



FREEDOM THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

The Buddhist Path to Happiness and Liberation

LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

FREEDOM THROUGH UNDERSTANDING





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May whoever sees, touches, reads, remembers, or talks or thinks about these books never be reborn in unfortunate circumstances, receive only rebirths in situations conducive to the perfect practice of Dharma, meet only perfectly qualified spiritual guides, quickly develop bodhicitta and immediately attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

LAMA YESHE
& LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

Freedom Through Understanding

THE BUDDHIST PATH TO HAPPINESS
AND LIBERATION

Edited by Nicholas Ribush

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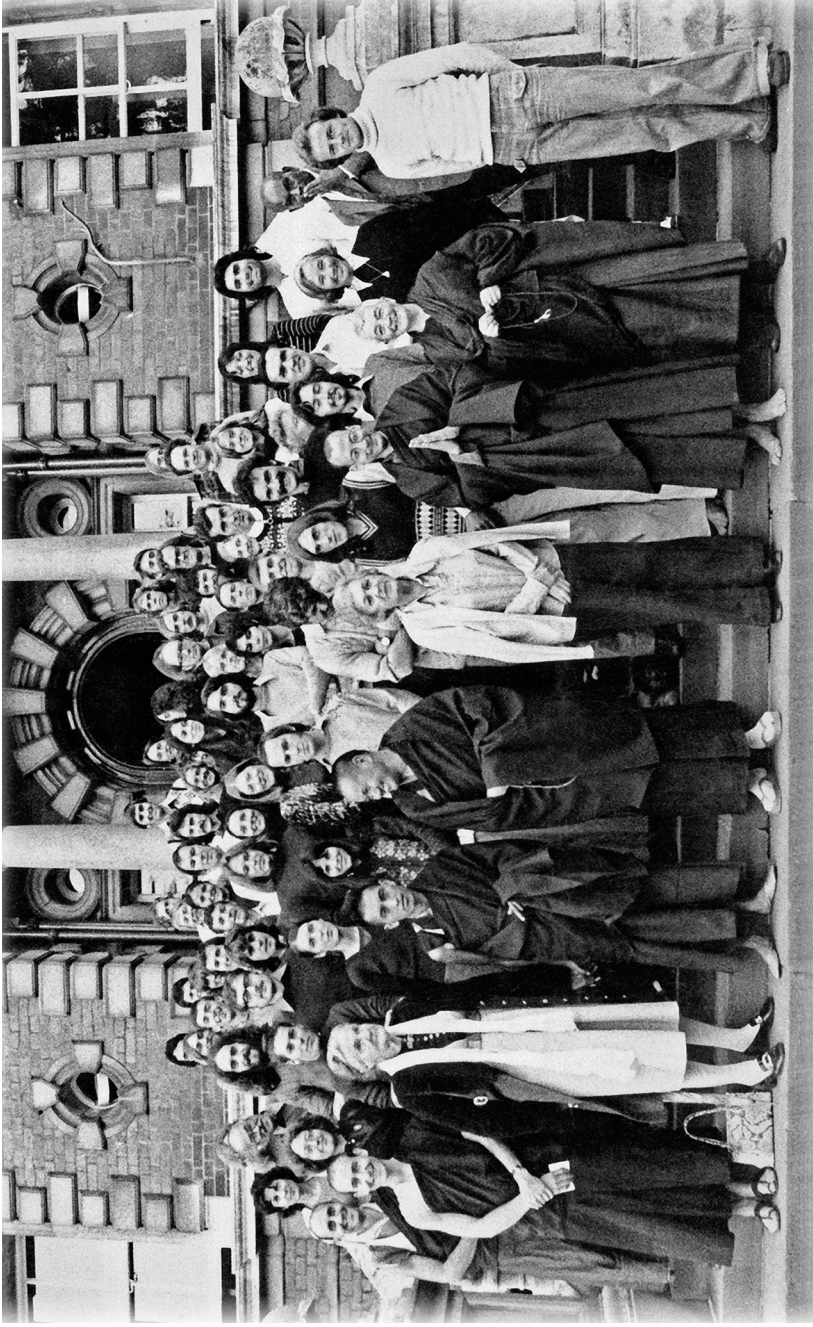
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The group at Royal Holloway College, 21 September 1975

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We are also deeply grateful to all those who have become members of the ARCHIVE over the past few years. Details of our membership program may be found at the back of this book, and if you are not a member, please do consider joining up. Due to the kindness of those who have, we now have several editors working on our vast collection of teachings for the benefit of all. We have posted our list of individual and corporate members on our website, www.LamaYeshe.com.

In particular, we thank our anonymous benefactor for so kindly sponsoring the production of this book and the accompanying

DVDs of this unique teaching occasion.

Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation for the kindness and compassion of all those other generous benefactors who have contributed funds to our work since we began publishing free books. Thankfully, you are too numerous to mention individually in this book, but we value highly each and every donation made to spreading the Dharma for the sake of the kind mother sentient beings and now pay tribute to you all on our website. Thank you so much.

Finally, I would like to thank the many other kind people who have asked that their donations be kept anonymous; my wife, Wendy Cook, for her constant help and support; our dedicated office staff, Jennifer Barlow and Ven. Ani Tenzin Desal; Ven. Ailsa Cameron for her decades of meticulous editing; Ven. Connie Miller, Gordon McDougall, Michelle Bernard and our other editors; Ven. Kunsang for his tireless work recording Lama Zopa Rinpoche; Ven. Thubten Labdron, Ven. Thubten Munsel and Dr. Su Hung for their help with transcribing; Sandy Smith, Kim Li and our team of volunteer web editors; Ven. Bob Alcorn for his incredible work on our Lama Yeshe DVDs; David Zinn for his digital imaging expertise; Jonathan Steyn for his help with our audio work; Mandala Books and Wisdom Books for their great help with our distribution in Australia and Europe; and everybody else who helps us in so many ways. Thank you all.

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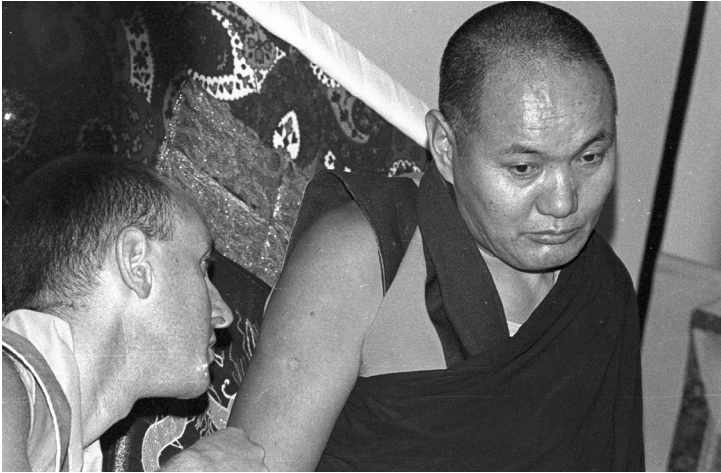
—Dr. Nicholas Ribush

Benefactor's Dedication

This book and the DVD of these teachings are dedicated to Walter I. Nathan, who passed away on 6 April 2006.

*Through the merit of having contributed to the spread of the Buddha's
teachings for the sake of all sentient beings, may our benefactors
and their families and friends have long and healthy lives,
all happiness, and may all their Dharma
wishes be instantly fulfilled.*

• • • • •



Lama Yeshe answers questions at Kensington Town Hall.
The editor assists.

· · · Editor's Preface · · ·

THE TEACHINGS in this book are typical of the incredibly inspiring teachings that Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche were giving together at the time. They are what inspired many of their students, like me, to drop whatever we were doing and devote ourselves to following the Lamas full time. When Rinpoche said, "Each of us needs to think like this: 'All sentient beings have been extremely kind to me in the past, they're kind to me in the present, and they will continuously be kind to me in the future. They are the field from which I receive all my pleasure—past, present and future; all my perfections come from other sentient beings. Therefore I must attain enlightenment. Seeking everlasting happiness for myself alone, not caring about other sentient beings, giving them up, having no concern for their welfare, is selfish. Therefore, I must attain enlightenment, the most sublime happiness, in order to release all sentient beings from suffering and lead them on the path to enlightenment by myself alone, as this is my responsibility,'" we felt, "Yes, that's what I must do," and devoted our lives to the Dharma.

The Lamas started teaching Buddhism to Westerners in the late 1960's. The first full meditation course was held at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1971. After the sixth Kopan course, March 1974, upon the invitation of their students, the Lamas made their first trip to the

West. They went again the following year and every year after that until Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984. The teachings in this book are the first the Lamas ever gave in Europe—a September 1975 weekend seminar near London that reflected the style of the Kopan courses. As their roadie and teaching assistant on that 1975 voyage, I was fortunate enough to be at this seminar and again observe the profound effect the Lamas' teachings had on people, especially those meeting the Dharma for the first time.

As ever, the Lamas stressed the importance of compassion, in particular its ultimate expression in the highly developed mind of *bodhicitta*. Lama Yeshe said, "This weekend we are very fortunate in that we have the opportunity to cultivate *bodhicitta* and put the actions of our body, speech and mind into the path to liberation, the path of control. This is so worthwhile."

And Lama Zopa Rinpoche proclaimed, "Bodhicitta is a realization, the intuitive determination to attain enlightenment for the sake of all other sentient beings. The pure thought of *bodhicitta* is never concerned for oneself but instead is always concerned for other sentient beings, how to free them from suffering and lead them along the path to enlightenment. Bodhicitta is always thinking of how to benefit other sentient beings in the wisest, most extensive way. It is a realization concerned only for other sentient beings, giving up oneself and taking most care of others."

As well as giving profound teachings, the Lamas also led several meditations, which are included here. When reading this book, when you come to the meditations, pause for a few moments and think about what the Lamas are saying, as was their intention. In

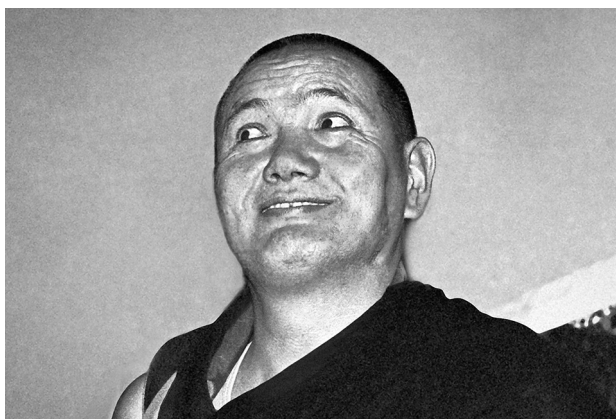
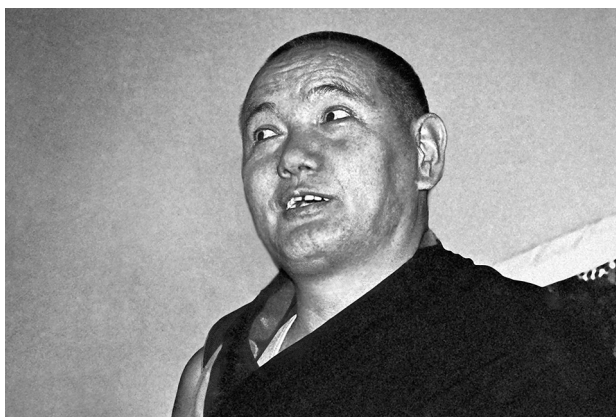
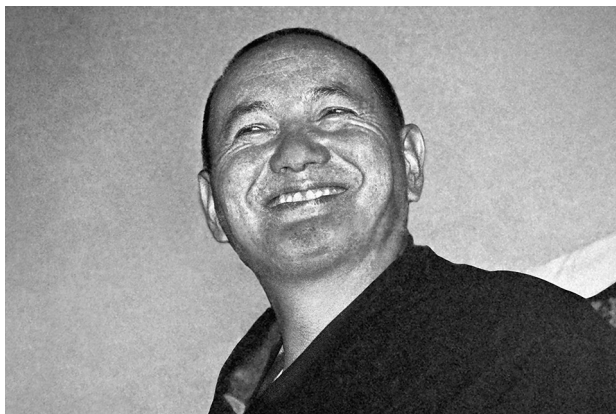
this way you will get much more out of the book than just reading it through and then moving on to something else.

But wait! There's more! By some miracle, these teachings were videotaped and all the tapes but one have survived to this day. We have digitized the tapes and almost the entire the seminar will be available on DVD not too long after this book is published. This is by far the earliest video we have of the Lamas and it is a great joy to watch them as they were in 1975.

Since this seminar is so short you can get only a brief albeit sweet taste of Dharma by reading this book. In order to help you go deeper we have included a recommended reading list at the back of the book.

Also, since many of our other free books contain a glossary and there's an extensive one on line at www.LamaYeshe.com, we have not included one in this publication.

I hope this book helps you as much as it has helped me.

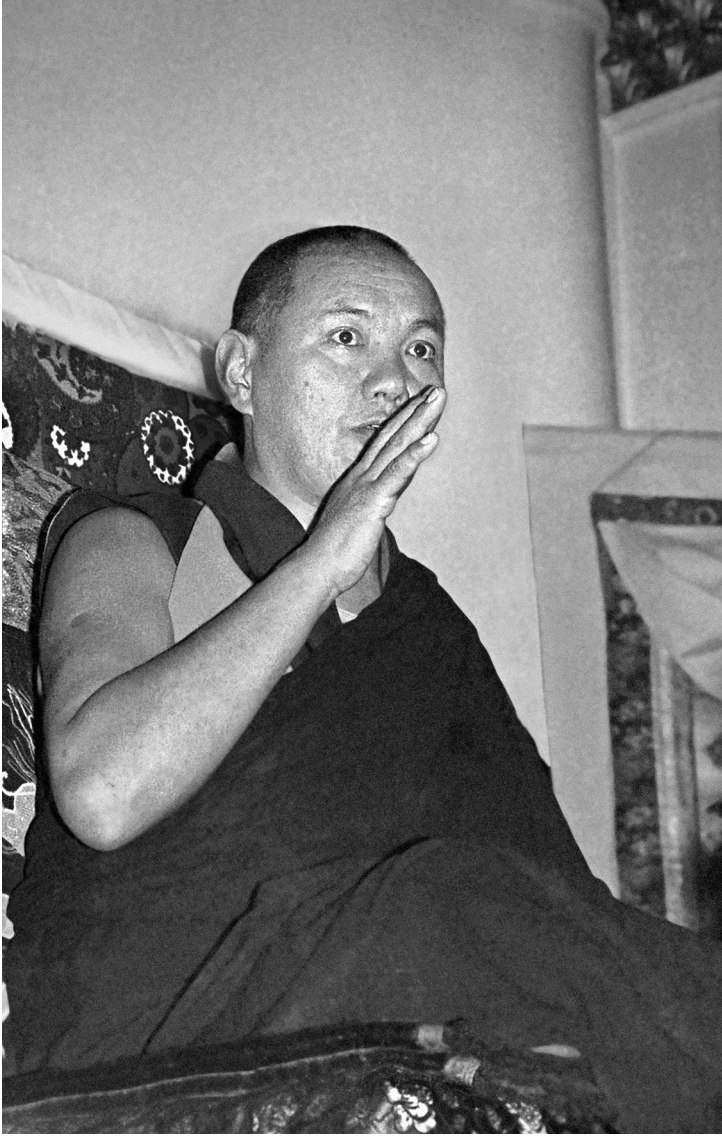


Lama Yeshe

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Kensington Town Hall, London

18 September 1975



What is Meditation?

MEDITATION IS THE WAY we realize the nature of the mind. Therefore it's something that we absolutely have to do. Since Western education does not explain how the mind functions in everyday life, many Westerners these days are seeking out meditation because they are not satisfied with what they've been taught about the mind.

Buddhism always talks about suffering. This turns some Westerners off: "We're happy; we're not suffering; what's our problem? Why should we listen to teachings on suffering?"

Well, you can think in that way if you like, but in fact, if you check more deeply into how your mind functions in everyday life, you'll realize how dissatisfied you are and how up and down your uncontrolled mind actually is. That up and down itself is suffering, that's all. It's very simple. When Lord Buddha talked about suffering he didn't mean simply physical pain, like toothaches, headaches and so forth. Those kinds of suffering are very temporary; they're nothing. But if you check within yourself, whether you're rich or poor, famous or unknown, you'll always find dissatisfaction, a kind of uncontrollable, ever-changing energy of dislike. That energy too is suffering.

From the beginning of human evolution on this earth up to now, people have constantly sought something worthwhile, pleasure and happiness, in many different ways, but most of their methods have been completely wrong. They've sought happiness here while all the time it's been over there, in exactly the opposite direction. You're educated—check historically what people have believed through the ages and how they've sought fulfillment in different ways. You can see. Most times they've gone in totally the wrong direction.

So now people are finally beginning to realize that happiness is not dependent upon external development or material wealth. These days you don't even need a lama to explain it to you because the manifest world itself demonstrates the up and down nature of mundane reality—socially, economically and in many other ways. That makes it easy to realize that material things aren't everything. As a result, people are now beginning to investigate better ways of achieving a happy and joyful life. Meditation is one of the ways.

Mental attitude

In the West, meditation has recently gained some popularity. Most people have heard of it and many have tried it, but if you check why these people are meditating, the reason they're trying it out, a question arises. Actually, you can ask the same question in relation to why people are practicing religion. In general, people are meditating or following a spiritual path because they want to be happy, but from the Mahayana Buddhist point of view, whether or not you get the desired result from your meditation practice depends mainly on

your mental attitude, or motivation. For meditation or any other implemented spiritual philosophy to bring happiness, it has to be done for the right reason.

Many people think that meditation means sitting someplace doing nothing while your mind toys with an object. That's a misconception. Your mind playing with an object, trying to concentrate, is not enough. Of course, I understand that way of thinking. Your mind is tired; you've heard so many things, so many philosophies, so much this, that and the other that all you want is a bit of peace and quiet and you think that single-pointed concentration will give it to you. But that's not enough.

Meditation is a tool. The most important thing is your motivation for using that tool, for practicing meditation; the way you are using it. That's what matters. Otherwise there's a danger that your meditation will simply become some kind of mindless routine, the way some people go to church on Sunday. They don't check their motivation; they just go. And not just in the West; Eastern people do the same thing. They go to the temple just because everybody else is going, because it's the local custom. Meditating or practicing religion for that kind of reason is a total misconception.

Also, practicing meditation just to experience temporal happiness, just to make this life happy, is also mistaken. That's a tiny goal; it's selfish and it's wrong. If all you're trying to do is make this life comfortable, your goal is really not worthwhile.

Ordinary people think that the purpose of meditation is to make the mind calm and peaceful, but that's not enough. Of course, when you create a calm, peaceful environment, you can integrate your

mind and make it calm and peaceful, but that's not liberation. Liberation is complete freedom from the uncontrolled, up and down, selfish mind. When you reach beyond that kind of mind you've reached a worthwhile goal.

Meditation isn't just a mental game where you sublimate one mundane state into another. When we meditate, we're not joking, playing with hallucinations. The purpose of meditation is to gain joyful inner freedom and everlasting peace—in Buddhist terminology, nirvana or enlightenment. But the words don't matter that much—what you do have to know is what kind of goal you're aiming to achieve.

So the mental attitude I'm talking about, the best kind of motivation, is what Mahayana Buddhism calls bodhicitta, the enlightenment attitude: total dedication of your body, speech and mind to the benefit of others. If you meditate with that kind of mind, your mind automatically slips into the vehicle that will carry you to your desired destination—enlightenment—without delay. If you don't, if your subconscious motivation is selfish, then even if you think intellectually, "I'm doing this meditation in order to realize enlightenment," you're dreaming. That's not bodhicitta.

Also, some people think that the only kind of meditation is single-pointed concentration and strive for years to attain it, but because they are motivated by self-attachment, even if they do achieve this level of concentration, their mind is still agitated. That can happen because they're meditating with the wrong kind of motivation—selfishness. Bodhicitta is where you totally sacrifice yourself for the benefit of others.

When I say “sacrifice” I don’t mean in the Hindu sense of blood sacrifice—human or animal—such as we often see in Nepal. It’s not like that. I’m talking about your sacrificing the actions of your own body, speech and mind with knowledge-wisdom, totally dedicating them to the benefit of others.

As long as you have that dedicated enlightenment attitude, the pure, innermost thought of bodhicitta, no matter what your everyday actions, they’re automatically beneficial. Similarly, your meditation practice is also successful and free of frustration.

Often you meditate with much superstition, with the expectation of easily attaining the highest goal of enlightenment. That’s a misconception; you’re psychologically sick from the very beginning. When you begin with a sick mind you can only finish up sick.

Of course, dedicating every day of your life, your entire body, speech and mind, to others, is one of the most difficult things you can do, but if you can do it, your life automatically has purpose. When your life has purpose, you naturally experience satisfaction and enjoyment. True enjoyment comes from within, from your mental attitude, not from without or from single-pointed concentration.

You can’t concentrate in the busy confusion of your workplace; you can’t sit cross-legged in the supermarket. You have to deal with people. But when you do deal with people, if you have the pure thought dedicated to others, they automatically give you good vibrations—because of the projection of your own mind.

If, however, your mind is clouded with thoughts such as “These people are no good,” you automatically have a negative projection

of others. That leads you to always blame them for how you feel: “He hurt me; she hurt me.” Actually, nobody else hurts you. You hurt yourself because you lack the knowledge-wisdom to understand yourself; you haven’t integrated wisdom into your everyday life.

In the terminology of Buddhism, self-cherishing is schizophrenic. I know that Western psychology thinks schizophrenia is something else, interprets it differently, but Buddhism thinks selfish motivation itself is schizophrenic and the cause of mental illness.

Experiment for yourself; I’m not saying you have to accept what I’m telling you just because I said it. When you get up in the morning, instead of thinking how difficult your mundane life is, generate the strong motivation, “Today I’m going to totally devote the energy of my body, speech and mind to others.” If you really dedicate yourself in that way, your day will go very smoothly. Try it out.

The human problem is that people have to interact with each other and when problems arise, as they inevitably do, they blame others for them. This is a misconception. So bodhicitta isn’t just an idea—it’s a psychological method for treating the sick mind.

Also, physical actions aren’t necessarily the best way of benefiting others. You need to investigate for yourself what the best way of helping others is. Actually, hunger or physical suffering are not the main human problem. To help others in the most effective way, you have to discover human potential. And not just *human* potential: even every insect has a mind and therefore the potential to be led into everlasting, peaceful enlightenment. You need to see that, instead of suffocating yourself emotionally with thoughts like, “I

want to help others; they need help, I can see that they're suffering, but I can't see that I can do anything about it.”

When you can see the potential of the human mind, the innate beauty of human beings and humans' infinite possibilities, you begin to see the solution to any problem that might arise. To the Mahayana Buddhist way of thinking, every human problem has a solution. For a start, every human problem has a cause; problems don't arise without cause. And if you eradicate a cause, its effect also disappears, doesn't it? That's scientifically verifiable.

Knowledge is the path to liberation

Buddhism isn't some fanatical religious trip. It's a philosophical way of living life. And also, to study Buddhism you don't need to believe in something extreme. It's a matter of investigating, examining and experimenting on yourself. It's not just belief. Without understanding, belief can be very dangerous. So what Lord Buddha emphasized was that understanding is the path to liberation, knowledge is the path to liberation.

Thus Buddhism emphasizes understanding; understanding is the path: no understanding, no path to liberation. Perhaps you're not sure about that. Ordinarily, people think, “This is religion, this is Buddhism,” and paint their own picture of Buddhism and religion. For example, there are more than a hundred of us here—I can almost guarantee that each of us has a different understanding of what constitutes the path to liberation. Check up. Although we all might say, “Liberation is this, this, this,” using the same words, at

the same time our limited mind will be painting its own unique picture of our personal interpretation of the path to liberation. In fact, in our practice we may not be doing anything positive; our life may have nothing to do with the path to liberation.

So you have to check carefully to see if you're on the right path or the wrong. You should not proceed along your chosen path blindly. It's much more important that you investigate your spiritual path than the goods you buy, for example. When you go to the supermarket you spend much time checking products—"Should I buy this? Maybe this? Maybe that?"—but when it comes to choosing which path to the highest goal of enlightenment is best for you, which path is right, which is wrong, you check nothing. Checking is never a mistake; checking is most important.

Checking is meditation; observing is meditation. As I said, meditation doesn't mean just sitting in some corner doing nothing. You can meditate when you are walking down the street, checking, investigating your mind's view of things. That's meditation. Are you perceiving reality or a hallucination? When you analyze your mind like this, you're meditating.

We often talk about positive and negative actions. Everybody says things like, "Today you're so positive; today you're too negative." It's common. But how do you know which actions are positive and which are negative? You need to know how to check. How do you ensure that your meditation is positive and a vehicle leading to enlightenment? How do you know?

It doesn't depend on the meditation itself—it's your motivation for doing it that directs your mind into the right channel.

So how do you tell if you're on the wrong path? How do you discriminate? You need discriminating knowledge-wisdom. That's the path of meditation, the path to liberation. You have to be able to discriminate right from wrong. If you mix everything together, all you get is soup.

Method and wisdom

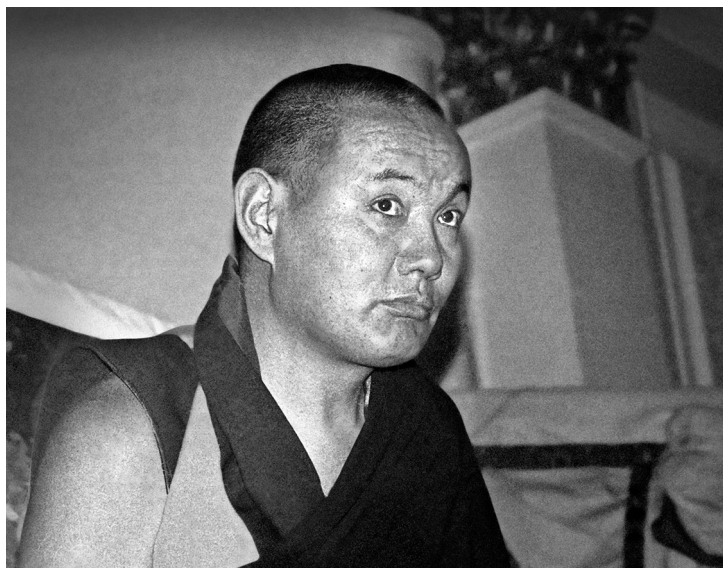
I'm not being judgmental, saying you're this or that; I'm just explaining how to go about meditating. We all need happiness; how do we check that the path we're on will bring us to that goal, that it's the most effective way of leading us to happiness? That's what we need to know.

Also, Mahayana Buddhism strongly emphasizes the simultaneous actualization of method and wisdom. Wisdom without method cannot produce enlightened realizations. That's very true: many religious people and meditators have wonderful ideas but lack the method for putting those ideas into action. Then their great ideas become useless.

Similarly, in the West, many people have great intellectual wisdom but not too much method. This is a problem. As Lord Buddha said, intellectual knowledge alone is not enough to gain realizations.

I don't have much more to say right now but I hope you all will actualize the method and wisdom that constitute the path to liberation and find everlasting peace as soon as possible. And now, if you have any questions, please ask anything you like. There's nothing

wrong with our discussing all this. Tibetan Buddhism is very open. If you like, you can even tell me everything I've said is wrong. No problem. In that way I learn as well. I'm not enlightened, so discussion is most worthwhile.



Q. Lama, you were forced out of Tibet. How have you made exile work?

Lama. Well, as long as people know how to put their life together, it doesn't matter if they lose their home and country, they can still have a good life. For me, every country on earth is my home. Having to leave Tibet hasn't made me worried or miserable. I'm OK. Here I am meeting English people, eating English food, enjoying it very much. But it's a good question. It's true that when some people are

forced to leave their home they are psychologically damaged and get sick as a result. But in general, Tibetan people understand cause and effect—the law of karma—and when they find themselves in a foreign country they're able to accept that their past actions have put them into that situation and thus find it easier to accept. Denying reality can make you want to kill yourself.

Q. You said that we should check within ourselves as to whether what we're doing is right or wrong according to our motivation. But isn't there the danger of over-analyzing everything and getting so tangled up that not only do we gain nothing from it but end up worse than when we started? Or would you say that that's a good state to be in?

Lama. You're right; it can be dangerous if you check too much using the wrong method. But if you check the everyday actions of your body, speech and mind with skillful method and wisdom, there's no danger; the more you check the more conscious and aware you become. Most of the time in our relationships with family and friends we act unconsciously and finish up hurting those closest to us. I agree; if you check your mind in a confused way you won't find anything and it can in fact be dangerous. Therefore I say that if you are seeking everlasting, peaceful inner liberation, you need perfect method and perfect wisdom. So it's not an easy job. Even if you have single-pointed concentration, that's not enough.

Q. Do external factors such as diet, sleep habits and livelihood affect the quality of one's meditation? In particular, is the food you eat

important? For example, I'm a vegetarian but many people aren't and meat is considered to make people more aggressive and blood-thirsty. This is not something that can be easily proved, but many people, including me, tend to believe it. What is your view of this point especially?

Lama. We do have some dietary restrictions when doing certain meditations where there are some foods that we should eat and others that we shouldn't, such as meat, eggs, garlic, onion and radish. But when doing certain other kinds of meditation, those foods can be taken. Now, while in general ordinary people shouldn't eat too much meat, eggs or garlic, if you're used to a diet containing them, because of this conditioning, suddenly stopping eating them can shock your body. Also, even if you don't eat such foods, sometimes you might need to do so for health reasons. So it's better to take the middle path and not be too extreme. In Tibet, we would sometimes eat meat but we were forbidden from eating meat of animals that we had killed ourselves or ordered killed or that had been killed especially for us. Those three kinds of meat have tremendous negative vibrations associated with them and can make your meditation foggy rather than clear.

Q. I've heard of Tibetan lamas exorcising demons. What are demons?

Lama. Sometimes it can be possible that superstitious, primitive people believe that they're controlled by a spirit and get sick as a result, so lamas have certain methods of healing such people. But in general, by "demon" we mean the energy of the ego. There's no external

demon, lying somewhere in wait for you. The Buddhist connotation is that the demon, devil or whatever you call it is within you.

There are thousands of different kinds of mind, some of them positive, others negative. Some of those negative minds are demonic and when they manifest they completely occupy your mind. At such times you become a kind of demon. When the demon mind takes over, wisdom, or your positive mind, has no room to function. However, by developing your meditation practice, perfecting your motivation and gradually purifying your mind, you can automatically control that negative energy. So that's the reason that meditation is worthwhile.

When Westerners feel psychologically unwell they tend to seek a therapist for help. The Buddhist point of view is all living beings have both positive and negative energy simultaneously existent in their mind. By meditating we can gradually increase the positive, decrease the negative and continuously develop until all the negative energy has been completely eliminated.

Therefore the Tibetan Buddhist approach to training the student is gradual; we guide students along the graduated path to liberation. These days Zen is very popular in the West; some Zen practitioners talk about instant enlightenment, like instant coffee. We think that's impossible. We think the mind has to evolve, or develop, gradually, just as modern science talks about gradual evolution. Accordingly, we have degrees of meditation from the beginning of the path up to the end. Some people have just one favorite meditation that they always do, from when they start meditating up to the end of their lives. The Tibetan tradition says that that's wrong: instead, you

should do one meditation; when you reach a certain point, go on to the next, then the next and so forth, in a logical order. This is what we mean by the gradual, or graduated, path to liberation.

Q. When we meditate, do we concentrate on our breath or do we just let our mind go free?

Lama. If you're a beginner, it's better just to focus on your breath rather than let your mind become occupied by mundane thoughts. It's very useful. Actually, Tibetan Buddhism doesn't consider focusing on your breath to be real meditation; we call it preparation for meditation. Why? If your mind is emotionally bothered, totally occupied by strong attachment or strong hatred, it's impossible to meditate. What you can do at such times to create a good foundation for meditation is to manipulate your mind by concentrating on your breath and feeling sensations. If you do that, your mind will automatically calm down: the object with which your hatred is obsessed goes away, the object with which your attachment is obsessed goes away, and you are then free to direct your mind into any meditation that you choose.

Q. When you are doing checking meditation, what do you think about?

Lama. Many things can be the focus of analytical meditation; there are many different topics upon which you can meditate. You can't simply specify this or that. Also, Buddhist meditation depends a lot upon the individual meditator, what each person needs at any given time.

Q. In Western medicine there's a growing interest in the benefits that meditation can bring to people suffering from stress, both physical and mental. I wonder if in your trips to the West you have been in contact with doctors who are beginning to take an interest in this particular practice. Have you been able to talk to them and point out the deeper meaning of meditation?

Lama. A few months ago I met a group of psychiatrists in Melbourne, Australia, and we had a very interesting discussion about patients with mental problems.¹ I've also spoken with American doctors on similar topics. I think they're still seeking and growing, experimenting scientifically, and as a result their theories are also constantly changing and growing. I think they're doing good work. Also, Tibetan Buddhism has more in common with science, logic and philosophy than with what the average person considers religion.

That's all we have time for tonight. Thank you very much for coming. If I've made any mistakes, please excuse me.

¹ See "A Buddhist Approach to Mental Illness" in Lama Yeshe's *Becoming Your Own Therapist*, free from the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive.

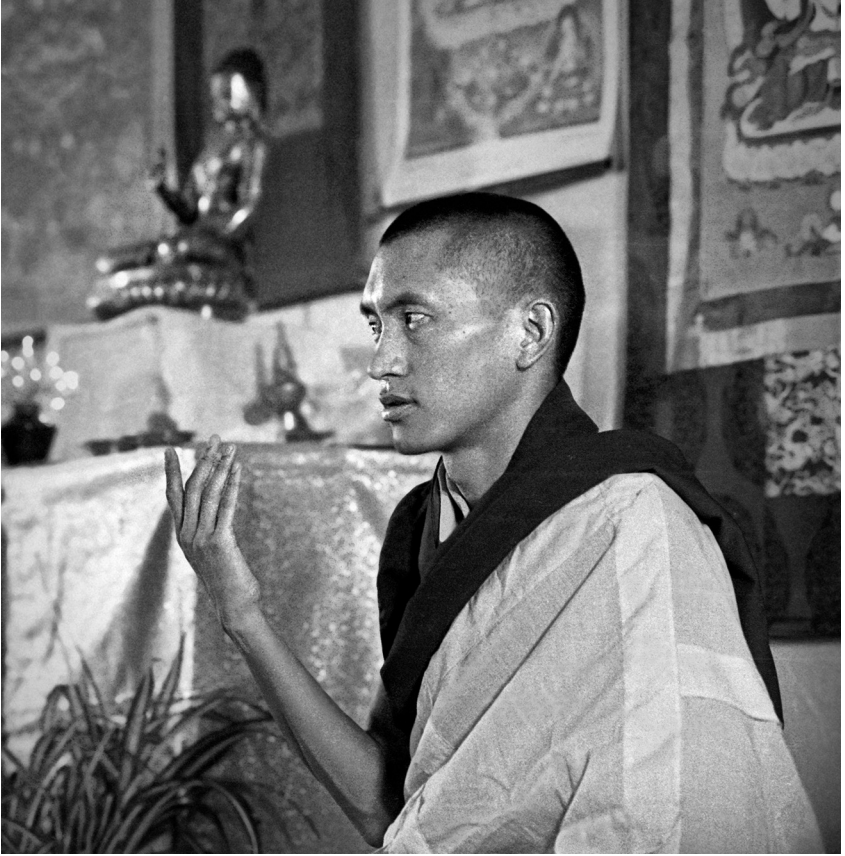


Lama Yeshe & Lama Zopa Rinpoche

WEEKEND SEMINAR

Royal Holloway College, Surrey

19–21 September 1975



An Introduction to the Path to Enlightenment

BECAUSE OF MY broken English you might find it difficult to understand what I'm saying, but it's important to try to focus not on the language itself but on the meaning of my words; and, if possible, to feel it.

All human beings and even the tiniest of creatures desire happiness and freedom from suffering. But our biggest problem is that although we desire happiness, we don't know what actually causes it; although we don't want suffering, we don't know what causes that either. That's our biggest problem.

Most living beings, no matter how much they wish for happiness, spend most of their time destroying the cause of happiness; and no matter how much they do not want suffering, they constantly rush to create its cause. All this comes about because sentient beings lack method and wisdom.

Earth's original human inhabitants did not have minds as negative and cruel as those of today. As a result, the actions of their speech and body were not as violent and harmful as those of the

people we see around us now, and life was much more peaceful then. But gradually, as their delusions of anger, attachment, pride and jealousy arose more frequently and strongly, their minds became increasingly cruel, negative and harmful, and the actions of their speech and body became more violent and destructive. And no matter how much we have progressed in external development since those times, life has simply become busier and more dangerous; no matter how many material things, such as nuclear weapons have been developed, instead of bringing true peace, all they have brought is more danger.

However, we can't blame external things for all these problems; the actual cause is the internal factor—the unhealthy, dissatisfied mind, attachment, hatred and so forth. Even though people have undertaken external development with the expectation that it will bring happiness, that's a wrong conception. Happiness does not arise principally from external things but from the internal factor, the mind.

For example, people who have all the material things they need and desire—gourmet food, beautiful clothing, a luxurious apartment and so forth—are not necessarily happy. They get unhappy and depressed because they feel dissatisfied and don't know why; and since they also don't understand the meaning of human life, some of them think there's nothing left to enjoy, get completely despondent and kill themselves.

All such problems come from the mind, the internal factor, attachment. Instead of bringing satisfaction and happiness, all these desirable external things bring only more dissatisfaction.

Similarly, with respect to the suffering that arises from problems caused by other people—enemies, family members, countrymen—even if we were to kill all the other human beings on earth, even all other living beings, and remain here alone, still we would not experience happiness or peace. Stopping suffering and receiving happiness does not depend on making all other humans, all other living beings on earth, non-existent. Since doing so would not bring peace or happiness to the mind it shows that this is not the right method, not the way to receive happiness. By being alone with no other people, friends or other living beings around, we would feel lonely and very unhappy. Those problems also arise from within, from the internal factor, attachment.

Even when we get the material objects or close friends we desire, after a while we get bored and lose interest. That also comes from the internal factor, the dissatisfied mind, attachment.

Our physical body dying, becoming non-existent, does not mean that our suffering is over; the mind does not stop when the body does. Even though our body no longer exists, our mind is still in suffering—as long as our mind is under the control of the delusions of ignorance, attachment and anger, it is not free from suffering. The delusions themselves are the worst suffering, the root of every problem people and animals experience; The delusions are like the root of a tree—if there were no root there'd be no branches, leaves or fruit, which produce more seeds. So if there were no root of the delusions—ignorance, attachment and hatred—there wouldn't be any of the problems that we and other living beings experience, such as sickness, old age, death and so forth.

Body and mind are completely different

The first thing we need to understand is that the causes of our present life's mind and our present life's body are different. Our present life's mind came from its own cause, continued from its own cause, our previous life's mind. And our present life's body came from the union of our parents' sperm and egg—our mind did not come from these atoms, these physical things. Also, our mind did not come from our parents' mind.

If the principal cause of our present life's mind were our parents' sperm and egg, then all the problems and sufferings we experience in our life would have been caused by our parents and they would be their root cause. In that way our parents would become our enemy—if they had not given birth to us we would not have had to experience this suffering.

But it is not like this. Our parents are never the source of our problems. No matter what problems we experience—ugly body, deformity, handicap, whatever—it is not our parents' fault; it's our own fault. There's nothing to blame our parents for.

Also, the mind and the body are two completely different things: the mind is a formless phenomenon; the body has form. The body is composed of atoms; the mind is not. Their natures are completely different.

Just as space, whose nature is empty, does not become the nature of earth, form, the nature of earth, form, cannot become the nature of space, emptiness. In that way, the physical body never causes the mind, never becomes mind. The nature of the mind is clarity and it has the ability to see, or perceive, objects.

In addition, as soon as they've been born, baby humans and animals know how to drink milk without having to be taught by their parents; they automatically know how to suckle. And even little puppies know how to engage in sexual intercourse without needing to be shown. All this is because of habits created in previous lives. Because of habitual actions in previous lives, the newborn do such actions spontaneously without being taught.

Also, some children, without being trained or taught, are naturally very compassionate and don't want to harm other people or insects. Even if they see insects fighting or people in trouble, they have a strong, intuitive wish to help relieve that problem; they have intuitive compassion. But other children are automatically very impatient and cruel; whenever they see insects crawling around they immediately want to kill them. They have a very cruel personality.

Why do these children have different personalities? Why are they born with them? It's because in their previous lives, one child's mind was trained in patience and compassion while the other used to be very impatient, angry and cruel, giving much harm to others. So when they were born in this life, those personality traits, compassionate or cruel, carried over.

Another way of saying this is that children born with different personalities or different types of body are experiencing the result of previous lives' actions. So whatever qualities the child is born with—good personality, instinctive knowledge, great intelligence, perfect, beautiful body and senses—they are the result of actions created in previous lives with a virtuous, positive mind. And a child born with a cruel or harmful personality and physical handicaps is experiencing the results of actions done in previous lives

with a cruel, negative mind, such as ignorance, attachment and hatred.

Furthermore, even in the West in modern times, many children can remember previous lives. Similarly, in the East, there are many people who also remember previous lives: where they lived, how they lived, their families and other people and places. Likewise, many meditators, as their mind develops through meditation practice and they reach a certain level of realization, can remember past lives and see future ones: where they will be born, in which country, in which family. And, according to their level of realization, they can make preparations before they die and choose where they want to be born and into which family.

In our case, just because we don't remember our past lives and our minds are incapable of seeing our future ones doesn't mean that our past and future lives don't exist. Arguments such as "I don't remember" or "I don't see the future" do not disprove past and future lives' existence. If such reasoning were sufficient we could assert "I was never in my mother's womb" because we don't remember it—the experiences we had, how we lived, how we entered it, how our mind was conceived there. If we search our mind with respect to these points it's completely dark; there's no clarity.

So forget about remembering previous lives or seeing future ones, we don't even remember how we came out of our mother's womb, what happened when we were a small baby, how our mother took care of us. We don't even recall any of that, so there's no way we can say we were never in our mother's womb just because we don't remember. That's no proof.

If the reasoning “I don’t know” were valid then we’d have to say we don’t exist. Why? Because we don’t know what we are. If we check, “Who am I? What am I?” we can’t see anything. But just because we don’t see who or what we are doesn’t prove that we don’t exist. “I don’t know what I am so I don’t exist” is a silly reason and cannot prove that we don’t exist.

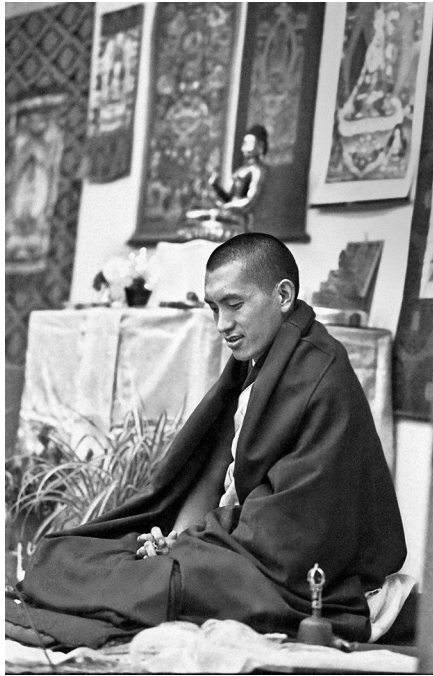
And besides there being people who remember their own previous lives and see their future ones, there are also people who can see other people’s past and future lives, even in the West.

Thus the mind does not cease when the body ceases; the mind continues. Our present mind’s life continued from our previous life’s mind; that previous life’s mind continued from its previous life’s mind; that came from its previous life; that again came from its previous life and in this way the continuity of mind has no beginning. Similarly, the continuity of mind has no end.

So even though this present life’s physical body disappears, the mind still continues. And as long as the mind is under the control of the delusions—ignorance, attachment and hatred—it is not free from suffering; the mind is in suffering. As long as our mind is not free from suffering, no matter how many different bodies we take, we always encounter problems. Whether we take an animal body or a human one, no matter what kind of rebirth we take, as long as our mind is not free from suffering we can never experience true peace or real happiness.

Why is our present body not free from suffering? It’s because our mind is not free from suffering. So just like this, as long as our mind is not free of the delusions, no matter what kind of body we take,

whatever rebirth, it is always in suffering, always involved in various problems. Since this is the actual evolution of suffering, nothing external, even thousands of atomic bombs, can stop it because nothing external can destroy the delusions, the root of all suffering.



Putting an end to suffering

What can really cease, completely destroy, the root of suffering, the delusions? That's the practice of Dharma. So that's the purpose of religion, why it exists. Why do we need to follow religion, practice meditation or Dharma, whatever we choose to call it? The actual reason is that there's nothing other than Dharma, or meditation, practice that can destroy the root of suffering, the delusions.

However, the meditation we practice should serve to destroy our delusions, our unsubdued mind. If it does not, it's the wrong meditation; it's useless. In the same way, the purpose of following religion is to completely destroy the root of suffering, the delusions; the unhealthy, unsubdued mind. If the path or religion we're following does not do that, does not serve to decrease our delusions, then the path we're following is imperfect; there's something wrong with it. What we're practicing is wrong.

The purpose of practicing Dharma is also to destroy these delusions. However, practicing Dharma does not mean just doing ritual things; practicing Dharma does not mean just reciting mantras; practicing Dharma does not mean just worshipping, making offerings and so forth. Just doing these things does not mean we're practicing Dharma. Simply wearing robes is not practicing Dharma; nor does reading texts of Lord Buddha's teachings, the Buddhadharma, mean we're practicing Dharma.

There's a story about the great Tibetan yogi Dromtönpa meeting an old man who was trying to practice Dharma. The old man was circumambulating a temple thinking he was practicing Dharma but the great yogi Dromtönpa said to him, "Your going around the temple is good but wouldn't it be better if you practiced Dharma?"

The old man thought by practicing Dharma the yogi must mean reading Dharma texts, so he stopped going around the temple and instead started reading texts. When Dromtönpa saw him next he said, "Reading texts is good but wouldn't it be better if you practiced Dharma?"

So the old man thought if circumambulating and reading texts

aren't practicing Dharma, the yogi must mean he should meditate and started doing that. When, after some time, Dromtönpa saw him sitting cross-legged he said, "Meditation is very good but wouldn't it be better if you practiced Dharma?"

At this point the old man was somewhat confused and irritated and exclaimed to Dromtönpa, "Practice Dharma! Practice Dharma! What do you mean, 'practice Dharma'?"

"Renounce this life," the yogi replied.

What did the great yogi Dromtönpa mean by "renounce this life"? He meant we should renounce suffering, which means renouncing the worst of all sufferings, the delusions—ignorance, attachment, anger, pride, jealousy and so forth—all the negative minds that are the root of all suffering. This is what practicing Dharma really means: facing the root of suffering, the delusions.

So no matter what religion people follow—Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism or any other—as long as their practice diminishes and destroys the root of suffering, that is the real Dharma, that is the actual path, the real path that brings true happiness, everlasting happiness. So it's extremely important that whatever we do, whatever meditation we practice, whatever religious actions we engage in, we use it to destroy the root of unhappiness, suffering. That's the most important thing to concentrate on.

But releasing only oneself from suffering by practicing Dharma is insufficient. Seeking release from suffering and everlasting happiness for oneself alone is selfish because all the happiness and perfections of our past, present and future lives have been received dependent upon the kindness of other sentient beings. Also, even

if we have freed ourself alone from all delusions we still haven't received all the realizations and complete knowledge of a buddha; we still have the subtle obscurations of the dualistic mind to purify.

For example, say there's a family where the parents are starving and their son has found some food and his stomach is full for today but there's no food for tomorrow. So, just being fed today with nothing for tomorrow doesn't mean he's self-sufficient and should not make arrangements not to starve in future. Also, he should help others avoid similar problems too. Similarly, since all our happiness and resources have been received through the kindness of all sentient beings and we still have not received all realizations and have subtle obscurations to purify, we must attain enlightenment for the sake of other sentient beings.

If we attain enlightenment, the highest goal, the most sublime happiness, even each ray of light that emanates from our holy body has the power to release other sentient beings and lead them on the path to enlightenment. As a buddha, we can manifest billions of bodies and show different methods according to sentient beings' level of mind to release them from suffering and lead them to enlightenment.

Also, with his holy speech a buddha can explain the Dharma in different languages according to each sentient being's need and therefore enlighten numberless sentient beings. And with his holy omniscient mind a buddha can see all the numberless sentient beings' different thoughts, different levels of mind, different personalities, different desires; the omniscient mind sees every sin-

gle thing that exists, all past, present and future, and in this way can enlighten numberless sentient beings by showing different methods.

An enlightened being has that much power and knowledge—all knowledge, complete; there's nothing missing—and no ignorance whatsoever—not a single self-cherishing thought, not a single dualistic mind, not one single defect. The enlightened mind is completely pure.

By attaining enlightenment we can release other sentient beings from suffering and enlighten them very quickly, and this is the highest goal of practicing Dharma, especially the Mahayana: to attain enlightenment for the sake of other sentient beings. The way we attain enlightenment is by following the graduated path, which includes all the teachings of the Buddhadharma.

How can we attain enlightenment through the graduated path? That is because the nature of our mind is not one with the delusions or the dualistic mind, which are the main hindrances to enlightenment, or buddhahood, which has all knowledge and complete purity. The nature of our mind is only temporarily obscured by these hindrances, so when we follow the graduated path the temporal obscurations—the delusions and the dualistic mind—gradually diminish. When they have been finally removed, our mind becomes completely pure. When the mind becomes completely pure, it becomes omniscient.

Why is our present mind not an omniscient, fully knowing mind? That is because of the hindrances, the obscurations, the dualistic mind. When they have been completely purified, our present

mind becomes omniscient. When our mind becomes omniscient, we become a buddha, an enlightened being.

Another reason is that the graduated path explains absolute nature, the right view of the nature of the mind, the nature of the self, the nature of all existence. Ignorance, the main obscuration, is ignorant of the right view, the absolute nature; ignorance does not understand absolute nature. That is the worst obscuration, the biggest delusion—ignorance, not knowing the absolute nature of the self or any other existence.

So by following the graduated path we receive the wisdom realizing absolute nature, or *shunyata*. When we realize the wisdom of *shunyata*, ignorance, the false mind that does not see the absolute nature, dissolves, finishes. That's one basic reason why the graduated path diminishes, or purifies, the obscurations and the dualistic mind.

The path to enlightenment

This graduated path to enlightenment is not something that nobody has experienced, traversed. It's the path that all the past, present and future buddhas have traveled on their way to completing all the realizations of the path to enlightenment. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha himself experienced it and on that basis showed it to his followers, handing the teachings down to Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom, and Maitreya, the next buddha to come. And then these buddhas handed it down to their own followers, such as the great philosopher and pundit Nagarjuna, who

received enlightenment, Asanga and many other eminent pundits. They attained all the realizations of the graduated path and in turn handed the teachings down to their own followers. In this way the teachings passed down to other fully realized pundits such as Shantideva, Atisha and others who had complete control over their mind, eventually reaching great Tibetan pundits and yogis such as Lama Tsongkhapa and many other followers of the great Atisha. From them, the teachings of the graduated path to enlightenment have been handed down to the high lamas of the present, such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, his tutors (Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang) and many other high lamas, and we have received the lineage of these teachings from them.

So the subject matter—the meditation, or the teaching—of this seminar is the graduated path to enlightenment, the lineage of which we have received from the abovementioned present-day great lamas, who themselves received it from the previous Tibetan and Indian pundits, and which originally came from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha.

If you follow and practice this path, it definitely works. Gradually, your mind becomes more and more free of delusions. As your delusions diminish you get closer to enlightenment. When you reach the end of the path you become a buddha.

If you have any questions or doubts, if anything is unclear, you don't have to feel depressed. It's good to have questions and doubts. They help you to develop your knowledge. You should think about them, discuss them with older students or ask your teacher.

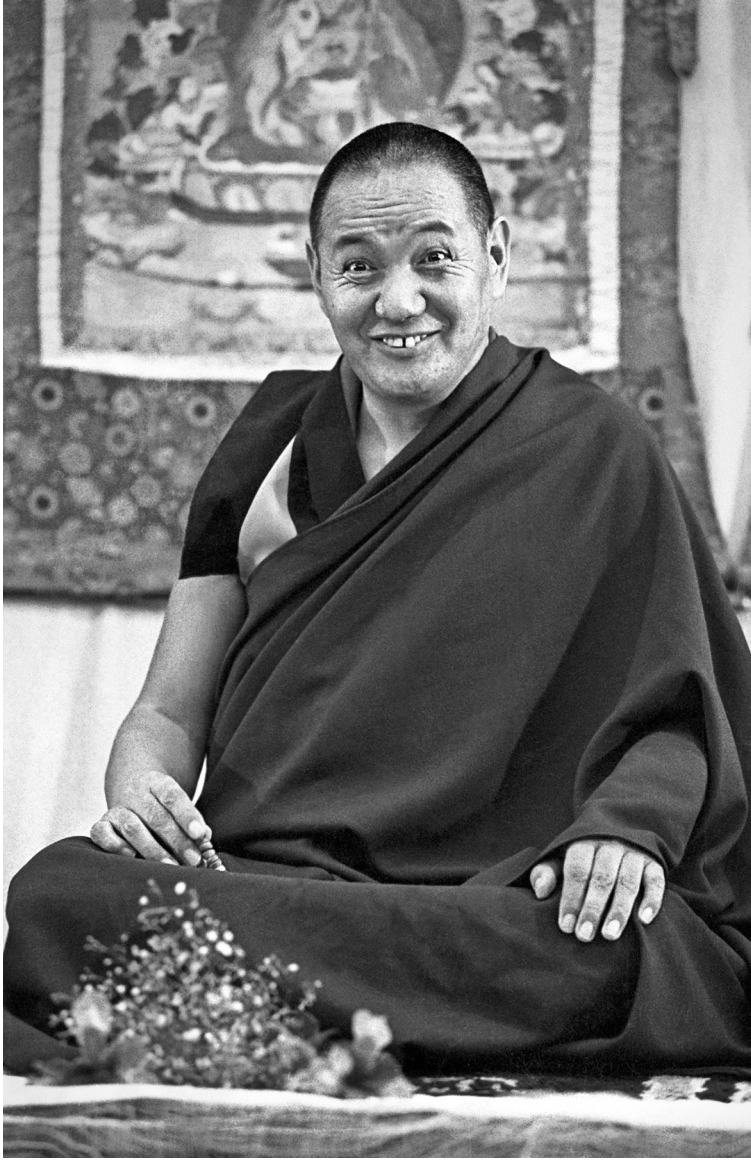
Meditation on the continuity of mind

In the next session, meditate on mental continuity. The way to do this is to first cultivate a pure motivation for doing the meditation. The mind that starts the meditation should be as pure as possible and totally uninvolved in ignorance, attachment or anger. So start by generating bodhicitta by thinking, “I am going to do this meditation in order to reach enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.”

Next meditate on your breath for a few minutes and then move into an analytical meditation on the continuity of life.

Check your mind, starting with your present mind, thinking that this year’s mind came from last year’s mind, last year’s mind came from the previous year’s mind and so on, going further and further back until the time you were a baby. From there go back to the time you were in your mother’s womb. Then go back from that to the time of your conception and when you reach that point, try to go even further back to see where your mind came from, what kind of previous life. Then think that that previous life’s mind came from its own previous life, and that from another and so on, back and back.

This is an analytical meditation that helps you realize reincarnation. Also, it gradually helps you realize the absolute nature of your mind.



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Making the Most of Your Life

THIS WEEKEND we are very fortunate in that we have the opportunity to cultivate bodhicitta and put the actions of our body, speech and mind into the path to liberation, the path of control. This is so worthwhile.

Despite having had many previous lives and having lived many years in this one, if we really check, from the time we were born up to now, we'll find that we haven't acted seriously for even one day because most of the time our mind has been completely occupied by uncontrolled thoughts and superstition. So we are very fortunate to have generated the enthusiastic feeling of wanting to help others and ourselves in the highest way possible.

Since we were born we've wasted practically every moment of every day, month and year. Instead of making our time worthwhile and using it to bring happiness, we've engaged in only useless actions and used our precious life for nothing. At the time, we've thought that what we've been doing is useful but if we check we'll see that it really has not been.

Perhaps you'll disagree; you think that what you've done has been worthwhile because you've taken care of your life, preserved yourself and made money. But is that fulfilling your human potential? Is

that all you can do? If that's all you can do you're no better than a cat or a rabbit. Having profound human potential but using your life as an animal does is such a waste of time. You have to realize how incredibly tragic that is.

If you check up deeply to see if, since you were born until now, you've done anything that was really worthwhile in bringing you true happiness and a joyful life, do you think you'll find anything? Check up. Don't look at others; check yourself. It's not complicated: you have your body, speech and mind; just these three. Which of their actions have been worthwhile?

I'm going to suggest that most of time your actions of body, speech and mind have produced only frustration and confusion. Check up: how many hours are there in one day? During how much of each of these hours have you been aware? How much of each hour has been positive? Check that way; it's very simple. The Buddhist way of checking is very scientific. Anybody can do it; we're not trying to be exclusive. It's realistic. Check for yourself.

Even though you might say that you're following a spiritual path or leading a meditator's life, you're not serious. It doesn't matter if you sit in meditation, go to church on Sundays, visit the temple regularly or do any other kind of customary religious activity; that doesn't mean anything. The actions that you need to do are those that actually lead you to everlasting, peaceful happiness, the truly joyful state, not those that simply bring up and down transitory pleasure. Actions that bounce you up and down are not true Dharma, not true meditation, not true religion—here I can make a definitive statement. Check up: you might think you're doing something spiritual but is your polluted mind simply dreaming?

Relative and absolute

Here I'm talking about what Buddhism calls your relative nature. You might think, "How can you describe my nature just like that? My nature has many different aspects." That might be the Western idea of it but the Buddhist idea is much simpler: we say your nature has two aspects, relative and absolute.

So when I describe how you are, I'm talking about your relative nature. Sometimes we talk about higher ideas, something absolute. Perhaps you've read books that talk about the absolute nature. Forget about the absolute—first you have to know the way your relative body, speech and mind function in everyday life. That's very important. You can't just jump straight into inner freedom.

When Western science talks about evolution it describes a process of gradual development. Even *I* know that and I'm somewhat stupid and uneducated; I haven't even been to school. Nevertheless, when I hear Western scientists talk about mind control, to me it sounds rather primitive. Of course, I'm sure they would say that I'm the primitive one!

However, ever since you could talk you've been saying, "My mind is this; my mind is that," but actually, you have no idea what your mind is. The nature of the mind is not some Eastern custom. You've had a mind from the moment you were born—you can't say that it's an Eastern custom. Also, Buddhism doesn't talk about customs; customs aren't important. So describing the mind isn't an Eastern custom. Anyway, here I'm talking about your relative nature.

It's your relative mind that functions in your everyday life. For example, whenever things go wrong in your interactions with

people—family, friends or society in general—you always blame somebody else. Check your mind—you do. That’s a misconception. In fact, all your problems, both physical and mental, come from ignorance—a lack of intensive knowledge-wisdom—and attachment. These two mental factors are the biggest root of *any* problem, social or individual. Check up, but this time check up on your *own* mind.

Think about when you cheat others through lying or when you kill, taking another’s life. Check up: why do you do such things? The root is ignorance; the motivation is attachment, involvement in your own pleasure. The energy of ignorance, a lack of intensive knowledge-wisdom, is like a king or queen and attachment is like a director. It’s the mind; it’s your mind. I’m not talking about something else. And your mind contains the association of these two things: ignorance and attachment.

These two factors are the principal cause of all problems, physical and mental. If you do not realize this you’ll never be able to solve your problems because you’ll continue thinking that their cause lies outside: “I’m not happy, I’m not going to see him again; I’m not happy, I need a bigger house; I’m not happy, I need a better car.” You can never put an end to problems that way. Especially in the West, we always think that money is the solution to all problems. It’s not true; that’s a complete misconception.

Don’t think, “Lama’s putting me down... that’s not how I think.” I’m not talking about intellectual thought; I’m talking about something much more deeply rooted in your mind. Human problems don’t originate from intellectual thought. Actually, if you could see

what goes on in your mind, you wouldn't believe it. Even though you're not consciously aware of this materialistic way of thinking, deep in your subconscious there are forces leading you in a circle from one trip to another to another to another, constantly changing. This is what we mean by cyclic existence. We go round and round but never reach beyond the circle. Our entire way of living is a joke. We give children toys to play with... we're the same; it's just a different game.

We like to boast, "This modern generation is so well educated, we know so much. We're well versed in social theory, economics, inflation and so forth." But it's not that the current generation is more intelligent and older ones were foolish. Why? Because the external world itself is changing automatically and all you're doing is observing natural occurrence. So don't think that you're so much smarter than previous generations.

However, some of you do see that it's worthwhile to seek something beyond mere material comfort, but if you don't seek with the right attitude you're still going to circle in samsara. Even if you try to meditate, do yoga or follow some other spiritual trip, you're still going to go round and round. So make sure you have the right mental attitude and the right view and that you're on the right path by recognizing how the wrong mental attitude leads you down the wrong path to the wrong goal.

Often Western people say, "Don't be negative; be positive." They like to talk about the positive but not the negative. But negativity exists; why not talk about it? You don't have to talk about it angrily but it's important to demonstrate and know how the negative mind

functions. From the Buddhist point of view, that's very important.

That's why I always say that Buddhism isn't a diplomatic religion, always saying nice things. We like to call things as they are, without hesitation. So don't be shocked; you should expect me to say things that are not particularly nice. Don't worry.

Of course, we do have nice qualities, beautiful qualities. Equally, so do all other living beings, even fish and chickens. We all possess good qualities of mind. But at the same time we all possess a negative nature that can bring us down. So we need to be shown and know both the good and the bad within us. Then we can let go of fear. Otherwise, our every move can make us fearful.

As long as you don't have the inner understanding or knowledge-wisdom of what constitutes real happiness and a truly joyful life and just sit around expecting the world to somehow get better, you're dreaming. How can the world possibly get better by itself?

Take inflation, for example. How's that going to improve? Inflation comes from attachment. It does—but I'm sure that political economists don't know that! Month by month, year by year, they go on, "This, this, this, that, that, that," but they don't know that inflation is actually due to attachment. Why is that?

You check up. It's not that the economy is strong and suddenly worsens for no reason. It's due to selfishness and attachment. Some people have too much but worry about not having enough. So they hoard and then the economy inflates. It's not that there are insufficient material goods; there's plenty of food, plenty of goods. It's the selfish mind that causes inflation.

Anyway, check this for yourselves; it's not true just because I

say so. Still, if you investigate you'll see how attachment, the selfish mind, creates problems for both the individual and society and destroys everybody's inner peace and joyful life.

Look at religious wars. There's one going on right now;² and not only now—throughout history. Religious wars come from attachment. I'm talking about how attachment functions. Two small children fighting over a piece of candy comes from attachment; two huge countries fighting each other also comes from attachment; and religious people fighting each other comes from attachment, as well.

Actually, those religious people fighting each other all think that religion is wonderful but fighting is not a religious action, is it? For them, religion is just an idea, that's all. Those who fight religious wars are not religious people. Religion is about compassion and universal love. How can killing become a religious action? It's impossible. It comes from attachment.

So you can understand how attachment is the biggest problem in the world. "My religion is good, therefore I'm going to kill you." That's ridiculous. People who think like that are simply destroying themselves.

If I were to do that I'd be turning religion into poison. What I was doing would have nothing to do with religion. But even though my actions were the opposite of religion, I'd be thinking, "My religion is good." Instead of being medicine to solve my psychological problems, because of my distorted mental attitude, my religion would be

² Lama may have been referring to the conflict in Lebanon, which had started just a few months earlier.

poison. Even though I'm thinking, "This is my religion," not a minute of my actions would be religious.

For example, I have the idea that my *thangka*³ is my religion. Then if somebody tries to burn my *thangka* I get upset because I think he's destroying my religion. That's a misconception. A painting isn't religion. People who think material things are religion misunderstand the meaning of religion. Religion is not external; Dharma is not external. It's only in the mind.

The Bible says the same thing. The New Testament contains wonderful teachings by Jesus but many people don't understand what they mean. For example, he said that people who worship idols are not following him. That's very true; that's a fantastic teaching. We have to understand how to integrate religion with our everyday life, put it into action and solve our problems, not think that material things like church and property are religion. That's ridiculous.

In other words, people who worship idols thinking that the material atoms are their religion and don't realize the nature of their own consciousness or spirit have no idea of what religion really is. Jesus gave perfect teachings explaining this; we just don't realize.

Ego and attachment

Attachment and ignorance produce many misconceptions in our life. How? For example, we often think, "This is good; this makes

³ A *thangka* is a Tibetan religious painted scroll.

me happy,” but if we investigate a little further we’ll find that such thoughts are misconceptions; that the things we think make us happy actually cause suffering.

Evel Kniefel is a good example of this.⁴ He believes his death-defying, daredevil stunts to be pleasure. Even when he nearly kills himself, after he recovers, even though he’s decided to quit, his ego and attachment tell him, “This is your profession, your job; you have to do it again.” So he does and nearly dies once more. Why does he put himself through all this?

Well, we ourselves do the same thing. I mean, in one way what we do is completely different but from another point of view it’s exactly the same. Why? Through misconception. We do things that bring us suffering but cling to them as wonderful causes of happiness. Check up on the things you do, physically and mentally—you’ll see that what I’m saying is true.

Perhaps it will be clearer if I give an example from our own experience. We’re always attached to food, aren’t we? As a result, we eat with greed and our stomach is often upset. This comes from attachment; it’s common.

Actually, people think that food should preserve body and life, but eating with ignorance turns nourishment into poison and kills us. Everybody knows this; check up. Why do most people die? It’s because they eat things that finish up killing them. If you really look

⁴ He was in the news around this time. From his website: 31 May 1975: a record crowd of over 90,000 at Wembley Stadium in London, England, watched as Evel crashed upon landing, breaking his pelvis after clearing 13 double-tiered buses. He died 30 November 2007.

into it you'll nearly always find that the person made some mistake or other.

What I'm saying is simple but you have to realize it more deeply; it's not just an idea. If the meditation you do is just an idea, if you're simply on some kind of trip, then it's not worthwhile. Proper meditation scientifically demonstrates the reality of your nature, your relative nature. This is well worth knowing. When you know the nature of your own mind—how your mind torments you, how it brings you suffering—your mind can then cooperate with your life. Most of the time our mind does not cooperate with our life. As a result, we don't know what's going on in our life.

Look at the Western world in particular. We're too involved in objects of sense gravitation attachment⁵; we over-exaggerate the importance of the sense world such that it's constantly exploding in front of us. The way we're brought up, we automatically believe that the external world brings us happiness. It's true; check up. Perhaps we don't assent to this intellectually, but if we look more deeply into our mind we'll see that that's what we believe. That misconception is deeply rooted in our consciousness.

I'm not talking about something intellectual. Forget about the intellectual. Just penetrate more deeply into your own mind and investigate your lifelong beliefs, what you think is best for you and what you think is not. Everybody holds to such beliefs. Don't think, "I'm not like that. I just go with the flow." That's not true. Don't think, "I have no fixed ideas." The nature of attachment is such that

⁵ Editor: For several years I thought Lama was trying to say "sense gratification attachment" and would try to correct him (to no avail) but eventually it became clear to me that he knew exactly what he was saying and meant the irresistible gravitational pull that objects of attachment have upon our mind.

you always have fixed ideas of what is best for you: "This is me, therefore that is best." Check up on your "this is me."

So attachment to "this is best for me" based on ego's conceptualization of "I'm Thubten Yeshe, this is me," the conception of I, my mind's fixed idea of who and what I am, this association of ego and attachment, has nothing whatsoever to do with my reality, relative or absolute.

While I'm saying this you should be meditating, checking up on whether or not what I'm saying is exaggerated or exactly right. Check up on this right now. What I'm talking about is how the ego and attachment are associated, how they relate to each other.

What I'm saying is that the fundamental cause of attachment is the conceptualization of ego, and in reality this ego does not exist within you, either relatively or absolutely. But the ego mind projects and paints "I am this," you get a fixed idea of what you are, and then you start worrying, "I am this, therefore I should have that; I am this, so I need to maintain my reputation; because I'm this, I need that." You check up.

Such fixed ideas of what you are, how you should be, which are completely mental projections, hallucinated, polluted projections, have nothing whatsoever to do with reality, either relative or absolute.

A meditation on how you exist

Why don't you take a couple of minutes right now to check up on what you are, how you exist. When you ask, "What am I?" a concrete, substantial idea of "this is me" will reveal itself.



Your color is not you, your I. Your form is not I. Your nose is not I. Your leg is not I. Your heart is not I. So where is that idea, your conceptual idea of ego? Where is it?



Your imaginary I, your hallucinated ego, was not created by God, Krishna, Buddha or anybody else. It was created only by your own mind, your own misconceptions.



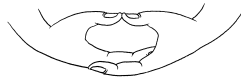
When you realize that your imaginary, conceptualized I is non-existent, suddenly something substantial and concrete disappears from within your heart. Your heart becomes restful rather than restless; your heart's restless energy is released. It's incredible; it's so powerful. As a result, your body becomes less intense and tight.



There is no self-existent, concrete I, ego. All transitory phenomena, your physical body and all that appears is totally non-self-existent. However, you—your superficial mind—have always thought that within your five aggregates,⁶ you truly exist. Your mind, your

⁶ The five *skandhas*, or aggregates, are the five psycho-physical constituents that make

conceptualization of I, ego, always feels that within your body, within your five aggregates, an “I am” really exists. You have always thought, and also felt, that something exists within you. If you check up carefully you will find that this is simply a projection of your hallucinating mind.



From the Hinayana point of view, your self and the entire sense world are non-self-existent; only inner reality is self-existent. But from the point of view of the Madhyamaka, a Mahayana school, even inner reality is also non-self-existent; nothing at all is self-existent, concrete, as the ego perceives. It's impossible for anything to be self-existent.

In other words, to keep it simple, when you feel miserable, it's because of misconception. Misconception produces miserable conditions; misconception holds a misconceived object that has nothing whatsoever to do with the reality of either your inner world or the outer sense world.



That's why Lord Buddha said that all your frustration and confusion results from your own actions and is not created by God. God doesn't create evil actions, does he? The Bible doesn't say that God created evil. Nevertheless, many people have the misconception

up a sentient being: form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness.

that because God created everything, God created evil. Philosophically, that's a dubious position, but philosophy's not important here. You just have to know what the Bible's saying.

Many people think that the Bible is mistaken. The Bible's not mistaken; *you're* mistaken because you interpret the Bible with a lack of knowledge-wisdom.

Negative comes from the mind

So it's really worthwhile if you can discover that all your false conceptions and miserable experiences come from attachment and the polluted I, the conceptualization of ego; if you can realize this you will release the tremendously uptight energy of bondage.

Also, it's not just a matter of your believing something. Through experimentation comes experience; through experience comes realization. We don't call mere intellectual understanding realization; without experience, knowledge is dry. From the day we were born until now, we've all been dry, and if we don't actualize the teachings, don't gain experience, we'll remain dry until the day we die. Dry, like dry wood.

However, as I talk about the relative nature of your own mind, don't think, "Oh, my mind is garbage; I'm the worst person on earth." Instead of thinking in that way, realize that "It's incredible. I'm not the only one with such problems. All other living beings in the universe have them too."

Now I'm sure that there have been times in your life when you've thought, crying emotionally, "I want to make my life worthwhile;

I want to help others.” That’s ridiculous; it’s so emotional. If you really want to help others, the way to think is, “First I need to realize the nature of my own mind and how to stop human problems. Then I’ll really know how to help others.”

If you don’t understand your own problems and know how to help yourself, how can you possibly think you can help others? You’re just being emotional: no wisdom, no method; you’re just joking.

First realize your own situation: “It’s not just me; countless beings on this earth are in the same situation, full of misconceptions, and, as a result, are greatly conflicted both physically and mentally.” Our minds are full of conflict and when that mental energy transmutes into the physical level, our bodies also get sick. In that way, all sickness comes from a diseased mind; the sick mind manifests as a sick body.

So the way to expand love and compassion is to first understand yourself; *then* you can relate to all other living beings. That’s good. The problem is that much of the time we don’t even have compassion for ourselves, we don’t comprehend ourselves, so how can we then have love and compassion for others? It’s impossible. Even if we say we love others, it’s just words, emotion. We say, “I love you,” but true love first has to be for *you*. You have to know your own situation, what you are. This leads to sincere love for yourself, and from that, sincere love for others. Without doing it that way, you’re joking.

Most of the time what you call love is selfish; it’s purely attachment. Also, although sometimes your meditation might not be

attachment, most of the time it is also selfish, attachment. Check up; really check up. I'm not joking; I haven't come here to joke. It's true. As long as you grasp at something concrete and cling tightly to your own comfort, it's still selfish, even though you think you're a meditator on a spiritual trip. It's still selfish.

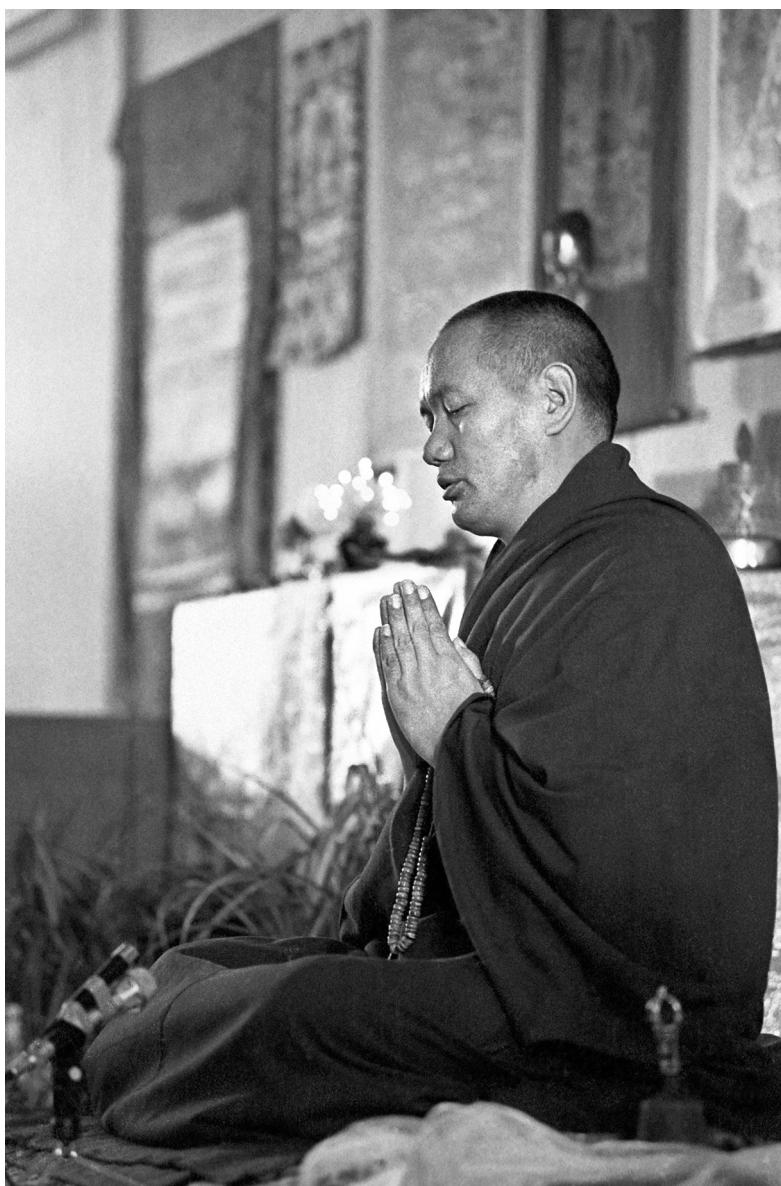
Why am I talking about this, emphasizing this? Because even if you're a meditator, as long as you're seeking something concrete for yourself, it has the psychological effect of making you easily frustrated. Even if you're on a spiritual trip, it's still self-cherishing. In other words, you still have the conceptualization, ego's fixed idea, "I'm this, my realization is that," which has nothing whatsoever to do with true realization.

So it's worthwhile for you to realize your own situation and the way you live. This is not just some philosophical point of view. Check how your life is, how you think, what sort of mistakes you make and how your misconceptions are related to what you experience. Analyze how all that happens and how it's related to attachment. By realizing that, instead of then worrying about your own problems you can see that all universal living beings are in the same situation. Then automatically, intuitively, love and compassion ensue. With such understanding, even your greatest enemy can become a good friend—yesterday you didn't even want to see him but today he appears beautiful to you. It's true, because it's all your projection.

Actually, when you look at other people and think, "She's ugly, she's good; he's ugly, he's bad," it's totally your own mental projection. Who on this earth is absolutely good? Who? Please tell me.

Who, in London, is absolutely beautiful? Who is absolutely ugly? There's nobody you can point to, for sure. You check up on that. It's interesting, isn't it?

I'm talking about scientific fact, not something you have to believe in. If you really believe that there's something in London that's absolutely beautiful, please prove it to me scientifically. You can't. The thing is, we always accept things too easily; we never check. We call that kind of attitude sluggishness; its nature is absence of intensive knowledge-wisdom.



... 4 ...

How to Meditate

Mantra

MANTRA HAS the power to separate your body, speech and mind from ordinary, mundane thought. The vibration of a mantra can automatically unify the split, scattered mind into single-pointedness. Reciting a mantra can focus your mind into the here and now rather than leaving it to run all over the place as it usually does. So that's very useful and is one of the reasons we recite mantras.

The mantra of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is TA YA THA OM MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHA MUNAYE SOHA. OM means magnificent knowledge-wisdom and power and MUNÉ MUNÉ MAHA MUNAYE contains three meanings: control, great control, greatest control, or conquest, great conquest, greatest conquest. We all need to control or conquer our uncontrolled mind, don't we? We don't need to conquer other sentient beings; we need to conquer our own uncontrolled mind. The connotation of the mantra is along those lines. So it's very useful.

[Lama and the students recite the mantra three times.]

If all negative actions and unhappy feelings come from false conceptions, then the only way to overcome these actions and feelings is to purify and release our false conceptions by perceiving the right view. Perceiving the right view is not something that can just be done instinctively. It takes time to develop right conceptions and perceive the right view.

Meditation

In order to awaken, or become conscious, we need to practice meditation. We tend to think we're conscious most of the time but actually we're not; we're unconscious. Check up; really check up. But by gradually developing our meditation practice we slowly, slowly integrate our mind with reality.

Also, when we meditate we often encounter obstacles to our practice and experience much trouble and frustration. The fundamental character or absolute nature of our mind is clean clear—we call this nature clear light—but relatively it is obscured by misconceptions and other hindrances that prevent us from seeing reality. It's like the sky obscured by clouds—when a strong gust of wind comes and blows away the clouds, the underlying clear blue sky is revealed. It's the same thing with our mind. Therefore, when we try to meditate, we encounter hindrances and lack of clarity and find it very difficult to concentrate single-pointedly on an object. When this happens, instead of getting disappointed we should employ the methods contained in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism to purify our mind.

When our meditation is not going smoothly we should not push. The mind is like a baby; babies don't like to be pushed—we have to treat them differently. Instead of pushing them we have to play with them in a psychologically skillful way. Then they're OK.

Similarly, we have to play a little with our mind. When it becomes impossible to meditate, we shouldn't push. Instead, we should just leave our mind where it is and do some purification practice. This will decrease obstacles and make our mind more powerful.

Unfortunately, many people do try to force it. This just makes them aggressive and frustrated and angry with their friends: "I don't like you this morning; I didn't have a good meditation. Instead of making me calm and clear it made me uptight." Such people don't have skillful wisdom; they don't know how to integrate their practice.

Also, every time you meditate, cultivate bodhicitta and totally dedicate your practice to others: "It doesn't matter whether my meditation is good or bad, I'm not doing it for me, I'm doing it solely for the benefit of other sentient beings." If you have that kind of dedicated mind, even if your meditation is not that good, you're not disappointed; you're secure in the knowledge that whatever you did was for the benefit of others. Then, even if you're not successful, you're still relaxed. You know that you tried your best and that your attitude—concern for others rather than the selfish "I'm miserable, I want to be happy, therefore I'm going to meditate"—is the most important thing. If you meditate with self-cherishing and it doesn't work, you get really disappointed.

Therefore, before you meditate or do any action, actually, it's

incredibly important to dedicate it to others by cultivating bodhicitta. Take going to work, for instance. Most people in this country work for a boss, so before you go to work you should dedicate, “May my life today be beneficial for others.” That’s the way to avoid frustration. If your motivation is selfish, concern for only your own pleasure, your work is always troublesome; your mind is sick, not happy. You get uptight with your supervisors.

These are important points. Don’t think that only sitting in meditative concentration is important. It is important but it’s not everything. All the time, no matter what you’re doing—meditating, working, walking down the street, cooking, making soup—always try to have good motivation. If your motivation is pure you can take all those actions into the path to liberation. It’s possible.

Otherwise, even if you do meditate, if your motivation is wrong, the action too becomes wrong. Even if you go to church or the temple, if you go with a negative mind, it’s a waste of time; it’s not even a religious action; it’s purely samsaric.

Perhaps you don’t know what samsara means. It’s a Sanskrit word, but that doesn’t matter; don’t worry about the word. It refers to worldly, mundane things. In Tibetan, it’s *khorwa*, which means circle, or cyclic. However, I don’t have time here to explain Buddhist philosophical terms. If you want to learn that sort of thing you’ll have to go to university. Since our time together here is so short, I just want to talk on the practical level.

Try this simple experiment for yourself. Next time somebody asks you for a cup of tea or coffee, check to see how you feel within. Often you’ll find that at your heart there’s a background buzz of irri-

tation, so even though you say, “Yes, OK,” you don’t mean it; selfish motivation makes you insincere. Since you don’t have a mind dedicated to others, even though you bring the person their tea, you’re unhappy about having to do it; you do it begrudgingly.

If your mind were dedicated, you’d be happy to serve others. You wouldn’t be psychologically bothered. You’d bring the tea or coffee joyfully, seeing even this small act as worthwhile, as a step on the path to liberation. It’s not that the tea or coffee is so good; it’s your sincere motivation, wanting to help others, that gives you much pleasure to serve them and makes you happy.

This is simple human psychology, not something religious or fabricated. It’s the psychological effect of dedication to others.

Actually, we know all this from our own life experiences. Trouble between wife and husband, husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend and girlfriend and boyfriend . . . all these things come from the selfish mind. You know—if you’re selfish you have trouble in your relationships.

And it’s not a question of intelligence: “Oh, I’m intelligent, I have to get angry.” If you check more deeply you’ll see it’s totally self-cherishing and attachment that are involved.

If the mind is dedicated, a wife is totally dedicated to helping her husband and a husband is totally dedicated to helping his wife. If you have the attitude, “I want to help you” rather than “I want you to help me,” you’ll have no trouble.

Look at the unconditional loving kindness a mother has for her only son. Even if he does stupid things, she still thinks he’s good; she thinks, “He’s so cute—look at what he does.” Actually, what he

does is stupid, but the reason it gives his mother pleasure is because she sees him in such a positive light and has so much love for him that she wants everything he does to be good and projects good onto even the stupid things he does. If somebody else were to do the same things she wouldn't like them at all. It's all to do with her motivation. You check up—I'm sure my example is apt.

You can see how different mental attitudes affect people's behavior and the way they interpret things. If you actualize bodhicitta meditation—train your mind in totally dedicating yourself to other sentient beings—nobody will trouble you. It's true; I'm not joking. Nobody will make trouble for you. And you will see others as beautiful; nothing will appear ugly or make you uptight. The reason you get uptight at the moment is because your schizophrenic, neurotic mind projects negativity onto objects.

You'll see that both Buddhism and Christianity talk about heaven and hell, but the connotations are quite different. Buddhism holds that there is no such heavenly place externally existent, but when an individual's mind has developed and completely released all ordinary conceptualizations of the I, the ego, then whatever that person perceives—the whole earth, all human beings—becomes transcendently beautiful; for that person, that view is heaven.

You can understand that, can't you? I'm talking in psychological terms. You don't have to necessarily believe that heaven or hell are out there waiting for you, but you can easily understand how the polluted projections of ordinary mundane thought make you miserable and through releasing such conceptualizations you can develop a healthy mind and perceive a perfect view. It's so logical;

I'm talking about this in the logical sense, not in some higher metaphysical way.

It's incredible, really: if you put the things you learn into action, if you put your meditation into practice, everything you perceive in your entire life enhances your wisdom; everything that appears to you increases your understanding. If you don't put what you learn into action, even if Jesus or Lord Buddha were to manifest before you right now and give you teachings, it wouldn't help that much. Just because Jesus and Lord Buddha are high beings doesn't mean your mind would automatically open in their presence. No—you have to develop it yourself. That's why Lord Buddha said that it's your own positive actions that lead you to enlightenment and your own negative actions that bring you down.

Because of their scientific education and understanding of progressive evolution, Westerners often find it difficult to accept that a human being can become an animal. They think such regression to be impossible. Actually, it's possible. As I said before, the sick mind can manifest at the physical level; this is the same thing. It doesn't matter that you look like a human being—your mind can degenerate such that you behave worse than an animal. The mental energy generated in that way can later transform at the physical level and come to occupy an animal body. That's possible.

But don't think that this means your human body somehow changes into an animal body. I'm not saying that. When your consciousness separates from your present human body, since it contains the energy of the animal mind, that mental energy transforms into an animal body.

However, right action and wrong action are determined by right thought and wrong thought: right wisdom leads to right actions; wrong conceptions lead to wrong actions.

If we put the energy of the human body, speech and mind in the right direction, it is so powerful. The problem is that our life has no direction and that's why our energy is fragmented. Check up on how your life is right now—does it have direction? If not, you're wasting all the energy of your body, speech and mind.

Therefore you need the discriminating knowledge-wisdom to distinguish between right and wrong. In order to develop that, you have to understand your mind and know how positive and negative minds arise. Since all actions arise from the mind, without checking your mind, how can you determine the nature of your actions?

Anyway, it is very useful to seek the right view, the ultimate reality of your nature, through meditation. And you also need to understand your relative nature, which is extremely uncontrolled, ignorant of reality, full of wrong conceptions, and the source of all frustration and suffering. Once you do, you should then extend that understanding to all universal living beings, even the insects around you now. Meditate, right now, understanding that all living beings in the universe, not just the beings in your immediate vicinity, are in the same situation as you are—their relative nature intoxicated by attachment—and generate much love and compassion for them all.

Guided meditation

Seeing that you and all other universal living beings are in exactly the same situation, ask yourself, "How can I best help others?"

Check: is giving them bread, candy or chocolate the best way to help? That's ridiculous, isn't it? That's an insufficient way of helping because living beings' problems with their uncontrolled mind do not come from a lack of bread; their problems derive from a lack of knowledge-wisdom—not understanding what they are or how they exist, relatively or absolutely.

It doesn't matter whether one person is wealthy, another is poor, one is beautiful, another ugly or one is dancing, another is not—in fact, all beings are equal in experiencing suffering caused by false conceptions. They're equally the same in this: king, queen and pauper. As long as misconceptions and the polluted conceptualization of I, ego, rule their mind, they're equally the same. Eastern or Western, there's no difference; it doesn't matter. They're all equally the same: they all want happiness and don't want suffering. But because their actions are driven by misconception, even though all they want is happiness, all they get is suffering. So it's misconceptions that are the biggest obstacle to freedom and inner joy.

Also think: these misconceptions are just temporary obstacles—momentary, transient. It's possible for all beings to totally transcend these obstacles and reach the everlasting peaceful inner freedom of liberation.

Now visualize Lord Buddha. Actually, what is Buddha? Buddha is universal compassion and omniscient knowledge-wisdom, which is in the nature of everlasting peace and joy. So visualize that that wisdom mind manifests in front of you as the radiant light body of Lord Buddha. If you can't visualize Lord Buddha you can just see me here in front of you. From the crown of the head of Lord Buddha (or Lama Yeshe), a powerful stream of radiant white light emanates,

enters the crown of your head and passes down your central channel like an extremely strong waterfall into your heart. This purifies all the impurities of your body's nervous system.

Then, from Lord Buddha's (or Lama Yeshe's) throat, a powerful beam of radiant red light emanates and enters your throat, purifying all your impurities of speech, such as telling lies and creating disunity between people.

Then, from Lord Buddha's (or Lama Yeshe's) heart, a powerful beam of radiant blue light emanates and enters your heart, filling it with blissful, joyful energy and purifying all your false conceptions. Your entire bodily nervous system and mind are completely filled with blissful radiant light.

Concentrate on feeling the unity of you and these lights that have entered you.



Dedication

Thank you very much. Now dedicate the merit of having done this meditation. What does that mean? Whatever we do, there's some kind of mental energy generated. Even though we don't see this at the physical level, it's there. Merit is the kind of energy generated by positive actions, such as the meditation we just did. So instead of thinking, "Oh, I just meditated; how good I am," and building our ego, we should direct our positive energy to the benefit of others. That is very useful.

We can't be certain of how we're going to be—sometimes we're up, sometimes we're down. And sometimes we get angry and anger destroys our positive energy, our merit. That's like spending time cleaning a room and when you're finished throwing dirt all over it. We meditate, making our mind clean, clean, clean, and then we get angry and foul it all up again.

So dedicating our merit protects it from destruction by anger and in that way we don't waste our energy. Dedication is also useful in that our meditation becomes not for pleasing our ego but for benefiting others and bringing us to enlightenment, or inner freedom. Actually, that should be our only purpose for meditating; we should not be doing it for pride: "I'm that, this, this, this." Being somebody is not important.

[Lama chants the dedication prayer: *Ge-wa di-yi...*⁷]

Actually, it's not necessary to chant a prayer; a prayer is not the words. You have to know that. We use words when we pray but the actual prayer is not the words. In fact, prayer is in the mind.

Dedication is a form of psychological treatment. Many times, after we have done something religious or meditated—or even after some mundane activity—we feel proud: "I did this, I did that." We're so proud of what we did.

⁷ Due to the merits of these virtuous actions
 May I quickly attain the state of a guru-buddha
 And lead all living beings without exception
 Into that enlightened state.

There's no reason to be proud. Pride is a symptom of the sick mind. Therefore, instead of feeling proud, we should dedicate everything we do to the benefit of other sentient beings, to bring them into everlasting peaceful enlightenment. If we do that, then psychologically, we won't feel proud; there won't be that strong feeling of "I did something."

For example, say a husband works and his wife stays home. When he comes home he can feel resentful: "I'm so tired. I worked hard all day; all you did was stay home and do nothing." He puts on a big show that he did this tremendous job but actually, there's no reason for him to show off. Going to work and doing his job is his duty.

It's the same thing when we meditate; there's no reason to show off to others: "Oh, I just did this great thing." Just totally dedicate your actions to others as much as possible. Then there's no sick reaction of pride. Otherwise, we do these things and all we get is more mental illness.

Dedication is something practical we can do for others; it's not just some empty Tibetan custom.

The Importance of Motivation

BEFORE LISTENING to this teaching you need to cultivate a pure motivation, because the action of listening to teachings has to be different from your usual life activities. If your listening to teachings—an action that you feel is special compared to what you usually do—is no different from or higher than your regular daily activities, such as eating, drinking, sleeping and so forth, then this particular action, listening to teachings, is actually not special, higher or holy.

The actual antidote to suffering

As I mentioned briefly before, the practice of religion, spirituality or Dharma—whatever you call it—has to be a method that completely destroys all suffering, a method that can bring about the complete cessation of suffering, and not just temporarily. For example, the simple, everyday sufferings that people and even animals recognize as suffering—fever, headaches, other kinds of pain—can be temporarily stopped by even external things, such as medicine, without the need of Dharma, or religion. So, if that were all we could do, there'd be no purpose for religion to exist.

However, religious activity should go to completely ceasing the continuity of suffering, and that depends upon completely eradicating the *root* of all the billions of sufferings that exist—ignorance and all the other delusions that spring from the root of ignorance.

So true peace—everlasting happiness, real freedom—is received whenever we completely cease the root of suffering: ignorance and the other delusions. In other words, cessation of ignorance, attachment and anger is real freedom, true peace—the peace that never changes; the peace that once received can never change, is everlasting.

Why is it impossible for true peace to change, or disappear? Why can we never come down from that? Why is it impossible to fall from true peace back into suffering? That is because once we've attained everlasting happiness there's no longer any cause to make us once again get caught up in the bondage of suffering.

Why is that we're happy one day but sad the next? For instance, one day we receive some good news or find ourselves in a beautiful, desirable place or receive a nice gift or meet a special friend and as a result feel extremely happy—so happy that we almost don't know what to do with ourselves, so happy that we can even do crazy things that endanger our life—but then after a while, a day or two, that happiness we received by meeting certain conditions goes away, doesn't last. When we meet a desirable friend, eat delicious food or put on luxurious clothes, at first we feel happy but that happiness does not last. Why does the initial happiness we experienced by meeting certain conditions not last? What makes it change? Why

do we get tired of sense pleasures instead of continually experiencing pleasure, feeling happiness?

That is mainly because our mind is not free from the root of suffering. Why? Since our mind is under the control of ignorance, attachment, anger and the other delusions, the pleasure we receive by meeting certain conditions changes, does not last. However, from the Dharma point of view, the feelings that we identify as pleasure are considered to be merely *samsaric* pleasure—as certain heavy temporal sufferings decrease, just that decrease itself is labeled pleasure.

For example, if you are carrying a heavy load on your back and after some time get tired, that's a type of suffering. Thinking that the heavy load is causing you to feel tired, you put it down. At that moment you feel light and the suffering you were experiencing diminishes a little; it doesn't completely go away, but it decreases a bit. So, we label that small decrease of suffering "pleasure"; we call that feeling of less suffering that the uncontrolled mind and body experience "pleasure." Also, although that pleasure is felt quite strongly at first, it doesn't last.

Similarly, a person who has been sitting cross-legged for a while starts to get pain in his back and legs and thinks it might be better to stand up. When he stands up, because of that change in the conditions, the pain he felt while sitting diminishes and he thinks, "This is pleasure." But, thinking that standing is pleasure, if he tries to remain standing all day and night, or even for just an hour or two, he gets tired. Again, the pleasure he felt at first does not last;

it changes. At first, sitting became a problem; he stood to relieve it; but then standing became a problem so he thought that he should sit down again to relieve it.

So, these are just a couple of examples, but our life is full of similar ones. We always try to change. “Maybe this is better,” so we try something else. But then we get bored with that; another problem arises. Then again we change, “maybe that is better.” We change people: “Maybe I’ll like him, maybe I’ll like her, maybe I should live with him, maybe I should marry her....” We’re always changing food, clothing and other objects of the senses.

All this shows clearly that there’s something wrong with our body and mind, that our body and mind are the root of our suffering.

So what is the mistake we make? Why is it that no matter how much we enjoy the pleasures of the senses, there’s no end? No matter how much we experience sense pleasures, there’s nothing to complete, nothing to finish. We experience one thing, it finishes; we try something else, that finishes too; we have another experience, that doesn’t last either.... We try and try again and that’s what we’ve been doing from the time we were born until now. And not just in this life—since beginningless time, we’ve been experiencing one temporal, samsaric pleasure after another, chasing experiences that are not true pleasure and always change and finish, and we’re still not satisfied. Furthermore, the effort that we’ve had to put in to gain these pleasures of the senses, again and again, by trying different methods, this too has not ended since beginningless time; this work is also unfinished.

So what causes these pleasures not to last and for us to have to

seek one pleasure after another, continually exerting effort and experiencing the suffering and misery of diminishing pleasures? Why does this happen? The reason we are in this situation of dissatisfaction and suffering is that our mind is under the control of delusion and karma.

What is karma? Karma is action produced by delusion. Because our mind is under the control of delusion and karma, our body is also under the control of delusion and karma; as long as our mind is not free, our body is not free either. Therefore, real freedom is the mind's being completely free of delusion and karma, and when the mind is free from the bondage of delusion and karma, the body, which is the house of the mind, also becomes free from the bondage of delusion and karma. When the body and mind are both free from suffering, the bondage of delusion and karma, at that time, whatever different bodies the mind takes, those bodies don't experience sufferings such as rebirth, illness, pain, aging and death.

For instance, at the moment, whenever we meet an undesirable object of the senses, we suffer: when it's raining or snowing and we don't have enough clothes or a heater, we feel cold and suffer; when it's hot and we don't have air conditioning, again, we suffer. It's like this with our other senses. With respect to our sense of taste, when we encounter food that we don't like, we're unhappy and suffer. Similarly with our sense of hearing: when we hear bad news or some other sound we don't like, again, we're unhappy and suffer. It's the same with our senses of sight and touch: whenever they contact undesirable objects, we suffer. When we sit for a few minutes with crossed legs, they hurt. So all the time, continuously,

we're experiencing one problem or another. All the time, as we meet the different sense objects, we experience all kinds of different problems.

Just look at our body: there's not one tiny part—not even the size of a pore or the tip of a needle—that doesn't feel pain, that's not in the nature of suffering. Therefore, when thorns, needles and the like touch our body, even though they're so fine-pointed, so small, we feel great pain. Even though the external conditions are so tiny, virtually nothing, the pain we experience is incredible.

This clearly proves that our mind is not free, that it's living in suffering, and because of that, our body is also living in suffering. Why are our mind and body living in suffering? Because they are bound by delusion and karma, controlled by delusion and karma.

When we attain nirvana—complete freedom, cessation of the bondage of delusion and karma—no sense object can cause us problems or unhappiness. Even if thousands of atomic bombs were to be dropped, they could not bring unhappiness or suffering to any living being whose mind had reached that level, complete freedom from delusion and karma.

The teachings divide the sufferings of beings living under the control of delusion and karma into three: pervasive, or all-embracing, suffering; changeable suffering, which means temporal pleasures, which are not real, true happiness; and suffering of suffering, the heavy, gross sufferings that even animals recognize as suffering.

Why is pervasive suffering called pervasive, or all-embracing? It's because not only are our feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness under the control of delusion and karma

but also there's not one single tiny part of our body that's free of delusion and karma.⁸ Since our whole body is under the control of delusion and karma, that type of suffering is called pervasive. Because our whole body is under the control of delusion and karma, we find problems everywhere. As long as our mind and body are living in pervasive suffering, controlled by delusion and karma, all the other different types of suffering arise constantly, continuously, one after the other.

So basically, it's like this: all suffering results from impure, or negative, actions; impure, negative actions are created by the impure, or negative, mind, that is, the delusions. All happiness results from virtuous, or positive, actions; virtuous, positive actions are created by the virtuous, or positive, mind. So the evolution of happiness, where happiness comes from, and the evolution of suffering, where suffering comes from, are completely different. Happiness and suffering arise in completely different ways.

Since we desire happiness and do not desire suffering but are living in suffering, it is extremely important for us to understand this evolution. But mere intellectual understanding is not sufficient. To really stop the continuous experience of suffering—in the present and into the future—and to continuously experience happiness, intellectual understanding is not enough. We have to act; we have to make an effort.

Seeing other people, meditators, with a pure mind creating good actions that result in happiness and believing and expecting that

⁸ See note 6, page 62.

through their effort we can also experience happiness is mistaken. Thinking “I don’t have to do anything; I can experience happiness, the good result created by other people’s positive actions” is wrong. Without making an effort ourselves, without changing our mind, without making our mind virtuous, positive, and on that basis creating actions, there’s no way we can experience any kind of happiness—temporary or everlasting. Without individual effort there’s no way to experience any kind of happiness. This kind of misconception is like a hungry person expecting to feel full after his friends have eaten.

However, the main point I want to emphasize is that we have to act right now. If we do, if with wisdom we change our mind, make our motivation positive, virtuous, then even though our present action might be being created by the poisonous mind, the delusions, the cause of suffering, right away that present action becomes positive, virtuous. In other words, to use the Sanskrit term, it become good karma, which brings only happiness.

Generating the pure motivation of bodhicitta

But experiencing temporary happiness is not enough. We need to gain everlasting happiness, the complete cessation of all suffering. However, just one person, oneself, attaining everlasting happiness is also insufficient. There’s a higher goal than individual liberation, the mere cessation of suffering. That goal, the highest goal, is enlightenment, the most sublime happiness: a state where all delusions have been completely purified, there’s not a trace of dualistic

mind, and one has gained all knowledge, all realizations, and nothing is missing.

Also, all sentient beings are experiencing continual suffering and have neither the wisdom nor the method to know how to escape from it. They don't know what is the cause of suffering, what is the cause of happiness or what real, everlasting happiness is. They have neither the wisdom to understand these things nor a method to practice; they have no path to follow.

Each of us needs to think like this: "All sentient beings have been extremely kind to me in the past, they're kind to me in the present, and they will continuously be kind to me in the future. They are the field from which I receive all my pleasure—past, present and future; all my perfections come from other sentient beings. Therefore I must attain enlightenment. Seeking everlasting happiness for myself alone, not caring about other sentient beings, giving them up, having no concern for their welfare, is selfish. Therefore, I must attain enlightenment, the most sublime happiness, in order to release all the sentient beings from suffering and lead them on the path to enlightenment by myself alone, as this is my responsibility."

So irrespective of the motivation or thought you had before, at this moment, right now, strongly dedicate your action of listening to these teachings to the benefit of other sentient beings, to their happiness. Feel deeply in your mind, "I am going to listen to the teachings in order to gain the most sublime happiness of enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings," feeling in your mind that you are the servant of all sentient beings, feeling in your mind that releasing all sentient beings from suffering and leading them on the path to

enlightenment is your principal goal, the most important thing you can do. "For that reason, I am going to listen the teachings."

Today's subject is a Mahayana teaching that explains the graduated path to enlightenment, the path that all past, present and future buddhas have traversed on their way to enlightenment; the path that the entire lineage of followers of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, all those previous, fully-realized Indian and Tibetan pandits, all the high lamas, have also traveled to enlightenment. As all these great masters gained all the realizations of the path to enlightenment completely, this is a teaching that has been handed down with their full experiences and is not just words.

To attain enlightenment for the sake of other sentient beings quickly, to attain this most sublime happiness, this completely pure state, complete knowledge, depends upon receiving the principal cause of enlightenment, bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is a realization, the intuitive determination to attain enlightenment for the sake of all other sentient beings. The pure thought of bodhicitta is never concerned for oneself but instead is always concerned for other sentient beings, how to free them from suffering and lead them along the path to enlightenment. Bodhicitta is always thinking of how to benefit other sentient beings in the wisest, most extensive way. It is a realization concerned only for other sentient beings, giving up oneself and taking most care of others.

The pure thought of bodhicitta is the complete opposite of the self-cherishing thought, which is only concerned of oneself, which always thinks about how to take care of oneself, which doesn't care about other sentient beings, which causes other sentient beings to

suffer. Self-cherishing is a thought that doesn't care for other sentient beings but for only oneself; self-cherishing thinks, "Only I am important; I am the most important of all." Bodhicitta is the complete opposite of this.

So what is the most important thing to do in order to receive enlightenment quickly? Try to receive the pure thought of bodhicitta. But receiving the pure thought of bodhicitta depends on receiving preliminary realizations, such as compassion.

Just having partial compassion, compassion for your friends but not other living beings, compassion for desirable objects, living beings that look beautiful to you, but not those who appear ugly or violent is not enough. Anyway, what we normally believe to be compassion is usually not compassion but attachment; it's based on attachment. The compassion we need to receive bodhicitta is impartial compassion, compassion for all sentient beings excluding not even one; equal compassion for all sentient beings, not just the suffering humans and animals we see with our eyes. We have to have compassion for all suffering sentient beings.

At our present level of mind there are many sentient beings that we can see but there are also many different types of sentient being that we can't see. For example, ours is not the only universe; there are huge numbers of universes, many different worlds, that we can't see, and in many of those live other sentient beings. Even today scientists are discovering and describing new galaxies that they didn't believe existed before. In those galaxies are planets upon which live different sentient beings leading different lives that we don't see because of our limited intelligence, limited power of mind. Even

on earth there are beings that we don't see, beings that we will see when our mind is ready, when it has the power to see them, in the same way we presently see humans and certain kinds of animal. So there are many different types of sentient being and they live in six different realms. In order to generate compassion for all sentient beings it's necessary to understand the different sufferings that sentient beings experience.

The Lives of Others

IT'S EASY TO KNOW about the animal realm because we can see many types of animal and their suffering is easy to understand. But in addition to humans and animals there are many other types of living being, such as *pretas*.⁹

Hungry ghosts

Preta is a Sanskrit term and is sometimes translated as *hungry ghost*. Their most common sufferings are those of hunger and thirst, which is a result of their karma, actions they created in previous lives. They can't find even a small drop of water for eons and their lives pass with the constant suffering of thirst. And no matter how much they search, they also can't find even a tiny bit of food and experience great hunger. And they have many other kinds of suffering.

First, even though they see a beautiful lake of water they are prevented from reaching it by fearful, karmically created protectors—mental visions, manifestations of the *pretas*' previously created

⁹ See *The Great Treatise or Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* for details of the different kinds of being in *samsara*.

karma. These protectors have terrifying bodies such as those we might see in a nightmare, which is also karmically created. So even though the pretas think they've finally found some water, they are unable to reach it.

Some pretas don't encounter protectors but when they reach the place where they saw the water from afar it either disappears completely or turns into a filthy pond of pus, blood and excrement that even pretas can't ingest.

Even if this doesn't happen and a preta manages to get a drop of water into its mouth, because of its previous karma, actions created out of delusion, its mouth becomes toxic and the water just disappears. Also because of their karma, many pretas' mouths are very tiny, like the eye of a small needle, so it's even hard to get anything into their mouth let alone their stomach. And even should some food or drink reach a preta's stomach, it bursts into flames, like oil thrown on a fire, and burns it badly. So pretas have much suffering of not finding food or drink or encountering these various obstacles and are always hungry and thirsty as a result. And their bodies look awful—very ugly, shriveled and dry, with very thin arms and legs, tiny necks and a huge, distended stomach.

Many hungry ghosts, such as those who live on smell and others who search for food in various places, live in the human realm. Yogis—advanced meditators who have achieved higher realizations and have certain mental powers—and even ordinary people who have the right karma have told many stories of preta sightings at different locations on this earth.

These days we see pictures of starving children in Africa, for

example, where their abdomens are very distended, their limbs very skinny and their skin discolored and dry. Although their suffering is very minor compared to that of the pretas, we can see it as a reflection of what hungry ghosts must endure. Of course, the pretas undergo many other sufferings as well.

Hell beings

Then there are the hell (Skt: *narak*) beings. As a result of negative karma created out of delusion, they have to experience extremes of heat and cold, such as constant and repeated incineration on red-hot iron ground. Hell realm beings don't need parents like we do; they are just born there spontaneously. For example, if a person creates the cause to be reborn in hell in his next life, right after he dies, because the potential to be reborn there is ripe, his mind goes straight to the intermediate state of a hell being and then, without needing parents, spontaneously gets reborn in that realm, in a way similar to that in which we go into a dream after we fall sleep. But unlike the hell described in the Christian bible, this is not a permanent state; nevertheless, the person has to remain in great suffering there for a long time, until the result of his previous actions finishes. When the karmically determined time for suffering in that realm is up, that being's mind takes birth in another realm, according to its previous karma. So it all depends on karma, but it's not as if once you're reborn in hell you have to stay there forever.

The beings in the hot hells have to endure a wide variety of dreadful sufferings. They have to live on red-hot, burning iron

ground while fearful-looking, karmically created protectors chop them into pieces, or they spontaneously find themselves trapped in an oven-like red-hot burning house with no doors or windows and have to experience terrible suffering until the karma created by their previous actions is expended. Or they can find themselves in a huge pot of boiling water, cooked like rice. And when these sufferings finish the beings are suddenly born on ground covered with swords such that they cannot step anywhere without cutting their feet and legs.

When we dream of being in a certain country or a beautiful house or a suffering, dirty place, it's not that somebody has created these places for us; it's a karmic vision of our own mind. It's the same with the experiences of the hell beings: the red-hot ground, the windowless houses, the pots of boiling water and so forth are all karmic visions that are the result of actions created out of delusion in previous lives.

So the main hell sufferings are those of hot and cold; in addition to the hot sufferings briefly mentioned above, there are also unbearable sufferings in the cold hells. After life as an animal or a human, a being with the karma to be reborn in a cold hell dies and is suddenly reborn in a completely dark place full of ice mountains with a body that becomes oneness with ice, like meat in a freezer. There is incredible suffering: the body cannot move because it's stuck within ice crevices or underneath the ice mountains, it splits and develops thousands of cracks, turns red and blue and becomes infested with many insects that eat it from the inside, while many other karmically created sentient beings, such as certain type of birds with very

long beaks, come to peck and eat the body from the outside. So the suffering is incredible.

However, whatever the suffering place, all these conditions have not been made or arranged by others; they are creations of that being's mind. What kind of mind is it that creates such suffering places in which beings get born there and suffer, then die and again the place changes and becomes another suffering place? That kind of mind is the negative, non-virtuous mind—the mind of ignorance, anger, attachment, pride, jealousy and other delusions; such suffering places are created by the negative mind.

The animal realm

Then there are the animal sufferings. Animals that are kept by people can have slightly better lives, depending on people who take care of them; such animals are generally a little more fortunate than those who live in the wild. Animals who live in oceans and forests experience much suffering, the most common being that of being eaten by others.

Even tiny creatures that are hard to see with the naked eye have other insects that eat them, just as larger animals such as elephants and tigers or those in the ocean, like whales and sharks, are attacked and eaten by others. And in earlier times there were even huger animals that lived on land and in the sea that were attacked and eaten by smaller ones getting into their bodies and eating them from within. So even big animals can be killed by small ones; every animal has its natural enemy that can kill and eat it.

On top of that they are also susceptible to the general sufferings of hunger and thirst and heat and cold. In addition, each animal has its own specific suffering according to the kind of animal it is.

So all those sentient beings—animals, pretas and hell beings—are not free like humans are; human beings have much more freedom than do the sentient beings in the lower realms. The animals that live in forests or in the ocean are always afraid—they don't enjoy human freedoms and don't have the methods to enjoy life as humans can. That's why the lower realms, the realms of the animals, pretas and hell beings, are called evil destinies [Tib: *ngän-song*]; those are the suffering realms.

The upper realms

With respect to the upper realms, there's not only the human realm; there are also the realms of the *suras* and *asuras*, whose enjoyments are much greater than those of humans. Their abodes, food, clothing and everything else are much richer, more pure than those of humans; beyond compare, in fact. However, those beings' minds are so dominated by attachment to sense objects that they don't have a chance of seeing suffering the way humans do.

There are all kinds of human being: we can see some who have much enjoyment, others who have much suffering. Suras don't have the opportunity that we do to develop the wisdom understanding the nature of suffering because they are surrounded by fabulous enjoyments and possessions, have many hundreds of friends

and experience very few problems in their lives. So because of their great attachment and inability to see suffering or realize its nature, they have no chance to practice Dharma.

Asuras' lives are in many ways similar to those of the suras in that they enjoy the same riches, but they are more mischievous in nature and their minds are more foolish than those of the suras.

There are also other types of sura, or long-life god, in the formless realm, where again, they don't have a chance to practice Dharma because they're unconscious from birth to death.

So in the three lower realms and in the sura and asura realms the beings have no chance to practice Dharma. It's only the human realm that gives us that chance, where it's relatively easy to practice Dharma, receive the whole path and quickly attain enlightenment.

The perfect human rebirth

However, just being born human isn't enough; one needs a perfect human rebirth, with eight freedoms and ten riches, which is extremely difficult to find but once found is highly meaningful. For instance, one needs to encounter the teachings, possess perfect physical senses and follow the path to enlightenment.

Therefore our present human rebirth is highly meaningful, not meaningless, because we have met the Dharma, through which we can completely free ourselves from the bondage of suffering and receive everlasting happiness. With this perfect human rebirth we can also attain enlightenment—in this lifetime or the next, or in a

lifetime beyond those, and then release other sentient beings from all their life problems and suffering and also lead them into the most sublime happiness of enlightenment.

Since this present human rebirth is so highly meaningful in these various ways, not to use it to fulfill its purpose and achieve these higher goals is a huge waste, the greatest possible loss. Having met the teachings and a spiritual friend to explain them and then not to practice will make it extremely difficult, virtually impossible, to meet the teachings and a teacher again in future lives. Therefore, while we have this chance, we should try as hard as we can to get closer and closer to enlightenment, day by day, month by month, year by year, by following the teachings.

The main path, the principal method, that brings us closer to enlightenment is cultivating bodhicitta, training our mind in the pure thought of bodhicitta as much as possible. In order to receive the highly beneficial thought of enlightenment, bodhicitta, we need the prerequisite realization of impartial compassion—equal compassion for all sentient beings. That depends on seeing all sentient beings in beauty, and that depends on understanding how extremely kind all sentient beings have been to us.

So what we therefore need to do is to equalize the discriminating thought that differentiates between sentient beings as enemy and friend. When we identify certain beings as “enemy,” hatred arises and we create negative karma by fighting with them. And when we identify others as “friend,” the delusion of attachment arises and by acting under its control we again create more negative karma.

So to see all sentient beings equally in beauty, just as a mother sees

her only child—as so beautiful, as most dear, as her own heart—we need to realize their kindness, and before that we need to equalize the thought that discriminates others as friends and enemies. If we don't, we'll always see others in that way and as a result create negative actions out of attachment and hatred.

The equilibrium meditation

At present, the only beings we see in beauty are our friends. Since we don't see those who harm us in the same way, we don't have love for them. As long as we feel like that, there's no way we can receive bodhicitta and obviously no way we can attain enlightenment. Therefore we must first equalize the thought that sees other sentient beings as friend or enemy, but we don't do that by running ads in the paper or on TV asking, "Please everybody, equalize yourselves as friend and enemy"! Instead, what we do is a very important meditation called the equilibrium meditation.¹⁰

The equilibrium meditation is especially important at times like this, when there's much violence and unhappiness in the world and people so strongly differentiate between friends and enemies and then act upon these distinctions to get rid of enemies by denouncing, harming and destroying them. This is no way to put an end to enemies. In fact, it only creates more. The more enemies you

¹⁰ See Lama Yeshe's *Ego, Attachment and Liberation*, Appendix 1, free from the LYWA, for Lama Zopa Rinpoche's equilibrium meditation. Also on line at www.LamaYeshe.com.

destroy, the more you make. Such methods simply ensure an endless supply of enemies.

However, what we believe to be friends and enemies are mere conceptions. We just *think* friends are real friends and enemies are real enemies. They are just projections of our own mind. There is no such thing as a real friend or a real enemy out there, existing without depending on our mind.

The thing is, the way we believe others to be absolute friends and absolute enemies is completely wrong; our view is totally mistaken. The evolution of such discriminations is as follows.

First of all, I am attached to myself, my own “I,” and my body, my possessions and my happiness. Then, when somebody disturbs my happiness or my possessions, I get angry and discriminate that person as an enemy. On the other hand, when somebody supports my happiness, attachment arises and I call that person a friend. Furthermore, I believe that person to be an absolute, real friend—qualities that exist nowhere.

But that’s how friends and enemies arise. When somebody gives me something, benefits me a little or helps my happiness, I see that person as a friend; when somebody harms my pleasure, my anger sees that person as an enemy. I give people different names according to their actions—friend and enemy do not come from their own side; there’s no such thing. First I project a person as a friend or enemy and then I believe it to be real, coming from that person’s side.

So the equilibrium meditation, in which we equalize others as friend and enemy, is practiced on the basis of understanding how

we discriminate others according to their actions of helping or harming.

Begin by visualizing all sentient beings, as infinite as space, surrounding you. Your mother is to your left, your father to your right; your worst enemy is in front of you, your most cherished friend is behind.

Now look at your enemy in front of you and ask yourself why you dislike that person. See what reasons come up. Perhaps he beat, cheated, criticized or harmed you in some other way. Then look at your friend and think how that person also harmed you in the same way in the past. So, if that person harmed you in the past just as your present enemy did, why do you now consider that person a friend? See what reasons come up—it's because that person helped you in some way. Then think how your enemy also helped you in the same way in the past. So since they have both harmed and helped you in the past, why do you now consider one to be a friend and the other an enemy?

If you think that your enemy has harmed you more than your friend has, if that conception arises, if you see that in this life your enemy has harmed you more than your friend has, then remember that this life is just one in a beginningless continuity for all beings, including your enemy and friend, and that therefore this enemy has helped you numberless times in previous lives and this friend has harmed you numberless times in previous lives—so the reasons to discriminate one as friend and the other as enemy are equal. In other words, the enemy in front of you has harmed and helped you numberless times in previous lives and is therefore equal in having

been enemy and friend. And the friend behind you has also helped and harmed you numberless times in previous lives and is therefore also equal in having been friend and enemy.

So the feeling you should get from applying the logic of this evolution to your present enemy and friend when you look at them is one of equanimity, as if you're looking at strangers: no attachment to your friend and no aversion to your enemy. When you see these two as equal, there's a feeling of peace in your mind. No violent thoughts, no uptightness, just a feeling of relaxation.

So after you have equalized enemy and friend, you do the same thing with your father and mother—equalize their being friend and enemy. Then, after you have equalized these four people, equalize all sentient beings as having equally helped and given harm numberless times from beginningless previous lifetimes until now. Therefore all sentient beings are exactly equal in having been friend and enemy. Then, whenever you get the strong feeling of equanimity with respect to all sentient beings, just concentrate on that; when your mind reaches that point, hold it for as long as you can.

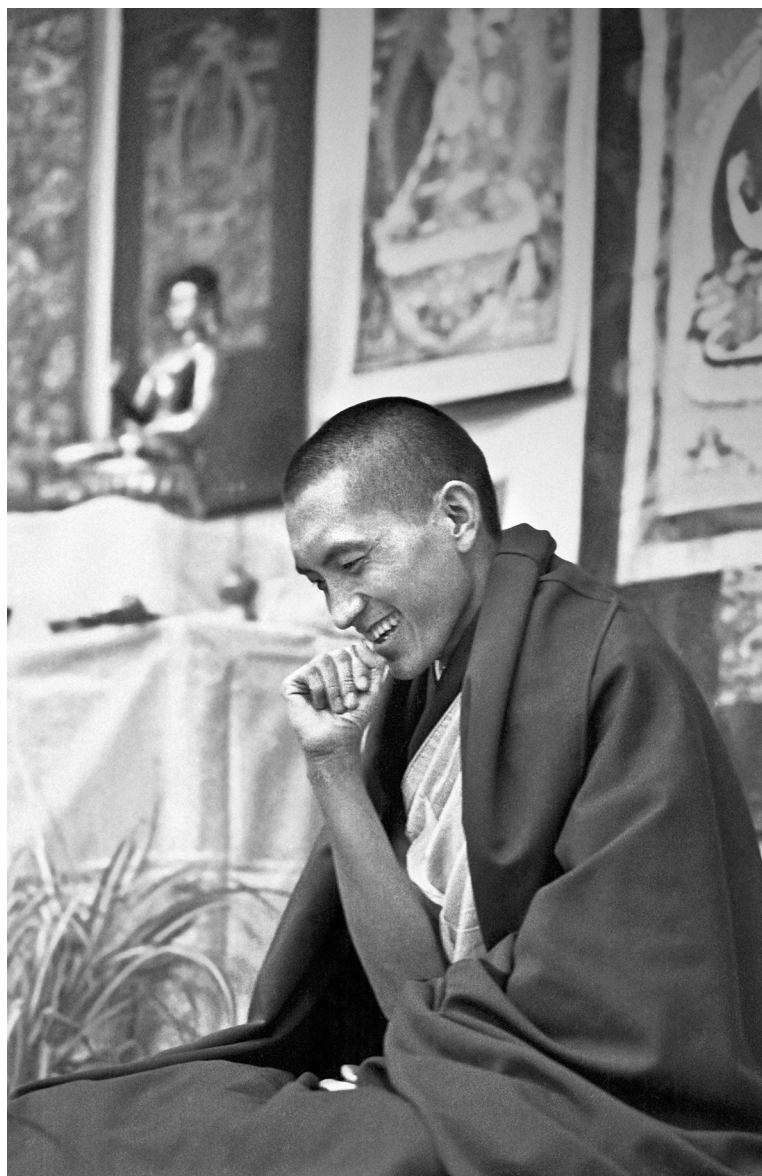
There are many different ways to do this meditation but what I've just described is the very basic, simple technique of equalizing all sentient beings as friend and enemy. If you train your mind in this meditation—especially when you receive the realization—when ever somebody harms you or somebody praises you or gives you gifts and so forth, because you have equalized your discriminating thought, you don't discriminate such people as enemy or friend, you have a feeling of equanimity for all, no matter what they do to or for you. If somebody bothers you, disturbs your pleasure or pos-

sessions, the delusion of anger does not arise; if somebody praises you, the delusion of attachment does not arise. Your mind is constantly at peace.

No matter where you go, wherever you travel, even if you're with a group of cruel, violent people, your mind doesn't change; your mind is unaffected by the conditions. Therefore you don't create any more negative actions, don't make others unhappy or cause them suffering; you don't create any more negative karma. Therefore you don't have to experience the suffering results that are caused by delusion and negative karma; you avoid all the future life problems that come from such causes.

However, this meditation is extremely helpful in your quickly realizing bodhicitta and attaining enlightenment and is extremely important in helping bring peace to the world and to your family and relationships. Disharmony and fighting come from the discriminating thought that differentiates between enemies and friends: "She helped me; she's my friend. He hurt me; he's my enemy, I'm going to destroy him."

Therefore the practice of this meditation is extremely beneficial and as you practice it, you yourself become a psychiatrist, you yourself become a psychologist—and that's the best way to solve problems: to work within your own mind.



...7...

Rinpoche answers questions

IF YOU HAVE any questions, please ask.

Q. When we do the purifying breath meditation, do we start by exhaling our negativities and so forth in the form of black smoke or by inhaling the qualities of enlightenment in the form of white light?

Rinpoche. I think it's more comfortable if first you visualize that all your delusions and wrong conceptions leave in the form of smoke or fog as you breathe out. In other words, purifying first seems more comfortable to me. It's similar to when you want to put delicious food into a pot. If the pot is dirty you're not going to feel comfortable putting food into it; it's obviously much better if the pot is clean. So just as you first clean a pot before putting something into it, purify yourself before inhaling the enlightened qualities.

Sometimes when you do breathing meditation you don't have enough time to visualize because your breaths are too shallow. Therefore it might help you to concentrate if you inhale slowly and build up some air inside and then when you breathe out you can

exhale more slowly and get a better visualization. This gives you time to make your concentration stronger and longer lasting.

Q. When I'm meditating on one topic my mind sometimes goes to other Dharma topics. Since they are still Dharma, are they considered to be distractions?

Rinpoche. Actually, when you're meditating on one topic and then think of others, you have to stop doing that. If, for example, you're analyzing the nature of the mind and trying to concentrate on that and then think of something else, something that's not the object of your meditation, that's definitely a distraction. When you're concentrating on the nature of the mind and other thoughts arise, you have to stop them.

However, there are certain levels of mind that you reach after realizing emptiness where in meditation you don't have thoughts that differentiate between subject and object as you do now. That doesn't mean you're unconscious; it doesn't mean that you have no thoughts whatsoever arising in your mind. It's not like you're asleep—there are certain stages of meditation in which the thought discriminating between subject and object stops, but in general it depends upon what meditation you practice. Not all meditation techniques are the same; there are different ways of meditating. Basically, all meditation is divided into analytical meditation and single-pointed concentration. In certain practices you use any thought that arises as the actual topic of meditation; whatever picture comes into your mind, instead of becoming a distraction it becomes your object of meditation.

Q. When the mind travels from life to life, what actually goes on and what is left behind? What propensities, such as memories or knowledge and wisdom, go into the next life?

Rinpoche. What actually goes on is the mind carrying the imprints that have been left upon it by actions of the body, speech and mind. Imprints are actions' latent potential; they're like seeds planted in the ground. So actions leave imprints on the mind and they are carried from life to life. That's why we see different children, even those of the same parents, having different levels of intelligence and different interests and abilities and so forth—it's because they have brought different propensities from previous lives.

For example, when people study Dharma, some find certain topics easier to understand than others. This is because they have studied and understood that topic well in previous lives. For instance, because of the imprints left on his or her mind, a person who has trained in the teachings on ultimate reality in previous lives can find it much easier to understand emptiness in this life than somebody who has not undergone such training. Those imprints come out in experience, like seeds planted in the ground sprout when the conditions are right. Some people might even be able to understand difficult teachings simply by reading them and not need a teacher to explain them; the understanding just comes from their mind.

In Tibet there were many high lamas who were reborn with Dharma knowledge in their mind as a result of their previous training. Even as children, they could read or recite prayers without being taught, explain teachings without studying them and so forth, not having lost their knowledge between death and rebirth.

Such people have more control and less pollution of ignorance in their mind than ordinary people, and since they are born with pre-existing knowledge they don't have much need of a teacher. Because they don't have the deep ignorance of ordinary people, they can remember their past life, despite the time interval and passage through their mother's birth canal, which cause ordinary, ignorant people to forget their previous life all together, let alone what they learnt during it. Also, rather than having the instinctual knowledge that incarnate lamas do, what comes naturally to ordinary people without being taught are anger, pride, jealousy, attachment and other delusions, which can manifest even in infancy.

Q. I thought Buddhism teaches that there's no permanent self, but from what you're saying it sounds like there's a permanent self or soul that doesn't stop at death but continues from life to life.

Rinpoche. It's true that since the continuity of mind has no beginning the continuity of the self has no beginning. After the death of our previous life, as the continuity of our mind continued into this life, so did the continuity of our self. The self, or I, does not cease at death; as the mind continues, the I continues—into the intermediate state and then into the next life. If the mind were to cease there'd be no way for the self to exist. But the mind never ceases; it always continues.

Q. So doesn't that mean that the self, or I, is self-existent?

Rinpoche. Oh, I see what you're asking. You're thinking that because, when I described the analytical meditation of checking the mind

back into the mother's womb and then back into the previous life, I mentioned the continuity of the self, that it's permanent and even self-existent, and that that's contradictory because Dharma texts usually talk about non-self or no self. Well, the first thing to understand is what the words in the books actually mean. You have to go beyond the words and understand the reasons behind those words being used in the way that they are.

So, when you read no self, it can sound as if the self doesn't exist but that's not what it means; it does not mean that the self does not exist. If the teachings said that the self did not exist, there'd be no reason to practice Dharma or to meditate because if there were no self there'd be no person; no person experiencing suffering; no person in the bondage of suffering; no person to follow the path; no person to gain liberation, complete freedom from suffering; no person to attain enlightenment.

So if the Dharma were saying that there's no self, and therefore no person to meditate, what would be the need for meditation? The Dharma would be saying not to practice Dharma, not to meditate. But it's not like that.

There are many other teachings that talk about no form, no nose, no tongue, no five senses and so forth. However, even though the negative word "no" is used, what it means is that there's no *self-existent* I, no *self-existent* person, no *self-existent* sense or object. Also, when the Dharma teachings talk about non-self-existence, they are not saying that you don't exist while in fact you do. It's not like any of that.

When the Dharma teachings say something does not exist they are referring to something that we think is there but in reality is not;

something that we see, or view, to exist but does not exist as we conceive. We view objects of our senses—the things we see, hear and feel—as self-existent but we are not seeing their actual nature, their real nature.

For example, when we're watching TV, people act in a certain way and we respond emotionally as if those are real situations... as if we believed what we were looking at was true. Or when we're at the movies and there's a landslide on screen and we get scared and move in our seats as if trying to dodge it; as if there were actual danger. Actually, there's no reason to be frightened—it's just a movie, just a picture on the screen—but something in us believes it's real so we try to move out of the way. This is an example of the way we view objects of the senses. The sliding mountain, the huge wave coming toward us in the theater isn't really there... there are no rocks or water on the screen, there's no danger, but we still react as if there were. What appears to us, what we believe, does not exist at all; what we view as self-existent, independent, is completely opposite to the reality of the nature of the object.

Q. How can the study of astrology help us in our Dharma practice?
Rinpoche. It depends on how you study astrology. If you study in a Dharma way, it becomes Dharma; if you don't, it doesn't. If your study helps you subdue or control your delusions rather than strengthen them, it becomes Dharma. So that depends mainly on your motivation; it's your motivation that determines whether your actions become beneficial or not. In other words, it depends on your mind.

Q. What causes bodhicitta to arise?

Rinpoche. Drink as much coffee as possible . . . I'm joking! One of the most important things you need to have in order to develop bodhicitta is renunciation based on an understanding of the nature of samsara and its shortcomings—impermanence, death and the three levels of suffering, which I was talking about before. If you understand how your own samsara is in the nature of suffering and have renunciation of that, then because of your deep understanding of the evolution of your own samsara, you can easily understand other sentient beings' suffering; how others are trapped in samsara and suffering.

For example, if you've had a really bad toothache, when you see somebody else with a toothache, based on a recognition of your own suffering, you know how the other person feels, how unbearable that pain is; you can feel it. In the same way, when you understand the shortcomings of your own samsara you can easily understand the suffering of others. Then that, coupled with an understanding of how other sentient beings have been extremely kind in the past, present and future, how precious they are, like the parents who took care of us—gave us our body, food, clothing, education, everything—gives rise to great love and compassion, the wish to help them to be happy and free of suffering. And on that basis, bodhicitta arises. So just like a fruit tree grows in dependence upon water and earth, bodhicitta grows by depending on love and compassion, which themselves depend upon an understanding of impermanence, death, the shortcomings of samsara, the sufferings others are experiencing in samsara and their great kindness.

Q. Are statues and ritual necessary to practice Dharma, and if not, why have them?

Rinpoche. Just because some atoms are collected together into a particular shape or somebody is doing a certain chant doesn't make that object or ritual Dharma. Something additional is required. Likewise with certain actions—actions themselves aren't Dharma; the performance of an action is not enough to make it Dharma. Like the example of astrology above, it mainly depends upon the person's mind, upon the motivation with which the action is done.

If the mind of the person meditating, performing a ritual or making offerings is Dharma, one with the Dharma, the action becomes Dharma; it depends upon the person's motivation, the mind that produces the action.

Another way of saying this, of making it clear, is to say that if an action is done with a mind that renounces the three poisonous delusions—ignorance, attachment and hatred—if an action is done with the mind that opposes the delusions, that action becomes Dharma; it's a pure action. Such actions don't have to look religious either. Sweeping the floor, cooking food, doing business or working in a hospital—in fact any kind of action—can become Dharma. Even telling lies or other actions that appear negative can in fact be positive, Dharma actions. As long as such actions are done with the wisdom understanding karma and the knowledge that they will definitely benefit others, bring good results to oneself and others, done with a mind that is one with the Dharma, renouncing attachment to the pleasures of just this life, renouncing the mind that has no concern for the benefit of future lives and is totally focused on

just this one, then such actions are Dharma. Even though they look like worldly, everyday actions—like, partying, drinking, watching movies—or even negative—like telling lies and so forth—if they are done with the wisdom that truly knows they are of benefit to oneself and others, the mind renouncing attachment, then they definitely become Dharma, pure and free of danger.

Now, if you want to know if the specific statues that have been arranged here on the altar are necessary for the practice of Dharma, you'll have to ask whoever put them here what his or her motivation was!

Q. If I have, for example, intestinal worms, is it better for me not to kill them and die myself or to take medicine and kill them?

Rinpoche. If the worms aren't that dangerous to your health, it's better to give them as little harm as possible but it really depends on the individual. If they are a threat to your life and you have a very strong mind, great compassion for those sentient beings, wanting them to be free from suffering as quickly as possible, and no self-cherishing thought, thinking, "My happiness is more important than theirs," and it's more beneficial that you continue to live, then perhaps it's better that you take the medicine. However, it's very hard for your mind to be really pure in this way.

Q. Can you please say more about wisdom and motivation?

Rinpoche. Wisdom is the mind that understands the importance of motivation in determining whether an action is positive or negative and knows the results of positive and negative actions; the mind

that can clearly tell the difference between negative motivation, the cause of suffering, and positive motivation, the cause of happiness.

There are many hindrances to the attainment of enlightenment but there are two basic things we have to do: purify obscurations and accumulate merit. So by completely purifying all delusions and their imprints and completing the accumulation of all merit, we can attain enlightenment. Without accomplishing both these tasks there's no way to become enlightened because there are still hindrances, or blocks. So all the various practices we do—saying prayers, reciting mantras, listening to Dharma teachings, making offerings, practicing charity, adhering to moral discipline and so forth—are included in these two activities of purification and accumulation of merit.

So even though you have the understanding wisdom that sees that a certain action, or karma, will bring benefit, a good result, happiness, and help one receive realizations and enlightenment, that is not enough. These methods, or forms of Dharma practice, that purify obscurations and accumulate merit have to be done until you attain enlightenment. When you're enlightened, you don't need to meditate any more; your work has finished. You don't have to meditate to purify, create merit and gain realizations any longer; that work has finished.

However, the practice of purification and creation of merit has to be continued until it's finished, all the way up to enlightenment. Until then we have to continuously do prostrations, offer mandalas—where with certain prayers we offer the entire universe, all objects of the senses, including those that cause ignorance, attach-

ment and anger to arise within us, thereby renouncing these delusions—and so forth. So there are various kinds of method that we need to practice in order to attain enlightenment.

Q. What is the quickest single way of collecting merit and cleansing negativities?

Rinpoche. Cleansing negativities? Taking a shower could be good . . . I'm joking! However, to purify in a short time the billions and billions of negative karmas collected over many previous lifetimes and to quickly accumulate extensive merit, the best, the essential method is to meditate on, or train the mind in, bodhicitta. If your concern is to attain enlightenment as quickly as possible, that depends upon how quickly you purify negativities and how extensively you accumulate merit, and the best way of accomplishing both these aims is the practice of bodhicitta. Then any action you do, no matter how small, like offering just one stick of incense or one flower, if it's done with bodhicitta, the sincere thought wanting to attain enlightenment for the sole purpose of releasing other sentient beings from suffering and leading them to enlightenment, creates merit as infinite as space itself. In the short time it takes to perform such small actions with bodhicitta, you purify incredible amounts of negative karma and accumulate merit as infinite as space. Such are the benefits of the pure thought of bodhicitta.

Q. Is dedicating our enlightenment to the benefit of all beings the best meditation we can do?

Rinpoche. Of course, that is a very good thing to do. Even though

you're not enlightened now, dedicating your future enlightenment to other sentient beings is very beneficial. There are many meditations like this, where we dedicate the realizations, happiness and pleasure that we have at the moment and our future realizations, happiness and pleasure to others, without miserliness, without attachment. Such meditations are extremely helpful in loosening attachment and such dedication is a practice of charity—as many sentient beings to whom we dedicate, that much charity we make.

Charity is not simply giving material things to others. There are different kinds of charity. Mainly it's mental, an action of the mind, the mind that dedicates to others. It doesn't imply sharing physical objects with all other sentient beings—we can make charity of even one cup of tea or one piece of candy to all sentient beings. This is the power of bodhicitta. If you dedicate one small cup of tea to all sentient beings and as you drink it think that all their sufferings and delusions are completely purified and they receive all realizations up to enlightenment, it is especially powerful and you gain much merit in this way.

The Shortcomings of Attachment

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND what I was talking about yesterday: how worthwhile it is to understand the nature of your own self-cherishing and attachment.

Sometimes you might think, “I want inner freedom; I want some kind of magic, higher meditation.” If you do, you’re dreaming, not facing the reality of what you are right now. Because what you always have to deal with throughout your life, with other people, with your mind, all the time, from birth to death, is attachment. All your problems—mental problems, external problems, internal problems, whatever you consider to be a problem, everything—comes from attachment. Understanding this to be your reality is wisdom and the path to liberation, the vehicle that carries you to everlasting peaceful enlightenment. It’s so worthwhile.

Also, it’s so logical—you don’t have to believe in something that’s hard to swallow; you don’t have to believe in anything. You can prove logically that attachment is your main problem, the principal cause of all your personal problems and the problems you have with those around you.

These are not merely dry words; they derive from life experiences.

It's very important to know this. That's why Lord Buddha always emphasized understanding as the path to liberation.

These days in the West there are many books that talk about the magic and mystery of Tibet, so when people see that a Tibetan lama is coming to give a meditation course, they think, "Oh, maybe I can learn some magic," and attend with that expectation.

But we don't need to teach you magic—your mind is already magic; the magic of attachment has been within you from the time you were born until now. Magic is not the path to liberation; don't expect me to do something funny. Some people do, you know. They expect lamas to do magic and make them hallucinate. Don't expect that. Instead, simply understand what your life is, how complications arise, what it is that complicates your life, what makes you happy...those are the things you should understand. That makes your attendance at this seminar worthwhile. You're not dreaming; you're down to earth and realistic about the way to develop your mind. And with that attitude, you won't be disappointed; you know clearly what you're going to do, what your trip is—meditation, spiritual practice or whatever.

Otherwise there's a danger of doing things without really knowing what you're doing. Many people are like that. Intellectually they say, "I want liberation, inner freedom, nirvana, enlightenment"—they know all the big words but they don't actually know what to do.

But at least you now know that in reality, all false actions, misery, unhappiness and negative energy come from the self-cherishing thought of attachment, and as long as you know that and prove it

through your own experience, that simple understanding is enough for you to really change your actions, to really put a stop to selfish thoughts, and that's what's most worthwhile.

Otherwise what happens is that you learn all about this religion or that philosophy but don't change your attitude or behavior; you can't even stop smoking or drinking. Even though you say it's not good to smoke or drink, because you haven't changed inside, there's no change in your external actions either.

From Tibetan lamas' point of view, if your actions don't change, even though you might think or say, "Attachment is the cause of all my problems," it's not really true for you; you haven't realized it. Mere intellectual comprehension is not realization. It's worthwhile to understand these things.

If we don't identify the psychological root of problems we can never cut them off, never rid ourselves of them. In order to overcome an enemy we have to identify that enemy and know where to find him. Otherwise we're shooting in the dark. Similarly, in order to destroy the root of our miserable energy we have to know exactly where it is; then the antidotes we apply will go to exactly the right spot. Even one atom of antidote will be part of the solution.

But that's not what we normally do. Normally, our problems are here but we apply the antidote there. Like when things go wrong, we usually blame our family, friends or society. That's totally misconceived. If we think that the cause of problems is external, there's no way we'll ever be able to stop them. In fact, that's why, from the time we evolved on this earth we've never been able to put an end to problems. It's impossible to do it that way.

Since we now realize that attachment is the cause of all our problems and acting under its influence causes us to create negative actions, we must determine that for the rest of our life we will not allow the actions of our body, speech and mind to follow after this deluded mind.

We have to change our mental attitude, our self-attachment to our ego, I, and to transfer that energy to others. That means we should concern ourselves more with others' pleasure than always thinking only of I, I, I. We should make the determination, "Right now, for the rest of my life, I'm going to dedicate the energy of my body, speech and mind to others and change my attitude, my self-cherishing thought of attachment—excessive concern for my own pleasure—to greater concern for that of others. From the time I was born until now, all my pleasure is due to others' kindness. Even my very existence is due to the kindness of other sentient beings; without it I would not exist, I would not have reached even the age of five."

That's true. For example, from the time we were born we've been drinking milk. It's not our own milk we've been drinking; it's that of others, it's others' energy. Think: this is scientific reality. And we need clothes; without clothes we'd die of cold. We don't make our own clothes, do we?

Everything that preserves us—food, clothing, everything comes from other sentient beings. So think how others preserve our life and how without them we'd die. Most of us eat meat; without depending on animals, how could we eat meat? Animals are so kind; they give us clothes, meat and milk. Similarly, all the people who work for us one way or another are also kind.

To give you another simple example, think how Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ gave up their worldly lives and pleasures and totally dedicated their actions to the welfare of other sentient beings, released their own attachment and reached the highest goal of enlightenment. We, on the other hand, are always concerned with nothing but I, I, I and end up miserable.

Actually, psychologically, we're suffering because of attachment, I, I, I, I, I... always I. This attitude of attachment itself is the suffocating mind; it suffocates us and makes us uptight. Attachment makes us feel a kind of intensity at our heart, a tightness; no release, no relaxation. All that comes from attachment.

Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ even gave their bodies for others; many times in previous lives they gave their hands, legs and kingdoms for others. With our present attitude of self-cherishing attachment we can't even give somebody a cup of tea with genuine pleasure; we can't give anybody anything without expectation.

You might be thinking, "Lama must be joking, putting us down, when he says we don't do good things. We do plenty of good things."

Well, perhaps you do give things, practice charity, but check with what kind of mind you do so. I'm sure that when you give others presents you have some kind of expectation. If you do give without any expectation, completely for the benefit of others, with no thought of enhancing your reputation, with no ulterior motive, such as "I have to give him a gift because he's my relative" or "If I don't give her a present she'll freak out," then it's OK. But that's not how we usually give; most of our giving has nothing to do with true charity and is simply an ego trip. As long as we give with

expectation, that's not true giving; we're not really dedicating. We have the expectation "If I don't give him a present for his birthday he won't give me one for mine."

Giving like this is just a joke. Out of the whole universe, we choose one atom—one girlfriend or one boyfriend—one tiny bit of energy, and say, "I love you." With much attachment we put an enormous amount of energy into this one concrete object and thus from the beginning automatically set ourselves up for conflict.

By building up such tremendously powerful attachment we create within ourselves a psychological atomic bomb. Our internal energy is so dependent upon this external object—this girl, this boy, whatever it is—that when it moves we shake. Our mind shakes; our life shakes. But this external object is impermanent; by nature, it's constantly changing, changing, changing. But the character of attachment is that it doesn't want things to change; it wants things to stay as they are. So when they do change, great worry and paranoia arise within us.

And when the time comes to separate from our object of attachment through death or any other reason, we feel, "My life is over." Of course, that's not true; you can see how attachment exaggerates: "Now I have no life." Before, you have life; now suddenly you don't? Can you believe it? But that shows you what a totally overestimating, exaggerating mind the basic conception of attachment actually is.

So you can see how miserable feelings come from our building up certain conceptual philosophies on the basic conception of attachment, and that's the way we end up suffering. There's no way

your pleasure can depend upon another atom; that's impossible, the materialistic way of thinking. The whole thing's completely wrong.

Of course, you can make a reasonable judgment: "My friend is transitory, changeable; I understand that. When change comes, it comes; when it goes, it goes. Even I have to die; my friend has to die." That's OK; you can make a reasonable judgment. But attachment doesn't do that. Attachment makes this tremendous overestimation of things and that's how we end up incredibly miserable.

You can just see in the world today how people worry about losing others. People worry, "My wife is going to die...my boyfriend is going to run out on me...my girlfriend is going to disappear." All this worry comes from attachment, excessive concern for one's own pleasure. Ironically, even though we call it pleasure, it's not actual pleasure.

Philosophy

Attachment considers relationships to be happiness but if you check with knowledge-wisdom you'll find that they're actually suffering. Why? Because they result in suffering. We think that worldly pleasure is happiness, that we're using our body and mind for enjoyment, but in fact our body and mind are in the nature of suffering. Why? Because they cause us to suffer. That's why Buddhist literature, especially that of the Hinayana school, emphasizes that everything changeable and transitory is suffering in nature.

If you understand that philosophy and ask yourself, "Why does it say that?" when you reflect on your everyday life and how the

subject—your mind—interprets the object—the sense world—and how you relate to it, you’ll see that such Buddhist philosophical assertions are very true.

We should have some understanding of philosophy. Many Westerners approaching Dharma think, “Enough with philosophy; I don’t like philosophy. All I want to do is practice.” They’re dreaming. Attachment *itself* is philosophy—you were born with it. You didn’t learn your attachment at school or from other people; you were born a philosopher. Don’t think philosophy comes from books, like you read something and go, “Now I know something; I’m a philosopher.”

People need philosophy. The ancient Christian and Western worlds had fantastic philosophy. But then people had difficulty because religion and philosophy often contradicted each other—so some gave up religion, others gave up philosophy.

Nowadays, therefore, we find religion is mostly separate from philosophy because many people think religious teachings are wrong because they’re contradicted by science. Actually, Christianity contains wonderfully relevant philosophy that is really worthwhile taking into our lives, but people just don’t understand.

As I said, many people say they just want to meditate and don’t want anything to do with philosophy but they’re wrong; we all need philosophy. Philosophy gives us the whole picture and within that context we can discriminate how our energy is going. If we don’t have some kind of overarching philosophy and have the attitude, “Whatever comes, comes; whatever goes, goes,” that kind of hippie thinking is wrong. We have to have some kind of understanding, otherwise we’ll get lost.

This earth is home to so much superstition, so much garbage philosophy, that if you don't have a correct philosophy, right understanding, you'll be led by the nose first in one direction, then another, by whatever you hear. Somebody says "This," and you say, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," and run after that; somebody else says "That," and again you say, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," and run off following that. You have no direction, no precise understanding. But you need direction and understanding, otherwise it's very dangerous. If you don't have a philosophy that can help you judge between right and wrong—what is the right attitude, what is the wrong attitude—if you don't have the discriminating knowledge-wisdom to distinguish between positive and negative, you don't know where you'll end up. That's why I say it's very dangerous.

I recently saw a film set in India—you might have seen it yourselves—where a man seeking realizations goes to a yogi for guidance and is given instead the misconception that if he kills a thousand people he'll receive inner realizations and liberation. Believing this wrong advice, he goes out and kills many people, cutting a finger off each person, making a finger rosary and wearing it around his neck. Thus he was called Angulimala [Tib: *Sermo Threngwa*].¹¹ So this is not a Tibetan story; it comes from India at the time of the Buddha.

The Buddha saw with his clairvoyance that Angulimala had killed 999 people and was looking for his thousandth victim, so he went to where Angulimala was and appeared on the road in front of him. Seeing what he thought was his final victim, Angulimala ran towards him, but even though the Buddha manifested walking

¹¹ Skt: *anguli*, finger; *mala*, rosary; Tib: *sermo*, finger; *threngwa*, rosary. See the entry for Angulimala in Wikipedia.

extremely slowly, no matter how fast Angulimala ran he could not catch him. Somehow, this made him reflect on what he'd been doing and he gradually realized how wrong he'd been. He vowed never again to do such actions, became a Buddhist monk and eventually attained arhatship.

Therefore, it's very dangerous if you don't have a well-founded guiding philosophy and just accept whatever people say at face value. You have to be careful. Tibetan followers of Mahayana Buddhism are very concerned about this kind of thing. You have to check up for yourself. In the West there are so many trips that you can get caught up in; there are thousands of things going on. Of course, there are some good ones among them, worthwhile things, but there's also a lot of garbage, and that's what's dangerous. So be careful.

That's why we always say to take the middle way and avoid the extremes of overestimation and underestimation. We have to take the middle path. To do that we have to understand the wrong paths—how our mind overestimates and underestimates things. We always have to check up, and to do that we need to develop the discriminating knowledge-wisdom that knows how our mind is functioning.

Losing your mind

For example, people considered crazy by society lack the ability to discriminate between normal behavior and extremes. Whenever they encounter great problems, that energy hits their heart or brain

or mind—whatever you want to call it—and they become completely unconscious, in that they don't know what they're doing or afterwards remember what they did. I'm sure you know what I mean; I don't need to describe the actions of crazy people. If such people could understand the direction in which their energy and mental conceptions were headed and had control over their actions, they'd be able to pull themselves back from going there and appearing crazy.

It's true; what I'm saying is clear. If you possess discriminating knowledge-wisdom, the ability to check up in the right way, you'll never go crazy because you'll be able to tell when your mind is tending toward extremes and bring it back. By knowing when your mind is becoming extreme, you can prevent it from going there. Otherwise, you think you're OK—"I'm all right, my life is going well, I hang out with my friends, I have enough to eat, I can take care of myself"—but along comes one piece of bad news that taps into the tremendous energy of your attachment and you become unconscious, lose control and become, in other words, crazy.

How does this happen? It's because the potential energy for us to become crazy exists within us right now. Don't think, "There's no way I can become crazy." You can. As long as you have the up and down mind of attachment it can break down any time. It's possible. Therefore it's worthwhile to continuously develop the knowledge-wisdom with which you can cut through that kind of situation and protect your mind by keeping it in a peaceful environment. You must develop knowledge-wisdom, otherwise it's in there and you can go crazy at any time. Don't think I'm exaggerating: check up.

At the moment you have perfect conditions and the intelligence to discriminate between right and wrong; you have tremendously powerful positive energy potential and to use it well is really wonderful. That's how you distinguish yourself from animals. Otherwise, as I said before, what's the difference between humans and birds? Birds also lead everyday lives: they eat food, fill their stomach, go to sleep, get up the next morning...how is that different from most human beings? We're a lot like that. We go to the supermarket, buy things, talk about this and that and go to sleep. Don't think that these are the limits of human ability; even animals can do all that.

Therefore, dears, it's worthwhile to determine to do something really meaningful with this life, and that is to dedicate your life's energy to the benefit of others. As long as you sincerely dedicate yourself to others with the understanding that attachment is the cause of all problems, you will automatically be happy. If you realize this you will naturally enter the path to happiness and joy and will have nothing to worry about.

What I'm saying is that it's necessary to reach a conclusion at the end of each analytical meditation. If you do an analytical meditation, understand something, but then just leave it at that—"Oh, OK, now I understand something"—your meditation has no power; there's no conclusion. You don't have the strength or energy to put what you've understood into action in your everyday life.

However, in general, the conclusion you need to come to is the great determination that "for the rest of my life, as much as I possibly can, I will avoid the mental attitudes of attachment and self-

cherishing and to the best of my ability dedicate myself to and concern myself with the welfare of other sentient beings. In particular, since other sentient beings' main problems are not material but attachment and ignorance, a lack of knowledge-wisdom, the best way in which I can help them is to give them the light of knowledge-wisdom, to put the energy of their body, speech and mind in the right direction. In order to do that, I first have to correct my own actions and slowly, slowly gain knowledge-wisdom and realizations myself. In that way I can automatically give others good vibrations and knowledge-wisdom." To dedicate in that way is extremely worthwhile.

Giving

Also, Tibetan lamas have a special mind training technique for releasing attachment and the self-cherishing thought where we transform our body into thousands, millions and billions of bodies and give them to all sentient beings. Actually, we should do this meditation right now.

When we did the equilibrium meditation before, we saw ourselves surrounded by all living beings in the universe; it's the same thing here. We transform our body into beautiful things—not horrible ugly things that we don't want—and give them to all sentient beings. We do this because at the moment we cling to our body with tremendously powerful attachment energy; giving it away to others begins to break that down.



Not only do you give your body to others—now meditate on giving them all your possessions. Your house transforms into thousands of houses, the food in your refrigerator multiplies thousands of times, and so forth with all your other enjoyments. Send all this out to all sentient beings with much compassion, realizing that all beings are equal in wanting happiness and not desiring suffering, but always act out of ignorance and therefore have to constantly experience suffering, confusion and dissatisfaction.



This kind of meditation is not a joke or something funny. It's very useful. Prior to practicing it your attachment might make you feel unhappy when giving somebody even one cent or a cup of tea, but through training your mind you can slowly, slowly reach the point where you give things away with much joy and pleasure. This is experience—I'm not saying it's my experience but there are many people whose it is, in both the East and the West. So it's something we too need to gain—the ability to happily give away our body and all our material possessions.

There's a true story about a Tibetan lama who was incredibly miserly; he couldn't give away even one cent let alone any of his other possessions to others. He asked his teacher what he could do about his incredible miserliness. His teacher said he should start by giving something from one hand to the other, thinking, "Now I'm

giving this,” visualizing that he was actually giving to other sentient beings. That was how his teacher taught him to start learning to give to others with pleasure, and that’s the kind of charity that we have to develop by training our mind—giving without attachment.

When they hear the word “charity,” many people probably think it has something to do with religion. From the Buddhist point of view, charity is the antidote to attachment. Also, people think that we can only make charity by giving material things but that’s not what charity actually means. True charity is giving sincerely without expectation. That mind is charity. Giving others material things is not necessarily charity.

For example, if, with attachment to having a good reputation, you think, “I’m a very religious person and want others to know it, so I’m going to donate a million dollars to charity,” that’s just an ego trip. Instead of becoming an antidote to attachment and helping you develop knowledge-wisdom, that way of giving merely strengthens your ego.

Often, what you think to be a spiritual practice is simply an ego trip, attachment. You need to check up on that. That’s why, despite your practice, you still haven’t found a solution to your problems. You’re hypocritical, because you have no understanding of what spirituality really is; your actions aren’t serious Dharma actions. If you’re going to act, don’t do so out of some pretentious, high-sounding intellectual philosophy but act simply, sincerely. Start off small; practice what makes sense for the level you’re at. If you begin your Dharma practice that way, you’ll really solve your problems.

If you get lost in the intellectual and don't act appropriately, what's the point? You're still wallowing in garbage.

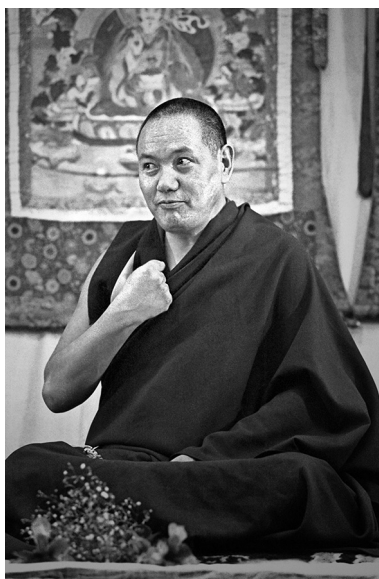
Although actions are very important, don't overreach. Don't attempt advanced practices before you're ready; start off slowly, small. Don't think that you can start at the end. Do a little bit every day and gradually, gradually you'll progress and see yourself develop.

Even Lord Buddha said, "Don't accept what I say just because I said it. That's the wrong approach." He said, "Check what I teach, and if you think it suits your level of mind, with clear understanding, adopt it." It's like shoes...you should wear only comfortable ones that fit your feet. In other words, before you start meditating or doing any spiritual practice, make sure that you're one hundred percent certain of what you're doing. In that way, your practice will be very comfortable and through your own actions you'll be able to see how you're developing.

Often, the problem with the Western way of thinking is that you want too much of everything. You have too much samsara, too much sense gravitation attachment...everything is exaggerated for the sake of sense pleasure. And then, when you get into meditation or some other spiritual trip, you bring that energy with you; you bring that materialistic attitude into your Dharma practice. That's a big misconception. Be down to earth; that's the more realistic way to develop spiritually. It's so worthwhile, very worthwhile.

Also, human potential is so powerful. Normally we think that rockets and atomic energy are very powerful but the power of rockets and nuclear energy comes from human beings, from the power

of human intelligence, which understands how to manipulate material things to make them powerful. Look around at all the large, fantastic buildings on earth—where do you think they came from? They were designed and made by human beings, not by God.



Cause and effect

So, as a human being, you should always remember how powerful you are and not devalue yourself, thinking, “I’m nothing; I can’t do anything.” That’s ridiculous. You are really worthwhile, incredibly intelligent and endowed with powerful energy. Of course, you can use your powerful energy in a positive or a negative way. Therefore human beings can also be dangerous. Why is the world today dangerous? It’s because of the human mind, which has created weapons, war and environmental problems.

We often hear people lament, “The world is so miserable; there are so many wars.” Instead of worrying about war, what you first need to worry about is integrating yourself, making yourself clean clear. Then your pure vibration will automatically contribute to world peace and benefit others. Otherwise, if out of confusion and a lack of understanding you say, emotionally, “This miserable world is just too much for me now,” that’s useless. It’s just emotion; it’s not compassion. No wisdom; no method.

Certain problems can be solved but there are others that, at the moment, are beyond solution. For example, Buddhism always talks about karma, but the karma we talk about is not something fixed. Karma means cause and effect. When a cause is already in our mind, there, right now—such as the cause to become crazy—if we apply the right method we can get rid of it before it ripens. But once that cause has brought its result and we’ve become crazy, it’s too late. That problem is pretty much beyond solution. So the time to implement a solution is before a karmic result has ripened. Once a problem has manifested it’s much more difficult to solve.

Both Hindu and Buddhist philosophy use the Sanskrit word *karma* but the connotation is different. Hinduism believes that karma is completely unchangeable, predetermined... something like that. Buddhism asserts that as an impermanent phenomenon, karma is changeable. Karma is your mental attitude putting your energy in a certain direction, producing a chain reaction, and you can break that chain before the result ripens.

Also, karma is the energy of your body, speech and mind. Don’t think it’s something else. Why do we call it karma? Because the

energy of the cause relates to another energy and that produces a reaction in yet another energy. That's all. It's scientific; I'm not talking about some religious thing. Scientists themselves have discovered that the energy of the four elements—earth, water, fire, wind—doesn't arise without cause; there's always a cause: one energy relates to another and produces a third, and so it goes on. If you don't know that, please visit a scientific laboratory! I'm joking—I haven't been into a scientific laboratory in my life! Anyway, it's true—you check up. Maybe I'm joking, maybe I'm not . . . I'm not sure!

Everything you see, hear, smell, taste or touch produces a reaction, either positive or negative. This is karma. That's why I say Buddhism is scientific: you can experience this for yourself today, right now. It's true; it's so simple. That's why we say that meditation develops higher conscious awareness; and when you develop it, you can see how each movement you make produces a different reaction.

Take *Time* magazine, for example. The publishers there are expert psychologists; at some level they understand karma. They put something special on the cover that they know will attract people's attention—often the face of a man or woman. People see the cover, react to it, buy the magazine and *Time* gets the money, that's all! Actually, that's karma.

It's the same with other advertisers in the West. I think they're fantastic. If you investigate why they do what they do, you get a glimpse of Buddhist psychology. I myself learn from that; it helps me understand how the Western mind works. It's incredible, really,

the way the human mind thinks: “If we do this, people will react like that...” Marketers know; that too is karma.

When you walk down a London street you see, hear and smell things, but mostly you’re unconscious of them all; whatever you perceive automatically reacts in your mind, but you’re completely unaware of it. When we practice meditation, we gradually become more conscious; if we don’t practice meditation, our unconscious mind gets stronger and instead of developing, our mind degenerates and we become more and more unconscious. You can see how that’s possible, can’t you?

If you understand true human psychology, the nature of the human mind, you’ll be able to integrate your mind and life; they’ll work together harmoniously. If your mind is split, your life is split; it has no direction and you’re unhappy and lost—even if you know precisely where in the world you are.

... 9 ...

Giving and Taking on the Breath

EARLIER WE DID a meditation for training our mind in detachment by giving away all our possessions, including our body, to other sentient beings. This time we're going to do the same thing, sending all sentient beings all our goodness—our knowledge-wisdom, good qualities and positive energy.

Technically, the way we do this is to mentally transform all this goodness into white light and, as we exhale through our right nostril, send this light into others' left nostril. As they breathe in it enters their heart and they experience an extremely joyful feeling.

Then, when you breathe in, inhale all others' sickness and problems in the form of smoky black energy—it leaves their right nostril, enters your left nostril and goes into your heart. This is the kind of negative energy and suffering that your association of ego and attachment completely dislikes. For countless lives, and even in this one from the time you were born up to now, you have been trying to avoid such problems as much possible, always obsessed with goodness for yourself, I. So this time, bring all that negativity into your heart; it completely mashes your ego and attachment. They freak out—let them freak out.

Totally changing the attitude of your ego-attachment's atti-

tude is very useful because the personality of attachment is limitless want: “I want every pleasure the universe has to offer.” And at all costs, attachment wants to avoid any unpleasant feelings whatsoever. So this time we act in completely the opposite way. Without the slightest hesitation, we send all our goodness, wisdom and joyful life energy—all our positive physical, mental and verbal energy—to others. We exhale through our right nostril and send joyful, blissful white light energy into all other beings’ left nostril without discrimination—not just our dear friend; all living beings in the universe.

Then bring their biggest problems, those that you don’t even like to see, let alone experience, in through your left nostril into your heart, where they smash into your ego and attachment, which completely vanish as a result; your ego completely freaks out.

Normally your ego’s attitude is such that if somebody who is not a friend barges uninvited into your house, you freak out: “How dare you come in without knocking?” Compared to your *heart*, this is nothing! So visualize bringing all sentient beings’ problems and sickness through your left nostril into your heart.

We call this kind of meditation *tong-len*. *Tong* means giving; *len* means taking. And we also say *lung wai gyö par cha*. *Lung* means breath: to give and take together with breathing.

In summary, send all your goodness, the positive energy of your body, speech and mind, your mental control, whatever, out on your breath through your right nostril. It enters others’ left nostril and goes down to their heart, which completely fills with joyous energy. Rejoice. Then bring others’ worst diseases and psychological prob-

lems—everything your ego dislikes—in the form of black smoke, in on your breath through your left nostril into your heart.



Perhaps you find it difficult to bring sickness and so forth into your heart. However, visualize old people in the West, many of whom are like vegetables, suffering greatly in nursing homes; they don't know what's going on. Send them positive energy. Think of all the people dying of hunger and thirst—such things do exist in the West, even though there might be supermarkets full of food nearby; because of their individual situation, many people still go hungry. Think about wars: thousands of people killing, thousands of others dying. Send your positive vibrations to all people suffering like this. Visualize that your positive energy enters dead people's bodies and they come back to life; take all their bad karma and its results in the form of black light in through your left nostril into your heart.



Even with your dearest friend, the situation can arise where you have to make the choice, "There's no way out, either my friend has to suffer or I do." When it comes to that point, even though intellectually you say, "I will take any suffering for your happiness," when the actual situation arises your self-cherishing is going to make the decision for you. Check up; be honest: you're going to choose happiness for yourself and let your friend suffer.



Normally we consider ourselves clever and intelligent because we know how to avoid disease and things like that. We feel so superior. Actually, it's just attachment—obsession with pleasure and aversion to the unpleasant. This is not a good attitude. Of course, avoiding disease and so forth in order to remain healthy and use your life for the benefit of others is OK but doing so with self-cherishing is not.

So this time, bring others' sickness into your heart. Let your ego freak out; let your attachment freak out. And when you do this meditation, from the psychological point of view it's especially important to watch how your ego reacts to your bringing others' sickness into your heart. Transform others' TB, cancer and so forth into black light and bring it through your left nostril into your heart and check how your ego likes it. You'll find there's a tremendous ego reaction when you do this.



Again, consider old people in the West. They're incredibly miserable. They don't have any mind training to help them understand themselves; they have no meditation with which they can keep their mind together. I've seen this myself; this is my scientific experience. When people in the West get old they become incredibly miserable, much more so than old people in the East. This is going to hap-

pen to all of us as long as we don't die. At the moment we don't even want to see old people's faces but every day we ourselves are getting closer to having that kind of face.

Think about it: if all of a sudden your face became that of a one-hundred-year-old person, do you think your ego would freak out? Check up now; it's possible, not a dream. The potential is there. Every day you're getting closer to having an old person's face.

However, if we train our mind in releasing attachment and developing detachment, even if we get old we'll have no problem; we'll be able to deal with the situation and comprehend our own mind. Even though physically we may be one hundred years old, our mind will remain young, like that of a child. It's possible. This is the power of the human mind...and we can progress the human mind into everlasting peaceful, joyful realization, whatever you call it: nirvana, enlightenment, salvation—it doesn't matter; they're just words. What matters is that you can gain insight into ultimate reality. That's so worthwhile. Therefore, mind training is extremely important. Those who have trained their mind can deal with any bad situation that arises, transform it into joyful energy and in that way always have a joyful life. Irrespective of whether the world is up or down, they always remain joyful.



So really bring what you normally don't like to even hear about into your heart and check how your ego reacts; examine how you feel.



Tibetan lamas do twenty-one repetitions of this meditation, sending out their good qualities to others on their breath through their right nostril and bringing in others' bad qualities, sickness and any other problems in the form of black light through their left nostril into their heart, and check how their ego reacts.

At the same time they make the following determination: "For countless lives, and even from when I was born up to now, I have always grasped at temporal pleasure. With a grasping attitude and the self-cherishing thought I've wanted the best happiness for myself and tried to avoid all suffering. I now recognize this as the main psychological problem behind all my mistaken actions. As long as I don't change, as long as I don't do something about this, I'll continually experience unhappiness and miserable reactions. Real everlasting joy and true happiness are beyond the attachment of the self-cherishing thought, so for the rest of my life, as much as I possibly can, I'm going to put all my energy into releasing attachment and the self-cherishing thought. This is my main path to real liberation, inner freedom and enlightenment."



Feeling equilibrium with all universal living beings is really powerful, as is the experience of sending all your goodness to others and bringing into yourself all their sickness and problems. The result you get is incredible joy; your mind is really balanced and

you enter the middle path. Attachment and hatred are exaggerated extremes, so if you can stay on the middle way between them and deal with people from there, it's really worthwhile and most beneficial, because most of our problems arise from dealing with other human beings.

More shortcomings of attachment

Check up: Lord Buddha said that we should not be attached to even the realizations of nirvana or enlightenment. He also said that it's wrong for his followers to be dogmatically attached to his doctrine, that that's another type of psychological sickness or disease.

That's incredible, isn't it? Most of the time we think, "My idea's good," but if somebody says, "Your idea is bad," we freak out. That's attachment. Lord Buddha said, "I don't want any of my disciples to be attached to concepts, such as the highest goal of enlightenment or any of my other philosophies or doctrines." Also, in Tibetan Buddhist tantric yoga there are vows forbidding us to criticize the doctrine of any other religion. Can you imagine? Lord Buddha has us take vows against that; it's incredible. This is a fantastically skillful method and shows how wonderfully well he understood human psychology. Unbelievable, isn't it?

I mean, worldly people are going to say, "My idea is best," and if you contradict them they freak out. That's because of their attachment; they're not realistic. Lord Buddha says that instead of freaking out, don't have attachment in the first place, because as long as you're attached to your religious ideas and philosophies you're

setting yourself up for inner conflict, and that will destroy your inner peace and joy.

Therefore we should take the middle path and avoid extreme views as much as we can. That's the *real* path, the *true* path to liberation, enlightenment or whatever you call it; the words don't matter. If you reach beyond attachment and self-cherishing I can guarantee that your life will be free of physical and mental problems and there's no way that you'll engage in mistaken actions—the door to suffering will forever be closed. But whenever you open the door of attachment and self-cherishing you also open the door to all problems.

The greatest human problems are actually rebirth, aging and death, but if you are free of attachment you can even die with much pleasure; dying is like going home. If you die with attachment to your material possessions, friends and reputation, your death will be miserable; if you don't have attachment you'll have an incredible death; your experience of dying will be blissful, joyful.

Really, Buddhism teaches us how to die. Buddhist education starts at the beginning of life and continues all the way through to its end; it's a total experience. Actually, it's not that difficult; it's easy. If you have the skillful method and wisdom to release attachment and self-cherishing your life will always be happy. You don't need to pretend; it will be natural. Happiness will be natural; control will be natural—you won't have to pretend.

If you plant a seed it's natural that it will grow. Similarly, if you plant the seeds of the knowledge-wisdom solution to releasing attachment, it will automatically develop. That's why I always say

that the human mind is very powerful—positively powerful and negatively powerful. You can direct it either way; it's flexible. The energy of the human mind is not fixed.

You can see how the energy of attachment and selfishness is like a needle in your heart; when you release it you feel incredible joy. You lose that uptight tendency in your heart and you're physically relaxed.

The benefits of meditation

Through meditation we can really reach a state of everlasting joy, so if we don't do something to get there we're really foolish, aren't we? And we can reach that joyful state without having to spend any money. But we forget that and instead get overly concerned with material things and, exaggerating their value, run after sense objects of attachment. We're totally unrealistic.

Do a comparative check: which offers you more, material things or knowledge-wisdom? Of course, material things do give you some level of comfort, but if you spend all your life working only for them, when you die you end up with nothing. On the other hand, if you spend your time developing knowledge-wisdom and releasing attachment and self-cherishing, it's incredibly powerful—your whole life becomes content. Even if the earth goes up into the sky and the sun and moon crash down to earth, no matter how much the external world changes, control and wisdom are always with you. Material things always cheat you—sometimes they're there, sometimes they're not. Many rich people die hungry. It's never

certain; money is no insurance or guarantee against hunger. I think you know that, but it's important. Really check up, seriously.

So for at least a short time every day, compare the benefits of chasing materials with those of developing your mind. You have plenty of time to do so. You just need to meditate and train your mind for ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour every day in the meditation techniques we've been teaching you here. These practices are incredibly powerful. In just a short time you can produce such joyful energy in your heart. That's much more worthwhile than running after transitory samsaric pleasures, which simply bring one miserable, useless result after another.

The potential for pleasure and joy is already within your mind; you don't need money to buy it. Anyway, you can't buy that kind of joy; it's already there within you. If you use that energy skillfully it will *always* be with you. Whether you go up into the sky or down into the ground, it will always come with you. Material possessions are the exact opposite.

Meditating is also much easier than going to the supermarket. You probably think I'm exaggerating, but think about it. Going to the supermarket is not necessarily that easy. First, you can't walk; you have to go by car. Then, maybe your car doesn't work. Anyway, you know; I don't have to go into details. There can be all kinds of difficulty in getting to and from the supermarket. Check up. In contrast, a short meditation can immediately relax you and keep you consciously aware all day. That's really worthwhile. It can bring you everlasting joy. Physically you may be old but mentally you can be experiencing an incredibly joyful awakened state of mind. It's so

worthwhile. We're all going to get old but we can make sure that when we do, our life will still be joyful. It's possible and therefore so worthwhile that we abandon collecting garbage with attachment, which is so unreasonable.

However, I'd like you to check up for yourselves; I'm not trying to push my ideas onto you. You're intelligent, so check up for yourselves. Actually, Western people aren't that easy. You have much learning but you've also picked up a lot of garbage. But now you can look into that garbage and learn from it; you have much experience to check on. It's much more difficult to teach primitive people the things we're talking about here; they find it much harder to understand subjects that Westerners find easy.



Making Life Meaningful

IN ORDER TO MAKE the action of listening to teachings the cause of everlasting happiness, complete freedom, it is necessary to make that action Dharma. Furthermore, in order to make the action of listening to teachings the cause of enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, it's necessary to cultivate pure motivation, the pure thought of bodhicitta.

So it's necessary to feel, or at least think, as follows: "Releasing myself alone from all samsaric suffering is not sufficient. There are numberless other sentient beings who have been extremely kind to me, and those sentient beings are in continual suffering, not having the wisdom or method to escape from suffering and receive everlasting happiness. As it's my responsibility to release all sentient beings from suffering and lead them to the most sublime happiness of enlightenment, I must first receive enlightenment myself. For that reason I'm going to listen to these profound teachings."

The subject that you're going to listen to is a Mahayana teaching that contains the graduated path to enlightenment that all past, present and future buddhas have traveled on their way to complete awakening and is a path that has also been experienced by the disciplic succession of the lineage.

The perfect human rebirth

This present human rebirth is extremely meaningful with respect to attaining both temporal and ultimate goals and highly meaningful every hour, minute and second. How is this perfect human rebirth so precious and useful in attaining even temporal goals? For example, if we want to receive a perfect human rebirth again in future so that we can continue practicing Dharma and following the graduated path to enlightenment by once more meeting a spiritual friend, we can create the cause for this result in this life by living in pure moral conduct, practicing charity and making stainless prayers. This present perfect human rebirth offers us the capability of doing this.

This perfect human rebirth also gives us the opportunity of creating the cause to be reborn as the king of a country, a wealthy person, or as a god in the sura or asura realms—where lives are long and enjoyments transcendent—by practicing charity, living in moral discipline and making prayers to achieve such temporal goals.

This perfect human rebirth is also highly meaningful in that it allows us to achieve the ultimate goals of either the everlasting happiness of complete freedom from samsara or the most sublime happiness of enlightenment.

And this perfect human rebirth even offers us the opportunity of attaining enlightenment in this life or within a few lives rather than taking many eons. How is that possible? The graduated path to enlightenment has two divisions: the sutra graduated path, or Paramitayana, and the tantric graduated path, or Vajrayana. Since

all the teachings of both divisions exist at this time, this perfect human rebirth gives us the chance to practice them: by following the Paramitayana path we can reach enlightenment after many eons but by following the Vajrayana path, the shortcut path to enlightenment, we can reach it much more quickly, without taking that much time.

Furthermore, this perfect human rebirth is extremely useful every second, every minute, every hour. This is especially so these days, when the Mahayana teachings still exist, have not degenerated, and we have had the great fortune of meeting these teachings and can practice their essence, bodhicitta. Since we are able to generate the pure thought of bodhicitta, in even a minute we can purify the obscurations and negative karma collected over eons, in our countless beginningless previous lives in samsara. With this perfect human rebirth, by generating the pure thought of bodhicitta we are able to purify negative karma collected over billions of eons and create infinite merit as vast as space, in the shortest period of time.

Therefore this perfect human rebirth that we have received this time is extremely useful. It is so precious; much more precious than a universe filled with jewels. Even if we had a universe full of jewels they could not bring us what the perfect human rebirth can. They could not even bring us a future perfect human rebirth let alone supreme enlightenment. The value of the perfect human rebirth we now enjoy is beyond compare with a universe full of jewels.

Also, as meaningful as this perfect human rebirth is, that much difficult it is for other rebirths, such as those of the animals, pretas, suras and asuras, to be as meaningful in achieving those goals.

Those other rebirths are nowhere near as meaningful or precious as this present perfect human rebirth.

However, even though we have received this perfect human rebirth, from the time we were born until now we have not recognized it as meaningful or precious. Not only have we not recognized it as precious, we have actually thought that it's meaningless, that being born human has no meaning. In other words, all we've done is make ourselves more ignorant. Instead of encouraging ourselves we've put ourselves down, which has served only to make our life not meaningful.

The way we've been using our perfect human rebirth is like a child who has an extremely precious jewel in its hand but doesn't recognize its value so throws it down the toilet. We waste our perfect human rebirth in exactly the same way. We have this extremely precious thing in our hand but, not recognizing its worth, completely waste it.

Even though this perfect human rebirth is highly meaningful, if we don't use it to attain goals that other sentient beings find extremely difficult to attain—such as the highest goal of enlightenment, everlasting happiness or temporal goals such as a human rebirth—and instead use it simply to pursue the happiness of just this life, the happiness of today, our actions are no higher than those of animals, whose sole concern is temporal pleasure and whose aims are always directed toward that end.

As this perfect human rebirth has meaning, if we don't use it accordingly, if we live our lives the way animals lead theirs, always striving for temporal pleasure, then it's as if we weren't born human

but as one of those lower realm beings. Why? Because our actions are no higher than theirs; what we do is not more special than what they do. From tiny creatures too small to see with the naked eye all the way up to the largest of animals, all their daily activities, all the things they do with their body, speech and mind, are done with attachment to the transient pleasures of just this life.

So now check up within yourself: “Since the day I was born, have I created any meaningful actions with my perfect human rebirth, any actions worthy of this human rebirth, any actions higher than those of animals, any meaningful actions done without attachment to temporal pleasure, actions that lead to the higher goals of better future lives and the ultimate goals of liberation and enlightenment?” Check how many meaningful, worthwhile actions—if you can find any—you have done with this perfect human rebirth from the time you were born until now; check to see if any of the actions you’ve ever done have been higher than those of animals.



Also check like this: “All the daily activities of the twittering birds flying from tree to tree and the insects crawling around on the ground are done with attachment to temporal pleasure. Are any of my daily activities—eating, drinking, walking, talking and sleeping—any different? Do I do anything without attachment to temporal pleasure or are all my actions the same as those of birds and insects, who do everything with attachment to temporal pleasure?” Check this.



Check everything you do from morning to night, your usual daily activities.

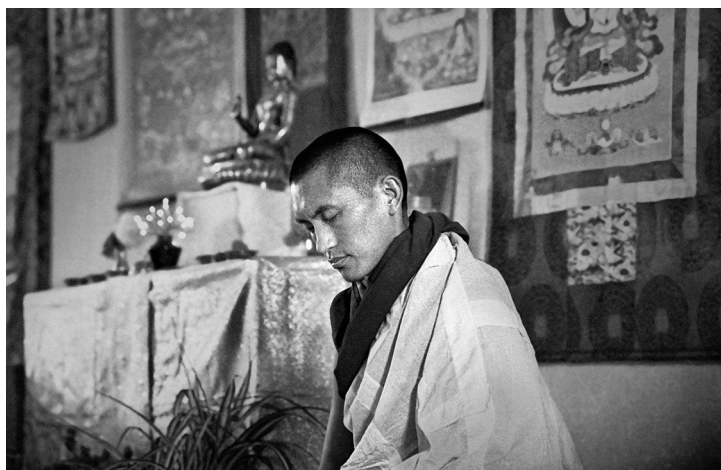


Check one day's activities to see if there's even one action that's higher than an animal's, done without attachment to temporal pleasure.



When you check like this you can clearly see whether you're living the life of a human being or that of an animal; checking the actions of your daily life in detail makes it obvious.

However, when we investigate in this way we can hardly find one single action that is pure—higher than the actions of dumb animals. The way our minds think is the same; the way we lead our life is the same. We can't find anything higher. The only difference is that our body has a different shape and we live in a house; there's no difference in the way we think. Basically, we're no different from the dog that lives outside. If we check properly, this is what we find; it's very upsetting.



The difficulty of receiving a perfect human rebirth

Now, if we could receive this perfect human rebirth again and again and again, easily, one after the other, again and again and again, then perhaps we wouldn't have to worry. If perfect human rebirths came as easily as rice grows—you plant rice seedlings, they grow, produce more seeds, you plant those and get more rice—if when we died we automatically received another perfect human rebirth, we wouldn't have to concern ourselves that much with making this life meaningful. It wouldn't be so dangerous to waste it. But it's not like this; it's not like this.

It will be very difficult to receive such a perfect human rebirth again; very difficult. Why will it be so difficult? Why is it extremely difficult to find another perfect human rebirth? That's because we have not received this present perfect human rebirth without reason; this perfect human rebirth is not without cause. Why in this

lifetime have we received a perfect human rebirth, met the teachings and had the chance to meditate, to control our mind? It's because in many of our previous lives we observed the law of karma, lived in moral discipline, created much charity and made many prayers to receive this present human rebirth. Many of our previous lives worked very hard, expended much effort, to create the cause of this precious human rebirth.

So this human rebirth is not something that has been received without cause, kind of independent, self-existent. It's not like this. Therefore, receiving a perfect human rebirth in future depends upon whether we, in this life, create the cause of a future perfect human rebirth; it's in the hands of our present human rebirth. If in this life we don't create the cause for a perfect human rebirth, we won't receive one in future; if in this life we do create the cause of a perfect human rebirth, we will receive one in a future life. It all depends upon our present life.

Why, then, is it extremely difficult to receive a perfect human rebirth? It's because the cause is extremely difficult to create. For instance, let's check like this, from the point of view of moral conduct. If we check in this way we'll be able to figure out whether or not we'll receive a perfect human rebirth again. Think, "From the time I was born until now, have I observed any moral conduct such as not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct. In this life, have I observed such moral discipline or not?"



Also check, “Have I not told lies, not gossiped, not spoken harshly, not slandered others? Have I observed any of these moral disciplines in my life or not?”



As well, check, “Have I not generated ill will, covetousness or the heresy of believing there’s no ultimate reality, no Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and no past and future lives? Have I observed any of these moral disciplines in my life or not?”



Now think, “Have I observed any of these moral disciplines for even a day?”



If you find that you have observed such disciplines, then that’s something to feel happy about, rejoice over.

So now, after checking, think, “If I were to die now, could I receive a perfect human rebirth again?” Question yourself.

So that’s checking to see whether or not we’ve observed any moral discipline in our life. We don’t need to investigate that carefully

to see whether or not, with negative mind, we've done the opposite: the three immoral actions of body—killing, stealing and sexual misconduct—the four immoral actions of speech—telling lies, speaking harshly, slandering and gossiping—or the three immoral actions of mind—generating ill will, covetousness or heresy. If we check how many such actions we've created from the time of our rebirth until now we don't need to worry we won't find any. It's easy to see that we have; we don't have to spend much time looking.

Anyway, what I mean is this: it's not sure that we'll receive another human rebirth let alone a perfect human rebirth in our future lives. Therefore, now that we have received a perfect human rebirth we absolutely must extract its essence. What is the essence of the perfect human rebirth? It's the three temporal and ultimate goals I mentioned before, the highest of which is enlightenment. So while we hold the jewel of the perfect human rebirth in our hand, we have to ensure that we create the cause for enlightenment, because it's most uncertain that in future we'll have this chance again.

We can see that it's most uncertain because it's so easy for us to find how many negative actions we have done in our life, the various action of our body and speech done with negative mind, with ignorance, attachment, anger and the other delusions. Since we have created these negative actions so many times, the ten immoral actions that I just described, it's inevitable that we will experience their result.

What makes actions such as killing, stealing and lying negative is that they are done out of delusion. If we do the same actions without delusion or self-cherishing, with bodhicitta, they are not immoral.

Buddhadharma explains that what makes an action immoral is not the action itself but the mind that creates it.

The results of negative karma

So, there are four karmic results of immoral actions. Take, for example, the immoral action of killing, causing the death of other living beings. One of the four results is called the ripening result: rebirth in one of the three lower realms, the hell, hungry ghost or animal realms. The second result for the person who has killed others is, even if—after a long time, as the result of some previously created good karma—he is born in the human realm, his life is short; he gets killed by another person. This is called the result similar to the cause in experience. What you do to another eventually comes back upon you.

The third result of the immoral action of killing, killing with a negative mind, is even if—after some time, as the result of good karma—the person is reborn human, he again kills other beings. This is called the result similar to the cause in action, or habit. The previous action of killing created the tendency to kill again. For instance, in this life we sometimes find it difficult to control certain violent actions—those habitual impulses come from similar previous actions.

The fourth result of the immoral action of killing has to do with the place in which one finds oneself; this is called the possessed, or environmental, result. Even if, after some time, the person who has killed is reborn human, he loses the essence of his enjoyments; the

enjoyments where he lives have no essence. Also, the environment is very dangerous, with much fighting and life danger.

It's also like this with the other immoral actions of body, speech and mind. For example, every day on television or in the newspapers we hear about problems all over the world. Some places are very wet, muddy and prone to flooding; others are always rife with factional fighting and disharmony.

Even on the family level we always see examples of fighting between parents or children. Some men can never get on with their wife, no matter how many they have; their relationships always fail, there's constant disharmony. And some women are the same; no matter how many husbands they have, their marriages never last, they always fight, they're never happy. Some people are always getting abused or criticized by others; no matter where they go other people always speak badly of them, causing them much suffering. These kinds of disunity or disharmony, not getting along in relationships, are especially the result of the immoral action of slandering others, causing disharmony between others.

Then there are other people who—no matter how much they try to accumulate material possessions, no matter how much money they receive through making business—always lose what they have, can never hang onto it. No matter where they go, their possessions always get stolen. Even if they stay in one place they get robbed again and again, or if they don't lose their possessions, they don't have enough time to enjoy them. Problems such as these result from the immoral action of stealing in previous lives.

Other people, even though they have a good house or excellent

material possessions and so forth, their things don't last; they wear out quickly or easily get broken. And there are others who can never get good enjoyments; whatever they get is always of poor quality. No matter how hard they try they can never get anything good. Others can't find work or always get fired from their job. Many things like this happen.

There are people who have to live in areas where it's hard to find food or water. Others have to live in very ugly places full of thorns, or on very high, steep mountains that are difficult to move around on, or in dry, barren deserts. Even though life in such places is very difficult, somehow, without choice, they have to spend their lives there.

There are many other examples that could be given, however, all such experiences are the result of immoral actions that have to be experienced in the human realm, not to mention the other results of even greater suffering that come from rebirth in the lower realms.¹²

And opposite to the ten immoralities is observing the ten moralities. Because in the past we did that, at the present time we find ourselves in the upper realms receiving many enjoyments. Whatever we try to get, we receive. If we want food, we get it; if we want clothes, we get them; if we want to be in a beautiful place, we can go there. Things come easily to us; our life is easy. Other things like having intact sense organs, a beautiful looking body, a good personality, patience and the respect of other people and having control over

¹² See the *Sutra of Causes and Effects of Actions* on the LYWA website, www.LamaYeshe.com.

others, where they do what we tell them—all these are the results of previously created good karma, adhering to moral discipline.

The root of suffering

Now let's do a short meditation.

All the suffering in the six samsaric realms—the hell, hungry ghost, animal, human, asura and sura realms—comes from ignorance, which is the creator of samsara. Ignorance creates samsara, the world of pain.

What is that ignorance that is the creator of samsara? That is the ignorance that does not realize the true nature of the self, the absolute nature of the self.

Therefore, to not experience all the sufferings of samsara and be completely free from their cause, ignorance, we must completely destroy ignorance, the cause of all samsaric suffering. To do that, we must realize the true nature of the self.

Realizing the true nature of the self depends upon recognizing ignorance, the mind that is unclear as to the nature of the self.

It's like this: if your body is dirty and you want to clean it, you first have to identify the dirt. In the same way, in order to realize the true nature of the self, what the self is, you first have to recognize ignorance, the mind that makes us view the I in completely the wrong way, a way that is opposite to the reality of the self. The way we view the self is the way ignorance conceives of the self.

So first concentrate on the thought, whatever you're thinking now. Just watch that thought and as your mind gradually becomes

relaxed, calm, then check up how you see the self, how you conceive the self, or how the I appears to you. First concentrate on thought; as your mind gets calm, relaxed, check carefully how the I, the self, appears to you, or how you conceive it.

If you find something, if you find the truly existing I, the truly existing self, search for where it is. When you find the truly existing I, the real I, check whether it's the body or the mind and whether it's within your body-mind or outside of it. Check in this way. If you can't find it, if you see the emptiness of the self, then just concentrate on that.

If you do find a real self, then check whether it's the body, the mind or the mind-body combination. You have to look for this truly existing self from head to foot, searching in every part of your body to try to find exactly where it is. If you don't find it and then come to the conclusion that the self does not exist at all, then that's a wrong conception; you've fallen into the extreme of nihilism. That conclusion does not make you free of suffering.

But if the feeling of the emptiness of the self comes to you more or less effortlessly, rather than running away from that you should practice concentrating on it, just for the auspiciousness of meditating on emptiness, seeking the true nature of the self.



That's all I have to say this time. If, as a result of having come to this seminar, you now see that your human life has great meaning and that there are many good things you can do with your life that you

were not aware of before, things that benefit all sentient beings, then that gives meaning to your having come here. If you now know that you can again receive a perfect human rebirth, completely release yourself from your delusions and attain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings and you wish to attain those goals, and you wish to study continuously and meditate in order to escape from suffering and receive enlightenment for the sake of others, then it's most worthwhile that you attended. That's extremely important for your own peace of mind and that of others.

However, the most important thing is to try to keep your mind away from giving harm to others as much as possible; to try to control your mind as much as you can. Keep your mind away from the harmful mind—that is the essence of Dharma, the most important thing. Whether you meditate or not, the essence of meditation is to stop the harmful mind from arising as much as possible. That keeps you and those around you in peace.

I'm happy to have made a Dharma connection with you all and to have had the chance to help you a little with the Dharma but it's important that you maintain a continuous wish to meditate and study the Buddhadharma more deeply. Then, if you have time, perhaps you will have the chance to practice the meditations more and more deeply.

Lama Answers Questions

The best answers come through meditation

WHenever human problems arise, instead of getting nervous and worried, you're better off meditating and checking up. Meditation is like a computer—whenever regular people have a problem, they turn to their computer for answers; similarly, whenever meditators have a problem, they meditate. And through meditation they get answers. The answers are there; the calm, clear mind gives knowledge-wisdom the space to come up with answers. The foggy mind is an obstacle; it makes the answers invisible. So meditation really is the best way to check up and find solutions to your problems.

We usually think we get answers by asking questions and that's true up to a point; certain things can be answered that way. But if you're unaware, even if the lama gives you a good answer, it doesn't really register; it goes right over your head. That's because the way you're asking is not serious. If you want to question something deeply and really, seriously meditate on it, when the answer comes it's so powerful. You *become* the answer, you *become* that knowledge; it doesn't just remain as some kind of superficial fact.

Often when you ask somebody a question and the person says, “This, this, this,” you might receive a little wisdom but we don’t consider that to be true knowledge.

So meditation is really worthwhile; it gives you the answers you want. Meditation is the real personal computer. Answers you discover for yourself through meditation are much more meaningful, much deeper, than those you get from somebody else’s replies to your questions. You ask, “Please could you tell me blah, blah, blah”; the other person replies, “Blah, blah, blah”; you think “OK, that’s good.” But then another problem comes to occupy your mind because you don’t have the penetrative concentration to cut through the fog of your confusion. That’s why I always say that human beings are so powerful. Potentially, we have fantastic energy; we just have to use it in the most professional way.

Every human being has a beautiful quality. If we only look at people’s superficial external appearance we will never find true beauty but if we look at their deeper human qualities—what people can do, the positive actions they can create and the power of the human mind—we will see everybody as beautiful. In fact, all universal living beings have *some* beautiful qualities.

If everything that existed in the world were to appear as beautiful, there’d be no way for the miserable mind to arise. The view of the miserable mind is foggy—the subject, the mind, relies, or depends, on the object it perceives. Transforming the external world into beauty prevents the ugly mind from arising by giving it no space.

So it’s really worthwhile that you people, having realized that happiness can never be found in the superficial sense world alone, are

seeking a joyful life through internal happiness, fully convinced—not “maybe, maybe”—that this is the way. You *have* to make that decision. If your mind still harbors the doubt, “Maybe the supermarket really does contain everything I need,” your meditation will be no good and you won’t get any realizations.

Also, you shouldn’t spend your life on useless pursuits. For example, there’s so much garbage on television; when you watch it your unconscious mind automatically absorbs that garbage reflection. So you have to exercise the discriminating wisdom that assesses whether what you’re doing is worthwhile or not.

I’m not saying that television itself is bad. I’m saying that, according to your mind, you have to check up whether what you’re watching is useful or not. Does it lead to wisdom or to the completely concrete attachment that causes conflict in your mind? Check up. This is really worthwhile.

Actually, you’re much better off watching the internal television of your mind. Regular TV is so boring; the same old programs on the same old topics over and over again. You don’t really want to watch. But when you watch your mind, it’s incredible; it’s much more interesting. There’s always something new; if you think about it, every experience is new.

This is really true. I’m not exaggerating. Every moment of mind is interesting. If you check your mind in meditation for ten or twenty minutes a day, it’s so worthwhile.

In Tibet, after listening to lam-rim teachings and receiving a clean clear intellectual understanding, people would often go into retreat to put the teachings into action; they’d experiment to see if what the

lama said really worked or not. They would seriously check up. Of course, Western life is so busy that you don't have the time to do long retreats, but if every now and then you could spend a two- or three-day weekend in strict meditation it would be very powerful and most worthwhile.



And with respect to this seminar, we've been talking so much that you haven't had much time to meditate; but if we'd allowed more time for meditation you wouldn't have received the teachings you need, so we've just had to try the best we can.

Now I can try to answer any questions you might have, bearing in mind that the real answers are those you get through meditation. As I said before, those answers become incredibly powerful and meaningful. Verbal answers often aren't as meaningful. However, if you have serious questions, please ask.

Q. Lama, last year in Nepal you said that fully ordained nuns have over one hundred more vows than fully ordained monks do. Also, we see far fewer pictures of Tara than we do of male manifestations of Buddha. So I was wondering if you could say something about women. Sorry!

Lama. Lord Buddha gave fully ordained monks, *gelongs*, 253 vows and fully ordained nuns, *gelongmas*, 364. The reason for the difference is that women have incredible wisdom and very quick minds. Men are normally a little bit slow but women can put things together and come to immediate conclusions much more rapidly. Also, the way women's bodies are constituted makes them more susceptible to vibrations of the sun, moon and earth, and they undergo monthly internal changes as well. All this has a psychological effect. So women's minds change much more quickly than do men's. Women are very intelligent; they have the wisdom to quickly put things together.

In addition, women's desire does not arise frequently but when it does it can be very strong and last a long time; it can feel very uncomfortable, like being poked by a needle. Men also have desire but while it's often present it's not as strong.

Q. So the greater number of precepts is because women are less able to control desire?

Lama. Yes, that's right. That's why I'm talking about this.

Q. So it's bad karma to be born female?

Lama. No, not necessarily. You asked a general question so I'm

generalizing in my reply. Certain individual women have great control. There are female buddhas. So actually, you can't generalize. However, Lord Buddha considered that men and women have equal potential to gain liberation in this life. Also, Lord Buddha didn't just say the words—he showed the method, the path to liberation. So women's liberation—inner liberation—is very good. Anyway, women have qualities and abilities that men don't and vice versa. Both have their own individual characteristics.

Also, when we ordain women, Lord Buddha said that first we should give five precepts—precepts being the way we start training the mind—for say a month; then perhaps eight; then maybe more. Proceed slowly and wait, sometimes for a year, then check up to see whether she can manage or not. Traditionally it was very strict; the purpose was to make sure. Of course, generally it's the same thing with men. They too have uncontrolled desire. But men also have their own specific characteristics, psychologically and physically.

But there's no way you can say that men can attain liberation or enlightenment and women cannot. That's impossible. In Tibet, some- times even senior monks would take teachings from higher nuns.

Q. If one has overcome strong attachment or aversion in this life, would one be placed in contact with the same people or places in the next life?

Lama. It's possible, yes. It's also logical. If in this life you train your mind such that your attachment gets less and less, at the time of

death your powerful determination and the force of your karmic mental energy can lead you into perfect contact with familiar people or places so that you have the opportunity to help them again.

Q. You said last night that a man couldn't be religious if he points a gun and shoots another man who is religious. What bothers me is that you hear of Thai monks blessing guns that are then used in Vietnam, Vietnamese monks burning themselves to death in Saigon, and Tibetan monks disrobing and fighting the Chinese. Can you explain all this, please?

Lama. Thank you, it's good to ask about such things. I think monks who bless guns do so out of misconception, no matter who they are. Psychologically, that will come back to bother them. As for the monk who burnt himself in Saigon, there could be two things. If he has incredible compassion for the Vietnamese people suffering in the war and burns himself in order to demonstrate their suffering, I don't think that's foolish; but if he doesn't have compassion and is just doing it out of anger, that's foolish.

Q. Is it true that Tibetan monks have disrobed, fought the Chinese and therefore killed some?

Lama. Yes, some Tibetan monks have done that. There are different kinds of Tibetan monk. When the Chinese came, some monks did return their vows to senior monks who didn't go to war. You can't stop that kind of individual anger. Actually, they were wrong to do that. If they'd asked the senior monk if they should go, he would have said, "That's foolish; a misconception. You want to fight but

you're already the best kind of soldier. You want to give up being a member of the best army, the Sangha, to join a junk army." That monk is already a soldier; he's fighting the internal enemy of the delusions, which is what really brings him down. That's a great question; you're right to ask.

There are many religions in the world, Buddhism among them. When their followers act in mistaken ways it's not the religion that's wrong; it's the people who have the misconceptions. And it's not only misconception—uncontrolled attachment is so powerful: "Oh, my nation, my country... I'm going to lose the place where I eat and sleep." So acting out of uncontrolled attachment, these Tibetan monks abandon their ordination and rush off to fight. They're foolish; I agree. That's exactly what I was talking about before. I don't even consider those people to be Buddhist. They're so emotional; their wisdom is so limited.

Q. What do we do if we recognize our negative mind? Do we just face it or do we react to it? Sometimes it seems the reaction could be to not want to face it.

Lama. What kind of situation do you mean? Be specific.

Q. For example, when we're meditating and see, "Oh, now I'm proud" or "Now I'm angry," do we just recognize this and say to ourself, "OK, I'm angry," or do we say, "I'm angry and this is not good"? What do we with the negative mind? When we find the negative mind, what do we do?

Lama. When you find that your negative mind has arisen, instead

of just letting it go, apply the appropriate antidote. Even better, as soon as you find your negative mind starting to arise, stop it right there; don't let it go any further. Many Western psychologists say that when you're angry, let it out, don't suppress it; they tell you to get more angry. They mean well, but according to Lord Buddha's psychology, they're wrong. Every moment of anger creates a karmic imprint; every moment of unchecked anger builds up the energy of anger within you.

What's better is to recognize the anger within you and as soon as you feel it start to arise, instead of letting it come and recognizing and expressing it, try to digest it. That's the best way. Western psychology says, "No, no, no... don't keep your tremendous anger energy in, let it out; express your anger." So that allows the person to be overtly angry. That's foolish. It's not good because your anger energy builds up. Actually, any action you do over and over—positive or negative—builds up the corresponding kind of energy.

Let me give you an example. How do you control anger if you're a person who has great difficulty doing so? When you get up in the morning, bring to mind the characteristic nature of anger. First of all, anger comes from the root of ignorance, and the cooperative cause for its arising is a huge build-up of superstition. Its function is to destroy all your pleasure. Even your face becomes the picture of misery. Check the faces of people who are always angry: they're always kind of tense, tight. Check up; they're different.

Anyway, first thing in the morning, because you're not angry at that time, examine the shortcomings of anger and see clean clear what the nature of anger is. After that, generate much compassion

for yourself: "If I keep behaving in this way I'll ruin my life. But it's not only me. All universal living beings also destroy their beautiful, enjoyable lives by getting angry. A moment's anger can destroy the lives of a couple that has been together for years. They do this to themselves. It's incredibly foolish. The nature of anger is pure foolishness; today I'm not going to get angry at all. I dedicate my life today to the opposite of anger: patience. From now until I go to bed tonight, I'm going to control my anger, with much compassion for all universal living beings."

When you make that determination in the morning, the whole day goes like that. In the evening you check up: "What a surprise. Normally I'm always angry but today I didn't get angry at all. I'm so glad, so appreciative, so happy." Then dedicate your positive energy to others and, rejoicing, go to sleep.

The next day you almost won't need to generate strong energy to maintain your control; it will be easy. Then the day after that it will be easier still...and the next and the next, until you've managed to control your anger for a week. If you can control it for one week, the second week will definitely be easier. Then you'll have been able to control it for a month. So two months will be easy. Then you'll have controlled it for a year. Once you've done that you'll practically never get angry again. Finally you'll finish up saying to people, "I find it impossible to get angry. Please would you teach me how?" You might have to go to anger school to learn how to do it! It's possible. That's true. You can reach a point where there's no way anybody can make you angry.

So that was a good, practical question. Just stopping the problem

of anger is most worthwhile; that's incredible. The nature of anger is misery and the angry mind is uptight. Angry people suffer greatly; their faces are different and they totally destroy their enjoyment of life. So at least controlling your anger is most worthwhile. If there's no anger between a married couple there's no way their life will be miserable; it's impossible. They will always have a good relationship, a good home and good vibrations.

Many times Westerners are too intellectual, always looking for some kind of higher meditation. They're not realistic. If you just practice not getting angry it's so worthwhile. That itself is liberation, inner freedom; that's more realistic and so worthwhile—in everyday life you're dealing with people, so you don't get angry with your wife, husband, friends or anybody. You always have a good time.

Q. Please could you say more about the dedication of merit?

Lama. We have an analogy for why we dedicate the energy of merit. Say you're riding a big, powerful horse. If you have no bridle the horse will run wild and you won't end up where you want to go. Although the horse's energy is perfectly strong and it can run really well, without control you'll finish up falling off and hurting yourself badly. Similarly, if you have the powerful energy of merit and don't dedicate it, if somebody suddenly says something to you that makes you angry, your merit immediately disappears.

Creating merit and then destroying it is like first cleaning a floor, then, when you've finished, putting *ka-ka* all over it, dirtying it up again. This is a good example of what we normally do. Therefore, you should dedicate whatever positive energy you have to benefit

others, instead of letting it go without direction, like a powerful horse without a bridle.

Also, whenever you dedicate your positive energy to others, the energy you dedicate is like a drop of water put into the ocean—as long as the ocean remains, that drop of water is never exhausted. Similarly, when you deposit your positive energy into the bank of enlightenment for the benefit of others, it becomes exhaustless.

Not only that. When you do something positive you might automatically feel proud: “Oh, I did such a good meditation.” Pride is a psychological problem; dedication is the solution. Therefore, it’s very important to dedicate your merit. Otherwise we often generate pride, boasting, “I did this; I did that.” You make a big show of your virtue. Dedicating merit is like putting money in a bank. You bank your money to protect it; dedicating merit protects it in your internal bank.

Q. When you do something good and you know what it’s for, is that dedication?

Lama. No, that’s not dedication. Dedication is the mind that thinks, “I have not done this positive action for my own salvation or pleasure but totally for the benefit of others.”

Q. So you let go of it?

Lama. Yes, you let go; put your energy in one direction. Don’t let it go like an uncontrolled, powerful horse. If I were to talk about merit in detail it would take much time, but briefly, it’s not that easy to dedicate merit properly; you have to bring to mind the emptiness

of three things: yourself, the person dedicating the merit; the merit itself; and the way you dedicate. Dedicating with understanding of the empty nature of these three things is the best way to dedicate, absolutely worthwhile. Dedicating with pure knowledge-wisdom releases all the misconceptions of self-attachment to these three things. This is the *prajnaparamita*—perfection of wisdom—way of dedicating. It's difficult, but, if you can manage, you should do it that way. Otherwise our dedication is mixed with attachment. In Tibetan we call this *ngo-wai kor-sum*—dedicating in the circle of the three.



Q. How does one use the rosary (Skt: *mala*)?

Lama. One thing that a mala is used for is to count mantras. Sometimes we have a certain number of mantras we have to count on a daily basis or in retreat and we use it for that. In some retreats you

have to recite one, two, five or even ten million mantras; each day we bless our mala and use it to count the number of mantras we recite. We also use it to treat certain illnesses. For example, some people are made sick by spirit possession and can be healed by a mala placed on their head, but the person doing this needs long experience and to have received the power of the mantra.

Q. Can we go beyond time, like reincarnate in the past?

Lama. No, that's not possible. Each rebirth is the result of previous karma and takes place in a different environment, so they're never the same. For example, say from the time you were born until now you've lived with the same family in the same London house—you feel as if you and the things around you are the same. But if you check up carefully, from the time you were born, every minute your environment and your experience have been changing; everything is totally different. If we just look at things superficially we have the attitude, "Oh, every morning I drink coffee, I have the same lunch, I have this family, this house...it's all the same." But they're not the same; thinking that they are is a misconception born of superficiality.

If you check your life experiences scientifically you'll see that each one is different. Even from the beginning of this seminar up until now, everything's different: your experiences, your perceptions, your view and your consciousness. Of course, you can say something like, "Last year I was a black woman; perhaps in my next life I'll be a black woman again." Is that sort of superficial thing what you're asking? That can happen but there's no way you can be

exactly the same as you were in a previous life. Is that clear? Perhaps you'd better ask me your question again.

Q. Are you saying that karma goes forward all the time?

Lama. That's right, yes. It's impossible for karma to go backwards. If it were then it would be possible for me to become a five-year-old child in this life.

Q. A lot of people do become children when they get older.

Lama. Come on, dear; that's just street language. We need to talk about this scientifically. When we talk generally we say things like, "Your mind is like a baby's." That doesn't mean the person has become a baby. We're talking about a one-hundred-year-old person's becoming a five-year-old. That's impossible. Can you prove scientifically that it can happen? You can say somebody's *like* a child; that doesn't mean the person's a child.

Q. But things seem to go in a circle.

Lama. Yes, things circle, but the experiences themselves are different. You can't say they're always the same thing. If you check scientifically you'll see that they're different.

Q. Can you say specifically what meditations we should be doing when we first wake up in the morning and right before we go to sleep at night?

Lama. The best meditation to do in the morning is the development of single-pointed concentration; at night you should do

purification. Before you go to sleep, check back on your day: "Since I awoke this morning I've done many things and gone many places." So you check up: "What kind of mind did I have here? What kind of mind did I have there?" Check how many positive minds you had and how many negative. The conclusion you'll probably come to is, "Most of my actions were negative; not so many were positive." So before you go to sleep, do a purification meditation and then go to sleep with a happy, joyful, clean clear mind. That's very useful.

Actually, it's best not to go to sleep with a foggy, uncomfortable mind. If you go to sleep in an agitated condition, you keep generating that energy all night. For example, if you go to sleep angry, anger energy builds up in your mind all night. Therefore, it's much better to make your mind calm and clear before you go to sleep. And if you can actually go to sleep in meditation, your entire sleep energy becomes the everlastingly peaceful path to liberation. So meditating prior to going to sleep is very, very useful. And we also have special methods of meditating while you're asleep called dream yoga that are in the further reaches of the graduated path to liberation, so you can study those later.

That's a wonderfully practical question. When you get up in the morning, instead of thinking in a conflicted, mundane way, "What am I going to do today?" and rushing into the kitchen as your mind immediately goes into your refrigerator, get up slowly and meditate. Relax, make your mind calm and clear, and dedicate yourself to making this day's life meaningful in the highest way instead of living like an animal. That way you're not up and down all day because the powerful determination you generate in the morning keeps you

on track. Even if somebody suddenly hits you, you remain in control. That's possible, through the will power of the mind.

Your mind is incredibly powerful, I tell you. You have to know how. We think external things are so powerful but they're all man-made. Real power actually lies within us. We created all these things; our internal power manifests the external world. If we direct this power inward we can create the inner realization of enlightenment. That's why generating proper motivation in the morning is very important.

Thank you for your questions. Now, one of the students has made small Manjushri lapel buttons, which is very auspicious. Manjushri is the manifestation of knowledge-wisdom, so now I'm going to bless these buttons and offer them to you. I'll also give you the transmission of the Manjushri mantra to facilitate the growth of knowledge-wisdom within you.

[Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche do puja to bless the Manjushri buttons.]

Mantra transmission

Now, if you can, instead of visualizing me, Thubten Yeshe, sitting here with this body of meat and bone, immediately transform it into the radiant red-yellow light body of Manjushri. At my heart is the Divine Wisdom Manjushri mantra. From this mantra a duplicate transcendent mantra manifests and comes from my heart through

my mouth like a rosary. This electric rosary energy goes into your mouth and down to your heart three times: the first time, it comes to your heart; the second time, it sinks into the first mantra; the third time, it again sinks into your heart mantra, making it indestructibly powerful, magnetically powerful to attract enlightened realizations through your developing knowledge-wisdom.

While visualizing all this, repeat the mantra:

OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHIH; OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHIH; OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHIH.

Now let's recite it together:

OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHIH DHIH DHIH DHIH DHIH... (x3)¹³

From your heart, blissful red-yellow radiates all throughout your entire body, energizing great joy.

[Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche chant.]

By receiving the transmission of this mantra you're not making a commitment to recite it daily but you can if you like; doing so would be most worthwhile. It's a specific method for gaining knowledge-wisdom.

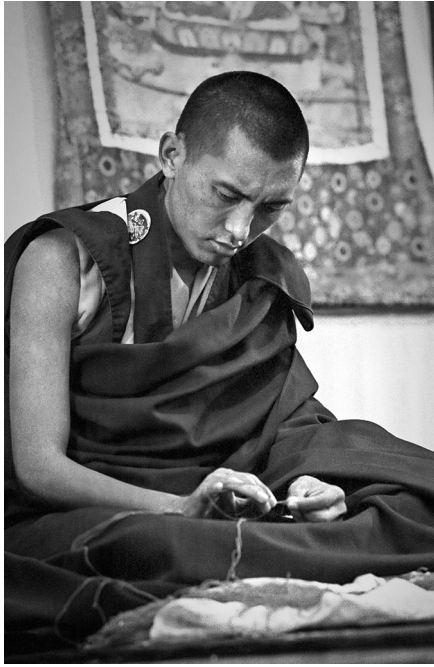
¹³ DHIH is the seed syllable of Manjushri. It is often recited repeatedly, either alone or after a repetition of the mantra OM AH RA PA TSA NA, in order to benefit the speech in the ways Lama mentions below.

For example, in Tibet, if a monk was a bit slow in understanding things he would practice Manjushri in order to gain quick knowledge-wisdom. Also, this mantra is incredible for people who can't talk properly because of trouble with their tongue. After just a month they can talk properly. I'm not joking; this is people's experience. If you recite this mantra before talking or giving a speech the power of your words can be greatly increased. So it is a very good to recite this transcendental mantra. Manjushri is nothing external; Manjushri is all enlightened beings' supreme transcendental knowledge-wisdom transformed into such a red-yellow light body. That's what we call Manjushri—the embodiment of knowledge-wisdom.

Conclusion

And now we've come to the end of this very short seminar. I've enjoyed it very much and have been very happy to meet you beautiful people. I pray that next time we meet we can spend more time together; that would be better. It's been a little rushed this time, so please forgive us for that. However, if you have any questions arise you can write us. These days, the world is very small. Also, if you have questions, you can talk to Chime Rinpoche or Akong Rinpoche, who both live in the UK.

We're also going to offer a protection cord blessed by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to anybody who wants; you can wear it around your neck if you like. It offers psychological protection. It's not that we think there are demons from which you need to be protected.



Also, the Manjushri buttons are worth keeping. They can be very useful in reminding you of the knowledge-wisdom you have gained instead of allowing your mind to be always occupied by mundane thoughts. This kind of image is not merely a material object but a reminder of knowledge-wisdom. It gives you teachings without words. When you look at an image of the Buddha sitting in the meditation posture you feel something, don't you? It automatically gives you some control. That's why we have this kind of art, not because we somehow believe that this is really God or Buddha. It gives off a positive vibration.

Also, when you get back home, check up on how you have decorated the place you live. This can give you a clue as to your psychol-

ogy, what interests your mind, what kind of mind you have. Anyway, what's best is to keep the inside of your house very clean, clear and simple instead of cluttering it with all kinds of garbage. When everything in your house is clean, clear and orderly, your mind becomes simple, clean and clear. Don't keep all kinds of mixed up things, many pictures, crazy stuff around. Look at the art of people who are psychologically disturbed. Everything they draw is so complicated and disordered. So don't make your environment like that; your mind is conditioned—you haven't yet reached beyond conditions.

Art can sometimes be useful. Religious art explains things beyond words. Even shopkeepers understand this kind of psychology, as you can see from their window displays.

I think that's all I can say. Thank you so much for everything. Now we're going to dedicate the merit we've created during this seminar to the benefit of all sentient beings, to lead them into enlightenment, the everlastingly joyful state of consciousness.

Ge wa di yi nyur du dag

Lama sang gyä drub gyur nä

Dro wa chig kyang ma lü pa

De yi sa la gö par shog

Thank you again. Perhaps I'll say one more thing. Sometimes young people take teachings from a lama then go back home and push their ideas onto their parents and friends, agitating them. You shouldn't do that.

The things you've learned here are for your own liberation, not

to push onto other people. We don't believe in pushing our ideas onto people, trying to convert them to Buddhism. That's not right. Don't push your parents or friends; just live naturally. Just put what you've learned into action as much as you can. Don't push your ideas onto others.

If you live the teachings, those close to you will get a good vibration from you, through your actions. Some young people get all excited, "Oh, now I've found something really special," and lay their trip onto others. Don't push that way. Also, don't accost strangers in the street and say, "Come with me, I'll show you the path to liberation." That doesn't work either. Be realistic; be natural. Of course, if somebody approaches you with questions, at that time you can answer to the best of your ability. But if people don't ask, don't push—that's not the characteristic nature of Buddhism. Act as much as possible; that's the way to gain realizations.

So thank you again for everything and we'll see you again soon—in the sky!

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

See page 2 for the list of books previously published by the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive. All of these will enhance your understanding of the teachings in this book. Also, thousands of pages of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's lam-rim teachings and many teachings by Lama Yeshe may be found on line at www.LamaYeshe.com.

GENERAL

- Rabten, Geshe. *The Essential Nectar: Meditations on the Buddhist Path*. Editing and verse translation by Martin Willson. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1984, 1992.
- Yangsi Rinpoche. *Practicing the Path: A commentary on the Lam-rim Chenmo*. Edited by Miranda Adams. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003.
- Yeshe, Lama, and Zopa Rinpoche, Lama. *Wisdom Energy: Basic Buddhist Teachings*. Edited by Jonathan Landaw and Alexander Berzin. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1976, 2000.

DEEPER

- Pabongka Rinpoche. *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand: A Concise Discourse on the Path to Enlightenment*. Edited by Trijang Rinpoche. Translated by Michael Richards. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991, 2006.
- Sopa, Geshe Lhundub, with David Patt. *Steps on the Path to Enlightenment: A Commentary on Tsongkhapa's Lamrim Chenmo: Volumes 1–5*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, 2005, 2008 (Vols. 4 & 5 to come).
- Tsong-kha-pa. *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment: Volumes One, Two & Three*. Translated by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2000, 2002, 2004.
- Yeshe, Lama. *Introduction to Tantra: The Transformation of Desire*. Edited by Jonathan Landaw. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987, 2001.
- Zopa Rinpoche, Lama. *The Heart of the Path: Seeing the Guru as Buddha*. Boston: Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, 2009.

Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

The Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive (LYWA) is the collected works of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. Lama Zopa Rinpoche, its spiritual director, founded the Archive in 1996.

Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche began teaching at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1970. Since then, their teachings have been recorded and transcribed. At present we have well over 10,000 hours of digital audio and some 70,000 pages of raw transcript. Many recordings, mostly teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, remain to be transcribed, and as Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of recordings in the Archive increases accordingly. Most of our transcripts have been neither checked nor edited.

Here at the LYWA we are making every effort to organize the transcription of that which has not yet been transcribed, edit that which has not yet been edited, and generally do the many other tasks detailed below.

The work of the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive falls into two categories: archiving and dissemination.

Archiving requires managing the recordings of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche that have already been collected, collecting recordings of teachings given but not yet sent to the Archive, and collecting recordings of Lama Zopa's on-going teachings, talks, advice and so forth as he travels the world for the benefit of all. Incoming media are then catalogued and stored safely while being kept accessible for further work.

We organize the transcription of audio, add the transcripts to the already existent database of teachings, manage this database, have transcripts checked, and make transcripts available to editors or others doing research on or practicing these teachings.

Other archiving activities include working with video and photographs of the Lamas and digitizing Archive materials.

Dissemination involves making the Lamas' teachings available through various avenues including books for free distribution and sale, lightly edited transcripts, a monthly e-letter (see below), DVDs, articles in Mandala and other magazines and on our website. Irrespective of the medium we choose, the teachings require a significant amount of work to prepare them for distribution.

This is just a summary of what we do. The Archive was established with virtually no seed funding and has developed solely through the kindness of many people, some of whom we have mentioned at the front of this book and most of the others on our website. We sincerely thank them all.

Our further development similarly depends upon the generosity of those who see the benefit and necessity of this work, and we would be extremely grateful for your help. Thus we hereby appeal to you for your kind support. If you would like to make a contribution to help us with any of the above tasks or to sponsor books for free distribution, please contact us:

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LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE MEMBERSHIP

In order to raise the money we need to employ editors to make available the thousands of hours of teachings mentioned above, we have established a membership plan. Membership costs US\$1,000 and its main benefit is that you will be helping make the Lamas' incredible teachings available to a worldwide audience. More direct and tangible benefits to you personally include free Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche books from the ARCHIVE and Wisdom Publications, a year's subscription to *Mandala*, a year of monthly pujas by the monks and nuns at Kopan Monastery with your personal dedication, and access to an exclusive members-only section of our website containing the entire LYWA library of publications in electronic format. Please see www.LamaYeshe.com for more information.

MONTHLY E-LETTER

Each month we send out a free e-letter containing our latest news and a previously unpublished teaching by Lama Yeshe or Lama Zopa Rinpoche. To see over one hundred back-issues or to subscribe with your email address, please go to our website.

THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE MAHAYANA TRADITION

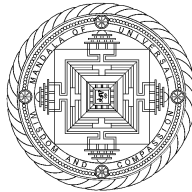
The FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE MAHAYANA TRADITION (FPMT) is an international organization of Buddhist meditation study and retreat centers, both urban and rural, monasteries, publishing houses, healing centers and other related activities founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. At present, there are more than 160 FPMT activities in over thirty countries worldwide.

The FPMT has been established to facilitate the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in general and the Tibetan Gelug tradition, founded in the fifteenth century by the great scholar, yogi and saint, Lama Je Tsongkhapa, in particular.

Every quarter, the Foundation publishes a wonderful news journal, *Mandala*, from its International Office in the United States of America. To subscribe or view back issues, please go to the *Mandala* website, www.mandalamagazine.org, or contact:

FPMT
1632 SE 11th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214
Telephone (503) 808-1588; Fax (503) 808-1589
info@fpmt.org
www.fpmt.org

The FPMT website also offers teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other highly respected teachers in the tradition, details about the FPMT's educational programs, audio through FPMT radio, a link to the excellent FPMT Store, a complete listing of FPMT centers all over the world and in your area, and links to FPMT centers on the web, where you will find details of their programs, and to other interesting Buddhist and Tibetan home pages.



FPMT ONLINE LEARNING CENTER



In 2009, FPMT Education Services launched the FPMT Online Learning Center to make FPMT education programs and materials more accessible to students worldwide. While continuing to expand, the Online Learning Center currently offers the following courses:

- ▶ MEDITATION 101
- ▶ BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL
- ▶ HEART ADVICE FOR DEATH AND DYING
- ▶ DISCOVERING BUDDHISM
- ▶ BASIC PROGRAM
- ▶ LIVING IN THE PATH

LIVING IN THE PATH is particularly unique in that it takes teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and presents them in theme-related modules that include teaching transcripts, video extracts, meditations, mindfulness practices, karma yoga, and questions to assist students in integrating the material. Current modules include: *Motivation for Life, Taking the Essence, What Buddhists Believe, Guru is Buddha, Introduction to Atisha's text, The Happiness of Dharma, Bringing Emptiness to Life, The Secret of the Mind, Diamond Cutter Meditation, and Refuge & Bodhichitta.*

All of our online programs provide audio and/or video teachings of the subjects, guided meditations, readings, and other support materials. Online forums for each program provide students the opportunity to discuss the subject matter and to ask questions of forum elders. Additionally, many retreats led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche are available in full via audio and/or video format.

Education Services is committed to creating a dynamic virtual learning environment and adding more FPMT programming and materials for you to enjoy via the Online Learning Center.

Visit us at: onlinelearning.fpmt.org

OTHER TEACHINGS OF LAMA YESHE AND LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY WISDOM PUBLICATIONS

Wisdom Energy, by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Introduction to Tantra, by Lama Yeshe

Transforming Problems, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The Door to Satisfaction, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Becoming Vajrasattva: The Tantric Path of Purification, by Lama Yeshe

The Bliss of Inner Fire, by Lama Yeshe

Becoming the Compassion Buddha, by Lama Yeshe

Ultimate Healing, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Dear Lama Zopa, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

How to Be Happy, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

About Lama Yeshe:

Reincarnation: The Boy Lama, by Vicki Mackenzie

About Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

The Lawudo Lama, by Jamyang Wangmo

You can get more information about and order the above titles at www.wisdompubs.org or call toll free in the USA on 1-800-272-4050.

TRANSCRIPTS, PRACTICES AND OTHER MATERIALS

See the LYWA and FPMT websites for transcripts of teachings by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other practices written or compiled by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

DVDs OF LAMA YESHE

We are in the process of converting our VHS videos of Lama Yeshe's teachings to DVD. *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*, *Introduction to Tantra*, *Offering Tsok to Heruka Vajrasattva*, *Anxiety in the Nuclear Age*, *Bringing Dharma to the West* and *Lama Yeshe at Disneyland* are currently available. More coming all the time—see our website for details.

DVDs OF LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

There are many available: see the Store on the FPMT website for more information.

WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA TEACHINGS

The Buddhadharma is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like this show you how to put the teachings into practice and integrate them into your life, whereby you get the happiness you seek. Therefore, anything containing Dharma teachings, the names of your teachers or holy images is more precious than other material objects and should be treated with respect. To avoid creating the karma of not meeting the Dharma again in future lives, please do not put books (or other holy objects) on the floor or underneath other stuff, step over or sit upon them, or use them for mundane purposes such as propping up wobbly tables. They should be kept in a clean, high place, separate from worldly writings, and wrapped in cloth when being carried around. These are but a few considerations.

Should you need to get rid of Dharma materials, they should not be thrown in the rubbish but burned in a special way. Briefly: do not incinerate such materials with other trash, but alone, and as they burn, recite the mantra OM AH HUM. As the smoke rises, visualize that it pervades all of space, carrying the essence of the Dharma to all sentient beings in the six saṃsāric realms, purifying their minds, alleviating their suffering, and bringing them all happiness, up to and including enlightenment. Some people might find this practice a bit unusual, but it is given according to tradition. Thank you very much.

DEDICATION

Through the merit created by preparing, reading, thinking about and sharing this book with others, may all teachers of the Dharma live long and healthy lives, may the Dharma spread throughout the infinite reaches of space, and may all sentient beings quickly attain enlightenment.

In whichever realm, country, area or place this book may be, may there be no war, drought, famine, disease, injury, disharmony or unhappiness, may there be only great prosperity, may everything needed be easily obtained, and may all be guided by only perfectly qualified Dharma teachers, enjoy the happiness of Dharma, have love and compassion for all sentient beings, and only benefit and never harm each other.

LAMA THUBTEN YESHE was born in Tibet in 1935. At the age of six, he entered the great Sera Monastic University, Lhasa, where he studied until 1959, when the Chinese invasion of Tibet forced him into exile in India. Lama Yeshe continued to study and meditate in India until 1967, when, with his chief disciple, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, he went to Nepal. Two years later he established Kopan Monastery, near Kathmandu, in order to teach Buddhism to Westerners. In 1974, the Lamas began making annual teaching tours to the West, and as a result of these travels a worldwide network of Buddhist teaching and meditation centers—the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT)—began to develop. In 1984, after an intense decade of imparting a wide variety of incredible teachings and establishing one FPMT activity after another, at the age of forty-nine, Lama Yeshe passed away. He was reborn as Ösel Hita Torres in Spain in 1985 and recognized as the incarnation of Lama Yeshe by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1986. Lama's remarkable story is told in Vicki Mackenzie's book, *Reincarnation: The Boy Lama* (Wisdom Publications, 1996) and Adele Hulse's official biography, *Big Love*, (forthcoming from LYWA).

LAMA THUBTEN ZOPA RINPOCHE was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, who had lived nearby at Lawudo, within sight of Rinpoche's Thami home. Rinpoche's own description of his early years may be found in his book, *The Door to Satisfaction*. At the age of ten, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri, until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to forsake Tibet for the safety of Bhutan. Rinpoche then went to the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave the first of his famous annual lam-rim retreat courses, which continue at Kopan to this day. In 1974, with Lama Yeshe, Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach and establish centers of Dharma. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Rinpoche took over as spiritual head of the FPMT, which has continued to flourish under his peerless leadership. More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found in *The Lawudo Lama* and on the LYWA and FPMT websites. In addition to many LYWA and FPMT books, Rinpoche's other published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Dear Lama Zopa*, *How to Be Happy* and many transcripts and practice booklets.

DR. NICHOLAS RIBUSH, MB, BS, is a graduate of Melbourne University Medical School (1964) who first encountered Buddhism at Kopan Monastery, Nepal, in 1972. Since then he has been a student of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and a full time worker for their international organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). He was a monk from 1974 to 1986. He established FPMT archiving and publishing activities at Kopan in 1973 and with Lama Yeshe founded Wisdom Publications in 1975. Between 1981 and 1996 he served variously as Wisdom's director, editorial director and director of development. Over the years he has edited and published many teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and many other teachers and established and/or directed several other FPMT activities, including the International Mahayana Institute, Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre, the Enlightened Experience Celebration, Mahayana Publications, and now Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies and the LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE. He was a member of the FPMT board of directors from its inception in 1983 until 2002.