

KOPAN MEDITATION COURSE 1982
Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe

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FIFTEENTH MEDITATION COURSE

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

18th November am

First I would like to offer thanks to everybody that came here to seek happiness, differently than other times. Seeking happiness might be the same as before, that might be the same, but this time, without closing our minds, we are giving some freedom to ourselves. This time we seek happiness by opening our minds to a new method. So therefore I feel rejoicefulness that you are giving the opportunity to yourself to open the door of liberation, the door of release, the great release, by opening the mind to a new method—not only the external way of seeking happiness, but opening the mind to practice, to understand the inner method, the spiritual method. This is extremely

important to do because the happiness is not outside, it is within the mind. So whatever we talk about, temporal or ultimate, whatever it is, there is no other way, except through mind development.

There are various methods for inner development, mind development. These methods, which are the methods explained in the teachings of Buddha, you can understand even before you practice, without putting them into action. Even just hearing the words, you can understand how they are effective for the mind. The calmness or satisfaction or peace they bring can be understood while you are listening to the teachings and then especially by putting them into action. Like the food that you see in the restaurant or in the supermarket, by tasting it, by putting it into action, it becomes experience; also through meditation. Without need to explain in many words the quality of the teachings, the effect of the teachings as one carries on, as one examines, while one is listening, while one is studying, meditating, this one can understand, one can experience.

One should not be satisfied with one or two meditations. It is something that you can do in your life, not like breakfast, you know, between lunch and dinner—if you feel hungry then suddenly you have something quickly. Just something to do because many people are practicing meditation. They have meditation from Zen, from this and that, they have received meditation instruction from Hindu gurus, various others, so everybody talks about meditation: I do this meditation, I do that meditation. So it becomes something just to have, just to make a story in the life, so that you can be part of it, so that oneself can be in the group of those who say, “I practice meditation, I do this and that.” Like we say, “Every day I have breakfast.” Doing meditation just so that you don’t become peculiar in the group of those who do meditation. Anyway, without talking much, that is not the point of doing meditation. Actually, meditation is not even to relax the body or to recover from a headache (here you might get leg pain from doing the sitting meditation). The practice of meditation is not just that.

What we want is to eliminate the root of suffering, the root of unhappiness. That root is within us and that is what we need to eliminate. In that way, our mind is able to approach the everlasting happiness (I don’t know in English how correct it is, “ever release from suffering”). In our daily life, that is actually what we need and that is the main emphasis of the Buddha’s teaching, that is the main emphasis. So we should study all those various meditations, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, without being satisfied with one or two meditations and thinking, “Oh, this is enough. I have enough, I have enough meditation.” If you know only one or two meditations, you block your own wisdom, the door of ultimate happiness. Or another way of saying, the door of the exaltation of omniscience. So that is not skillful.

Similarly, a patient who has various diseases—headache, stomach pain, heart attack, wound, infections, toothache—you see, one medicine, just taking medicine will stop the headache, but that alone cannot stop all those other diseases. As the patient has various diseases, he should get a prescription from the doctor—he should get all these medicines and take them in order to recover. You see, same, same. We have various diseases of mind. The disease of ignorance, disease of attachment, anger, pride, jealousy, various gross and subtle diseases, mental diseases. So one might wonder, physical disease has pain, but attachment, pride, this doesn’t have pain. This is mental pain. Not so much the physical pain, but it is mental pain.

When anger arises, how does it look? How do you see the mind? Do you find yourself comfortable? Mentally, there is no comfort, no happiness, like having a rock inside the heart. And pride is also like having a rocky mountain, a huge rocky mountain that does not fit, that almost cracks the body. So

uncomfortable, so painful. Even if you are well dressed, even if the body is dressed with very expensive clothes, sitting on very comfortable, soft cushions, you have lost your comfort, pleasure. During those times, your experience is just like having a rock inside, so solid, so tight, so painful, not relaxed. Similarly, with attachment, one is so uptight, so painful, as if something is pulling out the heart. Very painful inside.

Physical sickness can be easily cured with the right medicine, but it is not so easy with the inner disease, this pain occurring when disturbing thoughts arise, except maybe if you take something to make yourself unconscious—I don't know the names of the tablets, however, just for two or three hours being unconscious. Similarly, if you are able to sleep, then for one or two hours, however long you sleep, during that time, the disturbing thoughts don't arise strongly. So you see, this inner disease is nothing external. It has no external medicine to completely cure it. Therefore, we are real patients because of having so many mind sicknesses even though we don't have physical pain.

Because outside medicine cannot stop these mental sicknesses, we need to study these various medicines, the meditations, with nothing missing—the complete method, the complete path to eliminate all the sufferings that we have within. We need to study the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment. Then especially while one is going through the meditation, one can see the benefit, one receives benefit, one discovers. Then after one has studied and listened completely to all the teachings, after one has completed the course, then one can discover the benefits, the differences within one's own mind, how much freedom one has and also the peace within the mind. By looking back at one's life, the state of the mind before one attended, and after having known all the subjects of the method bringing peace in the mind, what comes in the mind is only rejoicfulness, happiness. This is the experience of those past students who have studied and checked the teachings, studied and put them into action. Then especially this course, even if you don't understand my language, even if you don't know what I am talking about, just mumbling on the throne, also mixed with coughs, during this course, Tom will be explaining the usual subjects of the course, the lamrim part, in one of the sessions. So this time, you can hear clearly, and also if there is something unclear when I speak, doubts, you don't need to keep the pain, that can be eliminated by discussing.

I am supposed to teach Buddhadharma here but it is difficult to benefit your mind just from my own speech. I don't have much hope of bringing benefit to your mind. To teach others, oneself should practice. So, myself having no understanding of the Buddhadharma, and then not living it, not practicing, it is difficult for you to receive benefits. But somehow, many conditions gathered, somehow, even without knowing Buddhadharma, one or two words that I say may be something that benefits you, maybe there is something that I know that can benefit you.

So this time, the subject that I will try to explain during the course is the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*. Guiding one's own life in the bodhisattva's actions, or putting one's own three doors—the body, speech, and mind—in the bodhisattva's holy action.

Putting the mind in the bodhisattva's holy action of mind is renouncing the self-cherishing thought from which all the problems arise. The mind, which is overwhelmed, possessed by the demon of self-cherishing thought, is transformed into the bodhisattva's holy mind, cherishing others. That is the practice of the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, practicing the bodhisattva's holy action, trying to transform the mind into the bodhisattva's great will, the brave bodhisattva's heroic good heart, by cherishing others alone and then accomplishing the works of obtaining happiness for others by bearing all the

hardships, in spite of all the hardships, however many there are. Through the practice of *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, by replacing the self-cherishing thought with the ultimate good heart, the thought of only cherishing others, one's mind is entered, one's mind is guided in the bodhisattva's holy actions, from the danger of self-cherishing thought. Similarly, the speech and body are guided or entered in the bodhisattva's holy action. So on the basis of this, one's mind is guided in the bodhisattva's holy action of mind.

Before going over this chapter, just by knowing the story of the author of this work, the great bodhisattva Pandit Shantideva, if one has a little idea of the author—it helps one to know that he himself was highly attained, highly learned, a highly realized being. That he himself did the practice, not just writing down the words, not just copying the words from somebody's teaching, from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings, but that he himself lived in this practice and offered great benefits for uncountable numbers of sentient beings. There are many other amazing life stories of the great bodhisattva, Shantideva, but this story is related to this scripture.

The great bodhisattva, Shantideva, was born in India, close to Bodhgaya, that area, I think the western side of Bodhgaya, the place where Buddha has shown the aspect of enlightenment. Shantideva did the retreat of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom, and he actually obtained the retreat, approaching Manjushri. In other words, he saw Manjushri and received many teachings. Then after some time, his father passed away. His father was king in that area and so people in that area requested Shantideva to be the holder of the king's throne. They insisted, so he could not refuse. He accepted and that night, Shantideva had a dream of Manjushri. Manjushri was advising him, "I am your teacher, so we cannot sit together on that throne." Shantideva woke up from the dream and realized that it was a sign that he should not possess the king's reign, the king's power, the king's possessions, palace, all those things—that Manjushri was advising him. So that night, he escaped to Nalanda. I don't remember exactly the name of the abbot who granted ordination to Shantideva, but I think it was Victorious Deva. The abbot who granted the ordination offered the name of Shantideva to him. From this abbot and from Manjushri, Shantideva received and completed the listening of all the teachings, vast like the ocean. He lived in the great monastic university, Nalanda, where there were thousands of pandits, those whose holy minds approached the higher path and were experts in the five qualities, not only Dharma, but also in logic, handicrafts, poetry, and hygiene, those educations. The ordinary people who didn't have any knowledge of clairvoyance could not see what level of realizations Shantideva had, what kind of practice he did. Actually, the great bodhisattva, Shantideva had approached the very high bhumis and was doing incredible, unimaginable works for all the sentient beings. In fact, that is how his life passed in the monastery, that is how he spent his time, but not to outside appearance.

For us, the work is night time to come back home, sleep, and day time to go out to work, to obtain our own happiness. I am not sure whether there's something special, inside, that is outside, and then inside, something special, like the great bodhisattva, Shantideva. I am not sure, that has to be examined. However, the great bodhisattva, Shantideva, appeared to the ordinary people as if he didn't read any scriptures in the monastery as others did; he didn't appear to be doing any reading of scriptures or doing virtuous actions that normally the other monks do in the monastery. He didn't do any works for the monastery, or read scriptures, or do any other Dharma actions. So whatever merit people saw was only three things: he eats and sleeps and then goes to the toilet. So only three things were all the ordinary people see in his daily life. So they called him in Sanskrit, *Bushke*; in Tibetan language, "the three recognitions."

So they felt he was wasting the monastery's means of living, the monastery's possessions. All the time he sleeps, then eats, then goes to the toilet. So they criticized, other ordinary people criticized, the monks criticized. He was doing nothing for the monastery, didn't do any service for the monastery. Also, he was wasting the monastery's things, that is, the monastery's means of living: food and those other materials that are offered by benefactors with devotion. So they thought to kick him out of the monastery. They consulted about kicking him out of the monastery. They think he is useless, or hopeless, or something like that, you know. But they can't just kick him out without his having done something wrong, something, there has to be some reason to kick him out of the monastery. So they consulted together and the idea came to ask him to give teachings, to recite teachings by heart. They thought that if they asked him to do this, because he didn't study, he wouldn't be able to give teachings, or recite. Also, they put a very high throne. So they thought, besides being unable to give teachings, he wouldn't be able to climb up on the throne. So they put a very high throne.

They requested Shantideva to give teachings and he accepted. Then I think they must have waited with great curiosity. Now what is going to happen when he comes? Anyway, when Shantideva came, without any resistance, without any difficulty, he sat on the throne. Then he asked the monks, "What teaching do you need—that which is explained by Shakyamuni Buddha or the teachings that are not explained by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha?" Of course, they would ask for something that has not been explained by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Then without any resistance, without any effort, straight from the heart, he gave the teaching of the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*. Then when he reached the "Wisdom" chapter, before the "Dedication" chapter, when he reached that chapter, one particular word, then Shantideva, while he was carrying on giving the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* teaching, flew away from the throne. And then he became smaller and smaller, his holy body became smaller and smaller, smaller, and after some time, the size of a fly. And even that became smaller and they couldn't see the holy body, but they were still able to hear the teaching, as if he were still on the throne. Then afterwards, when the teaching was completed, they gathered, then they recorded it. So that is how the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* happened, the reasons that made Shantideva teach this.

Similarly, like the great bodhisattva, Shantideva, there are many like this in Tibet and in the monasteries. Outside, very ragged looking, wearing very ragged clothes, very old, four pieces joined or a bare body, living on human excrement—where the people make excrement, there they eat. Outside, looking like that, very dirty, very ragged, but inside, the quality of their mind, the excellence of their mind is like the sky. The amount of realizations that they possess is like the sky. Ordinary people who don't have clairvoyance cannot see this. From the outside, they look just like they are begging, living like this, but in fact they are doing incredible, unimaginable, extensive works for sentient beings. There are so many stories similar to Shantideva's about monks and laypeople, there are so many stories like this that happened in Tibet.

Before going through this, we should try to understand more, to have a more extensive purpose for listening to this subject, to have a pure motive. One great pandit, Chandrakirti, said in the teaching called *Entering the Middle Way*, "The mind sees the shortcomings, the delusions; the mind sees that all the shortcomings and delusions arise from the gathering of changes, the view of gathered changes. I will realize that the 'I' is the object of this, the 'I' is the object of karma, and I, the yogi, will refute the 'I.'"

What this quotation is saying is that all the problems of body and mind that we experience in our daily lives, all these depressions, aggressions, fear, and worry—all these things are the shortcomings

of the disturbing thoughts, such as the three poisonous minds: ignorance, anger and attachment. Where did all these disturbing thoughts come from? They came from the view of the group, the view of the gathered changeable ones, that is the Tibetan term *jig.ta*, or “the view of the changeable ones.” “Changeable ones” means the five aggregates. “Changeable ones” has another meaning, which is “view”—the view of the changeable ones, or the view of the gathered group of changeable ones. The gathering of the changeable ones, the five aggregates are the aggregates of form (the body), feelings, cognitions, the compounded aggregates, and the aggregates of consciousness. The gathering of these five aggregates is in the nature of change. The gathering of all these is in the nature of change. So they are called the changeable ones.

Now “view—” the view of the changeable ones. This gathering of the five aggregates is the base on which we always label our “I.” Whenever we talk about our “I,” each time we think, “Now I am going to do this, now I am going to do that, now I am getting tired, now I am going to eat.” Each time we think, when we talk with others, saying something, talking about the self, doing some actions, each time when we say this, even though we are not aware of what we do in our life, constantly while we are speaking, while we are thinking, we are labeling, even though we are not aware. Each time we think this, we are labeling on these aggregates. So on this gathering of the body and mind, “I” is labeled. While the body and mind are doing some action, on that, “I am doing this and that—” the “I” is labeled. Because the body is sitting and the mind is thinking, the mind is concentrating, keeping that in the mind as a reason, then with the mouth we say, “I am now sitting; I am now meditating.” That is the reason in the heart, that is what there is in the mind when we say, “I am now sitting; I am now meditating.” That is what there is in the mind unless it is questioned. But if it is questioned, “Why do you say this?” (if it is not questioned, of course, the person won’t say anything), “Why do you say, ‘I am doing this?’ Why do you say, ‘I am sitting?’ Or why do you say, ‘I am doing this?’ Why do you say, ‘I am eating’ or ‘I am meditating?’” If it is questioned, then, “Oh, because my mind is concentrating,” or “Because my body is sitting.” That is always the foundation aggregate and that action is kept as a reason in our heart, in our mind, and then in the words we say, “I do this and that,” thinking that way. Like this, it is labeled all the time. This “I” is labeled, or merely labeled, on these aggregates, and exists by depending on the aggregates.

Now, not that “I,” but there exists another “I,” which you might call instinctive according to scientific terms. This is not the labeled “I” but the “I” that is not labeled. There is an “I” that is not labeled, which appears as if it is completely existing from its own side, completely, from all parts, from all sides, completely existing from its own side on these aggregates. There is something not labeled, there is some “I” that is not labeled. “Yes, I understand that labeled ‘I’, I understand that one, but there is one ‘I’ that is not labeled, I feel this in my heart, in my chest, there is something there appearing to me.” Okay, now that is the hallucinated “I,” the hallucinated, illusory “I” that is completely illusory, which is in fact completely empty on these aggregates. It cannot be found; if you search, it cannot be found, from the tip of the hair down to the toes. It cannot be found on the body, or on the mind, not even on the group. So now, the “view,” you see, the “changeable view,” is the very root of all suffering.

“Changeable” is the gathering of the five aggregates. Now view. The “I” is labeled on these aggregates, but in your experience, in your intuitive experience, while you are not examining how the “I” appears to you, it is as if it is not labeled on these aggregates but exists completely from its own side, independently, without depending on anything. That is the “view,” this appearance of “I”—that which independently exists from its own side. “I,” something which is not labeled, which exists without being labeled, this is the “view,” this appearance is the “view.” So this is the completely

non-existent, hallucinated, illusory “I.” This is the source of all the disturbing thoughts and all the sufferings. I think I stop here.

19th November am

During the discourses, when the lamas give teachings, the usual practice that was done by the lineage lamas of the graduated path to enlightenment, and also the lineage lamas who have given the commentary to the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, is just briefly explaining the outlines on the usual way of listening to and explaining the teachings, as they are given in the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment. The commentary is given from beginning to end, about the qualities of the teachings, this particular teachings’ general qualities, the particular qualities of listening and of practicing these teachings, and the details about the way of listening in order to make the teachings effective for one’s own mind, and also from the side of the lama, the way of explaining the teachings. Just briefly mentioning, those explanations come if it is done from the beginning to the end—the details are given in the commentary.

However, here do three prostrations. First of all, it might look funny. In the West, before giving lectures, there are no prostrations. In the universities, when the professor, or generally, when a president or somebody gives lectures, there are no prostrations, so it might look funny. However, this is different, the purpose is different, the whole thing is different—the purpose of listening, the purpose of explaining, the whole goal, the whole thing is completely different. The teaching, if it is given with pride, it is not pure, is not Dharma practice. It doesn’t become pure action. It cannot benefit others that much if the teaching is given with pride, with impure motive. In order to overwhelm the pride, to stop the pride from arising, as the lama comes in front of the throne, he makes three prostrations while visualizing the merit field and the lineage lamas: Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of these teachings, and then the direct and indirect lineage lamas of the teaching that is going to be explained to you. Visualizing the triple gem, the merit field—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Then as one sits on the throne—one doesn’t sit on them (I am just joking)—then the merit field, the lineage lamas that you have visualized above the throne absorb into one’s guru, and then that root guru is absorbed into oneself, enters into one’s mind, into one’s heart. Yourself being oneness, your mind being oneness with the guru’s holy mind, you give the teaching.

Then the disciples make prostrations to the lama who reveals the path, the guru who leads one on the path to enlightenment. However, I am not going to explain now the purpose from the side of the disciple for doing prostrations and all the rest. Those who know the purpose of doing prostrations, who know how to do them, can do. If you know, then you can do, if you don’t know, then you don’t need to. If one doesn’t know the purpose, why it is done, then when you understand, when you feel, when you understand the purpose, at that time, you do it. It is not Nepalese law, it is not the law of the Nepalese government, so there is no danger of police catching you.

The purpose and the meaning of prostrations is very deep and very extensive. If one knows the explanation of prostrations, they contain the whole path to the omniscient mind. The goal is to purify, to be free from all the suffering—true suffering and the true cause of suffering. This is done as a method to obtain happiness, ultimate happiness. It contains what is to be purified, the true cause of suffering, from which to be free. And then path, the explanation of the mudras, contains the path, signifies the path and the result, the enlightenment, the two *kayas*—the Dharmakaya and

the rupakaya. So actually, in short, it is a method to accomplish the whole path and the goal, the rupakaya and Dharmakaya, the exaltation of enlightenment. By doing prostrations to the object, not just rocks or trees or animals, but to a particular, holy field, not ordinary, that is able to guide one from the suffering realms of samsara, and guide one to the blissful state of peace, nirvana, or to enlightenment.

So first, the lama leads the prayer. After sitting down, he leads the prayer. After the disciples have done prostrations and sat down, he leads the prayer *The Essence of Wisdom--the Heart Sutra* or *The Essence of Wisdom*. The *Essence* is the essence of all the Buddha's teachings, sutra and tantra. This is the very essence of all the Buddha's teachings. That is, you see, the *Prajnaparamita*, the teachings of the *Wisdom Gone Beyond*, which explain the absolute nature, the reality or absolute nature of the "I," the absolute nature of all existence. That wisdom which realizes this absolute nature, voidness, is the best, the direct remedy to cut off the root of samsara, the true cause of suffering, the very root of the true cause of suffering, the originator, the ignorance grasping at the "I" as truly existent. There are twelve volumes of the text, the *Wisdom Gone Beyond*, in the scriptures, talking about shunyata—80,000 stanzas, I think, one text, and this is the most abbreviated one among those texts on shunyata.

This which is on one page is the very essence, the most abbreviated of all the Buddhadharma, among all those scriptures of the *Wisdom Gone Beyond*. Each time one reads this, as one contemplates, while one is saying the words, each time one thinks of the meaning of the words, as one understands the meaning of this, it shakes the root of samsara. It harms the root of samsara, the ignorance grasping the "I" as truly existent. As we hear, as I read, you contemplate without the mind wandering. Even though you don't understand much of the meaning of these words, just concentrate on the sound and if you understand the meaning, then of course, meditate on that.

As you hear "no eye, no nose, no tongue," as you hear such things, concentrate, not just thinking "there's no eye, no nose, no tongue." Look at the appearance—think when you hear "there is no eye," when you think of that, how it appears to your mind—eyes, nose, tongue, all these things. Eye, aggregates, all this—how does it appear when you think of that, when you hear of that, how does it appear to your mind, to you. How do you grasp at it, how do you think of it, how do you hold that, or how does the mind believe in it—in other words, the instinctive belief in those objects. When you hear it, you think of the way the mind grasps at the object, the instinctive belief. The truly existent, inherently existent, the "I" from its own side; there are the aggregates from their own side, there is the eye from its own side, there is the nose from its own side, without being labeled, something real which is not labeled, something real from its own side without being labeled. However, that is the hallucination—that view, that appearance is illusory. A hallucination that does not exist—the thing that appears, the way that it appears to one's own mind, it does not exist at all, it does not exist at all there. Where you find it, where you think you have found it, where you think it is—there it is completely empty.

In short, during this prayer, sometimes you think, concentrate on the eye aggregates, all these parts of the aggregates—nose, tongue, all these things—all these as merely labeled. Strongly think from the side of the thought and name, labeled, merely labeled, sometimes strongly think from that side. Just concentrate on that, and sometimes, when you strongly think from this side, then some experience comes, some answer comes into the mind, some effect, some result, some understanding comes in the mind, if you think correctly. In that way then, one recognizes what it is that the teaching is saying more clearly, or what I am saying—that which you see, that which you find in the

teachings of Buddha and that which you hear me saying is “hallucinated” or “truly existent” or that I say is completely a hallucination, completely empty in fact. By thinking sometimes strongly from the appearance, from labeling, that it is merely labeled by thought, the appearance, you see, it is more clear.

When those who have meditated and found some understanding of dependent arising, understanding of the hallucinated “I,” the aggregates, the object of the senses, that which appears, which has to be refuted, that which has to be realized as empty, when those who have found some understanding of the correct emptiness and dependent arising think of the way these things exist, by merely labeling, then, you see, the hallucinated “I,” the aggregates, the senses, the objects become empty. As they are empty, they become empty for your mind. You see that they are empty. Those who have not found much understanding of dependent arising and emptiness, the absolute nature, can at least meditate on the appearance of truly existent, inherently existent, or independently existent, which is not labeled. This is so even though it is not clear at this moment, even though one does not recognize it now, even though it is not clear for your mind, when you look at how things appear to you, even though you do not recognize it, you don’t find it appearing that way. Still, when you think more of the way things actually exist as dependent arisings, being merely labeled, then the result, the benefits of it, the understanding is the discovery in your way of perceiving things, in what it is that you clearly recognize.

Like scientists—as they check the atoms more and more, and check the elements, the more they check, for those who check the mind, and those checking outside phenomena—the deeper they check, the closer they come to Buddha’s explanation of biology, of the mind, the mental factors—the evolution and the nature of the mental factors, and also the evolution of the outside, the elements. So, in this way, the result is more and more—as you hear, as you see, you recognize it to be as you have seen in Buddha’s teachings.

It says in the *Heart Sutra*, “There is no this and that,” saying so many “no’s.” Sometimes when you meditate like this, sometimes meditate that yourself, the “I,” the listener to the teaching, and the aggregates, the general and particular aggregates and the objects of the senses, are merely labeled. And then sometimes, as you hear the words, look at them. As you hear the words, whatever appears to your “I,” your aggregates, your parts—the eyes, nose, those parts—without the mind wandering, as you hear the words, look at the appearance of your own particular aggregates, your own object of the senses. Also, you can think of others. Think where it says “no,” “no,” “no;” apply that to this—on the thing that appears to your mind, apply the word “no.”

Think, “All this is illusory.” Like when you have taken LSD, you get visions of mandalas or going to the planets, and then at the same time the mind is aware that it is not real, it is just a hallucination. Similarly, while you are dreaming, at the same time, you are conscious of the dream, you recognized that this is a dream. Similar to this. At least you can meditate sometimes in this way.

Then each time you do like this, it plants seeds, and the mind gets trained and can soon realize the meaning of emptiness, the absolute nature, the emptiness that is so much emphasized in Buddhadharma. It is emphasized so much how important it is to realize—there are so many volumes of teachings that explain about it in detail. There are the root texts and so many commentaries written by many realized lamas and by Indian pandits. So, soon that experience comes. What is in the books, what you talk about in the teachings, what you meditate on, becomes real. In other words, it becomes reality. Now it is just words, you know, imitating—when we are

meditating, we are imitating, just repeating the words. It is like this in reality, but we don't see it in this way. So now, one doesn't see it as a reality for one's own mind, as a kind of philosophy, but something that you cannot feel, or something that has no relation to the fact of existence. However, at that time, when the understanding and experience comes in your mind, it becomes normal reality, it becomes reality for your mind. Then in this way, one can be swiftly liberated from all the true suffering and the true cause of suffering.

Also, reciting *The Essence of Wisdom* is in experience a way to prevent life dangers or disease. It can prevent temporal hindrances for the success of the works. Then for Dharma practitioners, of course, this is a very essential practice. This is the everyday life practice, the remedy to all the disturbing thoughts, all the true causes of suffering, and particularly to the ignorance grasping the "I"—which, while there is no such "I" existing from its own side, believes that there is such an "I" on the aggregates. So it is of utmost need to practice this. The meditation of the *Essence of Wisdom* is of utmost necessity.

Actually, it is supposed to be related to everyday life. As the meditation and the subject that it explains speaks about one's life, day and night one should practice. The way of practicing this is not just in one session, not just one session of sitting. The meditation on this is from morning until night, whatever one does. Even when one does meditation, even when one does sitting meditation sessions, even when one does not do sitting meditation sessions, even during the break times, whatever action one does—sitting, walking, eating, whatever one does. Also at night, even going to sleep with this practice. This is something very much like a mirror, introducing a way of thinking in one's daily life to see what is wrong and what is right. In our daily life, there are things, objects that we believe exist but that do not exist in fact, and things that do exist. This is like a mirror showing, clarifying these things.

When one does meditation with rituals, such as tantra practice, especially tantra practice, there is generally no way that one can accumulate virtue, perfect virtue, the cause of happiness, without the understanding of the meaning of the *Essence of Wisdom*, the absolute nature, the dependent arising—no way. And especially tantra practice, from the beginning to the end, the practice is to be done accompanied by the meditation, with the understanding of voidness, the *Essence of Wisdom*. All those profound, secret tantra practices, such as the mandala, generating deities—all those things have to be done by the subject, the mind, the creator realizing wisdom, seeing the voidness with the wisdom, looking at dependent arisings as illusory, looking at the subject-object, the visualization, and the appearance as illusory.

So it is very important. When we recite this, all the hindrances to Dharma, to being able to hear and receive the teachings, all the hindrances that disturb one from hearing the teachings as one wishes, and all the hindrances preventing the teachings from becoming effective for the mind, become empty, and do not exist at all. All the hindrances to generating the whole path from beginning to end, the exaltation of the omniscient mind, become empty. There are outer, inner, and secret hindrances. All these disturbing thoughts—anger, attachment, ignorance—all the obscurations, all the hindrances to actualizing the whole path from beginning to end, the exaltation of omniscient mind, become completely empty, and are completely empty. As the hindrances appear while one is saying "hindrances," how this appears to one's mind becomes completely empty, does not exist at all.

Also, if one wishes, one can relate this particularly to anger if one has much anger, and is very impatient. Or if one has so many problems with pride, or attachment, or whatever. If one has one of those particular great problems, one of those particular kinds of disturbing thoughts, such as the self-cherishing thought, or of course the ignorance grasping the “I,” then one can think of these hindrances to practicing and accomplishing the practice of Dharma as completely empty, not existing at all. In that way, reciting the *Heart Sutra*, or meditating, this becomes puja, or becomes the method to prevent or dispel the hindrances to accomplishing Dharma practice.

So now I read the story. Then you can meditate on the meaning.

Before you recite the *Heart Sutra*, it is very good to visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in front of you and then remember the kindness of his having shown such an infallible supreme method, the best method to liberate you. Remember the kindness of the great compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, and then read and meditate on the meaning. Those who can do this, those who understand this can think in this way.

“...Thus I have heard (In emptiness, there are no karmic formations—I think the term compounding aggregates is better here)”

I think I have finished. Another day, I would like to make each subject a little bit clearer, more simple so that when one recites this, it becomes very effective for the mind. So, the more you do the meditation on the *Essence of Wisdom*, instead of getting more and more bored, the more and more your faith increases and, you know, the mind becomes more and more happy. Like this. I think I stop here.

If somebody has one or two questions—if there is somebody who has some problem or something that they can't answer.

Question: I wonder if you could explain what some of these things are: *bodhisattva*, *mahasattva*, *Shariputra*?

Rinpoche: I think *Sharipu* is one of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's disciples, the arhat. The name of that disciple is Sharipu. Sharipu, the son of Shari, probably—that I am not quite sure of. *Bodhisattva*, *mahasattva*. I think *mahasattva*—I don't remember one hundred percent from the commentary, but it could be the Buddha, *mahasattva* could be Buddha. It could also be great *bodhisattva*—there are ordinary *bodhisattvas*, and then there are higher *bodhisattvas* who have reached the *bhumis*. There are ten levels of realizations or *bhumis*, so those could also be called “*mahasattvas*.” They can also be buddhas. *Bodhisattvas* are those who are not enlightened, *mahasattva* could also be Buddha. If I remember one hundred percent later, I will tell you.

Question: Could this sutra also be saying, “Form is form and emptiness is emptiness?” Logically, it seems like that.

Rinpoche: You understand what? No, excuse me, your understanding is what? You understand when you hear “Form is empty,” you hear “emptiness is emptiness,” “emptiness is empty,” that is what you mean?

Question: Yes, in some books, it's explained this way; in other books, in other ways.

Rinpoche: Oh, that's alright. Emptiness is empty is correct. Emptiness is empty. In the teaching, when it says “emptiness is empty,” it means emptiness of the absolute nature. You see, emptiness of the “I.” “I,” that which is actually completely empty, the way appears to oneself, to us now, that emptiness itself, when we talk about that emptiness, it looks like the emptiness is appearing from its

own side, doesn't it? So that emptiness of the "I," the way it appears to us now, that is the emptiness of the "I." Okay? When I say the emptiness of this "I," there is emptiness again appearing from its own side. Now, that is also empty of that appearance from its own side. So emptiness is empty. You see, emptiness, okay You just think, this "I" is empty, it doesn't exist the way it appears, okay? Now, that emptiness is also empty of existing from its own side and labeled on that emptiness "empty." We label the third emptiness "empty." There is no truly existent emptiness, so that emptiness we label "empty." That is, form is emptiness, emptiness is form—that is actually the very essence of the subject of the *Heart Sutra*. Relating to our own experience—this "I" that we feel now, here, above the heart, not in the toes, not in the hair, not in the stomach—we feel "I" somewhere above the heart, in the chest, somewhere here, a real one. Okay, that "form is empty" relating to the "I"—we can understand it easier with the "I" than with form, or than with outside objects because "I" is easier to understand. When we are not analyzing, not seeking the "I," it looks as though it can actually be one hundred percent shown, pointed out here on the aggregates, somewhere in the chest. That it can be found in X-rays! I am joking, but anyway, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form," can relate the "I." You see, as soon as you search, "Where is the 'I'?" suddenly it becomes weaker. The appearance of the "I" that is not merely labeled becomes weaker. For those of us who have not trained the mind much in the nature of emptiness, there is no need to say "merely," just "not labeled."

There is an "I" that appears to exist from its own side, which is not labeled by thought. However, as soon as we start to search for it, it becomes weaker. As soon as we start to check out where it is, it becomes thinner, weaker. For some individuals, it would be easier to recognize the aggregates, the outside objects as the object to be refuted, that thing that does not exist. But usually, for most people, it is easier to recognize the "I" as the object to be refuted, the thing that does not exist, to which we cling. The "I" is easier. So, as soon as we start to search, suddenly it becomes thinner. This "I" that looks as if it exists from its own side, without being labeled, the more we search for it, the more it becomes unclear, disappears. That itself shows that this "I" is a complete hallucination—it does not exist when we search inside.

Now, I'll make this short. There is no "I" on these aggregates doing actions, except what is merely labeled on them by thought. We have an instinctive feeling, instinctive belief that there is an "I" on these aggregates existing from its own side, something real from its own side, without a label, but it is completely empty, completely empty. Therefore, the "I" is empty. On these aggregates, the "I" is empty, not existing from its own side. This "I" that is empty, not existing from its own side, exists on these aggregates. The way it exists on these aggregates is by depending on the aggregates by labeling, by merely labeling. Without choice, without freedom, it is under the control of thought and name. This "I" exists on these aggregates under the control of thought and name. No matter how much one believes, or tries to believe that the "I" does not exist through intellectual doctrinal belief, no matter how much one says it, in our experience there is still an "I" on these aggregates under the control of name. It is under the control of name without choice. It exists by labeling on the aggregates. If you don't label it with your mouth, with words, the experience labels it. When you are hungry, even though you might say that you believe, or that your doctrine says that "I" doesn't exist, still, when you feel hungry, your experience says, "I am hungry, now it is lunchtime." You know? The "I" is empty. On these aggregates, the "I" is empty of true existence. It is empty from its own side because it is dependent on these aggregates by labeling. You can see by this that the "I" is empty, and that emptiness is "I." The "I" is by nature empty, not existing from its own side, existing by dependence. So emptiness is "I." Like that, okay? The meaning of this, one can see, as I said

before, can be found only through experience, through realizations. That time, actually, one can get a surprise.

19th November pm

I didn't mean to come tonight to speak, but this morning, I think I just went somewhere, so I thought in order to reach the *Bodhicharyavatara* text, first we should finish some fundamental, necessary understanding and then actually start the *Bodhicharyavatara* subject.

As I mentioned the day before yesterday morning, this "I" is dependent on the aggregates because of being merely labeled, and the aggregates are also dependent on the group of the particulars, the five aggregates. Then each one—for example, the body—there is no body that is not labeled, which exists without being labeled on the gathering of the particulars of the body by thought. There is only what is merely labeled on the gathering of the limbs, all the particulars. Similarly, the mind is also a dependent arising. From that you can figure out the other mental factors, the other skandhas that have different names.

The mind or consciousness, which is formless, colorless, and whose nature is clear, perceiving objects, which has such a nature and which has such an action, is labeled "mind." There is no mind as it appears to our mind—a real mind that exists from its own side. As we hear "the mind," when I speak of "mind," the mind that appears to your mind is something real, that exists from its own side without being labeled. But that is empty except for what is labeled, and the mind that is labeled on that aggregate has the nature of colorlessness, formlessness, and clarity, and perceives objects. There is no mind that exists that is not that.

So, like this, dependent arising. The body is a dependent arising. The mind exists by mere labeling; similarly then, the mattress. When we look at that mattress, the grass mattress, it is also a dependent arising, it also exists in dependence on the shape and material. If it were a rock or a stone, you would not call it a mattress. If it were made of wood, you would not call it a mattress. However, mattress? What do you call it? Mat, I see. I am sorry—wrong label!

Like this, on the particular base of such material and shape we say, "mat." Same thing with the table, labeled on the basis of that wood that you say has a particular shape—it is not so much that it is wood, but that it has a particular shape, which functions as being used to put things on top. When you have this particular base that fulfills such a function, it is called "table." So it is dependent, and exists by depending on such a base.

Then, however, without talking much, in short, Kopan. By thinking, "I will go to Kopan," you came by air, by land, or whatever it was. But Kopan also exists as merely labeled on this particular area. It is a dependent arising. This meditation course is also merely labeled. There is no meditation course from its own side, as we believe. It exists as merely labeled on the base of the program, discourses—it is labeled on that basis, and it is a dependent arising. However, all this, when we think about it, when we talk about it, everything looks to our minds as though it were not labeled, as though it existed from its own side, but in fact, it is completely empty apart from what ourselves and others have labeled it.

Similarly, one dollar, one rupee, a million dollars—when you look at thousand dollars or one rupee, they appear to be a real one thousand dollars or one rupee or one million dollars in the bank. They

appear from their own side as though they exist by themselves. When you look at them without analyzing, without checking how they are created, your intuitive perception gives it the appearance of existing independently, of existing from its own side, without depending on the idea, on the people who made the machines—without depending on any of these. All these rupees, all these dollars that appear in this way are actually empty, a hallucination. What exists and what you can do, the actions of buying food or doing business with it, that is what is merely labeled. According to the number of zeros, according to how many round ones there are, according to that, it is labeled one thousand dollars, one dollar—all these names were given, all these names were put on that. It is believed, it is agreed, and you are able to buy. If you pay these one thousand dollars, then you get something that costs that much—a television, whatever it is. Like this, all these are dependent arisings labeled on the different numbers.

Similarly, clothes, you see. You make clothes, and something round that you can cover the legs with, you call trousers. The things you can put the legs through are called pants or trousers. Then the things you can put the arms through are called—shirts? With arms? With sleeves? Sleeveless? So you see, making different shapes, you give them different names. There are different shapes for different parts of the limbs, to cover the different parts of the body. Something that covers the head is called “hat.” Then for the feet, they are called “socks,” something like that. You can see, this way, how all these things are dependent arisings, how these different articles of clothing exist by being merely labeled on the particular shape that does that particular function.

Similarly, food. When flour is not mixed with water, when it is just dry, it is just called “flour.” You don’t call it “noodles” when it is in the shop in the sack. In the West, I am not sure—I don’t remember whether I have seen a sack like in the Nepalese shops. Anyway, “flour.” Then it comes into the kitchen. Each time that flour is used, for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner, each time you make something, you call it something different. From the same material you make a round or square something and you call it “bread.” Then if it is made long, it is called “noodle.” If it is made flat and then inside you put tomatoes, or cheese or something else, then it is called “pizza.” I don’t have a wide view of the varieties that pizza can contain. However, according to the way it is served, it is called something different—like spaghetti and all these things. You can see now from this that all the different food also exists by being merely labeled on that particular base. So you see, they are all dependent arisings.

Like this, it is the same with all the objects of the six senses. The six senses are also dependent arisings, as each has a different function. The sense of the tongue cannot hear, cannot smell—it can only taste. Depending on the different function or action that it does, it is labeled. Although when we see, hear, or think about the objects of the six senses, they appear to our minds as not labeled, as existing from their own side, actually nothing exists except for what is merely labeled on that particular base. All this is dependent arising. There is nothing, not one single existence, not one single thing, that exists without being merely labeled, without depending on the merely labeling thought labeling on that base.

It is simple—anything that exists has a name. Why? Anything that exists has to be a dependent arising. Why can’t it be independent? It is easy to understand thinking in this way; anything that exists has a name. For example, one couple plans to have a child next year and so this year they think of a name. Maybe they look in books—I have heard that in the West there are books of names to help the parents. If they are going to call the baby “Vajra” or something like that, that Vajra doesn’t exist even if they have chosen the name. Vajra doesn’t exist, they don’t have Vajra now.

Vajra will have to come. Next year, when they see the baby come from the mother's womb, if they are still going to call it Tashi, sorry, Vajra, if they haven't changed it, if they still have the same idea, then Vajra exists. Vajra exists actually—that Vajra which they already decided on from the beginning, before he was actualized in the mother's womb. When he is actualized in the mother's womb he exists, that Vajra exists. As the base is actualized, Vajra exists. But if they don't like to call him Vajra, if after one year they change the name, if they are going to call him "Rock n' Roll," or something like that, if they didn't like the previous name, then the boy, this child, "Rock n' Roll" did not exist when he was one year old. He wasn't labeled during that one year, so that child "Rock n' Roll," did not exist to that couple during that time. Only in the second year, when they decided to label him "Rock n' Roll," from that day forward, the child existed.

Before, there was a body, but "Rock n' Roll" didn't exist, because things that exist have to have a name. Even though that body didn't have a particular name given to it by the parents, it was just born—there was the body, the aggregates. The aggregates were actualized but no particular name had been given to them by the parents. But "child" was the name. Although it didn't have a particular name, it had that name. Before the particular name was given, it had some name. So you see, the name is merely labeled on the object by thought. Even object that we say "exists," exists also as merely labeled by thought. Every existence has a name and that name exists by being merely labeled on that base by thought. Every existence is a dependent arising, is dependent on the base. It arises, then it exists. All existence—the "I," like "Rock n' Roll," like "Vajra," as well as any other name that you put on phenomena—all existence has a name—without a name it cannot exist. Everything has a name that is labeled on the base, merely labeled on the base by thought. All existence is dependent on the base—by depending on the base, it exists. Being dependent on the base is the way it exists in mere name, as a dependent arising. The "I" is dependent on the aggregates and the thought and name that labels on the aggregates is dependent. The "I" is dependent on the aggregates. As in the example of the child, without the aggregates it cannot be labeled. If there is no base for thought and name to label, then there is no way something can exist. The "I" exists by depending on the thought and name labeled on the aggregates. It does actions, experiences suffering, experiences happiness. Like this, the "I" is a dependent arising. The whole thing, starting from the "I," the aggregates—the whole thing exists by mere labeling.

So in fact, it is like this. But according to our experience, according to our wrong conception of true existence, according to our ignorance—things appear according to our belief—I came from France—truly existent France that does not exist—and then came to Nepal—truly existent Nepal that does not exist—flew by airplane—truly existent airplane that does not exist—came to Kopan—truly existent Kopan monastery, truly existent hills, truly existent trees, which do not exist at all—then doing meditation course—truly existent meditation course that does not exist at all, which you are not doing—it doesn't exist, so how can you be doing it? Truly existent "I"—"I" am meditating, "I" am taking the course—that truly existent "I," the real "I" existing from its own side, cannot be seen even by the omniscient mind. What I am saying is that it does not exist at all. There exists nowhere such a subject who is doing the meditation, who is taking the course. Same thing with parents. When we think of our parents, we see our parents as something not labeled, as truly existent parents who do not exist, from whom we believe that we were born. Same thing with the truly existent son or daughter—they are completely empty. Same thing when we say, "I have a problem." Again, an inherently existent problem, an independent problem, a problem that one worries about so much—and which does not exist at all. Then again, there is happiness, inherently existent happiness which is not merely labeled by one's own thought. One clings to the pleasures, seeking the happiness that does not exist. So, in fact, without talking much, it is like this.

So, I came from France—which is merely labeled—by plane—which is merely labeled. Came to Kopan—which is merely labeled. I am doing the meditation course—which is merely labeled. “I am doing the meditation course.” “I” again—which is merely labeled on these aggregates. Then oneself is born from a merely labeled mother and merely labeled father, oneself is a merely labeled daughter or a merely labeled son. Similarly, one has merely labeled dollars in the bank, in the merely labeled bank. Same thing with the merely labeled money in the merely labeled purse. In the merely labeled car, you go to the merely labeled shop and you buy merely labeled food. Then you come back to the merely labeled house. Then you drink merely labeled wine. Then you meet the merely labeled wife. Then you quarrel, believing everything is truly existent. Then you quarrel, fighting about how much truly existent money was spent. How much money was wasted, how much truly existent money was wasted. I am talking about how it is according to belief, according to appearance—if that was put in words. But in fact, the wine that he had was merely labeled wine. The money was merely labeled money. However, they are quarreling, fighting over the merely labeled things. They are fighting, making each other unhappy, screaming at each other, beating each other, believing that so much truly existent money was spent. The mind is grasping at that view of the money being truly existent, even though it is empty. Like this.

Now they have found jobs in which they get a million dollars each month. And then they are excited, you see, believing that they are going to get a million dollars that exists from its own side—a truly existent million dollars each month. Then comes great worry that they may lose it, that somebody might interfere with the job, that somebody might kick them out, or be jealous. They feel much worry about not getting the truly existent million dollars. Even if they get it, even if they don’t get it, even if they lose it, it is merely labeled. I think I stop here.

There is something left. So you see, like this. You see how it is completely opposite—our belief, our everyday belief, the appearance of possessions, place, enemy, friend, stranger, to our minds. The way it appears, the way we believe it exists and the way things actually do exist are completely opposite. It is like having a vision. Even though we are staying at Kopan hill, even though we are staying at a place like this, having a hallucination of living in a golden palace. Even though we are staying here at this place, we are having the hallucination that we are living in a golden palace, that everything is made of gold, and that you are the king. Like this, although it does not exist, although you are not a king, although there is no palace and you are not living in a palace, still, things appear like this and you believe them to be so. Although it is not a palace, although you are not a king, although it is not a palace, you believe that it is. Like this.

It is like a dream. In dreams, things appear as if they exist from their own side, as if they were not a mind projection, as if they were not labeled by thought. As if they were something that really existed from their own side. In dreams, we also see things, people, ourselves—everything—in that way.

When you see and meet beautiful people, objects, or possessions, attachment arises for those objects. Then when you see undesirable objects or people, hatred arises. In this way, we are under the control of what, in the Western sense, might be called instinct by the scientist—this simultaneously born ignorance, believing that things are truly existent.

As it is said in the teachings, first one clings to the “I,” then one clings to the “my.” Like this, one circles in samsara. First, one clings to the “I,” then one gets attached to “my” things. Like this, one

circles without freedom. The circling in samsara is like the wheel that brings water that you turn round and round—like the wheel that is used to get water.

So, to that compassion that arises over these sentient beings (I am not sure if that is correct, but anyway, you may understand), the compassion that arises from this object, from the sentient beings, these suffering sentient beings, to that compassion, I pay homage. As Chandrakirti, this great pandit said. So you see, the simultaneously born ignorance of true existence holds the “I” as truly existent, as it appears, and it clings to that being true.

That is also how one cherishes the “I.” As one clings to “my” body,” “my” possessions,” “my” relatives,” and “my” happiness as truly existent, then also one’s attachment for these arises. Whoever benefits one’s own happiness, one believes to be a truly existent friend or helper, and then attachment arises. The one who disturbs one’s own happiness, one believes to be a truly existent enemy, and then anger arises. Then one clings to the stranger who neither harms nor benefits one’s own happiness as a truly existent stranger, so ignorance arises. As one meets different objects, these various disturbing thoughts arise.

Then they produce actions. They produce the karmic formation or the compounding action. (I think “karmic formation” is very commonly used, but it is more exact from the Tibetan to use “compounding action;” it makes more sense. It is more clear than just saying “formation.”) Like this.

Relate this to the present human body. Out of ignorance, under the control of the ignorance holding the “I” as truly existent, and also under the control of the compounding action, the virtuous action, the cause for this present body was collected and created. One did virtuous actions, practiced moral conduct, and made prayers with the wish to have human body, and the accumulated virtue, the compounding action, left a potential or seed on the consciousness. At the time of death, because of ignorance and the actions of craving and grasping, this arose. Because of the craving that plans and the grasping that actually decides to take it, craving and grasping caused the potential or the seed that was planted on the consciousness ripen. This is called becoming.

If the craving and grasping have ripened the potential that is left by a non-virtuous action, the person dies with a non-virtuous thought that takes him to the suffering realm. The consciousness transmigrates to the suffering realm. If the person’s craving and grasping ripens the seed that is planted by virtuous action, the person dies with a virtuous thought. That makes the consciousness migrate to the happy body, the happy realm. You see, the potential that was left by the compounding action was ripened by the craving and grasping at the time of death. Because of that, he died with a virtuous thought; so in this life, this time, the consciousness was able to migrate into these present aggregates which are called “human,” having a particular shape and having the incredible freedom to obtain whatever happiness one wishes for. This is labeled “human being.” I think I will stop here.

Rinpoche reads the *Heart Sutra*.

20th November am

After this, the lama or everyone together usually recites some mantras of the Lion-faced Dakini to dispel hindrances. Then after this is the teaching of the *Bodhicharyavatara* that presents the two or true

paths: method and wisdom. The method is particularly bodhicitta, exchanging oneself for others—particularly this profound advice, the practice of bodhicitta, equalizing and exchanging oneself for others. The extensive methods and the profound path, these teachings of the two paths came from the founder, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, to Manjushri, then to Nagarjuna, then to the author of these teachings on the *Bodhicharyavatara*, Shantideva, then gradually through to Lama Tsong Khapa, to the present living guru from whom I have received the commentary on the *Bodhicharyavatara*, the only guide of devas, human beings, and all sentient beings, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. From His Holiness' holy mouth, I was able—one or two times I think—to hear this commentary.

The first commentary that I received was from another great bodhisattva, His Holiness Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, the great bodhisattva pandit who is inseparable from the previous pandits such as Nagarjuna, Asanga, Shantideva, Chandrakirti and all those well-known pandits who did great works for sentient beings, who wrote many root text commentaries, and who clarified Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings. The Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, passed away some years ago. I am not going to mention much now but I will be talking a little bit about this great bodhisattva during the beginning of the discourses—about his advice, his teachings on the practice of bodhicitta. I shall talk just a tiny bit about his holy actions, just to get a tiny idea of his practice.

Rinpoche Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, was born in a rural place in Tibet. I don't remember the exact name. The biography is very short. The copy that I have received or somebody wrote down is very short. However, this great bodhisattva did much listening in his earlier life. He was an expert, learned in all the different aspects of Buddhadharma, the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle, the Theravada Path, the Paramita path, and the teachings of the secret mantra (I did not receive these—it was not so common for people to receive tantra teachings. In public, Rinpoche didn't give many tantra teachings but many teachings on the sutras, particularly on the *Bodhicharyavatara*).

Rinpoche himself wrote one teaching from his own experience on the benefits of bodhicitta, on the practice of the good heart, which is so effective, like nectar to cool the fire of the selfish attitude. He did much listening. There are four sects in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. I think this happened mainly due to the different presentations of the teachings by the lineage lamas. However, the essence, the essential path is the same, the goal is the same; the base, the essential subject is also the same. They all talk about the base, about samsara, about true suffering, and the true cause of suffering.

Rinpoche did extensive listening to all the four sects' teachings on sutra and tantra. He was also an expert in poetry, a great poet. The teachings that Rinpoche wrote are very sweet. They are written with poetry. Then also he understood diagnosis or hygiene—this part of the education, and logic. Like the previous pandits, he had all these five great qualities or excellences. He was excellent, fluent in Sanskrit.

His holy mind was like a great library, like those they have in universities, or Tibetan monasteries, with hundreds and hundreds of volumes. All these teachings that come directly from the holy mouth of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, collectively called the *Kangyur* and the commentaries on these written by the pandits, the Tibetan lamas, all those commentaries called *Tengyur*, Rinpoche could remember those hundreds of volumes. Each volume has three hundred, four hundred, five hundred pages. However, Rinpoche did not have any problems. For ordinary people at that advanced age, it would be difficult to remember, but he did not have any of the hindrances that ordinary people have in explaining or remembering the teachings. It was as if the whole library was within his holy mind. In

this way, he could remember any of the teachings and explain them. Later, Rinpoche became the crown of all the learned, highly realized lamas and the higher geshe.

Then, I think, according to the biography, Rinpoche came to India. For sure that doesn't mean that Rinpoche didn't practice in Tibet, that he only listened without practicing, but in India, he practiced for many years, just living an ascetic life in different places in India, living with the sadhus. From the outside, he appeared to be a sadhu, with just some red cloth wrapped around him, but inside, he was in fact a great holy being, possessor of all the teachings, the words, the understanding of the meaning of sutra and tantra, the whole teaching.

He also had realizations, the experience of the path. He was so rich inside, a great holy being. Day and night, all the time his heart practice was bodhicitta. For us, for myself and ordinary people, the heart practice is the self-cherishing thought, but for such beings as Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, day and night, the heart practice is bodhicitta. Even though the quality of his knowledge of sutra and tantra, of all the teachings, of the complete path to enlightenment, was as extensive as the sky, still he practiced bodhicitta with his whole heart, equalizing, renouncing the self and cherishing others. And if Rinpoche gave advice to anybody who came to see him or take blessings from him, this was the main advice.

When he was living with the sadhus in different places like Varanasi, by the river Ganges, the sadhus liked Rinpoche very much. They helped him, offering him food and things like that.

At that time, many Tibetan people didn't know about him. Then later on, His Holiness the Dalai Lama took *Bodhicharyavatara* teachings from Rinpoche and suddenly the Tibetan people and everybody started to realize who he was, that somehow he was a great being—something like that. Then everybody started to recognize him. His Holiness took teachings and showed his devotion to him as a virtuous friend, as a guru. Before, although as regards education, as regards understanding, his knowledge was as vast and infinite as the sky, still, many learned lamas, abbots, and geshe didn't take teachings and show their devotion to him as a guru. Some took teachings but didn't show devotion—didn't take the teachings with respect for him as a virtuous friend. However, after they saw that His Holiness the Dalai Lama showed devotion to the Khunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, and followed him as a guru, he became famous among the Tibetans.

The practitioners and monks of the different sects and later so many Western people as well received teachings. They received many blessings, advice and teachings from Rinpoche.

Rinpoche lived on one meal a day. His holy body was not the body of a monk, but he lived by the eight precepts, as a completely pure Dharma practitioner. He lived what we, in our ordinary view, see to be a completely ascetic life. He is what we see as a pure Dharma practitioner. Later on, as many people heard his holy name, they came to see him and to make offerings. He, Rinpoche, did not accept the offerings but gave them back. Usually Rinpoche returned whatever the people gave him, he did not keep them. Also, he wore very simple clothes.

Rinpoche was not only an expert in Buddha's teachings but also in other Hindu religions. There are many different Hindu religions and he could explain them all so well, so clearly. He was an expert in those other religions. Usually when Rinpoche began teaching, if there was time, he had a particular way of giving his teachings to the people, introducing those other religions to prove how their views were wrong and how their path didn't lead to nirvana, to the cessation of samsara. Then Rinpoche

would start talking about Buddha's teaching, about the Dharma—the inner and outer Dharma. Then about the four sects of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism with their different presentations—Rinpoche knew all the teachings of the four sects very well and there would be monks from all the sects in the audience. Rinpoche would not only explain the teachings from one sect's view but would show very clearly each sect's side in his presentation. "This way," he says, "according to this sect. This way according to this sect." Very clearly, without any confusion, so everybody was completely satisfied. Incredible, to be learned not only in one sect, Nyingma, or Gelug, but in all four.

I received one oral transmission, just the thing, just listened to the reading. I requested to receive a commentary just for myself, there were no other people. Rinpoche was very busy and couldn't give the commentary, only the oral transmission. So when he reached the ninth chapter, the chapter of wisdom, he was going to give a particular commentary on that, which I had not particularly requested, but there was a great obstacle—when he reached that part, I fell asleep. Then afterwards, I heard one commentary with many other geshe and lamas from other sects.

Rinpoche passed away at the same place and in the same country in which he was born. He was in meditation when he passed away. Rinpoche was in meditation for seven days or something, for quite a few days.

I think most of you have heard about His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Especially those who took teachings, those who received teachings—they understand. Especially those who came from Delhi, who have just seen His Holiness the Dalai Lama—you can understand, just by seeing him, so I don't need to say much. An ordinary person like me has such an ordinary view, but the ordinary person's view becomes great when you look and think of the holy actions of the body, how, even just with the holy body, even without hearing his holy speech, just by seeing the holy body, how much it benefits others, the suffering, confused sentient beings. Then, the holy speech and the actions of the holy mind—the attitude of the holy mind in this life, which you can see and feel very clearly. The whole of the holy body is filled up with compassion from the head down to the feet, like we are filled with blood and flesh. Compassion for any sentient being, whatever race or religion they may be. Compassion for all sentient beings.

Usually, kings or presidents wish less difficulties for themselves as far as the responsibility of working for others is concerned. Usually, those kings, or the president, whoever is the head of the population, desires less hardship, that his work for others should be as easy as possible. But His Holiness is different. There is a particular thing about His Holiness, a sign that he is a great bodhisattva, a great hero working for others, doing any difficult work for others. He is a hero doing that work for however long it takes, however hard it is, without the slightest thought that "it is difficult for me." Instead, it is like drinking nectar.

His Holiness says that for himself, he wishes the work for the Tibetans to be even more difficult than it is now. For himself, he likes that. In general, for all sentient beings, he wishes he could relieve them all from suffering, particularly as regards getting independence for Tibet. Day and night, he is continuously working for all sentient beings with incredible great love, for them to receive happiness without even a second's delay. His great compassion, without even a second's break, is always concerned, the way a mother feels for her most beloved son. With great compassion, with the great compassionate eye, he is always looking at sentient beings, not for even one second not working for sentient beings.

The regard for others' wishes is like this, but for himself, His Holiness is happier if he is working for others; the more problems people bring, the happier he is. That is a special, particular thing, different from other leaders who are working for the people. You can see his holy actions by reading his holy biography—what happened in the past and what is happening now.

Relating to the preservation of the teachings, His Holiness talks about not only one of the four sects' teachings of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, not only the Gelugpa teachings, not only the Nyingmapa teachings, but all of the four sects' teachings, with complete clear understanding. He explains them without mixing them up. He knows all the teachings of all three vehicles, not just with the intellectual mind but with experience, more clearly than what is written in the texts. He can explain straight, directly from experience. Through experience he can explain the general fundamental lamrim path, then the exhaustless path of the secret mantra, of tantra. So extensive, so profound, incredibly profound, deep teachings that many of the learned ones cannot understand, have difficulties in understanding. His Holiness makes the subtle meanings very simple, and relieves many practitioners from confusion and doubt. At the same time, he is preserving the whole Buddhadharma, preserving the experience, and spreading the experience in the minds of sentient beings.

At the same time, he is performing many other skills, the same work as the presidents or kings of other countries. He is doing all those other works, handling all the various problems of all the people. At the same time, he is doing all this work. He is able to handle it, able to do the whole thing, both the secular work and the spiritual work.

It's amazing. The capability, the power to be able to work for others is unimaginable. When His Holiness comes to give teachings, he looks very simple. He looks like a very simple monk who just came out of a cave. Like somebody who lives in a cave and who doesn't do any work, doesn't do any office work, nothing of any kind, like a person who doesn't have any of this, the politics, all these kinds of problems that people bring. His appearance shows no sign of this. He looks like somebody who doesn't handle anything, who doesn't do this kind of work; just himself alone living in a cave and practicing Dharma. Like that.

There are so many amazing, incredible, unimaginable stories in the biography of the Dalai Lama that ordinary people cannot imagine, that ordinary people cannot comprehend. There are so many other stories.

From these holy actions, from these things that ordinary people cannot do, it is proven that His Holiness is a great bodhisattva, a real buddha, the great compassionate one, the compassionate eye buddha, Chenrezig.

There is a praise, a request to Manjushri Buddha. One reason that Manjushri is visualized in the *Bodhicharyavatara* is that the great bodhisattva, Shantideva's guru from whom he received extensive sutra, tantra, and also this teaching, is the Buddha of Wisdom. So, by lineage, Shantideva is making requests to his guru, the Buddha of Wisdom.

Requesting and doing meditation practice swiftly purifies the obstacles and obscurations that make it difficult to understand karma and shunyata, and make it difficult to have faith in the Triple Gem and karma, and which prevent the understanding of shunyata. Then the ignorance is purified and Dharma wisdom develops the understanding of the meaning of the whole teaching. We are able to

comprehend the words, able to understand the meaning of the teaching correctly, and to actualize the realizations. We are able to understand every single thing about what is right and what is wrong, what to practice and what things are to be given up. For that reason, the request and the admiring prayer to Manjushri are done.

The mandala offering is a special method to create extensive merit—merit or fortune or luck to cause one to subdue the mind with regard to the teachings, to be able to complete the Dharma practice of listening, reflecting, and meditating, and to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the sake of others.

It is a special method that gives immeasurable results in this life. The temporal result while one is in samsara, until one is free from samsara, is that in so many lifetimes, one can enjoy the result: temporal happiness and perfection. In so many hundreds of lifetimes, one can find a happy body, perfect enjoyment.

Then the ultimate, the highest, the peerless exaltations of the omniscient mind. The whole graduated path to the omniscient mind. And then particularly, of course, it benefits by pacifying all the disturbing thoughts, the root of ignorance, the grasping “I,” particularly attachment, miserliness. It’s a practice, a remedy, particularly for attachment and miserliness.

Then, after that comes the request to the lineage lamas, requesting the lamas to pacify all the hindrances to generating the path that is contained in the *Bodhicharyavatara*, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, and requesting to purify all those obstacles. The first request is to purify all the obstacles to generating the graduated path to enlightenment within one’s own mind and within the minds of other sentient beings. The first time, we request the purification of all the obstacles for oneself and others, and the second time, the replica of the lineage lama absorbs into oneself and all the sentient beings, generating the whole path to enlightenment, method and wisdom. Especially the wisdom of absolute truth and bodhicitta, equalizing and exchanging oneself for others, are generated within one’s mind and within the minds of all sentient beings.

And after that, as I explained about the purpose and advantage of the mandala offering, according to the practice of the tradition, when the teaching has been given by the lineage lamas before the teaching the mandala offering is given to the guru. Then after that, the lama says some prayers.

I forgot to mention yesterday morning when I was talking about the way of explaining the teachings from the side of the virtuous friend, the lama, that after sitting down on the throne, one should remember that the entire merit field absorbs into the guru and that the guru absorbs into oneself. Then also, the lama should remember impermanence by remembering that the teachings, oneself, the listeners, the disciples, and all existence are like stars—they do not last, shimmering like a lamp, illusory, like water, dew that does not last, like water bubbles, like dreams, like lightning, like clouds. So one should look at it like this. One should look at all of existence like this. Visualizing the merit field absorbing into the guru prevents, stops the pride—remembering this stops the pride and the selfish impure motives for giving teachings. It stops the hindrances that do not allow the action of explaining the Dharma to be pure, that do not allow it to become a pure action of teaching.

Then just before giving teachings to the disciples, the lama, with the right hand in the mudra of expounding the Dharma and the left hand in the mudra of concentration, says the words that tell the devas from those high planets to come down to listen to the teachings. When those great yogis, like

Milarepa, and the high lamas give teachings, the goddesses make flower rains. When the lama starts to give teachings, they make flower offerings—flower rains from the sky.

Also, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama gives teachings, he gives teachings not only to human beings. We see only human beings. We give teachings only to the people, but there are many other beings we can't see from other planets, such as protectors, spirits, and devas. Not only people. So, when those great yogis give teachings, they also teach the devas.

The lama is telling the devas, the kings of the devas, such as Indra and Brahma, to come down to listen to the teachings, the Buddha's holy teachings, the teachings that the Buddha has taught, which are extremely pacifying for the mind, and are the cause of ultimate happiness. They ask them to come down to listen to such teachings. Then they tell them that this is a treasure, that there is no greater treasure than this precious knowledge. You should highly devote yourself to this great work—there is nothing to hear that is of greater interest than this. So therefore, listen to the teachings with a subdued manner of body and a subdued mind, listen to the teachings in a righteous manner, with a subdued body and a subdued mind, a mind of pure motivation.

If the teaching is given with worldly thoughts, to seek reputation, with the thought, "I will be famous," or, "People will think that I'm great," or, "I'm a realized being," if it is given with worldly thoughts, with worldly concern, with concern for the happiness of this life or with the worldly thought seeking material offerings, then even though the words of the subject about which I speak (referring to myself) are the holy Dharma that explains the path, the remedy to the disturbing thoughts that eliminates the delusions, still, if the action, the teaching is given with such wrong motive, then the action does not even become holy Dharma. My action of giving teachings does not become holy Dharma—it becomes worldly Dharma, it does not become holy Dharma.

So, without having worldly thoughts, without the motivation being stained by worldly thought, on that basis, with that pure motivation, keeping as much as possible the thought to obtain benefit for others, the compassionate, loving thought of bodhicitta, obtaining only benefits for other sentient beings—with that motivation, the teaching is given.

If there is extra bodhicitta, that is the best. Even if there is no uncreated, intuitive bodhicitta, at least there should be created bodhicitta.

I shall briefly mention the obstacles to listening to the teachings, the obstacles preventing the teachings from becoming effective for the mind. I shall just briefly mention how to avoid the three mistakes of thought. It looks funny, however—if a pot is upside down, then even though what you're going to put inside is nectar, it doesn't go inside. Similarly, if during the teachings, the body is in the hall but the mind is in Katmandu or in France or in Germany or in America while the teaching is given, if the mind is distracted, nothing goes inside. If the whole session is done like this, after the session you cannot say, "I heard such and such words on this and that." The listener shouldn't just be like a pot put upside down—that is one thing to know.

The second thing is not being like a stained pot. Although the pot is not upside down it has got some stains in it, some bad smell. So even though you pour ice cream into it (the Western nectar, you know), because it has a bad smell, because you put it in a dirty pot, no one will take it. Like this, if one listens to the teachings with the wrong motive, again, same thing. If one listens with worldly disturbing thoughts, such as pride, then we see the teachings with pride. You know, "What else does

he have to say?” kind of waiting for some new subject, to hear something that you have not heard before. When listening with pride, we think all the time, “This I know,” “This I know,” “This also I’ve heard before,” and “This also I’ve heard before.” Each time, we are thinking like this, not checking whether we have this realization, not checking like this.

If he is talking about patience, “I heard this ten years ago.” You shouldn’t think, “I’ve heard these things so many times, for so many years, from so many lamas.” If pride arises, that hinders the teachings from being effective, from being beneficial for your mind—it is something to practice, not so much to collect the words, but to practice, to put into action. Then you should think like this, “For that many years, I have listened, but has there been any progression in my mind? Has my anger become less, weaker than last year, than ten years back? Is there any difference between now and before I met Buddhadharmā? Is there any difference? Has it become any weaker, smaller, shorter than before I met Buddhadharmā?”

The point, the purpose, the conclusion, is this, “Because of following the anger, the disturbing thoughts, I didn’t get to practice patience. That practice of patience didn’t get accomplished, so still, the omniscient mind is not obtained.”

That is how it is blocked. That is why we still cannot do the effortless, extensive works for other sentient beings. It is blocked by anger, by giving victory to anger. Instead of giving the loss to anger and the victory to ourselves, we give the victory to anger, we let the anger overwhelm us.

The whole thing is blocked by this, following anger and not practicing patience. So, the point is to make the rising of anger within one’s mind completely non-existent. You look at your mind to check whether you still have anger or not. This is one example.

Then one should use the same technique, the same way of thinking with the other disturbing thoughts, whatever the teaching is about. If it is a remedy for attachment, then if your mind has that problem, think like that, according to the subject of the teaching.

One should listen to the teachings seeing oneself as a patient because of the sicknesses of the mind, then use the teachings as a medicine for that. One should see the guru, the virtuous friend who reveals the teachings, as a skillful doctor. One should see the teacher who reveals the teachings as a skillful doctor. Then if there is pride, the purpose of listening to the teaching is to remedy, to eliminate the pride, to see the true suffering and the true cause of suffering, the mental sicknesses, pride and these things. Then one should remember the shortcomings of pride.

If one understands the teachings on how to devote oneself to the guru, part of those teachings is to control pride. When pride arises because I know the words, I should check whether I am practicing or not, you see. Pride arising means not having practiced the teachings. Try to recognize your own mistakes, and in this way you will control it, and pride will disappear.

So, like that, listen to the teachings without worldly thoughts of seeking happiness for this life. For reputation—“So that I can write books. With all these notes I can make a book. Or I can teach to others, being a guru, being one of the gurus in the West.” Then the teaching doesn’t benefit. No matter how profound the teaching is, how unmistakable, it does not benefit one’s own mind. It doesn’t help to overwhelm, to pacify the selfish attitudes, the three poisonous minds, all those things.

Also, if one listens with this kind of attitude, with worldly thoughts, it does not become even holy Dharma.

So, in short, one should listen with the motivation of bodhicitta, with at least the creative bodhicitta. In that way, one renounces the mistakes of being like the stained pot.

I think I stop here.

21st November am

Rinpoche reads the *Heart Sutra*.

Those who know how to meditate on Manjushri can do the meditation and concentration on the meaning of the admiring prayer. If you cannot visualize the aspect, think of the essence, the wisdom of all the buddhas. The wisdom of all the buddhas is the Dharma wisdom, the practice and the avoidance manifested in yellow light. On the lotus and the sun-disc is the yellow light in the form of a being with one face, two arms, with crossed legs. His right hand is holding the wisdom sword, and his left hand is holding the stem of a lotus. The lotus holds up a *Prajnaparamita* text.

...Obeisance to my guru and protector Manjushri ...

...And the text that explains them.

Rinpoche reads the *Requesting Prayer to the Lineage Lamas*.

This is not only a request to pacify the obstacles and generate realizations for oneself. Visualize all sentient beings, including those who are around you now, and also remember all other sentient beings. Then request—as you are requesting for yourself, also request on behalf of them.

When I say, “From you three buddhas and bodhisattvas I request inspiration,” the first time, nectar beams are emitted from the buddhas and bodhisattvas and enter your body and mind as well as the body and mind of all other sentient beings, the Dharma friends who are around you here and then the rest of the sentient beings, purifying their obstacles to long life and increasing life and fortune. Then we purify the obstacles to receiving all the excellence and understanding of all the teachings and words, from the beginning to the end, from guru devotion up to the omniscient mind.

Then we request the ability to generate all the realizations of the path, the whole graduated path to enlightenment, particularly the two bodhicittas, the main subject of the Bodhicharyavatara. From the fundamental teachings, the graduated path to enlightenment, we request the two bodhicittas—equalizing, exchanging oneself for others—and then the absolute bodhicitta on which the teachings have been handed down through this lineage.

Then also think, from tantra, “I request the method and wisdom.” On the tantric path of illusory [body] and clear light, the path of wisdom is generated, and its obstacles are purified—those in one’s own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings.

Then the second time I recite this, replicas of the lineage lamas to whom you are making the request absorb into you. You can think that they absorb into your own mind or heart and also into the minds of all other sentient beings. Then all the fortunes are generated and life increased. All the excellences, the understanding of the whole teaching, the realizations of the graduated path from the beginning to the omniscient mind and particularly, the two bodhicittas, are generated. And then, from tantra, with the method and wisdom, the clear light is generated. In short, as these lineage lamas are absorbed, think, “Whatever realizations they have, I also now have.” That is the essence on which to meditate.

...Buddha is unequaled as a teacher and a guide

...I request inspiration.

From yesterday morning’s discourse on how to listen to the teachings that one hears so that what one listens to may be effective for the mind, one thing was left out. Even though the pot is not stained, if it has a hole, no matter how much you put inside, it cannot stay, it runs through, it cannot stay inside. If one forgets the teachings that one has been listening to and that one has understood, if it doesn’t stay in the mind, it is like the pot with a hole in the bottom. The method is to remember, word by word. This is the essence, the most important thing. The main topic.

Usually, the Tibetan lineage lamas from whom we receive the graduated path teachings will repeat three times. First one time, then they give the middle explanation a second time before the session is over, then the third time, the shortest one. Among the disciples, there are different levels of intelligent beings—highly intelligent beings can comprehend the whole thing at the first explanation. For those who cannot comprehend that much, the second explanation is helpful. Then for those with even lower intelligence than that, the very short, essential subject is helpful. So this is a skillful way of not wasting time for the disciple—not only to plant the seed of Dharma, not only planting the seed of the path to the omniscient mind, but for even those of lower intelligence, by coming to that session, by being there for a few hours, to have some understanding.

One should be discussing the subject to which one has been listening, trying to remember like this. Then, that which one can remember, one can train the mind in. Especially when a problem comes, when there is the need to apply that meditation to the problem, then one is able to remember immediately.

There are six recognitions, the practice of the six recognitions. As I explained before, one sees oneself as a patient, the Dharma as the medicine, the teacher as a skillful doctor, and then by practicing, one recovers from the disease. The main proof after having taken the medicine is your own experience. Your own experience proves to you that the medicine cures, that it helps you to recover from the disease. Similarly, there is no need to talk about the benefits of just listening. But when it is put into action, into practice, at that time especially, one can understand from one’s own experience that it pacifies the mental diseases.

Then wishing that the tathagathas or Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the teachings, will exist longer. Wishing that the holy being who reveals the teaching, the virtuous friend who reveals the teaching, will exist longer. Praying that the founder, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who reveals the infallible path, liberating oneself from samsara, will exist longer. Wishing that the holy teachings of the Buddha that end true suffering and the true cause of suffering of all sentient beings and lead to

enlightenment will exist longer. There are about six recognitions like this that make the teachings that one is listening to effective for one's own mind. One thing—when the lamas, the lineage of the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, give teachings, sometimes the mind is extremely happy, sometimes scared. Sometimes there is much laughter or sometimes, we wake up from sleep. There are various things like this when the teachings are given. These things happen because of our minds. The reason we are sometimes happy, the reason we are sometimes kind of very scared—this happens because we have such a nature of mind. Because of that, by hearing such teachings, the mind is in different states, sometimes so happy, sometimes scared.

When we hear about the great opportunities that we have to accomplish happiness in this life and beyond this life, both temporal and ultimate happiness, and when we think about the incredible freedom that we have to practice the holy Dharma, we are happy. When the teachings talk about the mistakes, disturbing thoughts, their actions, and the resulting troubles, the problems that they bring, or when we talk about the nature of our minds, then, you see, we get scared. If we didn't have that type of mind, there would be no reason to get scared. If our lives were not like that, if our minds had not been that way, there would be no reason to be depressed. It is like this.

Before you wash clothes, sometimes the clothes do not look so dirty. But actually, when you wash them, so much dirt that you couldn't see when you were wearing them comes out. "Oh, it's okay, not so dirty, it is okay." But actually, when you washed them, when you put them in a bucket of water with soap for one hour, after one hour an incredible amount of dirt came out, and then you were surprised. Then, after that, again you clean them.

Letting the dirt leave is not disturbing for the clothes. It is not disturbing for the clothes to become clean, it benefits them. It is their nature because of the nature of the clothes, it is their way to become clean. Similarly, because of our nature, because we have this type of mind overwhelmed by disturbing thoughts, by the selfish attitude, and all these things, the mind has always been overwhelmed, we have always been giving victory not to ourselves, but to the selfish attitude, to the disturbing thoughts. Because of being under the control of that, because of following them, we offer them service, we create the unwholesome actions or non-virtuous actions, the cause for unhappiness. That is why our life has had so many problems, on and on and on and on, unceasingly. And as the actions, as the cause has been created by following the disturbing unsubdued mind in the past, there are so many problems left to be experienced in the future. It is simply like this.

So far, we haven't meditated much. We have not recognized the problems, we have not recognized the shortcomings—how all these problems, all the unhappiness and the discomfort of body and mind, how all these the sufferings of the three times came from the disturbing thoughts, these selfish attitudes. Even when one is alone, not living in society, without companions, not being in a group of people, again we have problems, such as being lonely, and many other problems. Especially when we associate with people, there are many problems. We have not clearly discovered how all this came from our mind. The creator is the mind, our own mind. So the teachings, as I mentioned before, are like the mirror that reflects one's own body. For instance, to make the face clean, beautifully clean, by looking in the mirror you see the mistakes. Then you wipe it or you hide it, you cover it with something else. You clean away the mistakes or the black marks of dirt. Whatever you see, whatever you find on the face, you clean. That which you can't clean, you cover with something else, you fill it up. The gaps or the space in between, the wrinkles or the holes, you fill up with cream or something like that. I don't know.

By depending on the mirror, you see the mistakes; then when you see them, you are able to make them better. This is similar to the mind. By depending on the Buddha's teachings like a mirror, we see our own mistakes. We see from them how we live the life. By using the teachings as a mirror, we recognize whether our own lives, whether this precious human body, which can be made highly meaningful, which has great freedom, whether it is used to obtain great meaning or not, whether our life has been meaningful or whether it has been wasted. We see how all the mistakes of the mind come by following the disturbing thoughts, by being overwhelmed by disturbing thoughts; we see the nature of each disturbing thought and are able to recognize each of them, and how, being under the control of these, we create the action or the karma that brings unhappiness and discomfort to the mind, discomfort to the body—right that minute, right that second—and which also brings problems in the coming weeks, months, years, and also problems in the next life.

Since the mind is under the control of the unsubdued mind and the disturbing thoughts, and it has accumulated non-virtuous actions, from beginningless rebirths until now we have experienced suffering and the various problems of samsara.

Because our mind has such a nature, has such characteristics, and is not free from the disturbing thoughts, by depending on the teachings as a mirror, we can recognize the problems. We recognize that these disturbing thoughts create not only the problems of this life but also of rebirth, problems such as taking the suffering bodies of animals, preta beings (those suffering spirits who have great sufferings of hunger and thirst), and narak beings who have the greatest suffering, the suffering of hot and cold (this suffering is the greatest, the heaviest, heavier than that of the devas and the human beings, and even heavier than any other suffering of the lower transmigrating beings). The reason that we normally have all these worries and fears, all these things, the reason we can't lead a life without fear and worry, depression, up and down—all these problems are because the disturbing thoughts, the selfish attitude that exists within our minds. If we didn't have this dwelling in our minds, it would be impossible to experience all this unhappiness. And not only does it exist, but we let our minds be under the control of the selfish attitude, those disturbing thoughts, instead of these things being under the control of ourselves. The whole problem came from this root, from this mistake.

You can understand from this that the cause of the fear is not created by somebody else. The cause of fear, the reason you have fear and worry of all this—the cause was created by you. You created the cause of that. Because there is a cause, the result happens.

By depending on the teaching as a mirror, we recognize the whole process. We recognize the nature of the disturbing thoughts, how we are under their control, how we create karma and then, how we experience the various problems, including the greatest problem—the suffering of the lower realms. Because of the worry and fear, we practice. Then we seek the method, “What can I do for that? How can I stop it?”

The method is generating the path, the graduated path to enlightenment, which ceases the disturbing thoughts, which eliminates the two obscurations of the disturbing thoughts, the obscurations to knowing, obscurations that hinder the achievement of the omniscient mind. In order to do that, one should meditate on, reflect on, and listen to the teachings.

Understanding the fear makes us complete the listening, reflecting, and meditation practices. That is how one can put an end to one's suffering in samsara, which has no beginning. That is how one is

able to make it end and to accomplish the state of omniscient mind for the sake of all other sentient beings.

As in the West, when they think there will be an earthquake, in order to escape from that earthquake, or bomb, or something, they make holes under the house or under the ground, like ants (ants make holes, you know). Under the house or under the ground, they make huge spaces to hide if the earthquake or bomb or something happens. Perhaps it may benefit, perhaps it may help, perhaps it may not help—however, something has to be done before it comes. Similarly, if there is the danger of a dam or a lake breaking, there is the danger that it might destroy the whole village, the whole city. There was a movie in San Francisco (I'm not sure if this actually happened, maybe not, I am not sure)—the big dam broke, the wall broke, and the water ran down. I think this was part of the movie, but also, there was another movie that was taken from something that actually happened in the past. It is a movie that they made—I think they had some kind of scientist or astrologer, I am not sure, who had some kind of doubt or fear that there might be a huge earthquake in San Francisco. I think they made some kind of film of that.

So, you see, it is very useful to check if there is any danger. It is useful to check. If there is a danger, then of course, the worry or fear rises, because if it actually happens, there is mortal danger for oneself and for all others in that city. One cannot go on living at that same place without experiencing the danger. If the danger cannot disturb one, then there is no reason to have fear; but because it can disturb, it can endanger one, the worry and fear rise. The worry and fear persuade the person to do something, to immediately do something to stop the water from coming out. It can run out and wash away the whole city at any moment, so the method to stop it should be done as quickly as possible. The worry and fear caused by realizing that there is a crack and that there is danger makes the person put effort into the method to stop the water from coming out. In this way, the person does not experience the mortal danger. He is free from that.

Similarly, just now you have the fear, you recognize the mistake and the danger and you have fear; but if you don't do anything about it, then again, there is no use. You recognize that you have a disease. You recognize that you have cancer or that you have a heart-attack or this and that, but if you don't do anything about it, if you just live with the fear, then what is the use? That is completely useless. You know that you are going to die, that death is definitely going to happen. You know. No one will say, "I will live forever." If one person says that, we say, "Oh, he's crazy."

Death can happen at any moment. After death, even though the body disintegrates completely and becomes ashes, even if this whole earth were to become completely empty, non-existent, completely finished, where there used to be earth, completely space, no earth, not even an atom—even at that time, one's consciousness is continuing, still existing. It doesn't stop like the lamp when the gas or the kerosene is finished, when the flame stops. The consciousness does not stop like this, it continues. It continues, the consciousness migrates, taking either the body of the happy transmigrating being or the suffering body of the lower being.

The arhats and the higher bodhisattvas who have completely ceased even the seed of the ignorance that holds the "I" as truly existent, and have ceased the disturbing thoughts, don't have to reincarnate under the control of the disturbing thoughts and karma. But with us, sentient beings who are under the control of the disturbing thoughts and karma, the consciousness takes either the happy body or the suffering body of the lower being. There is no third option. It is definitely one of those two.

According to the type of karma—non-virtuous karma or virtuous karma—whichever has been accumulated more in this life in the past and which is more powerful, which is heavier, which is closer at death, the rebirth that will be taken is determined. The karma that is closer (“closer” meaning closer at death), the karma that is nearest at the time of death decides which rebirth will be taken. So, whichever is heavier, nearer, among virtuous and non-virtuous karma, whichever is the nearest, whichever is more habitual, whichever is accumulated first, depending on this, the rebirth of the happy body or the suffering body of the lower beings is taken.

So, you see, we are just living life with fear. You know that death is definitely going to happen. When one’s life is in danger, the fear of death arises. Even in youth when our life is in danger, when we have disease or we are living in a dangerous place or something, we have the fear of death. Particularly in old age when things are decreasing, when the senses or the powers and all things of the body are decreasing, there is more fear of death. But since you don’t have any method, the only solution is to ignore it. Something is definitely going to happen, but since you can’t stop it, since you don’t know what to do, since you don’t know at all, since there is completely dark ignorance as to rebirth, the beginning of life and the end of life, since you don’t know the evolution, the process at all, of what came before this life and what comes after the mind has separated from this body, and since you don’t have the slightest method to use during the process of death when it starts to happen, the only solution is to ignore it. There is no other solution at all. The only solution that you find is to ignore it, to ignore death.

Something that is reality, something that is definitely going to happen to you, you try not to believe in it. Even when some other person has died, you call it “went to sleep.” You call it “being asleep.” You try not to think about it, you try not to believe in it, which does not help, which doesn’t solve the problem at all. Especially if one has cancer, even though one is not old but has some kind of dangerous condition, then when one is near death, even though one tries to stop thinking about it, one can’t. Then fear somehow, uncontrollably, without choice, without freedom, arises. Then one doesn’t have a single method, no solution in the mind of how to deal with it. Even though one tries to ignore it, it just quiets the mind for maybe one minute. But inside, one is sick, inside and underneath, one is sick, not healthy.

If one is just living with the fear of death, it is completely useless. If one lives without doing anything, without doing something that benefits at that time, something that stops that fear, then it is completely useless. Not seeking anything that benefits at that time (even though you do experience death), something that makes the mind happy, something that gives freedom at that time, not doing anything, not seeking anything, not doing anything like this, just living the life with fear of death is completely useless, completely. It is just exhausting oneself. The result is that not only are you making yourself more sick, more unhappy, but you are making others unhappy as well, by their seeing the worry it is creating in you. It makes the environment sad. You are upset about not having any solution ...sadness.

It is the same thing with the human beings who have incredible freedom. We are able to hear, able to understand. We have intelligence and we have a body that gives us the incredible freedom to make preparation for death. Even though we cannot stop experiencing death, at least during those processes, the mind can be in a happy state. We have the ability to create so many unimaginable, various causes for happiness and the perfection of the life coming after this. Finally, the highest, the omniscient mind.

While one has such an incredibly meaningful precious human body, if one does not utilize it for that, to make preparation for eliminating suffering and for obtaining happiness, but instead, one is just always living with the fear, depression, and aggression, then there is no difference between oneself and mute, dumb animals. They also have fear of death but do not do anything about it.

If we tell those sentient beings, “Don’t get angry, practice patience,” they cannot understand. When dogs are fighting and you tell them the shortcomings of anger, how it constantly makes them get angry again and again in future lives and produce an unhappy mind, how they are injuring themselves, no matter how many months and years you explain in their ears, they cannot understand. It does not matter how much you try to explain any practice of patience, any practical meditation techniques, there is no way that they can understand. Any secret, profound teaching, whatever you try, they cannot understand. It is like this—when you put gold in the ear of the donkey, he shakes his head, and when you put dust in his ear, he also shakes. Similarly, even when you say something completely wrong—nothing. And when you say something unmistakable, some secret, profound holy teaching, it doesn’t make any difference to their understanding. They have no freedom. Because they have taken such a body by being under the control of the unsubdued mind and their karma, what can they do? Nothing. Only when they change their bodies, when they leave that body and take a human body is there a possibility. Then there is much freedom to attain happiness, whatever the person wishes. These animals are so pitiful, they cannot do anything. There is no other solution, no other method, nothing else, except the holy Dharma—practicing the holy Dharma, renouncing or separating away from the evil thought of the worldly Dharmas from which all of our problems of life arise, from which all the confusion arises.

For instance, with anger, one practices patience in daily life to stop the anger from arising. So when one is in a special situation, either alone or with other people, when any of those disturbing thoughts arise, we practice the remedy and pacify them. In that way one doesn’t accumulate the karma of being under the control of that. So as there is no cause, one won’t experience the result, the suffering.

Then every day, as much as possible, we practice the remedy to the self-cherishing thought to make it weaker—we lessen the selfish attitude by practicing bodhicitta on the basis of the thought of loving kindness, wishing others to be happy and giving that help oneself.

Also compassion—wishing others to be free from suffering and to do that by oneself. However, what can benefit at the time of death, which means not to take the suffering body of those lower beings and to take the happy body of the transmigrating beings, what can benefit at the time of death is nothing else except holy Dharma.

Lama Tsong Khapa advised like this. Even the animals think, “I am going to die.” That is not enough. Just that is not sufficient. (I don’t remember word for word but the essence is this.) When death happens, the consciousness continues and reincarnates in one of those realms. By thinking of death, we should make preparation for the happiness of future lives. Lama Tsong Khapa said, “We cannot stop death for awhile, we cannot completely stop experiencing the cycle of birth and death for awhile.” “For awhile” means until you reach the bodhisattva bhumi, the arya path. Like the arhat.

For a while we cannot stop experiencing the cycle of death and rebirth, so what to do is to remember, to be aware of the death, which is definitely going to happen, in everyday life. Then, with

that thought, fear rises, and with that thought, one should make preparation for the coming, future lives' happiness and perfection, the temporal and the ultimate.

In this way, thinking of death, rising fear and practicing Dharma eliminates the disturbing unsubdued mind, it eliminates the fear. The fear that comes from understanding helps to completely put an end to the fear and worry, all those things.

I think I stop here.

21st November pm

The subject is from where I stopped last night—the evolution of samsara. From ignorance comes karma, then craving, then grasping. The karma that was actualized at the time of death, the one that is nearest at the time of death, makes the consciousness join these present aggregates. It takes these present aggregates that are called “human being,” which have the most freedom to complete any happiness that one wishes. In that way, it sounds like ignorance is being kind, so we must repay the kindness of the ignorance. However, that is not so, that was just last night.

Being under the control of disturbing thoughts, with those past aggregates, we accumulated karma. Because of that, consciousness is joined without choice to samsara, to these present aggregates, accumulated karma. That is how it is. Being under the control of disturbing thoughts and the karma of the past life, the aggregates joined this present life's samsara.

Samsara is like a circle, similar to a bicycle. The reason we cycle from the past life's aggregates to these aggregates is because we are under the control of disturbing thoughts and karma. In a similar way, these present aggregates do not break the continuity of the three realms—the realms of desire, form, and formlessness—we continue journeying from one realm to another unceasingly, continuously. So the past life's aggregates, these samsaric aggregates, circle to the next life—these aggregates, samsara. It circles like this on and on continuously in one of the three samsaric realms, one continuously joining with another. Because of this function, of being under the control of disturbing unsubdued thoughts and karma, we are circling from one realm to another.

These aggregates are called the samsaric circle. The same circle continues until we break it, continuing day and night, again and again. In terms of compounding action (*du.che.ki.le* in Tibetan)—“compounds” could mean because of the first ignorance. The action came from ignorance and because of that, craving and grasping arose, causing the ripening of the seed that is karma. So that most definitely happened because of the action that comes from ignorance. Then also, these present samsaric aggregates are compounded into form by that action—accumulated with ignorance. That is why the action is called “compounded action.”

The first day that the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg, the name and form came. “Form” is the physical body that has the formation of atoms. Then the other aggregates of recognition and so forth, the compounded aggregates, arose. Then on this base, contact, feeling, and rebirth—all those things happened and now we are in the process of old age. The last thing left to be experienced among the twelve links of this present, particular human body is death.

Besides the four types of suffering, the suffering of rebirth starts from the first moment the consciousness takes place on the fertilized egg. Then we have all the problems of everyday life—in

short, the suffering of having fear and worries about meeting with undesirable objects, the enemy, or even with the elements, non-living harmful things. Then fear and worry about meeting with even the smallest bug. The flea that is biting is not letting you have comfort and sleep, it is disturbing, not letting you continue your beautiful dream. Fears and worries over not finding desirable objects, not finding desirable surroundings, friends or possessions, place, many things. And then, when one has found these things after working for that, looking for that with much effort, even though one has obtained them, again one is not satisfied. Again there is much depression, worry, and fear about having more and better, or about losing it. Like this.

All these problems are the suffering of suffering. These sufferings—such as the enemy attacking, various dangers and pains—even animals have the thought of renouncing these things. If even the animals have it, then it is not surprising that humans have it too. Most samsaric pleasures are changing sufferings. Most of the deluded, contaminated samsaric pleasures are changing sufferings. The tranquil abiding meditations, insight, may not be, otherwise all the rest of temporal samsaric pleasures are changing suffering.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama said it like this, “In the West, they first try to buy an apartment, then T.V., then cars, then after some time, even that is not sufficient and they want to buy better and more. When you first got the apartment, the T.V., and the car, it seemed that you got some satisfaction from them. But later, after some time, one gets bored and tired of that material.” (I don’t know if His Holiness said it exactly like this, but it is the same thing.) After some time, when one has exhausted the pleasure, one gets bored, so then one buys new and better things.

Actually, the first possession that one bought brings the result of more dissatisfaction. It has no end. There is no end to it in this life. Because of impermanence, because of death, there is an end, otherwise the work has no end in this life. There is an end simply because death comes, without choice, but otherwise, the work to always get better and more has no end in this life. The dissatisfactory mind has no end. Without choice, death happens. Then it stops that type of life, stops it for a while, for some time. It does not mean it is the end.

At first, one gets some kind of satisfaction or pleasure, then afterwards, it becomes boring. That pleasure changes into greater pain and dissatisfaction. Like this, it is changing. That is how the changing suffering works, these changing, samsaric, temporal pleasures.

It is not called “changing suffering” just because it does not last or because after some time it becomes a real pleasure and a pleasure that is not labeled. One suffering stops, a new suffering starts. It does not depend on that. It is not ultimate happiness, it is not truly existent happiness because after some time, it changes, it stops and changes into suffering—the suffering of suffering. The reason temporal pleasures are called changing suffering is because the base on which we label “pleasure” is itself suffering.

From this example, we can understand. After sitting more than one hour, even after only twenty minutes of sitting, gradually, the legs and knees become painful. Discomfort starts gradually, pain starts all around and the more you sit, as the talk gets longer, the pain becomes stronger, it increases. The more one sits, the more pain there is. So much pain exhausts you, so you think it is better to stand up. Then when we stand up, at first it is relaxing and pleasurable and comfortable. As we stand up, we think, “Now I am comfortable and happy.” But as one stands longer and longer thinking, “Now I feel comfortable. Now I feel really good,” gradually, the previous comfort decreases and

then another type of discomfort and pain becomes more and more clear and increases. Then, after becoming exhausted from standing, again you think, “Oh, better to sit down.” Again, as soon as you sit down, as soon as you stop putting effort into standing, you feel relaxed and comfortable. Then one minute passes, five minutes, ten minutes go by and that realization of comfort decreases. Then another kind of trouble gradually increases. So, now we have the troubles that were finished by standing up, the troubles that are there when we sit down.

That which we cannot bear did not happen suddenly, like that. The pain that we cannot bear so that we have to sit down did not start immediately. The pain that after some time might cause the body to fall down, so exhausted, that pain that we cannot bear did not start immediately, all of a sudden.

After getting tired of sitting, as soon as we stand up, the tiredness of standing starts. From that very second when you first stood up, the exhaustion of standing started. In that very second of standing up, immediately after that, the condition of the body, the standing up, causes the exhaustion of standing to start. It starts very small but as the action of standing is continued, the pain and tiredness increase gradually. In a similar way, the tiredness of sitting occurs. Right after you change the position of your body, right after you sit down, from that second, immediately, the tiredness of sitting starts subtly, from being tiny. Then as you sit longer and longer, gradually it increases.

This is the basis on which we label “pleasure” or “comfort.” On the basis of the cessation of the heavy tiredness of sitting and the beginning of the small tiredness of standing, on that feeling, we label pleasure. Similarly, after some time of standing, when we sit down, that pleasure is labeled on the base of the small tiredness of sitting that starts and the heavy tiredness of standing that ceases. The small tiredness of sitting starts; so on that we label “pleasure.” The base is only the suffering and on that base, the name of “happiness,” the name of “pleasure” is given.

This is similar to when we feel cold at night. When we feel cold we put many blankets on top of us. At the beginning when we wear something extra or when we put something extra on the bed, we feel kind of warm and comfortable. But then, gradually, we get exhausted from having too many clothes on top of us—too much warmth. This is similar to the comfort and pleasure of being warm, being in the sunshine after feeling cold. Then again we get too hot from sitting a long time, so we go inside the room. Again we are there for a long time, again we feel very cold. It is similar with all the comforts and the pleasures. After being hungry, then eating food, we have comfort. Then, you see, the discomfort of stomachache starts from very small. When we take the first spoon, the second spoon, the third spoon, it is kind of comfortable, pleasurable. Then gradually, as we continue the pleasure and comfort we felt at the beginning, we don’t feel it anymore—it decreases and another kind of trouble increases, when even if you don’t feel hungry, you eat more and more.

The name “happiness” is like this. The name “pleasure” is labeled on a base of suffering.

In South India, there’s one food that is so hot—I don’t know the name—I’ve eaten it many times but I don’t remember the name. They serve it in the tea shop. If you eat this, it makes you drink a cup of tea. They serve it in the tea shop; as you eat more of this, it makes you drink another cup of tea. After having a bite of that, when you drink tea, there’s comfort. After that, when eating again, the other comfort is lost, so again you have another tea.

It is the same with material possessions, food, and fortune. As it is said in the teachings, as it’s said by Buddha, “In samsara, whatever one enjoys, whatever enjoyment of the sense objects one takes,

one is taking the enjoyment of suffering.” If someone likes pizza so much, then okay, in the morning, for breakfast he eats pizza and then at lunch and dinner as well. One day, one week like this, one month like this, he lives one year like this (he cannot live that long just eating pizza all the time). I’m sure he gets bored—even if he didn’t get bored with the lunchtime pizza, after the breakfast pizza, maybe. The second day, I’m sure he might scream at the cook.

That first pleasure makes you think, “It is so delicious, so fantastic,” but even before you finish one plate, it’s already disgusting, you feel disgust that the dislike has started. The more, the longer you are eating, the more that first pleasure gets completely lost. Like this, we are enjoying taking the enjoyment of suffering.

Then, whatever friend one accompanies is a friend of suffering. After years and years, months and months of having put so much time and effort into it, one is able to meet the friend or able to live with the friend, after much material expense. When one finally meets or at the beginning, when one starts to live together, if you are separated for even one minute, if the object is not in front of you, one cannot stand it for even one minute. One cannot stand not being together. Like this, like milk and water mixed together, kind of inseparable. In the beginning it is kind of truly existent—a real, truly existent beautiful body, truly existent beautiful speech. In the beginning it is so exciting, so beautiful, such a beautiful life, so highly exciting, but hour by hour as one accompanies and lives with this friend, one doesn’t like that one anymore. The first hour you are so friendly, inseparable, but the next hour, due to finding some disharmony, due to some different way of thinking, one doesn’t like that one, one finds some different thoughts, different desires. Then the next hour, it got lost. Then the other person who was so beautiful becomes a very cruel person, a very cold person that you don’t even want to see again. You pray that he doesn’t show up at your house, especially at meal times, or when you have some party at the house and you’re talking with other friends. You even pray never to see him again.

Every day and month goes like this. Even though you may stay together, the mind is not interested, there is no thought of loving kindness. The great interest got lost. You lost your comfort, what you felt before, what you expected for many months, for many years, what you believed in at the beginning—there is nothing left of that any more. Although you are even physically living together in the same room, your lives are lived with fighting, your lives are lived like meditation sessions, fighting eight, nine, ten times each day. It is like this with whoever one accompanies—that friend is a friend of suffering.

Also the place. Every place you live in is a place of suffering. From this, we can understand how samsaric pleasures are changing suffering.

In Nepal, the young Eastern people seek more changing suffering from the West. They seek more. Many people in the West get bored of the changing suffering, the temporal pleasure, being wealthy, having so many material possessions, living with many friends surrounding you, with so much wealth and possessions, apartments, so many things. They have done everything, they could find in the world. They have done everything. However, they haven’t found any meaning in life. It didn’t give any answer. It didn’t give any satisfaction. So they got bored with the comfort of having the wealth and those things.

Then they want to seek something else, something spiritual. They want to seek happiness not by the external method but by the internal method, through a new method. Those who have fortunate

karma, those who have luck, meet the holy Dharma. But Eastern people, especially young people, they seek the West—their liberation is the Western way of life. Especially to be in America. That is their liberation.

The thought of becoming liberated from the suffering of change is necessary in order to be liberated from samsara. But still, this is not enough, this is not sufficient. I think I stop here.

Tonight, I have one request. One student's father (she came to Dharamsala, I think she attended one of the Dharma Celebrations), Rosario, died yesterday. She sent a telegram from Italy saying that he died of cancer, she asked to do pujas.

Relying upon and taking refuge in the Great Compassionate One, please recite the mantra and visualize the compassionate eye looking Buddha in front of you, with a thousand arms, a thousand eyes—in that aspect. The most important thing is to feel the essence, the great compassion of the buddha that covers all sentient beings.

You visualize the person who died, Rosario, in the form of a human, in front of the deity. Then you can visualize from the palm of the right hand, which is in the mudra of granting sublime realizations, purifying white nectar flows to the person who died and to oneself and all the rest of the sentient beings. And you can visualize your parents and any particular person you know who is sick. Or anyone else—maybe those relatives whom you want particularly to benefit.

Then all sentient beings are purified. Nectar rays enter into one's body and mind and all sentient beings are purified. If you have a disease or if you want to do purification for some other particular person, you purify the cause of the sickness, the cancer, or whatever it is. You do not only purify the sickness itself but also its causes, from where the sickness came. If somebody has a confused mind and trouble, a very hard life, the cause from which it came, their karma, the unsubdued mind, the two obscurations, get completely purified. And also the person who died, all his negative karma, whatever I have explained, whatever suffering he is experiencing now, the true causes of that suffering gets completely purified, as well as that of yourself and of all sentient beings. All the obscurations get completely purified while you are visualizing this.

Then you recite the mantra. You can recite the mantra verbally, then do the request to Chenrezig.

Dedicate the merit for this particular person as well as for all other sentient beings. Dedicate for the person who died, wherever he is now—in the intermediate stage or in the lower realms—wherever he is, that he may find a perfect human body and meet a virtuous guru like Chenrezig, and be guided by him in all his coming lives. Dedicate for him to achieve the stage of the omniscient mind of Chenrezig, and the same thing for oneself and for all the rest of the sentient beings.

If you have certain other people, then with the prayer to Chenrezig dedicate the merit to them so that what is left of the precious human life does not get wasted, and for them to be able to meet the holy Dharma, for their lives to be highly meaningful, and for them to be guided by Chenrezig until the exaltation of Chenrezig, the enlightenment of Chenrezig is obtained.

I think I will stop.

22nd November am

(Rinpoche reads the *Heart Sutra*.)

Praise to Manjushri. (The request should be not only for oneself but for all other sentient beings.)

This quotation from Lama Tsong Khapa is from the section on impermanence. The main point that Lama Tsong Khapa emphasizes is not so much the fear of death itself, the mind separating from the body, not so much that. The fear is not having done any preparation for the happiness and perfection of the future life—not having done any work, any preparation for the future life.

With that kind of concern and fear we practice holy Dharma and make preparation for future happiness. Beyond this life up to omniscient mind, we make preparations for the highest peerless happiness, the state of the omniscient mind. The problem is not so much that this life stops. The mind separating from this body is not the main problem. The problem is that one has been using this life, this precious human body to create non-virtue, the cause of the sufferings of the unfortunate transmigrating beings. While we have this incredible opportunity to obtain virtue, the cause of temporal happiness and ultimate happiness, whatever one wishes, we are not using it for that. Actually, we are using this precious human body to create the cause of suffering, which one does not like, while not using it to create the cause of happiness, which one does like.

On the other hand, if one has not been wasting this precious human body and one has made preparation, there is no worry or fear when death happens. Then, you see, it is just a matter of changing from one body to another, changing from this body to another body, like moving from one apartment to another apartment. You move from this apartment to a better one, to one that has more facilities, more comfort. You move to that better apartment, so it is pointless to worry.

You leave this body for another perfect human body that has more freedom to complete the path to omniscient mind, that is better qualified than this body. You move to the body that is perfect, with eight qualities, the ripened aspects. Like the perfect holy bodies with eight qualities of Lama Tsong Khapa, Milarepa, Marpa, or Naropa, those great yogis.

There are some points to be made clear in regards the changing suffering. You see, if it were not labeled, if the name “pleasure” was not labeled on the base of suffering, then the comfort you feel at the beginning should increase the more you sit. The pleasure and the comfort should increase. And similarly, the more you eat, the comfort should increase. But in our experience, the evolution is the complete opposite.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha explains the sufferings of rebirth and the other sufferings elaborately in the sutra teachings called *Entering the Womb*. So I think because of that it is called *Entering the Womb*. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha gave these teachings to his nephew or his younger brother or something like that. If one does only eating and doesn't do the other actions of standing, sitting, and sleeping, then one experiences only suffering. Also, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said that when the meditator checks up, when he analyzes each of these actions individually, he sees that when one does only one action, like the action of eating, and when one doesn't do other actions, then from that comes a painful, very unpeaceful feeling. I don't know how to put it exactly, but a very unpeaceful feeling arises, a very uncomfortable, unbearably unceasing pain, not beautiful. The recognition of happiness doesn't arise. One doesn't get any recognition of happiness from that action.

Similarly, when one does one of the other actions, with each of those actions, again the recognition of happiness does not arise. However, when one suffering stops and another suffering arises, when another suffering starts, upon that the recognition of happiness arises. When that happens, when one suffering arises, when it stops, it is also one suffering stopping.

When it arises, it arises in the compounding nature. When it stops, it stops in the compounding nature. You see, the action of standing compounds the suffering, the action of standing compounds the suffering. When the suffering of standing stops, again, when one sits down, the action of sitting on which we label “comfort,” the suffering compounds that suffering on which one labels “pleasure.” There is pleasure at the beginning. When it stops, it stops in the compounding nature and also when it arises, it arises in the compounding nature. This samsara, even if we sit, it is suffering, if we stand it is suffering—even if we live a millionaire’s life it is suffering, when we walk, it is suffering, even when we eat, it is suffering, and even when we sleep, it is suffering. Constantly, that is the nature of life.

We may think: “Maybe it is better, maybe I will be happier living as a beggar.” After being a beggar, a millionaire, then after getting bored with that, a beggar. However, this is all in the nature of suffering. Even if one leads the life of traveling all over the world, that is in the nature of suffering, and even if one lives at one place, without traveling, without moving, that is also in the nature of suffering. Even if one lives as a business person, leading a business life, that is in the nature of suffering, and even if one lives as a farmer, that is in the nature of suffering. (Maybe if one lives as a hippy, then maybe that is nirvana, the cessation of suffering.)

Whatever lifestyles we try, however different, until we become free from samsara, they are all in the nature of suffering. If one gets exhausted working in the office, then one thinks, “Maybe there is more pleasure in the life of the circus; if I get involved in the circus, maybe there is more pleasure.” However, afterwards, if one does give up working in the office, sitting at the desk, in front of the table, spending one’s time making bills and writing, even if one does give up doing office work, again there is suffering. One thinks, “Oh, maybe it is better to be involved in a circus, maybe there is more pleasure.” Then even if one does get involved in a circus, again there is suffering. You know, the fear of not being successful. I heard that on television, for the people who make jokes, the old mothers and fathers who make jokes on the channel that shows the old fathers and mothers joking, if the joking people don’t laugh, I heard that it becomes very painful. The nature of life, whatever we try, is like this. Some of us have had many different changes of lifestyle, so we can understand, looking back, how those different lifestyles were in the nature of suffering, even before we got involved in them. Looking at it, before we got involved in them, they looked very nice, very beautiful. Whoever you meet, any person from the top, king or president, down to beggar, at the beginning when you meet them, maybe you begin with some nice talk, maybe they are well dressed and nice looking, living in a nice apartment—if you start a conversation, at first it is nice, everything is okay, beautiful. But then, as you carry on the conversation, gradually the person talks about his suffering. After a few minutes, he talks about his suffering and if you continue the conversation for one hour, so much suffering.

Take somebody who is sick, for example. A person who got better today, yesterday didn’t have any comfort, just pain, and today, the pain has gone a little bit down. Then if you ask him, “How are you?” We would say, “Oh, I am a little bit better today.” “Better” means that because the pain has gone a little bit down, he would call it that much pleasure. This can help you to understand. This, “I am a little bit better today,” means a little more comfort than yesterday. When it is very small, when

the pain went down a little bit, although there is still pain, he says, “Oh, today I am very comfortable.” He still feels a little bit of pain, but it became so small, much less than yesterday. There is still a little, little bit, but, “Compared to the day before yesterday, I am so good, so comfortable.” So, you see, you label.

But about that person who got a little bit better, whose pain became much smaller, what would you say about him? What would you say? Do you call that pleasure or not? About that person whose pain got much smaller, would you call that pleasure or not?

TOM: Sometimes, but I could just say, “Today I feel better but I still feel lousy.” If you are much better than yesterday, but ...

RINPOCHE: Yes, yes, but “much better” means that there is a little bit more comfort, one has that much pleasure.

TOM: Maybe, that is not what we call pleasure, we would say ...

RINPOCHE: It is not called, but it means.

TOM: We look at it directly as ...

RINPOCHE: Comfort, more comfort than before.

TOM: Yeah.

RINPOCHE: Isn't there? Isn't there more pleasure than before?

TOM: I would not say more pleasure, but less pain.

RINPOCHE: Then ...

TOM: I would not say more pleasure, but less pain.

RINPOCHE: Then what do you call “more pleasure”?

TOM: Well, when I feel the pain is gone, then I say, “Ah, ...

RINPOCHE: Hum?

TOM: When the pain is gone?

RINPOCHE: When the pain is gone, then there is what? Little pleasure or middle pleasure, happiness? Heh?

TOM: It depends on what I am doing.

RINPOCHE: So there is some comfort even though you don't accept the word “pleasure”, but there is some comfort?

TOM: Yeah.

RINPOCHE: There is some comfort - but there is no comfort, there is suffering, there is only suffering of suffering.

TOM: Except we don't call it that.

RINPOCHE: No, it is suffering, but there is comfort; what there is only suffering, and there is comfort. This is contradictory.

TOM: Yeah.

RINPOCHE: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah?

RINPOCHE: So there is no suffering if there is comfort. So what is there? Heh?

TOM: We are suffering in that situation.

RINPOCHE: We are suffering, so there is no comfort?

TOM: No.

RINPOCHE: So there is no comfort. So he is not better than the day before yesterday, he is not better than yesterday.

TOM: Only by saying “less suffering”, just “less suffering”, not “no suffering”, just “less obvious suffering”, “less obvious suffering”.

RINPOCHE: Then. Then? Isn't that the definition of having more comfort? Because of having less pain? Then which one do you call "small comfort"? Which one ...

TOM: In English, when you say you have more comfort, it doesn't mean you have comfort. It means ...

GENERAL LAUGHTER

RINPOCHE: When you have a little bit of money, you don't have money?

TOM: If I am a millionaire and I have less money than a billionaire, I don't have a little bit of money, I still have a lot of money by comparison to other people. It is only in comparison ...

RINPOCHE: No, no, I am not comparing to others, I am just talking on one object. When you have a few paise, don't you have paise?

TOM: Hum.

RINPOCHE: Hey? You have paise. So when you have a little bit of comfort, you do have comfort?

TOM: Yeah...

RINPOCHE: Yeah, so you have comfort?

TOM: No, not necessarily.

RINPOCHE: Which one is true? "You have comfort" is true, or "you have not comfort" is true?

TOM: Probably "you don't have". In English, we don't say ...

RINPOCHE: I think, maybe pee-pee break.

The pleasures of samsara, these various types of temporal pleasure are in the nature of suffering. Even if one does not experience the sufferings of suffering, or only experiences the indifferent feeling, that is also suffering. These aggregates are under the control of karma and the unsubdued mind or the contaminated seed of the disturbing thoughts. So even if these aggregates are not experiencing the suffering of suffering and changing sufferings but only indifferent feeling instead—that is also suffering.

The formless gods, the formless samsaric gods or devas got bored with the samsaric pleasures and seek only the indifferent feeling.

There are four categories like this: "infinite consciousness," "infinite sky," "nothingness," then "the very tip of samsara." There are four categories. You see, with an actual physical body, through the achievement of the stabilized, single-pointed thought, in other words, tranquil abiding or *shamatha*, one experiences rapturous ecstasy. Then after some time even this great pleasure which is derived from the achievement of single-pointed concentration becomes boring. First they have only the thought of renouncing samsaric pleasures, then they seek only the indifferent feeling. I think with the "infinite sky" everything (I don't remember one hundred percent), everything is as though it were in the nature of sky, or consciousness.

Then, the third, "nothingness." The devas, the samsaric gods in the world of form, don't have the suffering of suffering. The formless ones abide in equanimity. However, they are not free from the suffering of samsara because they are not free from the pervasive, compounding suffering. You see, their aggregates are under the control of karma and the unsubdued mind with its contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. So, even though they reached the very highest realm called the "tip," the very top of samsara, at the time of death when they see that they have to reincarnate down in those lower realms while they believed that they had achieved nirvana, at the time of death when they see where

they have to be reborn, heresy arises in their minds. Heresy arises that such a thing as nirvana, the achievement of nirvana, is non-existent.

Because again one has not achieved it, one has to be born in the lower realms. As they have not eliminated the seed of the disturbing thoughts by generating the remedy of the path in their mind, by reincarnating they experience the same problem. Even though the disturbing thoughts such as anger, pride, and attachment do not rise while they are in that realm, because the seed is there, by reincarnating they experience the same problem.

These worldly gods, even though they don't have the suffering of suffering and the suffering of change, still they have the seed of the disturbing thought. Through the method of tranquil abiding, shamatha, the actual body is stabilized on the single-pointed thought. They have actualized and attained this, and as a result they are born in those four categories. The part of the wisdom path realizing the absolute nature and developing that wisdom is left out, missing. That is why the seed of the disturbing thought is not eliminated. They are unable to break the continuity of the aggregates, which are continually joining from one life to another life under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts. From this one can understand what is the actual fundamental suffering of samsara from which we should be liberated: the pervasive, compounding suffering.

These aggregates, which are formed, which are under the control of karma (as you remember, the other night I explained the evolution), the cause of which was created in the past life through karma, through ignorance and the contaminated seed of the disturbing thoughts, this is the fundamental suffering of samsara. This pervasive, compounding suffering—if I explain the meaning of the word you can understand the reason it is called “pervasive.” It is like a water bubble that comes from the water. From these aggregates (Tibetan *pung,po*), the deluded aggregates of attachment and desire come.

This suffering covers or pervades. It is the foundation for both the suffering of suffering and the changing suffering. Without the deluded aggregates of attachment and the pervasive compounding suffering, the two other sufferings cannot be experienced. You can understand how those two other sufferings arise by looking at pervasive, compounding suffering. These aggregates are under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts, and also there is a seed and the seed is not eliminated from birth. From the very first moment the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg, from that very first second of birth, the aggregates have the seed of the disturbing thoughts.

The reason that this life's aggregates were born with the seed of disturbing thoughts is that the past life's aggregates were contaminated with the seed of disturbing thoughts. That was not eliminated, so that is why we were born with it. This answers all those other questions for the reason that in this life one was reborn with anger, with attachment and pride, why one didn't take a birth without any of these disturbing thoughts.

Because the seed and the disturbing thoughts are there, when we meet with a beautiful object, suddenly attachment arises. When we meet with an ugly object, possession, or person, anger arises. And the indifferent object produces ignorance. Jealousy, pride, and avarice: all these disturbing thoughts rise when we meet the object. When the senses come into contact with the object, depending on the different objects those different disturbing thoughts arise.

Even though there is no anger now, no arising, if suddenly the person who sits next to you disturbs you while you are having a good meditation, a peaceful time, having a good trip, then suddenly the anger arises—as if you had thrown a burning match into kerosene. And the same way with all the other disturbing thoughts. Suddenly, because of the seed, the suffering of suffering, because these aggregates are under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts, even though you are not experiencing suffering now, in one minute or one hour, you experience the suffering of suffering. The suffering of suffering of the mind or the suffering of suffering of the body, the physical suffering of suffering.

The first cause, ignorance and the action, karma planted the seed. The negative karmas planted the seed. After the karma is done, the seed is planted on the consciousness. If in the past life or even in this life a person has created the negative karma of harming others, such as criticizing others with anger, saying blindly all kinds of harsh words with anger, then it has left the seed or the potential for him to experience eye-blindness this year. The evolution of this is that by having had the seed of the disturbing thoughts planted there, the aggregates, which are under the control of the actions and the disturbing thoughts, compound those mental sufferings of suffering, and this compounds the physical sufferings of suffering.

From this you can understand that without this, the fundamental pervasive, compounding suffering—the aggregates—there is no way for you to experience the suffering of suffering and the changing suffering. Even without tracking back, thinking about the past, it is easy to see how the aggregates are under the control of karma and the unsubdued mind, because even while we are meditating, even when we are trying to practice Dharma, trying to use the aggregates for practicing Dharma, we forget the object of meditation. Even though we try to make time for practicing Dharma, to meditate, during the meditation instead of keeping the mind constantly placed on the virtuous thought or the virtuous object of meditation, we forget the object.

Instead, what thoughts come? Only thoughts of boyfriend, only thoughts of the object of anger or thoughts of the object of attachment come. That shows how these aggregates are under the control of disturbing thoughts. Even though we are trying very hard, even though we are trying to make a particular time for practicing Dharma, obtaining the method to accomplish ultimate happiness, we find that we are unable to meditate because we are overwhelmed by disturbing thoughts. Even though one does not normally like to get angry, one hates the strong dissatisfactory mind of attachment, even though one doesn't like it, uncontrollably one gets completely overwhelmed by these disturbing thoughts. Sometimes you might get kind of surprised. How did it happen? By looking back you see how you got completely overwhelmed, overtaken by the disturbing thoughts. How did it happen? Where did they come from?

The pervasive, compounding suffering is the main suffering from which we should be liberated. This is what we should have the thought to renounce when we say renunciation of samsara—the thought of renouncing these aggregates that are under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts and the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts.

If the thought of renouncing this samsara of pervasive compounding suffering is just words, if the renunciation is mere words, then when you think of the suffering of others the compassion is just words also. The compassion you feel for other beings, since you don't feel strongly about your own, since you don't feel your own suffering to be unbearable, when you think of others, again the compassion is just words. You don't feel that it is all that unbearable that others are experiencing

these samsaric sufferings. The compassion is just on the surface, there is no compassion living in the heart—just on the lips. The compassion is just on the lips, not in the heart. So in order to bring up the uncreated, intense strong compassion, one should have the uncreated thought of renunciation. In order to feel that it is unbearable that others are experiencing pervasive, compounding suffering, as unbearable as falling into the fire, that unbearable, in order to get such an uncreated strong compassion, one should have the uncreated thought of renouncing one's own pervasive, compounding suffering. The wish to be free from that is so strong. The wish to be free from this samsara is so strong that one can't stand even for a minute to be in this. It feels like being in the center of a fire. So there is the uncreated, intuitive, strong wish to be free from this.

By seeing the meaning of this third suffering, you can understand that in these six realms, whichever birth one takes is only in the nature of suffering. For not even a minute does one experience the ultimate happiness.

To cease these true sufferings, one should cease the cause. The cause of these true sufferings is not just the bare mind, the stream of consciousness. This bare stream of consciousness cannot be stopped, cannot be ceased. The cause of the true sufferings is the mind that is overwhelmed by the disturbing thoughts such as anger, the dissatisfactory mind of attachment and ignorance—overwhelmed by these disturbing thoughts and their actions. Whether we are going to be free from these true sufferings and the cause of the suffering is up to whether we can control these disturbing thoughts or not. It depends on whether we keep these thoughts under the control of the mind—under our control, or whether we let the mind, oneself, be under the control of disturbing thoughts.

What do we do in our everyday life? In our everyday life we let ourselves be under the control of the disturbing thoughts—or are the disturbing thoughts under our control? This is dependent on how much we let ourselves be under the control of the disturbing thoughts and how much we control the disturbing thoughts. How quickly we shall be free from samsara, the true sufferings, and the true cause of sufferings depends on how we live every day. It depends on our practice. As long as we give the victory to the disturbing thoughts, the ignorance holding things to be truly existent, as long as we give the victory to the dissatisfactory minds, then our sufferings have no end, they are endless.

How can we eliminate these disturbing thoughts? You see, even without practicing the remedy, meditation, something that was an object of anger one hour ago or yesterday today is an object of attachment. Even without depending on the remedy or applying the remedy, meditation, it changes. Even though it used to be an object of attachment, it has become an object of anger and now again, this hour, it is the object of a thought of loving kindness, of compassion. Even in normal life, without depending on the remedy of meditation it changes. It doesn't last—the anger does not dwell on the same object forever. The same with the others. Not only anger can be stopped by practicing the remedy, the thought of loving kindness. Attachment can be stopped by remembering the shortcomings of the object, by seeing the ugliness of the object. The ignorance holding things as permanent is stopped by observing and thinking about their nature, which is impermanent.

Not only that. All these disturbing thoughts originated or came from the very root, the ignorance grasping at the "I," holding the "I" as truly existent, while there is no truly existent "I" on these aggregates. So, you see, these other disturbing thoughts can be made completely non-existent so that they cannot arise again, because the very root, the ignorance grasping at the "I," can be completely eliminated, so that it is impossible for it to ever arise again.

This ignorance can be completely eliminated because it is hallucinated—it is a hallucinated mind, a hallucinated conception. Like when you enter a room and coming through the door you see a snake on your bed. What is actually there on your bed is a piece of rope, but not having clear light (there is some light but it is not clear), you see a snake. When you come from the session, when you look at your bed through the door, you see that there is a snake on your bed. Instead of running away, completely trusting that appearance as true, you check if it is really a snake or not. Instead of having fear, screaming and disturbing all the other people who are around, you make sure whether it is really a snake or not.

It is usually impossible for a snake to come into that room. The snake cannot crawl up those many steps—those ten, thirty, forty, or fifty-storied houses. It cannot come from the ground and up by itself. It is an impossible thing for a snake to be there. So, instead of running away, you make sure to check with a light. If you check then you see that there is just a rope there—you cannot find even an atom of a snake's body on your bed, on the rope, no way. When you see just a piece of rope, the hallucinated conception of that being a snake goes away. Then you see the thing that does not exist there and the thing that really exists there.

Similarly, this ignorance is a hallucinated mind, a wrong conception. Because like the example of the snake, the truly existent “I” does not exist except for what is merely labeled on these aggregates. The truly existent “I,” the “I” that is not labeled doesn't exist, is completely empty on these aggregates. You recognize the hallucinated appearance, you recognize the appearance that is hallucinated. You recognize the existent “I” that is hallucinated, that does not exist. You recognize that hallucinated appearance, that hallucinated truly existent “I” by using the Dharma wisdom light.

The Dharma wisdom understands the advice and teachings given by Shakyamuni Buddha, the particular advice on absolute nature given by the experienced gurus or by the pandits. With this wisdom you analyze whether this truly existent “I” really exists or not. You see that this is completely empty, it doesn't exist at all. The “I” that exists is only what is merely labeled on these aggregates. By developing this wisdom with the renunciation of samsara we enter the path. Then comes the wisdom realizing the absolute nature of the “I,” that the “I” is empty and a dependent arising. By developing this wisdom one completely eliminates even the seed of the ignorance grasping at true existence. With the cessation of this true cause of suffering, the true sufferings also cease.

This is the ultimate happiness or nirvana. A mind such as this, the absolute nature of the mind, which is separated from ignorance—this is what is called nirvana, the blissful state of peace.

I think I stop here.

23rd November am

(Rinpoche reads the *Heart Sutra*.)

Praise to Manjushri.

The first prayer is to the lineage of the extensive method path. There are two paths: the method and the wisdom path. This is the lineage of the teaching of the method. This is like the first request. The nectar rays are emitted from the lineage lamas, from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Buddha,

and Asanga. In the prayer it is small, just this, but if one is familiar with the elaborate merit field, then one can visualize all the rest.

The nectar rays flow from them and enter your own mind and that of all sentient beings, the Dharma friends who are around you and all the rest of the sentient beings. They purify the obscurations that obstruct increased life, fortune, the excellences, and the understanding of the teachings. And then the realizations from the beginning—from guru devotion up to the omniscient mind—particularly bodhicitta, the paths of the method, the five paramitas and all the other paths that are the method, then tantra, the illusory body, and the result, the rupakaya.

This is just for those who normally do these practices of the *Guru Puja*, particularly the end of the *Guru Puja*, requesting the gurus to grant the realizations of the whole path to enlightenment, the fundamental lamrim which is explained in the stanzas and the tantra practice which comes in the *dorje* prayer in the *Guru Puja*. These are, I think, extremely important for one to be able to quickly subdue the mind, or to soften the very solid, the very hardened mind like iron.

The only thing that can subdue the mind is the holy Dharma. Only the holy Dharma can subdue these vicious thoughts and the vicious, cruel, selfish attitude that is harder than iron, harder than diamond, harder than any of the hard external things. So much harder than any of the external things that are so hard to destroy.

This mind seems to be nothing but attachment. This mind contains only attachment. Sort of, you know, the nature of the mind is nothing but the attachment of seeking samsaric pleasures and perfections. It looks kind of like that. Or the mind is nothing else but selfish attitude. Nothing else. Kind of, if there were no selfish attitude, there would be no mind. If there were no attachment there would be no mind. Then there would be no mind, no heart, sort of. There would be a body but no heart. Nothing else existing except ignorance, the grasping at true existence. At the moment our mind is kind of like that when we just look at it without thinking of the methods and without thinking of the possibilities. If we just look at the mind without thinking about the nature of the mind, that the mind can be cleaned and separated from these disturbing wrong conceptions, not thinking about the possibilities of the methods, then the mind seems to be like that. The mind seems to be oneness, there is no way to separate it, no way to change.

If this mind is nothing else, just selfish oneness with the selfish attitude, selfish oneness with attachment and selfish oneness with anger, then if this stops there is no more continuation of life, or continuation of rebirth. When we just look at it straight without thinking of the nature of the stream of consciousness or the nature of the mind and the methods that make the mind separate away from this, then it looks impossible, kind of hopeless, impossible to change, just on that.

I think this is extremely important for those who are normally doing this practice. I would think that this is the greatest puja. If you are concerned about helping your parents or helping some people who have much confusion in their lives, one after another, not having Dharma, not having understanding of karma or the cause of happiness, or the cause of suffering, not having any answer, not having one single slightest understanding of that, recognition of that, keeping busy all the time, just rushing to create negative karma, the cause of suffering, while the mind believes that it is working for happiness—if there are friends or particular people like this that you are concerned about helping, then this is the greatest puja.

When we do this part of the prayer that we did last night, at the end we request to receive complete realizations, the complete path to enlightenment. We should not only request these realizations for ourselves alone. At that time, during this section, it is very important to pray and request that the hindrances be purified and that we receive blessings. The replica absorbs and the blessings are received.

Here it says, "I request inspiration." Inspiration is okay but it might be a little bit limited. The request is to generate the realizations of the whole path. Sometimes it says, "I am requesting you to grant blessings." Sometimes there are prayers like these to grant blessing. In Tibetan terms this is *jin.gyi.lob*. A blessing is something that changes the mind, that makes the mind capable. So, "Grant blessings, change the mind, and change it by your magnificence, by your power."

If you plant a seed in the very hot desert sand, it cannot grow. If you plant a seed where is no wetness, it might dry up, it might get destroyed instead of growing. By pouring water and making the soil wet, with this wetness the seed that was planted can do the function of growing, it can produce stems, flowers, or fruit without being destroyed. Similarly when there is devotion, the devotion understands that the merit field has perfect understanding, power, and compassion towards oneself and towards all sentient beings. Even though there might not be that much devotion when we do the request, still, by doing the request to the merit field, asking for blessings to change and subdue the mind, the thought of renouncing samsara grows stronger. The attachment seeking the samsaric pleasures and perfections that always ties oneself to samsara grows weaker.

At the beginning it looks impossible to separate this from the mind, kind of thinking, "This is my life, without this how can I live my life?" and "How can there be life?" Even though at the beginning it seems impossible to lessen attachment, gradually, due to the practice of making requests to the lineage lamas of the graduated path to enlightenment, through the practice of purification, through reciting mantras and doing prostrations, through these various methods of purifying the obscurations or hindrances, the attachment seeking the samsaric pleasures will grow weaker. Then we generate the realizations. The various practices such as the mandala offering and the practices of the seven limbs are the methods for accumulating extensive merit. With these merits we create the causes for generating realizations. Reciting mantras and doing prostrations are methods to purify the hindrances that keep us from quickly generating the graduated path to enlightenment within our minds.

The requesting prayer to the lineage lamas causes blessings to enter into our minds, like pouring water. Like the example that I mentioned before. Like watering the rice field or when you plant flowers, like that. By doing these practices, the attachment seeking samsaric pleasures and perfections becomes weaker and weaker, smaller and smaller, while the thought renouncing samsara becomes stronger. We start seeing all the perfections of samsara as essenceless. The whole thing is in the nature of suffering. This, the realization of the graduated path and the thought of renunciation increases more and more, and then after some time not the slightest single stain of attachment seeking this samsaric happiness and perfections is left.

It is similar with the ignorance holding the "I" as truly existent, holding the "I" and all the rest of existence as truly existent. At the beginning it looks kind of incredible. We lived our entire life with this ignorance and this hallucinating mind, this ignorance grasping at true existence. The whole life, from birth, from that very first second that the consciousness took place on the fertilized egg in the mother's womb, we have been living our life keeping this ignorance in our hearts, following this

ignorance, completely trusting the projection of this ignorance. We have completely trusted this hallucination, which is the projection of our ignorance of true existence. We don't need more hallucination than we have now. We have enough. It is difficult to tear it off. It is difficult to recognize it, to stop it. By keeping this hallucinated mind, this ignorance of true existence in our heart, we completely trust the projection, the true existence. That is why our lives always have ups and downs, one after another, and we are constantly confused.

Then, also, the selfish attitude is so strong that after some time it even makes you cry to think of the harm you caused others, how you hurt the minds of others with a selfish mind, unbelievably, how you were careless of other's suffering, careless of others' happiness. When you think back and you remember this, when you look at your own mind, it makes you feel upset. The selfish mind is so unbelievably strong that it seems kind of hopeless to change it, to separate the mind from that incredibly strong selfish attitude. Among all these uncountable numbers of sentient beings there is nothing else to think about, nothing else to be concerned about but oneself. Among all the uncountable numbers of human beings, nothing else, nobody except oneself to be concerned about. Among all the creatures, the animal beings, nothing else, no one else to be concerned about except oneself.

However, through these three practices the selfish attitude becomes weaker. You sometimes felt it to be hopeless, "How shall I be separated from this selfish attitude?" You felt kind of hopeless. Doing these three types of practices, it gradually becomes weaker and weaker. And then the thought of cherishing others, the bodhicitta, the mind that is in the nature of compassion with the thought of loving kindness increases more and more. After some time there is not even the slightest stain of the selfish attitude that exists this mind. Instead of that, only bodhicitta, renouncing self and only cherishing others. Then you have the same experience as all those uncountable lineage lamas of the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment as they experienced it, as they explained how they practiced and how they generated the graduated path to enlightenment in their biographies.

One Kadampa geshe, Geshe Tolba, said of his own experience of generating the graduated path to enlightenment: "If one puts real, continuous effort into training the mind in the actual path, and by the way attempts to accumulate merit and purify the obscurations, then even the realizations that one did not think one could generate in a hundred years will be generated quickly."

Although one may think, "I have incredible anger, I have an incredible selfish attitude, how is it possible to change this even in a hundred years? I cannot be changed, after continuously practicing, continuously putting real effort into meditating, or in other words into training the mind in the graduated path to enlightenment, the actual body, then, by the way, the mind changes.

"By the way" means to be continuously practicing Dharma, even in the break times. We should be accumulating merit not only during the practice of purification in the session times, but even in the break times—while walking, sleeping, eating, talking—whatever action one does, continuously one should practice Dharma by transforming these actions into the holy Dharma. Also during the breaks, one should be doing those particular practices of accumulating merit and purifying obscurations.

One example is transforming eating food into virtue by making charity to the worms that are in the stomach. I don't remember exactly the number, but there are several thousand worms that are supposed to be there, several thousand creatures in the stomach. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha

explained in the teachings that when eating food, you can make charity of the food to these creatures in the stomach. Then dedicate the merits so that in the future these worms will be your disciples and that you will subdue their minds by revealing the teaching. You dedicate for them to find a perfect human body and to become your disciples in future lives. Like this you lead them to enlightenment. This should be done in a similar way with other outside creatures when you make charity to them.

There are various practices, both in sutra and tantra, of transforming these actions that are much more skillful. There are particular profound secret meditations explained in the tantra teachings that transform these actions into the quick path to enlightenment. There are much more profound meditations, much more secret meditations than those that are explained in the sutra teachings. Then, make charity to the insects, to the people, and make offerings to the Triple Gem of whatever material one has, of whatever quality or quantity, as much as you can.

Then, recite those particular mantras, such as Vajrasattva, or the Compassionate One's mantra. The mind is free to do the meditations and one's speech is free to be utilized to accumulate virtue, to purify and to accumulate merit. The same with the body. The three should be used as much as possible to accumulate merits.

Besides doing those particular practices, the things that you normally do—sit, sleep, talk, eat, whatever you do—these you should also try to transform into the holy Dharma. That is the most important practice, I think—to transform whatever actions you do in everyday life into the holy Dharma. The same actions that you were doing before you met the Dharma, since we were born and also in the past life. There are different levels of the pure attitude that transforms. The lowest pure attitude is that which is not stained by the worldly concerns, the evil thought of the worldly Dharmas. At least with this attitude try to transform the actions into holy Dharma. I think this is the most important thing.

If one is able to do those other particular practices, one gives special time for that, such as for retreat, or sitting meditation, or doing the preliminary practices like prostrations, mandala offerings, or the sitting meditations. Of course, if one is able to do this that is very good, but I think that the most important thing is to transform those actions that we normally do in everyday life. Even if we don't practice Dharma, still we do those actions—whatever you are doing now, right this moment, even working in the office—whatever you are doing now, right this minute, this present action—whatever you are doing with the body, with the speech, and with the mind, each of these actions should become the cause of happiness.

Even though it does not benefit others, even if it is not done in order to obtain happiness for others, it should at least be something that benefits you. We should have at least the lowest purpose; of something that benefits you, something that brings happiness to you. That is what I think is important. It doesn't mean that I practice it, but that is what I think is important in everyday life. I heard that the Zen masters say, "Don't think about the future, think about the present." That makes sense. If you are not careful in this present life, then you lose your future happiness. No matter how much we desire it, we don't get it. What we get is the opposite of what we wish for. There is one verse, one saying that is very good: "Because of the kind past life, a precious human body was received in this life. Precious present bhikshu, precious present monk, or virtuous beggar. ("Virtuous beggar" means begging for nirvana, the "virtue" means nirvana. One who is seeking nirvana, working for that is "virtue beggar".) So don't throw the next life over the precipice."

It means this: because we worked so hard in the past life to create the cause for this present human body, practicing moral conduct and charity and making prayers, in this life we received the precious human body. Because of the past life, the present precious human body is received; and then one became a “virtue beggar,” wearing robes like these, having much freedom, being fortunate. After having received this precious human body and becoming this precious bhikshu, this precious virtuous beggar, don’t create negative karma! Don’t throw the next life over the precipice of the lower realms by creating negative karma. Therefore, it says, “Present precious virtuous beggar, don’t throw the next life over the precipice.”

This is not only for the monks to be thinking about. What he’s saying is that in the past life he did a good job, so the result has happened. He has this precious human body that has incredible freedom to enjoy the happiness and perfections, as well as much freedom to work for ultimate happiness. So now he is requesting this life, “Now, don’t make it worse in the next life; during this present life what you are supposed to do is to make a better rebirth in the next life.”

One should be able to transform the everyday life actions that one has to do, that one cannot live without doing. One can transform each of these actions. When you are talking to somebody, you talk about something that is beneficial for that person, with the motivation to benefit that person’s mind, to have compassion and patience and to help him with whatever problem he has—with the motivation not to confuse but to benefit. So you should talk with the motivation to benefit others. Before talking one should examine one’s mind and create the pure motivation. At all times, with the voice and the mind, whatever one does, as much as possible, it should at least be the cause of your own happiness. Even if one cannot make it benefit all sentient beings, at least then try to develop the cause of your own happiness.

In this way, one makes an effort—practicing like this one day, and the second day the same, the third day the same, the fourth day the same—then you see even though this month is hard, the next month will be easier. This year is a little bit hard, but next year will be easier. In this way our life is never wasted even if one is not living continuously in a solitary place or even if one is not continuously studying Dharma or retreating. Then, wherever one is, whatever work one does, whatever style of life one has, day and night continuously one takes the essence of this body. In this way all the time one is making preparations for the happiness of future lives. The happiness of the lives coming after this. In this way life is always highly meaningful. To do that, again there is the need for the everyday life not to be wasted, but to be continuously highly meaningful by practicing holy Dharma. To be able to transform each action one does in everyday life into holy Dharma, into positive actions, one needs alertness. Continuously one has to depend on remembrance and awareness.

This is what the first chapter of the *Bodhicharyavatara* is about, which I will start in my next life. I am not going to start the explanation of the chapters from the beginning, just this first chapter, so that we can understand how to practice remembrance and awareness continuously in our daily life. What Zen says makes much sense. The present is more important than the future, you know. You should not put off what we study now for practice in the future. Whatever one understood from that teaching, put into practice. Even though one doesn’t have complete vast understanding of the path and of what one is going to practice, if one understands one teaching, if one has understood two words, three words, whatever understanding of Dharma that one has, one should immediately put this into action, without waiting to finish the study or to have complete understanding. The

complete understanding, the end of the study or the end of the understanding comes only when one has achieved the omniscient mind. At that time one has the complete understanding of Dharma or whole existence. Then that is the end of study, the end of Dharma practice.

However, for Lama Atisha and those high, great attainers of the graduated path to enlightenment, the Kadampa geshe, their way was to practice and study at the same time. While they were listening they meditated, while they were studying they listened, and reflected on the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment. They were not split, not separated. In this way you get something done every day. Every day you get some work done to achieve enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings. Otherwise you wait for the future, to have deep, profound understanding, then nothing changes in the mind, nothing happens in the mind. No matter how many years you study in a monastery or whatever it is, nothing happens in the mind, nothing changes in the actions, nothing becomes better. Then suddenly death appears. While you are doing something not finished, always not having finished something, while you are spending the life in such a way, suddenly death comes.

If one could practice holy Dharma in the lower realms, if one could continue, it would be okay, but that is not possible. Then all the Dharma that one studied—sutra, tantra, all these teachings that one has received—just becomes words. Without trying to transform the present actions and whatever one does into virtue, instead trying to create another separate time for Dharma, then also one doesn't get these things done. If one's mind is weak in transforming the normal actions into Dharma, then also one cannot make the time for those other particular practices. One gets delayed or it doesn't get done because the mind is occupied by the thought of the worldly Dharma, by those disturbing thoughts such as laziness and things like that. So, it doesn't get done. If one is able to always practice the remedy, keeping the remembrance and awareness of transforming those normal actions into Dharma, because of that one is also able to give more time to those other particular practices.

Anyway, I didn't make it to the prayer. I think it doesn't matter. The main point of the teaching is to benefit the mind, to benefit the mind. It is not like official work, something fixed. Dharma is to change, to benefit the mind. It is mind food, or mind medicine. However, if it is of benefit to some people, then that is it. Then it has a result, the purpose is accomplished. Otherwise it is just exhausting.

I think I stop here.

23 November pm

Oneself having attained nirvana or the blissful state of peace, the cessation of the true cause of suffering, is not sufficient. If we are satisfied with just that, then we are no different from the non-human beings, the animals, the goats and the buffaloes. What they are seeking is happiness for themselves, day and night, all the time, not having any thought for the happiness of others, only the concern of happiness for themselves. The animals find grass, each for his own happiness. When he finds water he drinks with the thought, "May I become happy." With that thought. Like that, seeking happiness only for the self. If oneself is happy, it is good. If oneself is suffering, it is bad. It doesn't matter what happens with others, whether they are happy or whether they are suffering. If *I* am happy, it is good. If *I* am not, if *I* have trouble and problems, then it is bad. Having that thought only.

This kind of attitude, this way of living life, night and day, all the time—is it any better, is it different from the life of the cows? If you compare, if you think what is the difference between my life, I who am living in a house, in this beautiful, rich apartment, and the life of these animals or birds living in the forest, or those cows living in the cow-shed, eating grass?

With regards enjoyments, of course there is a difference. We have much better enjoyments than them. But look at the attitude that I have everyday and night, the way I live my life. Is it better, is there anything that in my way of living is better than their life? The attitude that I have every day of my life, is there anything special about it? Is there anything about it that is better or more beneficial than the attitude of the animals that are not cows, the tigers and elephants or snakes, those wild, vicious animals? I am here, I am called “human being,” having great enjoyments living in comfort in a luxury house (I am not talking so much about Kopan although this is luxury compared with others—the homeless and those living in bad conditions.) With regards to the food that I eat, it is so rich, very expensive. Then my clothes also and all those things.

Then look at the attitude with which you use all these things that came from, that you received from other sentient beings. For you to have this enjoyment, they experience much suffering. Each of these uncountable numbers of enjoyments were received from uncountable numbers of sentient beings. You did not receive this from them without effort from their side. So many of them had to die, had to be killed. Even if they didn't get killed, they had to experience much pain. There is not a single enjoyment that has been received by not depending on the kindness of uncountable numbers of sentient beings.

But the person who enjoys all this is one—me. But look at my attitude! How selfish it is. How poor it is. When I wear clothes, when I have good food, it came from the kindness of the sentient beings. It came by so many others creating negative karma, both human beings and animals, sentient beings. So many of them have gone through much pain, so many of them were killed, so many of them created negative karma by harming others. How were all my enjoyments actualized? How did they come to me? The house that I live in was actualized by the kindness of sentient beings. The clothes that I wear, the food that I eat, that I enjoy, that I use, came from sentient beings with much suffering and much pain. I am the one person who eats, who enjoys all these things. I don't have one single thought to benefit others. I have only the selfish attitude, “May I be happy! When shall I be happy?” With this selfish attitude, I am using these enjoyments.

You could use this example. You worked so hard to collect money. You worked so hard for so many years with so much worry of mind and physical hardship; you worked both night and day. Then with this money you build a house. Then you let somebody stay there in that house, and also you give him food, you offer him all this that you yourself worked so hard for, with so much worry and physical pain. That person is supposed to help. This person is supposed to work for you. You give all these things and he is supposed to work for you. He is supposed to work in your shop for you.

Okay, now he does the business. But besides using all your food, besides eating all the food that is in your house, all of it, everything that came from you, besides that, even the work that he is supposed to do for you, he did for himself. He is supposed to help you out but instead of helping you he took all those things that were in the shop and used them for himself. If he takes something from the shop without asking, or he takes some hundred rupees, something like that without asking, how would that be after you gave him food and all these things? If he did that, immediately when you

hear about it, even without seeing him you would kick him out, and he would lose his job. Immediately you run there in front of the person and then with a red face, you scream right in front of his nose, in front of his face. Almost you might eat him. Kind of.

This is an example. If it is related to our everyday life, if it is put the other way, how painful that is. You see how incredibly selfish he is. So selfish and by seeing his incredibly selfish mind, it hurts your mind. You see how incredibly selfish he is—never concerned about you, only about himself. When you look at his mind, when you remember him on your bed at night, before falling asleep, while you are lying down on the huge bed under the huge large soft blankets, then you see, you think of him. How he is so selfish, and you think of his mind, his attitude, and you can't stand it. If he was there, if you had a bomb or something and he was there in front of you, you would just make him non-existent, just completely disintegrate his body. Such a wish can arise.

When the ill will and the anger starts to arise because the other person didn't agree to your wish, or said something that you don't like, that you hate, instead of arguing, instead of fighting and making your own mind confused and overtaken by anger, consider the other person. Otherwise, hours and hours you fight with words, and then if there is still some energy left, you use whatever you can to harm him. You scratch his face, or bang him on his head. If you are sitting on a chair, you throw the chair at his head. If you have nothing else to throw, you throw the chair at his head, or the table or a plate with food.

Not like in those movies on television, that is a different thing. They show a party, they have a party and they rent a lot of cakes. I am not sure if the plates are made of paper or—I am not quite sure—but anyway it contains one cake. Everybody is throwing things at each other making a big mess. Then the police come. The house is full of noise. On the outside the police come by car and go inside with guns. Then everybody kind of stops, everybody stops throwing at each other. Then they sit around and start talking to each other. But I am not talking about that kind of thing.

Actually, it is quite strange, because they are not angry, you know, when they act for movies. Even if they are physically hurt with maybe pain or something. We say bad words with dislike and with hatred, hating each other. The movie actor and actress are saying the same words, saying bad words, insulting each other like we do when we are beating each other. Generally in the movies one does those same things, the same words, the same beating, but one doesn't get angry. While at other times, when it is not prepared like that, the same words that we said when we acted in that movie, the same thing—the words are the same, the same insulting words or beating, now make us angry. Since it is not prepared, since it was not agreed on with the others to do it, when it is not planned like that, it makes us angry. Then, even if just two words in your talk are a little bit not right, two or three words in your conversation, the way you say something is a little bit not right, you know, slightly not pleasing to the other person, you make the other person so angry. The other person gets very angry because of one or two words. Even though he did not try to kill you or try to beat you, still it becomes so serious for you, this unbelievable anger.

So, an action is done—an action done with the body and an action done with the speech—that is done. With one you get unbelievable anger, you are so unhappy, but with the other one that doesn't happen. One was a performance, acting or playing, while with the other one became so angry, so unhappy. From this you can see how it completely came from your own mind, how it was created by your own mind. With one way of thinking you get angry, while with another way of thinking you don't get angry. There was the same action of insulting and beating from the other person, but when

thinking in one way you don't get angry, you even feel happy sometimes. I don't mean happy by practicing thought training, I don't mean that, but in some other way.

Similar to these things would be what I heard in America, that when a man is beaten by his girlfriend to whom he is very attached then it kind of makes him happy. It is similar. It is the same beating, but at that one doesn't get angry at all. Instead you recognize a kind of happiness, although physically there is pain. So you see how it is so much dependent on the mind.

That is not the point I am talking about. The point is, going back, to emphasize this. Instead of letting yourself get angry with a person when you have different ideas, different wishes, or if he does something you don't like and you can't really manage at that time to change him, then instead of letting your mind get angry, consider the other person. Even when someone is treating oneself badly, that includes *everything*—disturbing one's happiness—especially when there is something that you can't manage to change really, it's difficult, well then, instead of letting your mind be overwhelmed by anger and then letting a feeling that wishes to hurt and speech that hurts arise, instead you consider the other person's feelings.

And then, instead of quarreling for hours and hours and hours and hours, creating much negative karma, even physically harming the other person, instead of that think, when you get a feeling of ill will and you want to harm others like that, then think at that time, "How would it be if he had bad thoughts towards me, like I have now toward him, do I like it or not? I don't like it. I hate it. Therefore, I should stop. He doesn't like these bad thoughts that I have towards him, he doesn't like it either. So, for that reason, I should stop."

It is similar with your selfish desire, when you desire your own pleasure. Your desire for your own comfort is so strong that others do not agree, so you have problems with these friends, with these people. They don't like this idea that you have. When the desire for one's own comfort and for what one likes is so strong that one is pushing it on others, it only causes confusion, it only brings more problems, more disharmony.

Think how when someone is so strongly determined in his wishes or in seeking the comfort and the pleasures that he sees, remember how that makes your mind very unhappy. How, when somebody says certain things like this to me it is painful for my mind, it makes me so depressed or makes me so angry or unhappy. It is the same thing if I do this now. It would hurt, it would make the other person's mind unhappy—the other person gets aggressive and depressed. Since we are both exactly equal, both desiring any happiness, pleasure, or comfort from the greatest to the smallest, and both of us exactly equal in not desiring any great or tiring suffering or discomfort, there is not the slightest reason to think that I am more important than him. Therefore, I must renounce the selfish attitude that hurts him, that gives him fear and worry, and that makes his body and mind less comfortable.

This selfish mind doesn't bring peace, doesn't give any realizations—it only creates disharmony and brings more problems on myself. There comes only harm and no benefits from that. It brings no benefit for others, nor for myself—it only harms myself and others. So what's the use of keeping this in my heart? I must, I must give it up!

You see, today's consciousness continued from yesterday's consciousness. That one continued because of the continuation of the consciousness existing the day before, the day before that, the

five minutes before the next day started, the very beginning, the first second, the very first second of that day, the very beginning. The reason the consciousness goes on existing is because the existence of consciousness continued from the last second of the day before that. Similarly, this year's and last year's consciousness, the reason the consciousness exists this year is because of the existence of the continual consciousness last year. The very first second of consciousness that took place on the fertilized egg is a continuation of the consciousness of the intermediate state. And the continuity of that consciousness comes from the past life, whatever body was taken in that life—say that of a formless deva, or whatever. It is a continuity of that consciousness continued from other past lives. Like this, the continuity of the consciousness has no beginning.

If the continuation of consciousness had beginning—let's leave talking about the bare consciousness, let's talk about suffering, the disturbing thoughts, the ignorance of true existence, the very root of samsara. Well then, this would have beginning as well. If the consciousness had a beginning, then it would be truly existent, either that or permanent—the ignorance would be permanent. It would be truly existent in the sense that it would be independent, it would not be depending on its own past continuation of causes, you know. If it existed without depending on causes and conditions, then it would be independent and truly existent.

In that way, anger and all those other things would be truly existent, independent. In that case since it would not be dependent on anything, then you couldn't do anything towards its cessation either. There would be no way to achieve nirvana, the cessation of the true cause of suffering. No way. Why? Because you couldn't make the suffering less by using the method, the remedy of the path, you couldn't lessen it, you couldn't do anything. No method, nothing. In that case there would be no way for the disturbing thoughts to become stronger and also no way for them to become less. If they are independent, not depending on causes and conditions, then there is no way for the feelings to strongly increase when you continue the cause.

Like when you just keep thinking of the reasons for being angry with another person. You remember how he harmed you and the more you think of that—how terrible, terrible, terrible, terrible that person is, like counting mantra—the more you think and think about him, the anger increases. You remember how bad he is, how terrible he is. When you think of these reasons and remember his face, you have the mental picture of his face and body, and you see him as kind of ugly, ugly, ugly. The anger is like a balloon. From being small, suddenly it gets bigger. So huge, so large, that you see nothing inside you except anger. In your body, inside yourself, there is nothing but anger.

It is similar with attachment and with pride and with those other things. If they were independent, without depending on a cause, their previous continuation, then the condition is outside the object. If the person who at the time is the object of your anger and the anger were something that existed by themselves, then there wouldn't be this experience of the anger increasing and then disappearing. Like when after one minute or after one hour the person comes with a cake on a plate and says "Please, excuse me," with a very sweet smiling face, "Sorry," or something like that, "About what I said to you before." Then when you see the cake and you smell it as well, at the same time bliss starts rising in your heart. I am joking, but anyway, suddenly the mind changes, suddenly you are seeing him as a sweet person. Then suddenly the anger disappears. It is forgotten, you know. If these things were independent, without change, it would be totally opposite to the reality of our experience.

However, it doesn't exist like that. What I am saying is that it doesn't exist because we don't experience it that way. If it were permanent it would be unchanging by cause. But when we plant one seed, it goes on bringing stems and other things. It is going to have many seeds. It is similar when a tiny anger grows into a huge one. As we keep it and think of the reasons we are angry, that tiny anger becomes the cause of the next second of anger. The first second of anger becomes the cause for the next second of anger, and that is bigger than the first one. Then that one becomes the cause for the next one. Like this. The first anger itself is in the nature of change. It came from the seed of the disturbing thoughts which are again in the nature of change. Similarly, the ignorance is impermanent, changing each second by a cause. So from this you can understand the mind—from this example you can understand consciousness.

Let me just finish this point about the reason that we cannot remember past lives, or in a similar way the reason we can't remember certain injuries or things that happened in child time, or those painful experiences we had in the mother's womb—things that happened in this life, not in past lives. We don't remember how we came out of our mother's womb, you see. Then many things from last year or even today, sometimes we forget, we don't remember certain things that we did this morning—what we talked about at breakfast. Sometimes, suddenly when you think back you don't remember. This is mainly due to ignorance. For the same reason we cannot remember past lives—other lives, or the life before this one. The beginningless past lives, we don't remember for the same reason. So similar.

But for those who can remember past lives, it is similar to us remembering yesterday or last year, remembering the trouble that we had, the journey, or the entertainment. We remember because there is a continuation of consciousness between that time and this today. If there were no continuation, there would be no way that we could remember past lives. There would be no way to have the recollection of the past. We don't remember our past lives' suffering but when some people can remember past lives it is because there is a continuation of consciousness.

Even though we don't remember, there are similar reasons why we are born with the ignorance of true existence and these disturbing thoughts, and why we have this particular personality; why some are very impatient while some have a very compassionate nature. These daily experiences prove for us that there is a continuation of consciousness. If not, there would be no reason at all for this mind, or this present life to be in the nature of suffering. There would be no cause for this present life, for these aggregates or this body to have pain. Why does it have to experience pain? Why is it born with such a nature that experiences pain?

Also, there would be nothing that causes the different disturbing thoughts—like incredible anger. So that while you are angry, fighting, and quarreling, if somebody says, "Practice patience!" if somebody reminds you of the practice of patience, and to be a good person, it makes you explode even more—you get even more angry. In short, in our everyday life these things, these experiences, are proof that there is a past life, that past lives exist. So, from that past evolution of the mind, one can understand, one can figure out the future. So this experience is one example.

I stop here.

24th November am

The meditators experiencing the graduated path to enlightenment, those of the past and those who are experiencing it now every day, make these three requests to achieve their purpose and also do mandala offerings. This regarded as an extremely important method to be able to easily generate the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment.

Generating the realizations and actualizing the graduated path to enlightenment, from guru devotion up to enlightenment, all this comes from having received blessings. Each time that one has generated a realization in one's mind, one has received a blessing. Each time one generates a realization or one's mind gets changed, is more subdued, at that time one is receiving blessings. Before, the mind was completely empty of understanding karma, not knowing at all the cause of happiness and the cause of suffering. But now, we find a little bit of faith in this slowly arising as the understanding grows. That means that that many blessings have been received.

As I mentioned yesterday, the selfish attitude and the anger, as well as other disturbing thoughts, become weaker and smaller by doing the preliminary practices, the practice of refuge and bodhicitta, or the practice of mandala offerings and prostrations, which are methods of accumulating extensive merits. And also by doing Vajrasattva and Chenrezig mantras, which are powerful methods to purify unimaginable obscurations. When the mind gets better and better, that is a sign of having received the blessings of the merit field and the guru—the Triple Gem.

If you cannot think in the elaborate way that I explained with the first prayer, particularly the method and then the result, the rupakaya, from the beginning of guru devotion up to enlightenment, then just think of the merit field. If you cannot think in such detail about the path, about method and wisdom, the resultant rupakaya and then the rest of the complete path, particularly the wisdom and the result, the Dharmakaya—first purify all these obstacles, and on the second repetition generating all those realizations, through a replica of the merit field absorbing into oneself and to all the sentient beings—if you cannot think in such detail, just think of the merit field whose holy names are mentioned. Then these absorb into you and all sentient beings and whatever realizations they have, their infinite excellences of holy body, holy speech, and holy mind, whatever they have, all these realizations, all these excellences, I as well as all sentient beings have received. At least in short, it is very important to think or to feel like this.

If the question arises, “I want to become enlightened quickly for the sake of the sentient beings, I want to generate quickly the graduated path to enlightenment, so what can I do? Which methods can swiftly generate these realizations?” then, these are the answers. These preliminary practices are the answer to that. If one wonders, if somebody has a question, well then, this is the answer, this is the method to fertilize the mind.

If you plant the crops on the rocks, or very solid ground, where there are lots of rocks and stones, they cannot grow. Also it needs to be fertilized, it has to be well treated, it has to have perfect minerals and depending on that, the crops will grow. A similar arrangement is needed for the mind. There is a need to prepare our minds in order to generate the stems, the virtuous crops in our minds. The graduated path to enlightenment and the result, the fruit, the Dharmakaya and the rupakaya. Through the stems, the method and wisdom, the graduated path, one achieves the fruit, the rupakaya and the Dharmakaya.

If anybody has that kind of question, that kind of concern wanting to be of benefit to other sentient beings, to offer extensive benefits and to free all the sentient beings from suffering and lead them

into the state of omniscient mind, then one should study well these fundamental practices and practice them in everyday life. Otherwise just closing the eyes and sitting with the legs crossed, whatever, doing some physical exercises called yoga, or some things that are just making the body flexible for it to move around, to curve around, and closing your eyes as if sleeping—that won't even stop the lower realms, it won't stop even the problems of this life, it won't stop even the confusion of the mind, even today, besides being unable to close the door to rebirth in the lower realms.

Any questions regarding reincarnation? Or, no problems at all?

CLOUD: Why should I care where my consciousness is reborn, because I don't even know the address of the person my consciousness will enter next lifetime.

RINPOCHE: Do you care about your life tomorrow? Do you care about your life this afternoon?

CLOUD: But that is only because I remember from yesterday until the next day.

RINPOCHE: But you cannot see what you are going to do this afternoon, or what is actually going to happen, you don't know. You believe that you believe in the afternoon, but you are not one hundred percent sure. You should really check whether you really believe in this afternoon, after going to bed tonight, after going back to your sleeping bag. Same thing if you do care about your life tomorrow. Your question does not make much sense—if the consciousness is not your consciousness then it is somebody else, that is somebody else, that is some other person, some other separate being, it is not you. Heh?

CLOUD: Isn't it self-cherishing to want my consciousness to have a good rebirth?

RINPOCHE: Just to have rebirth you don't need to worry. Only if you are free, as we talked about just before, like those arya bodhisattvas or the arhats, those who have completely eliminated, completely ceased the true cause of suffering and the seed of the true cause of suffering, then there is no samsaric rebirth. Then maybe you should worry. Because then there is no rebirth. I am just joking.

Anyway, now I understand what your question is. You see, if one's ears are deaf or one has much pain, just as an example, and one cannot listen to the teachings. So, wouldn't it be better to have medicine, wouldn't it be better to have treatment to stop the pain? So that at least, even though you cannot do much for others, at least you can do something good for yourself? No? If you cannot do Dharma practice with suffering, if you don't have that much will or mind energy, or if your mind is not that well-trained in the practice so that you cannot practice with that pain or transform it, then it is better to have treatment.

You stop that pain, you recover from it, then you can do the practice, otherwise you just live with the suffering, you can't do anything, you just waste your life. The life is spent just for pain. It is better to do something, even though it means seeking your own liberation with a selfish mind, for your own happiness. Besides being unable to benefit others, you don't even attempt anything for your own happiness. If you don't seek happiness at all, if what you are seeking is only suffering, then that is a different thing.

Did you understand my point? If what you are seeking is only suffering, not happiness, if what you want to renounce completely is happiness and what you want to have is only suffering all the time, then that is a different matter, that is a different thing. Then there is nothing to emphasize in terms of creating the cause of happiness. There is nothing to emphasize for that person in terms of

creating the infallible causes of happiness. Since the person likes to suffer continuously there is nothing to say.

But since you want happiness and you do not want suffering, then, even if you cannot help others, at least help yourself. If you attempt the infallible cause, in that way you will achieve the happiness that you want.

If we have a perfect human rebirth in our coming life there will be more freedom to work to develop the mind in that which we haven't accomplished or completed in this life. You will be training the mind in the path, you see, so that you are able to have more realizations, more power. If you haven't generated bodhicitta in this life, by having a better rebirth, you are able to generate bodhicitta and to generate those higher bodhisattvas' paths. In this way you will have that much more realization and the power to reveal the methods, to guide others. Your powers will be like those that the arhats have.

The bodhisattvas, the new bodhisattvas and the higher bodhisattvas, have so much more power than the arhats. As a bodhisattva reaches one of the ten bhūmis, there is that much more realization—the realization has increased so much, so now there is that much more power and ability to reveal many more methods to others. Not exactly like Buddha, but much better than before. He has much more knowledge and understanding, so he is able to reveal a greater variety of methods and to guide sentient beings better.

Without a better rebirth one cannot complete works for other sentient beings without the slightest mistake; by taking a better rebirth one completes the rest of the path. In that way, one is able to be of more benefit and to complete the path.

And as Buddha, one is able to benefit all sentient beings. For oneself to benefit others there is the need to establish peace and tranquility first within one's own mind. In order to develop others' minds, first you need to develop your own mind. If you are a dog, what benefit can you give others? If you are born as a scorpion, how can you benefit others? Is there much that you can do for others? That's it. Therefore, in this life your responsibility is to purify and not create the cause of the suffering realms. You need to renounce those causes and purify those that have been created. Then you need to create the cause of the happy body that has much more freedom to work towards one's own ultimate happiness, and has much more freedom to give extensive benefit to other sentient beings as well.

Even if you seek a better rebirth in the next life, you don't need to do this with a selfish motive. That thought does not become contradictory to the bodhisattva's practice. As a practitioner of Mahayana teachings you are taking the bodhisattva's path, so you take a better rebirth, as I just explained, to train your mind in the rest of the path that you did not accomplish in the previous life for the sake of other sentient beings. Isn't that okay?

The practitioner of the *Bodhicaryavatara*, the practitioner of bodhicitta and of the Mahayana teachings in everyday life from morning until night, thinks of himself as a servant for others. You think of yourself as a servant for other sentient beings. You are a servant offering service to sentient beings, separating them from the suffering that they do not wish and helping them to obtain the happiness that they wish.

So, you see, you take care of yourself. You give food to this body, taking care of this body for their sake. You take care of your life and your body, not for the sake of your own happiness, but for the sake of the happiness of other sentient beings. Because you have to work with this body, with this human life that has more freedom to benefit others, for that reason you take care of it for the sake of others. As it is said in teachings, “One uses the enjoyments as a servant, one uses the enjoyments for the master.” Not only is the rebirth to benefit others, but so is every day of life, with all these enjoyments. This is the attitude of the practitioners of bodhicitta and the Mahayana teachings; this is their way of thinking. The sense objects should be enjoyed only with the thought of benefiting others.

I stop here. Do you have some questions?

QUESTION: If death and rebirth is a closed circle, with no beginning, how could it have an end? If we never get into it, how can we get out of it?

RINPOCHE: How was it made beginningless? What made it beginningless? What do you think it is that causes it always to circle? Heh?

You have to think about that. You shouldn't think of the circle of death and rebirth as something truly existent, something that happened intuitively—it is a dependent arising. The circle of death and rebirth is a dependent arising. Since it is a dependent arising you can change it. The reason it hasn't stopped so far is because the cause, the force that makes it circle, the samsaric aggregates that make us circle from one life to another life, have not been ceased so far. The causes—karma and the unsubdued mind and the ignorance of true existence—have not ceased. So far, we have not done any work to stop it, and this is why nothing has happened.. Still we are involved, still we haven't stopped our journey, circling from rebirth to death.

How can the cause be eliminated? As I explained before, the answer is that it can cease because karma and the unsubdued mind can be stopped, it can be made non-existent by generating the remedy, the path in the mind. This one can figure out, one can understand from practicing the thought of loving kindness toward somebody whom one dislikes. If you meditate on the kindness of that person, if you meditate on how precious he is, the anger goes away, the anger disappears, or at least it becomes weaker. During the time that you are aware of how precious or kind he is, it disappears. Similarly with attachment. When we think of the shortcomings of the object, the attachment disappears.

From the daily experiences that happen during meditation time, you receive the answer. This small experience gives the answer to how to completely cease the true cause of suffering. Through just a few seconds of meditating, we keep the unsubdued mind from strongly arising. So, when we actually enter the path and when we actually take those steps of the path, they are removed. Even the seed is not left. It is eliminated and it is impossible for it to rise again. From this daily meditation experience you can figure out how samsara can have an end. If we individually, from our own side, work hard to put an end to it, then it can be ended. Even though we didn't have a beginning, even though the continuous samsaric circle of death and rebirth didn't have a beginning, we can make it end. Otherwise it becomes endless. If you study the philosophy of the teachings, the explanations and the commentaries by Indian pandits such as Nagarjuna and Asanga, very extensively, if you study those detailed, elaborate explanations of the teachings, you will understand thoroughly, perfectly.

Relating to reincarnation—even though we don't have clairvoyance now, remembering past and future lives, we did have clairvoyance in the past, in other lifetimes. Like education—in some lifetimes we had so much education, in some lifetimes we were very foolish, just a fool, unable to understand even one letter.

Also, in numberless lifetimes we were born in the form and formless world, through the cause of stabilized single-pointed thought. In so many lives we had education, but in other lives we don't remember. In many lifetimes also we could remember past and future lives. Some people when they do meditation go back to the womb, check back to the womb, when the very first consciousness took place on the fertilized egg. And from there they try to concentrate very intensively. I met some students who get incredibly clear impressions from past lives, as if real—not just mere imagination, not just something that you visualize, like visualizing being a lama in Tibet, or the President of America, but like things that you remember. Like remembering things that you did some years back. Like that, so real, so strong, so clear, with much feelings.

Somebody with very deep feeling said (I don't remember if it was a lady or a man, but one of the students, he somehow had an incredibly strong picture with strong feeling that (I think maybe it was a she) she was in Tibet, she was a nun or something like that in Tibet, making Tibetan tea with the churner. She could see churners and the kitchen, things like that. And there are other people who said similar things. However, if you disbelieve and if your only logical reason for not believing is, "Because I don't see it, because it is not the object of my knowledge," if that is the only logical reason, then you don't need to believe him when the doctor tells you that you have cancer.

For months and months you are happy, you don't believe you have cancer, you don't think that your life is in danger. But one day you go to hospital for a check-up for X-rays, then the doctor says, "Oh, sorry, you have got cancer." Then you get completely spaced out. Then you should use that same reasoning there in front of the doctor, "This is not my knowledge, I don't see it." You should say the same thing to the doctor. Then the doctor will get spaced out. Maybe next time when you go back, when you get worse, then he won't look at you. Maybe he won't talk to you, when he receives your name. So, you see, you cannot use this as a logical reason.

Only when you have completely removed all stains of ignorance and you have not the slightest ignorance left, when you have removed both the disturbing thoughts, the ignorance and even the subtle obscurations such as the cause of the four unknowings that arhats have and the buddhas don't, only then does what you say have value. When even this cause of the four unknowings has been completely removed and your understanding doesn't have the slightest mistake, when you understand all of existence, every single thought of sentient beings of all the three times, if your mind has reached the state of omniscience, then what you say has value. Then if you say "It doesn't exist because I don't see it," it has value.

As long as you have limited understanding, then how can you say, "Since I don't see it, it doesn't exist." Or, "It doesn't exist because the scientists do not see it, because they have not written about it in a book."

Scientists themselves have not finished their discoveries yet. One cannot rely upon them (I am just talking generally) because their explanations change, their definitions of things change. Their discovery is not finished, not complete, so that each time they investigate further they find

something that is different from the past discoveries. In short, they are still in the process of progression. The understanding is not complete.

Therefore, even though it is not your own experience remembering past and future lives, or having the omniscient mind or bodhicitta, the compassion covering all sentient beings, or the thought of loving kindness covering all sentient beings—even if it is not your own experience now, it is the experience of others, of those with highly developed minds, those who have developed the good heart.

Saying that it is not possible to have such experience or such knowledge because, “It’s not my experience, because I don’t see it,” can never become a logical reason. If a learned, intelligent person looks at the person’s answer, that answer only proves that the person is foolish. With that answer the person is only showing that he’s a fool. It is not proving anything about the subject, it’s only proving that he is a fool.

Some days ago, one scientist came from America. His body showed that he probably had a very high degree. One very kind looking lady came, then the principal character, the American, and then one other guy came, but I don’t know his title, his job, or anything. That guy brought one small bottle containing embryonic fluid, a small quantity, and some hair from a one or two year old child, as well as some nails and the child’s first name. He asked for blessings. I asked him what had happened, I didn’t know why he wanted blessings. He said, “The child is in the hospital.” “So, what is his sickness?” He says “The normal,” he says, “The usual.” So I didn’t bother to ask him further. I asked him if I could keep this for some days and return it later. He was completely shocked when I asked him if I could keep the stuff for two days and then return it. He said “No!”

So, I tried to bless it, tried to purify the child.

However, the scientist asked questions. It must be very difficult for him to get an answer about the meaning of life. He asked, “What is the meaning of life?” He wants some answer in a short time. So, I said, I think, in brief, that the meaning of life is in everyday life to protect the mind from anger, pride, and those disturbing thoughts by practicing patience, the thought of loving kindness, and compassion and then, through development of this, as you establish peace in your own mind, you yourself become a good example for others. Then you benefit others. You help to pacify, to separate them from problems and to have peace in their mind. In this way, by having changed your own mind first, you are a good example.

Then he asked another question, “Is a human being bad or good?” I think that maybe the answer might prove difficult for him. I don’t know why he asked that question. He had a Nepalese hat and he put the hat between some flowers and some fruit and then very arrogantly he asked, “If this is a human being, on which side do you put him, on the good side?” I said, “I put him on the good side.” He asked, “Is a human being good or evil?”

I said, “There are different types of human beings. Your question is like this: there is yellow, white, green, different colors, many colors. Then somebody asks generally, ‘What is the color? What is the color of the color?’ Your question is like that.”

Then he asked me a little bit about Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, and about the Tibetan monks, the purpose and the result of debating, that form of philosophical study, and the results that come in the

mind through this way of studying. I said that the result is unshakeable understanding of the meaning of Dharma, the path that one is going to practice. Also that in order to reach the goal, the ultimate happiness or enlightenment, one needs to have complete, unmistakable understanding of the whole thing. One has understanding of the suffering from which one has to be free. One knows the details, the evolution, everything about it. Then one understands about the path that frees, that liberates one from that suffering. One has complete unmistakable, unshakeable understanding of the goal, so that if somebody gives some other teaching, “Oh, this, this, this, ... this way is very good, blah, blah, blah,” you know. Some guru comes along, somebody who has some title, this and that, comes along, gives teachings, “Something, something, this and this, nirvana is this...” But this cannot disturb his correct understanding; he only sees the mistake in what the other person is saying. That person who has the complete unmistakable understanding is able to discriminate whether what they are teaching is correct. He sees which teachings are correct, which are wrong, which are misleading. The result is that, after one has correct, unshakeable, complete understanding, by putting it into action, the correct practice comes. As a result of correct practice, the correct realizations come in the mind.

However, these kind of questions are not regarded as clever questions, even by those boys who have lived and studied here a few years. If you ask like this, as a general rule, it sounds a little bit like somebody who doesn't know debating well. So, I told him that there is a Tibetan term for that kind of question when we are debating, we say *rang.dro*.

With regards reincarnation, there is not the slightest logical reason that proves that there is no reincarnation. The logical reasons to prove that there is reincarnation are infinite. So many. Like this. Then, whatever reasons that you use to say that there is no reincarnation, that there is no past life and no future life, these can be refuted even by somebody of not even middle intelligence who has studied a few months or just one year in the lower class of debating. If it is argued or discussed with somebody who knows debating then it only becomes weaker and weaker instead of this point becoming more and more solid, harder and harder. It only becomes weaker and weaker. At the beginning it looks quite good, the first answer looks quite good, the second quite okay—then it gets worse and worse.

Anyway, the continuity of the consciousness has no beginning. As I explained before, the ignorance of true existence, the disturbing thoughts and karma, the continuation of that didn't have a beginning. As I explained before about the disturbing thoughts and the karma: this life's disturbing thoughts are the continuity of the past lives' disturbing thoughts. Like this, going back, the continuation of that didn't have a beginning. Therefore, samsaric rebirth, the circle of death and rebirth, the circle of that didn't have a beginning.

Each time we took rebirth in the past, we were not always born into the continuity of this life's mother, the present mother. When she was born as a human being in the past lives, you were born as a horse. When she was maybe born as a horse, you were born as an ant. When she was born as an ant, you were born as a human being. One has taken many different bodies.

When she was a certain body, you took different kind of body. Similarly with every sentient being. So you see, except when born from heat or under the other conditions that are not dependent on the womb, bodies arise in dependence on other sentient beings, the mother. Like this, as the present mother has been our mother and kind, all the sentient beings also have been our mother and kind.

Yes, I think I stop here.

24th November pm

First of all, the mother of this present life has been kind. If the mother had not created the karma to give birth to us, by now we wouldn't have this precious human body, which has much freedom to experience temporal happiness and enjoyment rather than the suffering consequences of, for instance, the animals. We have the freedom to practice the holy Dharma as we wish—all this is due to the kindness of the mother. Even if the consciousness had taken place on the fertilized egg in the mother's womb, if she didn't care, if she didn't love us, if she didn't care about us, she might have had an abortion. She might have gone to the hospital and asked the doctor to take it out, you know, or to give this injection that shrinks the baby's body, that boils it.

In the hospitals they keep files. In Australia the doctors keep files, and also in Israel, I think. If the child's body is a little bit grown or complete they take it out by giving injections that make it burn, like wax—like when you melt wax it dies. They keep files on how they killed each baby, maybe on how many each month, how they accomplished the killing of the baby. One student, an Australian girl, had the doctor take out her baby. Maybe she saw the body, that I don't know, but I think it was a complete body. The doctor gave her an injection that burns the whole body. Then later the doctor asked her if she wanted to see the pictures—they took pictures, they kept all the picture inside the file—and they asked her if she wanted to see the pictures. I think she was very scared of seeing the pictures of that burnt baby.

If our mother had not cared about us, if she didn't love us, even though our consciousness might have entered the mother's womb, still by now we would not have had all these great advantages. We would not have had this human body, as well as these great enjoyments and pleasures. We would not have had the opportunity to meet the infallible teachings, the complete teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, which have caused us to have that much Dharma wisdom, knowing what is the cause of happiness and what is the cause of suffering. We would not have that much understanding of karma and that much freedom to renounce the cause of suffering, as well as that much freedom to practice what we know is the cause of happiness. We would not have all these things now. All these great opportunities, all these comforts, all these things—we have received by her kindness. It is completely dependent on her. You can see it is this way—you can see how incredibly kind the mother is from just thinking of those two reasons—namely that she created the cause to give birth to you, and that she didn't have an abortion. From this you can see how incredibly kind the mother is. While you were in the mother's womb for nine months and ten days, something like that, she took the best of care. Whatever she could do, whatever she knew from her own heart and whatever she studied or asked others about, or whatever she read in books about how to take care of the child, she did. In many ways she tried not to hurt the baby when sitting down, in many different ways. She would not eat the food that harms the baby, even though she herself wished to eat it. She tried not to hurt the baby. When it was about to come out, after some months, when the body started to turn upside down, then she was in so much pain, as if the body was cracking. She had incredible, unbelievable pain when we were coming out. It was so difficult for her, but even though she suffered so much unbelievable pain, making tears come from the eyes, when somebody asks her, "Did you have a good time? When the baby was coming out, how was it?" even though she went through incredible pain, she never speaks one single word about the pain, she

kind of forgets it, or ignores it. She tells others, “No, I had an easy birth, the child had an easy birth.”

While you were in your mother’s womb she took care from her heart. She would think, “If the child is all right, if the child comes out okay, I myself do not matter.” She was cherished and cared more about the child than about herself. After you came out of your mother’s womb, again she took care. When the baby came out, she was so happy, like having found a wish-granting jewel. So glad, so happy, to see the baby. Again she took care from her heart. She wrapped it up with the most beautiful soft cloth, as soft as she could find. She took such good care of this piece of flesh that was crawling like a worm. She took such care of the big piece that had come out and was crawling around on the ground, that did not know in the least what is harmful and what are the things that benefit. The peepee and kaka comes out wherever the baby is. The baby knows nothing, is completely ignorant. She always puts the baby on a very soft, comfortable bed, always wraps it in nice clothes, as warm and soft as she can find. She always takes care. She always lifts up the baby with all ten fingers, always taking care, always keeping it warm with the heat of her body. She always carries the baby at her front or on her back. Day and night all the time, she thinks mostly of the child.

She took care as if her heart were on the outside. If she was away from the baby for even a few minutes, or for some hours, in her mind she was worried about the child. Sometimes she herself didn’t have the time to look after the baby, she had to go to work because without working there would be no food, no means of living. So she hired another person, a nurse or whatever, paying others to look after you. Day and night, all the time you were the object of her one-pointed concentration. Even though she had many hundreds of other things to do, and so many other problems, she had so many other things to do besides taking care of you each day she protected your life from hundreds of harms and mortal dangers.

If she doesn’t watch him every five minutes, every one minute, if she doesn’t constantly watch, after a few seconds or a minute that baby will fall down from the bed. Then again there’s another danger. Soon the baby is about to fall down the steps. Then very soon there’s another danger—the baby is putting harmful things in its mouth—knives or materials. Things that injure, that endanger the baby’s life are in the baby’s hand and the baby about to put them in its mouth. Constantly the mother has to watch, or somebody else has to watch, some other person that is hired—it is the same thing. It is the same inside the house or outside. Even when the mother brings the baby outside there are the same dangers. If it’s not watched... as long as it’s not asleep (asleep would be better), it has to be constantly watched, like the meditators watching the mind, every minute, every second. Also she has to protect it from the harms and dangers of machines, outside vehicles, and creatures.

I just remembered, somewhere in one country, in the West, (the other person who explained to me about the abortion process, I just remembered now she was in one of the courses—Elizabeth, probably. She asked what she could do for purification so she explained all these things about how she experienced the abortion process.) Anyway, this is just something that I saw in the newspaper. The parents were away from home and the child was left outside. Somehow the child caught a snake and ate it. Literally, the child caught a snake and was chewing on the snake. When the father came back home from work, he saw that the child had a snake in his hand and that the snake’s head was in his mouth and he was chewing it. Then the television news people came to film the baby eating the snake. One person asked the father why the child was eating a snake. I don’t know the exact

answer, the father said, “It is a challenge,” or something quite simple. Anyway, I remember it was entertaining.

I am not sure if any of you here have a child, but anyway, those who are mothers can understand, through your own experience you can understand your own motherly kindness. From remembering how much you suffered when taking care of that child, it should be easy to understand the kindness of the mother.

For me, I often say that it is very effective to see how much the mothers who have children are suffering. Constantly they have to watch the child or carry the baby in their arms. The child is always making itself dirty, again and again doing peepee or kaka always making itself wet, always dirty. The mother has to change it so many times in one day, and then not only that but she has other children as well. There are those who can walk, and those who can speak. One is behind, one is on the right side, one is on the left side, one is at the front. They are all screaming, and the one to the left is crying and making peepee. Those who can speak and who can walk around are climbing all over the mother’s body, screaming and pulling her hair. Screaming, “I want a milkshake!” One says, “I want chocolate!” Another says, “I want water!” This and that. One says he wants something, another says he wants something else. They shout and they scream for hours and hours, and they are crying. The whole house is filled with noise. They are making it so difficult for the mother, giving her a very hard time. She always listens to whatever they say. She gives them things whenever they ask, always buying whatever they demand. For a mother to not give what the children ask for is difficult. The children give her such a hard time. When I see mothers taking care of their children, it really makes me think about and feel their kindness. In the same way that she is taking care of them now, she has also taken care of me in the past. I see how she is taking care of them, how she is suffering so much, having such a hard time—it’s so clear, you see it with your eyes. Since the continuity of rebirth is beginningless, she has definitely been my mother. So definitely she took care of me like this. As she is now taking care of them, she took care of me in the past with much hardship. Feel the kindness from the very inside of your heart. It is so very effective for your mind when you apply this to yourself. Seeing exactly how the children give problems and hard times to the parents and how the mother experiences much hardship, we understand that exactly like this our own mother suffered for us. She has suffered so much and has been so kind. Constantly thinking day and night, “How can I make my child happy? How good it would be if my child was happy!” She was always thinking this from the heart. Whatever she did, even if she went for a job in an office outside the home. Whatever she did, always she had this in mind. Even though she could not spend much on food or clothing for herself, to make herself happy, she spends and gives the best that she can find. She finds food that doesn’t harm. Also she builds a whole house filled with various toys for the child to play with. She takes the child to the shops, and buys the toys that the child wants to play with.

Then the clothes. Even in one day the clothes have to be changed many times. Even after, when one is more grown up, there are many changes. There are different clothes for different seasons. There are so many different shoes to wear at different times and at different places. Even just with shoes it comes to hundreds and hundreds, not to mention all kinds of clothes. If all the food that she gave us with her loving kindness were piled up, it would make a mountain. The same with all the money that she spent since we were born, inside the mother’s womb until now—it is unbelievable, it is so much. All that she spent on food and clothing and then on education.

When we were like worms crawling on the ground, she taught us how to walk. Then she taught us how to speak and like this she put us in the group of human beings. If she had not spent the money

that she saved with much hardship and physical tiredness on our education, by now we would not even know how to write our name. Experiencing much hardship and physical tiredness, even though she was not healthy and had so much worry and fear, she spent all the money that she saved for many years on us, thinking, “May my child be happy! If he has a good education, with a college or university degree, then his life will be happy.” With this compassionate thought she spent all that money to educate oneself. If she had not done this, by now one could not even write one’s signature.

Now we think that this is not because of the kindness of our parents. We think, “Oh, I have a truly existent education. I have a degree, I have a certificate, a doctorate, Ph. D, or whatever it is, this or that. I got this degree by myself, by studying. Because of that I now have a job, I have money coming in. I have an easy life.” We think, “I did it. I did it.” We are completely ignorant of all the hardships, all the suffering, and all the kindness of the parents, what they did for us.

If they hadn’t sent us to school, if they hadn’t spent money and if they hadn’t taken care, we would not have this precious human body now. If they didn’t protect our life from the many dangers of disease, hot and cold, hunger and thirst, if they did not take care of us by spending money for medicines when we had a disease or buying clothes to protect us when we were feeling cold, or giving us drinks when we felt thirsty, if they did not protect our life like this, then by now we would be separated from this opportunity, we would be without hope because we wouldn’t have this precious human body. We would be unable to read, hopeless, with no way to read Dharma books. We would not be able to take notes when the lamas are giving teachings. (I’m not talking about my teachings, I’m talking about when high lamas give teachings and we are able to take notes and understand the meaning of the Dharma words.) If the mother had not taken care, all this wouldn’t happen. We have this incredible opportunity due to her kindness. Even though we cannot comprehend the teaching while the lama is giving it, by making notes we are able to understand it later, by thinking more and more, and reading more Dharma books.

It is a very bad attitude, thinking, “Oh, I did it,” all the time thinking, “I did it,” completely forgetting the parents. The parents are recognized as the enemy that disturbs your happiness. It’s a bad characteristic—not knowing and remembering the kindness of the parents. Instead of helping the parents and remembering their kindness, instead of repaying them, we completely identify them as the enemy, we see them as being completely black. Parents are an object not to be seen, not to be looked at, not to be met. If one does meet them, instead of being kind, instead of repaying them with love and compassion, remembering their kindness, repaying them and helping them when they have difficulties, instead of helping them when you meet them, you want to fight. You only want to hurt their minds as much as possible. You say words as harmful as possible to your parents. What the scientist was asking, talking about evil human beings—this is it. You are so selfish towards them, like a rock.

I also spoke yesterday on this point. I’d like to clarify, in case of doubt. It does not mean that one should listen to everything that other people say. If someone says, “You should kill yourself, I want you to die,” or, “I want you to throw a bomb on this bank, or this city, or to kill this person,” when you give up your selfish attitude and cherish others, wanting to benefit them, it doesn’t mean that you should do whatever others tell you to do. You all are intelligent people and can understand what’s right in case of doubt. However, in case anyone has this question: if you give up this selfish attitude and you benefit others, when you give the victory to others and take the loss upon yourself, should you listen to whatever other people ask of you or tell you to do? That depends on this; you

have to know the way of practicing, the way of giving the victory to others and taking the loss on yourself, cherishing others and renouncing yourself.

The conclusion is this: whether or not to listen to whatever they say, whether to put that action into practice or not depends on your capability, how much realization you have in the mind. If you don't have much capability or insight to be able to do certain actions, then you don't do it. If you do have the capability, then it only benefits, instead of harming. In terms of the actions that look negative, like killing, lying, stealing, and so forth, the various negative actions of body and the four negative actions of speech, if you do not have the capability to transform these actions into virtue, then do not do them. But if you have the capability to transform these into virtue, then doing so can only benefit instead of harming. It can only benefit oneself and others. However, one has to judge according to one's own level of realizations and capability of mind.

In short, the answer is this: whichever is more important, do that. Whichever is less important leave that and do the most important one. If there is a choice (like with the dam) you check out what work you can do, then you do whatever benefits others most. The thing that does not benefit others, particularly if it gives harm, is definitely something to give up.

It also depends on this: do whatever gives benefit for more sentient beings, and leave whatever actions benefit a small number of sentient beings. If you cannot do both, the small one and the greater one, then do whichever action or work benefits more sentient beings. Leave out the one that benefits a very small number. That should be left.

This wisdom or judgment comes from Dharma understanding. If you don't have Dharma understanding, if you don't have Dharma wisdom, there is no way that you can judge which is more beneficial, and which is less. It is difficult without wisdom or Dharma understanding. Without understanding karma it is difficult to judge or to make the life most beneficial.

If you practice, as the realizations come, after you yourself have generated the fundamental graduated path, you have much more understanding. Then you will be much more skillful in regards guiding or working for other sentient beings.

I stop here.

25th November am

As I remember now, I think I would just like to clarify regarding the suffering of change. I don't think it is that much of a problem for those who have had many teachings. As Buddha said in the sutra teachings, "One suffering stopped and another suffering came. One suffering action stopped and one suffering action started—that is how the recognition of happiness or pleasure happened. That is recognized as pleasure." It is said like this in the sutra teaching, and it is like this in our experience.

All these sufferings, the true cause of suffering and the true path, all these four noble truths are very scientific, if you check. If you have intelligence and you check, if you analyze, they are like this. This is not something to do with blind faith, something which is not real, so that you just need to have mere belief, blind faith, and nothing to do with reality, nothing to do with our experience. It is not like that. If you have intelligence, if you have wisdom you can understand. If you study the teachings

and put them into action then you can see whether it is something that you can actualize. You can see whether the path that is explained in the teachings is something that it is possible to have in your mind. You can see for yourself whether it is possible to have the path that is explained in the books and in the scriptures in your mind. If one has correct understanding, as one practices correctly, one's own experience is proof.

If it is similar with medicine that has been taken by many people and helped to cure many people's diseases. Generally speaking, if you take it and you have the same disease as the others had, there is a possibility that it will remove the disease. Of course, you should check before taking it, but if you live with doubt, doubting everything without checking more deeply, then nothing happens. Also, maybe you don't know how to check. If you have doubt you check more deeply, you study more. Actually, you may not get a real, clear proof without putting it into action. Just from study you may get some idea, but not real, clear proof.

Similar to the example of the medicine—if others have taken the path by which you hope to gain inner peace or ultimate happiness, the complete cessation of problems, if there have been others who have gone on this path, who have accomplished it, who practiced this path and have achieved the result that you are seeking, then since they have the same potential of mind as you, if you enter that path and practice it, you will get the result you are seeking.

This is not to put them down, but even some geshe-las and monks who have studied debate for a lifetime sometimes see pleasure as pure happiness, as if it were not labeled on suffering. According to them if it is suffering it has to be the suffering of suffering.

Indifferent feeling, the feeling which is suffering, and the feeling which is pleasure—namely the changing suffering or the samsaric pleasures—all have to be suffering. But although it is suffering, it shouldn't be confused with the suffering of suffering and the feeling that is suffering. One doesn't need to confuse the three types of feeling, which are all in the same nature of suffering. [Note: the three feelings—suffering feeling, happy feeling, and indifferent feeling—are often related to the three sufferings: suffering of suffering, changeable suffering and all-pervasive suffering respectively—Editor.]

Even though it is suffering, it doesn't have to be the suffering of suffering, the feeling that we recognize as suffering. If we think in our mind of the pleasures that come from various actions that we do during the day, like sleeping or eating, when we don't analyze them, they look like truly existing pleasures. When we talk about them, we say, "Oh, I had a good time!" When we think of that comfort, when we talk about it, or when we remember future or past pleasures, when we don't analyze the nature of these things, it looks like they are truly existent pleasures. They seem to be pleasure from their own side, a truly existent pleasure, pure happiness that is not labeled on suffering.

If it were not labeled on suffering, it would be contradictory to what we usually talk about in our everyday life. As I said before, when a problem becomes much smaller, or when one's disease or sickness becomes much smaller, we say, "Now I am very happy, very comfortable." However, this thing that we normally label happiness or comfort contradicts what worldly people usually talk about, besides what Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said in the teachings. As I mentioned before, with that quotation, when we analyze we find that it is suffering.

Thinking of these things as pure pleasure does not help your renunciation. You think that it is pure happiness, but if it really were pure happiness, then, as I mentioned before, as you carry on doing the action longer and longer, the pleasure should increase. If it is pure happiness, and not something that is labeled on suffering, this would be true. That wrong thinking does not help you to generate the thought of renunciation of samsara, or to generate bodhicitta. So it is more effective to see the reality of the nature of pleasure, the samsaric pleasures, as suffering. It is better and more effective for the mind to think of the nature (of pleasure). It helps to make the confusion less.

Real happiness is achieved when you are free from the third suffering, the pervasive compounding suffering. What we call the “comfort” or the “happiness of life” is when the suffering of suffering becomes smaller.

In one family there are five members. There is one person who is completely free from the pervading, compounding suffering. Then there is one who doesn't have the suffering of suffering but who has the changing suffering, and another one who has the pervading compounding suffering. One member of the family doesn't have suffering of suffering. The rest of the family have different levels of sufferings of suffering. One has the greatest problem, the heaviest suffering of suffering. The sufferings of the others are lighter than that. The others have much smaller sufferings of sufferings. Among these three people, the first one has the heaviest problem; the second person has more comfort or more happiness than the first; the third one, who has the smallest problem, is happier than the second person. Because he doesn't have the suffering of suffering, that person is happier than the others. Then we have the person who is free from the pervading compounding suffering, and that person has achieved the real happiness, the everlasting happiness or the ultimate happiness. That person has it.

There should be one more person; I left out the person who doesn't have the changing suffering but has the pervading compounding suffering. So there are six members in this family. We judge how much happiness there is in the life of a person in dependence upon how few problems there are in the life of that person.

Let me just clarify, one little point with regards to meditation on kindness. One question might arise. For example, I didn't see my father. I don't remember having seen my father. Probably he was alive when I came out of the mother's womb but I have no mental picture of my father, I don't know how to visualize him. Even though I did not see him, even though I don't remember him in this life as being physically present and helping me, still like the mother he has been kind. He has been kind because if he did not create the karma to give birth to me and to give me this body, then by now I would not have this precious human body, qualified with the eight freedoms and the ten richnesses. Just this became the great foundation that is so important, the very first thing to start. Even just considering this one thing makes him extremely kind.

I remember that my mother suffered so much. I think before when my father was at home they were not so wealthy, though a little bit better off than other families who are regarded as poor. A little bit wealthy. We had many possessions but I think that according to Western standard of life we should be rich in garbage, with a collection of garbage in the house. But in that country it was regarded as being a little bit better off. Anyway, my father was able to read the scriptures. I don't remember whether he was ever a monk or not before, but there are stories that he was very good at reading scriptures and doing pujas for other people.

Recently I found out how my father died. I asked my mother because I was very interested to find out how he died. He was sick for some time, I think he died at the fireplace—not in the fire! My mother went to work outside in the field, and the other children, my sister and the elder ones were not at the house, they were outside. One day she came back from the field and as she came in she saw the father sitting by the fireplace. (Usually the Sherpas sit around the fireplace when they eat. In the West you sit around the table, but Sherpas sit around the fireplace when they have food. The families always sit around the fireplace and also it keeps them warm.) So, anyway, one day after working in the field, when she returned home during one of the break times she saw my father sitting at the fireplace and she called his name. She called, “Father, do you need anything?” But he did not reply. He was sitting by the fireside, and his body was upright, it had not fallen down, it was not lying down. I think my mother did not understand. It is very possible that he was in the meditation state at the time of death, but I think my mother didn’t realize this. She thought that he was still alive because he was sitting like this at the fireplace. He was very quiet, so then she asked, “Do you want anything?” She was just coming back during one of the break times and asked did he need any help. He didn’t give any answer. Then she went outside to tell her friends and other people. They didn’t know what to do. They didn’t go to ask a lama what to do. That is what she should have done, but I think probably my mother might have had a quite limited understanding. So she went to spread the message among some of her friends, some other mothers, and then they told her to take the body outside and burn it.

She didn’t go to the cremation. I don’t know so much about it, maybe it is not their custom. I think maybe the day the body was taken out he was not actually dead, that the mind had not yet separated from the body. The people who took the body out and burned it, they were so surprised. They told my mother, “He looks so alive.” They told her that he looked very good, he did not look dead.

You see, when a person is in the meditation state, until the meditation session is over, things do not change. The color of the skin doesn’t change. There is no bad smell. If there are bad smells it means that the person is not in the meditation state. The main thing to examine is the smell and not so much the way the body is sitting. The more reliable thing would be not having any smell during those three, four, five days—however long the person stays in meditation. But I don’t mean that one should put it in the refrigerator! Some meditators, especially at the time of death, look more glorious than normal. Much more magnificent, much more glorious. Also they give out scented smells. Instead of giving out bad smells (upsetting) the environment for others—very deep bad smells around the house and in the room so that when other people come to see it is kind of scary, very fearful to touch the body—instead of that they give out the smell of moral conduct, the scented smell of having achieved bodhicitta, having great compassion, and the thought of loving kindness that covers all sentient beings. I have seen high lamas passing away like that and also ordinary people who died in front of my lap. Also, I went to the pujas where there were dead people.

There are so many stories. However, I don’t think I am going to carry on talking on this subject, because then I won’t make it to the *Bodhicharyavatara*.

So, I think my mother didn’t check with the lamas that were familiar with tantra teachings, those who are familiar and who know how to guide and how to deal with these kind of problems. Probably they burned him before he had finished the meditation.

At Pashupatinath, the Nepalese bring their bodies to be burnt. It is one of their places, one of the most famous Hindu temples. Many times I went there and watched the dead bodies that had been

brought. There was one body that I think was not finished. I don't think that the mind had separated from the body yet. Probably it was unconscious just for a while, due to some wind disease or something. Maybe it became unconscious for a while but if there had been some people who knew the right method maybe they could have revived that person.

So many times the people in the family do not know or do not recognize the possibilities. They do not know the method. They do not really understand and cannot recognize when the person is actually dead. There is a possibility that after some time the person might be able to revive, that the consciousness could come back and after some time the person could get better.

One day the body of one Nepalese man was brought there. They performed the whole ceremony, putting the body over the piles of wood and putting on the grass. First they wash the feet of the dead body in the river, which they think is kind of holy. This is meant to be purifying so that there is no trouble. They put the body over the wood and then they put burning grass, a burning cloth, or something like that dipped in kerosene on the head first. They carry the body three times around the firewood, then they put it on top and then they put the fire on top of the heart. One day one person's body was put there. They put the wood on top and the fire at the heart. Then this person came back—he moved his limbs when they put the fire on his heart. (It is similar to when in the West you give electric shocks as the very last method. The very final determining factor is the electric shock. If that doesn't do anything then, dead.) This person probably had wind disease or something, or some spirit harm. He was not actually dead. So this dead person was moving his limbs. He started to speak, saying, "I am not dead."

These people who were standing around thought it was very inauspicious. They had never heard about a person coming back from the cemetery. If there have been many stories then of course it becomes a normal thing. It becomes something usual and it would not be regarded as bad or inauspicious. These people were standing around, the relatives and maybe the sons. (I think that usually it is the men who burn the dead bodies. I didn't see any women there doing the burning. Also in Delhi and here it is the same thing, only men were working.)

I went two or three times to watch at one of the cemeteries, the cremation places in Delhi. I was standing there for hours and hours watching the different classes of people coming there for the burning. There are different kinds of burning. There is the rich way where many pictures are taken of the dead bodies. (Now my conversation is getting longer!) When one rich person's body came the wife and so many wealthy people gathered round—thirty or forty on motorcycles and in cars. So many gathered round and everybody was looking at the body. I didn't try to get near because maybe they would not like it. They were taking pictures of the face and taking blessings—they were not actually touching the dead body, but the ground nearby and putting that on the forehead.

For the rich person's body there is a special wood, very dry pieces. Of course they may have to pay more. It burns very easily. The old, very poor people are brought by two people or three people. The rich people have lots of flowers, lots of decorations. The poor ones, hardly anything. Usually they have some flowers and then two or three people bring the body there and they get very old, big wood. Then they burn the body. I think it takes more time, somehow, some are difficult to burn. Anyway, there was nobody taking pictures of that poor person. I stayed there for hours and hours, so the Indians thought that I was doing some kind of study of people's lives. They called it something but I have forgotten what. I told them that I came to do puja.

When people come to a cremation, the relatives and all those who come there experience a great change. When something happens to another person's life it has a great effect. The mind is kind of upset when some great change happens to the life of a person in the family. So if one talks about Dharma during that time, I think the mind would be very suitable.

However, to finish this—about that person who spoke, saying, “I am not dead!” He started to move his limbs, trying to get up. Then all the relatives and all the other people beat him with sticks. He was trying to get up from the funeral pyre saying, “I am not dead,” while everybody gathered round beating him with the firewood. Together everybody beat him and made him burn in the fire. They put wood on the top.

So like this, you see, what can you do? This is another example of karma. The idea is unbelievable. Before when he was alive among his family it would be, “my this, my that,” “my father” or my this and that, something. And then—could you stand it if you put yourself in the place of that person? Even though you say, “I am not dead,” it doesn't help.

Many times there is heat at the heart but there is no heat on the rest of the body. The very last place the heat absorbs is at the heart. Maybe it starts to absorb from the head. There are differences—with somebody who dies with virtuous thoughts, who has accumulated much virtue, the heat starts to absorb from the feet. For those who die with non-virtuous thoughts, who accumulated much non-virtue in that life, the heat starts to absorb from the head. There is a difference like this. The last thing is that all the heat contracts at the heart. If there is heat at the person's heart that is also one thing showing that the person is not dead, even though the body is extremely cold and the feet and the hands like wood.

After my father died many people from other families took the possessions away by force. I think my mother was in great debt. She didn't have the money to pay and I remember when I was so small many times people came to ask for money. They came there and she offered those expensive wines, the strongest, made from potatoes, and the ordinary wine, made of rice, barley, and all those things. When the person sat down at the table she offered wine and put the container with wine in front of that person. Then he asked her to give him this and that. Maybe she said, “Come another time,” or maybe she said, “I don't have it.” Anyway, I don't remember exactly, but what I do remember is what she did after the man left. That I remember. After the person who came to get money left and went downstairs, when he was about to go out the downstairs door my mother started to criticize and say wrong prayers. She would throw dust, picking up the dust between the planks and throwing it after the person saying: “May he die soon,” and this and that. That I remember very clearly.

She had great difficulties, especially after I was born. I think I gave a lot of trouble. The other children were okay. There were several other children. One child had one crown here, sort of a pinnacle, but it didn't live long. I must have been a very evil person because after I was born so many of the animals died. The family had many yaks—not exactly yak but the mother; normally we say yak butter and cheese, but “yak” is related to the father; I don't know what you call the female in English, it looks quite similar to the yak but it is not “yak,” but the female. In Scotland they have them, I think, or some other Western country. However, so many of them died gradually after I was born, so many of them. And many goats and sheep died.

In the family there was only one person who could help—the sister who was a little bit older than the others. Between her and myself there was another girl who died. She had a tiny tail in the back.

She was another example of karma. If you don't agree, if you think it is impossible, it is my experience. She died when I was in Tibet. She was in my mother's lap. She had diarrhea and while my mother was holding her the girl died. And then there was another younger brother who was completely useless, completely useless. He did nothing but disturb the mother, breaking things that she rented in the house.

She (the mother) was the one who had to take care of all the outside work in the fields and then go to the forest to get the firewood. We just played. It took many hours, it was not that easy. I don't know how strict it was at that time but you could cut only dried wood. So it took several hours. She came back home very late at night, sometimes even after dark, after the moon had risen. We would wait, just small children. We were kind of scared of the house. There was no light, there was no kerosene lamp, there was no electricity—of course there is no electricity even now. So we went outside the house and sat by the door and then we waited for mother. We didn't get any food. It would be very late. Then after some time she came with a huge load of firewood. When she came back home she was sick. She had a headache. Inside the house we just looked at her as she lay down by the fireplace, screaming because of much pain. That I remember clearly, we just did nothing, nothing. When mother screamed we would just look at her, just sit there and look at the mother, that is all.

There was no fire in the fireplace because mother was sick. When she was sick she would scream for her mother, calling her mother. Usually when somebody who knows better is sick or something he calls his guru, he calls the lama for whom he has devotion, but at that time she called her mother. Maybe now it is different. I think she is different now. Now she is a nun. She took ordination from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's tutor, His Holiness Ling Rinpoche, with many other nuns and monks at Bodhgaya.

We ate the food that she made, then all day we just played in the field with stones and with pieces of wood. When I was very small I had one friend, one dumb boy. One boy who could not speak. He was my best friend. Every day we would play. He liked to play ritual things and I also liked to play ritual things when I was very small. So sometimes I would sit on the throne and they would be like listeners. (I think I am still playing now actually!) We played many other rituals like doing pujas. I didn't know one single word. I was just imitating with this dumb boy, this mute boy. Some boys did the pujas, they made noise and played the cymbals. Some boys were the benefactors, they served things, but the material that they offered was sand. They put sand on the stones and made it wet with water, then pretended that it was vegetables or soup, they passed it to each boy. However, that is useless.

When I was small I read Milarepa's life story three or four, several times, just as a practice for reading, mainly for practice in reading Tibetan letters. Somehow at that time it was so clear, more clear than now even. I had a great desire to be a really good practitioner by finding a guru like Marpa, an infallible guru. However, without talking much, I liked very much the monk's life. I was interested in the monk's life. So my mother sent me with some relatives to a monastery, to one of my uncles who was a monk, in order to learn the alphabet. One syllable was a little bit difficult but I think that maybe (I don't remember one hundred percent certain), but I might have learned it in one day. I was very naughty also at that time, so I didn't stay in the monastery. My uncle used to teach me the alphabet outside on the balcony; and when he went inside to the kitchen to cook food I ran away, I escaped to my mother's house. It was not far from the monastery, maybe half a mile or something. Several times I escaped.

Then my mother sent me to another place to another uncle who was a monk. There I spent seven years and completed reading and memorizing and all those things. My uncles and the lamas from whom I received initiations were of the Nyingmapa sect. However, whether I received them or not I was there as a small child on the lap of other people. Their sect was Nyingmapa. I memorized their prayers and the meditation prayers during those times.

So all that up until now I have been able to study and able to understand, I owe to her kindness. That I am able to extract that much meaning from reading, by seeing these incredible, profound, secret, infallible scriptures, I owe to her kindness. All this, the tiny bit, the few words that I can speak, that I am speaking to you now, that is all due to her kindness. But I haven't done anything back. I haven't done anything. There is nothing that I can think of that I did to benefit her in return.

I think I stop here.

25th November pm

This morning the very first thing I was trying to explain was this: I used as an example the fact that I didn't have any mental picture of my father. It is similar if you have never seen your mother. I don't mean that you grew up in a bottle or something, under the heat, however, maybe your mother ran away from your father after you were born, or you don't remember that she took care of you when you were a child. Sometimes there was not even a father, both parents died, so you were actually brought up or taken care of by somebody else's mother or somebody else's father. So then one doesn't remember that this present life's mother took care of ones. She gave birth but you don't remember that she took care of you afterwards. In that case it is not necessary to push aside the mother; the whole point is for you to have an example of somebody who was kind to you. The main point is that you can remember somebody who was kind to you in this life, not necessarily your mother or your father but one person, one sentient being who was very kind to you. That is the main point.

We need an example for the purpose of meditating on kindness in order to be able to generate the principal cause of the omniscient mind, bodhicitta, in order to complete the extensive works for all sentient beings. To be able to generate the realizations of bodhicitta within our mind depends on being able to generate its root, great compassion for all sentient beings, and also great love for all sentient beings.

A son or daughter is someone who usually has much respect for his or her parents. They feel that their mother and father are so kind, so precious, that automatically the thought of loving kindness arises towards them. If you feel that a person gave a lot of help when you had many problems with your means of living, when you had a hard life, that someone helped you solve your problems when you had trouble and a very hard time, you see that person in the light of loving kindness. Knowing that they are so kind, you wish them to be free from problems, like a son or daughter. The more you feel their kindness, the more compassion you have for them, particularly when they have disease or when there is some problem in their mind. There is that much compassion wishing them to be separated from the problems and also there is a great wish, the thought of loving kindness, wishing that kind person to have the happiness that he is seeking. You wish for his happiness very much and also you want to help this kind person to fulfill his wishes. You know and feel deeply that this

person is kind, and as a result automatically greater compassion, greater thoughts of loving kindness arise towards him.

We need an example in order to understand kindness. We need to use it in order to see that all other sentient beings—besides the friend and those who are kind and helpful now, also the stranger, the enemy and all the rest of the sentient beings—have also been kind in the past. So if for you, the kindest person has been your mother, then by using her as an example you apply that to all sentient beings—all sentient beings have been your mother and have been kind. If it is your father whose kindness is the greatest, that you can remember that and use his kindness as an example—just like him all sentient beings have been kind.

It is best if you are able to recognize the kindness of the enemy who is harming you. This is especially the most important thing for one's own mind development, for the development of patience, and for the development of the good heart. If you recognize this, you can see the kindness of the enemy, and I would think that is the best example. Then when you look at all sentient beings in this way, you will not find any sentient being that gives harm or has given harm.

There are two pieces of advice when training the mind in bodhicitta. One is training the mind in bodhicitta through the seven techniques of the Mahayana cause and effect. With this technique, you try to realize that sentient beings are extremely kind through using the example of the extreme kindness of the mother in this present life. In this way you try to realize how sentient beings are precious and extremely kind.

Then there is the other more profound advice on training the mind in bodhicitta: equalizing with and exchanging oneself for others. The way of equalizing oneself with others is the lama's meditation technique and comes from understanding conventional truth or all-obscuring truth, and absolute truth. There are six reasons for equalizing oneself with others, and three of these reasons are because of the absolute truth. However, the essence is that oneself and other sentient beings are exactly equal.

The most important object to meditate on is the enemy. I, myself, and the enemy who is harming me are exactly equal, not desiring even the smallest suffering, not even the unhappiness experienced in a dream. In this we are exactly equal, both desiring even the smallest comfort, even the smallest happiness experienced in a dream. I, myself, and the enemy are exactly equal. This is the very root, the fundamental reason for equalizing. The conclusion is that there is not the slightest reason that I should be more important than him, that what I want is more important, that my happiness should be more important than his—the enemy, the person who is disturbing me. There is not the slightest reason that what one wishes or one's own happiness should be more important than that of others. Because of this, there is no reason at all to cherish the "I" or to cherish myself and renounce others. There is not the slightest reason that I should cherish myself more than others. There are unbelievable reasons for cherishing others and renouncing oneself. One cannot finish explaining the reasons, the benefits. The reasons, the benefits are endless.

When renouncing others and cherishing oneself, instead of receiving benefits, one only receives harm. Besides, it hinders one from generating the graduated path to enlightenment, especially bodhicitta, which means that it prevents one from achieving the state of omniscient mind to be able to complete extensive benefits for all sentient beings. It is so harmful that it doesn't let one accomplish extensive benefits, freeing each and every sentient being from suffering and leading

them to the state of omniscient mind. It doesn't allow this, it is the greatest disturbance. Even in everyday life, if you follow a selfish attitude there is no realization, no peace in the mind today. The amount of hours each day of the life that one follows and keeps the selfish attitude becomes the base that brings so many problems. It is like the poisonous root—the polluter, or the poisonous plant. It brings so many undesirable problems for the many people around us.

So one should think of the kindness as it is explained in the teachings. You should think also of the kindness of those others that you can see—not only of the kindness of those other sentient beings who were kind in the past as your mother. Not only that, but also the everyday life kindness of those whom you can see with your eyes—thinking how in everyday life every single happiness and enjoyment came from them, the ones that you can see, without needing to depend on quotations from Buddha. This is something that you can feel immediately, that you can recognize just by explaining. It is not difficult to understand, like the fact that in the past life we accumulated virtue so that in this life we can now experience the result, happiness. Simply by recognizing this kindness of other sentient beings we can apply it to all sentient beings. By relying on the kindness of the sentient beings from whom one has received all the enjoyment and comfort each day of our life, one is able to be a human being each day, able to be alive, able to be a human being. All this is by the kindness of those sentient beings. We can apply this to all the rest of the sentient beings thinking that they also have been kind like this. We think of their kindness when they were our mother and of the others' kindnesses. One thinks of how all of one's three times happiness came from sentient beings, and is dependent on the kindness of sentient beings. In this way the kindness of other sentient beings is much more extensive, much deeper.

Since all the sufferings came from the self and all the happiness and perfections came from others, what should one do, if what one wishes is happiness and what one does not wish is suffering? What one should practice to fulfill this wish is to renounce the self, from where all the sufferings come, and to cherish others, from where all the happiness comes. In this way there are no hindrances. All the hindrances to the fulfillment of this wish are stopped and so are the hindrances to eliminating one's own suffering and obtaining happiness. All the happiness that one wishes to achieve is immediately fulfilled without any hindrance.

By thinking of the greater kindness, a deeper and greater compassion and love are generated. From this root one is able to generate very strong love and compassion, and then one is able to generate a stronger bodhicitta.

Already you might have meditated a little bit on this way of realizing how others are so precious and so important. So precious and extremely kind. A little bit of talk on this might come again and again. If you are among the highly intelligent ones or among those for whose mind this way of training the mind in kindness and bodhicitta is more effective, namely equalizing and exchanging oneself with others, if it benefits, it is more effective to generate the great compassion and thought of loving kindness more easily and quickly, and then train the mind in this way. And if the other way, thinking of the kindness of the mother, is easier and more effective for the mind, generating great love and compassion more quickly, then train the mind in bodhicitta that way—the second technique of Mahayana cause and effect.

The point is this: the whole meditation is done to accomplish the final goal. The main purpose is to accomplish the work for all sentient beings. To accomplish the ultimate aim, training the mind in bodhicitta, this work subduing and changing the mind is done.

The mother has been extremely kind all the time. If she could give more than enlightenment, if she had the power to give more than enlightenment, she would give it to us. She has been kind in so many ways, always wishing, if there was the choice, for herself to be sick and not the child. She would choose for herself to get sick rather than the child, for herself to die rather than the child.

It is very good to remember that the mother has created so much negative karma in order to take care of you. So much harm she did to many other sentient beings. She gave so much harm to creatures and to human beings in order to obtain the comfort and pleasure of food and clothing for us. So many times she told lies to others people, even trying to hide our mistakes as much as possible. Even if we were so violent, so cruel to our mother, she would hide it. She doesn't want us to have a bad reputation. She tries everything, even though we don't have a good personality, don't do any good actions, don't have such an education—she tells lies to other people about how my son or daughter is intelligent and beautiful and this and that. If there is one small good thing, if we did just one small good thing, like when we started to speak as a child, when we started to say one word, “mummy” or something like that, if one day she saw one word coming out, something, then she was so happy, so blissful, and announced it to everybody and she exaggerated. She made it sound much better.

Even if the son or daughter has spoken very rude words, unbelievably painful, rude words, even beating the mother, she hides it. What the child did is so painful for her mind, but she hides such a bad characteristic, such an evil characteristic, never telling it to other people because of the worry of bad reputation. When she took care of us she fought others in order to obtain comfort and reputation for us. She harmed those who disturbed us. With anger and with ill will she harmed, she fought, and she spoke rude words. In so many different ways she created so much negative karma. In spite of all these hardships, in spite of creating those negative actions, killing others, all those things, the mother guided us and took care of us by giving the enjoyments.

The conclusion is that this present mother has been extremely kind, giving this body to me. This is not the first time that she has given me a body. She has been kind, giving me a body numberless times in past lives. First you feel this, you feel the depthless kindness. She has been kind in giving me this body because now I won't be late in making preparations for the practice of Dharma for future happiness. If the mother had given me, for example, the body of a scorpion when she was a scorpion it wouldn't have been too surprising, but having given me a human body is so very kind because with a human body there is more opportunity to experience pleasure and also to practice the holy Dharma, as I have mentioned many times.

All of us here are a good example. Now even many Western people have met the Buddhadharm that was not in the West before. Not like in India or Tibet. Previously it had not spread to the West but now there are so many Westerners involved. Even though one did not come from the West with the particular idea to study Buddhadharm and to practice it, somehow the conditions gather and somehow it happens. At one place all the conditions gather, somehow, like this, and one meets the holy Dharma. One starts to practice because one finds that it is practical for immediately solving the problems of life. All this did not happen without a cause. The cause was arranged or prepared in many past lives. Mainly with the human body.

So first you try to feel the depthless kindness of the mother, how she kindly given me a body numberless times in past lives. And protection. This is not the first time that she protected my life

from dangers such as hunger, thirst, hot, and cold by giving me the enjoyments, clothing, food, the place, and the house. This is not the first time that she has been extremely kind. Think that she has been kind in protecting my life from danger numberless times in past lives, and place the mind on this kindness, feeling the depthless kindness of this. This is not the first time that she has led me in the path of the world. “In the path of the world” means taught me how to walk, how to talk, and all those other educations with which she helped. This is not the first time she has been kind to me leading me in the path of the world—she did so numberless times in past lives. Again, look back and feel her depthless kindness in leading me in the path of the world.

(Can you hear, you who are at the door, at the edge? Can you hear? Maybe I'll try to speak also through the nose—I am joking!)

This is not the first time she bore hardships or suffered for me to obtain happiness. Each time she was my mother she suffered so much. If you remember some examples of how this person, my mother, was somebody who took care of me and bore much hardship, then you think that this is not the first time she has been kind to me, bearing numberless hardships for me. For example, when I was born to her in past lives she was unable to give birth. I couldn't come out and so she died. Even just those bodies in her past lives in which she died because of me, in which she suffered so much incredible pain and finally died—if just these bodies were collected, there wouldn't be any space left. In order to take care of me, while fighting others, she was injured and her limbs cut off, getting killed, all these things. If all these bodies had been collected there wouldn't be any space left. It is the same thing with the milk that she fed me. If all the milk that came from her and with which she fed me with the loving thought in past lives had been collected, there wouldn't be any space left! Not just the Atlantic. So much.

One should think in a similar way with other things. Like the medicines that she gave when one was sick. Think in a similar way with everything, feeling the depthless kindness, and apply the same thing to the father.

Before mentioning that, I'll explain the reason that in this technique we particularly mention the kindness of the mother. That is because normally you don't find so many who feel closer to the father. Normally if you ask, “Who do you like more?” they say, “Mother.” So because one feels closer to the mother it is easier to realize the kindness of the mother. In the same way the father has been kind, like the mother, numberless times in past lives. You think of those four ways of kindness and you think that the stranger and all the rest of the Dharma friends who are here have also been extremely kind in these four ways. You feel that each of them, each human being has been kind like this. Then you think of the sentient beings who are in other realms, the suras and asuras, then the animals, each creature, such as snakes and tigers, fleas, lice and mosquitoes, especially those that one hates, that make one get angry. Especially with those, think that each of them has been kind numberless times in past lives in these four ways. Feel the depthless kindness of each one. Then, each of the narak beings and each of the preta beings. It is very good for those who think that a spirit is harming them, for those who believe this, to remember and to feel the depthless kindness of these spirits, the four ways of kindness, and in this way to generate great compassion and the thought of loving kindness. In this way it benefits—you are not depressed, not aggressive, not worried, not scared. It helps to develop one's own good heart, and to subdue one's own mind. Also it benefits the spirit.

The kindness of all sentient beings, being mother, and those four ways of being kind is so much that even Buddha's omniscient mind cannot see a beginning, cannot find a beginning to the kindness that they showed us. So when you look at the mother, you meditate on her kindness. Even if you saw the mother as terribly ugly, as an undesirable object, so that as soon as you remembered her face you got angry, now you remember her kindness more and more, and then as a result you see her in beauty, in the aspect of beauty, the beauty of love.

Similarly with all sentient beings. In Tibetan it is called *drin.dren*. As you think more and more of the kindness of all these sentient beings, you see them more and more in beauty, in warmth. I think the expression might be "warmth." You see a person who has a very kindly heart, who is very warm. Remember how it appears to you when a person who is extremely kind to you comes with a lot of people who are the enemy, whom you dislike, whom you hate. When he comes with the enemy and with a bunch of other people, with strangers, how do you see the differences between him and the others? What feelings do you get? You see him in the beauty of love. You don't feel this with the strangers and you don't feel this with the enemy.

I think I stop here.

26th November pm

By thinking of the kindness of our mother, the kindness that we remember, that we have seen in this life—even though we don't remember the kindness of this present mother in our past lives, even though we cannot remember how other sentient beings were our mothers and kind—we can remember the kindness of this present mother. Even though we didn't notice it before, even though we hadn't thought about it so far, now, if we look at it as it is explained in the teachings of Buddha, if we look back, from the time of birth until now the mother has been extremely kind.

But what did we do from our side? She gave so much incredible benefit, happiness, and perfection to us. What she has done is so much. I mentioned briefly yesterday the four ways of recognizing and remembering the kindness. But what did we do? What benefit did we offer the mother? What did we do in return? Only caused trouble. As a child, as a baby we gave kaka and peepee. When we were a baby it was kaka and peepee all the time, so many times a day, making our mother's hands dirty, making the place filthy. Even at night time, when she was supposed to have a comfortable sleep, we did not allow her to sleep. During the day she couldn't relax, she couldn't have a good time, and at night she was supposed to have a good sleep. But at night we would cry, not even letting her have a good sleep. For hours and hours we would not let her sleep. Also during the day we didn't give her any peace, screaming for hours and hours, bothering her so much by crying, asking, "I want this and that." All the time disturbing her and being a nuisance.

"Nuisance?" I think I learned that word before. Actually, I memorized so much vocabulary, but I lived in a place where there was no one who spoke the language. There were 1,500 monks. I tried to memorize many words from Time magazine, because it looked interesting. Of course there were many that were very hard to understand, but it was interesting. Somehow Time magazine is better, offers more interesting reading than the other papers, Indian newspapers. There were so many words. I make a kind of small dictionary and memorized so many piles of words. Then I forgot them because there was no place to use them—just with Indian officials. Sometimes I would say a few words that I could remember to them. Like, "How are you?" "Good morning," all these things.

Then mostly in everyday life I was talking to Tibetan monks, so it was of no benefit, however many words I had memorized.

Afterwards, Lama Yeshe and I met the first Western student, Zina. She had a title. I think her father had the title of King, so probably for important letters she would write her name as Princess Rachevsky. After some time, we came to Nepal with her, staying at Kopan. For a few years I had much interest in learning English, but I didn't learn English the skillful way, the proper way. Then after some time of reading more lamrim teachings or the graduated path to enlightenment, I lost interest. That is why I still have broken English, as the old students know very well.

So, what one did in return, what one did for the parents, for the mother, was to make a nuisance of oneself. As a child, one gave all this trouble, and as a grown-up one got more education, and then came the time when you were able to support yourself—all this by the kindness of the mother. For what you received, instead of being kind to your mother, instead of repaying her by remembering her kindness, what you do in return is to say very hasty words. To beat her if you can. If you are able to beat her, you beat her. You try to use your mother, your mother becomes a person for you to use. Instead of yourself becoming useful to the mother, she becomes someone for you to use.

What you give in return is fear, worry, and upset, instead of bringing more and more peace by being a good example and by having the thought of loving kindness. If after all this, after they worked so hard and gave you your body, being so kind, if after all this you don't make use of this body to take the essence, then there can be nothing more foolish than this. If, after your body has been fed and taken care of with so much hardship by the parents, you don't make it the cause to be able to take the essence, utilizing this precious human body for practicing holy Dharma, there can be nothing more ignorant than this. If, in this life, in this body, we cannot make ourselves take the essence, utilizing this and practicing the holy Dharma, it is very foolish. If possible, in this life, with this body, we should make ourselves have bodhicitta in our minds, while we have this body, this present human body. If we cannot do that before the time of death, what we should do is at least make ourselves able to see the absolute nature of the self—at least. The main thing to try to have in our minds is the utmost need of cutting off and eradicating the root of samsara, ignorance. If you can't do that, then at least try to have the realization, the thought renouncing samsara in your mind before death. Take the essence; we should be able to take the essence of this body, at least having generated the realization, the thought to renounce samsara. Even if one does not enter the Mahayana path, one should have entered the lesser vehicle path, the path to nirvana. One should be able to enter the path to the blissful state of peace. If this is not possible—if the three fundamental principals of the path to enlightenment cannot be completed with this body received from the present parents, by their kindness—then on the basis of the three principal path, these fundamental realizations, we should at least begin the realization in our minds, even though we cannot accomplish the whole path, up to the omniscient mind, in this life.

Even though we cannot accomplish the second stage, the illusory and clear light, the second stage of the graduated path of accomplishment, we can at least begin the realizations in our mind.

There are two stages of tantra, the path of the secret mantra. Within the path of the secret mantra, there are the path of generation and the path of accomplishment. Even if we cannot make it, even if we cannot have the realization of the second path, the illusory body and clear light, before death happens, we should start the realization of the graduated path of generation.

Maybe we cannot be what is called a *bodhisattva*, which is so much admired in the Mahayana sutra teachings—in those teachings given by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and in those written by pandits and Tibetan lamas, with commentaries by Tibetan lamas, the bodhicitta which is so much admired, which is ... (I think some spirit is putting in the wrong words). Anyway, there is so much benefit, as it is explained in the first chapter of the *Bodhicaryavatara*, in these teachings, in generating bodhicitta, the realization which is called the ultimate good heart, bodhicitta. Maybe we cannot manage to generate bodhicitta in our minds in this present life. We cannot be the fortunate person, the fortunate practitioner who is called a bodhisattva. It may not be possible in this life to become a bodhisattva, receiving the label, the name of bodhisattva, the holy being.

Of course, those who haven't met the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, the complete path to enlightenment with nothing missing, the path to achieve omniscient mind; those who haven't met the Buddhadharma and the virtuous friend who reveals the methods to subdue the mind—what can they do? Those people have not met the method and have not met the virtuous friend who reveals that method, so what can they do? They don't have the freedom that we have to practice. It is so difficult, what can they do? Not having freedom or richness. We have met this particular teaching which contains the complete advice, the path to enlightenment. We have met the virtuous friend who revealed the teachings and from our side we have received the precious human body, qualified with the eight freedoms and ten richnesses, Now, if you don't try, if you don't practice, if you don't try to have some change in the mind by applying the method and the advice; if you don't try to make any progress in this mind in this life, while you have this perfect human body, while you have received this perfect, precious human body qualified with the eight freedom and ten richnesses, it is very upsetting.

If you have received the perfect teachings with nothing missing, such as these teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment, and if you have met the virtuous friend who reveals it, then if you never practice, never change the mind, always constantly following anger and the selfish attitude, always letting yourself be under the control of such strong attachment and ignorance, it is very poor. If, instead of utilizing this perfect human body to accumulate virtue, the cause of happiness of the life beyond this, we utilize this perfect human body only to accumulate non-virtue, the cause of the suffering in this life and the life beyond, if it is used as the cause for oneself to become the firewood of the naraks, then it is very poor, it is very upsetting.

First of all we give so much trouble to our parents and are unable to repay their kindness, giving them so many problems, so much fear and worry. Secondly, if we can't make any preparation for the happiness of the future life while there is incredible freedom, with every necessary condition gathered together, then we are much more ignorant, much more foolish than those people who haven't heard Dharma teachings to subdue the mind and make preparations for the happiness of future lives. We are much more foolish, much more ignorant than those who haven't heard them at all. Much more so even than the mute animals, the pigs, the turtles. (What is that one? One animal that lives in the mud, that has a pointed nose? It has a huge body. That is right, rhinoceros. It sleeps in the mud. "Rhinoceros" sounds a little bit like "renunciation.") You see, you cannot criticize them, saying that they are not practicing Dharma. Also snakes. Because of the body that they have taken, the pigs, the rhinoceros, and the crocodiles—what can they do? Nothing. Because of their body, since the body that is called "animal" has been taken, there is nothing they can do. They didn't receive even just a precious human body, let alone a perfect human body and the opportunity to meet the virtuous friend and the ability to hear all the complete teachings.

So now, if we don't try to change—having heard and listened to the Buddhadharmā, and particularly to the teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment and the Mahāyāna teachings on bodhicitta—after having listened to such precious teachings, if we don't try to change the mind, if we don't do something to change the mind, we are more ignorant than those animals.

There has been no change since beginningless life. From beginningless rebirths until now there has been no change in the mind. None of these disturbing thoughts have decreased. Just thinking that it did not have a beginning is something very fearful, something that cracks the heart—thinking that this ignorance, this anger and attachment, these things, the disturbing thoughts that give you problems all the time, didn't have any beginning. There was no beginning to these disturbing thoughts and the selfish attitude that harms us, tortures us. Even just thinking that it didn't have a beginning, about how much it has tortured us and given us problems, is something that we cannot keep for even a minute, even a second in our hearts. It is like fire sparks that spring onto the flesh of the body, onto the skin, and that you have to throw away immediately—you can't stand it to be there for even a few seconds.

Due to ignorance we don't remember all the past harms that were given by the disturbing thoughts, and even now you are not aware how it is harming, not letting you have peace in the mind. We are much more foolish, much more ignorant actually than those very ignorant animals who are regarded as deeply ignorant—we who have all this. We, who have heard all these precious teachings, especially the teachings on bodhicitta. If we don't get any practice done, don't get some change, some progression in the mind in this life, there is nothing more ignorant, there is nothing more foolish than this.

As the great bodhisattva Shantideva says in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (I don't remember the first word, however, the essence is this), “After having found the perfect human body, not utilizing it to practice, not training the mind in virtue—there is nothing more ignorant than this. There is nothing more foolish than this...” I don't remember it exactly word by word, but Shantideva expressed it something like this. Then also, after having found such a body having this freedom, if I don't train in virtue, when I become a suffering transmigrating being experiencing and being overwhelmed by suffering, deeply ignorant, at that time, what can I do?

There are more quotations. However, in short the conclusion is that by putting the teachings that one has understood from reading, from listening, and from the notes that one made into action, one should, if possible, have less anger tomorrow than today. Day by day, if possible, even between two days, we should try to make some progression, we should be able to have some little bit of progression. Even if that is not possible, then month by month. Next month—better, less dissatisfactory mind, less anger, less pride. Even if you cannot do this with all the disturbing thoughts, at least make some change with anger, which is like having hot red coals inside your body, inside your chest, in the heart. Like the coal in the fire, so painful. At least, if you cannot make some change, if you cannot decrease other disturbing thoughts, at least you work with anger, so that it becomes smaller next month, and you have more patience than before. Even such progression as this, from month to month, from year to year.

If possible, do the same with all the rest of the disturbing thoughts by applying the lamrim teachings. At least make it less, try to have less anger when somebody disturbs you, when somebody bothers you and disturbs your happiness, when somebody disturbs your peace. Try to have peace in your mind at that time. You see, it is easy to practice when there are no problems, it is easy to talk about

practicing Dharma. But when there is a problem, when somebody is disturbing your happiness and your desire, when somebody is not letting you be successful—if at those times you can remember and put this into action, applying these teachings, methods, and meditations—if instead of rising anger you can establish peace and happiness by practicing patience, then you are brave, you are the real hero.

When death comes it should at least be like this: even though you don't have other realizations, whenever death shows up, one morning, one night, while you are sleeping, while you are eating, while you are traveling, or while you are having a party, whatever it is, even in a meditation session, because you have been trying to face the disturbing thoughts, trying to control the negative mind, you don't feel upset, because this stops you from accumulating any heavy negative karma. Whenever death shows up, suddenly comes upon you and you start to experience it, there is no worry, no upset. Like thinking, "Oh, I haven't done any practice. Oh, I have done such and such negative karma, I gave such and such a harm to others." This fear and worry doesn't come. When death comes there is less fear and worry, without the need to be born in the realm of the suffering transmigrating beings. From this perfect human body of the happy transmigrating being, you go to another happy body. Then you do better practice. Like this, you go from happiness to happiness. From life to life you go from happiness to happiness, you go on the path of happiness to enlightenment. If you work, trying to subdue the mind at least like this, then there is such a possibility.

Otherwise, after all this hard work done by your parents with great loving thought, taking care of you, giving you whatever education you have—that whole thing has been used to create the cause for the lower realms. Instead of taking the body of the happy transmigrating being, we take the suffering body of the miserable transmigrating being. In that way, then, we were born just to suffer, we were born just to cause suffering to our parents. If we don't get some progression in our mind in this life, we were born just to give trouble to others. We were born to the parents just to give them trouble, to cause problems for the parents and for other sentient beings. It is like that.

I didn't mean to speak so much like this, but again, it just happened. So this is something to keep in mind, especially when you question the meaning of life.

27th November am

Maybe you think that sentient beings are not kind now. They were kind, they benefited before, they were our mothers before in other lives, but they are not kind now. In that case, you should remember that your own mother didn't give you your body today, she gave birth to you a long time ago. If you are over eighty—I don't know if there is any person here who is over eighty, who has reached that age—however, if you are over 100, even though the mother didn't give birth to you today, she is still your mother. Even though it was that many years ago, that many months and days ago, she is still your mother, she is still kind.

In relation to the person who was very kind, who gave us food when we were very hungry yesterday, or the person who guided and protected us when we were in danger of falling down the precipices, "Oh yes, he was very kind yesterday, but not today." If you say that the sentient beings are not kind because of the time, because it was in other lifetimes, if you use that as a reason for saying that they are not kind, then that should be the same thing, the same reason. Today we remember it so much, we tell other people, all our friends—I am not sure about telling the enemy or not—to all the people

we say how he is such a kind person, we admire and we talk about that person. For me, he is very kind. The parents and those people who helped in the past, who have protected us from life dangers and from problems, we think they are very kind because we remember these things. It is only because of not remembering that other sentient beings have been our mother and kind at other times, it is only due to ignorance that we don't feel the same way towards them.

When you do the meditation, after you have generated the very strong feeling remembering or feeling the kindness of the present mother from the depth of the heart, as it is explained in the teaching, those four main ways, then, after analyzing, you can do a little bit of fixed, single-pointed meditation, without the mind being distracted, continuously thinking that she is incredibly kind. Then you do the same thing for the sentient beings in each realm.

After doing the analyzing meditation, you think that they, each of the sentient beings, have been kind, extremely kind in these four ways, and then you do single-pointed meditation placing the mind on that great kindness. Just keep repeating that they are extremely kind, that they are extremely kind, like this. Do single-pointed meditation on the narak beings, the preta beings, and the animal beings—how they have been kind in the four ways.

What these kind mother sentient beings wish for is happiness and what they do not wish for is suffering, but they are ignorant about the cause of suffering and the cause of happiness. So, repaying their kindness by giving them food and clothing, the temporal needs, and benefiting them by giving material possessions is not the best solution for them, it is not the best way to repay their kindness. In past lives they were millionaires many times. Numberless times were American millionaires, English millionaires, French millionaires—I am not sure about Nepalese millionaires. Anyway, numberless times they have been kings, with so much power and so many possessions. They were even kings of the deva realms, where the worldly gods live, where there are incredible enjoyments. Compared to the deva world, compared to the devas' material perfections and wealth, we in the human world are like beggars, like those in primitive places in Tibet, Nepal, or India, or in some of the African countries. No matter how wealthy, how rich the human being, this is nothing compared to the deva realms, compared to their wealth and their enjoyment. Numberless times they were even kings, such as Indra or Brahma, the possessors of those devas realms' perfections and great powers, hut even though they has all this, it still didn't help them be free from samsara. So this is not the best way. This is not the best solution to benefit others. It is not the peerless, incomparable action for benefiting others.

Since what they need is happiness and what they do not wish for is suffering, in order to benefit them we should help them to create the cause for ultimate happiness and be free from the true cause of sufferings. Liberating them from suffering, guiding sentient beings in this way, is the best way to repay the kindness of all sentient beings. If you are considering repaying the kindness of this present life's parents or repaying anybody who is kind, anybody whom you think is extremely kind to you, this way of repaying them is the best.

The mother sentient beings are separated from the leader of the blind [Rinpoche calls it the "blind leader"], the virtuous friend. They don't have the dharma wisdom eye, knowing the right thing to be done, the cause of happiness, and what is the wrong thing, the cause of suffering that has to renounced. Each minute, each second they step over the precipices, put their feet over the precipices of the lower realms by creating non-virtuous actions. Either with the body or with the speech or with the mind, all the time, like this. So if one wishes to help and to benefit them, if one wishes to

repay them, as I explained before, one can. There is an opportunity if from one's own side one does something. There is the capability, there is the opportunity. Oneself has met the leader of the blind, the virtuous friend. One has met the teachings and has that much dharma wisdom to discriminate what is the right thing to practice and what is the wrong thing, the thing that should be renounced. There is a great opportunity from one's own side to repay them, to liberate all sentient beings from all their sufferings and to lead them into ultimate happiness.

If one has no concern for them or for repaying their kindness constantly day and night, all the time one thinks, "When can I be happy? How wonderful if I were this and that. How greatly happy I would be!" All the time, keeping nothing else in the mind, in the heart—only my happiness, only me, only I and my happiness. One only has I, my happiness, in the heart—nothing else, day and night, all the time, completely working for that. Even other sentient beings are used for that, creatures and human beings. So many other sentient beings are used for one person's happiness, one's own happiness. It is like when the mother is being attacked by tigers—one tiger attacking in front, one tiger attacking from behind, one tiger attacking from the side, and she is in the middle, while you are in the top of the trees. You are sitting in the top of the tree singing while she, the kind mother, is suffering so much. The daughter or the son to whom she has been very kind is satisfied that, "I am not in danger." You are free from the danger of the tigers, and satisfied because you are happy, not having to meet these dangers. You are singing, without any concern for helping the mother. How that is upsetting! How that attitude is selfish and hurtful for the mother.

The minds of kind mother sentient beings, who have been extremely kind to oneself, are exactly like this: crazy or possessed by the spirit or the *mara*, the poisonous mind and the disturbing thoughts, anger, ignorance, and attachment. They are constantly seeking the three types of sufferings: the pervasive and compounding suffering, the changing suffering, and the suffering of suffering, again and again. So, like the example, if you are satisfied that only you are happy, without any concern or thought for others, if you don't attempt to repay their kindness, you are incredibly selfish. It is very upsetting—a characteristic such as this is very hurting, very upsetting.

I used the wrong word before, I think. It should be "leader of the blind," not the leader who is blind. I mean the opposite, the leader of the blind person—I don't mean that the person who leads has to be blind.

When you realize that the sentient beings have been your mothers and are kind, and you want to repay their kindness, you see them in the aspect of beauty, as in the example that I gave before. Those who realize that the mother is extremely kind see the mother—with the enemy, stranger, or other people—in the aspect of beauty. It is the same with someone who has been extremely kind. You don't see them in the same way as the enemy and the stranger. This is not the beauty that comes in the newspapers, where there are articles to sell things, advertisements. It is not the beauty that comes in the advertisements, with pictures of the materials. Instead, mainly by remembering and realizing the kindness, you get a warm feeling. In that aspect of beauty. Thinking of them generates the beauty of love, realizing that they have been the mother and have been kind. Also, we reflect on the thought of repaying their kindness. Then after this, the great thought of loving kindness is generated. The object of our thought of loving kindness is not only human beings, not only animal beings, not only physical beings, those who have a body, not only those whom we can see now, not only the worldly gods, the suras and asuras, or the formless gods, those who are in the realm of the happy transmigrating beings—but also those other suffering transmigrating beings, those whom we don't see now, spirits or narak beings. All sentient beings, including arhats and

bodhisattvas, who have not attained the state of omniscient mind, are the object of our thought of loving kindness. The object is the enemy, the friend, and the stranger, as well as all the rest of the sentient beings.

“Sentient being” generally means somebody having a mind. Buddha would also be a sentient being in that general sense, just generally having consciousness, by that definition. But in this case, for whom we are going to accomplish the state of omniscient mind, for whom we are going to practice the holy dharma, for whom do we live life, for whom we our actions in everyday life—“sentient beings” means those who are not freed from obscurations, who have not completed the excellences of the complete realizations. It is the same thing when it says in the teachings the “sentient beings,” the *sem.chen.tha.cha*—“all sentient beings.” That is labeled on these sentient beings, on these types of living beings.

If there is one sentient being, one enemy, left out from your thought of loving kindness, if the person who disturbs your happiness is left out from the object of your love, or from your thought of loving kindness, it is not great, it doesn’t receive the name “great.” It is a thought of loving kindness, but it is not the great one.

Not only that. Not only is the object all sentient beings who have the aspect of being devoid of happiness, such as the suffering transmigrating beings, who are devoid of temporal happiness, but also, even those beings in the higher realms, even those happy transmigrating beings, those who have temporal pleasures, are devoid of ultimate happiness. What they wish, what they are seeking is happiness. What they believe that they are working for is the cause of happiness, but actually, in practice, they are constantly destroying the cause of happiness, as if it were their enemy. Even when somebody explains or somebody gives teachings, saying that these are the causes of happiness, the way of creating the causes for happiness, they are scared to understand, not giving themselves the opportunity to create the cause of happiness, to understand and to create the cause of happiness. Even the little that has been created is destroyed. They destroy it by the enemy, by rising anger, like this. There are even those who have the understanding of the cause of happiness but who are too lazy to create the cause of happiness. Even those who are not ignorant, who have the understanding, are too lazy to accomplish the cause of happiness.

Looking at sentient beings and how they are devoid of temporal and ultimate happiness, think, “In their actions, what do they do?” They do the opposite. In practice, they only make mistakes. Then think, how wonderful it would be if they had happiness and the cause of happiness. And I will cause that to happen. Then think that you are not only wishing them happiness, not only concentrating or focusing on the object, the sentient beings who are in the aspect of being devoid of happiness, that you are not only wishing them to have happiness, but, “I want, I will cause them to have this happiness.” This is the great thought of loving kindness, the Mahayana thought of loving kindness.

It is the same thing with great compassion, Mahayana compassion. The object is everybody—friend, enemy, stranger, and all the rest of the sentient beings. Again, if the enemy is left out it doesn’t become Mahayana compassion, great compassion, the compassion of the great vehicle—it doesn’t become the compassion of the great vehicle. The object of compassion is the enemy, the friend, the stranger and all the rest of the sentient beings—it covers and focuses upon them. Their aspect is that they are suffering. The way to think is that what they do not wish, what they do not like, is suffering, but in practice, what they do is always run and create the cause of suffering. Always they keep themselves busy, day and night, to create the cause for suffering. Even having worry and fear of not

having accomplished enough causes of suffering, they want even more, even heavier. If you look at them, if you watch sentient beings, it is like this.

Lama Atisha was one highly realized pandit who raised the Buddhadharma in Tibet. He was the originator of the Kadampa lineage, the lineage of the Kadampa advice. His closest disciple Dromtonpa asked this question to his guru, Lama Atisha, “What would be the result of only seeking happiness for this life?” Lama Atisha answered that the result would be the narak, preta, or animal realms. The ripening aspect would be taking this birth. Actions done with the mind not possessed by attachment, anger, or ignorance would result in rebirth among the happy transmigrating beings.

Now look at all the creatures in the ocean. You just look at all the creatures who are in the ocean, those fish, from the great ones, who have the largest bodies, the whales, with bodies like the size of a mountain, down to the tiniest creatures that you can see only through machines. They all are under the ocean, keeping so busy, running day and night. Their attitude is seeking only this life, “Oh, if only I could be happy!” That is all, keeping busy. Those creatures under the ground, same thing. Those creatures who are crawling over the ground, who are keeping so busy, those ants, those creatures who are over the ground and in the bushes. Those birds flying in the sky, those tiny ones, those tiny flies, all these—the attitude that they have is seeking only this life, nothing else, “If only I could be happy!” Day and night, they keep busy, flying back and forth.

Now look at the human beings who live in the city or those who live in a primitive place, in underdeveloped countries, or in developed countries. Those who live in the richest apartments and those who live in huts. Those who are running in the car—not “running in the car,” you cannot run in the car!—those who travel by vehicles and those who go by ship or who travel by airplane. Look at their attitude. First you look at their life, at their outside appearance, then you look at their attitude. Poor and rich, all those things. The outside appearance and then the attitude. You see, even though they have a different body called “human being,” the attitude is exactly the same, seeking only this life, “If only I could be happy!” All these actions, all these works are possessed by the non-virtuous thought, the attachment seeking only the happiness of this life.

As Lama Atisha answered Lama Dromtonpa: the result of all these non-virtuous actions of all the worldly dharmas is the rebirth of suffering transmigrating beings. Day and night they are constantly running, keeping busy in order to create the cause of suffering, the mind being completely ignorant of the cause of the suffering. Even those who know the cause, who have an understanding of the cause of suffering, are lazy about eliminating the cause.

When you generate the great thought of loving kindness, think even of those arhats and bodhisattvas who are devoid of the sublime happiness, enlightenment. Similarly, think of those who have the knowing obscurations, the obscurations to achieving omniscient mind. Then think how wonderful it would be if they were free from all sufferings and all the causes of sufferings. Do not only wish them to be free, but determine, “I will cause them to separate from suffering and the cause of suffering.” This is great compassion, the compassion of the great vehicle.

I think I stop here.

27th November pm

There are animals like the one that I heard about (I didn't see it with my own eyes but other people saw it, it was their experience, so I shouldn't contradict them completely).

The place where I lived for about eight years, Buxa, where 1,500 monks lived, at that place there were many leeches outside in the summer time. Even if you went for peepee outside, when you came back inside you had leeches. The Bhutanese or the Indian and Nepalese workers, the laborers, when they had leeches they put them on a stone and then they crushed them, and chopped them like chili. I heard from the other monks that the skin dries up, it becomes dry pieces and then when the rain comes, somehow the consciousness takes place on those, so that each one becomes a living being. That piece of the body has a consciousness, the consciousness takes place on that, like on a fertilized egg. Similar to what is called "entering rebirth." Similar to the consciousness that takes place inside the fruit. Sometimes it is possible that the worm goes in from the outside—with the physical body it makes a hole and goes inside. But also, there are worms that are born inside the fruit without there being any holes. In Tibet there are rocks where you don't see any holes, but when the laborers who cut stones crack the rock open, they find frogs or other animals inside.

Also at the same place, Buxa, all the monks' beds were made out of bamboo. They went into the forest to cut it. It is a very hot place, and especially in the summer time you cannot wear all your clothes. During the pujas they had to wear them, but otherwise it was so hot that many monks lived without wearing the outside robes. Inside the house they just wear the undershirt. Many monks washed every day. They have a bath every day, then every two days, three days, like that. Anyway, I am not going to carry on with that story. What I was talking about was the bamboo.

Those buildings were used as a prison or a concentration camp during the British times for the prime minister Nehru, and Gandhi. There is a very long building that has very strong doors with a lot of bars, and all the windows were covered with barbed wire. Also outside the house. Between the windows there were many holes for guns or whatever it is, small holes. Indira Gandhi's father and the prime minister Nehru's prison was turned into our college, into Sera's puja and meditation hall after the monks came from Lhasa. Then Gandhi's prison was turned into a nunnery. So many monks lived in one hall. There were no walls between them. The different groups of college monks wanted to have quiet, or to do their own practice. They wanted to have walls, so gradually because it was so crowded inside the monks went to the forest, collected bamboo, and made small huts or small rooms for themselves as they found a place outside. Afterwards as the years went by wherever there was a space it would be completely filled with small rooms made of bamboo. One monk brought bamboo. I think it was one monk who lived near the house, maybe in the same house. For the rooms they made curtains, sometimes out of cloth or out of bamboo, things like that. He told me that he had gone and brought bamboo from the forest. Then at the house when he was cutting the bamboo (there were no holes in it at all), he found a snake inside. In a similar way, when there are worms inside the stomach, they did not necessarily come with the food so that it is the mistake of the cook. The worms did not necessarily come with the food or something. If there is the condition inside the stomach and one has created the karma, and also the worm has created this karma, the consciousness takes place in the stomach from the intermediate stage. It doesn't have to come from somebody talking to you, somebody breathing on you, somebody presenting it to you through his breath. It doesn't have to be like that. I could mention more amazing things.

In Tibet, when they carry a load they have a leather strap. Those who have been to the mountains for trekking, like in Solu-Khumbu, might have noticed that when the porters are carrying things they use this leather strap so much. In the center it is wide to cover the head, and then it goes finer and

finer like this, and sometimes also it is wet. One person used to travel each year, and he needed this leather strap. Because it was kept inside the house it became completely dry and unusable. I think maybe he was preparing to go somewhere so he put the dried leather strap in the water stream for a few days, maybe seven days, something like that, so it became very soft. He put one stone on top so that it wouldn't get lost in the water. After seven days when he came down to check, the strap had become an animal. The wider side became the face, and two eyes came out. I think on one end was a ring to tighten the string, and that ring came exactly in the mouth. The ring somehow got stuck in the mouth of the animal. It had two eyes, and the narrowest part became the tail. This is dependent on the sentient beings' karma and also the conditions. This is how we should think about these things.

For example, say some people are trekking or crossing over the snow peaks, those dangerous mountains from where stones come falling down, and an avalanche comes and some people completely disappear, while others are left on top. This couldn't be explained exactly, one couldn't say the cause exactly. When they are in the same group, in the same line, some people completely disappear and some people are left. When some people come, an avalanche happens, when somebody else comes to the same place, nothing happens. Also, when crossing this dangerous mountain from which the stones fall down, when one person passes through nothing happens; no noise, nothing, no distraction, no disturbance, nothing; but when some other people come, a stone falls down and hits them over the fingers, or they are completely killed under the stones.

We have mountains like this in Solu-Khumbu when crossing from one village to another. In the place called Thami, where I was born, if you want to go from that village to the other side of the Sherpa country, to the valley of Roling, you have to cross the snow peaks. There are many different places, different villages of the Sherpas. If you cross, when you come to the side of Solu-Khumbu, Thami, and Namche Bazaar, you have to cross these snow peaks and those are very dangerous trails.

I went back and forth four times, but of course I didn't walk with my feet. I was very small the first time, especially the first times—anyway, all the time I was carried on the top of a basket. First by one person, then the other times I was carried by my second teacher who taught me the alphabet. He carried me on top of his blankets. Then the food, and fire-wood, and then grass to put down at night when you sleep in the caves—that keeps you warm, and also we can put it in the shoes. They have no socks, so in the place of socks you put grass, dry grass. The bottom is leather, then on top is woolen cloth. It is very cold, especially when the snow makes it very wet. So you put grass inside, and it keeps the feet very warm, and then when it gets wet, after some time it gets very cold, so again you change. You throw that grass away, and change. My teacher carried all this, our food and everything, and on top he was carrying me. He fed me with the food that he had brought from the house. He passed it on like this, back to me.

Just on the flat snow, the snow fell down many times. I don't remember so much with my teacher, but with the other person, it fell down many times. Not completely into the cracks, but just a little bit, it slipped. I crossed this dangerous mountain four times, I think, but nothing ever happened. It is very strange—usually the Sherpas stop before they cross this very dangerous mountain. It doesn't take very long, but it is so dangerous. So they stop here and drink wine, very strong alcohol, made from potatoes. This is collected from the drops of vapor that come from cooking potatoes. It is collected for many hours drop by drop, into a small pot. It is not necessary to talk about the details of this. When they make this wine it looks like a stupa. It looks like they are building a stupa on top of the fireplace because there is one huge pot, then a smaller one, then a smaller one, and then on

the very top there is one small one. They cook the small potatoes that are normally given to the animals, which people don't eat. They cook them inside the pot with lots of water. Then they put another small pot inside, and the vapor goes way up there, and the drops leak inside the small pot. By collecting one drop, two drops, like this, it becomes potato alcohol.

At that time they stop to drink this and then they rub their hands to generate heat (I don't know why they generate heat because to cross this danger heat doesn't help). Everybody carries huge loads, three or four of these butter tins, these huge, square tins that you see in the Nepalese shops. Also they take animals, yaks. There is no real road, you have to walk over stones. They push these animals—they don't walk so they have to push them. It is amazing how hard the life of a Sherpa is.

I don't remember when I first crossed this way, but all four times that I crossed, each time, when our group had completed the track, when the last person of our group had reached there from across the dangerous trail, the stones came. It happened several times—whenever we reached the other side there would be a lot of noise like thundering, a noise like when huge stones fall down and then small ones come down. When the huge ones come, “drin, drin, drin,” it makes an incredibly huge noise, and then the small ones, they come, “schirr,” like this, then they hit down below on the rocks and it makes a lot of noise. It is very terrifying. I was kind of worried that maybe something would happen to the last person but everybody finished. I think that also Westerners and some Sherpas got killed there. My first alphabet teacher, one of his fingers was curved so the story was that when he was crossing this place, one tiny stone fell down and hit this finger.

While you are driving the car, for example, a stone or a tree falls down onto a car. There are so many cars going, but it falls down over that car and that person gets killed or injured or whatever. Why? The question is, why? There are so many cars, so why did it happen particularly to that person's car? There is a reason created from the side of the person. That condition is not truly existent, that condition doesn't exist from its own side. We say, “Without any reason,” however, it is that person's creation, even though the person is not aware of it. The evolution of that disaster, that the tree fell down over him and injured him, the reason that happened particularly to him is because it is that person's creation, the creation of his unsubdued mind and karma. That appearance, the tree falling down and him getting injured, that appearance or that disaster came from his unsubdued mind. That is also an appearance, and that fearful, suffering appearance came from the unsubdued mind.

Similarly, with deformed or handicapped children, it is not the fault of the parents that the child was born handicapped like that. As the scientists explain it there is something missing or something wrong with the egg or the blood, or in the sperm that came from the father. There is something missing, maybe in the atoms that form that part of the limbs, the leg, arm or whatever it is. They explain the physical conditions, but they haven't explained the inner ones yet. They explain it from the physical side, from the side of the physical conditions and the physical cause, but they haven't explained anything from the side of the one who created that kind of physical condition.

According to the parents' wish they want their child, every child—even if they make one hundred children—to be the most beautiful child in the world, more beautiful than any of those other children who are living in this world. They haven't purposely arranged for it to have missing limbs or to have blind eyes. So there is no answer. The parents didn't arrange it that way on purpose. If they had prayed they would have prayed for it to have perfect organs, to be a beautiful child.

Because there is no understanding of karma and no understanding of the inner cause, there is no answer to the question of why, when this child was born, he was born handicapped. Perhaps someone might give the answer, “Because of time.” But then, what was caused the child to be born at that particular time? What caused the child to be born at the time when there was an imperfect egg? There is no answer, you see. Has it got an answer? In the past we discussed this, but it collapsed after a time, we didn’t find any answer. Is there something to say, is there any answer to why the person was born at such a time? What would you say?

Answer: Karma!

Rinpoche: But the scientists wouldn’t say “Karma.” Anyway, we’ll forget it. It is very important to check and not be satisfied with the answer of time. If you stop there it is kind of foolish. “Because of time”—that is no proof. That is uncomfortable. If you stop there it is not comfortable. It is just hanging in space. Without talking much, the creation of that imperfect egg and the particular person’s consciousness taking that place is the creation of that child’s unsubdued mind, the karma that was accumulated in the past with the unsubdued mind. What the parents wish is beautiful, perfect organs, but what actually came out in front of their eyes is the opposite of what they like—a freak, a mutation, something kind of unbelievable came out. The parents have something that they didn’t expect and that they did not wish for, like finding that the child has imperfect organs, and that appearance also came from their unsubdued mind, and is a creation of their unsubdued mind.

It is similar to when you put hairs in water. If some sentient beings have created the karma to take a hair as their body, then, that consciousness would take that hair in its wetness. The conditions gather like that, the consciousness takes place on that—so it becomes a sentient being. Before it was a hair, later it became a sentient being. There are many similar things, like with the leather. Before it was just leather, it wasn’t a sentient being, but later it became a sentient being. Similarly with tsampa or flour. If you keep it long, if you don’t eat it very fast (I’m joking), if you keep it for a long time (because if you eat it fast you won’t find such delicious tsampa again), anyway, as it gets older and the conditions are created, if there are sentient beings who have created the karma in the intermediate state to reincarnate in tsampa the consciousness will take place in the tsampa. Then it becomes full of mother sentient beings.

You cannot generalize. When the body or the limbs of some animals are cut the consciousness does not necessarily stay in every piece of the body. I would say that the consciousness would probably be in the main part of the body, probably not in the limbs. If the limbs are cut and separated from the main body, then, unless the consciousness immediately leaves the body, it may remain in the main part, at the heart. When you get angry, where does the anger come from? The anger does not come from the legs. The anger does not arise from the toes or from inside the fingers; the anger or attachment do not come from there. Where do you feel it when the anger arises? Where do you think the anger is? When the anger arises, where do you think it is or from where do you think it arises? Where do you feel the pain when the anger comes? Or the fear? Does fear come from the head? Do you feel fear in the head, or where?

Answer: Here!

Rinpoche: Yes? I see, in the chest; not in the head, not in the brain? The anger is not in the brain, but in the chest? Is it the same thing with anger and fear, they are not in the brain?

Answer: If I think I am scared it is in the brain. If I look at all the conditions I gather, all the information in my brain, that helps create fear in my (fades out).

Rinpoche: If you create all the conditions it helps to bring up fear in the heart? Isn't the brain the main place of the mind? So in the brain there is not anger or fear at all? Heh? How much is the anger able to spread? How much does it cover?

Answer: The whole body.

Rinpoche: Yeah? Without talking much—in the heart, when strong attachment rises that is where you feel pain. When strong anger or pride rises, where do you feel the pain? There, I am in the heart. Usually it is possible that the consciousness is there, it might be abiding there if it had not immediately split from the body. According to the being's karma it might gather, it might abide there. You cannot say it is one hundred percent certain concerning human beings or animals; generally it is like this. But as far as narak beings are concerned we have a good point to discuss. If you turn the discussion to the narak beings' particular sufferings you have a good point. If an animal's body is cut it could be difficult to say with a hundred percent certainty that there is no consciousness suffering in the other parts of the body.

[Tom asks if amoebas are sentient beings.]

Rinpoche: I can't say one hundred percent certain if it is a sentient being or not a sentient being. There is probably no particular name in Tibetan with the connotation that it is a sentient being. If it just has life I cannot say for sure whether it is a sentient being or not. So what you should do is to ask Buddha, ask somebody who has reliable clairvoyance. You ask and he might give the answer. I think that in Tibetan medicine the doctors do talk about it and also in the teachings they talk about very tiny creatures that you cannot see with the eye, so tiny that they run through the cells or the blood. I think this is a kind of infection, things that itch or spread. I myself would say according to experience, when there is an infection in a sensitive place I think it looks like they are tiny creatures. But I don't know whether other monks would say the same thing.

There was one question about lamas and laminis? There are lamas, so somebody asked a question about "laminis." There are many laminis. I don't know why the name has not come out. Maybe you should try. One who has omniscient mind—the complete quality of the cessation, the purity, and the realization—is a lama. That is a lama, that is the highest lama. The higher bodhisattvas who are free from disturbing thoughts are also lamas. Then the bodhisattva who has bodhicitta and who has accomplished the second stage of tantra, of the graduated path of accomplishment; who has those experiences, whose mind has approached the highest stages of tantra, having accomplished the illusory body and clear light on the basis of the three principal paths of enlightenment: renunciation, bodhicitta, and the wisdom realizing voidness—that is also a lama. Then the arhat, who is liberated from samsara, is also a lama. Even those who have bodhicitta are lama, they are that much lama. So why not laminis? It is just a matter of having these qualities and these realizations. It is just a matter of being able to lessen the disturbing thoughts and obscurations. When you have these realizations you can publicize them. (I have forgotten the word, when you show something that you have to sell in the newspaper, a property or something, you advertise it.) If you have these realizations and you are female you can advertise it through television and in the newspapers: "Lamini!"

It is good to think of those who have the title "lama" as having these realizations and to regard them as holy beings. It is good, it is helpful for one's own mind. But generally in the monasteries, like in the tantric college, they also use "lama" according to the job or rank and the responsibilities. There is the abbot, there is the lama *umtse*, and the person who is the leader of the monastery, who recites the sutras when they do confession and when they do the Vinaya practice of summer retreat. The senior monk who recites the sutra and who has the place of a representative of Guru Shakyamuni

Buddha is called “the lama of the place.” Generally, they are lamas according to the jobs they do, the responsibilities they have, and the Dharma activities they do in the monasteries. But when they say “my lama,” that is the virtuous friend, one’s own guru. That means someone with whom one has made the relationship of oneself being the disciple and the other the virtuous friend, either by taking teachings or by making the guru-disciple relationship. So that is something to relate to oneself. Other people may not call him “lama,” but that is “lama” from your side. That is all.

28th November am

After the great thought of loving kindness and the great compassion we have what is kind of voluntary or willed—that might not be as clear as in Tibetan. According to the Tibetan term, which is *lhag.sam*, it is a special kind of thought, a higher thought that takes on something voluntarily, a volitional thought. In order to complete the extensive work of freeing all sentient beings from all suffering and placing them in sublime happiness, the state of omniscient mind, one makes the complete determination, one hundred percent, to do that by oneself, to do that work by oneself alone. “This extensive work for others—I will do it myself.”

If a mother’s most beloved child fell into a fire the other relatives might help. They wish the child to be free from the suffering of being burnt by fire. The relatives and friends may help, but they may not have such an incredible determination, the volitional thought, themselves being willing to go down and pick him out. The one who actually makes the determination that no matter how much work it takes to help get the child out of the fire, no matter how difficult or dangerous it is for oneself, the one who makes a complete determination without hesitation, the one who does the work complete determination, is the mother. As soon as she hears that her child has fallen into the fire, or is in some danger, even though she is talking to somebody or eating food or driving a car, whatever different action she is doing at that time, what she constantly has on her mind is her child who is suffering. Constantly she feels that it is unbearable. What she has on her mind is only her child, feeling that it is unbearable that the child is in danger, that it fell into the fire. Constantly there is a strong, intuitive thought to help get the child out of the fire, without delay of even a minute or a second. When she reaches the place of the fire there might be others to help her, but they cannot immediately make the strong determination to bear the hardships of getting the child out of the fire themselves. But the mother, without any hesitation, in spite of everything, without being concerned about all the hardships or harms to herself, of the fire burning her, goes inside and takes the child out of the fire. The volitional thought is like this.

There is a difference between repaying the kindness and the great volitional thought. The question might arise about what the difference is between the two. When repaying the kindness there is a kind of intention, but it is not completely, one hundred percent decided. The root guru of His Holiness Dalai Lama’s tutors (His Holiness Ling Rinpoche and His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche), Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo explained it like this in his lamrim teaching. (Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo was the root guru of present high Gelugpa, lamas, mostly from Sera, Drepung or Ganden in Lhasa. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo is regarded as an embodiment of the deity Chakrasamvara, Heruka, in whose aspect Guru Shakyamuni Buddha manifested in order to guide sentient beings, revealing the skillful, secret method to them for them to swiftly achieve enlightenment.) He explained, “The thought of repaying the kindness is like having the intention to buy things from the shop, while the volitional thought is the complete determination that whatever it may cost you will pay it.—”I’ll pay it and take it!” This is the volitional thought.

The way to accomplish these extensive works for sentient beings, liberating them from all sufferings, enabling them to be in the state of the omniscient mind, is explained like this in the teachings. The way of the mighty ones (meaning Guru Shakyamuni Buddha) is not to wash away the negative karma by water, not to wipe off, eliminate, or relieve the suffering of sentient beings by hand, nor to transplant their realizations to others—others are liberated by the mighty ones revealing the truth or the absolute nature. “The mighty ones” means Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and the buddhas in general. The way they guide sentient beings is not by washing away the negative karma with water. What this is implying is that there is no way that the true suffering and the true cause of suffering, the two types of obscurations, can be washed away with water, it is impossible. Nor is it like taking thorns out of the flesh by hand. Both are implying that without sentient beings doing any practice, following the path, there is no way to free them from suffering. It is not like taking thorns out of the flesh by hand.

Then, how is it? What is the way of the mighty ones? If they do guide sentient beings, how do they guide or liberate them? It is not by transplanting either, like in the West when the doctors transplant the heart or brain of a monkey. (I don’t know if there exists a person who has got a monkey brain and who is still functioning. I didn’t hear. It might come as a surprise if that person made a monkey noise.) Anyway, the buddhas do not transplant their realizations into the minds of sentient beings—the buddhas themselves would become empty of omniscient mind. If their entire mind were transplanted into the sentient beings, the buddhas would become something that was not even a living being. It is not done by transplanting their realizations into the minds of the sentient beings without any need for the sentient beings to do any practice or to follow the path.

Well, then—how is it that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guides sentient beings and how do they get liberated from their suffering? The only way is that the mighty ones reveal the teaching of the truth, the absolute nature of the self, the absolute nature of the “I” and all existence. Then the sentient beings do the listening, reflecting and meditation practices, following the path like this. By following what is revealed by the mighty ones they get liberated from the sufferings of samsara.

In this way you can understand that the creator of all the suffering of samsara experienced in the three times is one’s own mind. Also, the creator of all the happiness, the blissful state of peace, even the state of omniscient mind, the sublime happiness, is your achievement and experience—the creator of this is your own mind.

So in order to free sentient beings from all sufferings and to lead them into the state of omniscient mind, one must reveal the path. This is the way Guru Shakyamuni leads or guides us into the state of omniscient mind. In order to free sentient beings from all sufferings and to lead them into the state of omniscient mind, in order to guide them, one should reveal the path to them, the complete infallible path that leads to the state of omniscient mind. They should follow the path, so one must reveal it, reveal the key. In other words, one must explain the path. In order to be able to do this one must understand clearly and completely, without the slightest mistake, every single thought of the sentient beings and their different capabilities of intelligence and their personalities, their levels of fortune—in other words, their merit, fortune, luck, or good karma.

As there are various personalities, desires, and thoughts, different levels of minds, the methods that you are going to reveal to sentient beings have to also be varied. As there are various thoughts, intelligence, and fortune, the methods also have to be varied. So one should have the complete understanding of all the methods in order to reveal them even to one sentient being. As the

personality changes and the intelligence increases one has to reveal various methods even to guide one sentient being at different times. When gradually leading him to omniscient mind one needs to understand and reveal various methods at different times.

Who is it that fully sees, without the slightest mistake in his understanding, all the different types of minds, all levels of fortune, all different personalities, and every single method that suits them, and who is able to reveal them without the slightest mistake? Only the omniscient mind. There is no other method at all apart from the omniscient mind. So I must achieve the state of omniscient mind.

We must have the altruistic mind, the effortless uncreated thought to achieve the state of omniscient mind, as I mentioned in the example about the mother who has the uncreated, effortless wish to liberate her most beloved child from the fire. Her wish to bring it into happiness is uncreated and effortless, she doesn't need to put effort into it, she doesn't need to do meditation first. She doesn't need to do sessions in order to get the child out of the fire and bring it into happiness. She doesn't need to do meditation sessions visualizing the fire and how her child is suffering. She doesn't need to try to feel how this is unbearable.

If one has the uncreated, effortless wish to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all kind mother sentient beings, if one has such a thought, such an attitude, an altruistic mind that is uncreated and effortless, one has the realization of bodhicitta. If you want to call yourself a "bodhisattva" you can receive that label then. At that time you can call yourself a bodhisattva.

If one wishes to achieve the peerless state of omniscient mind the path one should follow is the path revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. This is the path that the founder himself, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, followed and through which he reached the state of omniscient mind. He revealed this path that he had experienced completely to his followers and after that many pandits analyzed and checked, as if they were checking refined gold to see whether it was pure or not, whether it was corrupted or not. Like that the pandits later checked the teachings taught by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha that were recorded and made into scriptures, to see whether they were pure or not. Then many meditators and yogis practiced them. They did the listening, reflecting, and meditation practices, uncountable numbers of them completing the experience of the path. They achieved their goal, the omniscient mind. It should be like this.

It is extremely important to examine the path before one devotes oneself and dedicates one's life to it. It is important to examine the path before one starts practicing it so that one does not get misled, wasting one's whole life and energy. One should examine whether the path leads to the goal that one is seeking. If your goal is to accomplish the method of achieving omniscient mind for the sake of sentient beings you should examine well before practicing. Examine and study it well to check whether it is the right or wrong path. Before putting it into practice, before wasting your whole life, check the path with sharp intelligence and with discrimination, with the intelligence that is able to discriminate between what is right and wrong. Check before you get whole piles of wrong conceptions, mountains of wrong conceptions.

Even though many may talk about their path leading to nirvana—check it! Has it been the experience of the founder himself? And afterwards, were many of his followers able to experience this path and to reach the same goal? Did many others reach that goal or not? It needs to be checked like this. Maybe it is just a doctrine. There is some kind of founder who revealed it, who made up that idea, this doctrine that he called "path." Maybe it is not clear that he himself went

through this path and reached that goal. Also, there might be no stories at all about anybody else following this path and reaching the same goal, the cessation of suffering—if that is what you are seeking. Maybe there are no stories or biographies to prove it, like the biography that is very popular in the West about the great yogi Milarepa, who became enlightened in one lifetime. Or those about the great yogis Tilopa and Naropa.

Even now you can see the caves where many monks left their handprints and footprints. There are so many signs of their powers of realizations of having attained the high tantra paths. The teachings that were left, taught from experience and that you can read, affect you and benefit your mind so much. Just reading life story, the hymns, and the teachings of Milarepa is so beneficial and effective for the reader's mind, like nectar.

However, if there are no stories like these about things that happened in the past, nothing to talk about concerning now or the past, then it shows that it doesn't have a good shape. It shows that it is difficult to rely upon. That itself shows signs and reasons.

The point I am talking about is the cessation of suffering, the cessation of the true cause of suffering. If this is what we are seeking, if what we are seeking is the state of omniscient mind, it should be like this. But if you are just seeking temporal pleasures you don't need to check very deeply.

One great Tibetan pandit of the Sakya sect, a Sakya pandit advised like this, "As to business—even when we are doing small business, like buying a horse or a donkey (I am not sure, maybe not donkey—anyhow, possessions) we ask everybody first and finally we ourselves examine it. We seem to be putting so much effort into such a small work of this life. All the good and bad of all our lives are dependant on the holy Dharma; but Dharma becomes like the dog's food—whatever you meet, whatever you come across you follow with faith without checking." "Faith" means blind faith.

When we go to buy food for even one day's meal, when we buy fruit or vegetables, we check which is better and then buy the better one. We check it. I am not sure about the supermarkets in the West. Maybe there is no need to check much since already other people have checked it. If they bring bad ones to sell there they only get problems, so they bring good ones. Anyway, in other places like the East where there are no supermarkets we check well before we pay the money. Before we give our precious things away we check, because we don't want to waste it. So what this great Sakya pandit is talking about is the good and bad of all our lives, not only future lives, but this life as well.

For one who doesn't understand the holy Dharma there is no method to stop the confusion of everyday life and transform it into happiness. Also, the person who understands Dharma but doesn't practice it cannot keep his mind at peace; constantly his mind gets confused. But for the person who is living in the practice and who understands Dharma, whether there are good conditions or bad conditions, it doesn't change his mind. It doesn't shake or disturb his mind. So his life is always balanced, his mind is always at peace. If a person is living always practicing renouncing the dissatisfactory thoughts of worldly Dharma, while practicing the good heart against the self-cherishing thoughts, his happiness increases in this life.

"Bad" means the suffering of this life, "good" means all the happiness of this life. From this life up to omniscient mind, all this is dependent on the holy Dharma. All the suffering of this life and all the uncountable future lives come from not having changed and subdued the mind. It comes from the

disturbing, unsubdued mind. It is so important to practice Dharma in this life. Or another way of saying it, the common people's way of saying it—"To be following a spiritual path." It is like the key, you see how important it is to examine that practice before you put your life into it. The whole thing, the happiness and suffering of all coming lives depends on this life, which has maybe thirty, forty, or fifty years, or maybe only twenty years—one is not sure even about that, maybe just a few months. In this way you can see how important it is.

Even this human life is dependent on how we live it, as I said before—how we think, how we behave, how we conduct ourselves each day, each hour. It is mainly dependent on our attitude. This is something to keep in the heart.

Of course, how our life will turn out after some time, even now that we have met the Buddhadharmā, is mainly dependent on our individual karma. But however our lives are going to turn out later (I don't mean future lives but the coming years of this life), whichever path or spiritual practices you are going to devote yourself to, put your whole life into, before you do that you should really examine. That is extremely important. It is not something you should know only at the moment but something to remember in the future when different thoughts come into the mind, when the mind is very unsteady, very uncertain or shaky, at the times when the mind is collapsing. Maybe one does a practice for some time and then, somehow, one's fortune runs out, the fuel or the kerosene runs out because of lack of fortune or merit. There are no matches either, so the light goes out. After some time the mind, somehow, goes completely dead and life turns out in a different way. Only after some time, before death, when there is not much time left to practice the holy Dharma, one develops strong repentance.

This teaching on the graduated path to enlightenment is complete. If it were not complete but had just one or two meditations or just some parts, then one would not make it to enlightenment but might just find a good rebirth or achieve the cessation of the sufferings of samsara.

Even when one is using correct meditation techniques, like doing single-pointed concentration and through this one is born into the form and formless worlds, it is still samsara. In short, it is very important that the teachings contain the complete method for achieving the state of omniscient mind. Besides this, one receives all the temporal achievements like a good rebirth and all those things, all happiness and perfections, by the way.

This was revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha with his own complete experience, examined well by pandits, and has been the experience of uncountable numbers of meditators and yogis. Not only in the past, like all the stories and biographies, but even now. Many present Tibetan meditators are experiencing not only the lamrim but also the tantric path. Month by month they are making progress in their minds, having a good time. They are having a really good time, a real holiday.

I stop here.

28th November pm

As I mentioned this morning, if we start on the path that we are going to follow and practice without checking whether or not it will lead to the goal that we are seeking, if without checking the details more deeply we suddenly say, "Oh, I feel good about this!" Just after having done one or two

practices we say, “I feel comfortable, I feel good,” satisfied with a few temporary seconds of peace or relaxation. If we are satisfied with that there is the danger that we might generate realizations that no buddhas have achieved. You have not achieved what you wanted but something else. That is fruitless, it is just a cause for exhaustion.

There is no greater work, no work more beneficial than achieving enlightenment for the sake of the kind mother sentient beings. There is nothing more important than this work, there is nothing more beneficial for sentient beings than this. Even concerning one’s own happiness there is nothing more important or beneficial than this, namely obtaining happiness for other sentient beings.

From the side of this person, from my side, the purpose of explaining the small, tiny bit that I understand of the holy Dharma—the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment—the purpose and the goal is to accomplish the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of sentient beings. The listener, from his side, should keep this goal in the depths of his heart while listening to the teachings. Then it is perfect—then listening to the teachings has great meaning and also it becomes effective for the mind. That should be the goal of doing the meditation course. One should try to achieve the state of omniscient mind for all kind mother sentient beings—this is the purpose of the meditation course.

How swiftly one can achieve this, accomplishing the method, the state of omniscient mind for sentient beings, depends on whether there is bodhicitta in the mind or not. As long as there is no bodhicitta in the mind, as long as we are beggars, not having bodhicitta, having poverty of bodhicitta, there is no enlightenment. If there is bodhicitta then there is enlightenment. So according to how quickly one generates bodhicitta, enlightenment comes.

Achieving enlightenment swiftly depends on quickly finishing the work of accumulating extensive merits, as well as quickly purifying the obscurations. Whenever the work of accumulating extensive merits and purifying obscurations finishes one becomes enlightened. As long as there are merits left to be created and as long as there is some stain, some subtle dual view or a tiny impression left by the disturbing thoughts, the wrong conceptions of the ignorance holding true existence, as long as there is some small stain left like this, there is no omniscient mind. As long as there is merit left to be accumulated or even a tiny stain left, such as the impression of the ignorance of true existence, one cannot achieve the state of omniscient mind.

So then maybe the question arises: what is the best method to quickly finish accumulating extensive merits and purifying all those obscurations, the uncountable negative karmas accumulated from beginningless rebirths? The best solution or method is, again, the practice of bodhicitta. It is said by the great bodhisattva Shantideva in the *Bodhicaryavatara* in the chapter *The Benefits of Bodhicitta*, “All other virtues, like the water tree, bring fruits and then perish.” Actually, word by word maybe it is, “It is only in this nature: it brings fruits then finishes.” All virtues that are accumulated by somebody who does not have the actual realization of bodhicitta, any virtue done that does not possess the motivation of bodhicitta, even though it may possess the wisdom of shunyata, is like the water tree. Even though virtues may have been accumulated with the wisdom realizing voidness or done with the thought of renouncing samsara, still all these virtues are like the water tree.

“Water tree” means banana tree, it doesn’t mean that water is growing in the leaves. I think that the reason it is called “water” is because (this example is also useful to make us understand how essenceless the worldly actions, the worldly Dharmas, or the works of this life are) when you take of

one leaf there is another leaf, then after you take off that one there is another one, and you take off that one and there is another one. Expecting that there is some essence inside, something to get, you take off one, and then there is another one, and after some time there is nothing to get out of that, it is essenceless. I think that because of this reason it is called “water tree,” this is my guess. I think that maybe it gives fruit only one year and then it finishes. All other virtues are like this; they bring their result and then they finish. There is nothing more, no increasing. But the bodhicitta tree brings fruits forever, increasing without ceasing, without finishing.

Somebody who is very much a beginner, not having realizations either of the wisdom understanding voidness or the thought renouncing samsara, or the actual realization of bodhicitta, still, if virtue is accumulated by this person with the motivation of the created bodhicitta, it gives results that one can enjoy even while one is in samsara. The whole graduated Mahayana path to the omniscient mind is the result of the virtue done with the motivation of bodhicitta, the bodhisattva’s path of the ten bhūmis. The bodhisattvas have unbelievable powers, understanding, and realizations, and as they approach higher and higher in the ten bhūmis, they get more and more amazing, unimaginable excellences or qualities.

The accomplishment of the path of secret mantra is the state of omniscient mind. The result is not just acquiring all the infinite qualities of the Buddha’s holy body, holy speech, and holy mind when one becomes enlightened, not just this. The result, the benefits of the virtue done with the motivation of bodhicitta is that one frees infinite sentient beings, each of them, from all suffering, leading them into the state of omniscient mind. Every single benefit done with the holy body, holy speech, and holy mind after one becomes enlightened, even each beam emitted from the Buddha’s holy body, leads so many uncountable numbers of sentient beings into the path of happiness, bringing them into the path of happiness.

Each and every single benefit for sentient beings is the result of virtue accumulated with the motive of bodhicitta, the result of virtue dedicated to achieve the state of omniscient mind for sentient beings. The more you enjoy the result, the more it increases, instead of becoming less.

One should not be satisfied with training the mind in bodhicitta only at the beginning of the session, just generating the motivation, “I am going to do the meditation practice to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all sentient beings.” We shouldn’t be satisfied with generating the motivation once, practicing bodhicitta just at the beginning of the session and at the end with the dedication. During the meditation time it is especially easy because there is somebody who is reminding you, but in the break times especially, whatever action you do you should as much as possible try to do with the motivation of bodhicitta.

As Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen, whose biography I briefly mentioned at the beginning, said, “If you are going to eat, eat with bodhicitta; if you are going to sit down, sit with bodhicitta; if you are walking, then walk with bodhicitta.” In the quotation it might be, “Even if you are standing, stand with bodhicitta.” The quotation might be this, but it is the same thing. One shouldn’t be satisfied with generating bodhicitta only during meditation sessions, but especially during breaktimes. As much as possible, one should be doing this.

During the meditation sessions there is generally less opportunity to get angry. One does not get angry so much at that time, the strongly disturbing thoughts do not arise. Generally speaking, the mind is more disturbed during the breaktimes, especially if the senses meet with objects that disturb

the mind. Then it is difficult to remember the meditation techniques and very easy for the mind to be disturbed, to be overwhelmed by disturbing thoughts. So it is especially important to practice bodhicitta at the time when one does normal actions and when one meets the objects that disturb the mind and cause disturbing thoughts to arise. Those who have heard much teaching on thought-training can understand. They remember how it is explained in the thought-training.

Even if you are trying to recover from disease or from spirit-harm, trying to dispel spirits or other beings harming you, even if you are trying to stop these harms, do that with bodhicitta, exchanging yourself with others. As explained in the thought training, from beginning till the end, it should be done with bodhicitta. From morning until night one keeps bodhicitta as the heart practice. If somebody asks, “What is your main practice?” The answer should be, “My heart practice is bodhicitta,” without exaggerating or telling a lie. Like the heart practice of the Kadampa geshees and the highly realized meditators, the great Indian and Tibetan yogis, like that.

Some people say, “My heart practice is this wrathful deity,” or “My heart practice is a protector,” “My heart practice is *kundalini*,” or “My heart practice is walking.” I mean, just knowing that you are walking, that type of meditation. You know you are walking. It is similar to knowing that you are stealing. You can go into the supermarket and you have constant fear because you know you are stealing. But you are not trying to stop the attachment of stealing, not doing anything about that attachment, the covetousness that forces you to steal and to accumulate negative karma. The covetousness is kept well, you keep it as your guide and master, and you are his follower—then you go to steal for him.

However, saying that, “My heart practice is breathing, watching walking, watching breathing,” is very poor. It shows that the person either has not met the Mahayana teachings that grant the state of omniscient mind, or that he is unfortunate—that even if the person has met and heard the Mahayana teachings he doesn’t know the essence, doesn’t know the essential heart practice of the Mahayana teachings. It shows an unskillful person who does not have the state of omniscience as his main goal and does not have a real understanding of bodhicitta being the principal cause of the state of omniscient mind.

A person might say, “I am a tantric practitioner, I am a practitioner of the secret mantra.” A person might even say, “I am of the Vajrayana. I am not Theravadin and I am not a Mahayana practitioner. My heart practice is (as I said before) *kundalini*, all these things, opening chakras, *dzogchen*, *dzogrim*, things like this.

The person who, even though he practices tantra, lives his life with the practice of bodhicitta, who even though he has realizations such as the illusory body and clear light (the very high tantric paths, the path of the secret mantra), says that, “My heart practice is bodhicitta,” this practitioner shows signs that he has an understanding of the heart practice of the Mahayana path to omniscient mind. If you can answer, when somebody asks you what your heart practice is, “My heart practice is bodhicitta, exchanging oneself for others,” if you can answer like this, without it becoming a lie, that is very good.

In this way, every day all the time there is great peace in the mind. All the time, wherever you are there is a good environment. Everybody around you is happy. They get, in other words, good vibrations or feelings, and it brings peace to their minds because you are being an example. If one keeps bodhicitta as the main practice, the only concern is to benefit others; automatically the

thought to hurt others never rises. The practice of bodhicitta gives the disturbing thoughts of giving harm to others no opportunity to arise, it only strengthens and encourages thoughts of benefiting others.

I'll stop with a quotation from the *Bodhicaryavatara*, "One can be liberated in such a short time by depending on bodhicitta." (Bodhicitta is not directly mentioned, but that is what it means.) By depending on bodhicitta one can be liberated from unceasing, powerful negative karmas, the way one can be liberated from great dangers by depending on a brave person. One can even be liberated from the powerful, unceasing negative karmas that are the heaviest negative karmas. These are the five uninterrupted negative karmas: taking the life of one's father or mother or an arhat, causing blood to flow from holy beings, the tathagathas, or causing disharmony among the Sangha. Even these heaviest negative karmas that result in unceasing suffering for so many eons one can be liberated from, without it taking much time, by depending on bodhicitta. In such a short time one gets liberated from them.

It is also said, "Like the fire that burns and destroys the whole world at the end of time, like that bodhicitta completely burns all the great negative karmas." In conclusion, Shantideva says, "So you who care, you who are aware, you who are conscious and care about suffering—In other words, you who care about happiness, why don't you practice bodhicitta?"

In this way life is happy and all the karmas of coming lives are also happy due to the practice of bodhicitta.

I stop here.

29th November am & pm

As I mentioned last night, if from morning until night every single action of the three doors of body, speech and mind could be done with the motive of bodhicitta—if there is no actual realization of bodhicitta then with the created bodhicitta—even while you are living in the city there is no need for you to go to an isolated place or to some particular place to practice Dharma, doing the practices of purification and accumulation of extensive merits. While you are working in the office or while you are doing business in the shop, each action becomes a method for accumulating merit. Each action done with the motivation of bodhicitta brings accumulation of unimaginable, extensive merits, in such a short time, even in a second. Similarly, all the heavy negative karmas that we can remember and those that we cannot remember, done in this life, in other past lifetimes, all those obscurations get purified in one second. As the *Bodhicaryavatara* says, "That is like the fire at the end of time, it burns the great negative karmas in one second." It means bodhicitta is like that.

The purpose of listening to the *Bodhicaryavatara* is to develop the good heart and to subdue the mind. To develop a good heart not only toward your friends or those who love you, or toward those who give and who add to your happiness, but to develop a good heart especially toward the enemy. That is the person with whom we should especially practice the holy Dharma. The most important, the most kind person, is the enemy. So the person toward whom we should develop the good heart, the ultimate good heart—the bodhicitta—that is the enemy. When the enemy disturbs your happiness you should not let that disturb your mind. If your mind cannot become happier when somebody disturbs you or treats you badly or when you get into trouble or when other people

give you problems, at least there should be no change in the mind. Even if there is not more happiness or more peace, the mind is in tranquility.

The main purpose of listening to this is to practice bodhicitta. So if the motive for listening to these teachings is the motivation of bodhicitta, the action of listening becomes a cause for enlightenment. From the heart you should think, “At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind in order to accomplish the work of freeing each sentient being from all the suffering and leading them to the state of omniscient mind. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the *Bodhicharyavatara*.

I am not sure what I am going to talk about, so I don’t know how many chapters can be finished. Anyway, I start tonight. While trying to go to India it probably goes to America. One tries to fly to India, the aim is to fly to India, but without landing in India one goes straight to America. Anyway, I am joking. I don’t know how many chapters. The chapter chosen is this one; it says, *Guarding Alertness* here in the English translation.

There are about ten chapters. The first one is *The Benefits of Bodhicitta*, the second is *Practicing Confessing Negative Karmas*. The third is *Taking the Bodhisattva Vows*, and the fourth one explains cautiousness or carefulness. A person who does not have, in Tibetan terms *bag.yöd*, would easily hurt himself. A person who is not aware while walking or working can easily hurt others and can easily hurt himself. The fifth chapter is *Keeping Alertness or Awareness*, protecting alertness or awareness. The sixth one explains patience. The next one, the seventh, shows perseverance. Then comes how to accomplish the stable thought or concentration. The ninth is about wisdom, about absolute nature. It talks about nothingness, absolute nature. The tenth is the *Dedication*.

Generally, one is supposed to start from the beginning, but somehow, this time, I think we jump into the middle.

The general outline of *Guarding Alertness* talks about the moral, righteous action—in other words, moral conduct. The exact translation of *tsul.trim* is “righteous action,” “correct action.” This particular explanation is given on the way to practice righteous law or righteous action, which means keeping all virtues pure through the method of remembrance and awareness.

Before reaching the actual subject there is an introduction or general explanation. It explains the reasons why, after having generated bodhicitta one should follow the bodhisattva’s precepts, the bodhisattva’s deeds. It also explains that by practicing just one of the various methods for achieving enlightenment one cannot achieve buddhahood. Just practicing one of these methods, just the wisdom part, one cannot accomplish buddhahood. It also explains the gradual way of practicing the bodhisattva’s deeds and precepts.

Even if one has generated just the wishing thought of bodhicitta it has great benefit. There are two, the wishing thought of bodhicitta and the entering thought of bodhicitta. As I mentioned the other day, the willing thought, the effortless, uncreated attitude, the wish to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the sake of sentient beings—the entering thought is the thought that follows the bodhisattva’s deeds.

Even having generated just the wishing thought has great benefit, but if one does not practice the bodhisattva’s deeds and precepts as a heart practice, accomplishing enlightenment is not possible. Therefore one should follow the bodhisattva’s deeds.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said in the sutra teachings, “It is the victor of concentration (‘King’ is probably better), the king of concentration, therefore one should do this practice as a heart practice, as the essential one, as the essence, because for the youthful one who does this practice as an essence it is not difficult to accomplish or to find the perfect, complete enlightenment.”

This means that for those who do the bodhisattva’s deeds or precepts as a heart practice it is not difficult to accomplish the highest, perfect, and complete enlightenment. One highly realized pandit Kamalashila explained in the teachings *The Graduated Meditation*: “The bodhisattva who has generated bodhicitta realizes that without subduing one’s own mind one cannot subdue the minds of others.”

So the bodhisattva puts himself into the practice of the six paramitas: the paramitas of charity, moral conduct, patience, perseverance, concentration and wisdom. Without doing this practice enlightenment cannot be achieved.

There is something about this commentary on the *Bodhicaryavatara* that I forget to mention. The commentary that I shall be explaining here is basically that of Lama Tsong Khapa’s disciple. You may recognize him—you see Lama Tsong Khapa in the center and to his right and left sit Lama Tsong Khapa’s two closest disciples, the common ones. I think it is the one on the left side of the tangka, the one with an older-looking aspect, the one who took the place of Lama Tsong Khapa. His holy name is Gyaltsab Je. Basically, the commentary that I am talking about is Gyaltsab Je’s commentary. It explains that by following just a part of the path of the method and wisdom, just a part of the path to enlightenment, one cannot achieve enlightenment. It also explains the method to achieve enlightenment. The method that one is going to practice to achieve enlightenment should be the infallible method. No matter how much effort one puts into a mistaken path one will never achieve the result that one wishes. Even if the path that one enters is unmistakable, but not complete, again one won’t receive the result. So, therefore, it is extremely important to practice the complete method. One should complete the method and wisdom to achieve enlightenment—compassion, the root cause of bodhicitta and then bodhicitta, the absolute bodhicitta. One should complete the methods of charity, moral conduct, patience, and those things in order to achieve enlightenment. Now it explains the graduated practice of the bodhisattva’s deeds, that is, the cause of the six paramitas and their essence, the branches of each one, the definitions or the meaning according to each one, and their results.

The cause of the six paramitas is bodhicitta, which possesses the wisdom of absolute nature and compassion, which was generated by relying upon and devoting oneself to the virtuous friend. This virtuous friend is of the particular Mahayana type, the virtuous teacher. There are Theravadin types and Mahayana types. He should be particularly of the Mahayana type. The cause is also extensive studies of the extensive Mahayana scriptures.

Now, the nature of each one. What is the nature of charity? The nature of charity is the thought of giving, the virtue, the thought of giving. The thought of giving which is in the nature of virtue. With that virtuous attitude one does the actions of body and speech. First of all there is the thought of giving, which is virtue; then that is put into speech in order to give teachings, if one is giving teachings. That is Dharma charity; through speech and movements one does the action of giving the teaching. Then with the body one makes material charity, putting it into action.

Next comes the nature of the righteous action, which means abstaining from the action of giving harm to the object, sentient beings. It also includes the thought of protecting the object, sentient beings, from harms as well as having completely given up the thought of seeking liberation for the self, seeking happiness for the self.

Then patience: the nature of patience is keeping the mind in virtue (it could possibly be in another state also, not particularly in virtue), without being overwhelmed or disturbed by harms or suffering. When one receives harms from the elements, from non-living things, or when one receives harms from other living beings, the mind doesn't get disturbed. Or when one is sick or has problems, like a shortage of means of living, or having a bad reputation, the mind doesn't get disturbed or overwhelmed by the suffering. The mind abides strongly in the nature of extreme patience, in the wish to continuously practice Dharma. The nature of patience is this.

Then comes the nature of perseverance. Generally, the definition is: the mind that is happy to practice virtue, happy to practice the virtue of all the six paramitas, doing the work for sentient beings. With this attitude, the three doors of body, speech and mind are persuaded to do the actions. If the person is doing prostrations with this mind that is happy to be practicing virtue, he continuously puts the body into the virtuous action of doing prostrations, the virtuous action of body. Similarly, reciting mantras. This mind is constantly reflecting on the meaning of the teachings and then putting them into the action of meditation, analytical and single-pointed meditation. The stable thought, *sam.den*, or the stabilized thought is abiding or placing itself one-pointedly on a virtuous object. If one is doing single-pointed meditation or samatha on the object Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, that is concentration on the virtuous object. What you are visualizing, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, that itself is virtue. Whatever you visualize or concentrate on, Manjushri, Chenrezig or whatever, that itself is virtue. If you are meditating on bodhicitta then bodhicitta is the virtue and one is placing and abiding the mind one-pointedly on that. When one is meditating on emptiness one is one-pointedly placing the mind on that emptiness; that is the virtuous object.

Then wisdom: there are two types of wisdom. One realizes absolute nature and then analyzes this absolute truth. There is also conventional truth, or all-obscuring truth, *kun.tok*. One focuses on conventional truth, understanding it and discriminating existence, the conventional truth. One is analyzing conventional truth, the all-obscuring truth.

Next there are the different branches of each paramita and the meaning of each of the names.

I stop here.

29th November pm

Please listen to the teachings by generating at least the effortful motivation of bodhicitta, thinking, "At any rate I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all kind mother sentient beings. Therefore, I am going to listen to the commentary on the *Bodhicharyavatara*."

I shall be talking about the branches of each practice within each of the paramitas and then about the meaning of each of their names. First the branches.

Charity, which is the thought of giving, contains Dharma charity, material charity, and charity of fearlessness or charity of granting, giving refuge. (I think that without samsara there would be much

less work with the body. Since you don't have a suffering nose, a samsaric aggregate nose, there would be no need for handkerchiefs and all the effort, and no need for medicine. Maybe the doctors wouldn't find patients to give medicine to if all the patients became enlightened and free from samsara. [Rinpoche referring to blowing his nose.]

Dharma charity: if you are going to talk about Dharma to somebody, if you are in some Dharma conversation, you motivate to make Dharma charity to the other person, doing it with the motivation of bodhicitta, so that with the Dharma conversation you are making Dharma charity. Also giving teachings, explaining meditations, or reciting mantras, or saying holy words like *The Essence of Wisdom*, reciting prayers or mantras of sutra and tantra.

Concerning tantra, if there is a danger of heresy arising in a person instead of faith when hearing the subject—if instead of developing inspiration to practice the holy Dharma heresy and bad thoughts arise, like criticism towards the founder of the path and Buddha's teachings—there is a danger that he is creating negative karma, throwing himself over the precipice of the naraks. If there is such a danger then that person is not a receptacle. You are supposed to keep it secret from that person, because it does not benefit him in generating and increasing his faith and inspiration to practice the holy Dharma. Usually you are not supposed to talk about tantra unless people have had the fundamental lamrim teachings and are living in the practice of the three principals of the path to enlightenment. But sentient beings have different personalities of mind. I think that nowadays many Western people first have interest in tantra, also with the help of LSD and other things. I think it is some kind of preparation or preliminary. You get those visions and then you read tantra books like *The Book of the Dead* and Lama Govinda's books, that talk about tantra, I think—I have seen the book, but I haven't actually read it. I guess he talks about the visions at the time of death, talks about death. When somebody takes drugs he must also get visions of going to different realms.

I think that at times such as these, with this type of sentient being, drugs are a suitable method to start to open up. It is different in a country where everybody talks about reincarnation and having a good rebirth, or something like that, where not only are many people able to remember past lives, but where it is common for people to grow up with that faith, even if they themselves cannot remember past lives. And, of course, those who take teachings and who study logic from the teachings with clear, extensive explanations, they do not need drugs. But for many people I think it is a suitable method, a kind of preparation to start opening the mind at first. Then some of the books of tantra teachings appear and the person is able to relate his visions well with what those teachings talk about. Then he wants to practice and to know more about the tantra paths. He tries to look more deeply into it, eventually trying to find some teacher or guru, either in the West or in the East. Then there are those who meet lamas or gurus who practice tantra and who have an understanding of the whole tantric path to enlightenment—*kriya* tantra, *charya* tantra, *anuttara yoga* tantra, and the *mahaanuttara yoga* tantra. When these people meet a guru who has experienced this path and who lives in the practice of these teachings, who is skillful in the way of guiding the disciple to enlightenment, their interest in tantra becomes the preliminary cause for practicing lamrim, the three principals of the path to enlightenment, the preliminary for the tantric path.

There are three principal paths to enlightenment, to generate the realizations of the tantric path. The person hears the whole, complete teachings without mistake from beginning to the end and then he knows how to practice gradually, without getting mixed up, according to the level of his mind, without getting confused. Gradually, as he is practicing skillfully according to the level of this mind,

he is able to generate an unmistakable experience of the path. First the fundamental lamrim and then the graduated tantric path.

I believe that those beginning visions that come from outside causes, like LSD and these things, benefit in opening the mind to the understanding or feeling that the mind can exist without this body. The mind or consciousness can travel, like in those experiences that one can relate to the intermediate state or the visions that come at the time of death. These experiences open the mind to enter into the Dharma, the graduated path to enlightenment. I believe it is one way that Buddha is guiding this type of sentient being at this particular time in order for them to start a method, a beginning. But if one uses it as lunch, dinner, and breakfast, as everyday food, then I am not sure whether it is still beneficial.

The point is this: (that's right!) saying the words, the teachings of these holy beings, when one recites verbally *The Essence of Wisdom* or mantras it can become Dharma charity. You motivate in the beginning to make Dharma charity to the people who are around you, to the human beings, birds, and animals—to all the sentient beings who are around you. You recite verbally so that they can hear. Even if you are alone in your room, where there are not even fleas, one can still do Dharma charity by reciting these prayers verbally, visualizing all sentient beings around you and that you are giving them teachings. While you are reciting *The Essence of Wisdom*, at the same time you think that this mainly talks about absolute nature, and that all sentient beings who haven't realized absolute nature before now have realized it, that they have understood the meaning. They have heard the words and have realized the meaning of the teaching.

Just the mantra *Tayatha om gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi soha* shows how to enter and how to follow the path to nirvana, the state of omniscient mind. One can relate it to nirvana or one can relate it to the five Mahayana paths. The question is, how to follow the path to enlightenment? "Tayatha" means "It is like this. Go to the path of merit (that is the first meaning), then go to the path of preparation, go to the right-seeing path, go to the path of meditation, go to the path of no-need-for-training." "Bodhi" is enlightenment. "Soha" means, "Take the root of enlightenment by entering this path, starting from the path of merit, take the root of enlightenment, the bodhi."

Actually, when we have generated the realization of bodhicitta we have entered into the Mahayana path of merit, for the root of enlightenment has been taken.

That is one way to think. We can also think that when we hear teachings on bodhicitta or when we hear teachings on lamrim, the graduated path to enlightenment, for the first time, when we start listening to this particular teaching on bodhicitta, starting to plant the seed of the realization of bodhicitta, at that time the foundation of enlightenment has been laid in our mind.

The point I am talking about is that in this mantra particularly, all the five Mahayana paths to enlightenment are contained. Reciting this mantra one time in the ear of another sentient being, even to creatures, plants the seed of the five paths. Even though he cannot practice bodhicitta now, in this life, even though he cannot enter the path, still, after a certain number of eons he can. The impression or seed is planted there, so either next life or after a certain number of eons, hundreds and thousands, billions of eons, the person has the opportunity to make progress, to hear the teachings and to enter into the path. That comes from the seed of having heard the mantra once. This is how we can help creatures who can hear the sound of Dharma. The best we can do to help them is to try to plant the seed by reciting the holy teachings that reveal the infallible path to nirvana

or the path to enlightenment. Otherwise, no matter how long these creatures or animals stay with us, no matter how long they live, there really is no particular advantage. For we human beings who have met the holy Dharma it makes sense to have a long life. For we who have the inspiration to develop our minds, not developing negative minds and disturbing thoughts, but to develop a virtuous mind, for us it makes sense to try to have a longer life. If there are any hindrances, you prevent them with external methods, like with medicine or various meditation practices. Through the methods of sutra and tantra you prevent hindrances, and try to have a longer life.

For one who has met the holy Dharma and who is practicing, even one hour that one is able to make the life longer makes big sense. Even if there is only one hour left to live, during that hour one can accumulate extensive merits. One can purify unimaginable obscurations through the practice of bodhicitta or through the thought training practice, taking other sentient beings' sufferings and dedicating one's own happiness and virtues to them. One is taking their sufferings and the cause of their sufferings, the obscurations, and then dedicating one's own happiness and virtue to them.

Then there is the practice of refuge. There are various practices according to how broad an understanding the person has of the various teachings. If a person has only one hour left or even one minute, there is still a great opportunity. There is so much that you can do with your life to benefit your own future life and to benefit others. In that way, by the way, the present dangerous and fearful condition is transformed into happiness.

But these animals are just living on the result of past good karma, even if they get food, like food from cans, that the Nepalese and Indians and people from many primitive countries cannot afford. Also in the West (the person does not necessarily have to come from a primitive country), many people who live in the cities cannot afford dog food in the supermarket. The reason these animals are getting good, rich food is because of the result of previous good karma. They are just living on the result—it is just running out, finishing. They are living a longer life just to finish the past good karma, like the person who never makes any profit on the money he has, that he got from his job or through gambling. He is never tries to make a continual income from that—if he has one hundred dollars he just lives on that. Instead of trying to makes more from that he is just living off it, making it less and less. It is recognized by the world that this is kind of poor and unskillful, it is foolish. There is not one single opportunity to do better, to accumulate more merit depending on the previous good karma.

This is similar to the worldly person, the millionaire who has not the slightest, single Dharma wisdom understanding virtuous and non-virtuous karma. Instead of accumulating more merits on this result, his human body and his riches, wealth, and enjoyments received from his previous good karma, instead of accumulating more extensive merits and more causes for happiness, being overwhelmed by ignorance, he is creating the causes for suffering. He is utilizing all these enjoyments and his precious body only to create more causes of suffering. He is living his life just to finish, to run out of the good karma that was accumulated. He is living longer just to finish it off.

If we have animals at the house or around us, even in the forest, whether they belong to oneself or not, it is very good to say these precious mantras that contain all the qualities of Buddha's holy body, holy speech and holy mind, like *Om mani padme bung*. It contains the complete path, the method and wisdom to achieve enlightenment. One should make Dharma charity like this, with the thought of loving kindness, with compassion, being concerned with their happiness and suffering, that which they do not wish.

Nagarjuna was a great, distinguished pandit, the great propagator of the Mahayana teachings, especially of shunyata. When he lived in a cave there was a pigeon living over his cave. Nagarjuna recited teachings verbally every day, which the pigeon was able to hear. After the pigeon died he was reborn as a human being and became Nagarjuna's disciple. He became an expert on the teachings that he had heard in his past life as a pigeon.

There was another pandit, Vasubandhu, in Tibetan *Lopon Ignye*, who recited from the *Abhidharmakosha* every day when he lived in a cave. The pigeon who lived on top of the cave heard these teachings all the time. After the pigeon died, the great pandit Vasubandhu checked with his clairvoyance where this pigeon was reborn and he found that it was born somewhere down below in the valley. Then he went there (I don't remember hundred percent), but he went down to the family that he had seen through his psychic powers, his clairvoyance. He asked the family to give him the child. Later on the child became a monk and became his disciple called Sthiramati—in Tibetan *Lodro Tenpa*. He became a great pandit and wrote six volumes of commentaries on the teaching that he had heard when he was a pigeon.

However, it is not that just by leaving the impressions they get stuck there. It is not like that—he just became a pandit, he wrote commentaries, then finished—it is not just that. An incredible change took place. As a pigeon he just planted the seed, and then in his next life he not only became a human being, but did incredible work, having so many realizations, and very deep, extensive understanding of the teachings. The result that happened in his next life is unimaginable. The cause is nothing, just hearing the words.

Planting seeds by reciting mantras gradually benefits the being to make more and more progress in this life. By planting this seed of reciting mantras and by reciting the teachings of the infallible path it gradually leads to enlightenment. So there are incredible benefits and advantages from making this kind of Dharma charity. There is Dharma charity, material charity, and the charity of fearlessness, guiding sentient beings from danger. Among these three charities the best, the most beneficial is the charity of Dharma. As I just explained, even the mantra gradually leads to enlightenment.

I believe that those animals who are around people who recite scriptures, the holy teachings, animals who live where there are sounds of Dharma, even though they have taken an animal body now, something is done, they have got that much small profit. So sometimes, when I have time (but I am very lazy), I go to the buffaloes. We have several buffaloes and cows in the cowshed. I didn't get much done, but several times I try to recite mantras, some rounds of the rosary of the mantra from *The Heart Sutra* and the Chenrezig mantra.

(A dog barks.)

He is showing the usefulness of his life.

Not only are we drinking milk from them; it is not just that they are used by us, but I think there ought to be some difference between the animals that die in the hands of a Dharma practitioner, someone who seeks liberation and enlightenment, and the animals that are not in the hands of such Dharma practitioners. I think there ought to be some difference when they die.

I also go to see the chickens. The chickens probably get more mantras than the cows, for the cows live down a bit with barbed wire around, and somehow, sometimes, very late at night I do not make it—a little bit lazy mind. So I think the chickens get more mantras. It seemed like they were listening, the chickens. This is in the evening when they are about to sleep. I guess they went to bed, everybody is lined up. They all sit on the stick in lines very nicely, kind of very cute looking, kind of like they are going to some meditation or puja. They might have a leader for the puja, but maybe they don't tell.

In Dharamsala there are several small dogs. There are three or four grown ones and, I think, by now twenty puppies. Before, a Tibetan nun was there, now she has gone to Australia. She was with one girl from New Zealand who taught the boys art and English for some years, I think two or three years, I don't remember exactly, but a long time, anyway. I told them to recite for the dogs. I did it several times before I started retreat and then I asked them to carry on. So all the dogs, all the puppies hear Maitreya Buddha's prayer every day. It is several pages, much longer than *The Essence of Wisdom*. Then they do Maitreya Buddha's mantra thirty times because, somehow, that is very beneficial for them. If these mantras are recited every day, at the time of death they are guided by Maitreya Buddha and their consciousness is reborn in the pure realm of Tushita, Maitreya Buddha's pure realm. So when the girls were busy during the day taking initiations and teachings, sometimes at twelve o'clock at night they recited this prayer for the dogs very loudly.

1st December am Eight Mahayana Precepts

Before taking the Mahayana ordination, which does the function of purifying negative karmas, restoring degenerated precepts, and accumulating virtue, one should receive the lineage of the ordination. So one has to take the ordination from a lama. Then, after one has received the lineage of the ordination one can take it from a holy object, even if there is no guru who grants the ordination. That means that one can take it in front of a Chenrezig statue, if there is one, or a Guru Shakyamuni statue on your altar, or you can take it even if there is no altar. The main thing is the visualization.

The omniscient mind of Shakyamuni Buddha or the omniscient mind of the Compassionate Buddha, the Compassionate-Eye Looking Buddha, is in front of oneself; there is no place that is not covered by Chenrezig, the Compassionate-Eye Looking Buddha's omniscient mind. All existence is the object of his omniscient mind, all existence is covered by the omniscient mind. As there is omniscient mind there is the Compassionate Buddha, even though at the moment one is unable to see him in that aspect due to thick mental pollution. Because of the obscurations of the mind one is unable to see him in that aspect at the moment.

As the omniscient mind is one of the aggregates of the Compassionate-Eye Looking Buddha and as that mind is in front of oneself wherever one is, there is the Compassionate Buddha. Since there are the aggregates of the buddha, there is the Compassionate Buddha, that which is labeled on that, in front of oneself. As we cannot at the moment see him in that aspect we visualize him in this pure aspect. Then we take the ordination in front of that.

So in order to take this ordination one first receives the lineage of the Mahayana ordination.

This ordination can be taken by those who have the Pratimoksha vows, by monks and nuns who have thirty-six, two hundred and fifty and even three hundred and fifty vows or whatever it is—the nuns, the bhikshunis' precepts. This particular Mahayana ordination can be taken by lay people and even by those who are living in the Pratimoksha ordination. If one has taken these higher precepts or ordinations that have a higher number of precepts, and if, while one is living in this ordination one takes the five lower Pratimoksha precepts, it causes one to lose those thirty-six or two hundred and fifty precepts—it makes them empty. If one has taken these higher ordinations one cannot take the lower ones, in order not to completely break the higher ordinations. But this one, this particular Mahayana ordination can be taken by anybody, even by monks and nuns. This ordination has to be taken while visualizing all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, which is different from the Pratimoksha ordination. Also, this ordination should be taken with the motivation of bodhicitta.

One particular thing about the ordination is to abstain from black food. This Mahayana ordination, which has eight precepts, is stricter than that Pratimoksha ordination that has eight precepts. And it has this particular thing about abstaining from black food, keeping the body clean of black food. There are eight root precepts and eight branches. By breaking the small ones, the eight root vows can easily be degenerated—this can cause the main ones to be degenerated. By preserving the eight small ones one is able to keep the eight main root precepts purely.

The basic fundamental thing is that that which benefits all sentient beings is practiced and anything that does not benefit is not practiced. Something that benefits oneself and all sentient beings—that is practiced; anything that harms and disturbs oneself and all sentient beings, anything that does not benefit all sentient beings—that is renounced. That is the basic thing about the Mahayana ordination. Even though there are only eight root precepts and eight branches, this, in short, is the essence.

In order to take this Mahayana ordination one should offer the mandala. The main point is not to make business—the lama gives the ordination while the disciple makes the mandala offering, making business or exchanging. The main purpose is for the disciple to accumulate merit. If we are able to plant crops in a field it doesn't make any difference to the field whether you plant there or not. By planting, the field won't think, "Oh, I am so happy! I have got so many crops planted, how happy I am! How great I am!" It doesn't think like this. If you don't plant at all there is no upset, nothing. The planting of crops is done for the sake of the field. It is similar with all this.

Actually, one should be given a brief idea about the preliminary practices before the ordination, starting with refuge, but maybe not now. One gets a brief idea about the offerings and the purification of the place if one does the visualization. From the words about purifying the place and those things, one can understand.

All these things are for oneself to accumulate merit, without mentioning creating the cause of temporal happiness, benefiting temporal happiness, fulfilling one's temporal wishes. Without a question one is creating the cause for all this; but one is also creating the best cause, the utmost need, the cause to generate the realizations of the graduated path to enlightenment for sentient beings. And one has the opportunity to take this ordination again and again. One has the opportunity to live one's life purely, which is what "ordination" means. One protects oneself from the dangers of creating negative karma.

In the Pratimoksha vows, in the practice of the Theravadin or Lesser Vehicle path, there is more emphasis on the actions of body and speech, of protecting oneself from the negative karma of body and speech. In the Mahayana practice the most important thing, the greatest emphasis is on the mind, on protecting oneself from the true cause of suffering, not letting the true cause of suffering, the disturbing thoughts arise, and when one discovers that they are arising, trying to stop them. In that way, you protect yourself from true suffering. This is what is meant by “living in the precepts,” “living in the ordination,” or “taking ordination;” it means making the decision to protect oneself from those sufferings so that one is able to offer extensive benefits to all sentient beings.

Then you do the guru practice, visualizing the lama who grants the ordination in the essence and the aspect of the Compassionate-Eye Looking Buddha. Like you have been visualizing when you recite the mantra, in that aspect, with a thousand eyes and a thousand arms. I am not saying that I am Chenrezig. This is a guru yoga practice, visualizing the guru in the aspect of buddha, in the pure form. It is a little bit related to tantra practice.

In the practice of Pratimoksha, the disciple asks for and follows the advice of the abbot. He respects the abbot and offers him service, as if to the founder of the teaching, Shakyamuni Buddha. In Mahayana teachings the guru practice is to think that in essence he is the buddha, an enlightened being, not having the slightest stain of obscurations and having complete realizations. Thinking that he is in essence an enlightened being, one does the offering of service and follows his advice. In the tantric guru yoga practice one not only thinks that he is in essence an enlightened being, but one also visualizes him in the pure aspect, as Chenrezig and those deities. It is profound.

Whether the guru, the virtuous teacher, whether he who initiates you and gives you teachings, from his side is an enlightened being or not, from the side of the disciple practicing guru yoga this becomes purification in itself, a skillful and quick method. This practice quickly purifies the obscurations and one is able to swiftly achieve the unified state of no-more-learning, the omniscient mind. One can achieve this state without taking many lives, even in this life, during this degenerate time with very brief lives. Without taking many eons or many lifetimes one is able to achieve the unified state of no-more-learning, the state of the unification of the pure, holy body and mind. So as I just mentioned, the purpose is this; it doesn't mean that I am an enlightened being.

Then, as I mentioned in the example of planting crops in the field, one does the mandala offering and all the other preliminary practices. All these offerings, the seven limb practice, mandala offerings, and prostrations are all done to the merit field, the guru-buddha and the bodhisattvas, the Triple Gem, for oneself to create the cause of happiness.

So please offer the mandala. Those who can, visualize as it is explained in the teachings, with all the different categories of devas and their realms where there are incredible enjoyments, and also the human continents with all the perfections and enjoyments in the world. You visualize all objects of attachment, everything, and then you make offerings to the merit field.

Mandala Offering

What makes the ordination a Mahayana ordination is the motivation of bodhicitta, so meditate strongly, without a wandering mind.

From beginningless rebirths until now, I myself and all mother sentient beings have been suffering in samsara, experiencing the general sufferings, such as the three types of suffering, and the particular sufferings, those of the narak, preta, and animal beings, numberless times in the past. We have experienced all this suffering of samsara without beginning, being overwhelmed and under the control of ignorance. While I and others do not have any inherent existence from our own sides, except what is merely labeled on this, we believe that that which is merely labeled exists from its own side because it appears as if it were not merely labeled. We are completely grasping and clinging to that. While this ignorance, while those samsaric pleasures are in fact only in the nature of suffering, we are completely clinging to them as if they were pure happiness.

Like this oneself and others are overwhelmed by these wrong conceptions. One sees one's own body and that of others as completely pure. This body which is in the nature of impurity, the container of the thirty-six impurities, like a can containing thirty-six different types of filthy dirty things, like pus and blood, one believes to be pure. As Nagarjuna says, "This body is the container of thirty-six different impurities, of dirty things." One can understand this when even a small thorn has gone into the flesh. When there is a small cut one sees what comes out. As well as from the ears, the nose, and the mouth, and from that which comes out of the lower doors, the lower holes, one can understand how the body is a container of impurities, as it is explained in the teachings. H

However, a body such as this, which is completely in the nature of impurity we completely believe to be clean, completely clean and pure. Such are our wrong conceptions.

These phenomena which are in the nature of impermanence, such as the "I," such as the consciousness, the person, we think are permanent. Even though life is in the nature of impermanence, changing each second by causes and conditions, we believe it to be permanent. So far we have experienced the sufferings of samsara without beginning due to these wrong conceptions, the disturbing thoughts. If one thinks about all this, about how our minds have been under the control of this, experiencing the samsaric sufferings without beginning until now, it is something that makes one so upset, that makes tears come out.

If you follow these wrong conceptions continuously, without end you will have to experience the sufferings of samsara, the circling of death and rebirth, all the time like this. If you think, from the heart, of all the endless samsaric sufferings, if you think of all these problems that we experience, those that you can remember in this life and those we will have to experience without end, on and on, it is something that cracks the heart. If we think of the sufferings that we experienced in the past without beginning, like the sufferings of the lower realms, if we think of the endless sufferings of samsara that came from wrong conceptions and disturbing thoughts, if we deeply think of this, from the heart, it is something that cracks the heart. It is like that.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and all the buddhas took the Mahayana ordination, this one which has eight precepts, followed the Mahayana path, and became enlightened. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha or Chenrezig have enlightened numberless sentient beings in the past and are guiding us even now. Even now Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Chenrezig are guiding us by letting us accumulate merit through taking and keeping ordinations, by making such methods available. Those who can take and keep only eight take eight precepts. Those who have that much capability of mind can take eight precepts. Like this he makes available such a method for accumulating merit.

I, myself, have the same capability as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, as Chenrezig, to benefit all sentient beings. Being concerned only with my own happiness is not different from the selfish attitude of the mute animals. The mother sentient beings are the field from where I receive all my three times happinesses, all my perfections. Until I become free from samsara I shall receive all happiness and perfections by depending on the kindness of sentient beings. Even the omniscient mind I shall receive by the kindness of sentient beings. The beginning of my practice of Dharma, the path to omniscient mind, arises by the kindness of sentient beings. Then, in the middle, to continue is also by the kindness of the sentient beings, and to complete it is again by the kindness of the sentient beings. Even today, all our happiness and comfort, everything, all the perfections, we receive by the kindness of sentient beings. Each day's comfort, every single pleasure that makes one survive as a human being who is able to practice Dharma every day, all this we receive by the kindness of sentient beings; it comes from sentient beings.

Therefore, I must free all sentient beings, each one, from all suffering and lead them to the omniscient mind. There is no way to do this except with omniscient mind, therefore I must achieve the state of omniscient mind. For that reason I am going to take the Mahayana ordination, which is the fundamental cause of generating the path of the omniscient mind, for the sake of all sentient beings.

Please make three prostrations. Then keep the palms together at the heart in the mudra of prostration, remembering the great compassion and qualities of Chenrezig. With that understanding faith, in the respectful manner in the mudra of prostration, you visualize, thinking that all the buddhas and bodhisattvas are around Chenrezig, as if the whole space is filled with them. Please repeat the prayer.

This whole prayer has a very deep explanation. You might wonder why "elephant" is used as an example, why not use "one American guy" as an example, better than elephant. I am joking.

So here, please think well! You remember, trying to get the whole world in your mind. Be aware of all the six realms of sentient beings, for whom you are taking the precepts, for whom you are going to dedicate your day today, for whom we are going to dedicate twenty-four hours until the sun rises tomorrow, for whom we are going to dedicate our lives bearing the hardships of accumulating merit for sentient beings. Remember your parents, friends, and enemies (if you have enemies), and all the rest of the sentient beings. While you are reciting this be aware of the six realms, be aware of all of them and of all the sentient beings and their problems. Be aware of the famines that are happening now. We are not talking about past famines, but the famines that are happening now and the ones that sentient beings are going to experience in the future. All this you should think of. Remember all the hospitals and all the patients in the hospitals, so incredibly pitiful. So many are not sure whether they are going to be alive today or not, some are having unbelievable, incredible pain and there are no medicines to help them recover. All this you remember. You remember all the hospitals and all the patients. Also remember those sick people who are not in hospitals. Even though the day has gone and night has come, even though the day is finished, they don't know how to spend the night. It is difficult to get through the night. For all these patients who are having incredible pain, one is taking the ordination, and also in order to completely stop all sentient beings' diseases.

What we are doing is accumulating merit. We are not creating the cause for suffering but creating the cause of enlightenment for them, to liberate them from suffering. Experiencing cold in the morning and pains while sitting, as well as hardships while we are keeping precepts, all those are

extremely worthwhile. Comparing these hardships to the problems of other sentient beings, like those patients—it is nothing. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, for example, gave his body as charity to other sentient beings so many times, to animals and humans, fish, tigers; during so many lifetimes he gave charity to others. Jesus is another example, he also took the sufferings of others. Suffering for others is very good, very effective for the mind. Taking on all these hardships is something one should do gladly, happily, like the swan that so happily goes into the water. It should be like this, with a happy mind, with this attitude in the mind. The bird with a long neck, a swan, when he sees a pond he goes there very happily, without thinking that it is difficult. With great happiness he enters the pond. It should be like this.

Constantly remember to really practice, as much as possible, the awareness of the kindness of other sentient beings, especially during the breaktimes, with as much understanding of the kindness of sentient beings that you have, of those around you, and even of those that you don't see. As much as possible think that, "The purpose of my life, the purpose of my being alive today is for sentient beings, to eliminate their suffering and to obtain happiness for them, leading them to omniscient mind. The purpose of my living today is to work for them."

Then again and again think this, "I belong to sentient beings; my body, speech, and mind belong to sentient beings. I am their slave, I am their servant, offering my service to sentient beings, eliminating their problems and helping them to fulfill their wishes of happiness." Think this again and again, especially during breaktimes, and feel great happiness in the mind for having received and having taken the ordination. Think, "Today I am doing something good, even though my life has been meaningless, useless for other sentient beings, since I was born, since beginningless lifetimes, since I was born until now. But today I am doing something good for all sentient beings, I am offering something to all sentient beings. I am accumulating merits by living in these precepts.

I am sorry. This morning because of introducing those other things, it took longer. So if you have pain or anything, a cold, I apologize. Thank you very much.

1st December am

After having experienced these five paths you achieve the three *kayas*: the *Dharmakaya*, the *sambhogakaya*, and the *nirmanakaya*. By having generated or by having gone on these five Mahayana paths, all the three types of obscurations are completely finished. The obscurations accumulated with one's three doors—body, speech, and mind, are transformed into Buddha's vajra holy body, vajra holy speech, and vajra holy mind.

The meaning of the path, the goal, all the infinite qualities of the Buddha's holy body, holy speech, and holy mind are contained in this OM (Rinpoche is talking about the mantra TAYATHA OM GATE GATE PARA GATE PAPANASAMGATE BODHISOHA). When we are reciting this mantra it is like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha giving us advice on how to achieve enlightenment, which is signified by OM, in order to accomplish the extensive work for sentient beings. He is saying, "Go, go, go beyond, go completely beyond!"

The example of four people, each of whom has a different attitude when either listening to teachings or reciting mantras, is helpful to understand the different levels of virtuous motivation, and which goal one can achieve and which goal one cannot achieve depending on the motivation. In other words, which goal is caused by the various ways of doing the action of reciting mantra.

There are four people who are reciting the prayer *Essence of Wisdom*. The first one recites with the motivation of bodhicitta, with the wish to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. So his action of reciting the *Essence of Wisdom* prayer becomes the cause for omniscient mind. The next person recites the prayer with the motivation to achieve nirvana for himself, with the motive, “If I could only be liberated from samsara!” Just that. That action does not become a cause for omniscient mind, only for nirvana. The third person is reciting the prayer *Essence of Wisdom* with the motivation seeking happiness for future lives—such as being wealthy and only finding the bodies of happy transmigrating beings.

The Tibetan term for happy transmigrating being is *de.dro.wa*. *De* is “happiness,” *dro* is “migrating.” I think *dro* relates mainly to the aggregate of consciousness from among the aggregates. Not so much to this physical body because it does not continuously migrate. The aggregate that migrates is the consciousness. The being’s consciousness, being under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts, migrates in the six realms and because a person’s consciousness does that, that person, that being is called a “migrating” or “transmigrating” being. I haven’t got a clear idea of what the extra word “trans” likes to do, but anyway, “transmigrating being.” Being under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts, he migrates in the six realms. He is one who migrates in the six realms. *De.dro.lu.de*, “the body of a happy transmigrating being.”

The third person’s action, reciting the prayer with the attitude just wishing for happiness in future lives, doesn’t become the cause of omniscient mind and it doesn’t become the cause of nirvana. It doesn’t even become the cause of nirvana since it is not done with the thought renouncing samsara. The fourth person recites the prayer just to prevent sickness with the attitude, “If only this life could be happy!” Because he is clinging to the happiness of this life he is trying to have a longer life. Or he is reciting the prayer to prevent hindrances to his success in wealth, things like that, or maybe he is saying this prayer to protect himself from others’ harm so that he can be happy. With this attitude, the fourth person’s action of reciting the prayer does not become the cause of omniscient mind, it does not become the cause of nirvana, and it doesn’t even become the cause of the happiness of future lives. You see, in order for it to become the cause of happiness of lives beyond this one, the action must be the holy Dharma. That fourth person’s action, reciting the prayer with such a motivation, doesn’t become holy Dharma, it becomes worldly Dharma. The prayer itself is Dharma, the words are Dharma, but the person’s action of reciting doesn’t become holy Dharma. The words are holy words, but the action doesn’t become holy Dharma, it becomes worldly Dharma, because it was done with worldly concern, only seeking the happiness of this life.

This advice or explanation in regards to motivation is given so that with the understanding of these different levels of attitude one is able to judge one’s own actions. I can judge whether my action, like doing this prayer, becomes the cause of omniscient mind, whether it becomes the cause of nirvana, or whether it becomes the cause of the happiness of future lives, whether it becomes holy Dharma. With this understanding one is also able to discriminate and to transform one’s motivation, being able to transcend the motivation.

For example, those who have attended the course for the very first time, for whom this is the very first course, don’t have any sadhanas to do, daily prayers, sadhanas or meditation, daily commitments of things to do. But a person like me, when we do commitments, I think it is very important to check the motivation. We spend many hours on those sadhanas and prayers, but not on the motivation. We try to do the meditations that are in the sadhanas, visualizing mandalas,

visualizing and building up and constructing mandalas and all those various practices. We try to do what is written there, spending many hours with those visualizations and many things in the tantra practices. But actually, at end of the day after having done them, if you think back on all those prayers on which you spent many hours, doing them very quietly in your own room without others disturbing you, if you think back to see whether those tantra meditations became a cause for omniscient mind (the tantra meditations that are so secret, there is nothing more secret than that, the most profound words and subject), when you check back whether all these prayers and meditations became the cause of nirvana, actually, for practitioners like me, when we look back we cannot find that it became even the cause of nirvana, liberation for oneself.

It might be the cause of liberation, since it is done with the fear of being born in the naraks, is rushed with the fear of being reborn in the naraks. “If I don’t do this commitment, or if I don’t do this, then” It is a kind of concern for the happiness of future lives, so it might become Dharma. But according to the subject, the meditation is tantra, the path of the secret mantra and that practice is supposed always to be the cause of omniscient mind. Even though one might be unable to do those particular very secret meditations properly, such as the *mahaanuttara* tantra path, still whatever you recite and whatever meditations you do should become the cause of omniscient mind.

You think of those other advantages, the advantages of bodhicitta, you think that you have the freedom to make your actions become the cause of these advantages, and you see that it has not happened. It might have become Dharma, the cause of happiness in future lives, but it was wasted. Though it could have become the cause of nirvana, though it could have become the cause of omniscient mind, one didn’t transform it into that. So because now one will not get all these advantages, it was wasted.

Not nowadays, but I used to feel, sometimes when my attitude was a little bit more careful, that if half of the rosary was recited for one’s own liberation or for one’s own happiness, even for the happiness of future lives, since it was not done with the motivation of bodhicitta, since it was not done from the heart for the sake of others, I felt that it was wasted, not worth it. So again one repeated from the beginning of the rosary. When I discovered that half of the rosary was not done for the sake of others, with the motivation of bodhicitta, I felt that the mantras that had already been recited were kind of empty.

I think it is extremely important that your attitude is as pure as possible, even if you do one minute of meditation or five hours of prayers and meditation, whether your commitments are few or many. I think that even with fifteen minutes of meditation, or even one round of the rosary that you have decided to recite each day, the most important thing is for your attitude to be as pure as possible. The question is not so much the subject being profound, this and that, the most important thing is that your attitude when doing it should be as pure as possible. As much as possible it should be like the person of the first example, whose action of reciting the *Essence of Wisdom* became the cause of omniscient mind—as much as possible one should be in that group. Then the small practice—that one round of rosary, fifteen minutes of meditation, or even just watching the breath, even if it is keeping mindfulness on the breath, doing meditation on impermanence related to the breath, this becomes so effective for the mind. If it is done as much as possible with the motivation of bodhicitta from the heart, if it is done for others, it is so effective for the mind. The selfish attitude becomes less while the thought of cherishing others becomes stronger, so the mind is very happy. There is that much greater peace.

While reciting the compassionate Buddha's mantra with the motivation of bodhicitta you should also be doing the practice of taking other sentient beings' sufferings on yourself. While you are meditating on the kindness of the enemy particularly, and on the kindness of the mother and of all sentient beings, while you are reciting the mantras and while you are meditating on the kindness of others, you should also be doing the practice of taking the sufferings of others onto yourself. At the same time you are doing the mantra you are praying, wishing to experience the sufferings of others yourself, and also you are doing the practice of dedication, wishing and praying, "May others experience all my happiness and all my perfections!"

Reciting this mantra, this is my LSD in this life, my taking tranquilizers. The mind becomes such a compassionate nature, very calm. There is so much relaxation, such great peace while reciting the Compassionate Buddha's mantra and generating such a will, doing the prayers and the meditation of the Mahayana thought training of taking and giving. If your mind is depressed or aggressive, at that time it is very good to do this. When something has gone wrong in your life and you have some problem with your husband or wife, problems with a friend, with the job, with sickness; like you find out that you have cancer, you suddenly have a heart attack, or find out that you have hepatitis, then you make the hepatitis happy.

Somehow, I like this mantra, Chenrezig, the compassionate Buddha's mantra, so much, somehow. There are many other powerful mantras, there are so many, but this one is incredibly beneficial for the mind, to calm and subdue it. It is so beneficial for pacifying the very vicious and painful thoughts, like this painful, selfish attitude. So I try to do ten thousand. I try, that is my wish, but I do not manage all the time. Sometimes I can't remember to do even one.

These examples of motivations are something to keep in the heart, so that each time when we try to do practices of the holy Dharma we are making preparations to become bodhisattvas. Even though one is not a bodhisattva yet, even though one is not a Mahayanist yet, one is making preparations for that by generating the motivation and training the mind in bodhicitta. One is trying to make oneself closer to becoming the fortunate being, a bodhisattva.

In regards to Dharma charity, now you understand why, among the three charities, Dharma charity is the more important one: sentient beings, who are suffering in samsara, are only liberated through Dharma. There is no other way to achieve enlightenment, it is only possible through Dharma. There is no other way to achieve enlightenment, not by a very fast airplane, not by the Concorde. The Concorde won't make it to liberation or enlightenment.

When the American astronauts landed on the moon, they sent news people from the French press, from Paris and also from America to ask His Holiness the Dalai Lama what His Holiness thought about the Americans landing on the moon. His Holiness explained, "It is the highest accomplishment of science," like this, "Very good." Then somewhere in the middle His Holiness said, "But the ancient Indians, the famous poets, described those planets as celestial places." Then at the end His Holiness' conclusion was this, "However, without eliminating the three poisonous minds, no matter what high external development you make, it won't bring peace in the mind." That was the conclusion in the newspaper, it was answered like that. Maybe one should ask these three astronauts who landed on the moon whether their poisonous minds lessened.

The second charity is material charity. Material charity does not mean that whatever a person asks you for you have to give; it is not like that. You see, some things might harm that person. Maybe a

person is going to kill himself because of being so depressed or because of some problem, but being unable to find anything to kill himself with, he asks you for it. Then if you have guns or some other weapon and there is the danger that this person might kill himself, then anything that might harm this person, like poison, is not the material with which to make charity.

There are elaborate explanations of the six paramitas in the *Great Commentary on the Graduated Path to Enlightenment* by Lama Tsong Khapa, and also at the end of the previous course's book, the *Wish-fulfilling Golden Sun*, there is some explanation of each one. So you can get more explanations and more ideas from that.

I left out one thing about why Dharma charity is the most important one. You can understand from the example that I mentioned yesterday, about planting seeds or impressions that gradually lead to enlightenment.

The third charity is the charity of fearlessness, guiding others from fears and dangers. If you see two animals attacking each others like when ants attack a living worm (the dead one they can have), if there is a way of helping, you should help. If there is a way you can manage to get rid of them, protecting the worm from the danger of the ants, by shaking or by blowing, whatever it is, keeping the ants away from the worm is the charity of fearlessness. When a cat catches a mouse one should not leave it saying, "Oh, it is their nature." If that were the case, the same logic should be applied when somebody is attacking you or when somebody is treating you badly. There should be no help, because that is also the nature of things. Somebody is killing you, but why should there be anybody helping you? Why are you seeking refuge? Why are you seeking somebody to protect your life from danger? You know, you don't need it. Or is that not nature? If that were the case, we wouldn't need to take medicine, because it is our nature to get sick. Why should we put effort into taking medicine? It is similar, similar reasoning. It is completely wrong; there is no benefit for yourself and no benefit for others. That kind of idea is of no benefit. It is completely wrong. It benefits neither body nor mind, nothing.

According to the capability that one has, one should also protect people from dangers, trying to guide those who have fear, protecting their lives from dangers. All these are the charity of fearlessness.

About the eight Mahayana precepts, in regard to the meal: if, after you have taken one meal, you decide to stop, decide not to eat more, but then after some time you change your mind, thinking, "Oh, I should have more!" then that isn't one meal. First you decide, "Now I am not going to eat anymore," but you change your mind later and eat again. This does not constitute one meal. It is not the precepts of taking one meal. Once the decision has been taken "Now I am not going to eat more," one should completely decide this, it should be final.

1st December pm

If one sees somebody about to kill an animal, buying the animal from that butcher or person and thereby protecting that animal from the danger to its life is the charity of fearlessness.

When somebody is going to experience untimely death this is one of the methods: one goes to buy an animal, whether it is a small one or an animal with a large body. For example, one buys animals that are in danger of being killed in restaurants.

In Solu-Khumbu, and also in Tibet, if they have some superstition, a dream or something that has happened that makes them have doubts or fears of death, or when they have been sick for a long time, the common thing is that they go to ask a lama. If there is anybody available in that country or that area, like a meditator, or somebody who is able to predict, to explain, and to make observations, either through dreams or through making observations by taking refuge in the Triple Gem, they go to see him. This is one of the methods if there is danger to one's life; this is one of the things to do. People buy animals—goats, chickens or whatever—and then they just keep them at the house until the animals die. They give them food and take care of them. Sometimes they take the goats to high lamas and ask for prayers or some blessings for them.

If it is a small creature one can buy more depending on how much one can afford. If it is a small creature one can liberate many more from the danger of death. One puts them into water where there is less danger; one should not put them back into the same water that they came from. It definitely works, it definitely benefits for such things as untimely death. You caused others to have longer lives and that itself is a karmic cause for one's own life to be prolonged. It prevents the hindrances that cause untimely death, prolonging one's life.

My mother questioned one old lama who lives quite close to the Lawudo cave. He mentioned to her that she would die soon if she did not do some of these methods, like liberating others from the danger of death. If she did this she would live for a certain number of years. I think she did maybe two or three times. One time she brought a goat here. I don't know, it was around here, then it was given to the Nepalese man who always comes to milk the cows, for him to take care of. Maybe it had already become his food.

She says that according to the horoscope and the predictions made by the lama, now she only has one year left to live. So I say, "That's okay you don't need to worry, that's okay." She always says, "I am in the preparation for departure. I am a person in the preparation for departure, in the process of departure to the next life, to other realms." So I say, "It is enough that you have been doing each day, all day reciting Chenrezig mantras, and you don't gossip much, you don't criticize other people with bad thoughts." I just talk like this, but actually, she has a much better heart than me, there is no comparison. Compared to her heart, mine is completely black. If she is not gossiping, if there is nobody to help her gossip, she always will be reciting mantras, all the time. She has some short Chenrezig prayers that she does maybe two or three times. Many years ago, when she went to Tibet with my father, she heard so many teachings from one very highly realized yogi, the root guru of Trijang Rinpoche.

There is one very high lama who lives on a mountain in Nepal, at Jumbasie, who is also my guru. In general appearance he is not of the Gelugpa sect, he is Nyingmapa, but Rinpoche himself has taken many teachings from other sects, from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's tutor, His Holiness Serkong Rinpoche, and lineage initiations that have continued through the Gelugpa lamas, such as Yamantaka initiations and other teachings. He is the learned guru Trulshik Rinpoche, learned and also living in pure moral conduct. At the same time he is a noble bodhisattva with an incredibly good heart.

When my mother went to Tibet, so many years ago, she learned some prayers from the lamas and she remembers them. She doesn't know how to write, she can't read at all, not even the letter "ka." She cannot read the alphabet, she cannot even recognize the first syllable. Nothing. So if she could

comprehend something by her mind at that time, then that's it, if she could not—that's it. She can remember very clearly those prayers that the lamas taught her so many years ago.

She did Chenrezig retreat here some years ago and I taught her some prayers. But after a few years when I was listening to her reciting, some were a little bit broken. Some words were left out, half and half, some syllables were missing. It was like broken teeth, sort of. But she says, "I don't know if it is proper or not, I don't know if it is correct or not, but anyway, I say this." She has so much thought of loving kindness. Of course, she gets angry sometimes, but normally the nature of the mind is so great in thoughts of loving kindness. To anybody who comes to her house she always wants to give something, whatever there is, she always has a great wish to help.

She was in Dharamsala two years ago, not last year but the year before. Every day she went to His Holiness' temple to circumambulate the palace, at the same time reciting mantras. Maybe she ate a little bit of her morning breakfast, but most of it she kept in her pocket, then she went down and gave it to the Indian beggars who are around on the road to the temple. I always remember her kindness so much. She helps anybody around her. She is so aware, so concerned about people who are working, concerned about their tiredness and their exhaustion. She always has so many thoughts for other people. When she is walking along the road she is always saying about people that she sees, about anybody, "How pitiful they are! Maybe they are feeling cold." She has so much thought for others, even for those people just passing on the road, for people she doesn't know.

This dedication prayer that you heard some time ago:

I won't accumulate any non-virtue,
I will practice perfect virtue,
Subduing one's own mind is the teaching of the Buddha.

This is one of her dedications. It came from the teachings, the scriptures. Somehow, she has some very effective dedication prayers. This is one of the prayers that she says at the end.

When she was staying in my room and I heard this it was so effective for my mind. It was very useful for remembering the activity of the Dharma, which is to subdue the mind. So I told her, "When you are with me you must say this several times, and you must say it very loudly so that I can hear." Actually, this is a very vast subject, this one stanza. It contains the explanations and teachings of the four noble truths. I will mention something about it later.

The definition of "the righteous law" or "moral conduct," is "the thought of protection," which has three branches. This is the righteous law of abstaining from the vices. In short, one abstains from those actions that harm oneself and that harm others, from those vices.

The person who has taken the bodhisattva vows abstains from the opposite of the precepts, from those vices, such as praising oneself and criticizing others with a selfish attitude, with disturbing thoughts, and with attachment. Then, not giving teachings when one has their lineage and understands them. One does not give teachings to other people, not because there are any hindrances, but because one is being miserly and attached, with a jealous mind not wanting the other person to understand and become more learned than oneself. With this kind of selfish attitude one does not give teachings. Similarly, not making charity while one has possessions. With a selfish

mind, with miserliness, one does not make material charity, even though doing that does not become a hindrance for oneself.

I think that if somebody who has taken bodhisattva vows doesn't give to a beggar when he comes along because of a selfish attitude or miserliness, what happens is that one has received the vice of the third precept of not giving material possessions. If one has something to give when a beggar comes along (that is one example), and giving doesn't become a hindrance for oneself to accomplish the work to achieve enlightenment; one is not giving anything just because of one's selfish attitude. You have no interest because you don't like that person, the way he appears to you, the way he looks, the way he begs—something that just has to do with your selfish attitude. Then one has received that vice. Maybe you give when somebody with a nice appearance comes along.

So at the time one should remember to keep these precepts for the benefit of other sentient beings. Even if it is one paisa or two paisa that one has to give as charity, if it does not become a hindrance to accomplishing the work to achieve enlightenment, by giving that one is practicing the righteous action of abstaining from the vices.

If there is somebody one gets angry with, an enemy, somebody who treats you badly and who is always doing the opposite of what you wish, if even for a second the thought deeply rises, wishing from the heart for that person to suffer, you have received the vice of giving up the thought of loving kindness for sentient beings. If you rejoice and are happy when that person is in trouble, that is the wrong rejoicing, the opposite of the thought of loving kindness. When you think, "I won't do anything for his happiness!" and it is not just the words coming, but something from the heart, then even if it came for just a second, the vice of having given up the thought of loving kindness for sentient beings is received. From among the eighteen root vows this one is broken, degenerated.

If one gives up the thought wishing to achieve enlightenment for even one sentient being, one has also given up the thought of doing it for all sentient beings, because the wishing thought is dependent upon leading all sentient beings to enlightenment. The wishing thought, the wish to achieve enlightenment is generated in dependence on each sentient being. So if even for a minute, even for a second, the thought rises deeply from the heart, "I won't do anything for his happiness!" one has broken the precepts, and receives the vice of having given up the wishing thought. Because in the wish to achieve enlightenment in order to lead all sentient beings into the sublime happiness, this person is also included. It is similar with heresy.

In order for the other bodhisattva vows to be completely broken, these four things need to be gathered: not having repentance, not having the wish not to do it again, not regarding the action as detrimental, delighting or taking pleasure in the action, and having no shame or consideration. If these four things are gathered within four hours one has received the bodhisattva root downfall. Giving up the wishing thought and the arising of heresy do not need these four things to become a root downfall of the bodhisattva's precepts. If these two things rise from the heart, that very second one receives the root downfall. This means that it is not just the words coming in the mind, just the words clicking without any feeling, but it must come from the heart. Of course, it is better not to let even the words arise, because if one is able to protect oneself and to stop them, it helps very much to not actualize them from the heart. So these two, giving up the wishing thought and rising heresy, if these rise from the heart, that second one receives the root downfall.

One has to be very careful about heresy. Especially when one hears the stories on karma from the sutra teachings one really has to observe the mind well, otherwise heresy might arise. Most of those stories are not just common stories; so many of the stories that were recorded in Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's biography are about his holy actions when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was in India in the *nirmanakaya* aspect, doing the works for sentient beings. When Guru Shakyamuni Buddha went for alms in the villages or the cities with his followers, whenever sentient beings made offerings, Guru Shakyamuni, as his omniscient mind sees all three times very clearly, immediately predicted, without the slightest mistake, "Due to your karma of making such an offering, in a future life you will be this or that Buddha who has such and such a name." Also when there were human beings or animals with particularly usual bodies, or human beings experiencing particular sufferings, when something was happening and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha saw that this was a suitable time to explain the karma of those suffering sentient beings, then Guru Shakyamuni would explain it to them and to his followers. When there were incredibly unusual bodies of animals, like those that had one body but so many different heads, Guru Shakyamuni would explain.

Nowadays, during these degenerate times, so many strange things happen with people and animals. You see so many strange things, the so-called "freaks." One problem is that in the West it is so hidden, while in the East, like in India, in Varanasi, if you go to the river Ganges it is very much exposed. Many things are not hidden, because by exposing them they get money. Either they themselves purposely do it, or they are obliged by others to do it. However, in the West it is hidden; all the ugly things are hidden as much as possible. Anyway, I am not going to talk much about that part of the story.

When I go to the West and my students ask me, "What do you want to see?" I am not interested. Maybe sometimes flowers, because if there is some special flower maybe I could get a seed and make offerings to the gurus. That is one of the guru offerings, so one reason for having interest in flowers is that one. But otherwise, to see other things is a little bit tiring, kind of exhausting. But to go to see the freaks' places, the old folks' homes, and the places where the dead bodies are kept—those are my three best interests. It helps my practice, the meditation on renunciation, and for a bodhisattva, it helps to develop the three principal paths to enlightenment.

I saw one old folks home in America, in Madison. There was one student who lived there a long time, I don't know her name, one young girl. The reason she was there was so that she could take teachings from our teacher, Geshe Sopa Rinpoche. He is Lama Yeshe's teacher. In regards the geshe and learned monks who fled from Tibet to foreign countries, he is nowadays, in ordinary view, one of the most learned and most well-known ones from all those famous monasteries in Lhasa. He is unbelievably learned. Also, he is living in the West, but in pure moral conduct. It is an amazing way of living life, Geshe-la's life in the West. There is no change, no degeneration. So many years, more than twenty (I think the story is getting long). Geshe-la has one old servant in the West, called John or Elvin. He is a well educated person and has lived with Geshe-la for many years, offering service and taking care of Geshe-la—or geshe-la taking care of him. Because of having lived with a learned teacher, somehow, by the way he learned a lot about all the extensive teachings and philosophies, all those extensive scriptures. He himself says that he was so surprised, so amazed because Geshe-la's way of living life here was the same as in the monastery in Tibet. He told us that the only change that happened was that now Geshe-la drinks a lot of coffee, while in Tibet he drank a lot of Tibetan tea.

Geshe Sopa Rinpoche is incredibly noble, with a good heart, and he is unbelievably humble. There is that much incredibly extensive, deep, complete knowledge of all the teachings, without the slightest mistake of the whole Buddhadharma, but at the same time there is incredible humility, not like some professors or people who have studied a little bit of philosophy. Not like those who have some understanding of philosophical teachings, whose understanding is like atoms, but whose pride is like mountains. Not like this. If there is humility it is a result of the practices, it shows the achievement of the practice. This girl moved there (the story gets very long), so that she could take teachings from Geshe-la. I don't think she took teachings at the university, she took the teachings for the inside disciples, at his house. She worked at the old folks' home, so that is how we got a chance to see it.

One time, I think it was in Santa Cruz, there were only two dead bodies: one old mother who had died six months before and one black man who died maybe one year earlier. The oldest bodies I have seen were in Sydney, Australia. I have seen some fresh ones also, they put them in a box with chemicals and water. Nick or somebody pulled it up. (Dr. Nick, I think some of you must know). Because he is a doctor they could show it to him, so I was able to see, I was able to make pilgrimage. The first section was full of faces in a glass cage. On top the main parts of the body were hanging, then the different parts. Then way inside were the babies, twins, probably six months old children they had put with their arms holding each other; and there were fetuses in jars. The students who came with me, who drove me there—one was just a friend—they went straight to where the babies and fetuses were, way inside. But it was very difficult for me to go straight inside without looking at the others. It was so interesting, the face that I saw at the door. The first one was so interesting it was like seeing the Buddha, sort of. When you see the Buddha you are never satisfied, you want to see more. To turn your face away is disturbing, uncomfortable, I think I spent five minutes with the first and second faces. Then Nick said, "Oh, it is more interesting way inside!"

Then we came outside. I don't remember whether I or Nick who mentioned it, saying, "So actually, we are like that," and the student who drove the car, the girl said, "Sh, I don't feel that way. I am okay. I don't feel that way."

I saw the freaks in Spain. I also asked about the old folks' home, but it was quite far, so somehow we couldn't make it. The freaks' place was the closest. That was very helpful. It is a place where the missionaries are actually taking very good care of them. Anyway, I am not going to talk about that. I think for Dharma practitioners these are very useful things to go and look at. I think it is a very good way to give you encouragement when you feel there is weakness in your practice. Also, one can do prayers for them, one can make dedication. Their sufferings help us to develop compassion, renunciation, and bodhicitta. So what we can do from our side is dedicate the merits for them to find a perfect human body after this life, to meet perfect gurus, and to accomplish the teachings. In this way one can understand that sentient beings' karma is various, not fixed. We cannot say that it should be this way and that way, there is nothing fixed.

Going back to those many stories; when there was some strange thing happening and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha saw that the time was suitable to explain the cause of that sentient being's old karmas, suddenly, with his psychic powers everything was seen, and then Guru Shakyamuni explained to the hundreds and hundreds of people gathered there, and the disciples asked Guru Shakyamuni Buddha questions like, "Why is this animal like this?" or, "Why does this person have a problem like this?" Then Guru Shakyamuni Buddha indicated all the past karma, explaining why that

being had such a body or why he had such a hard life. So all those stories about karma in the sutras are Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's predictions.

For one who has taken bodhisattva vows, and even for one who hasn't taken them, it is very easy for heresy to arise when one reads or hears about those karma stories, since those four conditions need not be gathered. If it did not come from the sutra teaching, if it was not said by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, but was just like a fairy-tale or something not true, in that case there would be no danger. But if one thinks that those stories from sutra are impossible and heresy arises, in that second one has received the root downfall. If one has received a bodhisattva root downfall one won't achieve the Mahayana right-seeing path in that life. This was said by Lama Tsong Khapa in his great commentary on lamrim.

There are some points where heavy negative karmas can easily happen. Generally, heresy is one of the greatest hindrances to understanding the teachings. Even if one hears the teachings in future lives one will reject them. Even if one hears the teachings one can never accept them, no matter how much it is explained with logic or clear explanations. Somehow, one cannot accept them, there is a karmic block.

Just to end this topic—when you hear something, then just think, “Oh, there might be such a karma,” and leave it at that in order to stop heresy from arising.

However, the four noble truths, that is scientific; there is revealed a path to be practiced. If one practices that path correctly one is able to liberate oneself from suffering; that is the whole thing. If you try to argue about all the things that are written in the books, there won't be enough life. If you are going to argue about all the things that are written in all the books in the world, if you want to raise all your questions, there won't be enough life. I think that is all. Good night!

2nd December am

(Rinpoche reads the request to the assembly of Buddhas.)

(Copied from notes).

The last request is very important to fulfill the wish to accomplish the method of doing extensive works for sentient beings. It is not enough to just have interest in the Buddhadharma or just have wisdom. There are thousands and thousands of hindrances from the outside and from the inside that do not let one practice. Even though one tries to practice, one is unable to continue. You try hard for half a month, then nothing. Then next year again you do one or two months, then for several months it disappears, it is breacktime, holiday. The self-cherishing thought and the worldly concerns give you a holiday without choice. The self-cherishing attitude and the worldly thoughts tell you many things like, “Practicing Dharma can be done later. It is good—but later. What is more important is your pleasure now, this moment.” They say many sweet things that may sound very true and that are very easy to believe and trust.

Even though there is some wisdom of bodhicitta and karma, even though one has listened to many teachings on the three principal aspects of the path and a little bit of experience has been generated, like some experience of impermanence and death, guru devotion, renunciation of samsara, and bodhicitta, still one is unable to practice. The thought of loving kindness and compassion has been

generated during these one or two months, but one is unable to practice due to all the various hindrances from outside and inside disturbing oneself. So the one or two months' little bit of progress in the mind disappears for a long time. Again, some time next year it is generated a little bit, but again disturbances and hindrances come, so again it disappears. One is unable to continue and to develop it.

It is not that difficult to generate realizations on the graduated path to enlightenment. They have been generated in the minds of uncountable numbers of yogis in the past. Actually, it is not difficult. When you really do it day by day there is some change in the mind, week by week, even though you did not hope or expect that to happen because of so many powerful hindrances.

(Continued from tape)

One does not have enough merit. One has not done much purification so the hindrances are extremely powerful. Even though you have the wish to continue they are so powerful that you get overwhelmed. They overtake you, they overwhelm you. You are weak and the hindrances are powerful. So now, the solution for you is to overwhelm the hindrances, to make them weak. For you to become more powerful you need much fuel, as I mentioned before. We have to make ourselves very fortunate, we have to accumulate much luck.

To the very fortunate, the very lucky person, whatever he wants comes very easily—anything, even temporal wishes like business. Whatever he is seeking, even the accomplishment of temporal happiness, comes very easily without effort, worry, or fear. It is the same thing in regard to the success of achieving the greatest work, the omniscient mind for the sake of others. How it works is the same. It depends on how fortunate the person is, how much merit he has, how rich he is in merit accumulated in this life and in past lives and how much purification of negative karmas and obscurations has been done. It depends on how much purification of the obscurations that hinder one from generating realizations has been done.

For a person who has done much of that, who is very fortunate and rich on merit, it becomes the same thing on the path as well. When he practices Dharma, as he is making plans, as he wishes it, exactly like that, the necessary conditions come together. If he wishes to become an ascetic meditator, the necessary conditions come together—whatever practice he wishes to do, he receives the teachings. Whatever he wishes, he receives from the guru. Also, he is able to continue his practice and realizations come very easily. They come like a waterfall, like rainfall. All the various realizations of tantra and lamrim come very easily. Like many of the great Indian yogis and meditators, such as King Indrabhuti, who became enlightened in three years, or the great yogi Milarepa who became enlightened in one brief lifetime, or many of Lama Tsong Khapa's disciples who accomplished the rainbow body and who achieved the unified state of no-more-learning. So many of them left incredibly good teachings and incredibly good, inspiring examples for subduing the mind. They left biographies and teachings of their experience, they left so many good examples for other sentient beings.

If one wishes to take the essence of this precious human body that is received, if one wishes to make it highly meaningful, then even if one cannot accomplish the omniscient mind with this body, at least one should come near that. In order to accomplish the extensive work for sentient beings, nothing, generally, in this life is more important than training our minds in everyday life. Nothing is

more important than training the mind in the graduated path to enlightenment, making the mind come close to the thought of renouncing samsara and the wisdom realizing voidness and bodhicitta.

If we wish to take the essence, which we have never taken before from beginningless rebirths until now, which we have never accomplished, an experience we never had before, from beginningless rebirths until now; if one has the interest, inspiration, and wish, just intellectual understanding of the words of the teachings, of the words explaining the path, just that intellectual understanding of dry words alone is not enough. That alone won't make it. One should attempt to realize this, because it is extremely important to understand how important the practice of purification and accumulation of merit is. Accumulating merit is the cause of realizations, while purifying obstacles purifies the hindrances to generating these realizations. One should practice and try to understand the various skillful methods of accumulating merit and one should put the purification into action.

During Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's time there was one king, in Sanskrit *Mydide*, who always, whenever he heard some excellent, good things about Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, tried to compete with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. He always tried to harm and compete with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. He had memorized and learned by heart so many volumes of Buddha's teachings, such a huge load of texts that one elephant couldn't carry them. He was able to say by heart that much of Buddha's teachings. But you see, there was no change in his mind. He was able to say by heart, without looking at the text, such an incredible amount, but the problem was that because of not having put them into action there was no change in his mind.

The conclusion is that if one makes one's Dharma practice difficult, then it becomes difficult, while if one makes it easy it becomes easier and easier.

It is very good, very important to hear the teachings again and again. Maybe one hears them from a lama that one doesn't have much karmic contact with—of course, there is much benefit in planting the seed, much benefit is received, but maybe there is not so much change in the mind. But if one hears the some teachings from another lama maybe there is more karmic contact. From various lamas we hear the same subjects, the same teachings, but the teachings that come from one particular lama's holy mouth are very effective, every single word he says is very effective for the mind. There are differences like these, so it is very skillful and good to hear different teachings, even to hear the same teachings over and over again from different, qualified lamas.

Thus these preliminary practices are so important. These requests for pacifying inner and outer hindrances are extremely important.

(Rinpoche reads the prayer)

Buddha, head of the Shakya clan, is the foremost guide, peerless in expounding shunyata.
Manjushri is the epitome of the Buddha's complete wisdom.

“Epitome,” this word is like shunyata—can never make it.

The exalted Nagarjuna, best of the aryas, has seen the full meaning of profound shunyata.
From you three crowning jewels of clear exposition,
I request inspiration.

Please listen to the teaching by generating at least the effortful motivation of bodhicitta, thinking, “At any rate, I must achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Therefore I am going to listen to the commentary on the *Bodhicharyavatara*.”

I think last night when I was talking about the bodhisattva root downfall, I probably wasn't thinking properly. I remembered later last night. I mentioned that it becomes a root downfall if these four shortcomings or mistakes are gathered within four hours. I made it sound as if having gathered these four things, of course, that is the best. I spoke completely opposite. As if rejoicing at having done these things, such as criticizing others and praising oneself, not giving things and not having taught Dharma. I mentioned details yesterday, so I don't need to repeat.

In order for “not having taught Dharma” and “not having given possessions,” to become root downfalls, these four things need to be gathered. (The rest of the eighteen root vows need to have gathered these same four things in order to become root downfalls, except the two precepts of giving up the wishing thought and rising heresy.)

These four things are: rejoicing at what you have done, being satisfied, not having shame. One should feel shame by thinking, “I know the shortcomings of negative karma. If I do this, I who have received a perfect human body, instead of doing better practice, am creating negative karma.” One should remember the ripening aspect, resulting in the lower realms, thinking, “If I do this the result is negative karma. I, who have received a perfect human body should remember the result of negative karma, rebirth in lower realms.” Reasoning like this one feels shame on one's own behalf, that is shame for oneself.

Then there is the shame on behalf of others. One practices the bodhisattva precepts, but is careless with others. If one has no shame, one doesn't care about others. One is without consideration for others. For example, if you are going to criticize others, then, by considering other people, you should think, “How dare I do such a negative action towards my own kind mother sentient beings?” Considering others, one should think like this, remembering the kindness of others. “How dare I allow ill-will to arise towards this enemy, who is the one who gives me enlightenment.” By remembering his kindness and by equalizing one thinks, “He also wants happiness and doesn't want suffering, so how dare I do this.” There are different ways of being considerate of others.

Also, one should remember Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's omniscient mind. If one has accumulated negative karma due to the arising of strong anger, strong attachment, pride, or a jealous mind, one should think of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's omniscient mind, or of one's own guru. One should remember Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in that aspect, or whatever deity that one practices. Whether it is Chenrezig, whether it is Manjushri, whether it is Heruka, Tara, or Vajrayogini, whatever it is, one should think, “Chenrezig is looking at me. Chenrezig's omniscient mind sees the harm that I am doing, which is against the enlightened being Chenrezig's wishes, against Chenrezig's holy mind. So how can I be careless? How can I ignore it?” Think, according to whatever deity you feel closest to that you normally practice most in every day life; if it is Tara: “Look at what I am doing, my mind, my attitude, my actions! How can I, in front of Mother Tara's eyes, ignore her advice, how dare I do actions completely opposite to her wishes? The Mother Tara who guides me and who is my sole refuge, upon whom I rely in all my lives, in this life and future lives, and whom I request to fulfill all my temporal and ultimate wishes.”

Like this, by sometimes considering sentient beings and by sometimes considering the omniscient ones, you try to overwhelm the disturbing thoughts and to stop the non-virtuous actions.

The second thing that needs to be gathered in order for the action to become a root downfall is not regarding these root downfalls, not regarding any of these eighteen root precepts that have been degenerated, as shortcomings. One does not remember the result, the harms to oneself and other sentient beings. Because of this one doesn't change the action, but carries on doing it. Not changing one's attitude and stopping the action of body and speech is the second. The third is being happy and satisfied at having done that. Having no shame or consideration for others is the fourth.

Maybe from among the eighteen root vows one has given up the Mahayana teachings because, "It is so difficult to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings, so difficult and it is taking so much time." If, with little heart the mind is discouraged and one decides not to practice anymore then, if within four hours one has not looked at the shortcomings, not changed one's attitude or actions, but is happy at doing this, and having no shame or consideration for others, if it happens like this, one has received the root downfall of having given up the Mahayana teachings. One should think in the same way with the other precepts, except with heresy and giving up the wishing thought. However, if within four hours one either looks upon one's action and attitude as a shortcoming, and one wishes to change, to not give up the Mahayana teachings, if any of these four things happen within four hours, it doesn't become a root downfall.

Sometimes, some lamas' definition is half a day. I checked this with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and also with His Holiness Ling Rinpoche. They are more strict than some lamas, so the duration is four hours. If none of these four just mentioned are gathered within four hours, then you receive the root downfall.

I stop here.

2nd December pm

Now we come to the second aspect of moral conduct, the righteous law of gathering virtuous Dharma, the righteous law of the moral conduct of gathering virtuous Dharma. It is just a general explanation.

A person who has taken bodhisattva vows and who is doing prostrations, making offerings, and offering service to the merit field, who is doing the listening, reflecting, and meditation practices and the practice of the six paramitas, whose three doors are attempting to do virtuous work—all his actions form the first part of the paramita of moral conduct, abstaining from vices. The second is the moral conduct of gathering virtuous Dharma, while the third one is the moral conduct of doing work for other sentient beings. In the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment eleven different forms of work are mentioned.

One should work for sentient beings, doing whatever is needed. If you have the capability to help when somebody is suffering or having problems, then you should help them. If one does not have the capability then one should make preparations to be able to have that capability. We don't have the perfect power to guide sentient beings that Buddha has, so the purpose of doing the meditation course is to make preparations to have the perfect capability to guide others. Each session in which

we practice meditation on the graduated path to enlightenment prepares us for that. In order to guide ourselves we have to rely upon others who have supreme powers and greater understanding.

We should be doing the works for others, like benefiting beings who are suffering and who are ignorant of the method, by trying to help them understand the method. One should try to help them accomplish temporal happiness and perfections, whatever they are seeking, and finally the ultimate happiness, the peerless omniscient mind. One should try to dispel and eliminate their ignorance. One should also benefit the sentient beings that benefit oneself by doing works for them. And one should rescue those who are in great fear or in danger. One should help those who need and ask for help. Things like this are doing the works for others.

If somebody is going to commit suicide or is in danger of doing so, if someone's mind is so aggressive or depressed, and you have the capability to help with these dangers, you should help. You should also help those who are possessed and intoxicated by worries, so many worries. But if the person does not want to see you perhaps it might not be a good idea. Anyway, he won't listen to whatever you might talk about. If the other person doesn't want to see you at all, it gets worse when that person sees your face. Of course, how much one is able to benefit and to guide others from suffering depends on how skillful one is.

His Holiness mentioned this several times; the last time was after the Dharma Celebration when the Western monks and nuns finished the Guhyasamaja retreat. The previous year, after the centers offered His Holiness the Dalai Lama a long-life puja, we received an interview. This time, during the interview with the Sangha, one of the questions was, "How to explain Dharma in the West? How are we going to explain the Buddha's teachings in the West?" This was a question concerning doing work for others. The same question was put the year before and to that His Holiness replied, "People have various kinds of minds, so how can you say, 'It should be like this?' People have various kinds of mind so it is difficult to say. That is one thing." This time there was some question concerning benefiting others, so His Holiness said, "Even for the bodhisattva who is on the second path, the path of preparation, the benefit that this bodhisattva can offer others is only ordinary benefit."

So actually, only after having attained the first bhumi on the arya path (the right-seeing path, the path of meditation and the path of no-more learning), can one offer actual benefits to sentient beings. Only after one has achieved the first bhumi on the right-seeing path. Otherwise, before that, even a bodhisattva who has accomplished the second Mahayana path of merit can offer only ordinary benefit. This bodhisattva has already achieved tranquil abiding and the great insight, *lhag.tong*. He also has powers of clairvoyance. There are many excellences, but still he cannot do the actual work for sentient beings.

How much benefit is the bodhisattva who has reached the tenth bhumi, who meditates under a tree, how much benefit is he able to offer compared to the bodhisattva who has accomplished the first bhumi? Between them there is no comparison. Likewise, there are incredible differences between the bodhisattva who had accomplished the tenth bhumi and the Buddha, the omniscient one. There are big differences.

There is an example given in the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment, taught by the recent lineage lama Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. He gave this example, "Like between your palm and infinite space." The benefit a bodhisattva who has reached the first bhumi of the arya path is

able to offer to others, how much actual work for sentient beings he is doing compared to a tenth bhumi bodhisattva, is like the size of a palm, while the extensive benefit that the tenth bhumi bodhisattva is able to offer to sentient beings is like the sky.

As the bodhisattva proceeds higher and higher on the arya path—which is the remedy that ceases, two obscurations—the bodhisattva gets more and more skillful. The two obscurations cease: the obscuration of the disturbing thoughts and the fully knowing obscuration, which means the obscuration to knowing all the three time existence fully and clearly. According to how much the realizations of the arya path are developed, the bodhisattva becomes more and more skillful in regard to guiding sentient beings.

But we should not get discouraged either, even though it is like this—though there are great differences even among the bodhisattvas. Whatever capability one has, if it does not harm, if there is some benefit that one can offer, one should do it as much as one can. One should offer benefit as much as one can, such as by practicing the six paramitas.

Then we have the practice of the four gatherings, the bodhisattva's practice and the holy action of the four gatherings, guiding sentient beings on the path to enlightenment with four different methods of gathering or drawing sentient beings.

Concerning charity (a little bit more detail will come later), if charity doesn't become a hindrance for practicing the holy Dharma and accomplishing enlightenment, one should practice even the smallest charity, like making charity of one's body to one flea, for example. One should even be training oneself in this practice of giving, making charity of one's own body. The fleas are also hungry. When we are hungry we have to eat something for our comfort and to stay alive, whatever it is. Similar to us, these fleas and mosquitoes were also human beings in the past, but not having Dharma wisdom and being under the control of ignorance and disturbing thoughts, they accumulated this karma. There was no plan, it was not well-planned when they were human beings, "Oh, I must be reborn as a mosquito!" It was not knowingly planned, like when we plan to become a soldier or a doctor, or to find a perfect human body in our next life; it is not like that. If there are those here who like free will, those who like to keep the words, who cling to the words, then those things, you see, like finding a perfect human body, are done with free will.

However, there was no choice. There was no wish at all to be born as a mosquito or lobster, as those long worms that old people come and pick up and put into cans, after the waves of the ocean go away. They pick them up on the sand and then they give them to the fish. They cut them into pieces and use them to hook the fish. You see how pitiful they are. Human beings do so much torture. We have so much power over these sentient beings who don't have any power at all, who have no capability, and there is nothing that they can do. They have no power to protect their lives, nothing at all. Guideless, powerless, they are used for food to kill other animals. They are used for that human being's means of living, for his comfort, for him to obtain one day's comfort.

It was not purposely, knowingly planned, the karma was not created the way we in our past life created the good karma for this present perfect human rebirth, which we created on purpose in order to find a perfect human rebirth in our next life. For them it was without choice. While there was no wish at all to have such a body, because of being overwhelmed by the ignorance of clinging to true existence, because of ignorance, the unknowing karma and disturbing thoughts, such a body was taken. While there was no wish to have such a body at all, not even in a dream, this time, in this

life, such a body was taken even though he was a human being in his past life. The consciousness migrated to such a body, so what can he do? What can they do? Nothing. How long do they live? A hundred years? A thousand years? I heard that those animals in the museums, the dinosaurs, who don't live now, but thousands of years ago, lived for a thousand years. (I have seen a dinosaur in New York, the bones. It really is a huge one.) In the past there were animals that lived a long time. However, it doesn't matter how long they live because what is the use? What is the benefit of just living a longer life to experience more suffering? During that life with that kind of body there is no freedom to practice Dharma, no way to meet the holy Dharma. Having taken that body makes a block to practice the holy Dharma. Also, as their minds are completely overwhelmed by disturbing thoughts like anger and attachment, the actions that they do are nothing but non-virtuous actions all the time. So they are very pitiful—guideless and powerless.

You can see how much fear dogs and even birds have. Even though they find food there is no way to escape fear. The whole day is spent with fear—they have to watch east, west, north, and south. Even though they have found food, they watch in the east, west, north, and southern directions at the same time, because there is the danger that other birds might attack them. If you look at crows and small birds it is like that.

When you consider how they have taken that body without choice, you don't need to think of any of their other sufferings. How they are hungry, cold, and hot; how those who are in the hands of human beings are tortured by people, how among themselves they are attacked by each other, becoming the food of other animals. Without thinking of the sufferings they experience in that body, just think of how without choice they have taken that body, while having no wish at all, no interest whatsoever, in having such a body. But through being under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts in their past life, the consciousness has taken such a body. The result is experienced for that being to be whatever it is, to be one of those lobsters that are burnt when put into boiling water. Somebody picks them out of the water after having put on rubber gloves—you choose whichever you want and give it to the special waiter. The special waiter has a special dress, everything is white. He is trying to accomplish the narakas each time he is boiling those living creatures, because the result is ripening on that sentient being.

Just think of this: the goats and sheep don't know where they are going when they are being taken to the butcher's place. They don't know where they are being taken, they don't know where they are being led until the moment they are killed. They don't know anything about where the person is taking them. They have no idea until the time when the butcher is standing with knives in front of the eyes of the animal. Until the time of the killing they didn't know anything. Just thinking of that, how they are without choice under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts and how, because of that they have taken that body, just that is, I think, so pitiful, something that has to generate your compassion, that has to make your compassion arise without choice. When you are giving even such tiny charity, like giving such an incredibly tiny drop of blood to a mosquito or flea, that is practicing the charity of giving one's body. By remembering their kindness in the past and how one has eaten their flesh and drunk their blood one remembers how incredibly precious they are.

When we are practicing training our mind in the thought of giving, and giving up miserliness and attachment, we should not even have any clinging to the merit gathered by having given that charity. Instead we should dedicate it completely for that sentient being to be able to find a perfect human body and for oneself to reveal the path to him and guide him to enlightenment. Like this dedicate for all sentient beings. If the practice is done like this, with even the tiny, small actions gradually the

mind gets more and more strengthened, more and more courageous. Finally we become like the bodhisattvas, or how it is explained in Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's biography, in so many lifetimes he made charity of his holy body to sentient beings. One becomes able to make charity of one's whole body after some time, without any difficulty, without any hesitation, and in spite of all the pain with an incredible thought of loving kindness and great compassion. Then, after some time, one is able to give charity to others even without pain. I don't know. When you see the mosquitoes' stomach, when they fly around, completely empty their stomachs, transparent; then after you gave the blood it is kind of full, kind of heavy, while before that it was completely transparent, like the plastic you put the bread in. Incredible, they have no other food, there is no other. Completely empty, kind of screaming with so much hunger. I find it so effective for the mind and at the same time I remember their kindness. Somehow, there is a kind of tranquility and happiness after they have drunk enough and left. After they have flown away, having drunk enough, there is a feeling of purification and tranquility. While there is pain, while they are drinking your blood, at the same time remember their kindness. It is very effective to think of their kindness at that time. Also, even though there is pain at the beginning, the pain disappears when you think so much of their kindness. I heard that you get malaria from them, but I don't remember any bad ones, some that caused disease. They didn't leave any fear of getting a disease.

I didn't finish the eleven works for sentient beings, but tomorrow.

3rd December am

(Rinpoche reads *The Heart Sutra*; when he reaches, "There are no spheres of the 'I' ...," he starts explaining.)

Concerning the base of the label, the five aggregates, the object of the senses, if you cannot differentiate, if what exists and what doesn't exist looks like oneness to your mind, if you can't recognize it, the best way, the safe way to not get the wrong idea about emptiness, what can help us, is to think that the "I" does exist from own side. This is beneficial for recognizing the thing that is really empty, which one has to realize is empty, which doesn't exist there on the aggregates, which doesn't exist on that base from its own side, which does not exist inherently on that labeling base, which is in fact is empty. The best way is to think that such an "I" does exist from its own side, or that there is an "I" from the side of the aggregates. Think that there is a cushion from the side of the base of the label, the base to be labeled. From the side of the base there is a cushion.

In fact it is completely empty, but by believing in it and by clinging to the "I" and the sense objects, to the things that look as if they exist from the side of the base inherently, the mind becomes confused. Confusion arises and the three poisonous minds and various unhealthy minds and disturbing thoughts arise, which make the mind of the person unsubdued and unpeaceful. By not realizing or recognizing that things are in fact empty, we always have confused lives, one after another, continuously. Like this, whatever we would like to change and whatever we try to do, we never increase our peace of mind, because nothing is done about the root of the disturbing thoughts and the root of confusion.

So this is the best and safest way if it doesn't make any sense to you that true existence is emptiness or voidness, or if you cannot differentiate what that thing is that you are supposed to see as empty actually is. You have to realize what it is that is empty. Here in the teachings it is written "empty,"

but the best thing to think in your mind is “merely labeled.” You see all phenomena as empty, without characteristics.

It doesn't mean that a person doesn't have a bad character, or a good character that arise, such as loving thoughts and compassion, or that some people don't have a very evil character. It is not saying that things don't have characteristics, like being of a soft or a rough nature, of the nature of flames and heat or of ice and coldness. It is not saying that the nature of the Dharma doesn't have certain characteristics, the Dharma's power, if it is practiced, to subdue the unsubdued mind. There are characteristics, things do have characteristics, but there is something that doesn't exist on top of that. On top of that there is something that appears to us but is not there on that, over that characteristic, on the “I.” There is a merely labeled “I,” but on the merely labeled “I” there is something that doesn't exist, something that appears to us, which is empty, which is not there over that merely labeled “I” at all—completely empty.

When you hear that each aggregate is empty—feeling, recognition, “no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind,” if it doesn't make sense (it doesn't mean that you should visualize yourself as blind or with a dead body not having mind), then think “merely labeled.” This is the best way, which also gradually, the more you think about it, helps you to recognize what it is that is empty. It helps you to realize more and more the eye that doesn't exist, the ear that doesn't exist, the nose that doesn't exist, the tongue that doesn't exist, the body and mind that are empty, that do not exist. You recognize more and more the things that are empty, that do not exist.

On the merely labeled eye the truly existent eye doesn't exist. On the merely labeled ear the truly existent ear doesn't exist. On the merely labeled nose the truly existent nose doesn't exist. On the merely labeled tongue the truly existent tongue doesn't exist. On the merely labeled body the truly existent body doesn't exist. On the merely labeled mind the truly existent mind doesn't exist.

There is a mind that appears not to be merely labeled that appears on the merely labeled mind. That which appears from above the merely labeled eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, is empty of existing there.

The truly existent eye is empty on the merely labeled eye. The truly existent ear is empty on the merely labeled ear. A nose existing from its own side is empty on the merely labeled nose. Similarly with body and mind. That is that which is empty of those things—namely, the absolute nature of eye, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the same with all that exists.

There is a great meaning in saying that the refuting object is above the eye, is above the ear, the nose, the tongue, above the “I” and above the aggregates; saying “above” has great meaning. Saying that the absolute nature is above the “I,” above the aggregates, has great meaning. It is related very much, it is expressing an experience. The meaning of the word “above” is that it is actually talking about the experience itself, but saying the word “above.” This can only be understood and recognized, and the meaning of that can be identified only when your guru's blessings enter your mind. Or you start to recognize it after practicing much purification and accumulating much merit. And also by training the mind in shunyata meditation.

When you start to realize and recognize the refuting object, or start looking at the “I” that is empty, the aggregates that are empty with the experience of the guru's advice, at that time it makes great sense. Saying the words, “the absolute nature on top of the ‘I’, the absolute nature that is above the

'I', above the aggregates, the refuting object on the 'I' and the aggregates," saying this makes great sense.

So there is no "I." "I" is merely labeled in your mind. When reasoning that there is no "I," if you don't know how to meditate in this way, in your mind it is very useful to think, "There is no eye, eye is merely labeled. There is no ear, ear is merely labeled. No nose, nose is merely labeled and so on like this. It is similar with the 'I' and the aggregates, they are merely labeled." Gradually meditating on dependent arising saves you from falling into nihilism. There is a danger that you might accept wrong ideas due to doctrines saying that things do not exist, but if you check your own experience it is contradictory. If you check what you intellectually believe because of being influenced by the thoughts of others, due to wrong doctrines or philosophy, you will find that actually your experience of reality is the complete opposite. So falling into nihilism is not easy. I don't think it is such an easy thing to happen, even though in the teachings so many lamas emphasize it.

When you meditate on dependent arising and merely labeled phenomena, it benefits you to gradually recognize the refuting object. First we cannot differentiate between the "I" that exists and the "I" that does not. It is complete oneness; everything is complete oneness for our senses, for our mind. But gradually, by meditating on dependent arising, that things are merely labeled and by thinking about the way that they actually exist, by thinking about this over and over, all the time practicing awareness, it becomes like the person who is always telling lies. At first you believe what he says is very true, but then gradually, as you see that he only keeps telling lies as you deal with him and live with him, one day you recognize completely that he is a liar, that what he says, the whole thing, is lies, he has been telling lies. It is the same thing with somebody who always steals things from your house. He has always been a very good friend, smiling, very good, nice talking, maybe he gives you things sometimes, however, he is always stealing things from you. Then, as you check on him, one day you realize that he is the one who stole all your things. The person who is actually doing wrong things is somebody you believed to be doing right things. Then one day you realize that he was completely wrong.

Now at the beginning we cannot differentiate; it is completely oneness, but with the help of this meditation on dependent arising, using this logical reasoning on these things, on the "I" and the aggregates, gradually, gradually you are able to discriminate, to see the difference. Gradually you discover something different on top of the "I," a different "I" appears to you that you did not feel, that you did not recognize before, and you discover the same with all outside objects.

When you think of the "I" as merely labeled on the aggregates by thought, the truly existent "I," which appears to exist purely from its own side, that real "I" becomes thinner and thinner. While you are aware of dependent arising, the truly existent "I" or the real "I," which is something that you feel in the chest, becomes thinner and thinner. Then, when you forget this awareness of dependent arising, the "I" comes back as usual. The "I," the merely labeled "I" becomes very strong as usual, as if truly existent.

When this happens, it is a good start, a good sign. This is a good way of starting to recognize the hallucinated "I." When you have this experience it is a kind of start. When there is a small experience like this, some change is happening. Gradually one starts to recognize that "I" that is hallucinated, the "I" that is the refuting object, that is false, that is empty. Gradually the meditation on dependant arising leads one to see that this truly existent "I" is completely empty. By recognizing that that is where the fault lies, that this is what is actually non-existent, it becomes completely

empty or it disintegrates. It does not disintegrate into atoms or into pieces, it gets completely lost. What we cling to, what we have been taking the best care of as the most precious being among all sentient beings from beginningless births, that “I” is completely lost, without choice. Without choice it gets completely lost.

It is like this: one day you recognize that the person you trusted completely as your best friend is actually someone who has been the so-called enemy. You realize that he is the one who has been stealing and destroying everything, who has been harming you and destroying your happiness. Then, after you recognize this you throw a bomb at him, so that he completely disintegrates.

Anyway, with this meditation on dependent arising we see the truly existent “I” that we believed to be real, and that we have clung to as real from beginningless births; we see that “I” as not real. So far we have clung to it as real, completely real, one hundred percent with not the slightest doubt. For that reason we have taken the best care of it, cherished the most among all the numberless sentient beings. But one day you see that it is in fact false, that it does not exist. You realize that it is in fact completely empty. Just there it gets completely lost, not going somewhere else, to America or hiding in a cave somewhere, going from your room into hiding in a cave, not like that. Just there, wherever it appears to be, wherever you believe the “I” to be, wherever you believe there is an “I,” just there it becomes empty, it gets completely lost, like the snake on the rope. The snake that you see on the rope doesn’t go anywhere. You know—it is not something that goes outside when you come with a torch, it is nothing like that, it becomes empty just there. Similarly just there, wherever one believes the “I” to be, just there it doesn’t exist, it is empty. You see that it is empty just there.

After realizing that the truly existent “I” is empty you actually see clearly, you recognize and realize how the “I” exists on these aggregates. Then you actually realize that it is merely labeled on these aggregates or that it is under the control of name.

So the meditation training the mind in dependent arising is beneficial for seeing the “I” that is false, for recognizing the false “I.” Then it gets completely lost and one realizes that it is completely empty. The realization seeing that it is emptiness finally leads to the point where you see how the “I” exists. Then you have got the real meaning in your mind, the way it is in reality. You have got the complete meaning in the mind; the “I” is merely labeled on the aggregates under the control of name. That which you have been reciting in the past, on which you have been debating, that which you have been talking about so much—now you have got it. Only now, after you understood and realized this exactly.

There are seven different types of logic explained in the Madhyamaka for realizing that the object of ignorance, the true existence is empty, that it doesn’t exist. The four points of analyzing, *ne.shi.yer.pa*. However, it is said in the teachings that the logic of dependent arising is the king of logic, the king among the hundreds of infinite logical reasonings for realizing the non-existence of the object of ignorance, true existence. The reasoning of dependent arising is the king, the principal reasoning used to prove that the object of true existence is empty.

We are meditating on this “I” that we believe to be inside the chest somewhere; then right on top of the aggregates, the sense objects, right on top of the appearance of these things we use the words “dependent arising;” we are reflecting on the meaning of dependent arising right on top of that appearance. This is powerful for making the object of ignorance of true existence non-existent. It

completely eliminates the ignorance of true existence, the root of samsara. It is like an atomic bomb. It is like dropping an atomic bomb—that is how powerful it is.

I am not saying how powerful the object of ignorance is. What I am saying is that putting the meaning of dependent arising right on top of this appearance, this “I,” is as powerful as an atomic bomb in its ability to destroy and hurt the root of samsara. How it is harmful and quick to eradicate completely the root of samsara is like the most powerful among all powerful weapons, like the atomic bomb.

(Rinpoche reads, “There are no spheres of the eye up to no spheres of the mind, there is no attainment, no non- attainment”)

Same thing again with this, think “merely labeled.” If the meaning doesn’t make sense for you, think “merely labeled.”

(“Therefore Shariputra” Rinpoche finishes *The Heart Sutra*.)

There are about eleven examples mentioned in the commentary on the graduated path to enlightenment about the righteous action, the righteous law of doing sentient beings’ work. One is doing the work for sentient beings who are living in poverty.

There are two kinds of poverty: material poverty and Dharma poverty, which means being ignorant about the four noble truths, about karma, and not having any understanding of Dharma. That is poverty of Dharma. For those who are living ascetic lives, for monks and nuns who are living in the pratimoksha ordination, the practice should be to keep few possessions. The practice should be to have small desires and to be content. So in regards charity, for them material charity is not the main thing; the main thing is the charity of Dharma.

For those who are not living in ordination and are working for material things it is important to make material charity, and also to help sentient beings who have the wish to find a place to live, who don’t have such a place and who have difficulties in finding a place or a house.

One should also work for sentient beings who are experiencing disharmony and, if one is able, help those beings to become harmonious.

Next, work for sentient beings to be able to enter the right path, the perfect path of the world. This could have two meanings—however, forget about “the path of the world.” Sentient beings enter the perfect path by having someone explain to them what the virtuous karmas are and what the non-virtuous karmas are—explaining which way things become virtue and which way they become non-virtue. Then they are guided into the right path of giving up non-virtue and practicing virtue, giving up the cause of suffering and practicing the cause of happiness. Like this one guides them the right way, into the right path. Secondly, one guides them by letting them enter the perfect path by revealing the infallible right view, the unmistakable voidness, the remedy cutting through the root of samsara to them. Like this one guides sentient beings into the perfect path.

One also works for them to enter the perfect path of tantra without mistakes. But one should not guide sentient beings further on this path without their having done the preliminaries, such as the graduated path of generation, the first step of tantra, the first graduated path of tantra. Without

having practiced this, without the realization of this, the highest path, the path of accomplishment, can't be achieved. Even if one reveals the highest path at the very beginning, no matter how much the disciple practices, without preparation and realizations in the preliminary practices, he doesn't reach the highest graduated path. No matter how much effort he puts into it or how many eons he dedicates his life to this, doing retreats, he won't reach the highest graduated path. Instead of reaching enlightenment swiftly the mind becomes crazy or one gets wind disease, becomes unhealthy, because of wrong practice and unskillful meditation.

The next one is working for sentient beings who have entered the wrong path. The first one is guiding the sentient beings who have not entered the wrong path into the perfect path. This one is guiding those who have entered the wrong path into the perfect path. I think the difference is that. Then comes working for sentient beings using psychic powers. For a while, until we reach the bhūmis, the arya path, until we achieve the arhat or bodhisattva path, we can't do works for others with extensive psychic powers. But most of the other work for sentient beings we are able to do and the more we study Dharma and get the experience of the path, the more benefit we are able to offer beings, like benefiting others with the four practices of gathering.

The first of the four practices of gathering is to give material things to those who are not receptacles for the teachings. At first one gives food and clothes, material things, making these sentient beings happy, helping and benefiting them in their needs. Also one talks to them in a sweet, suitable way. I mean, sweet like candy, so that the other person likes it, pleasing the other person. With many of my gurus, like Geshe Rabten Rinpoche, that is how they make conversation with people. I mean, there is nothing to be done in this life for that person except talking, according to his life, saying something that the other person likes. Spending time talking just to please, so that he is happy.

The next is that as one explains the Dharma, like that oneself also practices. As one explains and teaches the Dharma to others like that oneself also lives in the practice. Otherwise, there is no good example—the other person has no example, no inspiration. Also, while you are explaining and giving teachings to others, you let them practice the teachings and put them into action. Otherwise, there is no result in their mind, in short, there is no peace of mind.

I think I stop here.

3rd December pm

Now the next paramita is patience, the mind abiding in virtue without being overwhelmed by suffering and harm. This paramita has three branches: having patience towards sentient beings who are giving harm; the patience of taking the suffering that one is experiencing voluntarily; and finally, the patience of definitely reflecting on the Dharma.

It is explained like this in the thought training and also in the teaching of the *Guru Puja*, “When inanimate things, the place and sentient beings all turn out to be disturbing for me, I should practice patience. When the whole thing is completely filled with the result of negative karma, even if there is a rainfall of unbearable sufferings, by seeing in them the cause for finishing off the result of negative karma, please grant me blessings to transform the bad conditions into the path.” One is making this request to the merit field, the triple gem, for the mind to be capable even though unbelievable problems arise.

Wherever you go, the whole place, all the four elements disturb you. All the creatures and human beings, everybody becomes your enemy. No-one likes you, no-one. There is nobody who likes you, everybody criticizes. Everybody treats you badly, beating you, whatever they can do day and night without a break. Not only that, but your whole body is full of leprosy disease, and you are homeless, with no money and no food, only suffering. There is no-one who smiles at you, who gives affection (Rinpoche laughs.) Not “infection,” affection, I am getting mixed up. Nobody gives affection, the whole world criticizes you. If you go out even the creatures attack you. If you go to hospital for treatment nobody wants to accept you. If you have dreams they are bad dreams. (Rinpoche laughs.) Besides, in the day-time everything, everything turns out negatively, harming you. Even in your dreams the people and the animals that you see attack you. Showers and showers, billions of billions of rainfalls of problems.

One is asking the guru and the triple gem to be able to transform these miserable conditions into the path, even though it may sound unbelievable and it may not happen in this life. One may not experience such things, but when there are showers of problems so that one cannot count each drop, you are asking for blessings for your mind for that amount of problems to be able to transform these miserable conditions into the path to enlightenment. When you receive so many harms, besides being homeless and starving and full of leprosy disease, maybe you also have headache, toothache, and all those things, and you receive showers of harms from the place and the sentient beings—even though you experience showers of undesirable problems like this, you ask for blessings for your mind to be able to transform these miserable conditions into the path to enlightenment. To transform whatever you meet with, even when it is so many uncountable numbers of problems.

Something that you can't stand, something that you can't figure out for yourself. Something that you can't believe, “How is it possible that this is happening to me? Other people do not experience such things.” You ask for blessings to make it highly meaningful, to make whatever you experience highly meaningful and highly beneficial, in order to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all sentient beings. In this way whatever problems one experiences become highly beneficial, one makes them highly beneficial for all sentient beings. The way is to transform these miserable conditions into the path to omniscient mind.

One way, one method to transform all these miserable conditions and problems into the path to enlightenment, is to look at it like this, thinking, “My experiencing all these problems—how fantastic! How fortunate I am! How fantastic it is! My experiencing all these problems is finishing off all the suffering results of negative karmas accumulated in this life and in past lives from beginningless rebirths.”

It is also very, very effective for the mind to remember details about karma at this time. There are four outlines on karma: karma is expandable, karma will definitely bring its result if it is not destroyed, one cannot experience the result of karmas that one has not created, and the karma that one has created never gets lost.

If the seed that was planted in the ground is left without water it becomes completely dry or if it is burnt by fire it gets completely destroyed, but as long as the seed doesn't meet these hindrances, or as long as it is not rotten, then it is definitely going to bring its own result, it never gets lost.

Particularly when you practice this thought training, looking at things like this, experiencing problems becomes a cause for finishing the results of negative karma. When we remember that karma is expandable there is more feeling and more happiness. The result is that more happiness comes in the mind. Even with external things, like when planting one rice seed, so many come as a result. Fruits come from such a small seed. One small seed grows into an incredibly huge tree with many branches and later so many fruits come. But the inner karma is so much more expandable.

I'll give just one example of how one experiences such an incredible result of suffering from one small negative karma and how from one small virtuous action one experiences unbelievably good results. In the past in India one person got angry. I don't remember exactly what it was that made him angry, but there was one bhikshu crossing a stream and then another person in anger gave him a nickname. He criticized him, saying, "You jumped, you are like a monkey." He criticized the monk with a bad attitude. So due to that small negative karma of criticizing the monk, that person had to be reborn as a monkey in five hundred lifetimes.

One example of a virtuous action: when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was going for alms in a valley, on the road there were three children playing on the sandy ground. As Guru Shakyamuni Buddha came along these three children wanted to make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was so tall that their arms couldn't reach up to make offerings into Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's begging bowl. So this is how these three children managed: one child stood on the shoulders of another child and then another child stood on his shoulders, like in the circus. They didn't have anything to offer, so they offered handfuls of sand grains while visualizing that they were offering gold into Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's begging bowl. Due to that one small virtuous action of offering sand visualized as gold, one child in his next life was born as the Dharma king of India, the king Ashoka. In one day he was able to build in so many different places (I don't remember one hundred percent), ten hundred thousand or one million stupas. He was also able to build many monasteries and he was able to make many offerings to the Sangha. Due to that small virtuous action he was able to accumulate so much more merit in his next life. This is just discussing temporary results.

So you see, in many lifetimes one has to experience the result of even one small negative karma, like in anger giving somebody a nickname or blindly criticizing others for this or that. If it is a powerful karma one starts experiencing its result even in this life after one month, one year, after some years, or even the next day or hour. It depends how powerful the action is.

Even in this life just with words we give so much harm, we hurt sentient beings so much. And it is not only this but negative karmas have been accumulating in past lives as well, from beginningless rebirths. Some of the results of the negative karma are finished, some are half finished; we have still not finished experiencing them, while there are many results of negative karma that we have not yet at all experienced. There are uncountable numbers of those.

Remember that karma is expandable, relating it to examples like the karmic stories of sentient beings, explained by Buddha Shakyamuni to sentient beings, in the sutra teachings. What Guru Shakyamuni said has been recorded in many of these karmic stories of the sutra teachings. Most of the stories, particularly the unimaginable ones, the peculiar and amazing ones about sufferings that you cannot imagine, were recorded on purpose. It is similar with those with such incredibly good results, so that you can't imagine how it was possible that so much good could come from such a small action.

They talk about things that people usually cannot imagine, cannot figure out. It is purposely recorded there, not just saying that from good karma comes good results and happiness, while from negative karma comes sufferings; besides this they give more detailed descriptions.

We don't have clairvoyance to remember all past lives and see all coming future lives nor can we understand the karma of others, like why each sentient being has different experiences. Those who are incredibly wealthy have one type of experience; they experience so much enjoyment of happiness and perfections. There are other sentient beings who have unbelievable problems that you cannot imagine.

At the airports, at the train stations, or in the city bookshops, especially in the West they sell many books that give one person's life story from beginning to end, thousands and thousands of pages all about suffering. Even between one couple, for example, it is unbelievable how many problems and how much suffering there is. Just listening to all the stories of the boyfriend's or the husband's life, the whole biography, as well as the whole life story of the wife or girlfriend, is incredible.

After they met, while they are staying together, there is so much unbelievable pain and fighting, they do so many undesirable things to each other, experiencing so much pain of the heart. Then, after a while that man leaves, he drops out. The first man drops out, gives up, and runs away with somebody else. Then she meets somebody else and again similar problems start, completely opposite to what she expected in the beginning. Again, there is no more interest, so again she tries to find another one. Maybe she is physically living with one man but at the same time she is trying to find another one. She is somewhere hidden, not telling him at the house. Then one day, somehow, he finds out, somebody tells him or he meets the person that she has kept secretly at the house when he was not there, while he was away. Sooner or later he finds out. Then there is a big hassle, the whole sky falls down, sort of. Then they fight, pulling at each other's hair, or if they are brave they beat each other up. Then she runs away or he runs away.

Like this it goes on and on over and over again. "How badly this man treated me. He left me with all the children. While there was one child in my womb there were three or four children outside. Then no money and difficult to find jobs. I had to move the family because the house was too expensive."

She thinks many times of committing suicide; at many different times she has been on the point of committing suicide. While having tried to seek much happiness, nothing happened. She did so much, tried everything, but nothing happened, so the solution is suicide. Living is suffering, so better to commit suicide. That is the final answer, the solution. Many times she was about to commit suicide by jumping off bridges or by putting heaters in the bathtub. Heaters? Maybe not kerosene heaters. Or she tried to commit suicide with injections or some other peaceful method or with knives, guns, ropes, or whatever.

When you listen to the whole biography of the boyfriend or husband it is something that makes tears come out, it is so painful. It makes one have uncomfortable thoughts and makes tears come out. There have been so many unbelievable problems, one after another. When you listen to the wife's or girlfriend's life story, all the problems, the whole thing, again it is the same thing. It is so very sad, it makes tears come out.

They are so pitiful, but when I listen, for me it is very helpful. For my mind their life story is so very helpful, so beneficial. It is like listening to teachings on the graduated path to enlightenment about the true cause of sufferings. Their confused minds are the true cause of suffering, while their problems, all the worry and fear and all the physical problems, are the true suffering.

There are so many unbelievable books with life stories about what people did, about the bad things the person did. It is unbelievable, one can't imagine it. How is it possible to think the way she thinks, with this attitude of giving harm to others.

All those life stories are teachings on karma, similar to the stories on karma explained by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in the sutra teachings, the particular ones that normal people cannot imagine, the not-very-common ones. Or a part of a person's life story is told. He has so and so many sons, such and such a profession, so much wealth, and this and that; this is talking about that person's comfort and enjoyment, talking about his happiness, the temporary results of virtue. These stories are very good examples of the three types of suffering, and we also have teachings on karma with the understanding of lamrim. If you read those books with Dharma understanding, particularly with understanding of karma and with the thought to practice Dharma, they become incredible teachings that can quickly generate the thought of renouncing samsara, and also of bodhicitta and compassion.

The conclusion is that even one negative karma has incredible results through so many lifetimes, but this thought-training makes all those problems finish. Even though one has so many results that would have had to expand in so many lifetimes, it makes them finish in this life. This is the cause to make the result of the negative karma finish in this life, without a need for it to expand in other lifetimes. Not even one negative karma. Every past negative karma's result is completely finished in this life by practicing thought training like this. The fact is that as one is experiencing the problems they are finishing. They are the results of negative karmas and the results are finishing. The more one experiences in this life the less there is to experience in coming lives. It brings peace to one's mind, transforming miserable conditions into the path to enlightenment.

So why not bring even incredible problems into the path? One should do this. Even incredible problems that I just mentioned at the beginning can be transformed into the path to enlightenment and happiness. So why not? Just one problem of a relationship, just one problem of a stomachache, just one problem of not having money, or just a problem of having cancer—that is nothing. So of course, such few, small problems we should be able to transform into happiness.

I stop here.

4th December am

(Rinpoche reads the *Heart Sutra*. In the middle he starts explaining.)

Think that whatever we hear and whatever we see today is empty. Think that the objects of the six senses, all enjoyments, all suffering and happiness, today are empty. During what we call today, from this morning until tonight, whatever object appears to our six senses as ugly, beautiful, or indifferent or as friend, enemy, or stranger, think that it is empty. Think that all the surrounding people, and the family that you have either here or in the West, are all empty, merely labeled on the whole thing.

This applies to yourself and all objects, so all the aggregates and all the objects of the senses. Think that this month, this year, from birth until death it is also like this. Everything, including myself, the surroundings, my family, and all my possessions, including all the ugly or beautiful things that I have seen in this life, the whole experience from birth until death is merely labeled. It is empty of being the way it appears to me, as real or as existing from its own side. It is merely labeled, all is merely labeled.

From beginningless rebirth up to enlightenment, the whole thing is merely labeled. All the six realms of suffering that we have been experiencing in the past since beginningless rebirths, the path that we are generating in our minds, the circle of samsara in which we are caught and from which we are trying to get free, including enlightenment, the cessation of all obscurations—the whole thing is merely labeled. Think that all things are empty of being the way they appear to my mind when I think about enlightenment, when I think about the path, and when I think about nirvana, the cessation of suffering.

When we think about nirvana, enlightenment, or the cessation of suffering, when we hear and think about the path, again it becomes something that exists purely from its own side. It becomes something that exists only from its own side, without depending on oneself, the meditator putting effort into actualizing the path that is the remedy, finishing the disturbing thoughts. There is a nirvana from its own side without depending on the path or the process. There is cessation of suffering from its own side—a path, and the realization of bodhicitta from its own side, that doesn't depend on the process of cleaning away the self-cherishing thought. A real bodhicitta appearing from its own side.

For example, what is unknowing? What is ignorant? The mind is ignorant about what? It is ignorant about such things as karma, the path to enlightenment, and the three times' existence. But we believe that there is an ignorance from its own side that is not dependent on those objects of ignorance, on the objects that are unknown to oneself, that one can't see or that one doesn't realize.

There is no ignorance existing separately from the mind that is ignorant about an object, no ignorance existing separately from the mind that is unaware of an object. There is nothing, there is no other ignorance existing except what is labeled on the mind that is unaware, that doesn't realize, doesn't see an object. This is how it is empty. When you hear the words: ignorance, disturbing thoughts, anger, attachment, and pride; and when you think about them as I mention these things, the way each appears to your mind is as something real from its own side, something that doesn't depend on an object, that doesn't depend on the mind, the creator, something that does not depend on the originator, the ignorance. There is anger from its own side, independent anger, and the same with attachment and so on. When I talk about these things and when I mention their names, you don't hear them as merely labeled, they don't appear that way to you. When you hear: samsara, nirvana, and enlightenment, you don't perceive that they exist under the control of name, being merely labeled—you don't hear them as they exist.

While you hear: independent, not labeled, something that exists without being labeled, it is in fact completely opposite, completely against the way it exists. The way things come into existence, the way the whole thing exists is by being merely labeled. All exists by thought, merely labeling on the base.

It is similar with the names we have. After I had taken the thirty-six vows, the abbot labeled “Thubten Zopa” on these aggregates. Similarly, when you Westerners call me “Lama Zopa,” it exists by labeling on these aggregates. Relating to your own individual names, they also exist like that. Everything exists in a manner similar to the way your names exist, similar to how “Roger,” “Paul,” or “Vicky” exist.

But does whatever you label come into existence? If it did, you could pile up, make a huge pile of kaka thinking that you are labeling it “gold.” You could collect all this kaka, pile it up into a mountain and then call it “gold.” “I have that much gold.” It is not like that. It is not just by labeling, being up to you, coming into existence according to whatever you might like, according to whatever label you might give it.

Three things need to be gathered. The base on which you label needs to be perfect. “Perfect” is not quite the translation. “Right.” There should be a right base upon which the label can be given. Secondly, it should not receive harm from or be faulted by the wisdom analyzing absolute truth. If it receives harm from the wisdom of absolute truth, it becomes non-existent. Thirdly, it should not receive harm from the true, valid minds of worldly people, from their true or valid understanding. It shouldn’t be refuted, shouldn’t receive harm or contradiction from the valid understanding of worldly people. The words “conventional truth” are just a part of this translation, “conventional” is a part of that definition.

When you take LSD or this plant, *datura*, you see the whole ground, all the dust full of moving worms. All the dust and earth are worms and creatures moving. All over the place you see creatures moving, it is a ground of creatures. But other people whose minds have not become defective through either disease or outside effects cannot see this. Those who are not hallucinating due to either disease or chemical drugs, those with unhallucinating, undefective minds or senses cannot see that the ground is full of worms—only those who have taken the drug and whose senses have become defective through external elements can see it. Other people’s true, valid understanding, or the valid knower of phenomena, don’t see it as a ground of worms. What the person who has taken *datura* sees receives harm or contradiction. The ground of worms seen by a person whose senses have become defective because of drugs can be refuted by the valid understanding or undefective knowing of the phenomena of other people. Also, after the effect of the drug has gone away, the person himself doesn’t see the ground of worms any more. Even though he believed in it while he was having that vision, after the effect has worn off he doesn’t see the ground of worms any more. So he himself refutes it; besides other people’s valid understanding, he realizes that ground of worms was false. After the effect of the *datura* wears off, the hallucinated view disappears, the view that came because the mind was disturbed by the effects and the power of the drug. His mind, now free of defects and not hallucinated by either disease or outside elements, that valid knower of phenomena realizes that his previous vision of a ground of worms is in fact completely illusory. It doesn’t exist.

When what you label, or the name that you impute on that object, has gathered these three necessary qualities, it exists.

Sometimes people say, “Oh, that is merely labeled and this is also merely labeled.” One is using the words that one has seen in Dharma books and heard in the teachings. Instead of using these words as a means to renouncing giving harm to others and offering them benefit, renouncing negative

karma and practicing virtuous karma, instead of that one says because of things existing as merely labeled, “When can I do?”

Happiness and suffering exist, so don't give harm to others; offer benefit to others. Renounce non-virtuous actions and practice virtuous actions. One should use these words in this way in order to get a more definite understanding of karma, a greater definite understanding of the existence of the four noble truths: that the cause, virtue, brings the result, happiness. But instead of using the words in this way, generating this great, strong, definite understanding of the existence of things we say, “Oh, negative karma is merely labeled.”

When this thought process happens it should affect or benefit the mind: where as when we are using the words we are thinking that since things are merely labeled, since negative karma and also positive karma are merely labeled, since the lower realms, the naraks, and nirvana, the cessation of suffering are merely labeled, the whole thing is a superstition. Thinking that anything exists is a superstition. We are talking like this and consequently being careless about practicing the cause of happiness and renouncing the cause of suffering for ourselves as well as being careless about the experience of others, about what others are experiencing.

If one could think “merely labeled” at the time when a problem is experienced by oneself, it would be useful. If the mind, by thinking, “It is just my superstition,” can't be shaken when people are causing us problems, and one is able to keep the mind in tranquility because of increasing peace, then it becomes useful to think like this. When people treat us badly and the mind starts to see things in ugliness, if at that time we do not let our minds get confused, depressed, or aggressive, and can keep the mind in peace, the “merely labeled” that one always thinks and recites has become useful. Saying “merely labeled” and “it is just superstition” has become useful.

It is a superstition because of your labeling. You call one way that a person acts towards you “good,” the way he behaves, the way he speaks, for instance. You call it “kind” because of the way he shows his face to you. One way of showing his face you call “good.” If he is moving the flesh a little bit, opening his mouth so that you see a little bit of wrinkles while the eyes are becoming a little narrower, this way of moving the face you call “good.” “He loves me” or “She loves me.” You call it good, you recognize it as good. “That is good.” Then there is the other way. From the white a little bit dark or a little bit red, probably on top of the nose, or on the ears, depending on the person. When the face becomes a little bit stiff, a little bit tough. There are none of those wrinkles, the opening of the mouth or the small, narrow eyes. The eyes are opening up, becoming a little bit bigger and very strong, while the body is looking kind of heavy. Because of a different expression on the face you call it “bad.” “I don't like it, the other one I like.” It is a different expression of the face, just depending on movements.

This mind is definitely a superstitious mind. There is no truly existent smiling face, there is no truly existent ugly, angry face, there is no permanent, truly existent face liking you, no permanent ugly face disliking you—even though it appears like this to our mind and even though we cling to it. The subject, a person, experiences happiness and suffering, no matter how much intellectually, or due to wrong doctrine he might believe that these things don't exist. When a person is attacked, the existence of that is his experience. When he has relationship problems or when people criticize him his mind is unhappy. Although he may intellectually believe that things don't exist because he accepts that kind of philosophy, he cannot, however, stop the experience of these things. There is no choice. Since he has created the cause he has to experience the results.

By applying thought-training the mind is content. When trying to have only small desires the problems are stopped and one experiences peace in the mind. The unsubdued, unpeaceful mind and unpeaceful feeling, the unsinking feeling is called “suffering.” The sinking feeling, the feeling that is in the nature of absorbing or sinking, the relaxed, unworried and peaceful mind is called “happy.” That person’s life is a happy life. Like this, the suffering and happiness that are merely labeled exist in our experience without choice. Similar to having taken medicine against headache, as the pain decreased and went away, so one became happy and comfortable. Like this the merely labeled suffering or comfort exist in our experience.

I think I have finished. From now on I’ll try to make the discipline of not talking in the middle of the prayer. However, if you check this essential subject it can gradually become more and more clear. We have maybe two or three minutes. Are there any questions?

ELEN: According to what you say emptiness is merely labeled.

RINPOCHE: Then?

ELEN: Is it true?

RINPOCHE: Why don’t you check? I think it is a very good opportunity to check.

JIMI: I have an understanding of the relative truth of the “I”; I have no understanding of the absolute truth.

RINPOCHE: You have realized the relative truth of the “I”?

JIMI: I have some understanding of the relative truth, it’s not completely clear, but I have almost no understanding of absolute truth.

RINPOCHE: Is the reason that you say you have some understanding of relative truth the fact that when you feel hungry or when your stomach is empty, you know that you need food? You mean like that?

JIMI: Yeah!

RINPOCHE: It is right that there is an “I,” that is true, but you cannot call just having that understanding having realized the relative or conventional truth. It is not that realization. Having just that understanding, you would not call having realized the “I” conventional truth. In order to have the realization that the “I” is conventional truth one has to realize, one should see that the “I” is under the control of name. When the explanation is given of the way it exists, how it is conventional truth, you do get some idea, but it is not clear. You think “Oh, that’s right, now I understand, that is the way it exists.” While you are studying and saying this you get something reliable, some truth, but still, while we are studying this and talking about it, if we check our instinctive or natural conception we see that it is something else.

The time you actually realize that the “I” is conventional truth, that the “I” is under the control of name, is when you see so clearly that from this base, from these aggregates “I” does not exist, but “I” exists on the aggregates. “I” does not exist from the aggregates, but “I” exists on them. Before you said “I” in one way, but now that you have realized it, now that you see clearly, you have the definite, unshakeable understanding that the “I” is under the control of name. Now you see the “I” over the aggregates. When, after seeking the truly existent “I” on these aggregates, you start to lose the “I,” you realize that it is completely empty.

When that which looked as if it existed is lost to our mind, when we recognize that it is empty, and it gets completely lost, when we have that experience we actually realize what we have been debating and talking about all this time—the truly existent and merely labeled this and that. We have actually been using the same words, but the way we have been thinking is in fact completely opposite to this

present experience. There is a difference. Only at the time when we actually start to experience it can we recognize it. Even though the words were correct before, our conception was something else. We don't really touch the meaning when we use the words.

RINPOCHE: Concerning realizing absolute truth: when you stand up you question yourself, "What am I doing?" Then you answer, "I want to go and eat food." Okay? Then you ask yourself, "Why do I tell myself this, saying 'I want to go and eat food?'" What is the reason? You check! Heh?

JIMI: Because I am hungry.

RINPOCHE: Yes, that's right, that's right. But why do I say I am hungry? What is the reason?

JIMI: Because I am.

RINPOCHE: But after you have eaten, after you've had enough, plenty, at that time is there a "you" who is hungry? Is there an "I" who is hungry? Heh?

JIMI: No, I'm full.

RINPOCHE: Without talking much, while you are saying "I am hungry," at the same time you watch, you look at the "I," you look at yourself. You call it "I am hungry," and "I am going to eat food," but at the same time as you are saying this to yourself, your mind is constantly watching your "I," the self.

There is no other reason for saying "I am hungry," or "I am going to eat food," except for the fact that my aggregate, the body, is going to eat, going to the kitchen, touching the plate and putting the food in the mouth. Except for the aggregates, the stomach being empty of food, there is no reason at all for saying these things. There is no real "I" somewhere behind you or somewhere around you, an "I" somewhere who is hungry and who is going to eat; it is completely empty, it doesn't exist anywhere. Not in your pockets, nowhere. Not on your head, nowhere. Not inside the body and not outside, nowhere. There is no real, hungry "I" except for the body, your aggregate the stomach being empty and your body is going to a place to eat.

After using that logic see what effect it has, see what changes happened to the appearance of the "I," whether it becomes different from what it was before. Then you see something, you start to feel a little bit unreal, you start to feel it a little bit.

The real "I" somewhere inside the chest, above the heart, don't you feel it? Heh? Don't you feel that above the heart, below the neck there is something there, an "I?" "I am hungry, I have taken ordination today.?"

JIMI: Yes.

RINPOCHE: Okay. This "I" that looks as if it existed from its own side becomes a little bit thinner. then after some time, while you are eating, you look at yourself again, you check how the self is. Okay? At that time the "I," the self, somewhere here above the heart in the chest, has become kind of darkness, with no particular shape. Now it is stronger than it was before when you used the logic: "There is no other reason to say that 'I am hungry' and that 'I am going to eat' except for my aggregate, my stomach being empty. For that reason I am going to eat." Check the difference between what you see now and what you saw before when using that logical reasoning. Okay?

The way it appears to you the second time is very different from how it appeared the first time. The first time when you were using the logic it had become a little bit weaker, thinner, unclear. Now while you are eating and not applying any logic on the "I," especially if the food is very delicious or

disgusting—now you watch yourself. At that time there is a strong one appearing to you, existing down below the neck, above the heart somewhere, kind of in the form of darkness.

That is what is meant by “the truly existent I” or “the independent I,” that is the one that one has to recognize. One should not just believe in the words, one should recognize it.

I stop here.

4th December pm

Please listen to the teachings... etc.

In order to practice patience one should see the various shortcomings of anger. You can see it with your eyes. When you get angry you see for yourself all the shortcomings and problems that arise from this anger. You see all the shortcomings of anger in the world as well. All the shortcomings are explained more deeply in the teachings, showing that it is so harmful. It is said in the teachings that anger cuts off the root of liberation.

First of all, it is very difficult to create the cause of happiness: merit and virtue. So difficult. Just concerning human beings; anybody who is a human being does not just accumulate virtue, those who practice virtue are such a small number. Even we who try to generate virtuous thoughts are only able to generate virtue sometimes, very rarely. Even those who are trying to practice Dharma, having understanding of Dharma, what they accumulate in one day is more non-virtue and less virtue. Then in one week like this, in one month like this, one year like this—like this in this life.

As it is explained in the first chapter, *The Benefits of Bodhicitta*, at nighttime, without the sun and without moonlight, it is dark, there is complete gloom and fog, one cannot see the stars, there is not even the light from the stars. It is completely dark, gloomy, black, and foggy. Then there is a very brief lightning, one second of clear appearance, the lightning is showing the objects so clearly, but so briefly, just for a second. Like this the fortunate, virtuous thought rises only sometimes, very rarely in the minds of the human beings of the world.

If the small merit that we are able to accumulate with much effort is not dedicated with the motive of bodhicitta, it gets completely burnt and destroyed by anger, like burnt rice. Even if you plant burnt rice it can't produce anything, it cannot do the useful function of producing, causing more rice to grow. It cannot, it is useless. Burnt rice becomes useless. In the same way the virtues that are not accumulated and dedicated with the motivation of bodhicitta become completely burnt, become useless, having no potential to bring the result of happiness and perfections to the person. Also anger hereby makes our virtues completely potential-less, useless.

Even in the case of the virtues that are accumulated with the motivation of bodhicitta, and dedicated to achieve enlightenment for the sake of sentient beings, if disturbed by anger one can't experience the result for a long time, depending on the object with which one got angry. For example, you did a job with much hardship, but due to some reasons—maybe you created some problem for the employer or something—for some reason the money will be given only after one hundred years, after a thousand years, or a billion years. You were supposed to get the money today or tomorrow, but because you created some problem they made the rule or contract to give it only after your next life. Or you put money in the bank, but you can't take it out of the bank this year, you can't use it

now. You don't receive it now, only after a thousand, billion, trillion years. You are supposed to get it this week or this month, but instead it becomes like that.

The great bodhisattva Shantideva said in the chapter on patience, "The virtue of having made offerings to those who have gone to bliss (which means the Buddha and so on), accumulated for thousands of eons, gets destroyed by one instant of anger." What he is saying is that all our virtues created in the past, like giving charity to others, protecting moral conduct, practicing patience, and having perseverance in our Dharma practice, as well as the virtue of having made offerings to the buddhas, all these various virtues accumulated for thousands of eons get destroyed if one gets angry with a bodhisattva. Even if one gets angry with a bodhisattva once, and that once is only for one second, all those virtues that one has been accumulating for thousands of eons get destroyed.

Even among those that were done with the motivation of bodhicitta and dedicated with that motive, the merit gets postponed for thousands of eons, as in the example I gave about the bank or about receiving money for your job—when you do not receive your money now, but instead the payment is postponed for so many years. In the same way your merit is postponed for thousands of eons. Maybe one did the practice of purification and accumulated so much merit that one would have been able to generate the realization of bodhicitta the next morning during the first meditation session. But if one gets angry with a bodhisattva before that (oneself not being a bodhisattva), the realization of bodhicitta that was ready to be accomplished the next morning during the first session gets postponed for thousands of eons. It is also like this with other results. The happiness and perfections that arise from virtues get postponed, and you don't experience the result for such a long time. The result is postponed.

If a new bodhisattva gets angry with a bodhisattva who has received the prediction, the result of the virtues accumulated get postponed for a hundred eons. There are details about how long the happiness and perfections and the realizations that are the result of virtue get postponed, depending on how high the object that you get angry with, and the level of his realizations.

This was about getting angry with a bodhisattva—now regarding getting angry with the guru, the highest merit field among the merit fields.

I think we can also call the sentient beings a merit field. The enemy is our merit field. By practicing patience with the enemy we accumulate merit, and there are many causes for happiness. Just as we receive food and enjoyment by planting crops in the field, in the same way we receive merit. By practicing patience with the object, the enemy, we receive so much merit. Also, with all other sentient beings, we are able to accumulate so many causes of happiness by making charity to them, by keeping moral conduct towards them, by abstaining from giving them harm. Not killing, not telling lies, not stealing—abstaining from those disturbing, harmful actions toward the object, sentient beings. Through the object, sentient beings, we accumulate merit; we receive merit from the sentient beings.

Because of our feeling that it is unbearable that sentient beings are suffering, we develop perseverance and practice Dharma continuously, with much effort. Because of sentient beings, depending on sentient beings, we accumulate much merit through the practice of perseverance. By practicing perseverance in regard to the merit field we accumulate merit, as also through single-pointed concentration on the stable thought. We practice the paramita of wisdom because of sentient beings. By generating these realizations we accumulate so much merit. Feeling that it is

unbearable, we can't stand it that sentient beings are suffering in samsara, feeling that their sufferings are unbearable—by thinking like this we accumulate so much merit. Then we practice generating the realization of the stable thought and wisdom, the great insight, *lhag.tong*.

You can see now how all our happiness came from and was received through sentient beings' kindness. We can see from this that they are so precious. You see, if the suffering sentient beings did not exist there would be no object to make charity to, no object for whom we would protect our moral conduct. If sentient beings didn't exist, if the enemy didn't exist, there would be no way that we could develop patience or perseverance, single-pointed concentration, or wisdom—in short, the practice of the six paramitas. There would be no way to accomplish the bodhisattva's path. If sentient beings didn't exist there would be no way to accomplish the Mahayana path, doing the bodhisattva's holy actions, and so there would be no way to reach enlightenment. Without sentient beings so there would be no way to reach enlightenment. Without sentient beings, there is no way that one can become completely free from the two obscurations and no way to achieve the complete, perfect quality of cessation and realization. There would be no way for us to practice the six paramitas, the bodhisattva's actions of accumulating extensive merits, the cause of omniscient mind, without sentient beings existence. Without them, there would be no way for us to generate great compassion, the great thought of loving kindness, and no way to generate the realization of bodhicitta, the door of the Mahayana path and the principal cause of omniscient mind. So without sentient beings existence there would be no way for us to even complete the works for ourselves; that is, the works for others as well as the works for ourselves.

The works for oneself are what I already mentioned—namely the complete qualities or excellences of the cessations, ceasing all the obscurations and accomplishing the realizations. One can see how the path to omniscient mind is dependent on the kindness of sentient beings, how generating the path within one's mind is dependent on them, on their kindness.

However, among all the holy objects of the merit field, the highest is the guru, the triple gem. If one gets angry with the guru with whom one has made a Dharma connection, for the duration of the sound made when a young person is snapping his finger, for that short time of split seconds, then for as many great eons as the number of those split seconds one has to be born in the unceasing or unbearable state of the naraks—the heaviest, lowest suffering state of the naraks. This is explained much in both the tantra and sutra teachings. The duration of that life is one eon, and after dying there one is again reborn there, over and over like this. So again one experiences an eon. One eon is their eon, it equals their eons, not human beings' eons. One has to experience this for so many eons if anger arises towards the guru for even one moment, like this (Rinpoche snaps his finger).

In regards the shortcomings of anger, we can't tell who is a bodhisattva and who isn't a bodhisattva. The conclusion is that we can't say who is Buddha and who is not Buddha. You can only judge your own mind, you can't judge others'. It is extremely difficult to judge the minds of others. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha said in the teachings, "Beings like me can understand the minds of others; the living beings can't guess the minds of others." This means that when ordinary sentient beings judge each other they can't say, "This is a bodhisattva, this is not a bodhisattva. This is a buddha, this is not a buddha." They can't judge. Living beings shouldn't judge the minds of others, otherwise their own minds will become degenerated.

This means that merely because you don't see him as an enlightened being, you might judge somebody who is actually a bodhisattva or an enlightened being to not be an enlightened being. Due

to your very thick mental pollution and karmic obstructions you don't see him as an enlightened being. From how he appears to you alone, you judge that he is not an enlightened being. It does not matter so much how he appears to others, the main thing is how he appears to you. Because he appears to you to be an ordinary person with faults and disturbing thoughts, you judge that he is not an enlightened being. So someone who is a bodhisattva is not a bodhisattva, as he does not appear to be a bodhisattva according to your own karmic view. For that reason only, you make the judgment that he is not a bodhisattva. That is only a cause for degenerating your own mind and for your realizations and fortune to decrease.

You should consider the results of anger arising, even for a short time, towards the highest merit field, the guru. Also, one should remember how the results of virtue and the merit accumulated and dedicated with the motivation of bodhicitta are postponed through anger arising.

I think I stop here.

5th December am Eight Mahayana Precepts

Wishing happiness for oneself in future lives, and wishing to achieve liberation from samsara for oneself only, are not good attitudes. One does not have any concern about freeing other sentient beings from suffering or obtaining happiness for them.

Phenomena such as rocks and trees, mushrooms, or the plants in the ocean do not have the thought of "I" so therefore, even if you cut them, there is no such thing as having taken another beings' life. It doesn't receive the name "killing," it cannot be labeled as having created negative karma. For these phenomena there is no such thing as receiving the harm of being killed. There is no such thing as suffering or being happy when free from suffering. As there is no thought of "I" on these things, there is no such thing as suffering and no such thing as liberation. There is nothing to talk about concerning suffering and liberation on these things.

On one's own aggregates one has the thought of "I." There is the thought thinking "I, I," and that thought of "I" wishes happiness and does not wish suffering. On others there is also the thought thinking "I, I, I." Like oneself they are wishing for happiness, even the smallest happiness and comfort, and not wishing even the smallest suffering or problem, not even in a dream. It is exactly equal.

As there is a thought on oneself wishing happiness and not wishing suffering, one has the right to work to eliminate suffering and to obtain happiness for the "I." And it is exactly the same thing for other sentient beings—they also have the right to obtain what they wish. Their thought of "I" is wishing happiness for that "I," not wishing suffering. They, too, have the right to receive or to accomplish happiness and to eliminate suffering for that "I." There is not the slightest reason why one's own "I" should have the right to accomplish happiness and eliminate suffering while there is no right for others to do so. There is not the slightest reason why others' "I" should have no right to accomplish happiness and eliminate the suffering of that "I." There is not the slightest reason—they are exactly the same, having the same rights. Concerning plants and rocks there is no such thing as "rights" to talk about, because there is no such thing as a thought of "I" wishing to accomplish happiness and to eliminate suffering. There is no such thing.

As it is said in the Kadampa geshe Langri Tangpa's advice from the *Eight Verses of Thought Training*, "I'll practice to cherish sentient beings forever, with the thought to accomplish the great success."

No, I left out one part. "I'll practice forever to cherish sentient beings, who exceed the wish-granting gem, with the thought of accomplishing the great, sublime success."

The sublime success that we can accomplish by depending on the kindness of sentient beings refers to the three sublime successes. If one wishes to receive a perfect human body in future lives it is accomplished through the kindness of sentient beings. The cause of a perfect human body is moral conduct. Without the existence of sentient beings there could be no practice of moral conduct, no sentient beings that one could make the vow never to harm. That is the essence. One is making the commitment or vow never to harm, and to abstain from negative actions, so without depending on the kindness of sentient beings' existing, there is no way to create the cause of moral conduct, no way to receive a perfect human body.

Even if one wished to have perfect enjoyment in the next life, the cause for that is to make charity to sentient beings. Without depending on the kindness of sentient beings' existence, there would be no way to create the merit of charity, and no way to receive perfect enjoyments. To have perfect surroundings in future lives depends on the cause of practicing patience; without depending on the kindness of sentient being' existence, particularly the enemy, there would be no way to create this cause, and consequently one could not achieve perfect surroundings. To achieve temporal happiness and perfections and sublime success is completely dependent on the existence of sentient beings.

Achieving nirvana, the everlasting release from samsara, is dependent on the essential path, the three higher trainings. The first higher training is moral conduct, the second is concentration, while the third one is the higher training of wisdom. Without depending on the kindness of sentient beings' existence, as I said before, there would be no way, no opportunity to practice the higher training of moral conduct, so there would be no way to accomplish the higher training of concentration, and because of that one could not achieve the higher training of great insight. There would be no opportunity to achieve the everlasting release from samsara. This is how one's wishes and the achievement of the sublime happiness is accomplished through the kindness of sentient beings. As I explained last night, without depending on the kindness of sentient beings' existence, there is no way that one can accomplish bodhicitta, which comes from great compassion and great love. It is generated by depending on the kindness of sentient beings' existing, so without them there is no way to achieve the state of omniscient mind.

Without depending on the kindness of all sentient beings and on the kindness of one sentient being in particular, the enemy, without depending on the kindness of the enemy's existence one can't receive any happiness. Without depending on the kindness of the existence of one sentient being, the enemy, there is no way to receive even one small happiness, no way, because all one's sufferings come from non-virtue and all happiness comes from virtue. The virtues that are within one's mind are the holy Dharma, accumulated by knowing the teaching revealed by Buddha. These virtues we have accumulated are the holy actions of Buddha.

There are two types of holy actions of the Buddha. One holy action belongs to the Buddha himself, while one is in our minds, the minds of sentient beings. These virtues are received from the Buddha. Buddha came from bodhisattva, bodhisattva came from bodhicitta, and bodhicitta came from great compassion. If this enemy, the person who is disturbing you, is left out from among all sentient

beings, there is no way to generate great compassion. Without depending on him there is no great compassion, no bodhicitta, no bodhisattva, no buddha, no teachings, and no Sangha. There would be no object of refuge, no triple gem in which we could take refuge in order not to be born in the lower realms, no way to be free from samsara, to be free from the two obscurations and to achieve the state of omniscient mind; this is completely dependent on the kindness of the enemy, this one sentient being.

In the same way, all happiness has come from virtues. All the happiness of today, each single comfort and happiness is received completely by depending on the kindness of the enemy's existence. All the three times happiness and perfections are received completely from this enemy. Completely from the one who is treating us badly. If we think back to the source it is completely dependent on him. So how precious the enemy is! How kind he is! One can never be finished explaining about all the advantages and benefits we have received from the enemy. All the three times happiness, all our wishes for happiness, everything is received by depending on the kindness of each sentient being; each narak and preta being, each animal and human being, each human being here now, and all the rest of the human beings. It depends on each enemy, on the girlfriend who dropped you, on the boyfriend who left you—the whole thing is dependent on each sentient being.

You may have mountains of wish-granting jewels, from which, by praying to such a jewel you receive, through the power of the material, whatever temporal happiness and perfections, whatever material possessions you need. Even if we had the most precious diamonds that can be found today, even if each of us possessed as many diamonds as the number of atoms of this earth, without depending on the kindness of sentient beings there would be no way for us to receive the three sublime successes. No way to avoid being born in the lower realms no way to find a perfect human body. Even the first sublime purpose, the happiness of future lives, can't be accomplished without depending on sentient beings. No matter how many jewels you have they can't accomplish any happiness.

I have not been talking about the happiness and comfort of each day of our life that we receive by depending on the sentient beings' kindness that we can see by the eye, that which we can see without depending on Buddha's quotations, without the need for any particular faith in the quotations. All our happiness is completely dependent on sentient beings, as it is received by others through their kindness.

Similarly, the sentient beings' happiness, their obtaining temporal and ultimate happiness, is dependent on oneself. We need help from sentient beings to solve our problems and to achieve even temporal comforts, besides ultimate happiness. As we need their help, in the same way sentient beings need help from us, to be able to solve their problems and to accomplish the temporal and ultimate happiness they wish for.

Another reason is that what is called "I" is only one living being, one person, oneself, while what are called "others," the sentient beings, are numberless. Therefore, freeing them from all their sufferings and accomplishing happiness for them is the greatest benefit, the greatest, most important work.

With this perfect human body, which I have received this one time, I must accomplish this. Even today, these twenty-four hours of my life, I'll use to offer these peerless benefits, and to accomplish the great works for sentient beings. To be able to do this, I must achieve the state of omniscient mind, therefore I must create the cause of omniscient mind. Dependent on that I am going to take

the Mahayana ordination, from now until sunrise tomorrow.

5th December am

As I mentioned last night, there is so much explained about the virtuous friend in the teachings. There is one whole sutra teaching, one whole volume of teachings given by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, about relying upon and devoting oneself to the virtuous friend. I think the name of the sutra is *Gandavyuha*. So many times negative karma is mentioned in the Kalachakra teachings and in other tantra teachings. I'll just mention some points here, as it is a part of the shortcomings of anger, as the conversation reached this part as I was mentioning the shortcomings of anger.

Even if one has accumulated heavy negative karma, the uninterrupted actions, by practicing Vajrayana one can accomplish enlightenment in this lifetime.

Why it is called “uninterrupted” or “un-ended” is because if one has done any of these five heavy negative karmas: taking the life of one’s father or mother, causing blood to flow from a tathagatha, killing an arhat, or causing disharmony among the Sangha, the result is unceasing suffering, a negative state. With other negative karmas, those accumulated in this or in past lives, it is not necessary to experience the result or the ripening aspect, rebirth in the lower realms, right after this life. One can experience the result after several lifetimes—one can live a hundred, a thousand, a billion lifetimes without experiencing rebirth in the lower realms, the result of one’s negative karma. At the time of death, one may experience the result of other, virtuous karma so that after the intermediate state one is reborn as a human being. In this way a different karma interrupts the negative karma, and one experiences the result of virtuous karma in between. But if one has created those extremely heavy negative actions, there can be no interruption by other karma. There is no interruption between the cause and the result: rebirth in the lower realms. The karmic experience immediately after this life, at the time of death, is the intermediate state of the naraks. One is already in the process of being born in the naraks during the intermediate state.

The result of these extremely negative karmas is the unceasing suffering negative state where there is the heaviest suffering of samsara. Among the different categories of the narak sufferings, this state, this unceasing, suffering state has the longest life. The length of the life here is kind of fixed at one hundred eons. The body is like wax or like electrical wire, completely in oneness with the fire. One is unable to differentiate between the fire and the sentient being. One can hear the screaming sounds of the suffering, but in regard to the body and the fire, the two can’t be differentiated. The body is oneness with the fire, like red, burning coal, as it is explained by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in the sutra teachings and in the commentaries on the graduated path to enlightenment. This is why those actions are called uninterrupted. It is said so many times in the extensive tantra teachings that even beings who created extremely heavy negative karmas such as these can accomplish enlightenment in this lifetime by practicing Vajrayana, but he who from his heart has criticized his guru can’t accomplish enlightenment in this life, even if he were to practice Vajrayana with great effort. It also says if a person who has criticized from his heart tries to practice Vajrayana, with great effort and much hardship, for him it is like accomplishing the naraks.

Before one makes the relationship, the Dharma contact, one should examine well. As I mentioned at the beginning, it is important to examine the teachings well, and it is similar with the virtuous friend. If you wish to be liberated from the suffering of samsara, the virtuous friend that you rely upon and to whom you will devote your whole life should be able to reveal the complete infallible path.

Otherwise he can't guide you, and you can't accomplish your wish. It is the same thing—if what you are seeking is to achieve omniscient mind, the virtuous friend to whom you devote your life should be able to lead you on the whole Mahayana path to omniscient mind by revealing the infallible, complete teachings of the complete path.

Maybe one can't see the different levels of the ten qualities that the vajra guru needs to have in order to reveal the *mahaanuttara* tantras. The vajra guru who reveals the *mahaanuttara* path needs to have ten inner qualities, while in order to reveal the Vajrayana tantra path, he should have the ten outer qualities. To reveal the bodhisattva's path, again there are ten qualities that the virtuous teacher needs to have.

The virtuous teacher to whom one is devoting one's life and on whom one is relying in order to achieve nirvana, the virtuous teacher who reveals the path, should have three fundamental qualities, three higher trainings and realizations. Without realizing the infallible right view or the absolute truth, it is impossible for the disciple to eradicate the root of samsara. You can see how important it is that the teacher should have this experience and realization. He should be able to reveal the infallible teachings on absolute nature. He should be living in the higher training of moral conduct, and have the higher training of concentration and great insight as well. He should have great compassion. If there is no compassion, the disciple won't receive the teachings that he wishes to hear, the virtuous friend can't guide if there is no compassion. He should be concerned, having great compassion and perseverance. If there is no perseverance, if the virtuous friend is lazy, there won't be any perseverance in guiding the disciple, so again there is trouble, he can't guide the disciple. There should be perseverance in giving advice and perseverance in giving teachings. The Kadampa geshe Potowa (I think) said, "If the virtuous friend doesn't have all those ten, he should at least have the five."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a great holy being who has complete freedom over birth and death. He is completely free from the cycle of rebirth and death which is caused by karma and disturbing thoughts. Even in the ordinary people's view there is not the slightest doubt whether His Holiness is a bodhisattva or not. Just by seeing him, just by being in his presence, even without hearing teachings, his holy speech, one can see it. Even if one has never heard of BuddhaDharma, or one belongs completely to some other religion, just by being in his presence for the very first time one can see, one can feel that he is a bodhisattva because of all the compassion there, the realizations and supreme qualities. In other words, the excellences of the understanding of the Buddha's teachings and the realizations of the path. One feels that he is definitely a holy being who has a supreme quality of understanding and power. Even someone who never heard of the BuddhaDharma sees that he is definitely not somebody usual, not someone you commonly see or meet.

For somebody who has heard the BuddhaDharma and has met His Holiness there is no question. Just by being in the presence of his holy body one feels that it is full of nothing but compassion. From his holy head down to his holy feet there is nothing but complete compassion and concern for others. He has a great concern to guide others. It doesn't matter whether it is a Tibetan or not, any sentient being, any creature, without question of whether he is of a different race or a different religion, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, all those things. If one listens to his teachings, one's experience is different from when one is listening to even the very famous, learned geshe and lamas. His Holiness is so practical, whether he talks about the three principal paths, the fundamental

lamrim, or whether he talks about special tantra subjects. When His Holiness talks about the illusory body, clear light, and all the methods and those very technical subtle points, about the meditation methods to accomplish the very high paths of secret mantra, it is unbelievably clear. He gives clarification on certain points that were not given by Lama Tsong Khapa, on points that are difficult for other learned ones to understand. Things that they can't understand, certain very difficult and subtle points that are hard to understand even for the learned ones.

Lama Tsong Khapa was a Tibetan bhikshu, or monk, and a highly experienced and realized yogi. For some reason he purposely chose to become enlightened in the intermediate state, in order to guide sentient beings, although he could have become enlightened in that very brief lifetime, during that life. Lama Tsong Khapa is the one who gave incredibly clear explanations on the teachings of the path to enlightenment, with quotations of logic and with so many clear explanations given from his own experience of the path.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama makes incredible clarifications of the teachings of all four sects, satisfying the learned Tibetan pandits and lamas of all sects.

When His Holiness gives initiations and talks about the qualities of the virtuous Vajrayana guru, he never mentions, "I have achieved this and that." His Holiness always says, "I have much faith and definite understanding of the benefits and advantages you can receive from bodhicitta. I have much definite understanding and faith in shunyata and bodhicitta." His Holiness often says, "Faith and unshakeable, definite understanding; great inspiration and great faith."

If there are no realizations in the mind then, of course, what can you say? But in the West, if there is something, even a small, tiny peculiar experience that other people don't have, the person announces it as much as possible, there is the worry that other people might not understand that he has this experience and this understanding. He announces it as much as possible with mountains of pride.

Leave aside talking about His Holiness the Dalai Lama—if in the West one had just the experiences of the ascetic monks, it would be advertised on television many times. Those ascetic monks who wear very ragged, old torn robes and whose bodies are kind of skinny, dirty, or black looking. If one had even the accomplishments of the path of these ascetic monks leading a simple life, one would have it advertised on television. Just because of having some understanding of the words, just words and no experience, incredible, unbelievable pride arises, "I am the only one in the world," sort of.

However, especially when hearing the teachings from His Holiness's holy mouth, one can easily figure out the realizations from the clarity of the teachings. Like when, by the reason of seeing smoke, one can figure out there is a fire. There is incredible, unbelievable skillfulness in guiding sentient beings from different religions and with different philosophical conceptions. When giving teachings, or even just making conversation, he gives each one an answer to their question exactly according to their religion or conception.

Once, an Italian student, one monk, took an Italian friend to see His Holiness. This friend used to be communist or he is a communist. They went to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He asked His Holiness about killing. "If somebody comes to attack your own family, should you kill him or not?" He asked that question. His Holiness answered, "Of course, if somebody comes to attack your family, you kill him." The Italian was very surprised, because he did not expect His Holiness to say

this. That was his idea, but he did not expect to receive such an answer from His Holiness. Because His Holiness is a religious leader, of course, he expected him to say that he should not kill. Then the Italian asked, “How can you be a Buddhist if you kill?” He was very surprised. His Holiness pointed at his younger brother who was in the army. He didn’t fight, but he did the army training. I think he was translating. This younger, incarnate lama went for army training. After he completed it he became secretary and bodyguard to His Holiness. He was there, and His Holiness was pointing at him, “Like him, he is a Buddhist, but at the same time an army man.”

The point was that the person was very happy, he was surprised and happy that His Holiness had said that he could kill somebody who came to attack his family. He was so happy and his happiness leads somewhere. He is not just being happy and it stops there. It leads gradually somewhere. Not just making him happy and it stops there, not like that. There is some advantage, this gradually leads somewhere. Nobody told His Holiness that this Italian was a communist or this and that—this is his skill in guiding sentient beings. Those are the outward actions, those are the signs to identify him as the real Chenrezig working for us, the sentient beings, by guiding us with the outward actions of his holy speech, holy body and holy mind.

The virtuous teacher himself doesn’t have to say, “Oh, I have this and that realization, I have done this and that. I am an enlightened being.” As a general rule, among the Buddhists or “the inner beings,” the more learned and realized they are, the more humble.

No matter how many hundreds of people there are who come for an interview or teachings, His Holiness sees each person’s life very clearly. His Holiness sees his whole life very clearly, how the person lived in the past, what kind of lifestyle he used to have, and what good and bad actions he has done, as well as seeing what kind of everyday life he has now, whether a generous life or an evil, ungenerous life. Just by seeing the person, His Holiness can see his whole biography, all that he did in the past and all about his future.

One day His Holiness let something slip out. Sometimes, when you listen carefully to the teachings, you can understand. Maybe people generally didn’t notice it, because it was just in between the teachings. One time in Dharamsala, during the teachings, His Holiness said, “Some of you think that I don’t see your life at all. But just by seeing how a person leads his everyday life, I do understand.” I think there might have been some reason for His Holiness mentioning this, telling the people that they can’t play games with him, can’t cheat him. I think that sometimes it is necessary to say something so that people are more careful. I think that among the people taking teachings there were some monks who had done wrong actions. They had probably broken precepts. This came as a little bit of advice for the general public for them to listen to His Holiness’s words. Sometimes, between teachings certain words come out.

The conclusion to all this talk is that maybe you don’t see the gurus have these qualities or hear them saying, “I have this and that quality.” To what degree you are able to see these qualities and realizations is another question. However, the teacher should be somebody who emphasizes cherishing others as more important than cherishing oneself, the lowest quality. He should be one who emphasizes that making preparations for the future life is more important than working for the happiness of this life. The lowest quality should be this, at least. Otherwise, one who doesn’t reveal the teachings of Buddha and doesn’t emphasize bodhicitta can’t guide others on the Mahayana path to enlightenment. If the teacher doesn’t emphasize one should make preparations for the happiness of future lives, the disciple will use his life to work completely for the happiness of this life only. In

this way he is only creating the cause for the lower realms. He is being guided on the completely wrong path.

I stop here.

5th December pm

Regarding checking the guru. Lama Atisha had heard about Lama Serlingpa through whom he later achieved the realization of bodhicitta. Lama Atisha went to Indonesia to meet Lama Serlingpa and to receive the complete teachings on bodhicitta. Although Lama Atisha had infinite excellences, the understanding of the teaching and the realizations of the path that the teachings reveal, he found the excellences of bodhicitta in this far land. During those times there was not much material development of vehicles and such things. I think it took much time to go by ship—it must have been very primitive. When Lama Atisha reached the place where Lama Serlingpa was teaching, Lama Atisha didn't go to see Lama Serlingpa immediately. A little before Lama Serlingpa's place, somewhere close, there was a place where Lama Serlingpa's disciples were staying. Lama Atisha stopped there for a short time, a few days, wanting to rest a little bit after all his traveling, before seeing Lama Serlingpa. He also still wanted to check about Lama Serlingpa, so he talked to the disciples and asked questions. He checked by talking to Lama Serlingpa's disciples about his heart-practices and the merit he had created. Then Lama Atisha, surrounded by many pandits with pandit's dress, went to meet Lama Serlingpa. The way it is described in the lamrim teachings sounds a little bit like armies meeting when they go in ships. Lama Atisha and all the pandits were in one groups with Lama Atisha in the center, such a glorious way, such a magnificent way, with many offerings for Lama Serlingpa. When Lama Serlingpa heard that the prince, Lama Atisha, had come to receive teachings, Lama Serlingpa and his disciples went to receive him. Lama Serlingpa himself went to see the ships come in.

Lama Atisha offered Lama Serlingpa a vase of transparent glass. It was filled with various precious jewels. Because of that auspicious arrangement he received the complete teachings on bodhicitta from Serlingpa. Whatever Lama Serlingpa had, Lama Atisha must receive, like the vase. However much nectar the vase contains is put into another vase. Lama Atisha took teachings, listening to the teachings on bodhicitta for years, living with Lama Serlingpa. Then Lama Atisha attained the extraordinary realization of bodhicitta in the presence of the guru, Lama Serlingpa.

It can be done like this: in this life we examine the guru and in our next life we meet the guru. When this life is finished, you'll meet him in the next life. I am joking. There is one story, I don't remember it exactly, about one great yogi, maybe one king, I don't remember his name, who was told to check the guru. So all his life he spent checking the guru. In this life, however, he didn't find the guru, his life finished.

In regard to seeing the guru's realizations and whether he is an enlightened being or not, I shall give one example, just to give you an idea. When the great Lama Naropa went to see Tilopa he was already a pandit with incredible, unbelievable knowledge of the Dharma. He had all the five great qualities, or the five great knowledges. He had the knowledge of logic, of poetry, and of astrology and art. He also had the inner knowledge of BuddhaDharma. Already he had an incredibly deep and extensive knowledge and understanding of sutra and tantra. So Naropa was kind of feeling a little bit proud, "I know all the teachings." That night the female aspects, the goddesses or dakinis, who have the accomplishment of the path of the secret mantra, told him, "There are still scriptures that you

have not seen.” The dakinis told this to the yogi Naropa in a dream. In the dream the dakinis also predicted that he should go and see Tilopa, the guru with whom he had karmic contact. The dakinis, giving the prediction that there were still teachings he had not seen, kind of broke down his pride a little bit.

When the great yogi, Naropa, reached the place in India where Tilopa was supposed to be staying, he asked around among the people at that place (I don’t remember the name of the place). In the village where the great yogi Tilopa lived, he asked, “Where is the great yogi Tilopa?” The great yogi Naropa wasn’t sure, he couldn’t figure out whether this was Tilopa or not, because what he saw was somebody who was eating fish—putting live fish in the fire, then frying and eating them. He also ate the insides of the fish, down by the water where fishermen had piled up the parts of the fish that they wanted to get rid of. Naropa was told by others that this was Tilopa, but he couldn’t figure out how that could be Tilopa, because he was doing such actions. Naropa was constantly following Tilopa and seeing him doing various actions that looked like bad, negative actions. So he couldn’t put the two together: what Tilopa was supposed to be, and what Naropa could see with his view. So he would ask, “Are you Tilopa?” Sometimes Tilopa would answer like this, “I am Tilopa,” and sometimes he moved his head like this, saying that he is not Tilopa. When Naropa thought, “Maybe this is the great yogi Tilopa, who accomplished the whole path of omniscient mind, the one who has accomplished the unified state of no more learning, who is an enlightened being,” at the times when he thought, “Maybe this is Tilopa,” when he tried to have faith that this is Tilopa, Tilopa would say, “Yes,” But when he thought, “Maybe this is not Tilopa,” because of having seen certain actions that looked very evil, when he asked with that kind of wrong idea and doubt, then Tilopa would say, “I am not Tilopa.” The answer was given according to Naropa’s way of thinking, it related to Naropa’s way of thinking. When he was practicing the pure view, he answered “yes,” but when Naropa’s thought was, “Maybe he is not Tilopa,” when he was thinking differently, with the mind going to the side of the impure view because of some kind of evil actions done by Tilopa, then he was answered, “I am not Tilopa.”

One sees according to one’s own karmic projection, according to one’s hallucinated projections of mind. With that view one finds mistakes with the guru, seeing him as creating many negative karmas, such as doing the ten non-virtuous actions or things like that. One sees him as a fool, as deeply ignorant, and with many faults. However, if one looks to the side of faults, according to one’s karmic view, then one sees only in that way. If one practices the pure view, training the mind in pure appearance by thinking on the side of the qualities, one sees in that way. It is dependent upon which way the mind is trained; so one trains one’s own mind.

One time in Tibet one teacher had two disciples who went home or somewhere. When they returned, the teacher made tea. The tea was cold, it was not hot tea. He made tea, but it was cold. The teacher gave the cold tea to the two disciples. One disciple got very angry, thinking, “He didn’t even give us hot tea! We came, tired, from such a far away place and he didn’t even give us hot tea.” Then the other disciple thought, “How kind he is! On purpose he made the tea cold for us.” He was so happy that he was receiving cold tea. The one who thought of the guru’s kindness didn’t create negative karma by getting angry; by thinking of his kindness he gained much advantage, much profit. The person who got angry didn’t gain any profit, but lost his merit, destroying his enlightenment; while the one who remembered the guru’s kindness gained profit, came near to enlightenment and near to realizations of the path to enlightenment.

When the great yogi Milarepa saw Marpa for the first time, Marpa's outer aspect was that of an ordinary person, kind of like a Tibetan farmer, with dust on the forehead and over the face. He was plowing the fields and drinking *chang*, or wine. The great yogi Milarepa explained to the guru Marpa, "I am a very evil, sinful person. I came from the upper part of Tibet, called Tsang. I came to ask you to give me Dharma and also food." Lama Marpa told Milarepa, "You have been so evil and you are asking me to give Dharma and food both. There is nothing to brag about—having been evil, and then saying I have to give both Dharma and food." Lama Marpa said, "I can't give both. I will give you either food or Dharma." For auspicious reasons Lama Marpa gave Milarepa one bowl of wine.

Many of you here might have read the biography and if you haven't read it, you must read it! It is very good to read it over and over, especially if you are concerned about practicing the holy Dharma. Also when you have huge mind problems, when your mind is confused and there are problems in your life. To read Dharma books on thought-training and the biographies of the great yogis at those times becomes nectar to purify and cut off the problems. It gives inspiration and destroys laziness.

Although Milarepa requested Lama Marpa to give him both teachings and food, Lama Marpa didn't give him teachings—only jobs, work, only hard times—like building a nine-storied house all by himself. Milarepa was alone, without any porters or laborers, only himself alone. Alone, he built houses, and then took them apart and put the stones back in the place they had come from. Then again he erected them—three times like this. He carried stones until the skin on his back was full of wounds and turned blue. In spite of that, still he kept carrying stones and building houses, three times. And all this time there were no sweet words, like Lama Marpa saying, "Thank you very much for doing such an incredible job." There are no such sweet words of thanks, or complimenting, only scolding and beating all the time. When Milarepa came to initiations that Lama Marpa was giving to other people, as soon as Marpa saw him among the people he would kick him out of the initiation, scolding him strongly, saying, "Why did you come here?" He was kicked out when he tried to get in so many times when Lama Marpa gave initiations to other people. For many years there was only scolding. However, Lama Marpa's secret wisdom mother couldn't stand it that for so many years Milarepa didn't receive teachings, and that he received nothing but hard work and scolding. So, quietly, Lama Marpa's secret mother sent him to another lama, one of Lama Marpa's disciples, without telling Lama Marpa, without permission from Marpa. Milarepa stayed for some time at the feet of Lama Ngokpa, taking teachings, but no good signs happened during that time, no realizations, nothing, not even a good sign in a dream happened, because he had not gotten permission from Lama Marpa.

All these scoldings were actually advice for Milarepa. All these scoldings and beatings, all this hard work, were actually a method of great purification. All these were preliminary practices before giving the initiations, like four hundred thousand Vajrasattva mantras, four hundred thousand mandala offerings, refuge, and guru yoga—doing four hundred thousand mantras and requesting prayers—all the preliminaries that in those days yogis like Lama Marpa, Naropa, and those very highly fortunate beings did. So much purification was done by Milarepa during that time, and when he became a receptacle, Lama Marpa transformed the whole mandala. He didn't have to draw the mandala or create the mandala with pictures, for he himself was an enlightened being, a buddha, the deity Hevajra. Even though in ordinary view he looked like an ordinary person, a married man, in fact he had completed all the realizations, not having the slightest stain. Lama Marpa transformed the whole inner mandala in space and then Milarepa was initiated by him. Then he gave Milarepa much

profound advice from the teachings, and finally Milarepa was advised to go the mountains and live in a solitary place in order to generate realizations and complete the path.

No matter how hard a time Marpa gave him, not giving teachings for so many years, from Milarepa's side there was no such thing as getting angry or as experiencing rising heresy toward Marpa. Through bearing many hardships and being perfectly devoted to the virtuous friend, Marpa, Milarepa became enlightened in that very brief lifetime of this degenerate age.

Similarly, Naropa performed twelve great hardships or austerities, almost dying from the experiences. Then he did twelve small austerities. (This was the same as Milarepa, he also did all those preliminaries.) When Naropa was following Tilopa, all the time, wherever they went and whatever happened, heresy, anger, or bad thoughts never arose toward Tilopa. He asked for teachings all the time. After many years of experiencing these austerities, one day they stopped by a sand-ground. Naropa requested Tilopa to give teachings. Tilopa told Naropa to make mandala offerings. (This is what I have seen in the biography.) There was no water so Naropa made peepee on the sand and made the sand into the shape of the mandala. Then they made mandala offerings, visualizing the whole mandala. Tilopa took the sand from the mandala offering and threw it at Naropa's face. Then Tilopa told Naropa to look into space. Tilopa transformed the whole mandala of Heruka in space and then Naropa was initiated into the mandala. Then Tilopa gave many profound, secret teachings.

When Naropa saw Tilopa the first time he was very skinny. He did not have a long, white beard and was not well-dressed, not like that. He was very simple, just like any Indian who is skinny. Even after Milarepa had become enlightened he was very skinny, and kind of very green-looking from the outside. Ordinary people saw him was as someone very skinny, very green, and with no clothes. He had a bare body and that holy body had turned into a kind of green color. You could not put together what you had heard about the qualities of Milarepa's holy actions and the achievements that he had and what you actually saw when you met Milarepa's holy body. You couldn't imagine how it was possible, you couldn't figure it out. But when you actually saw him, his aspect was like that.

One Bonpa was trying to compete with the great yogi Milarepa. He had heard so much about him and his disciple Rechungpa, about their holy actions and their achievements: they were so far-famed. But when he actually saw Milarepa's holy body, he didn't see anything special. He saw a completely bare body with a greenish color. The holy body was skinny, as if it could have been easily blown away by the wind. And he had no shame—everything was out, with no cover, not even pants covering himself. Anyway, no shame. This is what the Bonpa said, "Before I saw Milarepa, I was told that he was so famous, a great enlightened being, a great yogi; but when I actually saw him, this is what I saw—so no surprise." There are so many stories about the great yogis, actually enlightened beings, who according to ordinary view were doing various evil actions. To those who have impure view, whose impure karmic obscurations are not purified, they seem to be very evil actions. There are so many stories from the lives of the great Indian and Tibetan yogis, such as Tilopa catching fish and then frying and eating them. All this is actually guiding. It is not like when a person is very sick and there is no medicine to give, and then if the person's disease doesn't stop maybe one thinks it is better for him to die, so one gives him medicine to die. A big injection or whatever. And the person who is doing the killing has no ability to guide the being's consciousness to enlightenment—there is no responsibility taken in regard to guiding the consciousness to a better rebirth. With the great yogis, even if the creature that is being killed is a real creature, they are able to transfer the

consciousness into a realm. They are able to lead it to the state of omniscient mind. It is a particular way, one method of guiding particular sentient beings whom that method suits.

A highly realized yogi of Vajrabhairava and Yamantaka who completed the path of the realizations of the secret mantra one day went to see His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. That great yogi's name was Serkong Dorje Chang. I don't remember about his earlier life, but in later life he wasn't a monk, having the secret mother. Serkong Dorje Chang one day visited His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. When he entered His Holiness's room, this great yogi Serkong Dorje Chang saw His Holiness in an aspect of Chenrezig, the compassionate-eye looking buddha, called *sem.nyi.nyal.so*. This is one particular aspect of Chenrezig: the holy body is white, the right hand is holding a lotus, and the left is resting on the moon seat. The position of the legs are the same as Tara.

In Tibetan there are many high lamas like that, who have very thin karmic obscurations and mind pollution; who, when they go to see their gurus, the high lamas, see them as the deity that they practice.

There is one Indian monk who maybe was ordained by His Holiness. He was a very rich person who had many companies and factories. Somehow, after hearing and meeting His Holiness, after listening to His Holiness's teachings, he gave everything to his family—the factories and everything. Since then, he stayed around and traveled close to His Holiness. Each time he receives blessings from His Holiness, each time he gets His Holiness's palm over his head, he is in bliss for seven days. His himself has unbelievable, unshakeable, incredible devotion to His Holiness. He had many experiences. This is dependent on individual karma.

So I stop here.

I didn't mean to talk so much on the part of the guru. The main subject is anger and patience. That is the main subject I want to amplify a little bit. I thought it was very important because we have to apply it many times even in one day, like we have to take medicine many times a day. Each time the pain comes we have to take medicine, tranquilizers or whatever. This is similar, but patience is more important than medicine, much more, it is extremely important. Somehow, the conversation unexpectedly ran out, so just to finish this off—whether the guru from his side is an enlightened being or not, the advantages of devoting oneself to the guru are definite. Since the relationship, the Dharma contact, has been made, the advantages and shortcomings that are explained in the sutra teachings and in the commentaries by Tibetan lamas, the shortcoming and advantages of making mistakes or devoting oneself to and relying properly upon the guru are definite. Whether the guru from his side is Buddha or not, the benefits and advantages one receives once the connection has been made, or the problems and shortcomings that one will experience by making mistakes, are definite. There is no other way, as this is dependent arising. There are the eight advantages toward swiftly achieving omniscient mind that one receives, which are explained in the teachings. These eight advantages are definite—the result is definite, arising from the cause of perfectly devoting oneself to the guru and relying upon him correctly. The shortcomings of the mistakes are also definite. That happens even if the guru himself from his side is not an enlightened being. One is definitely going to experience problems and shortcomings if one makes mistakes. The shortcomings explained in the teachings are definite, for they happen because of dependent arising.

You can experience it in this life. If you made mistakes or did good, you experience, you can see the result in this life. It doesn't take one month, one year before one can start to see definitely the

advantages, and also the shortcomings if one made mistakes. If you check with your own experience you can discover it. There are benefits that are experienced and there are shortcomings experienced, so it is for sure. It is definite as good karma resulting in happiness.

It doesn't matter whether the guru from his side is an enlightened being or not. Since the connection has been made, the main responsibility is to think of one's own profit. Since one doesn't want loss, but only the highest profit, the omniscient mind, to be able to work for sentient beings, one devotes oneself to the guru the way Buddha explains in the teachings. You have to study, you have to understand what Buddha explained, and then you know how to follow the explanation.

I stop here.

6th December pm

I mentioned last night that one receives the eight advantages by devoting oneself correctly to the guru, and one receives the eight shortcomings by following the guru incorrectly after one has made Dharma contact with him, the guru-disciple relationship. This relationship exists even if one has only received the oral transmission of one mantra of three or six syllables, or even just five syllables of the alphabet taught by the virtuous teacher.

From the side of the guru, it doesn't matter whether he is enlightened or not, one still receives the eight advantages, being close to enlightenment and pleasing all the buddhas. One doesn't get overwhelmed or hunted by the maras, the evil friends; one doesn't fall into the lower realms; all one's realizations increase, while all disturbing thoughts and negative karmas, the evil characteristics, naturally cease. The shortcomings are that the realizations, or the good qualities that one had before, degenerate, and one is unable to generate those that one has not already generated. Even in this life, one is always harmed by disease. One receives many harms like disease from spirits. Even my present problems I can relate to past incorrect practice. That is what I see every day. It is like this, it is dependent arising.

For example, if a person has a goiter, it happened due to dependent arising. Because it is dependent arising it happened. If a person is sick, that happened due to dependent arising. Maybe a person for some reason wishes to be sick because there is something he doesn't want to do, like going into the army. So he wants to get sick. He wants to have some disease showing on his X-ray, but even though the person may wish it, he is still not going to experience it—that is because it is not dependent arising. If a person has a very beautiful body he has that because it is dependent arising. Maybe another person sees his own body as very ugly and wishes it to be beautiful, but even though he wishes this he doesn't get such a body, it doesn't happen. That is because for that person a beautiful body is not dependent arising.

Why does this flower have a shape like this? This flower is kind of wrapped around itself. Why are other flowers in the shape of leaves with such a form and such a color? All these different figures and shapes happened because their nature is emptiness. They are empty of independence, so they are dependent. Similarly, butterflies have all these different colors, these different, very fine designs, the various fine colors and the marking of the designs, all these things. Why are there flowers of various types? And why do the butterflies' wings have various kinds of figures? Similarly in art, the drawings of various figures and things come together like this, are gathered like this.

The reason is that if their nature had not been empty of being independent they could not have existed. Without depending on causes and conditions, and on the karma of the sentient beings who enjoy those things, those various types of fruit could not exist.

In different countries there are different types of vegetables growing. In some countries there is not much growing, while in other countries there is so much growing that even in the forests one can find so many plants and fruits. This is similar to the example I gave about the handicapped child. The child's condition is dependent on the physical condition of the egg, and having a complete body depends on how perfect and complete the atoms are. However, that is not the final answer. The physical cause is not the final answer, or the only explanation.

As I mentioned in that example, it is similar with these things. The same question arises. Why aren't there the physical conditions for growing certain things in one place? Why shouldn't there be? Why shouldn't there be the physical conditions here for whatever grows in other countries? Why aren't they growing here? We go back to the root.

The Western scientists always talk about and relate to physical evolution, always going back to the physical evolution—that which they can check through machines, that which can be the object of the eye. It is not so much the object of realizations, received through the development of the mind and by decreasing the mind's pollution. It does not depend on the knowledge and realizations that come from accumulating merit and purifying the pollution of the mind.

However, going back to the very root of the physical conditions, whether you are talking about atoms or whatever you are talking about, the whole thing, why isn't it here? Why isn't the whole earth the same? Why doesn't the whole country have the same earth, the same minerals, or the same physical conditions? Why don't all places have the same power to grow things, why shouldn't all places be the same? If you relate it way back to the evolution of the earth, even if you go back to the atoms, still the same question arises.

I think the scientists, the biologists or whatever, say that things like tables disintegrate into atoms; then after some time the atoms come together, but the atoms are permanent. I discussed this with, I think, a very educated person. Anyway, he had studied, he was quite intelligent. So we tried to debate. He lives in Bangkok and studied in America or somewhere. He had his own reasoning, so we went back to the physical evolution. He was saying that everything disintegrates onto atoms and that the atoms are permanent. After the atoms are gathered together they become the house and the table, like this. He was quite interesting. Our school teacher, the one who takes care of the monks together with Lama Lhundrup, tried to debate, but he couldn't change the other person's answer. I don't remember the debate exactly, but at some point the teacher asked, "Is that atom a creation or not? Then who created it?" At some point he couldn't say "Yes" or "No;" I don't remember the details.

However, nowadays the scientists, checking further, can see that even the atoms have many particles, and that each particle has many particles, like that. They have not yet finished their discoveries, they have not achieved their omniscient mind. They are in the process of development.

I have heard that the scientists also go to the mountains to meditate. They call it "giving up the world." They leave the city and go to the very high mountains. They call it "leaving the world." They go to the very high mountains where the government or whatever has built a kind of retreat place.

They go there and then each person thinks. I think these people are the astronauts, that group. Those who in the world are regarded as the top people. There is nobody who can teach them anything. They are the top teachers, so there is nobody, no other teacher in the world who can teach them anything. They have nothing to learn from others. Then they think. They keep silence in their own rooms, and sometimes in the break periods they go for walks. Afterwards they meet, and each person has a different idea. Through thinking and thinking, some idea has come and then they correct each other saying, "That is not right," this and that. I think they find going to the mountains and keeping quiet very useful.

Nowadays, the scientists are checking further and further. From what I heard they are making continuous outside observations, checking the external phenomena, in laboratories and so on. And the more they check, as the expert scientists check deeper and deeper, it comes closer and closer to the BuddhaDharma.

In Tibetan Buddhism there are four schools. You may have seen the book translated by our teacher, Geshe Sopa Rinpoche, "The Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism." With the fourth, the Prasangika view, the discovery becomes more and more subtle. The understanding becomes more and more fine as they check more deeply how things, or atoms, are of an impermanent nature. There is one interesting question, however, that they can't resolve due to a lack of understanding. It is a lack of understanding of the conventional truth of a lack or realizing absolute truth, not realizing that things are empty or independent of true existence. There is one thing, but I don't remember exactly.

If the experts, the scientists who make very fine, detailed discoveries, were to study the BuddhaDharma's views, the philosophical teachings, their questions would be answered. If they studied the logic of the Madhyamaka teachings, which explain the two truths—conventional and ultimate truth—elaborately, if, together with their science, they studied the five great treatises, doing their work of studying and checking together, I think the problem of their work would be solved. Each time they check the previous theories that they have been taught, they have found that there were mistakes; each time they checked they would get a better understanding. Then certain things appeared that they couldn't understand. The BuddhaDharma helps solve a lot of problems, a lot of blocks and ignorance that can't explain things correctly, with a hundred percent confidence, with clear and complete understanding. In that way, the investigation of external phenomena would combine with the study of the extensive philosophies of the BuddhaDharma, and all the Buddha's teachings for the mind, Buddhist psychology. Their discoveries and the study of the outside world would help to solve the problems of the mind.

However, inner phenomena are much more extensive. If one compares external and internal phenomena, the inside phenomena are much deeper. As long as one is ignorant about them, as long as one never tries to realize inner phenomena, their nature and their evolution, there will not be any development and there will not be any change. And then there is no peace.

No matter how many different languages of this world you speak, no matter how much you study to find out how many people on this earth have goiters, how many blind people there are on this earth, or how many mushrooms are growing in the mountains, it will bring no peace to the mind. No matter how much you study numbers and remember the names of existences, no matter how much you study outside phenomena, still there is no peace. No matter how much you are able to talk about, how many things you can mention, memorizing in your mind for months and months, years

and years, in regard to your peace of mind, there is no change, not one single benefit for your peace of mind.

You see, if you perform in a circus you have to have a flexible body. The mind alone can't make the body flexible. The body has to be trained. It is the same thing with our peace of mind. Making the body flexible by doing exercises will only benefit the body. It won't be a cause for the mind to be subdued, or for oneself to achieve the state of omniscient mind. That alone won't diminish or cease the anger and attachment, the dissatisfied mind and disturbing thoughts. The work achieving peace of mind—the cessation of anger and dissatisfactory minds of attachment and ignorance—that work has to be done by the mind. It can be achieved through the training of one's mind, there is no other way to achieve peace of mind.

If you study in order to establish peace of mind of yourself and others, is the study of external phenomena much more important than that of the internal? The inside, the inner phenomena are much more important. Also, internal changes are much more important than outer changes.

Since I have started the conversation, let's go back to the atoms. Maybe you think it is all the fault of the atoms. Maybe you are going to say that certain things grow here because certain atoms gathered. In some places there are so many plants growing, and in some places less, and that is because of the atoms. If one refers the cause back to the very original one, the formation of the atoms, saying that it is due to the different types of atoms, then again the same question arises: Why is it? It is the same thing. Maybe one says, "Because of time," or "That's the way it is, that's all. There is nothing deeper to look for. It is because of time, that's the way it is."

All these butterflies and plants, with their different and incredible details, figures, and shapes are so very beautiful. Each flower is different, their decorations and shapes are unbelievable. If you check where different flowers are growing, if you check each one, you'll see how some have so many details and different shapes. Very interesting, unbelievable. Some look as though they have minds, having intentionally, purposefully grown into that shape. Not only having many petals, but different levels of petals and different shapes.

The reason that all these things are different is that their nature is empty of being independent. They are dependent on the physical conditions preceding them, dependent on the minerals and all those things, as well as on the karma of sentient beings. If there are tiny creatures living on plants for their food, or if they were born inside a flower, that is also related to their karma.

When we see a beautiful flower the mind is kind of happy. When we see a dead or an ugly one we don't have a happy mind, it is like seeing garbage. The beautiful flowers that make us happy when we see them, and all that in our view is enjoyable, are the creation of our mind. Enjoyment in the form of an object of the eye sense, that which is related to a nice appearance, like the pleasant shape of a flower, is the creation of the mind of the person who sees it. It is the creation of his virtuous thought, of his accumulated virtuous karma. You see, without the view of that beautiful flower, there is no way for the mind to enjoy it. There is no way for the mind to be happy while enjoying the flower. Without the view there is no way to enjoy the flower. Appearances have to do with the mind. The appearance does not have to do with the tree, for instance. What is the appearance of the tree? What is the appearance of the rock? We can't say such a thing. But there is an appearance to our senses, there is an appearance to our mind. To living beings there is an appearance. It is merely related to the mind, it is view. Without the view of the beautiful flower, there is no way to enjoy that

beautiful flower. The view is related to the mind, the creator of the view is the mind. The view came from the mind. The view can't come from the flower, the view came from the mind.

That is why the same person in the same position and in the same place sometimes seems beautiful and sometimes ugly. When you think of something good that somebody else did, by thinking of that, you see that person in beauty, as warm. You feel closer to him and see him in the aspect of beauty. But when you stop thinking of the kindness of that person and instead start thinking about how he gave terrible harm in the past then, with those reasons, you see him in a different way, in ugliness. Even today, when a person disturbs and harms you, if you think of how kind that enemy is in harming you, your view of him will change. By thinking of many reasons, like, "By giving me harm and by treating me badly, he is helping me," by looking at it as help to develop and practice patience, even within a minute, there are two different views of the same person. When you look at his harm as help for you to develop patience on the path to enlightenment, you see him as very warm, in the aspect of beauty, as very kind. You see how the view doesn't come from the object, the view is the creation of one's own mind. Otherwise, if it came from the object, the object would not change, it would still be harming and your view would not change, now matter how much you thought of the different reasons.

The conclusion is that all these things are dependent arising, empty of independence. When you hear that, it means dependent arising. It is similar with making prostrations, making water offerings, and all those things. Since they are offered to Buddha, since the object is Buddha, the enlightened being, by the power of the holy object all these actions become virtue, even if there was no virtuous motive. It is like the fire has to burn things—why the fire burns and is able to burn garbage and cook food. The actions of making prostrations, the respectful actions, like making light-offerings to holy objects that are on one's altar or visualized, are like these examples. As long as they are done toward the enlightened beings, the actions become virtue, even though the motive may not have been virtuous. Through depending on the object, the actions become virtue. Because we made the fire it burns—the fire has that power, that nature. It is similar.

I think I stop here.

7th December am

Please listen to the teachings etc.

It is very important to really check with a straight, uncurving mind whether it is more important to dedicate my life to myself and my happiness, or dedicate my life to the happiness of other sentient beings. Which is more important? Really think from the heart. I think this is such an incredibly important, precious time to check and to really observe from the depths of the heart. If one has understanding of lamrim, of what the Buddha explained, one knows how important it is.

As the great Bodhisattva Shantideva explained in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, "All happiness arises from wishing happiness for others, while all suffering arises from wishing happiness for the self. There is no need to say much, just look at the difference! The child works for himself, the mighty ones look for others. Look at the difference between the two!" Clarifying this: we, who from beginningless rebirths until now have been working and working for the self, are "the child." Because of that we are still going through the circle of death and rebirth, old age and disease, and all those things—we have so many other hundreds and hundreds of problems. Still they have not ceased, we are still

experiencing them over and over again. Due to ignorance, we are unable to remember the beginningless rebirths and beginningless sufferings of samsara. For the mind that is unable to remember the past experiences of the same things, the present sufferings and the samsaric pleasures appear to be experienced for the first time.

The methods that one has so far been applying for eliminating the suffering and obtaining happiness have been external methods. We have been trying to solve the problems from outside, from the surroundings, by gathering the external factors. We can't recall that we have been trying these external methods since beginningless samsaric rebirths. Numberless times we tried these methods, but we can't remember, so we believe that this is the first time, this is the only time we tried these methods.

He who has no Dharma wisdom, who has no inner development, who doesn't have the fortune to have faith in the teachings of the Buddha, a person like that thinks external methods are the only solution, that there is no other way to solve the problems and to obtain happiness.

We have been trying these methods that we are using now since beginningless rebirths, and still the work is not ended—this work of trying to solve our problems from outside. Our wish is to completely solve the problem in order never to have to experience it again—the wish is like that. Whether the methods we use really work is another matter, but the wish is to have everlasting, ultimate happiness and not to experience problems and suffering at all. However, whether the method one knows, which one has found, completely fulfills this wish or not, is another matter.

Since there is no mind development, there are no realizations of Dharma wisdom. So the mind is polluted and obscured by ignorance. If whatever external method one has found works, then that is it; if it doesn't work, then trying to obtain happiness and to solve problems is finished, there is no method. Since one is deeply ignorant of the nature of the mind, of the absolute and conventional truth of the mind, and since one is deeply ignorant of the inner methods for developing this knowledge, one has to try whatever is available in that country. As from one's own side there is no knowledge, one has got to try whatever is available, whether it is something beneficial or not, whether it is a skillful method or not. So if that doesn't work, doesn't benefit, doesn't do anything, the method is finished. One has to suffer whatever problems one has. Similarly, when a person has some physical sicknesses, if the tablets work, that's it, but if they don't work there is no other solution. There is no other way, no other method to be tried from one's own side.

Even a doubt about the root of these undesirable problems that come again and again does not arise. There is not even a doubt, not even a question about the root of these problems.

The mighty ones, the buddhas, like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, have completely renounced the self and are cherishing only others through the development of having generated the great compassion covering all sentient beings, and through training the mind in loving kindness. For three countless great eons, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, numberless times, with much hardship, made charity of his own life to others in order for them to have temporal happiness, and by that to make the Dharma connection. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself dedicated the merits, praying that those sentient beings, humans, spirits, or wild animals to whom he gave his holy body as charity would be reborn as human beings and become his disciples so that he could reveal the holy Dharma to them. Like this, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha led uncountable numbers of sentient beings into enlightenment, into

temporal and ultimate happiness. After bringing them into temporal happiness, from there he led them to the ultimate happiness.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha followed the bodhisattva's path by accumulating extensive merits and doing purification for three countless great eons, with much hardship. He did not only benefit uncountable numbers of sentient beings while he was a bodhisattva, but also after he became enlightened. With bodhicitta, renouncing the self and cherishing others, he finished the work of accumulating the two types of merit—the merit of fortune and the merit of wisdom. Through the remedy, the path, he removed completely all obscurations, achieving omniscience, the perfect power. In the past, an uncountable number of sentient beings were guided and led from the lower realms into the realms of the happy transmigrating beings. From there he led them to nirvana and enlightenment. Even now Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is teaching, and guiding uncountable numbers of sentient beings from the lower realms to the bodies of the happy transmigrating beings, guiding them, bringing them to enlightenment.

Even though present sentient beings can't see Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself in that aspect of Buddha, he is guiding us by appearing in various forms—as a vajra guru giving vajra initiations, or as an abbot granting ordination; as a virtuous teacher giving oral transmissions and commentaries, or teaching the alphabet. He may appear in the form of a monk, in the form of a layperson, in the form of a king, in the form of a minister, in the form of a crazy person, in the form of a spirit, in the form of a beggar, or even in the form of a prostitute. He may appear in the form of a person having great attachment, or in the form of a person showing the aspect of great anger; or even in the form of animals—in various forms and aspects. Even to guide one sentient being at different times, according to the level of that being's mind, he will appear in different forms. He is guiding sentient beings in whatever way fits them. He reveals the teachings to those whose minds are suitable, who have reached the level where the teaching can be revealed to them.

There are so many stories in Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's biography, telling of the qualities and powers of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, of his skillful methods guiding sentient beings on the path of refuge. In the commentaries on refuge, in the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, and in the various texts of the sutra teachings, there are so many stories about Guru Shakyamuni Buddha manifesting in different forms, guiding sentient beings. In the commentaries and teachings on how to devote oneself to the guru, there are so many explanations, so many stories. Like quotations of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself saying, "I will manifest in this and that form" and also actual stories. These are very useful and effective for the mind to quickly generate the realization of refuge, and to see the guru in the essence of Buddha, the realization of the guru yoga meditation.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's life stories are extensively explained in the sutra teachings. In the past, Guru Shakyamuni was the bodhisattva, the wheel-turning king with the holy name of "The Rim of the Spoke." I think his father was Brahma (Brahma maybe is not right) and a sage, the Atom of the Ocean. (I think that is the name, I am not a hundred percent sure). That bodhisattva, the wheel-turning king, had a thousand sons. Each of these sons made prayers in front of the buddha, Rinpoche Nyingpo, to guide sentient beings in the future during different time periods of the various worlds of sentient beings. Each of the bodhisattva's sons made prayers in front of Buddha Rinchen Nyingpo in order to be able to subdue sentient beings. Each one pointed to a different world of sentient beings as their chosen object to be subdued. They made vows, praying in front of Rinchen Nyingpo, to subdue and to do the works for sentient beings.

This era, of the hundred years' age, this degenerate time when the five degenerations are flourishing, are exploding—this era was left out. The sentient beings who are living during this time period, the present degenerated sentient beings, were left out. No one chose them, except Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, in his past life as the bodhisattva, the wheel-turning king with the name "The Rim of the Spoke." All the others chose sentient beings of other eras. The sentient beings of this era, the time of the hundred years' age, were left out because it is so difficult to subdue them. Their minds are so ignorant and so vicious that it is extremely difficult to subdue and to do the works for these sentient beings. The others didn't point to them, as they were unable to accept doing the work of subduing these sentient beings. But Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in his past life as the bodhisattva, the wheel-turning king, saw that the sentient beings of the era when the five degenerations were extremely flourishing were left out; those sentient beings who were extremely difficult to subdue were left out. So he made five hundred prayers with an incredibly brave and altruistic will, with the incredibly brave mind of bodhicitta renouncing the self and cherishing others, feeling that he couldn't stand, couldn't bear the suffering of these beings, feeling it to be so unbearable. So he made five hundred prayers in front of the Buddha Rinchen Nyingpo, praying, "When this hundred years' age comes, when the extremely degenerated era happens, may those sentient beings who are extremely difficult to subdue be subdued by me." He made five hundred prayers like this.

The sentient beings that the thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon promised to subdue when they were bodhisattvas were sentient beings of fortunate, easy times; but these were beings whose minds were incredibly, deeply ignorant, so stubborn, so solid, so hard. Those who live during the fortunate times, when the five degenerations are not flourishing, are not like that. But Guru Shakyamuni Buddha pointed to these beings, and made a vow in front of Rinchen Nyingpo to subdue these extremely difficult sentient beings of this era, who exist when the five degenerations are flourishing in the extreme. For their minds, which are so unbelievably, deeply ignorant, it is incredibly difficult to understand and to have faith in karma or shunyata, while the delusions and disturbing thoughts are rushing so powerfully—like waterfalls, like rainfall. They have such short lives—and there is a lot of fighting, more and more fighting, a lot of famines, and every day new contagious diseases appear. There are so many famines and wars, and their minds are so stubborn and so hard to subdue.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha made the vow to subdue these beings. He pointed them out as his particular object to be subdued. Even though we don't see Guru Shakyamuni's way of guiding us, although we don't see Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in that aspect, he left the teachings as a good example. He revealed his experiences that we are hearing about, which we are studying and also trying to put into action. When we put the teachings into action, and when we understand them, even the temporal problems of everyday life are cut off. We are able to plant many seeds and make much preparation for achieving enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings. The more we practice, the more we understand, and the more solutions appear; there is more and more peace in our minds. The past experiences that one can identify with as having been guided from the sufferings of samsara and from all obscurations are how Guru Shakyamuni Buddha has been guiding us.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha made five hundred prayers, he made the vow in front of Buddha to subdue the sentient beings of the degenerate time. Those sentient beings are us. We are the sentient beings of the era of the hundred years. We are among those sentient beings whom Guru Shakyamuni promised to guide, for whom he made five hundred prayers. There are many quotations in the sutra teachings showing that he has manifested in various forms, in order to guide sentient beings according to whatever method fits them.

Even though we don't see Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in the aspect of buddha, there is definitely Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in an ordinary aspect that we are able to see, who is communicating with and guiding us in different ways. Sometimes he gives material help, sometimes he gives teachings or advice—he helps in different ways.

In the biographies there are many stories from the arhat's small path. For example there is the one about the king who had the greatest, most incredible pride, and who played the violin and who was subdued by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Or the one about the old man who achieved arhatship after the age of eighty. He practiced Dharma and became an arhat, and he was subdued by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. There are many stories like these. Whenever the time is right, when a person has so many worries, when he is crying, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, as he is always working for the suffering sentient beings, suddenly stands in front of that person asking, "What happened? What is wrong with you?" Then the person explains all his problems, and Guru Shakyamuni Buddha explains the method, what to do. Like this, so many sentient beings have been guided, achieving arhatship and becoming enlightened.

The old students have heard these stories many times before. In some of these stories that we've heard and in others that we have not heard, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha appears in a place—although he is not actually there, but staying somewhere else. No matter how far it is, how distant, suddenly he appears and guides that person, for example as when Guru Shakyamuni was guiding his cousin or younger brother, who had incredible, unbelievable attachment. He couldn't be separated from his wife for even one minute. Whenever the time is suitable Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is there in front of that person to guide him.

If Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guides animals, then why not us, the human beings, who have met and who are practicing the BuddhaDharma? Why not? As to that, there is no question. Since we can't see him in the aspect of Buddha, he definitely has to be there in an ordinary aspect that we are able to see, an aspect that is suitable for our minds and guides us into merit. These stories are helpful for guru yoga realizations.

8th December am Eight Mahayana Precepts

The quotation from the *Bodhicaryavatara* that I mentioned yesterday shows how Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, by having generated bodhicitta, renouncing the self and cherishing others, offered extensive benefits for sentient beings in the past and is offering them even now. Continuously, even within one hour, one minute, one second, uncountable numbers of sentient beings are led into enlightenment, or led away from the lower realms into temporal happiness. Those who don't have this already are led into temporal happiness, and from there they are gradually led into enlightenment. Even now, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is doing extensive benefit for sentient beings, including us. Even today, he is guiding us. Because of his five hundred prayers made for us with the virtuous thought, the motivation of bodhicitta, we are able to generate the path in our mind. By bearing much hardship we take the Mahayana ordination, purifying negative karma and accumulating merit for the sake of sentient beings. If Guru Shakyamuni had not revealed such a simple method as this—eight precepts that can be taken by those who have taken Pratimoksha ordination, or thirty-six vows, even by laypeople—we would not have this opportunity.

Even though some monks and nuns who have taken Pratimoksha vows may not normally keep their precepts well, having taken the eight Mahayana precepts, which are for one day, during that day try to observe the precepts in the best purest way. Even if one is unable to commit oneself to keeping the Pratimoksha precepts, the thirty-six, two hundred and fifty, or three hundred and sixty vows for a lifetime, and even if those who have taken them can't live purely in the branches of those vows, by taking and keeping the eight Mahayana precepts for one day one accumulates much merit. By keeping the eight root precepts and eight branches purely one accumulates much merit.

Many laypeople can't take these vows, so normally they don't live even in the five precepts. By taking these eight Mahayana precepts, however, which are for one day, they have an opportunity to accumulate merit, even though they do not normally have this opportunity. Even though one doesn't normally observe or protect one's karma strictly by abstaining from creating negative karma, having taken the Mahayana ordination, that day one has to protect one's view or one's mind very strictly, one has to protect oneself from the negative karma created through disturbing thoughts. They are just a small number of precepts, taken for only one day.

If Guru Shakyamuni Buddha had not revealed and made such a method available, by now we would not have accumulated all this merit during the number of days that we have been taking the Mahayana ordination. Today we would not have accumulated all this merit, and neither would there be this opportunity in the future. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha has revealed this method, the eight Mahayana precepts, and by taking them we are protected—this is very good to think. We are protected from unbelievable sufferings even today by keeping these eight Mahayana precepts. If we were not taking them we might be doing the opposite, the eight negative karmas, such as killing. We might be doing the opposite of the four root precepts and the four branches, like drinking wine (this time not only wine, but all black food as well which pollutes body and mind), sitting on high expensive beds or thrones, or wearing ornaments with attachment, without Dharma motive.

Think of just one precept, the action of killing. The completion of the negative karma of killing has four results. We should think like this so that we feel the advantages of the precepts from the depths of our hearts, not just as the discipline of the course. By understanding and thinking in this way about how karma continues, how there is a continuation of these negative karmas, one generates the wish to take the precepts. Because of being under the control of negative karma we always circle in samsara, experiencing suffering. By thinking in this way, the wish arises to take the precepts, without any difficulty, with great happiness. No matter how hard it is to take them, the wish arises from the depths of the heart.

The completion of the negative karma of killing has four types of results. The ripening aspect result is throwing oneself into the suffering bodies of the suffering transmigrating beings, like animal, narak, or preta beings. Even when one is born in the realm of the happy transmigrating beings, as a human being, one experiences a result similar to the cause. If in the past one caused others to have a short life, in this life one experiences a short life, even though one was born as a human. If you caused someone in the past to have a short life, you have such a relationship with this sentient being and somehow the result is for oneself to receive harm from this person, which will cause you to have a short life. Even though one is born in the mother's womb as a human being, due to having caused others to have a short life, like through abortion, one experiences death without the opportunity to live a long time. If one has caused others to have a short life one is killed by poison, with weapons, by black magic, or by being executed. One has created the result, so this is experiencing the result similar to the cause. The result is similar to whatever you have done to

others. The result that you experience in this life is similar to that which you have caused to others in the past.

Because you have the impression of the habit of killing other sentient beings in the past, you continue to do so in this life. Even when one is born as a human being, one again does the action of killing. Not only killing creatures, but even human beings.

There are many people who have a strong habit of killing, even in their childhood. They like killing, hunting, and such things very much. Some people always kill, no matter how many times they have been in prison, no matter how many times they have been in trouble because of it. Somehow, uncontrollably it happens. Even though a person may think it is not right, somehow it happens uncontrollably many times in his life. Similarly with telling lies—someone has no control over lying, and is incredibly used to telling lies.

If a person in this life is creating negative karma, that in itself is creating the result similar to the cause in future lives. So again in another life one does these negative actions. Then doing that again becomes the cause of doing it in the next life. It goes on and on without end. As long as one does not change the mind, as long as we don't subdue the mind, we create the negative karmas again and again. As we accumulate these negative karmas we repeat them again and again due to previous karma. Like this one if continuously creating the cause of samsaric suffering, it is how one continuously circles in samsara.

Another result of the completion of the negative karma of killing is that even though one is born as a human being, one is born in a place where there is a lot of fighting, where there is a lot of danger to one's life. Much disease, much fighting, so many conditions for death. Also where there are many fears, in a kind of very dusty and ugly place.

If the negative karma of killing is done today when we have made the vow to abstain from this particular negative karma, we will have to experience the four types of suffering results. The worst thing is not the lower realms, the worst is that which keeps the continuation, creating the result similar to the cause. This continues as long as we don't break it or as long as we don't change the mind, diminishing or eliminating the disturbing thoughts. It is not only important to have a long life in this life, but whenever we are born as human beings we should know what the negative way to think is, and we should be able to think in a positive way. By following the negative way, the sufferings of samsara go on and on continuously, creating the result similar to the cause. But if we think in a positive way, the completed positive karma of keeping the precept of not killing has four results, opposite to the four negative ones. It causes long life. When one is born as a human being in the future, all those future lives are long lives. Also because of keeping the precept of not killing, because of living in this vow, in so many, many lifetimes one is able to enjoy the result, happiness.

If you don't keep this one precept of abstaining from killing it makes so much difference in this life and in many other lives, while abstaining from killing makes a big difference in this life and for many, uncountable numbers of future lives. Even this one precept gives the result up to omniscient mind, accomplishing all the works for other sentient beings, leading all sentient beings into the state of enlightenment. The advantage of keeping even one precept is that in all future lives one achieves the state of omniscient mind and leads all sentient beings into that state. It makes a big difference, there is a big difference between the two. The precepts that we are taking and keeping today are not just one, but eight root precepts and eight branches. You should think of the negative side, of all the

sufferings that come from not keeping these precepts and from doing negative actions. You should think of all the endless samsaric sufferings that arise from these negative karmas. Then think of the results of keeping the eight precepts, of all the happiness in uncountable numbers of future lives up to omniscient mind, accomplishing the works of leading all sentient beings into enlightenment. There are incredible differences.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha has made the eight Mahayana precepts for one day possible. Even by our keeping these precepts just today, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha protects us from creating all four types of suffering results—like rebirth in the lower realms and the undesirable results, especially creating the result similar to the cause. Without keeping precepts we will create negative karma again and again in all coming future lives, even though we are born as humans. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is guiding and protecting us from the continual suffering results and from the cause, continuously creating negative karmas. Having made the prayer, and by revealing this method, and by guiding us in being able to keep the precepts, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is leading us from happiness to happiness. That is how he is guiding us to the state of omniscient mind. All the skillful works of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha guiding all sentient beings, including us, from suffering and leading us gradually to enlightenment, are by the power of bodhicitta, renouncing the self and cherishing others.

If one is concerned about the happiness of others, if one wants to benefit sentient beings, the best way to offer benefit is by keeping and living in the vows, living in the righteous law and doing correct actions. “Righteous law—” since we are taking these vows for the sake of sentient beings, we should not only stop harming others, but also by taking these precepts we are doing the work of offering benefit to all sentient beings. Without living in the precepts it is not possible to avoid harming others, besides not giving benefit to others.

Even if one doesn’t normally do the actions of killing, telling lies, stealing etc, if one doesn’t live in the vows, if one doesn’t take the commitment in the presence of the holy object, there is no merit. There is not the good karma of living in the vow, in the commitments. One person may make the vow to be a butcher, to kill animals or to kill human beings. One who has committed himself, who has made a vow to create negative karma, for him every day, hour, minute, month, or year the negative karma is continuously increasing. In a similar way, by living in the vow, by making a commitment in the presence of the holy object, the merit is continuously increasing. Even though one may not be doing the negative actions of body and speech in one’s everyday life anyway, still by living in the vows there is merit continuously increasing, even if one becomes unconscious, even during sleep. Even if one doesn’t meditate, or read Dharma scriptures, or create other particularly virtuous actions, still there is continuous merit. Even if one becomes unconscious just after having taken the ordination until the following morning, even if you sleep from now until tomorrow morning, continuously there is merit. There are big differences between living and not living in the vows, even though one doesn’t normally do actions like killing.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha changed his mind, renouncing the self and cherishing others, and preserved and protected the eight Mahayana precepts for the sake of sentient beings and was able to offer extensive benefit to others. We do the same thing. If we change our mind from this selfish attitude and keep the eight precepts, we create the cause to achieve omniscient mind and to do extensive works for all sentient beings, to fulfill their every wish for happiness.

When you think of all the advantages that we are receiving you can see that we have an incredibly

good opportunity to create the cause of happiness. You see, the result of these eight precepts is a happiness that we can't imagine. Being able to create the cause of these good karmas, being able to have the opportunity of taking the eight Mahayana precepts revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha—all this happened through the kindness of sentient beings. Without depending on the kindness of all sentient beings there would be no Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, no eight Mahayana precepts. There would be no opportunity for us to keep the eight Mahayana precepts today and to accumulate such an incredible amount of merit, no opportunity.

Feeling from the heart, knowing, recognizing that I have received all these incredible opportunities through the kindness of sentient beings, think that I must achieve omniscient mind to free all sentient beings from suffering and lead them into the state of omniscient mind, therefore, I am going to take the eight Mahayana precepts.

If, when you take ordination you have a problem with the limbs or the body, like a disease, then of course, there is no choice, you can't do prostrations. But otherwise you should do them. You see, the object of the prostrations is Chenrezig.

If you believe in the good heart, believing that the good heart and patience exist, if there is a belief, a faith, then that is something you can develop in yourself. Even if you don't meditate, even if you are not a meditator, when you see a wounded dog or a sick person you sometimes feel some compassion. You think, "What can I offer? What help can I give?" for that sentient being, for that animal, for that person. Sometimes, a little bit of compassion rises even though you are not usually a meditator of the graduated path to enlightenment, even if you haven't met BuddhaDharma. For sure this compassion can be developed. Sometimes it decreases, sometimes it increases. By meditating on lamrim, on bodhicitta, by thinking of the suffering of others, we generate a little bit of compassion. By thinking of the kindness of others we generate a little thought of loving kindness.

From this small experience in your daily life, you can figure out that this love and compassion definitely can be developed if one tries. It can be made greater so that it covers all sentient beings in the same way, like your compassion for that wounded dog or for that beggar. It is just a matter of understanding the sufferings of others, of those rich and worldly people, just a matter of understanding their kindness, seeing what they have done for you. Since there is a way to develop compassion there exists an ultimate, complete, great compassion that covers all sentient beings. The completion of our training should be this.

In a similar way, there is also the completion of understanding. It just depends on what method you use to increase your understanding. If the method you are using doesn't diminish the obscurations, that method doesn't help you to complete the understanding. If it is a method that diminishes the obscurations then it helps to complete your understanding. There is a Buddha; from this small experience you can figure out there is a Buddha and omniscient mind, infinite compassion covering all sentient beings.

The Buddhas have completed the mind training of compassion. The compassion of all the enlightened beings, the Buddhas, manifested in Chenrezig, the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed aspect of Chenrezig. (I will not mention that particular story here). We are taking the ordination in the presence of that great compassion, which has manifested in this particular form for the sake of guiding sentient beings. This is the object of prostration. In order to become like that, in order to reduce and diminish the selfish attitude, in order to develop compassion for all sentient beings, one

completes the mind training of compassion and understanding, so that one can do perfect works for others; like Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, like Chenrezig. For that reason one is doing prostrations, purifying obscurations.

You should be able to figure out and develop the faith that this compassion and understanding can be developed in yourself from these experiences, since it is the nature of the mind. There is a way to increase compassion so that it becomes greater and greater, covering more and more sentient beings. Generally, it is like this: you stop creating your own merit by not doing prostrations, you stop the cause for developing the mind. Generally, it is like this. If there is no disease, or anything in particular that keeps one from doing prostrations, one should do prostrations. If there is something physically wrong, of course until one has recovered one can't do prostrations. One should not put notes of the Dharma teachings or texts on the ground without having a cloth, something clean underneath. One should not put Dharma texts, teachings, or prayers on the ground. Without speaking in detail of the results of negative karma, you should be aware that the words written there reveal the method, the various practices of the path to enlightenment. These are the teachings revealed by Buddha explaining the path that frees one from samsaric suffering, leading one into the state of omniscient mind.

When we take refuge in the Dharma, one of the precepts of refuge is to keep Dharma books in a clean and high place. If one can't put them in a high place one should at least have some cloth underneath them, we should show respect in this way. Showing disrespect, like putting Dharma material on cushions, or on something that you place underneath yourself, or by putting things on top of them, or by putting them on the dirty ground, pollutes the mind. Respecting the Dharma awakens the mind, disrespecting it pollutes the mind. The mind becomes more and more ignorant to understand Dharma. One can't hear the teaching or can't comprehend the words. Even if one is able to understand the words one can't comprehend the meaning, can't follow the meaning. Even though one can follow the words one can't understand the meaning. One has difficulties in realizing the meaning. Again, that is dependent arising.

How does that work? By being respectful how does it affect the mind? How? It is the same question as: why does that leaf fall down from the tree? If you ask that question it is the same thing. Why does this fruit fall down from the tree? Why is this light working? If you ask the question, why? Like that it is the same thing. Why are you eating food? Why should death have to happen if we stop eating? Why? That is the same thing, it is all dependent arising. Something that is not dependent arising doesn't work, doesn't happen in this way as I told you yesterday.

It doesn't matter what you do after the course, but during the course this is also part of the discipline. After the course you can do whatever you want, but I don't want to see things like this, have them in my view. That is also part of the discipline of the course. When one day the course is finished it is up to you to do what you want to do. We do some meditation, we are trying to meditate on the words while at the same time we are creating hindrances for the development of our minds. This doesn't make sense. It is like when elephants are washing. The elephant goes onto the water, then when he comes out again he rolls his body in the dust. In one way we are trying to develop mind while in another way we are creating the causes for hindrances to the development of our minds. If you want to develop your mind, if you want mind peace, you should know all the hindrances.

If you don't know about the hindrances you should ask somebody who knows correctly. If you don't know, of course you have to take refuge in someone else who has more understanding, correct understanding. What to do? If you have no understanding, if you are ignorant, what can you do? There is no choice, without relying upon others there is no hope of developing your mind.

You should make the hindrances fewer and fewer. Making the hindrances list is in itself a method to develop the mind. Whether you think of mind peace or whether your concern is the realization of the graduated path to enlightenment, it is the same thing.

The Ceremony

Please dedicate all the three times merit accumulated by you, dedicate today's merit of having taken ordination by looking at yourself as illusory, and the merit as illusory, and the action of dedication as illusory. If you don't know how to think that then think "merely labeled." "I," the person who dedicates, is merely labeled, the action of dedication is merely labeled, and the merit is merely labeled, the seed that brings happiness, the virtuous thought that brings happiness is merely labeled, the sentient beings are merely labeled, enlightenment is merely labeled. By keeping constant awareness of this, dedicate the merits.

Due to all these merits may all the parents, the father and mother sentient beings, have happiness. May the realms of the suffering transmigrating beings be empty forever. When thinking that sentient beings should be happy you should think of enlightenment, not just of the temporal happiness of having possessions, or a boyfriend, or a girlfriend, or something like that. You should not think of just that. The connotation of that is limited happiness, what is meant when we talk about happiness in the West, you know. Wherever there are bodhisattvas may all their prayers be swiftly fulfilled.

8th December am

The other day I quoted what the great bodhisattva Shantideva said in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, "Whatever happiness there is in the world comes from wishing others to be happy. Whatever suffering there is in the world comes from wishing happiness for the self. What need is there to say more? Look at the difference between the child doing work for himself and the mighty ones doing works for others."

This short quotation explains the shortcomings of the selfish attitude and the advantages of cherishing others. If you cherish yourself, if you seek always happiness for yourself, what happens? How has it been so far? What is happening now? What will happen in the future? If, instead of cherishing yourself, you cherish others, it becomes easy to predict. It is easy to understand. You don't need to check, you don't need to use astrology, observations, or clairvoyance, or whatever. It is simple. It is the way Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Shantideva say in the teachings. How has life been so far? This is it. From birth until now, how has it been? I guess you have thought about it many times, so look back at your experiences.

The experience of this life has been so much confusion, so many problems. The three poisonous minds and all the disturbing thoughts, like jealousy and pride, have been rising uncontrollably. The mind has always been sick, all the time. Maybe the body wasn't always sick, but the mind has always been sick with the selfish attitude and disturbing thoughts.

From understanding the nature of this life, we see how we don't have control over the mind. From this we can guess how our past lives must have been full of suffering. If there was no true cause of suffering, if there was no selfish attitude last year, if those disturbing thoughts had been stopped, didn't exist last year, there would be no reason that one should have to experience unhappiness today or this year. There would be no reason that one should have to experience suffering or problems. If the cause, the root of the problem, didn't exist last year, there would be no reason that one should experience suffering this year. There would be nothing that could make the true cause of suffering come into existence again if it didn't have continuation. There would be no cause or condition causing the root of the problems to rise. There would be no creator of the problems, no doer or creator of the root of the problem.

If the problems, the true suffering did not depend on the true cause of suffering, if they could rise without a cause one would be experiencing the result, the suffering, without having created its cause, the karma. In that case it would be possible for the types of plants that need seed and roots in order to grow without a root and without a seed. Wherever you would wish it to grow it could grow there, without depending on the seed and the root—on the tables, in space. Then it wouldn't make sense to follow the true path. It wouldn't make sense, because whether you were following the true path or not, when suffering came, it would come. Since it wouldn't depend on the true cause of suffering, since it would be independent, self-existent, it wouldn't make sense to follow the true path. Those who followed and generated the path would also experience true sufferings. Even when they had achieved the true cessation of suffering it would be possible for them to experience suffering.

It would be like this: when we take medicine to stop a fever it stops it for a while, but it doesn't mean that you won't experience a fever ever again. It would be like that. Practicing the path wouldn't have great meaning. Even if one achieved the cessation of suffering, it would be temporary, like the fever. It would be like temporarily stopping a disease. Then there wouldn't be much difference between a person who does not practice Dharma, who does not follow a spiritual path at all, and a person who does. There would not be much difference since the person who practiced and generated the path and achieved the cessation of suffering would have to experience suffering again. Since the problem didn't depend on a cause it would be possible for that attainer to experience suffering again. It would be possible since the suffering didn't depend on the cause of the ignorance clinging to a truly existing "I" and the disturbing thoughts.

That way you have no choice when the suffering comes, it comes. It is not dependent on a cause, but independent—when it comes, it comes. You experience it. There is nothing you can do except just experience it. Just live, with go with it. That is the only method that is left. In that way it is similar to when there is a disease. Take one example, the problem of disease. If it didn't depend on a true cause of suffering, the ignorance of the true existence, clinging to true existence, if the disease was independent, even medicine wouldn't work. There would be no possibility at all of outside conditions, like medicine, making changes in the internal physical condition so that the disease or pain would become less. If it was independent, not depending on causes and conditions, this could not happen. Following the spiritual path or practicing the true path in order to achieve the complete, everlasting release from samsara wouldn't have any special meaning if one still went on suffering in samsara, even after having accomplished the true path. If the true cause of suffering came back again.

This is just a rough idea. As I explained at the beginning of the course, if you want a detailed, extensive explanation you should read one of the five great treatises of sutra. If you want to

understand clearly, in detail, with all the logic involved you should study the logic of the text *The Clear Commentary of the Valid Mind*. You should study this completely. Then with all this knowledge you can check—the way this life is, how one’s past life has been, how it has been full of suffering, under the control of karma and disturbing thoughts.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Shantideva have already predicted in the teachings that when one always follows the selfish attitude, from that selfish attitude problems will come. If you live with the selfish attitude all the time it shows that that is how your past life has also been. There have always been so many problems, the mind has always been so confused, so how are the future lives going to turn out? How will they be? Is there going to be greater happiness?

What Shantideva is saying is that whether the next year, the coming years, or coming lives are going to have greater happiness or greater problems is completely dependent on oneself, completely dependent on now, today, on this present moment, this present life. It depends on whether even today you are going to take the side of cherishing others; it depends on which side you are on. Which side you are going to be on in the future depends on determining today how you are going to spend this life, each hour. We are making the choice of whether life is going to be more on the side of the thought of cherishing others or more on the side of cherishing oneself, having the selfish attitude. Which way, which side do you want to follow?

Here is the thought of cherishing others and here is the thought of cherishing oneself. First, in order to make the decision you have to think, “If I follow the selfish attitude what advantages are there? Are there any advantages or not?” Think about the past. In the past we have always been dedicating our lives to the selfish attitude, we have always been taking the side of the selfish attitude.

Remember, think of how it has been since the time of birth, since beginningless rebirths in samsara. Check if there are any advantages. Compare how much advantage comes from the thought of cherishing oneself and how much from cherishing others. See how many advantages there are and how many shortcomings. Check if there is any advantage or benefit received by taking the side of and working for the selfish attitude. Think, is there any benefit that I can see from that? Do the same thing with the thought of cherishing others. Examine the benefits for yourself and the benefits for others—which attitude offers more for yourself and for other sentient beings? It is simple, which makes life happier? Think, which makes my own life and the life of others happier?

I mentioned in yesterday’s lecture, and this morning’s motivation of the ordination, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s work for sentient beings, the unbelievable benefits that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha offers. All this that he has done for sentient beings is the advantage, the benefit of cherishing others. All of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s incredible works, the completion of all realizations, the cessation of all obscurations, and the incredible benefits for other sentient beings came from cherishing others. That is one way of thinking and meditating.

It is also very good to read Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s biography, the holy deeds of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. It is extremely beneficial for the mind, and it helps to generate bodhicitta. In order to understand how to accomplish peace of mind, how to practice Dharma, just look Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. One way of getting the answer is by trying to understand the biography of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, reading about his holy actions, about the bodhisattva’s ten thousand incredible practices of renouncing the self and cherishing others. Also by reading about the great yogi, Milarepa, and other enlightened beings who have given extensive benefits to sentient beings,

who have done extensive works for sentient beings. Those biographies you can read and then use as an example. That is it—that is how to practice Dharma. That is how to accomplish peace of mind, the everlasting peace of mind, if one is concerned about this. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Milarepa's biographies show that they did incredibly extensive works for sentient beings, which all came from cherishing others. That is one way to understand and to realize the benefits of cherishing others.

There are also the ten benefits of Bodhicitta that are explained in the lamrim, in the outlines of the graduated path to enlightenment.

If one has the thought of cherishing others and renouncing oneself, one enters the Mahayana path, one has entered the door of the path to enlightenment. Even if one generated bodhicitta just an hour ago, renouncing oneself and cherishing others, one can overshadow the arhats through one's caste. This is not the physical caste but the quality of mind. With bodhicitta you surpass the arhats as, for instance, a king surpasses his ministers and everybody else. One becomes the best, the sublime object of offerings for other sentient beings by having bodhicitta, by having this realization of renouncing oneself and cherishing others. Sentient beings accumulate much more merit by making offerings to you, incredible merit. The higher the realizations you have, the more merits others accumulate. It gives them the opportunity to accumulate more merits. Just by that realization existing in yourself, even without your giving teachings it benefits others incredibly.

In the lamrim outline, in the commentary on lamrim it is said like this (first I'll mention the negative karma): the karma that arises from looking at a bodhisattva in a bad, disrespectful manner, with disrespect, looking with evil eyes, is much heavier than the karma that arises from taking out the eyes of all the creatures on this earth. Because of the realizations there is the power of the object. It is similar with Buddha. Looking at a bodhisattva with a calm and peaceful mind brings much more merit than making charity of your eyes to all human beings and creatures on this earth. Like this there are big differences.

Just having the realization of bodhicitta gives an incredible opportunity for others to accumulate the cause of happiness. There are about ten benefits—quickly finishing the accumulation of merits, purifying the obscurations, and quickly becoming enlightened. There are about ten. Those are also among the advantages of renouncing oneself and cherishing others.

Even when a person doesn't have bodhicitta, but just a good heart and a generous mind, he has incredible peace in his relationship with others, in getting along with others. There is much happiness in his relationships with others. Wherever the person goes he has a happy mind, he is always happy. The more generous he is, the more good heart and concern for others he has, the less people harm him, the fewer enemies there will be. Everybody likes him. The more good heart he has the more friends he will have, the more people there will be to help him. Even though he doesn't need help, people want to help him, and even though he doesn't want reputation people offer reputation—even though he renounces reputation, people will offer it. All those examples that worldly people normally talk about. Not a bodhisattva, just an ordinary being. Those are also the benefits of cherishing others.

8th December pm

You should examine in different ways the benefits of the thought of cherishing others, trying to understand the benefits of taking the side of the thought of cherishing others. As Shantideva said in the quotation that I mentioned from the *Bodhicaryavatara*, by generating the thought of cherishing others one is able to achieve all those incredible qualities, psychic powers, and understanding of the bodhisattvas, and the infinite qualities of the Buddha's holy mind, the understandings, the holy speech, and the holy body. One is able to do extensive works for sentient beings—all this arises from the thought of cherishing others, from having the realization of bodhicitta.

All one's three time happiness has come from virtue. Virtue, the Dharma, which is the holy actions of Buddha, came from Buddha. Buddha came from the root, the thought, came from bodhisattva. Bodhisattva came from the root, the bodhicitta, cherishing others. So all one's three time happiness, all the happiness of all sentient beings, came from the root, bodhicitta. Because of all these incredible advantages of the thought of cherishing others one should cherish them, sentient beings.

Bodhicitta, renouncing self and cherishing others, is received by depending on the kindness, on the existence of each of the suffering sentient beings. In this way, one can see that one's own three times happiness, temporal and ultimate happiness, completely came from and was received by depending on each of sentient being. All this three times' happiness, all the perfections that one has, are received completely by depending on this enemy, the one who dislikes me—all is received by depending on each of sentient being. As I mentioned before, we accomplish the three great purposes by depending on sentient beings, by depending on each of the sentient beings, on their kindness.

Even today's enjoyment, one grain of rice, one plate of rice, for example, we received through the kindness of others. For this one grain of rice on one's plate an unbelievable number of creatures suffered when the fields were plowed and fertilized by human beings with animals or machines. The human beings and animals who fertilized the land had to kill all these creatures. When the stems were growing, when they put water, when they transplanted and moved the plants to different places—at different stages of growth, again and again, there was work to produce grain. Both animals and humans had to bear much hardship of heat and cold. Humans created much negative karma by harming and torturing the animals. In primitive places people are torturing animals to plow and fertilize the land. In the West, human beings are using machines that kill billions and billions of creatures, worms, ants, and so forth. Entire anthills get destroyed and burnt when they start to make fields, when the forest is burnt down. For even one grain of rice, that many sentient beings suffered and that many sentient beings created negative karma, harming and killing others—so many unbelievable sufferings came from this one grain of rice.

This one grain of rice came from another grain of rice and again, so many sentient beings suffered or created negative karma. That rice grain came from another—many uncountable numbers suffered or created negative karma. If you think of the whole continuation like this, if you go back you see that so many creatures suffered or created negative karma for that. Billions and billions. It becomes unbearable to eat, unbearable to chew. There is not just one grain of rice in the plate, there are so many. If you eat three plates of rice, then more.

After so many billions and billions suffered so much and even died, others still created negative karma for this. In this country people take the husk off by threshing in a wooden pot, with sticks. After the rice is ripe the human beings collect it, they make it ready for you to buy. Especially in the

supermarket, there is no dust, not even dirt, it is already cleaned, the fruit, everything, there is not even old fruit. Already so many human beings worked for that.

However, the person who eats it—who is this? One person, that is oneself. It is similar with a piece of vegetable, the same thing. At the beginning, the middle, and at the end, as it is fertilized and so forth, at so many times so many orators got killed, by things such as spraying. Without spraying, the creatures eat the plants so that you don't get them. The whole thing gets eaten by different insects. When the farmers spray so many insects die. If you eat this with a selfish attitude what happens? When you think like that you are unable to eat even one grain of rice. How dare one eat with a selfish attitude, especially with the attitude that is concerned only for one's own happiness, never concerned about all those who suffered, those who died, those who created negative karma. One can't survive without eating, so when eating even today's lunch one should think how it is received by depending on the kindness of all sentient beings. There is no way that you can relax after eating this—how can you? How can you sit without doing something that benefits them? Even if you can't benefit all sentient beings you have got to do something at least for those from whom you have received your lunch today, your means of living, your comfort, and your enjoyments. You can't just relax, you can't just live life having no thought for sentient beings, having no thought except the selfish attitude. "When can I be happy? Oh, now I am comfortable, now I am happy!" You are satisfied if you are happy, then it is okay. That's it. If you have comfort, that's it. That is unbelievable, incredible, it is like not having mind. Having body, but not having mind. It is an incredibly poor and upsetting attitude, incredibly selfish, it makes tears come out, you know. In the winter time we have to wear warm coats, or cloth made of silk. Many of the clothes that one wears came from silkworms. I heard that they have to put the silkworms in boiling water in order to get the very long threads. If they cut the outside cover the threads get very short, if they take the worm out and cut it. All this beautiful cloth that we decorate the house with or that we wear for our comfort to protect our body, those woolen coats that we wear, all this we got by torturing animals, by taking their skins without choice when the animal is hunted or killed.

If there is one tiny thorn going inside our flesh, how painful it is! When one tiny thorn goes inside the flesh, under the feet or into the hands, how painful it is! We can't stand not taking it out. We can't relax. As quickly as possible we try to find a tool, something to take it out. You can't imagine what it must be like when an animal is killed. Other sentient beings, human beings are creating negative karma by making the animals experience much pain in order to get those warm coats that we wear in the winter, and all the leather clothes that are used for our comfort.

Also the water. Now that they have developed machines to see those tiny creatures in the water, it is easy to believe in them, easy to understand, because you see them through the machines, even though you can't see them with the physical eye. By depending on these machines you can see so many tiny creatures. Even to make one cup of tea so many tiny creatures have to die.

So many people worked for our material possessions, those enjoyments such as clothes and machines. Different companies are put together by sentient beings, it is kind of endless. If you think back on how all these comforts and the happiness that you have now are dependent on the kindness of so many sentient beings, it is incredible. These comforts are dependent on so many human beings, so many sentient beings. In many places this animal who has a long neck, the camel, the donkeys or the horses are tortured day after day through having to transport many things. Even if things are transported by machines still people put these machines together with so much hardship. If you think in detail like this, if you think of the evolution, of the enjoyments and all the comforts

that you have in the house, the chairs, tables, machines, the whole thing, if you think back you see how all this comfort and all these things are dependent on so many. The more you think back, the more you see how everything is dependent on the kindness of sentient beings.

Somebody put together a shop. Somebody bought it from a company, then put it together, arranged it well and made it into a supermarket, so that you don't use extra expense, effort, and time: you get everything in putting together these ideas. Finally, it was all put together, was made available for oneself.

It should be easier to remember the kindness of sentient beings in the West, because there are more enjoyments there. This is what I think. It looks like realizing the kindness of sentient beings is easier in the East, but the comforts are more in the West. It looks like the other way around. There is more enjoyment in the West. There are so many machines, even escalators so that you don't need to walk. So many things, sentient beings made it so easy for you. The cars, airplanes, all these things help to fulfill your wish quickly, whatever comforts or happiness you are seeking you can get them easily, more quickly. All this happened by the kindness of sentient beings. The house that one lives in warm and comfortably and where one's life is protected from danger and harm, where one is protected from danger and harm, where one is protected from the autumn cold and the rain, even for one to have this so many creatures suffered. With much hardship people built that house. It is even good to think of the whole evolution of a chocolate, like of its cover, even just one small piece is so beautifully made for our comfort and enjoyment, as good as possible. Even just thinking of that whole evolution you see how many people worked on the cover and on the chocolate inside. There is nothing, no enjoyment, place, food, clothing, there is not one single comfort, there is not one single enjoyment that you have received without other sentient beings suffering. Without depending on other beings creating negative karma there would be not one single enjoyment, not one single comfort. We should meditate like this concerning our food and the cooks and workers who put it together here in such a short time. Think how it came from Katmandu, from the shops, and how people put it together there, and before that it came from the various mountains and farmers who work so hard. We should think like this.

What can you do? You want to benefit all these sentient beings from whom you have received all these enjoyments, so now, what can you do for them? How can you benefit them? What benefit can you offer from your side? You should think what benefit you can offer them. Are you concerned about doing something in turn to benefit all these beings? Think from the heart. This is no particular religious belief, you can see with your eyes how everything, all your comforts, came from the kindness of all sentient beings. That should be very clear. Are you able to ignore them, their kindness and their suffering? Ignore, or do something.

The conclusion is: because of all these reasons, because all the happiness and comforts are received by the kindness of sentient beings, one should cherish them. Your reason for cherishing others should not only be the incredible advantages of bodhicitta, you should also cherish others because of the reasons that I just mentioned. One should realize how precious sentient beings are.

What is called "I" is one person. Now there are two other people who are called "you." Who is more important, this one person? Or are these two people are more important? Is it more important to work to obtain happiness and to eliminate the suffering of this one person, or is it more important to obtain the happiness and eliminate the suffering of these two people, these two

sentient beings? Which is more important, which are you going to choose, for whom are you going to work from now on?

Of course, even in the world when they vote for president, if there is one more person who voted for one candidate, one more person who wants him to become president then he wins. Let's say one candidate has one hundred votes, while the other has ninety-nine votes. There are ninety-nine people who want one candidate and one hundred people who want the other. So he who has one hundred votes becomes president. Where there is the greatest number that becomes the most important group. That group has most power, so the power, the right is given to them.

So if there are one hundred people in one group and on the other side there is only one person, for whom are you going to work? For the one hundred sentient beings or that one person, even if that one person is you, not some other sentient being, but yourself? Of course the hundred sentient beings are more important, no comparison. If the number is a billion, no question. Actually the others are uncountable in numbers. Even just the human beings on this planet, on this particular earth, and in other universes are uncountable. The animals are uncountable, the beings in the six realms are uncountable. Now you can see that, of course, without doubt, without any question if it is most important for them, the uncountable numbers of sentient beings, to be happy and free from suffering. They are much more important than this person who is you. Even if this one sentient being is a separate being and not yourself, it is still more important to work for the rest, the billions, the uncountable numbers of sentient beings. It is more important to work to obtain happiness for them than for just this one sentient being, it is much more worthwhile to give up this one sentient being than give up a billion.

If you compare this one sentient being that is yourself to a hundred sentient beings, or even just two, there is no question. You get completely lost. You are like an atom. This earth is made of numberless atoms, one atom is nothing. When we say "others," when we consider other sentient beings, this one person, the self, the "I" becomes insignificant, gets completely lost, nothing. Since the "I" the self is only one person, no matter how greatly happy one is, it is not a surprise, it is nothing to rejoice in, because that is just one person, just oneself. There is nothing to be excited about. Even if you have thousands of problems, it is just one person, oneself. There is nothing to be that much shocked about, nothing to be that much worried about. It is just one person, this "I" that is lost when you think of others, completely insignificant, completely unimportant.

Even without thinking how all sufferings and problems come from the selfish attitude, from following the selfish attitude, just by considering the numbers one sees that working for oneself is worthless. Without any other type of reasoning, just by thinking of the number of others you see that there is no worth at all in working for the self. To work for oneself has not the slightest worth. You see the value and the importance of working for other sentient beings, eliminating their suffering and obtaining happiness for them.

How are you going to benefit sentient beings? What are you going to do to benefit the beings from whom you have received all comforts, food, and enjoyments? How are you going to benefit all those who died or created negative karma? The best benefit one can offer is to help all sentient beings be free from suffering forever and be in happiness forever, which is what they wish. The only way to free them from all suffering and lead them into sublime happiness is through Dharma. There is no way except the holy Dharma through which one can help all sentient beings and benefit them in this

way—no way other than the holy Dharma. The only way is for oneself to achieve omniscient mind in order to guide them and to reveal the path.

Check if there is any other way you can help them, besides practicing the holy Dharma? Is there any other way by which you can give this benefit, the ultimate benefit? Check, think. Besides practicing the holy Dharma, what is there for you to offer of the highest benefit for sentient beings? What else? Is there anything greater than that? Check. Anything better than practicing the holy Dharma, subduing one's own mind? Check.

The most learned and skillful person gives up the lesser number and does the work for the greatest number of people. If there has to be a choice, give up the lesser number and do the work for the greater number of sentient beings. Give up the small, meaningful actions and do the greatest meaningful actions. This is the intelligent person, this is the skillful person.

9th December pm

I thought I would mention how to transform the actions of eating and drinking into virtue.

If, during the breaktime, one does the actions of eating and drinking with attachment, that itself is the cause of samsara, a cause to be born as a preta whose main suffering is hunger and thirst. For hundreds and thousands of years you live with that body, experiencing these sufferings.

When one, as a practitioner of the lesser vehicle, uses these enjoyments, one uses them as medicine to protect one's body in order to be able to practice Dharma. Not to beautify the body, not for the purpose of becoming fat. (I think that to try very much to become fat is not so much a problem in the West.) Anyway, Nagarjuna advised, "Take the food as medicine without attachment or hatred and not for the purpose of becoming fat or flexible." (I think the last one means in order to look beautiful. I am not a hundred percent sure.) One should eat just so that the body is able to survive, in order to practice the holy Dharma. One should take the enjoyments of food and drink without the attitude of attachment and disturbing thought. That is the fundamental practice.

As a practitioner of the Mahayana teachings one uses these enjoyments, received by the kindness of sentient beings, without a selfish attitude. Without a selfish attitude one enjoys the temporal pleasures, like food, drink, clothes, and other enjoyments. The previous one, that of the Lesser Vehicle, tries as much as possible to avoid the attitudes of attachment and hatred, the attitude of disturbing thoughts.

Then there is a much more skillful, profound method wherein you use the actions, the enjoyments of eating, drinking, clothes, and place as a quick path to enlightenment. The body that uses these enjoyments becomes other than this ordinary body. One has to make completely stop the impure, ordinary view, the conception of oneself as an ordinary person, the ordinary view that sees the "I" as ordinary—the conception that clings to that as well as the body has to be completely and perfectly emptied. Then you create a pure base. You empty the impure aggregates and generate pure aggregates. You create a pure base, the unification of the pure mind and body, the pure holy mind and holy body of the deity, that particular aspect of Buddha. Then all twenty-four hours, day and night, all the time you do the practice of the deity that you are trying to become, the particular aspect of Buddha with whom you have a closer karmic contact, with whom you are trying to become oneness. So the "I" that is imputed is the pure one, the pure "I" which is labeled on the pure

aggregates. Not the previous impure one, one can't use the enjoyments with the impure "I." Even the food is not the ordinary food, not this food that appears to the ordinary mind, that the ordinary mind clings to, not that one, the other one. There is a particular, very profound, very secret and skillful meditation in the mahaanuttara yoga tantra. You make the ordinary food empty and then you transform it into nectar, as it is explained in the mahaanuttara yoga tantra teachings, the highest yoga, the yoga practice of that deity, that particular aspect of Buddha.

Even this blessing of the food contains the whole explanation of the tantra path, the mahaanuttara tantra path, which grants enlightenment in one brief lifetime. The whole path is signified in this meditation of blessing the food. Similarly, you utilize the place, clothes, everything in the path to achieve the two *kayas*, the *Dharmakaya* and the *rupakaya*.

It is also a precept, it is also a tantric vow that one who has taken mahaanuttara yoga tantra initiation and the bodhisattva vows should completely dedicate to all sentient beings his three doors of body, speech, and mind, all enjoyments of place and possessions, everything, no matter how many billion, trillion dollars he has in the bank. There is a practice called the *Six Session Yoga Practice*, which has to do with a prayer made in order not to forget the practice of the bodhisattva's holy deeds and the practices of tantra. There should always be the thought, there should be the continual awareness that the whole thing belongs to others, it is not mine, it belongs to others. All the time, constantly one should be aware that the whole thing, the whole progression, all the three time's merits, even the merit of one's body, speech, and mind belong to others, there is not the slightest atom possessed by the self, that is for the self first to use. This is the bodhisattva's path. Even if one doesn't have the realization of bodhicitta one should practice this awareness. One should practice never to let oneself be possessed by the selfish attitude, and then use all these, the merit, possessions, and the three doors, for others.

In one section of the *Bodhicharyavatara* it is said (I don't remember it word by word), that all these things, one's body and possessions, have already been dedicated, have already been given to sentient beings, so how dare one use them for oneself? How dare one possess these things? When one recites the words of the prayer of the *Six Session Yoga*, one is dedicating, three times in the morning and three times at night. As one recites this prayer, saying the words, one has to dedicate the whole thing to sentient beings, one has to give up everything for sentient beings.

According to the tantra vows, as a tantric practitioner one always has to practice the pure view, always trying not to separate oneself from the pure view. With a pure view and pure thoughts, oneself has the pure form of the deity while the place is the mandala. One has to practice like this even if one has not got the stability of concentration, even if one has not generated the realization of the graduated path of generation, the first stage of the mahaanuttara yoga tantra path. In order to practice awareness, remembering the practice of the bodhisattva's actions and the fundamental practice of tantra this prayer, the *Six Session Yoga* is recited three times in the morning and three times at night.

All the profound tantra practices are done on the basis of the bodhisattva's practices, the practices of the bodhisattva's holy actions. As you wish to achieve the state of omniscient mind in order to offer extensive benefit to all sentient beings, as you wish to train your mind in bodhicitta, it is very good to remember first, as I mentioned yesterday, where your enjoyments came from. They were received through so many mother sentient beings suffering or creating much negative karma. Remember their kindness and think that the sublime, greatest benefit for these sentient beings from

whom I have received these enjoyments, and the greatest benefit for all other sentient beings, is nothing but the holy Dharma. Then generate the motivation of bodhicitta, thinking, “I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for these sentient beings and for everybody else, therefore I am going to make this food offering to the Buddha.”

I think I have mentioned once or twice the recent lineage lama of the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, the root guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s root gurus. One disciple was a certain Rinpoche. One day this lama came to make offerings of realizations to Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. I don’t remember if it was the first time this lama came to see him, or if it was after having taken teachings from Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. I don’t remember exactly. However, when this lama came to see him, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo was having his meal. He was eating a particular, special Tibetan food, called *pak*. It is barley flour, or *tsampa*, mixed with Tibetan tea in a bowl. Rinpoche was having his meal and that other lama came to explain his achievements. He said, “I have achieved single-pointed concentration, I have accomplished this.” Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo answered, “Even if you have the realization of single-pointed concentration which lasts without any distractions for eons, there is no comparison between your realization and my eating one ball of tsampa.” (The way of eating this food is to mix the tsampa and tea together in your bowl, then roll it into small balls with your hands and eat it like that.) Rinpoche said, “The advantage of your realizations can’t compare to my one action of eating one ball of tsampa.”

This was Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo expressing his having the realization of bodhicitta. For beings such as bodhisattvas, even each single act of breathing, each movement of the body, each action of eating is done purely for others, without the slightest stain of the selfish attitude. Every single action becomes a cause to benefit and to free each and every sentient being from suffering and to lead them to omniscient mind. The bodhisattvas themselves also accumulate infinite merit equaling infinite space.

That other lama had the realization of single-pointed concentration, but there was no bodhicitta, so even if he does single-pointed concentration for one eon without any hindrances, he can’t even accomplish the merit that a bodhisattva achieves when he drinks one mouthful of tea that a bodhisattva accumulates by taking one drop of tea or one ball of tsampa. The amount of merit that a bodhisattva accumulates through just one action, another person, because of not having bodhicitta, can’t accomplish in a thousand eons, even though he has incredible realizations, like the five types of clairvoyance. It is also said in the sutra teachings that even if one makes offerings amounting to three thousand galaxies or worlds filled up with seven types of jewels to the buddhas equaling the number of sand grains of the river Ganges, for eons equaling the number of sand grains in the oceans, the merit that one has accumulated by making such offerings for such a number of eons to that many buddhas is much smaller than when a person simply puts his palms together at the heart thinking in his mind, “I will generate bodhicitta for the sake of all sentient beings.” The merit that this person accumulates in such a short time is so much greater than the merit received by the person who for so many eons made guru offerings, made offerings to the buddhas.

Before one starts making offerings to buddhas one should generate the motivation: at any rate, I must achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of all the kind mother sentient beings, therefore I am going to make this food-offering to Buddha. Just by thinking this one accumulates unimaginable causes for happiness in such a short time. The merit would take up all space if it could be put into form. If the benefits, the merit materialized there would not be any space left.

Then you visualize according to whichever particular tantra practice you are doing, whether it is the particular method of the mahaanuttara yoga tantra practice or the kriya tantra practice. Those who do not do those particular practices can choose whichever deity, whichever aspect of Buddha that you feel closer to or that you want to practice. You practice that and then you visualize Chenrezig at your heart. Not as a statue, however. If you think that you have a statue of Chenrezig inside your heart you might get pain, besides “lung” or wind disease. If you visualize a statue inside your heart, instead of feeling bliss, you might feel discomfort. So, the omniscient mind of all the Buddhas or the great compassion of all the Buddhas has manifested in such an aspect, the holy body in the nature of light. Then in order to accumulate more merit one can visualize the plate or bowl as a jeweled pot and as big as this valley, as big as this earth. The food you visualize as nectar, as an ocean of nectar. If the food has a bad taste you don’t need to say, “I am offering this bad-tasting food.” The taste is nectar, the best, most delicious sweet taste, whatever is the best you can think of.

In the practice of offering it is best if one can practice awareness all the time while one is drinking or as one takes a spoonful of food, not just at the beginning. You are generating the motivation of bodhicitta: maybe you make offerings of one or two spoonfuls of food and then the rest is completely for the selfish attitude. At the beginning one or two spoonfuls for others, then the rest for me, most of the food for me. If possible one shouldn’t do it like that, but practice continuous awareness as much as possible in one’s meditation of offering. Each time you take the food you remember Chenrezig, thinking, “I am making offerings.” By doing it this way, even if you do the action of eating one thousand times, each spoonful becomes, first of all, the cause of happiness and virtue, and secondly, since it possesses the motivation of Bodhicitta each of these actions accumulates infinite merit, infinite luck or fortune.

If the food is delicious you eat as much as possible. If it is not delicious, then leave it. Eat a few spoonfuls and then leave it. I am joking.

For a person who is doing retreat, who is practicing meditation, and for those who are living in the Pratimoksha ordination, like monks or nuns, the quantity of food is explained in the Vinaya or the lamrim teachings. If one overeats, taking much more than what is needed, it becomes the cause of disease and also one can’t do one’s practices. It causes sleep, sinking thoughts, and fogginess, which are the distractions of meditation. The conclusion is that during the breaks one should do whatever is most beneficial for the meditation session, and that which keeps one from generating realizations during the meditation sessions should be given up. The space in the stomach should be three quarters full. If you divide the stomach into four, then one quarter of the space should be left empty. Like that it is very comfortable and it causes less distraction of one’s meditation. Do the practices that are beneficial for generating realizations during the meditation sessions.

After having eaten you do the dedication. Again the dedication should not be done with the selfish attitude: If I don’t dedicate the merit it will be destroyed leaving me no happiness. If we use the words, “... to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings,” it is extremely important that our attitude be as close to the words as possible, as sincere as possible. It is very good to think, “Whatever merit I have accumulated by making food offering, as well as all my three times merit and the merit of all sentient beings, I dedicate to others.” Each time we dedicate we think, “All this merit, every single happiness and its cause, every single temporal or ultimate happiness, including omniscient mind, however many good results there may be, may I not experience them. May the sentient beings receive this experience.” You completely give it, without the slightest expectation, to

each narak being, each preta being, each animal being, each human being and each deva, to each of the sentient beings. Think, completely decide: They have got it, each of them has got it. Each of them has received the complete cause and the whole, complete result—happiness, perfection, whatever it is.

Then there is one dedication to achieve enlightenment for the sake of others. Don't think that your first concern is for you to become enlightened, while the sentient beings are a secondary concern. Not like that. We may use the words, "... to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the sake of others," but if the attitude is to be first concerned about oneself and one's own happiness thinking, "If I become enlightened I will have achieved my sublime happiness," then again, that is a sign of cherishing oneself, and the dedication is done with more of a thought of cherishing oneself. The very first concern in the depth of one's heart, the first thing to worry about should of course, all the time, be the welfare of others. The best is when in everyday life, all the time, one's first, main concern is sentient beings. No matter what work or actions one is doing, the most important, the most urgent thoughts is the thoughts of others, the most precious ones are the sentient beings. Then yourself achieving enlightenment becomes a method to lead them into sublime happiness, the state of omniscient mind.

It is like this: a mother has ten children and the children are very weak because of not having enough food. The mother is also very weak and unable to work to support her children. So she eats more food so that when she gets healthy and strong she can work providing food for them. With an attitude like this one dedicates the merit to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the sake of all the kind mother sentient beings.

If possible you should also practice the unification of emptiness and dependent arising with such actions as eating food during break times; if one can't do that then at least dependent arising. When you make offerings, you, yourself are merely labeled, the offering of food is also merely labeled, Buddha is merely labeled, the action of offering is merely labeled, and the dedication is also merely labeled, as I explained during the ordination. In this way, it doesn't get stained. In this way, the practice doesn't become the cause of enlightenment only through the motivation of bodhicitta but the action of eating food becomes a cause, a remedy to eliminate the root of samsara, the ignorance holding the "I" as truly existent. In this way, no matter how many hours one spends eating food, or drinking tea, one's life becomes very rich, meaningful, and benefits all sentient beings. One has taken much essence in such a short time. This is my usual food offering prayer: "May I and all the surrounding beings never be separated from the triple gem in all our lifetimes, and may we always make offerings to the triple gem. May the blessings of the triple gem enter, flow into our minds."

"All surrounding beings" means first of all the closer ones around us, those who worked for the food, the cooks and so forth, those who offered the food, if it is an organization or a center, then whoever offered that and all other sentient beings from whom this food came. Then come all the rest of the sentient beings, so the word "surrounding" includes everybody. "To never separate from the Triple Gem and to receive blessings." "Blessings" doesn't mean just water or something to eat. This "blessing" means the realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment. The blessings of the triple gem refers to all the qualities that the absolute Sangha has. "Absolute Sangha" means the whole path, that is, the Sangha of the Lesser Vehicle path and the Sangha of the Mahayana path—all the qualities of the bodhisattvas as well as the buddhas, the whole lamrim from guru devotion up to enlightenment.

In order for us, the cooks, benefactors, and organizing people, all those who suffered and all other sentient beings to generate realizations, we depend on creating the cause. Without creating the cause all these realizations can't happen—this is dependent on creating the cause. The cause of the realizations is making offerings to the Triple Gem. That is why the second prayer says, "May I and all others always be able to make offerings to the Triple Gem." Praying for this opportunity to create the cause is an extremely important prayer. To have the opportunity to make offerings to the Triple Gem all the time depends on not separating from the Triple Gem; if one separates from the Triple Gem there is no such opportunity. Even on this earth, on this southern continent where there is BuddhaDharma, many human beings are separated from the Triple Gem, so there is no opportunity for them to accumulate merit or create the cause for realizations, namely making offerings.

Therefore, it is so important to have the opportunity to always be able to make offerings, for the sake of sentient beings, to the Triple Gem.

Whenever food is eaten, each time I consider saying this prayer is a great puja for the success of all sentient beings, the benefactors as well as all other sentient beings. In this way something gets done. There is less debt in this way, fewer karmic bills, at least.

After this comes a prayer which contains the whole practice of guru yoga, but there is no need to explain that one.

There are many other offering prayers that people do, but this is kind of my permanent prayer. My virtuous friend Geshe Sopa Rinpoche, who is professor at the University of Wisconsin, was saying this prayer quite often. In the beginning I didn't think about the meaning. This is not a new prayer, but Geshe-la was saying it so somehow, later on I thought about the meaning. I thought it was very important because it involved other sentient beings, you see. The more I tried to imitate what Geshe-la said, the deeper I thought and saw more deeply how important each of the prayers is.

I think I stop here.

10th December pm

Generally, when you do the offering practices, like making food offerings, or any kind of offering practice, the nature of the offering is generating bliss in the holy minds of the merit field, the buddhas. The guru-buddhas have the greatest bliss, there is no greater bliss to be experienced. The highest bliss that can be experienced they, the merit field, the guru-buddhas have, because they have completed the work of accumulating merit and purifying obscurations. There is no greater bliss left to be experienced for them. If we meditate like this, each time we do the practice of offering, it creates the cause to generate swiftly the profound, secret path, the shortcut path to enlightenment, within one's mind. It creates the cause to realize the most skillful, profound mahaanuttara yoga tantra path, which grants enlightenment in one brief lifetime during these degenerate times. Without much difficulty, without taking much time one is able to become like the merit fields, the guru-buddhas, achieving the unified state of no more learning, the state of enlightenment. One's mind can become of that nature.

Especially when one does tantra practices, the offering is a very essential part, a most important part of the meditation. It may not be revealing secrets to mention this. I think it is very important to remember whenever one does the practice of offering, whether one has taken initiations or not,

whether one practices tantra or not. Each time you do the practice of offering food think that Chenrezig, who is abiding at your heart, generates unimaginable bliss.

If we consider number, what are called “others” are uncountable. Even by that reasoning one must cherish others. What is called “I,” that is just one, that is oneself, so it becomes insignificant when compared to others, it gets completely lost. No matter how many great problems one has or how happy one is, it is nothing. No matter how many problems there are for oneself, like not having found a job for months and months, even for years, or having problems with relationships, like separation, no matter how hard one’s life is, no matter how many great problems there are, even if one is in mortal danger; or no matter how much happiness one has, still, what is called “I” is only one, it gets completely lost. When you think of the need for happiness for uncountable others, and the sufferings of all these uncountable others, oneself is nothing, it is nothing important, it gets completely lost.

Even if there are billion sentient beings who are happy, it is too little. Even if there are a billion, a trillion sentient beings who are happy, the number is too small, there is the fault of the number being too small. Likewise, even if there are one or two who are suffering, there is that fault, in regard to others, of being too many. Concerning others, that is too many.

Now we can look at how many shortcomings there are in taking the side of the selfish attitude. How much advantage and profit there is and how many shortcomings there are, what the advantages are that one can receive by taking the side of the selfish attitude. In regard to the shortcomings, the harm that the selfish attitude gives oneself is to destroy one’s happiness. The selfish attitude is like a butcher who takes the life of liberation. By following the selfish attitude anger rises. If somebody acts against your selfish attitude, turns out to be against your selfish attitude and the happiness that it is seeking, anger arises. Like this the selfish attitude cuts off the life of liberation, it doesn’t let oneself generate the path to liberation. The selfish attitude is like a thief, stealing, taking away all the merit that one accumulated with much effort.

What causes one to be reborn in the six realms, experiencing the various, particular sufferings of each realm, is the selfish attitude. What in the human realm causes us to experience the sufferings of rebirth, disease, old age death, and what causes us to experience the particular sufferings of each of the other realms, is the selfish attitude. All this is caused by the karma accumulated through disturbing thoughts that came from the selfish attitude. All the particular sufferings of the six realms came from this selfish attitude.

Then, the problems of this life. For example, even though one has accumulated wealth, having properties, money, and material possessions, one is without the opportunity to enjoy it all. As soon as you receive it you lose it. Then there is the poverty of the means of living, of material possessions. One’s life is always full of hardships, all the time. No matter how much one tries to do business, to become rich and comfortable, one never succeeds. One is always in great debt, which doubles and triples. There are many people living like that in many different countries—their whole life, day and night, is like that. You may have thousands and thousands of ideas of your own, and also ask others people, or look in books to get ideas for obtaining your means of living, for the happiness of this life. But somehow, no matter how much you try, nothing works. You always fall flat on your face. Life is so hard. Your wishes are never fulfilled even though in regard to having ideas one is really smart, having so many billions of good ideas. These kinds of experiences are again the shortcoming

of the selfish attitude that one had in the past, the selfish attitude of being concerned only for the happiness of oneself.

One's misfortunes of this life are due to one's disturbing thoughts, such as covetousness and ill-will, disturbing others, and not allowing others' wishes to be fulfilled. They are due to oneself not having given help to others, or having kept others from accomplishing their works.

Some people always get robbed wherever they go, so many times their things like visas, passports, or money get stolen. This is experiencing the result similar to the cause. The completion of the negative karma of stealing has four results, and this is that of experiencing the result similar to the cause. Some people always steal. No matter how many times during his life such a person may get beaten up, no matter how many times he gets into trouble, is caught by the police, still he can't control himself. So many times this thought to steal somehow comes and he just runs after it, it is so difficult to control. It is giving him trouble again and again, without any purpose. Life becomes expensive.

Another result of the negative karma of stealing is living in places where there is no water. One has to live in a place where there are many hardships, much drought and famine, much scarcity of food, where life is very hard. One way of saying it is that this is the possessed result of the negative karma of stealing. There will also be much fighting, many dangers to one's life. All these troubles and hardships are the results of the negative karma of stealing done with the selfish attitude. This is just one example related to the result of one particular negative karma that was done in the past with a selfish attitude.

If the actions of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slandering, gossiping, and speaking harshly are done with bodhicitta they are not negative karma, but virtuous karma. They give the complete opposite result. We cannot comprehend the result or the advantages of these actions done with bodhicitta, without the slightest expectation of happiness for oneself, actually done purely for the sake of others, with incredible dedication. The bodhisattva thinks: I will do this even if I have to be in the heaviest, unceasing suffering state, the hot naraks, being oneness with fire for eons equaling the number of drops in the Atlantic Ocean. Even if, for the sake of others, for uncountable numbers of eons one doesn't experience the slightest happiness, only the greatest sufferings that exist in samsara, one gladly accepts these sufferings in order to be able to guide others from the sufferings of the lower realms, to guide them from samsara.

A bodhisattva has a hundred thousand times greater compassion for the person who is creating negative karma than does that person for himself. The bodhisattva's compassion for that person is a hundred thousand times greater than the compassion the person who is creating negative karma by harming others for the sake of his happiness has for himself. The bodhisattva has an incredible amount of love and compassion toward that evil-doer, that sentient being who is creating so much negative karma through harming others.

One of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's biographies tells how, when he was bodhisattva, he was the leader of a group of five hundred traders who were traveling by ship. There was one man among them called "Short human body" who was having bad ideas. (Many times on television and in the movies they show a group of people traveling by train or by ship. Then they show one person having bad ideas of harming the people inside the train or ship.) This person was planning to kill all the other traders. The leader of the traders, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in a past life as a bodhisattva,

knew about those bad intentions to kill all these people, knew what he was thinking. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha thought that if he let him kill all these people, that person would have to suffer in the lower realms for an incredible number of eons. It would also cause the others to have short lives and much suffering. By seeing the negative karma this person was going to create and by thinking of all the suffering he would be causing others, unbelievable compassion was generated in Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's holy mind. He couldn't stand it that this person was going to create such negative karma. He thought, "I will experience the negative karma, whatever it is, I will experience all that, and may he be freed from all those negative karmas and their results of sufferings." Then, with unbelievable bodhicitta, renouncing himself, and cherishing others, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha killed this person called "Short Human Body." What happened as a result of having exchanged himself for others, of having killed that person, besides not being reborn in the lower realms for even a second—was that it caused the bodhisattva to stay in samsara a shorter time by one hundred thousand eons. It only became the cause to achieve enlightenment more quickly.

So there is a big difference. If actions such as these are done with this attitude, with such incredibly strong bodhicitta, exchanging oneself for others, it only causes one to be free from samsara sooner instead of being the cause to remain in samsara longer. If we develop the mind it becomes better and better. After some time we can transform the mind that is in the indifferent state. Even though it is difficult to transform this state into virtue now, later we'll have more control in transforming the indifferent thoughts into virtue. And after some time even those negative actions that are so difficult now to transform into virtue, even those become virtue through the graduated progression of the good heart.

One should think of the shortcomings of the selfish attitude and of the problems that are the results of the ten non-virtuous actions. It will become clear to one's understanding that each particular problem we have now came from a particular negative karma that was accumulated with a selfish attitude even in this life.

You have meditated several times on the shortcomings of the selfish attitude, but now without thinking of the past, without relating to past lives' selfish attitude, see how the problems are coming from the very close selfish attitude. Today's problems are coming from today's selfish attitude, each everyday problem is coming from each day's selfish attitude, from the very close one that you can see.

During these times, in this era, all over the world everybody is in fear because of atomic danger. They have much fear and worry, and a lot of meetings, whether they are beneficial or not. For thousands of years countries have been fighting so much and still they are continuing those stories, still kind of going on and on, back and forth. However, all these world problems, even the problems between teachers and students in the colleges and universities, between different parties or different districts within one's country, are caused by the selfish attitude. There are many places where due to much disharmony, there is fighting between two areas, two villages, between two families, two people, or even between two tiny ants. The whole thing, the whole problem is caused by the selfish attitude. There is always much fighting between the employees and the workers and also between the top people in the government and in the rest of the population. There are so many strikes, bombings, and killings. Banks, shopping centers, and bridges that were built by sentient beings with much hardship are all destroyed in one minute. It is very clear how all these problems came completely from selfish attitude.

Take, for example, a couple who are always fighting, ten, fifteen times a day. Every five minutes there is something happening. That amount of disharmony is so much dependent on the selfish attitude—the fighting and all their problems are dependent on this. If either the husband or the wife develops a less selfish attitude, sacrificing more for the other, there will be more peace. If one of them, say the husband, gives up, renounces himself more in favor of the other person, giving up his happiness for her happiness, there will be that much harmony. If he gives up his selfish attitude, how he likes things, how he wants to travel, how he wants to keep the house, how he wants the food to be cooked—the more he gives them up for the other person the more harmony there will be. Even if the other person's mind doesn't change, even if her selfish attitude is getting bigger, still his attitude is changing. If one wants harmony, if one wants to live together, if one wants to have peace in that relationship and happiness in this life, one should sacrifice oneself for that person—it is dependent on that. As much as one is able to sacrifice for that person one has that much happiness. It is dependent. For the husband who has made the sacrifice there is that much happiness; also for her, even though her selfish attitude doesn't change.

Of course, there is no question if both practice subduing their minds, sacrificing for each other. As long as the selfish attitude becomes more and more solid from both sides there will be no peace, not even for a minute. It is like living in the naraks on the red-hot burning iron ground or in the red hot burning house. No matter how beautiful the house, no matter how much luxury and comfort there is, how many bedrooms, showers or swimming-pools there are, life is like living among thorns. You put many thorns inside a hole and then you live inside that.

If you are concerned about helping your friends or your parents, the best way is to change your selfish attitude. This is the best way to benefit them, to bring happiness into their lives. For all sentient beings this is of utmost importance.

11th December am Eight Mahayana Precepts

So many of the people who were born on this earth on the same day that I was born, who were born on my birthday, have already died. I am fortunate not to have died quickly, like them. I should think that I am highly fortunate because of having been able to meet the BuddhaDharma. Actually the most special time, the day of the greatest celebration is the day that one meets the Dharma, the day that one hears the BuddhaDharma for the very first time in this life. That is the greatest festival day. So far, from birth until now the most important, the most auspicious, special day in one's life was the day one started to hear the infallible teachings of Buddha, started to open one's Dharma wisdom that discriminates between what to practice and what to renounce and avoid.

Think that for the number of minutes, hours, days, months, or years that are left I must make this life and this body, qualified with eight freedoms and ten richnesses, highly meaningful but not separate from the practice of the two bodhicittas: the bodhicitta of the obscuring truth and wisdom of shunyata, the absolute bodhicitta.

From the time of birth until now my life has been in danger many times, so many times I almost died. At such and such a time, in such and such a place I almost died. Many times my life was in danger through disease or through living in dangerous places and so forth, but I did not completely die.

My life is so fragile. If it was a machine it could be repaired, it could be fixed even if it was broken down and stopped doing its functions. It could be repaired, could be made to work again. But not so with the body. The body is so delicate, so fragile, it is incredibly easy for death to happen. When we say, “I am alive, I am well,” what we call being alive and being able to work and to practice the holy Dharma is just referring to having this breath coming inside the body and going out again. It is only because of the breath doing this function that we call ourselves “healthy” or “alive.” There is nothing solid, just this air or breath going out and coming in. If you think how our lives, our being alive or not, is dependent on this fragile breath doing its function, you can see there is no freedom to choose how long your life is going to last. We don’t have power over the breath and its function of going out and coming in. We can’t say, “I want to have my breath doing its function for a thousand years, for a billion, trillion years, for hundreds of eons.” How long one is going to live is not up to oneself, it is up to the breath and how long it is going to do its function. It is completely dependent on this breath which is nothing solid, which is very weak. The function of the breath going out and coming in can stop any minute. Even though we believe this life to be permanent and independent, even though we believe that it is going to last for many years, it is in fact so fragile, so very uncertain. Just by thinking of this very weak breath we see that life is nothing definite.

Our happiness beyond this life up to enlightenment is dependent on each life, which again is dependent on each breath coming in and going out. All happiness beyond this life up to omniscient mind is completely dependent on what we do, how we live our lives, while breathing in and breathing out. Think, “During each breath I am going to practice the two bodhicittas without wasting my time.”

The great, highly attained, learned Lama Kuntansang gives this advice regarding the nature of life—impermanence and death. If, while one has the freedom one does not seize the everlasting happiness, if one is unable to make it, then it is going to be extremely difficult for the mind to be happy at the time when the breath stops going out and coming in. When this happens it is so difficult for the mind to be happy. This means that if one can’t make it to nirvana, cannot approach the ultimate happiness, the state of omniscient mind, while there is freedom, while one’s breath is doing its function, it is going to be difficult to be happy at the time of death. One should at least catch up a little bit, begin to see, have one’s mind approach the beginning of the path to nirvana, the bodhisattva’s path to omniscient mind. If one doesn’t try to prepare to generate the path to omniscient mind while one has the freedom, while one is still breathing, then once the breath stops, when the time comes that the breath went out and is not coming back in again, it is finished, the time or opportunity of this life is finished. At that time no matter how much the thought rises, no matter how much repentance there is about not having practiced Dharma during one’s life, no matter how much repentance there is about having accumulated negative karma, it is too late. At death time, due to karma, fear naturally arises because of various fearful karmic visions, even though one may not have accepted karma during one’s life.

A disciple of one of the Kadampa geshees caused disharmony among the Sangha of his monastery, and had heresy towards his guru, something or other that he did not purify before he dies. When he was dying, the whole monastery caught on fire and fell on top of his body. He had the fearful karmic vision of the whole monastery being on fire falling on top of him, and he screamed so much about what he was suffering.

One man from Katmandu died not so long ago, maybe two or three years ago. He lived his life making a business of selling holy objects, statues and texts. He became wealthy from doing business

with holy objects. His food, clothes, and house he obtained with the money that he made from his business. Just before he died, during his last months in hospital, the doctors couldn't do anything for him. His stomach was huge, exactly as is explained in the teachings about the shape of the pretas, huge. He couldn't eat any food the whole day, but every twenty minutes he would have a tiny drop of water. He had so much thirst, feeling so thirsty. Although he was so wealthy, able to afford whatever food or drink he could wish for, now he had no choice—only water, and even the water he couldn't drink freely, just one tiny drop. He would ask for food and get one tiny drop of water in his mouth, and this he'd swallow very slowly. Of course it wouldn't help, couldn't do anything—his stomach was huge, this tiny drop couldn't quench his thirst. Then after some minutes again he'd ask for more water. He had just enough fortune to have water coming, he was at least fortunate enough to get one drop of water. No doctors could do anything except come to the hospital and put their hands on his stomach, I think nothing else. When he returned to his house and tried to climb the stairs it took him one hour, and he was in such incredible pain that people had to support him. Just before he died he saw many ants coming through the windows and doors. Wherever there was a hole, crowds of ants were coming from all over and onto his bed. His bed was full of ants. No matter how much he shouted, no matter how much he screamed to the servants that he was being bitten by ants, no matter how much the people surrounding him tried to shake the bed, his sheets and covers, it didn't help. Because they didn't have the karmic view to see the ants, for them there was not one single ant on his bed, but for him the bed was full of ants—all over his body he was being bitten by ants. The servants had to keep the doors and windows closed and the room completely dark. In the end he couldn't speak and was living in a completely dark room. He died in a hospital in Delhi.

Last year so many human beings on this earth died. If I had died last year, maybe by now I would have been reborn as an animal, as those long worms that are left half eaten by birds. If it was like that what could one do? There would be no opportunity at all to practice Dharma. Many human beings died last night and are by now suffering in the naraks, experiencing the cold or hot sufferings, oneness with the ice or oneness with the fire on the hot, burning iron-ground—experiencing their own karmic vision. If I had died last night I could have been reborn like those who are in the cold naraks, in the suffering state of the narak realms. Even the cold here in the human realm I cannot bear. Now I am trying to avoid worldly works, to practice the holy Dharma and to achieve the state of omniscient mind for the benefit of sentient beings. If I am born in this suffering realm, what can I do? I shall have no freedom to practice Dharma.

Death could happen this year. Think that death is definitely going to happen this year, this month, this week—think that death is definitely going to happen even today. As Lama Tsong Khapa said in the lamrim teachings, “By thinking that I am going to die today, if one does die today it is extremely good because one will have done some preparation for the happiness of future lives. And if death does not happen today, it is also good.”

Think, “My death is definite to happen even today, so the rest of the hours, minutes or seconds that are left I shall use to practice the two truths of bodhicitta. In this way I am going to make my life meaningful and highly beneficial for all sentient beings.” Think, “As Guru Shakyamuni Buddha did, I am going to take the Mahayana ordination in order to lead each and every sentient being into the path to enlightenment.”

The Ceremony

At the end of the third repetition, please generate great rejoicing within your heart because of having the opportunity to receive the ordination, understanding and recognizing the incredible opportunity you have to create incredible merit during these twenty-four hours until sunrise. These are unimaginable causes for both temporal and ultimate happiness and perfection. “For the sake of all that lives—” When we say this we should particularly remember the enemy, the person who dislikes, criticizes, and treats us badly. Remember all those who are sick with cancer, heart attack, leprosy, and so forth. So many sick people don’t have any medicine, they have to live with pain. Remember all the sufferings of sentient beings, and also their future sufferings from mental or physical sicknesses.

Oneself, the person who dedicates, is merely labeled, the merit is merely labeled, the enlightenment for which we dedicate the merit is merely labeled, and the sentient beings for whom we dedicate the merit are also merely labeled. With this practice of awareness, please dedicate the merits by thinking of the meaning of the prayer.

11th December pm

As the great bodhisattva Shantideva said in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, “If one does not exchange oneself for others, one can’t achieve the state of omniscient mind, and even while living in samsara there is no pleasure.”

Leaving aside life beyond this, even the works of this life don’t get accomplished, because the servants don’t work and the masters don’t pay the wages. What the great bodhisattva Shantideva is saying is that as long as we don’t change the mind, exchanging the mind of cherishing ourselves with the mind of cherishing others, it is impossible to achieve enlightenment. As long as this mind is not changed there is no hope. Even if one practices the most secret, most profound, quick path, the path of the secret mantra, even if one is practicing the fourth tantra, the mahaanuttara yoga tantra, for uncountable eons, even if one understands and practices the complete teachings, still there is no hope of achieving enlightenment. As long as this mind is not changed there is no hope of achieving enlightenment, there is no hope of accomplishing extensive works for other sentient beings. Let alone achieving enlightenment, even while one is in samsara there is no happiness.

If one does not make some change in the mind, if one does not change the selfish attitude but always follows it, then even while one is in samsara one can’t accomplish the temporal pleasures that one is seeking. The laborers or servants, by following the selfish attitude, don’t do their work and their employers or masters, by following the selfish attitude, don’t give wages. They have dissatisfied minds that are under the control of the selfish attitude. The dissatisfied mind rises, wanting more and more, but the workers do not receive their wages, no matter how much they appeal. Also the other way around. The employer, or the master, by being under the control of the selfish attitude, is not paying the wages, so then the servants are not working either. Their wishes don’t get fulfilled, so they have many problems. Their wishes don’t get fulfilled because of their selfish attitude. The employers and the laborers, or servants, because of their selfish attitude, don’t even accomplish the temporal pleasures they are seeking.

These are not the only problems that come from the selfish attitude of this life. All the problems of strikes, of human beings killing each other, criticizing each other, experiencing much unhappiness and no happiness in the mind, as well as no comfort of the body—all are due to the past karma accumulated from the selfish attitude.

I think this is extremely important. When one works for others, doing a job for others, one's attitude makes a big difference to the happiness of the mind each day. Maybe one does the work and lives one's life like this: in the morning one gets up with the selfish attitude thinking only, "... my happiness, when shall I be happy?" When one washes, again, "My happiness. If I don't wash I will be uncomfortable, I will be unhappy." By thinking "my happiness," even when washing the body you do it for the sake of the self. When eating breakfast again one is thinking "my happiness," keeping one's happiness in the depths of the heart, in the very inside of the depths of the heart. Then one gets dressed thinking again "my happiness" from the depths of the heart. One gets into the car thinking, "My happiness. If I am late, if I lose my job, I lose my happiness." Thinking "I, I, I" all the time, constantly cherishing the self. Like this one is keeping busy all morning, completely following this selfish attitude. There is nothing except "my happiness," kept in the depths of one's heart.

While one is working in the office, again it is the same thing, one completely follows the selfish attitude. No matter how many hours the work takes, five or eight hours, whether one is translating or writing letters sitting on the chair with machines like calculators or computers in front, whether one is teaching languages or whatever the work is, it is done purely and completely by following the selfish attitude. One goes home by car with the selfish attitude of going to rest, or going to a party, or to see a movie, or whatever. One goes home with a completely selfish attitude. After one reaches the house, whatever enjoyments one has in the evening, eating dinner or whatever, are done completely following, completely according to the selfish attitude. If one cooks a meal, it is done purely with a selfish attitude. Whatever actions one does during one day—eating, walking, sleeping—the whole twenty-four hours all are done completely with a selfish attitude. The whole thing, the main, principal good is "My happiness. May I be happy!" This is in the very depths of the heart, nothing else is more important than this.

As you have recognized, so far your whole life has been a complete slave of the selfish attitude, of the *mara*, the selfish attitude. Unceasingly, one has been experiencing problems, one after another because of this. You should try to understand all these problems.

When there are no more jobs, aggression, depression, and nervous breakdowns happen. When there is no more income, when the master, the employer loses his funds, or when his business collapses and he can no longer pay the wages, there is no more money coming in. Nobody forces you to have a nervous breakdown or go crazy, but because of following the selfish attitude one makes oneself depressed. One makes one's life expensive. One has to go to see psychiatrists or psychologists, paying twenty-six dollars, seventy-six, or even one hundred dollars for a few minutes, whether it is beneficial or not, whether it is worthwhile or not, whether the psychiatrist's words are beneficial and solve any problems or not. One has to keep many bottles of medicine around one's bed or in the bathroom in case a heart attack comes, for the comfort of one's body and for one's peace of mind. One makes one's life very costly, very expensive. All this is the mistake of following the selfish attitude.

I remember very clearly what Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen said in the teaching, *The Admiration of Bodhicitta*. He said that in our everyday life, from the early morning, we should try to do the practice of the five powers, which contains all the essential practices of the Mahayana path. All the practices of the Mahayana teachings are abbreviated and summarized in the five powers. With the first power, the attitude is to make determination about one's life, about the way to live or to dedicate one's life.

Right after one wakes up from sleep one makes a determination about one's life. "From this moment until I achieve enlightenment or until death time, especially in this life, especially this year, especially this month, especially today I will remember to keep bodhicitta in my heart. In the same way that we harbor harms given by enemies, keeping them in our hearts and always remembering them, like that I will keep bodhicitta in my heart."

When we point to somebody as an enemy, we recognize him as an interferer who disturbs and harms our life. There is no use in harboring the harms given by the outside enemy in our hearts. There is no use in this, only harm. This harboring is only harmful to oneself, there is no single benefit. Instead of this, what we should harbor, what we should keep in the mind, always remembering and always being aware of, are all the harms and shortcomings that the selfish attitude has given us from beginningless rebirths until now, from our birth until now. Even now it harms us, never giving any peace, any relaxation. By remembering that all the previous problems that you can see clearly came from the selfish attitude think, "If I follow the selfish attitude in the future it will continuously give me problems, it will continuously torture me." Those are the shortcomings of the selfish attitude that are explained in the teachings.

In everyday life one can do the practice of exchanging oneself for others. In everyday life according to what degree one is able to feel the selfish attitude as unbearable, according to what degree one is able to see the shortcomings of the selfish attitude, how it is continuously torturing oneself and not giving oneself any peace, one can see the advantages of cherishing others. To be able to do this is so dependent on to what extent one sees others as precious, important, or kind. Each day of one's life all the actions that are dedicated for other sentient beings become a cause for achieving the state of omniscient mind. The more one realizes things the more one's actions of everyday life will possess bodhicitta.

When one does a job one should know that it is extremely important to think of the happiness of others rather than harboring thoughts of happiness for oneself. Even if one doesn't think of all sentient beings, at least one should think of the company or organization for whom one is working. "As I need happiness, they also need happiness. As I do not wish suffering neither do they, exactly the same." Remember the shortcomings and problems of the selfish attitude and the benefits of cherishing others. Remember the kindness of the employers who gave you the job, from whom you get money and your enjoyments. Thinking the usual thought, "I am working so hard for them," thinking that I am kind to them, sort of, is a wrong attitude. It is of no use. You should think the other way around—that by their giving me a job I have all this physical comfort and happiness of mind. I have these enjoyments through their kindness. Like this, remember the kindness of others. Motivate to achieve enlightenment for the sake of these people for whom you are working as well as for the sake of all other sentient beings.

These sentient beings are also among the sentient beings for whom I have generated bodhicitta. Instead of running with the thought of "my happiness!" when you get up from bed or when you leave the house to go to work, instead of going with that thought, go with the thought from the heart to obtain happiness for them. Even if one can't generate the extensive thought for all sentient beings, one should keep in mind the people for whom one is going to work. Think, "I am going to obtain happiness for these sentient beings." While one is working in the office one should remember again and again, "I am working to obtain happiness and perfection for these sentient beings." Feel happiness in the heart. "How fortunate I am! How lucky I am to be able to benefit them and to make myself useful, to make my body, speech, and mind that useful." If your business

or job is talking, when you are making your speech, think at least whatever skill you possess is being used to dedicate for the happiness of sentient beings. If your job is to create ideas you should think in a similar way. Remember again and again that you are working to obtain happiness for them, and feel happy that your body, speech, and mind are able to offer at least that much benefit and happiness. “How wonderful it is to have the opportunity to be even that useful to them. Even if I am unable to bring them into the sublime happiness now, into the state of omniscient mind, at least I am able to offer them service and benefit them so that they obtain at least this small comfort and pleasure. How good it is!” In this way there is great peace in the mind all the time since you don’t think of your own happiness so much, since you think more of the happiness of others. Even if one can’t make a complete exchange of oneself with others, one doesn’t have the slightest selfish attitude.

Concerning the thought of the happiness of oneself and the happiness of others, in one’s heart one should be thinking that the happiness of others is more important than one’s own happiness. If one lives life and does one’s job with at least this attitude, there is great peace in the mind, relaxation, the nature of the mind is very tranquil and calm, never solid, painful, and uncomfortable. If we cherish others with this kind of attitude we are very happy. Even in the morning one is getting up with a very happy mind, a very relaxed mind. Also while one is working, all the time there is great relaxation, there is much happiness in one’s life and one has a good outward manifestation. As the mind is happy, one’s appearance also becomes happy. When the mind is completely overwhelmed by the selfish attitude generating these various disturbing thoughts, even the external form turns ugly, upsetting people in the family or in the office, even people in the road. Even if one is well-dressed, even if physically one usually has a beautiful body, because of one’s strong selfish attitude and arising disturbing thoughts, one’s body looks ugly. Anybody who sees your face notices that you are very aggressive, they can see it. Just seeing such a person’s body while passing him on the road shows you what his life is like. He may be driving an expensive car and receiving a high salary, but still from that person’s appearance you can see that he is kind of living in the naraks. People who see him become upset and unhappy.

If one lives one’s life doing one’s work with the attitude to benefit others, with the mind that is happy to be able to benefit others, even from the outside one looks kind of very peaceful with a smiling, happy aspect so that it makes the people around you also happy—in the family, in the office or wherever, it gives others pleasure.

When you benefit others then pray, dedicating the merits. “Now I have worked to obtain temporal pleasures for them, may doing this become the cause for me as quickly as possible to be able to reveal the path of omniscient mind to sentient beings and bring them to the state of omniscient mind.”

If one is working for the family, taking care of the wife and ten, fifteen children as well as the animals—cows and dogs—one’s attitude in everyday life should be the same as I explained, like the attitude you have when you go to work for others outside the home. Even if one has a hard time, experiencing many hardships while working to take care of one’s family, it should be with the same attitude. During times of personal problems, since there is no other alternative, since these are the results of past karma created by oneself, since there is no other way to manage, instead of thinking, “I have to work so hard, no time to meditate, no time to do this or that practice,” one should feel happy. If one has a particular problem and there is no alternative, no other way to manage, instead of living one’s life depressed about one’s work and lifestyle, making oneself suffer, torturing oneself,

one should make oneself happy. One should feel oneself lucky, as it is in fact true, when seeing that we have that much capability to benefit that many sentient beings. Depending on how many people there are in the family, one is able to benefit that many sentient beings.

It is extremely beneficial for the mind again and again to remember this quotation from the *Bodhicaryavatara*, especially when one is leading a life of working for the organization, working for the centers, whether the work is Dharma or physical work, whatever the work may be, in one's family or whatever. These words are very effective, very useful—they are real medicine to relieve the diseases of the mind, the worries and fears, depressions, aggressions and all dissatisfactory minds. I'll just explain this quotation and then I'll stop.

“Like the accomplished mantra, the wish-granting vase, and the wish-granting tree: like the great elements, the earth and so on, as well as the sky, may I become forever the foundation of the means of living for sentient beings.”

“The accomplished mantra.” Someone who has accomplished a mantra, maybe Chenrezig's mantra, who has recited one hundred million of this mantra, can do so many actions, such as pacifying actions. One can pacify disease in oneself and others and one can pacify hindrances. One can do the actions of controlling. Whatever one needs one has the control over it to be able to receive it. When practicing Dharma, doing the works for sentient beings, one can do the actions of increasing life and fortune, many such things. One can also do wrathful actions. One can accomplish these various actions by reciting mantras. The bodhisattvas pray to become beneficial for sentient beings, eliminating their sufferings, obtaining happiness for them in the same way as the accomplished mantra is powerful and accomplished.

“Like a wish-granting vase.” You might have seen a movie of this yogi, Sai Baba, who takes white dust or powder from a pot. Like he does, by putting one's hand into a wish-granting vase, one is able to extract whatever material possessions one may wish for. One prays to become beneficial in the way a wish-granting vase is beneficial, granting sentient beings whatever they need. Like a mantra, like a wish-granting vase. It is the same thing with the wish-granting tree. By praying to it sentient beings can receive any enjoyment, whatever they need. One prays to be able to offer them enjoyments in the same way.

Then earth. Earth is used in many different ways. The four elements are completely in the hands of, completely under the control of sentient beings. Whatever way they want to use them is completely up to them. The earth is used by human beings as a foundation to live on and to build their houses from. We make roads on the earth and we make the earth into many different shapes. Earth is made round or square, in different shapes according to what sentient beings wish. The shape it is going to take is completely in the hands of sentient beings. The earth is used as material for sentient beings' houses and for many other different purposes. One prays that one's own life, one's own three doors, can become beneficial for others in exactly the same way that the earth is beneficial for sentient beings. In the same way that earth is utilized by sentient beings for their means of living and their happiness, for them to grow food or build factories, being the foundation for so many perfections, exactly like earth oneself becomes beneficial—to be utilized, to be completely used by sentient beings. It is not up to oneself how one is going to be used, it is up to the sentient beings, in the same way that they use earth and other elements. Like that, one's life doesn't belong to oneself, but to others, to be used according to their wants; how he or she, how they, the sentient beings, want to

use it for their happiness and their means of living. It is not up to oneself, but up to the sentient beings. Completely dedicate like this.

Similar to earth, water helps sentient beings survive. It is utilized to eliminate hunger and thirst, to hinder those sufferings and to obtain happiness. It is used for their survival. Water is used in many different ways and it is up to sentient beings to decide how it is going to be used—if it is going to be brought up or down or whatever. Like the water, oneself is dedicated completely to be used by sentient beings. One becomes like fire, being completely used by sentient beings to obtain happiness in many different ways. Like air. The air is used in so many different ways, it is used by sentient beings to survive. In a similar way, one completely becomes an object to be used by sentient beings. Then sky. It is also used by sentient beings to obtain their happiness, for traveling, for movement in many different ways.

One should pray to become an object to be used by sentient beings for their every comfort, for whatever they need. And that is not just for one day, not just one minute, not just one hour, not just one year, not just for one life, but for all times, forever. The self becomes an object to be completely used by sentient beings forever. This is how the great bodhisattva Shantideva prayed, and this is also how the bodhisattvas of all times have dedicated their lives to sentient beings. It is how they feel and how they wish to dedicate. Even though one doesn't become earth, doesn't become water, doesn't become fire, the wish is this incredible dedication or will, the will of the brave mind to suffer for others; the prayer or wish is like this.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama all the time emphasizes, "This is what I pray all the time and this is also what I practice." Often when His Holiness gives teachings, or even when giving public talks for Tibetan people, His Holiness says this. We should imitate this even if we don't feel that great a dedication from the heart now. We should at least train in the words, at least pray with the words, try to imitate them; then gradually through this, by dedicating the merits our minds gradually, sooner or later become able to transform into bodhicitta, exchanging oneself for others. One acquires the brave mind of the bodhisattvas.

This *Bodhicharyavatara* quotation is the main thing to think about when there is no other alternative. Since one has to do this job, since one's lifestyle is such, with a family, or center, or whatever, it is something to think many times, again and again, especially when one has many problems.

Yes, I stop here.