

Saturday, April 24

WEEKEND TEACHING

Good evening, or good night! [It's almost 9:00 p.m.] Tonight we'll do the teachings in our dreams! A dream teaching in a dream retreat!

EMPTINESS

Somebody who has realized emptiness...this might sound as if I have realized emptiness, but I am not saying that. A few years ago, one of the times when Lama Ösel was at Kopan Monastery, he came into my room, lay on the bed, kind of rolling around, playing, and said, "If I tell people that I'm not enlightened, they will think I am, and that's not correct, but if I tell them that I am enlightened, that wouldn't be correct either." I thought Lama Ösel's thinking was very smart!

Anyway, an unenlightened sentient being who has realized emptiness still has the appearance of inherent existence but has no belief, no apprehension, that it is true. The understanding or recognition that the meditator has is that what is appearing to his or her view is false. The awareness is that this is a hallucination. Those who, like myself, haven't trained their minds, have not realized how things are empty, haven't developed the wisdom realizing emptiness, are unable to see sense objects—subject, I, action and object—as a dream or an illusion. Instead, such people totally believe sense objects to be real; they totally believe that everything they see is real. Not only do they live in the world of hallucination, in the world of their own hallucinated minds, but on top of that, they believe that world to be real. Not only do they have the hallucinated appearance but they also have complete belief that it is true. This becomes the basis upon which all emotional thoughts arise.

Those who haven't actualized emptiness, have not developed their minds to see things as a dream, as an illusion, who do not meditate on or practice awareness of the illusion that they have, who do not recognizing

it as an illusion or meditate on the emptiness of the subject, I, action, object and all other sense objects, all of which appears to them as not merely labeled by the mind...here, when I use the words “not merely labeled by the mind” to introduce the object to be refuted instead of saying “inherently existent,” when I try to present it by saying “appearing not merely labeled by the mind,” I am trying to express the extremely subtle object to be refuted according to the highest division of the fourth of the four schools of Buddhist philosophy, the Prasangika Madhyamaka.

I don’t remember all the Sanskrit names, but in Tibetan, the first of the four schools is *Che-tra-mra-wa* [Vaibashika]; the second, *Do-de-pa* [Sautrantika]; the third, *Sem-tsam-pa*, the mind only school [Cittamatra]; and the fourth, Madhyamaka [*U-ma-pa*], which has two divisions, Svatantrika [*Rang-gyü-pa*] and Prasangika [*Thäl-gyur-wa*].

Therefore, I say “that which appears not merely labeled by the mind” to express that *extremely* subtle object to be refuted according to the Prasangika school’s view. By realizing that *extremely* subtle one is empty, by realizing, recognizing, that it is a hallucination, that it is false, that it doesn’t exist, that it is totally empty, *only then*, only when that happens, do you realize emptiness, the unmistakable emptiness that Guru Shakyamuni Buddha realized, the wisdom that liberated him from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and their cause, delusion and karma, and enabled him to liberate numberless other beings; the wisdom that Nagarjuna, Lama Tsong Khapa, Milarepa and many others realized as well. If you read Milarepa’s life story you will find a section that talks about the two truths, and you can understand from that. There’s a short paragraph that talks about the two truths. Actually, I’m not sure which of the two Milarepa texts it is, his hundred thousand songs or his life story; but whichever it is, his presentation is *exactly* the same as Lama Tsong Khapa’s.

After you go through the object to be refuted, the object of ignorance, the root of samsara, according to the view of each of the four schools of Buddhist philosophy, if you omit the extremely subtle one explained by the second of the Madhyamaka schools, the Prasangika, then even if you have realized emptiness according to the point of view of the previous schools, you still can’t cut the root of samsara. It can *help* to eventually cut the root of samsara, but it doesn’t actually *directly* cut the root of samsara. That very particular root of samsara, that very particular ignorance, can be cut only by realizing the extremely subtle

Prasangika view, the extremely subtle object to be refuted, the hallucination that appears as not merely labeled by mind—not just “not labeled by the mind” but “not *merely* labeled by the mind.” That one.

The way things appear to exist to us is as slightly more than what is merely labeled by mind. Therefore, as I was going to say before, twenty-four hours a day, those of us who haven’t realized emptiness allow our hallucinating mind to believe that all these appearances, which appear as not merely labeled by the mind, are real, not false; are the truth. The appearances are false but we believe them to be true. Twenty-four hours a day, we let our mind make everything concrete, inherently existent; we constantly let our mind turn all these appearances, all these phenomena, into something concrete, inherently existent. Like this, constantly, twenty-four hours a day, we are creating ignorance, the root of samsara. In this way, twenty-four hours a day, we are making our mind become the root of samsara, ignorance, by letting it hold, apprehend, that the way things appear, as not merely labeled by mind, is true. Constantly we are making our mind the root of samsara, developing that particular ignorance that is the root of all the other delusions, disturbing obscuring thoughts, and karma, and all the sufferings of samsara.

Is the subject, I, action, object—all phenomena—appearing to us as not merely labeled by the mind in the mind or outside?

Student: Together.

Rinpoche: Made from LMB! Together; made from LMB!

Student: Made from space.

Rinpoche: Things appearing as not merely labeled by mind, does that exist outside or inside? Does it exist outside the mind or in the mind?

Answer: Not separate from the mind.

Rinpoche: Not separate from mind. I see. So it’s one with the mind? It’s one with the mind? So it’s mind? It’s mind? So if it is mind, then it has to be either the fifty-one mental factors or the consciousness. The appearance to the mind has to be one of those—consciousness or the fifty-one mental factors—what does Neil think?

[Ven. Neil doesn’t answer.]

Rinpoche: Mahakala? [Referring to Ven. Michel.] It's outside or in the mind? I, action, object, things appearing not merely labeled by mind—anyway, the inherently existent appearance—is it in the mind or outside the mind?

Ven. Michel: In the mind.

Rinpoche: In the mind. Bertrand?

Ven. Bertrand: It looks to be in the mind, even if it's a hallucination.

Rinpoche: It looks to be in the mind?

Ven. Bertrand: Dependent on the mind...

Rinpoche: Dépendant on the mind. Marcel?

Ven. Marcel: Created by mind.

Rinpoche: But is it outside or inside?

Ven. Marcel: Inside...

Ven. Michel: It appears to be outside...

Rinpoche: So...is hell outside or in the mind?

Student: It appears to be outside but it's inseparable from the mind.

Rinpoche: It is inseparable from the mind but it is not in the mind? It is inseparable but it is not in the mind. It is neither outside nor inside? Is hell neither outside nor inside?

Ven. Michel: [Inaudible.]

Rinpoche: So it doesn't exist? So hell doesn't exist?

Ven. Michel: It is only a point of view that you see things separate, inside and outside. There is always duality, seeing outside and inside. When we don't see, when we see a subject and object we see inside and outside, in the way there is a dualistic view, so we bring inside and outside, it doesn't exist on its own side, but we...

Rinpoche: So nothing exists inside or outside?

Ven. Michel: In its own way, in the way that it appears as being inside and outside, not. If we, I mean, the way we designate, we could say it's a

convention, conventionally could be inside and outside, just merely to designate...

Rinpoche: So conventionally, is it outside or inside?

Ven. Michel: [Inaudible.]

Rinpoche: So does hell exist outside the mind or inside the mind?

Ven. Michel: Inside the mind.

Rinpoche: Hell is in the mind?

Ven. Michel: Yes, either outside, if we are not in hell...

Rinpoche: I think that feels better! When you are not a hell being it is outside, but when you are born in hell, it is in the mind! That makes it feel much better! So, when you have diarrhea, is that in your mind or outside!

Nick: On your legs.

Rinpoche: Your having diarrhea, is that in the mind or outside?

Ven. Michel: Both...

Rinpoche: Both?

Ven. Michel: [Inaudible.]

Rinpoche: I think he could be a good political leader! Maybe he should become president of France! So, when you experience hell, that is in the mind, but when you have diarrhea, that can be also outside! Because you can see that very clearly, so it *has* to be a little bit outside more than just in the mind—because we can't see hell very clearly at the moment but we can see the diarrhea much more clearly, we have more feeling of the diarrhea. I'm joking! When you have pain in your toes, is that in the mind? Is that in the mind or outside? When you have pain in the toes?

Answer: In the mind

Rinpoche: So your toes are in the mind, your leg is in the mind?

Answer: You feel...

Rinpoche: No, your leg is in your mind?

Answer: You feel through the mind..

Rinpoche: Your leg exists in your mind?

Ven. Michel: It exists also in some way...

Rinpoche: Some part outside!

Ven. Michel: [Inaudible.]

Rinpoche: What?

Ven. Michel: The difference between Madhyamaka Prasangika and Cittamatra—the mind only view would be only in the mind.

Rinpoche: Only in the mind?

Ven. Michel: The Prasangika view would be...

Rinpoche: ...half and half! So why in the Prasangika's view...did you say some part of the leg is in the mind?

Ven. Michel: The pain...

Rinpoche: Some part of the leg is in the mind? Half the leg is in the mind? That sounds like birth, a baby coming from the mother's womb—half inside, half outside!

Ven. Michel: The solid aspect is outside; the feeling is in the mind.

Rinpoche: [Just laughs!]

Ven. Kunsang: [Not clear.]...pain is the thought...from the side of the toes there's no pain. It is only flesh and bone; there is no pain from the side of the toes. The pain is coming from the mind. From the side of the toes it's only flesh and bone, so there is no pain from the side of the toes. The toes don't say, "I have pain, I have pain."

Brian Flynn: On the conventional level it exists half and half. There's an object on the outside and then there's a mental projection. But ultimately it all comes from the mind. Karma is created in the past...our whole universe...

Rinpoche: So you mean there is a leg there, a leg exists there, and there's

an additional leg projected from the mind? There are two legs; a leg on a leg! What did you say...from the side of the leg there is no pain?

Ven. Kunsang: Yes.

Rinpoche: Why from the side of the leg is there no pain?

Ven. Kunsang: Because it is only flesh and bone, and I don't think flesh and bone have pain.

Rinpoche: Flesh and bone; when you have pain in your toes, in your leg, at that time is your leg not in the nature of pain? At that time, is your leg not in the nature of suffering, pain?

Ven. Kunsang: From the side of the leg there is no pain. From my mind, I would label pain; the pain is here. Sometimes they say that when carpenters cut their finger they don't feel pain until they realize that they have cut it.

Rinpoche: ...if they don't see that their finger is cut...?

Ven. Kunsang: ...they don't feel pain. But when they see it, then they realize, then the pain comes. So pain comes from the mind.

Rinpoche: Does a higher bodhisattva whose limb has been cut have pain?

Ven. Kunsang: They say there is no pain.

Rinpoche: But he can see his limb has been cut. You said that if you see it's cut, you have pain. But here is somebody who sees it is cut but doesn't experience pain.

Ven. Kunsang: Because at that point you are liberated from grasping at self. At that time, those arya bodhisattvas have direct perception of emptiness; they are free from grasping at the self.

Rinpoche: They are free from what?

Ven. Kunsang: They are free from grasping at the self. [Inaudible.] Therefore there is no pain—because there is no grasping at the self.

Rinpoche: Grasping at what?

Ven. Kunsang: Self-existing inherently...

Ven. Chantal: Self.

Rinpoche: There is no grasping at what?

Ven. Chantal: Self.

Ven. Kunsang: Towards the finger, “This is my arm,” or the self, existing by itself.

Rinpoche: It is mentioned in the *Lam-rim chen-mo*—I don’t remember which page, but last year, when we were taking teachings from Geshe Sopa Rinpoche on the great insight, it mentioned—that even arya beings have grasping at inherently existent appearances, but it didn’t explain what kind. I asked Geshe Sopa Rinpoche if it was the very subtle one. I thought it impossible that having had direct perception, great insight, that they would have the normal thought grasping at inherently existent appearances. Therefore, perhaps it was the extremely subtle one. It was not clarified there, simply mentioned. Different authors may explain the teachings differently; but that’s what the *Lam-rim chen-mo* mentioned.

Anyway, the conclusion is that you may have felt better when you talked about hell, but afterwards, when it came to diarrhea, it was not so pleasant and became more concrete! I’m joking.

A very good meditation for practicing mindfulness in daily life is to think how the subject, your own I, and objects, for example, other people, appear to you as not merely labeled by mind. Everything appears to you as not merely labeled by mind. The bright lights in this gompa, all the pictures, appear as something not merely labeled by mind. The pillars, the roof beams, everything appears to be not merely labeled by mind, appears like that, as something real, there. However, all these six sense objects that appear to be real, that appear as something real, from there, something real from there, outside, as if a real object is there, outside—all these are not outside; are not there, are not outside but are just concepts. Not there; just concepts.

Therefore, it could be said that they’re in the mind. Another way of saying it is that they’re just in the mind. If you don’t close your eyes, if you look at what appears to your sense of eye—or to your sense of ear, sense of nose, sense of tongue, all sense objects—it all appears as something real, outside. But actually, it is not there. It’s mere concept; it’s just in the mind.

For example, while we are sitting here, we can meditate that all these

things that appear around us are not really there—they are just in the mind. That blue light there, for instance, that real blue light that is not merely labeled by the mind is merely my concept, it's just in my mind. It is not there. So, subject, object, everything that appears as not merely labeled by mind is just my concept, merely in the mind.

It is a very good meditation, a very powerful meditation, to just keep your mind in that state, to practice mindfulness like that. You see it like this and meditate, practice mindfulness, in that way. Or, while you are walking, meditate that the inherently existent road, the real road that is not merely labeled by your mind, or the real sky that is not merely labeled by your mind, or the real redwoods, those very tall trees, the whole thing, cars, houses, whatever appears to you as not merely labeled by your mind—all these things are just mere concept. This means, another way of expressing it is, that they are all simply in your mind—not there. While you are walking, if you can walk with this continual awareness, it is very good, very powerful.

This is a very good meditation, but I am asking whether the conventional truth is also in the mind or not. Is the friend outside or in the mind?

Student: In the mind.

Rinpoche: In the mind. I see. And the enemy?

Ven. Michel: The base is outside. The way we designate it is inside.

Rinpoche: So the base is not designated by the mind? The base is inherently existent but the label is not inherently existent.

Ven. Michel: There is a base, but we cannot...I mean, there is not really a name for the base.

Rinpoche: There is no name for the base?

Ven. Michel: I mean, friend, enemy or stranger, there is a base but not really in the way we think, something on its own...

Rinpoche: There is a base from its own side?

Ven. Michel: No. There is a base, but not on its own side. After we label that enemy, friend or stranger, we put the label on, like, it would be on its own side, but it is not, because we could have, we have choice.

Rinpoche: Oh, I see. So you are saying it is labeled from its own side? What?

Ven. Michel: No, it's not, because we have a choice to label it differently. That's because it's not, it proves why it's not on its own side.

Rinpoche: Oh! That's *great!* This time he answered like Nagarjuna! That's right. So friend, enemy is in the mind? Friend, enemy is in the mind?

Ven. Michel: Yes.

Brian: Isn't it both? As soon as I designate it in my mind, it appears outside: "I'm going to visit with my friend, he's over there."

Rinpoche: So if it appears outside, it is outside?

Brian: It appears outside, but it is inseparable from the mind. But in the mind nothing exists by itself, because the mind...

Rinpoche: So that means if anything appears outside, it exists outside? Does it mean that?

Brian: It's not, it's not completely inside the mind, either, is it?

Rinpoche: What you are saying means if things appear outside to your mind, then they exist outside.

Brian: Not truly, it doesn't truly exist outside the mind, it only appears that way. It appears to exist outside the mind.

Rinpoche: I see. It appears to exist outside the mind, but it doesn't exist outside the mind?

Brian: But it's inseparable from mind.

Rinpoche: So it's mind?

Brian: It's not entirely...

Rinpoche: So it's mind?

Brian: It's not entirely inside the mind.

Rinpoche: It's inseparable from my mind?

Brian: The mind doesn't truly exist either; the mind is also empty.

Rinpoche: What do you understand by inseparable?

Brian: We can't take, you can't take Lama Zopa away from the mind. There is no Lama Zopa outside the mind.

Rinpoche: Are your clothes and yourself separable or inseparable?

Brian: My clothes? I can take my clothes off, and then I will be in a naked state.

Rinpoche: So now, are you and your clothes separable or inseparable?

Brian: Me and my clothes are inseparable, but still I can take them off.

Rinpoche: I see! Your clothes and you are not separate now, as long as your clothes and you are not separated.

Brian: Just like you cannot take me outside of the universe. We are inseparable. There is no Brian that exists outside the planet earth.

Rinpoche: What is the opposite of separation, what is the opposite of separate?

Brian: Opposite of separate? Unification.

Rinpoche: So you and your clothes are oneness?

Brian: Yes.

Rinpoche: You and your clothes are oneness? You and your clothes are unified?

Brian: We are inseparable, inseparability.

Rinpoche: Are you and the kaka in your stomach inseparable?

Brian: Yes. Me and my kaka, we're like this [Brian clasps hands].

Rinpoche: Just one more question, since you have put in so much effort. Are you and the kaka in your stomach unified?

Brian: Me and my kaka, my kaka and I...

Rinpoche: If that's the case, you become kaka, because you are unified with kaka. You become kaka.

Anyway, what I was saying before, in the case of enemy or friend, these labels are based on a perception of inherent existence, on the concept, or belief, of a real enemy or a real friend. Therefore, you can also think that it's not there, it's in the mind, you can meditate, practice awareness, that it is not outside. This is very useful.

Now, going back to what I was saying before, it is very effective, if you can practice this awareness when you are in danger of engaging in negative karma, creating the cause of samsara, particularly the cause of the lower realms.

The way that attachment arises, first there is the foundation of that very huge hallucination, the appearance of inherent existence. By seeing the base to be labeled "body"—the base that also came from your own mind—your mind makes up the label "body." The label "body" is merely imputed by your mind. You create the concept of "body" and, believing in that, due to negative imprints left on your mind, your mental continuum, by past ignorance, the concept of inherent existence, your mind projects the hallucination that there is a body on that base.

Whether you project an ugly body or a beautiful body, it's the same thing. It is merely imputed by your mind. Due to your own concepts, your own reasons—"this is good," "this is bad," "this is beautiful," "this is ugly"—your mind projects that there's a real ugly body or a real beautiful body on that base. Perhaps what you regard as beautiful in the West, a slim body, is regarded as ugly in the East. Or in some countries, where goiters are rare, someone with a goiter is regarded as ugly, whereas in places where many people have goiters, someone who doesn't have one is thought to be ugly. Or in the West, someone with big muscles is considered to be beautiful, whereas in the East, in Tibet, that person would be regarded as ugly. Therefore, due to your individual interpretation of what is beautiful and ugly or your society's beliefs that you have grown up with, you project an ugly or beautiful body there.

However, there's the projection of inherent existence. After your mind merely imputes, makes up the label, there's the hallucination that there's something real there on the base. That's the biggest hallucination. That is the foundation. Then, on top of that false appearance comes the belief that the beautiful body projected there is true. Ignorance apprehends that it is true, and due to that, attachment arises, grasping at,

clinging to, that object. The mind arises believing that that object is worth clinging to and the nature that mind of attachment is such that you find it very painful and difficult to separate from that object that is so worthy of clinging to.

Therefore you can say that all of this—the object of ignorance, the object of attachment—is in the mind. None of what is projected is there. It is all based on hallucination. What you're clinging to is a hallucination on top of a hallucination. Different hallucinating thoughts arise in relation to this object.

It is similar with anger in that it, too, arises on the basis of this same foundation of the biggest hallucination, the appearance of inherent existence. An inherently existent object is projected on the base and then your mind interprets its function, what it does to you. If you interpret the actions of another person's body, speech or mind as being harmful to you, you get angry. Anger, the thought wishing to give harm, arises. You dislike that object and the thought of harming it arises. Your whole manner changes. Nothing pleasant manifests in your behavior. Your speech and body language are the opposite of what would make the other person happy; the way you think about the other person, the way you look at him, the way you speak—everything is unpleasant. Even if normally you're quite a nice person, anger changes all that. Even if you're adorned with beautiful ornaments and attractively made up, even if you have a lovely body, when you're angry, everything about you becomes unpleasant. Your anger destroys it all. Your beautiful form becomes kind of terrifying.

The conclusion, of course, is that it is all nonsense. If you analyze the way your mind has created all this, you can see for yourself it's nonsense. The object to which you are attached is just your own mental projection. The person at whom you're angry is your own mental projection. It is all based on this big hallucination, the inherently existent object that doesn't exist at all, that is totally empty. Through this analysis, you can see that there is no value in these projections, that the whole thing is totally nonsensical. If you compare the object that you grasp at as beautiful to another that is more beautiful, the first appears ugly, and when you compare the second beautiful object to one that is even more beautiful, the second then appears ugly. What Venerable Michel said is correct—this proves that they don't exist from their own side.

I have brought up this topic of mental fabrications, one on top of the

other, so that you can see how we make our samsara endless, how we continually bind ourselves to samsara, and to show how actualizing the lam-rim path, realizing the lam-rim meditations, especially—of the three principal paths—the meditation on emptiness is extremely important as the means of liberating yourself from the prison of samsara.

So, going back to what I was talking about at the beginning, someone who has realized emptiness, whose mind is well trained in that, sees things as an illusion, like a dream. Sometimes, people like us are able to recognize a dream as a dream; occasionally, we can recognize a dream as a dream. Some people can probably do it any time, every night—whenever they dream they can recognize their dream as a dream. This probably has something to do with practice. They might have trained their mind in tantric practice in past lives, for example.

When you recognize a dream as a dream, whatever happens in that dream doesn't affect your mind. Whether it's separation from a friend, a relationship problem, if you have the awareness that this is just a dream, whatever happens in it doesn't affect you. What other people do to you—praise, criticize—doesn't affect your mind, doesn't make your mind go up and down. You know it's just a dream. Relationship problems, business difficulties, gain or loss, lost friends or lost wealth, failed business, family members died—whatever happens in the dream doesn't affect your mind because you are aware, you understand, that this is just a dream; all that is happening is not true.

A person who has a deep understanding that there is no I has a similar experience while awake, when not sleeping, not dreaming. Whatever is happening around that person who has a very deep understanding that there's no I—and when I use this term “no I,” I am not using it in the nihilistic sense—even though there may be the appearance of inherent existence—because the person is still a sentient being and the only sentient beings who don't have this appearance are high arya beings in equipoise meditation—because of that very deep understanding that there is no I, it all appears as if it were a dream. Even though the person is not sleeping.

As far as these things affecting the person's mind—not just the subject, I, but also sense objects, gain, loss, relationship problems, meeting, separation, whatever is going on—there's a huge difference in the way

the person reacts compared to others who don't have that deep understanding. Even though there's the appearance of all these things really happening, the person has one hundred percent understanding that no such things exist, including the I. So, even though it's daytime, in the view of that person it all looks like a dream. These things are happening—gain, loss, whatever—but because of the person's strong intensive understanding that there's no I, no objects, none of these actions—there's no affect to the mind and the person recognizes it all as a dream.

His Holiness Dalai Lama was once interviewed on television by Larry King. Larry asked His Holiness, "Do you have anger, attachment?" His Holiness replied that although on the surface of his mind there might be some activity, like waves on the ocean, deep down in his mind, nothing happens. I guess Larry was referring to issues about Tibet and so forth, so I think His Holiness meant thoughts come and go like waves, but inside, there's no disturbance. I think that kind of experience is based on seeing that everything is like an illusion, like a dream—seeing everything is empty.

I'm not saying that this is His Holiness's only realization but that what His Holiness described is based on his realization of emptiness. It doesn't mean there's no compassion for other beings. It doesn't mean that. It's just that when people criticize or are against His Holiness, at such times, nothing happens; it doesn't disturb his mind.

I think the life of the person who has that realization must become very interesting. When other people talk very excitedly about this and that, because of the person's very intensive understanding of emptiness, the understanding that things are empty, he or she gets the feeling that they are talking about something that doesn't exist, something that is not real.

For us, however, the extra thing is that, on top of the hallucinated appearance, we believe that everything is real, everything is true; we make everything solid. That then becomes the main issue, the basic, fundamental problem; the fundamental problem of our life. Not only does our mind project the hallucination, but we also believe it to be real. In this way, we make our mind weak and the object becomes a more powerful influence to our mind, the object overpowers our mind. The other way, the mind becomes more powerful, but our way, believing our projection to be real, whatever happens in life—praise, criticism, separation, meeting, relationship problems, gain, loss—becomes overwhelming,

overpowers our mind, overpowers our life. Our mind is too sensitive. The other way, our mind overwhelms the object and nothing can bother our mind.

Anyway, this is just talking blah, blah, blah.... Actually, I meant to continue from where I left off the other day, I meant to continue that subject. That was the idea, but because I mentioned doing the teachings in our dreams, the rest just happened! So anyway, whatever it is, it's finished! I'll stop there.

DEDICATION

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may bodhicitta—cherishing others, letting go of oneself, letting go of the I—which is the source of all the happiness and success of me and all other sentient beings, be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay. May that which has already been generated increase.

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

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may I be able to offer infinite benefit like the sky to all sentient beings like Lama Tsong Khapa did by having within me the same qualities that Lama Tsong Khapa had, from now on, in all my future lifetimes.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, which are totally non-existent from their own side, may the I, which is also totally non-existent from its own side, achieve Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which is also totally non-existent from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are totally non-existent from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is totally non-existent from its own side, by myself alone, who is also totally non-existent from its own side.”

Finally, dedicate to actualize Lama Tsong Khapa's complete teaching

within your own mind and for it to spread in the minds of all the sentient beings and to flourish forever.

Good night. Next session? [It's after 11:00 p.m.]

Sunday, April 25

WEEKEND TEACHING

Tonight I will continue where I left off. . .

Think, “No matter what, I must achieve full enlightenment in order to liberate the numberless sentient beings, who are the source of all my past, present and future happiness, from the vast oceans of samsaric suffering, and bring them to full enlightenment. Therefore, I am going to listen to the holy Dharma.”

Please listen to the teachings well by generating at least this abbreviated bodhicitta motivation as well as the proper conduct for listening to teachings according to the traditional practices of the lineage lamas.

[Rinpoche looks through his book...] I hope I can find it this time!

This section describes in particular the hell realm suffering results of each of the ten non-virtuous actions. We have already done the hell sufferings of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. Today, we’ll look at the results of telling lies.

REBIRTH INTO THE HOT HELLS

Those who have read *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* and other lam-rim teachings will remember that at the time of death, there’s a process through which you reincarnate in the hell realm. [p. 365 ff.]. Here it mainly mentions the process of being reborn in the lower realms from just before the time of death.

At the time of death, the person who is going to be born in the hot hell realm feels very cold. That’s not due to the climate or any other external factors—it’s not that generally the country is very cold or that the person doesn’t have enough to wear or enough bedding. It’s not a question of that. Of course, even those things are determined by karma,

but here, the specific thing is that no matter how many blankets the person is covered with, it doesn't help. Due to karma, the person feels extremely cold. Due to heavy karma, the person craves strongly for heat and then dies with that craving. Like falling asleep, dreaming and then waking up, similarly, the person dies with that strong craving for heat and then goes to the intermediate stage—like dreaming after falling asleep. Then, after the intermediate state, due to past karma, suddenly a vision, a karmic appearance—an appearance of impure karma, an appearance of the impure mind, the disturbing, obscuring thought—manifests. Suddenly you find yourself in a world in which the whole ground is made of iron that is oneness with fire, depending on which of the different hot hells you are reborn into.

As explained here, those appearances, which are the product of your own impure mind, manifest, including the karmic guardians, who torture you. Whenever I see those big earth-moving machines, it always reminds me of the hell realm. Of course, in our world there's electricity, gasoline and a person who drives the machine, but in the hell realms, everything works by your karma. Like an earth-moving machine driver, your karma makes mountains move and crush you. In the hell realms, it's your karma, your mind, that does all these things.

THE NEIGHBORING [SURROUNDING] HELLS

There are eight major hot hells and each one has four neighboring hells (sometimes six neighboring hells are enumerated). After you have finished experiencing one of the eight major hot hell sufferings—for example, the first one, the Hell of Continual Resurrection—after that unbelievable length of time, you then have to be born in those neighboring hell realms.

There are four of these [*Liberation*, pp. 373–74]. One of them is the Plain of Swords. The whole ground is completely covered with swords. There is nowhere you can step without cutting your feet. Each time you put your foot down it gets cut and each time you lift it up it recovers. But then you have to step down again and it gets cut once more. This goes on for inconceivable lengths of time.

Finally, when that karma has finished, you have to experience another neighboring hell, the Forest of Trees with Leaves Like Swords, which cut

your body to pieces.

Then you have to experience the Putrid Swamp, which is like being in a septic tank, drowning in sewage filled with worms. It's extremely filthy, dirty, and you drown in that for incredible, inconceivable lengths of time. Not only that, but the worms have very long, needle-like beaks like a humming bird's with which they pierce your body and eat your flesh. You have to suffer like that for inconceivable lengths of time.

The next one you have to experience is called the Uncrossable Torrent, which is filled with liquid that is oneness with fire and unbelievably hot. Being here is like drowning in mud that is oneness with fire. When an earthly volcano erupts, liquid fire comes out; liquid that is oneness with fire runs down the mountain. I usually say that that's a good example of this neighboring hell realm. In Tibetan it's called *chu-lung rab-me*. It's unbelievably, extremely hot; oneness with fire. The closest example of that is lava that comes from an erupting volcano, which comes down and melts even rocks, which normally other fires can't melt. But this fire, the liquid lava oneness with fire, can melt rocks. I thought it was very interesting that this is similar to what's described in the hell realm, except the one in the hell realm would be unbelievably more hot than the lava of our human world.

Then you come to a tree where you have the vision that your loved ones are at the top of the tree, calling you. You try to go to them, but as you climb up the tree, the branches, which are like swords pointing downwards, cut your body to shreds. Also, karmic copper dogs come and tear at your feet, legs and so forth and birds like eagles, which are also your karmic appearance, pluck out your eye balls with their beaks. While you are climbing up, these terrifying things happen. Then, when you finally reach the top, you again hear your beloved calling you, but now from the bottom of the tree. When you try to climb down to them, the sword-like branches reverse direction, turning upwards, and again cut your body to shreds. In this way you again have to suffer greatly.

There is nobody there making the branches of the trees go up and down. All these things happen due to your karma. Your karma and your delusions do all these things to you, produce all these terrifying appearances that cause you to suffer so much. It's your karmic appearance, the appearance of your delusions, your disturbing, obscuring thoughts.

FOUR THINGS THAT DETERMINE KARMIC WEIGHT

In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says that if you commit any of the ten non-virtuous actions strongly, you will be reborn in hell [p. 452]. Heavy non-virtuous actions result in rebirth in hell. For example, if you insult somebody with very heavy anger, with strong anger, that's a heavy non-virtuous action and causes you to be reborn in the hell realms. What makes it heavy is your attitude, the strong anger. So this is just one of the examples that Pabongka mentions [see also p. 455 ff.].

1. Your non-virtuous actions also become heavy if you are ordained, due to the power of the person living in the vow. The higher the vows in which you live, the more powerful a subject you become. Therefore, when you create negative karma, that negative karma is much heavier. Of course, when you create good karma, the merit is unbelievable. The higher the vows in which you live, the greater the profit, the merit, of your daily life's positive actions. But when you engage in negative karma, that negative karma becomes very heavy. For example, if a fully ordained monk or a fully ordained nun engages in negative karma, it becomes very heavy. This is the power of the subject, the person living in the vows.

2. It also depends on the object with whom you create negative karma. This is the power of the object. For example, if you get angry at or harm a bodhisattva, it's unbelievably heavy; very, very heavy. This also applies to your parents in this life. If you engage in negative karma with your parents, if you insult them or do any other negative actions, it's very heavy because the object is powerful. Similarly, buddhas are also powerful objects, and your gurus are the most powerful of all. When you do good actions with your gurus, like offering even the slightest respect, you collect the most extensive merit, but even the smallest disrespect creates very heavy negative karma.

The most powerful object is the virtuous friend from whom you received your Dharma connection. With the recognition of yourself as disciple and the teacher as guru, the moment you take even the oral transmission of a mantra or a verse of teaching, that person becomes the most powerful object in your life. Even if from that person's side he is not buddha or even a bodhisattva, is just an ordinary being, the moment that that connection has been established, that person becomes the most

powerful object in your life, more powerful than all the buddhas. Therefore, if the object is powerful, non-virtuous actions created in relation to that object become very heavy and result in rebirth in hell.

3. Doing a negative action again and again, engaging in a certain negative karma again and again, doing it so many times, again and again, makes it very heavy. That's another way in which non-virtuous actions become heavy and result in rebirth in hell.

4. The way an action is done also influences its weight. The way harm is given to other sentient beings, such as torturing animals in a terrible way, a very heavy way, or torturing human beings in a very heavy way, can also make it a very heavy karma. The manner in which negative karma is created—killing or torturing in a very sadistic way—also determines how heavy the karma becomes.

In a commentary on the *Seven Point Thought Transformation* by Kadampa Geshe Könchog Gyaltzen—or perhaps it was Geshe Chekawa; I'm not one hundred percent sure, it might have been Chekawa—it seems that I have seen in that commentary that committing one of the ten non-virtuous actions can cause you to be reborn in all eight hot hell realms. Committing one of the ten non-virtues can make you reincarnate in all eight hot hell realms. I will check again, but it seems that's what I read. In other words, it can become unbelievably heavy.

THE COLD HELLS

The hot hells are like that. Now the cold hells. At the time of death, the process is that, even if the weather where you are is extremely cold, if you're in a very cold place, due to your karma, if you are going to be born in the cold hell realms, you feel unbelievably hot and experience incredible craving for cold, to be cool; you have much craving for the pleasure of feeling cool. Then, with that craving, you die, and then—like after going to sleep, you dream—the intermediate stage happens, and then—like waking from a dream—the karmic appearance of the cold hell manifests.

As Pabongka mentions in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* [pp. 374–76], your body is completely immobilized on ice-cold ground or in an ice mountain, as if your shoes were nailed to the ground. Your

body is completely caught. It is completely dark, even on the very first level of the cold hells, and there is unbelievable, unimaginable suffering of cold, with incredibly cold winds blowing. Relating to us, imagine that your naked body were completely buried in and surrounded by ice such that you couldn't move, and on top of that, it was completely dark and there was an extremely, unbelievably cold wind and snow blowing over you, like in a raging blizzard. In the cold hells, it is unbelievably cold—billions of times colder than anything we could experience in the human world. No matter how cold it is in the human world, in those countries that are supposed to be extremely cold, with ice, freezing winds, and so forth, this unbelievably heaviest cold for humans is great pleasure compared to the cold suffering of the hell realms. The worst cold suffering that humans can experience is nothing compared to that of the cold hells; it's great pleasure.

It is said in the teachings that when beings in the hot hells experience human fire, it feels cool. For example, when we feel very hot, when a cool breeze blows on us we feel comfortable; we experience the pleasure of feeling cool. No matter how heavy human fire may be for human beings, it feels cool when it touches hot hell beings because their suffering in the hot hells is so unbelievably heavy.

As I normally mention, the fire at the end of time, at the end of the world, is said to be something like sixty or seventy times hotter than the heat energy of all the fires of the present human world put together, and one tiny spark of fire from the hell hot hell realm is said to be seven times hotter than the fire at the end of time. Even a tiny spark of fire from the hot hell realm is that hot.

Anyway, the process by which you get reborn in the cold hell realm, what happens just before you die, is as I've just described.

[The eight cold hells are: The Hell of Blisters; the Hell of Burst Blisters; Achu; Gihu; Teeth Clenched, where it's so cold you can't part your teeth; Cracking Like an Utpali Flower, where it's so cold that your body turns blue and cracks into many pieces; Cracking Like a Lotus Flower; and Great Cracking Like a Lotus Flower.]

When *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* describes the duration of the cold hell beings' lives, how long they have to suffer—they have a fixed length of life—it refers to a standard of measurement from ancient Magadha, the area in which present-day Bodhgaya is located. Even now,

Magadha University is there. In Tibetan, the word is *kal*—I'm not one hundred percent sure, but I think it's equivalent to one big sack of grain that one person can carry. Eighty of those big sacks of grain are one *pang*. In Tibet, we had huge long wooden boxes that were used to store grain. If you were to fill one of those boxes with eighty big sacks of grain and once every hundred years remove just one grain from there, the length of time that it would take to completely empty the box is the length of life of the beings in the very first cold hell, the Hell of Blisters. The length of life in the next cold hell, the Hell of Burst Blisters, is twenty times longer. The suffering is that much heavier. Then, the length of life in the third one, Achu, is again twenty times longer than that of the second. And so it goes on, with the duration of life in each cold hell being twenty times longer than that in the level before.

REBIRTH AS A PRETA

The sign that you are going to be reborn as a hungry ghost is that at the time of death you start to hate food; you have strong aversion to food and want to be in a place where there is none. You have a strong craving for that. Some of us have had the experience of being sick with hepatitis or something where we have no appetite at all and even the thought of food nauseates us. If you are going to be reborn a preta, at the time of death you have a very strong dislike for food and a strong craving to be in a place where there is none, where you can't even see food. You die with that craving. Again, like a person falling asleep and starting to dream, you die and experience the intermediate stage. Then, like waking up, after the intermediate stage, the appearance of the hungry ghost realm is actualized.

Here, you experience inability to find even one spoonful of food or one drop of water, even a sign of water, for hundreds or thousands of years. It also mentions even ten thousand years as the length of time it takes to find any food.

REBIRTH AS AN ANIMAL

In terms of being reborn as an animal, I guess it might be similar, I don't know exactly, but when you die, if you are going to be born animal, then

just before death, it seems that some people have a vision of some particular animal, like a beautiful bird, and perhaps get attached to that. A craving mind arises and then after the intermediate stage, the karmic appearance of the animal realm manifests. You reincarnate as an animal—a bird or whatever. It seems that at the time of death, even before reincarnating, before taking the body of the animal, you have this appearance of a certain kind of animal and feel very attached to that body. While still in the human realm with your human body, just before death you somehow get a karmic appearance of a certain animal body and your mind gets attached to having such a body. It seems that at the time of death, some people do get visions of animals. If you think of what happens when a person is going to be born in the hot or cold hells or as a hungry ghost, the process of being reborn as an animal seems to be similar to that.

This means a person who is going to be reborn as an animal after having this big, tall human body—say someone who is going to be reborn as a butterfly—has a vision of and great attachment to a butterfly body; the karmic appearance of a butterfly body, with its beautiful colored wings and so forth. Similarly, perhaps, with a spider body, seeing spiders as so beautiful and thinking how wonderful it would be to be like that! Or a tick! Well, there has to be something going on if a person is going to be reborn as a spider or a scorpion—or as a slug, a yellow slug in the rain, where there is a lot of fog. It has happened many times that after having this huge human body, you have become a yellow slug. Anyway, by thinking of the process by which you get reborn in the hot and cold hells, how the nearest attachment, the nearest delusion, makes you reincarnate there, or as a hungry ghost, there has to be a similar reason for your being reborn as an animal.

HOW TO AVOID LOWER REBIRTHS

But I don't think that it's necessarily only at the time of death that this craving and grasping affects your rebirth. During life as well, similar craving and grasping for warmth, for cold, for other sense pleasures, can also become a contribution, a donation, to the suffering of the lower realms. Therefore, you can see how important your motivation is, not only when you meditate, not only at that time, but twenty-four hours a

day. Your pure motivation becomes very important. You can see how essential it is that your attitude of life be Dharma. That becomes your most important refuge. Your Dharma attitude becomes your greatest protection from the sufferings of samsara, especially those of the lower realms—those many eons of unimaginable suffering.

Therefore, having renunciation in your mind twenty-four hours a day, having the attitude of renunciation, the detached mind, becomes most essential. Actually, each of the three principal paths—renunciation, bodhicitta and right view—becomes very important, extremely important. But if your mind cannot develop all three, if you do not have right view, try to develop bodhicitta. If not bodhicitta, then at least renunciation—realizing how sense pleasures, samsaric pleasures, are suffering in nature and with that awareness, keeping your mind in a detached, or free, state. Thus, trying to keep your mind in the lam-rim twenty-four hours a day becomes the most important issue, the most important practice in your life.

THE KARMIC RESULTS OF TELLING LIES

What happens to the person who has created the negative karma of telling lies is that you get captured by yamas in the form of human beings, who open your mouth and pull your tongue out five hundred *pag-tsä* [more than 2,000 miles; see p. 396 for details of these measurements]. Being under the control of the karma of having lied, yamas in the shape of human beings, stretch your tongue out five hundred *pag-tsä* and force you to lick the red hot burning iron ground. They make you lick the oneness-with-iron, extremely hot, blazing iron ground.

Then, thousands of yamas carrying blazing red hot plows that are oneness with the fire—due to your karma, created by your own karma—attach the plows to a very powerful elephant, which is also a creation of your own karma, and plow your tongue, just like farmers in Nepal and India plow their fields with animals like buffalo or cows. Then, pus, blood and worms come out of your tongue. I am not exactly sure what it means, but here the text says “like the deva’s eye”—however, your tongue becomes extremely sensitive, extremely tender, like a young baby’s—I think that’s probably the idea—so the hell being cries, screams, but there’s nobody there who can help you. No matter how much you

scream, how much you cry, there's nobody there to stop your suffering, to come to your aid. All you can do is experience such unbelievable, heavy suffering as the yamas plow your tongue with that blazing plow that is oneness with fire and drawn by that powerful elephant for hundreds of thousands of years—which are years according to hell beings' time, not human years. Hundred of thousands of hell years is an unbelievable length of time.

After that, I'm not sure, but it seems that your tongue goes back into your mouth when that karma has finished. Then, unbelievably, heavily disturbed and with incredible fear, you run away wherever you can. But again you get caught in the sparks of fire—like dry animal dung but oneness with fire, red hot inside. Due to karma, you get completely buried in this and severely burned and suffer greatly, having no guide, no refuge. Then, due to your delusion and karma, human-looking yamas carrying swords, hammers and so forth come and, from your brain down to your feet, completely chop you into pieces and then grind you into powder.

THE KARMIC RESULTS OF SLANDER

The negative karma of slandering is similar to that of telling lies, except that your tongue is drawn out three hundred pag-tsä. Then the yamas, who have no compassion, hold your tongue down and split it. Generally, the hell suffering karma of slandering is the same as that of telling lies. Then wolves, which are your karmic appearance, your karmic creation, come from all directions and eat your tongue. This experience is very heavy. You try to scream, but because you have no tongue, when you scream there is no sound.

The next one is the karmic result of insulting, speaking harshly, but I think I'll stop here.

LIFE IN HELL

Just to go over the names of the eight major hot hells: The Hell of Continual Resurrection, the Black Line Hell, the Assemble and be Crushed Hell, the Hell of Lamentation, the Hell of Great Lamentation, the Hotter Hell, the Even Hotter Hell and the Hell Without Respite,

which is the heaviest hot hell suffering, the heaviest suffering in samsara [as translated in *Liberation*].

It is helpful to understand the length of life of beings in the first hot hell, the Hell of Continual Resurrection, then you can get an idea of the rest [*Liberation*, p. 372]. Suddenly, your karmic appearance of this hell realm, Continual Resurrection, manifests; you are born there. Then, due to karma, whenever you and the other beings there see each other, you all become enemies. Whatever you pick up becomes a weapon and you all attack and kill each other. You get killed many hundred times a day with all these weapons, which cut and pierce your body. You fall unconscious, which is called dying. Then, due to karma, you hear a voice from the sky, “May you be alive again.” Then you come back to life and again, other beings cut and pierce your body with all these weapons. So it goes, on and on, many, many times each day, hundred of times a day, until your karma to experience that hell realm has finished.

The length of life of beings in the first hell, the Hell of Continual Resurrection, is [according to *Liberation*] 1.62 European billion human years. [In trying to come up with this number in English, there was a long, confusing (for us) discussion between Rinpoche and the students. The terms mentioned in this discussion are among the following: *bum*, 100,000; *sa-ya*, 1,000,000; *je-wa*, 10,000,000; *dung-chur*, 100,000,000; *ter-bum*, 1,000,000,000, US billion; *ter-bum-chen-po*, 10 billion; *trag-trig*, 100 billion; *trag-trig-chen-po*, European billion. Adding *chen-po* (great) multiplies each number by ten. With thanks to Dr. Martin Willson for this information.] In the next, the Black Line Hell, the length of life is double the first one. And so it goes on like that.

It is said in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that if you get angry at a bodhisattva, for as many seconds as your anger at that bodhisattva lasts, that many eons you will have to suffer in hell. Also, it is specifically mentioned in *Bodhicharyavatara* that if you get angry at a bodhisattva, all the merits you have collected by having practiced charity and morality for one thousand eons get destroyed in just one second. That shows how much harm anger can do to your merit.

The main thing I am trying to say here is that—since for as many seconds of anger you feel towards a bodhisattva, that many eons you will have to suffer in the hell realms—then for as many seconds of anger you feel towards a guru, a virtuous friend, of course, the amount of time you

will have to suffer in hell will be much, much greater, because your guru is the most powerful object. The number of eons you will have to suffer in hell is inconceivable.

REBIRTH IN HELL THROUGH BREAKING PRECEPTS

Also, if you break one of your root tantric vows, then for the number of seconds that pass from that time until you take the vow again, that many eons you will have to be born in the lowest hot hell, the heaviest one, Hell Without Respite, the state of unbearable suffering, where the length of life is an intermediate eon.

As far as receiving tantric root falls is concerned, the second one, being careless in regard to your vows, is easily broken. The vows can be pratimoksha, bodhisattva or tantric vows, or even your refuge vow. If you have the attitude, “Oh! It doesn’t matter,” towards any of these and then go ahead and engage in the action that breaks the vow, if your mind does not care about that vow, then by that, you receive the root fall with the consequences just mentioned.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said that a fully ordained monk who is careless about one of the faults concerning how he’s supposed to wear his *shem-tab* [the monk’s lower garment], again, thinking, “Oh, it doesn’t matter,” can in that way very easily break this second root vow of tantra. It’s not even a root pratimoksha vow, like one of the four defeats; it’s nothing like that. It’s not even a remainder or one of those other branches, vices, downfalls. Just feeling careless—no Dharma reason, no special reason, nothing highly beneficial—just being careless and engaging in that, you very easily break a tantric root vow—because the second root vow is not to be careless with any of your vows, precepts.

It is also mentioned in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that if a fully ordained monk breaks one of the one hundred and twelve faults, he gets reborn in the first hell, the Hell of Continual Resurrection. If he breaks one of the thirty [expiation with forfeiture], he gets reborn in the Black Line Hell. If he breaks one of the four actions to be confessed, he gets reborn in the Assemble and be Crushed Hell. If he breaks one of the thirteen remainders, he gets reborn in the Hotter Hell. And if he breaks one of the four defeats, he gets reborn in the lowest hot hell realm, the Hell Without Respite.

Of course, as I mentioned before, the higher the vows in which you live, the greater the profit. It is incredible, you make the greatest profit, collect the most extensive merit all the time. Whenever you create good karma, you create the most extensive merit—two hundred and fifty three merits for fully ordained monks and three hundred and sixty four for fully ordained nuns. By living in the vows, you collect that much merit all the time, and besides that, whenever you create merit in your everyday life, it increases that much more.

Conversely, if you engage in negative karma, it also becomes that much heavier. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo said, “If a person living in ordination doesn’t care about broken vows and just leaves them be, the negative karma is much heavier than that created by a non-ordained lay person’s killing one hundred men and one hundred horses”...anyway, animals. If an ordained person breaks vows and carelessly leaves them be without confessing or purifying, thinking it doesn’t matter, the negative karma is heavier than if one non-ordained lay person kills a hundred men and a hundred horses.

If you reflect on these things, analyze them, you can see how purification practices such as the Vajrasattva meditation and the *Confession of Downfalls to the Thirty-five Buddhas*—reciting the Thirty-five Buddhas’ names with prostrations—are of the utmost need, are unbelievably important. You can see that doing these practices and guarding your vows by knowing what they are is billions of times more important than going to the emergency room. If suddenly you have a heart attack or something, you immediately call an ambulance and rush to hospital. Doing these practices and guarding your vows by knowing what they are is billions of times more important than that. Even if you die from a heart attack, if you have not created any negative karma, you won’t get reborn in the lower realms. A heart attack alone can’t take you to the lower realms. But if you have negative karma on your mental continuum, if you have broken your vows, even if you have a natural death—no car accident, you’re not shot, nothing like that—you still get reborn in the lower realms.

Therefore, we should rejoice—actually, I don’t have much to rejoice about because I didn’t come for the Vajrasattva retreat—but you should rejoice. Those who have done 100,000 mantras should rejoice and feel

great happiness that that much purification practice was done, that you took this opportunity, and those who didn't finish should also rejoice for the thousands or tens of thousands that were completed. You should feel great happiness and should continue to practice purification in your everyday life and to protect the three levels of vows as much as you possibly can.

Pabongka also mentioned both in his commentary on the Six Session Yoga and in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that breaking even one of the forty-six branch bodhisattva vows—not one of the root vows, just one of the branches—the negative karma is 100,000 times heavier than breaking a pratimoksha root vow. And breaking one of the branch vows of tantra, one of the eight *bombos*, the eight heavy negativities—again, not talking about the root tantric falls, just the branches—for example, if you have taken a highest tantra initiation, if whenever you eat and drink you take it without blessing, then as many times as you drink, as many times as you eat, you receive that many bombos, heavy negativities—it is 100,000 times heavier than breaking a bodhisattva root vow. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo mentioned that in both teachings.

Therefore, by doing the Vajrasattva practice at this time, many negativities of that kind have been purified; unbelievable numbers of such past negativities have been purified. By doing both the Vajrasattva practice and the Thirty-five Buddhas, rainfalls of tantric vices get purified by just one mala of the Vajrasattva mantra. It depends on how you recite it. Twenty-one repetitions or just one mantra, depending on how it is recited, can purify all four defeats received by a fully ordained monk or nun. If it is recited perfectly, it can purify all that. Similarly, by reciting OM MANI PADME HUM correctly just once, a fully ordained person who has received all four defeats can purify them completely.

Therefore, one thing is to rejoice; the other is to continue to practice. That's the conclusion.

I thought to talk about the preta sufferings and some people have asked me to explain the Dzambhala practice for becoming a billionaire...no, a zillionaire!—Dzambhala practice and making charity of water to the hungry ghosts. So maybe not today. For today, maybe that's enough. Perhaps tomorrow we can talk about those other practices.

DEDICATION

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may the numberless sentient beings who have been born in the lower realms and are suffering unimaginably right now, including my own family’s previous generations who have passed away, those people whose names I have received, those for whom I have promised to pray, those who rely upon me and those deceased people whose names were mentioned in the dedication all immediately get liberated from all their sufferings in the lower realms and reincarnate in a pure land where they can become enlightened or achieve enlightenment quickly by receiving a perfect human body in all future lifetimes by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, whenever I hear that somebody is sick, just by hearing this, may I be able to cause that sentient being to recover from that illness immediately; just by hearing that another sentient being has died may I be able to cause that sentient being never ever to be reborn in the lower realms or if born there already, may that being be liberated from all those sufferings of the lower realms immediately and reincarnate in a pure land where that being can get enlightened; and may those who have been born in the human world but have no opportunity to practice Dharma achieve a perfect human body immediately and, by meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings, quickly achieve enlightenment.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, particularly today, and the merits of the three times collected by buddhas, bodhisattvas and all the rest of the sentient beings, may I, my family members and all the students and benefactors in this organization—especially those who sacrifice their lives serving other sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha through this organization—have long and healthy lives and may all our wishes succeed immediately according to the holy Dharma.

“Most importantly, may we be able to actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, especially bodhicitta, in this very lifetime, without even a second’s delay.

“May all those who are sick, whose names were mentioned, immediately get healed, recover from their sicknesses; may the treatment they’re having be most effective.”

As I mentioned the other day, when you do dedications—usually dedications are also requests—you can also visualize the seven Medicine Buddhas. In that way it becomes more powerful. You are not only doing a dedication but you are also making a request. If, when you dedicate, you visualize the Thousand-armed Compassionate Buddha, the seven Medicine Buddhas and Kshitigarbha—at least the seven Medicine Buddhas—your dedication becomes more powerful and therefore more likely to succeed.

“Due to the past, present and future merits collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may the operation that Ann [Bill Kane’s cousin] is to undergo be most effective, give her no harm and may she immediately recover from her sickness. May all other people who are sick—not only those whose names were mentioned in the dedication—be healed immediately, have long and most meaningful lives—not empty long lives but meaningful long lives—by meeting Dharma, developing loving kindness and compassion and actualizing bodhicitta in their minds in this very lifetime.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may all the businesses of Ellen, who wishes to sponsor *Mandala* magazine, succeed immediately so that she can do that, and may the rest of her life be most meaningful through her actualizing all the realizations of the lam-rim. Also, may our Taichung Center benefactors’ airline business be most successful as they wish and may their wealth be most meaningful for all sentient beings and the teachings, and may their lives be most meaningful through their actualization of the lam-rim realizations, especially bodhicitta. May all Fay’s wishes succeed immediately and may she be able to overcome all problems, actualize the lam-rim realizations in her mind and be able to spread Dharma of Lama Tsong Khapa’s teachings in the minds of all sentient beings. May all the work of our great benefactor be most successful as she wishes, be most beneficial for all sentient beings and the teaching of Buddha and may the rest of her life be most beneficial through her actualizing the realizations of the path to enlightenment, especially bodhicitta. Like that, may all others who support this organization and who

rely [on Rinpoche] also have great success, may all their wishes succeed and may all their actions become only Dharma.

“May all virtuous friends, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, have stable lives and may all their holy wishes succeed immediately. May Lama Ösel Rinpoche be able to show the qualities of Lama Tsong Khapa and benefit all sentient beings like the sky by actualizing the path and being learned, and with the three qualities of being learned, strict and good hearted, like Lama Tsong Khapa, show these qualities and benefit sentient beings infinitely by explaining Dharma, writing and debating.”

THE PANCHEN LAMA

With respect to Panchen Rinpoche, who was mentioned in the dedication [amongst the names that were read out], the second time I went to Tibet for pilgrimage—when there were seventy-four of us—we took some teachings from Panchen Rinpoche on the prayer to be born in Shambhala and the oral transmission of the Shambhala prayer and a few mantras. Also prayers to be born in America! I’m joking. At the beginning, these teachings were meant to be just for the group. I was not actually planning to take them myself; I was not planning to make a Dharma connection with Rinpoche. I requested teachings just for the group. The reason I didn’t want to begin a Dharma connection was because I was concerned that if in the future there were political problems between His Holiness and Panchen Rinpoche, I didn’t want to have a problem with the different views.

Then we started making a mandala offering, and while it was going on I was thinking. Just before the mandala offering finished, I decided to make a Dharma connection. Just before IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALA KAM NIRYATAYAMI, just before you collapse your fingers, I thought, “Well, if I look at those two lamas as one person, as one being, there’ll be no problem with different views.” So just before IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALA KAM NIRYATAYAMI I decided to make a Dharma connection. Before that, I was worried about getting into difficulties because of different views. Actually, this was the second time I had done this; it happened to me once before.

Anyway, I’m glad that I made a Dharma connection—he’s an unbelievable lama. I had seen Panchen Rinpoche when I was very small, when

my two alphabet teachers took me to Tibet. Most people have only one alphabet teacher, but because I was very naughty and kept running away, I had two. Finally, with the second one, I learned to read. We stayed at Tashilhunpo Monastery for seven days, and one day we got in line with all the other people at Dechen Potrang—like His Holiness has the Norbulinka summer palace in Lhasa, Panchen Rinpoche has Dechen Potrang in Shigatse—but I didn't get to see much. Like many high lamas, Panchen Rinpoche had a very long stick, with some cloth or something at the tip, and the blessing was given through his putting the stick on people's heads. I didn't really get to see much, I didn't have a clear visualization. It was all over very quickly. You just wait in line and those very tall monks with the huge shoulder pads push you along and through.

Also, some years ago in Nepal, there was a meeting of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, an organization that functions in different countries, and the Chinese communist government brought the Panchen Lama to Kathmandu. At that time, Panchen Rinpoche spoke just a few words in Tibetan and then in Chinese. He said something like, "May the teaching of the Buddha always spread and flourish in all directions." He stood up and said that. I felt that the Tibetan people were so lucky, so fortunate to have such incredible lamas like that; unbelievable. Panchen Rinpoche was very dynamic, very powerful. Straightforward and totally dedicated to other beings.

Anyway, the second time we went to Tibet, after the teachings, Panchen Rinpoche called me back and explained that he had a project, which was to build in Shigatse a very large Kalachakra mandala that you can enter and walk around in. I don't know what happened to it. Rinpoche asked if I could raise funds for this Kalachakra mandala, so I said that if there were some brochures or something, I would try, but I didn't get any. I asked Panchen Rinpoche for a statue or some relics to put in the 500-foot Maitreya statue in Bodhgaya, and he was going to give me a very precious Yamantaka statue but somehow there was some obstacle to my getting that and instead I received some pieces of the robes of five or six of the previous Panchen Lamas and some small Buddha statues to put into the Maitreya statue.

When I was in Australia in 1989, I had a dream in which Panchen Rinpoche's holy body was very tall, and he had his robes on—*dongka* and everything—but was not wearing his zen. He was very tall and I was

very small, even in the dream! Panchen Rinpoche was holding my hand and we were walking down the street. I didn't know that Panchen Rinpoche had just passed away that day, but when I found out, I thought that the dream might mean that I had the karma to meet his incarnation. I thought it might signify that.

When I heard the news that the communists had taken Panchen Rinpoche's incarnation away, I was very, very concerned, so with my crazy mind, I wrote to His Holiness saying that in Dharamsala there were many protectors and perhaps they could protect the Panchen Lama's incarnation, but I don't remember what happened.

FINAL DEDICATION

Therefore, dedicate for Panchen Rinpoche's incarnation to have a long, stable life, for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately as his past life intended, for there to be no obstacles to his health and for his wishes to benefit other sentient beings to be immediately fulfilled.

Also dedicate for all of our meditation centers to be able to spread the complete teaching of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything they need, and for all the projects in this organization, including those at Land of Medicine Buddha and the FPMT-sponsored Kalachakra initiation in Mexico City to succeed. (I haven't requested this or mentioned it to His Holiness yet, but I thought it would be very beneficial.) Also dedicate for the very beautiful Serlingpa Retreat Center outside Mexico City and all of Rocio's and her husband's other projects, including the stupa they want to build and all their other wishes to benefit others, to succeed immediately, and for them and their family to have long, healthy and most meaningful lives.

Also dedicate for the 500-foot Maitreya statue to succeed immediately by receiving everything required, for all the organizers and staff of the project to be harmonious all the time, for their minds to be united and for them able to be able to do the project without interruption.

Also dedicate for all the FPMT centers and projects, including the statue, to cause all sentient beings to generate bodhicitta in their minds and for not even one sentient being to ever experience war, famine, disease, earthquake, danger from fire or water or any other undesirable thing.

In short, may the Maitreya Buddha statue and all our other centers

and projects in the organization cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, from now on, whatever I do, whatever experiences life brings me—ups and downs, health or sickness, praise or criticism, good reputation or bad, good times or difficulties, problems, including in my Dharma practice, life or death, even suffering in hell—the most important thing is for all these things to become most beneficial for all sentient beings. Therefore, from now on, may all my actions and whatever I experience in life be only most beneficial for all sentient beings and cause them to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May I be able to completely actualize Lama Tsong Khapa’s teaching, which unifies sutra and tantra, within my mind and spread these teachings in the minds of all sentient beings. Thus, may Lama Tsong Khapa’s teachings flourish forever.”

Tuesday, April 27

EVENING: FINAL VAJRASATTVA SESSION

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Good evening. Is there one question?

Ven. Marcel: Rinpoche, if sentient beings are infinite, if infinite buddhas' minds can see all sentient beings, if buddha cannot see the beginning of sentient beings' lives, I wonder how buddha can see infinite sentient beings if their numbers are limitless?

Rinpoche: Buddha doesn't have any defilements. There are no defilements to block a buddha's seeing infinite sentient beings.

Ven. Marcel: So "infinite" means not just a great number? I'm just wondering exactly what the definition of infinite is. Does it mean there are always more or is it actually such a large number that it can't be counted? I think sometimes people use the word "infinite" because the number is too big to count.

Rinpoche: I would say that yes, there are infinite sentient beings. It is not just a word; in reality, there are numberless sentient beings. But that doesn't mean that their lives have to have a beginning.

Ven. Marcel: Rinpoche, we also had some discussion about the expandability of karma. This example in the scriptures that if you kill an insect and it's not confessed, then after fifteen days it becomes the same weight as having killed a human being. . .

Rinpoche: . . .you get the same heavy karma as if you had killed a human being. Even though you haven't killed a human being, the negative karma from having killed that tiny insect increases until after fifteen days it has become the same as if you had killed a human being.

Ven. Marcel: If somebody kills an insect in the very beginning of his life when he's very young, and he kills a human being when he's very old, then the karma of having killed the insect will be stronger at that time?

Rinpoche: Yes, I would think so. According to what Pabongka Rinpoche says, it has to be like that. The negative karma of killing an insect as a child and not purifying it could end up being much heavier than killing a human being when you were eighty years old. But it also depends on what kind of human being you killed. If it was a holy being that you killed, for example, the karma would be heavier. However, I think the karma of having killed one insect as a child and not purified it would be much heavier than that of killing an ordinary human being later, as an adult.

Ven. Neil: The question was also, Rinpoche, if for example, one kills another human being, the karma is to be reborn in hell. It seems that one has created the karma to take one rebirth in hell, which will last for millions or billions of years, and then on top of that, as the days, years, lifetimes go by and this karma is not purified, the karmic result is expanding more and more. Then, for example, if this karma ripens after three billion years, one will have to experience an inconceivable number of rebirths in hell, each of which will last millions or billions of years. All from killing one insect. Or does the expandable result mean that one ends up getting just one hell rebirth from that single, unpurified action?

Rinpoche: The expandability of karma means that you do experience the result of a particular karma many times, but this doesn't include then creating the result similar to the cause, one of the four suffering results of a complete karma—then creating the same negative karma again. The expandability of karma refers just to the direct results of one negative karma. In dependence upon how heavy the karma is, you then experience the suffering that results from that negative karma many times in one life or in many lifetimes. In his *Letter to a King*, Nagarjuna says, "If you cheat one sentient being, as a result you will be cheated in one thousand lifetimes." This is because karma is expandable.

Similarly, as you may remember from *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* or other lam-rim texts, if somebody criticizes a monk by saying to him disrespectfully, "You're jumping around like a monkey," it creates the cause to be born as a monkey for five hundred lifetimes.

Thus, karma is expandable, but this doesn't include consideration of

creating the result similar to the cause, which means that each complete negative karma again produces four suffering results, one of which is creating the result similar to the cause, so that the process is endless. Unless you purify the negative karma, you experience the karmic results endlessly.

TAKING MEDICINE FOR INTESTINAL INFECTION

Ven. Marcel: Rinpoche, there's a question about whether viruses and bacteria are considered sentient beings? And can we then take antibiotics?

Rinpoche: This question has been asked many times! I cannot say with certainty that they are sentient beings. However, we can discuss the question in relation not only to bacteria but to bigger sentient beings, worms. Many of the young Kopan monks get intestinal worms, and Lama Yeshe used to get everybody to take worm medicine.

Later, during a question and answer session in one of the early courses at Manjushri Institute—I think it might have been a course led by Venerable Marcel—someone asked whether it was permissible to take worm medicine. At that time Geshe Jampa Tegchog was teaching the philosophical part of the course and Geshe Kelsang was teaching lam-rim. Geshe Jampa Tegchog, who was the abbot of Nalanda Monastery for many years, is now the abbot of Sera Je Monastery, which has more than two thousand five hundred monks.

In response to this question, Geshe Jampa Tegchog said, “You are not permitted to kill worms. Buddhism has never permitted killing.” Some people then got upset with Geshe-la's answer and brought up the fact that Lama Yeshe had permitted the taking of worm medicine. Some confusion arose during this question and answer session.

The lamas used to eat together, and at lunchtime Geshe-la brought up what had happened during the discussion. I don't think Lama Yeshe was there at that time. Geshe-la said that he was going to have to talk differently the next time he did a question and answer session. He was going to make an adjustment. Geshe-la said he was going to tell the people that according to Buddhism you can't take worm medicine, but that according to the general world situation you can take medicine for worms. He was planning to say this in the question and answer session.

So far, I myself haven't ever taken any medicine for worms. It seems to me that the worms disappear after some time even without taking

medicine. I think they die. I think that perhaps you have the karma to have worms for a short time but not the karma to have them all the time. When that karma has finished, I think that the worms just leave the body. Maybe they just say goodbye! I remember taking worm medicine when I was in Buxa, because a doctor checked and gave it to me, but I don't remember taking any since I first returned to Nepal from India. My personal experience is that even though there are worms, they disappear after a while, even without worm medicine. I am just telling you of my own experience.

Basically, I think it depends on the capacity of each individual. You have to see that your life will definitely be more beneficial for other sentient beings if you kill the worms. The bottom line is that you have to try as much possible to make even that action of killing become virtue. Even if you have to take the medicine and end their lives, at the very least you have to make your action become virtue. And as much as possible, you have to make your action beneficial for the sentient beings that are going to be killed.

I cannot make a generalization that it is okay to kill. I cannot say that. However, I would like to say that if it has to be done, at the very least you must attempt to ensure that your action becomes virtue, Dharma, and that it is as beneficial as possible for the sentient beings you are killing. If you have to do it, do it in this way. You have to do something for those beings, for their happiness, for their good rebirth or whatever.

Perhaps each time you take worm medicine you should make food or money offerings to the monasteries where there are thousands of monks. Perhaps you should build a stupa, a very large one—one stupa for each worm! Perhaps you should sponsor as many stupas as the number of worms that you kill! I am joking a little here, but you need to do something. I mean, killing is involved and you need to ensure that your mind is not completely selfish when you do it. Those worms are also sentient beings. I am not sure about bacteria, but worms are sentient beings. Therefore, they all want happiness.

I think I mentioned earlier in the retreat [Chapter 34, Tuesday, March 2] that one of the texts mentions that attachment to sex causes you to be reborn an intestinal worm. I don't remember which text it was (I should have written down its name), but it is an authentic source.

Perhaps it is one of the thought transformation teachings of the Kadampa geshe. Anyway, it is not the kind of text written by an ordinary person that we come across nowadays.

These worms are just like you in having no freedom to choose their rebirth. Without choice, they are born there in the kaka in the gut. They do not plan to be born there. They are also like you in wanting happiness and not wanting to suffer. Therefore, if you make the decision to take worm medicine, you have got to do something for them. You should at least do some strong practice to purify their negative karma and to pray for them to have a good rebirth as a human being, to meet the Dharma and so forth, as Nagarjuna says in the food offering practice. The sutra way of offering food involves motivating to take the food not to become fat, not out of arrogance, not to look beautiful, but just to sustain the body to practice Dharma. The tantra way of offering food involves reciting quite a number of mantras and making offerings to the gurus and to the deities, but we have yet to translate that part. Many monks practice the tantric food offering, then do Nagarjuna's prayer to also offer the food in the sutra way.

At the very end, after offering in both ways, many practitioners do another prayer that says, "At the moment I satisfy the worms by giving them food. Due to this, in future lives may I draw them to me as disciples and reveal Dharma to them." This means that in future lives, when the worms have become human beings, they will become your disciples and by revealing Dharma to them, you will lead them to enlightenment.

I would suggest that you do some practice like this. Since killing is involved, you have to make your life really beneficial for other sentient beings. Because those sentient beings have to die for you, you have to make your life worthwhile. You have to have a compassionate attitude. You can't simply ignore them or think, "Oh, they're causing disease," and kill them out of anger. You cannot omit the practice of compassion. I can't make a generalization about what should be done, but I would say that if you do become involved in killing the worms, there should be compassion in your motivation, which means that killing them will enable you to make your life more beneficial, more worthwhile. There is then some purpose in their dying, especially if you use their death to develop your good heart, your bodhicitta. If you have to engage in killing the worms, this is the best way to do it.

BENEFITING INSECTS KILLED BY YOUR CAR

When Roger bought the red van, which now has all the ten direction buddhas around it, he was very excited. I think he thought he had accomplished something really great. He bought it one evening and came to tell me right away. He was very happy about it and curious as to what I would say. I didn't go out to see the car immediately, but not because Roger was so excited about it. I saw it late the next morning. For one or two days I tried to think, "This car belongs to sentient beings," but that didn't last long.

We then drove all the way from John and Elaine Jackson's house in California to Geshe Sopa's place in Wisconsin. On the way there were some sections with no insects, but in other parts, especially where there were cows and fields, a lot of insects died on the car. So many insects died when they flew in front of the car. I don't know whether the number of insects also had something to do with the time of year it was. Many insects were dying and we didn't seem to have much choice about killing them. I was telling the others in the car, "We are creating many, many causes to be born in the Gathering and Crushing Hell." The Gathering and Crushing Hell is the third of the hot hells, where you are crushed between huge mountains shaped like the heads of the animals or human beings you have killed. You are crushed between the mountains, your blood gushes out like a waterfall, then you revive and are crushed all over again. This goes on and on for an inconceivable length of time, until the karma is exhausted. I said, "I think we are creating many causes to be in that hell realm."

We stopped somewhere and did many light offerings and prayers dedicated to all the insects that had died on the road. Later on, when I asked if there was anything we could do to stop killing the insects, someone mentioned putting a special plastic screen on the front of the van. It is supposed to give some protection to the insects but I don't think it helps that much.

Anyway, now the van is covered with mantras. A shop that makes decals used a computer to make all the mantras and the pictures of the Thirty-five Buddhas, Lama Tsong Khapa, Maitreya Buddha, White Tara and so forth. The person who made them put a lot of time and effort into it, especially into the Tibetan writing because he was not familiar

with it. You start off with a black sheet, then like carving a rock, you have to cut away the excess until just the shapes of the letters are left. It is unbelievably time consuming.

The person who did the work became very, very interested in the project. Even though they are not Buddhists, both he and his wife said that this time their work had been very meaningful. I don't think they have read anything on Buddhism. Once they might have attended a talk given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which could have been the start of their interest in Buddhism. I visited their shop once or twice and they told me this on one of my visits. I was very happy to hear how they felt. You have to have some merit even to appreciate that the work is worthwhile; if you don't have merit, you won't recognize its worth. Anyway, I was happy to hear that they realized that this time, the work they were doing was meaningful.

They wanted to make a very large decal of White Tara to keep in the office where they worked. It would make their shop very meaningful, because everybody who came there would see this picture of buddha and thus plant seeds of liberation and enlightenment. This picture of buddha would purify the defilements of anyone who saw it there, including the people who worked in that office every day. Seeing a picture of buddha would make coming into the shop very worthwhile for other sentient beings.

THE FIVE POWERFUL MANTRAS

The idea was to have the five powerful mantras used in the practice of jang-wa on the van. [See Appendix 5.] The tantric practice of jang-wa is used when somebody has died, and even if the person is in the intermediate state on the way to the lower realms, you can still do jang-wa and change the direction of the person's reincarnation. You can cause the person to reincarnate in a pure land or in a deva or human realm. Jang-wa is a skillful tantric practice of purification, due to the power of mantra, the power of concentration and the power of Buddha's words of the truth.

These five mantras have unbelievable power. If you recite these mantras, blow on sand and then sprinkle the sand on someone's grave or cremation site, you can affect that person's consciousness, no matter where they have been reborn. You do not even have to touch the dead body. Simply sprinkling the blessed sand on the grave or cremation site

can purify that person's negative karma and bring them a good rebirth. These mantras have unbelievable power to purify negative karma.

Within the practice of jang-wa there are different means of purification, but recitation of these mantras is one of the main ones. You use the mantras to bless mustard seeds. Through meditation you hook the people who have died and then you throw the blessed mustard seeds over them to purify them. Finally, you do po-wa to transfer their consciousness to a pure land. After that, if you don't have ashes or parts of the body, you burn the photograph of the dead person or the pieces of paper with the dead person's name written on it while meditating on emptiness. You recite the *Heart Sutra* from where it says either "...no form, no feeling..." or "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form..."

I think I have already mentioned these mantras at various times in the past—for example, the mantra of Mitukpa, the Immovable Buddha, which you often see on tsa-tsas. If a dying person sees the Mitukpa mantra, they won't be reborn in the lower realms because seeing this mantra purifies their mind, their negative karma.

All of these mantras have incredible power. Simply touching these mantras to the body of a dying or dead person purifies their negative karma, and they are not reborn in the lower realms. Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche explained that the people in Amdo have these mantras written or printed on paper and they rub the paper on the body of anyone who is dying or has died to purify that person's negative karma.

The Namgyalma mantra, another of these powerful mantras, has unbelievable benefits. I mentioned them already when I was talking about the mantra on the bell at the Kshitigarbha statue, so I am not going to repeat them again. Remember, I mentioned that if the Namgyalma mantra is on a mountain, the negative karmas of all the insects or people who walk on that mountain are purified. If the mantra is on a banner, the negative karmas of the insects or people who are touched by the shadow of the banner are purified, and they are liberated from the lower realms. It is also mentioned that if you have the Namgyalma mantra in your house, the house becomes purified and blessed, and the same applies to your car. It is very good to have the Namgyalma mantra in your car, because any insects or people who touch the car will be purified. The mantras of Namgyalma and Stainless Pinnacle are extremely powerful ones for purification.

If you recite the mantra of the deity Stainless Beam seventy-three times after somebody has died, that person will definitely be liberated from the lower realms and be able to reincarnate in the higher realms, the realms of the happy migratory beings. If you recite the heart mantra, which is half the length of the root mantra, eighteen thousand times, and then build a stupa, all your wishes will be fulfilled. I thought to put this information in *Mandala* magazine, because stupas are now being built in many places. If the people building the stupa recite this mantra eighteen thousand times before they build the stupa, it is very powerful; all their wishes will be fulfilled. Buddha himself explained this in the Kangyur, the many hundreds of volumes of sutra teachings, although I don't remember in which volume. There is a section that talks about the infinite benefits of making a stupa. Buddha also explains the benefits of all the mantras that I have just mentioned, as well as those of the other mantras that go into a stupa. Putting the mantras into a stupa makes the stupa unbelievably powerful in benefiting sentient beings. It is just amazing! It doesn't apply just to big stupas; you can use them even in small ones.

If a group of people is building a stupa, everybody in the group should recite this mantra before they start building. This would be extremely powerful and so good. I started to recite them one day but my laziness didn't allow me to do more than a few hundred.

Another of the mantras is the Wish-granting Wheel mantra. I have read of the unbelievable benefits of reciting the mantra, but I have yet to see a picture of this deity. The mantra is very short: OM PEMO USHNISHA VIMALE HUM PHET. If you recite this mantra seven times every day, you will be born in a pure land when you die. And if you recite it and bless incense, whether stick or powder, by blowing on it, people are healed by smelling the burning incense. Here the healing comes through purifying the other sentient beings' negative karma, through purifying their mind, which is the most important healing. Purifying the mind then helps to heal any sickness. If you recite this mantra and then blow on your clothes, wearing the clothes brings healing; wearing the clothes brings purification. And if the cloth is made of silk, wool, or the skin of an animal, reciting this mantra also helps that animal, no matter where it has been reborn, by purifying that animal's negative karma.

The other deity is Kunrig, which is white in color with three faces. Kunrig is not a Highest Yoga Tantra deity; I think it belongs to either

Yoga Tantra or Charya Tantra class. Kunrig is known as “the King of the Deities for purifying the lower realms.” Even if someone has already been born in the lower realms, if you do Kunrig practice or puja, they will be liberated from the lower realms. There is a story that when a deva died and was reborn in one of the hell realms, King Indra didn’t know what to do, so he asked Buddha for help. Buddha then manifested as this deity Kunrig and granted the practice of the Kunrig jang-wa. The deva was then liberated from the lower realms. The practice of jang-wa was originally done with Kunrig, then later the pandits, those great holy beings, used various deities to do jang-wa. Both Kunrig and Mitukpa are used in jang-wa practice.

I think I have now mentioned the five powerful deities, although the five might have become six!

On the van we have the mantra of Stainless Beam, but the mantra of Stainless Pinnacle might not be there. I’m not sure. There is also the Medicine Buddha mantra, which has incredible benefit, as well as OM MANI PADME HUNG. There is also a very short mantra which when seen purifies 100,000 eons of negative karma.

A quotation from either a sutra or tantra—I’m not sure which—mentions that one of the benefits of the Wish-granting Wheel mantra is that by walking underneath it, you purify one thousand eons of negative karma. That’s why this mantra is normally put above doorways. Quite a number of years ago in Malaysia I wrote out this mantra and asked somebody to make many copies of it. Then later, in Taiwan, many, many small red cards were printed with a copy of the Wish-granting Wheel mantra and a picture of Lama Atisha’s stupa. Many were given out to people so that they could put one above the doorway to each room. In this way anybody who passed through the doorway would be purified. It is said that Lama Atisha’s stupa protects from pollution—not so much external pollution as mental pollution. It stops pollution from negative karma and degenerated samaya vows from affecting the minds of those living in the house.

Anyway, my idea in putting all those mantras on the van is to purify all the insects that come on the van. Also, any water or dust that comes off the van will have touched the mantras and will then go down on the ground to touch insects and worms, which will be purified and liberated. After touching the mantras, it becomes holy water or holy dust. Even

human beings who see the mantras get purified. The point of the mantras is to benefit other sentient beings as much as possible.

BLESSING THE FEET

Anyway, I thought to take this opportunity to mention the blessing of the feet. I think that the Nalanda prayer book contains the various mantras for blessing the speech, blessing the mala and blessing the feet, blessing the toes. I think that some people do this practice every day. It is very good to bless your feet, especially if you are walking in the bush or trekking or doing work that requires you to walk over the ground. Recite the mantra OM TRE TSARA GHANA HUNG HRIH SOHA seven times, then blow or spit on the soles of your shoes. It says to blow on your feet, but I would say that it is better to blow on the soles of your shoes because it is your shoes that directly touch the insects. It might help to blow on your feet, but I think it is better to blow on the soles of your shoes. It is especially good to do this if you have to walk through fields of grass, where there are so many insects. It is unbearable to walk through grass fields because you step on so many insects; as you walk you can see so many insects jumping around to try to escape. This is why it is very good to recite this mantra. When I remember, I do this practice when from time to time I have to walk across fields with many insects. It might look a little funny to other people, but we should try to take the opportunity to recite the mantra and then spit on the soles of our shoes. Cover the whole sole with spit. This is in case you step on any insects, because it means that you can benefit them by causing them to be born in the higher realms.

I think this practice comes from the tantric root text *Jam-pal tsa-gyü*, but I'm not absolutely sure.

You can do the same practice with the tires of your car. Recite the mantra then spit on the tire surface that will touch the ground. You can spit all the way around on the surface that will touch any insects and worms. By doing this, even if you unknowingly kill insects, you will still benefit them by purifying them and helping them to have a good rebirth. Such mantras have infinite benefits. Perhaps the benefits can be explained or translated at some later date.

I haven't really checked the benefits of the mantras for blessing the

speech in the source texts. Understanding the benefits would give more faith in the practice and inspire us to use the mantras. Knowing which sutra or tantra text is the source of the practice would also give us more faith. The sources are mentioned in the Tibetan prayer, and it would be good if that information was added to the translation.

SUFFERINGS OF THE PRETAS

Before talking about the water practice in relation to pretas and to Dzambhala, before you learn how to become a billionaire, I thought to mention a little about the sufferings of the pretas. Before learning how to become a billionaire, you first have to have the suffering of the pretas!

I will read what Pabongka Rinpoche has explained in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* [p. 380], where he gives some details about the great suffering of the pretas.

The general sufferings of preta beings are listed as six: extreme heat, extreme cold, hunger and thirst (their heaviest sufferings), exhaustion and fear (which is fear of being stopped from getting food and water by karmic guardians).

Also, even if a preta sees some food, it is difficult for them to get it because they have to compete for it with many hundreds or thousands of other pretas. When, after many hundreds or thousands of years, a preta finally sees a tiny bit of food or a drop of water, they have to fight a crowd of hundreds or thousands of other pretas for it. You will have an idea of what it is like if you have ever given food or money to the beggars in Bodhgaya in India. Like the beggars in Bodhgaya, thousands of pretas crowd around so that any food is difficult to get. This also causes fear.

The place where the pretas, the hungry ghosts, live is simply unimaginable. There are no grass, trees or water—nothing! There are absolutely none of these things. It is said in the lam-rim that the whole ground is like a red-hot copper pot, because it has been burnt by the sun. It is extremely hot. Without considering any of the other sufferings, just think of this one suffering. The ground in the preta realm is nothing like that around here, where we live, where everything is green and there are grass and many trees. The ground there is scorched by the sun and extremely hot to the touch, and the pretas have to live their whole life in such a place. The thought of even this one suffering is unbearable. When

we feel hot we can use fans or air conditioners or drink iced water. We can always have ice in everything: ice in our tea, ice in our coffee, ice-cream. We can have ice in every drink. To think of living in the place where the pretas live is unimaginable. Just thinking of it is so terrifying that you have to purify the negative karma to be born in the preta realm that you have created during beginningless past lives. It is so terrifying to have any karma to be born in the preta realm that you have to purify it immediately.

The bodies of pretas are unbalanced, because their limbs are not of the same size. Their heads are big, with hair that sticks out in all directions, like tufts of grass. Their faces are covered with wrinkles. Just thinking of their wrinkles should make us feel the need to purify. Since we don't want to have a single wrinkle on our face, we need to purify any karma we have to be born as a preta. Because we don't want even a tiny wrinkle on our face, especially on our nose, we need to purify immediately all such karma we have created not only since our birth in this life but during beginningless rebirths.

Pretas also have very tiny necks. I think it is explained in *Lam-rim chen-mo* that a preta's neck is as thin as a hair from a horse's tail. Anyway, it is extremely thin and cannot support the large head. The stomach is as huge as a mountain and the limbs are like bamboo stalks. The Tibetan term *jang-ma* refers to the fine slivers of bamboo that are bound together to make brooms. The limbs are so thin that they can barely support the body. Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says that pretas have a hundred times more difficulty standing up and walking than very old people in the human world. Pretas also have an uneven number of limbs.

Because pretas are unable to find a drink for many years, their bodies have no moisture, not even any blood or lymph. They are like a dry log wrapped tightly with very dry red leather. Their muscles and veins are all dry, so they're wrapped in very dry skin. When they move about and their limbs touch each other, there is a sound like two dry sticks or two rocks hitting each other. Sparks also fly out.

Pretas receive no food or drink for hundreds or thousands of years, therefore, they suffer extreme hunger and thirst. Because they still live in the hope of finding food and drink, they have no choice but to go to look for it. But their bodies are so weak and pitiful that when they do go to look for food, they are easily exhausted.

While looking for food, whenever they see the yamas they get so frightened that they feel as if their whole body will disintegrate. They feel incredible fear. In the heat of summer, even the moon feels hot to the pretas; due to their karma even moonlight burns them. And in the cold of winter even sunlight makes the pretas feel cold. Usually the sun warms and the moon cools, but for pretas, due to their karma, it is the opposite. In this way, they suffer incredibly from heat and cold.

These are the six general sufferings of pretas. We will now consider the particular sufferings of individual types of preta beings.

PRETAS WITH OUTER OBSCURATIONS

Pretas with external obscurations see water, trees laden with fruit and so forth in the distance, but when, after battling exhaustion and other great hardships, they finally reach that place, the water or food has disappeared. There is nothing there. After overcoming all their exhaustion, their fear of meeting yamas on the way and other incredible hardships, they reach their destination only to find that the food they saw has become non-existent.

Pabongka Rinpoche also says that when some pretas reach the food, they find armed guards protecting it, not allowing them to get any. I guess the guards are like those police who carry all kinds of weapons when controlling crowds. On top of all their already unbelievable suffering of hunger and thirst, at that time the pretas experience inconceivable suffering from despair and physical exhaustion.

PRETAS WITH INNER OBSCURATIONS

Pretas with inner obscurations are sometimes able to find food, but even when, after undergoing many hardships, they do find some, they cannot eat it because their mouths are as tiny as the eye of a needle. Even if a little food does go into their mouths, they cannot swallow it because they have knots in their necks. It is extremely difficult for any food to reach the stomach. Some pretas have a goiter in their necks and have to drink the pus that oozes from it.

PRETAS WITH FOOD AND DRINK OBSCURATIONS

When some pretas with food obscurations eat food, it transforms into a flaming iron ball that is one with fire. For some, the food transforms into the husks of grain, pus or their own flesh. Even when they manage to find some food, when they actually start to eat it, the food turns into these things. I guess the karma suddenly changes.

Many years ago, I visited a home in Spain for the severely disabled. I was with Piero, an old student from Italy, who was a monk at that time and traveling with me as my secretary, and Merry Colony, who was a nun. I think I probably said that I wanted to see the home. In the past, I sometimes used to go to see old people's homes or homes for the disabled. It is very helpful for the mind. It inspires you to practice Dharma—for a short time, anyway! Seeing how some human beings suffer, how they don't have even a human body with complete senses and organs let alone a perfect human body with which to practice Dharma (let alone mentioning Mahayana tantra), can inspire you to practice Dharma.

I think the home was in Barcelona, and was run by Catholic nuns. At that time, Carmen and her husband Alberto were the directors of Nagarjuna Center in Barcelona, and Carmen had previously worked as a nurse in that home. It is only through such a connection that you are allowed to visit the home. Carmen made the appointment for our visit.

In one room, there were teenage girls tied into frames with four wheels, because they couldn't walk, and their arms were covered with leather so that they wouldn't bite their own flesh. There were a few of them just moving back and forth on these wheels. I just remembered this when I mentioned the pretas that eat their own body. You might not believe such pretas exist, but since there are even human beings who do this, why should there be any doubt about pretas?

Anyway, since I brought up this story, I'll mention a little more. Right at the beginning, before we visited the children, the head nun warned me that some of the children might try to scratch my skin because it is not white. Since the children have no idea about people who are not white, they might scratch black skin to see if the black color comes off. In one section of that home, one child actually did that to me.

The whole place is really amazing because most of the adults and

children there have no hope of getting better. They will simply spend their whole life living in that home with other people taking care of them. I think they might have cleaned the home before we arrived; it was very clean. We saw one little girl who was horribly disfigured. I don't remember the details clearly, but I think that her eyes were tiny and it seemed as if her nose and mouth were missing. One of the nurses lifted her up and kissed her and generally showed her affection. I mean, this little girl was the opposite of beautiful. I think the staff try to show the children that they are not frightened of their disfigurements, that they don't regard them as ugly or dirty or bad. This little girl said goodbye to us. Piero was totally freaked out when he saw this little girl's face.

When we came down to see the head nun after our visit, she told us that they never ask anybody for help; they ask only God. She said that God gave them all the help they needed. She said that even when people come with money they don't accept it. This is what she said, but I am not sure about that. I told her, "What you are doing and what Buddha says we should do, to cherish and to serve others, are the same. Here you are putting it into practice." I then gave a donation of ten dollars or a hundred dollars. It might have been ten dollars, I think, as it couldn't have been a hundred dollars. I made a prayer, and I told her that the money was to help the home to benefit the children. Anyway, that piece of news is now finished.

It is really great that the nuns are able to take care of those children for whom there is no hope at all. No matter how many years they live, the nuns just take care of them every day.

When some pretas eat and drink, even if the food somehow passes through their neck, when it reaches their stomach it turns into molten iron. The Tibetan term *tog* refers to a type of hard metal, but I don't know the exact translation. I think the huge cauldrons in which soup was cooked for thousands of monks in Tibet were made out of *tog*. When many thousands of monks from Sera, Ganden, Drepung and other monasteries would gather for Mön-lam, huge containers made of *tog*, perhaps a kind of iron, would be used for the soup. Instead of quenching the preta's thirst and stopping their hunger, anything eaten turns into hot liquid iron when it reaches their stomach. Instead of benefiting them, the food gives them immense additional suffering. And even

if the food reaches the stomach and doesn't turn into molten iron, it can never satisfy the preta because their stomach is so big; the food can never fill their stomach.

Another type of preta has flames of hunger coming from its mouth. The Tibetan term for this preta is *de-me*. *De* is hungry ghost and *me* is fire, so it could be translated as "flame ghost." In Buxa and certain other parts of India, you often see these pretas at nighttime in the forest. We saw many flames in the forest from the place where we used to debate. I think these pretas might also be in remote deserts, where it is very hot, the ground is copper-colored and nothing grows. This is my guess, anyway.

The preta with the worst suffering of all is the *drul-geg*. Pabongka Rinpoche tells the story of Ananda, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's attendant, seeing such a preta when he was outside engaged in his daily activities. He met a female preta with three knots in her neck, and she had five terrifying sounds coming from her mouth. It says here that the three knots cause these pretas unbelievable suffering, that there is no limit to their suffering.

Next comes a quotation about the sufferings of preta beings from Nagarjuna's *Letter*, followed by one from Chandragomin's *Letter to a Disciple* and another from the Seventh Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso.

Pabongka then says that we can't be sure that by this time next year we won't be born as one of those preta beings. The causes for rebirth as a preta are miserliness with your possessions, great covetousness and having such strong attachment to your own possessions that you have to keep checking them again and again. I can see that I myself have created some causes to be born as a preta through being heavily attached to things and looking at them again and again.

Another cause of rebirth as a hungry ghost is interfering in other people's attempts to make charity. Perhaps someone is practicing generosity and you interfere, saying such things as, "Oh! You are giving too much" or "They don't need it." Other causes are stealing others' wealth and taking away things that belong to the sangha. Pabongka gives an example of this second one at the beginning of his explanation of refuge. If someone wants to offer even a slice of butter to the sangha—butter is a common offering because it is used to make Tibetan tea—and has already dedicated it to the sangha and you say, "Oh, that is too much. The sangha don't need it," you are taking away things that belong to the sangha,

because the person has already dedicated it. Also, when money offerings are given to the sangha by a benefactor, if you take extra for yourself, you are taking what has not been given.

You have to understand that the disciples to whom Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo gave the teachings contained in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* were mainly monks. Of course, there might also have been many lay people listening, but you have to understand that the presentation was given in terms of monks living in monasteries. Even though the examples often refer to sangha, you can still relate them to similar situations outside of a monastery. It can easily happen that when someone has already given something to someone else, you tell them that the other person doesn't need it. Such instances don't occur only in monasteries.

If Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo had been teaching in the West, his presentation would also have been related to Western people and the Western lifestyle. Since he taught mainly monks who lived in monasteries, his presentation was mainly related to their life. Once you understand that the basic points on karma are similar, you can also relate them to the lay life. There are many similar situations in lay life.

Another cause of rebirth as a preta is to call someone a preta. In the West you would not do this, but you might call them a ghost. In Tibetan, insulting someone by calling them a preta easily happens. Insulting a member of the sangha by calling them a preta causes rebirth as a preta for five hundred lifetimes.

Pabongka Rinpoche then says that when pretas with three knots are able to receive a drop of water, it is because in the past those pretas were not miserly in giving water to other sentient beings. You dedicate the drop of water with the powerful mantra given by Buddha, OM JVALA MIDAM SARVA PRETA BHYAH SOHA. Because of the power of the mantra and because of their past karma of being generous with water, those pretas, who have the heaviest of preta sufferings, are able to receive one drop of water. They have the karma to get just one drop of water but are unable to enjoy more than this.

Next comes the story of Lobpön Sangye Yeshe, a yogi who used his psychic powers to go to the preta realm. There he met an extremely pitiful female preta with five hundred children. She gave Sangye Yeshe a message for her husband, who had gone looking for food in the human world. She said, "Twelve years have passed since my husband went to

look for food, and during this time I have had five hundred children. I am experiencing incredible hardship and suffering, as I have not had even one drop of water during this whole time. O master, please tell my husband to return quickly with whatever food he has found in the human world.”

The yogi then said, “There are so many pretas there, so how will I know which one is your husband?” She replied, “Oh, he has particular characteristic. He is blind in one eye and has only one arm and one leg. And even the arm and leg he has are not healthy.”

When the yogi went to the human world to check among the pretas, he saw one that exactly fitted her description, so he passed her message to him. The husband said, “What she says is true.” In other words, he really wished that he could have returned as quickly as possible; he could not bear the fact that his search had taken so long. He continued, “I have looked for food for twelve years and I have found only this.” In his hand he was holding a very small piece of dried phlegm. “I haven’t found any other food other than this, so I regard this as extremely precious.”

The preta was able to find this small piece of phlegm because one *bhikshu*, one fully ordained monk, who was living in his vowed morality had spat the phlegm on the ground and recited a mantra to dedicate it to the pretas. A crowd of pretas then fought for the phlegm and the husband won. He told the yogi this story. The phlegm had dried out completely, and the preta kept it as his prized possession.

Pabongka says that if we are not careful with our lives, we cannot be sure that a time won’t come when we have to lunch on dried phlegm.

Another story concerns Uttara, a novice monk. Twenty-five years after his mother had died, Uttara met a terrifying preta. He was so frightened that he started to run away. The preta then said, “Don’t run away!” Uttara asked, “Who are you?” The preta replied, “My only son, I am your loving mother. I have been born here among the pretas, who have no food or drink. Since my death twenty-five years ago, I have never seen any water. Forget about seeing food—I haven’t even seen a damp mark on the ground.”

When I read about the sufferings of the pretas, I feel happy that I have been trying to do a little water charity to the pretas. I can rejoice by thinking, “Oh, this little bit of water charity that I have been doing must be really good for the pretas since they are suffering unbelievably. It must

be very beneficial for them because it is fulfilling their immediate needs.” However, making water charity to the pretas and reciting these mantras are done not just to enable them to find water and to alleviate their hunger and thirst. The very important benefit that this water charity has is that not only does it stop their hunger and thirst, but it also liberates them from their all their preta suffering—some of the mantras and visualizations have the power to purify their negative karma and thus liberate them from the suffering of the preta realm and cause them to achieve a higher rebirth. That is the real benefit; that is what they really need.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says that in terms of merit gained, you collect greater merit from making charity to one preta than from making charity to three galaxies of sentient beings. (There are different ways of counting this, but I don’t remember at the moment. I have heard the explanation quite a few times, but I still don’t remember it!) And making charity to one preta with flames coming from the mouth collects far greater merit than making charity to all the other general pretas. This is because this particular type of preta has much more suffering than the general pretas. Then, giving just one drop of water to a preta with three knots collects far greater merit than making charity to the pretas with flames coming from the mouth. In terms of material charity to sentient beings, giving one drop of water to this type of preta collects unbelievable merit—the most merit of all.

Of course, the main point is not how much merit you collect. The main reason for doing this practice is because the pretas need it. Since numberless pretas are experiencing unbelievable suffering, they need this charity of food and drink.

WATER CHARITY TO THE PRETAS

First I will explain how to make water charity to the pretas, which is part of the practice of the one hundred tormas offerings. After that, I will talk about offering water to Dzambhala [see Appendix 4].

First, of course, you have to generate a motivation of bodhicitta. Think, “Every single hell being is the source of all my past, present and future happiness, including enlightenment. Every single preta being is the source of all my past, present and future happiness, including enlightenment. Every single animal is the source of all my past, present

and future happiness, including enlightenment. Every single human being is the source of all my past, present and future happiness, including enlightenment. And it is the same with every single asura, sura and intermediate state being. Every single one of them is the source of all my past, present and future happiness, including enlightenment.”

Bring every single one of them into your heart by thinking of their kindness and of how precious they are.

After that, think, “I must take the total responsibility for all of them upon myself. I must free all the hell beings from the three types of suffering; I must free all the hungry ghosts from the three types of suffering. I must free all the animals from the three types of suffering. I must also free all the human beings, asuras, suras and intermediate state beings from the three types of suffering. I must free all sentient beings from the three types of suffering of samsara, as well as their causes, and bring them to enlightenment. Therefore, I myself must achieve enlightenment. For this reason, I am going to make water charity to the pretas.” (Or if you are doing Dzambhala practice, say, “For this reason, I am going to do the water offering to Dzambhala.”)

It isn't that you have to make the offering to Dzambhala before you can make water charity to the pretas, but the water carries more blessings if you first offer it to Dzambhala and then give that same water to the pretas. The practice then becomes more powerful and effective for the pretas. This is what Ribur Rinpoche said. Previously I didn't do Dzambhala practice; I just made water charity to the pretas. Somehow I happened to talk with Ribur Rinpoche about the water charity to the pretas, and Rinpoche then advised me that it would be better to do the Dzambhala practice first. That is how I started the Dzambhala practice. Before that I didn't do the Dzambhala practice. I did the water charity to the pretas because I read about some of its unbelievable benefits and because they really need it. The practice is not just about our collecting merit; the pretas actually need our help. I mean, when you think of their suffering, there is no choice; you have to do the practice.

If you wish, you can generate the motivation, do the Dzambhala practice first, and then make charity to the pretas with that water.

Actually, all these practices have already been translated into Chinese by the Chinese translator from Shanghai, who is translating Geshe Sopa's lam-rim commentary into Chinese. It will also be published in English,

and will be the largest lam-rim commentary in English in the world. The root text, Lama Tsong Khapa's *Lam-rim chen-mo* is also being translated into Chinese in a style that will be easy for the general public to understand. There is an existing translation, but it is written in classical Chinese, which is very difficult for ordinary people to understand. We are sponsoring this project. Geshe Sopa's commentary represents more than twenty years of teaching. I think that Geshe-la started this commentary the very first time that we visited the United States, in the mid-1970s. I think it was around that time that Geshe-la founded Deer Park Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Before that, he was just teaching at the university. There was no actual center and very few disciples. People would be introduced to Buddhism at Kopan then go to America to learn from Geshe Sopa, so the center was formed.

You already have an English translation of the Dzambhala practice [see Appendix 4], so I will read the oral transmission of it in Tibetan. I received the oral transmission of the Dzambhala practice and of the practice of making water charity to the pretas, which is just a small part of the practice of the one hundred tormas offerings, from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche. There is a complete text of this in Dharamsala. I will give the oral transmission of this practice, along with the Dzambhala.

So think, "No matter what, I must achieve enlightenment in order to enlighten all sentient beings. Therefore, I am going to take the oral transmissions of the Dzambhala practice and the practice of making water charity to the pretas." [Rinpoche gives the oral transmissions in Tibetan.]

It would take a lot of time to translate all the prayers, and in any case they have already been translated, so I'm not going to do it again. I will just explain the meditations.

When I do the practice, I usually visualize myself as the Thousand-armed Buddha of Compassion with nectar flowing from the hand. But I guess that you can also think that you are the Buddha of Compassion with one face and two arms and seated in the vajra posture as visualized in the very beginning of the nyung-nä practice, when you have to generate yourself as the Buddha of Compassion before you bless the action vase and the offerings. This aspect of the Buddha of Compassion is similar to that of White Tara; the only difference is that there are no eyes in the hands or the feet. Otherwise, I think the position is the same. Alternatively, you can visualize the Buddha of Compassion in the resting

posture, the posture of royal ease. This aspect also has one face and two arms and is seated on a moon disc. The right hand rests on the right knee in the mudra of granting sublime realizations and the left is stretched out behind on the moon disc. You can visualize whichever aspect you like.

You visualize that nectar comes from the palm of the hand, but physically, you pour water from a jug, kettle or watering can. A watering can with a long spout is very good for Dzambhala practice and for making water charity to the pretas since it allows you to pour the water in a very fine stream, which is the preferred way of offering it. If you don't have time, you can offer the water more quickly in a thicker stream.

For the water charity to the pretas, the container from which you pour should have a lid. You cannot use just any container that is around. It should be covered because pretas get very anxious when they see an empty container or a container that is only partly filled. Therefore, any container you use should be covered unless it is full and there should not be empty containers around when you do the practice. It is also good to do the practice in a clean place. This is advised for the one hundred torma offerings. Some pretas cannot come to dirty places. Also, there shouldn't be any sparkling lights where you are doing the practice as these lights will make the pretas run away.

The torma charity or the water charity can generally be done at any time of the day, though some specify that it should be done in the morning when the sun rises and others that it should be done at night. Different lamas give different advice. According to Lama Atisha, since pretas always need food and drink, the practice can be done at any time.

However, the torma charity to the pretas should be done before eating a meal, and this advice might also apply to the water charity. After you have eaten a meal, the pretas become scared because your body then becomes powerful and radiant. Another thing is that you should not smell of onion, garlic or other black foods. If the pretas smell these foods on your breath, hands or body, some of them will run away and won't get the torma or water that you are trying to give them. Therefore, it is good to do the practice in the morning before having a meal. If you have eaten, wash your hands before doing the practice.

Pretas are also so pitiful that they become frightened if they see the eyes of humans. For them, a human face is like the face of a lion, something

very haughty and intimidating. When my alphabet teachers did this practice every morning, they would wear a piece of animal skin with a fringe that covered their eyes. Ribur Rinpoche explained that when Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo did this practice he would wear very long black threads that completely covered his face. You can make something with black threads that at least cover your eyes.

When I stopped at Bangkok Airport on one of my recent trips from India or Nepal, I found some yellow hats and bought a small one for Brian and one big one. I wrote various mantras on the hat, including OM MANI PADME HUM, the Wish-granting Wheel mantra, which purifies one thousand eons of negative karma each time you go underneath it, and another mantra which when seen purifies 100,000 eons of negative karma. The hat was covered with mantras. I then had somebody sew black thread around the brim of the hat. The last time that I went to see Ribur Rinpoche in Washington, I thought I left the hat there. I didn't have one to use so I started to use the small one that I gave Brian, which also has mantras all over it. At that time the hat that I bought for Brian became useful. The big hat was later found in one of the suitcases.

When you pour the water, hold your left hand against your breast in the mudra of granting refuge and snap your fingers as you recite OM AH HRIH HUM, the mantra for the general pretas, over and over again. Think that you are the Buddha of Compassion and that your body is the size of a mountain. Pour the water from the container into the receptacle from the Dzambhala practice. Think that nectar flows from your hand and relieves the suffering of the numberless pretas. The nectar instantly cools their suffering of heat and they feel incredible peace and pleasure. Not only that, but it also goes into their mouth, purifies their negative karma and defilements, and brings them satisfaction. The nectar not quenches their thirst but also purifies their minds.

Then recite OM MANI PADME HUM as you make charity to the pretas with flames coming from the mouth. Again, do three things simultaneously: recite the mantra, snap your fingers and allow the water to drip from the container into the receptacle.

To make charity to the pretas with three knots, recite OM JVALA MIDAM SARVA PRETA BHYAH SOHA. *Jvala* actually means flame, but in the text it says that this mantra is for the pretas with three knots. As you recite the mantra, snap your fingers and at the same time give one drop

of water—do these three things together. In the previous two offerings [to the pretas in general and to those with flames coming from the mouth] you poured the water into the receptacle from the Dzambhala practice; here you allow the water to drip outside the receptacle into the body of water or onto plants or the ground. Recite the mantra, snap your fingers and drip the water many times to make water charity to the pretas with three knots.

Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo says here that if you recite this very blessed mantra OM JVALA MIDAM SARVA PRETA BHYAH SOHA, snap your fingers and offer one drop of water outside of the receptacle, the knots in the preta's throat are instantly released and the drop of water goes into their stomach giving them great pleasure and satisfaction. It has this great benefit.

As I have already said, I am not going to translate the prayers because I have already translated them.

WATER CHARITY TO THE INTERMEDIATE STATE BEINGS

The next practice is called Yeshe Karda. *Yeshe* means transcendental wisdom; *kar* means star and *da* can mean either shooting or arrow. You visualize yourself as Chenrezig and visualize the deity Yeshe Karda on your right hand. Yeshe Karda has a green-blue holy body; her right hand is in the mudra of granting sublime realizations and her left is in the mudra of concentration.

Nectar flows down from the palm of Yeshe Karda's hand as well as from the rest of her body. The nectar flows over all the sentient beings, but in particular over the pitiful intermediate state beings; they are all fully satisfied by the nectar. Hold the water in a container in your right hand and, snapping the fingers of your left hand, recite the mantra OM JNANA AVALOKITE SAMANTA PARANA RAMI BAWA SAMAYA MAHA MANI DURU DURU HRIH DAYA JALANI SOHA seven times and pour the water. Then recite the dedication, "By making this water charity to all the samsaric intermediate state transmigratory beings, may they be liberated from all fear and suffering and go to a pure land."

It is extremely good to do this practice when you are at the beach or near a river, lake or even a swimming pool.

The other mantras I recite are not mentioned in the practice; I have

added them to make the practice more powerful. The first time, along with the OM JNANA AVALOKITE... mantra, you can recite OM MANI PADME HUM as many times as possible times, blow on the water, then pour it back into the ocean, river or other body of water. The text doesn't say to blow on the water, but I think it would be better if you did. Meditate that all the water appears as uncontaminated nectar to all the pretas that are seen by buddha's omniscient mind. Think that all the pretas drink the nectar and are fully satisfied by it. Also, they are completely liberated from all their suffering, negative karma and defilements and all become enlightened in the aspect of the Buddha of Compassion. Visualize all of them as the Thousand-armed Buddha of Compassion.

Reciting this mantra (OM JNANA AVALOKITE...) and pouring the blessed water back into the ocean has the power to enable all the pretas to actually see the water and drink it. The special benefit here is that not only are they relieved of all their preta sufferings, but also that their mind is purified and they achieve a higher rebirth. This is a very important benefit that the pretas receive when this practice is done. This is a practice for all pretas. When you go to the beach, you must take the opportunity of doing this practice, because the ocean is the largest body of water. Due to the power of the mantra given by Buddha, the preta beings are able to see the whole ocean as nectar and to drink it; they are then able to be liberated.

Then take another container of water and again recite the mantra OM JNANA AVALOKITE... seven times. You can support the container with your left hand and hold the handle with your right. Then recite the Medicine Buddha mantra a few times and blow on the water. Do the same meditation and pour the water back.

Take another container of water, recite the mantra OM JNANA AVALOKITE... seven times, then recite the Namgyalma mantra a few times, blow on the water, then pour the water back.

For the fourth round, repeat the same process but recite the Mitukpa mantra. For the fifth round, recite the Kunrig mantra—Kunrig is the king of the deities for purifying the lower realms. For the sixth round, recite the Wish-granting Wheel mantra, OM PEMO USHNISHA VIMALE HUM PHAT. For the seventh, recite the Stainless Pinnacle mantra. You can also recite the Stainless Beam mantra.

Each time you take some water, recite the mantra OM JNANA

AVALOKITE... seven times, recite in turn a few of each of the other seven or eight extra mantras, blow on the water to bless it, pour the water back and meditate that the whole ocean appears as nectar to all the pretas.

I have added these extra mantras because if you bless the water with these powerful mantras and pour it back into the ocean, the whole ocean is then blessed and all the billions and billions of sentient beings that live in the ocean are purified. The water purifies all their negative karma, and even that of the people who play in the water. If we recite these mantras and throw the water back into the ocean, the negative karma of any sentient being touched by that water will be purified. Reciting those extra mantras has this unbelievable benefit; it has the power to bless the water and to purify all those sentient beings. And incidentally, you purify your own negative karma. If you see some water when you are traveling, if you have time to stop and do this practice, it is extremely good. And if you have a swimming pool, you can do this practice in your pool.

WATER CHARITY TO THE NAGAS

After the Yeshe Karda practice, the text next mentions visualizing Mitukpa to purify the nagas. Visualize that nectar flows down from Mitukpa's right hand to all the sentient beings of the six realms, especially the nagas. Again, while reciting the Mitukpa mantra seven times, pour the water and snap your fingers. All the sentient beings of the six realms, including yourself—and especially the nagas, who are suffering so much—are purified. As I mentioned before, the main cause of rebirth in the animal realm as a naga is taking vows and then degenerating them. The particular function of Mitukpa is to purify the negative karma of broken vows—pratimoksha as well as all others. Mitukpa practice is very powerful for that. Therefore, because rebirth as a naga is the result of having broken vows, Mitukpa practice is especially beneficial for nagas.

Finally, dedicate the merit as already translated there in the practice.

When you finish the water offering to the pretas, think that all the pretas have been totally purified of all their defilements and become the Buddha of Compassion. Here, you can think that all the nagas and the rest of the sentient beings of the six realms are purified of all their defilements and become Mitukpa. My feeling is that reciting the Mitukpa

mantra at the beach has particularly great benefit because of all the nagas there.

Making water charity to the pretas is actually a cause of wealth. As mentioned in the Madhyamika, “From morality one receives a good rebirth and from charity one receives wealth.” Making charity to other sentient beings is a cause of wealth. Because of the nature of the karma, making charity becomes the cause of your success in this life and in all the coming future lives. You are able to fulfill your wishes and receive whatever you need for both your Dharma practice and to benefit others.

WATER OFFERING TO DZAMBHALA

Did I mention before how Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion, came to manifest as Dzambhala? No? What happened was that one day, when Lama Atisha was traveling in India—I’m not sure where, perhaps where Buddha cut his hair or around Bodhgaya; anyway, some place associated with Guru Shakyamuni Buddha—he saw a man dying of starvation on a sandy river bed. Lama Atisha felt such unbearable compassion for the man that he wanted to cut some flesh from his own body to help the man to survive. The man, refusing his offer, said, “I don’t want to eat the flesh of a monk.” Lama Atisha replied, “I understand. In particular, you should not eat the flesh of an arya being.” Lama Atisha was an arya being, one who has realization of true path, of the path of seeing and the path of meditation.

Lama Atisha was disappointed that the man wouldn’t accept his offer. He lay down on the sand and suddenly a very bright light appeared. When Lama Atisha looked up, he saw the Thousand-armed Buddha of Compassion, who said, “Don’t worry. I have a method to relieve the poverty of sentient beings.” The Buddha of Compassion then manifested as Dzambhala and taught various practice for alleviating the poverty of sentient beings.

Thus, Dzambhala is the Buddha of Compassion, not some ordinary, worldly, wealth-granting god. The Buddha of Compassion manifested as Dzambhala to grant wealth, to relieve the poverty of sentient beings. The practices of the Dzambhala wealth vase, tormas offering to Dzambhala, water offering to Dzambhala and recitation of the Dzambhala mantra came from Chenrezig as methods to relieve poverty.

There is a white Dzambhala, a yellow Dzambhala, a black Dzambhala and a red Dzambhala. Also an Australian Dzambhala, an American Dzambhala, an LMB Dzambhala, a Californian Dzambhala!

White Dzambhala rides a dragon and has four dakinis around him. Recite the prayer, then pour water on the head of Dzambhala while snapping your fingers and reciting the mantra OM PADMA KRODHA ARYA DZAMBHALA HRIH DAYA HUM PHAT. Ribur Rinpoche explained the reason for pouring the water on Dzambhala's head—there might be more details in the text, but all I remember is that at the time Devadatta threw rocks at the Buddha, the Buddha was surrounded by Dzambhalas. The rocks hit the white and yellow Dzambhalas on the head and the black Dzambhala on the stomach, wounding them there. Therefore, we offer water on Dzambhala's head, and in return, Dzambhala gives prosperity, wealth. In the text, the poetic term *nyäl-dro'i gyun-po* is used for “water.”

However, Dzambhala is the Buddha of Compassion and this is the story. I think that Buddha probably manifested in this way to help sentient beings by giving them this method to practice water offering to Dzambhala. It is not possible for the Buddha of Compassion, an enlightened being, to experience suffering. Anyway, this is why you offer the water on Dzambhala's head or stomach.

As in the general practice of offering, if you visualize Dzambhala as inseparable from the guru, you accumulate more merit when making the offering. You can also think that your offering fills Dzambhala's holy mind with bliss as extensive as the sky and inspires him to immediately help to fulfill all your needs.

Ribur Rinpoche gave me one very nice small statue of Black Dzambhala, which came from Tibet. When Rinpoche gave it to me, he said to the statue, “Now you go to him, now you go to him...” I also have one small Yellow Dzambhala statue that was maybe bought in Dharamsala. It was given to some Tibetans in Dharamsala to be painted gold, but now even the eyes are covered with gold. You can't see the eyes clearly because of the gold. Just recently, a White Dzambhala on a dragon came from Nepal. I ordered it from Rajesh, who is the best painter of gold and who has now started to make statues. He made the statue very nicely, except that he made Dzambhala's face wrathful, like Palden Lhamo's or Mahakala's. Dzambhala's face should be fat with round eyes like Namtöse [Vaishravana], the protector of morality.

Think that Dzambhala is totally inspired to bring immediate success to whatever projects you have, as well as to relieve all other sentient beings from poverty immediately by giving them everything they need.

I usually try to think that Dzambhala is totally inspired to immediately bring about the success of the Maitreya Project, the building of the 500-foot statue of Maitreya Buddha, by giving everything that is needed to actualize the statue. I also think that Dzambhala is inspired to immediately give everything that is needed to bring extensive benefit to the teachings and to sentient beings. However, you can think like this in relation to whatever projects you have in mind. First think of your main project, then after that think that Dzambhala is inspired to immediately bring extensive benefit to the teachings of the Buddha and to sentient beings, which covers everything, through giving everything that is needed. I have been telling people that these two small statues of Dzambhala have the responsibility of building the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue. They are very small but their job is huge.

Next comes water offering to Yellow Dzambhala. There is a prayer to recite that requests the granting of realizations; this has already been translated, so you can read it in the text. You then recite the mantra, OM DZAMBHALA JALANDRAYE SOHA.

At the end you recite a verse of prostration and request. It says, “Sentient beings are tormented by the fire of the actions of miserliness, so together with all other sentient beings, I go for refuge to you from life to life. With the flowing nectar rain of jewel treasure, please pacify the suffering of poverty of sentient beings.”

After you have finished the practice, you sprinkle the water in each of the four directions and in the center [Rinpoche uses ring finger as in sprinkling the inner offering]. Think that the poverty in the minds of all sentient beings has been pacified. Then take a little bit of water at the end as a blessing. Then say, DZAMBHALA SIDDHI PALA HO.

Make charity to the pretas with the rest of the water. Ribur Rinpoche said that to do this is very powerful and has more blessings.

DEDICATION

At the end, dedicate first of all for bodhicitta, as usual. Then dedicate specifically for the long lives of the virtuous friends and for the immediate

accomplishment of all their holy wishes. “Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may I be able to obtain immediately everything needed to fulfill the holy wishes of all my virtuous friends.

“Due to this merit, may I be able to actualize immediately everything that is needed by the sangha to complete their Dharma practice, both realizations and scriptural understanding, and to preserve and spread the Dharma.

“May I also be able to actualize immediately everything that is needed by those sentient beings who are experiencing material poverty, as well as everything that is needed by those who are experiencing poverty of Dharma.” (You should do this specific dedication, because your purpose in doing the Dzambhala practice is to help others and to serve the teachings of Buddha.)

After that, do any of the dedications in *A Daily Meditation Practice*, but the main ones I would choose are: “Due to all the merits of the three times, may anyone who sees me, touches me, remembers me...” and “From now on, may whatever kind of life I experience, even rebirth in the lower realms, be most beneficial for all sentient beings, causing them all to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.” You don’t have to do all the dedications in the booklet; choose any one of them you like.

Or you can do the dedication that I often use, in which you request for this and that to happen just through your being in this universe, world, country, area or place. Dedicate for everyone to have perfect happiness; to find solutions to all their problems, including the various sicknesses; to never ever be reborn in the lower realms; and to achieve all the realizations of the path, especially bodhicitta.

Another very important dedication is, “Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, from now on in all my future lifetimes, may I be able to offer benefit as extensive as the sky to all sentient beings as the Buddha of Compassion does by having the same qualities within me as the Buddha of Compassion has.”

After that, recite *ge-wa di...* and seal the dedication with emptiness.

At the very end, it is extremely important to dedicate for the flourishing of Lama Tsong Khapa’s teachings. Always do this dedication at the end of every practice session. Dedicate to actualize the complete teachings

of Lama Tsong Khapa, the unification of sutra and tantra, within your own mind in this very life; in the minds of all the students and benefactors of this organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives offering service to others and the teachings through this organization; and in the minds of all other sentient beings. You can do this dedication for the spreading and flourishing of Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings in the minds of all sentient beings elaborately or briefly. You should do this dedication for the flourishing of Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings at the end of any practice because if the teachings exist for a long time, sentient beings will have the opportunity of achieving happiness. Without the teachings of buddha, sentient beings have no chance of achieving happiness.

Ven. Chantal: Rinpoche, I have a question. Rinpoche said that Yeshe Karda is blue-green, but the translation says that Yeshe Karda is "extremely red in color," so it is very confusing.

Rinpoche: Oh, I see. Yes, there is *great* confusion! Unbelievable confusion! The confusion is so big that it doesn't fit in Paris—I'm joking.

Pabongka's commentary says that Yeshe Karda is blue-green, but the prayer says that Yeshe Karda is extremely red. Maybe the deity has different colors. I think you can visualize whichever color you like, whichever color suits you more.

The water charity to the pretas and the Dzambhala water offering are now finished. Tomorrow, if there is time, we might go through the nine attitudes from the guru devotion section of Lama Tsong Khapa's *Lam-rim chen-mo*. The prayer that I translated is not from there, but from a text by Shabkar Tsogdrug Rangdrol, whose main guru was the abbot of Reting. I don't remember this abbot's name, but he composed many texts, including a commentary to *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. However, the nine attitudes are also explained in Lama Tsong Khapa's lam-rim.

"Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may all the father and mother sentient beings have happiness; may the three lower realms be empty forever; may all the bodhisattvas' prayers be accomplished immediately; and may I be able to cause all this by myself alone.

"Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas,

bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, which are totally empty from their own side, may the I, who is also totally empty from its own side, achieve Vajrasattva's enlightenment, which is also totally empty from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are also totally empty from their own side, to that enlightenment, which is also totally empty from its own side, by myself alone, who is also totally empty from its own side.”

[Multiplying mantras etc.]

Then dedicate for the flourishing of Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings.

Good night.

Friday, April 30 (A)

LONG LIFE PUJA FOR LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

Good morning, everyone.

THIS IS FOR ALL OF US

Today we're doing a long life puja, but it's a long life puja for every one of us. What does it mean that this is everyone's long life puja? We do this puja together. We all begin by taking strong refuge in the Guru-Triple Gem and we also do the rest of the practice together. In this way, we purify our minds and collect extensive merit. Therefore, any life obstacles there are, which arise from non-virtuous actions, get purified. That's how reciting the prayers contained in this puja becomes a long life puja for every one of us. Without your long life, even if I lived long, I could not benefit others!

Not only that, but this *Guru Puja* contains the most secret, highest tantric subjects. This practice was done by all those ancient yogis, such as Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, and Lama Tsong Khapa as well. Just like Milarepa, who became enlightened in one brief lifetime of the degenerate age, who became enlightened in the same life in which he began to practice tantra, similarly, many of Lama Tsong Khapa's disciples achieved full enlightenment in the same way. All those great yogis who achieved enlightenment in one brief lifetime of the degenerate age were able to do so mainly through their practice of guru yoga. They meditated on, or practiced, guru yoga, which is what enabled them to reach enlightenment quickly, in one brief lifetime of the degenerate age.

Even if we don't know the subject—the commentary, or the meaning behind the subject matter of this puja—we are still extremely fortunate even to have the opportunity of reciting the words. We are extremely fortunate even to be able to hear the words of this most precious teaching of the quickest path to enlightenment.

So, my advertisement has now finished! Thank you very much.

[Puja begins.]

[Rice is distributed to Rinpoche and the sangha.] Buddha has inconceivable qualities, Dharma has inconceivable qualities, Sangha has inconceivable qualities. The result of having devotion to those who have these inconceivable qualities is also inconceivable. Through the merit of offering this most delicious Tibetan rice, may we all be born in the pure land.

[Puja continues.]

THANK YOU SO MUCH

I would like to thank Venerable Marcel very, very much for taking the time to lead this Vajrasattva retreat while he was also extremely busy with the Maitreya Project. It came out in the observations that it would be very beneficial for him to lead the Vajrasattva retreat, so he kindly took the time to do this—leading every session every day, showing great patience and everything. Therefore, I would like to thank Venerable Marcel very much for leading the Vajrasattva retreat. All the various practices that I recommended were done extremely well, were of good quality.

[Rinpoche offers something to Marcel, everyone claps.] That's a gold coin to build a 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue!

Next, I would like to thank very much, from the bottom of my heart, the director of the FPMT International Office, Sharon, for her total dedication, devotion and sincerity. Since she offered herself to the organization to benefit sentient beings and the teaching of the Buddha, I would like to thank her very much for having done the job of director and request her to remain on the board of directors.

I would also like to thank the mother of Land of Medicine Buddha, Venerable Namdag, from the bottom of my heart for being a loving mother to everyone, taking responsibility for everything at LMB, bearing many hardships and showing great tolerance through it all. In particular, I would like to thank her for taking responsibility for organizing the

Vajrasattva retreat.

After we made the decision to conduct this Vajrasattva retreat, we still weren't sure where to hold it. So the director, Venerable Namdag, and Land of Medicine Buddha took responsibility for organizing it here at Land of Medicine Buddha. So thanks are due to her for her dedication—her service to me and the organization—in general, and for running LMB in particular. And especially for taking responsibility for this retreat.

All the merit that we had the opportunity of collecting every day is due to that. For example, each time we generate the motivation of bodhicitta, we collect merit like the sky. In just one *Guru Puja* there are so many practices through which we collect merit. With each offering we make, we collect inconceivable merit. When we do the practice of rejoicing, when we rejoice in our own merits of the three times and in the merits collected by others, we collect merit like the sky. By doing all these practices, by planting the seed of the path to enlightenment on the basis of guru devotion, we collect inconceivable merit and bring ourselves nearer to enlightenment and nearer to enlightening all sentient beings. With each prostration, we collect inconceivable merit. With each recitation of each of the Thirty-five Buddhas' names, we purify many thousands of eons of negative karma, negativity collected not only in this life but from beginningless rebirths.

And especially doing Vajrasattva practice. As many Vajrasattva mantras as we have recited, that much negative karma have we purified. There's a huge difference between how we are now, after three months or however many days of Vajrasattva retreat have been done, and how we were before we started the retreat. It has made a huge difference—much of the negative karma created in this and previous lives won't have to be experienced at all, and much of the rest has been made much lighter. The more Vajrasattva we have been able to do, that much lighter has our karma become—inconceivable eons of suffering in the lower realms have become shorter and lighter or totally eliminated. Also, we have greatly decreased the amount of time we will have to experience samsaric suffering, which is like a bottomless ocean. And each day, in every session, we have collected inconceivable merit.

All this is due to Venerable Marcel and especially the organizer, Venerable Namdag, and all her helpers—the cook, Karen, and the rest of

the staff here, all these young dakas and dakinis who serve every day with much tolerance, love and compassion. I would like to thank you all very, very much.

VAJRASATTVA RETREAT

This retreat has been a great learning experience for the future by showing how such retreats should be set up. Although out of laziness I didn't manage to retreat continuously for the three months or even get to all the sessions, I can see that the quality of practice at this Vajrasattva retreat has been very good. The powerful practices we did in the mornings—prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas and the *Guru Puja*—were extremely important. Such practices are the root of developing the mind in the path to enlightenment. Beginning the day with guru devotion by practicing something like the *Guru Puja* is really unbelievable; it's fantastic. The quality of this Vajrasattva retreat was really very good, especially with all those additional practices. Therefore, I am extremely happy with what happened.

My wish, however, is to hold a Vajrasattva retreat like this every three years or so. I think it would be incredibly beneficial. It's not possible to do it every year, but we could manage every three years or so, in different countries around the world. Sometimes it can be done in Taiwan; it can be done in different parts of the world. It's extremely beneficial.

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

I didn't get to write a letter to His Holiness the Dalai Lama yet. I wanted you all to hear this letter offering the merits of your practice to His Holiness. What I would like to do is to send His Holiness a letter from Land of Medicine Buddha offering him the merits of all the mantras we have recited. [See Appendix 6.]

As I mentioned in the first talk, we can tally all the mantras counted by those who completed 100,000 and the totals of the people who didn't finish that many and offer His Holiness the merits of all these mantras together with the merits of all the other practices we've done during this time—Vajrasattva practice, prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas, *Guru Puja* and so forth. We can dedicate all this merit for His Holiness,

the Buddha of Compassion, to have a stable life and for all his holy wishes to succeed immediately, particularly the cause of Tibet. We can dedicate all this merit to the quickest possible success of His Holiness's wishes for the freedom and independence of Tibet. We can then make the request, "Due to these merits, may Your Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Buddha of Compassion, guide us unceasingly in all future lifetimes, from now until our enlightenment. May all our actions become only most pleasing to your holy mind."

I planned to write a short letter like this. I did mention at the very beginning of the retreat that you can dedicate the merits from your heart in this way. It's not just for the letter. Anyway, all that we have been able to do has come about solely through the kindness of the Buddha of Compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

THANKS AGAIN

As I just mentioned, all the merit we have collected and all the negative karma we have purified is through the kindness of the organizers, so I would like to thank everybody again.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who did the entire three-month Vajrasattva retreat or part of it. I would like to thank you very, very much, from the bottom of my heart. Your helping each other has been very beneficial. Coming here to practice together, to inspire each other, has been very beneficial.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS RETREAT

Some of the retreat people I met expressed the wish to do this retreat again and were hoping another would be organized. This is an extremely good sign. However, by doing this retreat, whether you did the whole three months or just part of it, as much as you did, you have made your future lives that much easier—you have made it much easier to achieve realizations and have decreased the obstacles you will have to overcome. Many obstacles—negative karma created in relation to your gurus, other holy objects and sentient beings—have been purified during this retreat. You won't encounter these in future lives.

Therefore, rejoice and enjoy your life with the inspiration that you've

gained during this retreat and especially with bodhicitta, the thought of benefiting others.

Before, you may not have had that much feeling for Dharma, but now, after participating in the retreat, there's more of a Dharma feeling in your heart. Your heart has become more Dharma than before. That's a sign of having purified obscurations. You feel more compassion for others—that's one of the best signs of purification; more devotion to the Triple Gem, more devotion to the guru, more faith in karma than before—those are the best signs of purification. Those are in addition to the signs explained in the texts—this dream, that dream, the other dream, all those dreams. Dreams of eating ice cream, drinking milkshakes...anyway, I'm joking!

I think that's all. I don't want to mumble any more!

But I must also thank the co-director here, Angela, who has been the Dzambhala of Land of Medicine Buddha! And Kendall, the Spiritual Program Coordinator, too. And the rest of the staff. [Rinpoche gives each one a blessing; much applause.]

[Puja continues.]

DEDICATION

“Due to all the past, present and future merit collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings—which is totally non-existent (we put in all this effort to collect merit and it's totally non-existent!), totally non-existent from its own side—may the I—which is also totally non-existent from its own side—achieve the absolute guru, Guru Vajrasattva's enlightenment—which is also totally non-existent from its own side—and lead all sentient beings—who are also totally non-existent from their own side—to that enlightenment—which is also totally non-existent from its own side—by myself alone—who is also totally non-existent from its own side.”

Then, finally, “May Lama Tsong Khapa's stainless teachings of unified sutra and tantra be actualized within my own mind and within the minds of everyone else here—all these Dharma friends who practice

together and support each other in collecting merit—and within the minds of all the students and benefactors of this organization—especially those who sacrifice their lives serving others and the teaching of the Buddha through this organization, including the organizers and staff here at Land of Medicine Buddha. May Lama Tsong Khapa’s stainless teaching of unified sutra and tantra be completely actualized in this very lifetime within us all, spread in the minds of all sentient beings, and may this teaching flourish forever.”

I would also like to thank very much all those who participated today, who attended the long life puja, especially Venerable Tarchin from Taiwan. Many of his students came from Taiwan today especially for this long life puja and made offerings to Nalanda Monastery and to individual monks and nuns. I would like to thank you all very much. Venerable Tarchin also wants to offer Nalanda Monastery at least \$3,000 a year to help the sangha. After he finishes building his large temple in Taiwan, he wants to support the Western sangha at Nalanda.

I would like today’s money offerings to be divided into three parts—one for the Sangha Fund, one for the Vajrapani prayer wheel and the other for the large prayer wheel at the Aptos house.

Thank you very much.

Friday, April 30 (B)

EVENING: AMITABHA INITIATION

This is the American style of giving teachings! [Rinpoche is sitting in an armchair.]

This Amitabha initiation, or blessing to achieve Amitabha Buddha's pure land, that we are going to do today is also combined with a long life initiation, or blessing—it's for both having a long life and achieving the blissful pure field of Amitabha Buddha.

THE LINEAGE OF THIS INITIATION

I received the lineage of this initiation from one of the heads of the Sakya sect, His Holiness Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche, who is a guru of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, from whom His Holiness received in particular the Sakya *lam-dre* teachings, and I think also the Dorje Purba initiation and some other teachings. But particularly the lam-dre teachings, the main practice of the Sakya tradition. His Holiness Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche is also one of the main gurus of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, who is the head of the Sakya sect. I went to Boston from Vajrapani Institute especially to request and receive this initiation to achieve the pure land of Amitabha. Rinpoche gave this initiation sitting in a chair, because when Rinpoche received this initiation from the head of the Nyingma sect, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche himself gave the initiation sitting in a chair.

There are probably also some auspicious reasons for this, perhaps similar reasons to those for Maitreya Buddha's being seated—showing that he's about to get up, about to descend into this world. Whether it is exactly the same reason or not, there is some auspicious reason for this particular initiation being given in this way.

I think this chair is also giving teachings! [Rinpoche's chair is making creaking noises when he moves.] The chair is giving teachings on

emptiness—it's saying, "No form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no tangible objects, no enlightenment, no hell. . .!" Anyway, I'm joking!

THE PURPOSE OF THIS INITIATION

The purpose of this, then, is to be born in a pure land. What is the importance of that? First of all, the purpose of life is not to create suffering. The purpose of life is to achieve happiness. Anyway, that is our wish. Our wish is not to experience suffering; what we wish for is happiness.

The actual, real happiness that we should look for, that we should achieve, is liberation, the total cessation of the whole entire cycle of suffering—death, rebirth, old age and sickness; not finding desirable objects; then even after finding them, being worried and afraid of losing them; and not deriving satisfaction from the desirable objects we acquire. These are the problems, or sufferings, experienced particularly by human beings; problems experienced by the human body and mind.

Then there are all the sufferings not only of the human realm but also those of other sentient beings, such as the suras and asuras, the worldly gods, who suffer as desire realm gods, form realm gods and formless realm gods.

THE SUFFERING OF THE FORM AND FORMLESS GODS

The form and formless realm gods, those samsaric beings, even though they do not experience the suffering of change, they do experience pervasive compounding suffering—their aggregates are the production of their past karma and delusion and the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. Therefore, when the karma to be in, for example, the four formless realms—infinite sky, infinite consciousness, nothingness and the tip of samsara—when their karma to be at the tip of samsara finishes, again they must reincarnate in the desire realm. Even after reaching the highest realm in samsara, because they still have negative karma created in the past to be born in the lower realms, they have to reincarnate in samsara again, even in the lower realms. Again they have to circle from one of the six realms to the other—through the hell, hungry ghost, animal, sura, asura and human realms. They have to reincarnate in these realms again and again, continuously circling through them, experiencing unimaginable suffering.

Even though the aggregates of the formless realm beings are contaminated, they don't have the suffering of pain, sickness, heat and cold; all these things that we do. They don't have to go through old age and sickness; the kinds of problem we experience in the desire realm. They don't have the suffering of pain or the suffering of change—sense pleasure derived from external objects, which are exclusively suffering in nature, but which appear to us as pleasure. Because they appear to us as pleasure, we get attached to them. In this way, we cheat ourselves. Attachment to sense pleasure becomes the cause of our reincarnating back into samsara once more and experiencing the same old suffering, again and again; the suffering of pain, the suffering of change and pervasive compounding suffering. Our aggregates are not only produced by an impure cause, karma and delusion, but also by the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. As long as that is not ceased, we have to incarnate again in samsara—even after achieving rebirth in the highest realm in samsara.

WHAT GODS MUST DO TO GAIN LIBERATION

To be liberated from samsara, those long-life gods have to realize total renunciation of samsara. They have to actualize not only total detachment from the desire realm, which they already have, but also total detachment from the form realm. The formless realm beings, at the fourth level—the tip of the samsara, the highest realm of samsara—have total detachment from even the formless realm: infinite sky, infinite consciousness and nothingness. But they do not have total detachment from samsara, because there is no higher realm, than the one they're in, to compare it to. Thus, it is impossible for them to analyze that the tip of samsara has more gross suffering than the next highest realm and that the next highest realm has more peace and happiness than does the tip of samsara. They can't meditate on the better quality of the next highest realm because there is no next highest realm above the tip of the samsara. That is as high as you can go; the ultimate realm in samsara.

Therefore, even though gods at the tip of samsara have total detachment from and complete renunciation of the entire desire realm, they are not detached from their own realm. They completely renounce the sense pleasures of the human realm and even those of the worldly gods in the desire realm. They even renounce, for example, the pleasures of the Gods

of the Thirty-three, which is one of the sura desire realms where the gods have billions of times greater pleasures than human beings enjoy and whose abode is much more beautiful and has infinitely better enjoyments than those of any human being, even those who live in the most developed countries. The formless samsaric beings at the fourth level, the tip of the samsara, who have total detachment from even the pleasures of the desire realm devas, which are billions of times better than those of humans, also have total detachment from the lower formless realms—infinite sky, infinite consciousness and nothingness—but they do not have total detachment from the tip of samsara, their own realm.

To be liberated from samsara, those long-life gods not only need to have total renunciation of, total detachment from, the whole entire samsara, including their own realm, the tip of samsara, but they also need the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. In order not to reincarnate in samsara again, they have to realize the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.

It is said in the teachings that when their karma to be in the formless realm has finished, when they see that they have to reincarnate again in samsara, in the desire realm, in the lower realms and so forth, at that time—because they have achieved that realm through meditation and believed that they'd achieved liberation—heresy arises within them. They start to think, "Maybe it's not true; maybe there's no such thing as liberation." Naturally, that heresy—believing that liberation is not possible—causes them to be reborn in the lower realms.

The conclusion is that even at the tip of samsara, the beings in that realm, who do not experience the suffering of pain or the suffering of change, are not free from pervasive, compounding suffering.

THE HAPPINESS WE SEEK SHOULD TRANSCEND ALL SUFFERING

Therefore, the real happiness that we should look for, what we should really achieve, is the happiness that is not suffering—ultimate happiness, total cessation of pervasive, compounding suffering. Not just the cessation of the suffering of pain but also cessation of the suffering of change—the feelings that appear to be pleasure but in reality, when we analyze them, are found to be only suffering in nature. When we analyze those feelings we realize that they're actually suffering and that if we continue to do the

action, instead of the pleasure getting better and better, it not only gets less and less but at the same time the suffering builds up more and more until it becomes overt suffering of pain. If we continue to do the action, the less and less we experience pleasure and the more and more we experience the suffering of pain.

Our mind labels the feelings we experience at the beginning as “pleasure” because a heavy suffering has just stopped; an unpleasant feeling has stopped because we have stopped doing the action that compounded it. For example, if we’ve been sitting for a long time and stand up, the discomfort that was compounded by the sitting stops because the action of sitting has stopped. The action that compounded the discomfort, pain, tiredness and so forth—the sitting—has stopped, therefore the discomfort stops. But at the same time, the action of standing immediately begins to compound the discomfort of standing. Although it is compounded immediately, it is very subtle—so tiny, so small, that we don’t notice it at first. But even though we don’t notice it at the beginning, the discomfort of standing has already begun. It begins the very moment we stand up. The action of standing immediately starts to create the discomfort of standing, but it is so small that it’s unnoticeable. However, our mind labels that feeling “pleasure” and it appears to us as pleasure.

Then the emotional mind arises, the mind that exaggerates this feeling into pleasure. As I described one night, how delusions arise on the basis of ignorance; how our ignorance fabricates, or projects, inherent existence and we see an inherently existent object, similarly, our mind exaggerates the pleasure and clings to it with attachment; our mind clings with attachment to a feeling that is pain in nature but is very difficult to separate from. That clinging mind of attachment is not a peaceful mind. It disturbs and obscures our mental continuum. The effect of attachment on us is that we have no inner peace, no satisfaction and no tranquility. The effect is that we get disturbance, a lack of peace. The function of attachment, what it does to our mind, is to disturb and obscure our mental continuum.

ATTACHMENT IMPEDES WISDOM

This obscuration interferes with our being able to see the very nature of phenomena; their ultimate nature, the very nature of the I. It obscures us

from seeing what the I is. Attachment obscures us from seeing the ultimate nature of the self that we think and talk about twenty-four hours a day—“I, I, I”; from seeing what the very nature of the I really is. Attachment prevents us from seeing the ultimate nature of our I.

As long as we don't realize the very nature of the I and the very nature of our mind, due to that hallucination, the ignorance of not knowing those natures, we continuously, forever, have to die and get reborn, die and get reborn, die and get reborn, and constantly experience old age, sickness and all the other human sufferings as well. We have to go through the same problems again and again in the human world by repeatedly being reborn in the human world, as well as having to go through the same old sufferings in the other five samsaric realms—the hell, hungry ghost, animal, sura and asura realms.

THE SUFFERING OF THE AGGREGATES

These aggregates, this association of body and mind, are pervasive, compounding suffering not only because they are produced by an impure cause; not only because they come from, have been created by, the impure cause of ignorance—not knowing what the I is, not knowing the ultimate nature of the I, not knowing the very nature of the mind; ignorance from which delusions such as desire arise—but also because they were created by delusion and karma.

This samsara, the association of our body and mind, is the container of all our life's problems because it was created by delusion and karma. Therefore, whenever our aggregates meet unfavorable conditions, we experience the suffering of pain. When our aggregates meet certain conditions, we experience suffering. In particular, when we meet the condition of an unfavorable object, we experience the suffering of pain—mental anguish, worry, fear, physical discomfort and so forth.

If our aggregates, the association of our body and mind, had not been created by karma and delusion, there would be no reason at all for our having to experience, for example, fear. Why would we have fear? There'd be no reason. Why would we worry, why would we feel afraid, why would we experience unhappiness—why? There would be no cause for it. Why would we get sick? As I've mentioned before, even when we sit down, if we are not careful we can easily induce pain and discomfort,

and the longer we sit, the more and more discomfort we feel. Even when we lie down, it's the same. The longer we lie down, the more unpleasant it becomes.

Even when we pinch our skin between our fingers, we feel pain and discomfort. With just that little bit of pressure we feel pain. Even that shows, proves, that there is reincarnation, that there are past lives. What put these present aggregates, this association of body and mind, together. What is the cause? What put our consciousness and this body together?

This association of body and mind is a result; it is a causative phenomenon. It is a result. Therefore, before the result—this association of body and mind, these aggregates, this samsara—manifested in our mother's womb, the cause must have existed. A cause has to exist before its result. Cause and result cannot exist together. There has to be a cause before a result; they cannot co-exist. That's not possible. The pre-existent cause in question is delusion and karma. Therefore, the pain we feel when we pinch our skin comes with our aggregates. We were born with that nature, which is pain, because it came from its cause—delusion and karma—which existed before this result.

Now, not only are these aggregates the container of all this life's problems, but they also become the foundation for future lives' problems, future lives' suffering. Not only are these aggregates pervaded by suffering but they also bear the contaminated seed of disturbing thoughts. Therefore, these aggregates compound the future samsara. The continuation of these aggregates circles to the next life, and that continuation of samsara, those aggregates, circles to the life after that, and then to the next and the next, and so it goes on, without end. We then experience all the sufferings of each of the six realms. If we do not completely break their continuity, we will continue taking samsaric aggregates without end and will continue drowning in the vast oceans of human suffering again and again, not to mention those of all the other realms as well.

Thus, there'll be no end to cancer, no end to chemotherapy, no end to surgery, no end to going to hospital, no end to taking medicine, no end to spending vast sums of money checking the body, no end to x-rays. All these operations and other treatments will never finish, never end. There'll be no end to having jobs, having to work to make money.

Until you break the continuity of this samsara, these defiled aggregates—this continuity that circles from one life to another—there'll be

no end to hard work. Again we'll have to educate ourselves all the way up from kindergarten, through school, college and university and try to find a job. There'll be no end to all this. We'll go on and on and on without end. It'll be incredibly boring! It'll go on and on. There'll be no end to marriage, no end to fighting! No end to divorce! No end to seeing psychologists; no end to having mental problems and seeing psychiatrists. No end to life difficulties. No end to going to meditation courses—billions and billions of courses; no end. This course, that course, the other course; courses for this, courses for that—no end. Courses for the body, courses for the mind, courses for the nose! Courses for the ears! Anyway, I'm joking!

REAL HAPPINESS IS THE CESSATION OF PERVASIVE COMPOUNDING
SUFFERING

Therefore, the real happiness that we should seek is the total cessation of all this suffering, especially pervasive compounding suffering. We should seek the cessation of the continuation of these aggregates, of their circling; we should seek to be totally free from samsara.

Pervasive, compounding suffering is like a thorn bush that has been fastened to our naked body so that we have to carry it wherever we go. Whether we go to the mountains or the city, East or West, to the moon or underground, wherever we go, we are constantly in pain. Our very nature is pain and suffering because of this thorn bush chained to our naked body. Being in samsara is just like this. There's not a second's peace; no real happiness. It's like a blazing log of wood that is oneness with fire has been chained to our body. Until we break the chain, we will never be free from this burning log that is oneness with fire. We constantly experience problems, but wherever in the world we go in search of peace and satisfaction, it is the same. The suffering of samsara never stops; problems never stop.

If we can totally free ourselves from pervasive, compounding suffering, we will be totally free from the suffering of pain and the suffering of change. If we are not totally free from pervasive, compounding suffering, any freedom from the suffering of pain we experience is only temporary. Even freedom from the suffering of change, the temporary samsaric pleasures whose nature is only suffering, is also temporary. We will continue to experience it again and again.

HOW TO ACHIEVE ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

Therefore, the happiness we need to achieve is everlasting, ultimate happiness, and once we have achieved it, it is impossible for this happiness to degenerate, for us to ever experience suffering again. It is impossible because there is no cause, no reason. There is no imprint, no seed of the delusion, that causes delusions to arise and motivate karma, which then causes us to experience suffering. Once we remove the seed of delusion, it is impossible for us to ever experience suffering again.

To achieve this great result takes just a one time effort, a one time practice. Unlike samsaric work, we don't have to do it again and again; again and again and again without end. It's not like that. Dharma practice brings liberation with a one time effort. Work to experience samsaric pleasure—temporary sense pleasure through form, sound, smell, taste and touch—has no end. We have to do it again and again. Once more, the pleasure finishes; once more we have to do the work. Again the pleasure finishes, again we do the work. There is no way to finish this kind of work, no way to complete it—never. It certainly hasn't happened so far—from beginningless rebirths up to now. And from now on, there'll be no end to it either; no way to complete this work.

But all this is talking about just our own ultimate happiness, our own liberation. It is even more important to achieve the ultimate happiness of full enlightenment, the great liberation—total cessation of even the subtle, negative imprints of delusion; ignorance, the unknowing mind.

Although the I is merely imputed by the mind, although there is no I in this body, although there is no I, no self, no me in this body, no I can be found in this body, although the body is not the I, the mind is not the I, even the association of body and mind is not the I, I exists nowhere on this association of body and mind, although nothing is the I, although there is no I on *this*, ignorance believes, apprehends that there *is* an I on these aggregates, on this association of body and mind, in this body—that there is an I here somewhere.

When we do not make this analysis in our daily lives, we feel that while there may not be an I in our head, in our stomach, but there is one somewhere inside the body, somewhere here [Rinpoche points to his chest]. We feel that there is a real I there.

While there is no such I there—when we do make the analysis, our

wisdom cannot find it; the view of our wisdom is that there is no I there—the view of our wrong mind, wrong concept, ignorance, is that there *is* an I there, which is a total hallucination. While the I is merely labeled by the mind, our ignorance believes that this I merely labeled by the mind exists from its own side; that it is *not* merely labeled by mind.

Full enlightenment is the total cessation of this simultaneously born ignorance—the extremely subtle negative imprints left on our mental continuum, the complete quality of cessation—and the complete quality of realization.

Achieving this—and through it liberating numberless sentient beings from all their samsaric suffering and its cause, delusion and karma, and bringing them to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment—is the greatest happiness we can seek. It is the most important happiness as far as both we ourselves and especially all other sentient beings are concerned.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A GOOD HEART

Why should we help other sentient beings? Why should we benefit others; why should we think of others; why is it so important? The simple reason is that if you love others, others will love you. It's very simple to understand why it is so important to benefit others, to help others. Benefiting others, helping others, should be the main project, the main attitude, the main thing in your life. It should be your main education, your main project, the main way you live your life.

If possible, helping others should be the *only* thing in your life. There should be nothing else in your life—attitude and actions. If possible, there should be nothing else; only that.

However, the very simple reason is that if you have compassion, loving kindness for others, if you benefit others, if you help others, they will love you back; they will benefit you, they will help you. It is dependent arising. It works like that. As a result of your helping others, as a result of that action, you receive help from others.

As you plant a seed, so it produces the sprout, plant and fruit. Similarly, as you help others, benefit others, as a result of your good actions for others, you receive help from others, benefit from others. In this way, your wishes for happiness get fulfilled. Whatever wishes for happiness you have, they get fulfilled.

Thus, it has to come from you. Your mind, your good heart is the wish-fulfilling jewel. Amongst all material objects, the most valuable, the most priceless, is the wish-fulfilling jewel, but if this example doesn't work for you, think of money, which is the most common thing considered valuable these days. But even if you have a billion, trillion, zillion dollars that fill the whole sky, that money alone cannot fulfill all your wishes for happiness.

This is very simple to understand. In this world, there are many millionaires, billionaires—the richest people on earth—but there is still much suffering in their minds, in their lives; much dissatisfaction, much unhappiness in their hearts. All that money doesn't even bring happiness in their day to day lives, let alone the happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara and enlightenment. They get no real satisfaction from their money. Even though externally, materially, they might look successful, their lives are filled with misery, their hearts are filled with misery—depression, unhappiness. Empty hearts; empty lives. With money alone—even skies of dollars, untold billions of dollars—you cannot achieve ordinary happiness let alone the happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment. Wealth alone is not enough.

But from your good heart, your compassion, your loving kindness towards others, your thought of benefiting others, you can have it all. Your everyday life gives you great satisfaction, fulfillment. Your good heart—the thought of benefiting others, compassion and loving kindness—gives you much peace and happiness. Not only satisfaction, but fulfillment in your heart. This is infinitely more precious than skies full of billions of dollars or even wish-fulfilling jewels, which by praying to, all your wishes are granted and you can achieve whatever sense enjoyment or external object you like. No matter what material possessions are regarded as the most precious, their value is still nothing compared to that of the good heart—the thought of benefiting others, compassion and loving kindness.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama often says, if you have a good heart, even if you have nothing to eat or drink other than water, you are still so happy. Even if externally you have nothing, if you have a good heart, your mind is peaceful and happy. As His Holiness often mentions, even if externally you have nothing, no material possessions, even if you live by begging for whatever money or food you can get each day, there is much peace in your heart. Even if externally you have nothing, if you

have a good heart, you enjoy much peace, happiness and satisfaction.

From your good heart, you achieve all the happiness of this life. More importantly, you receive all the happiness of future lives. If you have a good heart, you experience happiness when you die. The day your death comes, at that very important, very risky time, your mind is happy. Even at that time. Not only is your day-to-day mind happy, peaceful, fulfilled, but because of that, you enjoy good health. Because of your peaceful mind, your loving, compassionate thought, you are also more healthy physically. You have fewer heart attacks or other health problems; many sicknesses don't happen.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR LIFE

This is not just talking about past karma. If in your day to day life you don't take care of your mind, if you don't guard against anger, for example, you can easily get sick. It is very easy for people who are very impatient, very emotional, to have heart attacks. Similarly, other negative emotional thoughts, such as grasping desire, attachment, anger and jealousy, bring sickness. Recently there have been some scientific studies showing the ill effects of this kind of attitude; how these negative emotional thoughts damage the health.

Anyway, if these negative minds cause you to engage in unrighteous actions, many, many sicknesses can result. You get sick because you're not protecting your mind, not looking after your mind—which means not looking after your life. Not looking after your mind means not looking after your life, not taking care of your life. It's the same thing. Happiness and suffering come from the mind, therefore, taking care of your life, looking after yourself, means looking after your mind. In order to avoid problems, to have only peace and happiness, it has to be this way. To take care of yourself, to look after yourself to be happy, you have to look after your mind, take care of your mind. Essentially, that means you have to practice Dharma; do nothing other than Dharma.

The best way of taking care of yourself is by practicing Dharma. Anything other than that creates negative karma. Taking care of your life, looking after yourself by any means other than Dharma creates negative karma. Anything outside of Dharma creates negative karma; anything other than good karma is negative karma. Creating negative karma is no

way to take care of yourself. Not practicing Dharma is no way to love yourself, look after yourself, take care of yourself, take care of your mind. Practicing Dharma is the only way to do that.

The best way of taking care of your life, of looking after yourself, is to make sure you keep your mind in virtue, maintain a positive attitude, and the very best way of doing that is to keep your mind in bodhicitta, the thought of benefiting others. That is the very best.

Looking after yourself means looking after your own mind, keeping your mind in virtue, always positive, keeping it healthy, in non-ignorance, non-anger, non-attachment and non-ego; maintaining a healthy mind, a free mind, a detached mind. It means taking care of your mind by keeping it away from the painful emotion of desire. It means taking care of your mind by keeping it away from anger—keeping it in tolerance, patience, loving kindness; keeping it away from the emotional, painful mind of anger—that very dangerous, harmful mind that destroys your merit, the sole source of your happiness. Looking after yourself means keeping your mind in bodhicitta, the thought of benefiting others; keeping it away from the selfish mind.

Therefore, the real definition of looking after yourself, looking after your mind, taking care of your life is nothing other than practicing lam-rim—keeping your mind in guru devotion and detachment, or renunciation—making your mind free, instead of bound and tortured by attachment; making your mind healthy—free from attachment clinging to this life, samsara, and endowed with bodhicitta and right view.

This is the essence. Through this, the door to all suffering is closed and the door to every happiness, including that of enlightenment, is opened. Not only is the door to moment to moment peace and happiness—everyday life peace and happiness, this life's peace and happiness—opened, but so is the door to all coming future lives' happiness, liberation from samsara and the highest enlightenment.

In this way, then, you are able to make your life meaningful. Practicing Dharma gives meaning to your life. Your life does not become meaningless. You don't need to commit suicide thinking life is hopeless and has no meaning. Changing your attitude in this way, developing a positive mind, especially bodhicitta, makes your life the best—most meaningful and beneficial not only for yourself but for all sentient beings. It gives you a purpose for living.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The purpose of your life is to bring happiness, including the happiness of this life, to other sentient beings; to do whatever you can for others every day, even if it's small—giving a smile or a few kind words to make someone happy, to release someone from tension, depression or unhappiness; in everyday life, offering others whatever great or small happiness, comfort or benefit you can; taking every opportunity to bring the happiness of this life to others—is one aspect of the purpose of living for the happiness of others.

More important, however, is to bring others both the happiness of future lives in samsara and, eventually, the long-term, ultimate happiness of complete liberation from samsara; total liberation from all suffering and its cause.

And finally, even more important than that, the greatest purpose for living, is to bring numberless other sentient beings, or even just one sentient being, to the peerless happiness of full enlightenment—the total cessation of all mistakes of the mind and the complete accumulation of perfect qualities; to bring one sentient being to full enlightenment or, similarly, numberless sentient beings.

We need to think very broadly. Benefiting all other sentient beings is the meaning of our life. What's the meaning of life, what is the purpose of living? It is benefiting others in the four ways I just mentioned; offering others those four levels of benefit. There is no way to do this work of freeing others from all suffering and bringing them to full enlightenment perfectly, without the slightest mistake, other than by first becoming fully enlightened yourself. Your own mind needs to become omniscient—knowing directly, being able to read, all sentient being's minds; knowing all sentient beings' different levels of mind, their individual karmas and all the various methods that suit them, that will bring them from happiness to happiness, to the peerless happiness of enlightenment.

First you must achieve full enlightenment yourself. To achieve full enlightenment, you need to actualize the steps of the path that lead to that goal. Enlightenment doesn't just appear in your mental continuum without cause. You need to achieve the realizations of the path to enlightenment from the root, guru devotion.

ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT

In essence, to attain enlightenment without practicing tantra, the quick path to enlightenment, to actualize the five Mahayana paths to enlightenment—the paths of merit, conjunction, right-seeing, meditation and no more learning—you need to collect merit for three countless great eons and gradually advance through the ten bhūmis. This takes three countless great eons.

The quick way to achieve enlightenment, to achieve enlightenment within one life, and not take that many eons to accumulate all that merit, is to practice tantra. By practicing Highest Yoga Tantra, you can complete accumulating the amount of merit that would otherwise take three countless great eons in a single brief lifetime of the degenerate time. By achieving the illusory body in particular, you can accomplish in one lifetime what would normally take three countless great eons of Paramitayana path practice.

However, if you can't become enlightened in this life, if in this life you are unable to actualize the clear light and illusory body—the paths that are the direct cause of the dharmakaya and rupakaya—if you are unable to have these realizations in this life, here, at last, comes the reason to be born in a pure land! Here comes the reason! Finally, the reason comes—the importance of being born in a pure land, why you should try.

BIRTH IN A PURE LAND

There are many buddha pure lands, which, of course, have pure enjoyments billions of times greater than even those of the worldly god realms; those deva realms. However, with many of those buddhas' pure realms, you can be still be reborn in the lower realms afterwards; it's not definite that you won't be.

But according to my root guru, His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche, and some other lamas, if you can be reborn in a pure land such as that of Amitabha Buddha, you can practice tantra there and achieve enlightenment in that life. According to Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche and perhaps also Denma Lochö Rinpoche, according to some other lamas, there is no opportunity of practicing Highest Yoga Tantra and achieving enlightenment in the Amitabha pure land. To do so, you have to be reborn back

in a human realm such as the one on this Southern Continent, where we now reside, where tantric teachings exist. You have to be reborn in such a human realm in order to complete the tantric path, to actualize the clear light and the illusory body, these completion stage accomplishments, and become enlightened there, in a human body.

However, I think it was Denma Lochö Rinpoche who said that if you are born in the pure land of Amitabha Buddha, it is definite that from that time on you will never again be reborn in the lower realms. Once you have been able to reincarnate in the pure land of Amitabha Buddha, rebirth in the lower realms is finished.

Here, in this teaching, in this initiation text I'm using, the lama who wrote it says that if you are born in the Amitabha pure land, you become enlightened there.

To be born in Tushita, the pure land of Maitreya Buddha and Lama Tsong Khapa, you need very pure morality. Only by living a life of exceptionally pure morality can you be born in a pure land such as Tushita. It is not easy to be born there. Also, there are other pure lands that require you to have realizations of emptiness or bodhicitta.

But Amitabha Buddha's pure land and others like it receive even ordinary beings who are very deluded, very obscured, who have no realizations. Such beings can very easily be born there. This is the special advantage of praying to Amitabha Buddha. This is why it is important to always remember Amitabha Buddha and pray to be born in his pure land.

In the past, before Amitabha Buddha became enlightened, while he was a bodhisattva, I think, I'm not a hundred per cent sure of the name, but the wheel-turning king called Rim of the Spokes, visualized the Amitabha pure land with all its incredible qualities, incredible enjoyments, incredible beauty, its wish-granting trees, this pure land where whatever you think comes to pass; where all your wishes get fulfilled. The king visualized this pure land, which has such incredible beauty, pure enjoyments, incredible qualities, and with bodhicitta made many prayers for ordinary beings, who have so much suffering, to easily be born there. He visualized this, made these special prayers and dedicated with bodhicitta. From that bodhicitta, it has happened. This is one cause.

Then, of course, there's our merit—the principal cause—and our prayers and wishes to be in the pure land, to have all those pure enjoyments—the conditions—which are also very important.

How come it is so easy to be born in that pure land? One reason, one cause, is the strong prayers that the bodhisattva king made for us sentient beings. Therefore, if you can't develop the highest path, can't succeed in actualizing the path, in this life, go to this pure land, after which you can never again be reborn in the lower realms. It's impossible. For you, it's finished. Then, on top of that, develop your mind in the path to enlightenment. This is a very quick and easy way to achieve enlightenment, to be free from samsara. That's the essence of why it is important to be reborn in the pure land. That's the reason.

And that is the purpose of this initiation, of taking the blessings of Amitabha—to achieve his pure land. The other purpose is that this is also a long life initiation.

WHY HAVE A LONG LIFE?

The purpose of having a long human life is not so that you can create more negative karma, the cause of samsara, not so that you can create more negative karma with all the human skills—giving more harm to others, creating more negative karma, the cause of the samsara, the cause of the lower realms. It's not that.

The purpose of causing a long life by receiving the long life initiation here today is to have more time to practice Dharma. And of all the Dharma practices, the most important is that of benefiting others. That is the one to actualize. As I mentioned before, to bring those four levels of benefit and happiness to other sentient beings you must develop your mind in the path to enlightenment. That is the reason you need a long life.

WHY BENEFIT OTHERS?

As I started to mention before, not that you're hearing anything new, but it might be good for some people to hear why we need to help and benefit others. Why *do* we need to do this? Why do we have to do this in our lives? As I mentioned before, if you love others, they will love you back, naturally. This is the nature of it. If you help others, they will help you, they will benefit you. That is the simple reason.

You want happiness, you don't want suffering; you want happiness for yourself, you don't want any suffering. How to ensure that? The question

is, how to do that? The best thing you can do is to benefit others, cherish others, have loving kindness and compassion for others. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama often says, at least, if you are going to be selfish, if you are going to live a selfish life, the best thing is to be intelligently selfish. This has great meaning. What His Holiness means is that since you are looking for happiness—you want happiness, you don't want problems—you need to benefit others, help others, cherish others. To get what you want, you need compassion and loving kindness for others. That is the first reason.

Another reason is—normally I give this example—say there is a blind person who is in danger of falling over a cliff. You don't know this person. There's no history of this person's having helped you in the past, done something for you, given you presents or said nice things to you. There's nothing like that. Also, it's not this life's brother, this life's sister, this life's mother or father. It's not a relative; there's nothing like that either. It's a person completely unknown to you but someone suffering from blindness, who cannot see and is in danger of falling over a cliff. But you have eyes; you have arms and legs; you have everything you need to help that person. So if you don't, it's very cruel. If you have every opportunity to help that person, to rescue that person from falling onto the rocks far below, and don't, it's terribly selfish; extremely cruel and selfish.

Just like that, numberless sentient beings are suffering because they are under the control of delusion and karma, completely overwhelmed by delusion and karma, completely overwhelmed by suffering. Basically, they are suffering, so they need help. Helping them has nothing to do with receiving benefit yourself. Basically, others are suffering, they need help and you have every opportunity to help them.

This time, you have received a human body. Not just a human body but a perfect human body. You have met the Dharma and a virtuous friend, a leader of the blind, who explains the difference between right actions, which are to be practiced, and wrong actions, which are to be abandoned; a guide who shows the path. You also have the opportunity, according to how open your wisdom eye is, to know for yourself what is right, to be practiced, and what is wrong, to be abandoned. What should be practiced is the path to happiness, liberation and enlightenment. You can develop your mind in the path to enlightenment; you can increase your capacity to benefit others. Even if you don't have much capacity to benefit

others now, you can develop it further. You can develop your compassion, wisdom and power to benefit others. You have every opportunity.

But the other sentient beings are devoid of a leader of the blind, a virtuous friend. They are devoid of Dharma; they have no wisdom eye. Because of all that, as the teachings explain, they are totally overwhelmed by delusions, possessed by the maras, the delusions, and constantly attacked by sickness, the three types of suffering. At every moment, in every second, whatever they do creates negative karma. At every moment, in every second it's as if they're stumbling over the cliff to the lower realms. Every second is like that.

Therefore, for the basic reason that they are suffering and you have every opportunity of helping them, of freeing them from all their suffering and bringing them all happiness, especially at this time, you are responsible for benefiting others. This is your responsibility.

A third reason for why you need to benefit others, help others, work for others, is because your happiness depends on others. All your comfort, even that of having a good reputation, necessarily comes from others. Even receiving praise that makes you happy, gives you pleasure, depends on others, comes from others. All your happiness and comfort depends on others. Similarly, others' happiness and comfort depend on you. As your happiness comes from others, your success depends on others, so too does others' happiness and success depend on you. Therefore, for this reason, it is very important.

You are just one person. Even if all sentient beings were to criticize you, even if nobody loved you, if everybody were angry at you—the whole earth, even the mountains, rocks and flowers! Anyway, I'm joking—even if all human beings, animals and insects were angry at you, didn't love you, you are just one person. You are just one person—when you compare your importance with that of others, who are numberless, you are nothing. Even were you to achieve everlasting happiness, you'd be just one person. It's nothing.

And no matter how heavy your problems, they're nothing; they're just one person's problems. Your suffering is just one person's suffering. One person's problems and suffering are nothing. Other suffering beings are numberless; others who need happiness are numberless. Numerically, others are the most precious; their need is the most important. For them to be free from suffering and to have happiness is of much greater importance

because their number is much greater. When we elect the president or leader of a democratic country, the person who receives the most votes gets elected. By getting the majority's votes, that person is considered more important.

As it says in the *Guru Puja*—this is one quotation that I often recommend to meditate on in the morning when you generate motivation for your life, especially the motivation for that day's life—first thing in the morning, meditate on this verse [91] to transform your attitude from self-cherishing into bodhicitta.

“By seeing that the chronic disease of cherishing the I is the cause giving rise to all suffering and the undesirable suffering to be born...”—all the undesirable problems of this life and in the future lives to be born—“...blame it on the ego and harbor it...” Like you bear a grudge against somebody who gave you harm. Somebody harmed you in the past and you keep this grudge in your mind—how that person is so bad. Similarly, harbor a grudge against your ego and keep thinking how harmful it is, how bad, how dangerous. “Please grant me blessings to eliminate this great demon, cherishing the I.”

What it is saying here is that suffering is born from cherishing the I. From this cause, all suffering, all life's problems, are born, from day to day problems to obstacles to achieving enlightenment. All the undesirable things that happen to you come from your ego, your self-cherishing thought. When other people abuse you, don't love you, are angry at you, all these things, cherishing the I is the source of all that. Self-cherishing is the source of all suffering; it opens the door to suffering. Therefore, especially for this reason, the I is always to be abandoned and never to be cherished. If you cherish the I, it becomes the problem; you create problems in your own life. Cherishing the I is what creates problems and obstacles in your life. The I is to be discarded forever. Especially for this reason, the I is forever to be abandoned.

This is the key. If you let it go, happiness; you open the door to happiness. If you don't let it go, suffering; you open the door to suffering. If you cherish the I, you close the door to happiness and open the door to suffering. If you let it go, you close the door to suffering and open the door to happiness—including day to day, moment to moment peace and happiness—in your mind, in your heart.

The next verse [92] says, “Please grant me blessings to be able to see

that cherishing my mothers, the thought of leading them to happiness, is the door to infinite qualities and happiness.”

Happiness, as I mentioned before, is this very minute’s happiness, today’s happiness, this life’s happiness, future lives’ happiness, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment—all happiness. Not just your own happiness but the happiness of all sentient beings. This thought, your good heart—cherishing the mother sentient beings, thinking of leading them to happiness—is not only the door to all your good qualities, all your happiness, all your realizations from guru devotion up to enlightenment, but it is also the door to happiness for all other sentient beings. Therefore, we ask to be granted blessings to be able to see that this thought is the door to all happiness for ourselves and all other sentient beings. I just added that it’s also the source of happiness for all sentient beings, because from your bodhicitta, all sentient beings receive all happiness. That’s why.

The rest of this verse reads, “Even if all these transmigratory beings arise as my enemy, all turn against me, please grant me blessings to cherish them more than my life.”

Even if they all turn against me, become my enemy, numberless other beings, may I be able to cherish them more than my life. You are asking blessings for this.

I often mention that in the morning, when you get up, first thing, meditate on these two stanzas to change your attitude into bodhicitta—not just for today, not just for this life, but from now on until you achieve enlightenment, until you bring all sentient beings to enlightenment.

Therefore, now, the last thing, if you cherish this one insect or person, this one sentient being, if you have the thought of bringing them happiness, causing them happiness, you receive enlightenment. If, however, you renounce this one insect or person, whatever it is—a spider, a mouse, a rat—whatever that sentient being is, whatever that person is, if you don’t cherish that, you don’t receive enlightenment. It makes a huge difference, like that between sky and earth. Cherishing this one sentient being gives you enlightenment; not cherishing this one sentient being prevents your enlightenment.

Now who is more important, you or this other person? You or this other sentient being—who is more important? The other sentient being is much more important. Even one on one—you are one, the other is

one—the other is most important, most precious. If you cherish the other, that one other being, all your wishes for happiness—including enlightenment, realizations, the happiness of all sentient beings—will happen. If you renounce the other being, don't cherish that being, none of these things happen. Therefore, this one sentient being is most precious, most kind; a jewel more precious than all the wish-fulfilling jewels put together, more precious than skies filled with billions of dollars.

When you think like this, when you think of the unbelievable benefit of cherishing even one sentient being, when you think that if you dedicate your life to even one sentient being, sacrifice your life for even one sentient being, it brings you to enlightenment, makes you achieve enlightenment very quickly...

...As I mentioned once before, when the great yogi Ngagpa Chöpa was going to Odi to practice tantra—probably the final part of the practice—at the river crossing there was a woman totally covered by leprosy sores, with pus and blood oozing out. She asked the yogi, “Please take me across to the other side of the river.” The yogi didn't help her and left. Later, his disciple Getsul Tsimbulwa, a monk living in the thirty-six vows, came along and she asked him the same thing, “Please take me across to the other side of the river.” As soon as he saw this woman sitting there, completely covered with leprosy sores with pus oozing out, totally dark, just by seeing her, he felt unbearable compassion and immediately, without any hesitation, without thinking that he is a monk and she is a woman or that she's covered in disease, something untouchable, with none of this, he just picked her up, put her on his back and started across the river. Getsul Tsimbulwa, with his unbearable compassion, completely sacrificed himself to carry this woman.

However, when they reached the middle of the river, this woman suddenly became the deity Dorje Pagmo, the female buddha, Dorje Pagmo, and took this monk to the pure land Tarpa Kachö. If you are born in this pure land, you are one hundred per cent certain to become enlightened in that life. So, in the middle of the river, this woman, who was covered with leprosy, looking very ordinary, in much suffering, became the buddha, the deity Dorje Pagmo, and took this monk to her pure land, and in that way, he became enlightened.

In this story, the teacher, the yogi, didn't help that woman but just passed by. However, his disciple, the monk, sacrificed his life to take care

of her, to carry her across the river. Then, in *this* life, without first having to die, he was taken to her pure land in his ordinary body—in this life, not the next. He went to the pure land, not after death but in the body of this life, and became enlightened there. From the story, it seems that perhaps the disciple got enlightened before his teacher, the yogi.

Therefore, when we think of the benefits of cherishing one sentient being, sacrificing our life for one sentient being, they are like the infinite sky. The benefits are unbelievable; something to enjoy in life. The benefits of cherishing even one sentient being with bodhicitta are like the sky. Cherishing others, seeing that even one sentient being is much more precious than yourself, is the most precious thing in your life, is most kind, is an unbelievable way to enjoy your life.

I'm not telling you why we should help others, why we should benefit others, because this is something new that you haven't heard before. Those who have received lam-rim teachings have heard this many times. I'm doing it to inspire or remind all those who already know these things and to inform those who don't but need to know. Why? Because this is the most important education of all. This is more important to know than anything else in life. This is the most important thing you will ever learn.

THE AMITABHA INITIATION

OK. So now to do a very quick initiation! Actually, the subject I planned to talk on today was the nine attitudes of guru devotion. That was my plan. That's why I brought my *Lam-rim chen-mo* and another text that I translated. But somehow it has turned out this way, where I now don't have time to do this. So maybe another time! Maybe tomorrow morning, at three o'clock!

It says here in the text that it is very easy to be born in Amitabha's pure land. Whoever just hears the name of Amitabha Buddha and dedicates their merits to be born in his pure land can find themselves there. This is due to the power of Amitabha's prayers, as I mentioned before. It also says that once you have been born there you will never return to samsara, will never again even hear any suffering. There is no suffering in the pure land of Amitabha Buddha, and in that perfect state of happiness you become enlightened there.

PO-WA

When the Nyingmapa lama Tulku Mikyö Dorje was very young, just over thirteen years of age, on Saka Dawa, the full moon of the fourth Tibetan month of the year, he saw Amitabha Buddha, as huge as a mountain, with the Buddha of Compassion, Chenrezig, on the right and Vajrapani on the left. He had a very glorious, magnificent vision—he actually saw them—and they granted him the initiation into the practice for achieving the pure land of Amitabha. It was daytime when he actually saw these three deities—Amitabha in the center, Chenrezig on the right and Vajrapani on the left—and received initiation into this practice to achieve Amitabha’s pure land. Later, asleep at night, he again saw Amitabha Buddha with his entire entourage, who gave him the instructions and the prayers of request in a dream.

The special po-wa practice for transferring your consciousness to the pure land of Amitabha Buddha is said to be very successful. You achieve it by doing po-wa meditation, training your mind in the transference of your consciousness to the pure land. After one or two days of this—it doesn’t take more than three days—signs will appear to indicate that you will be born in the pure land. If your visualization is clear, you develop a small swelling on the crown of your head, and a little fluid oozes out of it—such are the signs of success of your po-wa practice, your mind training in the transference of consciousness. That means that if you actually do it, your consciousness can be transferred, actually go, to the pure land.

The idea is that when the signs of death appear to you—certain dreams and also external signs...for example, there are other ways to check the length of life remaining by observing your pattern of breathing. I have noticed that sometimes at the beginning of the new Tibetan month, when the new moon starts, at dawn my breathing changes. Being able to interpret these changes is said to be a very reliable way of judging how many more years you are going to live; when you will die. This is regarded as a very reliable way of finding out.

There are also different ways of checking through certain meditations, physical signs and dreams. However, if you try all these means and discover that your impending death is due to negative karma, you need to do various purification practices. If your death is due to a shortage of merit—you don’t have the merit to live much longer—and your untimely

death is about to happen, offer mandalas or create extensive merit by any other means you can: serving others, making holy objects and so forth; whatever collects the most extensive merit.

The quickest way of achieving enlightenment, of collecting the most extensive merit, is to actualize your guru's advice or offer service to your virtuous friend. This topic is always mentioned in the outlines of the guru devotion teachings, in both sutra and tantra. Doing things that please your guru's holy mind is the quickest way of achieving enlightenment and the quickest, most powerful way of purifying negative karma.

If your death is due to a shortage of life, to your life finishing, you need to do long life meditation and take long life initiations. There are many other practices, various means, for achieving a long life—liberating animals, saving their lives, helping sick people, serving them, giving food and clothing to those who don't have food and clothing; things like that. Also, making light offerings and so forth, doing vase breathing meditation, practicing the meditation called "Eating the sky as food"—there are many things you can do to have a long life.

If you try all these things but the signs still appear, that means that now you are definitely going to die—definite signs have happened, nothing you've done has helped, now you are definitely going to die. Before death actually happens, when you are certain to die but before you actually do, if there are six months or so between when the signs first appeared and the expected date of death, do po-wa. If you wait until death arrives to start practicing po-wa, you might be experiencing some heavy sickness and be unable to meditate at that time.

If you do po-wa for another, it is taught that you shouldn't do it before the breathing has stopped, while the person is still breathing. The right time to do po-wa is after the breath has stopped. I think that probably there would still be heat at the heart. However, it is possible there might be other conditions where the consciousness is still there, but usually, even though the breath has stopped, heat remains at the heart for some time.

But I heard that a while back in Tibet, there were nine or ten people who were going to be executed by the Communist Chinese army. One lama asked the Chinese soldier who was going to shoot them to wait. Then the lama sat down and did po-wa for all those people. At that moment, all those people collapsed together. Before the Chinese soldier

could shoot them, the lama who asked him to wait did po-wa meditation and all those people collapsed together. Whether he himself was one of them or not, I don't know, but they didn't need to be shot; they just all fell simultaneously. Thus, the soldier was saved from creating the bad karma of killing them and the people all went to the pure land. So, they were still breathing, when you wouldn't normally do po-wa for others, but I think this was a special case, since they were all about to be shot. Those stories are great.

It also says in the text that the merit of making charity of three galaxies filled with jewels is less than that you create by putting your palms together and generating just one second's devotion for Amitabha Buddha. If, on hearing Amitabha Buddha's name, even one second's devotion arises from deep within your heart, your life is directed towards enlightenment. That is the benefit.

[Initiation begins. Rinpoche's comments during it follow.]

HOLY INITIATION WATER

This water [being used at this point in the initiation] comes from a holy place of Padmasambhava in Nepal. One of the heads of the Nyingma sect, Trulshig Rinpoche, who is also one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's gurus—I think His Holiness the Dalai Lama took an initiation from Rinpoche—goes there quite often to do retreat. There's a monastery there that was built by a man who was a *ngagpa*, a lay tantric practitioner, but later became a monk. I think he was the closest disciple of the previous Lawudo Lama, the lama who is regarded as my past life. He built this monastery at that Padmasambhava holy place, where Padmasambhava achieved the realization of immortality. He has invited me there many times but so far I haven't made it. Many other lamas go there to do retreat. His Holiness Sakya Trizin went there to do retreat before giving one great collection of many hundreds of initiations. To not have any life obstacles from giving these initiations, he went there to do a long life retreat beforehand. It is a very powerful place.

There is some Padmasambhava special water there. If you drink it you get liberated from the lower realms. Drinking that water purifies negative karmas. Somebody gave me some water from that cave. The former

Lawudo Lama's disciple used to send me a small bottle of this water from time to time, and I have the wish to go there, but as yet, I haven't seen this holy place. This water is very blessed water. It's one of the very holy things at that place. That's what's mixed in here; it's very precious. There's also some water from the Manjushri mountain in China mixed in.

[Initiation continues.]

RINPOCHE'S MOTHER'S INCARNATION

This is a prayer that my mother used to do. She didn't have many different prayers to do, but this was a prayer that she knew by heart. Then I taught her some additional prayers from the nyung-nä practice. Mostly she recited OM MANI PADME HUM, as I think I mentioned once before. A year before she passed away she told me she used to recite 50,000 OM MANI PADME HUMs every day, but was no longer able to do that many. As I look back on it now, I think she probably had cancer by then. She had some pains in her back and could not eat food. At that time she said she could not do as many OM MANI PADME HUMs a day as she used to—50,000.

I think that is why her incarnation's mind is so clear. He can remember all the relatives, recognize all the relatives, all the family—he recognizes them immediately with no shyness. He immediately asks you to sit down and starts talking right away. But he is shy with outside people. The very first time he met the family he was not at all shy. He immediately spoke, invited them in and to please sit. He also remembers many things, especially her belongings. He can recognize everything she used to use in everyday life. He went looking for her things; searched until he found them in the kitchen or the rooms where they were kept.

One of the many stories is that my mother, like many other Sherpas in the old times in Solu Khumbu, used to consider plastic buttons to be very precious. The people in that area thought plastic buttons that you found on clothes were very precious because you could not buy them in a shop. Spoons, needles, things like that—you could not buy them up there, they had to be brought in from far away. Some of the people wore spoons around their necks. Now Solu Khumbu is totally changed from how it was back then. Now there are so many Western things—sweet tea

and coffee—coffee has become a very common thing. The people there now have many Western things. But she used to collect all the buttons from her own shirts and keep them in a bottle. Then, when the incarnation happened, my sister made a shirt with those buttons on it, and as soon as she put it on the incarnation's body, he said, "Oh! Those are my buttons." He could recognize them immediately because my mother used to save those very precious buttons in a bottle.

A very close family friend, a Sherpa called Ang Puwa, who lives in Kathmandu, went to see the incarnation with my brother Sangye, who lives near Boudhanath. The incarnation had been waiting a long time to meet him and my brother...it took a long time to get around to visiting the incarnation, so he always used to talk about coming down to Kathmandu. Once he said he'd like to put all the Lawudo animals—the dzos and the cows—onto a helicopter and fly down to see us. There was one dzo who in the past used to carry our luggage and the food we had to transport to Lawudo. I think Lama Yeshe might have ridden on it once. It had something wrong with its leg. The incarnation said to put that dzo and all the other animals into a helicopter. Then somebody told him that there was no place to keep animals at Kopan, so he said, "Oh! We can keep them at Sangye's place for some time there and feed them there."

One day, together with that Sherpa man who was my mother's very close friend, they went to see the incarnation in the village next to the hermitage at Lawudo. As soon as they had entered and sat down, the incarnation immediately said the other Sherpa's name—Ang Puwa. He immediately said, "Ang Puwa, please have...." whatever his mother was serving at the time, chang or tea or whatever it was. He was shocked that the incarnation could immediately recognize him, remember his name. So he grabbed the boy by the leg and cried; the Sherpa man cried.

There are many stories like this. I think his having such an incredibly clear memory is a partial benefit of having recited OM MANI PADME HUM so much in his previous life. Remembering past and future lives is a very small benefit of reciting OM MANI PADME HUM. Out of the infinite benefits of reciting OM MANI PADME HUM, that is one of the smaller ones. Because she was a nun—she took her getsul ordination from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche—because of her morality, she was able to be reborn as a human being and meet the Dharma again. Many people ask whether the incarnation is a girl or a boy, because its previous life was

female. People ask whether it's a boy or girl incarnation. The incarnation is a boy.

This was one of her prayers. She didn't know many other prayers. This was one of the ones she knew. She used to recite a whole set of prayers, like the Six-session Yoga. She would recite them once in the morning, another time in the afternoon, and again at night. There were not so many prayers, just a few pieces, so she used to recite them many times a day.

[Note: Tragically, Rinpoche's mother's incarnation, Ngawang Jigme, passed away in hospital in Kathmandu at 11 a.m., October 27, 1999, at the age of nine, after suffering a head injury in south India a few months earlier. For more information, go to the Web site: www.dharmatours.com/jigme.]

[Initiation concludes.]

Now the initiation has finished. One text says, "In the Western world there is a blissful realm where Amitabha Buddha abides. Whoever mentions his name, recites his name, holds his name, will be born there, and then when you die you will see Amitabha Buddha in the form of a monk."

I gave this initiation at LMB during Chiu-nan Lai's time here as director, but that time I sat on the other side of the gumpa, facing this way. I don't know how many years ago that was; maybe six or seven? This is not the first time I have given the Amitabha initiation here. That time I also sat on a chair.

It is said that it is best to continue doing the po-wa practice until you get signs. Then, if you cannot do any version of the daily practice—even the middle-length or short versions—at least you should say,

"I prostrate to the Savior, Infinite Life, Buddha Amitayus;
I prostrate to the Savior, Infinite Light, Buddha Amitabha,"

then recite the mantra of Amitabha Buddha, OM AMI DEVA HRI. One text I saw, maybe by Pabongka, said normally you recite OM AMI DEVA HRI, but another text I saw said to recite AMITOFU; something like that. But normally, after saying, "I prostrate to the Savior, Infinite Life, Buddha Amitayus; I prostrate to the Savior, Infinite Light, Buddha Amitabha,"

recite one mala of OM AMI DEVA HRI, and when you have finished the mala, say, “May I be born in the pure land; may I be born in that blissful field.”

What does it mean to be born in the Amitabha pure land? If you do this practice and remember Amitabha Buddha when you die, after death, when you reach the intermediate state, you will see Amitabha Buddha and be born in the Amitabha pure land. That’s what the text says. And as I mentioned before, it is such an easy way to be born in a pure land. Other pure lands are difficult to be born into. You need many qualities—pure morality, realizations and so forth. But this is the easiest. Very ordinary beings with many delusions can easily be born there, even if they have no attainments, no realizations. It is very easy for them to be born in this pure land. This, then, is the special advantage of praying to Amitabha, reciting his mantra and doing the meditation practice.

DEDICATION

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may all virtuous friends have stable lives and may all their holy wishes succeed immediately.

“May Lama Ösel Rinpoche, the incarnation of Lama Yeshe, who was inconceivably kinder than all the buddhas of the three times, have a stable life and be able to show the same aspect and qualities that Lama Tsong Khapa had and be able to offer infinite benefit to sentient beings through showing the practice and attainment of the whole path and explaining Dharma through writing and debate.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may I be able to offer infinite benefit like the sky to all sentient beings as did Lama Tsong Khapa by having the same qualities within me in all future lifetimes, from now on.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings—which are totally non-existent from their own side—may I—who is totally non-existent from its own side—achieve Buddha Amitabha’s enlightenment—which is also totally non-existent from its own side—and lead all sentient beings—who are also totally non-existent from their own side—to that enlightenment—which is also totally non-existent from its own side—by myself

alone—who is also totally non-existent from its own side.

“I dedicate all the merits in the way that the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times praised greatly and as Samantabhadra and Manjughosha realize.”

While I say the words of these prayers, visualize the Thousand-armed Compassionate Buddha, the seven Medicine Buddhas and Kshitigarbha and make the dedication—but also request them for success. Visualize them while I say the words and think at the same time. In this way, both dedication and requests get done.

“Due to all the past, present and future merits collected by me and the merits of the three times collected by buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may the previous generations of my family that have passed away, any member of my family who has passed away; those whose names were given, for whom I promised to pray; those who rely on me who have died; and the numberless other sentient beings who are suffering unimaginably in the hell and other lower realms immediately get liberated from those sufferings and reincarnate in the pure land, where they can be enlightened. Or, may they achieve enlightenment quickly by receiving a perfect human body and meeting a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, whenever I hear that somebody is sick, may just my hearing it cause that sentient being to be healed immediately; may just my hearing that some sentient being has died immediately cause that sentient being never to be reborn in the lower realms; and if that sentient being has already been reborn in the lower realms, may those merits cause that being to be liberated from the suffering realms immediately and reincarnate in a pure land where that being can become enlightened. Or if the sentient being has been born human but has no opportunity to practice Dharma, may that being achieve a perfect human body and attain enlightenment quickly by meeting a Mahayana guru and the Mahayana teachings.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may I, my family members, and all the students and benefactors in this organization, especially those who sacrifice their lives serving others through this organization and serving the Buddhadharma as well, including all the center directors, the

LMB staff and everyone else here, may we all have long lives, be healthy, and, most importantly, may we be able to actualize the steps of the path to enlightenment, the path shown by Lama Tsong Khapa, in this very lifetime, without even a second's delay.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, may all our centers, including Land of Medicine Buddha, be able to spread the complete teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings by receiving everything they need. May all the projects in this organization, including those here at Land of Medicine Buddha—the 100,000 statues of the Medicine Buddha Temple, the 100,000 stupa project, the hospice to help people who are dying—and other projects, such as finding good places for the sangha, be actualized and succeed immediately by receiving everything they need. May the 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue succeed, be completed quickly, by receiving everything needed for this to happen. May all our centers, projects and statues cause bodhicitta, loving kindness and compassion to arise in the minds of all sentient beings; due to this, may no sentient being ever again experience war, famine, disease, earthquake, danger from fire or water or any other undesirable thing and may all our centers, projects and statues cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, whatever action I do from now on with body, speech and mind, whatever I experience—being up or down, health or sickness, criticism or praise, even life or death, even rebirth in hell—may all these experiences and all my actions be most beneficial for all sentient beings and cause all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment as quickly as possible.

“May the teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa in particular and the Buddha's teachings in general, flourish in all directions forever.”

GESHE NGAWANG DAKPA

I forgot to introduce Geshe Ngawang Dakpa before, during today's puja. I invited Geshe-la to teach in Taiwan about three years ago. Recently, according to divination, I requested Geshe-la to teach in America at the

centers around here—Tse Chen Ling in San Francisco, Land of Medicine Buddha, Vajrapani Institute and Gyalwa Gyatso Center. Geshe-la has just arrived to take up this position.

Geshe-la is an extremely well qualified teacher. After leaving Tibet, he studied at the Buxa refugee camp for all the years the monks were there. He was in the same class as Lama Lhundrup and was top of the class. Geshe-la is not only expert in Dharma, but of all the monks at Sera, Ganden and Drepung, he is probably the most expert in astrology. He can produce calendars containing all the details about each day—the planets, what's bad, what's good, all these things. Not only can he make calendars but he also does black astrology, the branch of astrology that deals with life and what to do when somebody dies—the methods to be employed at that time, how to discover why the person died and what to do to prevent the rest of the family being harmed by that, how to stop a person dying at the wrong time, all the methods for a good rebirth and what buddha statues and thangkhas to make for the person to take a good rebirth—all the details of things like that. Black astrology talks about matters of life and death.

Geshe-la has studied and is an expert in most aspects of Tibetan education—grammar, poetry, all these things. Therefore, he's an extremely good person to teach the basic program, all the philosophical subjects that are commentaries to the lam-rim. You now have a great opportunity to learn all this. The idea is to start a four-year program in these subjects at our San Francisco center, Tse Chen Ling. I'm just telling you this to make you aware of the possibilities, these great opportunities to learn Buddhism more deeply and extensively.

And now we've really finished! Thank you so much.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SHORT VAJRASATTVA MEDITATION PURIFICATION WITH THE FOUR OPPONENT POWERS

THE POWER OF DEPENDENCE (A): TAKING REFUGE

“I forever take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,
I take refuge in all the three vehicles,
In the dakas and dakinis of secret mantra yoga
In the heroes and heroines, the gods and goddesses
And in the bodhisattvas of the ten bhumis.
But most of all, I take refuge in my holy guru forever.” (3x)

THE POWER OF REGRET

First recall the definition of negative karma—any action that results in suffering, usually an action motivated by ignorance, attachment or aversion.

“Almost every action I do, twenty-four hours a day, is motivated by worldly concern, attachment to the comfort of this life. It is like this from birth to death in this life and has been like that from beginningless rebirths. Nearly every action I have ever created has been non-virtuous, the cause of suffering. Not only that, but continuously I have also been breaking my pratimoksha, bodhisattva and tantric vows. Worst of all, I have created the heaviest of negative karmas in relation to my virtuous friends—getting angry at them, arising heresy, having non-devotional thoughts towards them, harming their holy body and disobeying their advice. Having these negative imprints on my mental continuum is unbearable. It’s as if I’ve swallowed a lethal poison. I must practice the antidote right away and purify all this negative karma immediately, without a second’s delay.”

In this way, generate strong feelings of urgency and regret.

REMEMBERING IMPERMANENCE AND DEATH

“Many people my age or younger have died. It’s a miracle that I’m still alive and have this incredible opportunity to purify my negative karma.

Death is certain but its time is most uncertain. If I were to die right now, I would definitely be born in the lower realms. Because I could not practice Dharma there I would remain in the lower realms for countless eons. Therefore, how unbelievably fortunate I am to be able to purify my negative karma right now, without even a second's delay, by practicing the Vajrasattva meditation-recitation."

THE POWER OF DEPENDENCE (B): GENERATING BODHICITTA

"But I am not practicing Vajrasattva purification for myself alone—the purpose of my life is to release all hell beings, pretas, animals, humans, asuras, suras and intermediate state beings from all their suffering and its causes and lead them to unsurpassed enlightenment. In order to do this I must first reach enlightenment myself. Therefore, I must purify all my negative karma immediately by practicing Vajrasattva meditation-recitation."

VISUALIZATION

"Above the crown of my head, seated upon a lotus and moon seat, are Vajrasattva father and mother. Their bodies are white; they each have one face and two arms. He holds a dorje and bell, she a curved knife and skull cup. They are embracing each other. The father is adorned with six mudras, the mother with five. He sits in the vajra posture, she in the lotus.

"Vajrasattva is my root guru, the holy mind of all the buddhas, the dharmakaya, who out of his unbearable compassion, which embraces me and all other sentient beings, appears in this form to purify me and all others."

In this way, your mind is transformed into guru devotion—the root of all blessings and realizations of the path to enlightenment.

"On a moon disk at Vajrasattva's heart stands a hum encircled by a garland of the hundred syllable mantra. A powerful stream of white nectar flows from the hum and mantra garland and I am cleansed of all sickness, spirit harm, negative karma and obscurations."

THE POWER OF THE REMEDY: MANTRA RECITATION

“OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA, VAJRASATTVA DENOPA TITHA, DIDO ME BHAVA, SUTO KAYO ME BHAVA, SUPO KAYO ME BHAVA, ANURAKTO ME BHAVA, SARVA SIDDHI ME PRAYATSA, SARVA KARMA SU TSAME, TSITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM, HA HA HA HA HO, BHAGAVAN SARVA TATHAGATA, VAJRA MAME MUN TSA, VAJRA BHAVA MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA AH HUM PHET”

The meaning of the mantra: You, Vajrasattva, have generated the holy mind (bodhicitta) according to your pledge (samaya). Your holy mind is enriched with the simultaneous holy actions of releasing transmigratory beings from samsara (the circling, suffering aggregates). Whatever happens in my life—happiness or suffering, good or bad—with a pleased, holy mind, never give up but please guide me. Please stabilize all happiness, including the happiness of the upper realms, actualize all actions and sublime and common realizations, and please make the glory of the five wisdoms abide in my heart.

Recite the mantra seven or twenty-one times or as many times as possible, practicing the three techniques of downward cleansing, upward cleansing and instantaneous cleansing.¹

GENERATING FAITH IN HAVING BEEN PURIFIED

“From the crown of my head, Guru Vajrasattva says, ‘Son of the race,² your negativities, obscurations and broken and damaged pledges have been completely purified.’ ”

Generate strong faith that they have been completely purified just as Guru Vajrasattva has said.

THE POWER OF REFRAINING FROM CREATING NEGATIVITIES AGAIN

“Before Guru Vajrasattva, I vow never again to commit those negative actions from which I can easily abstain and not to commit for a day, an hour or at least a few seconds those negative actions from which I find it difficult to abstain.”

ABSORPTION

Guru Vajrasattva is extremely pleased with your pledge. Vajrasattva father and mother melt into light and dissolve into you. Your body, speech and mind become inseparably one with Guru Vajrasattva's holy body, speech and mind.

DEDICATION

“In emptiness, there is no I, creator of negative karma; there is no action of creating negative karma; there is no negative karma created.”

Place your mind in that emptiness for a little while. Like that, look at all phenomena as empty—they do not exist from their own side. With this awareness of emptiness, dedicate the merits.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings (which appear to be real, from there, but which are empty), may the I (which appears to be real but which is empty) achieve Guru Vajrasattva's enlightenment (which appears to be real but is empty) and lead all sentient beings (who appear to be real but are totally empty) to that enlightenment (which appears to be real but is empty) by myself alone (which appears to be real but is also totally empty, non-existent from there).

“May the precious bodhicitta, the source of all happiness and success for myself and all other sentient beings, be generated within my own mind and in the minds of all sentient beings without even a second's delay; and may that which has been generated be increased.

“May I and all other sentient beings have Lama Tsong Khapa as our direct guru in all our lifetimes and never be separated from the pure path that is greatly praised by the conqueror buddhas for even a second, actualizing the complete path—the three principal paths and the two stages of Highest Yoga Tantra—the root of which is guru devotion, within our minds as quickly as possible.

“Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra realized things as they are, I dedicate all these virtues in the best way, that I may follow after them.

“Whatever dedication the victorious ones gone to bliss of the three times have admired as best, I shall also perfectly dedicate in the same way

all these roots of virtue so that I may perform good works.”

Notes

1. See *Tantric Path of Purification*, pp. 58–60, for details of these three methods of purification.
2. This “son of the race” has nothing to do with gender but refers to a sentient being of a certain mental type, which in turn relates to the buddha family into which one has been initiated.

Colophon

This teaching was given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche during the Vajrasattva retreat and revised in New York in November, 1999. Edited by Nicholas Ribush.

APPENDIX 2

HOW TO MAKE LIGHT OFFERINGS TO ACCUMULATE THE MOST EXTENSIVE MERIT

THE BENEFITS OF MAKING LIGHT OFFERINGS

It is said in *The Ten Wheel Sutra of the Essence of Earth (Kshitigarbha)*, “All comfort, happiness and peace in this world come from making offerings to the Rare Sublime Ones (the Triple Gem). Therefore, those who want comfort, happiness and peace should always try to make offerings to the Rare Sublime Ones.”

In general, all goodness in samsara and nirvana comes from making offerings to the Triple Gem, but specifically, different kinds of offerings bring you different benefits. Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the fourth of the thousand buddhas of this fortunate eon, whose holy mind was enriched with the ten powers, announced in the *Tune of Brahma Sutra Clarifying Karma* that making light offerings brings you ten benefits:

1. You become like a light in the world.
2. You achieve (when born human) the clairvoyance of the pure flesh eye.
3. You achieve the devas’ eye.
4. You receive the wisdom of knowing what is virtue and what is non-virtue.
5. You are able to eliminate the darkness of ignorance, the concept of inherent existence.
6. You receive the illumination of wisdom; even in samsara you never experience darkness.
7. You receive much wealth and enjoyment.
8. You are reborn in the deva or human realm.
9. You quickly become liberated.
10. You quickly attain enlightenment.

Devas or human beings who accumulate the merit of making one light offering—or even a handful of flowers—will see the fully enlightened buddha, Maitreya.

The Sutra of Arya Maitreya says, “Those who offer a thousand lights or a thousand blue utpali flowers or make the pinnacle of a stupa or a holy form will be reborn when Maitreya Buddha shows the deed of gaining enlightenment and will receive his first Dharma teaching.”

It is also said that those who offer even one flower or rejoice in the merit of others who offer will achieve buddhahood. This means that even if you don’t get enlightened during the time of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s teaching, during Maitreya Buddha’s teaching your mind will ripen and you will gain liberation.

Offering light, in particular, is a special door of dependent arising for quickly completing the accumulation of merit and receiving great blessings. It is said in the second chapter of the root tantra of Chakrasamvara, who is a manifestation of Shakyamuni Buddha, “If you want sublime realizations, offer hundreds of lights.”

If you want to know the detailed results of making offerings to holy objects or of offering service to the Buddha or other holy objects, you should study *The Sutra of the One Who Looks with a Compassionate Eye (Avalokitesvara)*, the *Sutra of Sogyal*, where Buddha gave instruction to King Sogyal, or the *Könchog Tala*.

The text, *Immortal Drum Sound Mantra*, says, “If you devote yourself to the Inconceivable One, the results will similarly be inconceivable.” In the same way, *The Sutra of the One Who Looks with a Compassionate Eye* says, “Since the dharmas (i.e., the qualities) of the Buddha Gone As It Is (tathagata) are limitless, making offering to the tathagata brings limitless, infinite, inconceivable, incomparable, unimaginable, numberless benefits.”

The Small Quotation (Lung-ten-tseg) sutra says, “It is possible for the moon and stars to fall to earth, for mountains and forests to rise up into the sky and for the water of the great oceans to completely dry up, but it is not possible for the great sage (the Buddha) to tell a lie. Keep this in mind and generate strong devotion to and faith in the root of all happiness and goodness—actions and their results (karma) and the blessings of the Three Precious Rare Sublime Ones. While you have this body and possessions—which are as if borrowed for a year, a month or a few days—night and day, all the time, attend to the practice of taking the essence of this human life, whose short duration is like a flash of lighting, by planting as many seeds as possible in the special field of merit.”

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

Setting a good motivation

Before lighting the candles, generate bodhicitta. Think, “The purpose of my life is not only to solve my own problems and gain happiness for myself but to free all beings from their problems and lead them to all happiness, especially the state of full enlightenment. Therefore, I myself must first achieve complete enlightenment. To do this, I must complete the two accumulations—the merit of fortune (method) and the merit of wisdom. Therefore, I am going to make charity of the light offerings and offer lights to the merit field.”

Also remember to motivate for the success of particular projects, for people who have passed away or are sick, or for other specific purposes.

Reciting OM AH HUM

As soon as you light the candles or switch on the electricity, bless the lights by reciting OM AH HUM three times. In general, if you don't bless offerings immediately, they can be entered by the possessing spirit *Tse-bu chig-pa*, and then making those offerings can create obstacles for you; it can cause mental damage. In the case of possessed light offerings, without control, you fall asleep when listening, reflecting and meditating on the holy Dharma. Similarly, if you don't bless all other kinds of offering, various possessing spirits can enter them. Making those offerings can then damage your mind and create obstacles for yourself.

Making charity to the beings of the six realms

Think that you have received these offerings through the kindness of all sentient beings. Think, “These lights are not mine.” Make charity of the offerings to all the hell beings, pretas, animals, humans, asuras and suras. This is done to counteract the thought that the light offerings belong to you. Think that you and all other beings are going to make offerings to the Buddha together. Generate great happiness at having accumulated infinite merit by thinking in this way.

Blessing the offerings

Bless the offering substances by reciting the mantra that allows each Buddha to receive inconceivable offerings and the prayer, “Power of the truth.”

(a) Offering prayer

“I actually make and mentally transform the offerings of humans and devas. May Samantabhadra clouds of offerings pervade the whole sky.”

(b) Mantra to increase the offerings

“OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAJRA SARA PRAMARDINE TATHAGATAYA
ARHATE SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA TAYATHA OM VAJRE VAJRE
MAHA VAJRE MAHA TEJA VAJRE MAHA VIDYA VAJRE MAHA
BODHICITTA VAJRE MAHA BODHI MANDO PASAM KRAMANA VAJRE
SARVA KARMA AVARANA VISHODHANA VAJRE SOHA” (3x)

(c) Power of the truth

“By the power of the truth of the Three Rare Sublime Ones, the blessings of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, the great richness of having completed the two merits, and the inconceivable pure sphere of existence, may it become only like that.”

Making the offerings

Make offerings to all holy objects, visualizing them as manifestations of your own root guru, who is one with all other virtuous friends. Since the virtuous friend is the most powerful object in the merit field, by offering like this, you accumulate the most extensive merit. In his text, *The Five Stages*, the savior Nagarjuna said, “Abandon making other offerings; try purely to make offerings only to your guru. By pleasing your guru, you will achieve the sublime wisdom of the omniscient mind.”

In the root tantric text *Buddhaya*, Guru Vajradhara said, “The merit accumulated by making offerings to just one pore of the spiritual master

is more sublime than all that accumulated by making offerings to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions.”

First, offer to all the holy objects in your own room or temple by visualizing that they are manifestations of your own root guru, who is one with all other virtuous friends.

Make offerings to all the holy objects in whatever country you are in by thinking of them as manifestations of your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all the holy objects in India, in particular, the Bodhgaya stupa, where the Buddha showed the holy deed of enlightenment, and all other holy objects in India, thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all the holy objects in Tibet, in particular, the holy statue blessed by the Buddha himself, and all other holy objects in Tibet, thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all the holy objects in Nepal, in particular, the most holy precious object, the great holy stupa at Boudhanath, and all other holy objects in Nepal, thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all the holy objects in all the remaining Buddhist countries, thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in the ten directions, thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

Make offerings to all holy objects in the ten directions—statues, stupas, scriptures etc.—thinking of them as your own virtuous friend.

There is also a special way of making light offerings according to Highest Yoga Tantra, in which great bliss is generated in all the holy minds.

The actual light offering prayer

Next recite the actual prayer of the light offerings—five, ten, a thousand times; whatever—depending on how many times you want to make the light offerings:

“I offer these clouds of actually arranged and mentally created light offerings equaling the infinite sky—manifestations of my own innate awareness,

dharmakaya—to all gurus, the Three Precious Sublime Ones and all statues, stupas and scriptures, which are manifestations of my guru.”

Dedication

By generating bodhicitta, making charity to all sentient beings, and making the actual light offerings to the gurus, the Triple Gem and all the holy objects in the ten directions, you have accumulated infinite merit, which should therefore be dedicated:

“Due to this merit, may the light rays of the five wisdoms completely purify all the degenerated samaya vows of those for whom I promised to pray, of those who pray to me, of those whose names I have received to pray for, principally servants, benefactors and disciples, and of all remaining migratory beings, living or dead, right now.

“May all the sufferings of the evil gone realms cease right now.

“May the three realms of samsara be empty right now.

“May all impure minds and their obscurations be purified.

“May all impure appearances be purified.

“May the five holy bodies and wisdom spontaneously arise.

“Due to these infinite merits, may whatever sufferings sentient beings have ripen on me right now. May whatever happiness and virtue I have accumulated, including all the realizations of the path and the highest goal enlightenment, be received by each hell being, preta, animal, human, asura and sura right now.”

Having dedicated in this way, you have accumulated infinite merit, so rejoice.

“May the precious sublime thought of enlightenment, the source of all success and happiness for myself and all other sentient beings, be generated without even a second’s delay. May that which has been generated increase more and more without degeneration.

“Due to all the merits of the three times collected by me, buddhas, bodhisattvas and all other sentient beings, which are empty from their own side, may the I, which is empty from its own side, achieve enlightenment, which is empty from its own side, and lead all sentient beings, who are empty from their own side, to that enlightenment, by myself, alone.

“Whatever white virtues I have thus created, I dedicate as causes enabling me to uphold the holy Dharma of scriptures and insights and

to fulfill without exception the prayers and deeds of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times.

“By the force of this merit, in all my lives may I never be parted from Mahayana’s four spheres, and may I reach the end of my journey along the paths of renunciation, bodhicitta, the pure view and the two stages.”

Special mantras to increase the merit 100,000 times

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG PÄ
SANG GYÄ NANG PA NANG DZE Ö KYI GYAL PO LA CHAG TSÄL LO (3x)

JANG CHUB SEM PA SEM PA CHEN PO KUN TU ZANG PO LA
CHAG TSÄL LO (3x)

TAYATHA OM PENTSA DRIWA AWA BODHI NE SOHA (7x)

OM DURU DURU ZAYA MUKHE SOHA (7x)

Special mantra so that prayers made come to pass

CHOM DÄN DÄ DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA YANG DAG PAR DZOG
PÄ SANG GYÄ NGO WA DANG MÖN LAM TAM CHÄ RAB TU DU PÄ
GYAL PO LA CHAG TSÄL LO (3x)

Final dedication prayers

“Due to the blessings of the eminent buddhas and bodhisattvas, due to unbetraying dependent arising and due to my special attitude, may all my pure prayers be accomplished immediately.

“With Lama Tsong Khapa as our direct guru in all future lifetimes, may I, my family and all other sentient beings never be separated from the complete pure path praised by all victorious ones.

“Due to the merits of myself and others, may the victorious teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa, Losang Dragpa, flourish for a long time. May all the centers and projects of the FPMT immediately receive all the conditions necessary to preserve and spread these teachings. May all obstacles be pacified and may the FPMT organization in general and the meditation

centers in particular—all our activities to preserve and spread the Dharma, particularly Lama Tsong Khapa’s teachings—cause these teachings to continue without degeneration and to spread in the minds of all sentient beings. May those who have sacrificed their lives to benefit others through this organization have long, healthy lives, may all their activities please the virtuous friend, and in all their lives, may they always be guided by perfectly qualified Mahayana virtuous friends. May all their wishes succeed immediately, in accordance with the holy Dharma.”

APPENDIX 3

LIBERATING ANIMALS FROM THE DANGER OF DEATH

WHAT THIS PRACTICE INCLUDES

The practice of liberating animals from the danger of death is included within the pledges (*samaya*) of the dhyani buddha Vairocana, which contain the practices of three types of morality:

1. The morality of abstaining from vice.
2. The morality of gathering virtue.
3. The morality of working for the sake of sentient beings.

The morality of abstaining from vice refers to keeping vows, such as those of individual liberation (*pratimoksha*), which include the five lay vows, and also includes living within the morality of abandoning the ten non-virtues.

The morality of gathering virtue is collecting merit by the virtuous practice of Dharma. If the practice of liberating animals is done perfectly, it will involve all six perfections (*paramitas*):

1. The perfection of generosity (*charity*) includes:
 - (a) The generosity of giving loving kindness.
 - (b) The generosity of liberating from fear.
 - (c) The generosity of giving Dharma.
 - (d) The generosity of giving material objects (*miscellaneous charity*).

You are practicing the generosity of loving kindness because not only are you *wishing* the animals happiness but you are also *causing* them to have happiness by liberating them from the dangers of death, harm and a short life.

The practice of liberating animals includes the generosity of liberating from fear because you save them from fear and danger.

It becomes charity of Dharma because you recite powerful mantras and blow the mantras upon the animals to benefit them by purifying

their negative karmas and giving them a good rebirth in the deva, human or pure realms.

If you give food to the animals when you liberate them—for example, if you put food in the water for the fish or on the ground for the forest animals—this is the practice of the fourth generosity, giving material (miscellaneous) objects.

2. Abandoning giving harm to other beings and not hurting them is the perfection of morality.

3. Bearing the hardships of doing this practice, such as buying the animals and transporting them to the place where they will be set free, becomes the perfection of patience. The perfection of patience has three types:

- (a) The patience of definitely thinking about Dharma.
- (b) The patience of voluntarily bearing hardship and suffering.
- (c) The patience of not becoming angry with the humans or animals at the time of liberation. This also includes the fourth perfection:

4. The perfection of enthusiastic perseverance.

5. The perfection of concentration is maintaining continuous awareness, concentrating on virtuous motivation and keeping your mind constantly positive.

6. The perfection of wisdom is seeing yourself and the action of liberating animals as nothing other than being merely imputed by the mind.

The third morality included in the pledge of Vairocana, that of working for sentient beings, is also covered by this practice. Those who have taken tantric vows can practice the three types of morality here. Those who have taken bodhisattva vows have eleven parts in the morality of working for sentient beings, which can also be practiced here.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DHARMA CHARITY FOR ANIMALS

This practice of the generosity of Dharma is extremely important because even if you buy the animals from the shops and places where they are to be killed and put them in a place where there is no danger to their lives, so what? They have no opportunity to listen to Dharma, to change their minds, and will again have to experience much negative karma. When they do eventually die, they will again be reborn as animals. Most will go back to the lower realms.

Of course, since you are prolonging the animals' lives and as long as no enemies immediately attack them in the place where you liberate them, your actions have some benefit. But the best benefit comes from reciting mantras and teachings of the Buddha.

According to my own experience, it seems that frogs are able to hear—when you recite mantras they look at you. There are also stories of pigeons being able to hear. Therefore, animals that can hear benefit from the sound of the mantras and those that cannot hear are purified by having mantras blown, or blessed water poured, onto them. Thus, according to the various animals' capacity, there are many different ways in which you can benefit them.

RECITING MANTRAS AND BLOWING ON THE ANIMALS

Recite the mantras and blow upon the bodies of the animals, or blow onto water, which you then pour onto the animals. If there is a big pile of shellfish ("conch animals"), pour the mantra-blessed water over them so that it touches them all. You can also put them in a big container and fill it with blessed water so that they are all touched by it. You can also recite the mantras onto sand or talcum powder and then sprinkle the sand or powder onto the animals. The main thing is to try to use something that does not give the animals harm.

You should be aware of the animals in the containers. For those that may be in a difficult situation where they cannot survive long, the best thing to do is, before going to the place where you are to liberate the animals, bless a vessel of water by visualizing the deity above the vessel with nectar-beams coming from the deity's heart as you recite many mantras and blow on the water, which gives the water great power to purify all

their negative karma and obscurations. Then visualize the deity absorbing into the water.

When you arrive at the place where you will liberate the animals, everybody should generate the motivation together, recite a few mantras, and pour the blessed water on the animals or sprinkle it on birds, and also blow on them if possible. Then, those animals that are having a difficult time should be quickly released. The other animals that are not in such a poor condition can remain longer, while you recite more mantras and prayers before liberating them. This is important. Otherwise, the weak ones may die before they can be freed. Be sure to make the containers as comfortable as possible so that the animals do not die in them.

RECITING TEACHINGS AND PRAYERS TO LEAVE IMPRINTS

Reciting teachings on shunyata, bodhicitta and tantra leaves imprints on the animals' minds. As a result, it is definite that in future lives they will receive a human body, meet, listen to and reflect and meditate on the Dharma and actualize the path. If you recite the Buddha's teachings to them such that they can hear, the animals will not only be able to put a complete end to their samsaric suffering but will definitely reach full enlightenment.

Reciting teachings and prayers has these incredible, infinite benefits for the animals. Knowing that you are saving them from the whole entire suffering of samsara and its cause, delusion and karma, brings you great inspiration and you can really enjoy benefiting them in this way.

There are many stories from the past. For example, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha once gave teachings to five hundred swans and in their next lives they all became monks and completely ended their samsara by attaining arhatship. A pigeon on Nagarjuna's roof overheard him reciting teachings and in its next life was reborn a human who became a pandit monk and wrote four commentaries on the same teachings he had heard as a pigeon.

The results of the imprints of hearing teachings as given in these examples is so unbelievable that our minds cannot comprehend them; they are too hard for our ordinary minds to understand. However, the results of the imprints of hearing teachings will manifest sooner or later, therefore, it is unbelievably beneficial for you to recite Buddha's teachings. Furthermore,

if you recite the powerful mantras that purify the animals' negative karma, you can prevent them from again being reborn in the lower realms.

If you recite the prostration prayer to Buddha Rinchen Tsugtorchen, "*Chom-den-de de-zhin sheg-pa dra-jom-pa yang-dag-par dzog-pai sang-gye Rin-chen Tsug-tor-chen chag-tsal-lo*," humans or animals who hear it will not be reborn in the lower realms. This is the particular purpose of this buddha. If a person is dying and you have the freedom to recite this prayer without creating a lot of confusion in this person's mind or among the surrounding people, you can recite it in the person's ear.

Similarly, there are also mantras that purify negative karma and prevent rebirth in the lower realms. While reciting these powerful mantras, blow on the body of the dying person. If the mantra is short, recite it over and over and blow on the person's body. If the mantra is long, recite it and blow onto some water or powder, which you then sprinkle on the person's body. This purifies the person's negative karma, preventing rebirth in the lower realms and giving the person a chance of rebirth in a pure realm.

Although this makes it sound easy to purify sentient beings and change their rebirth, these things work in dependence on the extent of your faith in them and through the power of the truth of the Buddha's teachings, due to Buddha's unbearable compassion for sentient beings. However, it doesn't happen with everyone but only with those who have the right karma. You can see the difference; at the time of death, not everybody has the karma for it to happen like this. Not all dying animals or people are able to meet great yogis, unbelievable bodhisattvas or high lamas. Only some beings have the karma to meet pure practitioners who can save them from the lower realms. But if you have the karma, by meeting such a practitioner, your consciousness can immediately be transferred to a pure realm, even if you are already dead.

Some people who have cancer and AIDS have completely recovered by liberating animals. Since cancer shortens your life, you need to create the cause for a long life. Causing others to have a long life by saving them from certain death is such a cause. This is why cancer and AIDS patients have recovered by liberating animals.

Purifying negative karma by reciting mantras is like taking antibiotics to destroy bacteria. Liberating animals is like building up your health by following a certain diet. In other words, reciting mantras purifies the various

harms and diseases and liberating animals prolongs your life.

Also, these days it is especially important to dedicate for people who are ill, as there are so many who are dying of cancer and AIDS—diseases for which there is no cure. Even surgery, chemotherapy and radiation are limited in their ability to help, and often the disease recurs again and again. Therefore, it is very important to dedicate your merit to the long life of others, especially since many of them have not met the Dharma and have no knowledge of these methods. If voluntarily you dedicate for them, they will receive great benefit.

THE NAMGYALMA MANTRA

Namgyalma is a deity for long life and purification. Her mantra has infinite benefits. It is said to be so powerful that anybody who hears it will never again be born from the womb. Therefore, if animals hear it, they will never again be reborn in the lower realms.

There is a story from the time Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was on earth concerning a deva called Paripu Denpa. Due to karma, when devas start experiencing the signs of death, they spontaneously remember their previous lives and see their future lives; they perceive that they are about to be reborn in the lower realms and so forth. Since their realm has unbelievable enjoyments thousands of times better than those of the richest country on earth, when they realize that they are about to leave a life of such pleasure and be reborn where there is incredible suffering, their minds suffer greatly.

Thus, as he was dying, the deva Denpa saw that he was about to be reborn as six types of animal—dog, monkey and so forth. Very worried, he asked King Indra what to do. King Indra suggested that he see the Buddha, which he did. Buddha manifested as the deity Namgyalma and gave him the mantra. Denpa recited it six times daily and in seven days completely changed his karma so that he did not have to be reborn as those six types of animal. The Namgyalma mantra is unbelievably powerful for purification. I have translated its benefits and explained how to recite it for people who have cancer and other diseases.

The kind, compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha taught the benefits of reciting the Namgyalma mantra to the Four Guardian Kings. Even if you are in danger of dying because the karma that determines your

life-span is running out, if you wash your body, wear clean clothes and, abiding in the eight precepts, recite the Namgyalma mantra one thousand times, you can increase your life-span, purify your obscurations and free yourself from disease.

If you recite the Namgyalma mantra into the ear of an animal, you ensure that this is its last animal rebirth. If somebody suffering from a heavy disease that doctors cannot diagnose does the practice Lord Buddha taught to the deva Denpa, he or she will be liberated from that disease, bring to an end all future rebirths in the lower realms, and after death be reborn in a blissful pure land. For humans, the present life will be their last rebirth from the womb.

If you recite this mantra twenty-one times, blow upon mustard seeds and throw them onto the bones of even extremely evil beings who have created many heavy negative karmas, those beings will immediately be liberated from the lower realms and be reborn in a higher realm, such as that of a deva. Throwing seeds blessed by the Namgyalma mantra onto the bones or body of a dead being purifies that being's consciousness, and even though that being may have been reborn in hell or any other lower realm, that being can be reborn in a deva realm.

If you put this mantra in a stupa or on a banner inside your house or above the roof, whoever is touched by even the shadow of that stupa or banner will not be reborn in the lower realms. Also, any being touched by a breeze that has first touched a stupa, banner or statue containing this mantra is purified of the karma to be reborn in the lower realms. What need is there to mention, therefore, how great the purification experienced by those who recite this mantra or keep it on their body.

THE WISH-GRANTING WHEEL MANTRA

This mantra also has unbelievable benefits. If you recite it seven times each day you will be reborn in the pure realms. If you recite this mantra and blow upon clothing, it purifies yourself and any other sentient being who touches it. If you recite it, blow on the incense and then burn it the smoke purifies other sentient beings. If you put this mantra above doorways, people who pass beneath it are purified and not reborn in the lower realms. In Tibet, paper with this mantra written on it was touched to dead people's bodies, purifying their karma and preventing rebirth in

the lower realms.

Recalling this mantra just once has the power to purify even the five uninterrupted negative karmas. It prevents rebirth in Avici, the heaviest of all the hells; for many eons you will not have to be reborn in this state of unbearable suffering. You eradicate all obscurations and negative karma and are never again reborn in the lower realms. It enables you to remember past lives and see future lives. If you recite this mantra seven times each day you accumulate unbelievable merit equivalent to that of making offerings to buddhas equal in number to the grains of sand in the River Ganges. In your next life you will be reborn in a pure realm and will be able to achieve hundreds of concentrations.

If you recite this mantra, blow upon sand and throw that sand onto a dead body, even if the dead person had broken vows and was reborn in a lower realm, you can change the person's life and he or she will be reborn in a higher realm. If you recite this mantra and blow upon perfume or incense, whoever smells that perfume or incense will be purified of negative karma and cured of even contagious disease. It helps you achieve the complete qualities of a buddha.

MILAREPA MANTRA

The Milarepa mantra has the same benefits as the others. By reciting it every day you will be born in the pure land of Milarepa and be able to see Milarepa, as he promised. This great yogi attained enlightenment in one lifetime. If you recite his mantra and blow onto the bones or flesh of beings who have been reborn in the lower realms, they will be purified of all negative karma and be able to receive higher rebirth in a pure land.

Colophon

Teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, New York City and Boston, 1991. Edited and abridged by Sarah Tenzin Yiwong. Edited for this book by Nicholas Ribush.

HOW TO DO THE ANIMAL LIBERATION PRACTICE

I mentioned some of these details during the Vajrasattva retreat. The prayers are in the *Liberating Animals* booklet [see below, the actual practice], but

how to do the practice is the most important part.

In my experience, because of their crowded conditions, some animals may die while you are reciting the prayers and mantras, therefore, as soon as the animals are brought to where the altar is set up you should take them around it ten, twenty, thirty, forty...as many times as you can. In this way, if some of the animals die during the recitations, it's not so regrettable since a great amount of negative karma has been purified and they have already created so many causes of enlightenment, so many causes for good rebirths in hundreds of thousands of lifetimes.

After circumambulating the altar with the animals in that way, begin the practice. Start as usual with refuge and bodhicitta and then do the four immeasurables. After that, if there's time, you can generate the elaborate motivation. Usually I try to explain the four ways in which the mother is kind and then go through the development of bodhicitta in order to liberate the animals more extensively, according to the deeds of the bodhisattva.

The third of the three practices of morality is working for sentient beings, so include that—liberating animals as a practice of the paramita of morality. And from the tantric vows, in the samayas of the dhyani buddha Ratnasambhava is the practice of the four types of charity, especially the charity of loving kindness, as mentioned in the six session yoga. If you feed the animals, that is the practice of miscellaneous charity. By reciting the mantra for them, you are practicing Dharma charity. By blessing the water by blowing on it after you have recited the mantra and sprinkling it on their bodies and by circumambulating them you are practicing the charity of fearlessness, because all this purifies their negative karma, liberates them from the lower realms and gives them good rebirths.

When you do the elaborate motivation, dedicate your practice to the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for all his holy wishes to be successful; for the lives of all other virtuous friends to be stable and for all their holy wishes to be successful; to the long lives of the sangha and for them to complete their realizations and scriptural understanding; to the long lives and well-being of all benefactors who offer service to the teachings of the Buddha and for all their Dharma wishes to be successful; for all the people who have cancer, AIDS or other life obstacles to be free of these hindrances, to have long lives, and for the rest of their life to be most meaningful; to the long lives of those people who do more good

than harm, those for whom it is more beneficial to live than to die; and for evil beings to meet the Dharma and to change their minds and, by finding faith in refuge and karma, to have long lives. You can also dedicate the practice to specific people who are sick.

Experience has shown that liberating animals is one of the important ways in which people who have cancer or other life-threatening diseases can heal themselves and have a long life. It has been proven by many people who have done this practice and recovered totally from terminal cancer. This practice is one of the causes of this; others include taking the eight Mahayana precepts and engaging in other activities such as recitation of certain mantras. The practice of liberating animals is principally for long life, and recitation of mantras is more for healing sickness or protection from those harmful beings who become a condition for certain diseases to be experienced. Through these practices, all these problems can be purified, as can the karma that causes them.

Animal liberation doesn't have to be done for only yourself. You can also dedicate the practice to others—family members or anyone else. You can dedicate it to everyone. In that way, however much money is spent, whether it's on one animal or many, there are a great many benefits.

Once you've taken the animals around the altar many times and done your short or elaborate motivation, start the actual practice. Again, depending on how much time you have, this can be brief or extensive. If you have time, after refuge, bodhicitta, and the four immeasurables, do the other prayers that we do when we take precepts—purifying the place, blessing the offerings that are set up around the table, invocation, the seven-limb prayer and the short mandala offering. Then recite a direct lam-rim meditation for the animals. In this way you are doing puja on behalf of the animals. After that, recite the mantras.

The different mantras to be recited include several malas of OM MANI PADME HUM, and you can also do some of the long Avalokiteshvara mantra, NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA.... Then you can do the Medicine Buddha mantra and also the five powerful purification deities' mantras: Mitukpa, Kunrig, Stainless Beam, Stainless Pinnacle, and Wish-granting Wheel. There are also many other mantras you can recite, but these are the main ones I suggest be recited. All this has unbelievable benefit.

Depending on how many animals and people there are, you have one, two, three or more buckets of water. After everybody has chanted

each mantra together, you all bless the water by blowing on it. Then sprinkle that blessed water on the birds or pour it over the sea animals that you have. Then again, everybody takes them around the altar as many times as possible. In this way, not only do the animals get the benefit of as many circumambulations as are done but the people who take them around also get this benefit. Each circumambulation creates the causes of liberation and enlightenment and many hundreds of thousands of good rebirths for both the animals and, by the way, the people who circumambulate. When you chant the mantras, it's good to do so loudly, so that the animals can hear them, especially those that don't pay attention, like frogs, fish and so forth.

Each person carrying the animals—fish, insects and so forth—around the altar should think, depending on how many sentient beings are in the bag or the packet, “I'm giving enlightenment to these one hundred, one thousand...mother sentient beings. I'm giving them enlightenment. I'm also giving them liberation. I'm also giving them many hundreds of thousands of good rebirths.” And this is what's actually happening.

Then, as many holy objects as are on the altar, for example, one hundred statues or stupas, then you are giving *each* of the insects or other sentient beings that you are carrying one hundred enlightenments and so forth—as many as there are holy objects on the altar. The more holy objects, the more enlightenments, liberations from samsara and good rebirths you are giving them. Therefore, the more holy objects you can put there, the better.

That is how to do the practice. At the end, dedicate the merits to the same results that you mentioned in the motivation—the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and your other virtuous friends, the fulfillment of their holy wishes and so forth.

Liberating animals is done at least once a month in FPMT's Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Taipei centers. In Hong Kong there's one student who is responsible for organizing it and making sure that the various jobs involved are shared around. In Singapore they do it twice a month. That makes it easy for students from centers in other parts of the world to participate when the need arises to liberate many animals on behalf of a sick person or for whatever reason. In some places it may be difficult to do, so it is very convenient to send money to sponsor the liberation of animals in those centers where it is done regularly.

Another very attractive feature of this practice is that it can become a social occasion where many people create merit together. People bring their children and their friends, and the children love carrying the animals. Benefiting other sentient beings is something that makes everybody feel good. It's also a good practice and an excellent education for the children. It can be combined with a group outing to a restaurant or a picnic at the beach or in the country. And by the way, it becomes a cause for the liberation of the humans as well, since, as I mentioned, the people get to carry the animals around the altar, collecting a lot of merit, purifying much negative karma and creating many, many causes to not be born in the lower realms. This practice also gives people who don't come to courses or other teachings at the center an opportunity to create merit in an easy, social atmosphere. That's what happens in those Eastern countries where this is done regularly.

If there are many large animals, like big fish or other sea creatures, instead of bringing them onto land, you can set up a small boat with the altar in the water and have a bigger boat carrying the animals go around it. It might be harder for them to hear the mantras if you do it this way, but at least the circumambulation gets done. However, as you free the animals, you should recite the mantras loudly at that time.

Colophon

Oral teaching by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Aptos, California, 21 April, 1999.

Edited by Nicholas Ribush.

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE

Motivation

First, reflect that all these creatures have been human beings, like yourself, but because they did not practice Dharma and subdue their minds they have been reborn as animals. Their having such suffering bodies is the result of having followed delusion because of their unsubdued minds. When we see some small decay in our body, some sign of old age such as one more wrinkle on our body, our minds feel very uncomfortable and painful. Therefore, how could we stand having the body of an animal? There is no way. Thus, it is extremely important that we should feel for them. We

should not look at them with a mind that sees their experience of being in such bodies as having nothing to do with us. We should not think, “I am a human being and they are animals; there is absolutely no connection.”

We should not think that our own minds could not create such bodies, that these are permanent or truly existing animals that never came from the mind. It is not like that.

Think that all of these animals have been your own mother. When they were human beings they were extremely kind in giving you your body to practice Dharma and saved your life from danger hundreds of times each day. Later, they were kind by bearing many hardships to educate you in the path of the world, starting by teaching you how to speak, how to walk, how to behave as a human being and so forth.

Not only have they been kind like this numberless times as a human mother; numberless times they were born as an animal and looked after you. As a mother dog they gave you milk and food. As mother birds they fed you with many worms each day. Each time they were your mother they took care of you selflessly, sacrificing their own lives for your sake numberless times in order to protect you and give you happiness. As animals, they guarded and protected you from the attack of other animals numberless times, when you were in an egg or when you were a baby animal. In such ways, they have been unbelievably kind many, many times.

Not only has each of these animals been your mother but each has also been your father, brother, and sister numberless times. We are all the same; we are all of one family.

Think, “I must free all hell beings from all their suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment. I must free all hungry ghosts from all their suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment. I must free all animals from all their suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment.”

Think a little more about the suffering of the animals, such as being extremely dumb, being eaten by other animals without choice and being tortured by humans—not only do animals eat each other but humans harm, torture and eat them as well.

Then think, “I must free all the human beings from all their suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment.” While humans are experiencing the suffering results of past karma, on top of that, still being under the control of delusion, they continue to create cause after cause to

experience rebirth in the suffering lower realms of samsara.

Continue by thinking, “I must free all the suras and asuras from all their suffering and its cause and lead them to enlightenment. In order to free all sentient beings from their obscurations and lead them to enlightenment, I must first achieve enlightenment myself—there is no other way. To do that, I must practice the six perfections. Therefore, I am going to liberate these animals and work for sentient beings in general by making Dharma and food charity.” In this way, generate bodhicitta.

Dedication of the practice

Think, “I liberate these animals for the long life of the Compassionate Buddha in human form, His Holiness the Dalai Lama—the source of all sentient beings’ happiness and their sole refuge—and for all his holy wishes to be successful.

“I dedicate this practice to the long and stable lives of all other holy beings who live for the happiness of sentient beings and to the long lives of the sangha—who preserve the teachings and spread Dharma and who practice the three higher trainings of morality, concentration, and wisdom—and for the success of their Dharma practice.

“I liberate these animals so that all benefactors may have long lives and that all their wishes will succeed according to the holy Dharma.

“I liberate these animals for the long life of those people who have refuge in their mind and who create much good karma.

“May this practice become medicine for all those people who suffer from cancer, AIDS and other life-threatening diseases that they might be liberated from the suffering of disease and death.

“May those people who do not have the money to rescue sentient beings from life danger also benefit from this.

“I also dedicate this practice for evil beings to meet the Dharma. If they do not meet the Dharma they will continue to live evil lives and their living long will only be harmful. Therefore, may they meet and practice Dharma and have long lives.”

You can also dedicate your practice of liberating animals to particular families and people whose lives you would like to be long.

This is how to make an extensive dedication of your practice of liberating the animals so that it benefits others, not just yourself.

*THE PRACTICE**Prostrations to the Thirty-five Buddhas and the seven Medicine Buddhas*

[See the *FPMT Prayer Book*]

Visualize the Thirty-five Buddhas above the animals. Nectar-beams emanate and purify all their obscurations and negative karma accumulated from beginningless rebirths. Finally, their bodies and minds become pure, like crystal, they generate all the realizations of the path and become enlightened in the aspect of Guru Shakyamuni Buddha.

After reciting the names of the Thirty-five Buddhas, prostrate to the seven Medicine Buddhas as follows, saying their names slowly so that you can do the purifying meditation properly. Then complete the rest of the Thirty-five Buddhas prayer, which includes the four opponent powers.

Prostration to the seven Medicine Buddhas goes like this:

To the bhagavan, the tathagata, the arhat, the fully enlightened one,
Renowned Glory of Excellent Signs, I prostrate.

To the bhagavan...King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of
Ability, I prostrate.

To...King of Immaculate Excellent Gold, Radiant Jewel Who Fulfills
All His Vows, I prostrate.

To...King of Supreme Glory Who Frees from All Suffering,
I prostrate.

To...Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma, I prostrate.

To...King of Clear Light, He Who Totally Delights in the Supreme
Wisdom of the Ocean of Dharma, I prostrate.

To...Medicine Guru, King of Lapis Light, I prostrate.

Chenrezig Practice

Visualize Thousand-armed Chenrezig above the animals. Nectar-beams emanate from his heart and purify them, as before. Recite the praises to Chenrezig and then chant the mantras as many times as possible:

Praises to Chenrezig

Holy body of Dharma, being of the three times gone to bliss,
Who looks with compassionate eye upon all sentient beings of the
six migrations,
Having the eleven faces encompassing all, like the sky,
Glorious Limitless Light (Amitabha), to you I prostrate.

Your thousand arms are the thousand wheel-turning kings,
Your thousand eyes are the thousand buddhas of the fortunate eon.
I praise and prostrate to the pure, compassionate-eyed one
Who manifests in that form to subdue sentient beings.

Chenrezig Mantras

Long mantra: NAMO RATNA TRA YAYA NAMO ARYA GYANA SAGARA
BEROTSANA BUHA RADZAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA
NAMA SARVA TATHAGATE BE ARHATE BE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHE BE NAMA
ARYA AVALOKITE SHORAYA BODHI SATTVAYA MAHA SATTVAYA MAHA KARUNI
KAYA TA YA THA OM DHARA DHARA DHIRI DHIRI DHURU DHURU ITI WATE
TSALE TSALE PRATSALE PRATSALE KUSUME KUSUME WARE ILI MILI TSITI
DZOLAM APANAYE SOHA

Short mantra: OM MANI PADME HUM

Then dedicate the merits to achieve the Compassionate Buddha's enlightenment and to lead all sentient beings to the Compassionate Buddha's enlightenment: "Due to this merit may I soon attain the enlightened state of Chenrezig that I may be able to liberate all sentient beings from their sufferings and lead them to Chenrezig's enlightened realm."

Namgyalma Mantra

Long mantra: OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SARVA TRAILOKYA PRATIVISHISHTAYA
BUDDHAYA TE NAMA TA YA THA OM BHRUM BHRUM BHRUM SHODHAYA
SHODHAYA VISHODHAYA VISHODHAYA ASAMA SAMANTA AVABHA SPHARANA

GATI GAGANA SVABHAVA VISHUDDHE ABHISHINTSANTU MAM SARVA
TATHAGATA SUGATA VARA VACANA AMRITA ABHISHEKERA MAHAMUDRA
MANTRA PADAIIH AHARA AHARA MAMA AYUS SANDHARANI SHODHAYA
SHODHAYA VISHODHAYA VISHODHAYA GAGANA SVABHAVA VISHUDDHE
USNISHA VIJAYA PARISHUDDHE SAHASRA RASMI SANYTSODITE SARVA
TATHAGATA AVALOKINI SAT PARAMITA PARIPURANI SARVA TATHAGATA MATE
DASHA BHUMI PRATISHTHITE SARVA TATHAGATA HRIDAYA ADHISHTHANA
ADHISHTHITE MUDRE MUDRE MAHA MUDRE VAJRA KAYA SAMHATANA
PARISHUDDHE SARVA KARMA AVARANA VISHUDDHE PRATINI VARTAYA MAMA
AYUR VISHUDDHE SARVA TATHAGATA SAMAYA ADHISHTHANA ADHISHTHITE
OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNI VIMUNI VIMUNI MAHA VIMUNI MATI MATI
MAHA MATI MAMATI SUMATI TATHATA BHUTAKOTI PARISHUDDHE VISPHUTA
BUDDHI SHUDDHE HE HE JAYA JAYA VIJAYA VIJAYA SMARA SMARA SPHARA
SPHARA SPHARAYA SPHARAYA SARVA BUDDHA ADHISHTHANA ADHISHTHITE
SHUDDHE SHUDDHE BUDDHE BUDDHE VAJRE VAJRE MAHA VAJRE SUVAJRE
VAJRA GARBHE JAYA GARBHE VIJAYA GARBHE VAJRA DZOLA GARBHE
VAJRODBHAVE VAJRA SAMBHAVE VAJRE VAJRINI VAJRAM BHAVATU MAMA
SHARIRAM SARVA SATTVANANYTSA KAYA PARISHUDDHIR BHAVATU ME SADA
SARVA GATI PARISHUDDHISHTSA SARVA TATHAGATASHTSA MAM
SAMASVASAYANTU BUDDHYA BUDDHYA SIDDHYA SIDDHYA BODHAYA
BODHAYA VIBODHAYA VIBODHAYA MOTSAVA MOTSAVA VIMOTSAYA
VIMOTSAYA SHODHAYA SHODHAYA VISHODHAYA VISHODHAYA SAMANTENA
MOTSAYA MOTSAVA SAMANTA RASMI PARISHUDDHE SARVA TATHAGATA
HRIDAYA ADHISHTHANA ADHISHTHITE MUDRE MUDRE MAHA MUDRE
MAHAMUDRA MANTRA PADAIIH SOHA

Short mantra: OM DHRUM SOHA OM AMRITA AYUR DADE SOHA

The Wish-Granting Wheel Mantra

OM PADMO USHNISHA VIMALE HUM PHET

Milarepa Mantra

OM AH GURU HASA VAJRA SARVA SIDDHI PALA HUM

Medicine Buddha Mantra

TAYATHA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHABEKANDZE RANDZA SAMUDGATE
SOHA

Dedication

“Due to this merit may I soon attain the enlightened state of the guru-buddha that I may be able to liberate all sentient beings from their sufferings and lead them to that enlightened state.

“May the precious bodhi mind not yet born arise and grow. May that born have no decline, but increase forever more.”

APPENDIX 4

WATER OFFERING TO DZAMBHALA AND WATER CHARITY TO THE PRETAS

THE DAILY PRACTICE OF WATER OFFERING TO DZAMBHALA

The purpose of this practice

The purpose of practicing Dzambhala is to receive everything required to practice Dharma; to benefit all other sentient beings extensively by relieving their poverty, liberating them from suffering, giving them whatever they need to practice Dharma, supporting temples for the sake of all sentient beings, maintaining monasteries for monks and nuns to study and practice Dharma and helping sentient beings collect merit and practice Dharma in general; and to spread the teachings of the Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings. These are some of the many reasons for practicing Dzambhala.

There are three basic Dzambhala practices: the Dzambhala wealth vase; tormā offering to Dzambhala; and the daily practice of water offering to Dzambhala, including recitation of mantras. The third of these is given here [see Chapter 48, Tuesday, April 27 for the origin and a general description of this practice].

MOTIVATION

Begin with strong motivation, first taking refuge and generating bodhicitta and contemplating the four immeasurables. Think, “The purpose of my life is to liberate all sentient beings from their suffering and cause them to become enlightened. For this I must achieve perfect buddhahood.” To strengthen your practice, contemplate the sufferings of each of the six saṃsāric realms. Then think, “In order to achieve enlightenment, I am going to make water offerings to Dzambhala and water charity to the pretas.”

After offering water to Dzambhala, it is very good to make charity of that same water to the pretas; to combine these two practices. The practice can be done with a Dzambhala statue in the receptacle or just by visualization.

WATER OFFERING TO WHITE DZAMBHALA

First, generate yourself as Chenrezig, then recite, “I offer this water to the holy body of Dzambhala, who rides a dragon. His body is white in color. His right hand holds a trident; his left, a club. He is surrounded by the four dakinis, one in each cardinal direction.”

[The four dakinis are: in the east, blue Vajra Dakini holding a vajra in her right hand and a vessel full of auspicious, variegated substances in her left; in the south, yellow Jewel Dakini holding a heap of jewels in her right hand and an iron hook in her left; in the west, red Lotus Dakini holding a lotus in her right hand and a jewel-marked banner of victory in her left; and in the north, green Karma Dakini holding a double vajra in her right hand and a treasure-producing mongoose in her left. All of them sit in the half-lotus posture and are adorned with jeweled ornaments.]

Now offer the water by pouring it on Dzambhala’s head. It is good to use a watering can with a long spout, which lets you offer water in the preferred fine stream. As you pour the water with your right hand, snap the fingers of your left at your heart (to remind yourself of emptiness) and recite the mantra, OM PADMA KRODHA ARYA DZAMBHALA HRI DAYA HUM PHET seven, twenty-one or as many times as possible.

To collect more merit when you do this practice, the most important thing is to visualize Dzambhala as your own guru. Also visualize unceasing wish-fulfilling jewels or billions and billions of dollars pouring out of the mouths of the dragon and the mongoose like a beautiful waterfall tumbling down a mountainside. The water you offer generates great bliss on Guru Dzambhala’s head; he experiences endless bliss like the sky. After you have offered the water, from this state of bliss, Dzambhala’s mind is extremely inspired, and he promises to help you completely, to provide everything you need for all your projects to succeed and for you to realize all attainments.

WATER OFFERING TO YELLOW DZAMBHALA

On a lotus and a moon disk, the seed syllable *Jam* transforms into Yellow Dzambhala. His right hand holds a *pitsapura* fruit and his left a treasure-producing mongoose spewing a stream of wish-granting jewels.

Generate yourself as Chenrezig and recite, “By offering to your holy

body that which cleans”—*tsang-che*, another term for water, which is called this because it cleans as it is poured—“all pains are pacified and I am fully satisfied by experiencing great bliss. Please grant all attainments and needs.”

Recite the mantra OM DZAMBHALA DZALANDRAYE SOHA as many times as possible and, as before, offer the water by holding up the watering can and snapping your fingers.

WATER OFFERING TO BLACK DZAMBHALA

Next offer water to Black Dzambhala, reciting the mantra OM JLUM SOHA OM INDRAYANI MUKHAM BHARAMARI SOHA seven or twenty-one times, pouring water on Dzambhala’s stomach and snapping your fingers as before. To collect the greatest merit, again think that Dzambhala is your guru. Your offering of water generates bliss like the sky in Dzambhala’s holy mind and he is fully inspired to grant you all realizations and every kind of assistance.

(When offering water to White Dzambhala, recite White Dzambhala’s mantra. When offering water to Yellow Dzambhala, recite Yellow Dzambhala’s mantra. When offering water to Black Dzambhala, recite the mantra of Black Dzambhala. And when offering water to only one of the three, don’t recite the mantras of other two. You can also recite the mantra without offering water, in which case visualize making the offering.)

REQUESTING PRAYER

“Savior Dzambhala, guardian of the north, enriched with wealth, treasure of jewels, lord of all the harm-givers who have wealth, to you who grants supreme attainments, I prostrate. We who are tortured by the fire of miserly karma go to you for refuge from life to life. With the flowing nectar rain of jewel treasure, please pacify the suffering of those sentient beings who live in poverty.”

Think that the poverty of all sentient beings in the ten directions has been eliminated. Then take a little water with your fingers and touch it

to your tongue to receive the attainments. Say, DZAMBHALA SIDDHI PHALA HO.

After this, make water charity to the pretas, using the water from the Dzambhala practice.

Colophon

This teaching was given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Madison, Wisconsin, 26 July, 1998, transcribed and edited by Vens. Sherab Chen and Diana Finnegan, and revised for this book by Nicholas Ribush.

MAKING CHARITY OF WATER TO THE PRETAS

Do this practice using a container with a lid. Hold it in the fingers of your right hand [see Chapter 48 for more advice on how to do this practice]. Clarify your visualization of yourself as Chenrezig or the deity with whom you are doing this practice. Say the prayer, “May the continuous flow of milk from the hand of the Arya Compassionate-eyed Lord (Chenrezig), satisfy the pretas, bathe them and always keep them cool.”

Make the mudra of granting sublime realizations and stretch your right hand out over your knee while offering the water. In the palm of your right hand is a HRIH. The HRIH emits beams of light along which nectar flows, satisfying all pretas.

Your left hand is at your heart in the mudra of granting refuge. Visualize numberless general pretas and while snapping your fingers, recite OM AH HRIH HUM seven or twenty-one times and slowly pour water from the container into the receptacle from the Dzambhala practice. In this way, give water to the general pretas. It becomes nectar, enters their mouths and immediately relieves them from all their heavy sufferings. They experience inconceivable bliss and generate in their minds the entire path to enlightenment. Also do this visualization with the other types of preta, as follows.

Snapping your fingers, recite OM MANI PADME HUM seven or twenty-one times and drip water from the container into the receptacle. In this way, give water to the pretas with flames coming from the mouth.

Then, snapping your fingers, recite OM JVALA MIDAM SARVA PRETA

BHYAH SOHA as many times as possible and drip water from the container, but this time it goes outside the receptacle. In this way, give one drop of water individually to each of the *ju-geg-ma* pretas.

The necks of the *ju-geg-ma* pretas are obstructed by three knots and they have no freedom to swallow even a drop of water. They are especially tormented by hunger and thirst, and flames come from their stomachs. Of all pretas, these have the most extreme suffering. Their obstructions to taking food and drink are the result of having created the karma of stopping people from practicing giving.

If you recite this blessed, precious mantra and offer one drop of water, the knots in the pretas' necks are instantly untied. As the drop of water goes down its throat, the preta becomes blissfully satisfied. The teachings say that this practice has great benefit. All their obscurations and negative karma are purified and they all become enlightened in the form of Chenrezig or the deity with whom you do this practice.

“Due to the merit of making charity of this nectar, may the Queen of the Pretas as the principal and all other pretas who have external and internal obstructions to food and drink, those who are in the main preta place and those scattered elsewhere, be liberated from sufferings of hunger and thirst and the two obscurations and be fully satisfied by this nectar. May all miserliness and similar minds, including even their imprints, be completely purified. By completing the paramita of charity, may they be enriched with enjoyments infinite as the sky. May all beings be free of harm and freely enjoy ‘sky treasure’ forever.”

The benefits of doing this practice are that you accumulate inconceivable merit, do not experience poverty of necessities, enjoyments and so forth, and get reborn in the pure realms.

MAKING CHARITY OF WATER TO THE INTERMEDIATE STATE BEINGS

Clarify your visualization of yourself as the Arya Compassionate-eyed Lord. The syllable HRIH in the palm of your right hand transforms into Transcendental Wisdom Star-Arrow (Yeshe Karda), who has a blue-green holy body. Her left hand is in the mudra of concentration and her right in the mudra of granting sublime realizations. Nectar flows from her whole body as well as her palms, satisfying all sentient beings, especially those pitiful migrators, the intermediate state beings. Pray, “May this

flow of nectar satisfy migratory beings.”

As before, hold the water container in your right hand, visualize numberless intermediate state beings and, while snapping the fingers of your left hand, recite OM JNANA AVALOKITE SAMANTA PARANA RAMI BAWA SAMAYA MAHA MANI DURU DURU HRIH DAYA JALANI SOHA seven times and OM MANI PADME HUM as many times as possible, blow on the water, and pour it back into the body of water where you’re doing this practice (swimming pool, pond, lake, river or beach).

The nectar enters the intermediate state beings’ mouths and immediately relieves them of all their heavy sufferings. They experience inconceivable bliss and generate in their minds the entire path to enlightenment.

Then pray, “Due to the merits of offering this water, may all the migratory beings of the intermediate state be liberated from all suffering and fear and reach the pure land.”

Repeat this entire process seven times, each time substituting another mantra for the OM MANI PADME HUM. The first time, recite the Medicine Buddha mantra at least seven times, blow on the water and offer it. Repeat this process with the Namgyalma, Mitukpa, Kunrig, Wish-granting Wheel, Stainless Pinnacle and Stainless Beam mantras. In this way, since the water you pour is blessed, the entire body of water gets blessed and all the sentient beings in that water get purified and receive good rebirths. After pouring the water, think and visualize that all the water appears as nectar to all the pretas that the buddhas perceive; all the pretas receive the nectar and are totally satisfied; the nectar purifies all their negative karma, they get liberated from all their suffering and all become Chenrezig. Do this after each time you have poured the water.

Finally, pray, “May the intermediate state beings who died or were killed yesterday and so forth, those who have not received a body, whose minds are wandering without support in the intermediate state, be satisfied by this nectar charity. May they be able to remember the guru-deity. By recognizing the intermediate state as the intermediate state, may they be liberated immediately from the fear of the four terrifying enemies”—your own negative karma manifested in the terrifying appearance of the four elements—“the three precipices of the lower realms, and so forth. May they achieve the holy body of complete enjoyment (sambhogakaya).

“Due to the merits of offering this water charity, as soon as the appearance of the intermediate state occurs, may every sentient being

immediately be shown the unmistakable path by the eight bodhisattvas and be born in a blissful realm. Through transformations, may they guide the migratory beings of the impure realms.”

MAKING CHARITY OF WATER TO THE NAGAS

After you have finished the water offering and prayers for the intermediate state beings, Transcendental Wisdom Star-Arrow transforms into the fully qualified destroyer, Immovable Vajra (Mitukpa). From his right hand, which is in the mudra of granting sublime realizations, nectar flows and purifies the sentient beings of the six realms, particularly the nagas, and satisfies them.

Visualize infinite sentient beings, especially the nagas, and while snapping your fingers, recite, “Due to the water charity flowing from these fingers, may the pitiful migratory beings be able to free their breath” and the Mitukpa mantra OM KAMKANI KAMKANI ROTSANI ROTSANI TROTANI TROTANI TRASANI TRASANI PRATIHANA PRATIHANA SARVA KARMA PARAM PARA NIME SARVA SATTVA NÄNYTSA SOHA seven times.

The nectar enters the intermediate state beings’ mouths and immediately relieves them of all their heavy sufferings. They experience inconceivable bliss and generate in their minds the entire path to enlightenment.

“Due to this water charity, may the mental continua of the King of the Nagas, The Joyful One, The Near-Joyful One and so forth, the Owner of All Water, landlords and all other sentient beings be adorned by the thought of pure charity, become the supreme meaning of the yoga of pure enjoyment and be quickly enlightened.” With this prayer, offer water charity to the nagas.

OFFERING DHARMA CHARITY

“Due to the power of my pure attitude, the blessings of the one Gone As It Is and the sphere of Dharma (profound emptiness), in order to make offerings to all transcendent beings and to benefit all sentient beings, may all my intentions happen instantly, without resistance.”

With your right hand in the mudra of revealing Dharma, recite, “All the causes and the dharmas that arise from these causes have been explained by the one Gone As It Is. Everything that ceases these causes

has been taught by the great one in the training in virtue.”

Then recite *The Heart Sutra* in full or its essence: “The inexpressible, inconceivable Wisdom Gone Beyond, unborn, unceasing, only in the nature of sky, is the object to be perceived by discerning, self-recognizing wisdom. To the Mother of the Victorious Ones of the three times, I prostrate.” Then recite the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, TAYATHA OM GATÉ GATÉ PARAGATÉ PARASAMGATÉ BODHI SOHA, three times.

Think that all sentient beings of the six realms understand the meaning of the mantra, generate the entire Mahayana path and its result in their mental continua, ripen and gain liberation.

While reciting, “And thus, O venerable compassionate gurus, I seek your blessings that all karmic debts, obstacles and sufferings of mother beings may, without exception, ripen upon me right now, and that I may give my happiness and virtue to others, thereby investing all beings in bliss,” three times, take into the center of your own heart the suffering and its cause of all samsaric sentient beings and give them your own happiness and merit.

Then recite, “Should even the environment and the beings therein be filled with the fruits of their karmic debts and undesired sufferings pour down like rain, I seek your blessings to take these miserable conditions as a path by seeing them as causes to exhaust the results of my negative karma.”

DEDICATION

Dedicate the merits with the intense understanding that you yourself, the action and the object of charity are all merely labeled by the mind; that nothing in the slightest exists from above the object; and that in name, cause and result, dependent arising is unbetraying.

Thinking of the meaning of the words, slowly recite the following:

“Due to all these merits, may the holy enlightened beings be the guide and refuge of the pitiful sentient beings, who suffer because of contaminated cause and have no guide or refuge.

“Due to the merits accumulated in the three times and the merit of my having done this practice, may I become the holy guide and refuge for all pitiful migratory beings.

“For all the narak beings tormented by heat, may I become rain and

protect them with coolness. For all the narak beings suffering from cold, may I become the supreme sun eliminating torment.

“May I become oceans of food and drink of a hundred tastes and give breath to all the pretas.

“May I become the sublime light eliminating the darkness of ignorance of those used for work and food (animals).

“May I become armor for those who suffer jealousy, quarrel and receive rainfalls of arrows (asuras).

“And may I become the stable ship liberating those for whom the tidal wave of death means downfall (suras).

“To those attacked by the intense contagious diseases of terrifying rebirth, old age, sickness and death, may I become the supreme medicine eliminating all disease of disturbing thoughts.

“To those with poverty of merit and no means of living, may I become the great treasure granting all wishes.

“To those tormented by separation from relatives and friends, may I become steadfast relatives and friends.

“In all my lifetimes may I be able to receive a perfect body with freedoms and riches, and hold the virtuous friend, the wish-granting jewel, on my crown. By entering the boat of listening, reflecting and meditating, may I go to the land of the three kayas.

“I dedicate the merits of having done this practice to accomplish every single prayer and action of the Ones Gone to Bliss and the bodhisattvas of the three times, and to cause the holy Dharma of scriptural understanding and realization to be upheld.

“Due to this, in all my lifetimes may I never be separated from the four wheels of the supreme vehicle [residing in places where enlightened beings are present and you have facilities for Dharma practice such as food and teachings; having a guru; accomplishing your past vows; and already having a great accumulation of merit] and complete the principles of the path—the determination to be free, the thought of enlightenment, perfect view and the two stages.”

It is said that it is more difficult to meet the sutra and tantra teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa, which are refined with the three analyses, than it is to find a perfect human body, receive many hundreds of thousands of times the wealth of Brahma, Indra, wheel-turning kings and so forth,

meet the teachings of the buddha, or be born in the special buddha field of Pure Sky Enjoyment (Dagpa Kachö). Therefore, the reliable holy beings of the past say with one voice that it is extremely important to pray to meet these teachings. There are elaborate prayers for this, but here is a condensed one written by the Fifth Dalai Lama:

“May I and all others be able to live lives of pure moral conduct, like Lama Tsong Khapa himself, train our minds in bodhicitta and live in pure view and conduct. In this way may we be able to complete our lives without corrupting the pure wisdom of the Second Buddha’s teachings.”

Colophon

Translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Sydney, Australia, October, 1991. Originally transcribed and lightly edited by Vens. Tenzin Tsapel and Ailsa Cameron and first published in *Mandala*, October, 1992, and April, 1993. Edited for this book by Nicholas Ribush using material from the teaching at Madison, Wisconsin.

WATER CHARITY TO THE PRETAS WITH TARA

There is a very simple practice of making charity of water to pretas that can be done anywhere, but is extremely beneficial for them. It is especially good to do when you go to the beach; there is so much water there that you can do the practice all day long. Just take along a big jug or watering can, bless the water and make charity of it to the pretas.

You can do this practice with Chenrezig, Buddha of Compassion, or Tara. She herself taught it to the great yogi, Tagpu Dorje Chang, who often saw Tara and received directly from her the initiation and entire teaching of the Highest Yoga Tantra path of Cittamani Tara, which mentions that Tara advised that this practice of offering water to the pretas be done.

Even if you have not received Tara initiation, you can still do this practice with Tara; just don’t visualize yourself in her aspect. Otherwise, generate yourself as Tara.

Fill a container with water and visualize Tara on the water with her mantra at her heart. Invoke the wisdom beings, who absorb into Tara and become non-dual. Then invoke the empowering deities, who bestow

the initiation. Make offerings and give praise to Tara.

Now recite one or more malas of the Tara mantra. Visualize that from the ten directions, the blessings of all buddhas and bodhisattvas in the form of nectar beams [beams of light together with streams of nectar] absorb into the mantra at Tara's heart. Nectar flows down from the mantra through Tara's holy body to mix with and bless the water in the container.

After the recitation, Tara melts into light and absorbs into the water, becoming oneness with it. If you have visualized yourself as Tara, emanate numberless Taras to fill the whole earth. Around each Tara are numberless pretas with flames coming from the mouth. Nectar flows into the mouths of the pretas from the right hand of each Tara, immediately putting out the flames and completely purifying the pretas. While visualizing this, recite the mantra that dedicates the nectar to the pretas enabling them to receive it: OM TARÉ TUTTARÉ TURÉ SARVA PRETA BHYAH SOHA.

Through your making water charity like this, the pretas receive inconceivable benefit. They are liberated from the lower realms and receive the body of a happy transmigrator or are born in a pure realm. This water charity makes a huge difference to them. It stops their lives of unbelievable suffering and enables them to receive happy rebirths. It is a very simple practice but brings the pretas these unbelievable benefits. And that's not even mentioning the benefits received by the person doing this practice, which is actually part of a bodhisattva's practice of charity. As well as making material charity of the water, by reciting the mantra, you are also making Dharma charity.

Making charity of water is also a practice of the tantric vows, the samayas of the five dhyani buddhas. It is part of the practice of the morality of working for sentient beings, which is one of the three moralities of the Vairocana samaya, and includes the four types of charity—material, fearlessness, Dharma and loving kindness—of the samaya of Ratnasambhava. (By doing this practice motivated by the wish that all pretas be happy, you make it the charity of loving kindness.)

You can also bless the water by reciting the mantras of the deities that purify the causes of the lower realms, such as Chenrezig, Medicine Buddha and Milarepa. Recite the mantra and blow on the water.

The reason I have explained this practice is that it is something we

can add to our lives without much extra effort. Since you are going to the beach, lake or pool anyway, even if you are going for your own pleasure, doing this practice once you get there gives meaning to your having gone. No matter how far you've traveled to get to that water, how long, expensive or difficult your journey, using that trip as a means of practicing Dharma and benefiting others gives great meaning to all the time, effort and expense involved.

This practice is unbelievably important for the happiness of the present and, just by the way, becomes the cause of our own greatest success—of our enlightenment, the greatest possible success; liberation from saṃsāra; and the temporal success of this life, such as wealth and so forth. It brings success in this and future lives.

Colophon

This teaching by Lama Zopa Rinpoche was originally edited by Ven. Ailsa Cameron and first appeared in *Mandala*, April, 1992.

4. *Mantra of Jetsun Milarepa*

This mantra powerfully purifies causes of lower rebirth and creates the cause of rebirth in a pure land.

OM AH GURU HASA VAJRA SARVA SIDDHI PALA HUM

ॐ ॥ ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ह्रस्वसं ह्रस्वसं ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ॥

5. *Mantra of the King of Tantra*

This mantra purifies sentient beings from lower rebirth.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SARVA DURGA TIPARI SHODHANI RAJAYA
TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA TAYATHA OM SHODHANI
SHODHANI SARVA PAPAM BISHODHANI SHUDDHE BISHUDDHE SARVA
KARMA AVARANI BISHUDDHE SOHA

ॐ ॥ ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ह्रस्वसं ह्रस्वसं ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ॥
ह्रस्वपुं ह्रस्वसं ह्रस्वसं ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ॥
ह्रस्वपुं ह्रस्वसं ह्रस्वसं ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ॥

6. *Mantra of Wish-granting Wheel*

This mantra promotes healing through purification and creates the cause of rebirth in a pure land.

OM PADMO USHNISHA VIMALE HUM PHET

ॐ ॥ ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ह्रस्वसं ह्रस्वसं ह्रीं ह्रस्वपुं ॥

7. Mantra of Stainless Beam

This very profound mantra is extremely powerful in purifying negativity. The Buddha explained that reciting it seven times for the sake of someone who has died can liberate that being from the lower realms immediately and cause him or her to be reborn in a pure land.

NAMA SAPTANAM SAMYAK SAMBUDDHA KODINEN PARI SHUDDHE MANASI
AH BHYA TSITAPA TIKTA TUNEN NAMO BHAGAVATE AMRITA AYUKASYA
TATHAGATASYA OM SARVA TATHAGATA SHUDDHI AYUR BISHODHANI
SAMHARA SAMHARA SARVA TATHAGATA BIRYA BALENA PARTI SAMHARA AYU
SARA SARA SARVA TATHAGATA SAMAYA BODHI BODHI BUDDHA BUDDHA
BODHAYA BODHAYA MAMA * SARVA PAPAM AVARANA BISHUDDHE BIGATA
MALAM TSARASU BUDDHE BUDDHE HURU HURU SOHA OM SARVA
TATHAGATA MALA BISHODHANI RUDHAVALE PARTI SAMSKARA TATHAGATA
DHATU DHARE DHARA DHARA SENDHARA SENDHARA SARVA TATHAGATA
ADHIKATANA ADHIKATATE SOHA OM HANU PASHA BHARA HE YE SOHA

* Stainless Beam heart mantra starts here

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

8. *Mantra of Namgyalma*

This mantra is powerful for purification and longevity. [See Appendix 3 for the long mantra.]

OM DHRUM SOHA OM AMRITA AYUR DADE SOHA

ॐ ཨོཾ་ཧྲུཾ་སྐུ་ཧྲུཾ་ཨོཾ་ཨ་སྲི་ཏ་ཨུ་ཡུད་དེ་སྐུ་ཧྲུཾ་

9. *Mantra of Medicine Buddha*

The Buddha said that this mantra was powerful not only for healing sickness but also for purifying negative karma. Just by hearing this mantra, one creates the cause never to be born in the lower realms. It also has great power to bring success.

TAYATHA OM BEKANDZE BEKANDZE MAHABEKANDZE RANDZA
SAMUDGATE SOHA

ॐ ཏཱ་ཨྲ་ཧྲཱ་ཨོཾ་ཧྲི་ཧྲིཾ་ཧྲིཾ་ཨ་ཏྲ་ཧྲིཾ་ཧྲིཾ་རུ་ལྷ་མཚན་རྟེན་སྐུ་ཧྲུཾ་

APPENDIX 6

LETTER TO HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

29 May, 1999

Your Holiness,

Our precious teacher, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, has advised us that the mantras recited during the Vajrasattva retreat at Land of Medicine Buddha should be dedicated to the long life of Your Holiness.

Please, Your Holiness, Buddha of Compassion, have a stable life until samsara ends. We, the students of the FPMT, particularly the students who participated in the three-month Vajrasattva retreat from 1 February, 1999, to 30 April, 1999, at Land of Medicine Buddha in Soquel, California, will follow Your Holiness's wishes and advice about our Dharma practice and how to offer service to Tibet as much as possible.

We humbly request Your Holiness, Buddha of Compassion, to accept our offering of the 4,159,200 Vajrasattva mantras that were completed during the retreat and dedicated to the long life of Your Holiness. May our efforts be able to eliminate all the sufferings of body and mind of all sentient beings and spread the stainless teaching of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings. Just by coming to Land of Medicine Buddha, may sentient beings never ever be born in the three lower realms again and be free from all sickness, negative karma, obstacles and spirit harm and develop unchanging faith in refuge and karma, bodhicitta and the rest of the path to enlightenment.

Please guide all the students of the FPMT, particularly the organizers of the Vajrasattva retreat as well as the dedicated practitioners who took part in the retreat, until enlightenment is achieved by doing only actions that please our virtuous friend, Your Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Your obedient and ever-loving student,

Ven. Tenzin Namdag
Director of Land of Medicine Buddha

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Our precious teacher, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, has advised us that the mantras recited during the Vajrasattva retreat at Land of Medicine Buddha should be dedicated to the long life of Your Holiness.

Please, Your Holiness, Buddha of Compassion, have a stable life until samsara ends. We, the students of the FPMT, particularly the students who participated in the three-month Vajrasattva retreat from 1 February, 1999, to 30 April, 1999, at Land of Medicine Buddha in Soquel, California, will follow Your Holiness's wishes and advice about our Dharma practice and how to offer service to Tibet as much as possible.

We humbly request Your Holiness, Buddha of Compassion, to accept our offering of the 4,159,200 Vajrasattva mantras that were completed during the retreat and dedicated to the long life of Your Holiness. May our efforts be able to eliminate all the sufferings of body and mind of all sentient beings and spread the stainless teaching of Lama Tsong Khapa in the minds of all sentient beings. Just by coming to Land of Medicine Buddha, may sentient beings never ever be born in the three lower realms again and be free from all sickness, negative karma, obstacles and spirit harm and develop unchanging faith in refuge and karma, bodhicitta and the rest of the path to enlightenment.

Please guide all the students of the FPMT, particularly the organizers of the Vajrasattva retreat as well as the dedicated practitioners who took part in the retreat, until enlightenment is achieved by doing only actions that please our virtuous friend, Your Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Your obedient and ever-loving student,

Ven. Tenzin Namdag
Director of Land of Medicine Buddha

THE LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

The LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE (LYWA) is the collected works of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. The ARCHIVE was founded in 1996 by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, its spiritual director, to make available in various ways the teachings it contains. Distribution of free booklets of edited teachings is one of the ways.

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 the LYWA contains about 6,000 cassette tapes and approximately 40,000 pages of transcribed teachings on computer disk. Some 4,000 tapes, mostly teachings by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, remain to be transcribed. As Rinpoche continues to teach, the number of tapes in the ARCHIVE increases accordingly. Most of the 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, to edit that which has not yet been edited, and generally to do the many other tasks detailed opposite. In all this, we need your help. Please contact us for more information:

LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE,
PO Box 356
Weston, MA 02493, USA
Telephone (781) 899-9587
email nribush@compuserve.com
Web site: www.fpmt.org

Bank information

For transfers from within the USA:

Name of bank: BankBoston
ABA routing number 011000390 BankBoston N. A.
Account: LYWA 546-81495

Transfers from overseas also need either one or both:

S.W.I.F.T. address: FNBB US 33
Telex 4996527 Boston BSN

THE ARCHIVE TRUST

The work of the LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE falls into two categories: archiving and dissemination.

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

We organize the transcription of tapes, 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 videotapes and photographs of the Lamas and investigating the latest means of preserving ARCHIVE materials.

DISSEMINATION involves making the Lamas' teachings available directly or indirectly through various avenues such as booklets for free distribution, regular books for the trade, lightly edited transcripts, floppy disks, audio- and videotapes, and articles in *Mandala* and other magazines, and on the FPMT web site. Irrespective of the method 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.

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.

The ARCHIVE TRUST has been established to fund the above activities and 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 booklets for free distribution, please contact us at our Weston address.

The LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible, non-profit corporation (ID number 04-3374479) dedicated to the welfare of all sentient beings and totally dependent upon your donations for its continued existence.

Thank you so much for your support.

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 110 FPMT activities in twenty-four 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 Tsong Khapa, in particular.

Every two months, the Foundation publishes a magazine, *Mandala*, from its International Office in the United States of America. For a sample issue of the magazine or for more information about the organization, please contact:

FPMT
PO Box 800
Soquel, CA 95073, USA
Telephone (831) 476-8435; fax (831) 476-4823;
email fpmt@compuserve.com
or check out our Web site at www.fpmt.org

Our Web site 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, 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.



WHAT TO DO WITH DHARMA TEACHINGS

The Buddhadharmā is the true source of happiness for all sentient beings. Books like the one in your hand 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 or the names of your teachers 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 ZOPA RINPOCHE

Rinpoche was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1946. 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* (Wisdom Publications). 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 on the FPMT Web site, www.fpmt.org. Rinpoche's other published teachings include *Wisdom Energy* (with Lama Yeshe), *Transforming Problems*, and a number of transcripts and practice booklets (available from Wisdom Publications at www.wisdompubs.org).



*Doing Vajrasattva retreat is not simply about
reciting the mantra and saying some prayers.
It is about making the practice effective
for your mind, making it the quickest,
most powerful way to transform your mind.*

– Lama Zopa Rinpoche

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