

# **The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas**

Preliminary Teachings to the Kalachakra Initiation

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I will be lecturing on The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas by the Bodhisattva Togmey. When one engages in lecturing on or attending a lecture, hearing about the Buddhist religion in general and in this case the doctrine of the Great Vehicle, it is necessary first to go for refuge. One then practices altruistic mind generation to make the mind more altruistic. This is why we will repeat together the basic refuge formula three times.

Before beginning to lecture on The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas, I will give a general presentation of the structure of the Buddhist system. As is well known, there are in general the system of the Theravada and the Vehicle of Bodhisattvas. Within the Vehicle of Bodhisattvas as a sub-division there is the Vehicle of Mantra or Tantra. There are these three. I think most of you know that the Tibetan system practices all three yanas. The Theravada system concerns oneself and is practiced as a foundation. The main practice is the understanding or realization of suffering. Following these are the three practices of ethics, samadhi (or focusing our mental force sometimes called one-pointedness of mind) and then wisdom or deeper awareness of the ultimate nature, a deeper awareness of selflessness, the non-soul theory. Without the practice of these things you can not practice the Bodhisattvayana. This must be taken as a foundation or basis.

On top of the foundation is the teaching of Mahayana or Sutrayana. The focus is on the proper development of infinite altruism on the basis of love and compassion. The actual implementation of the altruistic mind is the Six Paramitas or Six Perfections; giving, ethics, patience, effort, concentration and wisdom. This is the basic structure of the Mahayana or Sutrayana teachings.

In Tantrayana there are four different classes; Kriya, Caryā, Yoga and Annutarayoga Tantra. Unifying all four tantric classes is a special technique to develop or increase the power of the combination of mental energy and wisdom, a meditative stabilization, which is the union of, calm-abiding of the mind with special insight. This involves deity yoga or the practice of visualizing oneself as a deity. This is the style of the Tantrayana.

In Annutarayoga tantra the special technique uses a special level of mind or consciousness. In order to develop or transform the subtlest level of consciousness into wisdom, one must first subdue the grosser levels of mind. Therefore in this system, in order to ascertain or to discriminate between these various levels of consciousness, it is necessary to engage in techniques whereby they can be manifested and identified. This is where physical practices that involve the channels, winds and drops of subtle matter are used.

This is the Tibetan system, which usually I call the complete form of Buddha's teaching.

Now though the main teaching is the Kalachakra system in order to receive this initiation one needs preparation. Without preparing one's mind one can not receive proper initiation. However if one had to be completely qualified even I could not be qualified. However all of us have to make effort to achieve at least this bottom line of these qualifications. These teachings will give you some sort of foundation.

Spiritual development does not take place over a few hours, that is impossible. It takes years and years of practice. From the Buddhist perspective, we accept rebirth and that the subtle consciousness has no beginning or end. The grosser levels of consciousness, particularly those negative emotions have no beginning but an end. Generally speaking the subtler level of consciousness has no beginning or end and because of that, the self itself has neither beginning nor end. Therefore we count eons, not minutes, hours or weeks. Rather we count eons. Take time for the proper development of spiritual experiences.

The person with determination to realize a meaningful goal or purpose does not worry about the time it takes to achieve it. When one develops such an attitude then time seems shorter. The opposite is true. When one is very worried about time then it takes more time. Spiritual development takes time and there is no reason to be discouraged about it. Since this is the case even if you can not quickly achieve realizations it is very important to get a sense of the whole breadth of the path from beginning to end.

In the *Heart Sutra* there is a line where one is committing oneself not to engage in any ill-deeds and to engage in as much virtue as possible. Therefore what are ill-deeds? Ill-deeds are those actions which when one engages in them have as their fruition suffering. What is virtue? Virtues are actions which when one engages in them they bear their fruit as happiness. It can be said generally speaking, ill-deeds are those actions which when you engage in them bring about an ill-feeling, an unhappiness of mind and/or body for other beings and will bring to you suffering. Generally speaking also those actions which when you engage in them bring about mental or physical happiness or both to others, will in the future bring to you as their fruition happiness.

The non-engagement in non-virtues and engagement in virtues depends on one's mind so it is necessary to tame one's mind. Thus it is extremely important to examine, to inspect one's own mind; to examine the undisciplined states of mind and tame them. This is dharma. This is religion.

Among the many types of living beings there are different types of mental levels, different types of consciousness. In deed humans have the best type of consciousness for taking on new practices and so forth. Thus this lifetime as a human is very valuable. There are many differences within the appearance of human beings but even greater are the variety of dispositions, interests, predispositions, levels of intelligence and so forth among humans.

As is said in *The Expression of the Names of Manjusri*, "Due to the fact that sentient beings are of many varieties and different types of dispositions, intelligence and so forth, there are many different techniques set forth for them". However all of them are one in the sense that they are techniques for training and taming the mind.

Since it is the case that beings are of such a great variety of dispositions and so forth, this means there has to be many different types of techniques. All of these techniques then have to be appropriately helpful for those beings. Now it is the case that in the end one needs to remove all mistaken notions or mistaken attitudes. In order to do this it is necessary to have an unmistakable view. Thus it means that from among these many different systems and these many different views, it is important to determine through reasoning which have a valid foundation through reasoning and which do not have a valid foundation through reasoning.

Therefore in sutra itself Buddha said that it is very important to depend upon reasoning. Buddha said, "O monks and scholars you should examine my words as a goldsmith examines gold before acquiring it; by scorching it, cutting it and rubbing it. You should not accept my word just out of respect for me". Therefore it is said that in the end one must depend on reasoning in order to

make these final decisions about the correct view and so forth. It would be very difficult just to use scripture.

Thus the four modes of procedure for the examination of phenomena come to be very important. These four are a mode of procedure that is a looking into the nature of things, looking into causal dependence, an examination of the performance of function and a proving by way of logic.

It is a natural fact of things that external and internal phenomena have their own characteristic properties. For instance external phenomena have a character of materiality that can be measured. Internal phenomena here refers to consciousness which is something which is not physical, that is luminous, that has a cognitive nature. It is just natural that these have defining characteristics. It is just a natural fact that there are persons, that one's self does exist. It is also just a natural fact that one's self wants happiness and does not want suffering, it is a natural fact. These are not characteristics, which have developed adventitiously or temporarily. They are right in the nature of things.

The next mode of procedure of the examination of phenomena is to look into their performance of function. Due to the various causes and conditions that produce them, they can perform a variety of functions. Through making a study of the relationship between cause and effect, one can understand, can predict, what will come in the future because of the specific types of activities that certain functions that specific causes and conditions produce.

In terms of the mode of the procedure of looking into or examining dependence, for instance within chemistry, you can have two chemical agents. One can talk about the cause being former and the effect later however these are even things, which can have simultaneous effects on each other. This is dependence. For instance when you bring together these two chemicals, due to their activity they produce some new manifestation. That new manifestation itself can produce some other different manifestation.

The way that one uses objects to bring about the happiness one wants and get rid of suffering is to examine these external phenomena in terms of their basic nature, the nature they naturally have. Then in combination with that, one examines the synthetic effects, which come about through the proximity of this type of material with another. This type of examination is the basic procedure for gaining happiness and getting rid of suffering through external substances.

Similarly also internally, we have many different types of consciousnesses, many different types of conceptuality. These need to be identified. Take for instance the attitudes of love and compassion, and a mind realizing emptiness and a mind realizing impermanence; even though they may not be related in a causal sense there is a relationship of dependence. When you have love or compassion and you engage in meditation on impermanence or emptiness, then this effects that meditation. Thus there comes to be wisdom that is effected by compassion, compassion that is effected by wisdom. A synthesis comes out of them and then that synthesis itself comes to produce other types of effects.

The last type of reasoning is by logic. This is to understand that if such-and-such is so then another thing would be so.

This covers analysis but who or what is the analyzer? The analyzer is the self or person. By what means does the person analyze? With consciousness? Specifically coarser or finer forms of investigation?

What kind of a consciousness is needed? What's needed is valid cognition. This means a consciousness that understands the object exactly as it is, not as some other way, without superimposing something that is not so.

Within the Buddhist systems there are varying presentations of increasing subtlety with regard to the topic of valid cognition. An example is the differences between the Prasangika School and the lower schools. It is for these very reasons that in Buddhism there is a very fine presentation of the various types, functions and so forth of valid cognition.

Within valid cognition there are two types; direct perception and inference. Direct perception involves knowing the object directly without engaging in reasoning. Whereas the type of consciousness that engages in analysis is mainly that of inference which has to be a very clever type of consciousness that is engaged in investigation. Indeed inference flows from direct experience and it also flows to direct experience. Thus experience is very important.

In the Buddhist texts the focus of analysis between the two types of objects of analysis, these being matter and consciousness, is consciousness. The focus is consciousness. That which is doing the analyzing is also consciousness. Within consciousness it is mainly inference. The purpose of engaging in such investigation and analysis is to generate a mind in which the untamed factors of the mind have been removed, a mind that is completely tamed. Thus the object of analysis, that which is the means of analysis and that, which is the purpose of analysis, is all consciousness; mind.

This is indeed what the ideal situation is supposed to be. Even nowadays there are people achieving unusual experiences. Indeed for those people who are meditating in a profound way using various internal factors of the body, which bring about changes in consciousness, this is very interesting, very profound.

We have our laboratory right inside our own heads. So even if externally there may be many different types of appearances, people with blond hair, black hair and so forth. The internal laboratory is all the same.

Since this is the case if you examine with reasoning and determine that there is a contradiction in what has been said, then one must consider what has been said to require interpretation. Therefore in the Great Vehicle scriptures the system of there being both literal and non-literal teachings is set forth frequently. Even within the teaching of Buddha himself there are teachings, which are contradictory, contradict themselves. How do they come to be contradictory? There is a purpose. The one, which is set forth literally, that is literally acceptable, accords with reasoning. But the one that does not accord with reasoning is not acceptable literally. The Buddha taught it though for a specific reason, for a specific situation and purpose in accordance with the situation of the listener. Thus from this point of view one should respect both the literal and non-literal teachings.

This itself is a great help to understand why and how one should respect other religions. As I have been saying recently this great supermarket of religions that we have in the world, the many different religions have something to offer which is suitable for certain types of beings. Thus by looking how within Buddhism itself one respects even non-literal teachings, this can help to gain appreciation and openness to the value of all other types of religious systems.

For instance if we consider two teachings by Buddha, one in *The Sutra Unraveling The Thought* in which Buddha explained the thought behind his teaching the Perfection of Wisdom sutras that all phenomena do not inherently exist. It explains in this sutra that Buddha had something else behind that teaching in that actually other-powered phenomena and the thoroughly

established nature of phenomena do inherently or truly exist whereas imputational natures do not. The Mind-Only school accepts *The Sutra Unraveling the Thought* as its own basic system. However the Madhyamika or Middle Way school follows the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. From this point of view all phenomena do not inherently exist. No phenomena inherently exist. Thus from the point of view of the Madhyamika, the Mind-Only school has fallen into the extreme of permanence in that it is holding that other-powered phenomena and the thoroughly established natures of phenomena inherently or truly exist. They also have fallen into an extreme of nihilism in that they do not accept that there are external objects.

These are both sutras set forth by the same teacher. They are both systems of tenets following the same teacher but they are very different ideas. From the point of view of the Mind-Only school, the Madhyamikas have fallen to the extreme of nihilism.

Similarly from a Buddhist viewpoint if one looks at those religious systems that assert an eternal deity that creates everything, that system has probably fallen to an extreme of permanence. This is because the deity is viewed as permanent, unitary and is under its own power. Those systems have also fallen to an extreme of nihilism in that they are not accepting the cause and effect of karma. However from the point of view of those systems, the Buddhists because they do not accept a creator of the world have fallen to an extreme of nihilism.

These modes of explanation are indeed very different but they are appropriate to help different types of sentient beings. From this point of view you can respect all of them. As I mentioned earlier, what is the purpose of engaging in analysis? It is because one wants happiness and doesn't want suffering. In order to bring about happiness and get rid of suffering it is necessary to engage in techniques. It is from this point of view that Buddha set forth the Four Noble Truths. In these four there are two sets of cause and effect. The first set is first the effects of suffering and the causes of them are the sources of suffering; ignorance and attachment. This is what one wants to overcome, to get rid of. So that one class of the first two Noble Truths are of what one wants to overcome.

What does one want to achieve? One wants to achieve happiness, not some kind of temporary happiness but a final happiness, a permanent peace in which all suffering has been extinguished. Even if there is not the feeling, technically what is called the feeling of happiness, it is a blissful state devoid of all suffering. This is what one is seeking to achieve.

The Third Noble Truth is of true cessation of suffering and the causes of suffering. The Fourth Truth is the causes to bring about that effect. Those causes being true paths.

What are the effects of meditating on the Four Noble Truths? When one meditates on true suffering one recognizes, one understands, one's situation of suffering. This generates a wish to overcome this suffering. When one looks into the fact of whether the overcoming of suffering depends on causes or not. It does depend upon causes. Thus it is necessary to identify what the causes of suffering are.

When one looks into the sources of suffering one understands that they are two-fold. These are afflictive emotions and actions contaminated by the afflictive emotions. Whose afflictive emotions? Whose afflictive actions are these? These are our own. It is do to our own afflictive emotions and our own actions contaminated with these afflictive emotions which entrap us in cyclic existence. When one recognizes this, that it depends upon oneself, one develops a wish to actualize the cessation of these sources of suffering. One understands that it is possible to overcome suffering since it depends on causes, which are within oneself. When one carries out the implications of this, then one develops a wish to practice to achieve the paths that will bring about such a cessation.

Within the true paths are the three trainings in ethics, meditative stabilization and wisdom. This is the mode of procedure of the Theravada way.

When one realizes that oneself is caught in cyclic existence by this process of causation, one knows with respect to oneself that there is no possibility of happiness as long as one is under the control of contaminated actions and afflictive emotions. Based on this once you have understood this with respect to yourself, then you can extend this understanding with respect to other beings. They similarly want happiness and don't want suffering. One can understand that other sentient beings equally can not have happiness as long as they are under the control of afflictive emotions and contaminated actions. From this point of view one develops love and compassion and engages in the practices of the Six Perfections, the practices of Bodhisattvas and so forth to bring about freedom from suffering and the gaining of happiness for all sentient beings.

In the Great Vehicle scriptures a great deal of emphasis is placed on the topic of the final nature of phenomena, emptiness. Thus a very important topic in the Great Vehicle scriptures is that of the Two Truths. The presentation of the Two Truths is called the presentation of the basis. The Two Truths refer to the class of phenomena, these appearances that necessarily are dependent arisings. The ultimate truth is their emptiness of being under their own power. Once appearances are under the influence of causes and conditions they are necessarily empty of independence. This lack of independence is the ultimate truth. This is the presentation of the basis.

In dependence on the presentation of the basis is the presentation or practice of the path. The path being the accumulation of the two collections of merit and wisdom. The class of merit having to do with appearances and the class of wisdom mainly having to do with the ultimate nature of phenomena. In dependence upon these two collections, on the path, which has the nature of these two collections, one achieves a double-effect. This double-effect is the Form Bodies of a Buddha and the Truth Body of a Buddha. Thus these three sets of two are all based on the primal set which is that of the Two Truths.

What one achieves in Buddhahood are the two bodies; the Truth Body which is the fulfillment of one's own welfare and the Form Body which is for the sake of others' welfare.

What is the special feature of Secret Mantra for the speedy achievement of a meditative stabilization that is a union of a calm abiding of the mind and of special insight into the nature of reality? One of the most important features for the speedy development of a meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and of special insight comes in Highest Yoga tantra. In Highest Yoga tantra the basis one is using within one's meditation are special focal points within the body that assist one in the development of this meditative stabilization. Thus it is said that at this point in the practice of Highest Yoga tantra, even though one does not engage in analytical meditation as it is done in the Perfection or Sutra Vehicle and even though one just sits in stabilizing meditation on these focal points within the body, it is never the less possible and in fact one speedily generates, this meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and of special insight.

In a particular practice of Highest Yoga tantra in which one is seeking to achieve a calm abiding of the mind, at this time it is even possible to remain engaged in analytical meditation. It is not necessary just to do stabilizing meditation. At the point of making use of a blissful consciousness then it is not necessary in the Sutra system to engage in analytical meditation. One can just use stabilizing meditation. This is one of its features.

Also one of the distinctive features of tantra is that in achieving a union of method and wisdom does not in the Sutra system have to make use of consciousnesses that are different entities. In tantra rather within the entity of one consciousness, one has factors of both method and wisdom.

This is the special form of the undifferentiability of entity of method or compassion and wisdom in tantra.

Thus these features come mainly by way of the central distinctive feature of tantra, deity yoga. Once deity yoga is a central or focal way by which these distinctive features of tantra come about, there comes to be the importance of mandalas and the generation of oneself as specific deities in specific mandalas. The type of appearance or form of the deity upon which one will meditate depends on the type of afflictive emotion one has or how much conceptuality one has. Thus in dependence on such factors there come to be the Five Lineages of Buddhas which are different types of deities one can take for one's own particular meditation based on one's own situation. Since this is the case, among the different classes of tantra there are many different types of deities.

One has to understand how these lower or earlier practices form the foundation and how these other higher practices are added on to them. One has to understand the relationship between them in that the earlier practices are the foundation. For instance in building a house it is necessary to build the lower stories first before building the upper stories of the house. There is no way you can build the upper stories without first having a lower story. Also you can build the first story and not go on for the time being to build the upper stories and you still have something useful. However if you try to build the upper stories first you have nothing.

Therefore those people who think that they can do away with the Sutra Path and immediately cultivate the Mantra or Tantra Path are doing it entirely backwards. Thus it is indeed very important to understand the order of the teachings and practices that one must engage in. As Buddha set forth in The Sutra of King Garaniṣhwara (?) many levels and the order of the teaching. Taking such sutras as their bases the great founders of the doctrine such as Nagarjuna, Asanga, Candrakīrti and so forth all with one voice and with one meaning set forth that it is necessary to proceed in a gradual way, to proceed through stages.

However there are cases of unusual people who due to training in former lifetimes can make tremendous progress right in this lifetime. These are not cases however of persons doing the initial ground practices. These are cases where people are leaping over various stages of the path leading to higher levels of practice. These are very individual cases.

We will now turn to the text. It is written by the Bodhisattva Togmey Zangpo who lived about fifty years before ... Rinpoche. Togmey Zangpo was not only a great scholar but also a practitioner. During his lifetime he was considered a true Bodhisattva by all. His life story is very remarkable. His main practice was that of Santideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. He did this in connection with the Five Great Texts of Maitreya. I myself have seen his commentaries on Maitreya's *Ornament For The Great Vehicle* and his commentary on *The Sublime Science* or *Sublime Continuum Of The Great Vehicle, Uttaratantra*.

The first line is in Sanskrit:

### **Homage to Avalokiteshvara**

The homage in Sanskrit stresses the link between the Buddhism in India and Tibet. There are one hundred volumes of text considered to be Buddha's own teaching with another two hundred and twenty-five volumes written by various India panditas as commentary on the Buddha's teaching. Some of the volumes deal with grammar but at least two hundred volumes are on Buddha's teaching. There are three to four volumes from Chinese teachers and the rest are from

teachers in Bali and some from Nepal. The most important books are from India. India is considered the source of Buddha's teaching. Thus there is the custom of using some Sanskrit at the beginning of a text.

The Bodhisattva deity Avalokiteshvara is a manifestation of Buddha's compassion not necessarily a separate sentient being or separate deity. For a practitioner of an Avalokiteshvara yoga or sadhana eventually that person becomes a Buddha and we may call him or her Avalokiteshvara. In that case they are an individual Avalokiteshvara. Thus there are different meanings to the name Avalokiteshvara. In the one case it is a quality of all Buddhas, their compassion. In the other case it can refer to specific persons.

One Buddha such as Shakyamuni can cause a manifestation of his own compassion as an Avalokiteshvara. When persons achieve Buddhahood although they are equal with all other Buddhas in terms of realization, in terms of their abandonment and although they are equal with all Buddhas in the sense that all defilements have been extinguished in the expanse of reality, this does not mean that they all turn into one person. They are different persons of different continuums. As I mentioned earlier, the individual, subtle consciousness has no end. The Buddhas still possess an individual, subtle consciousness.

What is the reason why Togmey Zangpo pays homage to Avalokiteshvara at the beginning of this text? It is because Avalokiteshvara is the physical manifestation of the compassion of all Buddhas. This is a great topic of the text. Also Togmey Zangpo himself in terms of his main practice, he depended upon Avalokiteshvara as his special deity, this deity of compassion.

Among the qualities of a Buddha, the main quality is that of compassion. It is through the force of compassion that a person engages in accumulating these great collections of merit and wisdom that make Buddhahood possible. Even a Buddha's qualities of knowledge depend upon compassion. It is through being effected by compassion that the wisdom realizing emptiness becomes this high form of realization. It is only due to that compassion that such profound knowledge is possible.

With regard to the special exalted activities of a Buddha, the activities of a Buddha come by way of the union of pure mind and pure body. These in turn similarly depend upon wisdom that is effected or moved by compassion. Thus compassion is the root again. Thus as Candrakirti said, "Compassion is important in the beginning, middle and end". All of the great qualities of Buddhahood have their root in compassion.

In the homage it says "to" Avalokiteshvara. The "to" is a translation of the Sanskrit word which can be interpreted in two different ways. One is an interpretation as an accusative and the other as of dative. In any case the meaning here is that one is bowing down to Avalokiteshvara with a wish to attain that sort of state, for the sake of attaining that state. The word homage is explained to mean that one is wishing to actualize one's own effect refuge.

There is one way of taking refuge that indeed is suitable and it is to put oneself in a lower position in relation to something that is a different entity from oneself. That is indeed suitable but in particular here the reference is to one's own development of becoming a refuge. One is seeking that state so that the state to which one is paying homage is one's own future development of being able to afford that type of refuge. This is particular to the Great Vehicle.

From this point of view there is also immeasurable compassion. There is a wish that beings be separated from suffering and there is the compassion in which oneself wishes to free other beings from suffering. The third is a case in which oneself is wishing to protect others from suffering.



Thus in the Great Vehicle compassion refers to not just to a sense of pity for other sentient beings but where oneself wants to bring about help for other beings. This leads one to take on the responsibility of freeing beings from suffering and joining them with happiness.

**Respectful homage always through the three doors of body,  
speech, and mind  
To the supreme lamas and the protector Avalokiteshvara  
Who though perceiving that all phenomena have no going or  
coming  
Make effort single-pointedly for the welfare of transmigrators.**

This is a homage both to Avalokiteshvara and to the lamas and gurus who teach one the doctrine. What kind of qualities do supreme lamas and Avalokiteshvara have? The line referring to single-minded effort for others indicates the factor of method, the factor of compassion. Sentient beings are those who are to be freed from suffering. Suffering is that from which they are to be freed. Oneself is the freer of them. One needs to understand that although they appear to inherently exist, sentient beings are empty of inherent existence. Within such understanding one engages in compassionate activity.

What is the meaning of it being said that all phenomena are like illusions? They are like illusions in the sense that they appear to inherently exist but actually do not inherently exist. If they did inherently exist when one sought them analytically their inherent existence should become clearer and clearer. But it does not; it is just the opposite.

If one is not satisfied with the mere appearance of phenomena but seeks to find them under analysis, then when one seeks to find them, such phenomena as going and coming will not be seen in the face of such an analytical consciousness. Thus the text refers to perceiving all phenomena as having no going or coming.

As Nagarjuna says in the expression of worship at the beginning of his *Fundamental Treatise On The Middle Way*, "If dependently arisen phenomena did have production, cessation, going, coming, sameness, difference and so forth that subsisted in their own nature, then this going, coming, production, cessation and so forth would have to be found when one searches analytically". But it is not found. Thus this absence of production, cessation, coming, going, sameness and difference in the face of such an analytical consciousness is the final nature of dependently arisen phenomena.

In the face of this analytical consciousness going, coming, sameness and difference do not appear. It is said that the non-seeing of these is the Supreme of Seeings. In the line referring to going and coming, he is not indicating that there is no going or coming in general. It is in the face of such analytical consciousness that going and coming are not found. Thus this line sets forth the factor of wisdom.

...when you look at it suddenly you might think these two lines are contradictory. What it is saying on the one hand that all phenomena have no going or coming and then it is saying that these beings make efforts, single-pointedly for the welfare of beings. However this is not contradictory. What the first line sets forth when it says that all phenomena have no going or coming is in terms of what is found by this type of final analytical consciousness in terms of the basic mode of subsistence of phenomena. Thus phenomena are empty of such inherently existing going and coming. However going and coming does exist conventionally and within conventional existence

one engages in the factor of method. Thus the first line sets forth the factor of wisdom or emptiness and the second line sets forth the factor of compassion or conventional existence.

These two lines set forth the Two Truths that exist as one entity with every single phenomenon. Take a phenomenon such as a person. The person themselves is a conventional truth, a phenomena which exists due to the coming together of causes and conditions. With that person is also the factor of that person's emptiness of independence, emptiness of inherent existence due to the very fact that the person exists in dependence upon causes and conditions. A person is empty of independent inherent existence but that very emptiness of independent inherent existence makes it possible for the person to depend upon causes and conditions. This is how the Two Truths, conventional and ultimate, exist as one entity within every single phenomena.

Conventional phenomena are objects that are found by a consciousness, which does not engage in ultimate analysis, whereas ultimate truths are what are found under such ultimate analysis. Thus these two objects found by these two consciousnesses are mutually exclusive. Take the case of looking into the emptiness of an object. You consider not just the object but you consider the emptiness of the object. When you look into finding the emptiness of the object you find the emptiness of the emptiness of the object. Thus from that point of view some scholars say that the emptiness of the object relative to the emptiness of the emptiness of the object is a conventional phenomena.

In this way there are these two different objects the emptiness of the object that is found by the consciousness analyzing in this ultimate way and the conventional object that is found by the non-analytical consciousness. These two are different objects and thus while one is still on the path of learning, before Buddhahood, when one directly sees emptiness it is impossible at that time to see the phenomena that are qualified by emptiness. However at Buddhahood one can directly perceive emptiness and directly perceive phenomena at the same time. This is called a state in which the states of meditative equipoise and the state outside of meditative equipoise are mixed into one entity. Thus in the text when it states that all phenomena have no going or coming and yet make effort single-pointedly for the welfare of beings, it is referring to the state of Buddhahood at which one can directly perceive the ultimate nature of phenomena, their emptiness, and at the same time perceive those conventional phenomena themselves.

In terms of how a Buddha perceives conventional phenomena, there are many fine points that are very difficult to explain. But in general there are two types of conventional objects that a Buddha perceives. There are impure ones and pure objects. Impure objects appear to a Buddha only through the root of their appearing to other beings who are contaminated with the predispositions of ignorance. They do not appear to a Buddha from a Buddha's own point of view but only from the point of view of their appearing to other beings.

Pure phenomena however appear to a Buddha from Buddha's own point of view. There are many such difficult points. It is said in terms of independent appearances to a Buddha, independence here has the sense of not depending upon these phenomena appearing to other beings, thus in terms of what appears to a Buddha from a Buddha's own viewpoint, it is said that this is just limitless purity.

There is another system of explanation, which says that even impure phenomena have as their root of appearance the very subtle wind or energy and mind, the very subtle mind and the very subtle energy with that mind. Thus from this point of view even impure phenomena are the sport of such a subtle consciousness and even they would be pure.

The two lines indicate the qualities of compassion and of wisdom that a Buddha has. The first stanza is the expression of worship and the second is the promise to compose the text.

**The perfect Buddhas, the sources of help and happiness,  
Arise from having practiced the excellent doctrine.  
That in turn depends on knowing its practices.  
Therefore, I will explain the practices of Bodhisattvas.**

When one speaks or refers to a particular person becoming a Buddha, the qualities of compassion and wisdom that a Buddha has arise in dependence upon the practice of the path. The path has two aspects of the vast practices of compassion and the profound practices of wisdom.

However there is a reference to the primordial Buddha that is causeless and without beginning or end. The reference here is most likely to the fact that Buddhahood is possible because of the basic pure nature. This basic pure nature means that all defilements are adventitious. They depend upon causes and conditions. Defilements themselves depend upon a mistaken mode of perceiving things. Once they depend upon a mistaken mode of perceiving things, they can not abide forever nor can they abide in a fundamental way. They are adventitious, temporary and thus this indicates that defilements can be removed. It is from the point of view of this basic, pure nature that there are references to primordial Buddhahood that is causeless.

Every consciousness has a nature of being luminous and cognitive, or luminous and knowing. Any consciousness naturally of its own accord has a capacity to know objects. This refers to consciousness in general. Now all beings have consciousnesses and once beings have consciousnesses it means that those consciousnesses when they meet with the appropriate circumstances and conditions are capable of knowing objects.

For instance, an eye consciousness naturally has the capacity to see such a thing as is in front of me. However when it is obstructed then even though it has that capacity, it can not perceive that object. As long as one has the obstructions to omniscience, the obstructions to all-knowingness, those obstructions prevent one from knowing all objects. When those obstructions are removed then the natural capacity of the consciousness to know all objects becomes manifested. All of us have in our consciousnesses the capacity to know all objects of knowledge, to know all phenomena. This can occur when the obstructions preventing such have been removed.

It is said that all sentient beings have the capacity to become Buddhas, to achieve Buddhahood. The consciousnesses of all sentient beings naturally have the capacity to know all objects once obstructions are removed.

In the first line where it says the perfect Buddhas, the sources of help and happiness, how is it that Buddhas are sources of help and happiness? It is not that they can create or give help and happiness as some sort of creation or gift. Rather it is said in a temporary way they bring help and in a profound, deep way bring happiness through virtuous activity. Virtuous activity has its origin in altruism. From this point of view a Buddha is a source of help and happiness.

That is the promise of composition and let us leave it at that for today. Let's meditate for three or four minutes of whatever you like; emptiness, compassion or on mind.

## **Day Two**

**Question:** If Avalokiteshvara is a deity representing the emanation of Buddha's compassion, which can be attained by everyone, can there be more than one person who is an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara?

**Answer:** If we consider Avalokiteshvara from the point of view of Avalokiteshvara being the physical manifestation of the compassion of all Buddhas, then that sort of Avalokiteshvara is just the sport or emanation of the Buddhas and is not a person or being in his own right. If we speak about reincarnations in general, there are many different types. For instance in this particular case there is one person who is emanating an Avalokiteshvara or many. So from this point of view there can be many Avalokiteshvaras.

In terms of reincarnations there are many different levels. It is possible for a person who is still a common being to be a reincarnation. It is possible for somebody who has achieved the Path of Seeing or a high Bodhisattva ground to have the incarnation of a Buddha.

**Question:** Could you share from your own personal experience, not Buddhist theory, how you overcome problems in order to develop loving-kindness?

**Answer:** The other day I mentioned the development of a sense of responsibility. Even insects in order to survive form a community to work together. We human beings have to live together. If we were like animals who live alone then cities would never have developed. Humans are social animals who need to live together. Thinking along this line especially in the modern economic picture is the problem of the environment. When we talk about the problems of the environment or the economy there are no natural boundaries. These are the problems of the whole, one group.

The responsibility does not lay with one nation but the entire global population. The entire population includes ourselves. Each of us bears some responsibility. This is my feeling. It does not involve any philosophy. In our daily life we need wisdom which comes from proper motivation or activity.

A true smile comes from a genuine warm feeling. Artificial smiles come from a different kind of motivation. If you examine the smile carefully you can tell the difference between a genuine and artificial smile. Sometimes a smile gives you more happiness while another gives you suspicions. A genuine smile must come from a warm heart.

Everyone likes warmth and happiness. These things come from preparation or groundwork we call karma. Karma means action. Every event comes from action. Today's comfort comes from yesterday's actions. Without action things do not change.

Action itself is difficult to judge as being positive or negative. It mainly depends on motivation. Motivation is the prime factor whether an action is positive or not. Scientists describe how crucial human touch is to human infants. This shows that the body itself needs compassionate feelings. This is human nature; it has nothing to do with religion, nothing to do with philosophy.

**Question:** With respect to belief in an eternal deity, does this differ from the Buddhist view of absolute mind?

**Answer:** A lot depends on what you mean by absolute. It means many different things. Absolute can mean a oneness or independence. This meaning can refer to the mind. From the Buddhist standpoint subtle mind is almost like a creator. We accept self-creation. Within this self-creation my future is shaped by my actions. My actions create my motivation. My motivation creates my

subtle consciousness. Motivation happens because there is consciousness. Why does a different kind of consciousness happen? There is subtle consciousness. From this viewpoint the innermost subtle consciousness is almost like an ultimate creator.

There are many different kinds of deities. One category of deity belongs to samsara and they are under the influence of ignorance or negative mind. Another category is the manifestation of different Buddha qualities. These deities are manifestations of Buddha mind.

**Question:** Do faith and grace have a place in your practice of Buddhism?

**Answer:** Yes. Generally there are three kinds of faith. There is the faith, which is the wish to attain certain qualities. There is a faith, which is clarity of mind, and the faith of conviction. For instance when you speak about having faith in sources of refuge, all three of them are involved. The Tibetan word for grace or blessing is in two parts. The first part means magnificence and the second part transform. In one way it means to be transformed into a magnificent state and in another way it can mean to be transformed by way of magnificence.

Therefore the real sense of blessing is the transformation of one's own mind from a negative state to a positive state of mind. In this sense the real transformation must occur within oneself by one's own effort.

**Question:** If one is rude to another need one apologize?

**Answer:** Yes but sometimes you must analyze the situation and your motivation. Sometimes you need harsh words, tough action. That action or harsh words comes not from blind anger but rather with awareness or clarity from analyzing the situation showing the need for harsh words. In that case it may be better to leave it and not apologize. In certain people it may be more helpful to show tough action or harsh words. If the person realizes their mistake then one should apologize which gives more conviction or help to that person. All these things depend on individual circumstances. Too much sincerity can sometimes lead the other side to be more negative, in that case no need to apologize. On a good ground one can respond to toughness with toughness.

**Question:** What are the role of deities since you do not believe in a creator and how does rebirth happen without a soul?

**Answer:** We do say that these deities are creators. The non-soul or no-self theory is often misunderstood. Sometimes people get the impression that Buddhists deny the existence of self or I at all. This is wrong. Buddhists do accept some existence of I. Nobody denies the existence of I. I is there. Whether we realize I or not the natural feeling of I is there. Nobody can deny that. If I is there then what is the meaning when we say non-self? That the self is not independent or a oneness. Buddhism does not accept this sort of I.

In many ancient Indian traditions there is the belief in the atman or soul. On that basis they accept rebirth. If that is true then the soul can never change. When we are a child we say we are young. When we grow old we say I am old. The changing of the physical should not change the feeling of I. Changes in the human body cause changes in the feeling of I. The self is not then independent or unchanging. The self is always changing.

As I mentioned yesterday the consciousness has no beginning and no end. So Buddhist tenets or philosophical schools have different definitions of the I. According to some Madhyamika and Cittamatra schools they believe that the supreme consciousness is as a self or I. According to the Prasangika-Madhyamika, the highest, deepest or most profound Buddhist philosophy, the I is merely designated of the combination of consciousness and body. I is there, not only there but also since beginningless time.

**Question:** What is the best way to overcome fear in meditation?

**Answer:** What kind of fear? Again there are many different kinds of fear. There is the fear of earthquakes. This is serious and must make preparation. Then there is senseless fear. As a small child I use to be afraid to walk past a dark room. This is due to one's own wrong imagination. This is a different type of suspicion or fear. This fear is simply mentally created from factors of our own conceptuality. Thus how you think about it, your attitude is very important. Often these feelings are brought on by loneliness or suspicion of everyone and then you feel insecure. In this case with the practice of compassion and respect of others and a sincere and open attitude then this will reduce this kind of fear.

Let us return to the text. Yesterday I spoke of the mode of procedure of the path of the Theravada vehicle, of the Bodhisattva vehicle and of the Mantra or Tantra vehicle. The great Atisha took these practices and condensed them down into the practices of beings of three levels of capacity.

With respect to the three levels of capacity for training in the stages of the path, on the first level one is concerned with overcoming sole attachment to the affairs of this lifetime and is turning the mind toward the longer period of time, the future. It is necessary to take care of this lifetime but for that person for whom this is no longer the primary concern, the primary concern having become the future lifetime, that is the first of the three levels.

On the next level, the middling level, one develops a wish to cease the process of cyclic existence itself through undoing the process of afflictive emotions. When a person turns his or her mind to undoing the process of cyclic existence entirely, that is the middling level.

On the third level one is no longer thinking just to take care of one self but instead one is considering all sentient beings and is seeking the omniscience of Buddhahood in order to help all beings. This is the third level, the being of great capacity.

From a positive point of view this is how the three levels are explained. From a negative point of view, that is to say in terms of what one is removing, one is seeking basically to remove suffering. What is the ultimate source of suffering? From the Buddhist explanation it is the afflictive emotions. On the first level one is on a stage where it is not possible to overcome the afflictive emotions that are at the root of cyclic existence, one is seeking to overcome the pain and suffering caused by them. One is restraining the external behavior, which is motivated by the afflictive emotions, even though at this point one can not overcome the afflictive emotions.

To remove the negative thoughts is very difficult, not an easy task. First, what should one do? One tries to minimize those negative actions due to negative thoughts. One should try to stop these completely but if unable to do that then at least minimize the negative actions.

In the second stage one works to restrain, to overcome the afflictive emotions that give rise to bad behavior. On the third level one seeks to remove the latent predispositions that have been established by afflictive emotions.

Thus in the practice of Buddhism, whether directly or indirectly, one is engaged in a technique to overcome afflictive emotions. It's really impossible to say that one is engaging in the practice of Dharma if one is not doing anything about the afflictive emotions. To do so would be the religion of the easy minded.

All the great teachers such as Shakyamuni or Jesus Christ clearly demonstrated that one must fight the negative emotions. They themselves went through many difficulties and had to sacrifice a lot. One must follow their examples. I always am telling our Buddhist brothers and sisters that we are very presumptuous. Buddha himself spent six years in hardship meditating without food or clothing. He left his kingdom and spent many years in the forests. Eventually he became enlightened. We do not undergo these kinds of hardship and are expecting great achievement. If I consider myself to be a Buddhist follower and our teacher became enlightened through hardship, then I a simple monk will not achieve enlightenment unless I put out great effort.

It is important for Buddhists and Christians to take their founders' examples seriously. The sincere follower or practitioner should go to the level of action demonstrated. We as Buddhists have to fight our inner enemy, constantly. One Tibetan master said, "My whole practice involves holding the antidote of wisdom in front of the delusions". This is the practice of self-examination, always watching, examining oneself. Mindfulness is the watcher. If the mind starts to move towards a wrong way then one notices and tries to stop it. This is the way to improve oneself.

That was a general presentation of the stages of the path arranged according to the three levels of capacity. Now the text refers to the first level of capacity:

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas-  
For the sake of freeing themselves and others from the ocean  
of cyclic existence-  
To hear, think, and meditate day and night without deviation  
Here at this time of having attained the great ship of leisure  
and fortune hard to gain.**

At this time of having gained a human life support, we have the very best support for being able to engage in thought. There are many special things which humans can do by way of their special capacity for thought. The focus is to transform one's mind. In order to transform the mind, it is necessary to train. Now it is with respect to the topic of training that we come to the topic of meditation.

What is meditation? Meditation is a matter of familiarizing the mind with an object such that in time it becomes natural. It is an artificial training of the mind, a familiarizing, a conditioning of the mind.

Basically there are two types of meditation. One is meditative cultivation in which you are seeking to generate a certain type of attitude such as when you seek to generate faith or love. The other type of meditation is when you take something as your object and meditate on it such as meditating on impermanence or selflessness.

For both of these types of meditation two other types of meditation are needed. In the first one reflects on many different types of reasoning in order to induce ascertainment. This is called

analytical meditation. When one has induced ascertainment by way of reflecting on many reasonings, then one sets one's mind one-pointedly, without analyzing, and this is called stabilizing meditation. In order to attain ascertainment, one must first do analysis.

In order to meditate on an object it is necessary to know that object or topic well. Because of this there is the series of three types of wisdom. The wisdom arisen from hearing. At this stage one is hearing about the doctrine, studying it and getting it straight. Then comes the wisdom arisen from thinking which entails thinking, contemplating over and over that topic and generating ascertainment. Based on this then one can develop the wisdom arisen from meditation.

When it says to hear, think, and meditate day and night without deviation, it doesn't mean that one should not sleep. If we divide the day into session and non-session what is important to do is to keep whatever you have gained in the session such that it does not completely disappear during the periods of non-session. You need to keep it going in some form.

There are even cases when during the day you engage in study, are thinking, if that has not disappeared if some form of it remains until you go to sleep, then even during sleep you can continue reflecting on the problem. There are cases indeed of something that you could not figure out during the day, you can figure out at sleeptime during dream. When you have these experiences during dreamtime you should not take them as some sort of profound prophecy but as a matter of continuing your own analysis.

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to give up their fatherland  
That has, like water, the fluctuations of desire for the class  
of friends,  
That like fire, has burning hatred for the class of enemies,  
And that has the darkness of obscuration forgetting to  
adopt [virtue] and discard [non-virtue].**

Since one's own homeland is full of one's own family, parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends and so forth it is easy when meeting with them and so forth to generate desire and hatred. Thus it is very helpful to put some distance between one self and them. The purpose is to distance one self from your own generation of desire and hatred. If that purpose is achieved then there is no need to distance oneself from friends and relatives.

The second stanza sets forth the problems one encounters when not putting a distance between oneself and friends, enemies and so forth. The third stanza sets forth the advantages of achieving such a distance.

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to resort to isolation -  
Through abandoning bad objects the afflictive emotions  
gradually diminish,  
Through the absence of distraction application to virtue  
naturally increases,  
Through clarity of mind ascertainment of doctrine is  
generated.**

During that period of time when one has not achieved stability with respect to the antidotes to desire and hatred, it is important to distance oneself from the objects, which would cause this.



When one distances oneself from objects, which generate desire and hatred, the mind becomes withdrawn and capable of reflecting on virtuous practices. Thereby virtuous practices naturally increase.

Through engaging in such training of the mind, the mind gradually becomes more and more alert. In general early morning is a very good time for a sharper type of intelligence. Thus it is important to rise early and meditate. However you need to do this relative to your own disposition, your own constitution.

The fourth stanza is concerned with overcoming a mind that is attached to this lifetime, to the affairs of this lifetime.

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to renounce this life -  
Close friends, who companied together for a long time  
separate,  
The wealth and articles achieved with striving are left  
behind,  
And the guesthouse of the body is left by the guest of  
consciousness.**

There are two types of meditation on impermanence, one coarser and the other subtler. When Buddha set forth the Four Noble Truths, he spoke of four attributes with respect to each of the four truths, making sixteen. The First Noble Truth is that of suffering and the four attributes of true suffering are that they are impermanent, miserable, empty and selfless. Thus the first of those is impermanence. When one meditates on impermanence from within the sixteen attributes of the Four Noble Truths, this is the meditation on subtle impermanence.

However here at this point where one is seeking to generate a mind, an attitude, that turns away from overemphasis on the appearance of this lifetime, it is important to meditate on coarse impermanence.

Indeed all of the afflictive emotions; desire, hatred and so forth depend upon ignorance. But at this stage one can not just get rid of ignorance. Therefore one needs a means to overcome the coarser forms of desire and hatred immediately as they arise. One of the chief reasons why desire and hatred arise is that we are overattached to this lifetime. We have a sense that it is permanent, that it will last forever and with that sort of an attitude, people are overattached, overconcentrate on this lifetime. They put too much value on material goods, material possessions. They are attached too much to temporary friends, temporary situations. Thus as a method which is immediately employable, one needs to reflect on the fact that one will pass away. These situations will change.

When we speak of renouncing this lifetime it does not mean that one should give up all activities concerned with taking care of this lifetime. Rather within the two divisions of practitioners, householders and those who have emerged from the household, for both of these two classes of practitioners, even monks and nuns, it is important to engage in a middle style of behavior. Buddha taught about not falling either to the extreme of indulgence or to the extreme of excessive asceticism. Thus it is necessary to take care of this lifetime. If this is the case for monks and nuns then of course it is the case for a layperson.

In our lifetime some kind of contentment is very important. There are two types of desire. One kind of desire is a reasonable desire. In order to live one needs a house or money. As a

practitioner one desires to achieve altruism, wisdom or ultimately to achieve Buddhahood. This kind of desire is the right one.

Another kind of desire is an attachment to the things you see, that you want. This leads to a lack of contentment and is a negative desire, an unreasonable desire. If you ask yourself if you really need these things the answer is no. Without these things one can survive. This type of desire has no limit, no way to satisfy it. It leads ultimately to suffering. It is important to have a brake on this kind of desire for contentment.

Without the first kind of desire there is no improvement, human evolution. All human development comes on the basis of desire. We have to make a distinction. I call the negative desire attachment.

For meditating on impermanence its very important to meditate on the indefiniteness of death, when death will be. When one thinks about this then the question arises, what will happen after death? This leads us to the topic of rebirth. According to Buddhism one decides on what exists and what does not exist by way of whether the thing in question is observed by valid cognition or not. Among existents there are those that change and those that don't change. Those, which change, depend upon causes and conditions and those, which do not change, do not depend on causes and conditions. Thus among existents there are these two classes.

Among those, which depend upon causes, they can mainly be classified into the external substances, matter or material things and internal consciousness. There are many different categories of phenomena such as production that are neither the material thing itself nor consciousness but are in a category called non-associated compositional factors. All of these depend upon causes and conditions.

With respect to external substances, material phenomena, one can speak of their substantial causes and the cooperative conditions. If there is no substantial cause present then no matter how many of the cooperative conditions are present that thing can not be produced. When one investigates the causation external, material phenomena, such as one's own body, when one carries it back and back in the system of Kalachakra one finally comes to particles of space.

Between the destruction of the last world-system and the formation of the next world-system there is a period of vacuity. The particles of space referred to previously are these particles during the period of vacuity. When we consider the substantial causes of material phenomena and carry them back and back and back to this period of vacuity, there are earlier continuums, these particles of space. They are very subtle.

Once these particles of space are produced-phenomena they are phenomena which disintegrate moment by moment. However it seems that their continuum probably has no beginning. With respect to certain material or physical objects there is a limit or end to their continuum. But it seems one might have to say that in general if we just consider physical phenomena composed of these particles as having no beginning but an end. Without the substantial cause things can not exist. This is a law of nature.

The next question is whether there is mind or not. Nobody doubts the existence of particles. Is there such a thing as consciousness or mind? Though we use it at all times it is hard to realize the mind. One can develop a deeper awareness or realization of what is mind mainly through meditation. This is a simple technique. Try to stop thoughts of the past, the future or having the mind follow the sense organs.

Because the mind runs a great deal to external phenomena and takes on the aspects of external phenomena, it is as if the mind is hidden, whereas it actually isn't so. The actual nature of

the mind is luminous and cognitive but remains hidden to us therefore we can't identify it. Therefore as I was saying earlier one needs to keep the mind from being distracted by external things. When one stops distraction to external objects and stops thinking about things which occurred in the past, stops thinking about things that might occur in the future and gradually develops stability to lengthen that space in which you are not thinking about the past, not thinking about the future, then the luminous and cognitive nature of the mind tends to appear in and of itself.

As I mentioned yesterday there are different levels of consciousness. The coarser level of consciousness depends on the physical particles. Therefore without the physical support this consciousness can not function, it can not develop. The more subtle consciousness even without the physical particles it can function. Through training sometimes the mind can depart the body and can again re-enter. Sometimes through the training of the mind some extraordinary experience or phenomena can occur. This is because of that nature of the subtle mind.

How did the universe happen? The Buddhist explanation is that the new world-system forms before there are any sentient inhabitants. Due to the actions of sentient beings the world-system eventually forms. When the physical conditions are right then the sentient beings appear. There are sentient beings who will reside there so the world-system forms.

Similarly the human body is composed of particles. When the body changes the grosser level of consciousness also changes. One galaxy appears and another disappears endlessly. Generally speaking beginningless and endless.

Besides the physical there is some other energy. We may call it mind or special kind of energy. Like matter the mind is also always changing. Even the subtle level also changes momentarily. It shows that it depends on causes.

On the external level there are substantial causes and cooperative conditions. When one looks into the substantial cause of a consciousness, it is very difficult for a physical phenomenon to serve as a substantial cause of a consciousness. That which makes something into having a nature of luminosity and cognition itself would seem to have to have as its nature a luminosity and cognition. With respect to a sense consciousness for instance, there is an observed object-condition, which is the object, there is a dominant condition, which is the sense faculty, and an immediately preceding condition. The immediately preceding condition is that which makes the consciousness into having a nature of luminosity and knowing.

Thus any consciousness is produced in dependence upon a former continuum of consciousness. If it were not produced that way then consciousness could either be produced causelessly or from a discordant type of cause. If any kind of produced phenomena such as consciousness or anything else were produced causelessly then either it would exist anywhere and anytime or at nowhere and at no time. This indicates, shows a sign, that produced phenomena depend upon causes and that they depend upon concordant causes.

Thus it seems preferable to assert that the continuum of consciousness is beginningless. The continuum of the substantial causes of consciousness is beginningless. This is the root by which former and later rebirths are established. A more specific reason for asserting rebirth is that there are cases of people who very clearly remember former lifetimes. For those who don't assert rebirth it's quite difficult for them to explain such phenomena although they do try to explain it.

In general from a Buddhist viewpoint if we accept the beginninglessness of consciousness then there is less question, less contradiction, although this may not solve all problems. On the other hand if one accepts a beginning of consciousness then there are more difficulties, very difficult questions to answer. We prefer the fewer questions.

Another way to approach phenomena is to divide them into the classes of those that are manifest, those that are slightly hidden or obscure and those that are very hidden or obscure. Those, which are in the class of manifest phenomena, are realized by direct perception. Those in the class of the slightly obscure or hidden are realized by the usual sort of inference that operates by the power of the fact. The third class of the very hidden or obscure are realized by way of scriptural inference, inference of belief.

Our consciousnesses are such that they naturally have a nature of luminosity and knowing. Under the proper conditions they are capable of knowing everything. However in the sort of condition we have in which we are obscured, obstructed and defiled we can not say, "Because I don't know something it can not exist". It is important to make the distinction between not finding something and finding something to be non-existent. There are many types of things where people have not found proofs for their existence but this does not establish that they are non-existent. They have not found nor determined their non-existence.

With respect to those phenomena, which would appear to an ordinary person if they were present, when they don't appear, when you don't see them then you can say they are not present. However with respect to those phenomena that wouldn't appear to an ordinary person the very fact that they don't appear, you don't perceive them, doesn't establish that they aren't there, that they don't exist. Candrakirti made a statement like this.

It is very important and very interesting to investigate more into the nature of the mind. As a Buddhist monk I am always interested in discussions with scientists who are involved in this field; about human beings, about psychology, the relation between mind and brain. I have had very useful discussions with scientists. It is very helpful to know their latest findings.

Theoretically speaking the Buddhist attitude is that if it does exist one should be able to find it. Under this situation through scientific analysis or investigation, if it is not found then we have to accept that this does not exist. For Buddhists the scientific experiment is very helpful, very useful.

This is the system, which is the basis for the theory of rebirth. Some beings can take a future rebirth under their own choice. This we call reincarnation. Sometimes unfortunately in the Tibetan community reincarnation has become a social status. This is very unfortunate, not good. This is why I make distinctions between those who are lamas and those who are also reincarnations. Those who are both, neither, one who is a lama but not a reincarnation and one who is a reincarnation but not a lama.

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to abandon bad friends  
Who, when accompanied, increase the three poisons  
[of desire, hatred and ignorance],  
Cause the activities of hearing, thinking, and meditating  
to deteriorate,  
And make love and compassion non-existent.**

For beginners it is a very dangerous to accompany bad friends. Whether there is bad motivation or not it can be very dangerous. It is very important to accompany with, to acquaint with people of better type, good friends, healthy friends, friends who encourage our good side. Indeed there are many cases of people who due to the influence of their friends begin taking drugs, drinking alcohol and getting themselves into a lot of trouble. This is the meaning of this stanza.

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to hold more dearly  
Than their own body the excellent spiritual guide  
Who when relied upon causes faults to be removed  
And good qualities to increase like a waxing moon.**

The sixth stanza indicates that it is important to acquaint with people who can serve as models of good behavior, models of virtue and so forth for oneself. It is very important to acquaint with, depend on and get used to an excellent spiritual guide. Because of the focal importance of depending on a spiritual guide, a lama, a guru, Buddha himself in the Sutra system and in Tantra set forth the qualifications for a spiritual guide, a lama.

Since it is impossible to help others become tamed if one is not tamed oneself; it is necessary first to tame one's own mental continuum. The first qualification of a lama or spiritual guide is that his/her continuum be tamed. It is not sufficient to tame one's continuum, to restrain oneself just occasionally, here and there, and have some feeling that one has done so. Rather this must be done continually throughout the entire day.

It's very important for a student to examine the behavior of a spiritual guide. For the time being you have to act like a spy on your lama. Otherwise if you have some sense of faith and immediately take on the person as a lama, then in time your mind will change and you will become disillusioned. There is no hurry in choosing or depending upon a lama. You should take your time. It is very important not to be mistaken. Thus in tantras it is even said that it is suitable to engage in this kind of examination of a spiritual guide for twelve years.

**Who could be protected by a worldly deity  
Himself also bound in the prison of cyclic existence?  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to go for refuge  
To the Three Jewels, which are undeceiving when, refuge  
is sought.**

With respect to the Three Jewels, the central focus or way of getting at what refuge is, is to look at the Doctrine Jewel. The Doctrine Jewel specifically refers to true cessations, which are abandonments of faults, of defilements, and true paths, which are the means of abandoning those faults.

...thus these are mental qualities. The Doctrine is like medicine, the Buddha is like a doctor and the Spiritual Community are like nurses. The main or central of all of these is the Doctrine.

What are true cessations? True cessations are factors of the cessation of faults, defilements or obstructions. When one looks into it further true cessations are ultimate truths. When one takes it further true cessations are the final nature of a mind in which the defilements and obstructions have been extinguished.

With respect to mental defilements, the very entity or nature of the mind itself, its luminous and knowing nature, is not affected by the defilements. The defilements do not subsist in the very entity of the basic mind. Because defilements do not subsist in the very entity of the mind itself, it is said that defilements are adventitious. This indicates that they can be removed. The mind can be separated from its defilements.

Thus in what way is it said that defilements are adventitious? To understand this one needs to know a presentation of afflictive emotions. There are a great number of different types of

afflictive emotions but according to Asanga's *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge* they are divided into the six root afflictive emotions and the twenty secondary afflictive emotions.

Those that are the most obvious to us are desire, hatred and pride. Now it is said that at the basis of all of these afflictive emotions is ignorance. With respect to identifying what ignorance is, there are many different explanations, coarser and subtler, among the various schools of Buddhist tenets. If we speak about ignorance from the point of view of the Madhyamika school and from within that the sub-division called the Prasangika, then ignorance is a obscured consciousness that apprehends objects as if they exist in their own right.

If we examine cases of our own generation of desire and hatred, we can see that desire and hatred are based upon an object's appearing as if in its own right it is vastly attractive or vastly unattractive. Based on assenting or agreeing with this false appearance of objects as if they are from their own side very attractive or unattractive, one is drawn into desire for them or hatred towards them.

Thus it is clear that when such desire and hatred are generated, they are generated in dependence upon ignorance, the ignorance which assents to the false appearance as their root. Does this consciousness that apprehends objects as if they are self-instituted, as if they exist in their own right as being very attractive or unattractive, have a correct mode of apprehension or is it mistaken? One has to look into this.

This is the context in which the topic of emptiness comes. When one uses the reasonings for establishing the emptiness of inherent existence, it is the case that one can understand through these reasonings that objects don't exist in their own right. They are not self-instituting. Reasoning contradicts the way objects seem to exist with such an ignorant consciousness. Conversely reasoning supports the wisdom consciousness that realizes that objects do not inherently exist.

Once the inherent existence of objects and the absence of inherent existence of objects is opposite, then a consciousness that apprehends objects are inherently existent and a consciousness that apprehends the absence of inherent existence have opposite modes of apprehension. Because of this the wisdom, which realizes the absence of inherent existence, will damage or undermine a consciousness that conceives objects to inherently exist.

An ignorant consciousness that perceives objects as if they inherently exist can be opposed by another consciousness, a consciousness that realizes that those objects do not inherently exist. Because reasoning backs up such a wisdom consciousness, it can be increased and increased. It is from this point of view that it is said that ignorance and the afflictive emotions can be removed. When desire, hatred and so forth are generated they are generated in dependence upon this type of ignorance as their foundation. When one cultivates wisdom, which realizes the absence of inherent existence, this gradually undermines desire and hatred and lessens their force.

It is from this point of view that it is said that one can achieve a true cessation, which is a separation from afflictive emotions that it is possible to achieve such that such does exist. Thus the Doctrine Jewel are these true cessations and the true paths that bring them about. When a person generates a superior path consciousness, this being a wisdom consciousness that directly realizes emptiness, then that person is called a Superior and becomes a spiritual community jewel among the Three Jewels.

It is possible to posit persons as among the Three Jewels because that sort of person has within his or her mental continuum a quality of realization that makes it possible for them to help other sentient beings in accordance with that level of realization. When such a person's practice becomes more and more profound, then that person eventually achieves a Truth Body which is a

fulfillment of that person's own welfare and an extinguishment, a true cessation, of all defilement. That consciousness which is devoid of all defilements then manifests its capacity to know all objects of knowledge. This is the reference of the term a fully enlightened Buddha.

Those are the three refuges of Buddhists. There is no exposition of someone who is a Buddha who earlier was not an ordinary sentient being or did not train in the paths, who was not an ordinary sentient being like ourselves and who did not train in the paths. It is by the way of progressive development that anyone achieves Buddhahood.

### **Day Three**

As I said yesterday, because this subtle consciousness is not permanent, unitary nor independent it is different from the soul or atman. This subtle consciousness is a product produced by causes and conditions.

There are two types of permanence; one that is called permanent in that the continuum of phenomena exists forever and the other meaning of permanence is that it is unchangeable. In this case the subtle consciousness is changeable but its continuum goes on forever. From this point of view it is called permanent.

If the mind is basically pure and unobstructed where does ignorance come from? If ignorance comes from karma, where does karma come from first? How can pure mind produce bad karma?

Even on the conventional level a consciousness has a nature of being luminous and cognitive. Thus the afflictive emotions or ignorance and so forth can not abide right in the very nature of mind itself, in the entity of mind itself. Therefore ignorance is said to be adventitious to the basic nature of the mind. However this does not mean that ignorance didn't exist before and then later comes into existence. There is no beginning to ignorance. Thus the meaning of adventitious here is that ignorance does not subsist in the very nature of the mind and indicates that ignorance can be separated from the basic nature of the mind.

In terms of the levels of consciousness when the fundamental, innate mind of clear light, the most subtle level of consciousness, the innermost consciousness is manifested, there is no way that ignorance can manifest at that time. Ignorance and so forth can only manifest when the level of conceptuality called the eighty conceptions becomes manifest.

If one can accept that heat or energy can be generated from matter as in a nuclear reaction, why is the body's generation of the mind considered a discordant cause and effect? My reference was to the substantial causation of a consciousness that this must be a former moment of consciousness. Speaking more in general including cooperative conditions it probably could be said that consciousness can be produced in dependence upon matter. It can be said that the mind is produced in dependence on the brain or that a sense consciousness is produced in dependence upon the sense organ.

**Question:** You have spoken on the importance of building a strong foundation on the Sutra Path before moving on to the Tantra Path, how should those of us who are new to the Sutra Path participate in the Kalachakra initiation?

**Answer:** It is a mistake to take the initiation in such a condition when one has not trained in the Sutra Path. Usually in order to receive initiation I make some sort of condition. At least five years

since you have become a Buddhist. Without having the qualifications even if you attend the Kalachakra initiation in reality you will not receive any blessing, any actual initiation. Because of different spiritual experiences, one initiation ceremony performed by one lama, there will be a variety of experiences because of each individual capacity to experience it.

**Question:** What is the difference between thinking and analytical meditation?

**Answer:** It's the same isn't it? Just because different terminologies are used the impression that appears in the mind can be different but the basic meaning is the same.

**Question:** If someone is suffering very much and asks to be killed is it always improper to grant someone their wish? If I am suffering too much can I ask to be put out of my misery without negative karma?

**Answer:** This is a very complicated situation. One has to make an individual decision. If there is no hope to recover and it is not only painful but usual mental function is not present which means the person can not generate positive thoughts and if to keep them alive it is expensive and a hardship on others then to cause their death may be an exception to not killing. Generally despite pain which is due to one's own previous karma as a result, sooner or later one has to face it. So in general that should be one's attitude.

**Question:** If one is not to accept teachings on the basis of authority alone, what attitude should a beginning practitioner develop towards those Buddhist tenets such as original Buddha-nature that are beyond one's direct experience and do not apparently lend themselves to analysis?

**Answer:** There are reasons behind the teachings of a pure Buddha-nature. As is said in Maitreya's *Sublime Science* beings want happiness and do not want suffering. The reason or how they can want this indicates itself that it is possible to remove suffering entirely and to increase happiness infinitely.

Certain subjects are beyond what we can figure out. I usually point to the fact that in our daily life there are things that we see with our own sense consciousnesses. There is another level of things, which we figure out or infer from other facts. Finally there is a level with respect to which we must rely on the word of another person.

For instance my own birth date is not something I could attest to myself but about it must depend on the word of my mother. In this case there are certain things we can not know through thinking about it and rely on a third person. In order to rely on that person's word we need to check whether that person is truthful, reliable or not.

In order to rely on the authority of a third person, it is vital here to first examine whether that person is reliable or not. This examination or analysis can not be performed on the basis of the thing for which you are relying on his or her authority. So how do you determine their reliability? It is through judging their position or understanding on facts or things on which you through logic or inference can understand yourself properly. If on these matters you find the person has never proved unreliable through that process, also see that this person has always proved themselves right, has no reason to deceive you or mislead you and their position has no internal inconsistencies then this



person is an appropriate authority for the third category of phenomena being something you can not know oneself.

**Question:** In this country we have a large problem of drug and alcohol abuse. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions for this problem?

**Answer:** People usually consider these things not good for one's health. Everyone is concerned about one's own health. Listen to the doctor's advice more carefully. Other than this I have no experience with these drugs. Some say that through these drugs they have extraordinary feeling or vision. This is really mistaken, as it is a hallucination.

Our present situation is that we are being deceived by false appearances of objects as if they inherently exist. We are building afflictive emotions upon them and we are trying to get out of this position of falseness. To rely then on something which is even more false is even a bigger mistake. For practice it is essential that our minds be very clear, very alert. Therefore alcohol and drugs which can reduce alertness of mind is very harmful.

**Question:** Does the subtlest consciousness always cognize emptiness?

**Answer:** No. However it is said that when the subtle consciousness manifests, emptiness appears to it.

**Question:** What is the connection between mind and brain? If mind is separate from the brain how can something like removing part of the brain affect the mind so much?

**Answer:** On the grosser level of consciousness, mind totally depends upon the brain. On this level if you remove a certain part of the brain it effects the mind.

**Question:** With respect to abandoning bad friends, what about a bad family? Families, which encourage drug use or racism. Should they be abandoned?

**Answer:** Here abandon does not mean that you give them up. Abandon means that you don't come under their influence. We are seeking to take care of all sentient beings so no one is to be given up. We need special compassion towards those who are wrongdoing. A strong feeling must develop.

**Question:** As Buddhism grows in the West, does His Holiness see a relationship developing between the methods used in Western psychology and Tibetan Buddhism in working towards overcoming afflictive emotional states of mind? Could it be useful to use techniques such as psychotherapy and counseling in a Tibetan Buddhist center?

**Answer:** According to what I have heard there are already some who are doing this. I am not sure about the results yet. I do not know the Western way of psychotherapy but since it is dealing with the mind or mental afflictions, some Buddhist ways may be of use.

**Question:** If the nature of the mind of all Buddhas pervades all sentient beings naturally from the beginning, why is it not possible for an animal to achieve full and perfect enlightenment?

**Answer:** Animals can gradually achieve enlightenment not just humans. Even with human beings if you take retarded people they are not able to make full use of the human potentiality. Animals in

general have a lower potentiality than humans do. In the subtle mind there are no differences, all sentient beings are the same. Because of different bodies and different brains the grosser level of consciousness is very different. Therefore we consider the human body to be very precious.

**Question:** Is it appropriate for Dharma centers to charge for teachings in order to support its directors living expenses or to acquire property?

**Answer:** Money gained through religious activity is a wrong livelihood. It is considered very bad to sell the Dharma. If this is what is happening then this is completely mistaken. For practical reasons you need money. Given human weakness even if at the beginning there is sincere motivation as times passes it can very easily be spoiled. Religious centers must be very cautious. This is very important.

**Question:** How and at what age do we introduce the practice to children?

**Answer:** I don't know. The subject is very important. The development of the future generation's selves is very important and much depends on the atmosphere in the home and classes. The behavior of the teachers and parents is a crucial factor besides the lesson. In order to develop a good human being not only is the development of the brain or knowledge important but the whole person this being mainly a good heart. Children learn from their parents and relatives at home and teachers. Teachers not only teach the lesson but also show responsibility, some real concern about the future of the student. This sort of attitude makes an impact on children's minds. Happiness leads to a feeling of security and then develops in a healthy way. Everyone has a responsibility but the details in how to teach or how to introduce these things I don't know. We need a lot of discussion and experiment.

**Question:** During the period of vacuity between world-cycles what happens to the consciousnesses of sentient beings?

**Answer:** They have gone to other world-systems. The number of world-systems is infinite.

**Question:** The text mentions the need for going into isolation. Please comment on the appropriate application of this instruction to those of us who are householders and have families.

**Answer:** As I have been explaining the main purpose of these practices is not to generate desire and hatred. Occasionally you should have a short retreat.

**Question:** How do we gain cooperation and world peace between religions when some religious people regard other religious people as evil and going to hell?

**Answer:** This is due to a lack of knowledge, lack of contact. For example when we were in Tibet we thought Tibet was a really big country and everything about it was very good. We thought Buddhism was very great and other religions were worthless. Then we came to the outside and met different people and realized there were many good people, cultures and religions.

**Question:** Do we have a social obligation towards animals on the same par with meditation and prayer?

**Answer:** From a Buddhist viewpoint we use the words mother sentient beings, all sentient beings. Sentient being means any being with mind, have experiences of pain and pleasure. All are the same. Naturally we have to take care of animals. The use of animals in medical research is very complicated. If humans use their human abilities the right way then human bodies are precious. From that viewpoint in order to save precious human life some sacrifice if there is no other way, no alternative of animals may be appropriate.

Sometimes the human body is not precious at all but even worse than an animal. Animals no matter how powerful are usually innocent even meat-eaters. They attack other animals purely for food besides this there is no other ill feeling. Humans can be the most cruel and destructive.

I am very happy to hear more concern about animal rights. More and more people are taking an interest in vegetarianism. These things are very positive. We must encourage these activities. One advantage of Tibetan medicine is no involvement in animal experimentation.

**Question:** How does tantra deal with intense sexual desire?

**Answer:** When anger or sexual desire arises the negative emotion is accompanied by an energy. Tantric technique neutralizes the negative anger and sexual desire but uses the energy for practice. This is very difficult to practice. Tantric practice, especially Annutarayoga, is not at all easy. For these reasons it is even more important to practice the sound basic foundation, the groundwork.

**The Subduer said that the sufferings of bad transmigrations  
Very difficult to bear are the fruits of ill deeds.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas never to do  
Ill-deeds though it comes down to their life.**

With this stanza the text starts speaking about what kind of practice to engage in upon having taken refuge. When one takes refuge as was explained yesterday, one is primarily taking refuge in true cessations and in true paths. The true cessations are states of abandonment of defilements and the true paths bring them about. Therefore to actualize the meaning of taking refuge one has to engage in the practice. The first level of practice is to restrain ill deeds and engage in virtue.

The ill deeds of body, speech and mind are summarized or condensed down into the Ten Non-Virtues. When one considers the opposite of these Ten Non-Virtues there are the Ten Virtuous practices. Among the ten the first three are physical, the next four are verbal and the last three are mental.

The first non-virtue is killing which in its worst form is to kill humans right down to killing bugs. Killing is in regard to another sentient being. With regard to suicide this is not considered murder however it is considered very, very bad. Even in the practice of the transference of consciousness this must be done after the signs of death definitely occur. The practice then is done while one still has a clear, strong consciousness that is able to do the practice. If you do it before that, before the signs of death are clear, then it is a great misdeed, actually suicide.

The next is stealing, taking what is not given. Whether you steal something small or something large, you are still a thief. Sometimes it seems if someone steals a great sum that they are not called a robber. The same is for killing. If someone kills one person they are a murderer but often if they kill many they are called as hero. The next is sexual misconduct. With regard to sexual misconduct there are basically four types; with regard to the person, with regard to the time, with regard to the place, with regard to which orifice.

The next is lying. Now in the world isn't it true that when people tell small lies we say those are lies. When someone tells huge lies then we think that the person is so skillful. For a religious practitioner you shouldn't think this way, you should not lie at all. Next is divisive talk followed by harsh speech. This is followed by senseless chatter.

Harmful intent is next followed by covetousness. Last are wrong views. In all religions are prohibitions against wrong views but the definition of what those wrong views are differs. All of the other misdeeds are very similar in all religions.

These wrong deeds need to be known in great detail in terms of the different factors that are involved in the actions; the motivation, the various types of situations, objects and so forth. If one engages in non-virtues then the result is that one must undergo unwanted suffering. When one kills one harms others' lives. When one steals one harms or damages others' resources. When one engages in adultery one harms others' companions. Thus in all of these cases one is harming thus the result of it is harm to oneself.

On the opposite side which refers not only to the absence of killing but engaging in the antidote of killing and refraining from killing in that context. The same applies for stealing and sexual misconduct. These are all helpful to others and the result is that one receives help or benefit.

Thus with regard to the relationship between actions and their effects, if an action or karma is helpful then its effect for oneself is good. If an action is harmful then the effect will be bad. This is a natural law that from helpful actions comes good effects and that from harmful actions comes bad effects. This is the situation naturally. This is an explanation about karma and the effects of karma.

Karma basically means action. All of these things that are produced externally and so forth come by way of actions. Daily life is the result of daily action. Today's experience is the result of a previous time's actions. One must accept this pairing of action and experience. This is the law of karma.

When one refrains from indulging in negative actions as a consequence of that restraint one will be freed from undesirable suffering. From one point of view even if one can not now overcome the afflictive emotions oneself, one can restrain the ill deeds that come from afflictive emotions. The effect of doing this is one achieves a high lifetime, a lifetime of high status in the future. It is like a guarantee for bringing about a good life support in the future. If as a result of your having observed restraint over indulging in negative actions then it will give you the guarantee to take rebirth in a high status in the future thus providing you the opportunity to carry on the task set forth in this lifetime.

This makes it possible for you to carry on with your practice and make progress in spiritual development leading eventually to the attainment of full enlightenment. So far the text has been concerned with the practices on the level of persons with small capacity. The next verse begins to speak about not only restraining ill deeds that are produced by afflictive emotions but the restraint of the afflictive emotions themselves.

**The happiness of the three realms of cyclic existence,  
Like dew on the tip of a blade of grass, disintegrates after  
a brief time.  
[Therefore] it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to seek  
The supreme state of immutable liberation.**

Take as an example an illness. When one engages in the practice of avoiding the Ten Non-Virtues and engages in the Ten Virtues, this is like taking a painkiller. It reduces the pain but does not remove the illness from the root. One has to go on and take other medicine to overcome the illness from the root.

First of all it is necessary to identify afflictive emotions as great troublemakers. If you don't know the disadvantages of afflictive emotions and continue to engage in them of your own accord, then there is no way you could possibly achieve liberation. What are the disadvantages of the afflictive emotions? The very sufferings of cyclic existence themselves are the disadvantages of afflictive emotions.

When the Buddha set forth the Four Noble Truths, first is the truth of suffering. He spoke of the four attributes of true suffering these being impermanence, misery, emptiness and selflessness. With regard to impermanence, this refers to the disintegration of things moment by moment. The disintegration of things is brought about by the causes of things themselves. It takes no further cause to bring about the disintegration of an object other than the causes that produced that very object. Production itself leads to things having a nature of ceasing, disintegrating. The fact that things have a nature of impermanence indicates that they are not under their own power. They are under the power of other causes and conditions.

In this context since we are talking about the suffering of sentient beings the cause upon which they depend is ignorance which underlies the root of all sufferings and delusions. All sentient beings and their environment are dependent upon causes and conditions which are ignorance and delusion induced by ignorance.

The word for afflictive emotion in Tibetan is very meaningful. It has the sense of being any attitude or consciousness which when produced causes the person to become afflicted, unpeaceful and uncomfortable. The general definition of an afflictive emotion is a phenomenon that produces unpeacefulness. When we generate strong desire, hatred, pride or whatever we are restless. This is why in the definition it refers to an afflictive emotion as being phenomena that brings about disquiet. A mind that was quiet once an afflictive emotion is generated can't stay still until the desired object is achieved.

When one comes under the influence of such afflictive emotions then there is no way that one can be happy. It is like being under the control of some awful master, a bad dictator. What one needs to do is to identify clearly that as long as one is under the influence of afflictive emotions there is no way that one can be happy.

Buddha set forth true sufferings and the sources of suffering. These are the effects and causes within the class of phenomena that are thoroughly afflicted. As soon as he set this forth he immediately thereafter set forth the alternative that is true cessations and true paths. The very purpose for identifying suffering and its causes is because there is an alternative. If there weren't an alternative why should we bother ourselves or make trouble for ourselves thinking about suffering.

Once there is an alternative one has to make effort at that alternative. To make effort one has to aspire towards making that effort. In order to have that sort of aspiration one needs to see the disadvantages or faults of cyclic existence, know them well.

The text compares the happiness of cyclic existence to dew on the tip of a blade of grass, which disappears very quickly. Thus it indicates that such happiness is impermanent, that it is under the control of other forces, these being afflictive emotions. It also shows that there is no way of making everything right and that no matter what one does, one does not pass beyond the nature of suffering.

When one overcomes the root of cyclic existence, the afflictive emotions, one then has a factor of having removed those afflictive emotions. This factor of abandonment is called liberation. The types of productions that are produced by the afflictive emotions are changeable this way and that way. Thus when one overcomes the afflictive emotions the liberation which is obtained is immutable, unchangeable.

There is a limit to cyclic existence because that which produces cyclic existence, the afflictive emotions, have as their root a mistaken type of consciousness. This mistaken consciousness can be counter-acted through its antidote. Thus it is possible to remove the afflictive emotions and overcome cyclic existence from its very root.

With regard to the path for achieving liberation, one should be motivated by the wish to get out of cyclic existence assume a code of ethics. If possible one should take on the code of ethics of one who has left the householder way of life as a monk or a nun. If this is not possible then one should assume the code of ethics for householders or laypersons.

In the process of cultivating the path, one cultivates the thirty-seven harmonies for enlightenment and within them is a very powerful practice, the four establishments in mindfulness. These are the mindfulness of body, feeling, mind and other phenomena. For instance with regard to mindfulness of the body one reflects that the body is made from impure substances, impermanent, miserable and so forth.

The next set of four are the four thorough abandonings. These refer to the abandoning indulgence in negative actions, restraining from potential negative actions, increasing the potential within oneself for engaging in positive actions and the accumulation of positive imprints. These four practices of abandonments led on to high states of practices whereby the meditator or practitioner engages in systems of paths where one is able to cultivate a heightened state of mind through channeling one's attention upon a chosen object of meditation. This practice or technique is called the miraculous faculty of lakes (?). On the basis of that single-pointedness of the mind, the practitioner is equipped to engage in the very powerful practice of wisdom, penetrating the nature of reality.

These thirty-seven aspects of the path leading towards enlightenment involve all the essential points of the path that is required for a person to attain liberation from cyclic existence.

It is from this point of view that Nagarjuna said that ethics is the basis of all practice just as the earth is the basis of everything that moves or is unmoving. The earth serves as the basis for everything.

This pattern of training in the path, training first in ethics then in meditative stabilization and then in wisdom is not just a pronouncement of the Buddha but accords with the actual fact of experience in training the mind. In order to generate the view realizing emptiness in any strong form, never mind that special level of mind called special insight realizing emptiness, it is necessary that the mind not be distracted, that it be channeled, that it be brought together and made powerful.

Thus in order for the wisdom consciousness to be powerful and to be capable of acting as an antidote, it is necessary for the consciousness itself to be channeled. Thus meditative stabilization is needed for wisdom.

In order to have meditative stabilization, in which there is a quieting of internal mental distractions, it is necessary prior to that to restrain coarser types of distraction of body and speech. Thus one engages in practices of ethics that involve restraint of these coarser activities of body and speech in order to lay the groundwork for meditative stabilization. Thus ethics is first, meditative stabilization second and wisdom is third in the order of the three trainings. This is certified by experience.

Indeed it is very good to leave the householder's life and become a monk or nun but it is very important to take the time to analyze, to see whether this is appropriate to one's situation. I often say that the Christian practice of giving prospective monks or nuns a long period of self-examination is very valuable, a good practice. Once one has become a monk or a nun it is very important to do the job well. You have to wear the habit of a monk or nun well.

At the time of the religious kings of Tibet there was a division into two; lay clergy who wore white robes and the monk or nun clergy who wore yellow and maroon robes. It is necessary for someone who has become a monk to shave off his beard. Among Tibetans monks there are indeed some who have beards but there is no source for this at all. They should shave off their beards.

The transmission of the vows of individual liberation as they are known in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand and Tibet are different transmissions. There is the Theravada transmission and the Sarvastivada transmission. Although there are minor differences between these two transmissions, they are basically the same practice and it is very good if we keep these the same.

In Buddhism there is the question of whether one should or should not eat meat. According to the Vinaya system of Sutra there is clear reference to certain meat which is prohibited. Certain other meats are all right. This means there is no general prohibition against eating meat according to the Vinaya sutra. Theoretically I think the principal idea is the monk is to go out with the begging bowl. One family who are vegetarian will give food according to their way. Someone who is non-vegetarian and gives the monk must accept.

Then in the Mahayana there is clear prohibition, complete restriction against eating meat. The three lower Tantrayana also prohibit eating meat. In Annutarayoga Tantra with particular reason sometimes eating meat and other certain substances connected with a commitment are allowed. Generally speaking according to the Tibetan Buddhist system if one can remain vegetarian that is best. If for health or other reasons one can not then that is all right. I think it is better to be a vegetarian and the Buddhist community should work towards that way of life.

As far as monks are concerned, quality is more important than quantity. So this finishes the last stanza which explains the level of practice of middling capacity. Up to this point it is just the same as Theravadin practice. From my own experience when I visited Thailand when we discussed the monk's role, activities and process of becoming fully ordained there was complete agreement. According to the Sarvastivada moksha there are 253 rules for monks or bhiksu and for bhiksuni there are 364 rules or precepts. According to the Theravada system for monks or bhiksu there are 327. There are differences on minor points. The main points are completely the same.

Next is the section on the practices of beings of great capacity or those engaged in practice of the Great Vehicle. It is called the Great Vehicle because the attitude one has in practicing the Great Vehicle is vast or great. It's greatness or vastness comes from the fact that one is not primarily

concerned with oneself but is concerned with other sentient beings. What one has is a special type of compassion that is not just a pity for other sentient beings but which induces a wish oneself to help other sentient beings. This special compassion or altruism induces the practice of activities of special altruistic deeds. These deeds then make it possible to accumulate vast collections of merit. Due to the accumulation of vast collections of merit one achieves a greater goal, a greater effect or fruit of practice. For these reasons it is called the Great Vehicle.

Thus it is said that the door of entry to the Great Vehicle is altruistic mind generation or making the mind more vast. The self-centered mind is small, it is not vast. One is expanding the scope, the range of the mind and extending one's concern to all beings. The text says:

**What is the use of one's own happiness if mothers  
Who were kind to oneself since beginningless time suffer?  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to generate the  
altruistic intention to become enlightened  
In order to free limitless sentient beings.**

With regard to training in developing this altruism, there are basically two types of methods that were transmitted from India. These are the Seven Quintessential Instructions of Cause and Effect and the Equalizing and Switching of Self and Others. In Tibet a very fine practice developed which combined these two into one.

First one cultivates equanimity, and then one recognizes all beings as friends or mothers. One is recognizing beings as having been one's closest of friends. An illustration of this is one's mother. Following this one develops mindfulness of the kindness of other beings when they were one's closest of friends such as one's mother. The next is to reflect on or to develop special mindfulness of kindness. This refers specifically to the value of the assistance of others that is involved in all of the good things that can be obtained, whether worldly or enlightenment. These arise in dependence upon the contributions made by others. This is the greatest of causes to bring about an altruistic attitude.

It is very clear that even among external, concordant circumstances, external factors that are helpful to oneself, that these came about in dependence upon many, many other sentient beings. Even fame, people think they are famous in their own right however if there weren't other people to pay attention to you, there isn't anywhere you could be famous. If you go out to an empty place and think you are famous, there isn't anything is there?

Food, clothing, good name, good conversation and so forth all of these arise in dependence on many other sentient beings. Our very livelihood depends on other sentient beings. Our comfort depends on other sentient beings. Our happiness in future lifetimes arises in dependence upon practicing virtue in this lifetime. One practices virtue only within the context of altruism for other people. For instance the virtue of restraining oneself from murder, for that one needs an object which could be murdered. Similarly also the virtue of restraining from stealing needs those from which one could steal. Thus one can use this as an illustration to understand that all virtues arise in relation and in dependence upon others.

Also in order to have a long life span; in order to be in a position of power or to have resources the main cause is by way of other people. Other sentient beings have to take care of you.

The most precious thing is compassion as I am always talking. This compassion without other beings does not develop. This is the most important thing. This special compassion only



develops because of other sentient beings. Therefore without other sentient beings we can not practice and develop this special compassion. Therefore Buddhahood depends essentially on others. Without the other sentient beings for whom one is seeking to obtain Buddhahood, there is no way one can achieve Buddhahood. This is the point of view from which one develops special mindfulness of the kindness of sentient beings.

When one has this special mindfulness of the kindness of others then the next step is to develop a special intention to repay their kindness. To increase even further this force, this attitude, one engages in the next step, the equalizing of self and others. One thinks, reflects, from many points of view on the disadvantages of self-cherishing. One then reflects on many points of view on the advantages of cherishing others.

When you have thought this way then the next step comes which is the actual thought of switching self and other. The next step is out of compassion to take upon oneself others' suffering. After this, out of love, one gives one's own happiness to others. The next step is to generate the special resolve or unusual attitude, which comes from reflecting on the fact that at one's present stage it is extremely difficult to help others. One takes upon oneself the responsibility of freeing others from suffering and joining them with happiness. This induces the last step, actual altruistic mind generation.

This is a mode of practice in which these two transmissions are combined into one. The next stanza gives the essential meaning of this.

**All suffering arises from wanting happiness for oneself  
Whereas the perfect Buddhas are born from altruism.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to switch completely  
Their own happiness for others' suffering.**

Up to this point it is set forth the actual way of generating the altruism of seeking enlightenment for the sake of others. Now the text turns to setting forth how between formal sessions of practice one can make use of bad circumstances that arise in a positive way on the path. Adverse circumstances which practitioners need to transform into positive conditions for enhancing their practice refers to situations that normally produce unhappiness, depression or excitement. When confronting such adverse circumstances, Bodhisattvas use their special training to transform them into factors, which assist their practice.

Since it is the usual worldly way of living to become happy when you get something and unhappy when you lose it or don't get it, here the stanza speaks to the situation where one doesn't get what one wants or loses what one has. One is seeking to transform the situation into a positive aid on the path. The stanza says:

**Even if someone out of great desire steals all their wealth  
Or sends another to steal it away,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to dedicate to that person  
Their body, resources, and virtues of the three times.**

Once when Geshe Togmey Zangpo was heading back to the monastery with many offerings and was robbed. As the robber was leaving he was heading back towards where Togmey Zangpo received the offerings. He warned the thief to go a different route as he might be captured.

Never mind generating a sense for this life or worrying about the resources for this life, one generates even a greater sense of altruism for helping the other person. For instance sometimes we lose objects and when we lose objects we feel upset. If right at that point you think, "I've lost it but if someone else gains it how nice that will be for the other person!" This makes you happy doesn't it?

The next stanza sets forth the situation in which the feeling of suffering arises and one uses that as a positive way to enhance one's practice of the path.

**Even if someone hacks away at their head  
When they do not have the slightest fault  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas out of compassion  
To take to themselves the ill deeds of that person.**

As I discussed the other day Bodhisattvas attitudes towards others who harm them or others is that the attacker has to face the undesirable consequences of their ill-deed and can be seen as worse off than the victim who already has faced the consequences of their past actions. This was noted by the great Bodhisattva Santideva in his *Compendium Of Deeds* when he stated if one feels anger towards the one doing harm then for whom should we feel compassion or mercy?

It is the general practice in the world to feel happy when one becomes famous and to become depressed, sad or disturbed when one hears bad things about oneself. Here the practice is to take the situation of ill repute and put it to use on the path.

**Even if someone proclaims throughout the billion worlds  
Various types of ill-repute about them,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to speak with a mind of love  
Of the good qualities of that person.**

It is the general practice of the world to be happy; to be pleased, when one is praised and to be displeased, unhappy, when one is insulted. However because there is a danger when one is insulted of becoming discouraged, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to make use of this situation in a positive way.

**Even if someone crowds into the middle of a gathering  
of many beings  
And accusingly speaks bad words about them,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to bow respectfully  
With a discrimination of that person as a spiritual guide.**

Next the text sets forth two situations that are usually difficult to stand, difficult to take. One seeks in practice to transform these into positive circumstances.

**Even if a person sustained dearly like their own child  
Views them as an enemy,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to be greatly merciful  
Like a mother to her child stricken with illness.**

Aryadeva said in his *Four Hundred Verses on Madhyamika* that the Buddhas perceive the delusions as the real enemy and not the persons who have these delusions. This is very true and a very valuable teaching. Who we perceive as an external enemy is due to a small factor. Our current enemy may become a good friend tomorrow. Friends and enemies are very relative and there are many possibilities. As long as negative thoughts or motivation such as hatred or anger are present then even a friend is seen as an enemy. When negative thoughts towards an enemy disappear then the enemy becomes a friend.

The real enemy is the internal enemy. The practitioner must point the finger inside. One who always blames those around them is not a true spiritual practitioner. When something bad happens do not blame others. This is true spiritual practice. The practitioner will be happier, calm.

From the point of view of the future also, if one is not accumulating bad karma now, one will not have to undergo the suffering produced by that bad karma in the future. So in both the future and the present it is helpful. In the present you haven't disturbed your mind and you can live well.

**Even if a being equal with or below them  
Derides them out of pride,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas respectfully to take  
That person to the crown of their head like a guru.**

The next stanzas refer to situations that can serve as obstacles to the development of the path. These being extreme poverty or being extremely rich. When one is extremely poor or sick, miserable, this can serve as a reason to become discouraged about practice. If one becomes very rich it is also easy not to practice. These are dangerous situations as far as cultivating the path and need to be transformed into positive circumstances.

**Though they are bereft of livelihood, always despised  
by people,  
And afflicted by awful illness and demons,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas without discouragement  
To take all beings' ill deeds and sufferings to themselves.**

**Though they are famous, respected by many beings,  
And have attained the likes of the wealth of Vaishravana,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to be uninflated,  
Seeing the essencelessness of the glory and wealth of  
cyclic existence.**

Because the situations of generating hatred or desire serve as great obstacles to one cultivating the path, one needs to take these situations and transform them into positive circumstances.

**If the internal enemy of hatred is not tamed,  
When one tries to tame external enemies they increase.**

**Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to tame their  
own continuum  
By means of the soldiers of love and compassion.**

**The attributes of the Desire Realm, like salt water,  
Increase attachment no matter how much they are used.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to abandon  
immediately  
Things generating attachment and desire.**

This finishes the discussion of the class of method, the class of compassionate method. Now begins the discussion of a Bodhisattvas practice of wisdom, cultivation of the ultimate mind of enlightenment.

The discussion of the topic of the view of emptiness is around the two states of meditative equipoise and states subsequent to or out of meditative equipoise. The next stanza deals with meditative equipoise.

**Whatever appears is one's own mind; the mind itself  
Is free from the start from the extremes of elaborations.  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas through knowing just that  
Not to take to mind the signs of object and subject.**

The presentation of the view of emptiness in this text accords greatly with a text on altruistic mind training by the great Tibetan master Chekawa in which he presents the view in accordance with Yogacara-Svatantrika Madhyamika system. The first line here, whatever appears is one's own mind, refers to the fact that objects appear as if they are external entities, that is to say as different entities from the consciousness that is apprehending them whereas they are not. They are empty of being different entities from the mind that apprehends them.

That mind itself is not asserted in this system the way the Cittamatrins assert it to be truly existent, rather the mind is asserted to be without true existence. Thus the text states the mind itself is from the start free from the extreme of being truly existent. In the sphere of reality in which all conceptual elaborations have been pacified, there is no appearance of subject and object in this state of meditative equipoise. Thus this is called the space-like meditative equipoise.

If the stanza is interpreted from the point of view of the Prasangika system of Buddhapalita and Candrakirti, even though they would not say that whatever appears is of the same entity as one's own mind, whatever appears is posited by the mind. Whatever appears exists designatedly, whatever appears exists in dependence upon conceptuality. This conceptual, designating mind itself, does it truly exist? Does it exist from its own side? No. It does not exist from its own side thus it is from the start free from the extreme of being inherently existent.

The sphere of reality, which is the mere negation of inherent existence, is the basic nature of all phenomena. Phenomena appear to be their own final mode of being. Phenomena seem to be their own mode of subsistence. However they are not. When you analyze with reasoning you understand that phenomena seem to exist from their own side but do not exist from their own side. Phenomena are not their own final mode of subsistence. This sphere of reality, which is the mere

absence of inherent existence, is their mode of subsistence. This is known in the space-like meditative equipoise.

We notice phenomena as producing help or harm. When we notice that they produce important effects, helping or harming, then it is easy to have the thought that if these aren't true, if these don't inherently exist, if these aren't true, then what is true? We are impressed by the fact that phenomena produce effects, bring about help or harm. We have the sense from this that it serves as a sign that they inherently exist. However if they do inherently exist then when one investigates the process of production whether from the point of view of the cause or whether from the point of view of the effect, that production should become clearer and clearer. When one uses these reasonings to investigate production in terms of the causes or the effects, it does not become clearer rather one finds an absence of the inherent existence of such production.

Thus it becomes clear that when one analyzes the causes by the way of the reasonings called the diamond fragments; whether things are produced from causes that are the same entities as the effects or different entities or both or neither, or when one examines the effects whether existent effects are produced or non-existent or both or neither, or when one analyzes the entities of objects by way of the reasoning of looking into whether they are singular or plural, when one analyzes in this way one understands that there is no object that is independent. Objects are devoid or empty of independence.

When one analyzes in this way what finally appears is a mere absence of inherent existence, a mere absence of that which is being negated. Inherent existence is what is being negated and its absence appears to the mind. At this point one sets one's mind in stabilizing meditation on that absence of inherent existence. This is an emptiness, which is shared in common between the Sutra and Tantra systems. This is a mode of cultivating the view of emptiness without making distinctions of levels of consciousness.

## **Day Four**

**Question:** You say you usually recommend that only those who have been Buddhists for at least five years receive the Kalachakra initiation. For those of us who have been Buddhists for shorter periods of time can it create negative karma to receive the initiation? How can we know if this will be the case for us individually? Is it possible for us to receive some benefit?

**Answer:** It will help; there will be benefit.

**Question:.** If one takes the Kalachakra initiation and has time for only the brief Six-Session Yoga and not the longer practice, is initiation justifiable?

**Answer:** This is fine.

**Question:** During this Kalachakra initiation how many of the initiations will we receive and will we be empowered to perform the Completion Stage as well as the Generation Stage?

**Answer:** The initiations for the stage of completion will also be given.

**Question:** Why aren't there more female lamas? Is the female body inferior? Could this change in the future now that women can do more as they wish to?

**Answer:** Here we need some explanation. In the Vinaya Sutras because of the Indian social system bhiksus were considered superior. But in terms of their rights, they are completely equal. Just as a man has the right to gain full ordination as a monk so a woman has the right to gain full ordination as a nun. According to the Sutrayana and also the lower three Tantrayana it seems that it is explained that the lifetime in which one is going to achieve enlightenment will be as a human male.

According to Highest Yoga Tantra this is different. In order to receive full empowerment, the initiation ceremony has to be conducted on the basis of meditation associated with three groups of deities; Dhyani Buddhas and consorts, Bodhisattvas and consorts and wrathful deities and their heroines. After having taken the empowerment the practitioner observes the vows and pledges taken during the empowerment. One of the fourteen tantric root vows is not to deride or insult women. There is no root vow about deriding men.

In the actual practice of the path one of the most crucial elements that is required in Highest Yoga Tantra is seeking another practitioner as a consort. At the level of the Completion Stage the practitioner attains highest enlightenment and just as a male practitioner can attain enlightenment so equally can a female practitioner. In the Highest Yoga Tantra it is mentioned that if all the conditions are favorable one can achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. There is no mention of the need to be a man as a favorable condition or for a woman to transform into a man in order to realize enlightenment. So you can see that in Highest Yoga Tantra men and women are completely equal. This is the final Buddhist position.

Now regarding lamas. A lama is not a social status. Just as you posit a father in relation to a child so you posit a lama in relation to a student. When a woman has several students who consider her to be a lama then she becomes a lama. Among the qualifications of a lama there is no explanation that the person must be a male.

Then regarding reincarnations. In the past in Tibet there were female lamas some of who were considered very high. Among self-arisen lamas there are some very good lamas. There are consorts of late, great lamas who are very knowledgeable practitioners.

**Question:** What is the state or frame of mind one is left in when one switches or exchanges one's happiness and takes on the suffering of others? For instance, nurses in the United States are in great shortage. Those who do work as nurses have a very high rate of severe mental exhaustion due to long hours and exposure to suffering. What spiritual or emotional state should one be left in under these circumstances?

**Answer:** This depends on the individual person and their own mental attitudes. Someone who accepts Christianity, Buddhism or some other religion would reflect according to their own faith and develop some determination. The real purpose of life is not just feeding ourselves. If eating were so important then going to the toilet would end up as a major purpose in life. The true purpose in life is to bring joy or happiness to another's life. Nursing is a very sacred job. I don't think I would be able to put up with the hardships of a nurse's life but as an observer I find nurse's work very admirable and very noble. Teachers and doctors provide a great service to humanity provided they work for others not money.

**Question:** Concerning sexual misconduct and being gay myself, I've heard conflicting interpretations. On the one hand all sexual behaviors are said to be OK as long as no suffering is inflicted on the other person. On the other hand the traditional approach that I've heard condemns indirectly behaviors such as gay peoples' relationships. Could you please clarify this point?

**Answer:** I think this depends on whether one is a believer or not. If someone has a Buddhist faith then this is sexual misconduct and should be avoided. If not a believer and no suffering is inflicted and there is no danger of getting AIDS, then it is up to them.

For the practitioner sexual desire is a very delicate desire. For the layman generally sexual excitement is not considered something wrong. Too much emphasis or involvement in it can bring disaster. Everything needs to be done in a balanced way. This is important. Too much excitement or sexual attachment is a seed of divorce. A balanced approach lasts longer. In human life everything should be in balance. This is very important.

**Question:** The Chinese government has been using violence against the Tibetan people. Is it acceptable for the Tibetan people to use violence against the Chinese to obtain freedom?

**Answer:** As I always advise, suggest to the Tibetans, violence is against human nature. Secondly in our case it is impractical. Violence would almost be suicidal. Also if we engage in violence we will lose many good friends. Many are attracted to our struggle because of its non-violence. Our struggle is something unique. If we succeed then it will be a new approach for this planet.

More and more people now realize that non-violence is the best method. Non-violence is something I consider as an indication of inner strength. Violence actually is a sign of weakness. This I feel. This question is tough.

The violence and repression the Chinese are using against the Tibetan people demonstrates insecurity and weakness. There is a saying in Tibetan of using a pickaxe to kill lice. Despite their attitude we maintain non-violence.

**Question:** I am a student and meditative exercises seem to encourage internal fixation. When I meditate I become too fixated inside and I have difficulty communicating with my fellow students and teachers. With what method can this fixation be approached?

**Answer:** You are not supposed to be meditating in class but in your room.

**Question:** Please explain how compassion deepens the understanding of emptiness and how the realization of emptiness strengthens compassion.

**Answer:** When you develop an attitude of compassion you develop a wish to look into or examine the causes of sentient beings' suffering. When you develop some realization of emptiness then from your own experience you can understand that afflictive emotions such as desire and so forth are built upon a misapprehension of the nature of things. Thus when you consider others' sufferings you understand that they are undergoing such a misapprehension, that their suffering stems from something which isn't necessary. Whereas there is a technique for them to overcome their suffering, they are unable to make use of it.

**Question:** Should anyone get the death sentence?

**Answer:** Some countries have abolished the death sentence and this is very great. I, myself, remain in India where non-violence founded the country. The basic philosophy of India is ahimsa, non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi set ahimsa into modern politics and Indian foreign policy is of non-alignment, which is related, with the basic philosophy of non-violence.

My argument is like this. If we look at the potential to commit a crime like murder, everyone one of us has that potential. As long as desire, hatred, attachment, jealousy or ignorance are present, the potential for crime is there. From the viewpoint of action, this can be stopped through other means. Even with a great criminal, as soon as the mental concept changes that person becomes positive.

The death penalty is something very unfortunate. I always support the abolishment of the death penalty. International organizations doing this work are very good.

**Question:** What is the difference between pride in Deity Yoga and false pride?

**Answer:** According to my understanding when we talk about pride there are different connotations of the term pride. Pride in the negative sense is associated with being conceited and arrogant. Another mental state, which is sometimes called pride, is the self-confidence to counteract the arising of delusion within oneself. The identity of oneself as a divine deity is also technically called divine pride.

There is an issue or question here of whether one is holding oneself during the period of Deity Yoga from the depths to be a deity or not. In any case just as with our ordinary sense of I, first our mind and body, mental and physical aggregates, appear. Then in dependence upon that we have a sense of I, an ordinary self. Just so in deity meditation one first meditates on emptiness, removing all ordinary appearances into emptiness. From within emptiness pure mind and body appear. One then has a sense of being a deity that is designated in dependence upon pure mind and body. This is the divine self; to think or to feel, "I am such a deity", is called divine pride.

**Question:** Could you say a few words on whether there is any conflict between Dharma practice and political activity?

**Answer:** Political activities are another way of trying to solve human problems. All the different professions are for helping humanity. With proper motivation, there is nothing wrong in engaging in politics. I tease Indian politicians that they should be religiously motivated because their behavior has a great effect on the public. Some of the religious persons who remain in the mountains they have no effect on society. If the motivation is correct then almost anything can become Dharma activity.

On the other hand if one does not have proper motivation then even giving a teaching or sermon is a negative action.

**Question:** What is the difference between analytical meditation and thinking?

**Answer:** Generally they are the same.



Returning to the text we are on stanza twenty-three. In the previous stanza the instruction was about meditative equipoise on emptiness in which one was concentrating on the absence of inherent existence. In the stage subsequent to meditative equipoise one is to see all phenomena as like illusions. Phenomena are appearing again and one could come under the influence of desire, hatred and so forth. There are now instructions on how not to come under the influence of the appearances of phenomena as if they existed in their own right whereas they actually do not.

**When they meet with attractive objects,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to view them as untrue -  
Even though appearing to be beautiful like a summer  
rainbow -  
And to abandon attachment and desire.**

**Like the death of a child in a dream, through holding the  
erroneous appearances  
Of the varieties of suffering to be true one makes oneself  
so tired.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas when meeting  
With unfavorable conditions to view them as erroneous.**

The text then has instructions on the Six Perfections beginning with giving. The text speaks about a Bodhisattva's giving as being a type of generosity in which one has no hope for reward, no hope for getting anything in return. Rather the generosity, the giving, the charity is done solely for the benefit of others. Although heroes and so forth engage in practices of giving, they do not have the Bodhisattva-type of giving in which it is solely for the sake of others, without any attachment or misapprehension of the nature of the giver, the giving, what is given and the recipient.

**If it is necessary for those who want enlightenment to give  
up even their body,  
What need to say anything about external things?  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to give gifts  
Without hope for reward or fruition for themselves.**

There is the giving of material things, there is the giving of non-fright which means to protect other beings' lives or relieve them from difficult situations and there is the giving of words of Doctrine that are beneficial to others.

The next stanza is concerned with ethics. One could keep ethics only for the sake of obtaining a good life for oneself in the future. However Bodhisattvas keep good ethics altruistically for the sake of others. The primary mode of a Bodhisattva's ethics is to restrain selfishness and self-centeredness.

**If without proper ethics one's own welfare cannot be  
achieved,  
To assert that others' welfare could be achieved is a  
source of laughter.**

**Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to keep ethics  
Without aspirations involved in cyclic existence.**

When one summarizes all the various kinds of ethics they are included in three; the ethics of restraining bad behaviors, the ethics which is a composite of virtuous practices and the ethics of heeding others.

Because the generation of hatred serves as a tremendous obstacle to the development of a Bodhisattva's attitude of altruism, the practice of patience, forbearance or tolerance is very important.

**For a Bodhisattva wanting the resources [arising] from  
virtues  
All harmers are like a treasure of jewels.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to cultivate  
patience  
Without anger or resentment for anyone.**

There are basically three types of patience; one is a willingness to forbear, to withstand difficulties, the second is being indifferent to the attacks or harms from others and the third is the patience developed through having deep conviction of the nature of phenomena. With regard to the practice of patience there is no teaching better than that given in Santideva's *Guide to The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, the chapter on patience. The practice of patience serves as a foundation or basis for the practice of the equalizing or switching of self and others.

For both temporary and final purposes it is very important that one must make effort. Therefore it is important that Bodhisattvas make effort without any sense of discouragement.

**In that even Hearers and Solitary Realizers achieving only  
their own welfare  
Are seen to make effort as one would to stop a fire on one's  
own head,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to make effort,  
A source of good qualities for the sake of all transmigrators.**

As was said earlier, in order to overcome the afflictive emotions one has to develop a view of emptiness that is powerful enough to act as an antidote to them. To do that one must achieve a meditative stabilization, which is a union of calm-abiding of the mind and of special insight realizing emptiness. Thus the purpose for one's achieving calm-abiding, this one-pointed mind, is for the sake of empowering the wisdom consciousness so that it can overcome the afflictive emotions. The purpose is thus not a mundane or worldly purpose; it is a supramundane purpose. The strength of mind is to be utilized for the path of wisdom.

**Understanding that the afflictive emotions are completely  
conquered  
Through special insight thoroughly endowed with calm  
abiding,**

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to cultivate concentration  
That exceeds even the four formless absorptions.**

With regard to achieving calm-abiding there is a mode of procedure in the Sutra system and a mode of procedure in Highest Yoga Tantra that is slightly different. Even though there are slight differences both the Sutra system and Highest Yoga Tantra agree in that what one is seeking is not just a mind capable on remaining on an object but one, which can remain on an object with great intensity, and with great clarity. Thus it is necessary to overcome those factors which prevent such intensity and clarity. These are laxity, excitement, scattering of the mind and dullness.

With regard to the type of object that one can meditate on in the process of developing calm-abiding it is said that it is possible that it could be some external phenomena such as a pebble or a stick. But then there are also internal objects of meditation for developing calm-abiding such as the channel structure in the body, the drops and the drops of the essential fluid that move in those channels. Similarly also it is very valuable to meditate, to take the mind itself as the object.

In doing such meditation taking care of your physical condition properly is very important. You have to keep your body from becoming heavy and thus your diet is important. In general it is very helpful to be vegetarian. There are people who take non-vegetarian food and get nervous imbalances so in such intensive meditative states there is a danger of over-excitement.

The place where you are meditating is also important. One must live in a completely isolated place, a very quiet place. This is very important. Generally speaking if all other facilities are there and with a proper teacher, one could develop this concentration within two months, six months or one year. Sometimes this is very difficult, not at all easy. If you are not careful it is possible to have a nervous breakdown. Sometimes you take a normal person who goes into meditation to develop calm-abiding and what comes out is an abnormal person. I think the techniques in Highest Yoga Tantra involving various physical practices can be useful in reducing these sorts of obstacles.

The next stanza treats the perfection of wisdom.

**Since one cannot attain perfect enlightenment  
Through the [other] five perfections without wisdom,  
It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to cultivate the wisdom  
Possessing method and not conceptualizing the spheres  
[of object, agent, and action as inherently existent].**

There are basically three types of wisdom; the wisdom concerned with the five types of knowledge, the wisdom concerned with ultimate truth and the wisdom concerned with heeding others.

After having explained the Six Perfections the following verses explain certain other practices of Bodhisattvas. The next verse describes the Four Practices as found in the sutra called.... Since it is very important to be critical of oneself, to examine one's own mistakes, Milarepa said it was a focal religious practice to engage in self-criticism. Milarepa said you could have the outer appearance of a practitioner but the inner form of a non-practitioner.

**If one does not analyze one's mistakes,  
One can perform non-practices with the form of a**

**practitioner.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas continually  
to examine  
Their own mistakes and abandon them.**

**If due to afflictive emotions Bodhisattvas speak fault  
Of another Bodhisattva, they themselves degenerate.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas not to speak  
of the faults  
Of persons who have entered into the Great Vehicle.**

The First Dalai Lama said that our attitude towards others should be such that one always reflects on their kindness, admires all spiritual practitioners and always combat the enemy within ourselves.

**To dispute back and forth out of [wanting] goods  
and services  
Causes the activities of hearing, thinking, and meditating  
to deteriorate.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to abandon  
attachment  
To the households of friends and patrons.**

As Santideva said in his *Bodhicaryavatara* the Bodhisattva should not be too attached or too close to one's friends or relatives but rather keep sort of a neutral stance, a kind of a distance. Bodhisattvas' attitudes should be such that if possible one should regard and perceive all sentient beings as one's closest friends or relatives. If this is not possible at least Bodhisattvas should not become too attached or close to one's own relatives or friends.

**Harsh words disturb others' minds and cause the mode  
Of a Bodhisattva's behavior to deteriorate.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to abandon  
Harsh words about the unpleasantness of others.**

Now the text speaks about how to counteract the afflictive emotions.

**If one becomes accustomed to the afflictive emotions,  
They are hard to overcome through their antidotes.  
Therefore, it is a practice of Bodhisattvas to overcome  
The afflictive emotions of desire and so forth immediately  
upon their first being produced.**

Engaging in the task of counteracting delusions or afflictive emotions what is very important is to apply the appropriate and right degree of the antidote to the degree of the afflictive emotion or delusion. Right from the beginning one must constantly think of the uselessness or

harmfulness of the afflictive emotions. This itself is very helpful. This kind of realization can develop a reluctant attitude towards the negative emotions. In spite of this when a negative emotion starts to develop but is not yet fully developed then you sometimes can make use of the antidote.

For example if anger starts to develop remember compassion or kindness. Enemies often appear very negative but trying to view that person from a different perspective or angle often lessens the negativity. Anger is often generated against only one aspect of a person and if you can bring to mind another aspect of that person the anger will be reduced.

If one is facing tragedy or a crisis, remembering the others who are also facing this brings an awareness, which helps to reduce one's own reaction towards the situation. Another method is to try to investigate the negative experience itself. If there is a way to overcome it then there is no need to worry. If there is no way to overcome it then there also is no use in worrying. This type of analysis is also helpful.

During times of attachment the object only appears positive. In reality it is not that way. There are negative qualities. So when attachment starts to develop try to see the other angle. One can find the negative aspect and this helps to reduce attachment. Once attachment is fully developed then at that time it is very difficult to suppress. The only method at that time is to try to forget or distract your attention away from the object. It may require you to physically leave the presence of the object.

This is the way of practice. Eventually the negative emotions will reduce.

**In brief, it is the practice of Bodhisattvas to achieve  
Others' welfare through continually possessing  
mindfulness and introspection,  
[Knowing] the state of their mind  
In each and every form of behavior.**

**It is a practice of Bodhisattvas to dedicate to enlightenment  
With the wisdom of the purity of the three spheres [of  
object, agent, and action]  
The virtues achieved with effort in this way  
In order to remove the suffering of limitless transmigrators.**

The dedication of merit is very important. If one dedicates the merit arisen from virtuous activity towards complete enlightenment it then has a great purpose. It is very good to dedicate the merit of virtuous activities as you do them during the day and then at night as you are about to go to sleep. If you review during the day what you did that was good and dedicate those to highest enlightenment, it is a very helpful practice.

If everyday you review your own mistaken actions and develop contrition, regret for them and develop an intention not to engage in them again in the future, then this is a good daily, foundational practice.

The author then sets forth his purpose in composing the text.

**For the sake of those wishing to train in the Bodhisattva path  
I have written down these thirty-seven practices of  
Bodhisattvas,**

**Meanings related in the sutras, tantras, and treatises,  
Drawing on the speech of the excellent.**

**Because my intelligence is low and training slight,  
This is not poetry to delight scholars.  
However, because it relies on sutras and the words of the  
excellent,  
I think it is the unmistakable practice of Bodhisattvas.**

The author is assuming a humble attitude.

**Still, it is difficult for one with a low mind such as mine  
To penetrate the depths of the great waves of the  
Bodhisattva deeds.  
Therefore, the excellent are asked to bear with  
The groups of faults - contradictions, unrelatedness, and  
so forth.**

There is finally a dedication of the merit of the text, which is within the context of not being involved in the two extremes of being caught in cyclic existence or of seeking a solitary peace for oneself.

**Through the virtue arising from this may all transmigrators  
Become the same as the protector Avalokiteshvara,  
Not abiding in the extremes of cyclic existence and [solitary]  
peace  
Through the supreme minds of enlightenment, ultimate and  
conventional.**

This finishes a short teaching on The Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas.

Now we will perform a brief ceremony on the Altruistic Mind Generation. In accordance with the stages of the ceremony, one is first to generate a sense of altruism through an explanation, which I will give. One then makes that sense of altruism that has been generated more firm through this ceremony. One then develops a wish to train in the Bodhisattva practices. When one has generated a strong wish to engage in the Bodhisattva practices then one takes the Bodhisattva Vows.

If one is then going to train in Mantra, Tantra, then one can take the Mantric Vows. Taking the Tantric Vows is required for the practices of the two higher classes of tantra, Yoga Tantra and Highest Yoga Tantra. The mode of procedure is to first have as a basis the ethics of one who has left the householder's life or as a layperson. In addition one needs to have the vows of a Bodhisattva. Finally one takes the Mantric Vows. This is called the triply qualified procedure.

There are different assertions among Tibetan scholars. One being that these three vows are different entities within the continuum of one person and the other being that they are one entity

within the continuum of one person. Whether they are one entity or different entities, what one needs to do is make great effort at them.

Today the ceremony is called The Promise To Take Up the Aspirational Intention to Become Enlightened. As a precept for taking this pledge or promise to enhance your generation of altruism, is to reflect on the merits and benefits of altruism and to increase the force of and enhance your altruism at least six times a day. The next precept is to never abandon even a single sentient being for whose sake you have taken the pledge to generate altruism. The next precept is to accumulate as great a store of merit as possible. These are the four factors that will assist the practitioner to protect their aspiration to attain enlightenment and the altruistic attitude generated within this life.

The practitioner should avoid engaging in the four negative actions which are the obstacles, which would degenerate the thought of the altruistic attitude in the future, and life. The first of the four negative actions is to deceive a person who is worthy of respect and veneration. The second negative action is to encourage others to regret their engaging in positive actions. The third negative action is to insult or speak falsely about Bodhisattvas. The fourth negative action is to be deceitful.

The antidote for indulging in the four negative actions is to engage oneself in the four positive actions. If you can identify and understand them then it will help prevent your indulgence in negative actions. First is to never tell lies. The second is to always be sincere and honest. The third is to always regard Bodhisattvas as one's spiritual teachers. This type of attitude would be completed if you have the wider perspective that is normal required of a Bodhisattva that is to say to have the attitude towards all sentient beings as being close. As I quoted earlier from the First Dalai Lama, generally one should remember the kindness of all sentient beings and admire all spiritual practitioners. The fourth positive action is to always engage in actions which are directly or indirectly beneficial and helpful towards others especially those which would eventually lead towards their liberation from cyclic existence and the attainment of highest enlightenment.

For those of you who do not feel committed enough to take the pledges and observe the precepts, it is not necessary to take full participation in the ceremony of Generating the Aspiration to Enlightenment. Also those who do not consider themselves Buddhists, it is not necessary to participate in the ceremony. It is beneficial and helpful in the ceremony for you to simply generate within yourselves an altruistic attitude.

In the procedure of this ceremony we are to conduct a Seven-branched Service but since you don't know how to do it and there wouldn't be much sense in my doing it without you knowing what it is, I will identify them for you.

First of all imagine that all of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are present around you. In the environment are beings who are illustrations of the six different types of beings in cyclic existence. Within faith in the Buddha and within compassion for sentient beings, induce a wish to obtain the omniscience of Buddhahood. Think for the sake of this, "I will take up the aspirational wish to obtain Buddhahood". For the sake of that, first pay obeisance to all beings worthy of worship. Putting your hands together think that you are paying homage, obeisance. With your palms folded reflect on the great qualities of these beings who are objects worthy of veneration and worship. Develop a strong sense of faith, and admiration for their state and also develop a strong aspiration for yourself to gain such a state. Reflect on their qualities of great compassion, wisdom and so on.

For these objects worthy of veneration and worship, imagine making offerings of your own possessions, collection of virtues and so on.

Reflect that although it is the negative actions and the delusions which give rise to such actions which are the sources and causes of our own suffering, we have up until now been ignorant of and indifferent to these facts. We have committed many negative actions and face unbearable consequences so at this moment while we are capable of understanding, we repent and request that all of our accumulated bad actions in the presence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas be purified. This act of confession is taken with all sentient beings as our witnesses to whom we have committed these actions.

Reflecting that virtuous actions of oneself and others are the sources for happiness, one rejoices in one's own accumulation of virtuous activities in the past as well as admiring others' collections of virtue. One should not be neither jealous of others' virtues nor competitive but rather admire of actions of others.

Next one requests or appeals to the Emanation Bodies, the physical manifestations of the Buddhas, who have yet to teach to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. Following this one requests the Emanation Bodies who are about to enter the parinirvana, to physically deacease their existence, to remain longer and work for the benefit of all beings.

The seventh or last limb is dedication. One dedicates all the merit that has been accumulated through this and all other practices towards the attainment of highest enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

One should kneel on one knee for this if possible. The most important thing is to develop a strong wish to bring help and happiness to other beings. Make a promise that you won't harm anyone under any situation and will do whatever you can to be helpful. If you are capable of it then think that this attitude which you have produced, you will never give up. As I said earlier if you think you cannot maintain the precepts that were described earlier, then just generate a good attitude now and that will be enough.

First repetition.

With the second repetition do as before but with an attitude of faith and generating a strong sense of altruism for others.

With the third repetition, with the repetition of the last line, think, "Just as the Buddhas of the past generated an altruistic intention to become enlightened, engaged in the Bodhisattva deeds and became fully enlightened so I also today have generated this aspirational wish".

Now we engage in prayer-wishes dedicating whatever virtue has been accumulated through this practice. May it go towards the benefit of all sentient beings so that they become free from all suffering and quickly attained Buddhahood.

This completes the altruistic mind generation. Always try to generate a good heart and be a good human. I am very happy to have had this opportunity to talk on these practices. Although I do not have any high realization myself nor do I have the necessary knowledge and wisdom, but at least my motivation is sincere and pure. I try my best to explain as much as I can.

Today happens to be the tenth day of the Tibetan month and a great religious day associated with Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava. We will be performing a tsog offering.

## COLOPHON

Transcribed and typed by Phillip Lecso from audiotapes obtained from Thubten Dhargye Ling entitled *The 37 Bodhisattva Practices*. I take full responsibility for all mistakes that have occurred, through hearing and writing incorrectly what was taught, for these I apologize. May all be auspicious. May any merit from this



activity go to the long life and good health of His Holiness. May all sentient beings quickly attain the state of the Glorious Kalacakra even through these imperfect efforts.