

Daily Practice: Tibetan Buddhism 2013 Garrison Excerpts

Refuge

Begin to motivate by thinking, "Aha. I'm glad to know that I'm alive. I am happy. So I will not waste my time." That is so important. First thing in the morning make a sort of strong engaging thought that you're not going to waste your life. You're going to do something, whatever that may be, spiritual or material or normal or whatever, thinking, "I will make a difference." And that thought you should always try to engage. And if you are Buddhist-influenced, then think about it. Appreciate life. And then if you really look carefully, there's a huge thing there. That is not knowing what's going to happen for your life. We don't know what's going to happen even this day. You presume and plan something, but whether it is going to go that way or not we don't know. Not knowing will give me a sense of a little urgency.

That little sense of urgency makes me take refuge. I'm talking about myself. And I take refuge in Buddha, in Dharma, and Sangha. Or if you can't think clearly, just take refuge. And once your mind is used to it, sort of automatically you will take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Those who are not used to it, whoever you're taking refuge in your mind will automatically take you there. With occasional awareness of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha you think about it until your mind becomes automatic. Once that mind becomes automatic, taking refuge to you means refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha because they have the capability of helping. They have the experience and the compassion. And they don't have a biased attitude. Like and dislike is not there. For all of those reasons, if you think about it, it will come. However, you may or may not be able to think that. One thing is learning about the refuge, who Buddha is, who Dharma is, who Sangha is. Practically, simply doing it every day is another thing. Every day whatever you're doing there, you cannot go on saying, "Is this the historical Buddha? Or my future Buddha?" [56:37:9] You cannot go and do that in that short period, in the morning or when you're getting up. There's no time. There is a purpose, but there's no time to do that. So if you are a Buddhist you automatically take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. And if you're something else, so whomever you take refuge, it doesn't matter. But take refuge.

I think taking refuge just by saying the words and bowing down a little bit, without any background of knowledge it is a little blind faith. I don't think it is time now to talk about it. But just at least know that the Buddha you are taking refuge in is not necessarily the historical Buddha. The historical Buddha has gone 2600 years ago. And that is only a representation. If you say, "Isn't there Buddha?" Yes. If you say, "Isn't the historical Buddha, also here today?" So, if you go in detail that way, yes it is true the historical Buddha is here today. The historical Buddha is also Buddha. But truly taking refuge means I'm connecting with my own future Buddha, which does not even exist. Not only not matured now, now even exists as Buddha. But there is some purity of me which will become my own future Buddha. So I'm connecting with this. That's really what it is, the historical Buddha is representing to me and I am connecting with that.

Particularly refuge in Dharma. Dharma refuge is the true refuge. Buddha refuge is like having a guide. Dharma refuge is like actually taking medicine or engaging in surgical activities. So Dharma is the real one. The sangha is the helper, remember? So really taking refuge in Dharma is engaging in these positive deeds of the virtues and avoiding non-virtues. With every negativity you throw out you gain the positivity of rejecting that negative activity. That positive gain is your own spiritual development. Good or bad, strong or weak, that is your basic spiritual development. That is your basic future saving. That is

your basic future endowment that you can carry with you. That's really what it is. And when you talk about good karma, that's what it really is all about. Technically, good karma and good dharma and good virtue may differ. These are little technical differences. But in reality, when you really look deep down, they're really all the same.

Taking refuge in Dharma means that. Truly. So symbolically you say, "I take refuge in Dharma." You think about it. Dharma is the spiritual development of those who are already enlightened and those of us who are not yet enlightened. Whatever we have. Truly I am relying on my Dharma in the future. Because my Dharma is my good karma. My good karma is a source of my good results, my virtues. My joy, my happiness coming out of that. That is the real source. That is the real saving you have. That's why even among the refuge, the Dharma refuge is the actual refuge and that's the reason why they say that. Knowing this is important. Whether you say "I take refuge in Dharma" or not, every action you do, whenever, every day, you have the choice of engaging in a negative or engaging in positive way. That goes for any deed you engage in, including in your own job or wherever.

Whether you're packing meat, or whatever your job may be - except things like slaughtering, because that's by virtue negative, but even packing meat or selling products, or whatever, you can be a very good dharma practitioner without knowing anything about dharma. You can be a very good Buddhist without knowing anything about Buddhism, honestly. That's all possible. We see this every day with a lot of people. There are people who always want to do the good things who always want to be kind and compassionate. That is very good Buddhist activity. They may not be Buddhist, but it doesn't matter, honestly. Simply do your job well. I think that really counts. Very strange, it works that way, whether you're a carpenter or artist or whatever. Many carpenters are artists anyway. You can be a student and studying well is a positive deed, particularly if you do it with a motivation of helping.

So being the right way, avoiding the wrong thing. How do I know right and wrong? This is a big question. We don't know. We really don't know what is right or wrong. But we have something to think. The idea is: what does the right thing do? It helps. It doesn't hurt or harm. The wrong thing hurts and harms. How many people you're affecting it depends. Whether you are hurting one or a hundred, you're hurting. If you're hurting one person, this is one too much. So this is where you can have a basic idea of right and wrong. You can have something to hang on. Is it perfect? I don't know, but it is something to hang on to for being right or wrong.

And then our thoughts will come in between that. That's how we should conduct our life to begin. But then our thoughts will come, such as ego will pop up saying, "Me! What about Me? Who cares about them? What about me?" Then our obsessions will come up saying, "I must get it. It must be mine. I just want it." Our hatred will come, "I hate it. I don't want to do anything." Our obsessions will pull you; hatred will push you out and then the attitude of "couldn't care less, I don't care" all will pop up. The minds of the addictions become extremely busy. And they try to engage and control us this way and that way, each one of them pushing, fighting for the driver's seat and they want to drive. The vehicle is yourself. They're driving you. They become the driver and drive you right and left and mostly wrong. Then, as a spiritual person, we begin to see this. We begin to have awareness and realize, "Oh my god I've been driven." But better late than never. Even if it doesn't come straight away, it doesn't matter.

[1:11:27] The moment awareness comes, it will have a break. The moment there's a break, you can think about it, you can breathe. And then you try to direct. Again, you have make sure, who is the

director? The director could very well be the ego again in different form. It could be hatred in different form, with maybe a little smoother face this time. Because earlier it didn't work so well. So it will put on a little more kind face. The director could be the obsession or jealousy or meanness. So we really have to put the brake on. Don't be so quick. Think about it. Knowledge, education, information, will make a difference, particularly information. Trustworthy information is really power. That will guide you.

This is going on all the time in our life. True spiritual practice means truly guiding yourself, in the right way, engaging yourself in that manner and avoiding harming others. Many times His Holiness says in the teachings as final conclusion, "If you can be helpful, be helpful. If you cannot help, you have no right to hurt or harm." That's basically how you motivate and conduct your morning.

A tremendous amount of busyness in our mind, all varieties of thoughts, are going to come out. That is one thing. Let the thoughts take place. But to manage them is another thing. Wherever you look, every meditation will tell you to let the thoughts go away. Some people will say peel them off like you're peeling an orange skin or something. Some people will say don't think about it. But whatever they may say, the reality is that it is important to manage your mind. I know many of us don't like to manage. Many of us like to do whatever we want to do. It is a really big deal for us to do whatever we want to do. We say, "Don't tell me what to do". People become very sensitive and that is our reality. However, as a good human being, I don't say "manage," but just try to organize your mind a little bit.

Traditional teachings will tell you don't let your mind be controlled or managed or driven away by negative emotions. And that's very true. But we don't like to hear it. But whether you like to hear it or not, I don't mean you have to do it. But unless we organize a little bit, then we have the same old thing that has happened before. The same old thing will repeat. If you look in our life, we see clearly what happened. We have seen, we have been through with a number of different levels of life. Even in one lifetime, we have been a number of different categories or a number of different statuses of life. Many of us have been very wealthy before. Many of us have been poor. It changes. It changes, honestly. Many of you have been a beauty, handsome, all of them. And many of you still are. But many of us are not. So it changes all the time. Similarly, many of us enjoyed life tremendously before. Many of us suffered tremendously. And all this suffering, joy, good, bad, rich, poor, healthy, sick, all of them change, even in one lifetime. If we are talking about other different lives, then there is a tremendous difference.

However, we have remained the same. This is because we let the mind do whatever it wants to do and there's no direction. There's no organization. So it takes you wherever. If you try to put a little effort in, it will get you very far. Look at yourself. If you put a little effort in your education, what a difference it makes to your life! We see it today. You don't have to put in a lot of effort - not so much. That clearly shows we have this tremendous capability. All of us do. We all behave as though we are handicapped. But we are not. Mentally we're not. We're very capable, each and every one of us. Those of us who are a little bit crazy and those of us who are very serious, and those of us who are happy-go-lucky, all of us are tremendously capable. There is no question. It is a matter of whether you make use of it or not.

Bodhimind Motivation

So a little effort and a little bit of organization of the mind is really worthwhile. We talked about motivation last night. Tibetan Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, recommends that the motivation should be bodhimind. Remember we talked refuge last night a little bit. I can't talk in detail because then we're

not going to do anything else. Next to refuge comes “generating bodhimind”. That’s how we technically call it. But in straightforward language it is motivation.

For those of you who are very familiar with Tibetan Buddhism, we also say this,

Sang gye chö dang tsok kyi chog nam la / jang chub bar du dag ni kyab su chi
I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha until I obtain enlightenment...

The question is, how long do I take refuge? I take refuge as long as I need it. How do I know when I don't need it anymore? When I have total knowledge. Until then, I do.

da gi jin sog gyi pei so nam kyi/ dro la pä nchir sang gye drub par shok

jin sog means generosity, etc. There are a lot of other things. By doing all this, may I be able to obtain state of total enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings.

Now I'm talking about the Buddhist point of view. But whether you are Buddhist or not, this idea of the ultimate achievement, of getting to the end of wherever you're going, that is everybody's goal. Nobody wants to go half-way through. Everybody would like to be perfect, the best and gain whatever there's to gain. And it doesn't matter whether you're Buddhist or not Buddhist or atheist or nothing, whether you're believing or not believing or whatever. The reality becomes that. So the Buddhists have a way of saying "for the benefit of all beings, I would like to become Buddha." The moment you use these words it colors it and becomes some kind of coded language only meant for Buddhists and nobody else. Without saying so, it is almost like we are treating it like some Buddhist cult or something. And that's not really correct.

From the angle I am looking from I will say even those non-Buddhists who are really very sort of conservative Judeo-Christian or Muslim, and even those, sorry to say that, very conservative like some terrorists, to me, they also want to become Buddha. Honestly. They don't want to become buddha as Buddha, but they want to gain the perfection of whatever they believe in. And I think that is what we call "Buddhahood." It is not caste, culture, religion. A lot of terminology describes the buddha-state as total knowledge, gone beyond, Buddha, and all kinds of terminologies. When you begin to think a little bit more, not that deep, but a little more, what does "total knowledge" mean? You could just say, "Okay, it is total knowledge, it is Buddha." So the word come, let it go. It doesn't really work that well. We think it is some kind of Buddhist coded language. Or even the Hindus will say, "*aya Ram, gia Ram*, Ram has come, Ram has gone." When you think about it, that's what happens, right?

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Ask yourself, "What does 'total knowledge mean?'" Look in your life. We know we can learn. We know there's something we learn. We know we have improvements. And we knew we get better by experience, by learning, by understanding. Day by day, we know that. I mean, it's very clear in our life. So total knowledge means there's no more to go. Whatever there is to pick up, we've fully picked it up. And that is total knowledge. Whether it is coming through Buddhist practice, or through pure learning, whether it's coming through whatever it comes, when you reach to that level, so that's what it is.

So when you begin to think that way, that's Buddhahood. It is total knowledge and that is everybody's goal, honestly. Be unbiased and think about it. I find it is something very different than traditional coded language or coded way of thinking. In the Buddhist tradition, we call it "seeking Buddhahood." But it is really seeking perfection, the perfection of knowledge, perfection of capability, being perfectly capable of doing something you need to do. So, don't make Buddhahood into something holy, unreachable, up there in the air somewhere. Think of it as do-able, practical for the individual, something you are going to get. When you think that way, then you become very open-minded. I know you are all very, very open-minded. But you really become very open when you think that way. But if you make it some kind of deeper, unreachable state somewhere beyond, which gives you that quality, this quality, then somehow it becomes something else. Tibetan Buddhism tells you when you take refuge, that there's two types. One is causal refuge and one is result refuge. So the result is what we recommend, right? So maybe that's what result refuge is all about.

So anyway, seeking that state, seeking that level of perfection, seeking that level where nothing is hidden to you and everything is clear and absolutely clear, that's really what we're talking about, rather than Buddhahood as something mystical, mysterious, not to be too much clarified. Many of us look at it that way and maybe that was wrong. So if you change that view and try to make it really clear and see, then we don't think Buddhahood is something a million miles away, somewhere down the road away, in the future, a million lives away or something, but rather something very close. Every dharma you have, text, teachings, everything will say it is possible to become Buddha in this lifetime. And that's what Vajrayana says is its quality and all that. So when it's going to be that close, it has to be reachable and do-able. If you push it away, very far away, it will go even beyond. Sometimes you even call it "gone beyond." We even label it that way. Terminology and language makes a huge difference for us. We have to swim out of this little religious category and language. If you can swim through you can try to get really close to it. Otherwise you may begin to think, "Is it really true?" You get to that level sometimes. I think we face a lot of problems on that.

Besides that, your background will not help you much. You have learnt that God is unreachable, beyond and that you can simply pray and worship and it is up to God's grace. All that doesn't help and it gives us the idea that there's something unreachable beyond. It makes it sort of a little more distant. So when you're saying, "I'm going to put my efforts here and get this done this time. I am going to make it this time" - that is what obtaining Buddhahood is all about.

[53:16] It is very, very interesting and simple. So if you think that way, that's what happens.

So what we do normally "*dro la pän chir sang gye drub par shok*" – may I become Buddha for the benefit of all beings". We simply say in prayer form, "I may become that Buddha." The word Buddha is in Tibetan *sang gye*, which is really two words. *Sang* means all obstacles are gone, cleared. *Gye* means total knowledge. Anything to be learned, anything to be obtained is all there. That's very simple in Tibetan. But again that word also can be made into some kind of coded language, according to which you worship and pray, and hopefully be granted something somewhere. I understand that in the Judeo-Christian tradition you simply pray and hopefully you'll be granted something. Buddhists will say yes, you can obtain buddhahood, but what they really do is the same old thing, the praying and worshipping business. It can quickly get twisted around. That's what happens. Maybe it is a human habit that is driving us. So I think it is our job to clear that, to cut through. In reality it is something that you are trying to get. We're not trying to get something which is not there. That would be a goose chase. But there's something there we are really trying to get and that's not a goose chase. Whenever you are

generating the motivation, "I will become Buddha for the benefit of all beings," we are not talking about the benefit, but about what you want to get. That's a different view. Maybe it's easier, or maybe not. I am sort of suggesting that. Whatever you do, it is very important that buddhahood is not left there as something mysterious, somewhere in the clouds and hopefully one day, later, later, later, you can get it. I think that's the important point.

Now as motivation here the Mahayana recommends and guides you to bodhimind. And they say there's nothing better. So bodhimind seems to be the most important. But in the Theravada tradition, even though it is Buddhist, they don't talk about bodhimind at all. Everybody talks about the compassion, love. But they don't talk about this bodhimind. That's why this bodhimind is called the gateway to buddhahood. It is sort of a boundary between the Mahayana and non-Mahayana. It is really, really the essence of Buddhism.

The essence of your practice is two things: bodhimind and wisdom. Normally, we talk about compassion and wisdom. That's easier language-wise. But really, what we're talking about is bodhimind and wisdom. I don't know why we call it "bodhimind". Maybe because it is Buddha's type of mind or it is the mind that is seeking that level of Buddha. But first and foremost, before we even talk about bodhimind, we talked about what Buddha is - enlightenment or total knowledge. Then the mind which is seeking that, which desires to obtain that is bodhimind. By thinking about how you get that mind you desire it and see the quality and admire that. And then you would like to have it. Everything, whatever we take, we need to see first, admire the quality and then we want it or we don't want it. Is it for me or not? That's how we decide, right?

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So similarly here it is the same thing. When I say, "I would like to become Buddha" I have to know what for. And what is that anyway? All these questions are important. Sometimes we say a lot of prayers. Under the prayer we lose all our basic important points. On the other hand, we need prayers too. Somehow we need both. The prayers cover a lot. And it looks to me almost like the mind thinks it is impossible to get it. So then the traditional teachers and writers have taking refuge under the prayer. All right, you think it's not going well, okay, then pray that you will get it. So many practices have become prayers. But still, even in the prayer form, it is structured such that it tells the individual what to do. So to some people, it is simply praying. To some people, it is the total message. That's why praying is also important because it is something that our mind rejects and there is something to fall back on. We don't completely go off or fall back.

Anyway, in this way we build the motivation of seeking total knowledge, not for us personally. For me personally to be happy and free of suffering I do not need total knowledge. It's overkill. Honestly. But, when you want to help and guide everybody, then you do need it. Otherwise, you don't know what to do. That's why total knowledge is needed. Many of us struggle because of not knowing what to do, in everything we do, in our profession, whether as technical person or policy maker or whatever. We struggle for the one reason: not knowing what to do. Even as a spiritual practitioner you face that problem: not knowing what to do. This is the reason why you need knowledge. And this is the reason why you need total knowledge. We know information is power. That tells us that we need total knowledge. And that's why the traditional Buddhist teachings will tell you "for the benefit of all beings, I would like to become perfectly enlightened." It is for the benefit of not one or two, but all. And there's another reason: this very motivation, this very thought, is also accompanied by tremendous benefits. The

Buddha has discovered that the more people you can think of, that much capability, that much power, that much value it adds up. So that's the goal: all living beings. You can't have more than all, right? Unless you want to get zero.

So when you say, "all living beings" it means you are trying to maximize. There are two things. In one way, if you look what you're talking about is impossible, you're crazy. Impossible – that may be true. You're crazy - I don't think so. Honestly, because you're maximizing your deeds. That makes a difference to us. Deeds themselves make a difference, we know. When they are maximized it makes them much better. You can do nothing better. So the idea "for the benefit of all beings" really carries that value. You may be doing just one little thing, but with the idea and the motivation of benefitting all, you're doing tremendous good. You may simply be giving one little piece of food to a hungry animal, but with that motivation it becomes worth millions. It is maximizing our efforts towards our goal. And that's why this motivation is so great. Is it easy? Certainly not.

You know you can do two things. You can go in detail and understand and function properly, or you can just follow it and presume and go and gradually pick up the reasons why. Both these choices are available for us. So we should utilize both. When we are unable to make it very clear to us, let's presume and then go through. But that can never be all the time. It won't work. You can't leave it there forever. It doesn't work when you need to get through. So when you're looking at this bodhimind, this is very, very interesting. It says "[1:14 Tib] *Dakpay shenjay....rimpoche*" - "others are more important than me." That's what the mind of cherishing others, such a precious mind. It is almost impossible for us to regard others as more important than ourselves. There is no way that our mind will get it. We can say the words, we can say that's what Tibetan Buddhism tells us. But that is a distant mind. You can easily say, "That is Tibetan Buddhism" and leave it there and think, "I recognize, I follow, I admire", but the subject is far away, over there.

How To Develop Great Compassion

It is very different to think, "That's what I'm going to do" and take it in. We need to take it in. Such a mind cannot grow with us unless we really have tremendous compassion. In other words, we really care tremendously for that person. You're not going to take such a difficult hardship unless you care. And you're not going to care very much unless you love or like the person. It's really true. If you don't love the person, you don't care that much. You may have a general care. Care is good, it has to be. But that's a very generalized mind. If you love the person, you have a specific care. "Because I love you, so I care." That's a different feeling. "Your happiness is mine, your sorrow is mine" – that's a result of love. Honestly, if it's a genuine statement it's the result of love. Without love it doesn't happen.

Love is something that we all have, honestly. But we misuse it all the time. We make the love into desire, attachment, obsession. That is our addiction. And if you make it really love, then it's appreciation, admiring. You want to have it. You like to be that. All of that will follow. It's really a mental door, how you look at it. The difference between true spiritual and non-spiritual is a very thin difference, very subtle. Maybe I should stop talking too much in that, because then we won't get anything done.

So anyway it is love that we have. Now build that up and make it better and vast, more intense, because the basis of compassion, then basis of bodhimind - all of them are this. And love needs closeness. It

doesn't mean you have to be hugging all time. Even if you hug all the time, you may not have love at all. Some people do that. It has to be really closeness. If you have distance you don't get this. No one should have distance. Our mind will say, "No that's not true. Why should I not have distance from my enemy because he or she bothers me all the time?" That's what we do. It is true to some people. It is true, it bothers us.

Recently I saw this tv show "Dr House", with that crazy doctor who's limping. I have such a bad habit, I look in the middle of a show and I enjoy it. It doesn't matter what it is. So in that show the hospital had a patient who was professionally a service person, waitress or something. And she had some kind of a problem and they brought her in. She had tremendous memory, photographic memory. And she had some dislike to her own sister. So she was doing okay. The sister came to see her and recalled what they had done as kids. And then she gets so mad and sort of hysterical, completely crazy, because of something, somewhere that the sister had done to her. And she can't forget that. That's what our normal language says. For me that shows she had a lack of equanimity, because she has that one little thing that she did as a kid and cannot forget it. So it becomes worse, and then there are many more things to remember. But there's no need for me to go into that detail. But the idea is: she can't forgive. And she has become a symbol of love and hate. There is love because she is her sister. There is hate because of what happened and she doesn't like it. That's why her mind has this pull and push very strongly. It swings so much that it becomes a physical problem for her.

So, the Buddha's experience tells us, yes, you have to have love. Yes, you need to have compassion. Yes, you need bodhimind. You don't get bodhimind without compassion. You don't get compassion without love. You don't get love without closeness. You don't get closeness if you are distant. If you think some are enemies and some are friends then you have pull and push. So you need equality and equanimity. The traditional teachings give us the example. If you want to have a mural painting against a big wall the wall must be very smooth. Otherwise, you can't paint. In modern art it may work. But in the traditional way of painting it doesn't work. So you need smoothness. Likewise here we need equanimity. We always admire equal rights and equality. That's the basis of our democracy, honestly. [1:28:29]

How much we say, "It is our right. It is my right." How much we will fight for it. How much we take it for granted. How much it means for us. And we say: whatever rights you have I have too. You may be fighting for your own rights. I may be fighting for my own rights. But the truth is we have the same rights. That means equal rights. And there's no reason why you have to have more rights and I have lesser rights. Or why should I have more rights and you have lesser? So it is equal. That is the principle of a democracy. This language is not foreign for us. This idea is not foreign for us. It is real and it is with us. And that is what equanimity is all about. Many of us do not know how to handle ourselves in a society. Some people behave differently and we respond differently. We forget they all have equal rights.

So equality, equanimity, is the base of actually developing ultimate love, which is not far away, which is not foreign. Everybody is the same. They have the same rights. Even if you can't think of all living beings, think of human beings. Even if you can't think of all human beings, think of American citizens - whether you are a born citizen or naturalized citizen. And even then you'll see the difference there a little bit for many of our minds. Theoretically we accept all. Practically sometimes there's a difference. But we have to go beyond that. Then take citizens of other countries, like Canadians, Europeans, Asians and Middle Eastern. All human beings will become equal. This is not un-do-able, it is do-able. We can

manage. Our mind can manage that within ourselves. If you have that, you have at least a basis of developing love, compassion to all.

Buddha tells us look at everybody as ultimately your friend. Buddha cannot find any better example for the ultimate friend than a mother. That's why Buddhism talks about "all mother sentient beings." It's because we need to look at closeness. Sometimes the mother is the subject of both love and hate. But, one good thing is, that for most people, even if there is hate or love or both to the mother, ultimately love takes over. That's everybody. Where there's a difficulty we forget, forgive and forget everything and go out and help. Even though Mother behaved a little more miserably, but even then people are willing to go. So love is stronger, because the truth is on the side of love. It gives you birth. Basically it gives you life. I'm not trying to protect mothers here; they are capable of protecting themselves. But actually that's what it is. You people are leaning towards choosing love rather than fear or something.

So that's the closeness, admiration and desire to be like that or to become like that. Then if you see that person suffering, then you really have pain. That person may be suffering, but you have the pain. So you don't like it. And you don't want to engage in that. You want to get rid of it. Not only you want to see yourself free of pain, but you want to see your loved ones enjoy. And that becomes our challenge. Bodhimind says, "I'd like to do that." That's all. No such mystery. I'd like to get the best way, best know-how to be able to do that. And that is the setting of our all-time motivation, throughout our life, throughout the year, throughout the month, throughout the week, throughout the day. So that is how we are setting our motivation.

The Four Seals

I'm talking about the functioning of our life within a day or within twenty-four hours. Probably we talked about it, when we said we want to obtain Buddhahood. We briefly touched on it, what we're really looking at, whether it is possible to attain it and so on, without avoiding any detailed explanation or without trying to avoid criticism, but simply thinking straightforward, barebones in the sense of what does practice mean. How do you live your life? How do you function? What is your goal? And how are you trying to achieve it? So I think we have established the goal.

You know it is only Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayana Buddhism which says that to become a buddha is the goal. Other forms of Buddhism don't say that the goal is to become Buddha. They don't say that. They simply lead the individual by introducing suffering first, and we really don't have to introduce that. It is there. But they are pointing out that this is your suffering, so do you like it? So then naturally the answer is, "No, I don't. I don't want it." So, if you don't want suffering, what is the alternative? The alternative is nirvana. By the way, I'd like to mention that to you also. So, therefore, the expression, "Samsara is suffering. Nirvana is peace." That is one of the four Buddhist slogans. These are: [3:44 Tib]

- All created phenomena are impermanent
- All contaminated phenomena are suffering
- All phenomena are selfless
- Nirvana is peace

So that is the meaning. I don't know whether anyone other than Buddhists says "samsara is suffering," and "nirvana is peace" or not. This is sort of a sign of being Buddhist, following Buddha's footsteps or

pursuing our life the way the Buddha did. These are the four signs or seals or logos. The whole idea is accepting samsara is suffering, nirvana is peace. When you look at the Four Noble Truths, they introduce suffering first, and then also three kinds of suffering: suffering of suffering, changing suffering and pervasive suffering. So everywhere, whenever you look, whatever we're using it is suffering nature. That's why it is samsara, the cycle of existence I'm quite sure you all know samsara. If you don't, talk about it in your discussion groups. If the terminology is not familiar, talk about it with the person next to you. That is very widely used. So basically, life without control, repeating one after another, again and again, is called samsara.

I also want to mention to you that the true samsara is ourselves, not something outside. As I said earlier, true enlightenment, total knowledge, is within ourselves. Just like that, true samsara is also within ourselves, it is nothing outside to search. So that's why wherever we're born, whatever we do, whatever we touch becomes the samsaric thing because of that. So then, the general conclusion is that all samaras are suffering, and that nirvana is peace. The goal becomes transiting yourself from the samsara nature into the nirvana nature, getting away from the suffering and then remaining in peace. So that is the goal, no need to become Buddha. There is no mention of Buddha at all. Buddhahood becomes the goal of our spiritual purposes because of the greater love and greater compassion. And that's why it is only within the mahayana. And the vajrayana is part of the mahayana. What I covered now is one of the four slogans: samsara is suffering, nirvana is peace. So the goal becomes to move yourself, your nature, from the suffering nature into a peace nature. So that is the purpose and goal. That is the job, that is the challenge. And at that point we don't talk about enlightenment. The teachings and practices within that sphere of work do not mention Buddhahood. That is the simple reason. Maybe that's enough.

The ideas of Mahayana and the other viewpoint, traditionally known as Hinayana, later called Theravada, are not that one is superior and one is less superior. The goal and purpose is different and that is the basic framework.

Now I want to talk a little about the other 3 signs: one is that anything created is impermanent. Anything – and we said that the basics of samsara is suffering that is a created thing with which we live is impermanent in nature. We talk about dependent origination or interdependence. It is created, not a single, solid thing, but exists collectively. When the conditions are right it functions. And all conditions depend on each other. The true reality of life, what we truly see today, is what we call "createdness." Createdness is the true life; it is what we see and anything that is created is impermanent. Because it is dependent origination, therefore the dependent basis will change. When that changes everything changes.

Dependent origination is that because of this that happens and and because of that this happens. So when things are that way then it happens. That is the bottom-line, straightforward, bare bones idea of dependent origination. That's my understanding. It totally depends on the things that are happening. And that's why we can do something, we can change and undo things or make them better or worse. All this we can do because of the interdependence. The word we use in Tibetan is *dujay*. They will say *dujay* is impermanent and that sort of thing. Don't look at it in that manner. Look in the manner *dujay* means collecting and functioning. So what we have collected: the conditions have become right and then it becomes. So therefore it is definitely impermanent because the conditions are going to change. We are going to get older, everything, die, all of this happens. There's no way we can skip it because of this. So

that's why it is all important. Since it is created in that way, it is all impermanent. And that's why we say it is suffering. Definitely. Because it is change. People like change. Change is joy, change is suffering.

Also, everything contaminated is suffering. Not only is it impermanent, but it is also suffering because it's contaminated. This is what I'm talking about, what does being Buddhist mean. I do remember years ago, there used to be little topics in Tricycle Magazine saying, "What does being Buddhist mean for you?" And people used to talk about it. So here this is really what it is. Contaminated phenomena are all suffering. Everything, whatever we touch is supposed to be, from the Buddhist point of view, contaminated. Why? Because we don't see reality. That's why we say it is ignorance, and confusion. They are all coming out of this. True reality is emptiness. We don't see that. We see something existing. We see something solid, somehow. It looks like it. It feels like it. It takes you in a solid way for years, even life, but it is not. That is what confusion is all about. This is where we get confused. And that's why it becomes contaminated.

I have totally avoided the philosophical basis of the definition of contamination and just come from a very practical way of thinking. [And I've been insisting to Jonas not to broadcast this, because somebody who's listening somewhere says, "What nonsense are you talking about?" To avoid that, that's one reason, and many others]

[18:33 Tib] If contaminated things are suffering then what is the one which is not confused? That leads to the third of the four logos: Every phenomenon is the nature of emptiness or selflessness. Then the fourth one is that nirvana is peace.

Normally, when we ask, "What does being Buddhist mean?" the answer is: taking refuge. We do say that. And it is. We say that accepting Buddha, Dharma, Sangha as pure objects of refuge. But if you look very carefully, these four logos are the point at which you are convinced and you are taking these as basic principles in your life's functioning. That's really how the Buddhists look. They don't look at them as some kind of theory that a group of people take up and call "Buddhist view". But you see your own acceptance of reality, whether there's anything contradicting or going with it.

Taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is doorway to be Buddhism, but really in deep reality these four points are what you may call Buddhist viewpoints. We look at reality and see what it is really all about. So if you are getting along with that, and you are tallying your thoughts with us, and you're going through with that, then whether you call yourself Buddhist or not, then you are. And if your thoughts are not going with this, then whatever you do, wear double or triple yellow-red robes or whatever you do, you're not even a Buddhist truly. And that's how I see it. This is why I call it "Buddhist life."

Suffering – the Need for Refuge and Bodhimind

[22:17:6]

So now, that is why samsara is contaminated and therefore it is suffering. And let's not talk about what's suffering, we know. There are six types of suffering, eight types of suffering. That's a way of talking, but we've really got tremendous pain; mental, emotional, physical. These are real within us, whether they are really a hell realm or hungry ghost realm or whatever it is. These mental, physical, emotional sufferings are real and we don't want them. And then, when you get out of that it automatically becomes

nirvana. It's not some boundary you drive across and then you get into the territory of nirvana and there's this immigration and all that. You don't have that. It's sort of naturally shifts the nature of the individual. That is what nirvana is all about. Nirvana is Sanskrit and simply means freedom from pain and suffering. That's about it. It is not total knowledge, not total enlightenment, although, in their own vehicle or yana, the Hinayana calls that also the level of "no more learning" in the sense that your goal is totally fulfilled. "No more learning" is also what the Mahayana refers to as Buddhahood. In the Theravada or Hinayana vehicle, "no more learning" refers to the arhats. I don't want to go into too much detail, but the arhat's "no more learning" has a level with leftover and without leftover. With leftover is because of our physical body, and that is the first Noble Truth. As long as you have that you have the no more learning with leftover. Without leftover it becomes like a candlelight that finishes its wax. When the wax is gone the candlelight automatically goes and there is no more left. So that's not even necessary for me to bring up here today. That's just how my thought went in.

The purpose for that is freedom from suffering. And that's why becoming an arhat is enough. But when you begin to think about, "not only me, what about my loved ones, my companions, my family", then you have to extend it. And it is extended – in this life, the previous life, everything. When it's getting more and more then everyone is interconnected. When we say "interconnected" we are willing to accept, we will agree that yes, we are interconnected.

Ultimately, it will come to the point that that there is no one who we have not depended on for our life. The mother was just an example. As I said this morning, perhaps they couldn't find a better, ultimate, closest friend than the mother. And the reality is that all beings have been that. So therefore it becomes greater compassion, not just compassion. Let me talk about compassion first. What is compassion? Compassion is really two aspects of mind. One, you focus. Two, there is the desire of what you want to do. The compassion is focusing on anyone desiring them to be free from the pain and suffering, whether it is one person or two persons or a group of persons. Looking at our own understanding, when it's a group of persons suffering we get more shock, we get more disgust. We don't like it when it's a larger group. We will say, "How come it hurts so many human beings?" There is a big difference between our feelings for one person getting hurt or killed and ten, twenty, thirty, forty, hundreds of people killed. Think in your normal life. Because the number of the people who suffered is much more we think it is stronger, like the crime or whatever it is, is greater.

Similarly, compassion is the same thing, whether for one person or for ten people. Compassion for ten is greater than compassion for one and for a hundred is greater than ten. Likewise, thousands is greater than hundreds. So you go to the extent that there will be no more people left, and we call them "all beings, all human beings, all living beings." The bigger you can think the greater it is. The greater compassion focuses on limitless people. The aspect, the action and the feeling is the same thing.

However, a question will rise within us. "If you're thinking that much, your feeling will be meaningless. It will be a very much watered-down feeling, almost becomes artificial." That's true and it is also not true. When we see people suffering, whether we know it through news or through media or everywhere, the more we see, we get a much stronger feeling. That indicates to us it's not getting watered down. But when you look at it practically it's very much possible your compassion becomes watered-down compassion. So maybe that is the challenge. The higher the number goes, the more it becomes weaker compassion. That may be our challenge. So that is the compassion aspect of it. And I said to you earlier, such a compassion depends on the love. When there's no love, watered down compassion is very much

possible. When there is love, there's no watered down compassion because love will hold it up. So it is very interesting and very tricky.

Compassion wants to remove the suffering as quickly as possible. And then comes the hesitation, "I can't do it. I'm very handicapped. So what do I do?" If you have total knowledge, you will know what to do; so total knowledge is necessary. The moment you have a genuine desire to develop total knowledge, influenced and, strongly pushed by love and the compassion, greater compassion, then it becomes that thing called bodhimind.

We're just now talking. It's only words. But take time for yourself. Most of you are taking time. Most of you are spending time. But you're spending time on something else other than this. You're spending time on something, saying prayers, practically working to improve life, that's great. Nothing's wrong with this, though I'm talking like I am criticizing. I'm not. But I'm trying to push this point in. Yes, you do need practical work. Yes, you do need to say your prayers. But you have to push this mind too. Without this mind it all becomes artificial, it's not genuine. It won't become genuine bodhimind. Yes, it is true, genuine bodhimind and doing nothing is also artificial. But the genuineness, heartfelt movement within yourself is what you need. And when you get that, then things function quite a lot by themselves. That doesn't mean it becomes effortless. You have put a little effort in to get a better result, a huge result, although the teachings will tell you it is happening "effortlessly". There is no such a thing called "effortless." The teachings will tell you Buddhas will do things effortlessly. Buddha can't do it effortlessly. Otherwise why are we suffering today? Honestly, you have to think about all of that. So that is basically bodhimind is all about it.

[38:09]

And when you say, "I'm practicing Mahayana Buddhism, I'm practicing Vajrayana Buddhism, I'm practicing Tibetan Buddhism," then that's your basic requirement. You either have that or you don't. When you don't have that, but you're wishing, then you are a wishing Tibetan Buddhist practitioner. [Laughs]. Nobody used that terminology, but it is. You're at the wishing level, not the action level. So the moment you think you are Buddhist practitioner or you are a true, genuine spiritual practitioner, then that's what it's all about. And you talk about compassion, that's what it's all about.

THE SEVEN LIMBS

Then, on top of that, what makes you achieve your goal is two things, only two things: accumulation of positive deeds, good karma, and getting rid of negative karma. Blocking things have to be removed, and accumulate merit. That's only two things. After the genuine motivation, then there are these two: purification and accumulation of merit. And that's about it.

How do I do these? It's basically the Seven Limbs practice that we have. If you look at the Jewel Heart Prayers that you say in the morning, then you have the Seven Limbs in there, in a very, very short way. You can also look at the detailed verses of the *King of Prayers*. That also has the seven limbs. Or you look in the *lama chöpa*. Also the *ganden lha gyema* has the seven limbs. When you look in the sadhanas, the seven limbs are there. They are called *seven purities*. That's just a little change of color and other than that, it's the same thing. Basically, whether you do it in one verse or whether you do it in hundreds of verses, it's the same parts. The mental aspect is the more important than saying the words. Particularly, we are extremely busy people - or extremely lazy people. That's why the seven limbs were made into a very short practice, just one line each. I can talk on the basis of that prayer, because it's the

easiest way to do. If you look in the Jewel Heart Prayers, we do have it. First is taking refuge. Actually first there is *Gate Gate Paragate* but let's not talk about that and the refuge we already talked about.

Invocation

Then there is the object on whom you practice the seven limbs. So that's the invocation. The translation here is slightly different from the original one in Tibetan

MA LÜ SEM CHAN KUN JE GON JUR CHING
DÜ DHE PUNG GYE ME ZÄ JOM ZÄ LHA
NGÖ NAM MA LÜ YANG DHAH KEN JUR PÄ
CHOM DHAN KHOR CHÄ NÄ DHER SHEG SU SOL

You who destroy all evil forces
And who know all things perfectly,
For the sake of all beings,
Please come to us.

For that particular verse, there's hundreds of different translations. So we have this one. But it's the same thing. Every translator will translate different way. But it's okay, because they have their understanding, they know what they're doing and that's why they're translating. But it is the Invocation, inviting the subject on whom we can practice Seven Limbs.

Originally the *ma lü sem chen* came from the *Magadha Sangmo*, a princess of a central Indian kingdom who was married very far in South India. We're talking about 2600 years ago. It was an Indian state where there was not even a mention of great early Indian practice and teachings. So she invited Buddha. And Buddha traveled there with a retinue that had magical powers. They had the power to just go there physically in a moment. Her husband, the king, "If you're so sad, then invite Buddha here." She said, "I could, I should, and I could." So there's a way of inviting. She went on the rooftop and looked towards the center of India and said this particular verse, which has been translated in a million different ways since then. The Buddha happened to be somewhere where he normally was, in Bihar and U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] in a couple of different kingdoms at that time. So the Buddha said, "Ask those retainers who have the magical powers to be able to go. Ask them to pick up the stick." They had this old system of giving you a stick to choose whether you were going or not going. So if you pick up the stick it means you're going. So they picked up the stick and in the early morning they all went by flying there. That's why you can see these drawings where the Buddha is flying, even this horse cart is flying in the air, and some monks are flying with these robes, and some have fire and some have water and all that. So these drawings we see very often and they are done on this particular story.

When I was a kid, I had a cave. In that cave I had this drawing as a mural. It was a funny cave with a couple of bedrooms and a living room – and running water. It was sort of a pocket where I enjoyed my life. Now you think about it, it was running water. Very funny. It was a simple idea. It was up in the mountains and there's a water spring up there somewhere. And they built a little bit of water storage and tried to move pipes up and then the water comes to the cave. And then they even put a faucet so that when you turn it on the water it will come. So it was running water. And then there's a kitchen and then with the kitchen then there's a little living room and that living room had a wall and that wall had a painting of this flying thing, like flying monks and all that. The Rubin museum has an exhibition of

flying saints - something which Glenn Mullin arranged. It's flying monk and siddhas . That's where it comes from. That is the famous story. That is the basic invocation words which are used in almost every Tibetan Buddhist text, whatever the tradition is, Sakya, Nyingma, Gelug. That's what they use.

So then it's been re-composed and reworded a million times. But basically it's the same old thing. That's the Invocation. Basically you are inviting the field of merit in general, and particularly Buddha, as the leader of all and the one who defeated then evil forces, one who knows all and therefore I invited you, the leader and the retinue. I am sort of paraphrasing.

A very practical word here: whether you invite Buddha or the guru or the yidam, it is one thing, just one, no difference. Teachings and practices are given either on the basis of guru or yidam, whatever, but it is only one thing, no difference. The moment you divide and make a separation within them you are defeating your purposes, honestly. There is Guru, the Buddha, the yidams, dharmapalas, dakas, dakinis, arhats, bodhisattvas. And there are these internal categories, but for all practical purposes for us it is one. Do not try to separate. Let's say if you're engaging in the Tara practice, then the whole field is Tara. That's fine. But that's also Buddha. That's also Dharma. That's also Sangha. That's also Guru. The moment you separate, you have a problem. So you may say, "Hey, that's Buddha. I'm Yamantaka and that's not Yamantaka." But there will be no Yamantaka without Buddha. While I'm practicing Tara there's not really much talk about Buddha, but there will be no Tara without Buddha. You may think, "Well, I'm a guru practitioner", but there will be no guru without Buddha. And also, the most important guru of all is Buddha. Honestly. People fail to understand that.

What is the meaning of "Guru"? What is the definition of "guru"? One who is very heavy with qualities, one who's loaded with the qualities of total knowledge, total enlightenment, which is Buddha. So this is very important. Whether you invite one or whether you invite zillions, it is one. One is zillions, zillions is one. Once you have invited them, these are mental activities too. And that doesn't mean that reality is not happening. Reality is also happening, though we don't see it.

There is the story of Asanga not seeing Maitreya Buddha for twelve years. All of those are the reality. Maitreya Buddha said to him, "I've been with you there the day when you went into retreat, but you simply didn't see me. Finally you've been able to see, and that also as a very wounded bitch." He saw Maitreya as a bitch whose physical body was totally covered with wounds and worms. So saying that "I didn't see it" doesn't mean it's not there, or that it's not happening. It does happen. It is working, because if there is something called enlightened beings, if they are really there, then they have their own commitments. One of their commitments is to help us. And whenever we're giving them an opportunity to help they're there. If they're not there, they're failing their own commitment and we know they don't fail. So they are there, but somehow we don't see them. Someday we may see them. it, but now we don't. So the moment you have done the invocation you are getting business going.

1. Prostration: I bow down in body, speech and mind

Prostration is the first. That's strange language. Actually it is admiring and honoring the qualities and giving respect and then also seeking these qualities. Whether you're physically doing prostrations or folding your hands doesn't matter. These are physical gestures. Physically if you're doing the standing prostration, it's also a good exercise, in combination with purification and accumulation of merit together. But, the reality is that we are admiring and honoring the qualities along with seeking them.

And you can look anywhere in Tibetan Buddhist practice, you have them - either with different names or different purposes or different ways or something, but basically you have them, whether there's seven together or maybe three or four. And not only in Tibetan Buddhism but also the Chinese have what they call "Incense Offering". For incense offering they have the same thing there. And Chinese Buddhist take it very seriously. They change their dress, they beat their cymbals and they line up. Zen, too, take it very seriously. When you look around, they'll go straight. And in Tibetan Buddhism, "wah wah wah" everywhere. But honestly, you do the same thing. So the first thing is what we call "Prostration."

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

Second is offering. Offering is an act of generosity. Generosity is a great thing to do. Somehow in the West you don't have to put efforts into talking about generosity because somehow your culture will have a much greater generosity than anything else. That's very admirable, wonderful. And the Western way of doing the generosity is also great. They see the needs and they will make sure the hungry get food, the sick get medicine and the homeless get shelter. But when you look at the Eastern generosity, whether it's Indian or Chinese, you know sometimes the monks, lamas and rimpoches get huge gifts and the needy people out there don't get it. So that's the problem there. But in the West, generosity is great. Somehow we're very rich with it. As for offering, you can offer anything you want. Anything. Outer, Inner, Secret, Suchness, all of them. What do the words say? "Actually arranged and mentally created." So that's the words we use.

But generosity is the mental activity, actually. The purpose of the generosity is to cut stinginess. Stinginess comes out because you want to serve ego. Ultimately, if you boil down stinginess, it will get to the ego. You think, "I will be needing it. I can't give it away. "When do you need it?" "Maybe once in ten years". So that's why we collect all our junk. We will not throw it out, thinking, "Well, probably we need it!" When? Probably one time in ten years. So stinginess is one of those ego's manifestations and ego's agents. This is when we say we're confused. What is the cause of being rich and wealthy? Generosity. What do we do? We entertain stinginess. We're comfortable entertaining the stinginess. We're not comfortable entertaining the generosity. Yes, we want to be generous. Yes, we would like to have the name of being generous. But we're not really comfortable with generosity. Why? Because of ego. "I will be needing it. I'll be left without." And not only "me," but "my" will be left without. Maybe I should cut that there. If we're going that way, I will have no end.

So one of the examples of generosity is offering. Offering means giving away. We are in the habit of saying if it's offered to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, or all those teachers and rimpoches, we call them "offering." And if you're giving it to people you don't call it offering, but give-away or something or throwaway. This is again our culture. One important thing Shantideva always argues is that we will appreciate and respect Buddha so much. Why? Because he helps me, guides me, this and that. And we don't respect people so much because, you know, because they are people. They're not Buddha but just people. But if you really look at the reason, it is the people who help us, the people who give us an opportunity to meditate, even on compassion. People suffer, so we recognize suffering, we meditate compassion. People give everything. They give you a liver, they give you sweat, they do all things. We have a beautiful house to live in and people built that. We have beautiful running water. People connected that. We have beautiful heating and cooling systems because people made it. We may say, "Oh yeah. They made it, but I paid for it." True. But without their making it, you can't even pay for it.

So that's why Shantideva argues the kindness given to us by Buddha and by people are equal. But we respect Buddha so much and we don't respect people. Why not? I just wanted to mention that to you because when you do daily functioning you have to really almost think they are equal. One is an object of worship and one is a subject of compassion and to one we look up and to one look down. That normally happens but that may not be right. I raised this as a question.

So again generosity is a mental activity. Mentally we may be able to let it go, which is really important. We can't let it go. You know why we collect all this dirt and dust and all this stuff, all these articles, old food, cans, broken utensils, all of them, old shirts? It is a clear sign we cannot let it go. It is the signal that is saying, "I cannot let it go." So when you see a broken utensil, you can't throw it, "Ah, I cannot let it go." This is a sign. So truly generosity is letting it go. But I am claiming it, I'm putting my claw on it. I'm holding it. So let that go. The major generosity is that. And whatever is the hardest for us to let go, we should be able to let it go.

3. Purification: I regret and purify all transgressions

Next is Purifying. The question is can anybody purify anything? If so, why? And how? I don't have much time to talk and think about. But when you're doing it, is it purifiable? Yes. Can we undo? No. There's a big difference. What you're purifying is negativities that we accumulated because of certain actions. And that negativity you can purify, you can make it go away. You can wash the negativity. But you cannot undo the deeds because whatever harm is done, it's done. That's why if you killed someone purification will not bring that person back. Purification cannot do that. Purification doesn't have the capacity or power to be able to do that. Nor do we have the power, nor does anyone have the power to do that. But the negativities we accumulated which will bring negative results, before the negative result is materialized, it is changeable. So the purification is that change. If it's a very heavy one, make it lighter. If it's a lighter one, make it disappear. You can do that. People do change, even legally. The lawyers will know how to change it and make sure it goes away from your record, with some different names put in. It is practically in our life every day, it's happening.

1:18:12

In the same way, spiritually it can happen. Sometimes we have this idea that the world we are in is a corrupt world and that the spiritual world is pure. We can't go and change it. We have a saying in Tibet, [1:18:30 Tib] "Whether you're a god, or whether you're a human, or whether you're a ghost, you have the same character." So the material world and the spiritual world have a similar function, a very similar function. That's why you cannot bring the person who you killed back, but you can make your punishment lesser or make it even nothing although it is not nothing for this Judy's??? thing two days ago. We saw the hung jury. So it can happen. Not sure if it happened permanently, but it happened for that day. It's a reality on that day. It may change the next day, but it is. So all things can change because they are impermanent and because they are dependent arising. The conditions will change. When the conditions change the result will be different. That's really what it is.

So things are purifiable. The level of intensity that one needs to engage, that's what we have to look in. So how do we purify? What do we do? I talked so many times about how to use the four powers and all those. I'm just going to say today that things are purifiable because they are impermanent, because they are changeable. You can change because you can change the conditions. When the conditions change, it becomes different, because it's dependent arising. It is impermanent. So there is not even the heaviest negativities that one cannot purify.

Remember the Angulimala story. That was a guy who would like to liberate himself. He got a bad teacher. The teacher said, "You kill 1,000 people and cut their thumbs and put them all on a string and wear them. When it becomes 1,000 I'll liberate you." So a person who has committed such a crime also can be purified, if you look in that story. There's a little bit of love to the story. He had a little bit of love for the mother and that's why he hesitated to kill her. So then there was the opportunity for the Buddha to appear. Eventually Angulimala could become an arhat. So can very dull ignorance be changed. Remember that guy who couldn't remember two words together? When he remembered "dust" he forgot "dirt." When he learned about "dirt" he forgot "dust." Such a person could become an arhat because it's impermanent, because it's dependent origination.

4. Rejoicing: I rejoice in all virtues

Without efforts you can have a very big gain. If you keep on rejoicing you are supposed to be getting tremendous gain, especially if you rejoice in your own personal good deeds that you did before. Then you get double the benefit. You made the effort some time ago and keep on rejoicing and you will get double of that effort. It is better to keep milking a cow than to get angry and cut it and then you are finished. So rejoicing is very easy and that's why when you take the bodhisattva vows they put the rejoicing in there with the purification.

I take refuge in the Three Jewels! I confess one by one all sins! I rejoice in beings' virtue! I embrace the Buddha enlightenment!

We take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, purify all negative deeds, rejoice in the good deeds of all beings, hold bodhimind as the most important practice. That's how you take the vow. Quickly taking the vow needs quick development of good luck, good karma. That is rejoicing.

5. Request to remain: I request you to remain until total enlightenment

This is important and also the best for your own longevity.

6. Request for Guidance: I request wise and compassionate guidance

Then comes request for guidance. That's important because we do need the guidance. Particularly when you don't have a guide, at a crucial time, like at the 11th hour before becoming enlightened and things like that you do need guidance. When you talk about becoming enlightened through a vajrayana practice it is very often mentioned that at the time of enlightenment, the last minute before the lama in the form of the yidam, or the yidam in the form of the lama will appear and give the last boosting teaching. And it is needed at every level. That's why this request is there.

7. Dedication: I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings

Next is dedication. That is safekeeping. I told you earlier that karma is definite, however, it is impermanent. When it is dedicated, the mechanical system changes in the karma, until the result is given. Until then it will not change. That's why we need dedication. Also it should be dedicated to very important and good points. That's why we do it for the longevity of the teachings, the longevity of Buddha's teaching and other very important things. That doesn't mean you cannot also dedicate for your little personal things. You can and

you should, but dedication changes the karmic mechanism. Out of those seven, requesting to teach, requesting to remain and dedication are important, but not as important as the first four, especially purification, rejoicing, etc. Within them there are certain priorities. That's about it for the Seven Limbs.

If you look at each and every one of those 7 limbs, particularly 5 of them are very important and easy to do. But once is not enough. Constantly putting efforts in is always better, like the idea of putting drops in the bucket and there will be a time when the bucket is full. It's just like that. And that's why it is called 'daily practice'. Those of us who do different sadhanas do that four, five times a day. Each sadhana will bring that in. Plus you have the Six Session yoga and the refuge. So we do this at least 7, 8 or 9 times per day. The bucket will be filled 7, 8 or 9 times faster.

These are essential for purification of negativities and accumulation of merit. They are both included in this.

MANTRAS

Buddha's mantra: OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SOHA

What does OM mean? It is commonly used almost by all traditional Asian religions, particularly in the Hindu-Buddhist system.

0:10

Many people will say that OM is the beginning of the mantra. That is true, but it doesn't end there. There are a number of different ways of explaining what OM is, but the most important thing here, if you look, is the letter OM by itself is also known as jewel mantra. Even if you don't have anything else to say you can keep on saying OM OM OM and that will be fine. People do that. OM is the combination of three letters: A O M. A is the base.

*A ni yin dru kun chi chog
Dön je yi ge tak pa yin
Ko ne jung wa kye wa me
Tsig du je ba tong pa chi*

That is from the Manjushri Nama Sangit. A is the basis of all sound, all letters. Everything is coming out of A. It is the basic, original source of language. It is also the basis of the letter OM. Then A combines with O and then it is combined with M and becomes OM. These three parts represent body, speech and mind. When you say OM you talk about body, speech and mind. Then in this particular case we have MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE. Mantras are said in whatever the original language the mantra was established in. You are supposed to keep that. You can translate the meaning, but the translation doesn't become a mantra. You have to keep it in the original language, whether you pronounce it properly or not. That doesn't matter. You have to keep it in the original language. Mantra is sound and not meaning. It is not the translation. It is the sound. Even if you don't pronounce it properly you keep the original.

The Tibetans have translate the original Sanskrit teachings and prayers and everything into Tibetan, but kept the mantras in Sanskrit – with a great deal of difficulty to pronounce them. Tibetanized Sanskrit words are only known to the Tibetans, not to the Sanskrit speakers, honestly. It is true. Even then, for a thousand years we kept them in that way – because mantra is sound, not writing, not meaning. They have meaning, but that is mental activity, nothing else. Mantras are sound.

MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE in Tibetan is *thub pa thub pa*. It means something you have achieved. So it is translated as *victory victory, greater victory or achieved, achieved, greatly achieved, conquered, conquered, greatly conquered, etc.* The whole idea is that Buddha managed to conquer and greatly conquer the negativities. These are divided into two, *nyön drib* and *she drib*. The negative emotions, the direct negativities are afflictive emotional negativities. Overcoming these is the first MUNI. The second MUNI is overcoming the self-cherishing and selfishness. The MAHA MUNI, the greater victory is overcoming even the imprints of the negative emotions. That's the *she drib*.

0:20

Then SO HA means to lay the foundation or establishing the ground, same as in Hindi. In Tibetan it is *zhi tsung*.

Above we said that OM is body, speech and mind. Then we had MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE as victory, victory, greater victory and then comes SO HA. So the body, speech and mind of the Buddha will lay its foundation in my body, speech and mind. SOHA and HUM have almost the same meaning. When some mantra become a little longer they are made with that.

Avalokiteshvara Dharani:

Man-tra means protection of mind. There is also something called yantra or dharani. Mantra and dharani are two different things. The long Avalokitesvara dharani goes:

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA / NAMO ARYA JNANA SAGARA VAIROCHANA / VYUHA RAJAYA /
TATHAGATAYA / ARHATE / SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA NAMAH SARVA TAGHAGATE BHYAH
ARHATE BHYAH / SAMYAK SAMBUDDHA BHYAH / NAMAH ARYA AVALOKITESVARAYA /
BODHISATTVAYA / MAHA SATTVAYA / MAHA KARUNIKAYA / TADYATHA: OM DHARA DHARA
/ DHIRI / DHIRI / DHURU DHURU / ITTE VATTE / TSALE TSALE / PRATSALE PRATSALE /
KUSUME KUSUME VARE / ILI MILI / TSITI DZOLAM / APANAYE SVAHA

If you look in detail that's not a mantra. Mantras normally begin with OM and end with either SO HA AND HUM and dharanis normally begin with TAYATA rather than OM – but you can never say that as a blanket statement. Then some people will say TAYATA OM...so that is either added up or came later, I don't know. But the idea of the dharani is not the have OM, but begin with TAYATA.

Avalokiteshvara's Mantra: OM MANI PADME HUM

The Chinese tradition will say NAMO TAPEI KUAN SE YANG PO SA...Here TAPEI is the same as dharani. KUAN SE YANG PO SA is instead of OM MANI PADME HUM. That is Sanskrit origin. I

already explained OM. MANI means jewel. If you look at Avalokitesvara's hand implements, you find he holds a jewel in his hands. PADMA is lotus. HUM is union.

So it is the body, speech and mind of the object you are supplicating, in this case, the Jewel – and Lotus Holder. That's why they say in vajrayana that the hand implements of the yidam are also the actual yidam. It is like their initials. You initial on this page, on this line. There is a reason why jewel and lotus. The jewel is a symbol for wishfulfilling. What is wishfulfilling in the practice of the individual? All the compassion aspects and their related activities. Lotus stands for purity. The lotus itself grows from the mud, yet there is no fault of mud for whatsoever. So it is pure. That refers to the wisdom. Though grown from contaminated beings such as ourselves, wisdom has no fault whatsoever. It is pure.

The word HUM, though often pronounced HUNG, is written as HUM, the M being represented by a circle above the H. The syllable HUM refers to union. People will tell you there are six parts of the HUM and that represents the six realms and purity, etc. That is all true, but the most important thing is the union. It is the union of the object's body, speech and mind, in this case Avalokitesvara's and the subject, oneself. So his body, speech and mind and ours, the supplicator's body, speech and mind, become oneness. Your body, speech and mind and my body, speech and mind may become one.

Taras mantra: OM TARE TUTARE TURE SOHA

Last night one of the questions was, "Is it prayer or meditation?" If you look at the prayer as a simple supplication, asking the higher power to make it happen, then that is one thing. Then the mantra is actually the individual trying to handle it, do it, rather than asking somebody to do it.

0:30

Mantra is hands on action. Then I even said it is meditation, because it is focusing, concentrating and if you simply say the words alone without focusing may have still benefit of saying the words, but not have the benefit of a true mantra. In true mantra each syllable has meaning and a message and you are expected to cooperate with this message and bring it within you, to your deeper mind.

Then it is the same thing with OM TARE TUTARE TURE SOHA. The real meaning of that is the Four Noble Truths. OM is the same. TARE TUTARE

CHAK TSÄL TARE NYUR MA PA MO

TUTTARAYI JIK PA SEL MA

TURE DÖN KÜN JIN PE DRÖL MA

SO HAYI GE KHYÖ LA DÜ DO

*OM, I and all prostrate to the liberator,
the fully realized, transcendent subduer.
I prostrate to the glorious Mother
who liberates with TARE,*

*the Mother who eliminates all fears with TUTARE
the Mother who grants all success with TURE,
To SOHA and the other syllables we offer the greatest homage.*

With this praise of the root mantra
twenty-one times, I have paid homage.

This is the short form of the 21 Tara praise. I never memorized these words before. But that will tell you that OM TARE TUTARE TURE SOHA means the Four Noble Truths.

TARE – means heroine, who overcomes suffering. That’s the First Noble Truth.

TUTARE – that’s the cause of suffering, the delusions and karma, the Second Noble Truth.

TURE – is fulfilling the two positive truths, cause of perfection or cessation and the cessation itself. So when you are saying OM TARE TUTARE TURE SOHA you are thinking and giving the message of the Four Noble Truths.

Mantras are not easy. You can get them on your mouth and without thinking say them a lot. But it’s not that easy. It is among the deepest meditations. In vajrayana, sound as mantra is one of the important things, with mind doing the visualization and the physical gesture altogether. That means body, speech and mind working together. So these are the efforts you put in, once you generated your own motivation.

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