have been born in all four levels of the formless realm numberless times, including the tip of samsara numberless times, and we have circled like this again and again. Therefore, all three realms, the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm, are only in the nature of suffering; they are only pervasive compounding suffering, the contaminated seed of delusion.

THE THREE TYPES OF SUFFERING

I've already mentioned this twice, so this is the third time. I'll repeat it again. Our aggregates are contaminated by the seed of delusion, which compounds all the mental suffering. Even if there is no depression, depression can arise at any time, compounding all this loneliness and all these fears and worries, all these mental problems. And it compounds all these physical sufferings: sickness, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, old age—all these physical problems are compounded. This seed of delusion, the aggregates, also compounds future lives' suffering. Because the seed of delusion is there, if we are not practicing mindfulness meditation, if we are not practicing the lamrim, when we encounter objects, the seed delusion arises, motivated by karma, which leaves an imprint, a seed, on the mental continuum, and that throws us into a future rebirth. So, you can see very clearly all our suffering comes from the seed, from karma and delusions. These are again pervasive and compounding sufferings, sufferings that compound our future lives' suffering.

On this basis, we experience the suffering of change, the temporary samsaric pleasure: the pleasure of food, the pleasure of sleep, sexual pleasure and so forth. All these pleasures are the suffering of samsara, the suffering of change.

When we are hungry and we eat the first bit of food, we feel pleasure. When we start to eat, we feel comfort, pleasure. How did that happen? By eating food, our hunger, the previous suffering through not eating, is stopped. The suffering of hunger was compounded by not eating. The minute we start to eat, however, the discomfort starts already, after the first bite of food, but it is very small, unnoticeable. The more we eat, the more it increases. As we continue to eat, it becomes more and more noticeable. Sometimes, even at the beginning of the meal, the food seems very tasty, but then, when our stomach becomes fuller, even the taste changes; it is no longer the same taste as at the beginning. It can even become disgusting if we keep on eating when our stomach is already full. Anyway, when we start to eat, one suffering stops, the hunger, but another suffering begins, but it's still too small to notice. That feeling we have as we begin to eat, we label "pleasure." It is labeled "pleasure" and it appears as pleasure, and our hallucinated mind, our attachment, believes this is real happiness, real pleasure. But being attached to this, we never find satisfaction, we can never get satisfaction. No matter how many eons we eat, we can keep on eating without end, but we can never get satisfied.

From beginningless rebirths up to now, we have never found satisfaction being attached to pleasure. It's like that with being attached to any samsaric pleasure; we can never get satisfaction. That's another big suffering. Our mind labels something as pleasure only because another previous suffering has stopped and although a new suffering has begun, because we cannot yet notice it, we label that feeling as "pleasure" or "comfort."

It's the same as getting bored with something. First, there is the suffering of not having a car or not having a TV. Then, we get a new car or a new TV. But the pleasure and comfort we get from that new thing doesn't increase hour-by-hour, day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month. According to our belief, the pleasure should increase, but it doesn't. The longer we keep it, the more we get bored with it, and then we want another one, a newer car, a bigger and better TV. The old one has become boring. The pleasure didn't increase, it didn't last. So, one suffering stopped and another suffering begins, one we call "pleasure." And when we're attached to pleasure, we never find satisfaction. *This* is a big suffering. Being attached to any samsaric pleasure becomes the cause to tie ourselves to samsara again, the cause to be reborn in samsara again. It becomes the chain to tie ourselves to samsara, to always reincarnate in samsara.

I'm sure you must be feeling a lot of pain from sitting too long, pains in your knees or backside. I'm sure a lot of pain has already started. But when you stand up, there's comfort. There is that pleasure because another suffering has stopped, compounded by sitting. From the comparatively greater suffering of sitting, another suffering begins, the suffering of standing. The discomfort of standing begins, that which is compounded by the action of standing, but it is still very small. If you were to keep on standing, that discomfort would gradually increase. Then, it would become unbearable after some time, and so it becomes the suffering of pain. When you first stand up, you feel release, comfort. You feel free, like you are given liberation! This is because the previous suffering has stopped. Although another suffering has begun, we call it "pleasure." The reality is that it is only suffering. On that base, we label "pleasure." It appears to be pleasure and we believe it to be pleasure. And we get attached to that. If we are not practicing, if we are not applying mindfulness, if we are not applying the meditation looking at its suffering nature, we get attached. Attachment arises and we cling onto that pleasure.

If we are meditating, even if there is no realization but we look at something as suffering, that which is the nature of suffering, then attachment doesn't arise. There is no opportunity for attachment clinging onto samsaric pleasure to arise. Looking at the suffering which is suffering, looking at samsaric pleasure in the nature of suffering, attachment cannot arise; that causes us to achieve liberation. Therefore, if we are in samsara, even if we sit, we are suffering; even if we stand, we are suffering; even if we go to the beach, we are suffering; even if we stay at home, we are suffering; with the heater, we are suffering; with the air conditioner, we are suffering; if we go to the countryside, we are suffering; if we live in the city, we are suffering; even if we go to the moon, even if we *move* to the moon, we are suffering.

Until we are totally free from this fundamental suffering, pervasive compounding suffering, these aggregates whose nature is pervasive compounding suffering, everything is only suffering. As I mentioned, the whole of the desire realm, the form realm and even the formless realm, where there is only consciousness, are all pervasive compounding suffering; they are all in the nature of suffering. Until we are totally free from pervasive compounding suffering, until we cease the cause, karma and delusions, until we break the continuity of the aggregates, everything is just suffering, whatever we do. As Lama Tsongkhapa explained, we join the continuity of the contaminated aggregates that

receive future samsara again and again from life to life, until we break this by ceasing the karma and delusions.

Before we become a famous actor or singer, we are suffering; when we become a world-famous actor or singer, we are suffering. Then, we are fed up, always surrounded by photographers, by so many people, without any freedom. Life has no freedom. We get bored. We get attracted to becoming a farmer, living on a quiet farm, growing our own vegetables! We are bored with living with so many people, always having our photos taken by so many people, always, everywhere. Then, after we have been living on a farm, growing our own vegetables, again we are suffering. We are still living a suffering life. Whatever samsaric life we live, it is always suffering. Until we are free from this pervasive compounding suffering, until we break the continuity of these contaminated aggregates, everything is only suffering.

THE SUFFERING OF THE SIX REALMS

Within the suffering of pain there is the hell realm, with the eight hot hells, the eight cold hells and the six or four neighboring hells as well as the ordinary hell sufferings. There is [the suffering of the hungry ghosts,] the suffering of the animals, being extremely foolish and being eaten by another one. That's a major suffering as well as the heat and cold and being tortured, all these things. Even with ants, there are so many other animals that eat ants. I have seen quite a few different ones that eat ants. So, with animals, this one eats that one; that one eats another one; this other one eats another one; and so on like that. If you are an animal, another animal eats you or a human being eats you or kills you for your skin or your bones.

At the moment we are born as a human, so we don't have that problem. Compared with animals' suffering, this is an unbelievable liberation, if we put ourselves in their situation. They have constant fear, always afraid of the enemy around, and besides other animals there are human beings hunting them. They lead such a suffering life, constantly looking for food and often unable to find it. Can you imagine, those animals who have babies must take care of them, and they're always afraid another animal will come and eat the baby while the mother and father are away. Birds' eggs are always eaten by snakes and other animals while the parents are away looking for food. Anyway, that is the suffering of pain.

It's very good to think of our situation now, born as a human being. We do not have all these problems. Comparatively, we feel so liberated. Because we do not have these problems for even one hour, we feel liberated in this life. Because we do not have these problems for even one day, we feel unbelievably liberated. For even this one day we don't have these problems, therefore we must do something worthwhile in this life, even with this one day of life that we have. We are going to die tomorrow, we have only today left, so we must do something. We have no idea how many days, how many weeks, how many months we have left in this life, so of course we must do something even more meaningful, more beneficial, for others, or at least for ourselves.

The heaviest suffering of the hungry ghosts is a hunger and thirst that lasts for hundreds and thousands of years, even for tens of thousands of years. They don't die due to their heavy karma, but they cannot find even one bowl of food, one spoon of food, one drop of water; they cannot even find moist ground for hundreds of years, for thousands of years. We should put ourselves in their situation and see how it is. We can see that we are so lucky because we don't have that problem. Of course, we really don't want to waste our life. We really want our life to be of benefit for other sentient beings. It really inspires us to achieve realizations in this life. Being hungry, thirsty, exhausted, disappointed, and having all the outer and inner obscurations to attaining food, all these sufferings are the suffering of pain.

Then, there are the sufferings of a human rebirth; the sufferings of old age, sicknesses and death, of being unable to find desirable objects and so forth. This is the suffering of pain. After we find something, we are unable to get satisfaction, that's the suffering of pain. Then, even if we find what we desire, there is the worry and fear of being separating from it, of encountering enemies or undesirable things. Then, because of the five suffering aggregates, there is the suffering of death. This is the suffering of pain. Then, among the devas, there is the miserliness and jealousy of the asuras, killing each other in wars. And the heaviest suffering the devas have, the five near signs of death. This is all the suffering of pain.

REFUGE CEREMONY

The purpose of taking refuge is not just to be free from all the suffering of pain, not just to be free from the suffering of temporary samsaric pleasure, the suffering of change, but to be free forever from the fundamental suffering, pervasive compounding suffering, to be free from this forever. Then we become free forever from the previous two sufferings. That is actual liberation. Only this life has all the opportunities to do that with this present perfect human body, having met the Dharma, having met the perfect virtuous friend revealing the path to liberation.

However, that is not sufficient. We also must achieve great liberation, full enlightenment, for sentient beings. Therefore, we must actualize the actual refuge Dharma within our heart. For that we must rely upon founder of refuge, the Buddha, and then the ones who help us actualize refuge within our heart, the Sangha. We are like the severely ill patient who needs to rely upon the wise doctor and nurse. We *are* the severely ill patient who has been suffering in samsara from beginningless rebirths, with the chronic disease of the delusions, the root of all the three poisonous minds.

Those taking refuge, do three prostrations, first to the Buddha, the Buddha statue as actual living Buddha, then do three prostrations to me, the Lama who gives refuge.

Those who can kneel down, kneel down like in the morning time when we take eight Mahayana precepts. Then, place the hands in the mudra of prostration at the heart like that. Those who can't kneel down, never mind, relax, but do not stretch out your legs. It's not the right time to do yoga! You can do that at other times.

I explained the motivation before, feeling like that. Actually, you already have refuge in your heart when you rely upon the path, the lamrim, or when you generate the wish to meditate on the lamrim to have a realization. Then, of course, wanting to learn and practice the Dharma. The Dharma is founded by the Buddha, so of course, naturally you rely upon the Buddha. Then, you rely upon the Sangha who help you to actualize all this.

This is taking the refuge vow. Refuge is already in your heart. Here, through the ceremony, you are taking the refuge vow, making sure, putting yourself in the situation. It is like when you are going to fly to New York or somewhere, making sure you have the air ticket and everything, putting yourself in the situation, making sure everything is prepared. Or if you are going trekking, making sure you get a jacket and have all the food and clothing prepared for the trek, so you can get on the road and start. Today, you are taking the refuge vow, the ceremony in front of the lama. Please repeat the prayer.

[Rinpoche confers refuge]

The next one [is the pratimoksha vows]. Anybody can take refuge, but those who have taken higher ordination cannot do this one, which is a lower ordination. You cannot do it because it means you lose the higher vows that you have taken. The eight Mahayana precepts are exceptional; they can be taken by anybody because they are done with bodhicitta and taken in front of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and many other special things. Even between the eight pratimoksha vows and the eight Mahayana precepts, there are a lot of differences. The eight pratimoksha vows cannot be taken by those who have taken higher vows, the thirty-six or two hundred and fifty vows, or the fully ordained nun's vows.

[Rinpoche continues refuge ceremony]

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING THE VOWS

Here is a very important thing at this point. Normally I emphasize that if you can't take any of the five lay vows, you can still take only the refuge *upasaka* [or *upasika*] vow. The Buddha is so compassionate for others, allowing us so much choice. Because even if you only take the refuge vow, there are all these precepts: the three things to abandon and the three things to practice, and the general pieces of advice. There are so many things within the refuge that make life so meaningful, that allow us to collect so much merit and do so much purification, when we eat, when we go to sleep and so on—the things we normally do. Along with them, we collect so much merit and purify so much.

Normally I emphasize that, from the five lay vows, it may be good to take the vow to not kill. Generally, even if somebody injures you, you don't want to be killed. That's most frightening, but it depends on the individual person which is the most frightening. For some, it's not killing that's the most frightening but some other thing, maybe sexual misconduct.

You have already gone through each of the negative karmas, the ten nonvirtuous actions. Each completed negative karma has four suffering results. You have already gone through those, so you have an idea.

If we kill an insect—not even a human being but an insect—the karma is expandable, and we get killed by others in five hundred lifetimes. Karma is expandable, so keep that in mind. It is explained in Aryadeva's commentary on the *Four Hundred Stanzas*. No, sorry, this is another text. In this commentary the *Four Hundred Stanzas*, the root text is written by Aryadeva but also the commentary, the auto-commentary, is written by Aryadeva. There, if we cheat a sentient being, we will be cheated by other sentient beings for a thousand lifetimes. That is mentioned in the text of Aryadeva, one of the great Six Ornaments.

Therefore, even you can't take all five lay vows, it is so wise to take as many as you can, whatever is easier. This is your best protection for yourself and, of course, for the peace and happiness of all sentient beings, because you stop giving them harm. However many you can take from the five means you stop that many negative karmas to other sentient beings—killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies and taking alcohol. When you become intoxicated, you lose all shame and shyness and that makes the mind so uncontrolled and dangerous for yourself and others. You harm yourself and you harm others. It makes you unable to practice Dharma, unable to practice morality. And being unable to practice morality means being unable to protect yourself.

Living in morality, on the other hand, means you are protecting yourself; it also means you love yourself. Loving and protecting yourself, it's all the same. If you are practicing Dharma, it means you love yourself. If you are practicing bodhicitta, it means you love yourself. If you are practicing renunciation, it means you love yourself. If you are practicing right view and especially bodhicitta, it means you love yourself. Cherishing others and letting go of the I, giving up the ego and cherishing others, that is the best way to love yourself, the best way to take care of oneself. When you're not

practicing Dharma, you are not loving yourself. It means you are engaging in nonvirtue so you are harming yourself and others.

In the West, people talk so much about loving yourself. Now here, if you want to know how to love yourself, this is it. The best way is practicing bodhicitta, letting go of the I and cherishing others. Why? This way you achieve all happiness. If you let go of the I and cherish others, you achieve all happiness and you can cause all the happiness for the numberless other sentient beings. Because of that, this is the best way to love yourself. In the West, for many people the way to love yourself is to be totally selfish, and that means harming others for your happiness, giving up others for your happiness. It's like that. In reality that's harming yourself, not loving yourself. You are ignorant, not knowing that harming others is harming yourself. Helping others is helping yourself. That's helping yourself because when you help others, the karmic consequence is that you get happiness. That's why His Holiness says, "If you want to be selfish, be wisely selfish." When many people in the West advise you to love yourself by being selfish, that is the wrong meaning, the wrong psychology.

Therefore, from the five lay vows, however many you can take, that means you stop that many harms to yourself and especially to the numberless other sentient beings. Living in that number of vows means you are bringing peace and happiness to numberless other sentient beings, to your family, to the people in this country and in this world and to all sentient beings who are in all other universes, not only human beings but even animals, all other beings. You bring that much peace and happiness to all sentient beings by taking however many of the five lay vows you can take. And of course, it means that much peace and happiness for yourself.

However many vows you take, if you take one vow, then every day whatever virtue you collect, it increases a hundred thousand times. If you have taken one vow, like abstaining from killing or from sexual misconduct or telling lies or whatever, or not taking alcohol, you collect virtue all day and all night. While you're eating, you collect merit all the time; while you're sleeping, you collect merit all the time. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, by living in that vow, even one vow, you're collecting merit *all* the time. You are making your life so meaningful all the time. And if you have taken two vows, three vows, four vows or five vows, of course, there is no need to say how much the merit increases all the time. And whatever other virtue you do increases even more. It makes life so meaningful.

For example, committing sexual misconduct once, that completed negative karma has four suffering results. The ripening aspect result is rebirth in the lower realms, and then there are three suffering results you experience in a human life. After some time, due to good karma, when you are reborn as a human being, you experience three suffering results. Experiencing the result similar to the cause means when you are at home, your family do not like you, they don't have same mind as you have, they have the opposite wishes. Your wife or husband has the opposite wish to you. There's disharmony. Even if you are physically living together, there are always fights, always unhappiness between you. The people in the office do not help you; their wishes are opposed to yours, so there's disharmony. Your wishes do not get fulfilled.

With creating the result similar to the cause, in the future lives when you are reborn as a human being, you do the same thing again due to past habit. With sexual misconduct, you engage in that again. Then again, that produces four suffering results: the ripening aspect result of rebirth in the lower realms and the three suffering results you experience in the human realm. Again, there's experiencing the result similar to the cause and creating the result similar to the cause, where you do it again due to habituation in the past. Then *again*, that produces four suffering results. Like this, there's no end. From this one act of sexual misconduct, the result goes on and on, bringing endless suffering. As long as you don't completely purify this one negative karma of sexual misconduct, if you leave it without taking care of it, never purifying it, you have to experience the suffering result on and on without end. That's extremely frightening. It's worse than the hell realm, where you are born there for a certain length of karma, but then that finishes. This one is unending.

The fourth result is the possessed result, which is to do with the place. You are born in a very filthy place, full of excrement or a very dirty, unhygienic place. Even if you are not born in such a place, somehow you have to live there. Even when you cross the road or while driving a car in a different area and there's a terrible bad smell, even just for a few minutes, that is the result of past sexual misconduct.

So, one thing is it is not purified. And the other thing is that even if you purify that negative karma, you do sexual misconduct again, same thing. You purify one act of sexual misconduct but then you create another one, and then you have to experience the suffering result of that. Therefore, to not

commit a nonvirtuous act again is very important, otherwise purification has no end. Therefore, to live in the vows and not commit them again seems very practical.

This is an example, but of course, from the five lay vows, you take anything that you think you can take and keep. I've already mentioned the essence of benefit, so you choose in your heart whichever one. You can take all five or you can take any number from that. Then, if you are taking any of the vows, think, "I'm taking the upasaka vow, one vow, two vows, three vows, four vows or five vows." If you are taking all the five, think "I'm taking the complete upasaka vows." If not, then think, "I'm taking one or two upasaka vows," like that. If you are not taking any of the vows, only refuge upasaka vow, think that. Make sure that is very clear in your heart.

[Rinpoche continues refuge ceremony]

DEDICATION

"Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be generated within my own heart, in my family members' hearts and in the hearts of all sentient beings, particularly in the hearts of all the sentient beings in this world, and in the hearts of all the leaders of the countries and in the hearts of all the terrorists, all those people who have the vicious thought to harm others.

[Prayers in Tibetan]

"Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I and all sentient beings be able to complete the paramita of morality by keeping it without mistake, without pride, and keeping it purely."

So, dedicate this well to be able to complete the paramita of morality by keeping it without mistake, without pride and keeping it purely.

For those who attended the course here every morning, when you take the eight Mahayana precepts, there's the mantra:

OM AMOGHA SHILA / SAMBHARA [SAMBHARA] BHARA BHARA / MAHA SHUDDHA SATTVA
PADMA VIBHUSHITA / BHUJA DHARA DHARA SAMANTA / AVALOKITE HUM PHAT SVAHA

This refers to the “unforgettable wisdom” that stops us engaging in nonvirtue and causes us to engage in virtue. That mantra is the mantra of pure morality. We say it to keep our morality pure. Reciting this mantra purifies our degenerated vows—that's one thing—and it restores vows, making them pure. All the buddhas can also help us somehow receive the vows. There are these three things but I don't remember the benefits of reciting this mantra. One is to purify degenerated vows, restoring them, maybe this. And then there is receiving all the buddhas' pure morality, something like that, but I don't know. So, reciting this mantra has the benefit to be able to keep our vows purely, particularly lay vows but also ordained ones.

In the morning when you do prostrations, if you recite the mantra of pure morality a few times at the end, it helps to keep your vows pure, to purify and restore the degenerated ones. That's one method.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me and collected by others, may all the father mother sentient beings have happiness, may the three lower realms be empty forever, may all the bodhisattvas' prayers be successful, may I be able to cause all this to happen by myself alone.”

We dedicate the merits that we have this incredible opportunity, that we are able to make our life so meaningful, so useful for sentient beings. May we be able to bring peace by living like this. By taking the refuge vow and then however many upasaka vows we have taken, we are able to stop that many harms to sentient beings, particularly in this world. We are able to bring peace and happiness to all sentient beings, particularly in this world. This is our real practical contribution for world peace, for peace for all sentient beings, particularly in this world.

THE FOUR HARMONIOUS BROTHERS

Maybe you have never heard this story. In the past in India, there was a country where there was so much wealth, where the crops grew and the rains came at the right time. Before that time, there had been a great scarcity of food, but then rains came at the right time, the crops grew and there was a lot of enjoyment. There was so much prosperity that the king thought he was responsible, and the ministers thought they were responsible. Then one day, a minister suggested to the king they go to see a sage, one who had clairvoyance, to see who brought the prosperity to the country. When they did, the sage said. "It was none of you. There are four harmonious brothers living in the forest and it is because of them that the country is prosperous." There was an elephant, a monkey, a rabbit and a bird. Where was I? Anyway, I was telling some story! They were all under a tree. The elephant stayed there because of the shade, the monkey to eat the fruit on the tree, the rabbit for the dew on the grass or something, I'm not sure. I don't remember the bird. Anyway, there was some reason they were all under the tree. They all sort of agreed to respect each other, the younger ones respecting the elders. Then, they all agreed to live in the five lay vows. The elephant spread the five lay vows to the other elephants, the monkey spread them to the other monkeys, the rabbit to the other rabbits and the bird to the other birds. Respecting each other, they lived harmoniously in the five vows. Because of that, the country enjoyed so much prosperity, without any economic problems.

Actually, I think the bird was Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and the others were Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's attendants, Kungawo (Ananda), Yegawo and maybe Chungawo. Living in the vows, even the lay vows, helps the country so much, bringing prosperity and stopping economic problems. So, it's really the most practical contribution for the world peace. You should remember this every day when you wake up. "I'm living in this vow. This is my best contribution for world peace." This is very good because then you know you are doing something for world peace and for all sentient beings. That encourages you to live in the vows all the time. You never want to break them, because you know that if you break them, you stop bringing peace and happiness to the world and to sentient beings. If you are in danger of breaking a vow, by remembering this, it's very easy to stop.

DEDICATIONS (BACK TO)

We have this incredible opportunity due to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's kindness. So, please pray for his long life and that all his holy wishes succeed.

[Rinpoche and students chant His Holiness the Dalai Lama's long-life prayer]

And the same with Lama. This is also particularly due to Lama Yeshe's kindness, so pray that all his wishes be fulfilled, that Lama's wishes offer limitless skies of benefits to sentient beings like Lama Tsongkhapa, showing that same quality.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I be able to offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings by having the same qualities within myself as Lama Tsongkhapa has, from now on in all lifetimes.”

And please dedicate, “Due to all the three-time merits collected by me and collected by others, may the five-hundred-foot Maitreya Buddha statue be actualized as quickly as possible, and continue to completely abide in this world. May the Maitreya Buddha statue be most beneficial for sentient beings to bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible, and especially actualize bodhicitta in the hearts of all sentient beings and bring perfect peace and happiness in the world. May it receive all the funding it needs and be completed without delay of even a second. May all the rest of the projects be actualized to benefit sentient beings by Maitreya Buddha receiving all the funding.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may bodhicitta be actualized within the hearts of all sentient beings. By that, may war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, the dangers of fire, water, air, earthquakes, wherever they are happening, may they be stopped immediately and may no one in this world experience any of those undesirable things forever in this world.”

Dedicate the merits having taken the vows for this, for world peace.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, which exist but which are empty from their own side, may the I, who exists but who is empty from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, which exists but which is empty from its own side, and lead all the sentient beings, who exist but who are empty from their own side, to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment, which exists but which is empty from its own side, by myself alone, who exists but who is empty from its own side.

“I fully dedicate all these virtues to be able to train just like the hero Manjushri, who knows reality, and just like Samantabhadra as well.

“May the general teachings of the Buddha, and in particular the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, flourish forever in this world. May they spread in all the directions by being completely actualized within my own heart and in the hearts of all of us here, in the hearts of all the students and benefactors in this organization, especially those who sacrifice their life to the organization doing service for sentient beings, teaching Buddhism—in all their hearts and in the hearts of all the sentient beings in this world.”

Lecture 5

December 8, 2005

TARA INITIATION MOTIVATION: ABOUT ALL THE DHARMA PROJECTS

I'm going to begin with the four-armed Mahakala, some protector prayers that are done according to the tradition.

[Rinpoche and students chant in Tibetan]

I should just mention on the requests to the Dharma protectors, the very first request is the most important one, that His Holiness Dalai Lama's holy wishes succeed. That's the first. Why the first? If that happens, then all our wishes are individually fulfilled. If His Holiness' wishes are fulfilled, that helps everybody in the world, in the East and the West, everybody. When we pray to protectors, the first request should be that. And the next I would like to say is for the projects in the organization, in the FPMT, and particularly that the five-hundred-foot Maitreya Buddha statue, that it is actualized as quickly as possible, and not only to be actualized but to be most beneficial to sentient beings. Whatever size we build it, even a one-inch statue of the Buddha or five hundred feet or a thousand feet or a thousand stories! Anyway, I'm just talking words! It doesn't mean that I will do it. Maybe in my next life. The most important thing is to be most beneficial for sentient beings, to cause all sentient beings to collect extensive merit, to purify all their defilements and in particular to actualize loving kindness, compassion and bodhicitta in everyone's heart. In this way, the whole world will be filled with perfect peace and happiness, everybody will live their life only benefiting each other, with great joy, without any harm, and whatever they do will become the cause of enlightenment. That is the highest success.

Then, that all other projects continue, such as offering service to the monasteries, to the Sangha who are preserving and spreading the Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha, which is the source of all the sentient beings' peace and happiness. It is where all the happiness comes from, not only for the sentient beings of this world but for all sentient beings. The Sangha's main responsibility is to preserve and spread the Dharma, so we should offer service to the Sangha, those within the FPMT and outside. As well as offering service to the Sangha in the FPMT, [we should also offer service to

Sangha outside the FPMT], the different nationalities in the East and West, the Western Sangha and the Chinese Sangha and those from different countries. To be able to do the most service, to take care of that, to be able to build monasteries and nunneries in different parts of the world, like Russia, where there's an urgent need. And of course, to preserve and spread the Dharma for sentient beings, and to build the various holy objects in different parts of the world, which is the quickest way to purify the sentient beings' sufferings and all defilements and to cause them to collect extensive merit and bring them to enlightenment as quickly as possible.

Then, to offer social services in different parts of the world such as in hospitals and hospices. That's excellent. The most successful hospice and the first hospice we started was in Brisbane, Australia. I would like that to happen in many places, to provide places that have a good reputation, where people know that if you are dying, you will be taken care of [in a place like] Karuna, the hospice in Brisbane. There are also hospices in different places, such as Perth and America, but the bigger one, the most successful one, is in Brisbane. It also has government support and people say that if you're dying and you are taken in by Karuna, that's good luck. They say it's good luck if you are taken care of by Karuna Hospice! They have been very, very successful, which has encouraged me to start them in different cities of Australia and in other countries, running them in a similar way. I think it's great, making somebody happy when they are dying. I mean not just hallucinating happy, but by generating a positive thought when they're dying. That's the whole point, to die with a positive thought so there is the opportunity for a good rebirth.

There are various social services, such as the eye hospital in Kham, Tibet, that's happening, which His Holiness supports. And there are many social services in Mongolia, which is a very difficult country. In Mongolia, there is a tent for people who are homeless, with food and many things. Especially, there's universal education. That is a very important social service, because not everybody can become a Buddhist and come for the teachings, or not everybody can become a Catholic or a Muslim. This is another way to help the world to generate a good heart, to educate people in the good heart. That's the idea, the good heart. In that way, it helps there be less violence, less killings, like in the United States where, some years ago and even in recent times, a small boy in school killed many people. It recently happened and also a few years ago. All the senators and politicians talked about whether people should be allowed to have guns—they talked for months and months and months, but in all that time I never heard the word “compassion.” Watching TV, I never heard of

the need for compassion. They spent a long time talking about whether to allow people to have guns, but I never heard them trying to change people's minds.

Bush used the word "compassion" a few times recently. I think somebody must have advised him! I wrote a long letter to Bush some time ago after the Twin Towers and the Iraq war. It was a long letter. I just thought to offer my ideas, just a small ant offering idea to Bush!

So, universal education is a big social service. We are trying to make books to guide teachers. I'm not going to talk in detail on that now because it would take a long time. It won't be Tara initiation but a universal education initiation! We would like to establish this in a place like Columbia, where there is a lot of killing, where there is unbelievable killing all the time. There are many groups killing each other all the time. We have a very nice center there, Yamantaka Center, with very beautiful people there, but they say their families can be killed at any time. That's what they tell me. It is very dangerous. So, in places like this, and maybe in Africa, where there is a lot of violence, we might be able to start this kind of school for educating people in the good heart. The school would have other education, a normal school education, but the special thing would be an education in the good heart, in tolerance, in practicing kindness to human beings and animals, without discrimination. To practice forgiveness and to apologize—to forgive when somebody harms you and to apologize if you did something wrong to others—as well as rejoicing. These are very basic qualities to practice in order to become a good human being in this world. We are a human being just about once, but this is about being a good human being.

I think this is a very important education. In Bodhgaya there is already the Maitreya essential education project. Of course, it's at the beginning and it's still not very clear, but as I assess more, its direction will become clearer. Even only a few years ago the children there were not able to take examinations; they had to go to another school to do them, but when they did they found out the other school was so violent and without discipline. When they returned to the Maitreya Project school, they found the children there were so much more peaceful. So already there's a result achieved. In just three years, already this result has happened. That's a great thing. That inspired me to start a school like that in Bihar, because Bihar is very poor and there is so much violence, like killing and theft. It's similar to those places in Africa. In the very remote areas where there are so many poor, we could start a boarding school like this, to provide food and so forth. In this way,

gradually, if those children develop a good heart, when they become parents, they will naturally educate their children to also have a good heart, and this will help generation to generation. That is the long-term benefit. That's how [we hope to do it] one by one, little by little, starting with a few. That's how it will bring peace in those villages, in those states. It encourages me very much when I see the results already in such a short time.

There's also helping the centers to actualize their projects. The other projects are bigger than the Maitreya Project. Even though the Maitreya Project is a five-hundred-foot statue, it's a very small project compared to the rest. I think [offering service] this way makes the students' lives meaningful, because not everybody can go to the mountains to meditate, to live a renounced life and actualize shamatha, *zhi nä*. Some people can do that but it's not something everybody can do. Therefore, I think making all these various projects, learning and teaching the Dharma and the many social service projects are all very beneficial. I think it helps to make the students' lives productive and meaningful. You can make your life meaningful, doing something for others. This is what happens, you use your body, speech and mind to bring peace and happiness to others, which is the purpose of life.

So, request for success for this, and then for the projects of your own organization, whatever projects you have to benefit others and the teachings of Buddha. Request for the success of your own Dharma practice. So basically there are these three. First, the request that His Holiness' holy wishes succeed, then that all sentient beings achieve happiness, and then that includes yourself.

Then, the Palden Lhamo prayer.

[Rinpoche and students chant the prayer]

Now the Four-armed Mahakala sadhana.

[Rinpoche and the students chant the Mahakala sadhana in English]

TARA INITIATION MOTIVATION: THE GURU IS ALL THE BUDDHAS

Tonight we'll do the permission to practice the Twenty-one Taras, from those hundreds of initiations. We'll see how it goes. I'm not sure but I think I'll do some *lung*s, a few texts on the Tara practice. There are some elder monks and nuns here, so I'll do oral transmissions of a few different practices.

Tara the Liberator, which is *Dolma* in Tibetan or *Tara* in Sanskrit, means the liberator mother. Being called "mother" has great meaning. By understanding "mother," we naturally know she is the liberator. We naturally come to know the meaning of "liberator," how Tara is the liberator. Who is Tara? Who is the mother? This is the same. The transcendental wisdom of nondual bliss and voidness, the dharmakaya of all the buddhas' holy minds, that is the absolute guru. Guru has two senses: the conventional guru and the absolute guru. In Tibetan it's *kun dzob lama* and *don dam lama*. We have to think of the very heart, the essence, *don dam lama*, which is the absolute guru. We have to know what that is. Once we know that, that's the main focus. What's the real meaning of "guru"? The very heart of that, what it really means, from our side that is what we should realize.

The dharmakaya is that which is eternal, with no beginning and no end; it pervades all phenomena. As I mentioned the other day, the Buddha's holy mind pervades all phenomena, not just seeing all phenomena from a distance but pervading it, covering all phenomena. The real proof of that comes from the highest tantra. The Buddha's holy body and mind is not like our body, caused by karma and delusion, with bones and flesh and all that. It's not like that. There is the gross body, the subtle body and the extremely subtle body. Like that, the absolute guru has no beginning and no end and pervades all phenomena. As a highly attained Tibetan lama, Khedrub Sangye Yeshe, mentioned "Before the guru, not even what is called 'Buddha' exists." No buddha existed before the guru, not even the name "buddha."

If we don't come to know what the absolute guru is, there's no way to understand that meaning, and also the refuge prayer, *La ma sang gyä la ma chhö* [*Taking Refuge in the Gurus*], there's no way to understand that meaning. The door to all these is the guru. The guru is Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and all the doors are the guru. That means the guru is the one we receive all our happiness from: all the past happiness from beginningless rebirths, all the present happiness and all the future

happiness, including the ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara, and full enlightenment. The guru is the one we receive all the collections of goodness from. It comes from the source, the guru.

So, all the buddhas come from the absolute guru. All the past, present and future buddhas come from the absolute guru. This is the way to actually understand what the absolute guru is. The guru is the one who manifests. One way to understand is that the guru manifests into all the various aspects of the Buddha, taking all the various peaceful and wrathful aspects of the Buddha. There are four classes of the tantric deities in the nirmanakaya aspect—those thousands of buddhas, the Medicine Buddhas, the Thirty-five Buddhas and so on, all those buddhas.

In the same way, the Dharma, which is revealed from these different aspects of the buddhas, comes from the guru. You can see here very clearly where the Dharma comes from, and where the Sangha comes from. When we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, they all come from the guru.

Most of us do not have pure karma so we cannot see the guru in the aspect of the deity, in the aspect of the Buddha. Since our karma is impure, our mind is impure, the only way the buddhas can communicate with us, the only way we can receive teachings and guidance from them is by manifesting in an ordinary form. There is no other way to guide us at all except manifesting in an ordinary form. What's the definition of "ordinary form?"

By saying this, I'm not saying that I'm a buddha! You should not misunderstand that! The definition of "ordinary form" is having delusions, having suffering such as old age, sickness, death and rebirth. And then showing mistakes in the actions. That is what "ordinary form" means.

At the moment, until we have purified this impure karma, this impure mind, we have no other way for the pure aspect of the Buddha to directly guide us, to reveal teachings, to grant vows and initiations. The only way is for this ordinary form to guide us directly, to look after us and protect us from the sufferings of the lower realms and from the oceans of samsaric sufferings, the sufferings of the human and god realms. This ordinary form can save us from all this, liberating us from samsara. Its continuation has had no beginning but who ends our suffering in samsara? By revealing the four noble truths, the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path, the philosophical teachings, and the heart of the Buddhadharma,

the lamrim, the stages of the path to enlightenment—in that way, this ordinary form brings us to enlightenment.

To be liberated, we need to actualize the path to liberation, which means those five paths to liberation and two things: the foundation clear trainings, which need the requirement of living in the pratimoksha vows to liberate us from the samsara, by living in the bodhisattva vows to bring us to full enlightenment and by living in the tantric vows to cause us to achieve enlightenment not just in one life but in a brief lifetime of degenerated time. In that way, we can liberate sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering quickly and bring them to enlightenment quickly, whereas the other way would take a long time—many eons. Like that, the guru can grant the advice, the practice, can give commentaries and initiations that allow us to practice the path, to listen, to reflect, to meditate and to actualize the tantric path. Like this, the guru guides us to liberation and enlightenment.

It is very good to meditate like this when we do the guru yoga meditation. Maybe I'll mention this first since I mentioned guru devotion, so those who are new can get some clear idea.

ALL PROBLEMS COME FROM SELF-CHERISHING

I should have mentioned this at the beginning, but why we need to practice guru devotion is like this. It's related to the question of the purpose of living. The purpose of our life is not just to achieve happiness for ourselves, to only solve our own problems. Even if we could do that, it is not the purpose of our life, the meaning of our life. That opens us to cherishing the I; that's one reason. The other reason is that cherishing the I is opening the door for all the suffering. As I mentioned the other night, there are all these relationship problems in the world, unbelievable suffering, so much like hell. We are not born in hell but there is hell in our mind. We are not actually born in the hell but it's like that. There are unbelievable sufferings for years and years, one thing after another. And because of that, life becomes unbelievably expensive. We build debts upon debts, losing our business and becoming bankrupt. In life, there is one problem after another, causing unbelievable suffering. If we check the source, it's all related to the self-cherishing thought; it's all because of that.

All these problems and all this loneliness that so many people have come from the self-cherishing thought. But if we have a good heart, if we have bodhicitta, if we have the thought of cherishing

others, like how we feel with our family members, if we have the thought of loving kindness, of cherishing other living beings, there's no gap between ourselves and others; there's no distance. We feel very close to everybody in our heart and they feel very close to us, like they are our family.

Again, the suffering of loneliness comes from the self-cherishing thought. So many people are suffering from depression, and that also has to do with the self-cherishing thought. That depression is a result of either the self-cherishing thought of this life or of negative karma created in past lives, of past negative karma done with the self-cherishing thought. Of course, with the self-cherishing thought, there is attachment and those other delusions.

It is mentioned by the Buddha in the sutra teachings that whenever the evening comes and our mind becomes naturally depressed and we don't know why, that's the karmic result of past sexual misconduct. That is mentioned in the sutras. I think it would be similar when we wake up in the morning and don't know why we feel depressed. It's based on past negative karmas done with the self-cherishing thought. In this life, we have so many problems we created in other lives with the self-cherishing thought. I mentioned this last night I think, when I was giving the lay vows.

Similarly, because of sexual misconduct, many people in the family don't like us, many colleagues in the office don't like us, their wish is opposite to ours. Our spouse opposes our wishes; we no longer get along; there is disharmony and fighting. Generally, others don't help us, they oppose our wishes. As I mentioned, this is experiencing the result of the past negative karma of sexual misconduct.

Why is sexual misconduct a negative karma? Because it's not just done with attachment but also basically with the self-cherishing thought. In the Mahayana, the bodhisattva who has very brave-hearted compassion can sacrifice their own life to be born in hell to protect a sentient being from engaging in very heavy negative karma. For them to be born in the hell realm on behalf of that other sentient being is unbelievable joy, incredible bliss. The bodhisattva has unbelievable joy to be born in the hell realm, even if they are there for many eons. How many eons? Equaling the number of the drops of the ocean. Even if they have to suffer for that long to protect a being from engaging in heavy negative karma, they are very happy to do that even for one sentient being. That bodhisattva feels about achieving liberation from samsara, the total cessation of the oceans of suffering of samsaric suffering for themselves alone, like we feel about used toilet paper, disgusted—*used* toilet

paper, not unused. The text mentions where we spit becoming like a poison, so we can compare it to used toilet paper, something to throw away it's so disgusting. For the bodhisattva achieving liberation for themselves alone it's like that.

Bodhisattvas were permitted by the Buddha to do the three physical actions of killing, stealing and engaging in sexual misconduct [and the four verbal actions] of telling lies, slandering, saying harsh words and gossiping. When the bodhisattva engages in these seven actions, it only become virtue, and they collect extensive merits like the sky. This makes their time in samsara shorter, instead of longer when it is done with the self-cherishing thought as it usually is. For the bodhisattva, it causes them to be in samsara for a much shorter time.

This is like the story of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's past life when he was a captain. He saw a short black man carrying a spear who was thinking to kill the five hundred traders on the ship. The captain found this out and felt so sorry that this person was going to engage in such heavy negative karma, which of course would result in rebirth in the lower realms, where he would have to suffer for an unbelievable number of eons. Therefore, the captain with unbearable compassion killed him, completely giving himself to be born in the hell realm for killing that person. By killing him, the captain collected unconceivable merits and it made his time in samsara a hundred thousand eons shorter. By the power of compassion, it only became purification rather than collecting negative karma, the cause of being longer in samsara.

I said that sexual misconduct becomes negative karma because it's done out of the self-cherishing thought. I was just trying to clarify that point by bringing up these stories.

Many of the problems we experience in this life were created by negative karma created in this life, but there are so many created in the past life with the self-cherishing thought. Basically, those ten nonvirtuous actions done in the past could be done in the life before this or many eons ago. Anything done with the self-cherishing thought becomes negative karma.

Although people can be wealthy in this life and even in the next life or for a few lifetimes, with so much wealth, they are still not satisfied. They still want more, and so they engage in illegal things. Then, after becoming very wealthy and very famous in the world, they end up in prison. That is all

to do with the self-cherishing thought. It's very clear it's the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought.

Once the attitude of our life is the self-cherishing thought rather than cherishing others, whenever something happens in our life, when somebody says something or acts in some way, we judge it from our self-cherishing thought. We always wish everybody to act nicely to us, to be kind, to say only nice things, never nasty words! We want others to do only nice things, with a respectful manner, only ever smiling at us. These are what the self-cherishing thought always wants, but that doesn't happen all the time. Whatever happens is due to past karma—how we think of the other person, how we treat them, whether we look at them and treat them with compassion and loving kindness or whether we treat that person with the self-cherishing thought, only seeking our own happiness. One thing is past karma; the other is how we behave now, [Rinpoche snaps his fingers] this morning. Every moment, what we think of the other person, how we look at them and behave toward them, affects us now.

It is mentioned in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* that when we look at the sentient beings, at human beings or animals, we should look at them with a sincere heart, with loving kindness. If we smile at other sentient beings, it should not be with the political mind, thinking of our reputation, smiling for our own happiness; we should smile because in our heart we hold the happiness of others. Then, we smile like His Holiness does, thinking of others' happiness. Our smile should not be for our own happiness; that is a political smile, done with attachment, and it is difficult for that to become virtue. Shantideva said that when a person who smiles has a very kind nature, others feel it. Even when animals see that person, when they are near, they are unafraid; they feel very relaxed.

In Australia, when I was doing a retreat in Perth, no, in Adelaide, there were some mice going around and around. One mouse climbed onto the table and looked at me, checking me out! He was checking whether this person was somebody who was going to give him harm or not. He climbed over the table and then with his big eyes he checked on me, whether I was a bad guy or not! Every animal is like that. There are many stories of bodhisattvas where the animals around them feel very relaxed, and not just stories about the bodhisattvas. When snakes or tigers encounter somebody who is very soft in the heart, because there's no self-cherishing thought, the animals like that person. They feel protected when they are with that person.

There are many stories, for example, Saint Francis, the great Italian saint. There was a wolf in the forest that harmed many people. Saint Francis wanted to go to tell the wolf not to give harm to others. Others told him not to go but he went into the forest and met the wolf. The wolf was usually very vicious and had harmed many people but when he was in the presence of Saint Francis, he licked Saint Francis' feet like a dog, when a dog sees the master who takes care of it so happy, rolling on its back on the ground. Like that, the wolf licked the feet of Saint Francis, and then Saint Francis told the wolf to not harm others. He said he would beg for food from the town and give it to the wolf if it stopped harming others. And after that the wolf never harmed others again. It listened to Saint Francis because he had a realization of bodhicitta, and bodhicitta has no thought of cherishing the I. It is because of that power, the power of the loving compassionate thought. And what other thing?

Lama Tsongkhapa Institute is quite close to Assisi, the place where Saint Francis' holy body is kept. One of his disciples was a nun who had three hundred nun disciples. You can see her body covered by glass, well kept, kind of like she's still alive, but you can't see Saint Francis' body. I went there with Lama Yeshe. Lama sat down and did a meditation for a short time. In that place, there was water running down, so the disciples of Saint Francis complained to him that they could not meditate because of the noise of the water. Then, Saint Francis went there and talked to the water, saying, "Sister don't come. My disciples can't meditate." Right after that, the water stopped.

There are many stories in the Buddhist texts like that, such as when bodhisattvas cross a river, the river stops, and then, when they have crossed, the river flows again. Also, there was a great lama, Kālsang Jamyang Mönlam. When there was a flood in Tibet coming towards the monastery, he wrote on a stone, "If it's true that I have bodhicitta then the flood should go back." After writing it, he put the stone in the way of the coming flood water and, when he did that, the flood water receded. That was by the power of his bodhicitta. So not just sentient beings, even the elements can be controlled by bodhicitta.

There was an ex-abbot of Sera Je, Losang Wangchuk, an extremely renowned and learned monk among Tibet monasteries, Sera, Ganden and Drepung. I think he has now passed away. His face always reminded me of Lama Tsongkhapa. When he was at Buxa, the concentration camp where

Gandhi-ji and Prime Minister Nehru were imprisoned when India was under British rule, and where I lived for eight years, he had a cat. Usually if cats see a mouse they would immediately jump and grab it, but by living with the ex-abbot, even though the mouse might be running back and forth in the same room, the cat just stayed with the monk, not harming the mouse. It had totally changed because of the bodhicitta of Losang Wangchuk. Even though before the cat was quite vicious, seeing the mouse as something to play with and to eat, with the ex-abbot the cat just sat there, seeing the mouse but not running to kill it. That was due to the blessings of the ex-abbot's bodhicitta.

So anyway, what I was saying before?

If we live our life with the self-cherishing thought, it is very easy for mistakes to arise when we are dealing with others, when we are living with others, because our attitude is only seeking our happiness and we don't care about others' needs and happiness. Because we don't care about others, whenever the way they think, speak or behave is something that our self-cherishing thought doesn't expect or doesn't like, it's so easy to get angry or jealous or for all those other negative emotions to arise. Then, we will scold or beat them, or hit them or even kill them. Then, not only will this violent action harm the body, speech and mind of others, but also those around us will be unhappy with us. Discovering that our motivation is only this selfish mind, they get bored and unhappy; they are no longer interested in us.

With this self-cherishing thought, saying disrespectful words, behaving badly, whatever conduct we have with others becomes negative, making others unhappy. Angry at us, it makes them harm us, insulting us, fighting with us, beating us and even killing us. There are these negative consequences. With the self-cherishing thought, with those unkind, bad manners and those harmful actions we want to do to others, there are the consequences that we are treated badly by others. When we engage in negative karma, it causes others to engage in negative karma by harming us. We both create the cause of the lower realms like that.

But here, with a good heart, with loving kindness, with the compassionate thought, there's respect. With the thought of cherishing others, respect for others arises. A sincere loving smile comes. These kind acts with the body, speech and mind have a positive effect on others, making them happy,

making them also generate loving kindness and compassion. And seeing that they are happy with us, that makes us happy too. So, there's a circle.

How others think of us, how they treat us, with respectful words and respectful manner, with a kind heart, depends on how we treat them. How they treat us is an immediate consequence of our own act, with what kind of motivation we look at them and what kind of conduct we have. We can see that the person who is good-hearted, with a very calm, loving nature, wherever that person goes—to the market, a shop, a restaurant—even though other people don't know them, they have never met them before, when they see that person has such a kind heart, they want to speak with them, to spend time with them. They naturally ask them if they need any help. But if that person is very selfish, full of negative emotions that they express physically, in their looks, there's a negative feeling when other people see them. They don't want to go near them or help them.

The more selfish we are in our life, the more jealous we are, the more external enemies we have. Wherever we live in the East or the West, whether we are at home or in the office, it is like that. There's no real happiness. For example, it is often said when our motivation is the self-centered mind, the selfish mind, our only concern is, "When can I be happy?" We only think of our own problems. "When can I be happy?" With this problem and that problem in our daily life, when we only think of our own problems, even the face is very dark. Walking on the street or wherever, if we only think of our own problems, then we are a very tight person, a very unhappy person. Our life feels very dark; there's no light in our life. There's no happiness or peace in the heart.

But, the minute we change our attitude from that to cherishing others, while we are walking on the road, while we are in the market, wherever, the minute we change the object [Rinpoche snaps his fingers], instead of cherishing the I, cherishing others, with loving kindness, with the compassionate thought toward others, immediately there's a release. There is immediately a great release in our heart. We immediately release the tension in our face from its very uptight, very unhappy expression. We immediately find peace and happiness. Then, there's a natural smile, a very happy face. Immediately life becomes meaningful. The minute we change the mind to cherishing others [Rinpoche snaps his fingers], life immediately becomes meaningful, filled with happiness, with joy. So, the difference between cherishing the I and cherishing others is huge. With cherishing others, there's immediately fulfillment in our heart.

MISTAKES OF NOT DEVOTING TO THE GURU ARE DUE TO SELF-CHERISHING

I've already gone through the eight shortcomings of making mistakes in devoting to virtuous friend, of creating negative karma with the relationship of the virtuous friend.

Criticizing the guru is as heavy as criticizing all the buddhas. Engaging in such heavy negative karma again comes from the self-cherishing thought, is motivated by the self-cherishing thought. Even making mistakes in the practice of guru devotion is due to the self-cherishing thought. Having non-devotional thoughts, going against the guru's advice, disturbing the holy mind, getting angry with the guru. There are three hundred and sixty-five shortest moments in a finger snap and for however many of those we are angry at the guru, for that many eons our merit is destroyed. For that length of time we have to be born in the hell realm and suffer. Engaging in these shortcomings is again due to the self-cherishing thought.

As a practitioner, as somebody who is trying to practice Dharma, the self-cherishing thought is so harmful, interfering with our guru devotion practice and causing us to create this heavy negative karma. Even if we practice the highest tantric path, we cannot achieve attainments. We make so much effort, going so many years without sleeping, without eating, being so strict, practicing tantra for years and years bearing so many hardships, having made mistakes devoting the virtuous friend, but it's like there's nothing, there's no change, no progress. Besides that, it only results in obtaining the lower realms, only the hell realm.

If you mix the color black with white, how does it look? Still black. I'm giving an example of how to understand that when there's a small amount of white color and you put a lot of black color, it's still black. Because the karma is so heavy, while we make mistakes in guru devotion—having non-devotional thoughts arising to the guru or breaking their advice, criticizing them, having heresy or anger toward the guru—while we might try to practice day and night for years in retreat, with a lot of hardships, the negative karma is so heavy that, despite those many other practices, it's like achieving the hell realm. The Dharma understandings we didn't have before, the realizations and qualities, don't happen. We are unable to achieve them. And what experience or Dharma understanding we had before becomes degenerated. Then, our life is tormented by so many

problems, so many heavy sicknesses one after another. And the next life is an unimaginable number of eons wandering in the lower realms.

Now, here's the point. If we let ourselves come under the control of the virtuous friend, the guru, if we allow ourselves to follow the guru, we do not receive any of these shortcomings, any of these problems. When we cherish the I, we don't surrender, we don't allow ourselves to follow the guru and because of that, all these shortcomings arise—breaking their advice, disturbing their holy mind, heresy, anger—all this arises due to the self-cherishing thought. It is very clear how the guru devotion practice is related to self-cherishing thought. When we recite even one mala of the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM or something, we are unable to do it correctly, unable to concentrate our mind. Our mind becomes like a monkey, jumping all over the place. We are unable to meditate for even the duration of one mala of OM MANI PADME HUM. Again, this is to do with the self-cherishing thought.

LACK OF ALL SUCCESS COMES FROM SELF-CHERISHING

Even if we have taken lay vows or the thirty-six ordination vows, or the two hundred and fifty-three vows of the *gelong*, again the self-cherishing thought makes us break those vows or degenerate them. It's very clear that when we cherish the I, attachment, anger and all those negative minds arise, thus causing us to degenerate the vows; we are unable to live in the lay or ordination vows, unable to have renunciation. Breaking the vows is related to the self-cherishing thought. If we look at what caused it, it's related to the self-cherishing thought. If we have taken a vow to lead a better life, to achieve liberation and enlightenment, to benefit others, because the self-cherishing thought is always there, when we follow it, that thought makes us break the vows, and that destroys our own liberation.

If we cherish the I, we are not only unable to achieve realizations, but all these mistakes also arise. Due to the self-cherishing thought, due to cherishing the I, because there is no special bodhicitta motivation, whatever we do in our daily life, nothing becomes the cause of enlightenment, not even meditating or reciting prayers. Because of cherishing the I, attachment arises to the samsaric perfections of this life and the samsaric perfections of future lives. Because of that, whatever activity

we do does not become the cause to achieve liberation from samsara, not even meditating or reciting prayers.

Then, because of cherishing the I, attachment to this life arises, which is a nonvirtuous thought. Therefore, whatever activity we do becomes negative karma, even meditating or reciting prayers. Everything becomes negative karma; everything becomes the cause of the lower realms. Again, here it's very clear that many mistakes arise by following the self-cherishing thought.

The self-cherishing thought makes even one day not only totally empty, but it also causes us to engage in negative karma. It is like that for one week of our life, for one month of our life, for one year of our life, for our whole life. That is how the self-cherishing thought has been so harmful from beginningless rebirths up to now. As long as we cherish the I, we receive all the shortcomings and are unable to attain any realizations. From beginningless rebirths up to now, we have never achieved any realizations and the mind is still totally empty. Nothing is happening; there is no progress. As long as we cherish the I, there is no attainment, nothing—just the endless suffering of samsara.

Even if we have the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, if we don't have bodhicitta, the mind cherishing others, the highest we can achieve is only arhatship, not enlightenment. We are unable to even become a bodhisattva and cannot receive even the name "bodhisattva."

What we all want is happiness, what we do not want is suffering. By cherishing the I, we are opening the door to all suffering; by cherishing others, we are opening the door for all happiness, for all our temporary and ultimate happiness, for liberation and enlightenment. And we are also opening the door to be able to cause all the happiness for each and every single sentient being, all the temporal and ultimate happiness, for liberation and enlightenment.

Even for our own happiness, the best thing is to cherish others, to seek the happiness of other sentient beings, so no question about actually achieving happiness for all sentient beings. The purpose of our life is to benefit other sentient beings. Therefore, as I mentioned before, of causing the happiness in this life, causing others the happiness in all the coming future lives, or causing them to achieve liberation from samsara and then enlightenment, that's the highest benefit. Bringing sentient beings to full enlightenment is the best benefit, the highest benefit.

The solution is that first we ourselves must achieve the state of omniscience. For that, what is the solution? Actualizing the whole graduated path to enlightenment is the cause to achieve the omniscient mind. That's the reason we practice guru devotion. If our goal is to achieve enlightenment, we need to actualize the stages of the path to enlightenment. For the success of all that, we need the root, guru devotion. The perfect human rebirth is the beginning of the path. To have success from there up to enlightenment depends on the root, guru devotion. Only by having that stable realization, we don't create any obstacles for our realization. We only create the cause to have success. Whatever we do, we only create the cause to have success in attaining all these realizations up to enlightenment. The main reason we practice guru devotion, the main goal, is because we want to become enlightened and liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and enlighten them. That's the reason—because we want to benefit others.

How it works is scientific. It's like a machine where every thing depends on every other thing. In a watch, there are many mechanisms that depend on each other for the watch to function. It's very important to know why we need to practice guru devotion. If we don't know, if we don't have a deep reason of that, many difficulties will arise. We might think it is just superstition or it's useless.

When we were in Nepal the first time, we stayed in Boudha and lived together with a French doctor who worked at the public hospital in Kathmandu. He always meditated. I don't know what he meditated on, but he always meditated. He was with us the very first time when we came to Kopan hill.

From the Gelugpa monastery we stayed at, Samtenling, from the window where Lama's bed was, Lama always saw Kopan hill and felt an attraction and he always wanted to go there. So, one day we came here. There was a very old house the king had built for his astrologer, but it was covered by trees so we couldn't see it from below. We went to the top of the hill and came down, but the French doctor had disappeared! It took us some time to find him. He was there at the astrologer's house, sitting on the cement step, facing the door, meditating. He couldn't enter the house, of course, because it was locked. We saw him there but didn't disturb him.

What were we talking about? Yeah, Lama. There was a French artist who always talked about Madagascar and all those places where he had been. He made and bought oil paintings, and he and the French doctor came for meditation. Lama gave a Vajrasattva meditation, describing how to visualize Vajrasattva on the crown. After he heard that, the French doctor said, “What’s the difference? You visualize the shoes outside or the shoes at the door on the head?” “What’s the differences between Vajrasattva here and the shoes on your head?” This is what he said. If you don’t understand, it’s like that! So, there’s a reason deep as the ocean to practice guru devotion.

TARA INITIATION MOTIVATION: HAVING STABLE GURU DEVOTION

I would like to mention this. This is a Tara initiation—Tara is called Tara the Liberator—and what Tara actually means is the guru, as I mentioned at the very beginning. With stable guru devotion, looking at the guru as the Buddha and seeing the Buddha, whether from the guru’s side they are a buddha or not, from the disciple’s side, we must look at the guru as the Buddha and see them as the Buddha, using the quotations, the reasonings and our own special experiences with the guru. With stable devotion, we must see them as the Buddha, by looking at them as the Buddha. At the beginning we do it with effort, then as a result we see the Buddha.

In *The Foundation of All Good Qualities* it says,

The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and perfect guru;
Correctly following the guru is the root of the path.
By my clearly seeing this and applying great effort,
Please bless me to rely upon the guru with great respect.

Without effort, it just doesn’t happen. We have to put many years of effort into looking at the guru as the Buddha. Then, as a result, we see the Buddha. It’s the nature of the mind that it can develop. That the mind can become pure is a quality of the mind. It depends on how we train. If we train it in a negative way, we become negative. If we train it in a positive way, it can be turned that way, so we only see the guru as the Buddha, with no mistakes, with only pure qualities.

That meditation on how to train the mind—all the reasonings, all the stories, all these things—was explained by the Buddha, by Lama Tsongkhapa, and by those great enlightened beings. What happens if we don't have this stable guru devotion, [which arises by] putting effort for many years into seeing the Buddha by looking at [the guru as] the Buddha? Without this stable guru devotion realization, for example, heresy can arise. Then, there is no protection in our life at all. What happens is that when we have ordinary heresy or anger we create negative karma, but when it is in relation to the guru, it is the heaviest negative karma.

Why? The parents of this life are powerful objects, more powerful than other people, more powerful than anybody other than ordained people, arhats, bodhisattvas, buddhas and gurus. Other than that, our parents are more powerful objects than other people. If we criticize our parents, even just a small disrespect, the negative karma we create is so heavy that we experience the result in this life. And if we are respectful in a small way, giving them a small praise or doing them a small service, the good karma is so powerful that we experience the result in this life, besides for many hundreds of thousands of lifetimes. Now, more powerful than the parents is the ordained person, the ordinary Sangha. Then, there are the arhats, the absolute Sangha, and the arhats are more powerful still. Then, of the numberless arhats and one bodhisattva, one bodhisattva is a much more powerful object. If we create negative karma with a bodhisattva, harming or disrespect them, or if we offer respect or offer service, one bodhisattva is more powerful than the numberless arhats who are free from samsara.

It is mentioned in Lama Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo* that when a non-bodhisattva gets angry at a bodhisattva for one second, they experience the hell realm for one eon. But it is mentioned here that this is the same with guru devotion. If we as a non-bodhisattva get angry at a bodhisattva for one second, we are born in the hell realm and suffer for an eon. I asked the ex-abbot of Sera Mey for clarification when I took teachings from him. Rinpoche explained that with the guru we count in the shortest moments, of which there are 365 in a finger snap. With the guru, each time we [develop heresy for the guru] we get reborn and have to experience that many eons in hell. I think this might be what Rinpoche answered, but otherwise it looks exactly the same as with a bodhisattva. How can it be possible? If we get angry at a bodhisattva, we are born in hell and suffer for one eon. I think Rinpoche clarified it like that. If we get angry at a bodhisattva, even if we just look at them like this. What do you call it? I always forget the name. [Student prompts] If we scowl at a bodhisattva, we

create heavier karma than taking out the eyeballs of all the three realms' sentient beings. The karma is so heavy if we look at a bodhisattva like that.

And if we look at a bodhisattva with a very calm mind, with a devotional mind, we collect as much merit as giving eyes to the three realms' sentient beings. Maybe it's even more. But now you can see how even a small disrespect or a small respect toward a bodhisattva makes a *huge* difference; even a small service creates unbelievable merit. Now, between numberless bodhisattvas and one buddha, one buddha is more powerful. And between numberless buddhas and one guru, one guru is more powerful. Now you can see that. It is said that from the disciple's side, you should rely upon the guru, you should devote to the guru. That's the definition of a disciple. The guru is the one who instills devotion in the disciple, who is relied upon by the disciple. That's the definition of a guru.

I think there may be different answers. But anyway, if we wish to be accepted as a disciple by the guru and from the guru's side they also accept us as a disciple, with this recognition from the side of the disciple that this is our guru, this creates the guru/disciple relationship. Then, with that understanding, even receiving OM AH HUM or any four words or a just few verses of a teaching or of an oral transmission, the relationship is established. From that second, it is done; from that second, that person becomes the most powerful object in our life. It's all a dependent arising. They are the most powerful person in our life, more powerful than the numberless buddhas.

Then, for not just a second or a finger snap but the shortest length of time, if we get angry or develop heresy with the virtuous friend, that many eons of merit are destroyed. That's one thing to understand. Then the next thing is that for that many eons we have to be in the lower realms, in the hell realm, and experience the most unbearable suffering. And the third thing is that because our merits are destroyed for that number of eons, our realizations are delayed for that many number of eons. So, there are these three things.

So, you see this is the heaviest negative karma; it is the greatest obstacle to developing the mind in the path to enlightenment. It is the greatest obstacle if we want to help other sentient beings, if we want to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. If we don't have a stable guru devotion realization, all the negative thoughts arise and we give up the guru. After having made the connection and established the relationship, if we give

up the guru when we think that we cannot do what we want but we must do what the guru wants, this is a great danger. All this is the heaviest negative karma.

That is why there is so much emphasis in both the sutra and tantra teachings on having a stable realization of guru devotion. In *The Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion* there are so many things to observe. It is emphasized so much because of the shortcomings, the heavy negative karma that we create, which is a great obstacle to developing our mind in the path. Benefiting others, liberating others from suffering and bringing them to enlightenment, that's the meaning of our life, the purpose of our life. If we want temporary or ultimate happiness, enlightenment, if we want to be the cause of all the happiness of the numberless sentient beings, this is what we need to practice. For the success of actualizing the whole path, we need the realization of guru devotion. If we have the stable realization of guru devotion, we are protected all the time from anger, heresy, non-devotional thoughts, breaking their advice, disturbing their holy mind—we have all that strong protection so those things don't occur. That is why it's emphasized so much in the teachings.

When we think about how the real meaning of guru is the absolute guru, we can see that the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha we take refuge in all come from the guru, the absolute guru. All our past, present and future happiness, all the qualities, every goodness, everything comes from the guru. That's why, with Mother Tara, mother liberator, the real meaning of “mother” is guru. The name “mother” is given and the function is to liberate us sentient beings from suffering, from the sufferings of the lower realms and even the sufferings of the god and human realms. It also liberates us from the lower nirvana, from the subtle defilements and brings us to enlightenment. So the “mother liberator” means the guru.

The mother liberator, the absolute guru, is bound with infinite compassion for us sentient beings, liberating us from all undesirable things, from all sufferings and even from the subtle defilements, the negative imprints, and granting us every happiness: temporary happiness and ultimate happiness, enlightenment, everything we desire. This is all manifested into a female aspect. The interpretive meaning of the ultimate guru is this female aspect who manifests in order to do all those activities: liberating us from samsara and lower nirvana and granting every happiness up to enlightenment.

All the gurus that we visualize who have shown an ordinary aspect are the embodiment of the absolute guru, manifested in an ordinary aspect to guide us to liberation and enlightenment. Here, Tara and these gurus are one. Tara is manifested from the absolute guru; these gurus are also manifested from the absolute guru. Each of these gurus is Tara. That is how to meditate on this. That is what we must realize.

Tara's mantra, OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA, includes the four noble truths, showing the cessation of the suffering and the cessation of the cause of suffering. Within that it also contains the truth of the path. Where it says, "TURE liberates from the eight fears," that also relates to the eight delusions. What was I going to say? I've already explained before, we are seeking the cessation of all the defilements; from the thought of mistakes toward the guru up to the subtle dual view; *chag* means to cease and *tsal lo* refers to all the realizations up to enlightenment *chag tsal lo*.

Maybe a short break? Huh? We'll have a short break to stand or something.

[Students offer mandala]

TARA INITIATION MOTIVATION: TARA AND ATISHA

It is a very common experience that when we rely upon Tara, doing the meditation, the recitation, it makes it very easy to have our wishes fulfilled, to have success. It's a very common experience, even for ordinary people. Lama Atisha, who always relied on Tara, was able to offer extensive benefit to sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha because of Tara. Whatever activity he did, he first made requests to Tara, and through Tara he was able to accomplish extensive work and give extensive benefit to sentient beings, not only in India but also in Tibet. He was able to make the Buddhism in Tibet pure.

Lama Atisha composed the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* in Tibet, and then Lama Tsongkhapa and many of the great lamas wrote commentaries to it from their own experience of the path. There have been numberless beings who have become bodhisattvas and achieved enlightenment by practicing the lamrim, which started from Lama Atisha's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, the heart of the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha. Even in these days, many meditators are practicing and

having realizations of the lamrim based on the integration of all the 84,000 teachings of Buddha into the lamrim. There are meditators in Dharamsala or in different places attaining realization by correctly meditating on the path. Now it's spread all over the world, even in the Western world, which has been dark from the beginning of time. Now the light of the Dharma, the lamrim, is spread even in the Western world and in many of the Chinese countries.

Every year, many tens of thousands are able to meet the Buddhadharma and are able to have opportunity to practice the lamrim and follow the path to enlightenment. They are able to find the answers in their life which they could not find in Western culture. This includes us here, during this one month. We came to attend the course and we have the opportunity to hear the lamrim teachings and meditate on them. Not only to hear them but to make the mind closer to the path. We have left so many imprints on our mindstream during this month by doing this course. I haven't had so many imprints left because I didn't attend the course! But you have been able to leave so many positive imprints to actualize the path to enlightenment, making you so much closer to the lamrim realizations, to the realizations of the path, so much closer to enlightening all sentient beings. Every day, meditating on the lamrim during this one month at Kopan has made you so much closer to enlightening the numberless sentient beings. So, we must rejoice. We are able to do all this because of Lama Atisha's kindness, because of Lama Atisha's holy activities.

All these incredibly extensive benefits all over the world are due to Tara. This is just one example. There are many other great yogis, great holy beings, who through Tara have been able to benefit many sentient beings in the world. Through Tara, it is very easy to have success, even in just ordinary activities or in Dharma activities; that's very common.

His Holiness Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche, who is the Dalai Lama's guru, used to tell me that some children are close to the father but most are close to the mother. Similarly, Rinpoche used to say that even to receive the blessings of and achieve Compassion Buddha, it's easier through the Tara practice. Rinpoche used to give the example that if you are a friend of the attendant of the lama, or if you know them, you are able to see the lama easily. Rinpoche used this example! We can pacify obstacles and have success through Tara. What pleases Tara, what makes Tara close to us is bodhicitta, the *tonglen* practice—taking other sentient beings' suffering and giving them our

happiness and merit. As much as we are able to do this bodhicitta practice, that's what brings Tara close to us and grants all our wishes more quickly.

TARA INITIATION

We are taking the permission to practice, the *jenang*, of the Twenty-one Taras for success in attaining the path to enlightenment, the lamrim, and success in service for sentient beings and for the teachings of the Buddha.

For the *jenang*, the self-generation, the front generation, the blessing vase and those things are done. Now, there are the graduated activities to do from the lama's side and the general activities to do from the disciple's side—washing the mouth, prostrations, distributing flowers. Then, there's the mandala offering before that and giving tormas to interferers who interfere with granting and receiving the *jenang*, the blessing of Tara.

[Rinpoche confers the *jenang*]

It's part of tantric practice to see the lama you take the initiation from [as the deity]. I'm not qualified. I don't deserve to tell you to visualize me as Tara, but as there's a special purpose for the disciple to achieve enlightenment, in this part of tantric practice it requires you stop the ordinary thought of the ordinary person and to look at them from the side of the disciple not only in the essence of Tara but also in the aspect of Tara. And you see the place where you take the *jenang* as not an ordinary place but as a celestial mansion, the transformation of Tara's transcendental wisdom, or Tara's pure land, Yulokod, Khadiravana in Sanskrit [Acacia Forest]. Then, in order to receive the *jenang*, the permission to practice, you should offer mandala, your body, speech and mind and all the three-time merits in the various form of offerings, of the whole entire universe. Offer without any clinging. So, the short mandala.

[Students offer a short mandala]

As I mentioned before, three extremely rare things have been gathered. From your side, you have achieved the perfect human rebirth, which is extremely rare to find, and you have met the

Buddhadharma, which is extremely rare to meet, and you have also met the virtuous friend revealing the path to enlightenment, which is extremely rare to meet. All three of these are most rare and you have achieved them at this time, which happens about once. You have achieved this body about once. Therefore, it is not sufficient just to not be reborn in the lower realms or just to receive a higher rebirth. Even achieving liberation from samsara is still not sufficient. As I mentioned before, for all these reasons, you must achieve full enlightenment for sentient beings before death happens. For that, you need to actualize the path. For that success, you are taking this jenang. You need to rely upon a special deity to bring success and Tara is the incomparable one.

With that, to do the mantra recitation you need to receive permission to practice, the jenang. Even that is for the benefit of all sentient beings.

[Rinpoche recites prayers and asks students to repeat]

The next one is the bodhisattva vows. Those who have taken them in the past, there is no question that by taking them again you purify them. And those who have not taken bodhisattva vows, has George already gone through the wishing and entering vows? [Ven. George replies.] The wishing vows. So, George will introduce the entering vows after the initiation. For those who have not taken bodhisattva vows, there are the wishing vows and the entering vows. The entering vows are abstaining from the eighteen root falls and the forty-six vices. Basically, even though there is a great number, the very essence is that you try to live your life with the attitude to benefit others, to think that your life is for others, to free others from suffering, to cause them happiness. You live your life engaging in that attitude.

With that attitude, even though there are so many other bodhisattva vows, when you are able to practice you feel that what you have belongs to other sentient beings. This is the key point to be able to keep the many bodhisattva vows. It very much depends on how you keep the attitude, the thought of benefiting others or not.

If you can't take the entering vows now, you can take the wishing vows, which Venerable George has already explained, so I don't need to repeat it again. That is avoiding the four black dharmas and practicing four white dharmas. For those who can't take even the wishing vow, what I normally say

is you should think, “I’m definitely going to practice more compassion for others than before. I’m definitely going to practice bodhicitta in this life.” You must make a strong decision like that. So please repeat.

[Rinpoche continues the initiation]

Since you have taken the bodhisattva vows, in every second you collect limitless skies of merit, and any other virtue you collect increases millions of times. This makes life unbelievably meaningful, productive. Taking the bodhisattva vows becomes the most practical contribution for the happiness and peace of all sentient beings, particularly of this world. Please do the particular request.

[Rinpoche recites prayers and the students repeat]

Here, you purify yourself into emptiness with the mantra OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM. Look at the I who is taking the jenang, the blessing of Tara. How does that I appear to you? Does it appear merely labeled by mind or not merely labeled by mind? Check that one. Unless you are a buddha, everything appears as not merely labeled by mind, everything appears as truly existent. This I appears as something real from its own side. Hold onto that. One-pointedly concentrate on that. Think, “This real I appearing there, this is what is called the object to be refuted.” Think that this is a hallucination. What it means is that this is totally nonexistent. There is not even an atom of that which exists. Now your wisdom sees the emptiness; it is nondual with it, like having put water into water.

[Rinpoche continues the Tara initiation]

Ab la! I forgot to mention this! I’ve only remembered this now it is already done. We’ve already gone to the hell realm; we’ve already bought the ticket and gone to the hell realm. This is Kriya Tantra so you need to have received a great initiation, such as the Chenrezig great initiation or Mitukpa or Medicine Buddha. In Kriya Tantra there are three types: the vajra type, the lotus type and the tathagata type. If you haven’t received any of the great initiations, you cannot visualize yourself as the deity. I missed that out at the beginning! Of course, no question if you have already received a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation, or if you have received any of those great initiations of

Kriya Tantra, you can visualize yourself as the deity, Tara. But if you haven't received any of the great initiations, either lower tantra or highest tantra, then you must not visualize yourself as the deity. If you have visualized yourself as the deity before, now pack up! I'm joking!

[Rinpoche continues the Tara initiation]

In regard to the various activities to do with Tara, there's a common one and an uncommon one. I received the uncommon one from His Holiness Zong Rinpoche when Rinpoche first came to the United States, to Geshe Sopa Rinpoche's center in Madison. At that time, I received it with Alan Wallace and maybe somebody else. I'm not going to do the whole thing. There is the whole night purification with Tara. You can do the whole night of purification. I thought it might be good if many people can do that practice, so I'll do the lung of that.

[Rinpoche confers the lung]

Within this, there is healing the I to develop wisdom, the meditation to protect yourself and others, from danger. It's very effective when you have harm from black magic or harm from nagas or human beings, to be liberated from strange sicknesses, those that cannot be cured in hospital. And betraying the death, the puja, the practice to pacify the danger of untimely death. Then there are pacifying actions, increasing actions and controlling actions.

[Rinpoche confers the lung]

This is available in English. In the past, many years ago, we used to do it many times in Lawudo as well as here. We did the Tara purification practice many years ago, also maybe some other centers in the West have done it.

Why do we do it at nighttime? Because it's more difficult; you have to sacrifice your comfort and sleep for the Dharma practice. You do prostrations and circumambulation. You make sessions like that. Because it is harder, that means more negative karmas get purified. I think that's the whole reason. Tara herself taught this method.

[Rinpoche confers the lung]

You have to offer butter lamps or candles, whatever it is, light that lasts the whole night until the next morning. Until the light of the butter lamp or candle stops, you don't take away the Tara statue that's put there. Doing that practice purifies all the defilements, negative karma, downfalls, all those things. It makes a huge difference to generating the realizations of the path and increasing wisdom.

Doing this practice is an extremely profound way to increase wisdom. If you do the practice correctly, you will definitely achieve perfect wisdom and a long life. Tara herself said, "This I promise."

[Rinpoche confers the lung]

This is a short meditation for long life, which was translated into English many years ago, from the first Dharma Celebration I think. Maybe that's enough.

[Rinpoche confers the lung]

With the Twenty-one Taras, you can eliminate whatever problems you have. This oral transmission is a very special meditation to do for pacifying problems and for benefiting sentient beings. This is from the collection of texts by Panchen Losang Chökyi Gyaltzen, who composed the *Lama Chöpa*.

[Rinpoche continues the initiation]

I just went over the Twenty-one Taras mantra. The twenty-one Taras do different actions: pacifying problems, bringing the wishes. This one actually elaborates the meditation. It specifies how to do the meditation, whichever problem you have or whatever way you want to help others. This shows how to do the meditation for each Tara.

While you are reciting the Twenty-one Taras praises, when it comes to each Tara, you do the more elaborate meditation to accomplish those purposes. It looks like a lot but actually it's empty. It looks like many pages but it's empty. There are not so many lines.

There's a meditation to liberate from prison. If somebody is in prison, you can liberate them; it shows how to do that. There's another text for that too but I never got it translated. It's quite a few pages. But this Tara meditation on how to get out of prison is very short. It would be a very good practice to do for those who are going to be killed in prison, who are facing a death sentence. Not a life sentence, a death sentence. There was a person who was going to be executed. I wrote a very, very long letter, but it seems it has been delayed a year. He did a lot of practice in prison. There are quite a number who did lots of practice in prison, many hundreds of thousands of prostrations. This is extremely meaningful, because if they were out of prison there would be so much distraction and they wouldn't be able to do that much practice. I think being in prison, because the mind is different, you want to do something meaningful, and I think many of them do a lot of practice, like somebody being in a hermitage. Doing a lot of practice and not coming out—it's similar.

[Rinpoche continues the initiation]

For these activities to be successful, you need to do a nearing retreat—no, not a nearing retreat, an enabling action retreat, with something like 400,000 Tara mantras. In the past it was 100,000 but now you need 400,000, like the jenang retreat, and a fire puja. You need to do that preliminary before you actually do these various activities.

[Rinpoche continues the initiation]

Doing this Tara practice is according to Lama Atisha's tradition.

So that's it. Maybe we will do the Twenty-one Tara praises tomorrow. Maybe tonight that's enough.

Now short mandala of thanks.

[Students recite mandala offering and Rinpoche and students do dedication prayers]

So I must say, "Good morning!" Thank you very much.

Lecture 6

December 9, 2005

THE ORAL TRANSMISSION OF THE PRAISES TO THE TWENTY-ONE TARAS

[Rinpoche chants in Tibetan]

I didn't do the oral transmission of the Twenty-one Taras yesterday, so, since many people would like to recite the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras*, I thought to do the *lung*, the oral transmission. In case I forget at the end of the initiation, I thought to do it before. Or in case you fall asleep! It goes on and on and then you fall asleep!

It's good if you can recite this praise. In the monasteries, wherever there is an assembly of Sangha, they recite the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* every day. There are many other prayers but this is one they always recite, sometimes for the success of the activities of the monastery or other people request that they do the praises one hundred or two hundred thousand times for the success of their projects or for health or for their business or many things. It's very common. It is very effective to recite this and the common experience is that it is successful.

When there are a great number to do and you need to recite them in a short time, such as when a person is very seriously sick, if you need to finish like one hundred thousand *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* but it will take time, there is also a short prayer you can say.

Once, one of Lama Atisha's disciples, I think a Kadampa geshe, was very, very sick and needed a lot of Tara Praises recited. I think Lama Atisha or Tara gave this short praise which I just mentioned before, where you can finish a big number in a short time. It's a replacement for the long praise.

When you need success very urgently, when you have something urgent to request, you grab Green Tara's feet on the lotus and put your head under the feet, and then you recite the praise with your whole heart relying upon Tara. It's advised like that, to make this very strong prayer when there's some very urgent thing you need to succeed in.

Then, if there's a very important thing to complete, the day before you do the *Four Mandala Offerings to Chittamani Tara* puja, you should recite this, which contains the *Praises to the Twenty-one Taras* within the *Four Mandala Offerings to Chittamani Tara* puja. It's very effective if you, the day before you do this puja.

There are a few things that makes the puja and your prayers effective. Whether you are a lay person or an ordained person, living in pure morality, living as purely as you are able to, makes your prayer, your puja, very effective. When other people ask you to pray, you have great success. The protectors and deities listen to you because you have done something from your side, practicing pure morality, samaya. It's very easy for them, and because of that, they pay attention to your request. It has power for them to obey you, to listen, to act. Also, keeping the commitments, living in the pure samaya vow, they have to help. The other thing is having a good heart. The more compassion you have, the more you think of benefiting others. Of course, if you have a bodhicitta realization, that's the purest heart, that's the best, but even if you don't have an actual realization, with strong compassion, with the thought of benefiting others with a sincere heart, that also has value. With that attitude, if you recite the prayer, it carries weight. That helps because of your good heart, your sincere heart, the thought of benefiting others.

I mean, there's no question that the best one is a realization of bodhicitta. And another one, of course, is having the right view, but the best is bodhicitta. It's what pleases Tara, what pleases the Dharma protectors, even if the prayer is not done much, it carries big weight, it helps.

Then, of course, if you have attained the realizations of the generation stage and the completion stage, the clear light and illusory body, there is no question, because you are really a yogi. Even the bodhisattvas and the protectors become attendants, servants, to those who have a realization of bodhicitta, especially on the basis of that then having the unification of clear light and illusory body; [they are like servants] to those who are very high yogis, even though they are still unenlightened beings. The protectors are like servants to them, fulfilling all their wishes, giving them support. Whatever they pray for is very powerful.

Think to listen to the oral transmission to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings and for the success of works for teaching of Buddha, and for sentient beings.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission]

THE ORAL TRANSMISSION OF THE KING OF PRAYERS

I did the *lung* of the *Heart Sutra* before. So, I will do the oral transmission of the Buddha Samantabhadra prayer called the *King of Prayers*. When you recite this, it becomes an extensive dedication, the ten numberless hundred thousand prayers of the bodhisattvas are contained in this. If you are able to recite this bodhisattva prayer, the *King of Prayers*, it's an unbelievably powerful purification.

As it's mentioned here in the part talking about the benefits, anyone who keeps it, reads it or recites it to somebody, either to themselves or other sentient beings, only the Buddha can understand the result of this. That means it has like limitless skies of unbelievable benefit. With the ripening aspect results, only the Omniscient One can fully understand all the benefits. So definitely, by reading this, you will achieve enlightenment. Therefore, it says here, "Don't have a two-pointed mind, don't have any doubt."

There is the very common dedication,

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra, too,
Realized things as they are,
I too dedicate all these merits in the best way,
That I may follow their perfect example.

All that I mentioned before, the ten times numberless one hundred thousand prayer, what is contained in the *King of Prayers*, all that is contained in this verse. When we dedicate, this is usually always done. Even though we might do other dedications, this is always done, even if the whole *King of Prayers* is not recited but just the condensed one.

Many practitioners at the end of the day dedicate all the merit collected that day for sentient beings by reciting the *King of Prayers*. That is a very extensive way of dedicating. If you recite this every day,

it becomes a preparation itself for when you die. Amitabha will guide you and you will be reborn in Amitabha Buddha's pure land, the blissful realm. Once you are born there in that blissful pure land, you can complete the path. The definition of a pure land is a place where there is no suffering, not even the name "suffering." There's no such thing as old age, sicknesses, rebirth and death and all these things caused by karma and delusion. You complete the path and then, as it's mentioned in the prayer, you manifest in numberless emanations, in billions and billions and billions of emanations to work for sentient beings.

It's said that the infinite worlds of the ten directions are completely adorned with jewels, which you offer to the buddhas. Then there is also the supreme bliss of the devas and human beings, which you offer to the buddhas. For how long? For eons. For how many eons? Equaling the number of atoms of the worlds of the ten directions. For that many unbelievable eons, you offer to the buddhas and collect that much merit. But just by listening to this *King of Prayers* and generating the wish to achieve enlightenment, just once generating devotion, you collect far greater merit than offering all those infinite worlds of ten directions decorated with all the gold, silver and all the precious jewels, offering to the buddhas as well as all the supreme bliss, all the supreme happiness and pleasure of the devas and human beings, of offering all that to the buddhas, for how many eons? Equaling number of atoms of the worlds of ten directions.

So, I will give the *lung* of this.

[Rinpoche gives the oral transmission]

The best way to take an oral transmission is to hear the words, which means the words are able to leave a positive imprint on your mental continuum. In that way, you can see the benefit in the near future. In your next life, you will be reborn as a human being and you will hear the words of the Dharma teachings. Either later in this life or in the next life, you will meet the Dharma again and hear the teachings, but then, the difference will be like sky and earth. It will be unbelievably easy to understand the words and the meanings, and to be able to practice and then actualize the path and cease the defilements. Then you will be able to achieve liberation and enlightenment. Then you will be able to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to full enlightenment; you will be able to enlighten them. That's the whole advantage, the benefit, of

listening to each word of the oral transmission. Each word leaves a positive imprint on the mind. So, it has all these skies of benefit.

By understanding this, with great joy take the oral transmission. As much as possible, pay attention to every single word.

[Rinpoche continues the oral transmission]

VAJRASATTVA INITIATION MOTIVATION: PURIFYING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The purpose of taking the Vajrasattva permission to practice is to allow you to do the meditation and recitation. As I mentioned before, Lama Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri what was the way to achieve enlightenment. And Manjushri explained the necessary conditions: collecting merits in order to achieve realization of the path to enlightenment; and (the other one) purifying the obstacles, which means the negative karma, the defilements.

So, this Vajrasattva practice meditation and recitation is according to Manjushri's second advice, purifying the obstacles. Then the third one was making single-pointed requests to the guru. That's the guru devotion practice, which means looking at the guru as the Buddha and, as a result, you see the Buddha. With that devotion, seeing that the guru is only the Buddha, free from all mistakes and having all the qualities. With that guru devotion, you make request to be granted blessings and realizations within your heart, your mental continuum. Then, the fourth advice is the actual body, the mind training, and the graduated path to enlightenment.

I mentioned the other day that the one complete negative karma of sexual misconduct has four suffering results, with the ripening aspect result being rebirth in the lower realms, and then the other three we experience in the human realm. Much later, if due to another good karma we are born in the human realm, in that life we will experience all these three types of suffering. In the family, we are incompatible with our partner; they always go against our wishes. We don't get along; the relationship is not harmonious. Even physically living together in the same house, we always quarrel; there's no real peace and happiness in the relationship. Then, there is also the divorce, the

separation. Other people in the office or in the family go against our wishes, and we don't get along. There's no harmony, no peace. That is experiencing the result similar to the cause, as I mentioned.

Then, with creating the result similar to the cause, again we engage in sexual misconduct in that life, because there's a karmic imprint left on the mental continuum by the past negative karma of sexual misconduct. In that life, we engage in it again.

The possessed result is to do with the place, which for sexual misconduct means we live in a very dirty, filthy, unhygienic place. Somehow we have to live in such a place. Even when we normally live in a clean place, sometimes there's karma that we still experience for even five minutes where we have to go through such a terrible place. That is the result of the past negative karma of sexual misconduct.

Then, creating the result similar to the cause. Because of that completed negative karma, we again produce the four suffering results, and one of them is creating the result similar to the cause, doing the act again, engaging in the same negative karma, which again produces the four suffering results. So, like that, it is endless. From this negative karma, sexual misconduct, the suffering becomes endless: we create it again and again, because of the imprint left from this negative karma of sexual misconduct. That makes our suffering endless. We never purify it, we never take the vow to not commit it again, we don't practice morality and we never purify, we don't do any Dharma practice.

To stop experiencing all this, the solution is to purify continuously, very strongly, with the remedy of the four opponent powers until we get a sign that it has been purified. However, if we purify that negative karma, but then we engage in it again, we will again have to experience the suffering result of *that*. Even though the other negative karma is purified, we create it again. That is because of not living in morality, not abstaining from creating negative karma again. Then, we have to experience the ongoing suffering result from that negative karma that we have done again. Therefore, if we don't want to experience all these ongoing sufferings, the solution is to purify the previous one and then live in morality, abstaining from those actions in the future. Together, that is the solution.

To stop experiencing all these kinds of sufferings in samsara, the only solution is practicing Dharma, nothing else. There's nothing else. There are no scientific machines that can stop it, no computers

that can stop it. Computer technology cannot stop it, *only* Dharma practice can stop it. It is very clear; the only solution is that. Therefore, practicing Dharma is universal. You understand? It's universal. It's something everybody has to practice. Anybody who is suffering and who wants happiness has to practice it.

VAJRASATTVA INITIATION MOTIVATION: PURIFYING COVETOUSNESS

Now, the negative karma of covetousness. When we go shopping, there's attachment to things. When we decide to get something, at that time, the karma of covetousness is completed. For example, when we go shopping, how many actions of covetousness do we experience? Shopping is just one example.

Of the ten nonvirtues, we think "I don't create any of the ten nonvirtuous actions. I'm pure. I don't create any of the ten nonvirtuous actions." Actually, we create so many every day. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said that when we go shopping, we come back with a huge mountain of negative karma. We return home with big piles of negative karma. It's very true. While we are shopping, we don't have lamrim in our mind. If our mind is living in renunciation, renouncing this life—there's no question about the renunciation of future lives—we don't create negative karma, the ten nonvirtues, and from the ten nonvirtues, covetousness, we don't create that.

Because we have realizations, the realization of the renunciation to this life, the realization of impermanence and death, knowing we may die even today, even before we get home, with no thought that we are going to live for a long time, for many years—with that realization, if there is something we have to buy, we only buy it for Dharma reasons, to practice Dharma. Because of the realization of impermanence and death, because of that uncertainty, that death can happen today, there is no attachment clinging to this life. Even if we have to buy something, we only buy it for a Dharma reason, to practice Dharma. Even if there's no bodhicitta, it's still for others. Then, it doesn't become negative karma.

Buying with the attachment clinging to this life, because the motivation is nonvirtue, the action becomes nonvirtue, as Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained. Then, the result is only rebirth in the lower realms. Without the lamrim, the motivation can only be attachment clinging to this life.

Therefore, when we go shopping, we are shopping for the lower realms, because that's the result of the action. Shopping is just one example; there are many others. When we get back home, we bring so many things for the lower realms. We have created big piles of negative karma to be born in the lower realms.

When we are shopping, if our mind is in lamrim, if there is right view, we look at everything as empty—ourselves, the things we bought, the people and so forth. We look at the I like this, not the merely labeled I but the real I, the one that appears to us. Our real I, the material things, the people, all this appears as not merely labeled by mind, as real in the sense of existing from their own side. With right view, we look at all of them as hallucinations, seeing the hallucinations as the hallucinations they are. Which means in our heart the understanding comes that they are empty. That also helps to not have attachment arise; that helps to not create the negative karma of covetousness. The meditation on emptiness protects us from delusions arising.

And then of course, the best one is bodhicitta, the thought of benefiting others, having the good heart. With the previous motivation, we are buying something with renunciation, we do it for the Dharma, to achieve liberation from samsara; the need is for that. But now here, with bodhicitta, it's for all sentient beings. Whatever we have to buy is for the benefit of sentient beings. So everything for our survival—food, drink, clothing, shelter, whatever—all these things we buy are for all sentient beings; our own Dharma practice is to benefit all sentient beings. Our life is to benefit all sentient beings. Because whatever we do is for sentient beings, there is no covetousness. Maybe it sounds like there's no coffee! Not coffee, covetousness. There's no attachment because what we do is for other sentient beings with a bodhicitta motivation. There is a huge difference when we buy something for the benefit of sentient beings, to practice Dharma for sentient beings, instead of buying it with the attachment for our own happiness. The other one is such a great joy, bringing a very healthy, peaceful mind, but buying with attachment to this life's happiness is a very obscured mind. It's not an enlightened mind, it's not an awakened mind, the attitude itself is kind of tight or obscured, obscuring. The Tibetan means “disturbing attitude” but I'm adding one more word, “obscuring.”

What is the nature of delusion, how does delusion affect our mental continuum? It disturbs and obscures. Attachment to our body, for example. The body is the nature of suffering, but attachment

blocks us from seeing that. The nature of this body is suffering, but attachment makes us believe something else, that it is not in the nature of suffering. When there's attachment to this body, even though its nature is impermanence, while attachment is arising to this body, it doesn't allow us to see how the nature of this body is impermanence. It blocks that, it obscures that. Then, attachment blocks us from seeing how the nature of the body is empty; it obscures us from seeing that this body does not have true existence; it obscures us from seeing selflessness, the ultimate nature of this body. It makes us see the opposite to reality, which is impermanence, suffering, emptiness—with no self. There is this constant concept of clinging, apprehending that this is truly existent.

And while the nature of the body is dirty, attachment to the body blocks us from seeing this. It obscures us from seeing that the body's nature is dirty, and then we cling to the wrong idea. As Nagarjuna explained, the body is a container of thirty-six dirty things, like the body is a machine making dirty things. Before we eat food, it is clean, but afterwards, when it comes out, it has become dirty. Before going in it is clean but what comes out is dirty. Whatever comes out of the ears, the nose—everything—is dirty, so there is no question about what comes out down below. Why does clean food become dirty by going inside? That shows this body's nature is unclean, dirty, that proves that. Not discovering it is dirty, clinging [to the idea it is clean], being attached to that makes us circle in samsara.

Similarly, whatever feeling we experience is only in the nature of suffering. Not only the suffering of pain but even the pleasures we experience, the temporary pleasures, are only suffering. The attachment obscures us from realizing that feeling is the suffering of change. The feeling is only suffering but it blocks us from seeing that as suffering. It causes us to have the wrong concept, thinking that it's pure happiness. Clinging to that ties us to samsara, to be continuously reborn in samsara. As I mentioned before, while the body is impermanent, attachment clinging to this body obscures us from seeing its nature of impermanence. Then, the concept of permanence arises that doesn't allow us to practice Dharma, to continuously experience the suffering of samsara; it does not allow us to be liberated from samsara by practicing Dharma and actualizing the path.

So, when we are attached to something, it not only disturbs us, never giving us peace on our mental continuum, it also obscures [our mind]. It makes us totally hallucinated, blocking us from seeing all these natures—not only the conventional nature but also the ultimate nature of this body. Here, I'm

using our own body, but it's also very good to [apply to] the body of somebody else, somebody we are attached to. Mindfulness of that is a very important meditation. Meditating on and discovering the conventional nature and the ultimate nature of the body helps us stop attachment from arising. That helps us get out of samsara; it helps us to become liberated from samsara. The other one only ties us to samsara and particularly causes us to be reborn in the lower realms and the upper realms without end, to experience all the sufferings over and over, like that.

I translate “delusion” as obscuring and disturbing. It doesn't matter which comes first. Anyway, it is the obscuring, disturbing negative attitude. When we mention that, it gives the overall negative effect, the harm it does us.

So, what I was saying? Covetousness in our daily life, from the ten nonvirtues, the complete karma of covetousness has four suffering results: rebirth in the lower realm, and then three other suffering results that we experience later when we are reborn as a human being. Experiencing the result similar to the cause that we experience in the human realm is not having success. Although we have wishes and plans, they do not succeed. That's experiencing the result similar to the cause. Then, the possessed result is similar, I think, in that the produce of the country [we live in], the desirable things, the treasures or the things we need do not happen. Other people in that area are able to find things like water but for us the water disappears or dries up. This is an example.

Then, creating the result similar to the cause. Because we previously engaged in covetousness, then due to the karmic imprint from past covetousness, we commit covetousness again. And, again that completed action produces the four suffering results, one of them being creating the result similar to the cause, which *again* produces the four sufferings. So, it is endless. From one negative karma of covetousness, the suffering is endless. If we don't purify it with the remedy of the four opponent powers and if we don't live in morality, abstaining from that nonvirtue—if we don't do these two practices—the suffering from that negative karma is endless.

That is why the Vajrasattva practice is so important. I'm not talking about gaining realizations. Just for a good rebirth in the next life, just for happiness, to stop all these sufferings, the Vajrasattva practice becomes so essential. We can't wait for even a second. If we think of just one negative karma that will cause us suffering on and on, endlessly, it's so scary—much scarier than bird flu,

much scarier than SARS, much scarier than cancer or AIDS. Even when we die, that is just the separation of the consciousness from the body of this life. It doesn't cause AIDS or cancer in all the future lives. So, that is not frightening, that's only the end of this life. Death doesn't cause us to have cancer or AIDS on and on, endlessly.

Death seems the most frightening thing in the world, but in reality it's nothing compared to one negative karma of covetousness or gossiping. (I mentioned covetousness, but gossiping is the same.) One negative karma of gossiping, if it's not purified well and if we then don't practice morality and abstain further from that, it will cause endless suffering. This is much more frightening, much scarier [than death]. When we know this, we can't wait; we can't fall asleep, we can't eat food without doing something right away to purify this negative karma. It becomes so serious. If we really think about karma, if we really understand, it's so serious. However many Vajrasattvas we have to do, however many millions, we have to start immediately. This is without talking about the need to purify all the defilements in order to achieve realizations. This is how serious it is. The great need to practice Vajrasattva is like that.

I've only mentioned one or two or three karmas, but there are so many. In one day, we have completed many negative karmas of covetousness and gossiping, so many. Then, there are others. From time to time, there could also be heresy. If we really watch, we will see there can also be heresy about the Buddha's teachings, like doubting that the Buddha's teaching on karma could possibly be like this. For example, with karma, in a sutra the Buddha talked about a golden elephant making golden *kaka*. There are quite a number of stories on karma that Buddha himself explained. Most of the karmic stories are in the sutra teachings, but some are mentioned in the lamrim. These stories can be hard to believe, especially the stories brought there in the lamrim.

There are books in the West that show all kinds of people; some have very small bodies and very big faces. There are all kinds of humans being born, unbelievable, you can't imagine. In India you see people like that on the road. There are books that show pictures of all these people. The title is [*Ripley's*] *Believe It or Not*. Whether you believe it or not, I had a copy in Tushita. I think Dr Adrian brought one from France.

Anyway, whether you believe it or not, it's similar to those karmic stories the Buddha explained in the sutras that are included in the lamrim. [We can mistakenly] think that karma is nothing, that it is something not fixed, but karma is fixed, definite, and just as there are unimaginable, unimaginable, unimaginable good things that can happen by doing good karma, there are also unimaginable bad things that can happen from negative karma. The bodies these people have come from negative karma. This is the result of having lived an unethical life, whether or not you believe all these pictures of people born in all kinds of unbelievable, unimaginable ways. It is basically from negative karma, from not practicing morality. It's similar to the stories mentioned in the sutras and the lamrim.

I lost my path! Now I remembered. I was talking about heresy. If we watch our mind, sometimes there's heresy for the Buddha's teachings, heresy for the guru and heresy for the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Heresy happens, but if we don't watch, it looks like we haven't done anything. In particular, when we hear those stories about karma, sometimes it can happen, and we start to doubt that enlightenment is possible. Maybe this thought doesn't last long, sometimes just a few minutes, but it can happen like that. "Maybe liberation's not true." Due to past negative imprints, this can happen, even for a few seconds.

Here, I'm just talking about one negative karma, but we have to think about how many times today we have done that one from the ten nonvirtuous actions. From the many, even just that one, how many times have we done it today, for example, covetousness or gossiping? And usually there is ill will as well. Depending on the individual person, for somebody, this [negative karma] is much more in daily life; and for somebody else that [negative karma] is much more in daily life. However, in one day there are so many other negative karmas, even from the ten nonvirtues. And in one week there are so many, and in one month there are so many, and in one year there are so many. From birth up to now, we have collected so many. Now if we add next—sorry! Not next, I meant past lives—if we add all the past lives we have had, from beginningless samsaric rebirths up to now, it is unimaginable. There are so many negative karmas from beginningless rebirths we haven't finished experiencing; there are so many we haven't purified. Even just from today with one kind of negative karma, there are so many. Now you can see! If we think about karma, there can be no way we can fall asleep! When we think about karma in detail like this, we might vomit or have a heart attack!

You can see why we need purification, which means the Vajrasattva practice. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained that if we kill one tiny insect today, unless we purify with Vajrasattva at the end of the day, the negative karma becomes double the next day. Then, on the third day, that doubles again, increasing to four times, and the next day it becomes eight times. So, like this, it increases. Recently, when Kyabje Choden Rinpoche was teaching the *Lamrim Chenmo* section on karma, he said after five days it has increased, how much? Thirty-two times? [*Student*: Sixty-four.] Sixty-four times after five days? And the third day, it becomes? [*Student*: A hundred and thirty-two.]

A hundred and thirty-two. OK, thank you very much. So, after five days, if we don't purify by doing the Vajrasattva practice at the end of the day, after five days Venerable George said a hundred and thirty-two. Right? Oh, he said sixty-four!

That's very frightening. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said that, having killed a tiny insect without purifying with Vajrasattva at the end of the day, by increasing, after fifteen days it becomes as heavy as having killed a human being. Even though we might not have a reputation for killing human beings, in reality we have the same heavy karma! Then I think Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said after eighteen days it had increased one hundred thousand, I've forgotten now, one hundred and thirty-one thousand and seventy-two. [Pabongka actually said 16,384. (*Liberation*, p. 194.)] That's what in the *Jorchö* commentary and in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*.

Anyway, if you recite the Vajrasattva mantra even twenty-one times, it stops negative karmas multiplying the next day. You need to recite the long [hundred-syllable] mantra twenty-one times. There is also the short mantra OM VAJRASATTVA HUM. There is also OM VAJRASATTVA AH, but when I asked my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, he explained it is better to say OM VAJRASATTVA HUM. Even saying the short mantra stops negative karma multiplying the next day, but you have to recite the short one at least twenty-eight times. If you are reciting the hundred-syllable mantra, it's twenty-one times. This has the power to stop the negative karmas multiplying the next day. Not only that, it purifies today's negative karma, it purifies yesterday's negative karma and the past negative karma. You should also understand that.

There are fourteen root falls in the tantric vows, and then there are the secondary vices and the eight heavinesses, within the mother tantra, the vices, the degenerations of breaking these. If we have

received a root fall, by reciting 100,000 Vajrasattva mantras, we can purify even these very heavy negative karmas. That might be the same with the root bodhisattva vows we have received or the root pratimoksha vows. I guess it could relate to all those.

Otherwise, even though we might not have the reputation of killing a human being or anything like that, one negative karma of having killed a tiny insect, or covetousness or gossiping or whatever, because karma increases, by increasing, that one small negative karma, like a speck of dust, becomes the size of a mountain, like the size of this Earth, by the time we die. It becomes so heavy that [we will have to endure] the lower realms for numberless eons. It is difficult to see when we will finish experiencing all this negative karma, the ripening aspect result of rebirth in the lower realms; it is difficult to see when we will finish and when we can come back to the human realm.

Doing the purification practice is not just for our own happiness, not just to achieve a rebirth as a god or human in our next life. It is not just to have temporal happiness or even to achieve liberation for ourselves. It's not even for that. The purpose of doing the purification practice, the main purpose of life, is to benefit other sentient beings. The highest benefit is to free them from all the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment. For that, we need to achieve the state of the omniscient mind, and for that we need to actualize the path. Therefore, we need to purify all the defilements, all the negative karma.

Therefore, taking the Vajrasattva initiation is for the benefit of all sentient beings. Think that your motivation is that. I thought to go over Pabongka's *Calling the Guru from Afar*, to chant that in English and in Tibetan, so that becomes a very profound motivation, but I think that's enough now.

So, to do the *jenang*, there are the graduated activities from the side of the lama—self-generation, front generation and blessing the vase—and the general activities from the side of the disciple—washing the mouth, prostration, distributing flowers and the mandala offering. But before that, tormas are to be given to the interferers who interfere with granting and receiving the *jenang*.

Maybe you need to go to *pipi*? Because George got up, it reminded me of a pipi break. If you need to go pipi, you can go.

VAJRASATTVA INITIATION MOTIVATION: THE FOUR OPPONENT POWERS

What I mentioned before was based on the ten nonvirtuous actions, but they are not the only negative karmas we commit. They are just some examples of the negative karmas but not all. When we do the Vajrasattva practice or any other purification practice with the remedy of the four opponent powers, one power is the power of reliance or dependence. Because negative karmas are collected in relation to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we first purify the negative karmas collected with sentient beings by depending on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and by depending on the sentient beings.

The next one is called the power of regret. The first one is *ten gyi tob* in Tibetan. If you want to learn Tibetan, it's *ten gyi tob*. This one, the power of regret is *nyejé sinjin gyi tob*. We think about the shortcomings of negative karma, like having degenerated the pratimoksha, bodhisattva or tantric vows, and the shortcomings of having committed negative karma. Then, we feel strong regret, strong repentance.

According to Western psychology, if you have done something wrong that has harmed others, it is regarded as bad to feel regret, to feel sad about making a mistake, about having committed negative karma. That's what I hear anyway. That's something to abandon. But here in Buddhism, with the practice of purification, we use this as a medicine, we use this repentance, feeling sorry for having committed negative karma, to heal. We use it to purify our negative karma, so we don't have to suffer, and also so we can benefit others. We use the meditation practice as a medicine, but, in other words, it's psychology that helps us purify the negative karma so we don't have to suffer from it from life to life. Then, we not only achieve realizations, which is the most important thing, but we also have all this happiness and are free from having to experience all those suffering results of the negative karma.

It's like when we meditate on impermanence and death. We generate fear of death, but it should be useful fear, fear we can use to meditate with, to practice Dharma, fear that persuades our mind to practice Dharma. As Milarepa said,

I fled to the mountains because I feared death.

I have realized emptiness, the mind's primordial state.

Were I to die now, I have no fear.

Meditating on how samsara is in the nature of suffering, Milarepa used the fear to realize the nature of the primordial mind, emptiness. Then, he overcame death; he had no more death after realizing that. Therefore, what he's saying is, "Now, even if death comes to me, I have no fear." After we have overcome death, there's no danger of death. After we have actualized the clear light and illusory body, we have overcome death. So, you have to understand this kind of fear is totally different.

Usually there is a lot of misunderstanding about meditation on impermanence and death and the lower realm sufferings, but actually it's incredibly skillful. We can use that fear we generate by meditating on these things, but when we think about impermanence and death or when we think about death, we don't have to be afraid. Whether we are afraid or not is an individual thing, depending on the individual level of mind.

This is a great thing. I met this father yesterday during the long-life puja, an old man who is the father of Pemba, the resident teacher of our Hong Kong center. His father came and I was very happy to meet him. I met him on the road when I was coming from the airport. Why I was very happy to meet him was because I heard the father constantly chant OM MANI PADME HUM. When guests came to his house he would go outside because he said it was a waste of his life, just chatting. So, he just keeps on reciting OM MANI PADME HUM and he doesn't care, because the thought of death is there. Because death can come at any time, at any moment, he keeps chanting OM MANI PADME HUM, which is the mantra of compassion, the mantra of Compassion Buddha. [Thinking of death] does not just mean thinking that we are going to be reborn in the lower realms and suffer, that we are not going to have a good rebirth. It's not just that. When we chant the mantra so much, we receive great blessings.

I have seen many people, all those old fathers and mothers, who chant it naturally. They know nothing about philosophy; they have no intellectual understanding of the Dharma, but because they chant OM MANI PADME HUM with faith, with so much devotion, they receive the blessings of

Chenrezig, the blessings of the mantra, and because of that, they naturally generate a warm, compassionate heart, with so much loving kindness for others.

Even in my home in Solu Khumbu, there are many old people like that, so good-hearted but they know nothing, they can only chant OM MANI PADME HUM all day and night. I think this father definitely has a realization of impermanence and death. I think this old man only very rarely goes when a lama gives teachings. I don't think it's normal. And even if he did go, I don't think he would understand much, maybe just some simple stories or something, maybe some few words but, like my mother, I don't think he could understand the actual teachings. Still, I think this old man must have a realization of impermanence and death. When people come to chat, he says it's a waste of life, so he goes just outside and keeps chanting OM MANI PADME HUM. He doesn't want to waste his life just chatting. He's like this all day long. That's a sign that there is definitely some progression there. I think definitely a realization of impermanence and death.

Yesterday, during the long-life puja, he came and what he told me was this. He looked at my face very strongly and said, "Lama" or something, "Now even if death comes to me, I have no fear." That's what he wanted to express to me very strongly. He was not lying. I could see from his face he was telling the truth. He has confidence that he will never be reborn in the lower realms.

I don't know why this story came. I've forgotten. [A student prompts]

Huh? Ah, fear, yes, that's right. Before he would have been afraid, with a lot of fear, now there's no fear, but he has no interest in the teachings, just faith, just strongly chanting OM MANI PADME HUM all day and night. If we could all be like that, when death comes, we would feel total confidence, we would be totally unafraid. I was very happy to hear the story and was actually thinking of visiting his home. Pemba, his son, the resident teacher of Hong Kong, told me about the father. That's great.

It's the same with my mother. The mantra has the blessing, with no intelligence, nothing. My mother went to Tibet to attend the teachings of Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, a very high lama of the Nyingma tradition, who was the guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guru and my guru, but I think she couldn't understand the actual teaching. Between the teachings, he gave some simple instructions, such as how to sit when you are in front of the guru. Rinpoche's guru mentioned during the

teachings that you must put your hands in such a way and sit sort of respectably. She understood things like that. Or the lama told her once, when you chant a mantra, you don't recite one mantra and pass two beads. She understood these simple instructions, but when the lama went back to the actual teaching, she kept on chanting, OM MANI PADME HUM, OM MANI PADME HUM, OM MANI PADME HUM, and was unable to understand any of the actual teachings.

Of course, she was so incredibly good-hearted. Because she chanted OM MANI PADME HUM so much, even though she had no real intellectual understanding, by the blessings of the mantra, she became so compassionate and warm-hearted. Even if I do have a little compassion, hers is thousands and thousands of times greater. Maybe I have a little bit more intellectual understanding and she has nothing, just devotion, but her heart is much purer.

She was a nun, ordained by His Holiness Ling Rinpoche at Bodhgaya with many other Western Sangha. I don't know which year, but then she passed away and reincarnated. And I think maybe not enough pujas and things were done to pacify life obstacles, because her reincarnation didn't live long. He went to Penor Rinpoche's Nyingma monastery in South India, and after fifteen days he fell down and injured himself. There were many operations, but he passed away in Nepal. My sister checked with someone, and I heard that the reincarnation's reincarnation is in the Chenrezig pure land. Not the Potala, Tibet, but the pure land Potala.

What was I saying? Oh, yeah. That's right. The fear of death in Buddhism is like this. We use the fear. What I was trying to say is that not everybody has fear when they meditate on impermanence and death. For those who have overcome death, there's no fear, like Milarepa said. It's not necessary, it depends on each individual. It's not necessary that there is the fear of death. Like that old father, who has no fear of death because he has full confidence that he won't be reborn in the lower realms.

However, what I was saying was, the general thing is that we use the fear to overcome fear. By meditating on impermanence and death, on the nature of samsara, fear arises, which persuades us to actualize the path. Then, we don't reincarnate in samsara, we overcome death and we no longer have fear. We have overcome fear. Fear is like surgery. We wouldn't have surgery if we didn't have a

sickness or snake bite. Usually, we wouldn't like to have surgery but it becomes useful to heal that heavy sicknesses so we can have a long life. Similarly, we use the fear that arises to overcome fear.

It's the same thing with repentance, regret, in Buddhism. Of course, if we hadn't created the negative karma, how could we generate regret? If we have engaged in negative karma, then we feel sad or we feel regretful, thinking we should not have done that. Because the result will be suffering, that makes us sad. Doing this practice, eventually, by generating regret, our negative karma becomes thinner. The stronger our regret, the thinner our negative karma becomes. If we can generate very strong regret, our negative karma becomes that much thinner. From the four remedial powers, this is the most important one to purify negative karma. By practicing this, we are able to purify our negative karma. Having completely purified it, we will not experience the suffering result, so then there will be nothing to be sad about. It will only be the cause to rejoice, to be happy. There's nothing to feel sad about or to regret, because that karma is purified already.

After we have achieved the exalted Mahayana path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, and have become a bodhisattva, when we have completely abandoned the suffering of birth, old age, sicknesses and death, when we reach the third Mahayana path, the right-seeing path, there is no reason to feel sadness or regret; we have overcome all these sufferings. It's not that even after we become a buddha we still have regret, it's not like that. We are beyond the reason to regret. So, we have to understand that it is used here as medicine to heal our suffering; it becomes psychology.

I think what I was going to say was that negative karma is not only about the ten nonvirtuous actions. Actions done with anger, ignorance, such as ignorance of karma, and attachment clinging to this life or the thought of the eight worldly dharmas—any actions done with any of these poisonous minds are nonvirtue. We should especially think of this when we do the purification practice, when we practice the four remedial powers, and especially regret. The first thing is the ten nonvirtuous actions collected in one day, in this life and then from beginningless rebirths. Then, we need to think that the suffering result of one negative karma is endless. And there are ten nonvirtuous actions done so many times in one day, in this life and from beginningless rebirths.

On top that, even if we have not taken pratimoksha, bodhisattva or tantric vows in this life, we have taken them in the past lives, and we have broken and degenerated them. If we have taken them in

this life and broken them, we should think of those specific ones—the broken pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows in this life, and then from beginningless rebirths.

There is general negative karma. What is negative karma, what is nonvirtue? It is an action done with ignorance, anger, attachment clinging to this life, which results only in suffering. That is definition of “nonvirtue.” We should check from the morning for twenty-four hours what motivation we had. When we got up, when we got dressed? If it was with attachment clinging to this life, it becomes nonvirtue. What motivation did we have when we had breakfast? Again, if it was attachment clinging to this life’s happiness, eating breakfast becomes nonvirtue. What was the motivation for washing? Again, if it was done with attachment clinging to this life, all the washing, cleaning the mouth, everything—it all becomes negative karma.

Then, going to work, what motivation was there? Again, with attachment, when there is no bodhicitta, no renunciation, no right view, as well as no guru devotion, doing service for the guru, none of those, if there is attachment clinging to this life, all the many hours doing work only becomes negative karma, nonvirtue. Then, eating lunch, if again the motivation is attachment, everything becomes negative karma. And dinner, again checking the motivation—if there is attachment clinging to this life’s happiness, eating dinner becomes negative karma. With sleeping it is even more difficult to keep a pure motivation. By that time, we are exhausted. Just like now! So again, what is the motivation? If the motivation is attachment clinging to this life, however many hours we sleep—eight hours, fifteen hours, twenty-four hours—it all becomes negative karma. For so many of us, it’s like that.

So, negative karma is not just the ten nonvirtues. It is very important to think of the definition of negative karma, of nonvirtue. After thinking about that, we examine our twenty-four hours—one week, one month, one year, then from birth up to now, and then from beginningless rebirths.

Negative karma is like the dust of this earth. If we do not analyze like this, we think that we are perfect, pure. We think we have done nothing wrong. We have never killed a human being. We don’t steal, but actually stealing is an extensive subject. There are many details. Normally, people think, “I didn’t kill a human being. I did nothing wrong. Why should I get sick? Why do I have this trouble? Why does this person give me trouble? Why did I get cancer? I didn’t do anything wrong.”

People usually think like that. If we examine like this, we can generate a wide view of negative karma. Then, generating regret becomes very powerful. Then, when we chant mantras or do prostrations, whatever we do, it's really very sincere, it's very powerful. Then, reciting mantras, generally any virtue becomes the antidote.

I did enquire about the meaning of the next power, which people call the power of the remedy. It might be the remedy, for example, reciting mantras. By practicing the remedy, such as reciting mantras, the result is always happiness.

Then the last one is the power of resolve. That is the power to not commit again. There are a few different explanations. If we practice the four remedial powers, we are able to stop experiencing the ripening aspect result [and be reborn] in the human realm and we can stop the three results there. These three are the possessed result to do with the place, the environment, and experiencing the result creating similar to the cause [and creating the result similar to the cause]. That's one way of explaining it.

The explanation about Vajrasattva is the same as I explained yesterday about Tara. Who is Vajrasattva? Here it says Vajra Sattva. In Tibetan it is Dorje Sempa. The definite meaning is that Vajrasattva is the absolute guru, *don dam lama*, all the buddhas' holy mind, the dharmakaya, the primordial mind. For those who haven't received a highest tantra initiation, it is kind of secret to mention transcendental wisdom of nondual bliss and voidness. The strict way of talking becomes secret. However, this absolute guru, the dharmakaya, binds with infinite compassion for us sentient beings. It pervades all phenomena and is nondual with the emptiness of all the phenomena forever. Because it is bound with infinite compassion, whenever a sentient being's karma is ripened to receive guidance, it manifests right there without delay of even a second. The minute our karma is ripened to receive guidance, it manifests and we receive guidance in any aspect—in a pure aspect, an impure, ordinary aspect, in an animal form, even in the aspect of rocky mountains or a bridge or whatever, besides in the aspect of a buddha. According to the karma of the sentient beings, it manifests exactly as that. Then it guides the sentient being from happiness to happiness, to enlightenment. It guides us from happiness to happiness to enlightenment. The ultimate guru is the definitive meaning of Vajrasattva.

By doing particular actions to purify our negative karma, it allows us to achieve the complete path, the path of merit and of wisdom and achieve the dharmakaya and rupakaya, which means achieving enlightenment. For that it manifests into interpretive meaning, Vajrasattva, Dorje Sempa. Here is the highest tantra aspect, with the father-mother embracing. In the lower tantra, Vajrasattva is solitary, just the father without the wisdom mother. The highest tantra aspect is one being; it's not like an ordinary couple, it's not like two separate people embracing, this is one being. It's just the dharmakaya, the ultimate guru, manifesting like that. It manifests like that for our meditation, for our practice.

Doing that visualization, with the deity, the father-mother embracing, helps to actualize the direct cause of the dharmakaya, to actualize the clear light, the primordial mind. It actualizes the great bliss. By continuing, by developing that, it's like an atomic bomb, it's the quickest, most powerful way to cease the dualistic view and the negative imprint, the delusions. That's how we achieve enlightenment, the unified state of Vajradhara, not only within one life but within a brief lifetime of these degenerated times, within a number of years. That is why Vajrasattva shows this aspect of father-mother embracing. It has a very profound purpose to allow sentient beings to quickly achieve enlightenment. So now you understand what Vajrasattva is, and the purpose.

[Rinpoche confers the Vajrasattva initiation]

DEDICATIONS

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merit collected by others, may the bodhicitta be generated in my heart, in the hearts of my family members and all of us here, in the hearts of all the students, the benefactors of this organization and all the supporters and those who give up their life for the organization, doing service for sentient beings and the buddhas. There are so many. May bodhicitta be generated in all their hearts, in the hearts of all those people who are doing service, all the directors of the centers, then each center has many members and all the staff doing hard work, then the board of FPMT, so everyone, and then in the hearts of all the sentient beings.”

[Rinpoche and students chant dedication prayers]

“May the bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of everyone, especially in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

[Rinpoche and students chant dedication prayers]

“May the bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of everyone, especially in the hearts of all the leaders of the world.” If bodhicitta is generated in the heart of leaders, then all the millions of people in one country would have so much peace and be led into the correct path, the path of peace. That makes a huge difference.

“May bodhicitta be generated in the hearts of all the terrorists, all the people who have vicious thoughts to harm others, without delay of even a second. And in those whose hearts bodhicitta is generated, may it increase.”

[Rinpoche and students chant dedication prayers]

We have this incredible opportunity, me to grant and you to receive the *jenang*, which allows us to do the purification practice. As I mentioned, there are all these benefits from doing the Vajrasattva practice. We have this opportunity and we have gained much Dharma understanding during this month, then in this life. Those who are here for the first time, please understand that. All this is by the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Therefore, we dedicate the merits, “May His Holiness have a long and stable life and may all his holy wishes succeed immediately. And may the Mainland China’s officials, immediately without delay of even a second, be able to devote to His Holiness, to realize His Holiness is the embodiment of the Buddha’s compassion and to do everything exactly as His Holiness wishes. May they invite His Holiness to Mainland China and may the billions of people there be able to receive teachings from His Holiness and enjoy the happiness of Dharma, like the sun shining. Also, may the people in Tibet have total freedom and be continuously guided by His Holiness, and receive teachings and preserve and spread the Dharma. May there be even more bodhisattvas and buddhas in Tibet than before, and may Buddhism be able to spread in the rest of the world and flourish forever.”

[Rinpoche and students chant dedication prayers]

Then in particular, as I mentioned before, Lama Yeshe, who is kinder than all the three-time buddhas, all this also came from Lama. “May whatever holy wishes Lama Yeshe had before be actualized for the students, for the organization and for the sentient beings. And may Lama Ösel Rinpoche have a long life and be able to show the same qualities as Lama Tsongkhapa and offer extensive benefit to sentient beings and the Buddha.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I be able offer limitless skies of benefit to sentient beings, to the teachings of Buddha, like Lama Tsongkhapa did, and may I have the same qualities within me as Lama Tsongkhapa has from now and in all the lifetimes.

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may I and all the students in this organization, all the supporters, those people who give up their life to this organization, doing service for others, and all the rest of the sentient beings, may we meet only perfectly qualified Mahayana gurus in all the lifetimes, and be able to see only enlightened beings from each sentient being’s side and from my own side; may we do only actions most pleasing to the holy minds of the virtuous friends and be able to fulfill the holy wishes of all the virtuous friends, from each sentient being’s side and from my own side in all the lifetimes. May I never rise heresy for even a second in the actions of the virtuous friend. With devotion, may I see them as pure all their actions. And may the blessings of guru enter my heart.

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may all conditions for all the funding, all the necessary needs and conditions be received without delay of even a second and may the five-hundred-foot Maitreya Buddha statue be constructed as quickly as possible. May it continue to abide in this world, and may it be most beneficial to sentient beings, bringing them to enlightenment as quickly as possible and especially actualizing bodhicitta in their hearts. May it bring perfect peace and happiness to everybody in the world, offering service to all the Sangha, the monasteries, the monks and nuns in different parts of the world, preserving and spreading the Dharma, and building various stupas in different parts of the world, and doing social services for the happiness of sentient beings. May it help the centers and all the projects and may all

the centers be most beneficial for sentient beings and be the cause for sentient beings to generate faith in karma and refuge, and the cause to actualize bodhicitta in the hearts of sentient beings, and especially to spread Lama Tsongkhapa's teaching, the unification of sutra and tantra, in the hearts of all the sentient beings.

“Due to all the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, by having generated bodhicitta in everyone's heart in this world, may war, famine, disease, torture, the dangers of fire, water, air, earthquakes that are happening in any part of the world be stopped immediately and may nobody in this world experience all these undesirable things forever.

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, those who rely upon me, those I promised to pray for, those whose names were given to me, those numberless beings who died, all the students up to now who have passed away, then the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, all those who have unimaginable suffering now, may they immediately be liberated from all the sufferings and reincarnate in a pure land, where they can be enlightened or receive a perfect human body. May they achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to the three-time merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, may all the organizers of the course here, including the Lama Lhundrup, the abbot of the monastery, and all the Sangha here, the monks and nuns, have a long life and be healthy. May they be able to complete the practice actualizing the graduated path to enlightenment in this very lifetime, the common path, the wisdom path, and particularly the two stages in this very lifetime. And may all the rest of the Sangha in this organization have a long life, be healthy and be able to complete sutra understanding, the realizations, the path to enlightenment, in this very lifetime by living in the pure vinaya. And may all the students and all the supporters and those who give up their life to the organization, doing service to benefit sentient beings, may everyone have a long life and be healthy. May all their wishes succeed immediately according to holy Dharma and especially actualize Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings, the unification of sutra and tantra, in this very lifetime without delay of even a second.

“May any students who rely upon me, who I promised to pray for, whose names have been given to me, those who are sick, those who are devoted and always helping the Sangha and helping the

organization, especially Henry. May he have a long life and be healthy and immediately recover from all the cancer. Then, may all other students in this organization have the most meaningful life.

“Due to the past, present, future merits collected by me, the three-time merits collected by others, that which exist but do not exist from their own side, may the I, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty, achieve Vajrasattva’s enlightenment, which exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty, lead all the sentient beings, who exist but who do not exist from their own side, who are totally empty, to that Vajrasattva’s enlightenment, which exists but does not exist from its own side, which is totally empty, by myself alone, who exists but does not exist from its own side, who is totally empty.

“I dedicate all the merits to be able to follow the holy extensive deeds of Samantabhadra and Manjugosha, as they realized. I dedicate all my merits in the same way the three-time buddhas dedicate their merits. May the general teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa flourish forever and spread in all the ten directions in this world by completely actualizing them in my heart and in the hearts of all the students and supporters and in the hearts of everyone in this world.”

[Rinpoche and students chant dedication prayers]

Thank you very much, for all your patience and all your pains, for everything. So, please leave. I still have to do a few prayers.