

THE FOUR
MINDFULNESSES

ON THE BASIS OF A POEM BY THE SEVENTH DALAI LAMA
WITH COMMENTARY BY KYABJE LING RINPOCHE

Gelek Rinpoche

ALSO BY GELEK RIMPOCHE

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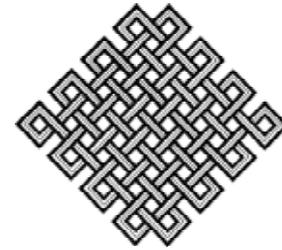
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THE FOUR
MINDFULNESSES



GELEK RIMPOCHE

A JEWEL HEART TRANSCRIPT

2009

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Gelek Rinpoche, The Four Noble Truths
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Jewel Heart Transcripts are lightly to moderately edited transcriptions of the teachings of Kyabje Gelek Rinpoche and others teachers who have taught at Jewel Heart. Their purpose is to provide Rinpoche's students, as well as all others who are interested, with these extremely valuable teachings in a way that gives one the feeling of being present at the teachings.

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This is the transcription of two teachings Gelek Rinpoche gave in Garrison, NY in 2005 and 2006, on the Seventh Dalai Lama's Song of the Four Mindfulnesses. The first year Rinpoche based his teachings on a commentary by Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, the second year on a text by the First Panchen Lama. In this edition inserts from the teachings in The Netherlands 2007 are added. The Seventh Dalai Lama's Song is inserted here in bold type italic; Kyabje Ling Rinpoche's commentary in bold type.

The beauty of this transcript is that it carries the traditional commentary by Kyabje Ling Rinpoche – in bold type – as well as the western translation of it by Gelek Rinpoche. The Question and Answer sections are very rich, providing the reader with fine information and solid advice for one's own spiritual practice.

Merging the teachings of both years into one smooth stream was not possible without cutting some of the flavor of the teachings. The reader will be confronted with a few overlaps as well as with the jumping back and forth that goes with an oral teaching tradition.

The headings do not function as real outlines; they are there just for easy reading. As a help to the reader notes are added. Transcription and initial editing was done by Hartmut Sagolla. Final editing and possible mistakes are on my account.

Jewel Heart, January 2008

Marianne Soeter

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SONG OF THE FOUR MINDFULNESSES

Root Text by the Seventh Dalai Lama

U MAI TA TRI TREN PA ZHI TEN GYI GUR YANG NGÖ
DRUB CHAR BEB ZHUG SO

1 *thab she zung jug gyur mä kyi den teng na
kyab kün ngo wo trin chen gyi la ma zhug
pang tog dzog pai sang gye shig de na da
kyön tog pang nä dag nang gi söl wa thob
rang sem gya yän du ma jog mö gü kyi ngang du
zhog
dren pa jä me du shä ne mö gü kyi ngang du
sung*

2 *kor wa thar me dug ngäl gyi tsön ra na
de wai phong pai rig drug gi sem chen kyam
drin gyi kyang pai pha ma nam de na da
chag dang phang ne che dzin dang nying je gom
rang sem gya yän du ma jog nying je yi ngang du
zhog
dren pa jä me du shä ne nying je yi ngang du zung*

- 3 *kyi du tshor wa de chen gyi zhel ye na*
phung kham dag pa rang lü kyi lha ku zhug
ku sum yer me yi dam zhig de na da
phal bar ma dzin nga gyal dang sel nang kyong
rang sem ja yän du ma jog sab sel gyi ngang du
shog
dren pa je me du shä ne sab sel gyi ngang du
zung
- 4 *nang zhing si pa she ja yi kyil khor na*
chö nyi dön dam ö sel gyi nam khe kyab
jo drel dön gyi ne lu shi de na da
lob shä pang ne tong sang gi ngo wo tob
rang sem gya yän du ma jog chö nyi kyi ngang
du shog
dren pa je me du shä ne chö nyi kyi ngang du
zung
- 5 *nang wa na tsog tsog dru gi zhi do na*
zhi tsa drel wai nyi chö kyi sa si thong
lu tri gyu mai tä mo zhi de na da
den no ma nyam tong nyi kyi ngo wo tob
rang sem gya yän du ma jog nang tong gi ngang
du shog
dren pa je me du shä ne nang tong gi ngang du
zung

SONG OF THE FOUR
 MINDFULNESSES

Root Text by the Seventh Dalai Lama

*On the seat of the immutable union of method
 and wisdom*
*Sits the teacher who is the entity of all the refuge,
 A Buddha who has perfect abandonment and
 wisdom is there.*
*Forsaking thought of defects, make a petition
 with pure perception,*
*Not letting your mind stray, place it within
 admiration and respect,*
*Making your attention unforgettable,
 maintain it within admiration and respect.*
*In the prison of the suffering of limitless cyclic
 existence*
*Wander the six types of sentient beings bereft of
 happiness;*
*Fathers and mothers who protected you with
 kindness are there.*
*Forsaking desire and hatred, meditate on
 endearment and compassion.*

*Not letting your mind stray, place it within
compassion.*

*Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it
within compassion.*

*In the Divine Mansion of great bliss, pleasant to
feel, abides the divine body,*

*Which is your own body of pure aggregates and
constituents.*

A Deity with Three Bodies inseparable is there.

*Not conceiving yourself to be ordinary, practice
divine pride and vivid appearance.*

*Not letting your mind stray, place it within the
profound and the manifest.*

*Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it
within the profound and manifest.*

*Throughout the circle of appearing and occurring
objects of knowledge*

*pervades the space of clear light which is reality,
the ultimate.*

An inexpressible mode of being of objects is there.

*Forsaking mental fabrications, look to the entity
of immaculate emptiness.*

*Not letting your mind stray, place it within
reality.*

*Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it
within reality.*

At the cross-roads of the varieties of appearance

and the six consciousnesses

*is seen the confusion of the baseless phenomena of
duality.*

*The illusory spectacles of a deceiving magician
are there.*

*Not thinking they are true, look to their entity of
emptiness.*

*Not letting your mind stray, place it within
appearance and emptiness.*

*Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it
within appearance and emptiness.*

Translation: J. Hopkins

I
SOURCE OF THIS TEACHING



MANJUSHRI - BUDDHA OF WISDOM

Welcome everybody. When we decided to do this retreat, my thought was to share with you a teaching on the Four Mindfulnesses.

Normally, when you hear about the Four Mindfulnesses, straight away you will think about the mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of mind and mindfulness of all existence¹. Teachings on these Four Mindfulnesses, usually called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, are available from many sources, including the Buddhist traditions coming out of South-East Asia.

The Four Mindfulnesses I am going to talk about here, however, are different. These are four points to be mindful of always. It is a secret teaching given by Manjushri to Je Tsongkhapa. Those who are familiar with Buddhist terminology will know, but in general, the easiest way to tell you who Manjushri is, is that he is the Buddha of Wisdom. You can talk a lot about whether he is a buddha, a bodhisattva, a manifestation or an embodiment of wisdom or whatever, but let's just stick with Buddha of Wisdom. Manjushri taught Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelug tradition in Tibet, who lived from 1357 to 1419.

TSONGKHAPA AND MANJUSHRI

During the earlier period of his study Tsongkhapa was not satisfied with the existing explanations on wisdom that were available in Tibet at that time. He wanted to go to India to do some further study. But by that time, the great Indian Buddhist universities had declined quite a lot. It had also become quite difficult to go there. Further, Je Tsongkhapa had already over a thousand students following him everywhere. If he had gone to India it would have become a great hardship for a lot of people. Actually, Tsongkhapa used to go from place to place to either receive or give teachings and people started following him around. They heard he was going somewhere and just went along. His students were almost like nomads. Sometimes he would stay in a particular place for a few weeks or a few months and by the time he was leaving, the last people wanting to hear him talk would just arrive there. Whole families of people were following him. So it became very difficult for him; they really begged him not to go to India. Not only his students, but also some of his teachers asked him not to go, saying that ‘Even if you go to India, you are not going to find anything better.’

Still, Tsongkhapa was not satisfied with the explanations of any living teacher of that period. So he decided to get his questions somehow passed along to Manjushri himself. It happened to be that one of his teachers known as Lama Umapa, from the Sakya tradition, had frequent visions of Manjushri. He talked to him, asked questions and brought answers back. This Lama Umapa now acted as a go between for Manjushri and Tsongkhapa. Manjushri then instructed

Tsongkhapa not to go to India but rather ask him directly. He told Tsongkhapa,

Before you can do this, you have to go into retreat. Go to a quiet, remote area in the mountains. You can't take all your retinue there. I will name the people who should go with you.

There was another teacher of Tsongkhapa known as Lhodrag Drubchen Lekshe Dorje. I think he was from the Kargyu tradition. He used to have continuous visions of Vajrapani, who also confirmed that Manjushri would teach Tsongkhapa.

Finally, Manjushri named eight people to go into retreat with Tsongkhapa. They had to go up into the mountains, 15,000 feet high and look for caves to live in. They had to do a lot of purification.

Eventually, Tsongkhapa did receive direct visions of Manjushri and other deities. Tsongkhapa's first reaction was to totally ignore all of them, until he was absolutely sure. He received a lot of confirmations, including Manjushri appearing to another person saying that the visions were real and not a trick. Even then Tsongkhapa did not accept. He made sure by asking questions to the visionary appearances, difficult questions that he himself knew the answers of. That way, if the answers were correct, he could be sure the visions were true. So finally, he received direct teachings from Manjushri.

One of these teachings was the *Three Principal Aspects of the Path* and another one was this teaching on the *Four Mindfulnesses*. The Four Mindfulnesses is a slightly secret

teaching, more so than the Three Principles. It is not given very often. When I was looking at existing teaching materials, I did not find much. There was one teaching on this given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins. That is available in English.²

THE FOUR MINDFULNESSES

1. Mindfulness of the Guru
2. Mindfulness of the Altruistic Aspiration to Highest Enlightenment. That means, bodhimind – the ultimate, unlimited, unconditional compassion and love.
3. Mindfulness of your Body as a Divine Body.
4. Mindfulness in the View of Emptiness.

COMMENTARY BY KYABJE LING RIMPOCHE

Earlier, we couldn't find any other existing teaching notes in English. I actually did take this teaching from Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, the senior tutor of His Holiness, twice. The last time was in Tibet House in New Delhi around 1980. That teaching was recorded by tape recorder. Transcripts were made and that came out as part of a book. Since I attended, I do know that it was recorded. But I never read the transcript. Yesterday, when I came on the plane to New York, I read it for the first time. It is very good. It may not be the best English but it is an excellent teaching. So

I thought I would make that transcript available to you. I cannot tell you anything better than my guru Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, no way. It is really great. It is available to you. So this is going to be very easy, not so much work for me.

Kyabje Rimpoche gave this teaching over five days in Tibet House, New Delhi. So, the transcript of his teaching is divided into Day 1, Day 2, etc. When I am reading this, I remember again exactly what he did.

According to Tibetan custom, during teachings we quote from the earlier teachers, at least in the tradition that I belong to. As a teacher you don't just talk about something out of your head. You always quote from the tradition and Kyabje Rimpoche himself does that in this teaching. He begins by quoting Je Tsongkhapa. The translation of the quote might not be literally exact; however, the meaning is correct. The direct quote that Kyabje Rimpoche used is from Tsongkhapa's shortest *Lamrim* [*lam rim du don*]. We do sometimes do teachings on that as well. The quote is about the preciousness of the human life. We can read straight from the transcript.

DAY ONE

Je Tsongkhapa says in his writings how very fortunate we are; we have a fully endowed human body and we have met the teachings. It is essential that we should recognize how auspicious this situation is and how lucky we are to have met the Dharma and to have

**a chance to practice. How are we fortunate?
We have a precious human body.**

It is true. We do have this precious body with us; however, our problem is that we don't recognize how precious it really is, until we are under threat of losing it. Until then we take it for granted.

Talking about mindfulness: one of the points to be mindful of is to recognize the value of our human life. Not necessarily only the body. The body is the basis of this human life, therefore it becomes important. But human life itself is tremendously valuable and important.

We have the habit of ignoring our body, when it comes to health issues. In my own case, the last thing I will attend to is looking after my body. That is why I have become a couch potato, as you can see. Likewise, a lot of us will say, 'It has become a little cold, but so what, I won't bother'. Or, 'I will be getting a little wet outside, but it doesn't matter.' From the wider angle, often we consider our work more important than taking care of ourselves physically. The work is given the overriding priority. That way we do abuse our body. We shouldn't do that. Human life is very precious and it does depend on our body and our mind. If something is wrong with either of them we lose the value of this life. If we lose the body, the value of this life is totally gone. If we lose our mind, there is also no human value left.

In the past we have been reborn in all possible states. Sometimes in the three higher rebirths, innumerable times in the

three lower.

We say that our lives are beginningless and limitless. We have taken a lot of rebirths. We have been born in lower realms 'innumerable times', and in the higher rebirths much less often. Still, we continuously take rebirth due to our karma.

To have all the eight qualities and ten endowments of a perfect human rebirth is almost a unique chance...

Those of you who don't know, read about the eight qualities and ten endowments. The information is in all *Lamrim* texts and also in my *Lam Rim Teachings*³. But just briefly this: the ten endowments are divided into two: five from the point of view of time, and five from the point of view of the individual. It is actually very obvious: I can see, I can hear, I can understand. I can communicate. Time wise, Buddha's teaching is still alive; we can still connect with the living tradition and obtain total enlightenment. These ten endowments give us the opportunity.

The eight pleasures are also easy to follow. If you are in the hell realms you have no time to practice. As a hungry ghost you are too hungry to practice. In the animal realms you are too dull to have an opportunity to practice. If you are reborn in the samsaric god realms, there is too much pleasure, so you won't be able to practice. In the demi-gods realms there is too much anger and jealousy; so you won't have an opportunity to practice. But in the human realm

we do have the opportunity.

...and it is also extremely rare to hear the complete teachings and to have time to put them into practice.

This is true. Let's say this was the 1930s in America or anywhere in Europe. If you were to look for Buddhism you wouldn't find anything at all. Also, in a couple of decades from now, it won't be here anymore either. This is really the period in between where you can really gain something. In the second half of the 1900s and now in the 2000s there is a unique opportunity, because something had happened in this country to open it up. We have to thank the people of the 1960s for that. They opened up the human mind to this possibility. It was the beatnik poets and others who tried to explore the human mind. If they hadn't done that in the 1960s, we wouldn't be doing this today, for sure. The opportunity has come to us just at the right time. This is in accordance with what the Tibetan teachers and in particular, Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, is saying here.

So, realize the uniqueness of this opportunity, determine to take advantage of it and make full use of it.

Even if the opportunity is there, you need a capable life to make use of it. You not only need the basic quality of a human life but also the quality of an open mind. There are a great number of people around us, yet they don't have

this unique opportunity. Their mind may not be that open. Perhaps they are too conservative or maybe too liberal. Very few will really explore spirituality deeply and truly, many show a superficial interest and a lot of people may have no interest at all. Only very few people will deeply go into it. Even among them, only a few will really have the opportunity.

On the one hand we say, 'Oh this is because we don't do enough good publicity'. That maybe true, but at the same time, it is the karmic connection of the individual which needs to be there in the first place. Really. Many people simply don't have the karma to be able to take advantage of this unique possibility. The opportunity may pass by under your nose, very close by, and you won't have any idea at all. That happens.

Right now, right here, we are in a different position. We do take a deep interest and we have come across a profound teaching. This teaching on the Four Mindfulnesses, which Manjushri taught to Tsongkhapa, has been kept quite secret under the cover of the general Four Mindfulnesses teaching. Curious people may do a Google search on the computer, but they are first going to come across the Four Mindfulnesses of body, feelings, mind and phenomena. Reading about them they will be fully satisfied.

Realize the preciousness of a human body and the rarity of hearing the teachings.

First we have to realize the preciousness of our human body. This is not me talking but Kyabje Ling Rimpoche,

the senior guru of the present Dalai Lama.

This is still not enough: we must take the essence of this opportunity by striving for Enlightenment or for liberation from suffering, or at the very least refrain from taking a lower rebirth.

He is here introducing the three different goals of what you can hope to achieve in spiritual practice. Best is to become a fully enlightened buddha. The second goal is to at least liberate yourself from suffering and at the very least you should make sure that your future rebirth will be okay. These are the goals. Spiritual practice is not just to feel good or to solve your depression. Yes, it does help with that too, but that is not its purpose at all. If that is your only purpose you are not on a good path at all. The little man-made problems can be solved in a variety of ways. The traditional teachers would say, 'You don't need an axe to cut a louse into two pieces.'

Many Tibetans, while talking a lot about compassion, used to pick up the lice, torture them and squeeze them between the fingers. That is why during the teachings the teachers will always point that out as an example of perfect negativity. There is anger as motivation, and then you torture the lice as much as you can and finally you squeeze a little blood out of their little body and then say with satisfaction, 'ha'. This is the example of a perfect bad karma.

Anyway, to get a little temporary relief for right now is not the purpose of spiritual practice. Full enlightenment is the best goal. If not, at least free yourself from the sufferings

of samsara. If you can't achieve that, at least make sure your next rebirth is okay.

This is talking from the background of reincarnation, not from the view that our life ends at death. Normally, I wouldn't get into these points too much, but since it is written here, it gives me the opportunity to emphasize it more. I might as well add something.

Traditional teachings like this one by Kyabje Ling Rimpoche will make the division between a good spiritual path and a bad spiritual path on the basis of what the goal of that path is. Seeking total enlightenment is great. Are you simply seeking freedom from your own suffering? If the path you are practicing can deliver that, that would be the second rating goal. Then, at least such a path should deliver you a positive next rebirth. If your path can do that, it would be the third class goal. Normally I can't say that because it might disturb what so many other people might say. But since I have the basis here by Kyabje Rimpoche, where he outlines these three goals, I can say it clearly.

To accomplish these purposes we need a sincere practice of the Dharma, and for this we need a proper understanding of the Dharma, proper teachings and the blessings of the unbroken lineage of the Gurus' oral teachings. We cannot rely only on books; although an intelligent person can learn something from books, to really practice we need the blessings of the lineage. So now, out of a great rejoicing state of mind, think

how you are going to receive the teachings from a Mahayana teacher.

I can't say that for myself. I never think I am a good teacher, forget about being a great one. I am repeating what Kyabje Rimpoche is saying and at least pretend to be a Mahayana teacher.

Avoid mistakes in the way of listening and generate the proper attitudes. The wrong attitudes are described by analogy with 3 pots:

- (1) a leaky pot which can't hold its contents, from not concentrating;**
- (2) an upside-down pot, if there are many distracting thoughts, nothing can go inside: be mindful and reflect on the meaning of the teaching;**
- (3) a defiled pot, a stained pot: this is listening to the teaching with the wrong motivation, wanting to gain some benefit from it for this life.**

A leaky pot is a problem. No matter how much water you pour in, it will all go out again. We often say that it goes into one ear and comes out the other, straight through, nothing remains. A tea pot with a hole can't hold anything.

If the pot is upside down, no matter how much you pour in, it will never go inside. This is like coming here and

listening but thinking something else. That never works. The traditional teachings give you an interesting example. We always make fun of the Tibetan nobility and make jokes about them. So, one noble person told his attendant: 'When I go to sit in meditation, make sure you leave a piece of paper and a pen next to my cushion.' During that time then he would actually write down how much he owed and how much money he had to collect from whom, how much rent to collect and so on. That is what he did in his meditation sessions! When he came out he would give the list to his attendant and give instructions what to do. This is the example of the upside down pot. You are there and listening but not really listening. You are occupied with something else.

The third mistake is that of a stained pot. Kyabje Rimpoche may or may not have said it at that time. When you want to make that example really vivid you say: you bring a cup which firstly is not of good quality and secondly is totally dirty, stained by some rotten things. You can never use such a cup to pour in lion's milk. It will spoil the lion's milk. This example illustrates coming to teachings with prefabricated ideas. You are not open-minded, but looking for certain things to be said. When you hear those you are happy, if you don't you are not happy. That is the stained pot. So whatever you hear is not going to help you, because it will be affected by your preconceived ideas of what it should be. If your ideas are confirmed you will be, otherwise you are unhappy. This would not be a good way to pick up this teaching.

Another thing is listening to the teachings with wrong

motivation. This is most important. If the motivation is right, everything can be right. If we don't have the right motivation, no matter how much you try, it can go wrong. Kyabje Rinpoche mentions it here: *wanting to gain some benefit for this life*. This is considered a wrong motivation. If we say that today, people won't like it. We would like to have something good for our life right now. But the traditional Tibetan teachings will tell you that this is wrong. Why? Because to try to get something good for this life is a very short-term goal. The life we have will last at the most for 90 to 100 years. If you waste the dharma practice for such a short-term gain, it is not worth it. Dharma practice can give you much better than that.

Also, to pray for material benefits is not proper. You could pray that your next lottery ticket may win or that your business may be successful. A lot of people, especially in South East Asia, actually do this. It is somehow in their culture. They will be very generous to people like me, but the purpose of their generosity is to double and triple their business.

The motivation has to be: to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. The proper attitude is that I myself am like a sick person.

Buddha himself taught that. He said: Behave like a sick person who is seeking a doctor who can treat you. Take the dharma like medicine.

Afflicted since beginningless time by

emotions and delusions,

We may think that we are perfectly healthy, but Buddha says we are sick. We are afflicted with negative emotions and that also for a very long time, since beginningless time.

**'A patient who never gets cured,
a traveler who never reaches his
destination.'**

This is really what we are. We're locked in samsara life after life, like a patient who never gets cured, a traveler who never reaches his destination.

I was talking with Geshe Sopa once, the great teacher from Wisconsin. He was telling me that I should do more exercise, because I was getting too fat. I said, 'I am trying to walk'. He said, 'Well, I don't think that is enough. Get an exercise bike, a stationary one. That's very good.' Then I said, 'Oh yeah, you mean I should be like the traveler who, no matter how much he keeps on going, never gets anywhere?' Geshe-la laughed. After a while we met again and found out that we both had knee pains. I couldn't do much exercise, so instead I lie down and put my legs in the air and moved as if I was riding a bicycle. I told Geshe-la that this was helpful for me. He said, 'Right, that is easy for you, because you wear pants. For me, wearing robes, if I did that....' We had to laugh.

**We keep returning again and again to
samsara, never getting anywhere, we are**

like a prisoner who can never finish any sentence.

This is absolutely true. We come back again and again, not necessarily as human beings, but sometimes with horns on our heads and hairy bodies, sometimes in crazy ways. That happens again and again. I don't know whether we are prisoners who can never get out or if, even when we get out for a while, we end up going back in all the time. Because of our habitual patterns, addictions, lack of facilities and lack of help we go back to prison straight away. If you can stay outside for a few months, you are lucky. Then you are back. That is exactly our situation.

The Guru is like a doctor, he has the method, and by following his teaching we can actually get out of cyclic existence. The teachings are the medicine that we have to take to get cured. Among all the types of teachings there are, this is a Mahayana teaching, so you need a Mahayana attitude. You need the enlightened motivation which is an ardent desire for oneself to attain enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings.

Please try to have this motivation of bodhicitta.

We always say during all our prayers, 'For the benefit of all sentient beings, I would like to become a fully enlightened

buddha.'

Today the teaching is on *dbu mai lta hkrid dran pa bzhi ldan*. It was received by the great Je Tsongkhapa directly from Manjushri, from whom he often received vast and profound teachings directly, as he was constantly in his presence. Basically this is a text on the Madhyamika philosophy of voidness, explained through mindfulness of the four following points:

1. Regarding one's own Guru as a truly enlightened being; the admiration for one who shows the method for achieving buddhahood.
2. Having compassion for all sentient beings and generating the enlightened motivation.
3. The simultaneous collection of merit and wisdom through imagining oneself as a deity.
4. The realization of emptiness which is coupled with its application to the world of appearances.

Kyabje Rimpoche talks about the vast and profound teachings. The vast teachings are those related to compassion and love. The profound teachings are about wisdom. The third one, imagining oneself as a deity is slightly secret, but we will talk.

This teaching is a Mahayana teaching, a precious teaching for the purpose of nothing but obtaining enlightenment. It needs the highest motivation: to become a buddha for the benefit of all beings. When taking these teachings, try to be free of the three faults: not listening - upside down

cup; listening but not paying attention - cup with a hole; having a stained attitude - dirty cup. Have an open mind, not pre-fabricated. Don't expect that the teaching should say what you have in mind and not talk about anything you would object to. In that case you would be the teacher and you would not need to attend any teachings, because you already know better. A lot of us do that. So don't have the three faults and with a perfect motivation, listen to the teaching.

WHAT MANJUSHRI TAUGHT TO TSONGKHAPA

We are really very fortunate. This Four Mindfulnesses is what Manjushri directly taught to Tsongkhapa, then patted him on the back and said, 'Keep this in your mind and think about it all the time.' It is not a very public teaching. Even the teachings on the guru we don't put out into the public very easily. It is extremely important, but it can be misunderstood very easily, especially after some unfortunate guru-business incidents took place in the 60s and 70s. I normally try to avoid talking about gurus, unless the text we follow demands that. Even then, I try to treat it as carefully or soft as possible.

Kyabje Rimpoche gave this teaching in the 80s. It is in English so it is easy for me to repeat what he said. I remember it. After the teaching I was holding his hand. I was young then and he was leaning on me, as I helped him go down the steps from the third floor of Tibet House in New Delhi. It

was a big hall and it was packed. I don't remember who the translator was. There were a couple of professors there, but I don't think Professor Thurman was there at that teaching. Jeffrey Hopkins might have been there. Jose Cabezon was there. There was a Tibetan translator as well.

The house had a funny lay out. Kyabje Rimpoche's room was one of those mezzanines on the second floor. It was like an apartment. So when we were coming down the steps after this teaching Kyabje Rimpoche said to me, 'Everybody is trying to avoid the subject of guru devotion. Today I have said it - everything. It needs to be said because it helps people. If you never say it how can you expect them to know?'

He really said a lot about the guru devotion and we will go through it tomorrow. In between sessions there will be discussion groups. This is done for a number of reasons. You may not understand me very well. I have a heavy accent. Actually, I never really learned English. The very little English I talk to you today is mostly street language. I learned mostly from the television programs, like Days of Our Lives, when I first came to this country and didn't have that much to do. So you may understand my words wrongly or not completely. That's why we have made small discussion groups. There you can discuss. You came here to learn something. You could have gone on holidays, but you didn't. You paid money for this. So you have to gain something. To make sure you do, there are these groups, where you can clarify your questions. And if there is no satisfactory answer we can bring those questions back to our afternoon sessions. Also at the end of the section on

each of the Four Mindfulnesses I will introduce a guided meditation. I don't think that Kyabje Rimpoche did that in his teaching in New Delhi.

When Tsongkhapa could not be satisfied with the answers about wisdom he was looking for explanations on Nagarjuna's Prajnaparamita teachings. Other great Indian masters like Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti had already further elaborated on Nagarjuna's explanations. Tsongkhapa had exhausted all the teachings of the contemporary Tibetan masters, but was not satisfied. He was thinking of going to India to receive more teachings, following in the footsteps of Marpa Lotsawa, hoping to find Lama Manjushri, like Marpa found Naropa, even after Naropa had passed away. However, everybody urged him not to go to India. By going into retreat he eventually achieved the direct vision of Manjushri.

Levels of vision. There are three levels of vision: the best is the perfect vision, like one human being seeing another human being and engaging in conversation, person to person. The second best is like having a dream, conveying messages to each other that way. That may not be as reliable as the person to person contact. The third best kind of vision is more on an imaginary level; it seems to be like that person told you something. That is not very reliable. These three are known as *tsa sum nang par tak pei tang nang*, the 'Three Channels Pure'.⁴ If the channels are pure you will be able to have these visions and work with them.

Below that, you just have thoughts, imaginations,

delusions and all kinds of funny things, which to 60% are unreliable. The remaining 40% could also be affected by spirits and so on, so in the end there may only be 20% value. It almost amounts to wrong, unreliable visions.

In our case, we don't even have any visions and if we have them, they are considered unreliable. It is extremely important, if you are following the spiritual path, if you want to help yourself and others, not to rely on those types of visions.

Even Tsongkhapa himself didn't at first trust his own visions. He began to see the Thirty-five Purification Buddhas on the surrounding mountain peaks. He ignored them people with him which Manjushri had personally selected. Each was sitting in their own cave. For purification practices Tsongkhapa did a tremendous amount of mandala offerings, prostrations, and circumambulations. The mandala offerings he did were done on the base of a big, flat rock. He didn't have a gold or silver mandala of high quality; he didn't even have a brass or copper mandala. All he had was a slate of rock, which he cleaned with his forearm, so much so that he had cuts that were bleeding all the time. But he continued to make hundreds and thousands of mandala offerings. When the visions started appearing he ignored them all, not only the Thirty-five Buddhas, but also Manjushri, Tara and many others.

This is recorded in his secret biography, composed by Jamyang Choje, the founder of Drepung monastery and one of his students. This secret biography is in verse form⁵ and used to be recited as a daily prayer in the monasteries – though after a while when you say it all the time you don't

pay much attention any more to what it says.

Tsongkhapa did not bother with all the visions until he got a message from his living master, saying, ‘These visions are real, they are not fake, so please pay attention to them.’ Then Tsongkhapa engaged the visions and to test them, asked them a lot of tough questions, of which he knew the answers. If you don’t know the answers, you have no way of judging the validity of the answers. Only after he was totally convinced that the visions were real, he began to take teachings from Manjushri.

One teaching he received was the Three Principles of the Path. Another one was this teaching on the Four Mindfulnesses. Manjushri gave this to Tsongkhapa and it has been kept a little secret. It is not commonly known like the *Lam rim* or even the *Ngag rim*⁶. Even the vajrayana teachings of Guhyasamaja teachings are better known. In the midst of all these vast teachings this one has been thrown in. The collected works of Tsongkhapa and also some of the other great masters contain a volume of secret teachings. Of course, everyone goes to the secret volume and so after some time the editors did redistribute all of Tsongkhapa’s secret teachings across all of his 18 volumes. There is no separate secret volume. That is the method of the old Tibetan masters to hide the secret teachings.

Another example of the secret teachings is the First Panchen Lama’s teaching, a slightly more elaborate commentary on this Four Mindfulness Teaching, and you find that in his Miscellaneous Works⁷. Then the Seventh Dalai Lama has composed a Song of the Four Mindfulnesses, which is the basis of the teaching I received from Kyabje

Ling Rimpoche. At first I looked through all the volumes of the Seventh Dalai Lama. The old Tibetan edition of his works had 7 volumes. Now a new edition, printed in India, has come out with 13 volumes. I sat there, reading line by line, looking for the verses of the Seventh Dalai Lama. I found the text in the colophon of the 12th volume. Kyabje Ling Rimpoche’s teaching on these verses was transcribed and is part of a book published by The Tibetan Library.⁸

By reading the verses of the Seventh Dalai Lama’s poem on the Four Mindfulnesses I will give you the oral transmission. Then I will have the First Panchen Lama’s text side by side and add up from his commentary. In the First Panchen Lama’s text the Mindfulness of Compassion comes first and then the mindfulness of the Guru. But I am going to stick to the order of the Seventh Dalai Lama’s text here. Actually the first reference to the Four Mindfulnesses in writing are from somebody called Genla Lodro Beba. I have not seen it myself, but read references to it.

The title. It says, *U mai ta tri tren pa zhi ten gyi gur yang ngö drub char beb zhug so*. The word *u ma* stands for middle, center, or free of extremes; *ta* stands for *tawa*: view, meaning: what you understand. So *u ma ta* means: view of the middle. What is the middle? Free of the right extreme as well as free of the left extreme. That refers to wisdom. The truth is neither the right nor the left extreme; it is in the middle. The word *tri* means teaching. Then *tren pa* is the name of one of the mental faculties⁹ called remembrance; *zhi* is four. So: four points to remember, or Four Mindfulnesses. *Ten gyi gyur yang; gyur yang* means poetry or song; *ngö drub* is accomplishments;

ngö drub char beb means ‘the shower of accomplishments’.

Keep the teachings authentic. I want to tell you this: we must always give teachings on the basis of certain texts. The tradition that I belong to emphasizes to do that, so that we are not just simply talking and cooking up things. Yes, you must give a lot of information and things on the basis of individual experience. That is a must. But the individual experience you are going to share, also has to be based on certain texts, so that whatever information we pass on will be authentic. Otherwise someone could sit somewhere and have a fantastic vision, and talk to you about on the basis of that vision while there is no way of counterchecking and proving and challenging it. In the tradition I belong to, that is considered a disadvantage. Therefore, however long or short the teaching might be, we must base ourselves on certain important textbooks. When you base the teaching on that, whatever you say is going to be authentic. Nowadays, concerning the spiritual path, a lot of - I do not want to say fraud, - a lot of those types of things can come in because there is no way to check. Checks and balances are extremely important in the spiritual path. If you do not have that, then anybody can say anything.

We have a story in Tibetan. There was a village, somewhere in a remote area of Tibet. A guy came to the village, telling a story about Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. No one there had ever been there, he was the only person, so he knew he could say whatever he wanted to say. In old Tibet, in Lhasa City, there were big long sticks like totem poles, three or four stories high. They used to put these long sticks

up and put prayer flags on them in four or five different corners of Lhasa. One of them is *Sha*, which means Eastern banner. The word *sha* could be east but it could also mean deer, too. So somebody asked this guy, ‘How is the *sha ga rin*, (meaning the eastern banner), doing in Lhasa?’ He said, ‘Oh this deer is just eating a little grass and drinking a little water and sitting around.’

That is what people then tell each other. One person tells the other and it becomes some kind of tale. The teachings will say that if you do that, a lot of people may not know whether it is true or not true, however they think it is holy and wonderful and part of dharma and oh so great. That is how you mislead people. The teachings give you these very mundane, vivid examples. These stories are part of teachings.

So authentic teachings must have checks and balances. If the teaching is based on an authentic text, it is much easier to know. That is the reason why we are always taught to base the teachings on certain texts. Then you give all your personal experiences on top of it, so will not become dry academic study. Personal experience must come in. That also has to be based on a text, so that it remains authentic.

Retreat. I would like to call this event a retreat. We are trying to withdraw from being in the midst of all kinds of mundane, everyday activities. We are not simply withdrawing from the city to an upstate location and found this quiet, nice and beautiful facility. It means more that our mind is retreating from the many activities that we always have. We are giving our mind a little bit of rest. First of all, the purpose of the

rest is to recuperate our mind itself. And in order to do that we have to give our mind a little quietness. Mind quietness means withdrawing from the distractions, whatever type of distractions there could be. Give yourself a little chance to recuperate your mind, and avoid all the e-mails and faxes and all of those things. Withdraw also from the physical, mental and emotional attractions, and give yourself a little room, to be yourself, be quiet. Not quiet as in avoiding any noise, but in the sense of having peace in your mind. Unless and until you have been able to give a little peace to your own mind, you may not be able to do anything that you want to do. So withdraw from all attractions a little bit. Be yourself. Then we can build something on that.

[We love compassion, but] just saying compassion, compassion, compassion will not do very much. Everybody knows how to say compassion, but that just does not become compassion. It has to become caring. In order to become caring, being concerned, it has to be touched with the heart.

In order to get the heart touch, you have to be yourself. If you are not yourself, if you are completely covered by all kinds of emotions, you are in the midst of a cyclone of emotions swaying around, then trying to be compassionate is not possible. Then it will never be mindfulness of compassion. Similarly, the mindfulness of wisdom is never going to happen. So please give yourself a little quietness just for this very short time, the following forty-eight or sixty hours, or something. Allow yourself to be yourself. Just be you. Have compassion in motivation and be yourself. That is action. And then we add up a few more techniques

on that. So hopefully we will have something to gain, something to take with us when we go home. That is what I hope to bring here.

Before we call it a day let us meditate a little bit about our motivation that we talked about.

INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION: MOTIVATION

Give yourself a little quietness just for this very short time. Please allow yourself to be yourself. Just be you.

Make a commitment or promise to yourself to just be yourself.

Have compassion in your motivation and be yourself.

Free yourself for a while from all the emotions of yourself and other people – all those emotions mixed up together.

Give yourself a promise, to at least [meditate] a few short times every day – in the morning, and in the evening. Allow yourself that daily little chance to recuperate.

Every day is important. If you are caught in that cyclone of emotions of yourself and others, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days in a year, then naturally you go crazy. So please give yourself a chance, [allow

yourself] at least a few minutes every day.

You came for that purpose, so you should be doing that.

II MINDFULNESS OF THE GURU

The first mindfulness is the Mindfulness of the Guru. Traditionally, that was not a sensitive issue at all. The early Indian stories and the stories of the Indian mahasiddhas will confirm that. However, to receive teachings from a qualified master was known to be a difficult point. Many of the early practitioners were ready to sacrifice their lives for even one verse of teaching. You find a number of examples in *Buddha's Previous Life Stories [Jatakas]* as well as in the biographies of Naropa and Marpa¹⁰, which are now available in English through Trungpa Rimpoche's Dharmadhatu organization. There you will see how many sacrifices and difficulties they had to endure for the sake of the teachings.

NAROPA AND MARPA

The guru of Marpa, the founder of the Kargyu tradition, was Naropa. Naropa had passed away already but Marpa hoped to see him once more, ran into the forest and found him. One day when Marpa was sleeping Naropa woke him up and said, 'Your mandala of Hevajra is standing here in the air'. Marpa got up, looked at it, saw the whole mandala in the space and acknowledged it. Naropa said, 'To who

would you like to prostrate first, to me, your guru Naropa, or Hevajra in the mandala?’ Marpa thought, ‘Well Naropa I can see every day, seeing the mandala happens only once in a blue moon’, so he started prostrating to the mandala. Then Naropa said, ‘*Lama mepa*.....

When there’s no guru there’s not even the name
of the Buddha. The thousand buddhas of
this fortunate eon totally come out of the
guru.

The yidam¹¹ and mandala is my manifestation!

And the mandala dissolved into the heart of Naropa.¹²

MARPA AND MILAREPA

Marpa and Milarepa’s relationship is another example. Marpa kept on beating Milarepa all the time. Marpa used to kick Mila out of the teachings, saying, ‘These teachings are not for free, what are you going to give me?’ Marpa’s wife Dagmema felt bad and gave Milarepa her turquoise jewelry to give to Marpa as payment. When Milarepa presented them, Marpa recognized them and said, ‘These are mine. Are you stealing my things?’ And he beat him up more and threw him out.

Milarepa and Marpa’s wife then had a conversation with Ngogdon Choje Dorje, one of the Four Pillars of Marpa’s disciples¹³. He had come to Marpa with his own group of disciples, with a hundred mules and many offerings in order

to take more teachings. Milarepa and Marpa’s wife convinced Ngogdon Choje Dorje to give teachings to Mila. He didn’t really want to but felt obliged by Dagmema. So he gave Milarepa some teaching. When Marpa came to know about that he called Ngogdon, got hold of him and beat him up badly. Of course he beat up Milarepa too. (This is all recorded in Milarepa’s biography.) Then he told Milarepa that he wanted a house for his son and made Milarepa build this huge thirteen-story tower and tear it down again three times. First he wanted him to build a square one and half way through scolded him, ‘Who told you to build a square one, take it down and put every stone back where you took it from. Put all the mud back into the ground. I want you to build a round tower.’ Half way through the completion of the round tower, again he scolded Milarepa, ‘Who told you to build a round one? Take it down.’ This happened three times. Finally, according to Marpa’s design the house became a thirteen story tower, with a tiny area at the top. It wouldn’t even stand properly, but it can still be seen today. It looks more like a three story building, but the books and teachings talk about thirteen-stories. Maybe it’s thirteen layers. In any case it was a useless construction, resembling a light house, in the middle of an 11th century Tibetan village.

Despite all of this, the guru devotion has never been a sensitive issue until recently, because certain people have abused it and taken advantage of it. In the early sixties we went through a difficult time with that and now it is a sensitive point.

On the other hand, the guru devotional practice is called the root of all development. If you don’t have a

root, no tree will grow. Without roots, roses won't grow. Although, one time, there was a year where some roses wouldn't bloom at my house, so I took them out. But next year one branch came up and bloomed - without root! So maybe what we normally say is not always true. But it was only one branch and the flower did not have multi layers and was not big enough anyway. So it remains: without root the flower doesn't really grow. And the guru is the root of all development.

ORAL TRANSMISSION

I am going to read from the transcript of Kyabje Ling Rimpoche's teaching from Tibet House, New Delhi and comment on it in between. Hopefully we will come out with a better translation some time in future. By hearing this, first in Tibetan and then in English, from a living person you do get the oral transmission. Thereafter, if you people give teachings, you can read this in English and give the oral transmission. Oral transmission means that you hear a teaching from a living person who has heard it themselves in the continuity of the lineage. If you hear it from a tape recorder or any other type of media I don't think it serves the purpose of an oral transmission. You must have live contact.

The teaching itself in an unbroken lineage from Manjushri to Tsongkhapa and then down to my later master Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, the senior guru of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. As a matter of fact, I think it was the last teaching I

received from Kyabje Rimpoche before he passed away.

WHY A GURU IS NECESSARY ON THE PATH

I need to talk to you a little bit before I even get into the guru practice. Guru is such a subject, we all know, somehow it is important. But it is a very touchy subject, because we had some interesting experiences in this country. A number of guru issues have come up in our lifetime. We forget the contributions and help that these gurus have given us in this country. Instead, we focus on whatever controversial issues that have come up around them. People remember the scandals and difficulties, but do not remember the contributions and good things they have done. That is an honest statement. So it is a very touchy subject.

The question is this: Is a guru necessary on the path? The answer given by Buddha and all masters after him is: yes, all the time. The simple reason why they say yes is because we need information, we need knowledge, we need know-how. We need a guide, we need guidance, we need a role-model. We do.

We may say, 'Information is available in books and on the internet nowadays. You just put in 'guru' in the search engine and you get all the answers. So what is so important about it?' When I am talking about information here, it is not just information of what it is, but information that links up with the spiritual forces and strength. The guru is really the backbone of our spiritual practice. That is why it necessary. I am giving it to you the very raw way, not

trying to avoid any criticism or any doubt. You can raise your doubts, we can talk about it. I am not going to dress up my statements. I am sort of straightaway pushing it. Otherwise, the information is without life, without force and won't necessarily work well. It is not just a manual of some Chinese compassion measurement machine. It has more than that. It has unseen value. The guru is the real spiritual force and backbone of our spiritual practice. It is something that we can rely on for our future, for our future lives. It is something that is able to contact the enlightened beings, establishing the connection between the enlightened beings and ourselves. It is the magnifying glass that brings the solar energy in to provide fire in a heap of grass. It is the magnifying glass that focuses and brings the force. It is the bridge between us, the non-enlightened ones, and the enlightened society. It is our spiritual connection. It is our divine connection. These are the reasons why we need it. Not only that, when we achieve the ultimate goal, let us say total enlightenment, we achieve total enlightenment of ourselves, our mind, [in] the nature of the mind of the guru. It is like a throat¹⁴. That is why it is important and necessary.

Now the question comes. Who is guru, what is guru, what has that got to do with me? There are a lot of those questions. To me the most important guru is the Buddha, because that is where I come from, anyway.

thab she zung jug gyur mä kyî den teng na
kyab kün ngo wo trin chen gyi la ma zhug pang
tog dzog pai sang gye shig de na da

kyön tog pang nä dag nang gi söl wa thob...

On the seat of the immutable union of method
and wisdom
sits the teacher who is the entity of all the
refuge,
A Buddha who has perfect abandonment and
wisdom is there.
Forsaking thought of defects make a petition
with pure perception,
Not letting your mind stray, place it within
admiration and respect,
Making your attention unforgettable,
maintain it within admiration and respect.

This is the quote from the root text by the Seventh Dalai Lama in relation to the mindfulness of the Guru. Let me paraphrase the translation from the Tibetan.

The first line says *thab she zung jug gyur mä kyî den teng na*. *Thab* is method and refers to love-compassion, bodhimind. Then *she* stands for *sherab* and refers to wisdom, wisdom meaning the understanding of emptiness. *Zung jug* means union. So it is the union of wisdom and compassion.

At the beginning level, *thab* refers to the lower and medium level of Lamrim and *she* refers to the wisdom of selflessness. In mahayana, *thab* refers to bodhicitta both in prayer and in action form and *she* is the wisdom of emptiness. In vajrayana *thab* refers to the great bliss and *she* to the wisdom of emptiness. This tells you right from the beginning

that the dharma you engage in is nothing but compassion and wisdom. That is the essence of your Dharma practice!

Also in vajrayana we have the method [and the wisdom] level. Look into the prayer at the end of the Solitary Hero Yamantaka sadhana,

The great radiance of the heart of the Perfect
 Hero
 Invites the Field of Accumulation, which
 pervades the sky;
 By delighting this Field with the purest
 offerings, praises and practice
 May I totally complete the great collections of
 merit

At the lay person level in vajrayana that's the method aspect.
 Next verse:

Having, with stainless reason,
 Examined the meaning of the mantra
 And having, with awareness which is sure of the
 profound emptiness,
 Strongly established the Pride of Dharmakaya
 May I become habituated with the Peerless
 Wisdom

That gives you the idea of the wisdom aspect, even at the lay level of vajrayana. From the general protection realm up to the mantra saying, the four branches are completed. These

are all method aspects, again. The wisdom aspect remains [throughout] as the basis of all functioning; emptiness is the basis on which you build the palace, the vidam, etc.

Then when you change to a different level, like the completion stage, the method is the great joy and ultimately the illusion body. It is interesting: the illusion body is the physical aspect of the practitioner who is hoping to transform the ordinary physical body into an extraordinary body. The calmness we normally talk at the shamatha level, and the calmness, quietness and joy that get intensified at the generation and the completion stage, both belong to the physical aspects of the practitioner. Though all this seems to be mind, the impact is on the body; all joy aspects are physical joy.

The mental aspects will go as wisdom or clear light. Right from the beginning, at the sutra level, we talk about selflessness and phenomenalessness and at the ultimate level the sexual joy is taken as an example and made into a very strong unshakeable intense [way] to look at the nature of emptiness: like the sky, void of any existence, nothing existing.

Using sexuality as an example, though it is a mind aspect, the experience is the physical aspect; understanding what you experience is the mind aspect.

The ultimate combination of it is the ultimate clear light¹⁵, or the clear light of the fourth stage. That very stage is then completely mixed with the physical aspects, the illusion body. Inseparably. We may call that union, *zung jug*. [All that is in the very first four words *thab she zung jug*.]

Gyur me is immutable or unchangeable: once it becomes union it is not going to be divided or separated. When that has become ultimately inseparable, it is the first stage of the person's total enlightenment. Since we have no experience of that level, it is very hard to talk about it. At the same time we cannot deny it unless we are sure it is not there. Nor we can say it is there, because we can't experience it. Thus we rely on the texts that describe it. *Den teng na* is moon and sun seat. Moon and sun represent method [or compassion] and wisdom.

On such an absolutely reliable unshakeable cushion of union of method and wisdom I find my guru. In reality he is the nature of all the objects of refuge. But he appears in the form of my kind guru. In Tibetan it says the guru is a buddha who has completed all purification and achieved everything that is to be achieved: *dzok pai sang gye*. In our ordinary mind, when we look at an ordinary person we are going to see nothing but faults. Here the advice is not to entertain the faults so much. Leave these aside and envision a pure appearance and then pray. Do not let your mind roam around. Keep it in the mindfulness of profound faith. Don't let your mind forget. Always keep your mind focused on profound respect. This is the first mindfulness.

The seat is the Guru's throne, on which the moon and sun indicate the non-duality of wisdom and bodhicitta. The Guru sits on the moon disc, which represents the method aspect.

'Meanwhile this teaching is also giving you the visualizations but it may not work if I go into it during the explanations. But at the end I am going to give you the visualization. The seat is the guru's throne'. Traditionally, the gurus sit on thrones, but in my case I don't like to sit on a throne. I prefer chairs or cushions. In Jewel Heart I made a point of sitting on one cushion on the stage. Then our people made a back rest and now it almost looks like a throne. I don't need a throne. Everybody has a throne in their bathroom. That is no big deal. Just make sure you are sitting on it in the right direction!

Bodhicitta means bodhimind¹⁶. The method aspect refers to accumulation of merit and purification, meditation on compassion, *etc.*

The rays of the moon have a cooling effect; when we develop the proper attitude of bodhicitta we will get relief from the heat of the self-cherishing attitude, the selfishness from which we suffer.

We don't know yet that selfishness causes all our sufferings. But Buddha said that selfishness brings suffering and compassion brings joy and happiness. The great masters in the Buddhist tradition as well as in a great many other traditions did meditate and develop compassion and they did get rid of suffering.

Very recently in Houston I was at a conference of

science and spirituality. His Holiness the Dalai Lama attended that as well. There were a lot of hard core scientists at the conference, including some Nobel Laureates. I had a little speech there which I read in Jewel Heart on Tuesday night and which was put on the internet. I mentioned in there that scientists by watching the brain activities may be able to prove that meditation on compassion produces happiness. We can now physically measure if meditation brings happiness to us. So far it has been the Buddha's claim and for those who did the actual practice it proved to be true. But for the others there was no physical proof. Now there will be scientific measurements.

SELF-CHERISHING

All our sufferings come from self-cherishing. We create enemies: people who do something that I don't like, who do something that goes against my self interest. If you take it to the bottom line, all enemies that we have were created through our self cherishing. I have given a lot of examples throughout my teachings. I remember one of them.

The Meditator "Always Crying"

There was this meditator in the mountains who was crying all the time. He was not suffering from depression. Today, over here, if somebody cries all the time, we think it is depression and send them to hospital. This guy was not depressed, but was crying because of the suffering of all the people. The ghosts in that area were not friendly; they were

non-dharmic spirits. There were lots of those in Tibet. They had a meeting and talked about this guy. The leader said, 'This is a strange fellow, we don't know what he is going to do, so let's nip it in the bud, before he becomes powerful. Otherwise he will control us. Who is going to get rid of him?' One local ghost volunteered and went there to do it. But he found him crying. Through the clairvoyance that ghosts have he realized that the meditator was crying for all beings, particular the ones in that area, which included the ghosts. So he couldn't harm him. He thought, 'He is worrying about me, it will be impossible for me to hurt him.' He tried a couple of times but couldn't do it. In the next meeting the leader of the ghosts asked, 'What happened? That meditator is still there.' The ghost in question explained, 'I went there a couple of times, but he is worrying about us and I couldn't harm him.' The chief slapped him and said, 'What a silly guy you are. I will finish him off.' So he went there himself and found the meditator still meditating on compassion. The chief ghost also couldn't harm him, although he thought about it and hung around for a while. So eventually, all the ghosts in the area became this meditator's friends and even his followers.

That shows: if someone is thinking to make your situation better, how can you hurt that person? Then anybody who thinks, 'Let me destroy', will make himself more and more enemies. To some degree you may achieve something through force and violence but you will never achieve your total goal. America has engaged in so many wars this past century. We found enemies and tried to destroy them, but the enemies never finished. Yes, we managed to stop Hitler and the Nazi activities, we managed to almost stop communism and managed to stop

some dictators. But constantly, continuously, more enemies come along. You cannot go on and kill everybody. The only way to overcome the problem, help ourselves and bring safety and security to us is the practice of love and compassion. That is our secret weapon to bring happiness to ourselves.

The sun indicates the wisdom of understanding voidness.

Voidness means emptiness, which is wisdom. So the moon cushion is compassion and the sun cushion is wisdom. Why is the guru sitting on cushions of wisdom and compassion? He is giving us a message, saying ‘I am the nature of wisdom and compassion. Since that is my cushion I have completely developed it and I am the union of wisdom and compassion’. We need both. Wisdom becomes the mind aspect of the enlightened level and compassion becomes the physical aspect. Here we are talking about the union of compassion and wisdom. At the enlightened level it becomes the union of body and mind. Mind is wisdom, body is compassion. They become one. You can see the pictures of deities with their consorts and that is giving you the message of union. They are not pornographic pictures.

Its rays go out in all directions and eliminate the darkness of ignorance about the way all things exist. The Guru sits on both: he has full knowledge of Voidness and full development of Bodhicitta.

The combination is important; we need both for Enlightenment, just as a child needs two parents. The Guru is a synthesis of all objects of Refuge, he is their essence, all three are combined in him. We need to see him as both transcended and realized; he has abandoned all delusions and completed all realizations.

Kyab kün ngo wo trin chen gyi la ma zhug. *Kyab* stand for *kyab gön*, which stands for refuge. In other words the guru is nothing but your object of refuge. Your object of refuge is nothing other than the guru. The guru is Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are the guru. Guru is yidam, yidam is guru. If you try to separate these it will never, ever work. It has never worked throughout history and it will never work in future. In our perception we may say, ‘Oh yes, this teacher is Venerable So and so or Master So and so, but I have my direct link with Manjushri.’ Thinking like that never works. I believe that is why the word ‘synthesis’ was chosen. The guru’s body is sangha, the guru’s speech is dharma and the guru’s mind is buddha.

Let’s say you are doing Yamantaka practice. It is the same guru who becomes Yamantaka. If you are doing Vajrayogini, it is the same guru who becomes Vajrayogini. If you do Tara, it is the same guru who becomes Tara. Guru Vajradhara is the same guru, the same Buddha, the same Vajradhara. It has to be. It is like a performance. It is like one artists performing in various ways. I am very happy that Kyabje Rimpoche has clearly said it, so I can talk freely on the basis of his statements. The guru is the direct link of the practitioner to the enlightened society.

Kün is all. Meaning: no separation between guru and

vidam, guru and dharma, etc. *Ngo wo* refers to reality. *Trin chen gyi la ma zhug* is referring to the guru who is always kind. Remembering the kindness of the guru is one of the most important activities of guru yoga. So this line is almost identifying the guru to the individual. The identity may or may not change, but in reality it is important that we always look at the guru as one with Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one with the dakas, dakinis and even the dharma protectors. No separation. So he is called the synthesis of all objects of refuge, or the entity of all the refuge. In our mind there should not be any separation. Such a person is called guru. I remember I once asked Song Rimpoche, How does this work? He replied, you can visualize the person as Tsongkhapa look-alike and label him as guru.’ He mentioned that for the *Cittamani guru-yoga*. So we should understand that. Then, in *the Ganden Lha Gyema*, when finally the guru dissolves to ourselves, not only he comes to the center of our heart but also becomes one with our consciousness. This will also raise a question. When you get enlightened, do all the buddhas become oneness with the person? *Zhug* means sits there.

Pang tog dzog pai sang gye shig de na da; *pang* refers to abandonment of all negativities and the imprints of negativities; *tog* stand for *togpa pun tsoh*: all accomplishments or achievements; *pun* is best of all. So this has abandonment as well as accumulation. *Sang gye* is buddha. So all this refers to buddhahood or enlightenment. *Shig de na da* means: this is what it is, here it is. The message is: this guru is a buddha.

Kyön tog pang nä... *Kyön* is fault; *tog* refers to *tog pa*,

which stands for seeing, perceiving, understanding as well as development. Here it has to go as seeing, perceiving, having a pure perception.

‘Forsaking thoughts of defects’ means when you are in the presence of the Guru you are in the presence of a fully-realized Buddha. Usually we see only faults, now try to see only qualities, and make a request to the Guru, with the purified understanding of what the Guru is. Because of the force of the delusions in us it is easy to see faults in him, as he appears in ordinary human form. From now on, see only his pure qualities. With single-pointed respect and admiration, with pure vision, with full conviction and realization that he has attained all the qualities, that he is the three Refuges, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we should have proper devotion to him. Never forget such regard for the Guru.

This is quite clear. Forgive me if my reading is not always correct. But it is permitted to read wrongly for the oral transmission.

Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche

I have one guru called Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche, from whom I have taken all the Tara teachings. He used to always read the opposite of what the text says. Later I learned that

this is called 'dyslexia.' Maybe it is a sickness, but that is what he did. His oral transmissions were so long. He took very long. Some shorter texts should be read in two days, some in just half a day, but it took him seventeen days. On top of that he would fall asleep in the middle of reading. And always he would read wrongly. On the other hand he would verbally recite one chapter of the Prajnaparamita as his daily practice commitment. Then when he was asked to give the oral transmission of the Prajnaparamita he said, 'Today I can read a little faster, because I say this every day.'

Two of us in the audience were supposed to follow with another text what he was reading, making sure he did not jump any pages. That's when I noticed that he was reading the syllables completely opposite. And he was reading slowly, even then. It was funny. The text would say for example that Koshi De Sha made the request to Buddha and Buddha ordered it to be done. But Rimpoche would read, 'Buddha made the request and Koshi De Sha ordered it to be done.' You could correct him a couple of times and he would say, 'Oh yes, I made a mistake'. But if you kept on doing it he would say, 'This little incarnate lama told me that I made a mistake' and he would repeat that sentence 20 or 30 times before continuing to read.

Kyabje Ling Rimpoche also took teachings from Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche and he told me that Kyongla Rimpoche, who lives in New York now, was there too. Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche agreed to give that teaching and said, 'But I am not really good at it and if I make a mistake, please correct me.' So, of course Lhatsun Rimpoche read wrongly and Kyabje Ling Rimpoche corrected five times. At the sixth time Kyabje

Lhatsun Rimpoche picked up his book and said, 'The two of you have come here to accuse me.' He kept on repeating that a number of times. Kyabje Ling Rimpoche told me, 'After that I stopped correcting him, no matter whatever he said.'

I asked both Kyabje Ling Rimpoche and Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche if Kyabje Lhatsun's oral transmission was okay, since there were so many reading mistakes. But they both said, 'This is different, it is totally fine.' I was very close to Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche. So I had to prepare the young incarnate lamas who were coming for teachings, because he would always say things the other way round. For example, one quotation says, 'One who tries to meditate without learning anything is like someone who is rock climbing without using their arms.' But Kyabje Rimpoche would quote, 'One who is trying to meditate without learning anything is like somebody without rocks who is trying to climb on their arms.' So I had to warn the young lamas there not to giggle or laugh. By telling you these stories I am trying to justify my wrong reading to you.

PURITY

The creation of our perception is the creation of enlightenment for ourselves. That is why purity is emphasized so much. The teachings tell you, if you have a lama who is a holy horror, you don't visualize him as holy horror. Whatever the reality may be, change your perception of it, so that ultimately it becomes pure for you. If you look from the faults point of view, you will see lots of faults; if you look

from the perfection point of view you will see the good things. The guru has no other business than representing the enlightened beings. The guru is the manifestation of the enlightened beings to serve me, the individual being.

The essence of guru yoga is seeing the guru as inseparable from all enlightened beings. Then you develop admiration and respect.

[So you have] the perception of the purity and the acceptance of the pure nature and seeking those qualities. Between appearance and acceptance there is a huge difference. Tilopa told Naropa, 'Appearance will not tie you, but acceptance will. So let the acceptance go.'

What is a pure land? Pure environment and pure inhabitants. Purity is the result of pure acceptance, which brings pure reality. Pure acceptance can only come after pure perception. In order to perceive purely, you need to remove the faults. These are all mind activities. Beauty appearing to the individual is reality; reality was born in accordance with its terms and conditions. The condition of the perceiving mind, the appearance and the acknowledgement [of it, the capability of the mind to perceive, acknowledge, realize and maintain [purity], is the result of pure perception. That is where the pure land comes from. Even we, when we become a buddha, will have those: pure environment and pure inhabitants. It is all coming out of pure perception.

It's very important to have a proper Guru. Even in ordinary circumstances, for worldly skills, you need a good teacher, you can't just learn by yourself. So, to gain Enlightenment

to be able to liberate all sentient beings, you need to rely heavily on a fully-qualified Guru. There are three types of Gurus; for Vinaya, for Mahayana and for Tantra. This is a Mahayana teaching; there are ten prerequisite qualities for a Mahayana Guru and it is important that they be present in the teacher. If you have the combination of a fully-qualified Master, fully-prepared disciple and the proper circumstances it is possible to create Enlightenment, as though made by hand.

This is Kyabje Ling Rimpoche's usual way of teaching. Kyabje Rimpoche would say that if there is a properly qualified teacher and a properly qualified disciple you can produce a buddha like an artist makes a china cup. You can make exactly what you want. You can create a buddha in the individual just like an artist makes a piece of art. Kyabje Rimpoche would say that in almost every teaching:

Otherwise, if the teacher doesn't have proper qualities, one can be reborn in the lower realms. So there is strong reliance on a proper Guru. A heretical Guru causes tremendous problems; look at the case of Angulimala, who lived in the time of the Buddha. He was instructed by his teacher to go around killing people and to make a rosary with their thumbs. In the end he met the Buddha and attained Enlightenment. It is not enough to have a qualified Guru. We have to know how to make proper devotion,

not see faults, see only qualities.

Before one takes a guru it is important to check the guru. Whatever you have to do to check out the faults and qualities, you have to do before you take that person as guru. Afterwards you don't. If you don't check, you will get a lot of problems. Kyabje Rimpoche gives the example of Angulimala, but for us here today, there are vivid examples from just a few years ago. Remember Jim Jones, remember Heaven's Gate. These so-called gurus were truly misleading the people. Sometimes we hear about controversial things that this Swami and that Rimpoche are supposed to have done, but that is not misleading in that sense. You have to mainly keep in mind what contributions individual gurus have made.

Take Trungpa Rimpoche for example. We talk about that he used to drink and have nude parties. But we don't talk so much about how many great disciples he has produced, how many qualified teachers have come up today through his teachings. We can't tell whether or not they are enlightened, but they are well qualified teachers now. However, we mostly are interested in scandals. Yes, scandals are bad, but not that serious. They don't lead people into terrible situations like Jim Jones and Heaven's Gate, who caused people to lose their lives. That is bad misleading. Therefore, check out the gurus you want to take teachings from beforehand.

One of the reasons is to get benefit.

These are Kyabje Rimpoche's bullet points. Somehow the translation of this teaching doesn't clearly show the key points. In the teaching Kyabje Rimpoche would say,

I am not saying the guru does or doesn't have a problem. I am saying, whether the guru has a problem or not, that is his or her problem. What I want is benefit. I want advantages, not disadvantages. I want the benefit of becoming a fully enlightened buddha, so therefore I look at the guru as a fully enlightened buddha, for my benefit. I don't need disadvantages.

BUDDHA'S TOOTH

I tell you an earlier story. It is a Tibetan story, unfortunately. I wish I get some more western stories. But my knowledge is limited, so I only have Tibetan ones. Actually, it is an example Kyabje Ling Rimpoche often used here.

There was a business man somewhere in old Tibet, maybe four hundred years ago. That businessman used to go to India to do business. And he has a mother. And he loves the mother and mother loves him. So every time before he goes to India he goes to his mother and says, 'Mom, tell me what you want from India. I will bring anything.' She always says, 'Oh, I do not need anything from India.' But one time she decided, 'Son, can you really bring me something I want?' He said, 'Well, whatever you want. I will beg, borrow or

steal, but I will bring it.' She said, 'All right.' 'Can you find a tooth of Buddha? Please bring a tooth of Buddha.' He said, 'Yes, yes, I will; I have a number of friends who can find out, and somehow I think I can get it.' So he goes one time, comes back, no Buddha tooth. Another time, no Buddha tooth. Three, four times it happened. But he remembered the mother really wanted that Buddha tooth. So one time he thought, 'I am never going to find a Buddha's tooth. But I have to give her something.' So two days before he reached Lhasa, when he stopped overnight, he found the dead body of a dog. He pulled out a tooth, and rubbed it clean and smooth with a smooth stone.

He really worked hard and made it look like a slightly too big human tooth. Then he washed it, cleaned it and wrapped it into scarves of five different colors. And then he stayed back two days and sent a message to his mother's home, 'I am bringing Buddha's tooth.' So by the time he was arriving, the mother had dressed up, and as he walked closer, she walked outside, holding incense and a scarf, to receive the tooth. She said, 'Where is the Buddha's tooth?' and he said, 'Here. This is Buddha's tooth, a real Buddha's tooth.' She said, 'Thank you so much.' She got up and put it in the middle of the altar. She gave it the most important space on the altar. From that day on she prayed to that tooth, including making offerings every morning, and taking them down every evening. She cleaned the offering bowls, and made new water offerings, flower offerings, incense offerings, including music, and everything. Then, one day the tooth started giving relics.

The word 'relic' is something else than what it usually

means in English. In western languages it could be some holy people's bones, or something. But in the Tibetan language, relics refer to what we call *ringsil*: tiny white little balls which slightly radiate light. I have seen many relics, and recently, after the funeral of Ribur Rimpoche they found huge amounts of relics. He had put out tremendous amounts of relics. Relics are such delicate things. If you capture them by your hand, they will disappear like bubbles in the water. So you have to catch them by spoon, preferably a pure gold or platinum spoon. If not, at least silver, pure old-fashioned silver; not stainless silver. You take them and put them in the water for a while. Then you take them out and then they will remain. You have to look after them very carefully. If you leave them very clean and nicely, sometimes one relic gives two, three, four or five more. And if it is not so clean it disappears. These are the true relics. I have seen them a number of times.

One time I went to Switzerland. This was maybe twenty years ago. There is this friend of mine, a very interesting Rimpoche, a crazy type of guy, very fashionable. He just had to wear the most wonderful, best dresses. We were refugees, we had no money, but even then he would go for an Armani suit. Nothing else would do, you know. He was that type of guy even in Tibet. He also called his house 'palace'. No one does that in Tibet, not unless you are hugely rich and famous. Even the Karmapa did not call his house a palace, but this Lamda Rimpoche did. He also used to ride horses and was very fond of guns. In Tibet, he was extremely wealthy, but in India, after becoming a refugee, he had nothing. He always had 25 attendants. He had them

all dressed completely in some uniform type of dress made from a sort of green-colored Italian wool. There is a lot of wool in Tibet, but he insisted on Italian wool. And they had to wear some kind of Italian felt hat, even in the summer. They carried long rifles and short pistols and knives. He was like that. Then he himself was also riding horses. One day a horse threw him off and he broke his hip. From then on he had to limp. But he walked with an exaggerated swagger, so that nobody knew he was limping.

After becoming refugees, we were a few months together in Dharamsala in India. After that he went to Switzerland and I went to see him there in Davos, near Zurich. I walked into his room, and he had a nice beautiful altar. At the center of the altar there was a Yamantaka image. And he had put a little cup in front of the main face of the image. I asked, 'Is Yamantaka drinking, or what is it?' He said, 'Look inside.' When I looked, I saw these little white pills in there. Then he said, 'Look at the nose very carefully.' I could see the white pills coming out of the nose of the image of Yamantaka, and they would slowly drip into that little cup. And somehow he kept the cup as though Yamantaka was drinking. Anyway, to finish this story, this Rimpoche eventually went back to China and the late Panchen Lama wanted him to work with him, so he even went back to Tibet. And even today, his place is called palace. I received a note once that said, 'From the palace'. He will not write his name. He writes, 'From the palace by me.' This is what I call really true relics, not somebody's old bones or hair or all this. So this dog's tooth started giving these kinds of relics. Since then it has become a saying in Tibet:

If the old lady has unshakeable, profound faith,
even the dog's tooth will give relics.

For her, it was Buddha's tooth. She treated it that way and it worked that way. In reality it was just a dog's tooth, yet it started giving relics. Even the son was shocked, naturally. I don't know whether you call it a miracle, or whatever. The reasons why I tell you this is: it does not depend so much on the person that does it, but on the person that perceives it. So, even a dog's tooth can give relics. That may be a mystical aspect of Buddhism, and one can either dismiss it or pay attention. The choice is the individual's.

To come back to our point: even a dog's tooth is capable of giving relics. Therefore proper devotion to the guru is beneficial to the individual. It doesn't make the guru enlightened nor non-enlightened, neither does it make him better or worse. But it gives benefit to the practitioner.

**Whether poor or rich, no one refuses gain
or welcomes loss, and as for gain, everyone
wants as much as possible. Here the benefit
is all qualities and all attainments, and,
from seeing our Guru as a Buddha, the
attainment of Enlightenment, which pleases
all the Buddhas.**

Attaining enlightenment from seeing the guru as Buddha is the first benefit. Pleasing all the buddhas is the second benefit. I think this translation might have cut out some

of the reasons Kyabje Rimpoche gives. The reason for the second point is that your guru is the representative of the buddhas. If the representative is treated well the buddhas will be happy. If the representative is insulted the buddhas will not be happy. It is like the treatment of the ambassador of a country.

Also, never falling back to samsara, accomplishing all aims, both spiritual and material, protection from falling into lower states or from encountering adverse conditions.

If you have a proper guru and you listen to the teachings, they will take you away from material interest, away from samsara, away from self-cherishing. The blessings of the enlightened beings help you to accomplish all aims.

You can see the advantages of proper devotion to one's Guru from stories in the Sutras, such as the tale of the Bodhisattva Tagtongu. He was ready even to cut his own flesh in order to serve his Guru properly. He attained realizations within seven human years which ordinarily require aeons. From proper devotion to his Guru Marpa, Milarepa attained the great blissful state of non-duality in one short lifetime. Although it is an old story, he is still known and remembered as one of Tibet's great yogis to

this day.

The transcriber must have cut the stories short. Tagtongu's teacher was the bodhisattva Chöpa. He was giving teachings in the street. Tagtongu used to get water and sprinkle it on the street to put the dust down. One day though, a mara, an evil force, made all the water disappear completely. Tagtongu couldn't find any water and there was so much dust. He then didn't hesitate to cut his wrists and use his own blood to keep the dust down as much as possible. Because of that devotion, he developed the bodhisattva stages from stage one to seven, which is unprecedented in the sutra system. Not seven human years, but seven bodhisattva stages! In vajrayana this is well-known, but from the sutra teachings this is unprecedented and the only example we know.

You need to have proper devotion, otherwise the qualities disappear, adverse effects or mistakes occur. Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, saw only faults and achieved no realizations. In the end he committed one of the [5] heinous crimes of immediate retribution. For proper Guru devotion we need to have full conviction and realization that our own Guru is a fully realized and Enlightened Buddha, and then practice correctly both in thought and in action.

Devadatta was not necessarily a mara or an evil one, but Buddha and his cousin Devadatta staged this performance

all the time. Devadatta was always challenging Buddha. He was jealous of Buddha. This was actually a performance between Buddha and Devadatta, in order to guide us.

We may distinguish between the guru as individual and the guru as guru. The individual person has these changes like birth and death; the actual guru does not have that. As the *Lama Chöpa* says,

Though your vajra body knows neither birth nor
death,
Please stay here to help me,
Manifesting the ultimate union,
Without entering nirvana until samsara's end.

Guru devotional practice means two things: thought and action. Most important is thought.

In thought: we must have the full conviction that our Guru is a fully-realized Buddha. It is very important to have this total conviction. Here we are not trying to see a Buddha in someone who is not a Guru. What we are trying to do is to gain recognition of the Enlightened qualities of the Guru. We are trying to discover for ourselves the Enlightened aspects of the Buddha which are already in the Guru. We are not trying to make someone Enlightened who is not Enlightened. There are many reasons and proofs for seeing our Guru as an Enlightened

being. First of all, Vajradhara has asserted that one's own Guru is definitely a fully-Enlightened being. In this time of the five degenerations one should not fail to recognize Vajradhara in the Guru, since at this time he will emanate in the form of Gurus.

The sole purpose and aim of the Buddhas is to care for and to serve all beings. At the beginning (aspiring), in the middle (accumulating merit for aeons) and at the end (attaining) it is for the sole purpose of serving and benefiting all beings.

In the sutra system we are taught: Buddhas first develop bodhimind. Then it takes three countless eons of accumulating merit and purification. And finally enlightenment is attained. This is the non-vajrayana system. That is why vajrayana is so important. Without it, enlightenment is eons and eons away!

We are not fortunate enough to see the actual Nirmanakaya presence of the Buddha in its real aspects. Since his main concern is to benefit all beings, he will emanate or reincarnate in whatever aspect is beneficial, whether animate or inanimate: as a bird, a tree or a bridge. The most beneficial emanation is one at our level, one that we can relate to. Neither a Nirmanakaya nor a

bird is easy to relate to, so he will appear to us as a teacher, as a human being like us. If we don't realize the purpose of the Buddhas in the Gurus, we are failing to see the purpose of the Buddhas.

There are many other reasons why one's own Guru is the true representative of the Buddhas and an Enlightened being himself. There has to be someone to channel the blessings of the Enlightened beings to an ordinary being, much as you need a magnifying glass to start a fire by focusing the sun's rays onto a bit of wood.

Similarly, the Buddhas' blessings come through a representative. If the Guru is not a fully-realized being, then the Buddhas have to rely on an ordinary being, and then their capacity to help is very limited. Although we are not so fortunate as to be in the presence of the fully-Enlightened Nirmanakaya, the Guru is always benefiting beings. There is no space which is not pervaded by the Buddhas: they are constantly incarnating and emanating for us.

Kyabje Rimpoche says that 'if the guru is not a fully-realized being, then the Buddhas have to rely on an ordinary being and then their capacity is very limited.' In the west we see on

television all the time someone saying, 'We have to punish people on behalf of God.' That sounds like God has to depend on ordinary people to do his job. He also says that we not are 'so fortunate as to be in the presence of a fully enlightened Nirmanakaya', but I would say that if we were able to see one we would run away - no doubt about it. In New York anyone can run around in whatever costume they choose and no one would even bother looking. But if Buddha really appeared in nirmanakaya form in the street, everyone would run away.

There is the story of Arya Asanga who had been meditating in a cave for twelve years to develop a vision of Maitreya. Leaving his cave he met a dog laying in the middle of the road, an old bitch with a deep wound all covered with maggots, still barking despite her injury. Out of sheer compassion he decided to remove the worms, but realizing that they would die without food, he cut a strip of flesh from his thigh on which to place them. Then he saw that picking them out of the wound with his fingers would probably kill them, so he closed his eyes and bent down and tried to remove them with his tongue. Meeting nothing, he opened his eyes and saw Maitreya in all his glory standing in front of him. In amazement he cried out: 'Where have you been all this time?' and Maitreya replied, 'Right here, but your own karmic obstacles

prevented you from seeing me until your intense compassion for the dog cleared the obstacles'. Thinking that our own Guru is not a Buddha because of his appearance, because he doesn't have the attributes, is a mistake. Conversely, thinking someone is a Buddha because he has the attributes is also wrong.

I think the transcriber abbreviated the story a lot. Normally we tell it more in detail. Asanga went into retreat for twelve years, but after three years he almost gave up, saw something that made him go back with renewed enthusiasm and the same thing happened another two times. There are many stories about that first part. Kyabje Rimpoche is saying here that if you see somebody who seems to look like a buddha in all aspects it not necessarily is a buddha and if you don't see all the aspects it does not necessarily mean that this person is not a buddha.

One Arhat had a long-standing conflict with one of the major interfering forces, which later became his disciple. It had lived at the time of the Buddha, and knew what he had looked like. It also had great supernatural powers. So one day it manifested before the Arhat at his request in the appearance of the Buddha, with all the major and minor attributes, lights and so forth, warning him beforehand not to be fooled. The Arhat

was so overwhelmed that he went to make prostrations. Maitreya appeared as a dog. So, if the signs are not present it doesn't mean anything.

An interfering force is a mara, an evil force. This arhat had arguments and fights with that evil force, which later became this arhat's disciple. This evil force had powers of manifestation. So when he became the arhat's disciple, he appeared to him and offered to help him and asked him, 'What do you want?' The arhat said, 'Look, you have the capability to manifest. I would really like to see what the Buddha looked like. Can you manifest that?' The disciple said, 'If I manifest as Buddha for you, you have to promise that you won't prostrate to me.' The arhat promised and so the force manifested as Buddha. The moment he saw the Buddha emanation this arhat was so amazed that he started prostrating and then this evil force disappeared.

In short, it is very important to have a Guru who is qualified. Even for ordinary skills you need a teacher, how much more so in this case! We are trying to develop a recognition of the Enlightened qualities of the Buddha - not trying to see one where there is none. One's own Guru is a fully-Enlightened being. Any virtuous thoughts or actions that occur to us are a product of the Buddhas' Enlightened action. How do we get the benefit of the virtuous action

of the Buddhas? Through the presence and kindness of the Guru, Buddha's representative. It is not enough to find such a teacher; we also need to practice proper Guru devotion, as improper devotion is dangerous. We must practice properly both in thought and in action. In thought: this means to develop the recognition and conviction that one's own Guru is a fully Enlightened being, a true representative of the Buddhas, and that our own virtuous thoughts and actions are received from the Buddha. It is stated by Vajradhara that our virtuous thoughts and actions come thanks to our Gurus. In this degenerate age only the Gurus work to benefit us, and there is never a time when Enlightened beings are not working to benefit us. Use these and the other reasons given to establish in meditation that your own Guru is a Buddha.

As the text says: 'Forsaking all thoughts of defects, make a petition with pure perception, not letting your mind stray, place it within admiration and respect.' It is not a matter of just trying to avoid seeing faults; we actually see that our Guru doesn't have any, that he is free from faults, that he really is an Enlightened being.

Whatever experiences we may have to go through, from now until Enlightenment, we place ourselves entirely under his care and protection, and that of the Buddhas in general. Thus generate devotion and meditate accordingly. This is to be done through analytical and formal meditation. We do analytical meditation all day long, as we are constantly examining how to make money, how to succeed and so forth. Now we can use this method and the points that we have been given, and our own intelligence, not just relying on what has been said, to establish that your Guru is a Buddha.

Meditation, '*sgom*' in Tibetan, basically means developing familiarity with a certain subject, seeing whether something is that way or not, using your own reasoning and your own intelligence, on the basis of what you have heard from others and from scriptural sources. Once you have become convinced by certain strong reasons that your Guru is a Buddha, then, without analysis, place concentration just on that point: this is called fixed or formal meditation. At this point we should just do analytical meditation on Guru devotion, as we still haven't developed the reasons

and conditions to see him as a Buddha. Once you no longer have to search for reasons to see him as a Buddha, then you can do formal meditation. Sitting in the seven-part posture of Vairochana, if that is comfortable, or at least keeping your back straight and head held loosely, visualize the Guru, kind in all three ways: giving initiations, explaining texts and giving oral transmissions. You can visualize a single figure, your own root Guru, at eye level, about five feet away. Don't visualize any physical defects he may have. Then make requests: to develop spiritual paths, to eliminate interferences. Engaging in meditation, with your own reasons and those of others, see whether you can establish that your own Guru is a Buddha.

In his teaching Kyabje Ling Rimpoche spent a long time on guru devotion. I remember that he spent at least two days talking about the guru and even when he went on to the second and third mindfulnesses he kept coming back to the guru devotion. So it is important.

The conclusion of Kyabje Rimpoche's explanation on the guru is: you need a guru; you cannot do without. It is a living tradition. A living master gives living teachings to living human beings with the intention to benefit all those who are fortunate enough to have a karmic connection.

A living master is the living representative of the Buddha. Whether he or she has faults or not is not our problem. That is his or her problem. What we need is the blessings and benefits. The activities of the enlightened beings are thereby channeled to us. By that I don't mean that someone is sitting in trance and 'channeling' some 17th century guy appearing to us. Such a thing could be true or false. You can't rely on that. We do rely on a living master who transmits living teachings, commentaries and oral transmissions received from his or her own master. They are representing the Buddha. Whatever Buddha did earlier in his time, they are representing this now. So that guru is a representative of enlightened beings to me. My relationship with my guru is my relationship with my buddha, my enlightened beings. Therefore, this guru should be a good one, not a faulty one. If I focus on faults I can pay no attention, but if I look at the qualities, I appreciate them, because that is what I want to achieve.

That is why guru devotion is emphasized so much. In the west it has not been emphasized by so many teachers because of the reasons we mentioned earlier. In Tibet it is okay to give teachings like that. It has been done for centuries and every generation keeps on repeating it. But in the west, I can't say that I am a guru and you have to respect me and so on. There is a danger of misunderstanding. My training has also been such that I am a very humble person. I always think that I know nothing, that I have no qualities. I will never dare to stand there saying, 'You have to look at me as a buddha' - no way. It would be absolutely wrong for me to say that. This is one of the reasons for hesitation.

On the other hand it is very important to talk about guru devotion. So the easy way for me is to talk on the basis of Kyabje Rimpoche's teaching and on the basis of the First Mindfulness.

To me, Guru is my connection, my divine connection, my connection to the divine world. My guru is the representative, or rather the ambassador of the divine beings, giving their credentials to me. That is not necessarily looking at one individual person, nor is it looking for individual deities or buddhas or anything, but the combination of all. The perfect example for us is Buddha Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, who is inseparable from any *yidam* [meditational deity] that I practice or any guru that I have taken teachings from. They are all inseparable from Buddha Shakyamuni as my guru. Therefore, right now, I like to use Buddha Shakyamuni here, although in this teaching tradition you are supposed to use Manjushri.¹⁷ I just want to show you that you can use Buddha, or Tara, Avalokiteshvara, and so on. You can use any individual enlightened being as representing the guru.

MEDITATION I: SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA INSEPARABLE FROM THE GURU

Imagine your own spiritual root master, if you have, as inseparable from Buddha. So, I now visualize the Buddha on my crown, above my head. First there

is a multicolored lotus and moon and sun disc, and above this, in reality my root guru, but in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni.

He appears in the usual form that we see in paintings: sitting cross-legged, holding a nectar-filled begging bowl, touching the right hand to the ground, calling the earth as witness to confirm that he has obtained enlightenment. He has all the wonderful qualities, all the major and minor signs of enlightened beings in their physical body, and is made of absolutely pure, clean clear light nature. Not physical bones and flesh, but of light nature.

The Buddha radiates light from his body, and that brings all enlightened beings along the side, all different buddhas, lineage masters, bodhisattvas, yidams, dakas and dakinis, arhats, dharmapalas, all of them. (If you cannot visualize that, just simply visualize a light-natured Buddha on your crown, not one made of wood or mud or metal or living flesh, but of light nature; pure, radiating light.) Then we recite the invocation:

You who destroy all evil forces and who knows all things perfectly, for the sake of all beings, please come to me.

Light goes out especially from the heart of Buddha, invites the wisdom beings of all enlightened ones and

dissolves them to his body. He thereby becomes the collection of all enlightened beings, inseparable from our own spiritual root master.

Invocation. With the invocation, according to our Jewel Heart Prayers, we are inviting the wisdom beings of all enlightened beings here. a-l-l. Not necessarily only Buddhist enlightened beings, not only eastern or only western enlightened beings, but, for the sake of all living beings, all enlightened beings.

Who are they? 'You who destroy all evil forces.' In our culture we may immediately think of some evil force outside, with little horns and a little tail. It is not that way. Evil here refers to inner and outer evils. The inner evils are our negativities, negative thoughts, negative emotions, and especially our ego. The outer evils, maras in Sanskrit, are more or less a metaphor of the internal ego and what is coming out of ego, like hatred, obsession, and so forth. The actual external thing is only the reflection or a mirror image of what we have internally. Enlightened beings are those who have totally destroyed these evil forces. By destroying the evil forces you gain total knowledge, as expressed in the line, 'and who knows all things perfectly.' Total knowledge is not misknowledge. It is knowledge free of misknowledge, free of wrong knowledge. In other words, enlightened beings are all-knowing. We invoke them to come here.

A STORY

This invocation has a very interesting background. When I was a kid, I had a little cave in Tibet. I do not know whether we can see it now when we go there¹⁸, I am not sure. But I had a little cave that I used to go to during the breaks of study in the monastery. I am sure there will be a huge difference between what I remember and what was really there, but what I do remember is a big, very spacious cave. There is sort of bedroom inside. Then in the cave itself I had a living room, a little courtyard, a little storage room and running water. Tibet never had running water in those days. In the beginning we had open bamboo stalks and water came through those, but later, my father got a real water pipe from India, even with a faucet. He connected it to a spring up there, and from there it came running down. That is why we had running water in the cave. Then two or three steps down from there was a big kitchen inside the cave. My father also built up another little verandah. So I had a beautiful room. You had to climb on the rock, and then there was a doorway, and then this beautiful room. And in that room there was a nice drawing of Buddha, that shows all these Buddhist monks flying in the air, flying from somewhere to a beautiful city. In the middle of the city you could see a palace, and all of these people flying were going to land on the palace roof. And on top of the palace roof you could see a nice young woman holding some incense, with smoke coming out of it. I saw that drawing all the time, ever since I was five, six, seven, and I was wondering: what is this?

Later they gave me the explanation and this is confirmed

by the sutra. Buddha was in the center of India, and one daughter of a royal family got married to a prince, very far away, in some southern kingdom. She really missed the Buddha and his disciples and the prayers and meditations. So she has been crying all the time, sitting on the palace roof, looking towards central India, and praying to Buddha. And one day she said, 'How wonderful if the Buddha and his retinues could come over here. I would like to give them a feast.' The day before that Buddha was sitting in his ashram, and he told one of those monks, 'Cut little sticks of wood and take them around, and let the monks pick up whoever would like to go with me tomorrow to her place, to have lunch,' He specified that only those who could fly would go. The next morning, at sunrise, Buddha and his disciples flew off. They used their yellow robes sideways as wings and flew to her place and they landed one-by-one on top of the palace roof. At that time, when she was crying, the words she used to invite them were these which we still use in our invocation. These words were originally in some kind of local language, then translated into another local language, then into Sanskrit, then into Tibetan, Chinese, and I think everywhere else, so now we have them in English.

That is why we are using this invocation, and if you want to use it, you can visualize Buddha on your crown, say these words, invite all the wisdom beings wherever they are, and dissolve them to that Buddha on your crown, who thereby becomes the collection of all enlightened beings, inseparable from your own root spiritual master. The Buddha that we meditate on our crown is not different from any other

enlightened being anywhere because in essence they have all dissolved in one.

This is guru yoga. The most important guru for Buddhists is the Buddha, no doubt about it, and the most important guru in the Gelugpa tradition is Tsongkhapa. And so it is Buddha, Tsongkhapa, and it is Buddha Tsongkhapa, inseparable from of your root guru. [Likewise the guru] is Tara, is Avalokiteshvara, is Manjushri, all of them, wrathful, peaceful, everything – all in one. It is a great Indian tradition to focus on [them as] one.

When Atisha was in Tibet, some of the disciples asked him, 'You have so many stories to tell about this person and that person in India who has obtained this or that enlightenment, and we here in Tibet still have no idea. We have no one here who has achieved anything, how come?' (By the way that is exactly what is happening here in the west today.) Atisha replied, 'We in India have only one but we get everything. You Tibetans have hundreds of them so you get nothing.' Atisha was referring to this system of oneness.

Once you have invited the guru, [either on your crown or] in front of you, this is your 'field of merit'. A field is the ground where you grow crops, right? The wheat field, the bean field, the corn field, and so on. Here you have the field to grow merit. Merit in the sense of good karma. So this is where you can do your farming work, trying to grow good karma, by putting a seed into a good field.

The object of refuge, the Buddha, or guru, or all in one, is the field of merit. Now how do you grow the merit or good

karma in it? In 7 different ways that are covered in the practice of the Seven Limbs.

THE PRACTICE OF THE SEVEN LIMBS

1. *Prostration*

I bow down in body, speech and mind.

The formulation of ‘bow down’ is very unfortunate but I was told that is the best word you can use in English. It does not do justice to what we are talking about. The word in Tibetan is *chak tsel*. Normally *chak* means doing prostrations, but that is only the physical gesture. It does not mean the real *chak* at all. The real *chak* is: knowing the quality of the one you are respecting, appreciating the quality and wanting that quality. These three things combined is what is expressed by *chak*. And *tsel* is the seeking, like touching your forehead, the highest part of your body, to the lowest part, the ground, out of respect. (In the Indian tradition, the moment you walk in they touch your foot. Some of them will literally bow down and touch their forehead on your foot. And many of them use a gesture: they touch their own forehead with their right hand, then bow down and touch with their hand or point towards the foot of the person they are bowing to, symbolizing the earlier full-blown gesture.) You show respect because you know the quality, you admire the quality, and you seek the quality.

We cannot use words other than ‘bow down’ because otherwise it almost becomes like a military salute. In the

military you have to salute because otherwise you will be fired or court-marshalled. Here it is different. You show respect because you know the quality. And you do not force people to do it.

In Jewel Heart I made sure we don't do physical prostrations all the time. This is one thing I was very happy and proud to change, despite of many requests from many great friends. You know I do not force people to do prostrations and fold their hands, and stand there when I come in, which a lot of other dharma traditions do. Doing prostrations is a great thing to do, no doubt about it. But I do not like it, personally. I noticed that by discouraging that, people begin to know the person and their quality, and recognize the benefits and help they receive from that person, and once they appreciate that, they can really develop true respect, and that is the foundation of our spiritual development. Personally, I feel that the customary expression of bowing down is distorting that by projecting some cultural behavior in it, like standing up and bowing down. During vajrayana teachings it is still compulsory to do prostrations, but that is different.

Prostration in the West. I must tell you a story. There was a really good Rimpoche and great teacher called Tara Tulku, I am sure some of you know him. He came to the United States a number of times, and when I was first in Ann Arbor, everybody was talking about Tara Tulku coming to the US and some of our people in Ann Arbor even told me that we should invite Tara Tulku to Ann Arbor. And I said, ‘OK.’ So I called professor Thurman, who organized Tara Rimpoche's

visit to the United States. I know him well. And he said, 'Yes, Rimpoche, yes, but Rimpoche, you don't mind if I tell you straight,' I said, 'Sure.' He said, 'Tara Rimpoche is very well-known and very busy, and you, Rimpoche are just starting out, there will be only like a handful of people, it will be a waste of his time.' I said, 'Fine, no problem.' So, I told Aura and Sandy, 'No, he is not coming.' 'How come?' 'Thurman said it is a waste of time.' So they said, 'OK, OK.' Then that same night, around eleven o'clock, the telephone rang and it was Tara Rimpoche. He said, 'I understand you want me to come over.' I said, 'Yeah, but I don't want to waste your time.' He said, 'I don't think like that. I will come whenever you want me to.' So he decided to come. Thurman called up immediately and said, 'Tara Rimpoche wants to go to Ann Arbor, so how will we arrange all of that?' I said, 'I don't know. Talk to somebody.' And so Tara Rimpoche came, and he had a large number of people following him from Massachusetts, all the way, traveling with him, even to Hawaii. There were some really nice ladies there. I was sleeping in that little room upstairs in my house in Cherry Street, and Tara Rimpoche was downstairs. And he came and sat on my bed and said, 'Don't you think the Americans have so much devotion?' and I said, 'Do you think so?' He said, 'Yeah, whenever I go in to a teaching room, they all get up, prostrate, and do all that.' I said, 'And you think that is real devotion?' He said, 'Otherwise why are they doing it?' I said, 'Let's find out.'

So next day he was teaching and we all walked in. You know when Tara Rimpoche came, a lot of people showed up and our place at that time was a little too small, we couldn't

even walk in the normal way, we had to walk in from somewhere else. And there were two or three ladies standing there and doing something that looked like folding hands and bowing down. I was right behind Tara Rimpoche, and I asked one of them, 'What are you doing?' She said, 'Am I doing it wrong?' I said, 'Oh, no, no, no.' There was another one a little further away and I asked, 'What are you doing?' She said, 'He is nice guy, I try to do justice to him, isn't this the Tibetan way of being nice to him?' I said, 'There you go.' Tara Rimpoche had heard all of that. So, he started talking about that directly in the teaching, saying 'Gelek Rimpoche said let's find out and he did find out by asking two ladies and they said this and that'. After the teaching, Tara Rimpoche said, 'I had no idea that this is what they think. They just think it is Tibetan custom and they have to pretend to be Tibetan.'

In the English language there is actually no good way of greeting people in a spiritual way. In India you have the *namaste*, with folded hands. Tibetans also don't have this. They started using some word called *Tashi Delek*, which we normally use on New Year only, but since being refugees in India *Tashi Delek* is being used by everybody everywhere. The Americans do not have that. So they are willing to adopt anything. It is easy to adopt a fancy foreign culture, follow the Tibetan system of prostrating, folding your hands, sitting up, carrying a scarf or whatever. But that is different from pure devotion.

2. Offering

I offer the best I have to give, both real and

imagined, to fill the space between us.

Offerings are the essence of generosity. That is why offering is important. Actually arranged – that means giving offerings, whatever it may be, which is very limited. But mentally created is without limit. Imagine an abundance of offerings everywhere. Whatever you can imagine is not limited. Don't think of some tiny little things. Some people are in the habit of thinking of a cup of water or one or two cut flowers, or one stick of incense. If you do that you are limiting your generosity. If you think of flowers, think that the whole space has been filled up with the most beautiful, rare flowers, like the utamwara flower. If you think of offering water, think of a huge ocean.

Once I wanted to have a sky light in my office and I wanted it quite big, right over my table, the same size as my desk. So I asked a friend to make that and he produced a sky light a few inches wide! I said, 'This is too small' and he said, 'Well, ok, I didn't know you wanted it that big.' I had got a desk and put it under the sky light, and the desk takes up the whole area in the room. Then he said, 'You really mean big! I thought you were just saying it. Nobody buys a desk that big. A desk should only be this big. I see, you make jokes all the time, telling me that any offering should not be limited.' Later he told me, 'You really taught me how to think big. So now I am doing things in a big way.' He really did change his profession from small into big now.

So, offerings should not be limited. The moment we say offering, people are in the habit of thinking of a glass of water, and all this. But it is a great Indian tradition to

have all these different offerings. In Buddha's time, if you look in the stories, the offerings filled up everything. Today the offerings even in India are much less. It really changed tremendously. It is because of the convenience and the idea that, 'Well, nobody drinks, why should we pour so much, and flowers are just for blessing and why should we throw them away?' That sort of idea will limit the generosity. The result of generosity is wealth. So with that thinking you are limiting your wealth.

Each activity has its own results: The fruit of generosity is wealth. The fruit of morality is joy. The fruit of patience is beauty. The fruit of enthusiasm is success. The fruit of concentration is peace. The fruit of wisdom is liberation.

So whenever you are putting limits on the cause, you are limiting the result. If you want to be wealthy, you have got to be very generous. And if you are generous at the right time, in the right place, to the right person, then the result will be very different.

I should not say too much about that because there is a problem with that in the Asian culture. You find the Chinese and Indians throwing a lot of money at the lamas, rimpoches and temples. The temples are the richest in India, people give them everything, and on the other hand the needy people like the homeless, the sick and so on, are left out. That is the problem.

Anyway, offering is the essence of generosity. 'Both real and imagined' as it says in the prayer. That is the original translation. 'To fill the space between us', these words were added up later, I think for the purpose of fitting the tune. Nothing is wrong if you imagine the space not only being

filled up between us, but surrounding us and all over the place. Imagine the space being filled up everywhere. Those of you who do Vajrayogini practice will remember the Kusali offerings where you also do not think of a little skull cup and a little piece of offering material but think of the size of the skull cup being like the earth, and the things to fill it like oceans and mountains. That is the idea of the generosity.

3. Purification

I regret and purify all transgressions

Purification is Possible. This particular line is about purification. Purification is extremely important. Everything, whatever we did wrong, can be purified, no matter how bad it has been. If you have killed someone you cannot bring that someone back to life, but that does not mean that the negativity of the individual who has done that is not purifiable. It is purifiable because it is impermanent, because it is changing. Negativity is impermanent, so it changes. When the terms and conditions are right, it will change into the right thing. When terms and conditions are wrong, it will change into the wrong thing. That is the nature of impermanence. And that is nature of existence, because it is dependent arising. Any phenomenon, whatever we see, is dependent arising. Nothing is permanent. Even the 'permanent' monuments are impermanent. How many times do we try to maintain and repair the statue of liberty? The way and how things change depends on terms and conditions. So if you provide the right terms and conditions, anything can be

purified. In other words, no one has gotten so bad that they are doomed. There is no such thing called hopeless or helpless. Everyone can change. We have hope, we have an opportunity, we have a chance.

Sometimes there is an incredible chance to come out clean. Sometimes it is hard. Sometimes something will hit you and you realize, 'Oh my god, my actions might have hurt this and that person.' You might have done it without realizing. When you get that thought that you might have hurt someone, it is not easy to take it, it is hard. But at the same time, it gives you an incredible opportunity to come out clean. And that is purification. You cannot bring someone back to life. However, you can compensate by doing all kinds of things. I am using the extreme case of killing a human being. Anything below that, whatever it may be, you can definitely come out absolutely clean. Like Allen Ginsberg used to say: it is never too late. He used to say: It is never too late to make the superpower meditate.' Whether you can make the superpower meditate or not, it is never too late for us to come out clean, even at the eleventh hour on the death bed it is not too late to come out clean. It is an incredible opportunity. Whether we can take it or not, it is up to the individual. If you realize it, you can take it. In order to realize it, sometimes you need a certain incident. It has to hit your heart. When it hits your heart, it is not pleasant, but it presents that wonderful opportunity. We have so much denial. We deny anything, saying, 'Oh, that is a crazy person.' It is easy to just put it down to craziness, or something else and just dismiss it. We do that very often. And to realize that you need it to hit your heart. When it

hits hard, you say, 'Oh, my god, I might have hurt that person by my actions.' When you realize that, it is not easy, but also it is an incredible opportunity to come out clean.

Four Powers. Purification is commonly done on the basis of the four powers. The Buddha has given us four powers. The first is the power of the *base*, which is love-compassion, and taking refuge. To the enlightened ones, we take refuge. To the non-enlightened ones we develop compassion. That builds the basis. If you have hurt anybody, it must have been either an enlightened or a non-enlightened being. It cannot be in between. It cannot be neither. So to enlightened beings, we take refuge. We cannot generate compassion for enlightened beings, because there is nothing to be compassionate for. They do not have suffering, so we cannot say 'Poor buddhas'. So we take refuge to them. And for non-enlightened beings, we generate compassion. This is a very Buddhist thing, but taking refuge and generating compassion provides the foundation for us to do anything, not only for purification, but for our total practice. It is our fundamental foundation.

Then the most important thing is the power of *regret*. That is very hard to get, because we keep on denying. When you deny, you do not get it. And after a little while, even if you get it, you cannot accept it. Like President Bush. He keeps on denying that whatever he is doing in Iraq is wrong. And by the time when it becomes so difficult, I am sure, unless he is a fool, he realizes it was a big mistake. But then he cannot accept it because politically it would be suicide for him. So he has to find excuses, and say, 'Oh, let's have democracy in the middle east; how wonderful.'

Good excuse. That is what happens. First you deny, you do not even know. And then you are surprised and you cannot accept it, so you have to make some excuses. It happens. That is the big picture.

The same thing happens on a smaller scale within us. Almost every day we have that, because we are sort of addicted to our negative emotions. Even when we think we are doing the right thing, we will hurt people right and left and we cannot accept that. So we deny it. Denial blocks the regret. And regret is what you need here. If you do not regret, you will have no commitment of not repeating. If you do not regret, why should you purify? There is no reason. You will at best do lip service, 'Oh, sorry, sorry.' That is not regret, it is lip service, just a cultural gesture.

Regret comes from realizing that your action hurt that person. Right or wrong is not the issue. Hurt is the issue, physically, financially, emotionally - especially emotional hurt. Physical hurt is violence and nobody can deny that. Still, there can always be an excuse, there no end to excuses. During this teaching, we often quote a saying, 'Even a son who kills his own father will have an excuse.' It is true, a couple of years we had the case of the Menendez brothers who killed their parents and had all kinds of reason why. A true case. Even they had an excuse. Whether people bought it or not is another story. So making excuses is not the thing to develop here. It has to be regret. Regret depends on the realization that you have caused hurt. And then you feel sorry. That is regret. You feel sorry from the bottom of your heart.

If you have strong regret, the decision not to repeat

will be automatic. When you know it was wrong, and that you hurt yourself and others, you do not want to go back there. That is human nature. So non-repetition then comes automatically.

And then you need an *antidote* action. That could be meditating on compassion, meditating on wisdom, generosity, all of those. Any virtuous action is an antidote, but especially meditation on compassion and meditation on emptiness are very strongly recommended. Shantideva said, ‘Such a powerful negativity, no one can overpower except meditation on compassion [bodhimind].¹⁹’ And Aryadeva said, ‘Even developing a doubt against ego will tear samsara into pieces.²⁰’ So these two are the most powerful practices. And then there are mantras, and circumambulations and prostrations and so forth. Buddhism has endless activities on this.

By these four powers in combination, not matter whatever the powerful negativities we might have created, they can be purified. They are like clouds that can be blown away by powerful winds. And the sun will shine again – because of the pure nature. Everything is purifiable.

4. Rejoicing

I rejoice in all virtues

Rejoicing is the easiest way of building positive karma. Rejoice instead of getting jealous of others’ good works. Just cut the ‘but’ out. We always comment on others’ good works by saying, ‘It is good *but...*’, ‘It looks nice *but...*’. Just cut the

‘but’ out and put a period. It is good work, period. That is much more profitable in the spiritual field than bringing in this unnecessary ‘but’. So rejoice.

Rejoice in your own good deeds. And especially rejoice when you had a choice and you made the right choice and did the right thing. That is fantastic. I know some people who had the choice to either buy a plane or to put money into a good institution which will be the source of good for a lot of people. When they decided not to buy the plane but to build the institution that was a great choice. That goes a long way. Most people would have picked the fancy plane that you can fly around in. When you rejoice in that, it keeps you continuously receiving the positive karma. I gave you one example, but everybody has many examples of where you made the right choice in your life. Some are big scale, some are small scale. However small it may be it is a big deal for the individual. So rejoice in it.

And rejoice in others’ good deeds, like those of Buddha, of Jesus, of Mother Theresa, the Dalai Lama, Dr. King. Rejoice in their efforts. Let them work. You get benefit. Honestly. We do not get equal benefit but we get some. It is good enough. If we get some of Mother Theresa’s good deeds, what more do you want? So the rejoicing is a technique and trick in the spiritual field. It is a very good investment on the spiritual path. There is no risk. You do not lose anything. So rejoice.

5., 6., 7. Requesting and dedication

I request you to remain until total

enlightenment.

I request wise and compassionate guidance.

I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.

Then we have the request for the guru to remain and the request for wise and compassionate guidance. Actually requesting to remain is very important because you need guidance all the time; particularly you need wise and compassionate guidance. Especially at the eleventh hour before you become total enlightened you will need that. That is why we make this request.

Dedication is a safeguard. Remember when Al Gore was running for President, he said ‘I am going to have a lock box’. Dedication is like that. One of the characteristics of karma is that it is definite²¹. That is why to whatever aim you dedicate an action, until that result is obtained the force of that action will not be wasted. It is the karmic principle.

These are the seven points about which Shantideva has said, ‘The buddhas thought for eons about the easiest and best way for people to develop. So they came to the seven conclusions.’ All seven put together is called the seven limbs or seven branches. You are going to find this in every Tibetan and even in every Buddhist tradition. Maybe not all seven, but two, three or four are always there in any Buddhist practice, Chinese, Japanese or Zen. The complete practice of all seven you will find in all the Tibetan traditions.

²²Where do we do it? In the presence of our guru who appears in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni. When you read this prayer you will know what to see and think. You have a brief idea. If you want to extend your understanding, you have all kinds of different teachings, for example the *Lama Chöpa*,²³ in there these seven limbs are quite a bit extended. If you read the *Ganden Lha Gyema*, it is a little bit shorter than the *Lama Chöpa*, and a little bit of longer than in the Jewel Heart Prayers. In the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* you find the expanded seven limbs. In any earlier authentic Buddhist text, you always find these, either page after page or just one line each. These days we are under the influence of the ninth non-leisure²⁴: everyone is busy, extremely busy. We have deadlines, and responsibilities, have to pay the bills, and all sorts of things, so we need short, precise and easy practices. This is one of them.

Not only you make the seven limbs offerings, you also praise and do additional prayers. We praise the guru as collection of all enlightened beings. And he is the holder of the vajra. This is a buddhist technical term, which means vajrayana master.

We can also make a food offering to the three precious jewels. And you can make coffee offerings to the three precious jewels. With whatever you drink, even wine, you can think, ‘I offer my wine to the three precious jewels.’ Why not? Buddha in the Shakyamuni Buddha form may not drink, but Buddha in the Buddha Vajradhara form drinks. Do not worry about it.

MEDITATION I (CONTINUED)

Remind yourself that the object of refuge Lama Shakyamuni – Buddha inseparable from your guru²⁵ – is on your crown. Visualize that he is surrounded by buddhas and bodhisattvas, particularly Buddha Vajradhara, Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara. Then make the seven limb-offering:

I bow down in body, speech and mind.

I offer the best I have to give, both real and imagined, to fill the space between us

I regret and purify all transgressions.

I rejoice in all virtues.

I request you to remain until total enlightenment.

I request wise and compassionate guidance.

I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.

Then say the praise:

I bow to the guru as the collection of three jewels.

I bow to Buddha, the peerless master,

Dharma, the peerless protector,

Sangha, the peerless helper.

I respect and bow to the Three Precious Jewels.

Then you can make a mandala offering. Mandala is the universe, so we offer every existence as additional generosity:

By directing to the fields of buddhas this offering
of a mandala

built on a base, resplendent with flowers, saffron
water and incense,

adorned with Mt. Meru and the four continents,
as well as with the sun and the moon,

may all sentient beings be led to these fields.

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

From the bottom of your heart pray to the objects of refuge.

From the bodies of all objects of refuge light and liquid comes. Do not think of tiny little lights, tiny little drops of liquid.

Think of light like sun rays; think of liquid nectar like storm water.

This fills our body completely. It purifies us, washes away our negative deeds, obstacles, illnesses, internal evil effects.

Our body becomes pure, clean and clear like crystal, radiating light. We obtain the blessings of all buddhas, bodhisattvas, yidams, dakas and dakinis and dharma protectors [Skt. dharmapalas].

Finally all lineages that fill up the space, begin to dissolve to each other. The dharmapalas dissolve to the sanghas - both sutra and tantra sanghas. All sanghas dissolve to the buddhas and yidams.

They all dissolve to the masters and the lineage masters.

Finally everyone dissolves to Guru Shakyamuni.

And that Lama Shakyamuni remains on our crown forever as our Buddha, our guru, our source of inspiration, our source of liberation, our basis of purification.

Remember that very often. And remember their blessings, their spiritual development.

Think: I have obtained both the compassion lineage as well as the wisdom lineage. I have become rich in both compassion and wisdom.

Finally we dedicate our virtue for benefiting all beings:

By this merit may I quickly obtain the state of enlightenment.

And take with me every being without exception.

That is the meditation on mindfulness of the guru. Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS²⁶

Audience: The story about the dog's tooth is amazing. Obviously the woman's faith had an effect for her in her development. Now I am wondering if conversely the faith of the disciple for the guru cannot in certain cases promote the further evolution of the development of the guru. Is there an interdependence there?

Rimpoche: Most probably not. Why? If the disciples are praying to the guru, that costs the guru from the spiritual point of view. The guru has to have a lot of merit. It is a little expensive. Beside that, anything you gain is due to your own deeds, to nobody else's deeds. So your deeds will make a difference to yourself. Let's say, the guru is not enlightened, but on the way there. In that case the deeds of the guru should help the guru to advance on his or her path, rather than the deeds of students or followers. But

the guru's service to the disciples, by being generous with the dharma, etc. those positive actions should enhance the development of guru's spiritual path too. So again, it is not because the students did something, but because the guru did it. The guru gets the result because the guru did it. Not because the disciples worshipped the guru. As a matter of fact, if the guru is not lucky enough, and does not have enough faith, it reduces the virtue of guru. When you have more people relying on or even worshipping you, it costs you. Spiritually it is very costly. So how can the guru keep it from being so expensive? The guru keeps on building his or her own continuous merit. It goes and comes, comes and goes. Sorry, but that is really what it is. And unless you are a phony one, the gurus always have tremendous merit.

Audience: Is there a point where skepticism with a guru is unhealthy?

Rimpoche: I think the skepticism is a welcome thing at the beginning. Until the individual is convinced, they should keep their skepticism. But they should also be ready to end it. Doubt is considered negative. In the *Praise of Green Tara* you have eight fears, and one of them is the fear of doubt. The metaphor for that is a ghost. Skepticism is necessary to protect yourself and necessary to make sure the path and the teaching and the teacher are correct. Once you are convinced, then you have to buy it. Otherwise you will be doubting everybody all the time and you will keep on doubting until the cows come home. The

worst thing is that then your life is wasted. You need to protect yourself but you also must know where to stop. Skepticism is a must. We have to encourage it. Especially in the west. You need it. You know why? Real good teachers will not advertise, but just be hiding somewhere. The phony ones like me, you know, we do have a little advertisement, and then the bigger phonies have much better advertisement. Someone was telling me the other day, 'You never invite me for your teachings.' I said, 'I never invite anybody.' Then that person said, 'The other teachers do send invitations for teachings, but you never do.' Here you go. Therefore you must keep some skepticism. You also must know when to withdraw it; otherwise your whole life will be wasted with doubt.

Audience: I have a double question. In your story with the dog bone, it seems that you really do not need a guru if all it takes is faith, because the woman had faith. The second question: if it is true about reincarnation, then if in this lifetime you do not meet the guru, if you are searching for the guru, how does the guru know that is he your guru and is he waiting for you?

Rimpoche: Good question. Thank you. Let me answer the first one: it was the woman's faith in the dog's tooth which gave the relics. As I said earlier, in general it is not recommended and not encouraged, but for those who are not so intelligent, this method of faith does work.

The second question: when we talk about this guru thing, I do not think we are talking about one particular

individual. The real guru for all the Buddhists is the Buddha. With changing times, from person to person, Buddha happens to be using individuals to convey the spiritual messages. And the guru who is waiting will be the Buddha again. As I often say: even in the eleventh hour before you become fully enlightened, the master has to give a teaching. It is the Buddha who gives you the teaching. So the real guru is the totally enlightened Buddha, whoever may be the individual person at that moment conveying the message. Not only the Buddha, but even the lineage masters somehow influence that person, and they guide each and every individual. That is how it really works. That is why I keep saying that it does not matter whether the individual teacher is enlightened or not. That is not the issue. The issue is our own benefit. Kyabje Ling Rimpoche once told me, ‘When at the end of analyzing you draw the conclusion on the guru devotional practice, the conclusion you draw is: I want benefit, I do not want disadvantages.’

Audience: Why then is there this struggle to find a guru? It is as if in the struggle you learn. Some people find the guru rather quickly; some people take a rather longer amount of time. I am wondering is there a lesson in the actual struggle, the search, and who determines that?

Rimpoche: You yourself determine that. The struggle, yes, we have. That is because of our negative karma. To some people, there are many factors involved in this, like karmic connections, previous relationships with the individual. Without previous connection it is not possible to con-

nect. Take us here in this room. Although I don’t know many of us here and you don’t know me, without previous karmic connection you would not be here today. Even if you wanted to be here, there would be some obstacles, preventing you from coming. That is for sure. Even if you have come here with a skeptical view, there still has to be a karmic connection, without which you would not be here. I am not saying I am your guru. This goes for any event. So that is the karmic struggle. It is real. Milarepa had to struggle tremendously to get teachings from Marpa and that although Marpa was the right guru for him.²⁷

Audience: If the students or disciples cost the guru his merit, how can the students give to the guru? And on the same note, if people can only earn their own merits, are you really giving anything to anybody when you practice the White Tara and image that you put your light around those you are trying to give to? If they have to earn their own merit, how does that work?

Rimpoche: By working, by doing the practice of the White Tara or any other practice, you are building your own merit. And that itself is a worthwhile effort. That itself will give you results.

Audience: But how do you give to someone else, if everyone has to earn their own merit, and, like you said, for a guru to have disciples or students, is very costly?

Rimpoche: It has nothing to do with the disciples them-

selves. Because more people respect you there are karmic expenses. That has nothing to do with the other person. It has something to do with the individual who receives all this worship and prayers and respect. How does praying for others help them? They are getting Tara's blessing. It is two different things. It has something to do with karma, but the karmic connection will be different. Tara's blessing somehow connects and conjuncts one of their own good karmas to materialize the healing. That is how it works.

Audience: Does an enlightened guru who brings people together have insight into the nature of that connection that the student might not have?

Rimpoche: Maybe. It depends - the good ones, yes. A person like me, nothing. Honestly.

Audience: What is the limit of development that could be achieved by having faith in something or someone that actually does not have the qualities, such as the 'Buddha's tooth'? Is faith alone enough to act as cause of development?

Rimpoche: In the story of the dog's tooth the old lady believed it was the Buddha's tooth and did a spiritual practice according to that belief. The practice she was doing was purification, prayers, circumambulations, prostrations, mandala offerings – practices for accumulation of merit. A dog's tooth is a dog's tooth. However, once you open yourself up, then the buddhas and bodhisattvas are always there looking for opportunities to help and serve. When

they looked at the woman who believed that the dog's tooth was Buddha's tooth and they saw her doing sincere practices, they connected with that and the blessings of the Buddha were passed through. How big is the role that faith plays and how much reality of a holy object is there? I think faith plays a major role. This is not for you educated and intelligent people though. If you look at the Tibetan system, there are three categories of practitioners:

1. Intelligent - they can analyze, think and gain wisdom by themselves with a little guidance and help.
2. Medium intelligent- they can still analyze and understand and meditate, but they need a lot of guidance and support. This is actually true for you people too
3. Not-so intelligent - they can neither analyze nor understand, but they can simply pray. For them the faith works. You cannot deny the effectiveness of simple faith.

However, you cannot really rely on simple faith. It is blind faith. If that old lady would have faith only and there were no blessings of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, nothing much would have happened. Also, if she had faith, but didn't do anything to follow up, I doubt whether the faith alone could have delivered the goods. Her practices of purification and accumulation of merit along with faith made it work. To sum it up: Will faith alone work? Probably not. But it gives an opportunity for Buddha, Dharma and Sangha to channel the blessings, plus the woman also worked hard.

Audience: Please explain how the guru-disciple relationship can be established. How much personal interaction between guru and disciple needs to be there for it to work and is there a possibility for it to work if there is no personal one-on-one exchange?

Rimpoche: Traditionally, it is like if a person listens to a teaching from a guru and if that person thinks, 'I am learning from the guru' and if the guru also thinks, 'I am teaching this student', then the learning of even just one word is considered to be the establishment of the guru-disciple relationship. Sakya Pandita said,

The measurement of whether somebody is your guru or not is whether you have learned one verse of dharma from such an individual.

If you learn a verse of dharma from someone but don't consider that person your lama, then you will take rebirth as a dog a hundred times.

It also depends on what kind of teaching it is. If it is really a teaching and if the teacher thinks, 'I am teaching' and the student thinks, 'I am learning' then that establishes the guru-disciple relationship. However, if the teaching has been presented as a lecture or dharma discussion, as a symposium or seminar, then I don't think it establishes the guru-disciple relationship at all. The motivation of both, the one who is giving and the one who is taking the teaching, makes it work.

Do you need a direct relationship between guru and disciple? That would be considered the best. But, for example, today there are large numbers of people, including us, who would consider the Dalai Lama as our teacher. Do we have a direct relationship? No. Is he our teacher? Yes. That tells you something. It tells you that the relationship is actually established on the basis of the teaching. Some people think they have to have a very personal, private relationship and they start chasing the teachers around. If you do that, it is nothing but a pain in the butt. I am sorry to say that. Sometimes people go too far in chasing after the teachers and that is not great. On the contrary, it can open the doors for other negativities.

The relationship really is the teaching. This has to include transmissions, whether oral transmissions or explanations. It also includes initiations. Sakya Pandita's comment I quoted, may sound a little extreme, but that is a little hard to judge within dharma things.

Most of you here have been with me more for at least a couple of years. So it may not be wrong to say it here: The ultimate, true guru-disciple relationship is total enlightenment. When you become fully enlightened, you obtain enlightenment in the mindstream of the guru. That does not mean that you lose your individual identity or your individual mind. I think it is just like space. You absorb into it but you still maintain your individuality. That individuality appears in the form of whatever yidam you are practicing, whether it is Heruka, Vajrayogini, Yamantaka, Guhyasamaja, Tara or whatever. Within the space-like enlightened mind you maintain your individuality.

The relationship between guru and disciple is very deep. It is not a matter of one session or one retreat. It is not even a matter of one life. Disciples always consider the guru to remain there as guru, whether they are living or have passed away. This is very deep and especially when you get into vajrayana it gets even much deeper and more profound. In vajrayana the guru is almost the creator of the mandala. The guru creates the mandala of the yidam. Within that mandala the individual disciples are being initiated. Within that mandala we practice. Within that mandala we obtain total enlightenment. Within that mandala we function in order to help and serve all other sentient beings. If you look from that angle it is very vast and very profound. It is a very, very big thing. I cannot see anything bigger than that.

We read in the *Lamrim* tradition about the relationship between guru and disciple. There are stories here and there. We learn about the benefits and disadvantages. These are simply talking about the mundane level. But I think the relationship in a very profound way goes far beyond that.

This is not so much about the guru as an individual. As Kyabje Rimpoche has said, the guru is the representative of the enlightened society. The guru is the bridge between the enlightened and the non-enlightened. Like we said earlier: the guru is like the magnifying glass that collects all the sun rays and sparks the collected hay. It is something very profound.

I don't see any other relationship as deep and profound as this in the human dimension. We consider becoming engaged and married a very big thing. But this goes far beyond that. And it goes for life after life.

I know very little about it, but you see in the Christian tradition that the nuns sometimes use the expression 'married to God'. You can look at it from the point of view of celibacy, but you can also look from another angle. Maybe it is part of the mystical tradition in Christianity. I don't really know; I am just thinking aloud.

It is not about a single person who is teaching. It is about the whole enlightened society committed to helping the individuals. For example, this morning I read to you that Buddha Vajradhara had committed, 'I will take care of you. And if I am not doing it through the gurus, then through whom else?' The individual guru is a vehicle for the enlightened beings to work. You cannot say that the guru is not doing anything, but [in whatever he does] the whole enlightened society is behind. Or as I said in the Cittamani Tara teachings: the individual guru represents the enlightened society; it is my link to enlightenment.

The idea is that you visualize the guru in whatever form is prescribed by the ritual but you think that it looks like your own root guru. Some people have a number of different gurus so what you do is to think that they are all included in one being. All of that is possible because of this idea: Buddha Vajradhara is the real guru, that appears as the yidam. We call that *gyal wa kyab dag dor je chang*²⁸. It is almost like a creator. We call it manifested, but to say it straight forward: it is created.

Audience: Does the spiritual relation with the spiritual master remain intact over lifetimes?

Rimpoche: I believe so. You cannot say it is; you cannot say it's not.

Audience: What is the importance of visualizing the guru?

Rimpoche: A few years ago I was in my living room, playing with the remote control on the television and suddenly there was an announcement on one of those channels. It was one of the Harvard professors saying that the best way to learn is to visualize. I thought, 'Hello, we have known that for 2600 years and you call that a 'discovery'?' Don't we say that a picture speaks more than a thousand words? A visual image makes a great impact on the consciousness. We know that. The visualization techniques are originally vajrayana techniques. In Vajrayana you learn through visualizing. One of the purposes of vajrayana is to cut out ordinary appearance and ordinary perception. Ordinary appearance is acceptable but perceiving these ordinary appearances to be true is considered a negativity in vajrayana. That's why we talk about purity, the pure vision of the pure deity, the pure mandala. This begins by visualizing that pure state [and eventually] that visualized state then becomes reality. Therefore visualizing the guru becomes extremely important. The external guru connected with the internal vision of the guru, becomes your own guru, your own practice, made by you for you, yours only. That is how you create it.

This is not only true for the guru but also for the yidams. In the lower tantras you visualize the yidam in both ways, front visualization and self-visualization. In the

higher tantras you visualize yourself as the yidam. To make it work, the material you use is the visualization of the guru and the guru-devotional practice. Therefore, in my opinion, the visualized guru is extremely important, perhaps even more important than the external, physical guru. Milarepa said²⁹,

While I am sleeping, I am meditating.

I have a wonderful teaching here. I wish everybody could have this.

While I am eating I am making a tsoh offering.

I have such a wonderful method. I wish everybody could have it.

While I am sitting, I have the guru on my head.

I have such a wonderful method; I wish everyone could have it.

While I am looking at the palms of my hands,

I have the guru on my hands. I have such a wonderful method. I wish everyone could have it.

Milarepa of course was not carrying Marpa on his head or hands, nor was he carrying around his picture. It was the visualized guru who became reality.

Audience: Please share some personal experiences of guru devotion with your teachers.

Rimpoche: The number of my gurus has continuously increased over time. Now I have thirty-four. In some cases it is questionable, whether I have to consider them as guru or not. I have been very, very fortunate, when I look back. I have had a great many masters. There were publicly well-known great teachers like Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche, Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche, my own father Demo Rimpoche, Lochö Rimpoche and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then there are my own private teachers who are not so well-known in public but who spent 24 hours with me, giving me teachings. Particularly my first teacher, who was a great being. He really kept me and sent all the attendants away. As far as my incarnate lama status is concerned, my own estate from my previous incarnation did not amount to much, but from my father's side I had quite a number of retainers. After this teacher took me in, he sent away all attendants, including my nanny. I was three or four years old. The nanny stayed for a while nearby, because she was not allowed in the monastery. She stayed in my cave, not too far away. I must have been crying at night, so this teacher would take me to the corner of the balcony, and from there I could see the light in my mountain cave and he would say, 'Your nanny is there'. He really became very kind for me and I became extremely devoted. That doesn't mean that I didn't get angry at him. I got angry a number of times. He couldn't help it; sometimes he had to beat me. I don't know what I did at the time, but after a while I decided to give him a pay back. When he was standing there barefoot, beating me up, I started peeing on his leg. That was my way of pay back! I still remember that.

Those of you who know me may agree I have no quality, but I don't really get angry. Anger and hatred is something very far away from me. I don't get it that easily, though I scream and yell sometimes. I had to do that occasionally in my life; otherwise I would become a wimp. Sometimes I might have done it a little too fast.

I did receive quite a lot of beatings from some teachers, especially from the one who taught me the technique of speed reading of Tibetan books. Now I completely forgot, but I used to be quite good at it. He beat me up quite a lot, and after some time I even forgot to get upset or angry.

I appreciate all of these teachers and try to look at them as enlightened beings. That doesn't mean that I don't see their faults. I had one teacher who lived with me and taught me the debating. Living with me was not so easy in those days. We were in a tiny little room with two beds. I was sitting on the one and he on the other. He was there all the time. And he never slept at night. He was always dressed up and sitting on the bed. He never lay down and slept. He read books all night, except sometimes he did fall asleep. To be able to read at night he had a butter lamp and when he was falling asleep his head would come close to the butter lamp and he'd burn his face in different places. He would wake up, shouting 'ouu' and that woke me up too. Some other teachers of mine would sleep all the time.

But to me there is no difference, whether a teacher is known as 'His Holiness' who comes with retainers and banners and trumpets, or whether it is somebody who sits next to you and tries to teach you. It is the same. I always try to build an image of the guru in Vajradhara form or

Tsongkhapa form and think that in reality each and every one of my gurus is there. They are one, they are separate, they are all in this [visualized image]. That is how I maintain my relationship with all of them.

Also, almost every one of my teachers has been extremely kind to me, particularly those well-known teachers and those who were living with me, for sure. I felt free to talk to them any time. Sometimes I would get scolded, but not so many times.

Lochö Rimpoche gave the Guhyasamaja teachings in Garrison last year, and I was sitting there with Za Choje Rimpoche next to me, a young incarnate lama. Za Choje asked me after a while, 'Why does Lochö Rimpoche respect you so much? When I was studying in Drepung with him, we young incarnate lamas were tormented by him. He was always scolding. Here he listens to you and laughs. How come he respects you like that?'

But all my teachers were like that to me, including Kyabje Ling Rimpoche and Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche. Except one time. Normally, when Kyabje Ling Rimpoche came - and the same goes for Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche - I would try to help them and hold their hand and they would lean on me and walk around. One day in Delhi I tried to do that with Kyabje Ling Rimpoche but that time he twisted his body away from me and indicated he didn't want to talk to me. I followed behind a little bit and noticed his manager was giggling a little bit. I followed him for a while to the railway station and bowed to him and then he said, 'Don't come and see me until you have shaved your moustache!' So he didn't like the moustache. I had kept that

for some months, and it was growing quite slowly, because I don't have strong beard growth. Anyway, I went home, shaved it off immediately and came back and saw Kyabje Ling Rimpoche. He said, 'Oh, now it is okay.' And after a while he said, 'I was not really upset with you, but His Holiness the Dalai Lama does not like it if you wear a beard. So if he sees you he may get upset and I don't want you to go through that. I thought I better tell you first.' I had been wondering what I had done wrong!

On the other hand, when I fell from the monkhood, neither Kyabje Ling Rimpoche nor Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche showed the slightest hint of displeasure. None of my teachers did. Instead, many of them started to support me. [laughs]. Let's not go into that. Normally it is a great disgrace to give up the monkhood. So my teachers have been extremely kind to me. I can almost say that I have total devotion to each and every one of the teachers from whom I have taken even the slightest teaching of dharma at my own request. That includes teachers from the Nyingma tradition, Sakya and Kargyu tradition as well.

Audience: For someone to be your guru, do they need to be a living person?

Rimpoche: Very good question. I do not know how to answer. My guess is probably yes. But on the other hand, why did I say this with hesitation? There are people who did have visions. For example, this very teaching on the four mindfulnesses is actually Manjushri's teaching to Tsongkhapa. Therefore Manjushri is definitely the guru of

Tsongkhapa. No doubt about it. But is Manjushri considered a living person or not? That is questionable. A living person, just like a human being, no. But I do think that Manjushri is a living person. On the other hand, I also have hesitations about people coming into trance, and while in trance, trying to be a guru or teacher, and things like that. That is objectionable. As far as I know, it has at least been very strongly objected to by Tsongkhapa himself and his disciples, continuously. As late as the 1900s, great Tibetan teachers such as Pabongka and others have objected to gurus coming in trance and so on. So I do not know. My answer will be, 'It is a very good thought.' And whatever my understanding is I shared with you, and I do not know exactly whether I have to say yes or no. I do not know.

Audience: For someone to be your guru, do you need to have a personal connection with them?

Rimpoche: Personal connection, I would really say yes. It is necessary. It is very important to have a personal relationship, a personal connection. But many times that becomes quite difficult. For example look at His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A lot of us will consider him to be our guru, but do we really have a personal connection? Maybe at the spiritual level, otherwise the situation makes it very difficult. With things like that, again, my answer is: I do not know. Do they have to be living? I do not know. I hate to say to everything: 'I do not know', but that is the situation. I explained honestly as much as I could.

And this is not new. Earlier too, Tsongkhapa's disciples, I do not think they all had a personal connection with Tsongkhapa. Looking back to old Tibet, those great teachers had thousands and thousands of followers, and so to have a personal connection, what we consider a personal relationship on the mundane level, is very difficult. It was the same even in my lifetime, in Lhasa with Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche and Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, the senior and junior gurus of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When I was a teen, they were already the outstanding teachers, and I attended a number of teachings, just being an incarnate lama with that name. Because of my father I was able to go and see them whenever I wanted to, and they would give me special attention. Apart from that, and for every disciple who attended their teachings, it was quite difficult to have what we call a one-to-one personal relationship. They do and they don't. They do in the sense that whenever you talk to them, it is very personal, because you do not have to explain the situation, somehow they knew. So it is very personal. But on the other hand, you know, you receive a letter, and you have to figure out who this person is, and it is always like that. So the answer again, I do not know.

For me personally, I have a number of gurus, and with some of them I have very personal relationships, and with many of them I do not have very personal relationships. But when we think of the spiritual level, it is a totally different story.

Audience: Well, you mentioned that if there was a third question you would say that you do not know, so here is

the third question. Again, or someone to be your guru, do you have to have met?

Rimpoche: I consider it definitely necessary. Again, meeting is meeting. It is personal, whether it is a private meeting or a group meeting. When we look today, at least 60% or 70-80% of the Tibetan population will be considered the Dalai Lama's disciples. Did they meet him? No. They have blessings and it is almost like what in India they call *darshan*. But, there are personal teachers.

The purpose of the guru is really to be a role model. You can think and you can sort of share things, you can follow what they do. I am not very sure whether for them to be your role model you have to be with them personally or not, but definitely personal is better. They are a number of stories about that. I'll give you one.

Thogden Rimpoche. There was a person who later became a great teacher, but in the beginning, this gentleman was quite confused.

Actually, his reincarnation, [also] called Thogden Rimpoche, came to Jewel Heart during a summer retreat a couple of times and even gave the oral transmission of the *Prajnaparamita* in Jewel Heart. He is the abbot of the Upper Tantric College today.

There is a funny story about when the previous incarnation first came to Central Tibet. He had a couple of buddies, seven or eight of them, and they all came as beggars, walking and begging on the road for food, all the way to Central Tibet. It took them probably thirty, maybe forty days. Finally they came to Ganden Monastery before they reached Lhasa. At Ganden

Monastery Serkong Dorje Chang was at that time a very well-known, teacher. (Some of you might have known Serkong Senchen Rimpoche, his son).

Serkong Dorje Chang was giving a teaching and initiation in Ganden right on that day in front of hundreds, maybe close to a thousand people. Serkong Rimpoche kept on shouting from the throne, 'There are some people who are not authorized to be here, nobody asked me permission for them to be here, but they are here, and I can see them and if you do not leave now, I will destroy you with my gifts to the evil forces.' He was shouting that from the throne, and that was very unusual. So these seven or eight people gradually got up and left. When one of them, a long-bearded guy, was about to leave and got near the door, Serkong Dorje Chang picked up his dorje and said, 'Hey that bearded guy, aren't you going to sit down, or do you want me to hit you with my dorje?' So he got sort of scared, and just sat down near the door. This happened to be Thogden Rimpoche who later became a very, very famous teacher, especially in Eastern Tibet.

While in Lhasa, Thogden Rimpoche went on to study in Drepung, the famous monastery, and he was totally confused. The word impermanent in Tibetan is *mi tak pa*. But by the sound of the word it can also mean man who is permanent. If you say *mitakpa*, it is impermanent, and when you say *mi-takpa*, it means 'man permanent'. So he was totally confused between man-permanent and impermanent. And they say that at night, during his prayers he covered his head and debated with himself about man-permanent, or impermanent, *mi-takpa*, or *mitakpa*. He

went on saying mantras and he used to run to Pabongka, whenever he was giving big teachings. He ran there and they say he did not even have shoes to wear. He just ran from Drepung to Sera or wherever Pabongka was giving teachings. And when the teaching was over, he ran back to Drepung. And then, whenever he has questions, without thinking he just gets up and runs to Pabongka Rimpoche's house, and tries to ask his questions. Pabongka Rimpoche had a lot of attendants, and they would block him. And he will still try to get in and sometimes they will not let him, and even have a physical fist fight, because he will insist to go in. And somehow Pabongka would know about it from inside the building somewhere, and say, 'Send that guy up.' And then he will give him the opportunity to have questions and things like that. It is very interesting. And he was extremely poor, completely and totally broke, not a penny to his name. So during the teachings some people will offer him food and even sometimes there is a distribution of money. They say he always brought this big, huge bowl, in case there was some food and if there was he would have that completely filled up with soup and he would drink that, and then nearby somebody else would give him some extra barley flour and he would make his dough from that. He was also studying with the previous Lochö Rimpoche. (The present Lochö Rimpoche came here a couple of years ago to give the Guhyasamaja teaching and initiation.) He was sort of running between Lochö Rimpoche and Pabongka Rimpoche, and both of them have a number of attendants, who would block him and fight with him. He kept on doing that for quite a while. At that time he was not known as

Thogden Rimpoche at all, not even as Thogden. Thogden really means yogi, one with spiritual development. He started getting headaches. Actually by this time he had gone beyond the issue of impermanent and man-permanent, he was now looking for emptiness, really closely examining emptiness. So he is getting a lot of headaches. I was told this was absolutely true. In one lunch break the previous Lochö Rimpoche was getting up from his throne. And Thogden Rimpoche is sitting over there with his big bowl, waiting for the next tea distribution to come up after the break. You know, when they had a peepee break they would come back, say prayers and serve tea. So Lochö Rimpoche says to him, 'What is this big bowl of yours?' He was shouting loudly in the middle of a big group. There were still lots of people left in the hall. Thogden said, 'I am hoping to get tea or something.' 'So, you are having headaches, I hear?' 'Yes, I have a lot of headaches.' 'You want to cure your headaches?' 'Yeah.' 'Bring your bowl here.' So he brought his huge bowl to him and then Lochö Rimpoche peed into that bowl, completely full to the top, and gave it to him, and said, 'Drink this', and Thogden sat right there and drank the whole bowl. And at that moment he realized emptiness. Not the bowl being empty of pee, but the real emptiness. And thereafter he became extremely famous, known everywhere as Thogden Rimpoche, especially in Eastern Tibet.

These things do happen. Look at the Naropa and Tilopa stories, earlier in India, and the Marpa and Mila stories, they are all very interesting. But this story of what had happened with Thogden Rimpoche is very recent. These things are very hard to judge. I think it depends

most on the connection, not connection in the sense of our human connection, but in the sense of understanding, devotion, and realization, all together. And it is quite funny. The previous Lochö Rimpoche was known as extremely conservative person. He would not do such a funny thing at all, under any circumstances. But he just did it. There were lots of people watching, because, you know, during that break, he was getting off the throne, there were hundreds maybe thousands standing there, who knows. So things like that happened. I think it is some very special relationship one person has build with another. And, most importantly, it is not blind faith. That is extremely important. This is not blind faith; it is intelligent faith. That is how it works. That is your answer. (I did not say I do not know).

Audience: What is the difference between a teacher and a root guru?

Rimpoche: That is a good question. In the spiritual path, normally teachers are considered as guru, but when you use the word root guru, it is different. In the west, people do have some misunderstanding. Some think that whoever you took refuge from is your root guru. That is misinformation, in my opinion. Those who say so may have their own sources or bases to prove it. In my opinion, what constitutes a root guru is a guru who has been most effective. Not necessarily the one who gave me most teachings. Nor is it necessarily a famous guru. Whoever is more effective, who touches me, whoever is most helpful, and constantly, continuously does that, that is my root guru.

It does not have to be the one you took refuge from. (As a part of initiations there may be a lot of refuge taking, but that is not necessarily the first refuge.) That is true for me. But in the west, some dharma centers sort of use this, and say, 'Well, since you took refuge from so-and-so, and so-and-so belongs to our group then you belong to our group,' I think that is just total b.s. I am sorry. No one belongs to anyone. Everybody has to make their own independent choice, whoever you study with. And whenever you want to join any group, yeah, you are welcome to join, and that does not mean you have to be stuck only here, or anywhere else, you can go to three, four different groups, why not? No one belongs to anybody. Believe me. It is the individual who makes the decision what they want to do. So to me, the root guru is not necessarily the first teacher or the one you took refuge from.

My first guru I took refuge from was when I was very young and I had no idea, most probably was Kyabje Lhatsun Rimpoche or Pabongka. I do not even know which one. The Tibetans have the habit to take the kids, and let them take refuge already before they even open their eyes. In my case, the first name was given by Pabongka, and I was called Gelek Genden Namgyal. So I might first have taken refuge with Pabongka, or maybe with Kyabje Ling Rimpoche. One of them, for sure. I do not consider Pabongka Rimpoche as my root guru because I did not learn much from him. Even though he is great, fantastic, one of the outstanding teachers of that time, at least in the Gelugpa tradition. I do not consider him to be my root guru. Why not?

Three kindnesses. Basically a root guru has to have three

kindnesses: the kindness of giving teachings, the kindness of giving initiations and the kindness of giving transmission, which is the kindness of practice and oral traditions or commentaries. So when you have teachers who have all three kindnesses, then it is your choice to decide who your root guru is. Absolutely your individual choice. No one can say, 'I am your root guru'. Anyone can tell you, 'So-and-so is your root guru,' but it is you and only you who chooses. Your root guru is chosen by you, for you. Only. No one can interfere with that. We had a problem on this point in Jewel Heart several years ago. Luckily it is no longer there. There was someone who made calls to people and said, 'I am your guru and I want to tell you, you do this, this, this.' Some people did follow, and then asked me later, 'Is that true?' The answer is that you have to choose. No one can choose a guru for you. Guru-devotional practice is the fundamental root of spiritual development. Unlike a few years ago, nowadays a lot of books are available in English, and almost every Lamrim book will have an important section on the guru-devotional practice. Even the other great teaching traditions, have very long sections on the guru devotional practice. The more you read about it, the more you will know.

I can tell you how I did it. Each and every teacher, every guru that I have, except the earlier ones, were chosen by myself. I wanted teachings. And I follow.

Audience: What is the indication of having achieved a solid guru-yoga practice?

Rimpoche: Oh, yeah, that is a good question. Every Lam Rim teaching has a section that tells you how one can check if you have achieved guru devotional practice or guru yoga, and the sign for that is that you do not see a separation between any of your gurus and the enlightened ones, like the Buddha or any yidam. You do not see a separation; you see them as merged into oneness, almost. The guru becomes the buddha, buddha becomes yidam, guru becomes yidam, yidam becomes guru. There is a verse in the *Lama Chöpa* that begins with:

You are the guru, you are the yidam,
you are the dakini and dharma protector.

When you are getting to that level of the merging into oneness of all objects of refuge, it is the sign that you have achieved the very strong guru- devotional practice. There are a lot of people who really have very, very strong guru devotional practices. Look at Allen Ginsberg, an absolutely outstanding example of a person who has developed guru devotional practice. This is the reality. There are a lot of people I could name. You do not have to be Buddhist, not does it have to be an Asian.

Audience: My question is about projecting or seeing the teacher as a buddha and yidam. How do you do that if the teacher says that they are not enlightened?

Rimpoche: They make their statement in their own way, and you make up your mind in your own way. The point

is, whether you see the guru as buddha and yidam does not make a difference to the guru for whatsoever. It is not for the guru, it is for ourselves. There is a huge emphasis on this. I do not remember exactly, but Atisha, an earlier Indian master from Bengal who reorganized and rearranged all of Buddhism in Tibet in the 1100's, was asked by an earlier Tibetan master, 'How come you have so many examples in India of masters who have achieved this, achieved that, but we have no example in Tibet?' Atisha said, 'We Indians see our gurus as fully enlightened. You Tibetans see your gurus as worse than ordinary human beings. So what are you expecting to gain?' There was another Tibetan master called Padampa Sangye, again from India. Padampa Sangye said,

Judging from the point of view of our own negative karma, we are fortunate to be able to see our guru as a human being and not as a dog or donkey.

Audience: Should we ever place complete trust in the guru even when they do something that betrays that trust, such as sexual misconduct, or stealing?

Rimpoche: This is very important question. I do not know how to answer that. When you look back, what had happened in this country, a lot of people gained great benefit through different gurus. For example, there were those different swamis, and, Rajneesh, Trungpa Rimpoche, and all of them. Look how much people have received. We

do not really talk about it that much. But about the scandals we talk a lot. I don't really know what to say. They are great gurus, and they may have what we call skillful means, or maybe not. I do not know. However, there are also a number of fake gurus that have come in and took advantage of people. Maybe some are genuine gurus, but their skillful means did not work well or whatever. But [also] there have been a lot of unfortunate incidents. We cannot ignore that. The purpose of guru devotion is spiritual development; the real essence of the guru devotion is the development of intelligent faith. Intelligent faith discriminates, it builds discriminating wisdom.

A number of my gurus agree with some, and with some they disagree. Even their disciples have disagreements too. I have seen it. Most of them, when they disagree with their own teachers, decide not to follow, but keep quiet about it. I think they tried to explain it, because it is very clearly stated: 'When you cannot do it, you have to explain it. When you explain it, it is perfectly fine.' This was already stated by Buddha himself.

I have witnessed that. A number of teachers of mine did not agree with a number of other teachers, who happen to be their teachers too. When they chose not to follow, they did not go against their teachers publicly. They just kept quiet. We see now that the time of skillful means is almost over. Some people may think, 'Oh, I am the special person, so I have a special thing happening to me, and this is my test for me.' This is rather unfortunate. Miracle things are extremely exceptional, one in millions, and chances are not likely that is going to be me. We think the other way around, 'It is one in a million, and

chances are that it is me.’ You have to follow your common sense, without going against, or being anti- or something.

Audience: What happens to the guru practice after the guru dies?

Rimpoche: It becomes much easier.

Audience: For whom?

Rimpoche: When the guru is in life, you have tremendous devotion, and at the same time, you will always have to be slightly careful with everything. When the guru dies, you begin to realize a sense of loss, the tremendous loss. You think, ‘I could have done this, could have done that, could have done that.’ The list will go on and on and on. There are a lot of could have done’s. You begin to realize that you could not do it, you missed the opportunity. Yet at the same time, there is this incredible gratitude, to have been able to get connected, to see, to take teachings, to ask questions, to have been able to learn, able to share, everything, to have been able even to share a cup of tea or a glass of beer or wine or dinner, all of those. And of course the dharma teachings, the initiations, because of all of them you feel a tremendous gratitude and at the same time, a tremendous loss. And then, I think it is Padampa Sangye or Milarepa who said,

That kind, compassionate guru is now with you forever, on your crown, in your heart, in the palms of your hand.

And with that gratitude, with that devotion, together with that sense of missing the opportunity, you see that the guru is inseparable from Buddha and all gurus, all yidams, all dharmapalas, and everyone, all together. Then you really see the true sense of the prayer in the *Lama Chöpa*: ‘You are the guru, you are the yidam, you are the dakini and dharma protector.’ That true sense of ‘you are this, you are that’ all comes in. Although you are supposed to do that when the guru is in life, that sense of loss comes only when the guru has passed away.

I have been through with this a number of times. Suddenly the normal resource for whatever you have to ask, is no longer available. You know, it is strange. I recall the passing away of Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche. He was like a tremendous father figure that you can go to and ask everything, whatever it might be, including questions of business, even to the point of how to get married, and everything. Then, all of a sudden that physical figure does not talk back to you. It is sort of unbelievable. And then you begin to appreciate the kindness and compassion, and everything they have shown. You have this sense of loss and it is sort of joy and sadness combined together, some kind of feeling that remains with you all the time. I have been through that a number of times. But the guru does not disappear. The manifestation has been dissolved to the original source where it has been manifested from. It does not just die, it is living. Not only it is living, it will be there, whenever you need it.

A lot of funny incidents have happened in my life in that regard. One time I was in Singapore, trying to go to

China, It was just before the Chinese student trouble in Beijing [in '89]. I was trying to go to Tibet and was on my way to Beijing via Singapore. At that time I did not have a proper passport, only the Indian identity certificate which every Tibetan takes. With that one it is very hard to get a visa from any country, except Singapore. So I was in Singapore, living with a Chinese business person, who is very kind and who supported me, a very nice person. I stayed in his house for a month and not only me, but a number of people came to see me and stayed along with, and we had one monk from Australia. I think Hartmut was there and Alfred too. This Chinese businessman was a very high society man, and yet he opened his house, and people started camping in his living room and dining room. Some monks and we stayed there. And he kept on telling me that he had to buy a house, and asked me whether he should buy or not buy. I said, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, and never checked or anything. He said it three or four times, and I forgot. He used to have his chauffeur take him to his office, and another chauffeur would take his wife out, so we were all living in his house and nobody was there all day in this big house in Singapore. One day suddenly he dropped back at about eleven or something and I did not have a clue whether he should buy the new house or not, and there he was taking me to see it. He said, 'Rimpoche, would you come with me for a minute? We want to show you the house.' 'OK,' so I went with him, naturally. What else can you do? It was another big house and four or five different buyers were looking at it too. So I was thinking to myself, 'What can I say now? I do not know. What answer

do I give?' I did not have a clue.

There was a big living room on the ground floor with kitchen, and we walked around. I was wondering, 'If Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche was alive, what would he say about this?' Then we were about to climb the staircase to the rooms upstairs and I looked up and suddenly saw Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche's attendant, whom people had always nicknamed egg-shaped head or something because of the shape of his head. He was literally standing there and was saying to me, 'Kyabje Rimpoche says that whether your friend can make money out of this or not is not your business. He is a business person and should know better than you. But if he buys this house it is not going to bring any unfortunate incidents for him or his family.' I looked up again and the attendant had disappeared. When we were walking around upstairs, my friend asked, 'Rimpoche, should I buy it?' and I answered, 'From a business point of view I have know idea. I do not know. But buying this house is not going to bring you any unfortunate incidents.' The Chinese are very superstitious about anything. They are very concerned whether something is going to bring unfortunate luck or something. So I said that no such things were going to happen. Thus I was saved. Sometimes guru devotional practice does that. The most important thing is not to freak out at moments like that. So things like that do happen sometimes.

Audience: In order to get the full benefit of the teaching we have to see the teacher as Buddha?

Rimpoche: Not at the beginning level. Although, the Buddhist teaching does emphasize that, not at the beginning level. If you do, it is not going to happen. So first, I think it is very good idea to study dharma as dharma study and not as dharma practice. Try to learn. People study the subjects and attend courses. Try to study those. At that time, treat the teacher as a lecturer or professor or reader or something like that. This should be the basic understanding between the two. Afterwards, when you really understand, when you really want to study, when you really want to have a dharma practice, then change your attitude. Let the teacher know that you are changing your attitude. I think that will be much safer. As I said before³⁰, Sakya Pandita did say that if you hear one word of dharma from somebody, you have to treat that person as a spiritual master, and if not, you will be reborn hundred times as a dog. Also in Buddha's previous-lives stories, the *Jatakas*, there are a number of stories that illustrate that in order to pick up one little profound teaching, one has to be ready to give one's life and all that type of thing. That is all there, I think, to show to the people the quality, the rarity and the importance of the dharma, rather than to make that compulsory.

In my opinion, one should really start to take the dharma as a study, and find out what one likes and what not and how it is, like anybody else who does study. Then change that into practice. Then you can also change the [relationship with the] person whoever you are learning from. If you like it, if you think you manage, then switch from a teacher relationship to spiritual master's or dharma

master's relationship. And then you can further switch from the dharma master's relationship to guru relationship. Finally you can switch from a guru relationship to the vajrayana master relationship. I think that is something one gradually has to work out. It is not going to work immediately.

When you are with people like His Holiness the Dalai Lama or somebody similar, who comes in with a big entourage and lots of people and does not get in touch with you very much, there is not so much danger, but with the teachers who spend time with you, or who are perhaps even living in your home, or living nearby, there is much more danger of seeing faults in their behavior. Because they are human beings, they will have faults, and all that. And then you have a guru relationship and you will see all faults coming up and that is going to be a big problem. Therefore the gradual process. It is very safe and very nice. That is why I normally recommend you to do until you get convinced and happy and comfortable. Then you move and take the dharma teaching as a practice. The decision has to be made by yourself. No teacher can make it for you. Once you have accepted a dharma master or spiritual teacher, a guru, then you may rely on that person. I think that is a much better way of going.

Audience: You said at one point that a person is either enlightened or not enlightened. And then you just said that at some point in the relationship you should begin to look at your teacher as Buddha, which is an enlightened being. So, there may be cases it seems where that is going to be a delusion. Is that not correct?

Rimpoche: Could very well be. Even delusions are capable of delivering results, not because of the person, not because of the delusion, but because of the blessings and the power and the commitment of the enlightened beings. Although the person might not be enlightened at all, when you look at them as fully enlightened, it will serve the purpose of having an enlightened master.

Audience: Is guru devotion a cause or an effect?

Rimpoche: I think it is a cause. I don't know whether it is an effect. The guru devotion helps to grow and develop. It is the spiritual root. So I'd say it is a cause.

Audience: Can one get attached or too dependent on the guru?

Rimpoche: It depends [laughs]. I don't think the word we are looking for here is attachment. You want a profound closeness. You are depending on the guru, you are supposed to, but that doesn't mean you do nothing. Very often there are misunderstandings on that point. Profound respect and admiration is a guru devotional stage. Take the example of taking refuge. You take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and depend on them. But that doesn't mean you don't have to do anything. If you think, 'I bought my ticket to heaven and now I can do anything I want to', sorry, it doesn't work that way.

Audience: What processes did Tsongkhapa use to know

when to stop disbelieving his visions and take them serious?

Rimpoche: Well, I did mention it: first, when Tsongkhapa had visions of the 35 Buddhas on the mountain tops and visions of Manjushri and Tara, he totally ignored them. Then he got word from one of his teachers, Lama Umapa, that the visions were real. So, first you see visions as just visions. Later you begin to talk to the 'hologram' appearance over there. You ask them tough questions that you know the answers of. Then it is getting more and more profound. Before Je Tsongkhapa had direct contact with Manjushri, Lama Umapa was acting as a translator or postman, delivering messages back and forth between Manjushri and Tsongkhapa. Many of the answers were already available, but Tsongkhapa checked and re-checked whether the answers were correct. Only then he decided to take teachings.

Not only Tsongkhapa did this, but a great many masters in many traditions had visions. I had correspondence with and blessings of an old monk in the Dagyab area. Everybody told me about him. He was known as Lama Yeshe Wang Dak. He used to live in a hilly remote area in Dagyab, Eastern Tibet and had besides monks and lay people a lot of nun-disciples. He had a retreat area where he stayed but he also walked around and gave teachings. During his teachings a lot of deer came and listened too. So the monks and the deer started pushing each other for space. At one time one monk got even pushed over a cliff by a deer and died. Normally they didn't hurt each other, but rushed there together. I think there were even more deer than

human beings listening to Lama Yeshe Wangdak's teachings. I had correspondence with him and received blessings from him, but I never met him.

Dagyab Rinpoche, who lives in Germany now, did meet him a number of times, because he is the head of the entire Dargyab province, a mini Dalai Lama for the Dargyab province. Just last year I asked Dargyab Rinpoche, 'What about this Lama Yeshe Wang dak?' Dargyab Rinpoche said, 'Oh I can tell you about him.' At one time, being the head of Dargyab, Dargyab Rinpoche issued an order that Lama Yeshe Wangdak should appear before him. So he actually came and met him. Dargyab Rinpoche asked him a lot of questions and he replied, 'Well, let me ask Tara tomorrow and then I will let you know.' Any difficult points, spiritually as well as mundane, political, economic points, Lama Yeshe Wang Dak would consult Tara about. He promised to get all the answers by next day. For example, Dargyab Rinpoche asked him whether he should go to Chamdo on the invitation of the Chinese. The Dargyab government officials had decided not to go. After asking Tara, Lama Yeshe Wangdak's answer was, 'You should definitely go.' So he went.

This lama had a person to person relationship with Tara and she answered many of his questions. And no one has ever claimed that any of the answers had ever misled anyone - not only on the spiritual path, but even in the mundane political and economic field, including family matters.

However, there are also wrong visions. The 'three channels-purified' visions are not easy to get³¹. It requires a tremendous amount of spiritual standards of the individual. 'Three Channels Pure' tells you that ordinarily, the three

channels are blocked. The energy cannot flow through the right and left channels, because there are knots. If the three channels are pure it means that the knots have been cleared. That is not simple and can only be done in two ways: one is at the time of death, which is a physical process and the other is during [advanced] meditation. (There are those masseuses who may tell you that they open your heart channels. I don't know what they are talking about. They must be doing some external kind of thing. But I don't think they can truly open the channels and chakras. If that is so easy, why aren't we all enlightened?) That is the mystical aspect of Buddhism, the vajrayana aspect.

From the sutra aspect, looking from the angle of the five paths, the first two are the path of accumulation and path of action. The path of action is divided into four: Heat, Peak, Patience, Best of Dharma. At the patience level you have pure visions. At that time the images talk to you. You can have conversations with them, that is if the images are properly consecrated. So it is even possible in the non-vajrayana tradition, in the pure, straightforward sutra path.

Food Offering. Okay, if there are no more questions, let's eat. When you eat, you can make any kind of prayer as food offering. It doesn't have to be an external display.

In most of the guru yogas you dissolve the guru to your heart. Then, every food that you eat, if you have blessed it, you can use as a feast offering to the guru in your heart, who is in the nature of the yidam and in fact in the nature of all buddhas, yidams, dakas and dakinis - the total refuge. Eating that way is probably the best thing you can do. It

follows Milarepa's saying, 'Every food I eat becomes the *tsok kor*, the food offering to the guru.' I have such a wonderful method, I wish everyone could have it.'

If you don't want to do it this way, you can also visualize all the buddhas, gurus and yidams in front of you and then bless the food. Blessing means three things: purify, transform and multiply. OM AH HUM represents that. You make that essence offering in your visualization and you can also use the left-overs in your blessing. We have a prayer that we say together:

OM AH HUM OM AH HUM OM AH HUM

I and my circle, throughout all of our lives, may
we never be separated
from the protection of the three precious jewels.
By continuously making offerings to the three
precious jewels,
may their blessings be obtained.
Buddha, the peerless master, dharma, the peerless
protector,
sangha, the peerless helper,
we make these offerings to the three precious
protectors.

You can say it quietly under your breath. Don't say it loud. That becomes show biz. If you do that, your practice will become a show biz and that is not so good.

MEDITATION 2: MANJUSHRI AS INSEPARABLE FROM THE

GURU

*First take a few moments of breathing meditation.
Feel the breath passing the nostrils....*

Now, the main thing is to watch your mind, [whether it is] in the sphere of virtue³². If you find that your mind is in the sphere of virtue, be happy about it. If it is neutral, try to change it into virtue. If it is in a negative mood first try to change it into a neutral state and then into virtue.

*Keep the mind influenced by positive, virtuous thoughts. Positive actions will follow from there.
Refuge. Take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
Focus completely.*

Bodhimind. Now move your mind to setting up the Mahayana thought. All living beings without exception have been our mother. All enlightened beings have stated this in one voice, again and again. We have to presume they are not telling us something wrong. We presume they are reliable. Therefore, I see each and every sentient being as my mother.

They have not only given me birth but constantly protected and helped me. They have been extremely kind. The mother chooses to die herself for the sake of protecting the child. Up to that extent all sentient beings have protected me.

I would like to repay their kindness by generating equanimity. I think: May all living beings be free from hatred and obsession.³³ May they be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. May they remain with happiness and joy and the causes of happiness. May they also remain with the great joy that has never known suffering. If I could develop such a situation that would be repaying the kindness of all living beings, it would be great. This reminds me of love and compassion to all living beings.

I wish I could do this. I would like to commit to do this. But I cannot do it in this situation, at this level. Therefore it is necessary for me to become fully enlightened. If I could do that, I would be able to effortlessly help all living beings.

Visualization. Then visualize yourself in your ordinary human form. On your crown is a lotus cushion; above that, a moon and a sun disk.

Above that sits your root master in the form of Manjushri. His body is orange in color. He has one face and two hands. The right hand is holding a sword, the left a book. Thus your root master - comprising all your gurus - is not in ordinary human form but in the form of Manjushri.

Above that Manjushri, are all the lineage masters, 30 to 40 of them. If you can't think that, just think

there are a number of lineage masters, sitting one above the other. (Don't think the weight of them is so heavy that they push down one on the other. This is a visualization).

Finally, above Je Tsongkhapa on the top is Manjushri again. Everybody in the lineage is in Manjushri form.³⁴

Above the topmost Manjushri is Buddha Vajradhara, blue in color, one face, two hands, holding bell and vajra, sitting in vajra style.³⁵

The lineage gurus are surrounded by all direct masters, buddhas, lineages of direct masters, bodhisattvas, dakas and dakinis, arhats and dharma-protectors.

On Buddha Vajradhara's crown is a white OM, at his throat a red AH, at his heart a blue HUM.

Invocation. From the HUM at his heart light radiates. Simultaneously all lineage masters in Manjushri form start radiating tremendous amounts of light into all directions, inviting all buddhas and bodhisattvas. They all dissolve into the root- and lineage masters and become inseparable.

Prostration. Here you can say: Buddha, the peerless master, Dharma the peerless protector, Sangha the peerless helper. May we all make prostrations to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Now we offer the Seven Limbs:

I bow down in body, speech and mind. You know about their qualities and admire them, appreciate and seek these qualities.

I offer the best I have to give both real and imagined to fill the space between us. In your visualization the offerings are endless, the space is filled up with limitless offerings.

I regret and purify all transgressions. I purify all negativities, those that I remember and those that I have forgotten, by applying the four powers³⁶. I rejoice in all virtues. I rejoice in the great activities of the great beings.

I request you to remain until total enlightenment.

I request wise and compassionate guidance. At different times you need different teachings. Not only that: Even at the 11th hour before becoming enlightened, you need specific teachings. At that time your guru will appear as Buddha Vajradhara and give the necessary teaching. I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.

All these practices should be done from the bottom of your heart.

After that, the root-and lineage lamas and particularly Buddha Vajradhara, release from their body a

tremendous amount of light and nectar.

This enters through your crown, fills up your body completely and dissolves into every part and particle of your body. It purifies all obstacles, negativities, illnesses, interferences. Your body fills up with nectar and you receive the blessings of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, and especially Guru Buddha Vajradhara's blessings. Your life, luck, fortune, qualities and spiritual development increase.

MANTRAS

You can say the general Manjushri mantra: OM A RA PA CA NA
DHIH

Or you can say the long praise of Manjushri³⁷.

You can say White Manjushri's mantra: OM VA-KYE DAM
NA-MAH

Then you may say the Migtsema:

MIG ME TZE WAI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG
DRI ME KYEN PAI WANG PO JAM PAL YANG
DU PUNG MA LU JOM DZA SANG WAI DAG
GANG CHEN KE PAI TZUG GYAN TZONG KA PA
LO ZANG DRAG PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB

The tradition recommends to make prayers and requests

to each of the lineage lamas, but [you can do what I did] while leading the visualization.

While seeing Manjushri on a lotus, moon and sun on our crown, during the first Migtsema I focused on the root guru as guru Manjushri. Light and liquid came from Manjushri and purified everything.

The second time we said the Migtsema I jumped from Kyabje Ling Rimpoche in the form of Manjushri straight above to Tsongkhapa. Light and liquid came from the bodies of all these objects of refuge and blessings were obtained. (In that way, with one Migtsema I covered the whole lineage.)

The last time I focused particularly on Tsongkhapa. Light and liquid come, you are purified and blessings are obtained.

When you say these mantras, visualize that one mantra [when finished] dissolves to the other.

You can say more mantras such as om muni muni maha munaye soha. Or more Migtsemas and more om a ra pa ca na dhih. In that case you focus on Manjushri himself. Light and liquid come, purification is done and blessings are obtained.

Then focus on Buddha Vajradhara above him and make requests.

Then you can say the Foundation of All Perfections here. If you do so, then at each of the key points you have to think. And think at each stage that you have now developed the realization of that stage.

For example:

I have now developed the guru-devotional stage.

I have now developed the realization of the precious human life.

I have now developed the realization of impermanence.

I now developed the understanding of the karmic functioning.

I have now developed refuge.

I now developed the realization of the 2nd scope, the 4 noble truths.

I now developed the no-more-learning stage of the arhat level.

I have now developed compassion.

I now developed love, bodhimind, the 6 and the next 4 paramitas.

I have now received the four initiations into vajrayana.

I now gained the realizations of development- and completion stage.

I have now become a fully enlightened buddha.

Dissolving. Then all [surrounding] buddhas and bodhisattvas etc. dissolve to the root and lineage masters, which includes Buddha Vajradhara.

Finally, Buddha Vajradhara dissolves down to Manjushri.

All the lineage masters in Manjushri form dissolve down to each other and finally into your root master in the form of Manjushri.

Recognize that this guru is the collection of all refuge. It helps you to build the mindfulness of the guru.

Finally the guru dissolves to you, and your body, mind and speech become inseparable from the guru's body, speech and mind.

No one and nothing can separate that.

This is the meditation of seeing the guru as Buddha. Those of you who have received initiation³⁸, can visualize themselves

in the Manjushri form on the lotus, moon and sun. If you do this, not only you have covered the mindfulness of the guru, but also the mindfulness of the body as a deity.

This is how you meditate on the guru. Do this once today, once tomorrow before the next session, once during the group practice of chanting the Seven Limbs, including the mantras of Avalokiteshvara and Tara, and make sure you say some Migtsamas during the Seven Limbs period. That way the 24 hours of our activities are included into the meditative state. Good Night.

HOW TO INTEGRATE THE MEDITATION IN THE GANDEN LHA GYEMA

Last night we meditated the guru on our crown, sitting on a lotus, moon and sun. We meditated the guru in the form of Manjushri, because the fourth mindfulness is wisdom. Also it was Manjushri who gave this teaching to Tsongkhapa, who himself happens to be Manjushri. It is sort of an exchange between two Manjushri's for our benefit. That doesn't mean that you cannot use the guru as Avalokiteshvara or Vajrapani. We did a teaching on the *Ganden Lha Gyema* on Labor Day weekend and there you could see that the trinity of Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani are all interchangeable. Yet, although the aspects of Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani are interchangeable, here it is recommended to choose Manjushri for the reasons given above. Perhaps, if you want to, you could choose Avalokiteshvara for the mindfulness

of compassion, if you do that separately. For wisdom you could use Manjushri and for the mindfulness of the guru you can use the guru.

How can we integrate this teaching with our regular practice, like the *Ganden Lha Gyema* or the *Lama Chöpa*? This teaching has been taught separately, on its own. So you can always practice it on its own. On the other hand, if you look at the *Lama Chöpa* and the *Ganden Lha Gyema*, both are guru-devotional practices and the guru is the same guru. The guru can appear in the form of Tsongkhapa or Manjushri or in the form of Vajradhara, as in the *Six Session Yoga*, or sometimes in the form of Heruka or Vajrayogini during some of the mother tantra commitments. The appearance of the guru is interchangeable. So that part is compatible.

Then refuge, generating bodhimind, the four immeasurables, the offering of the seven limbs, etc, is all the same too.

At the time of request, in the *Ganden Lha Gyema* you bring the guru to your crown and say the verse: *O precious and kind root guru, come take your lotus and moon seat on my crown...* You may not have to verbally say that, because you have already generated the guru on your crown. Then, reciting Migtsemas, obtaining the blessings of the gurus, that is all still the same thing.

Then follows the *Foundation of Perfections*, the very root of the practice. Kyabje Rimpoche repeatedly said that this prayer is the essence of the *Lam rim*, the essence of the stages of the path. Pabongka too, in the *Liberation in the Palm of your Hands*, while talking on a different subject, always comes round to that sequence of the stages of the

path. Even Tsongkhapa's *Lam rim chen mo* follows the same steps.

After the first verse, light and liquid comes and purifies negativity in general and develops the guru-devotional practice and specifically purified obstacles to it. And you think that the state of the mindfulness of the guru has been obtained.

The second verse addresses the preciousness of life and impermanence together, while the third verse is particularly about the impermanence of this life. As the teachings repeatedly say: don't get attached to the samsaric goodies. The best way not to get fooled by that is thinking about death, particularly about our own future death. That will cut the attachment to samsaric goodies. Again, light and liquid comes and purifies negativity in general and particularly the obstacles to this point.

Then contemplate karma and so on. At each verse you think that you have purified obstacles to this stage and that you now have obtained this stage. This is including the vajrayana practices.

At the end you pray that you may never be separated in life after life from the precious teachings of Tsongkhapa.

Now the dissolving point. In the *Ganden Lha Gyema* there is this verse you say three times: *Come take your lotus and moon seat at my...* At that point, guru Vajradhara dissolves to Manjushri, who dissolves to Tsongkhapa, who dissolves to the lineage masters, who finally dissolve to your root master in the form of Manjushri, who then dissolves to yourself.

Now it becomes slightly different from the *Ganden Lha Gyema*. There the guru dissolves to you and remains at the

heart level, which is the system of the pure sutra practice. Here, this Four Mindfulnesses is mixed with vajrayana practice. [Therefore] by dissolving the guru within you, you generate tremendous bliss.

If you have the background of the *Mahamudra*, this is the place to use it.

In the *Lama Chöpa* teachings, at the final dissolution, the whole tree dissolves to the guru and the guru dissolves to you. Although the *Lama Chöpa* has vajrayana influence, the guru, when dissolving to you, remains in the guru form at your heart level.

Mahamudra is actually emptiness practice, dharmakaya practice. All the dissolving systems that we teach in the sadhanas can be used at this level. That dharmakaya state is the actual *Mahamudra* stage, the actual emptiness.

In the sadhanas you arise in sambogakaya and then in nirmanakaya. But here, if you do the guru mindfulness separately, you conclude with the guru at your heart. (That is, if you are *not* combining it with the divine body mindfulness.) Within that state you can generate compassion and develop wisdom, which is already included with the *Mahamudra* aspect.

If you are authorized to arise as a deity you can do that in whatever form that maybe, but recommended in this case is the form of Manjushri. That is an indication of the vajrayana practice being involved here.

There is another advantage from this practice: When people give you respect from the spiritual point of view, when they bow down, etc, if you as a teacher are not so well to do with your merit, then if other people are paying

you respect, that can become a little expensive for you. It cuts your virtuous karma. Therefore, if anybody is showing respect to you, you should accept that from the guru at your heart level, or remembering the guru on your crown or in the palms of your hands. Similarly, giving blessings, doing healing work, praying, giving initiations or whatever, that is also done by the guru at the mind-heart level. That will be more effective to you as well as to others.

Also, receiving monetary or material gifts, especially from the spiritual point of view, when people give you things in order to increase their own merit and you are taking that, that is considered to be very difficult to digest. There is a very specific name for that: *kor*. That is a kind of income that burns your virtue. It is also considered that the generosity that you have thus received, you will have to pay back in future lives. All of those become very heavily loaded. Receiving, giving, taking, all that should be done by the guru at your heart level, which will give you some safeguard.

III
MINDFULNESS OF THE
ALTRUISTIC ASPIRATION TO
ENLIGHTENMENT

DAY TWO

As the great Indian pandit Nagarjuna said in his 'Friendly Letter to the King', it is absolutely essential to cultivate and tame one's own mind -Shakyamuni Buddha has said this, so it is most important. This is the root of the Dharma, to tame one's own stream of consciousness. If we ask, why is this so important, it is because by doing this it is possible to become Enlightened. Also, it is the functions of the mind which cause us to be reborn in the three lower states of rebirth and to wander aimlessly and endlessly in samsara. This is all based on the functioning of the mind.

Kyabje Rimpoche is talking here about the mind. It is the mind which determines what our future is going to be, our future rebirths and everything. That's why the mind is extremely important.

Shakyamuni Buddha in his time taught three different types of disciples and gave numerous teachings tailored to different levels of mentality, all aimed at taming and developing the mind. The mind is often compared to an elephant. While it is wild and untamed it can be very destructive and do a great deal of harm. When fully-tamed it can be very useful to society. Similarly, our minds are very destructive when allowed to run wild. When properly trained and cultivated, we can achieve Enlightenment or Liberation.

We have done teachings in Jewel Heart that use the comparison of the mind to an elephant. These are in the transcript *GOM*³⁹ and include a chart with descriptions of all the steps.

When we talk about liberation and enlightenment, we are talking about mental states. That does not mean that everything just happens in your mind and not in reality. It is real and that reality is mind. When talking about dharma practice it doesn't matter what color your dress is or how your hair is styled. What matters is mind and its improvement. That also doesn't essentially mean an educated, learned mind. It is meant in more practical terms, to be more compassionate, caring and wise. Of course learning helps. Spiritual development to me is mental development, not physical development.

All of Shakyamuni's teachings are designed to suit the various dispositions, idiosyncrasies and levels of mind of sentient beings, according to their capacity. To those who are not capable of working selflessly for others, but only capable of gaining liberation for themselves, he has given the Hinayana method.

Buddha's teachings are designed to suit individuals on various levels. Some are very intelligent, and I talked to you earlier about the three different levels⁴⁰. Individually, everybody has specific capacities. Sometimes the Hinayana is wrongly referred to as 'selfish', but the Hinayana's emphasis is self-liberation, rather than liberating all others.

To those who are more advanced and have the mental capacity to work for others, he has given the great Mahayana tradition. This teaching is for those who are most capable and who can take on the enormous responsibility and burden of liberating all beings and achieving enlightenment for their sake. In the Mahayana tradition there are both the vast and the profound teachings. This text combines both: the teachings on Guru devotion are part of the vast tradition. Please listen with the great Mahayana motivation of attaining Enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

The recommended motivation according to Buddha's teaching, according to this particular lineage where I come from, is bodhimind. It is not just a recommended motivation, the tradition insists our motivation *should* be bodhimind. That motivation, compassion, the bodhimind, is the very thing that is our subject today.

COMPASSION

When we use the word compassion, in one way it is a word that touches our heart deeply. We feel that it somehow takes our breath completely to think about it. On the other hand sometimes we use the word 'compassion' so much that it begins to numb us. We lose the value and the meaning of the word, and instead of taking our breath away it becomes some kind of luke-warm water. I think that is our problem.

The essence, the bottom line of Buddha's teaching, boils down to two things: one is compassion, the other is wisdom. Compassion is such a wonderful tool, such a wonderful way of not only improving ourselves, but also improving everybody, if that becomes lukewarm, it is not good. So we have to take care that it does not go that way. Buddhist teachings normally say the buddhadharma is what really makes one's mind soft and kind and useful. We say it is the best method to tame our wild, crazy mind. But when that best tool, that best way to tame our mind, becomes luke-warm, then it becomes difficult to make any progress.

Judging from our way of thinking, when the word

compassion becomes that way, it may be harmful for us, because compassion is the real thing that makes our mind soft and gentle and lets us feel the pains and miseries and sufferings of people, mentally, emotionally, physically. That is what I wanted to point out first. Compassion is something wonderful. But if that word is overused, it becomes just a buzzword.

That is what Allen Ginsberg told me once. I did not know what the meaning of 'buzzword' was at that time. We were sitting on a stage. Something like 4,000 people were watching. I just sort of smiled a little bit and tried to get out of the situation. But the moment we were off the stage Allen said, 'I do not think you heard what I said; I said, 'Buzzword'. I said, 'Well, I heard the sound, but I do not know what it means.' He said, 'I thought so.' So he gave me a long history about the origin of the word. He said it comes from Brooklyn, and this and that. He was very kind in that way. honestly. If I had taken advantage of Allen's kindness, I would have been an English language expert. At every opportunity Allen tried to explain to me each English word, what its equivalent is in Latin, what it means, and how it was picked up in English. When I regretted not having learnt more, it was too late. That is how life is. We all do that anyway. When the opportunity is there we cannot take it. When we finally realize it, it is too late.

That is why, before I use the word compassion too much, I want you to know that it has to be heartfelt compassion. The ultimate unlimited unconditioned compassion and love is what Buddhists call bodhimind: the mind that seeks total enlightenment [for the benefit of all beings].

When we use the word ‘enlightened one’ or ‘enlightenment,’ we are using Mahayana Buddhist terminology. And the message is this is talking about a buddha. That does not mean the one has to be Buddhist. It does not matter whoever, whatever, wherever it comes from, if Totally enlightened means one has achieved the highest spiritual level that anyone can achieve. For me, that is a buddha. Whether coming from Buddhism or from anywhere else, whether the person is a buddhist or a non-buddhist, atheist, man or woman, kid, black, white, yellow, green or blue, whatever it might be – to me, that means a buddha. Of course the Buddha figure we have here, is a physical representation from one tradition, representing Shakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha. Before we talk about the bodhimind, we need to get an idea what the word buddha means. Buddha means to me a quality of mind: the ultimate quality of kindness, compassion, love [and wisdom]. That together is the quality of a buddha, as I see it. It is a total quality of mind and body – a perfect, pure, body. I mention this because one of the mindfulnesses is the mindfulness of the body as enlightened.

BODHIMIND

When I say bodhimind, I am referring to the mind that wants to be perfect. That is why it is called bodhi-mind⁴¹. That mind is seeking the buddha level, becoming like that.

Bodhimind is unlimited, unconditioned compassion and love. Why do I say unconditioned? Because that mind

does not raise the question, ‘What is in there for me?’ That question comes out of our ego, our selfish thoughts, our self-interest. I am not saying we should ignore ourselves completely, but we shouldn’t give undue priority to self-interest. That is why compassion and love should not be conditioned in a way where you think, ‘If you do this for me, I will do that for you.’

There is a practice called *tong len*, which means ‘give and take’ and it helps to develop that mind. Thinking ‘If you do this for me, I will do that for you’ is the opposite of the real *tong len*. There should be no conditions, one should not put a limit. We should not think, ‘First, for me this, this, this, and then I can help one or two or individuals.’ We have a lot of limits. Bodhimind should not be limited. It should be for *all* living beings.

That is almost impossible, right? Yes, it is almost impossible. However, the capacity of our mind is such that we can make every impossible thing possible. Human mind is fantastic. There is no equivalent. This is not a today’s statement. It is what Buddha showed us 2,600 years ago and is continuously showing. When we are able to use it, there is no limit to what our mind can achieve. If we have the know-how and the will to do it, so unlimited, unconditioned compassion is possible for our mind. It requires that we put efforts in. All these meditations, all these practices are meant for this.

Our motivation is very important. It should not just be for my benefit alone, but for the benefit of all others. The difference between Mahayana and Hinayana is the motivation. The gateway to the Mahayana is the bodhimind, the ultimate,

unlimited, unconditional love and compassion. When you have that, you are a Mahayana person, and if you don't have that you are not. All of us pretend to be Mahayana practitioners. But unless and until we have developed the bodhimind within us, we are not Mahayana practitioners at all. We just claim to be. We do take vows. These have advantages but also equally, they have disadvantages of downfalls. Even then, taking Mahayana vows doesn't make you a Mahayana practitioner. The dharma you practice does not make the difference. Yes, what we do here is called a Mahayana teaching. But whether what you practice is Mahayana or Hinayana depends on the individual. Even giving a little food to a dog becomes a Mahayana practice if it is done with bodhimind. Without bodhimind, even lavish offerings don't become Mahayana.

The earlier Indian kings would set up huge feast offerings in the villages, with millions of pounds of food for the poor people. But it is only a Mahayana deed if the mind of the person making the offering is bodhimind. So it depends on our own mind. When you have the altruistic aspiration, your practice becomes Mahayana. Tsongkhapa says,

That the dharma is Mahayana dharma it is not enough. The person must be a Mahayana practitioner.

Mahayana is so great not just because of compassion, but because of taking the responsibility for liberating all sentient beings. Once you have bodhimind within you, that itself

becomes the method for purification. Also, the bodhimind itself automatically works for accumulating merit. Shantideva says⁴²,

Such heinous non-virtues, what else could purify it other than bodhimind?

And⁴³,

Once bodhimind is developed no matter whatever you do, even sleeping the whole day and night, or fooling around, every minute of your activity becomes accumulation of merit and purification of negativity.

If you want to know more about the benefits of the bodhimind, read the first chapter of the Bodhisattvacharyavatara. For example it says⁴⁴,

[Bodhimind] is like the supreme gold-making elixir; For it transforms the unclean body we have taken into the priceless jewel of the Buddha Form; Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.

This is based on the old Indian stories. I hate to call them 'mythological stories'. They are similar to the biblical stories in the west. People can develop powers to develop nectar-like elixir that transforms any metal into gold. That is what Shantideva is talking about.

* * *

When I looked at the First Panchen Lama's Four Mindfulnesses, I noticed that in his order first comes the mindfulness of compassion, then the mindfulness of the guru, but here, Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, following the Seventh Dalai Lama, does it the other way round. So, let us go to the second verse:

*kor wa thar me dug ngäl gyi tsön ra na
de wai phong pai rig drug gi sem chen kyam*

***In the prison of the suffering of cyclic existence
wander the six types of sentient beings bereft of
happiness;***

***Fathers and mothers who protected you with
kindness are there.***

Forsaking desire and hatred,

meditate on endearment and compassion.

***Not letting your mind stray, place it within
compassion.***

***Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it
within compassion.***

To paraphrase this verse directly from the Tibetan: There is a prison called samsara, a place of tremendous torment. There you see the people who very badly lack joy and happiness. The sentient beings of the six realms are roaming around there. When I look carefully I realize these are my fathers and mothers, who have saved my life a number of times, who have helped and protected me. I should give up hatred

and obsession and develop compassion and love. Don't let the mind run away, keep it on compassion. Let your mind hold compassion tight.

Kor wa me dug ngäl . . . *Kor* refers to *khör lo*, which means circle. *Kor wa* refers to the circle of cyclic existence, or samsara; *thar me* is endless; when life is endless with suffering, then it becomes a prison; *dug ngäl* is suffering. So this line is about limitless painful samsara.

De wai phong pai rig drug gi sem chen kyam. *Rig drug* means six castes and *sem chen* is beings.

SAMSARA: CONTINUATION OF IDENTITY

The second contemplation is the contemplation of the different types of sufferings of all sentient beings in cyclic existence, and being mindful of having compassion and mercy for all sentient beings.

We need to develop a proper understanding of what samsara means. It is not a place or a country; it means that one is forced by one's own accumulated karma and delusions to take rebirth in the cycle of life and death. In simple terms, samsara is the continuity of our physical form, which is the product of karma and delusions. If we cut that continuity, we will no longer have to take a

samsaric rebirth. No liberation is possible until then; we just have to wander along.

There is some problem with the translation or editing here. Normally, Kyabje Ling Rimpoche said when you talk about samsara, don't look outside. It is not a country. It is not a separate place, but it is within us. Samsara is the continuation of identity. As long as we have the continuation of contaminated identity, we have samsara. Deep down, samsara is not the individual but the continuation of contaminated identity. By saying 'continuity of physical form', the editor tried to make it easy to understand. But it doesn't mean the continuation of this particular physical form. We continuously take on new identities which are contaminated. That is samsara. The moment you cut that, you cut the ego and with that, the samsara.

'Limitless cyclic existence' means we cannot identify or trace our origins. There are no past limits, no beginnings to samsaric existence but there are limits of the future. The samsaric existence is called a prison because, once trapped, there is no happiness, only suffering. What appears to be joy or happiness is actually in the nature of suffering.

There are a number of crazy people who actually enjoy being in prison. There is free food, free accommodation, free medical care. You don't have to worry about anything.

Nobody will chase you to pay the bills. So some people think it is great. They cannot live outside. But when we look at them we know it is a place of suffering.

That is how our delusions work with us. Many times we do things and think it is great, but actually it is suffering. Something always goes wrong. Always. That is the clear sign that we are in samsara.

There are continuous changes, ups and down, good and bad. It doesn't go turn by turn either. All of a sudden anything can happen and it is always more on the side of suffering and less on the side of joy. These are the signs of samsara. If we keep on thinking that it is great, we are like the people in prison who think that is great because they don't have to pay the bills.

SAMSARA: SIX-REALMS PRISON

We wander helplessly and unhappily through the round of existence. We wander around in the six samsaric realms just like feathers carried by the air. We have no idea where we are going. When the storm comes and picks up the leaves and feathers, there is no certainty where they will be dropped. We will be born alone, again and again, and wander through existence. That is how samsara is depicted by Buddha.

The moment we die we have no control over our destiny. Storm-like karmic forces drive us, pick us up and where are we going to be dropped? If we are lucky we will connect with good karma and the feather will be dropped in the United States. If we are unlucky the feather may be dropped into the hot or cold

hell realms, the hungry ghost or animal realms. We are actually running all our lives, looking for happiness and joy. Materially and spiritually. We are running to make money. Most people struggle to make ends meet, some are running for a little extra, or to make more and more. We are all running, looking for happiness and joy. But we don't really know what happiness is. We have never experienced it. We don't know the joy that has never known suffering. Yet, that's what we are looking for.

Although we fail to recognize them as our parents, in fact they have been our mothers and fathers time and time again, and when we were born to them they treated us as kindly as the parents of this life. Not being partial we should see that they are all equal. Each one has been kind to us as a parent at some time, but by failing to recognize this fact we form tremendous attachment to those who are dear to us and repulsion to others. We create attraction to some and hatred to others and this is grossly wrong, as they have all been equally kind and dear to us at some time. Without forgetting their kindness, thinking of them as our parents, we should place our mind in the state of great compassion and care for each and all of them without any exception.

SAMSARA: CONTINUOUS BIRTH AND DEATH

As I told you before, we don't recognize people because of our transition through birth and death. Constantly, continuously, we die and get reborn. Sometimes we have short lives, sometimes we even die before we are born. Sometimes we die immediately after birth, sometimes we die a few years later. Sometimes we live to 60, 70 or 80 years and die. But constantly and continuously we go through birth and death, one after another. Birth follows death, death follows birth. We are hoping to grab some happiness and run all over the place and then death strikes us down. We wake up in the next life and start running around, looking for happiness again. Because of the shock of birth and death and because of the time that has passed, we do not recognize others.

In Buddha's view, all souls are old souls. There are no new souls. That's why from the limitless of beginning we have been existing, but changing lives and running. Every life we change mothers and fathers. Some lives we are even born without father or mother, like some insects are born from heat or in other ways. Many times we did have parents, but now we do not recognize them at all.

Kyabje Rimpoche is talking here about great compassion. Great compassion is different from the usual compassion. When compassion is focused on all living beings equally, it is great compassion. That has no equivalent. It is very rare. A lot of people will have some compassion. Great compassion on the other hand is difficult because we have aversion and attachment.

RENUNCIATION

In essence: by developing proper awareness, being frustrated and depressed with our own situation in cyclic existence, we generate renunciation.

We have to renounce being frustrated and being depressed with our own situation in cyclic existence. It is not life [itself] that we should renounce. A number of buddhologists and tibetologists have told me that I shouldn't use the word 'renunciation', because when people hear that they think they should give up everything, shave their head and leave their family, and go somewhere in the forest or the Himalayan mountains. But what we really have to renounce is hatred and attachment and obsession. Being constantly frustrated and depressed with our own situation, that has to be renounced. However, we are not able to renounce that. We go deeper into depression and frustration. I have been accused of not understanding depression. That is true. I don't have the experience of being depressed. I am a happy-go-lucky person. I take whatever comes, no matter how urgent or sad something may be. I may be scared, but that's about it. Even scaredness doesn't last very long with me, perhaps a few seconds or minutes. After that, no matter how intense the situation may be I don't get depressed. I will think of a solution how to handle it and not give up. So I don't know what depression feels like personally, but I have seen people go through it and seen how much torture it is. They really go through tremendous torture.

I am sure that some people won't like what I am going to say now. If you go beyond the psychology and psychotherapy point of view and go deep down, it is our own mind which is creating this problem for ourselves. We see what is going to happen and what the consequences are for us. So then you bring the future into the present and begin to worry. If you can handle it, that may be good, but if you can't, you are just going to create additional problems for yourself.

One of our friends was driving on the road and got a speeding ticket. She got hysterical and was worried that the police was going to raise her points, which was then going to raise the insurance and that would create so many problems for her. She was besides herself. I tried to tell her not to worry ahead of time, but stay calm and then when more information came, think of a way to deal with it. I said, 'Just now you had an accident and got a ticket. So try to relax a little bit.' In reality, her points didn't get raised, her insurance didn't go up - nothing. So she was worrying about that unnecessarily, and couldn't even breathe for a while. Taking the future suffering today - I don't know whether that makes sense or not.

Samsara is depressing and frustrating. We do get frustrated all the time - with our work, with our study, our practice. That is the sign we are in samsara. This is samsaric suffering. So if you don't like that kind of suffering, you should tell yourself, 'I don't like samsara. I will renounce samsara.' That's how practitioners should think, in my opinion.

EXTENDING LOVE-COMPASSION TO OTHERS

Then transferring that understanding onto other sentient beings, thinking of their miserable existence and their sufferings, we generate compassion and love towards others.

Kyabje Rimpoche says that first we have to look into our situation, know and recognize our own sufferings and frustrations, and recognize them as samsaric symptoms. We have to know that we cannot get rid of them unless and until we get rid of samsara altogether.

Knowing that, we transfer that to others. Then you don't have to ask, 'What can I do? How can I help?' Look into your own situation and recall, 'How did I help myself?' Apply that to the other person, seeing their frustration and depression and again recognize them as symptoms of samsara. Then thinking of their miserable existence and suffering we generate compassion.

When looking at one's own suffering it is called renunciation, when looking at others it is called compassion. I remember when I once asked Kyabje Ling Rimpoche about love and compassion he showed me a handkerchief and said, 'This side is compassion', then turned it round and said, 'This is love'. It sounds like a Zen teaching, but what it means is that love and compassion is one mind with separate aspects. One mind thinks, 'How can I remove the suffering of these people?' The other thinks, 'How can I bring joy to them?' Similarly here, it is the same mind

disliking, renouncing, almost hating samsara for oneself and for others. It is also one mind with different aspects.

Today the topic is different from yesterday's. What is the connection? Yesterday it was Guru devotion, seeing no faults in the Guru, seeing his Enlightened nature. If you wonder: 'Oh, but my Guru does have faults, he has attachment and anger' - then wonder also whether it isn't the reflection of your own deluded thought. First of all, there is no logical pervasion: if from your own side you don't see any faults, it doesn't necessarily mean that he is faultless; if you see qualities it doesn't necessarily mean there are qualities. Take an alcoholic disciple and a teacher who drinks: they will be very compatible, and the disciple will see this fault as a quality. If a teacher is very diligent and stays up late reciting, but the disciple likes to go to bed early, he may see it as a mistake in the teacher.

This is self-explanatory. If you are an alcoholic and you have a teacher who drinks, you will be happy and see that as a quality. If you are diligent and get up early, but you see your teacher gets up late and stays up late you will see that as a fault. If you are lazy and like to sleep in and you know that your teacher is getting up late, you will think, 'Very good.' Whatever we perceive is not necessarily true. That is what Kyabje Rimpoche

is saying.

Also, regardless of one's own perspective, if the Guru manifests a mistake or a defect, here again it is not at all certain that he actually possesses such a defect. He may be manifesting it simply to relate better to the disciple. Shakyamuni Buddha is known to have appeared as a Mara. Then of course you have to act like a Mara, otherwise it defeats the purpose. In some Sutras such as 'The Meeting of the Son and the Father', he is said to have appeared as a blind man; elsewhere, as someone angry, lustful, ignorant - all for the benefit of sentient beings, although he himself has no faults or physical defects. When contemplating Guru devotion, if you start seeing faults in the Gurus you should check whether it is not just a reflection of your own faults you are seeing in the Guru, or whether he is appearing to have such a fault just to benefit you and others. Then you can be grateful to him for showing you your fault, or for manifesting as he does in order to relate to you.

The purpose of having a Guru is exclusively to practice the Dharma. You may object that there are books which you can just pick up and read. This is for acquiring merely intellectual knowledge, but to deve-

lop insight and receive blessings we have to rely on proper devotion to a Guru; a Guru is essential. We think that having a spectacular Yidam is more important than a Guru. Take the example of Marpa and Naropa. The Guru, Naropa, manifested the full mandala of Marpa's Yidam and calling him over asked whether he would prostrate first to the mandala and deity or to his Guru. Marpa thought: 'Oh I can always see Naropa, but this mandala is quite an unusual sight' and he prostrated to the mandala. Naropa said, 'Without the Guru there is no Buddha' and snapped his fingers and made the whole mandala disappear.

At this point it is very important to understand that Dharma means to hold and to protect. There are three scopes: the smallest protects from falling into lower realms, the medium scope protects from falling into samsara, cyclic existence, and the great scope protects from all the obstacles to Enlightenment. By relying on and entrusting yourself to a qualified Guru, you should engage sincerely in the practice of the Dharma to protect yourself from falling into states of suffering.

Through the practice of Dharma you can

achieve happiness and joy in this and future lives. If you doubt your own capability, well, there is no real reason to hesitate; we have all the requirements, the eight freedoms and ten endowments, and suitable conditions.

We must become convinced that we do indeed have all the suitable conditions and are free from all obstacles. Again, sometimes we may think, well, maybe it isn't so urgent or so crucial to practice now; I'm busy, maybe I will practice in another life. We procrastinate, but this is wrong. Perhaps only once in a hundred opportunities will we obtain such a highly-qualified birth; this may be our only chance! It's very important not to postpone our practice. In fact it's vital not to keep putting off your decision to practice - there is no guarantee that we will live forever. Today we are alive, but there is no guarantee that by tomorrow our body will not turn into a corpse and everyone will ignore us. The time does not wait, so there is real urgency about engaging in practice - considering the rarity and preciousness of this opportunity. The great Gungthang Jampalyang has said: 'This endless mention of tomorrow, tomorrow, may bring the sudden guest of death. Then it will be too late, our chance will have passed. So engage now without postponing'.

Literally, Gungthang Jampalyang says,

Whether tomorrow or the future life comes first is not certain. Therefore make the proper choice.

To engage in the practice of Dharma we should enter the gateway of the Buddhadharma by means of going for Refuge to the Triple Gem: the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha. The Buddha is the one who shows the Refuge, who gives the teachings; the Dharma is the actual means of obtaining Liberation and the Sangha are the helpers who encourage us to attain, to be on the path to Enlightenment. The reason why it is essential that we enter the practice of taking Refuge in the Triple Gem is that we constantly accumulate far more non-virtuous actions than virtuous ones. In a single day we accumulate enough to wander endlessly in samsara. So there has to be a force of protection to counteract all this negativity. That is why we take Refuge, which is like the gateway of entering the Buddhadharma.

Before we develop any love and compassion or genuine consideration for others, it is important to understand our own state of existence. Unless we understand its

suffering nature, without an appreciation of what liberation from this recurrent cyclic existence in states of suffering means for oneself, it is very difficult to develop any sympathy for others. It is very important to have your own realization of the state of suffering. Suppose one is born into a lower state, say into one of the hot hells: there the beings have very large bodies and super-sensitive skin like an infant's. The further down the hells, the longer the life spans in eons. There are tremendous sufferings. Then you also have the cold hells, and the preta rebirths. Because there is the reality of being reborn into one of these states, we need the protection of taking Refuge in the Three Gems, with the true causes: (1) recognizing one's own suffering and fearing a rebirth in one of those realms by realizing the suffering there, and (2) realizing that the Three Gems give complete protection from such rebirths. The reason why we need to take Refuge in the Three Gems can be explained by analogy with a sick person. He needs a doctor, medicine and proper care from nurses for a complete cure. The doctor prescribes the medicine, but then the patient has to take it, he has to practice the Dharma. The nurses are like a guide, they encourage him on the path. If the patient

does not listen to the doctor and take his medicine, it will take a long time to get cured.

Shakyamuni Buddha constantly advised refraining from virtuous actions and practicing to collect virtue, otherwise there is very little chance of avoiding the three lower realms. The non-virtuous actions can be synthesized into ten: three of the body, four of speech and three of the mind. It is very important to avoid collecting these. Insects and animals are constantly collecting non-virtuous actions, and we have bigger bodies and collect even more non-virtue, not to speak of that collected in previous lives. We have a tremendous accumulation; there must be some way of purifying it! The Dharma is not lacking in methods, primarily the four opponent forces, the main one being repentance or regret. Take the example of three people who have eaten poison. One has already died, one is very sick and one is still alive and well. By some chance we are still alive and we have a precious opportunity to practice the Dharma, to develop repentance or regret for all our past accumulations, realizing that we 'took poison'. The second force is the vow not to commit such non-

virtue. Abstinence is very important. The two forces of repentance and abstinence are extremely powerful; with them we can eliminate any amount of negative potential. Just as Angulimala achieved liberation from the consequences of his own actions, we also can, by applying these two forces plus the force of accomplishing positive actions and the force of confession⁴⁵, eliminate past accumulations and take higher rebirths as devas or as humans.

The reason why I'm talking about these sufferings of the lower realms is to make a connection with the line that talks of suffering beings and how we should remain in a state of compassion for them. Before we can have true sympathy for the sufferings of others we have to realize our own suffering in the three lower realms and want to attain higher states of rebirth. Then one can begin to aspire to generate renunciation of samsara for oneself. Je Tsongkhapa said: 'If one cannot develop goose-bumps from the extent of suffering and the imminent danger of falling to a lower rebirth, if one cannot be moved by that, then there is no question of sympathy or regard for other beings' suffering states.'

The Buddha's teachings sort of push us into all kinds of challenges. They will drive us. Why? Because the goal is total enlightenment. In order to get total enlightenment we are forced to see our limitations. That is why this is serious and solid business. Fortunately or unfortunately, it is not just a feel-good business. Not at all. Compassion is serious, very serious. It should feel like I myself going through the pain. No matter whoever it might be, the compassion feeling should be the 'I', the first person, going through. If it does not become the first person, if it is 'somebody in Darfour' who is going through, it is wishy-washy compassion. There is no first person touch, you just feel sorry, and after a while you say, 'I do not want to talk about it.'

Disconnecting is our way of avoiding getting ourselves seriously involved with compassion. It is natural for us human beings to disconnect. When we have a huge pain in our body somewhere, our mind will disconnect from that, so we faint, or have a lapse of memory, or whatever. That naturally happens. When there is too much pain, the mind will shut it out. Exactly the same thing happens with compassion. When you see the suffering, instead of being there, and being present, and seeing what you can do, you pretend there is nothing going on. I do not want to comment on Ram Dass' work, but 'be here' really means that to me. Just do not shut it out. Unfortunately we do that, because it is more comfortable for us. We feel it should be comfortable. But what is really happening is, we are doing a wishy-washy business. The compassion must be felt, just like pain in our own body, or pain in our own mind.

FEELING THE SUFFERING

I am going to be very critical about this to myself and to you. A lot of us will talk about compassion. A lot of us will think about it. A lot of us will try to do things. But we must make sure it is not wishy-washy. This is one of our biggest challenges. I see very kind, very serious people, who talk and think about it, but the solution we find is always a little wishy-washy. I do not mean everybody has to be a bodhisattva. That is not even possible. But at least move into that direction. One must feel something. We should not feel in order to make ourselves suffer more, [we should feel the pain] so that we can find a way to help and protect. If we do not feel it, how can we help? If you do not feel it, how do you know it is suffering? That is the mindfulness of compassion.

Isn't that strange? Suffering is so much around everywhere. Everyone of us has enough themselves, but everyone would like to play the role of helper, the person who gives the solution rather than acknowledging the actual suffering within us. When you notice that happening, it is the first signal of becoming wishy-washy compassionate: 'I am here to play the role of the helper; you are the one over there, suffering.' The moment we have that big division we are never going to know how the other person suffers. He or she may look at you, and say, 'What do you know about this? Nothing.' Think about it. Today most of us, preachers, lamas, rimpoches, therapists, everyone of us is looked at as someone who is making it right, the curer. So the first question that arises in my mind is, 'What do I know about that suffering, about the feeling of that individual?'

Lower realms suffering. I am just talking about human beings. Then go beyond. Look at the animals. They suffer worse than us, for sure. No question. We will enjoy looking at them, 'Oh, there is a rabbit family, look, and a deer family', we find them interesting and cute. But try to see it from their point of view. They have to get food, they have to protect themselves from heat, from cold, and then their life is in danger all the time. Then go beyond that and look at the hungry ghosts and at the hot and cold hell realms. Our mind would like to shut that out. We don't even want to discuss it. We just switch off, because it is too painful to talk about it, too painful to think about it.

Equanimity - equality. Tsongkhapa says that when you think about your own states of suffering and the danger of falling into the lower realms, and you don't make any mental, physical and emotional move, how can you expect to have compassion for others? Compassion, and bodhimind are absolutely necessary. Before we have bodhimind we can have love and compassion to a certain extent, but to have great compassion, the unlimited, unconditional love and compassion, is much harder. Yet that is absolutely necessary to develop the bodhimind. In order to develop love-compassion, we have to recognize the kindness and compassion shown to me by all sentient beings at one time or another, equally.

It is extremely important to develop equanimity. Without that we cannot acknowledge the kindness given to us by all living beings. Without that, we cannot have the commitment of repaying that kindness. Without that, we cannot have love for

all living beings. Without such love we cannot have compassion. Without compassion we cannot have commitment and without commitment we cannot have bodhimind. One depends on the other.

Reincarnation. There is not so much analysis and logic here. You cannot point out anything that is wrong, but you also cannot see that it is right. The problem is that we can't see the limitless beginning. We can't see previous lives. We can't see reincarnation and future lives. We don't see what our future situation is going to be.

In Buddhism we recognize that there are certain points that we cannot see. Because we are not enlightened, we have obscurations. When our experiences contradict statements by Buddha and other enlightened beings and we cannot analyze them ourselves, we refer to the scriptures. Buddha has been proved to be right many times and has not been proved to be wrong so far. So, since we don't have a solid, reliable, empirical truth [on reincarnation] we do have to trust Buddha's words. Our mind is not capable of penetrating into this. It is extremely difficult to analyze. In comparison, emptiness is easy to analyze. We can think about it and understand it.

With reincarnation we have that block of not seeing life after life. Nobody comes and says 'I am back', except the Tibetan recognized incarnate lamas. But who knows what is really happening with that. We do have two Panchen Lamas now. And at one time when Khyentse Rimpoche passed away, there were five recognized incarnations. Dilgo Khyentse Rimpoche was one of those five. We don't know

if that is all true. Who knows.

[With regard to] incarnate lamas, who are believed to be reborn, they will usually tell something like, 'Look into this area or that area, not so many areas; pick a few kids that seem to be good and may become helpful for the people, and then ask His Holiness. If he picks somebody then that is okay, if he turns the candidates down, then there will be no reincarnation.'

This is hard to understand. Buddha almost had to say, 'Trust me on this.' But once we have made our own breakthrough we will see it. Then it will no longer be a mystery to us. It is perfect and straight forward. I mentioned in my book *Good Life Good Death* that if you have a breakthrough with the subject of reincarnation you will have a panoramic view of life. If you don't have that, your life is very limited, between birth and death. Even within that, we keep forgetting the past, what we remember is cut shorter and shorter, and about the future we are very confused; we project and hallucinate about it.

But once you know about reincarnation and have a breakthrough, you will have a panoramic view. Total existence is much more than the time between life and death. It is huge. It is like getting into space and looking in all directions. It is like going into a circular bathroom with mirrors all around. If you look into any of them you will see countless reflections in all directions. Like that, if you could see past and future you would see lives after lives after lives. It is all you, your rebirths in past and future lives. Until you have a breakthrough on this, we have to rely on reliable testimony and from the Buddhist point of view there is no one more reliable than

Buddha. If you were able to see all your countless previous lives you would most probably see just faults and sufferings. Even hot and cold hells are there. That is samsara. So we are concerned. We want to help ourselves and the cause of refuge is to seek protection from that.

The Buddha himself has committed that at the time of transition from life to life it will help you to just think about the Buddha. That alone can protect you. Thinking about Guru, Buddha, Yidam, compassion, wisdom, all of that will protect you. Buddha himself has stated that thinking about him will protect you. There are some twenty easy ways to make the transition and the easiest one is thinking about the objects of refuge.

REFUGE

One of my students from the Netherlands was Dr. Yet. She was a medical doctor and was diagnosed with cancer. She was operated on and stitched up straight away. They said there was nothing they could do. It was too late. They gave a prognosis of a few weeks. As a doctor she had to agree with that. But she did Tara practice and lived for five more years. These years were a healthy life, not in bed or in pain. She did everything, including gardening and shopping. She drove to Paris from Holland and bought a very expensive table cloth for me. During the late stage of her illness, Dr Yet fainted once and told me afterwards that the only thing she could think of before blacking out was Buddha. I said, 'That is good enough'. She thought she had not achieved anything, but I told her it was good enough. I

hope that when she finally did pass she thought of Buddha. This is how the refuge protects you.

Dharma is the [actual] protection. The best protection is the one you give to yourself. When a second and third person has to protect you, the result is not guaranteed. It is a little shaky, always. But if you can help yourself, it is best. Dharma means to avoid negative actions and create positive ones. Dharma is not a mystical mystery, it is not some kind of mystical love-and- light stage you can get. Rather we have to deal with reality. The protection is to constantly work with the negative actions and thereby cut the negative karma. Along with that we can do purification work and purify the negativities we have committed earlier. Side by side we try to build up as much positive actions as we can. That is what it means to become a good dharma practitioner.

DHARMA CENTERS – VOLUNTARY DHARMA

Once we are involved in dharma it is very hard to leave. When we are stuck with pains and problems, our mind will call for protection and help and this helps; that's why you cannot really get away from dharma. It is not a mafia gang that will not let you get off. Nobody is chasing you. When I started Jewel Heart I made it very clear in black and white: we are here to do a service of giving dharmic information. Whoever doesn't want to take it, it is up to them. We make one phone call if we notice somebody has not come for a while. That is our duty. But then

we don't call. We don't chase anyone. Nobody should convince somebody else to remain or come back continuously.

If we do that we are no better than the Jehova's Witnesses. When I first came to the United States I didn't have that much work and I enjoyed the visits by the Jehova's Witnesses. I would listen to them and ask one or two questions and they would say, 'We will come back with an answer.' Then they would come back with answers and some booklets. In the afternoons I would watch 'Days of our Lives' and that's how I learnt my English. So we shouldn't be like that. We should be of service and we should draw the line where we go. We can't cross the line and chase people and say, 'It is my duty to help you', 'It is my duty to say prayers for you'. That is not right, it is like being an uninvited, unwelcome guest. You don't want to be like that. Dharma is too precious to be used in that way.

So far we have completed the first mindfulness of the guru and we've gone quite far into the mindfulness of bodhimind. Let's us continue to read what Kyabje Ling Rimpoche says about that:

DAY THREE

Nagarjuna says: 'If we want Enlightenment, then we need to develop compassion, Bodhichitta and a proper understanding of Voidness.' The primary cause of Buddhahood is Bodhichitta, for which we need to develop

proper compassion. To develop Bodhichitta on a sound basis, it has to be preceded by recognizing all sentient beings as having been our mothers. Then, thinking of their kindness, of all beings' kindness, we engage in practices to repay this. Then comes developing genuine love and compassion, and the pure dedication of working for the benefit of all sentient beings. The root cause of developing actual Bodhichitta is compassion. The nature of compassion is to want all sentient beings to be separated from their sufferings. To develop compassion towards sentient beings, we need a vast understanding of the suffering that sentient beings have to experience. To have a feeling for that, we have to clearly see what our own position is, here in samsara. To develop renunciation of suffering in general, we need to see that there is no ultimate happiness even in the Indra or Brahma heavens - the highest of the deva realms - and to recognize that, we need to see the suffering nature; that there is no happiness in this very life. To work hard at accumulating negative actions for the happiness of this life leads only to countless hellish rebirths, so you have to see that there is no point in such an accumulation. Since there is a very real danger of falling to one of the three lower realms, we need a means of protection, which is Refuge in the Three

Gems. So, develop the proper Mahayana attitude and listen to this teaching in order to develop Bodhichitta, to attain Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

It is customary to quote every day from one of the scriptures and explain it. Here Kyabje Rimpoche has chosen to explain the Seven Stages of developing the bodhimind, upwards, from recognizing all beings as mother beings, remembering their kindness, repaying their kindness, developing love and compassion, the special commitment and the bodhimind. Then he traces back that the bodhimind depends on the root of great compassion, which is understanding of suffering and especially our own sufferings. So he goes through the common with the medium level to the Mahayana level and as the basis of the Mahayana he introduces the common with the medium level and the common with the lower level, which is understanding the basis of our own suffering and the renunciation. In the Tibetan tradition that is the system. Teachings are normally done forwards once, backwards once, and forwards again. This is trying to show the link within ourselves.

SAMSARA IS WITHIN

By the reality of our situation also our practice has to go back and forth. The nature of samsara is the continuity of form, which is the product of karma and delusions. Kyabje Rimpoche always says that when you look for samsara you don't look outside, but within you. Samsara is not physical,

not mental, but the continuation of the contaminated identity. This translator chooses to call it 'the continuity of form'. 'Form' is not the only possible translation. In Tibetan the term is *phung po*, which can be 'form' but also 'identity'.

The nature of samsara is the continuity of form which is the product of karma and delusion. In samsara, which is called 'the circle' in Tibetan, we go around and around like the hands of a clock; born over and over again, sometimes high, sometimes low, we keep coming back to the same thing.

The term in Tibetan is *kor wa*, which really means circling.

In this context, samsara is called 'limitless' and in our situation it is limitless, because if we keep accumulating negative actions, making the same mistakes repeatedly, there is no way of telling when we'll put an end to it.

In Tibetan it is called *ta me* – no limit. There is no beginning and no ending. There is an end to the individual samsara, but otherwise it is limitless.

But in fact there are methods. Samsara is like a jail: once a person is put in, he is watched over by guards and subjected to the torment of mental and physical sufferings.

Once you are trapped in samsara, wherever you are born, whether in the highest or the lowest realms, you are always guarded by the samsaric guards - your own delusions and actions, and you have to suffer an endless variety of tortures and sufferings. From the moment a being is born into cyclic existence he is subjected day and night to the three types of sufferings - misery, change and pervasion.

To elaborate on these: out of six types, first we have the suffering of uncertainty. Once trapped in samsara there is no way of being sure that a friend will not become an enemy. Also, an enemy can become a friend and an old friend can be tomorrow's enemy. There is also uncertainty as to wealth and status; the rich become poor and beggars become rich.

In ancient India there was a man who liked fishing in the pond behind his house. When he died he was reborn as a fish in that pond. His daughter's enemy, who had committed some form of sexual misconduct with her, was reborn in her womb, out of attachment. His wife, out of fondness for her home and family was reborn as the family dog. One day the son-in-law caught the father in the pond - so that

evening the family ate the father, while the dog sat coveting the bones, but it was being kicked away by the daughter who was cuddling her former enemy on her lap. Quite a ridiculous situation! Without going so far, just within this very life we can experience uncertainty, because the friend of the early part of one's life can become one's bitter enemy, even within one day. Starting out on the best of terms, over a small misunderstanding a serious quarrel can develop and we are no longer even on speaking terms. There is no certainty anywhere, no assurance or guarantee either of friends and enemies, or of wealth and status. This experience of going from rich to poor and being friends and enemies in turn is all the fault of remaining in samsara.

This story comes out in many versions. I kept on thinking it is Shariputra's story. I kept on searching throughout the textbooks and in the back of mind I thought it could be Katayana's story, rather than Shariputra's. When I looked in Pabongka's *Liberation in the Palm of your Hands*, he quoted it as Shariputra's story. Finally, one day I met the Ladakhi scholar Jamspar in Columbia University and asked him about the story of Shariputra. He said to me, 'Rimpoche, you Tibetans say it is Shariputra's story, but I read it in Sanskrit and it is Katayana's story.' He sent me the copy of Katayana's story in Sanskrit, which I couldn't read, but then I looked it up in the Tibetan texts under Katayana,

and I found it there. That happens. The *Liberation in the Palm* was an oral teaching. Notes were taken and then it was printed in Tibetan and later in English and now everywhere is has become Shariputra's story.

Then there is the suffering of dissatisfaction. No matter how much happiness we get, we can't satisfy ourselves; we want more. We are insatiable, always craving more joy and happiness and pleasure. Ngalenu was a Cakra King and he became the ruler of many types of worlds, until he became Indra's co-ruler, sharing his realm.

Ngalenu was supposed to have been a chakravartin raja, a universal king. This is mythological, almost like a biblical story.

But he was dissatisfied with sharing and wanted the whole kingdom, at which point his rule and power all fell apart and he became extremely weak and poor. It is very important to be content with your experiences of pleasure and happiness in this life, and to set a limit on how much further you will crave for the pleasures and bliss of this life. Contentment with what you have is very important. A beggar once found a magic wishfulfilling jewel and said 'I'll give it to the poorest person'. So he

gave it to the king himself, the person who had no contentment and just wanted more power and wealth. Nagarjuna has said: 'The best wealth is contentment.'

I am not sure if that was really a wishfulfilling jewel or not. I remember it as being a bag full of gold. In any case when he was looking for the poorest person, it happened to be the king, which was the person with the most craving for more.

Then there is the suffering of having to change your physical form again and again, impelled by your own actions and delusions, forced to take rebirth and die again, over and over, in an endless process. While we wander in samsara there is no certainty as to our rebirth status. Again and again we've shared the bliss of Indra's paradise only to fall to the lowest of hells in the next life, driven by our own actions and delusions, so there is no certainty about one's position. As Nagarjuna points out: it's no great wonder for someone to be reborn in the highest samsaric existence, because you are bound to fall to the lowest if you remain within samsara.

In short, as long as we remain in samsara, even pleasures are in the nature of suffering. 'Once you are born, the final result is death, once you have a

companion, the final result is separation, once you have an accumulation, the final result is loss. This is the nature of your samsaric pleasures and joy.'

Then we have the suffering of loneliness, of friendlessness. It is useless to make an ultimate effort to look after and to help your friends and relatives, and to hate and fight against your enemies and those you disagree with; it is useless to make such distinctions, separations and divisions. You are born alone and in the end you will die alone. By making an ultimate effort to help friends and to hate and harm enemies, what can you accomplish? When you are in pain no friend can share your suffering and no one can go along with you when you die. Realize that the best of friends cannot help you in that final act or accompany you into future realms. You will be left alone to die and to be reborn.

GENERAL SUFFERINGS IN SAMBARA

Kyabje Rimpoche has given a very detailed explanation of the sufferings in samsara in general. You will normally find these in the common with the medium section of the *Lam Rim*, as well as in the *Three Principles* and

everywhere else. These are materials for you to bring about the mindfulness of compassion. As you can see, in order to bring compassion for others, first you have to generate compassion for yourself. Somehow the terminology does not permit to use compassion for oneself, so the translator chose the term 'renunciation'. The reasons why and what is to be renounced are given in these points.

These are the general sufferings common to all sentient beings in samsara and for each realm of existence there are specific sufferings also. Within the three lower realms, in the hells the main sufferings are from heat and cold, the pretas (hungry ghosts) suffer primarily from hunger and thirst and animals suffer mainly from being treated brutally and from their own ignorance.

Kyabje Rimpoche is thinking on the lines of Shantideva's statement that the general sufferings of animals is that they eat each other alive. A recent BBC-program shows very graphically how the animals kill and eat each other and the reporter even says, 'That's why we call them animals'.

There are eight specific sufferings in the human realm. Birth is fraught with pain. Aging comes next: you get old, your youth is gone; although you were handsome in youth, as time goes by the beauty fades, an

unpleasant appearance develops, you get wrinkled, weak and frail. ‘Your crumpled face is not the mask of a monkey, it is that your youthfulness has been taken away from you and you are showing your true nature.’

Kyabje Rimpoche quotes here a remark by Gungtang Jampalyang who wrote a booklet called ‘*Tales of Old Age*’

Then sickness, which causes so much pain and discomfort, and you wonder and worry: ‘When will I be cured? Will I be completely well again? Am I going to die?’, thus adding intense mental suffering to the physical. Then comes death. People worry so much about when they are going to die. They wonder how and they get nervous thinking: If I am about to die, where am I going? Will I get a better rebirth or go to a lower realm? There is tremendous mental agony at this time.

In addition we worry at that time whether we will be completely annihilated and will no longer exist at all. So, the most important pain is not knowing what is going to happen.

There is the suffering of being separated from loved ones, and the sufferings of confronting challenges, meeting unpleasant

situations, enemies, competition, dangers. Then the suffering of not reaching goals, instead, meeting disasters on the way, losses, problems, difficulties along with your desire to achieve your goal. Look at merchants and businessmen who want big profits, or farmers, wanting large crops. They often go through the experience of not achieving their goal, and additionally suffer all kinds of disasters while trying to be successful. Realizing all these sufferings which are specific to the human realm, you might think there is a chance of avoiding them by taking a rebirth in the higher realms of existence, say in the non-deva realm.

The highest realm of samsaric existence is the god realms, or *deva loka* in Sanskrit. Then there is the demi-god realm, human realm, animal realm, hungry ghosts, and then the hot and cold hells. That makes the six realms. So Kyabje Rimpoche is going through each of the realms.

Yet even if you are reborn there, above humans, you have to go through enormous sufferings of jealousy, which is specific to non-devas. They have tremendous mental anguish and suffering - we can see how people who have strong jealousy are constantly tormented by it and they also

suffer from engaging in battles with the devas, in which they are injured and cut up and killed.

The non-devas or demigods are supposed to be jealous all the time. This is again a hindu-buddhist biblical story. The god realm and demi god realm share a tree. It is a wishfulfilling tree. The fruits are supposed to be wishfulfilling jewels. The tree is rooted in the non-deva land. It grows high and higher into the deva land and the devas get all the fruit. The non-devas have the root, but that doesn't give them anything. So the non-devas are always jealous with the devas and make war on them. Ever since they are born, everybody there gets trained to be a soldier and go to fight against the deva's rule of Indra and Brahma. They are never winning, but always get killed. And there is a lake in the non-deva realm where all the other non-devas see the scenes of war, in which they see their own people getting killed. This is a karmic consequence.

Then there is the suffering of the devas. Although devas enjoy the utmost joy, bliss and long life, they suffer specifically from death. When it approaches, the signs come: perspiration, flowers wilting. Once the physical signs appear there is a torment equal to the worst of the lowest hells. Further, as they are clairvoyant, when they look into the future they can see their place of rebirth, which is usually one of the three lower realms -and this is another torment

and cause of intense mental anguish.

I always say where the gods are going to be reborn is like the slums of Calcutta.

In short, wherever you are born, whether in the three higher or the three lower realms, in whichever of the six samsaric realms, there is no way of escaping the three kinds of suffering: the suffering of misery, the suffering of change and the suffering of pervasiveness. The suffering of misery is the unpleasant feeling of pain, as when one is pricked with a needle. The suffering of change comes with the experiences which we consider joy and pleasure. The pleasures we hold dear are subject to change: samsaric happiness and pleasures have no substantial nature of their own. To give an example: you are shivering in a cold room so you go out into the sun. At first it's a big relief from the cold and very pleasant, but after a while it becomes an unpleasant state of suffering, your attitude changes, and you have to go into the shade to get away from the heat. The suffering of pervasiveness is the continuity of the form which is the product of delusions and karma.

Again here we have the definition of contamination. Here

it is given as continuity of form which is the product of karma and delusion. I call it the continuity of contaminated identity. Kyabje Rimpoche defines contamination as being produced by karma and delusion.

That contaminated physical form itself is the suffering of pervasiveness. This third type of suffering is called the suffering of collective pervasiveness and it refers to the continuity of the physical form which is the product of delusions and karma, and it pervades all realms of samsara, from the highest to the lowest. It is called 'collective', because this body is like a magnet which attracts, or collects, every type of suffering.

Whatever our consciousness maintains as basis - whatever body we may have - it has this suffering. Kyabje Rimpoche probably used 'base' in Tibetan and for some reason that was translated as 'collective'.

It is no great wonder to be able to understand the misery of suffering, or the suffering of change, since some common practitioners realize that physical pleasures are something which will change into suffering and they can thus become separated from attachment.

The third type of suffering, that of collective pervasiveness, is dealt with exclusively in the

Buddhist tradition, as it deals with the body, the continuity of form which is the product of karma and delusions. Developing a proper renunciation based on understanding the third type of suffering is what is stressed in Buddhism. Je Tsongkhapa said in reply to questions: our physical form is the basis for all types of experiences of suffering and unpleasant feelings, it collects many types of misery and one should at least try to develop renunciation by realizing this nature of suffering.

Renunciation means developing a strong determination and will, from being dissatisfied at seeing all the births in samsara; a feeling of distaste, disgust and frustration with being trapped in this cycle of rebirths. Renunciation is a very important practice. In one of his actual physical appearances to Je Tsongkhapa, Manjushri gave a teaching on the 'Three Principles of the Path': Renunciation, Bodhichitta and the View of Voidness. The reason why it is called a principle is because in order to become free of samsara you must have developed full renunciation. To become fully Enlightened, the essential thing is to have developed Bodhichitta. So you really have to see all of samsara as suffering and become determined to set yourself free from it. This is

renunciation.

Before you can develop sympathetic consideration for sentient beings, to the point of not being able to endure the types of suffering that beings have to undergo, it is very important first for oneself to develop a comprehensive understanding of one's own situation, and the suffering oneself has to go through. It is not sufficient to be like a spectator watching a show; there will not be real intensity watching others, if you have not developed a realization of your own state of suffering in samsara. Thinking of one's own suffering here in samsara will induce renunciation. Then, when you develop a sympathetic consideration for others' suffering, you can develop compassion.

From realizing our own position in samsara, from renunciation of our own suffering, we fear falling into the three lower realms and go for Refuge. This is the lowest level of motivation. We cannot remain at that level, but have to develop the intermediate motivation. By developing proper renunciation, seeing the suffering nature of all samsara, we have to develop an ardent desire to liberate oneself and

achieve nirvana, which is freedom from all delusions and states of suffering. Having generated that desire, the way to achieve our wish is to practice the Three Higher Trainings: Morality or Ethics, Meditation and Wisdom.

EGO – ROOT OF SAMBARA

The main points of the teachings on Day Three were really geared to developing renunciation. What you really need to renounce is the samsara, not the samsaric picnic spots. Actually, those too, but if you don't want to right now, you don't. The samsaric picnic spots are the glue that keeps us in samsara, a tiny, little joy you are given, making you tremendously happy and willing to go on in samsara. We don't know that this tiny joy is suffering in nature anyway. It comes out as a pleasant feeling. It is the carrot that samsara shows us, but of course there is the stick behind it. This is attachment and obsession. That is the real thing that binds us.

Ego is the root of samsara. It produces hatred, putting fire under us, so we fight. Then of course you will get tired and that's when ego produces attachment and obsession. You feel a slight relief compared to the push of hatred. The way we are engaged in samsara is all ego's tricks and manifestations. It is the manifestation of evil. I don't look at the evil as an external being with horns and a tail, like we see sometimes on television. The real evil is the ego within ourselves. It completely misuses the individual. The ego

makes sure we remain in samsara as its slaves. We don't see that. Otherwise nobody would stay. That's why we say in Buddhism that we are confused and deluded and have a dualistic view.

EGO – BLOCKING GREAT COMPASSION

Greater compassion does not just come out of nowhere. Nor it is going to be that positive feeling after a good night's sleep that makes me feel that I am up for everything. It does not grow that way. It is a very serious mental process.

First and foremost, in our mind, we have a very unequal approach to people. There are the people I like. My family, my spouse, my friend, my teacher, my student, my colleague. Whenever this 'my, my' comes in, it brings it somehow closer. Whenever 'my' is not there, it sort of zooms out a little bit, just simply saying, 'teacher', 'student', 'parents', 'children'. Children come always a little closer, but when there is no 'my', it zooms back. That is because our mind is such that 'me' becomes so important, that nothing other than me matters. I am the most important. Anything else is secondary. If I am OK that is important, the rest of them can be whatever it may be. Because of me, the 'my' will come in.

The most important problem within is my ego. My ego. I am not using the term 'ego' like the psychologists use it. They invented the word, so I was told, for the purpose of building self-esteem. But I am using the word in the way that everybody else does when they say, 'Oh, that is your ego talking' and 'This is my ego coming up'. In the traditional teachings Buddha gave us, it is called in the

Tibetan translation *ma rig pa*, ignorance, and in Sanskrit *a-vidya*, absence of intelligence. The problem with us is that this traditional terminology sometimes does not make much sense. And then we have to interpret, interpret, interpret, and then it loses its value and becomes lukewarm. So to really hit at the point, straightaway, that's why I use 'ego'. Actually non-wisdom. Without wisdom. Stupid. Confused. And fear. There is tremendous fear, we are afraid of everything all the time. This is because of our experience. We suffered enough, and we are afraid of suffering more.

EGO – FEAR AND CONFUSION

There is an interesting Tibetan teacher in the 1700's who wrote a poem called *A Conversation with an Old Man*.⁴⁶ I just remembered one of the verses. I am going to paraphrase it. 'Old people are looking to the ground so much because they are bending down; they are not searching for needles that they lost, but looking for the youth that they lost'. You know, Tibet is a cold country. We have thick clothes. When you become older you cannot wear such thick clothes. That is not because you would like to dance and jump around, but because if you are older your body cannot carry these heavy clothes, so that is why you are taking them off. Another example in there says, 'The hands are not shaking because you try to grab what you have in your hand, but regretting that what you had in your own hand is already lost.' Forget about previous lives, even in this life, our experience is that we have already lost a lot, everything, day by day, minute by minute. What we can really count is losses. Well, in your

business books you can count gain in terms of green dollars, but in our life itself, every account we can produce shows only losses. We are all in the red, and the older we become the more we get into the red. That is why fear is somehow automatically within us. Always.

We are very strongly influenced by fear and confusion. The mind is confused, afraid, stupid, so it becomes ego. Simple. This ego is our target, the target of negation, actually. Compassion and wisdom do the work. Though they are two separate subjects, they walk hand in hand, within the individual person. Whether you are a spiritual practitioner or not, does not matter, they walk together. Similarly, unkindness, meanness and stupidity walk side by side, hand in hand. That is our life. Spiritual practice or dharma practice means to me to switch these two. Do not be stupid, do not be ignorant, have wisdom. Do not entertain ego, entertain yourself. Ego is an imposter of the self; ego pretends to be the self. When we are looking for the self, we are not going to find the self, we are going to find ego. It comes first and stands there as large as life. Here I am! That is exactly what it is. I don't want to say too much about that right now, the mindfulness of wisdom will have more on that. The root of the wisdom and compassion relies on one. It is very funny, but that is how it is.

PREREQUISITES TO BODHIMIND

Although the verse text says compassion, it refers to great compassion, the root of bodhimind. From the great

compassion the bodhimind is bound to develop. It is certain to develop. Great compassion is so strong and powerful. It cannot get off track at all. It pushes the individual tremendously to help. You constantly think, 'What can I do? Whatever I can do, I will commit myself to do and will definitely do.' This will shift you from the great compassion to the stage of commitment. You give a solemn commitment from yourself to all sentient beings to solve their problem, to help them and bring joy.

Then the question will come in: How? You realize, 'I cannot do anything right now. Forget all living beings, I cannot even help one living being, myself. Therefore it is necessary to achieve the highest possible position, buddhahood. Then I will know what to do to help.' Just wishing to gain total enlightenment on the basis of that commitment is actually the precious bodhimind. This wish will be followed by actions.

Bodhimind is a two-pronged mind. One prong seeks enlightenment for oneself: I have to do the work. The other prong is the commitment to others: the whole purpose of doing all this is to help and serve.

We over-use the phrase: for the benefit of all beings. It is becoming what Allen Ginsberg used to call a buzzword. It starts to lose its value; it doesn't touch us anymore. If we don't think carefully then it becomes *cho tib*, something that is always used and has no value. That is very harmful to us. The earlier masters used to give an example for that: In old Tibet one of the major economic resources are animal products, including animal skins. When the animal skin is

left untreated it becomes very hard and rough and useless. In Tibet there were no chemicals and machines. So the only way to treat the skins was by using the animal fats. In Tibet again, there were no plastic containers, so they used animal skins to keep butter and fat. The metaphor here is: no matter how terrible an individual may be, even if they have committed the five heinous non-virtues and so on, they can still become wonderful persons. It is like the raw skins that can be made into all kinds of leather. But the leather that keeps the butter cannot be treated again with butter. Since it has already soaked up a lot of butter, it has become stale and nothing else can be done.

The wish and the commitment to help, to serve, to lead, to guide, to push myself and all living beings to full enlightenment, and overcome all the sufferings, the obvious, vivid suffering and the pervasive suffering and even the imprint of the sufferings once and for all – such a strong commitment and wish will bring about the bodhimind.

This very important mind depends on the strong commitment, which depends on the compassion. This again depends on love. If you don't love the person you don't really care that much. Therefore it is true that compassion is based on love. If you love someone you will be prepared to tolerate all their nonsense, no matter how much pain in the neck they may be. Love makes it easy to transit to compassion. Again, you don't love someone unless you have a reason. It could be attraction, attachment or desire or something else. Here in the seven stages love evolves from the wish to repay the kindness of others. For that purpose you have to first see all beings as kind

mother beings and that is not possible without first developing equanimity.

Even if you have equanimity, if you can't see your own suffering and pain, how could you recognize the pain and suffering of others? This is a very simple, complete and compact Buddhist practice.

Seeing pain and suffering, there are basically three: suffering of misery, suffering of change and the hardest to see is the pervasive suffering. It is everywhere, it is cause of all negativities and the result of all negativities. It is almost like the basis of ego. Seeing ourselves in that suffering, disliking it, wanting to get away from it, wanting to be completely free of it – that very thought in our personal experience has to be then focused on other people, transferred to their situation and then it becomes compassion. This is the mindfulness of bodhimind.

Bodhimind can be developed in two ways: the seven stages development and the exchange stage development. In Tsongkhapa's tradition, the very special way of developing bodhimind is the eleven stage development, which is the combination of the seven stage and the exchange stage systems. Pabongka describes this in the *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand*.⁴⁷

In normal cases, when you don't have much understanding of bodhimind, even ordinary compassion and caring is better than nothing.

DAY FOUR

As the great Je Tsongkhapa has said: 'It is extremely rare to have an opportunity to attain a human body with the eight freedoms and the ten endowments and to meet the Buddhadharma. At such a time we should not waste our time with trivial matters, with struggling for gain or positions. Instead of wasting this opportunity we should take the essence of this achievement.' Taking the essence doesn't mean wealth, good clothes, power and status. The good things of this life are not the essence; we have been born in such situations again and again and have failed to take the true essence. Taking advantage of this opportunity means engaging in sincere Dharma practice.

There are three levels of practice. The best is to achieve Enlightenment, to become free of all obstacles to omniscience, to attain the state of Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings. The next best is at least to free oneself from cyclic existence. The very least is freedom from rebirth in the three lower realms, which prevents us from achieving this human body with its opportunities to meet the Dharma, the wisdom to practice

it, and happiness and joy. We should take the essence through the practice of Dharma, which doesn't mean just circumambulating temples, doing prostrations or recitations, or repeating mantras. The true practice of Dharma is done in the mind. The word Dharma means 'to hold back', but from what? Either from lower rebirths, from falling into samsara, or from obstacles to full Enlightenment.

Among all types of teachings, this is the supreme teaching of the Mahayana, so we should listen with the highest intention of attaining Enlightenment for the benefit of all, and with the determination and affirmation not to leave these teachings at the merely intellectual level, but to sincerely put them into practice, and strive to attain for the benefit of all beings.

You see he is repeating the same information several times, in shorter and in longer form. Everywhere it is repeated. That is what dharma is all about.

Yesterday, within the context of the verse which is 'In the prison of the suffering of limitless cyclic existence,' I explained the faults of samsara, the suffering that each being is conditioned to undergo at all

levels, in all realms, as well as the specific sufferings for each type of rebirth. Then we saw how we need to have an accurate understanding of our own position as individuals in samsara before we can start to genuinely generate compassion and love for other sentient beings. While we stand around as spectators, as if we have nothing to do with the show, there is no way of generating proper compassion for others. Just as we individuals will have to wander aimlessly and endlessly in this cycle, all other beings who have been our parents time and again, are similarly trapped. We must contemplate and meditate on the love that cherishes all others without partiality. We are overly attracted to our friends and get angry with our enemies, and usually we do our utmost to help our friends and go to great lengths to hurt the beings who are our enemies. The rest, those who don't fall into either of these categories, we just ignore. That is a partial attitude, and it is wrong. It is said that all sentient beings without exception have been parents to each of us. We might feel that since there are limitless beings, there is a likelihood that some in fact have not, but that is incorrect. As we have been born endless times, our samsaric existence is limitless, so their existence

is limitless also, as well as their number of births. There are four types of birth: from a womb, from an egg, from heat and moisture, and by transformation⁴⁸. Most births require parents.

Before developing compassion it is very important to have equanimity. If you want to draw a picture on the ground, you clear away the stones and obstacles first to get a level surface without bumps. We need the smooth surface of equanimity to develop compassion free of the great obstacles of attraction, repulsion and indifference to beings. When we contemplate our friends we generate love and affection towards those who have been kind and friendly, then when we think of our enemies or those who have been unpleasant, we generate repulsion and anger, and towards those who have been neither kind nor unkind we feel indifference. As the thought of affinity and affection towards friends occurs, think: has it always been so, maybe this was an enemy before, in previous lives? When aversion develops towards an enemy, wonder whether he was not once our good, kind friend. When indifferent, also think that maybe before this person has been very, very kind to us. You can also use a shorter time factor,

say over the past few years.

In essence, we should develop complete equanimity. This is highly emphasized here, as it is only then that you can embark on the proper procedure for developing compassion. The first step is realizing that for each birth we have needed a mother, so all sentient beings have been our mother at some point, and in fact, each single one has been our parent many times. Once we are fully convinced that all have been our mothers, the rest will come quite easily: remembering their kindness, wanting to repay it, admiring love, compassion and the dedicated wish will all follow automatically. When trying to recall the kindness of all sentient beings, first we should think of the kindness of our own mother. After carrying us in her womb for nine months, after birth she held us as though she had found a precious jewel. When we were as helpless as a worm, she taught us our first steps, shared all her time and energy and food and love, educated us and prepared us for life in this world. Even animals, although limited by their ignorance, when rearing their young will sacrifice their lives to protect them, as a bird instead of flying away will cover her little ones with her wings to protect them.

They also spend much time licking and cleaning their young. Similarly our mothers have been extremely kind to us every time. This is called 'Remembering their kindness', so we should try to understand the love we have received from our mothers since beginningless time.

After recalling their kindness, the next step is to engage in ways to repay it. To know how they have been without taking steps to repay it, just ignoring them, is shameless behavior totally lacking in nobility. Now, although there are plenty of beggars, feeding and clothing them is not the best way of repaying them, as we can never satisfy them or make them all rich, but only a few. The best way of repaying the kindness of sentient beings is to have the determination and the ardent desire to separate all beings from suffering and to stabilize their happiness. The desire to separate beings from suffering is called compassion, and the aspiration to stabilize their happiness is called love. But it is not sufficient just to have these thoughts; as it is the children's responsibility to take care of their parents, so we have to take responsibility for separating them from their sufferings and take positive action

to stabilize their happiness, which is the dedicated intention.

We take this responsibility of helping all sentient beings, without depending on the help of others, with determination and dedicated intention. Then, if you examine yourself: do I really have such abilities? You will see that not only are you incapable of helping all sentient beings, you are quite helpless yourself. Although your goal is very noble, you simply lack the means and the methods to attain it. If you look around, you will see that only Buddhas can actually do this - by emitting just one ray of light they give ultimate benefit to all beings. So determine to become a Buddha to reach your goal of helping others. This method is called the six causes and one result: recognizing all beings as mothers, remembering their kindness, wanting to repay it, admiring love, dedicated intention and compassion are the causes; the result is Bodhichitta, the determination to become fully-Enlightened. In the context of this verse the emphasis is on compassion, which is the main cause and basis for developing Bodhichitta. Once you recognize all beings as having been your mothers, the admiring, happy love will occur without effort; then

compassion, then dedicated intention and finally Bodhichitta will arise.

This method was given directly by Buddha Shakyamuni to Maitreya Buddha, who gave it to Arya Asanga. Through Je Tsongkhapa it has been passed through our present lineage of Gurus. If you want to practice, this method is quite sufficient for developing Bodhichitta.

There is an alternative method called 'equalizing and exchanging self for others'. This second, alternate method also came from the Buddha who gave it to Manjushri, and it reached our present lineage of Gurus through Pandit Shantideva. This method of exchanging self for others also requires the preliminary development of equanimity - there is a slight difference, as in the first case what is important is to stop attraction and repulsion, whereas here what is important is to equalize, not to make any difference in the way of producing happiness and joy for sentient beings.

That is why we talk about different types of equanimity.

THE PATH TO BODHIMIND

Equanimity

Because of that stupid ego within us, 'me' and 'my' is always more important to us, and 'you' and 'your' becomes less important. Always. And especially, if it is neither you or me, then there is not even a consideration; we treat it as just a thing out there. Although it may be a human being, to our mind it is a thing standing there, like a rock, or a tree, or something. There is that much roughness in our mind. So we have got to smoothen that.

Traditional teachings will give you the example of a painting. When you would like to produce a nice painting, the canvas on which you have to paint has to be smooth. The traditional Tibetan painters will spend a lot of time preparing the piece of cloth they paint on. Some of them take more time to get that cloth ready rather than on the actual painting. You have to make the ground smooth, because if the ground is not smooth, whatever you paint on that is going to be unequal, not smooth. Likewise, before you produce beautiful art-like mind, you must cut down that roughness, that difference between me and you, yours and mine and could not care less, all these three. This is called equanimity.

What does that mean? At least your viewpoint of looking at other people should be the same, not so much jumping in, and not pulling back that far. This is the fundamental basis of the Mahayana teachings. The Mahayana teachings are so vast, that it seems almost impossible. When we think about feeling love and compassion equally for all beings, we

react, 'What are you talking about? My responsibility is to me and my family. That comes first. Then come the others that I like to consider.' So even the first statement you get in Mahayana Buddhism seems impossible. The question comes to our mind, 'Do I really want to do that? No I do not!' Why should I?

In order to counteract that Buddha gave the example that all beings are your mother. Every living being has been your mother. Should we just buy the Buddha's word or is there a way to know it? Ask yourself and the answer will probably be: I do not know it because I do not know reincarnation. If I knew, I would accept past and future lives and then I would also accept that mothers change. Close friends change. Closest friends change even in our life time. We ourselves change almost every minute. Changing the mother is not known to us. We just do not see it. But once we know reincarnation we will see it. Because every time we are reborn there has to be a different mother. The mother of this life is not going to be my mother all the time. No person is going to run before and wait for me, to be my mother again. That is not possible. Sometimes you die before your mother and you are reborn again. Then there has to be another mother. And who is that other mother? So from that angle we are connected with each and everybody. We know this now. We even say the world is so small. And we talk about interconnectedness, interdependence. We have a sense, we are talking about it, but we never put the dots together in our heads that my enemy and I are together. For us the enemy is always something which we have to push far away. The friend is something we have to bring closer

and embrace. That is the challenge for us.

Buddha suggests to soften our mind. Do not hate enemies so much. There is no point. Do not have so much obsession for friends. No point. So what you try to smoothen out is hatred and obsession. Work within your mind. Hatred and obsession is what produces all our negative emotions. The first step therefore is to challenge hatred, challenge obsession. It is not about making the enemy equal to the friend, the friend equal to the enemy. It is about softening the perception of our mind, towards enemies and towards friends.

Hatred, if you let it go without any check and balance, takes over the whole world in no time. People are willing to kill everything as we have already seen in our history. Look at what Hitler did. Not only willing to kill, but wanting to kill, having to kill; that is the result of unchecked hatred. Not only Hitler did that, but Stalin, Mao and others, too. There is no shortage of that category in our history: all those dictators. Unchecked hatred does that. Unchecked obsession does not do that directly, but it brings tremendous discomfort; no doubt about it. And then obsession becomes hatred: if you have a huge obsession, and it does not work the way you want, then you hate, hate, hate.

Equanimity here is trying not to let your obsession be so strong that it takes over your life completely. Forget about your life, obsession tries to take over yourself as a human being. Under the influence of obsession we do not function as a normal human being, but almost become a mad person. Obsession not only tries to take over your life, but also the life of others. Power-obsessed people have done

that all the time throughout our history.

Even in our religious practice we do that. Religious practice is supposed to be overcoming those things, but sometimes people misuse that. It becomes 'my' religion is the best there is. You will say, 'Your religion, nice, nice, nice,' but you think 'Mine is better'. And if you settle it there, that is still OK, but we do not settle there. We say, 'My religion is the best so you must follow it, for two reasons. One is the prosperity of my religion. Two, it is good for you; you know it. So better do it, otherwise I will kill you.' That is what we do. First we offer some reward, 'You better do it, I can give you this, here is money, here is the position, here is this, this that. And if you do not listen I have no alternative but to kill you.' Obsession is playing here. This goes for terrorists, extremists, Al Qaeda and all of those. It is the obsession that has brought hatred. So religions, instead of helping, sometimes get misused.

Buddhism is not free of that either. You know what happened during the Vietnam war. A lot of the monks started burning themselves. We talk about compassion, kindness. And then we are talking about self-sacrifice. It just does not make sense. It contradicts itself. One of the great Kadampa lamas commented on that during a teaching. One of his disciples asked, 'It is so bad, so unfortunate that we are in the degenerate age, the Kali yuga'. He was worrying and crying about it, and that teacher said, 'Oh, the general spiritual path, Buddhism, does not belong to us, but let us not have our own personal kali yuga. Let's not have a personal degenerated age.'

Whatever is happening in general is very much

interconnected, very much interdependent. However, we can make a difference on our individual level. Let us not have that bad degenerated period for ourselves. This is very important because when we, each and every individual, can make that improvement within ourselves, it will contribute to the general situation. The individual does make a difference to general society. Society is nothing more than a collection of individuals. Is there something called society that comes from nowhere and lands in front of us out of nowhere? When individuals make corrections, it affects the society. And that is how we change. That is how our spiritual practice changes. That is how we contribute to society. That is how we contribute to total enlightenment. That is how we contribute to mankind and all living beings. That to me is what spiritual practice is all about.

It is not out of selfish interest that I want to do a spiritual practice, but individual spiritual practice contributes towards society. That is how I look at it. Otherwise all of Mahayana Buddhism will talk about compassion and everything and at the end we say, 'I must become a buddha.' So it looks like the bottom line is me again. It is not. It is me and my contribution towards society. And that applies to everybody. My reduction of hatred and obsession contributes towards society.

The first equanimity is, do not let me be controlled by my hatred or obsession. We have to invite Nancy Reagan here and say, 'No' to obsession and say 'No' to hatred. And I do not think it is that difficult, because we see and understand what obsession does to us. We see and understand what hatred does to us. Seeing and knowing

should not be left as education, we must get that to become our knowledge. That knowledge must become translated, interpreted, and become the quality of the individual. That is what spiritual study is all about. You know hatred is bad; you know obsession is bad. Do not leave it there and say, 'I see, I see', but change that into a very important mark for yourself, and that should change into a quality, meaning, 'I will never be controlled by my obsession, I will never be controlled by my hatred.' When it becomes that way, then you have your own equanimity. It has to come as quality. I do not care whether you meditate on that equanimity, or you analyze, whether you write it down, or you paint it, whether you dance it or whatever you do. But I want it to become part of you. It has to be mixed with your mind and it has to become your quality. That is step one of the mindfulness of compassion.

Once you have taken step one as part of your quality, you have really gained tremendously. This is the most difficult point to break through, because our habits, our addictions are so strong. Even if you were previously used to getting up at four or five or six in the morning, if you pick up the habit of not getting up until 8:30 or 10 am it will be very difficult to break that. And the habit of anger and obsession is a habit that we built not only for a few weeks or months or years; life after life we have continued that habit. Ever since we knew we exist we had that. We have had this for countless eons of lifetimes. So it is going to be very, very hard to break. But it does not matter, this is the first incredible opportunity for us to be free from that terrible habit, the addiction that tormented not only our lives, but

our deaths, life after life. It is an incredible opportunity. No matter how much time it will take, no matter how much effort you have to put in, it is worthwhile.

Mother Beings – Individually Connected

Let us presume we did that. Then we begin to look at all living beings. In our prayers, as well as in the teachings, we tell you to think ‘I am the leader of all these little sentient beings’. In our imagination, they will look like little dots everywhere, and the ground is filled up with all these dots. That is what prayers and teachings will tell you. However, these beings are not dots. And there is no such a person, called ‘All living beings’. Each and every person we encounter is a living being. Each and every one, no matter how high, how low, how poor, how weak, how rich, or how strong they might be, each and every one of them is a living being. If there were such a person called ‘All living beings’, then you could say to people, ‘You get out of my way, you are not ‘all living beings’.’

Caring for each and everybody’s needs and concerns means that it has to effect you, that you have to be caring. What is the difference between attachment and love? One has to think on those lines. Attachment is *me*. I like *you*. I chose *you*. You have to be *mine*. No matter whatever the costs are to you or me, you are *mine*. Love, on the other hand, is caring for the other person. I am caring for your concerns, caring for your feelings, caring for your well-being, your wishes. Every human being has a feeling just like I do. Rejection hurts, acceptance makes happy, praise will make happy, criticism will make sad and angry. That is

true for everybody.

Buddhists often talk about the ‘eight worldly dharmas’⁴⁹. The feeling of these worldly dharmas is with everybody. Good and kind people can tolerate a little more. And short-tempered people will tolerate less. But everybody has a feeling. So caring means carrying that feeling. ‘I care for you.’ We say that. But think about it, what does that mean? These are the basis of love and compassion, my dear friends! So the second step is caring. Honestly. The teachings will not say that. The teachings will say, ‘Regard all beings as mother beings.’ Why? Because the mother is the closest and dearest friend, at least according to old Tibetan terms. Today, it is almost the other way round. Today we do not make much difference between mothers and mothers-in-law. I am just joking.

Buddha is saying that everybody is our mother. With that he is trying to bring the feeling of closeness to the people, to each other, as much as possible. Maybe it is a cultural difference, but where I come from, whenever we have difficulty, when we experience shocking, surprising things, we say, ‘Oh, mom’, whether mom is there or not. With anything – pain, suffering, miserable things – mom comes in first. You know, when kids have anything they are afraid of they run to mom, as source of comfort, source of protection, sort of confidence. They run to her, rely on her. That shows us the kindness mothers have contributed in our life, no matter whatever we think today. Some of us may think, ‘Oh, mothers...’ And that is not even so bad. A lot of people will even have a lot more to say. But no matter what we say now, or whatever we may think, when we were

helpless and hopeless little infants or a little bit bigger, how many times have we run and cried, 'Mom!' And every time, she has protected us. If not, we would not be here today. So our mother has shown us this kindness, compassion and love. She has nurtured and protected us, and that brings us close to her. You have to think from that angle. And Buddha tells us, every sentient being, every living being, has that relationship with us. It is not undermining the kindness of the one mother, but bringing the kindness of everybody to all of us.

Intermotherness – Remember Kindness and Caring

It may look like everybody is in the same situation, so what is the big deal about my mother in particular? The meditation is not for that purpose. It is to bring the compassion, the closeness, the interconnectedness to all beings. It is more than interpersonal connectedness, really. It is a sort of inter-motherness, you could call it in English. That is what Buddha tries to bring us, the kindness, the feeling of care to all beings.

Let me just mention the step immediately after that. If you have experienced such a kindness, and then not consider that kindness as valid, then you must be a terrible person, because you do not know who did good to you and who did bad to you. Either you are not intelligent enough, or you are naïve, or whatever. Even in the world, if someone has been good to you, if you turn against that person, you are considered to be not such a nice person. Maybe I belong to a society which counts loyalty so much. Maybe it is not relevant to the American world today. I do not know.

So first we are looking at every being and realize that not only do we have an interpersonal relationship with them but complete closeness. [We realize] our very life depended on that person's kindness and compassion many times, in each life. And then we need to remember and acknowledge their kindness. If you are not a nice person, then whatever you get, you just walk away. If you are a nice person you cannot just walk away; you have to care. Think about it.

We take one being as our object of analysis; see how he has sometimes been kind, sometimes unkind, but we see how the kindness prevails. The kindness of beings is not restricted to when they have been our mothers, they have also been kind when they were not. The eight and ten special conditions of a human rebirth are the result of the kindness of other beings, and our precious human rebirth is based on morality, refraining from harming others, being patient, generating love and compassion towards others. Without sentient beings we could not practice morality, or develop good qualities, and they are the force behind our development of Bodhichitta, attainment of the state of Nirvana or Liberation, and of highest Enlightenment. So it is through their kindness that we reach all the stages of spiritual development. They also produce

all our food and clothing, housing, entertainment and pleasures. Most of us can't even weave or sew, let alone produce all the other conveniences we enjoy, so we owe all our comfort to others.

Cherishing others impartially, not ignoring or neglecting them is very important. One should disregard oneself, not consider oneself important, and instead hold others very dear, more dear than oneself. Cherishing oneself is the cause of all downfalls, whereas cherishing others is the source of all happiness. We should develop the realization of actually cherishing others more than oneself. First of all, contemplate the advantages of cherishing others and the disadvantages of cherishing oneself, which is selfishness. As Acharya Shantideva has said: all misfortunes and unpleasantness come from selfishness and ignoring others; all wars, epidemics, famines, catastrophes, even quarrels between neighbors and arguments in a small room are caused by that attitude. The great Geshe Thogme Sangpo in his training of the mind text has emphatically said that all unpleasantness in life comes from one attitude, which is self-cherishing. He also said that holding others more dear than oneself not only gives

all happiness and bliss in this life and is the cause of all good qualities and joy, it even produces Buddhahood. In the context of exchanging self and others there shouldn't be the misunderstanding that you are the other person and that he is you: the point isn't trading places. What has to change is the attitude within oneself: no longer holding oneself most dear, from now on cherish others more.

The next step in this tradition is giving and accepting. We've seen the various extensive sufferings both general and specific which beings have to undergo. Developing strong compassion towards them, we accept their many great sufferings in the form of black rays of light which come towards us and into ourselves, thus 'taking' their suffering. This practice consists of first accepting, then giving; accepting all suffering on oneself, with compassion, then giving with the emphasis on love. We give our bodies, wealth and accumulation of virtuous actions which become whatever sentient beings wish for. Whatever they desire, their wish is fulfilled: you visualize that they are fully satisfied, that you prepared them and brought them almost to the point of Buddhahood. It says

in the ‘Guru Puja’ that we should accept all beings’ unpleasant experiences, their misery and their suffering, and take them into ourselves, thus practicing acceptance with compassion. Then practice giving with love, with the thought of stabilizing beings’ happiness by giving them our own happiness and pleasure, our bodies, wealth and virtuous actions which are the cause of all happiness. According to the teachings on the training of the mind, these practices should be alternated.

The next step in this method is dedicated intention. Taking suffering and giving happiness is limited to a state of mind, as we cannot really take their sufferings or give them happiness. Only Buddhas can actually do this. So we have to develop the determination to become Buddhas ourselves, since only they have the power and capability to actually do what we have decided merely at the mental level. This dedicated intention is the same as in the other tradition, and so is the Bodhichitta. The only difference is in thinking of the respective disadvantages and advantages of cherishing oneself and others. Remembering that compassion is the main force behind the development of Bodhichitta,

never forgetting this, engage in the practice of compassion.

With that, Kyabje Rimpoche completes the compassion aspects of the path. He revisited here the seven-stage method as well as touched on the exchange stage method. He even quoted the Guru Puja [Tib. *Lama Chöpa*]. If you are familiar, there are five verses out of the *Lama Chöpa* that are used to develop the exchange stage bodhimind. I am not going to repeat that here, because I have done that a number of times. There are transcripts available and you have heard it a number of times, learnt and practiced it, so we don’t have to repeat that.⁵⁰

MEDITATION 3: DEVELOPING COMPASSION

As Kyabje Rimpoche has said, and as we said before, Shakyamuni and all enlightened beings have said with one voice that all sentient beings have been our mother. They are not lying. We can’t really see that clearly. No matter how much analysis we might go through, until we really make a breakthrough, we can’t see it directly. Even if one buddha could be wrong, all of them can’t be. (This is just to satisfy our rational mind.) Every time these beings have been my mother they have been very kind, like my own mother in this life who has saved my life a number of times each day. Also her other expressions of kindness have brought me

up to this level of human functioning. All beings have thus been extremely kind and I am indebted to their kindness and compassion. I am not a bad person, so therefore I will not forget their kindness. My pride will not allow me to be a bad person. I must remember their kindness.

However, being grateful alone is not good enough. I owe them. I must try to repay their kindness. To be a good person means to pay what you owe. Yes, right now I can give a little service, by giving medicine to the sick and food and shelter to the poor. But I have this great opportunity – once in a blue moon – to help them completely, once and for all, to liberate them from their suffering, along with myself. I cannot and will not lose this opportunity.

I see their sufferings. I see how intense they are. They are tortured and tormented just like me. I just can't keep watching it. I cannot bear it and must do something. I must completely remove their suffering.

For that I must commit myself. I wish I could liberate them immediately, but I cannot. Not only I cannot liberate them all. I can't even liberate myself. For that I must become a fully enlightened Buddha. That is a must. The urgency of the suffering is so great. I am suffering myself and all others, one after another, from right, from left, inside, outside, up and down and everywhere. I will not forget that and I vow to remove their suffering.

May I be blessed by the buddhas and bodhisattvas and by Buddha Manjushri to be able to do that.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: What is the cost of not having compassion?

Rimpoche: I guess, being stuck with hatred, obsession and above all, ego.

Audience: Can you describe non-attachment?

Rimpoche: Attachment is sticky stuff. Non-attachment does not have stickiness. That does not mean that you don't have fondness. Love and attachment is something very interesting. They are very close, yet there is a subtle difference. Attachment always has the desire to have it for me, by me. Love has the fondness and the liking too, but it doesn't have the 'I must get it'. Non-attachment does not bring hatred, anger or jealousy. Attachment does bring hatred, jealousy, anger and possessiveness. Non-attachment lets you let it go easily. Attachment makes you unable to let it go. Though it is said that the two are very close and it is very difficult to make the distinction, when you look at the comparison, there is quite a difference. They might not be that close. The common element is showing fondness, but far as non-attachment is concerned showing fondness doesn't have strings attached. Maybe that much I

can say. Am I wrong?

You have to look within yourself and you will see how these emotions function within you. Looking at others you will also see how these emotions play with people.

Audience: What about if you are attached to compassion?

Rimpoche: Well, attachment to compassion wouldn't be the sticky stuff. Some people say that every desire is bad and every want is bad. That is not necessarily true. We do want enlightenment, we do desire enlightenment. We desire liberation and freedom. That is nothing bad. To me, more important is the effect of the thought and action, rather than the label you give it. Attachment should be something bad, but being attached to compassion may be a good attachment. I think so.

Audience: There could be the downside that if people are attached to compassion they could fall into despair and extreme sadness, a sense of hopelessness.

Rimpoche: That may not happen. Honestly. You know why? If you have strong attachment to compassion, and you are going into the right direction, that will help you to develop more compassion. You are right. Compassion sometimes does bring sadness. Remember the story of the Geshe 'Always Crying' [Tagtungu], also known as the 'Dark Mood Geshe'.⁵¹ Sadness can be part of compassion, but that sadness should not bring frustration and depression. Compassion can bring sadness and happiness, both.

It is important that it doesn't become the hopeless, helpless kind of sadness. The hopeless view looks at the situation and says, 'Oh my God, this is so terrible and I can do nothing'. That is not true. You can always do something, even on the mundane, usual level. Almost all our heroes come out of such conditions. On the spiritual level, you can even do something more than that. Now you are looking at the causal level and doing something there. That is the reason why you need enlightenment. Without that, the situation may well be hopeless and helpless, that's why we need to become fully enlightened. This conclusion is what the seven stage system and the exchange system are leading you to.

Audience: I have a question about the exchange stage. How does one prevent the cherishing of others from infringing on caring for oneself?

Rimpoche: No one says you should not care for yourself. A good question. I usually have only one straightforward thought about that: we label this ignorance as ego. I never thought about the other side: the people who used the term ego actually as a means to build self-esteem. So it is giving me the opportunity today to clarify that.

We are looking at the two different egos at that time. We are looking at an ego that is building self-esteem, self-respect; that is one part of ego. And we are looking at another part: the ego that is the big boss, inside. These are the two different things. When I am looking at the big boss as ignorance, that does not even exist, it is a false entity. No

one says to give up cherishing the self. We are encouraged to switch priorities, meaning we have a tremendous priority for self-cherishing, which is not even self-cherishing, it is ego cherishing. So switch that. We did talk about equanimity. Make self-cherishing equal to cherishing others. And if possible, give cherishing others priority over self-cherishing. That is the idea. It is not encouraging ignoring oneself or putting oneself down, making oneself a doormat. That is *not* the point of Buddha's message of compassion. Nor is it the point of the exchange way of developing compassion.

I very often say that every Tibetan text that I ever read, begins with 'I and all mother sentient beings take refuge. I and all mother sentient beings do this and that. I would like to obtain enlightenment for the benefit of mother sentient beings.' There is no text that says, 'Excluding myself, all others take refuge to Buddha,' or 'Excluding myself, everybody should become a buddha.' So, yes, cherishing others is important. But do not misunderstand that. Why? Prior to cherishing others, prior to developing bodhimind, the first step is to develop compassion for yourself. It is the first step: common with the lower level practice. The beginning of dharma practice is developing compassion for ourselves. This has to be established strongly so that when you are reaching to the level of exchanging self-cherishing with cherishing others, your ground is not being shaken.

Many times, we go immediately for the highest level and ignore the lower level. That is a problem we are always warned against. If you build up the top level first without building the ground, the card house can collapse. If there is an earthquake, the card-house can collapse. Somebody told

me yesterday that there was a huge earthquake in Indonesia. I heard 3500 people died. That is very unfortunate. We should also dedicate our virtues, our good work, and our thoughts and the teachings for the well-being of those departed beings along with our own. There are a number of people who asked me to say prayers, and things like that. Along with that, we should dedicate all our good works that we did here, on this weekend, for the benefit of those departed consciousnesses, so that they may take a good rebirth in future, and have a good human life, a good spiritual and material life and reach total enlightenment. Natural disasters are popping up now more than ever. Maybe it is the *kali yuga*, the degenerate age. It is the lack of human awareness all together, a lack of human awareness for the protection of the earth and all the environmental issues. Along with that, it is also the karma of all of us together, not only of those who lost their lives and loved ones, but all of us. We feel the pain all the time, so that is all our common karmas showing their ugly faces. So we should dedicate and pray.

Audience: How does one recognize that one has done something genuine to rejoice in, rather than just patting oneself on the back?

Rimpoche: When you do something good, you feel good, 'Oh, I did something good.' And that is worth to pat yourself on the shoulder for. We have very little inspiration otherwise. So any of these positive things you do you should cherish all the time.

Audience: If one recognizes that there is an egoistic motivation in one's practice, what is the antidote? How can one begin to transform that?

Rimpoche: Well, try to switch. Try to make it for the benefit of yourself and others. A lot of those practices for the benefit of others are actually done to challenge ego. I did a teaching on this in New York three years ago. The transcript from that is available. It is called *Lojong*⁵². It is explained in detail there, including taking the suffering from the people, and hitting them on yourself, actually on your own ego, like lightning hitting a rock. There are also nine bullets that hit the ego. If you look in there you will be informed much more than what I am trying to tell you here briefly. But the idea is this: do not let the ego take any credit; give the credit to yourself. Do not let your ego bully you. You stand for yourself. These are important points to remember throughout.

Audience: In order to repay others' kindness, we are advised to take specific actions. Does that mean logically, that we have a responsibility to separate other people from their suffering?

Rimpoche: Truly speaking, yes, we do. We do have the responsibility to separate people from their suffering. It depends what background you are coming from. If you think, 'I am just responsible for myself', there is nothing wrong with that; that is also right. But on the other hand, if you are looking at the interdependent nature of exis-

tence, of the lives and relationships that we have with people, when you look carefully at that, [you will see] we do have tremendous relationships with people. Without other people we cannot survive. Our total survival is due to the kindness of the people. Even the opportunity to generate bodhimind is due to the kindness of people. To be able to obtain total enlightenment is due to the kindness of the people. From that level, Kyabje Rimpoche takes it down to the level of being able to eat food, to wear comfortable clothes, to have a place to live and so on. All of these are due to the kindness of people. That is one of the ways of looking into the dependent nature of existence. If you look from that angle, we do have the responsibility to help and serve the people, like it or not. Definitely. But if you refuse to accept that, you can do that too. It is your right. Whether that tallies with reality is another question.

So, we do have that responsibility to all other people, not just because we have taken vows, or because we meditate or because the scriptures say so, but practically: from the possibility to obtain highest enlightenment down to the very mundane reality of getting just a glass of water, all is due to the kindness of the people. We do have that connection. That is very real to me.

Audience: The text says that not only should we separate people from suffering but also stabilize their happiness. What is the role of concrete social action in that? How much does meditation need to be translated into external action?

Rimpoche: I think both are required. The meditative level is a must. Without this you cannot really achieve much. If you strongly engage in social helping activities, you will definitely get a great amount of good karma. But it can't go beyond that. With the meditative level it is definitely going beyond, up to the level of total enlightenment. On the other hand, if you only act on a meditative level and do nothing in practice, that becomes lip service. That alone is also not going to get you further. If you cannot do external things, because of the terms and conditions that you find yourself in, it is different. Otherwise, whatever you meditate should be translated into practical action.

Audience: If meditation leads us to social action, and given the fact that we are not enlightened, how do we know which sort of action is the best to take?

Rimpoche: That's a heavy question. We are always in this dilemma. It is true, we are not enlightened beings and therefore don't see everything clearly. We have obscured vision. So do the best within your capability and your knowledge. Let's take one interesting example:

Generosity is fantastic, we should do it, everybody knows and talks about it. But you also don't want to be too generous to a drug-addicted person. Whatever you give them they will convert into drugs. You should not be giving them those things. However, if that person's life is threatened by withdrawal symptoms, it is even necessary to give them the drugs. This is what is called 'discriminating wisdom'. You have to apply whatever discriminating wisdom you have.

Do the best you can. We will make mistakes, no doubt about it. That's because we are not enlightened. But we can learn from our mistakes. We should try to correct it next time. But don't credit every mistake you make as a 'learning experience', then you will never learn anything. We all have a great capacity for intelligence. You are all brilliant people. People in the west are highly educated and you are open-minded and looking into the spiritual path. You do have brilliant minds. Make use of them. Use your discriminating wisdom. Like in the example of the drug addicted person, saving the life of such a person is more important than preventing them from taking the drug. You have to make your own judgment, depending on the situation.

Drukpa Kunleg, the founder of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition, was a little bit of a crazy guy. He used to walk around with bow and arrow, a trident-type of spear and a dog. He looked like a hunter. That is how he appeared all the time. There was an old lady who was about to die. Before her death she told her family to get her precious turquoise. In the old tradition, some women used to keep jewelry in their hair. Good old families used to have really good turquoise. So she told her family to give that turquoise to Drukpa Kunleg and ask him to protect her and pray. When she was dead, the family decided to switch the turquoise, keep the good one and give Drukpa Kunleg an inferior one. Soon they found him running through the streets somewhere and offered him that turquoise. He said, 'He He, is that the turquoise she is giving to me? I don't know what to do about it. I only know how to hunt' and he threw it in the mud. The family tried to give him another

one, and he did the same thing. Finally, the family thought this was not going well, so they took the right turquoise and gave it to him. He suddenly said, ‘Oh yeah, let the small turquoise go in my quiver and the old lady into the level of liberation – OM AH HUM’, and he snapped his fingers and that was that. Interesting guy.

Another time he was walking around in the town of Lhasa, carrying a *Prajnaparamita* text on his shoulder. There were a lot of stray dogs who came and started biting him. So he took that *prajnaparamita* text off his shoulder and said, ‘There is very strong objection to using dharma books as weapon, however, with great auspicious omens I am going to hit this book on the head of these dogs’ and that is how he chased the dogs away. So, although there are strong objections to using dharma books that way, the need of the moment was more important. There you can see how to use discriminating wisdom.

Drukpa Kunleg really was the founder of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition, but he chose to run around like a crazy person. He was contemporary with another famous master of his time, Sakya Pandita, who used to walk around with a lot of retinue, great publicity and huge amount of show biz. When Sakya Pandita came to Lhasa he had signs put up that read, ‘When I go to the upper part of the country, people know it is I, Sakya Pandita. When I go to the lower part of the country, people know it is I, Sakya Pandita. When I remain in the middle part of country, it is I, Sakya Pandita.’ Drukpa Kunleg saw that, he got up and slightly changed one letter on those signs. In Tibetan ‘I’ means *nga*. If you put a little hook under the *nga* it becomes *ngu* and

that means ‘I cry’. So wherever the sign said, ‘I, the Sakya Pandita’, Drukpa Kunleg put that little ‘u’ underneath and it changed to *ngu*, meaning: ‘When I go to the upper part of the country, I cry, when I go to the lower part of the country, I cry, I am the one who cries.’

Both were extremely highly respected mahasiddhas and contemporaries. This is the kind of thing Drukpa Kunleg would do.

Audience: Given the enormously high stakes, the difference between being able to achieve total enlightenment and the prospect to end up in the lower realms, why isn’t everyone breaking down the doors to come in here and learn this material?

Rimpoche: Don’t you remember the teaching on the precious human life? One of the conditions to have a precious human life is to be able to take advantage of the opportunity. The Third or Fourth Panchen Lama gave teachings in Tibet, talking about how difficult it was to find this great human life with the qualities of the eight leisures and ten endowments. While he was talking, one of his Chinese benefactors came forward, made three prostrations and said, ‘Excuse me, obviously you have not been to China and don’t know how many human beings there are. Tibet only has a very small population. What you are saying might not be right.’ That showed that he didn’t really understand what the Panchen Lama was trying to say. He was not talking about a shortage in human beings, not even about a shortage in educated, intelligent

human beings. He was talking about the human life, that has education, intelligence and wonderfulness, and which has the opportunity to learn and practice dharma. That is where the shortage is! Opportunity is such a thing, it is a dependent arising. One requirement is that such a method is available. Then it requires the openness and interest of the listener. When these two come together, the person can use the opportunity. If that is not there, there is no opportunity. That is why it is rare, important, difficult to find and easy to lose. That's the reason why not everyone is coming in here, breaking the doors down and grabbing it. It is not a hot sale.

Audience: Please explain the difference or similarity between ego and *jigta*.

Rimpoche: Kyabje Rimpoche doesn't talk about *jigta* in this text, but only about ego.

Audience: What is the relationship between *cho tib* and *jigta*?

Rimpoche: Why? They have nothing to do with each other. What makes you think that?

Audience: Well, its like dharma becoming almost like another accessory.

Rimpoche: Dharma cannot become valueless. But dharma terms and ideas, if you become so used to them, you

may think, 'Well, yes, I know all that.' Then it becomes common, everyday stuff, nothing specific, not useful, something you have to repeat because you committed to it. It is more a burden than something you value doing. Also, some terms are used so much that they become buzz words. We use certain terms so much, like 'For the benefit of all beings', that we almost become numbed to what it means. It doesn't mean anything anymore.

In any case, to such a person the profound words of dharma become meaningless, almost like a parrot saying OM MANI PADME HUM. That is what *cho tib* is. Particularly, when you look at the stages of the *Lamrim*, which have the purpose of overcoming certain difficulties one after another, when that doesn't have any effect any more, you are in trouble. It will become weaker and weaker and then finally, it is becoming useless chat. It is considered more difficult to help such a person than somebody who has committed the five heinous non-virtues. That is *cho tib*.

The *cho tib* problem is actually more likely to affect intelligent people, rather than less intelligent people. You try to poke and it doesn't work and after a while you withdraw and it becomes just words. The young incarnate lamas are very much in that danger. For whatever reason, the young selected incarnate lamas, with the exception of a few, are mentally sharper than most other people, They pick up words very easily. If the words don't quickly do the job that they are supposed to do and if you just repeat the words so many times, that numbs the person. I think Geshe Lobsang Tharchin from New Jersey used the example of a donkey in the Charong area, where he was born. You load

up the donkey and if it doesn't want to go, you beat it. After a while, no matter how much you beat the donkey, it won't affect it any more. It has become normal to the donkey and it won't move at all any more.

Likewise, if you open any Tibetan book, on any page it will say a hundred times 'for the benefit of all beings'. That is a *cho tib* danger for us and I wanted to simply raise that.

Audience: How do you evaluate your own compassion objectively?

Rimpoche: I think that part is little bit easier than the others. How strong compassion really is depends on how strong you feel, on your personal feeling and your association with the pain. There are two things, right? One is real pain, the person experiencing it cannot help it. The second is overly exaggerated pain, which feels real, however might not be that real. When it is a real thing, how much does one feel. Do I feel as though looking at a movie? Do I feel as though I am involved? Do I feel as if it was my own pain and I wonder how can I help? So there are different layers of feeling you can judge within yourself. I think this is how we can judge whether the compassion is strong or not.

The second aspect is whether your feeling about this pain, this compassion, is directed to a large group of people, or a few people, or you feel it with all the people. I think there are all these degrees. So you can look from the point of view of the object and from the aspect point of view how strong your compassion is. We will be able to judge ourselves.

Audience: Do enlightened beings feel love and compassion for everyone all the time?

Rimpoche: Enlightened beings are supposed to feel love and compassion all the time to all beings. If not, their compassion would become selective, which is a clear sign of not being enlightened. There is no selectiveness in the compassion of enlightened beings. All enlightened beings are supposed to have the strongest compassion that is always compelling them, without causing them suffering, without causing them pain. So, very strong compassion to all and I think it has to be all the time. We cannot comprehend that because we have limitations: limitations to our compassion, and limitations to our knowledge. We cannot focus on two things together. Enlightened beings are supposed to have gone beyond that, so they will be focusing on all beings, all the time. That is the difference. We cannot comprehend that, because for us it is almost impossible. We will go crazy. They do not.

Audience: Rimpoche, how can we prevent ourselves from becoming overwhelmed when we open ourselves to the suffering in our world?

Rimpoche: Well, that is a very good question. 'Overwhelmed, burn out' – those words we find very often, and that is lack of compassion. If you have true, genuine compassion, there is no opportunity of being overwhelmed, no opportunity of being burned out. When compassion is limited, it puts limitations on the efforts. When you put

limitations on the efforts, it means you are doing something extra there: you are measuring it with something, maybe with how much you gave and what you received. That is why all this is coming up. So maybe the basic measuring idea is wrong. One may revisit that and look very carefully what one is measuring.

There are some people who become completely mentally or physically exhausted beyond their capability, and I think that is a different story. Due to mental or physical exhaustion and lack of capability one may not be able to do it by oneself physically, but one should never put limitations on ideas, opinions and suggestions about the way how to do things. These ideas of burnout, being overwhelmed and all this, are coming from the psychological point of view. It is very genuine, very true, however from the compassion point of view, it is a lack. It is a lack of compassion. That does not mean you have to ignore all your own personal needs. Compassion must work to bring joy and happiness to the individual. Not as an outpouring service-oriented activity only. On top of the outpouring service-oriented [output], there should be some in-pouring input. Compassion should be bringing joy and satisfaction. If there is a lack on the two-way street approach and it only becomes output, then you have those problems.

If you are happy to do it, how can you be burned out? If you are getting satisfaction of serving and if you experience joy, how can it be overwhelming? That is what little I know. But this is very common with a lot of our people whom we call care-givers. When care-givers are not grounded in the spiritual path, then you have those problems. When you are grounded, you will not have those problems. When you are not grounded,

you think, 'Oh I am doing too much, I cannot do it, I have been doing this, this, this, this, this, and whatever I have been doing, is give, give, give, give and I have received nothing.' or you may think, 'I cannot take it any more because the pain is too much.' I think all of these problems will come because of not being spiritually grounded. In such a case, serving and helping does not bring joy and happiness to that person. It does not bring satisfaction. It is simply mere hard work with very mediocre result. That is my feeling. Maybe I am wrong. But I have never heard the terms 'burnout' or 'overwhelmed' in the *Bodhisattva Way of Life*. That vocabulary does not exist in there.

COMPASSION VERSUS PITY

Audience: This question is directly related to what you just said, Rimpoche. How do caregivers, such as doctors, nurses, therapists prevent job burn-out? How can they distinguish between good compassion and stupid compassion, versus pity and sympathy?

Rimpoche: I do not know whether you call it stupid compassion. I think Trungpa Rimpoche used to call it idiotic compassion. Idiotic compassion

Audience: And then pity, sympathy...

Rimpoche: No one wants the pity feeling, no one. And a lot of our compassion is pity feelings. 'Oh poor things, they are helpless, I must go and help them'. Such a feeling,

I do not think anyone wants. We may want to give it, but those who receive it, I do not think they want it. Everybody has their dignity, no matter how difficult, how weak; whatever the situation may be, they have their dignity. Pity feeling will really cut out the dignity of the people, in my opinion. We may think it is compassion but it is not. We felt pity for that person. And that gives you two choices, either to just not look at it, walk away, or else, try to give something, share something. So right from the beginning, that motivation has limitations in there. So this is not going to be helpful to anyone, especially not to yourself.

In one way we look at compassion as something to help others. But we completely forget it is one of the best ways to helping ourselves too. Being of service to others is the best way to be of service to ourselves. That brings us closer to enlightenment, that is our purification, that brings accumulation of merit, all of those. So it is more service to us even than service to others. We tend to forget that, but it is a major point. It looks like I am the most compassionate, with no selfish interest for whatsoever, totally doing something for you. In reality, it is totally helping myself and it is helping them as well. It is fulfilling two purposes: the purpose of helping ourselves and the purpose of helping the people you are serving. This is a double benefit. Really, great work. The best way to help ourselves is to help others.

Good compassion should be able to take a little hard, painful work to benefit the person. When we see the result, we can do it. It is like doctors performing surgery on a person. It looks harsh and tough; it is painful and difficult, but when you look at the result, it becomes worth it. Worse consequences are

prevented. Good compassion should be able to do that. Idiotic compassion will be unable to do that. When a diabetic person wants sugar so badly, the good compassionate person can find some substitutes for the sugar to satisfy the person as well as not harming them either. But people with idiotic compassion, when they feel that somebody wants it so much, they will give it to them. They cannot argue, they just keep on giving it. I believe idiotic compassion is weak in will-power. Sometimes it even misunderstands the situation completely.

Nobody wants pity. Nobody. No matter how pathetic the situation of the individual may be. But for us, pity is the easiest compassion. It looks like compassion, and we have it. We see people's pathetic situation, we see how horrible the situation is, and we feel we must do something. That could be genuine compassion, that could be idiotic compassion, that could be pity feeling. With real compassion you will know what to apply, you will apply something to get rid of the cause completely, you are not just going to look for temporary solutions. Thank you.

Audience: There are some people who have never experienced the love and compassion of a mother, such as orphans or those who have been abandoned, and yet the teachings are telling us to look at all sentient beings as our mothers. How can those individuals use that to cultivate love and compassion?

Rimpoche: I think it is an excellent question. Recognizing every sentient being as a mother being is a method given in a tradition of Buddhism, but it is a metaphor. One could not find a better example applicable to so many people. That is why it is used. That does not necessarily mean everybody has

to meditate about every sentient being as mother being, and see the mother as most kind and compassionate. Generally, it is the best example, but of course it is not the only example. There are many other ways.

Audience: How do you connect with the [mental] pain of others?

Rimpoche: Well, you yell and scream. [laughter] I really think you need a genuine understanding of what is going through the person's head. That does not mean that every pain of that person has to be entertained. Many of these pains are some kind of man-made, crazy pains they go through, just absolutely crazy. The person themselves is a genuine, wonderful person, but sometimes when they make up their pains, it goes completely crazy. We have seen it. We have to understand what type of difficulties they are going through. By understanding that we find out how best we are able to relieve their pain, but that does not mean we have to feel everything that person goes through. Whatever that person is going through is a genuine pain for that person. No doubt. But at the same time it is craziness too. So we have to acknowledge that and almost treat it as craziness.

On the other hand, there are really conditions that are truly helpless, not mentally provoked. We have to see and acknowledge these conditions, and not only that, we really have to be in touch with it, feel it, and just that feeling somehow gives support to the individual who is suffering. They know that you are with it. And that is what I mean

by saying: touch it and feel it. 'I know you are suffering' is not the answer. The answer really is that somehow you have to go with it, and make sure it is not only that person's problem, it is your problem; challenge it together, face it together, support a solution together. That is what I mean by feeling and touching. You have to distinguish between the craziness and the real, because instead of helping the crazy pain, by entertaining it we create more crazy pain. And that is where sometimes even cutting it short and wrathfulness may be part of the way to help.

Audience: When meditating on the suffering of the world, how do we overcome the sense of depression and despair?

Rimpoche: Why get into depression in the first place? The purpose of the meditation on suffering is really to know. When you know it, then you look for how to overcome it. And there is no question of getting depressed. When you cannot find a solution, when you keep on thinking and suffering so much, that brings depression and difficulties, if I understand correctly. Please remember, I am not trying to be a psychologist. Nor am I a therapist. My understanding is based on what Shantideva said:

If there is something to be corrected, why be unhappy about it?

If there is nothing to be corrected, why worry about it? ⁵³

Audience: If we are so interdependent, why do we experience loneliness?

Rimpoche: Because we are stupid. Honestly. I mean, we do not know. We are not aware of it. The moment we walk in our room and close the door we think we are alone. There is no one to relate, no one to talk to, no one to share. That is what we think. And believe. And to a certain extent it is true. I think that is the perception of the individual. I do not mean it is a wrong perception; it is a perception. And that is why we experience loneliness. Also we are afraid of being lonely so much. Perhaps it has been one of the biggest concerns for a number of people. It may not be genuine, but people do suffer.

Audience: How are impermanence and emptiness related?

Rimpoche: Impermanence is not emptiness, however impermanence helps a lot for us to understand emptiness. (I would love to say that emptiness is impermanent, but that is not allowed, because emptiness is supposed to be permanent. Phenomena are divided into two categories. Created or compounded, and not created or not compounded. Emptiness falls in that category of not created, not compounded. It is not made, therefore it is supposed to be permanent. That is how we divide it, and that is why I am not allowed to say that emptiness is impermanent.)

Audience: Are negative emotions an integral part of our mind?

Rimpoche: No. Negative emotions are not an integral part of our mind. It is like they are stuck with our mind. It

is like cloth dresses and dirt on it. The common example is the sky and the clouds. So it is not integral part of mind.

Audience: When can ego be used as a constructive tool, versus when it is not constructive, for instance pride, and false identification?

Rimpoche: The way I look at the ego, I do not see any way that ego can be used as positive or constructive tool, because by nature the ego is confused. It is fear by nature, and it is ignorance by itself, and it is a false identity, false existence. So I do not see any constructive usage of ego. No, I do not.

Audience: Could you please talk about reconciling reincarnation with the Buddhist doctrine of the absence of a permanent soul?

Rimpoche: Buddhists do not accept a soul, from the doctrinal point of view, but they do accept consciousness. I do not know exactly how it works in the Judeo-Christian tradition, whether you see the soul as something permanent. In Buddhism, every being, every consciousness, is not permanent, it is impermanent, and that is probably the reason why they do not accept a soul, because the word soul may convey the message of being permanent, being the same for eternity, or something. Atman. Eternal. Probably that is the reason why Buddhists say there is no soul. (I am making all of us into soul-less persons. I do not know whether we would like that or not. We must be all ghosts, moving around here.)

Audience: In the absence of soul, what is it that gets reincarnated?

Rimpoche: I got that already, but I am sort of trying to dance around and tease you a little bit here, and make us all soulless, and ghosts, particularly ghosts that also move during the daytime in the light. But I have said clearly that we accept consciousness. I do not know what is the difference between consciousness and soul, except that consciousness is impermanent, and soul is supposed to be permanent. If that is true, then that is the difference. Impermanence does not necessarily mean discontinuity. I think Trungpa calls that a 'continuation of discontinuity'. It is something that is continuing. But all sorts of discontinued things are continuing together. And that is what reincarnates.

MEDITATION 4: SEVEN STAGES TO BODHIMIND

1. *Every living being, at one time or another, has been not only our most beloved one, but someone that we completely depended on for our total survival many times. Within that, the mother is the projected example. Mother or no mother, there was a time when we depended for our total survival on this individual, that very individual, and today we cannot say, it is this one or that one. We cannot say that any particular person has or has not done this for me. If we could make a breakthrough of seeing the past and future lives then there would will be no difficulty. But right now we*

cannot because we have limitations. This is bridged by the teaching of the Buddha.

Let us presume there has been reincarnation. Our sense indicates that this is not the first time [we live], nor is it going to be the last time. It is not a wrong sense; it is a very valid sense. Until we are able to see this clearly by ourselves we only have this sense. So let us give the benefit of the doubt. Buddha says that we are all reincarnated, that we are all continuing. And every time we take rebirth, we have someone to protect us, to help, to nurture us, to bring us to the level of what we are. That someone we cannot say is not this person in front of us now. No way. So, for our own benefit, for our own sake, let us say all living beings have been one time or another the person who gave us protection, ensured our survival, nurtured us. We cannot take out any single living being and claim 'This one has not done that for me'.

2. *Every time, when they did this, they have really given me us total love and total affection, although, when we become older and don't listen to them, they may have difficulties. When we were young infants or very young children, they have shown this love, caring, compassion day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. Such a kindness I cannot forget. I am indebted to all living beings who have given me this so many times. And I must remember what they have done to me. It is time for me to bring awareness of,*

acknowledge and remember their kindness.

Not only as a mother, not only as a lover, not only as a companion, but even now, they, the living beings, are providing opportunities for us to meditate on compassion. If there is no living being who is suffering, I have no opportunity to meditate on compassion. So even from that angle I am grateful to all living beings, not only for giving me life and nurturing me, but also for the opportunity to practice, to meditate compassion.

3. *Such a kindness has to be repaid. It is a human quality to repay kindness. So what we would like to do is give medicine to the sick, food to the hungry and shelter to the homeless. But we have the capacity to do something more than that. Not only these things we need to do, but something more than that. What they want is nothing but happiness, to be free of suffering. So I am looking if there is an opportunity for me to be able to do that, just to repay their kindness.*
4. *Not only that, when I am looking at each and every one of them, they all have their own unique quality, their unique personal, sweet way of doing. And I must generate love that is wishing for them to be happy. I wish them to be happy.*
5. *In order to make them happy, in order to make them remain in happiness, I must remove their sufferings*

and the causes of suffering. How wonderful it would be if I can achieve this. How wonderful it would be if I can bring joy and happiness to all beings. How wonderful if I could separate every being from their suffering. I pray I may be able to [have that compassion and] do that.

6. *Not only I pray to commit myself to do this, I give myself to bring this about, I pick this up as my goal, I pick this up as my responsibility. I pray I will be able to do that. I like to take a special responsibility to liberate all living beings. Why me? Because I have the opportunity: (a) I have this great human life. (b) I have this great mind. (c) I have this information. (d) I have the capability. If I do not do it now, who else will do it? It is my opportunity. It is my privilege to commit myself to bring all happiness to all living beings, and make them free of suffering. Can I do it? I love to do it. But can I do it? No.*
7. *At this moment I don't even have the capacity to bring myself, a single human being, to that level. How can I bring all living beings to that stage? However, it is not impossible. If I can achieve the state of enlightenment, if I become a buddha, I will have the best capability. Therefore I would like to become a buddha, I would like to become fully enlightened. Not just for me, but to serve all those I love and I care for. I have compassion and I have personal responsibility and commitment. And therefore I must strive to become*

fully enlightened.

* * *

PRECIOUS BODHIMIND – SIX SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

This is very briefly how you meditate on the ultimate, unconditioned, unlimited compassion and love, which we call bodhimind. It is one thing to say, read and listen to something, and try to guide our mind in that way. But it is another thing to remind ourselves all the time about the sufferings of the people, seeing how terrible it is, so much so that we cannot even bear a minute of it. ‘I am not just watching them suffer, I am feeling it with them together, so therefore we must remove this, immediately. I must bring joy to them immediately. I would love to do that, I would like to take the responsibility. However, I do not have the capability, and therefore I would like to become fully enlightened, get that maximum capability, and then effortlessly, I should be able to do this.’

That is what the earlier buddhas and bodhisattvas call the precious bodhimind. Precious because it is a huge commitment; it is almost impossible to do. But we do have that huge mind capacity, that openness, committing ourselves to do this. That is why we call it precious. Not only it is precious because it is so good, but also it is the beginning of the opening of the path to be enlightened and that is why it is such a precious mind. If we do not utilize this opportunity, how unfortunate it will be?

Therefore, we like never to submit ourselves to laziness.

We must overcome the laziness and bring *enthusiasm*. We must also bring *patience* into this, because it is something that does not happen over night. It needs constant, continuous effort, to be able to wait and develop and work continuously. And the most important obstacle to this is anger, including anger against ourselves. We think, ‘I did something wrong, it is impossible, it is almost impossible.’ To be able to have the patience that does not give in to that anger is a most important support system here. And we also need the support of enthusiasm to be able to continue. Another support is the ability to focus on whatever you are doing, to *concentrate*.

Concentration, enthusiasm and patience alone will not be able to work, we need the basic fundamental principle of *morality*. Just morality, patience, enthusiasm, concentration, alone will not do, we must be very *generous*. Just being generous alone will not do, we must have *wisdom* of how to be generous, of how to maintain morality, of how to keep patience, of how to bring the enthusiasm, and how to focus. You do not only build up the mind alone, but also the support system of the six activities, all the time. That is the mindfulness of compassion.

Avalokiteshvara – om mani padme hung

Here we also have another aspect. It is not only thinking, analyzing and focusing meditation alone, but you are also bringing the enlightened beings into the picture. And you are bringing mantra into the picture. In this case, the enlightened being recommended to focus on for compassion is Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion.

There are a number of different versions. Very commonly known are the thousand-armed thousand-eyed Avalokiteshvara, and the four-armed Avalokiteshvara. There is also the two-armed Avalokiteshvara. So far the male aspect. The female aspect is Tara. There are White Taras, Green Taras, multiple Taras. All of them are representing enlightened beings that are trying to help us to bring that compassion. And that is why we are meditating on Avalokiteshvara, and saying his mantras.

We do say the long mantra or dharani: NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA...⁵⁴ And the short one is OM MANI PADME HUM, the famous Tibetan mantra. It is famous because even small children, in Tibet, at the beginning, are saying Ma and Mani together, and that brings the mantra. As kids, it is almost the first word they can say. I do not want to give you the detailed explanation of this mantra, but I have to say a little bit.

OM is not only the beginning of the mantra, but also it consists of ah - oh - em; three syllables combined together, which mean body, mind and speech of the enlightened ones, and of ourselves. MANI, we all like that, don't we? We like money, who does not like money here. I am just joking, sorry. MANI is actually the Sanskrit word for jewel. And PADME, or padma, is lotus. What is the jewel, what is a jewel heart? It is compassion. The heart or mind is compassion-oriented: ultimate, unlimited, unconditioned compassion. That is the jewel. The lotus represent purity. It is pure because although it grows out of the mud or swamp, there is no fault of swamp or mud in the lotus. That refers to wisdom, to emptiness. The union of compassion and emptiness brings the union of the body-mind-speech of individual practitioners and of the enlightened ones together, bound by the HUM. So mindfulness

of compassion is OM MANI PADME HUM.

OM MANI PADME HUM is the body-mind-speech of those of us who are not enlightened, practitioners who are looking for enlightenment, and the body-mind-speech of those who are enlightened. Joining them together is the union of compassion and wisdom. That is what OM MANI PADME HUM is all about it, very briefly. There can be a hundred different explanations, but very briefly this is the most important thing. So, whenever you say OM MANI PADME HUM, you think that way, and the moment you say HUM, you think about body-mind-speech of the enlightened ones and of ourselves: pure and impure are going to be merged and mixed together, so that impure can become pure. If you think that way, it becomes what it is called – a jewel mantra. It is the jewel-like, wish-fulfilling mantra.

So you say the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM and concentrate and focus on compassion. Try to develop it, no matter how basic. We all have compassion, we are not really such bad persons at all. We may not have greater compassion, but we do have compassion. Use that as a basis and build on that. Expand it. The object of compassion should be expanded, the purpose of the compassion should be expanded. And you can make the compassion stronger, not just appealing to yourself, but really pushing, focusing, and sort of plug yourself into that compassion. If you can do that, it will be very strong compassion. That is the beginning. It is almost like the first step to becoming an enlightened being.

How do I think, how do I meditate on suffering? There is

one simple, basic rule for all. First and foremost, learn. If you do not learn, what can you think? Nothing. Learn, and not in order to be a scholar but learn enough so that you can function by yourself. Every information is not necessarily correct. So process that information. Analyze it. Find it. What does analyzing do? It gives you the essence. When you get the essence, focus on it. That is the meditation. So one, two, three: learn, analyze, meditate. That brings it into the reach of your quality. It becomes part of you, without forcing yourself. By doing this analyzing and meditating, it will become part of you without any efforts. After a little while, you will be realizing that you are already soaked half-way through with compassion. Then it becomes your quality. Not only your quality, it becomes part of your mind. And that is how we bring ourselves to become compassionate, not as an academic study or learning but as quality.

Learning is very important. Its major purpose should be to transform the learning into the quality of an individual. And when you have that, you are going to find it is going to be helpful for others and for yourself. If you do not have that as a quality, then it may help or maybe it won't. Chances are that it is not likely. Then it becomes mere dry information and so the hope of helping anyone is much less. When it becomes a quality of the person, the person becomes different. And that helps. One quality person provides hundred or tens of hundreds and that provides again hundreds of thousands and that is how we contribute to the society, to the world. That is how we change the terrible hatred-oriented society into the loving, compassionate, caring society.

This is the only way to do it. It is not meant in a religion's way of saying 'My way is the only way', but truly, the only way to do it is first making that into a quality of oneself and then help others. Until it becomes a quality, it does not help. When it becomes a quality, it begins to help us and others. That is what I know. That is what I attempt to do. Hopefully I am doing the right thing. And that is what I will ask you to consider.

And OM MANI PADME HUM is helpful for this, a great help. It is a great mantra. People may think mantra is something magic: something will change, zoom, into something. No. Mantra is meditation. It works the same way. It may have a little more power than our simple thought-processing-meditation because it carries the name or initials and the commitment of enlightened beings. So it may have a little extra power to add up to our own mental meditation. But, saying mantras only, without mental meditation, is not enough. There may be a few mantras which claim that just saying the word alone is enough, but other than that, a mantra alone does not do that much. It is mantra combined with meditation that brings us the result. And that is mindfulness of compassion.

Taking Refuge and Four Immeasurables

The First Panchen Lama's text on the Four Mindfulnesses briefly introduces you to the refuge taking. We take refuge to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. That is a very Buddhist thing. If you are not Buddhist you do not have to take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, but you do need to take refuge to enlightened beings. As long as they are

enlightened ones, it does not matter. To non-enlightened beings, better do not take refuge, because there are a lot of difficulties and problems.

From the Buddhist background, the first step, is to take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and according to vajrayana, to take refuge to Guru, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. According to the First Panchen Lama, *all*, that is *a-l-l*, all enlightened beings, including Buddha Shakyamuni, say in one voice that every living being has been our mother. And that is a reliable word. Therefore, everyone, whenever they became my mother, have helped me just like my mother does today, the kind mother who cares for her child. It is very briefly mentioned in this text. It is then our duty to repay the kindness of all these beings. How wonderful if they were *free from the attachment and hatred, remain in great equanimity*. I pray it will remain. I will make it will remain. I seek the blessings of the object of refuge to be able to do that. That is the first step.

Then the second: How wonderful if all these mother beings could be *free of suffering and the causes of suffering*, I pray they will be free of suffering and the cause of suffering. I will pray they will remain free of suffering and causes of suffering. I may be blessed to be able to do that.

So we say all the time, *‘May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness*. How wonderful if they could remain in happiness. *May they experience a joy that has never known suffering*. I will pray they will remain in that joy and the cause of the joy, always. I am going to do it, making sure that they will remain always in the joy and the causes of joys. I may be blessed by my object of refuge to be able

to do that.

So the first one is the wish to remain in the joy and cause of joy. Then the second one is praying they will remain in the joy that has never known sufferings. In order to do that, I would like to become totally enlightened. In order to achieve this, I will have a great, profound practice such as a compassion and wisdom combined practice. And that is how one remains in the mindfulness of compassion. That is according to this text by the First Panchen Lama. And it is almost the same as I said earlier.

That is how we think, how we meditate. These are the guidelines for us to how we conduct our life, what is the goal of our life, what we want to achieve, what we are looking for and what we think we can do. The mindfulness of compassion tells us to remember this all the time. But we know that is very difficult for us. But what we can do is constantly reminding ourselves, as often as we can, at least six times in twenty-four hours. That will help to bring our life in a right way.

IV
MINDFULNESS OF YOUR BODY AS
A DIVINE BODY

In the Divine Mansion of great bliss, pleasant to feel, abides the divine body, which is your own body of pure aggregates and constituents. A Deity with Three Bodies inseparable is there. Not conceiving yourself to be ordinary, practice divine pride and vivid appearance. Not letting your mind stray, place it within the profound and the manifest. Making your attention unforgetful, maintain it within the profound and manifest.

Let me paraphrase the translation: There is the joyful beautiful mandala that whoever reaches it enjoys. Here is the pure part of our aggregates and elements⁵⁵. It is your own body as deity. Here is the inseparability of the three kayas. Do not look at it as ordinary. Have pride and clarity. Don't let your mind run, keep it on the profound and clear.⁵⁶ Don't let it forget. Hold it there.

We have reached now to a very interesting subject. There is a little bit of secrecy involved here. The reason is that this is pure vajrayana practice. It is not commonly talked about

much, but Kyabje Rimpoche talks about it quite openly, so I have no problem following.

Kyi du tshor wa de chen gyi zhel ye na. That is sort of the example of something most joyful, the mandala of great bliss, which is the mandala of the yidam. It is most blissful, *de chen*.

Mandalas are not made out of anything else but our meditative state: whatever you have built up, such as faith, devotion, contemplation, positive karma, shamatha etc. All of those are manifested now as mansion, as mandala. What is the mandala made of? Not of bricks of woods or gold or silver. It is made out of my virtues, my good karma. Where did you get those? We have accumulated them from as long as we know. These are now becoming your own mandala. That is why it is called the mandala of great bliss.

That tells us the mandala is also a very personal, a very individual thing. When we obtain the pure state of a yidam, each and everyone of us will have our personal mandala, because each and everyone of us has personal virtues and those are becoming the mandala. Whether that is the same of this or that deity's mandala, whether it is one with or separate from..., that is another question, hard to answer. It is almost the same as when the individual person becomes Tara, or Vajrayogini or Yamantaka etc, are we going to be the same as or different from that deity? All those are questions we have to deal with. When we say all enlightened beings are enlightened beings, there is no problem, but whether this Yamantaka is the same as that Yamantaka? There the question comes in of what happens to the individualisation.

All those questions are there.

In the sutra it is easy. We know of the Pure land of Amithaba Buddha and pray, 'May I take rebirth as a retinue there'. That is easy. In vajrayana it is personalized: personal independent mandala, personal independent retinue, personal independent Yamantaka Whether one with or separate from? That is a different issue; that has to be dealt with and thought about and solved. It looks like I am raising more doubts than clarifications. But that is how we move forward.

In that palace, where does the self as yidam body come from? From the pure part of our skandhas and elements. We see the pure aspects of the body and the mind as yidam. Your pure body of aggregates and constituents. *Phung kham dag pa rang lü kyi lha ku zhug.* *Phung* is the skandhas; *kham* the elements. The pure aggregates and elements of your body are the body of the *lha* referring to the *yidam*, like Yamantaka or whatever.

Profound and clear. [Normally] the more profound you go, the more the clarity gets lost. In vajrayana the more profound you go, the more clarity you are supposed to bring in. That is contradictory to our ordinary perception: the more profound the less clarity.

Mantra comes from the Sanskrit words 'manas' which means mind and 'traya', to protect. Mantra protects the mind from ordinary appearances and the grasping at them, which is our usual attitude. In

Tantric practice we develop the pride and clarity of being a deity to eliminate the ordinary aspects of ourselves. At present, when we are not engaging in Tantric practice, we feel and appear as ordinary beings. In Tantra, we counteract this by feeling ourselves to be a deity, with clarity and pride. The text says: ‘In the divine mansion of Great Bliss’ – which means in the celestial abodes of the deities there is immeasurably more joy and pleasures than in the best of human mansions. Here we cannot go into great detail as some of those present have not received the appropriate initiation, but speaking in general terms, to keep it simple, there are the five aggregates: form, feeling, recognition, will or volition, and consciousness, along with the four elements, earth, water, fire and wind. The aggregates of ordinary beings, when purified, will appear in the nature of the five Dhyani Buddhas: form relates to the Dhyani Buddha Vairochana, feeling relates to the Dhyani Buddha Ratnasambhava, and so on. As we attain the higher states our four elements will appear in the nature of the four consorts.

Kyabje Rimpoche does say that since there are people who have not obtained initiation, he can't say much in detail,

but in general terms there is something he can say. In the usual sutra part, we try to restrain ourselves from negative actions, which follow from negative emotions, thereby creating negative karma and thereby bringing the sufferings of samsara. That is why the object of what not to do is not to engage in negative emotions and negative actions in order to avoid creating negative karma. The thing to do in the sutra system is to create positive, virtuous karma, generating compassion and love and so on.

Ordinary appearance and perception. Now, the moment you get into vajrayana, the thing what not to do is shifted. I don't want to go as far as to say that the object of negation is shifted. The prerequisite of the vajrayana is a perfect sutra path. So by the time it is shifting, the sutra path is considered to be almost over. The shift here is to not adhere to ordinary appearance and ordinary perception. What ordinarily appears we should not accept in that way. In order to block that ordinary appearance and perception, the individual generates the divine pride of whatever yidam one is practicing.

Three kayas. Then we come the three major activities: the activity of death and the dying stages, the activity of the bardo, the intermediate stage, and the activity of rebirth. These are the three most important things in one's life. In the divine form, you try to transform death, bardo and birth into the extraordinary three states of dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. The first of these is the dharmakaya, which is almost the first state of enlightenment. Second is the sambhogakaya, which is almost like the first physical appearance of total enlightenment, although it may not be accessible to

everyone. Sambogakaya has five restrictive qualities. Then comes birth as nirmanakaya. This is the manifested body, so everybody can see it.

Method and wisdom. Most importantly, behind all of those, is the combination of method and wisdom. In sutra, when you talk about method, it means love, compassion, bodhimind. It also includes circumambulation, prostrations, mandala offerings, guru devotion and so on. In vajrayana, when you talk about method, you are talking about a mind that is totally influenced by, almost soaked and absorbed into and radiating out great bliss. It is the nature of the mind absorbed into the tremendous bliss nature. The wisdom is the wisdom of understanding emptiness. The combination of these two is becoming the vajrayana path of method and wisdom.

Aggregates and elements. In that process the ordinary aggregates [Skt. *skandhas*] transform. The stages through which you transform them is through the eight stages, four plus four, which we introduce at the dharmakaya level. But they don't necessarily have to be only experienced at death. Thereby the ordinary aggregates are transformed into the five Dhyani buddhas, particularly Vairochana as form related, and Ratnasambhava as feeling-related. Kyabje Rimpoche doesn't mention the other three in detail.

The four elements—earth, water, fire and air—will transform into the four consorts. So the five Buddhas will share four consorts [laughs]. But they don't have to fight over them. There are reasons for the classification. The essence of the vajrayana is transformation. Not only the mind itself is transformed, but also all mental faculties, not only your aggregates but

also the elements. The big horn that the vajrayana is blowing is transforming, rather than cutting the unwanted things, constantly, continuously, over a long time with great difficulty.

It is important to see yourself in the form or physical manifestation of a deity. One of the main obstacles in Tantrayana is the ordinary appearance - seeing things in the ordinary way, feeling things in the ordinary way and being in the ordinary state. So we see ourselves as a deity and develop the pride of a deity as an opponent force to ordinary aspects.

Transformation. When you have the mindfulness of your body as a divine being, and if you only keep on thinking 'I am Heruka', 'I am Vajrayogini', 'I am Yamantaka', and so on, I don't think that will do much good. Then you are missing the point. Divine pride is not thinking that I, the one who is completely controlled by ego, is suddenly Heruka or Vajrayogini. We have to think, 'My consciousness, which is totally transformed, has become of divine nature.' That is still not right. We all have the divine nature anyway, which is known as buddha nature. The individual is actually transformed. The pure nature aspect of the transformed person is generated in the divine form. That 'me' has nothing impure in it, it is not subject to any impurity.

We are not trying to brainwash ourselves, not seeing anything impure and seeing everything as perfect and wonderful. We are not generating love and light. I have to

clarify that here. Transformation is not just imagination. When you finally really transform, then whatever aspect of purity you have visualized, from the inhabitants to the environment, will actually materialize, will become real in the literal sense. That is the real vajrayana. Unless and until we can become that in the literal sense, we are striving and working for it, first in the development stage and finally at the completion stage.

Development- and completion stage. What is development stage? You are building it up. Once you have completely built it up and you are practicing in that, then completion means that whatever you have built has become complete. If you are building a house, it is not enough just to build four walls and a roof. That is not a useful house. Only when a person can use it as a home is it actually completed. Just like that, in vajrayana the completion stage means that it really becomes the reality, in the literal sense. At that point the completion stage is completed and you become fully enlightened as Buddha this or Buddha that.

MEDITATION 5: PURITY

Each and every one of us have the buddha nature within us.

Each and every one of us has the seed of compassion within us.

Each and every one of us has the seed of wisdom within us.

We do have the purity of the individual human being, no doubt. However because of our obstacles we cannot share that pure part with others and not even with ourselves. The obstacle is the false perceptions that I accept as true. This is our problem.

Purity is within us; pure environment is within us; pure mandala is within our environment. It is not somewhere else; it is in the place or dimension where I am now.

However, my perception is impure and I accept that impure perception; that is my problem. As Tilopa said to Naropa:

Appearance does not hold you down,
but the acceptance of it holds you down.

As my perception is so extreme, I must use an extreme method: the projection of a pure mandala and pure being and [keeping] that with pride and clarity. May I be able to forcefully block the obstacles of ordinary perception and conceptualization.

Pure environment and pure inhabitants may or may not be true for us right now, but hopefully when our negativities go down the nature of the environment and inhabitants will change into pure environment and inhabitants. Thus I will establish my future pure land: pure mansion, pure retinue and pure being.

DAY FIVE

As Gungthang Jampalyang has said: ‘When you travel on the long road of samsara into future lives, the best provisions for your journey, which give comfort and encouragement, are the practice of Dharma itself.’

Guntang Jampalyang was a great 1700s scholar, teacher and master, saint and mahasiddha. He is using that analogy, because in those days there were no hotels and motels in Tibet. When you were traveling you had to carry all your provisions.

When I was a kid and was traveling for a week or ten days, there were 30 or 40 people going together in several groups. One group went first, carrying the tents and cooking utensils and so on. They would settle in and by the time the second group arrived, the tent would be put up, the food would be cooked and we could spend the night there. Then there would be another advance party separating from that group, going ahead and preparing for lunch the next day. Perhaps we would spend the rest of the day there or maybe not. By that time the party that stayed behind had packed up the tents and caught up with the main group and then gone ahead to prepare for dinner. That is how it worked. When I was a little kid and we went to our estate in the Kongpo area, that’s how we traveled. We had to carry all the provisions we needed ourselves. There was not the

convenience of these days, with hotels, motels, shops, etc. There was no hotel to stay at night, with a bed and food to eat and wine to drink. Everything needed to be carried.

That is why Gungtang Jampalyang says that on the unknown road of the future the provision you really need to have with you is the dharma.

When you go into a strange land where you have no acquaintances, it is helpful to have a guide. When you are born in future rebirths, when you are confused, the Dharma will act as your guide. When traveling in a strange place there is danger of thieves and bandits and you need reliable companionship. It is also the Dharma which will give protection and companionship when you travel the dangerous paths of the lower rebirths where there are many chances of being afflicted and harmed.

With single-pointed dedication one has to engage in the practice of Dharma, and in order to practice you need knowledge. Just as in ordinary occupations you need a skilled teacher through whom you must learn the methods and techniques, so to practice Dharma you need to rely on a proper Guru to teach you the methods and how to practice.

The knowledge is all contained in this

teaching of the four contemplations.

First the remembrance of one's Guru as a Buddha; then how to develop renunciation of this life's happiness and comfort, and of future lives as gods and so forth, in short, of all samsara.

There is a problem with the translation here. You don't renounce the happiness and comfort of life. It is the desire for the happiness, the attachment to happiness and comfort that has to be renounced. That is the reason why it is said that comforts are not necessarily comforts. They are in nature suffering as well. However, if you have some of those comforts you don't have to give them up. You have to give up the desire to work for the desires, making yourself the slave of what you think your purpose is.

Then going for Refuge by seeing one's own suffering in cyclic existence, and developing sympathetic compassion towards all other beings. Finally, there is the development of the dedicated intention, which leads to Bodhichitta, the desire for Enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

Lam Rim is the essence of all teachings; it is the graduated path to Enlightenment. In order to practice Dharma, you have to know how. So, listen to the teaching with the highest Mahayana motivation, the noble

attitude of attaining Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. So far we have covered three of the contemplations: how to regard one's own Guru as a Buddha; regarding all sentient beings in all states of samsara as our parents with compassion; and regarding ourselves as deities, with the clarity and appropriate dignity of a deity. The main obstacle to be totally abandoned in the practice of Tantra is the grasping of ordinary appearances. As an opponent, we have the practice of deity-yoga, seeing oneself as a deity with clarity and appropriate pride, being the true Vajradhara oneself. With respect to Tantric teachings we can't explain in detail as some of you present here have not received Tantric initiations.

If I go on explaining the detailed aspects of the teachings, both of us, the teacher and pupils will suffer consequences: so there is no point in giving an elaborate explanation, just the essential points.

Kyabje Rimpoche is using the term 'appropriate pride'. You don't just think that 'this dirty old man' is Chakrasamvara⁵⁷.

In Tantrayana you find four exclusive qualities or features not shared with the Paramitayana: the four types of purities, of the body, place,

utilities and deeds or actions. The purity of the body means of your own form, visualizing yourself as a deity. The purity of place means visualizing the mandala, the celestial abode of a deity. Utilities, or enjoyments, refers to seeing yourself as a deity and then emitting lights and offering goddesses from your heart. They return and make offerings, and you experience Bliss and Emptiness. Purity of deeds or actions means that you visualize yourself as a deity and issue forth many rays which reach all sentient beings: they help them mentally and physically, prepare them spiritually, and place them at various levels of spiritual development, such as pure lands, and the various states of Buddhahood. Although we can't actually do this, we can engage in this practice as a mental exercise of imagination. These four purities are found only in Tantrayana. Although we don't have the experience or the ability to practice the actual four purities at our present level, Shakyamuni Buddha is a true deity, he lives in a pure celestial abode; all objects of his senses are pure and only cause bliss within him, and all his actions are only devoted to helping sentient beings. We can also engage in the practice of the four purities in a similar fashion at our present level.

All classes of Tantra practice these four

purities. The higher Tantras also have the practice of transforming the three Kayas into a spiritual path. One may have great appreciation of and aspiration for the valuable practices which have these exclusive characteristics, yet we need the proper foundation of the Paramitayana, as was taught before, to engage successfully in these practices of Tantra. Engaging hastily in these practices without the proper preparation, without the other requirements and prerequisites, is like constructing a high building without the proper foundation. It's bound to collapse. So developing the foundation is extremely important. The effectiveness of Tantra, which makes it possible to attain Enlightenment in one short lifetime, is totally based on the practice of the Paramitayana, without which you cannot experience the attainments arising out of the Tantric practice: it is entirely out of the question.

We need the preliminaries, starting with devotion, renunciation of samsara, Bodhichitta and the right understanding of the true nature of all phenomena, We need a genuine development of these principles. It's like 'thu', a Tibetan cheesecake, which is a delicacy, but without 'butter, the main

ingredient, it is tasteless. Similarly, if you start without the prerequisites, Tantric practice does not produce any special effects. Even if you manage to visualize yourself as a deity in its abode and so on, it is like looking at frescoes, there is no real effect, no special quality.

So this is the body as the divine body, the deity mindfulness. Kyabje Rimpoche gives an alternative for those who are not initiated. Buddha Shakyamuni is a deity and has all the purity. You can use that.

This is 50-50 vajrayana and non-vajrayana. But Kyabje Rimpoche did talk about the three kayas, the four purities, about development- and completion stages. In that way I can also say a few things. In the beginning of the *Lama Chöpa* it says,

From great bliss I arise as the lama-yidam.
My body radiates light, transforming all existence.
Everything becomes pure.

You can think that the object you want to achieve is total enlightenment. That is total purity, not only a pure environment, but also the inhabitants are pure beings. Everything you utilize is pure. That is the reason why before the food offering we say OM AH HUM. The work of OM AH HUM is to purify, transform and multiply. As we say in the vajrayana way of blessing the food, 'All faults of color, smell and potentiality are purified, transformed and multiplied into an ocean of nectar.' That is

pure vajrayana practice.

Seeing yourself as deity is a vajrayana practice. The purpose is to cut [two things]: the ordinary appearance and the acceptance of how things appear. That is considered our main problem. Something may appear as ordinary, but you have to see that in reality it is pure.

The usual advice given by the Tibetan masters from all traditions is,

Try to see every person as a pure being.
Whatever you hear, think that all sounds are
dharma and mantra.
Whatever environment appears, think that it is
pure.
All males you see are Avalokiteshvara, all
females you see are Tara.

This concludes the mindfulness of the body as divine body [*yidam*].

MEDITATION 6: MINDFULNESS OF THE DIVINE BODY – BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI

Let us remind ourselves that we have that guru Buddha Shakyamuni on our crown. We have made the invocation and praise and have said the seven limbed prayer.⁵⁸

To develop compassion we have the mantra OM MANI

PADME HUM. Today for the guru we use OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA.

MUNI MUNI means: conqueror, conqueror or victory, victory. It has to do with overcoming obstacles. The first victory is the victory over gross delusions and the second victory is the victory over the imprint of the delusions. These are known as the two obstacles, the subtle and the gross obstacles.

MAHA MUNAYE means: great victory. That is the greatest victory over negative forces, which is total enlightenment.

HUM is union. Not only the union of wisdom and emptiness, it is the union of body-mind-speech of ourselves and the body-mind-speech of our buddha.

OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA is the union of Buddha and ourselves, the individual practitioners. So we say the mantra. OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA (...x)

By our strong request, light and liquid comes from the body of the Buddha, purifies all of our negatives, and we obtain the blessings of body, mind and speech of all enlightened beings.

Finally that Buddha dissolves within ourselves. Thereby our body, our mind, and our speech now become a pure body, a pure mind and pure sound.

Vajrayana. In the case of vajrayana practitioners, here just like in the Lama Chöpa, at the beginning, that guru-buddha dissolves to you. And you yourself become the lama buddha. Remember that very often.

Recognizing that is the mindfulness of the body as the buddha or the guru or the yidam.

* * *

Thank you for meditating with me. So here there is a little restriction on meditating our body as fully enlightened. It does have some consequences of losing secrecy in vajrayana and incurs a downfall by doing it for the uninitiated. You do not get the downfall; I get it.

So therefore, I do not recommend to those who have not obtained vajrayana initiations to think your body as fully enlightened body. But you can think that all the blessings of the enlightened one have been totally obtained. And the pure nature, or the buddha nature within you, is connected with the pure nature of the ultimate object, the buddha. And thereby you can maintain your physical body as pure as possible. That is physical purity. And then you maintain a mental state of purity and an emotional state of purity. If we maintain that, we have the third mindfulness.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: What gets transmitted in an oral transmission?

How does it benefit us? What are the qualifications to be able to give oral transmission?

Rimpoche: Basically, you have to be a strong practitioner. Then you must have received the oral transmission before giving it to others. Receiving it is also not just by somebody who knows how to read it, but there must be the continuation of the unbroken lineage of that oral transmission.

I have a funny story. Tibetans make funny jokes sometimes. Every society has a group of people that they single out to make jokes about. The Tibetans did that with the Mongolians. Particularly the teaching traditions used to make jokes about the Mongolians.

Once there was a Mongolian guy who claimed to be a teacher and wanted to give the oral transmission of the whole Buddhist canon. That means a hundred odd volumes. It takes months to read those. Everybody presumed that he had received the oral transmission himself. So a lot of people spent time and energy to sit there and listen, month after month. At the end the guy said, 'You people are very fortunate, you received the oral transmission of the collected works of the Buddha, which I have not even received myself.' Then everybody was upset and shouted at him, 'What you think you are doing?' But it was too late. You can't get the time back.

Oral transmission requirements. Jokes are jokes, but the hidden message behind this is that one has to have received the oral transmission in an unbroken lineage. Further, your teacher and yidam must not have objected to your giving

this. If they permit it, that's great. If not, at least they must not object for you to give the oral transmission. This is the basic minimum requirement for giving oral transmissions. The relationship between disciple and master has its own system of teaching and listening and all that has to be observed.

I have been in the west for a number of years. I begin to notice that in Tibet we would take it for granted that the person up there is only giving something they have received from a qualified teacher themselves. We'd also take it for granted that the people listening know what they are doing and that the relationship between the one giving the oral transmission and the one taking it is there. Also, Kyabje Rimpoche mentioned in his teaching clearly how to listen. He gave the three examples of wrong listening: the pot with the hole, the stained pot and the upside down pot⁵⁹. Further, one should consider oneself as a sick person, the teacher as doctor and his teaching as the medicine. All that belongs to the normal system of giving and receiving teachings. One is expected to observe all that. And think, 'This is all to my benefit. I will receive a valid transmission.' Without transmission there is no connection and no continuation of the lineage blessings. As Kyabje Rimpoche has mentioned in the transcript: practice itself will not get you anywhere; you need the support and blessing of the lineage. That is how it works.

Of course, the first thing is that the teacher must be qualified. The qualities of the teacher are important. If you teach in the Theravadin tradition you need two qualities:

stability and knowledge. A Mahayana teacher needs ten qualities. Nagarjuna has mentioned it very clearly. You are given 50% discount, or even 70%, but the minimum qualities are three: morality, concentration and wisdom. They correspond to the three baskets of Buddha's teachings. In vajrayana the number of necessary qualities is doubled. The qualities of a Mahayana guru are mentioned in detail in our *Lama Chöpa* transcript⁶⁰. The bottom line is that one must have proper morality and know what one is doing, must have received the continued lineage of this teaching and very specific teachings have their specific requirements.

Teaching requirements. A teaching like the one we do today can be done in three different ways. One way is to just read it and explain it – as long as you have received the lineage continuation. The second way would be to go verse by verse, let the students meditate three times, explain everything three times and repeat whatever was taught the previous day again in the morning. In order to teach this way you have to have received the teaching accordingly. Then the most important kind of teaching is the experiential teaching. You explain one point and let it go completely, until the student develops further. When the student is ready to receive further teachings, then you give the second point. For example, if the teaching is the *Foundation of Perfection*, the first line would be taught and it is left there. You would learn and meditate and practice and develop completely. Then you would receive teachings on the second line. If you are not ready, you keep practicing, no matter how long it may take, months or years, it doesn't matter. If you teach this way you have to have received it this way too.

When you want to give vajrayana teachings, there are more requirements. Of course you have to have received the teachings. You also have to have done the mantra recitations and sadhana practices. Also additional fire puja offerings must have been done. You must be able to take the self-initiation. When you are ready, you may be ready to let others enter into the mandala. Of all requirements, the most important one is that your own master should not object that you do it. He may say, 'Don't do it now', that means try again later. If he says, 'Don't do it', that means period; you don't do it at all. [If you are] at that level and you teach, you have to teach cautiously.

I have said more than the questioner asked.

Audience: How does a student know they are on the right track and not make dharmic errors?

Rimpoche: Everybody makes dharmic errors. Whether you are on the path or not, you have to check with your own mind. A lot of people will think, 'I couldn't do my daily practice for a while, now I am distant from dharma.' I am not saying that you shouldn't do your daily practice. I don't want to accumulate the negativity of people not doing their daily commitments. That's not what I mean at all. But my honest true opinion is this: when your mind is influenced by dharma, even if you are not doing any formal practice at all, you will react differently. If something big happens, wonderful or horrible, you will be looking at the dharmic source. You will gain understanding and you are dealing with it. That means you are still on track. You

are not going fast enough on the track, but you are still on track. The Buddhadharmas is such that it is very hard for anyone to get off the track, no matter what, even if you decide completely to go in the opposite direction. This is because it is extremely effective. Buddha's teaching is such that it really penetrates into the mindstream of the individual. Somehow it leaves something there, even though you may think you have abandoned it completely.

There are a number of examples I remember. When I was young there was one very well-known incarnate lama. At the Tibetan government festival he was sitting above me. There were three or four of us: Domo Geshe Rimpoche, myself and Serkong Rimpoche. We had to be sitting together. Next to me was Domo Geshe Rimpoche. On the other side was Manggam Oser Rimpoche. He went to India in the early 50s. He denounced Buddhism completely and became a Christian priest. He made his living in India by doing physical work. He used to pull jeeps and cars.

Ribur Rimpoche belongs to the same native area as Oser Rimpoche in Manggam. Ribur Rimpoche went especially to India in 1956 to see Oser Rimpoche and try to bring him back. There are long stories in between. I can't get into. But at the end of it, no matter whatever Oser Rimpoche pretended to be, he not only turned out to be a perfect Buddhist but also a perfect vajrayana practitioner. His reincarnation now has been selected by the Dalai Lama and seems to be a very effective young incarnate lama, very good in giving divinations and very active, now in his late 20s. So it is very hard to get totally off the track. You may do better, that is always true. You can always do better. There is no

limit until you become fully enlightened.

Audience: Can you talk about White Manjushri? How is he different from the yellow-orange Manjushri that we are more familiar with?

Rimpoche: There is a difference in hand implements. You can look at the pictures and you will see it. White Manjushri, of course, is white and not orange. White Manjushri doesn't carry the sword in the right hand like the orange Manjushri, but it sits on a lotus above the shoulder. That is the difference in looks. And then there is a different mantra.

But then all Manjushri's are Manjushri, just like all Taras are Tara. Not only that, all enlightened beings are enlightened beings. Look from that angle. From one many separate, and from many separate beings there is one. These are the uncommon conditions of the enlightened beings – unless you have a very specific practice, this explanation should be enough.

Audience: Rimpoche, what is the meaning of the nectar in Buddha Shakyamuni's begging bowl?

Rimpoche: You would look at the quality of it and there are three different types of nectars: 1) medicinal nectar which overcomes illnesses; 2) longevity nectar that overcomes untimely death; 3) uncontaminated nectar that overcomes the contamination. Now we look at Buddha's begging bowl and say that it was full of nectar, but dur-

ing the Buddha's lifetime, that was a true begging bowl. Buddha went around begging. Not only Buddha, all the disciples of the Buddha carried these begging bowls, and all the communities supported them. That practice is still available in the Southeast Asia today, particularly in Thailand.

Audience: Will every being eventually be enlightened?

Rimpoche: Yes. Very definitely.

Audience: How do the Buddhists deal with insanity? For example, a confusion thinking that pleasure is pain, or schizophrenia, or sado-masochism or those kinds of things?

Rimpoche: Interesting. You know what I feel, honestly? We are all taking pain as pleasure. Whatever we consider pleasure is more or less, pain, or pain-causing. It is only a difference of degree. Every one of our pleasures does not stay pleasure. It becomes suffering. If you feel too hot, you go into an air-conditioned room, but if you stay there for a while you get too cold and catch a cold, too bad. Take sexual pleasure; it is suffering too, it is not pleasure. We know that very well. Too much of it hurts, and too little is satisfaction, and it is not always the right thing. It is pain rather than pleasure. So every pleasure that we consider as pleasure, if you look carefully, is pain. We take it as pleasure, but it is pain. That is why there is compassion. Sometimes, even in order to safeguard, you may have to take a

little bit of harsh actions. If you find some crazy guy that wants to jump from a building, you may have no alternative but tie him down. You do not want to tie anybody down, and so that is a harsh action. Still, we may have to do it. But at the same time, you make sure that person gets enough relief. You don't tie him down for 24 hours. Make sure he gets to walk around. If necessary, walk with him, take him outside to get sun and fresh air, to get reasonable comfort. I am always wondering: it is no good to give a substance-addicted person money, because they will buy drugs. But we forget that there is something called withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms sometimes can kill the person. So at that level we should have enough intelligence to be able to give them something against the harsh pain at that moment, and then somehow find a way to adjust it. These are called skillful means, in my opinion. That is the reason why I just cannot follow Nancy Reagan. [just say no]

Audience: My sister was a flight attendant on the Pan Am route, and I kept on having a dream, for three months before it crashed, that it was blown out of the sky, and I kept telling her that I saw in my dream state that she needed to get off that flight. I was not able to protect anyone else on that flight because they would not listen to me. Was I in an egoless state when I was able to pick that up? Was that part of interdependence that I was able to pick up that this was being planned and this was going to happen?

Rimpoche: I do not know whether it is egoless or with

ego. Whatever it may be, in the dreaming stage, you know, we have the capacity to know what is going to happen. We all do have the capacity. Some people have lesser, some people have stronger obstacles. Psychic people have lesser obstacles.

Audience: Right, that's me. I am a freak.

Rimpoche: Ok. I do not know how much I can go on this. But that may or may not necessarily be ego or egolessness. It is sort of a case of lesser obstacles. We have some kind of boundary, where you do see or where you do not see. And sometimes the boundary lowers, and when the boundary is lower, you can see over it.

Audience: Well, whenever I have done readings, I am in the alpha state.

Rimpoche: So when the boundaries are lower, you can see over it. But then also, what you see is not necessarily all true, because sometimes there is mis-information and twisted information, all kinds of things. Again, it depends on the obstacles, as well as on the karma of the other person. All of them materialize in that way.

Audience: What is the Buddhist perspective on how to deal with psychiatrically disturbed persons when you encounter them in the street, in that moment?

Rimpoche: You know, there is Angulimala's story which I

very often share.

Angulimala. He was a guy who was looking for spiritual achievement and found the wrong master. That wrong master told him, 'If you can kill 1,000 human beings within a week and string their thumbs together as a rosary and wear it, you will be liberated.' So Angulimala goes round killing everybody. Maybe there was no police in those days. It was in a small town. He had one more person to kill to reach to 1000. But by that time everybody had run away, except his own mother, who was watching from a distance, trying to help him. (Look from the mother's point of view to her children. Do not look from the children's window to the mother.) She was even willing to lose her life to help. Yet at the same time she was afraid, so she couldn't come close. Therefore she appeared and ran away, appeared and ran away. He also had hesitation of killing the mother, yet she was the last person he needed. This happened in Buddha's life time. Buddha decided the time was right and he appeared on the road, walking. Angulimala thought, 'Wow, great, I do not have to kill my mother. There is this guy, so I can kill him.' Buddha walked slowly. Angulimala was running. But he could not catch Buddha at all. Finally he shouted out to Buddha, 'Hey, wait!' And that broke the ice. Buddha replied, 'I am waiting. Come faster.'

And that is how the conversation started between these two. Finally Buddha was able to convince him, through dialogue, which now we call education, that his actions were wrong. Of course, at first Angulimala had doubts, first negative doubts, then later positive doubts, and finally Buddha was able to communicate and change his mind,

and eventually he became an arhat. That is a very good achievement. That is how Buddha dealt with the situation.

MEDITATION 7: MINDFULNESS OF THE DIVINE BODY

– VAJRAYANA

Again, we are using the Manjushri form. The text I am referring to is the First Panchen Lama's meditation on the Four Mindfulnesses. Kyabje Ling Rimpoche bases his teaching on the Seventh Dalai Lama's song. This meditation by the First Panchen Lama is from before the Seventh Dalai Lama. The First Panchen Lama was the guru of the Fifth Dalai Lama. So this meditation is from three generations earlier than the teaching. The actual teaching, of course, was given to Tsongkhapa by Manjushri.

[Start with taking refuge, generation of the bodhimind and the practice of the four immeasurables.]

Then you visualize: You yourself are sitting in ordinary form. On your crown, on a beautiful lotus cushion and above that, a moon and a sun disc, representing the wisdom and compassion or rather the wisdom and method, in terms of both, sutra- and vajrayana, is the guru who is the nature of the union of wisdom and method, the union of body and mind, the union of the two truths, absolute and relative, the union of illusion body and clear light.

Think: Such a great living master, a totally enlightened being, is my root guru, who is in the form of Manjushri, the embodiment of the wisdom of all enlightened beings.

See that on the crown of Lama Manjushri sit [one above the other] all the lineage masters in the form of Manjushri up to Je Tsongkhapa and, above him, Manjushri. And then on top is Buddha Vajradhara.

[Here you invite the wisdom beings who come and dissolve into you. Then you make the seven limb-offering⁶¹, and say mantras].

With profound respect we request the development of the spiritual path, one by one, step by step, based on either the Foundation of Perfection or a similar process. We request their blessings and special way of purification.

These come out to us in form of light and nectar. They reach to each one of us, purify all negativities in general and particularly the negativities of not seeing the guru as true Buddha, the negativities stopping us from developing compassion, love and bodhimind, the negativities stopping us from seeing ourselves in the form of a divine being, the negativities of not being able to see absolute true reality and not being able to manage the aftermath activities.

All these are completely purified, washed away, in the form of light and liquid, inside and outside, completely.

These negativities are collected as darkness, the blessings come shining like light and make the darkness disappear completely. I become pure.

I obtain the stage by stage developments, from guru devotional practice to non-dualistic perception, one by one. The dualistic perceptions and appearances totally disappear. I constantly and continuously request this to happen by saying the Migtsema and Om Arapacana Dhih, whichever is more convenient.

Finally, all surrounding enlightened beings dissolve to Buddha Vajradhara, he to Manjushri, he to Je Tsongkhapa, he to the lineage master below, and one after another, all lineage masters dissolve into the root master. Finally my master dissolves into me and I become a pure Manjushri.

For a short period I maintain divide pride of being Manjushri, the wisdom of all enlightened beings. Everything I touch, see, feel, etc, is all pure.

That covers the third mindfulness, the body as divine body. As I said before, the body as deity has a little restriction here. This should be enough for the meditation on the divine pride.

V

MINDFULNESS OF THE VIEW OF EMPTINESS

Now we have only the Fourth Mindfulness left. That has two parts.

Part I is actually learning, recognizing and developing the shunyata or emptiness. Part II of the fourth mindfulness is dealing with the aftermath.

MINDFULNESS OF THE VIEW OF EMPTINESS

*Nang zhing si pa she ja yi kyil khor na
chö nyi dön dam ö sel gyi nam khe kyab
jo drel dön gyi ne lu shi de na da*

***Throughout the circle of appearing and
occurring objects of knowledge
pervades the space of clear light which is
reality, the ultimate.***

***An inexpressible mode of being of objects is
there.***

Forsaking mental fabrications, look to the entity

of immaculate emptiness.

***Not letting your mind stray, place it within reality,
making your attention unforgetful,
maintain it within reality.***

Nang zhing si pa. *Nang* is short for *nangwa* is appearance. *si pa* is knowledge. *she ja*: anything to be perceived, anything to be known. *Kyil khor* is circle or mandala. Translated as circle, it may not give you the idea of fullness, translated as mandala it does. *Chö nyi dön dam ö sel gyi nam khe kyab* is the inexpressible, indescribable light of reality. *Jo drel dön gyi ne lu* is like the short Prajnaparamita verse:

*Ma sam jö meh she rab pa röl chin, ma kye mi gag
nam key ngo wo nyi
so so rang rig ye she chö yül wa, dü sum gyal wey
yum la chag tsel lo*

I pay homage to the Great Mother of the Buddhas of the three times, who is original wisdom, the expression of highest self-awareness, the essence, which is space, unceasing and unborn, the highest wisdom beyond words, thoughts and expression.⁶²

It says, ‘Even if you want to say it, you cannot express it. It has the nature of space-like, yet it is discriminating wisdom. It only can be perceived by the wisdom beings, referring here to arya’s and above. That is the reality of emptiness, which

is the mother of all buddhas.’ In other words, emptiness is everywhere; everything is emptiness, yet we don’t see it

Now for the fourth contemplation, of Emptiness or Shunyata, the first lines refer to the fact that anything within the realm of samsara or nirvana, all that can be known or perceived is pervaded by Emptiness.

In Mahayana, nirvana is also considered suffering, whereas in Theravada, the self-liberation vehicle, or ‘Way of the Elders’, nirvana is the goal. I always emphasize that whenever you engage in practice you must be grounded, you cannot fly, you cannot just indulge in love and light, although that may be an extremely popular, modern thing. Real practice must be grounded.

What does being grounded mean? We must have three things: the base on which we stand, a method or path that we follow, and we must have a goal for our practice. If you have these things properly established, then you begin to know what you are doing. You are not just copying the other person. You are on your own and you are working by yourself, on your own path, even though you might be doing it with others.

TWO TRUTHS – DIFFERENT YANAS

In Buddhism the base is the two truths. The path is

method and wisdom. In Mahayana the method part is love, compassion and bodhimind, and the wisdom is understanding emptiness. That is true even in Hinayana. In Hinayana the method is renunciation, seeing the faults of the sufferings of samsara, particularly those of the lower realms, and developing dislike for this situation, being disgusted with the sufferings that come constantly and continuously. Do not let yourself sink into hopelessness and helplessness. Uplift yourself. When you see that the situation is not really that great, that it is because of samsara, your goal will be at least to get away from samsara and into nirvana. You introduce obtaining nirvana as the goal of your spiritual practice. That is the Hinayana level.

In Mahayana the goal has been changed to total enlightenment. In Buddhism, other than Mahayana no one introduces enlightenment as goal. No one talks about becoming a buddha except in Mahayana. Except in vajrayana, no one talks about becoming a buddha within a short period of time, maybe even within this life time, or in three life times, but at least within sixteen life times. When you ground yourself, you know where you stand, you know what you are doing and what you hope to get. When you have established your base, your method and your goal, you become grounded. Until then, all you can say is, 'I feel good here, it's nice' and have some fun and after a while, 'Oh, it's better over there, let me have fun over there.' That is what I call 'love and light'. Feeling better is definitely good, no doubt. We all need it and deserve it. However, it is not a spiritual practitioner's goal.

In Hinayana, nirvana is the goal. There are four Buddhist logos and the last one of them says directly that

nirvana is peace. These four statements are:

1. All created things are impermanent
2. All contaminated things are suffering.
3. All phenomena are in the nature of emptiness.
4. Nirvana is peace.

In Mahayana, nirvana is also considered suffering. It is too lukewarm. It is boring. There is no pain, but not joy either. According to Mahayana, those who have obtained nirvana at the Theravadin [*i.e.* Hinayana] level, will eventually also be asked to progress to total enlightenment, because until you reach total enlightenment you have not accomplished your own purpose, nor that of the others. When those who have obtained nirvana rest there peacefully, the buddhas and bodhisattvas will come, wake them up and ask them to join forces in liberating all living beings. Ultimately they will join. So ultimately there is only one yana, one vehicle, and that leads to total enlightenment. If people don't join the Mahayana from the first level on, they will do so at the middle level, at the third path, the path of seeing. Since they have already seen emptiness, since they are already accomplished to that point, the only thing left for them to do then is to traverse the path of meditation with its nine stages, the final one of which is the path of no more learning. That is total enlightenment. That is why samsara and nirvana are both to be abandoned.

EMPTINESS PERVADES EVERYTHING

Kyabje Rimpoche says that samsara as well as nirvana are pervaded by emptiness. Emptiness is the basis of all, the reality of everything, the animate and the inanimate, the seen and the unseen. In that way emptiness is pervasive.

The nature of all things, without any exception, is that they lack true existence. Just as there is no place which is not pervaded by the sky in space, there is no place not pervaded by Emptiness.

‘Inexpressible mode of being’ means a fully-realized Arya’s understanding of Emptiness cannot be described in any words, and it cannot be explained how such an Arya arrived at that understanding.

Anything you see, hear, touch, think of, the reality of all of that is the space-like emptiness. There is no such thing whose nature is not emptiness. When you see reality you become a special person. When such a person sees emptiness they cannot express it in words.

It says: ‘Forsaking mental fabrications, look to the entity of immaculate Emptiness’. In order to understand Emptiness we have to understand its nature. Emptiness is egolessness; we have to understand what is

being refuted, otherwise, ‘Emptiness’ gives rise to many intellectual misconceptions and misunderstandings. We must eliminate wrong concepts, and mental fabrications concerning Emptiness. Shunyata, egolessness, etc. are synonymous. What is egolessness? The lack of a self-existing or truly independent ‘*bdag*’ or ego. So there is the lack of true existence of the ego in terms of personality. In this realm there are many other things apart from personalities or persons: there are phenomena, and their lack of true or natural existence is called the egolessness of phenomena, while the lack of true or natural existence of the ego is called egolessness.

EMPTINESS OF SELF AND OF PHENOMENA

Kyabje Rimpoche mentions here two kinds of emptiness: the emptiness of self, or the being, and the emptiness of phenomena. These are two separate emptinesses. Though there are several divisions of emptinesses, like the eight emptinesses, the sixteen emptinesses, the emptiness explained by Nagarjuna, and commented by Chandrakirti and Buddhapalita thereafter. Emptiness has as a bottom line two divisions, to make it easier to understand: the emptiness of beings and the emptiness of phenomena other than beings, in other words, the emptiness of the animate

and the emptiness of the inanimate. I notice that Kyabje Rinpoche called 'dag' ego and I am quite happy about that. I have seen no other place where that was done.

SELF OF WHAT? – EGO AS OBJECT OF NEGATION

Before we meditate on selflessness or emptiness, we have to know what it is. Otherwise we will be just sitting blank, watching in the air, and declaring: this is nature, this is empty, and we'll even talk about space-like emptiness and all that. However, unless you make really an impact on your mind, just sitting blank does not really do that good. It does good things, it gives you mental harmony, and mental relaxation, and no thoughts will be intruding. Such a thing was taught, even in the Buddhist tradition. But Tsongkhapa emphasized that just sitting blank, like in total openness, may be wonderful, but is not so difficult. You sit down and meditate, try to connect your thoughts with open space, try to link up your brain and mind with the open space in front of you, and go beyond, cutting through, as if cutting through your skull, through the walls of the building, cutting through the limitations of the space, and getting into that open outer space picture, like we see from the spaceships. And you can go and travel round, go miles and miles, thousands of miles away, and your mind will mix up with that, completely, become completely open, and you feel good. That is easy. It is not difficult. All of us can do it. It is a matter of getting used to it, and when you get used to it, a sort of very open blank beautiful spot is there. But does that really

convince us that all things are empty? We are seeing an empty picture, we are seeing a picture of nothing.

That might not have been what the Buddha was really talking about. He talked about emptiness as wisdom. This meditation on empty space does not give you wisdom. That open space might not be wisdom. You know why? The purpose of wisdom is to cut our negative emotions. And the source of negative emotions within is the clinging to an ego. Just as we have learnt that the source of anti-compassion within us is the self-cherishing, just like that, the source of all negative emotions, negative thoughts, and negative actions that we engage in is ego.

Ego wants to protect everything. Ego wants to do everything right. Ego is so righteous. It always wants to be very right. So anything that comes in the way and contradicts it being right, it wants to kill and cut. That provides us with all the difficulties. Ego does that. That is ego's job. It acts in such a way that the end justifies the means. No matter whatever, it comes out and kills anything on the way. And sitting in open space like that is not going to deal with that at all. So that is not wisdom, it is blankness. It is not emptiness. So what is the emptiness we are talking about?

To establish this understanding there are many methods and forms of reasoning. The two main methods are: a) the separation of one and many; and b) dependent arising, which is called the king of reasoning. *The separation of one and many has four points:*

1. Ascertaining the object to be refuted,
2. Establishing the pervasion,
3. One,
4. Many.

When we talk about egolessness we have to determine what it is that is 'less'. The term in Tibetan is 'bdag med' - no ego - so we have to determine what is 'bdag' - ego?

What is it that we are trying to refute? If you saw a thief and noticed that he was wearing clothes of a certain color, then you can recognize him again and point him out to the police. It is extremely important to understand what one is refuting. There are two types of ego and one is valid.

If we deny the one that is valid we will find ourselves in the position of being nihilists, denying everything, which is a very serious mistake.

The ego that is valid has functions, it is the relative ego, and we must be careful not to deny its functions. It is said that those of very small wisdom can fail by making this mistake.

When we speak of the Madhyamika philosophy, 'madhya' refers to a middle path, between nihilism and eternalism, a path without extremes.

If you have a narrow path, you have to walk very carefully without falling to the right or left,

between the mistakes of nihilism and mental fabrication, eternalism. When Shakyamuni Buddha became Enlightened in Bodhgaya he spent a week without saying anything, as he felt it would be too difficult for people to understand him. He said: 'I have discovered an indescribable teaching on Voidness. It is extremely profound and vast, and will be very difficult for people to be able to understand'. Then he wandered off into the woods for forty-nine days, and only started to teach later at the request of Brahma and Indra.

Indra and Brahma are the great Hindu gods. They are common to Hinduism and Buddhism.

So there are two types of ego, one which exists and one which doesn't.

One type of ego does exist and the other doesn't, but we think that it exists.

How are we to recognize them? The false self appears as something which is independent of, or apart from, the five aggregates. For instance, when we are falsely accused of being thieves, we immediately get angry; thinking 'Why am I being accused?' or else when falling off a cliff we think 'I am falling!' Without thinking of

the five aggregates we get a strong feeling of 'I'. This is a small taste of the false self, the one to be refuted.

I often use this analogy of being falsely accused. If somebody in a group accuses you, 'Hey, you thief!', you will defend yourself very strongly, 'Me? A thief?!' That sense of self is what Kyabje Rimpoche refers to here. This strong sense of 'I', also when we are in danger of falling from a cliff, gives us a glimpse of the object of negation.

When we get this feeling of a strong 'I' without any relation to the base of the five aggregates, since the five are the basis of the self, we have to conclude that there is no such thing as this independent and natural false self as we feel there to be. So we have to analyze and establish logically whether it exists as one with the five aggregates or separate from them, i.e. whether it is the same entity or separate.

FOUR KEYS

Key 1: Establish the Object of Negation

Above, Kyabje Rimpoche outlined four steps. The first one is to ascertain the object of negation. That is what he is talking about here. You want to find ego-lessness. So what is that ego-less? Or better, what is that ego? We call it self

or 'I', but there is an ego-'I' and an I-'I'. In the transcript of the talk it sounds like they are both called ego. But if you look at an ego-'I' on the one hand and I-'I' on the other hand, it is much easier. The ego-'I' is the big boss who is tormenting and torturing us, making us confused and which is the source of all delusions. That is the 'I' that has to be refuted. Then the I-'I' is the basic I. The moment the ego-'I' is hit, the ego-'I' withdraws and at that point the I-'I' picks up to make sure we don't just collapse. But otherwise, normally the ego-'I' bullies the I-'I' completely. It is the big dictator, the big Saddam.

Ego as jig ta. There was a question earlier about the ego and the *jig ta*. (I taught on that in Ann Arbor very recently and also in New York.) According to the system of Buddhapalita, the ego itself is the *jig ta*. Ultimately we accept Buddhapalita. Chandrakirti's work is based on Buddhapalita's understanding. Buddhapalita's *Buddhapalita* is based on chapter 18 of Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, the 'root of wisdom'⁶³. Chandrakirti's explanations of the Madhyamaka, the Middle Path, both the word and the meaning commentary, are based on chapter 8 of the *Buddhapalita*. Therefore, *jig ta* is ego.

I would like to quote Chandrakirti himself here, a great scholar and yogi, one of the most outstanding early Indian Buddhist teachers. He was not a direct disciple of Nagarjuna [Tib. *Gonpo Ludrub*], but somehow he links up to Nagarjuna. This Chandrakirti quote is found in Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo, the great treatise on the stage of the path to enlightenment*, in the English translation vol 3, p. 120. Chandrakirti says,

In their minds, yogis perceive that all afflictions
and all faults arise
from the reifying view⁶⁴ of the perishing
aggregates.
And knowing that the self is the object of that
view, they refute the self.

This is talking about the ego. What constitutes *ma rig pa*, or ego? It is a mind that is totally influenced by fear, completely confused, completely under the influence of misknowledge. Actually, because of the confusion it becomes misknowledge. If you are confused, you are not knowing. You are walking towards the east and yet you think you are walking towards the west.

Recently I have been called by one of our friends ‘Wrong Way Rimpoche’, because I get lost in New York City all the time. When she tells me to walk to the east I walk to the west. When south, I walk north, you know, just the opposite. So, she started calling me, ‘Wrong way, Rimpoche, this way!’ So, Wrong Way Rimpoche becomes my name. Which means, when you are confused, you are not right, you are wrong. It becomes misknowledge. We pick up misinformation, we pick up confused points, and then that is what we perceive.

Now, whenever we think ‘I’, what do we project? We project deep inside of us someone that can be identified as ‘me’. We know that physically we can point to our body and say, ‘yeah, that is me,’ and refer to that with a name. The mouth will say it is me. And we can raise our hand. But we know very well that is not me. Yet we think there

is somebody who occupies the body, somebody who is identified as me. This is a case of the base of imputation or the base of labeling, taking the label. That is what we think. We think that something else, someone, is in there.

When you are suddenly accused of being a thief in a group of people, you first may think that the person is joking, but the moment you realize he is serious, the ego-‘I’ pops up, the object of negation, the dictator, screaming ‘me’! That is a glimpse. Similarly, it comes up when you are in danger of falling. These are the examples I often use and you are familiar with them.

Self: Less of What – Historic Development of Four Schools.
Then the question comes: what is that? Is there something? You have to think in two ways: positive and negative. The negative way is: whatever you refute, then whatever is left after the refutation, has to be the emptiness.

These thought processes have come to us in the form of a historical development. We are given the information of what historically has happened. Some group has proposed something and then that was proved wrong. Next other statements came and they were proved wrong. Then again another view came in, and that also was proved wrong. And so on. So, by negating one viewpoint after the other, what is left in the end is supposed to be the correct viewpoint.

Let’s say this glass half empty. We do not like to say it is half empty, we like to say it is half-full. There is that too, but whenever we say the glass is empty, we are saying that something is not in there, whether it is water, or wine, or tea, or whatever it is. So empty refers to a lack of something.

Likewise when we are referring to wisdom as emptiness, we are talking about a *lack of something*. The something that we are going to find the lack of – that is labeled as the *object of negation*. This is what you are going to negate.

You are going to negate it because your mind has analyzed the object and refuted it. That is why it is called a negation. It is not quite like pouring out water from a glass. What we are looking for is not what is empty; we are looking for that what we are going to negate. In other words, if you look for zero, you are going to find zero only. In order to find the zero you have to get to the point of zero. Therefore you have to get the numbers right down, so that at the end you come to zero.

Now the question is: how are you going to get to this? What is the object you are going to negate? That is difficult to find.

In the Buddhist tradition it is presented as an historical development. In Tibetan Buddhism you find it quite clearly in the tradition of tenets, [Tib. *drub ta*]⁶⁵. It goes not only into the Buddhist points of view about emptiness, it also goes into the non-Buddhist schools of thoughts, at least five different non-Buddhist earlier Hindu schools. It goes over their philosophical thoughts and thinkers and ideas. All of these are presented, and then eventually it reaches to the Buddhist schools and their thoughts, and investigates what is right, what is not right. That is how it progresses. By learning historically what had happened, and bringing that message into today's practice, we are hoping to find the same thing. It is a ever deeper and deeper investigation in how to find the object of negation.

Each one of those schools presents their thoughts, and each one is deeper than the previous one. By pointing out the different thoughts and ideas we go deeper and deeper. I have no time to go into all of them in detail, and even though there is a Buddhist way of presenting the views of the different non-Buddhist schools and thoughts, that may or may not be really accurate. I do not know. So I like to go directly to the level of the Buddhist schools.

There are four major Buddhist schools of philosophical thought and each one is deeper than the previous one. And it is all about recognizing the object that you are going to refute.

1. The first is called Vaibashika [Great Exposition school, *chettra mawa*]
2. Then we have the Sautantrika [Followers of sutra, *do de pa*]
3. Then there is the Cittamatra or Mind Only school [*sem sampa*]
4. Finally there is the Madhyamaka, the Middle Path school [*u ma*]

Vaibashika Sub-Group. Out of these four, the first school alone has 18 different sub-groups, 18 different systems of thought. One among them is particularly important. In Tibetan we call it *nema puba deba*. That one has a unique way of looking at the object of refutation, the self or ego. Their definition of that self is: it is a *permanent, single, solid [independent]* self. In their view, when you talk about the self,

they mean: something permanent, solid and independent. Then the analytical ideas will be applied, and you search and search and finally you find that there is no such thing as a single, solid, permanent, independent self. Finding that they identify as selflessness and call that emptiness.

The views of the Vaibāsika are mostly contained in the *Abhidharmakośha*. The most important person presenting that, almost the founder of it, was Vasubandhu, the nephew of Ārya Asaṅga. There are actually two *Abhidharmakośhas*, upper and lower. The lower one, presented by Vasubandhu, might not even accept emptiness at all. Asaṅga has presented the higher level of the *Abhidharmakośha*. At the same time the nephew became the student of his uncle too. In reality, Vasubandhu was highly developed, equally to Asaṅga, who was as good as Nāgārjuna. I think it is for the benefit of us, so that we may understand better, that they have presented different viewpoints.

The Next Three Schools. The other seventeen sub-groups of the Vaibāsika and all the Sautāntikas say, ‘Oh, that [viewpoint] is too gross, that is not subtle enough.’ In order to get to true emptiness, you have to have a much more refined understanding of the object of negation. So they came out with the definition of the object of negation as: a self that is *able to stand by itself*, in Tibetan *rang gi tu pai zhe yul*. You can also call it a *self-sufficient* I. That is what they define as ego, and when you find that this does not exist, you have found the great wisdom. The Sautāntika or Realist school also has several divisions and also they do present emptiness in different ways.

The Cittamātra or Mind-Only school is still more refined than that. They identify as object of negation the perception that the mind which is observing, and the object that this mind observes are separate. Let’s say you are looking at a book. So there is the mind observing the book, and the object of this mind, the book itself. The Chittamatins hold the view that the perception that there is a separation of book and perceiver of the book is the ego. And when you find that such a separation does not exist, you have perceived the non-duality of object and subject, of the perceiving mind and its perceived object. They are one-ness or non-dual. That is why this school is called Mind-Only school: *no separate external phenomena* outside the mind. And when you see that, in their view that is emptiness. This view is much deeper than the first two. A lot of western people now think that non-duality is the reality. It is the view of the Mind Only school.

Then the most refined view is that of the Madhyamika. The Tibetans divide the Madhyamika into two. ((I was told that traditionally in India they did not divide the Madhyamika that much. Is that right? (Audience: They may have had the division but did not give the same terms.)) It may look like I am giving a philosophy lesson here, but the reason is to show how each view will go deeper and deeper inside. And that is important to see.)

The first sub-school of the Madhyamika is called Svatantrika-Madhyamika [Tib. *u ma rang gyu pa*], translated as Autonomy School, and is presented by Bhāvaviveka⁶⁶. They say this about the objection of negation: it is not only that the pure mind did not project it, but it is something

solid, a substance standing by itself. [That is] very close to the self-standing substance of the Sautrantikas, but there are differences. When you go in detail there are big differences. IButt is not so much just about whether your mind does perceive [it] or not, there is something without depending on your mind, there is *some kind of self-nature* existing there, existing from its own nature. It is like: the book is a book, nothing else but a book; I am me, nothing else but me – sort of self-standing. And when you find that this is not true, then you have found the emptiness [according to this school].

Prasangika. Now the caviar among all the views - the last one. This is supposed to be the best viewpoint of all, [the viewpoint of which] everybody says it is Nagarjuna's thought, it is Buddhapalita's thought, it is Chandrakirti's thought and all of those. (All Tibetan schools now claim to be followers of Nagarjuna's view on emptiness as presented by Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti.)

The Prasangika maintain that there is almost nothing. Notice that I used the word 'almost'. It is just the conditions, the perceiving mind and the terms; they just work together. Things just become existing that way, but deeply there is nothing there. *It is just terms and conditions meeting together, and then a correct mind, a reliable mind, does the labeling and perceiving and recognizing.* The combination of that is good enough to be existing. There is nothing beyond that; there is nothing solid, nothing self-standing, nothing independent. Not even a non-duality. Nothing.

Interdependence. This is also not only an emptiness, this is also

the meaning or essence of interdependence. Therefore, the meaning of interdependence is emptiness, and the meaning of emptiness is interdependence. They are the same. This is very similar to what some physicists are finding about the existence of the person. It is coming quite close. When you have come to that level, you have completely whacked that self-standing ego out, right out of your thoughts and out of your system, because it is all just dependent arising. In Tibetan we call that *ten drel*. In Sanskrit it is *praticcha samutpadha*. It is the interdependent existence. So *the real essence of emptiness is interdependence, and interdependence is emptiness*. That is the bottom line, as far as we know. And that whacks out our ego completely.

To recap, out of the mindfulness of the emptiness, we sort of are looking at emptiness. You have to look for the empty. What is not there? Empty of what? That is the most important thing. If there is just nothing, nothing bothers us, nothing helps us. Nothing is nothing. But something *is* bothering us and we do have some misunderstanding. What are we misunderstanding? Something that is not really there, but pretends to be there and functions as if it is in complete control of the situation – [the 'I'].

What does wisdom do? It refutes that 'I'. Then it becomes I-less – *dagme*⁶⁷. That 'I' or self is the false self. When you completely negate the false self you are left with the true self. If you don't know that, you think you should negate everything and then you wrongly conclude that nothing is there.

Middle Path between Nihilism and Existentialism. To add

to the confusion: we say [in the *Heart sutra*] that there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, etc. Sometimes people misinterpret that to mean that there is nothing, that everything is just illusion, just a magician's trick, that at the end everything is going to disappear and equal out by itself, so it doesn't matter what anyone does, because in the end it is going to be zero, nothing. That is the nihilistic viewpoint.

The existentialist viewpoint will insist: Yes, everything is real, literally. It is all truly there, you can't change and shake, you can't do anything, it is solidly there. That is the existentialist extreme.

Therefore, we need the middle path between those. Only the middle way can truly establish what we are, and what the things around us are. What is their nature, their reality? It is emptiness. Why do we call it empty? Because there is a false perception of something and that is being negated. Emptiness is being empty of what is negated.

Professor Thurman has been shouting for years, 'Emptiness is not empty, emptiness is full!' What he means is that it is not non-existing. When you negate the false self, the real one appears.

NEXT DAY

Good morning everybody. We have been praying and meditating: 'May all beings be free from suffering'. We have to remember the tremendous sufferings that people go through. Despite all the great scientific developments, human suffering

still continues. Last night somebody was telling me that the latest earthquake in Pakistan now has a death toll of 20,000 people. I think it is in the North Kashmir-Paktuni area. That is in the middle of nowhere. The people there also have been fighting for their own independence for years, ever since I came to India. Also the mud slide in Guatemala killed 1800 people. There is so much suffering. That reminds us more and more of compassion and reminds us more and more of our commitment to liberate sentient beings from suffering. It is not only a meditative reality. Right in our face that very vivid suffering is tremendous.

Key 2: Establishing the Pervasion

Of the four keys we now are at the second one: to establish the pervasion. (I wonder whether pervasion is the same as pervasive. When we do the *Mahamudra* teachings the very first words are *kun yab kun gyi rang zhin dor je yin*.⁶⁸ It talks about the pervasive nature of vajra dharmadhatu, the nature of reality of all existence, animate or inanimate. It is the nature of all, wherever you search – emptiness. Even [all] permanent existence is in the nature of emptiness.)

On what basis do we exist? We exist on nothing but the five skandhas and four elements. Apart from that you are not going to find anything. Therefore, the focal point of the ego-'I' is the five skandhas. These are by nature perishable. The ego watches and holds these perishable aggregates as identity. That is called *jig ta*: *jig* means perishable, subject to destruction, not lasting, dismantling, *ta* means one who holds that. Therefore, according to Buddhapalita's system, *jig ta* itself is ego. The

Mind-Only school and others have a little different way of looking at this.

When you are establishing the I to be refuted, it is the ego-'I', the bully I, not the simple, humble, sweet I, [the I-'I']. The ego-'I' bullies the I-'I'. The ego-'I' takes over, presuming and pretending to protect the I-'I'. It uses the methods of hatred, obsession and confusion. That is why the ego-'I' is the object to be refuted.

[If the 'I' is really there, it must either exist as one with the five skandhas or separate from them. These are the only two possibilities. There is no third possibility.] This now is the second point. Pervasiveness means that emptiness is the nature of all that exists.

Key 3: Existing as Many [i.e. As One with the Skandhas]

If this false self exists independently, if it has natural existence as one with the five aggregates, as the same entity, then there must be five selves, since they are inseparable from the five aggregates. Here there is the fault that there cannot be five aggregates as there is only one self. The basis of the five aggregates and self is not an independently self-existent one. You can understand this by thinking of what happens at death – the form aggregate is left behind and disposed of. Is the self burned or buried along with the body? If so, the self would disappear at the same time as the

body. So here there is the fault of denying that the ego continues on to future lives. In short, there isn't an ego that doesn't rely on the five aggregates.

Key 4: Existing as One [i.e. Separate from the Skandhas]

If we say that the naturally existing or independently existing self is separate from the five aggregates, then there would be no relation whatsoever between the two, but that is not the case. When we are hurt, we don't say: 'Oh! Someone stuck a needle into my body!' We say: 'Someone stuck a needle into me!' The reference is not to the body aggregate, but to a self. So the self does not independently exist as one with the five aggregates, nor as separate from them. The relative self is totally dependent on the five aggregates, and there isn't an ego which does not rely on the five. If we think that: since it doesn't exist as one with the aggregates, nor as a separate entity, does a self exist at all; then the answer is, yes, there does exist a self in the form of nominal mental labeling.

There is not a self which does not depend on the five aggregates. In dependence on the five aggregates, labeled onto the five

aggregates, there is a nominal self which attains Enlightenment, wanders in samsara, goes on to the next rebirth, etc. That is the functioning self.

MEDITATION 7: ONE WITH OR SEPARATE FROM?

When you see the 'I', not the ego-'I' that gets upset when accused, but the normal, functioning 'me', somehow you get a picture of something, not a solid figure, but a mixture of physical appearance and mind.

I have a cell phone and in there are peoples' cell, home and work numbers. At the work numbers there is a funny looking picture, which looks like the English letter 'I'. So when I think of 'me' the image of that letter 'I' comes up for me. When I think in Tibetan I get the image of the letter nga. But it doesn't matter what image you get. We have been telling you that the 'I' is not the body and not the mind, so you lose all of them, but you do get something. Whatever you get, doesn't matter.

Taking that picture inside of me, I call this a 'me' or 'I'. It is within my body, within my aggregates and elements. Is that 'me' the same as the five aggregates? It is established as oneness with my aggregates or is it completely separate from them? If it is one, there is a big contradiction. I have five aggregates, but only

one 'I'. When I separate out the aggregates, do I have five 'I's'? Does each one of the aggregates get one 'I'? If that is the case, am I five different 'I's'? Plus do my four elements have an 'I' each? Are there nine 'I's' then? That is not the case. I don't have a split personality. I am 'me'.

The other option: I would have to be established completely independently from the aggregates and elements. I then can have virtually nothing to do with my aggregates. I should be completely independent and separate from them. But in that case, if I get hurt physically, I should not say, 'I hurt myself', because only the physical form aggregate was hurt, not 'me'. But that does not happen. We say, 'I have been hurt, I have been stabbed.' Then when you get asked where, you may say, 'In my stomach', but you never say, 'my form aggregate has been stabbed.' So we do identify with the aggregates and elements, we can't be separate.

If I am one with the five aggregates, I would be inseparably one with them. In that case, when at death my five aggregates are cremated, do they cremate 'me' as well? If they bury the body, do 'I' get buried?

So, neither options are correct. I neither exist in oneness with the aggregates nor separate from them. I am here just because the aggregates and elements happen to be functioning together. I am 'just me'. That 'just me' will arise out of the space-like emptiness.

This is Chandrakirti's and Nagarjuna's system. If there are five of you, then you are more than schizophrenic. On the other hand, if you are one with your form, then when the form disappears, you disappear, so when the form is cremated you are cremated and you then no longer exist. All these problems will come. They are all meditative creations based on logical rules. Then at the end [when you see that the object of negation would have to exist with all these absurd consequences and therefore does not exist at all] you have to draw a conclusion. And whatever the conclusion is you have found, you meditate and focus on it. And that very focusing becomes part of your life, part and parcel of yourself and your quality.

KING OF REASONING – TEN DREL

The logical reasoning of dependent origination, *pratitya samutpada* in Sanskrit, may be easier to understand. These two words, in Tibetan '*rten*,' dependent and '*brel*' origination, demonstrate that there is no contradiction between the non-truly existent self and the self which exists on the conventional level. If you use the logical reasoning and take the example of a sprout, it does not have true independent existence because it is a dependent origination. The fact that it is a dependent origination eliminates the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. The word '*brten*' shows that it

is dependent on something, that it cannot exist by itself without relying on its object of mental labeling. We say, 'We did not plant the flower; it grew by itself.' Although this is not the same, reliance or dependence shows that it cannot exist or stand alone. The word '*brten*' negates the true independent existence of the self and shows that it has to depend on something. Then if you ask whether the self exists at all, the next word, '*brel*', origination, shows the interdependent nature: because of the self, we can experience happiness, pleasure, misery, etc. It has the function of experiencing and of accumulating positive and negative actions and then experiencing the consequences. This goes to prove the existence of the relative self.

When you read '*brten*' and '*brel*', you have to pronounce that as 'ten' and 'drel', otherwise it becomes 'britain' or something. I remember a funny thing. In the late 50s Professor Wiley from Seattle was very deeply interested in Tibetan Buddhism. All his studies were based on books though. He could read and understand Tibetan language but he would read '*brten*' rather than 'ten', pronouncing every silent syllable. Actually, Professor Wiley produced a number of great students of Tibetan language, such as Gene Smith and Mel Goldstein, which is still the generation before Bob Thurman and all those people.

Anyway, there was a Tibetologist-Buddhologist conference

in Europe and Professor Wiley was reading the name 'Khedrup-je', which is Tsongkhapa's disciple on the left hand side. When you spell it out, Khedrub is spelled Mkhasgrub. So he was reading it as 'Makesgrub'. Nobody could understand what he was talking about. He kept saying, 'You don't understand Makesgrub?' When he learnt it was pronounced Khedrup, he was surprised and said, 'I only learnt from dictionaries, I didn't have a living teacher.'

The great Guru Chone Lama Rinpoche has said: the word 'brten' is to demonstrate the void nature of the ego; it explains the lack of true existence of the self. The second word, 'brel', explains the interdependent nature, the functions in keeping with the experience of ordinary people. These are, for instance, basic cause and effect, children from parents, and crops from seed, the ordinary functions of the self. Since it refutes the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism, it is called the king of logical reasoning. This is how we can negate the false concept of true existence, while establishing the existence of the self on the conventional level. Thus we can understand the void nature of the self, without falling to extreme views. Unlike arriving at a proper understanding and development of Bodhichitta, this is a difficult and dangerous point.

You need extensive, correct teachings from a qualified Guru before engaging in meditation. After proper Guru devotion, and correct intellectual knowledge, you also need the accumulation of physical and mental merit as a force behind the realization of Shunyata.

Kyabje Rinpoche makes the point of the 'King of Logic' here. Take the example of a flower. You can use the same reasoning with the person or self, but perhaps a flower is easier. We say that a flower does not exist truly, because it is dependent arising. Using dependent arising as reasoning proves that if you rise dependently you did not arise independently. Your existence has been depending on a variety of points. Therefore you are not truly existing, but collectively existing.

Now take the person. 'Me' does not truly exist because my existence depends on my physical, mental aspects and my name, label and identification, all together. That then becomes Gelek Rinpoche. Gelek Rinpoche does not exist independently. If that were so, Gelek Rinpoche should not depend on anything and should remain forever. But that is not the case. Especially, the name 'Rinpoche' does not have any value, unless and until such a person shows their own quality and people acknowledge that. On the basis of the quality shown to the people the label 'Rinpoche' has value. Therefore it is a dependent arising. That goes for anything, because it is dependent, it is not truly existent.

A [traditional] example for dependence is when you walk

with the aid of a walking stick it shows your dependence on the stick; it shows you cannot walk by yourself, independently. When you try to stand up by relying on the help of a table or another person, it is a clear indication that you cannot stand alone by yourself. Dependent arising not only means depending on somebody [or something] else, but also within itself, on parts, parcels, causes, conditions and people even may say, on consciousness. Therefore the dependent arising is one of the most important reasonings. Buddha called it the ‘King of Logic’ [or the ‘King of Reasoning’].

KING OF REASONING – 3 LAYERS

Traditionally the Buddhist philosophy uses the examples of sprouts and seeds. The fact that they are not truly existent is the object that you are trying to establish. And then the reason which will establish that object, will be dependent arising. If [something or someone] truly exists, it should not be dependently arising and if it is dependently arising, it cannot truly exist.

Now when you talk about the dependent arising, just as the four different schools have an ever deeper presentation of the self, just like that, dependent arising also has deepening levels of presentation.

1. This is the usual one. It is dependent arising because it depends on cause and effect, terms and conditions, parts and parcels.

2. And, then, second, there comes the combination of the object that you label, and the observer who is labeling. In this level there is no basis for whatsoever except for the combination of the object itself and the reliable mind which is labeling. So you see also the dependent arising has different layers.
3. When you come to the subtlest level of dependent arising, there is almost no basis. [Everything is] just a combination of terms, conditions, parts, parcels, and reliable minds that are doing the labeling, nothing else. It is stated that that level of dependent arising can only be analyzed by the persons who have recognized and realized emptiness.

So although we may recognize dependent arising as reason, and are able to establish the not truly existing, there are deepening layers of it. This is a big subject. In New York we have been talking on this for two years, maybe going into the third year. And we are doing the same thing in Ann Arbor on the basis of Shantideva’s 9th chapter of the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*. Mind you, the 9th chapter alone is running into its third year. When it finishes, only the chapter of dedication is left, which is very easy and then I will have finished the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*. It will have taken ten years. By then, I may be able to finish it, or at least, have some ending to it.

So, just like the establishment of self or ego goes deeper and deeper, just like that, the reasoning which destroys the ego also has to go deeper and deeper.

What you really meditate is this. First you analyze the

object of negation and then find out that it is not really there. That loss, that there is nothing really there, that is the point you have to meditate on. You use that [loss] as space-like emptiness. But if you do that without any [prior] analyzing, [if you are] just sitting blank and watching empty space, [then] according to Tsongkhapa's and according to Nagarjuna's words, it may be good dharma work, however it gives you only another rebirth within samsara.

In samsara there are the six desire realms, four form realms and four formless realms, and one of those formless realms is called 'Nothing Exists'. Sitting blank and mixing your mind with the sky, and enjoying that, is a direct cause to take rebirth in that formless realm called 'Nothing Exists'.

Buddha repeatedly mentioned this, and the earlier Indian teachers repeatedly used this, and I think Tsongkhapa emphasized this too. Perhaps, this is one of the points where Tsongkhapa was dissatisfied with the earlier teachings and what he tried to go to India for, to find better guidance. Finally he met with Manjushri and received the *Three Principles* and the *Four Mindfulnesses* teachings directly from Manjushri.⁶⁹ These teachings actually carry these important points on wisdom.

In the *Three Principles of the Path*, Tsongkhapa points out,

Without opening the wisdom eye
seeking freedom and generating bodhimind
cannot cut the root of samsara.
Strive to see interdependence

He says, 'If you do not have the wisdom that understands reality, no matter how strongly you develop love for yourself and compassion for others, you will not be able to cut the root of samsara, which is ego. Therefore strive to understand interdependence.'

Tsongkhapa did not say to strive to understand emptiness. This is a very important point. A lot of people will look directly for emptiness. But to remind you: the essence of emptiness is interdependence and the essence of interdependence is emptiness. They are dependent on each other. That is the real essence. Once you know this, then you can go through. Do not expect to have something pop up in your head within the next minute or hour or week or month, or even year. It really requires constant, continuous efforts of not necessarily meditating all the time but occasionally thinking. Put your thoughts on that, do not forget, and occasionally think, and then, as I said earlier, purification and accumulation of merit have to work with that together. Then there will be a time when you see this. And by that time, you gain your freedom. I do not mean you will be enlightened. But you really gain your freedom at that time, because you whacked out your ego completely. But then, make sure you are not following the nihilistic point.

If during the analysis of Emptiness we are using the analogy of a vase, we see that the top is not a vase, the belly is not a vase, the spout is not a vase. If you then say: 'Oh there is no vase at all, the fact that no independent

truly-existent vase can be found in any of its parts goes to prove that there is no vase', that is an intellectual fabrication of Voidness; it is a misunderstanding. Denying the conventionally existing vase is a mistake to be avoided. At the same time we have to understand that things lack a truly-existent self which does not rely on the five aggregates. Take the feeling of ourselves which is not based on the five aggregates: such true independent self existence is not to be found. There is, however, a relative self, dependent on the five, on the conventional level, which has functions and experiences. Just as we used this method to ascertain the Voidness of the self or egolessness, we should follow it for objects. Take a vase: if we look at it without relying on the components, i.e. the top, base, belly, rim, spout, then we get a feeling of an independently existing vase. The true vase, or the conventional vase, is not independent of anything, it is something which has been mentally labeled a vase on parts which have a specific function. Applying the same logical reasoning to ascertain the Voidness of other phenomena is known as the sky-like contemplative Voidness.

DON'T NEGATE THE CONVENTIONAL SELF

Kyabje Rimpoche is using the example of a vase. I think he is referring to the initiation vase that has a spout. When you take the top off, the belly away, all parts away, then you may think, 'Ah, it's empty. There is no vase.' That is what we may feel. But Kyabje Rimpoche says that if you do so, you are losing the identification of the vase and that is called nihilism. You are not supposed to lose the vase. The vase remains there. This is a mental exercise. Take a table. That is even easier. If you physically dismantle the table, it is destroyed and no longer there. But when you say, 'The top is not the table and the legs are not the table', the table does not disappear. Making the table disappear, that is not the emptiness of the table at all. Then you have gone too extreme.

You have to recognize the collective existence of the parts and parcels – including the label. Then you can say, 'This is a table'. It serves the purpose, you can put your books on it, put a clock and flowers on it. It *is* a table. It looks like a table, functions like a table – it is a table. It still exists.

When you analyze the self, don't lose the conventional aspect of the self. You may say, 'The 'I' is not my body, not part of my mind', etc, [and] you may think there is no 'I' at all. [That is not right]. If you lose the conventional truth, you are going too much into the extreme of empty. And if you make it solid, then that becomes the extreme of existentialism.

AFTER DECONSTRUCTING EXISTENCE – WHAT DOES STILL EXIST?

[Having heard the Prasangika viewpoint⁷⁰,] the question arises: aren't you becoming nihilistic? Aren't you saying that nothing exists? That level we have to work out more. The books give the answer, 'No, it is not nihilism.' They say so because there is something to label, and something to function. [With regard to persons there is] something coming from a previous life, living here, going to the future. So you have something, therefore it is not completely nihilistic. [So far the books.]

But myself personally, I am yet to find out, I am yet to be convinced of that completely. I am struggling with that. I know it is not nihilistic philosophically. But I am not convinced that way. Logically, I did not completely see it yet. It is true, if it is completely nihilistic, there should be nothing to be referred to. So it may be true, but I have not yet completely worked it out in the mechanical system of my mind. It did not completely click clearly yet.

Whacking off the ego itself is not the problem. But with that you are also whacking out ego's products. When you have lost the 'I' you have lost 'my'. When you have lost 'my', you have lost 'my hatred, my obsession,' and all of them. It is not a problem. It is quite easy and simple when you reach there. It takes some time.

JUST THE COMBINATION

But then, what you re-establish, what is actually there, that is a problem, you know. You empty everything out, so what are you going to fill it in with? You cannot be completely empty. There has got to be something. That something has got to be: *just the combination of terms and conditions, and some kind of continuation*. The moment you concede that there has to be some kind of continuation, there is almost a game starting in your mind: if you give an inch, it will take a yard. Honestly, it is true. The moment you give room for a little continuation, it will start assuming a bigger space. And if you are not careful you may completely re-establish total independent self-standing existence again. That is the important point, and one has to be very careful. And I believe it takes a lot of effort. That is why the teachings always tell us that we need a combination of purification and accumulation of merit, and analyzing, meditating.

So, the books and the teachings tell me that in the end there is just a combination, although there is no basis on which you label. Up to the *u ma tal gyur wa* [madhyamika middle path school] of Buddhapalita there is always some basis the various schools try to hold on to. But when you reach to that level, there is not even a base, it does not even exist, there is just the combination only. The books and teachings tell me that just the combination is good enough to exist. But my mind could not really grasp that. I know the language, I know the message, but something does not really click in there yet. In my case that is after 65 years of

thinking. So there you go. With the right condition, at the right time, it does affect.

The one verse from Chandrakirti⁷¹ I quoted is the real ground, the very basic ground. In New York we spent a couple of months on that verse, going backwards and forwards, and in the beginning it does not make any sense, but after a little while, I think we all become accustomed to it.

Mere 'I'. There are eight special criteria that distinguish Buddhapalita's system from all others. Actually, there are sixteen – eight difficult points and eight special criteria. They overlap. It is a little confusing for us.

One of the eight special qualities is what we call in Tibetan *nga tsam*. That means the mere 'I', literally 'just me'. According to Kyabje Rimpoche in this text, that is the 'I' which is not to be refuted. It is the big 'I' that needs to be refuted. Then the 'just I' remains. Why does it say 'just me'? It is because I just exist when all terms and conditions, parts and parcels come together, just right. So I am here.

It is a very simple, humble, fragile, completely dependent thing, yet it is the basis of all functioning, of good and bad karma, of traveling from this to the future life, of being responsible for one's deeds. It is just this simple 'I', due to the conditions being right. It is very fragile, humble, small, yet very responsible and everything. That is the *nga tsam*.

This short, little talk about it may not be good enough, but by the end of next year, after finishing the subject on all the

Tuesdays and Thursdays, I do hope we will have quite a solid understanding of *shunyata* – emptiness.

That reality does not only apply to the self, but to all animate and inanimate phenomena. Take this clock here. It functions perfectly well, as long as all the parts and parcels are working together. If the battery goes off, no matter what you do, banging and breaking will not make it function. Then the clock also has all the cogs and wheels pushing each other and making the hands of the clock move. If only one of them stops moving, the hands on the clock won't move. Just because of the perfect movements of all the parts the clock works. It is very fragile. Although it looks very solid. It just exists because of causes and conditions being right. This gives you a very good example of the emptiness of phenomena, emptiness of the inanimate.

GOM

Meditation is nothing but two: concentrated and analytical meditation. What is recommended here is: first analyze again and again. You probably think, 'Nothing is there'. At that moment, focus on that. Focusing is concentrated meditation.

We do have a beautiful transcript called *GOM*, explaining how to do the concentrated meditation. When you begin to follow these steps they are going to put you to sleep at first, for sure. That is the first obstacle. I have introduced four obstacles there, gross and subtle sinking and gross and

subtle wandering mind. First you get gross sinking, that is falling asleep. Then we give solutions how to overcome that. After that the subtle sinking is a big problem. Before you get to the subtle sinking you are going to get gross wandering, exactly because you applied the antidotes to falling asleep. So all kinds of techniques and tricks are given there, and for a while you get under the influence of the wandering mind, which is visiting everywhere else, except your own subject.

So you are battling with the gross sinking, then with the gross wandering and later you encounter subtle wandering and subtle sinking. Subtle sinking is a very difficult obstacle. It is very close to samadhi, the concentrated equipoise. That stage of subtle sinking can be mistaken for the actual samadhi, so one has to be careful. You can meditate on the mind as object or on a Buddha image or directly on the subject of emptiness. When you really combine concentration meditation with meditating on emptiness, it will be the combination of shamatha and vipassana working together. Concentrated meditation and analytical meditation are then working together.

ILLUSION-LIKE AFTERMATH

*At the cross-roads of the varieties of appearance
and the six consciousnesses
is seen the confusion of the baseless
phenomena of duality,
the illusory spectacles of a deceiving*

magician are there.

*Not thinking they are true, look to their
entity of emptiness.*

Not letting your mind stray,

place it within appearance and emptiness,

Making your attention unforgettable,

*maintain it within appearance and
emptiness.*

Let me paraphrase this: 'All kinds of appearances of the six senses -all things that have no root of existence- everything is almost like a sorcerer's creation. Do not think it is true. Look into the nature of the empty. Don't leave your mind wandering round. Let things appear, but know they are not true. Do not forget that. Keep your mind empty, yet appearing and functioning.'

During the contemplative stage you have to apply reasoning to ascertain the nature of Voidness, then fix your attention single-pointedly on the realization of Voidness. At this stage of contemplation, you don't see things, but when you rise from meditation you see many things, animate and inanimate, as mere illusions lacking true, independent, self-existing nature. You see them as mere mental labeling, you see that they all exist by the force of labeling. We should have the experience of 'snang stong', in which the term 'snang' points to

the appearance and functions, and ‘*stong*’ to the lack of independent self-existence. Like a magician who can produce many illusions but to him they lack reality, similarly, in meditation we ascertain the fact that all things lack true independent existence. In the post-meditation period we see whatever appears in that light, as lacking true independent existence.

Regarding the first two lines, when you arise you see many different things, just like when standing at a junction you see various kinds of activities. These multiple activities are the objects of the six consciousnesses and of the six organs - eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch and mind.

As objects appear to these sensory organs, you will see, feel, hear many things, but you should see them as the chaos of duality, since you have realized the Void nature in the state of contemplation, that all things lack independent true existence. They are empty, ‘*stong*’, but they have appearance and function on the conventional level, ‘*snang*’. In the post-meditative concentration one sees things as a mere drama, as illusory creations, just as a magician knows when he produces his show, while to ordinary

people they may seem real. Like a magician, we have to develop an understanding of the real nature of things.

Although things appear initially to be truly independent self-existing phenomena, you should understand their illusory nature. You have to remember your own realization of the illusory nature. Despite appearances, you need to have the conviction and understanding that the appearance and the reality are separate, and that in reality things are lacking true independent self-existence although they seem to appear to us.

That was the explanation on the fifth verse. There are four mindfulnesses and the fourth one has A and B. Part A is telling you the meditation and mindfulness of emptiness. Part B is about the aftermath experience. In the later part of the *Lama Chöpa* there is a verse:

Inspire me to complete the perfection of
illusion-like aftermath,
realizing that inner and outer phenomena lack
true existence,
yet still appear like an illusion, a dream or the
reflection of the moon in a clear lake.

I have not presented to you the real emptiness yet. I only

showed you that the 'I' can't exist as oneness or separate from the aggregates. That is the second out of the four points that Kyabje Rimpoche made above. That is the most important one anyway. That is good enough for now.

When you are totally focused on emptiness, within the sphere of that meditative state nothing else exists. A lot of people assert that there are funny experiences there. But each of these arguments can be answered. Truly speaking, you are completely absorbed in emptiness. Within the view of that mind, at that moment, nothing else exists, not even our physical body. It is completely absorbed, soaked into the sphere of emptiness.

There is no question; you cannot manage without vajrayana here. That void is not embraced by the mind that is in the nature of joy, of great bliss, but the mind of great bliss is totally absorbed in the space-like empty. That is the total absorption of emptiness. Nothing else exists for that mind.

When you rise from that meditative level you again see all the animate and inanimate objects. However, now that you have discovered the true nature, you somehow have gone beyond the laws of physics. The normal, usually things that make sense, don't make sense to you. Such a person could walk straight through a wall, without damaging the wall and without damaging their body.

Milarepa and Rechungpa. There is a story of Milarepa. Once his disciple Rechungpa came back from India, and Milarepa asked, 'What present did you bring me?' Rechungpa gave him

a long-life initiation in the system of Machig Labdronma. Rechungpa developed some pride at that point, thinking that Milarepa was not his only teacher, that he had obtained a great deal of teachings in India from great masters and now he was giving initiation to his guru Milarepa. Milarepa noticed that pride and manifested a great storm. Milarepa hid himself inside a little yak horn and in his biography it says, 'Neither did the yak horn increase in size, nor did Milarepa shrink his body.' Yet he got in there and began to sing, 'There is wonderful open space in this yak horn, If you, the son, are equal to the father, come and join me.' Rechungpa couldn't get in there, he couldn't even find the yak horn on the ground.⁷²

When you really see emptiness directly you have that quality. Whenever we talk about the great power of the mahasiddhas, that is their power. But we are instructed that at that point you can't go on behaving like that. You need to maintain discipline. You will see everything and accept everything that happens, but you must not forget that all these come out from emptiness, that they are empty in nature.

The traditional teachings always give the example of the magician's show. In the old culture where I come from, the magician they mention is actually referring to a sorcerer, not the kind of magician that produces a rabbit out of a hat and coins from behind your ear lobes. The ancient Indian sorcerers created tricks that were reality to a certain extent. When a sorcerer performs sorcery he himself knows that it is only a trick, but other people don't see that. So the teachings tell us, 'Look at reality as being like that.' By that

time you have seen the reality and you look at appearance like a sorcerer's show. That is the meditative aftermath.

This aftermath is like a dream.⁷³ In the dream stage, we dream everything. While you are in the dream, for you it is reality, it is true. The suffering is true, the happiness is true, the joy is true, the fun is true. Having a terrible nightmare is also true, at that stage, in that level, in that mind. But when you wake up, you know that it was a dream, most unreliable.

What we are living through today, what is happening to us, is also like a dream. We do not have the influence of sleep, which cuts or changes our awareness, but we do have the ignorance, the ego, which tricks us all the time. That is why our life is an even bigger dream. Honestly. The moment you know the emptiness, you *realize* it all is like a dream. You are still 'dreaming', but everything moves differently. The walls don't block you, you can walk through. If you have come to that meditative practice, it becomes a little difficult to adjust, and that's why there are rules. You are not supposed to walk through walls and things like that, but behave just like everybody else. For a few days you may be disoriented completely. But you are supposed to function just like anybody else. This is called the aftermath of recognizing the wisdom. And that realization is what destroys the samsara, the suffering, completely.

That is it. Whether you meditate or not is your choice.

The colophon of the verses says that Manjushri himself has given this teaching known as the Four Mindfulnesses directly

to the great Dharma King Je Tsongkhapa. The Seventh Dalai Lama says, 'This has been put in the form of a song in order to establish the good seed of understanding of emptiness by Buddha's simple follower, the monk Losang Kelsang Gyatso.'

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: Could you talk to us about the relationship of karma and emptiness? And is karma negated when you talk about emptiness, or is that part of the essence of emptiness?

Rimpoche: This is a very important question, which got asked a number of times by earlier teachers and scholars. What is it that you negate? You negate the self. When you negate that self, you may think you lose the basis of the karma, but the answer given by all these great scholars, one after the other, is that you do not negate karma, because that is what it is: just the combination of the continuation is good enough to be existent. That is the book answer I am giving you. We call that relative existence. If you exist relatively, that is good enough to be existent. It provides the basis for karmic functioning, for the continuation of life, coming from the past, living in the present, and going on into the future. They all will work. The technical word is *chaje teba*, meaning something like 'functionable'. The ability to function becomes more important than existing. There is a long argument: if there is no existence, how can it function? We have read it, page after page, in the *Lam-*

rim Chenmo wisdom chapter. Finally Nagarjuna answered,

When emptiness is possible, everything is possible.

When emptiness is not possible, nothing is possible, because it becomes static.⁷⁴

That is the bottom line answer for whether something is functionable or not. Still, there are a lot of difficulties with the statement that if [something or someone] relatively exists, it is good enough to be existent. Just being functionable is good enough to be there. It is very hard to catch that. It almost becomes existing or not existing, based on whether it is functionable or not functionable. In that case, there will be a lot of other questions.

The other side of that statement will say, 'If the self truly does not exist, it is not sufficient not to be existent.' So, it is not good enough not to exist truly [or absolutely], but it is good enough to exist relatively. Truly not existing is not enough. You don't want to go as far as saying nothing exists at all, because then what is the base of functioning?

It is just the combination, just some continuation of the combination. The combination may change, parts and parcels may change, but something is still continuing. Again, if you are at that point the same question we had earlier will pop up: if there is something continuing, why not the self? These are the difficulties.

Audience: What is the relationship between karma and free will?

Rimpoche: That is a good question. There is a very strong and important relationship. A lot of people think karma cuts free will, and that is not true. Karma enhances free will. It is just like we engage in a discussion, and we come to agreements, and we draw a legal document on the basis of what we agree on. That legal document is the result of the free will discussions and choices that we made. It is not an obstacle to our free will. With our free will we create karma. And that provides karmic consequences for us, good or bad. Therefore, free will enforces karma and karma reinforces our free will; it does not block it at all. If we know the karmic consequences of negative actions, we can prevent the karmic consequence by not engaging in a negative action. Such a choice is based on the understanding of the individual. That does not mean that karma blocks free will.

Audience: How is buddhahood, becoming a buddha, explained within this system? Is it relative to all the terms, conditions and labels as well?

Rimpoche: Since everything is dependently arisen, so is buddhahood. We are striving for the causes and conditions to become a buddha. When that is fully achieved, when causes and conditions are perfectly right, then you become a buddha.

Audience: So once it is achieved, how do buddhas exist? Are they not subject to the same causes and conditions?

Rimpoche: If you think buddhahood is not dependently

arisen, I believe you are wrong. Buddhahood is definitely dependent arising. It is definitely dependent on karma. Some people think buddhas have gone beyond karma. No, buddhas have exhausted all negative karma, and they have a continuation of positive karma, and that is how buddhahood continues.

Audience: What are the terms and conditions or causes of buddhahood?

Rimpoche: Buddha-nature! Oh, this is an interesting question. The *tathagathagarba*⁷⁵. There are actually two types of buddha-nature: the nature of tathagathagarba and the buddha-nature itself. That means the growing buddha-nature and the nature of this buddha-nature. That nature almost looks permanent. That is a very complicated position. That is why a number of people will even say that you are fully enlightened already from the beginning but that delusions have come in and this and that. That is because of this nature of the buddha-nature, the natural buddha-nature.

The growing buddha-nature is not so difficult, because that is the accumulation of merit and purification. Tsongkhapa says the nature of the buddha-nature is like a seed. Tsongkhapa is adamant in saying that you are not enlightened from the beginning. Once you are enlightened, you will not become non-enlightened, because enlightenment is a permanent achievement. It is not permanent, but it is a permanent achievement. This permanent achievement will be achieved because the growing buddha-nature makes it into perfect buddha-nature. It is a seed that will become a

fruit, because of the growing buddha-nature. If you pick up the static buddha-nature itself, that is quite difficult.

Audience: What is the source of the seed?

Rimpoche: Good question. Buddha comments that there is no beginning. No beginning of human existence. That is why I said it looks like permanent. This is a difficult philosophical question. According to Tsongkhapa all earlier Tibetan masters are wrong on that.

Audience: You said, if the person realizes enlightenment, karma continues. So e.g. a great lama would still have cancer and die, right? That is, the physical karma of those events occurring to his body. But his experience would be completely different because his perspective is completely different. So he does not experience it the way we would experience cancer or am I wrong?

Rimpoche: I do not know. For example, the 16th Karmapa passed away with cancer. I do not know what that means in his case. People have a lot of different explanations, saying for example that he did this for the sake of all others, just like Jesus suffered for the sake of other people's sins. Others say the illness was a manifestation, and blah, blah. So, who knows what the reality really is.

Audience: I cannot remember what you said was the point of negation in the Madhyamika school.

Rimpoche: The point of negation here is the base on which we label 'person'. Something to point out, some base, other than terms and conditions. Something to be called the person.

Audience: What is that base?

Rimpoche: That is the point. Such a base is not there. That is the reason why we say emptiness is a negation of something that is not there. It is not the emptiness of something that is perceived wrongly; we are looking for the emptiness of something that is not there.

Audience: Is that which is not there, the ego?

Rimpoche: What is not there is the ego. And we begin to realize there only exists simply a combination of terms, conditions, and besides that, nothing is there really.

Audience: If we meditate on emptiness, will that dissolve the pain of compassion? Is the realization of emptiness the antidote to pain? Yesterday you said yes. Also, you threw in something else. You said the emptiness works on either pain or joy, and the reason I am asking is if the purpose of meditating on emptiness is to cut through the suffering, of course I want that. I want to be removed from the suffering, I would love to see suffering as lacking inherent existence, and impermanent, and whatever little bit I can understand of that. But when the suggestion of the emptiness of joy was thrown in there, I noticed that I did not

want to meditate on the emptiness of joy, because I do not want to see it as impermanent, and cutting through whatever. I don't want to be removed from that. And I know it is a misunderstanding of emptiness. I was just wondering if you could explain a little more about that.

Rimpoche: I do not know whether emptiness destroys the joy. Emptiness definitely destroys the cause of pain, [because] the real root cause is the ego. The purpose of realizing emptiness is actually to see there is nothing, there is no ego to protect and worry about, and in that way it really cuts the root of all pains. I do not know whether emptiness numbs the joy. I do not think it is anaesthesia; I do not think it numbs that. But on the other hand, you are familiar with that other word, bliss-void combination. The bliss aspect will be the nature of the mind. And the void aspect is the object which that joyful mind perceives. The blissful mind sees, embraces, recognizes the emptiness. The nature of the mind has to be developed in joy nature. These two different things come together. And then they become like two peas in a pod. As for 'dissolving the pain of compassion' I never heard that before. The mind itself becomes joy nature, and that keeps the joy, that joy mind recognizes the emptiness, and then that becomes the non-duality of mind and emptiness together. That means emptiness does not cut joy at all. If so, how can there be non-dual emptiness and joyful mind together?

Audience: What does it mean then to recognize the emptiness of joy?

Rimpoche: Well, joy is emptiness, pain is emptiness.

Audience: I guess what I am struggling with is that it sounds like you can use either one as the object of developing the realization of emptiness. You can use pain as developing the realization of emptiness, or you can use joy as the subject to develop the realization of emptiness, and I guess what I am struggling with and trying to get a mental grasp of is, I can understand how to use pain as the subject of emptiness, if I think of it as cutting the pain.

Rimpoche: I am not saying that you cut the joy. I am saying you can develop emptiness on pain or you can understand emptiness using joy as a subject. I might have said it, I do not remember it. You can meditate and develop an understanding of emptiness with pain or joy as subject, but that does not mean that this cuts the joy! It definitely cuts the pain, because the source of pain is negativity and by removing the negativity, it cuts the pain. But the source of joy is positivity. Emptiness should enhance the source of joy, positivity, rather than cut it. Emptiness' job is not only cutting, cutting.

Audience: Do you think that with the realization of emptiness and the fading away of duality, joy could also fade away?

Rimpoche: There is a big question. Some people think that non-duality is a reality. And some people do not think non-duality is reality. That is a separate question.

Lots of people think that in emptiness there may be no duality. But whether emptiness itself is a non-duality or not is a different question. It has to do with the object of negation. Emptiness means something is negated. That which is negated is the object of negation. The object of negation differs from Buddhist school to Buddhist school. Out of those the Mind Only school holds non-duality as emptiness, and that in turn is rejected by the Madhyamika schools.

Audience: Would you say a state of joy and love is the natural state of things?

Rimpoche: The natural state of things is emptiness.

Audience: Would that include joy and love?

Rimpoche: Well, that is interesting. Joy is emptiness. Emptiness is joy.

Audience: A lot of times when I hear this talk of self and no-self it just becomes very confusing. What the self is starts to get philosophical and conceptual, and I guess I am wondering if there is some other way to understand emptiness, that is a little more concrete. I do not know what self is, you know. I just kind of get a little confused like that.

Rimpoche: I understand. Thank you. I think that is what we have been dealing with: what is the self? Some people

claim: this is the self, and then others go deeper than this, and deeper than that, and it does get complex. That is very true. We are getting stuck at the level of figuring out what self is, let alone what self-less is. In technical terms, in the Buddhist teachings, they call that recognition of the object of negation. That is the most difficult part. In order to know something is not there, you have to know what you are looking for.

It is like requesting you, 'Would you go into the dining room, and see if John is there?' Then you need to know who John is, what he looks like. Otherwise, how you can go up there and say, 'Hey, John? There will be probably three people who will say, 'Yeah?' Then you have to know which one it is. Therefore, the recognition may become important. It is just like shooting. When you shoot arrows or guns, you need to recognize the target. If there is no target, you will simply be shooting in the air.

The recognition of the object of negation is the hardest part of it. Honestly. We are talking about selfless, but what is that self? This is the hardest part. But you are on the right track. Step one here is a little bit of learning. Step two is whatever you have learned needs to be analyzed. Then, whatever you have found by analyzing, meditate on that, and that will deliver the result. That is what little I know. But thank you. You have been thinking, you know. If you are not thinking you will not recognize that and may at best say, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know the self is there.' Everybody will try to shoot at something, without knowing. It is like running into the forest with closed eyes and trying to grab something.

Buddhists tell you here the story of the blind people and the elephant. Four blind people feel the elephant and then you ask each one of them, 'What does the elephant look like?' One of them will say, 'The elephant looks like a trunk.' The one who felt the elephant by the ear will say, 'The elephant is flat and moving.' And so on. That is the usual Buddhist story here.

Audience: It seems that according to the Mind Only school of Buddhism, faith alone should be enough. But in terms of the *Madhyamaka* the achievement of the Buddha's mind would be a dependent arising and therefore could not come through faith alone. It would have to have faith plus a competent guide plus the lack of obstacles plus effort. All these factors have to be there. Am I on the right track with these thoughts?

Rimpoche: With your second remark you are on the right track, but the Mind Only school does not accept that faith alone can deliver you enlightenment. The Mind Only school does not accept external identification of the individual, however, they accept mind as inherently existent. Whatever is inherently existent is very difficult to change. In the Tibetan tradition, whether you are Nyingma, Kargyu, Sakya or Gelug, everybody is thinking within the *Madhyamaka* view, and that within the system of Nagarjuna and Buddhapalita. The Mind Only school does accept full enlightenment, no doubt. But I don't think there is any Buddhist tradition that thinks faith alone can deliver the goods.

In his commentary Kyabje Ling Rimpoche sums up:

This text was composed by the Seventh Dalai Lama Gyelwa Kelsang Gyatso. Although the title is ‘four contemplations’, it seems to have five contemplations. Since it set out separately the way of realizing voidness in meditation and the post meditation period.

Doboom Rimpoche and the staff of Tibet House requested me to give a teaching aimed primarily at non-Tibetan students, rather than a Tibetan audience. So I chose this text of the Four Contemplations, because it is short and concise and carries great blessings, as it comes from the Seventh Dalai Lama.

I am sure something went wrong with the transcriber or the editor here. I do remember hearing that the great blessings come from Manjushri directly to Tsongkhapa and that it was composed as a song by the Seventh Dalai Lama.

It contains the quintessential teachings of the graded path to enlightenment, from the guru devotion upwards, the complete path. Although born in very developed nations with much material progress, you have left it all behind in the quest for spiritual

knowledge. I have much admiration for your dedication and sincerity. Now you are in the process of studying and accumulating knowledge about dharma. But you shouldn’t be satisfied with mere knowledge. You have to make it useful and put into practice what you know and have studied. After knowing how to practice dharma, if you don’t engage in sincere practice, then it is of no great benefit. Even at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, his cousin Devadatta, who was a very learned person and knew much about dharma, failed to put it into practice and so he wasn’t able to achieve or attain the fruit of his knowledge.

As Je Tsongkhapa said in his *Lam rim chen mo*: The graded course to enlightenment you study in order to acquire knowledge about the dharma for the purpose of putting it into practice or action, according to your own capabilities. Some people are more intelligent than others. Everyone is endowed with different capacities and abilities, but one should put one’s knowledge of dharma into practice according to one’s individual capacity. One’s own thoughts and behavior is known to oneself, without any secret. So, if by following the teachings on dharma you

make any change or corrections in your behavior, then it is an improvement. But when observing your own behavior, you haven't made any progress, but instead maintain the same, then you haven't made practical use of dharma in your daily life. Although you have received the blessings of attending such a teaching, you haven't received the ultimate benefit, because you have failed to put it into practice, to bring about an effective change in your personality and behavior in your daily life.

In short, whatever knowledge you have, if you put it to practical use to improve yourself, then it is excellent and this is to be encouraged. You should please try to practice virtue as much as possible and try to abstain from non-virtuous actions. To be honest, develop all good qualities, entrust yourself to the protection of the Triple Gem and always perform your actions in accordance with the law of cause and effect, or karma.

I have given these teachings and you have heard them. So in turn, when you return to your respective countries, you should always be mindful of benefiting others. Just as you have benefited from this teaching, you

should hold the wish of benefiting others dear to your heart. I will always pray for your successful achievement and practice. You in turn pray for the preservation of dharma and for the happiness and welfare of all living beings.

Amen, this is it. I am glad I was able to look through a little bit in the plane coming here. Otherwise there wasn't much background. There is no strong commentary for this teaching anywhere. I looked in a number of places but couldn't find anything, except one teaching of His Holiness the Dalai Lama⁷⁶. So somehow this has been kept a little secret. Although this translator tries to use 'Four Contemplations', it is really called 'Four Mindfulnesses'. His Holiness' teaching also says it is the Mindfulness of the Guru, Mindfulness of Altruistic Aspiration, Mindfulness of Body as Deity and Mindfulness of the View as Emptiness.

By using the term Mindfulness this teaching is hidden, because everybody will think it is talking about the mindfulness of body, feelings, thoughts and phenomena. There's a lot of secrecy in there, actually, but I took the liberty to talk about it, because Kyabje Rimpoche talked about it in his teaching.

Now I should conclude, just as Kyabje Rimpoche has said: The great Marpa Lotsawa said to Ngogdon Choje Dorje, one of the four great pillars among his disciples,

I have shown you the path to liberation.
Liberation does not depend on others.
Liberation depends on yourself.

Some people may think that in order to liberate themselves they have to retire from their job. They think they have to reduce their responsibilities, go into the forest, mountains or retreat. Another of the great masters said,

Liberation can be found in the *khyim*, the lay people's households.

Lay people here means those who haven't been ordained as monks. I am an ex-ordained person. So now we have all become lay people. The great early mahasiddhas and great kings, and the great Marpa Lotsawa, remained householders. When Milarepa met Marpa, Marpa was out in the field sowing seeds. He showed himself as a farmer. I talked to you about Drukpa Kunleg, the crazy guy who was actually the founder of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition⁷⁷. He was a lay person too. (I don't like the term 'householder'.) It is really the common, normal human being, leading a normal life. So liberation is in our home, with the family, in our farm, our business, our work place, our office. It is everywhere. It is pervasive. It depends on the individual how we pick it up, whether we can do it or not. Once you have decided to follow this, when you are looking for liberation, betterment and improvement in spirituality, you can do it anywhere. The way you do this is by following the mindfulness of the guru, mindfulness of compassion and altruistic bodhimind, the mindfulness of the divine being and the mindfulness of emptiness wisdom.

As I told you, according to the earlier teachers, the mindfulness of divine being means to look at every male as

Avalokiteshvara, every female as Tara, and hear every sound as dharma and mantra⁷⁸. That is the divine mindfulness. Lastly there is the mindfulness of the nature of reality. That is important because we have been fooled all the time. Because of not knowing emptiness, our goals are set wrong, our priorities are set wrong. That makes us waste our time and miss the opportunity. Remember the illusion-like reality. It appears, yet it is not true.

With this in mind I would like to say thank you so much to all of you for coming here to the week ends. You could have done many other things, but you chose to come here. That is very kind and wonderful and I hope it will be helpful.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Part of the *Thirty-seven Wings of the Buddha-Dharma*.
- 2 Dalai Lama, *Four Essential Buddhist Commentaries*. LTWA 1982. (Namse Bangdzo)
- 3 See Gelek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, ch. 8, point 1.
- 4 The central channel (Tib. *uma*), the right channel (Tib. *roma*) and the left one (Tib. *kyangma*).
- 5 *Song of the Mystic Experiences of Lama Je Rinpoche*.
To be found in: Gelek Rinpoche, *The Three Principles of the Path, a concise commentary*.
- 6 Stages of the Path in Vajrayana.
- 7 No translation in English available.
- 8 Kyabje Ling Rinpoche's teaching in inserted in this commentary in bold type.
- 9 Tib. *drun pa*; Skt. *smṛti*. This is not to let what one knows slip away from one's mind. Its function is not to be distracted. Part of the five object-determining mental events.
- 10 Guenther, Herbert V. *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*. Shambhala 1986
Nalanda Translation Committee. *The Life of Marpa the Translator*. Shambhala, 1982.
- 11 *Yidam* [Tib.] Meditational deity.
- 12 Nalanda Translation Committee. *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, p. 92.
- 13 Four Pillars: Ngok Chöku Dorje, Tsurton Wanggi Dorje, Meyton Chenpo, Milarepa.

- 14 This refers to the traditional Lamrim example of the guru being like the throat, in the sense that all the food has to go through the throat and likewise, all speech can't but get processed through the throat. So, no enlightenment without relying on the guru.
- 15 Tib. *don gyi 'od sel*
- 16 For more on bodhimind see p. 156.
- 17 For the Manjushri meditation, see p. 137
- 18 In the summer of 2006 Rinpoche visited Tibet with a number of students.
- 19 Bodhisattvacaryavatara, ch. 1, vs 6: '...The great strength of evil being extremely intense, and except for a Fully Awakening Mind, by what other virtue will it be overcome?'
- 20 If you are not fortunate you will not even think about it; you will not even raise a doubt about this dharma. Developing just a doubt will tear samsara to pieces. *Four Hundred Verses*, vs. 180.
- 21 Four characteristics of karma: it is definite, it is fast-growing, one never meets the result if one did not create the cause, and if one creates the cause, the result is bound to come.
- 22 *The Bodhisattva Way of Life*. Detailed commentary on the first 5 chapters: Gelek Rinpoche, *Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Vol. 1-5.
- 23 Gelek Rinpoche, *Guru Devotion; How to Integrate the Primordial Mind*.
- 24 Normally eight leasures of human life are counted. Rinpoche added this ninth one.
- 25 Lama and guru are synonymous, Tibetan and Sanskrit respectively.
- 26 The questions were the outcome of what was discussed in the discussion groups.
- 27 See p. 36.
- 28 *Gyabva* = Conqueror; *kyab dag* = all-pervasive; *Dorje Chang* = Vajradhara.
- 29 Quotation not yet found.

- 30 See p. 104.
- 31 Also see p. 19.
- 32 Sanskrit for 'sphere' is *dhātu*, meaning 'in the midst of', 'under the influence of'.
- 33 See: Gelek Rimpoche, *Lajong – Training of the Mind in Seven Points*. Point Two.
- 34 Rimpoche points out: In the *Lama Chöpa* thangka, one of the vertical lineages shows a line of Manjushris, one above the other. That is the lineage we are talking about here.
- 35 Rimpoche adds: In the west often called lotus style.
- 36 For the Four Powers, see p. 88.
- 37 See the Yamantaka sadhana, 'O Manjushri, whose being is non-dual... or the optional longer one, O Manjushri, golden angel come from space...'
- 38 Refers to a full-fledged fourfold initiation (*vanṅ*), not to a blessing-initiation (*jenang*)
- 39 Gelek Rimpoche, *Gom; A Course in Meditation*. 2005.
- 40 See p. 103.
- 41 Bodhi is Sanskrit and means awakened or awakening or enlightened.
- 42 Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, ch. 1, vs. 6.
- 43 Probably Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* ch. 1, vs. 18-19: And for those who have perfectly seized this mind [...], From that time hence, even while asleep or unconcerned, A force of merit equal to the sky will perpetually ensue.
- 44 Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* ch. 1, vs. 10.
- 45 By Gelek Rimpoche usually called the power of the base.
- 46 In Glenn H. Mullin, *Death and Dying in the Tibetan Tradition*. ch. 3.
- 47 Also see Gelek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, ch. 19, 20 and 21.
- 48 What here is translated as 'transformation' is often called miraculous birth.
- 49 Eight worldly dharmas: eight worldly or childish attitudes in experienc-

- ing: gain or loss, fame or disgrace; praise or blame, well-being or misery.
- 50 Gelek Rimpoche, *Guru Devotion: How to Integrate the Primordial Mind*.
- 51 See p. 63.
- 52 Gelek Rimpoche, *Lajong, Training the Mind in Seven Points*.
- 53 Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. ch. 6, vs. 10.
- 54 Part of the Jewel Heart Prayers.
- 55 *phung kham* skandhas [form, feeling, discrimination, volition, consciousness] and elements.
- 56 *sab sel* - profound and luminous or manifest.
- 57 Heruka Chakrasamvara is a male meditational buddha (*vidam*).
- 58 See Meditation 1 on p. 76 and p. 94.
- 59 See p. 18.
- 60 Gelek Rimpoche, *Guru Devotion*. Index entry: ten qualities Mahayana master.
- 61 See p. 94 and/or p. 137.
- 62 Translation: Tarab Tulku.
- 63 Literature: Nagarjuna, *The Philosophy of the Middle Way*. SUNY 1986.
- 64 Wikipedia: 'To treat that which is abstract as something tangible; the error which consists in treating as a 'thing' something which is not one.'
- 65 System of philosophical schools.
- 66 Tib. *Lek den je*.
- 67 *Dag* refers to I or ego; *me* is the negation. For *dag* see p. 305
- 68 To the Great Seal, pervasive nature of all, Indivisible, inexpressible mind's diamond realm, To the lord of master adepts who taught it nakedly, At the feet of my peerless mentor, devoted I bow!
- 69 For the story see p. 8.
- 70 See p. 318
- 71 See p. 311.
- 72 See Garma C.C. Chang, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. ch. 38.
- 73 See the verse from the Lama Chöpa on p. 213.

74 Nagarjuna, *Mula-madhyamaka-kaṛika*, ch. 24, vs. 14.

75 Tib. *de zhin shek pa nying pa*. Literally, the seed or essence (*nying pa*) of tathagatas (*de zhin shek pa*) which is usually translated as Buddha-nature or buddha essence.

76 See note 2 (p. 10).

77 See p. 239.

78 See p. 283.

ABOUT JEWEL HEART

Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist center is dedicated to helping individuals live the most productive, peaceful, wise, and compassionate life possible. By putting into practice methods for freeing oneself from jealousy, hatred, obsession and pride, participants discover an unlimited source of energy, strength and compassion that is available to each of us.

Jewel Heart programs are based upon Buddha's path, blazed into the present-day by the internationally recognized teacher and bestselling author, Gelek Rinpoche. Rinpoche's teachings address current questions of identity and purpose as well as bridging the dilemma of having both spiritual and material ambitions.

Jewel Heart's graduated program of study and practice program is based on the teachings of Gelek Rinpoche and facilitated by Jewel Heart instructors. These courses, available throughout Jewel Heart chapters and study groups, are open to all and range from questioning the need for spiritual development, to serious and engaged study of the Tibetan Buddhist path. Taking a creative approach to learning, Jewel Heart programs engage the arts, the sciences and multiple media platforms to maximize the ability to absorb knowledge to a level that changes the way we think and live. The complete program provides a foundation for entering the Vajrayana path, transformative practices designed to quickly unlock the mystery of life and end all

forms of suffering.

Jewel Heart presents annual open and Vajrayana retreats in the U.S., the Netherlands and Asia; regular teachings by Rinpoche in Ann Arbor and New York as well as frequent events in Chicago, Cleveland, Nebraska, San Francisco, Northern Michigan, and Philadelphia; weekly member webcasts; teachings and workshops by guest speakers; and meditation and practice retreats. In addition, Jewel Heart's Buddhist-inspired introductory talks, open meditation sessions, film and discussion evenings, various workshops, and yearly pilgrimage offer diverse levels for participation and service to surrounding local communities.

Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Center offers a wide variety programs for spiritual development, supports senior lamas and the training of young monks, a children's school and orphanage, and Buddhist performing arts tours. Sales from the Jewel Heart Store support Tibetan refugees and monasteries in India and Nepal.

For more information on national and international programs, classes, webcasts, recordings and books, visit www.jewelheart.org

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This book is our offering of thanks to a Great Teacher,
in appreciation for all the times you were there for us,
which is always, and for the way you touch our lives, all
three generations of our family. This book is to celebrate
your wisdom, your compassion, your kindness,
your very being.

To your good health and may you live long and
accomplish whatever you set out to do.

Thank you, Rimpoche.

We dedicate this book to all dharma friends whose lives
have been enriched by you, Rimpoche, and to all dharma
friends who will benefit in the future.

Chee Eng, Wee Lin & Ken,
Ming-li & Liat Hong,
Chien-Yuen & Amy,
Julian, Hong, Leon & Kevin,
and our little ones,
Rui Wen, Anicca Shereau & Ariya Shangguan