

SEM
THE NATURE OF MIND

Gehlek Rimpoche

SEM

The Nature of Mind



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Gehlek Rinpoche, *SEM – The Nature of Mind*
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Jewel Heart Transcripts are lightly to moderately edited transcriptions of the teachings of Kyabje Gehlek Rinpoche and others teachers who have taught at Jewel Heart. Their purpose is to provide Rinpoche's students, as well as all others who are interested, with these extremely valuable teachings in a way that gives one the feeling of being present at the teachings.

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This is the transcription of the Summer retreat 2003 in US, The Nature of the Mind. Added to this is the transcription of a day's teaching in Cleveland in 2004, The Continuation of Consciousness, a subject in tune with that of the Summer retreat.

Though these teachings are for a general public, to explain the relation between mind and energy, Rimpoche also draws upon the secret treasure-chambers of vajrayana.

The transcription was done by Jewel Heart US. Charts and texts that Rimpoche referred to in his teaching are added as appendices. As a help to the reader some notes and references to further literature are added. Any mistakes are due to my lack of knowledge.

Nijmegen, Rimpoche's birthday, October 26, 2005

Marianne Soeters

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I

Introduction

base, path and result

Some of you are already familiar with Buddhism and Buddhist practice and some of you are not. Whatever I do and what little I know is from the background of Tibetan Buddhism. Even though we try to present it in a secular way, it is coming from Buddhism and it is true to the tradition.

Yet we may adapt it. That is very necessary. Lately I've been noticing that there are many, many people who would really like to have some information. People are hungry for a spiritual practice with depth, with value, with a goal, and with a basis. There is a tremendous hunger, I should say. I notice that not only all the time, but also very vividly. When doing sessions at Renaissance Unity I see there's a tremendous amount of people who like to have this information. And, yet, they're also afraid of what they're doing.

So, what is needed is a safe environment where you can collect the information. We are hoping this Summer Retreat will serve that purpose. That's why we try to secularize it as much as possible. But, no matter how much or how little we secularize it, if we lose our tradition, we lose our value. Then it will be the same as any New Age approach. That's why the truth of the tradition must be maintained.

There are things that are culturally-oriented, like this throne I am sitting on. It's not really a throne. I've always been against using a throne. I'm just sitting on the stage with one cushion; that's is fine. Then, this back rest, which normally is part of the throne, I don't necessarily like, but is useful to me to lean back if I have to. So the throne is actually gone.

But we also need some of these nice culturally-oriented things. We do have a simple lineage tree right behind me, which tells you that the teaching is not just made-up here, but comes from 2600 years ago. The lineage tree is giving that message.

And then there is the beautiful White Tara picture over here. As you know, Tara does tremendous things. Every morning we will have the Tara practice – guided meditations with healings. Different people, who have devoted their lives to this practice, will guide you with the years of their experience.¹ That’s why we have the Tara picture here.

And then we have a picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama because it is a Tibetan tradition, as well as because His Holiness the Dalai Lama is somebody that everybody likes. And then there are pictures of two of his teachers, his senior and junior guru. Kyabje Ling Rimpoche you see on the right hand side of His Holiness’ picture. I have received a lot of my teachings from Kyabje Ling Rimpoche. And a picture of Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche is on the left hand side of His Holiness’ picture. Also, from him I received a tremendous amount of teachings. Both of them have been extremely kind to everybody, and I remember their kindnesses particularly – very much so. With Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, it was almost like I was going home. I didn’t have to ask or anything, just sort of arrived in Dharamsala, and moved into his house and stayed there. They automatically gave me a place to stay and food. It was sort of taken for granted that I would stay there. When I stayed somewhere else, he’d say, ‘What are you doing? Come over here.’ He said that all the time. He was so kind. And Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche was equally kind. He would say, ‘Well, you’re staying with Kyabje Ling Rimpoche, and that’s fine. But if you want to move somewhere, you can come here, too.’ It was always like that. So kind. And I received so many different teachings from them.

These are not the only two masters that I have had. As I’ve mentioned a number of times, I have had close to forty masters, and if I would try to put up pictures of everybody, it would be a photo exhibition of Tibetan earlier masters. So the two of them shown, represent all the teachers. They represent the *living* tradition.

What else do we have here? Flowers! Beautiful to look at, beautiful things to offer. Looking at flowers makes you happy; that’s what

flowers are all about. I'd just like to tell you this since this is a buddhist tradition.

MOTIVATION

I'd like to also tell you that even though it is a buddhist tradition, by attending here you are simply picking up the information. You are not becoming a buddhist. Please be aware of that. You don't have to think, 'I am becoming a buddhist because I went to a buddhist retreat'. Well, I can't say it's not a buddhist retreat, but I can't say that it is, either. It is a buddhist-oriented retreat. It contains important things you have to know. Otherwise, why are you here?

The first thing I'd like to share with you is the two activities: the activity of the beginning and the concluding activity. Those you should apply to the retreat as a whole, to everyday, to every session. What we do is the following. The first one is correcting our motivation. Think, 'Why am I here?' I'm sure you will think, 'I'm here because I like to learn something. I'm here because I'd like to make myself better.' That's all fine, but it's not the recommended motivation. The recommended motivation here is: 'For the benefit of all beings, I'd like to learn and help myself.'

The moment I say 'help', our culture is such that we immediately look to helping others rather than helping ourselves. I'm telling you that helping yourself is your first priority. Having compassion for yourself is your first priority. Developing love and care for yourselves is your first priority. People will say, 'love-compassion is loving others and caring for others.' True! But, that doesn't mean that I'm not included. In the sixty years I have read Tibetan prayers, everywhere it says, 'I and all sentient beings, *etc.*' It all begins with 'I and all others.' It never said, 'All beings *except* me.' So, helping yourself and developing compassion for yourself, are the first urgent priorities for us.

If we can develop compassion for ourselves, then it is easy to develop compassion for others. If you try to develop compassion for others and ignore yourself, I don't think you will ever develop compassion at all. You will feel pity when looking at people suffering – at beings suffering, like a dog or a cat when a car runs over them. You'll feel sad, but I don't know if that's being compassionate; it's pity feelings we develop. We may call that compassion, but it's not really true compassion. What true compassion is we'll try to talk

about this week. But, already I tell you here: if you don't develop compassion for yourself, it will not appear. It is not an automatic thing. It has to be developed. If you don't develop compassion for yourself, then forget about developing compassion for others; there's no way it's going to happen. Atisha, the famous Bengalian scholar who came to Tibet in the 1100s to bring the true message of the Buddha, said,

Until you help yourself, until you develop yourself,
and attend to your mind,
you'll never be able to attend to others' minds.

So, our first priority is to develop love and care for ourselves. We do care for ourselves, but often not in the correct way. Atisha also says,

Don't think 'I did this. I did that. ...'
Think, 'Others did this. Others did that. ...'
Have respect for everybody.

Atisha did not say, 'Underestimate yourself'. He says to consider that others have done great things and to have respect for everybody. But your job is to help yourself first. If you do not develop love and compassion for yourself, who is going to help you? No one else can. These are very important points.

A SHORT PRACTICE

Please think,

My first motivation is to develop compassion for myself and for everybody.

And we would like to have all the possible knowledge of helping others – which we call enlightenment. So,

I would like [to develop] total knowledge of helping others, for which I would like to spend the week here and pick-up whatever knowledge comes out of it.

In a certain sense, you can't just pick it up. Tibetan Buddhism is so vast and deep. People who spend ten to fifteen years don't even pick up ten or twenty percent of it. It's that deep. But, we will pick out the best to give to you. So, with that motivation, we should begin.

We're going to recite the Heart Sutra² and after that we have little short prayers we do on our regular Tuesday and Thursday night teachings. These are very important things that we have here.

Heart sutra mantra (or, alternatively, the Heart Sutra)

GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA.

Refuge

NAMO GURBYAH, NAMO BUDDHAYAH, NAMO DHARMAYAH,
NAMO SANGHAYAH (3x)

or:

I take refuge in the Guru, I take refuge in the Buddha
I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha (3x)

Invocation

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

Seven Practices

I bow down in body, speech and mind.
I offer the best I have to give, both real and imagined,
to fill the space between us.
I regret and purify all transgressions.
I rejoice in all virtues.
I request you to remain until total enlightenment.
I request wise and compassionate guidance.
I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.

Mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni

OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNI YE SOHA (...x)

Long and short mantra of Avalokiteshvara, embodiment of compassion

NAMO RATNA TRAYAYA, NAMO ARYA JNANA SAGARA
VAIROCHANA, VYUHA RAJAYA, TATHAGATAYA, ARHATE,
SAMYAK SAMBUDDHAYA NAMAH SARVA TAGHAGATE BHYAH
ARHATE BHYAH, SAMYAK SAMBUDDHA BHYAH, NAMAH ARYA
AVALOKITESVARAYA, BODHISATTVAYA, MAHA SATTVAYA,
MAHA KURNIKAYA, TADYATHA: OM DHARA DHARA, DHIRI
DHIRI, DHURU DHURU, ITTE VAITTE, TSALE TSALE, PRATSALE

PRATSALE, KUSUME KUSUME VARE, ILI MILI, TSITI DZOLAM,
APANAYE SOHA (3x)

OM MANI PADME HUM (...x)

Mantra of Tara, embodiment of enlightened activity

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA (...x)

Generating Love and Compassion

May all beings have happiness

May they be free from suffering

May they find the joy that has never known suffering.

May they be free from attachment and hatred.

PRAYERS IN THE TIBETAN TRADITION

Some of you may wonder what these prayers are for. Probably I do owe you an explanation, but, if I keep on explaining these prayers, I'll probably 'waste' the whole day. An explanation is necessary for those who are new, but it is duplicating for those who are already familiar with the prayers. So, I'm not going to do it.³ However I'd like to say something about mantras and a little bit on prayer in general. It's very new to America. Praying isn't new – you've been praying for centuries. But saying prayers along with meditation is brand new here.

What's happening here is this. (This is my view, maybe I'm wrong.) When you look at the Zen tradition and any of the traditions from Southeast Asia, there is much emphasis on sitting meditation. This has become quite popular in the United States, everywhere. In the Tibetan tradition, however, we sing the prayers and in the prayer, all the visualizations are included. Each word has something to be visualized. So, Tibetan meditation is not simply sitting and focusing. Really, meditation is visualizing and all this. And that is something I don't think is very familiar here. It's not only the tunes, it's not only singing the prayers slowly, you have to back it up with the visualization. It's body, mind and speech working together. A lot of people say, 'I like to practice. What do I do?' This is your practice.

I would like to talk a little about the Seven Limbs. Shantideva, the famous seventh century Indian scholar says,

The Buddhas thought for eons and drew the conclusion that these seven things are the best practice to do. Among the seven, four are most important, most helpful and effective: praising, offering, purification and rejoicing.

That's why we have those prayers there. You can pray to anybody you want to, as long as whoever you pray to is an enlightened being and not some funny ghost or spirit or something.

Next I would like to say something about the mantras. If you don't want to do the mantras, you can throw that part out. Using mantras is something unique for the Vajrayana Buddhism⁴. And this teaching is vajrayana-oriented Buddhism.

[*Tayatha*] *Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Soba*. That is the first mantra. You can either use this mantra by itself or as part of the Heart Sutra. This mantra gives you the road map of how to help yourself, how you get to nirvana [*i.e.* liberation]. Or, if you're not familiar with the word nirvana: 'How can I help myself? What steps are involved? How do I get over those steps? How so do I transfer myself from this to that step?' All five steps to nirvana are mentioned in this mantra. It simply gives you the five paths, which really means: the five stages of spiritual development.

The first stage is called *Path of Accumulation*. The major emphasis here is to accumulate merit. The second path is the *Path of Action* [or training]. So you have to take action, work hard. The third one is the *Path of Seeing* – seeing the true reality. In other words, at this level you solve the mystery of life. Then the fourth path is the *Path of Meditation*. That means, once you've seen the reality, you [get yourself acquainted to it], you meditate. And then, the fifth one is called *Path of No More Learning*. That is really true; [at that level] there is no more learning because then you have become perfect.

Namo Ratna Trayaya... is the longer version of the Avalokiteshvara mantra. I'm not going to explain that here. We have introduced this since the Iraq war. So many people have died; we just can't sit there as though we know nothing about it. We are just simply dedicating the merit to those people who have lost their lives, whether they are American or Iraqi, or whoever they might be. Why this mantra? It addresses the Buddha of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara. It's not

only to help those who died but also those who are still living – I sense this while I am sitting here, when you people are singing this. It really has an effect on you, also if you want to deal with your own hatred. You can think about it and meditate on it. And what makes it work is the mantra. Mantras really make it work. Why? Because of the mantra power, that is the power of all these great ones, and because of the power of the truth. Those combined together do the job. The teaching will give you thoughts and ideas on how to apply the information to your life, you meditate on it, and the mantra makes it work. Mantras are like the glue that makes it stick together.

Om Mani Padme Hum. That is the short Avalokiteshvara mantra, the famous Tibetan mantra of the Buddha of Compassion. Don't let me explain the meanings of those words – it will take me well beyond the time limit! Actually, it tells you about every existence - wherever you can take rebirth, what it's going to be, and how.

OM itself is a tremendously important mantra. Each letter has a meaning and a message. I did give explanations of OM last winter retreat in the context of Tara's mantra.⁵ There is OM as mantra, as energy, as body. There are zillions of reasons why. Mani means jewel. Sounds like 'money'. 'O money pay me hum'. That jewel stands for love and compassion. Padma is lotus and represents purity. Although it grows out of the mud it doesn't have any fault of mud for whatsoever; so it is wisdom. Hum is union, the combination of both. So, what you are saying is, 'May the union of wisdom and method become the union of my body, speech and mind.' Now you have the whole mantra.

Audience: What should we visualize when we say this mantra?

Rimpoche: Coolness. When you attend a teaching on that you are given a tremendous amount of visualizations.

In general, almost all mantras are about bringing joy and happiness, from the pure heart of yourself, to all beings in the room with you, filling up the room, filling up the town, the state, the country, the universe and beyond that, filling up every galaxy, touching everywhere, and just by the touch of that light everything becomes pure. The land and inhabitants become pure. Their blessings are collected back and the light dissolves to you. That is the usual practice with mantras.

You can also have a deity figure in front of you. In case of *Om Mani Padme Hum* it is Avalokiteshvara, the buddha or bodhisattva of compassion. Light and liquid come from him; purify us and all sentient beings. That is another usual mantra visualization.

Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soba is the mantra of Tara. You will get explanations of that every morning during the meditation hour in this retreat⁶. The meaning of the Tara mantra is the first teaching of the Buddha: the Four Noble Truths. *Tare Tuttare Ture Soba* is the Four Noble Truths.

TARA AND THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The words *Tare* and *Tuttare* both mean ‘liberating’. But, liberating *whom* from *what*? You can say ‘liberation’, but you have to know who is liberating whom from what. You liberate yourself from the sufferings. We are lucky. When the Buddha first taught, it wasn’t Buddhism he taught; not at all. Actually, Buddha taught his own experience, which we later called Buddhism.

1. *The truth of suffering*

What Buddha first taught is what he discovered himself. It is the truth of suffering. We all have it, believe me, we all have it. You know it, if you think about it. You may like to deny it, but we do have a zillion of different sufferings. Everybody has all kinds of varieties – mental, physical and emotional suffering. There is no end to our suffering. Really, it is true.

Three levels of suffering. Sometimes we may not acknowledge certain sufferings. So when Buddha introduced the truth of suffering, he introduced three different levels of suffering.

First is the *suffering of suffering*, which we all go through. We know this. Every time we are separated for a few months, when we come back, what do we talk about? The sufferings, the pains and problems. We talk to each other, ‘So and So died, So and So is sick’ and ‘I had trouble with my children, trouble with my spouse, trouble with my parents.’ God knows where there is a place with no trouble at all. We don’t have it. These are the sufferings of suffering.

Then Buddha said that we have *suffering of change*. It doesn't look like suffering. It looks enjoyable, really cool, but when you have it for a little while, it gives you pain. It's like the air conditioning in here or the heat outside. It's a relief, but it becomes suffering if you have too much of it. Everything, even sex, honestly, and all our medicines, is changing suffering. Change itself is suffering and everybody goes through it. There is one good quality about this type of suffering, and that is that it comes slowly and gradually. One of the Kadampa teachers said that if the changing suffering came all of a sudden – e.g. you look young and beautiful, and tomorrow morning you look in the mirror, and you suddenly are old – the suffering would be unbearable. We all know that change is suffering. If it was not, we would not put on make-up or get plastic surgery and all that. Those actions indicate the changing suffering. We all have it.

Now, what we don't know is the *pervasive suffering*, the third one. That is the hidden suffering. It is everywhere, but it never pops up and never shows itself to you. It not only causes future suffering, but it is also the result of another suffering. It is everywhere, almost like in nature. Since we are born, it is absolutely certain that we're going to get old, to get sick, and we're going to die. It is all sort of a pretend show; it's still there, the all-pervasive suffering. The word 'pervasive' means it's everywhere. Even in the most joyous moment, pervasive suffering is there.

Buddha discovered the truth of suffering and he shared that understanding with us.

Base, path and result. Why am I talking about the Four Noble Truths and not about Tara? What I really like to talk about is the important point Buddha made, what a spiritual practice really means. There actually are three levels. The first level we call *base*, the second we call *path* and the third level we call *result*.

At the base level you normally talk about the Two Truths, but here we're doing the Four Truths. That's fine. It saves me time, teaching this and the Tara together. Buddhism is nothing more than what Buddha discovered. It's not something that came down from heaven and hit him on the head; no. And also, the Buddha is not a son of God – he is just a son of a historical king. He experienced everything that we experience. There's nothing supernatural, mysterious or mystical about it. There maybe a little bit sometimes here

and there, but, mostly, it is straightforward, normal, everyday human being problems that Buddha faced, and these are the truths he discovered.

Buddha's life. Buddha [at that time prince Gautama] was put in a gilded cage. When he was born, the king was worried he was going to run away. Some soothsayer had predicted that he might do that. Well, of course his parents didn't want him to run away so the soothsayer recommended to make him happy, put him in a 'gilded cage', meaning put him in this beautiful palace and don't let him see anything unhappy. Whoever got sick in there was not allowed to come back the next day. And anybody getting old had to get out of there. Only allowed were beauties and nice things, twenty-four hour music, beautiful singing and dancing girls around, and wonderful singing near the bedroom. And you know the Indians really know how to build a palace. If you have a doubt, go look at the Taj Mahal. Really, that's the kind of palace they built for him and kept him in. He wasn't allowed to see any suffering at all. He was not even allowed to see his own subjects; not even his parents, if they were sick.

So, for the young prince, getting out and seeing real life was certainly a big discovery. And at some point, the first question he asked was, 'Since I am an extraordinary person am I immune to this?' Unfortunately, his attendant, who showed him around had to say, as they did in those times in Indian culture, 'God of gods, deity of deities..... you are not immune'. So, Buddha then asked about the royal family, his parents, and then he asked again about himself, 'Am I immune and what about my subjects? O my God, what can I do for them?' That really made him upset.

So, naturally, his job, his responsibility became to help himself, his parents, his family, and his subjects. He started searching for what he could do and how he could help. Those are the questions: What can I do? How can I help? The same question Ram Dass asks, 'Can I help?' So, the Buddha asked the question at that time. He's like anyone of us.

He saw this huge monster of suffering over here, taking its toll on everybody, including himself and his royal family, day by day. Suffering is taking its toll, particularly, the suffering of aging, illness, and death. It goes on and on. Buddha asked, 'There's this huge monster

over here. What can I do?' That monster was a danger for himself as well. He realized he could not just fight that monster with weapons. Nor was it of any use to fight the symptoms only. So, he began to look: Is there a way out?

Of course, the idea in India is the River Valley Project. The rivers start from water collected from the various hills and mountains, and you make a dam over here to save those rivers' waters, and the water is used for whatever, right? When the water bursts out, you go to where the rivers are coming from, and you cut [the supply] from the source. The Buddha's question was whether this suffering was coming from nowhere – just popping up – or was caused by something else. That way came to find out that there is a cause for each and every suffering we face. And he decided to deal with the cause rather than fight with weapons. What are the causes of suffering? That will move us to the Second Noble Truth.

Base, path and result. Where we are, and whether there is any way we can help ourselves, these questions belong to the base. And then we find, 'Yes, there is a way to help'. That is called the 'how' – method and wisdom. Method is love and compassion, but not only that; there are other methods like purification and accumulation of merit; all of those are important. The 'how' is the *path*. Then, the *result* is what you get: freedom – freedom from those sufferings and from the causes of sufferings. In short, the base is where we are, what we are, and what's happening. The path or method is what we can do, and how we can do it. And the result is what's in it for me. When Buddha presented the situation he presented the base, the foundation of what we are doing. This is *Tare* – the first noble truth, the truth of suffering.

2. *The truth of the causes of suffering*

Now the next word, *Tuttare*, refers to the cause of suffering. In terms of Tara it means that she has the power to protect us from the eight fears. These are the eight negative emotions of anger-hatred, attachment-obsession, ignorance, jealousy, miserliness, pride, doubt, and wrong view. Metaphorically these are presented as lion, elephant, snake and so on.⁷ These negative emotions influence the

mind. Then the mind acts and creates negative karma accordingly. That is the cause of suffering.

Buddha thought, ‘What is the best way to stop suffering? Should I cut the flood off at the point where the river is flowing into the River Valley Project dam or should I try to empty the dam?’ He understood that the real solution was to cut the river off at the source. That way there would be no more continuation and then you won’t have the problem of so much water collecting in the dam that it is bursting. It is going to dry up gradually and the danger will go down more and more and finally all danger will be eliminated. That is what Buddha saw and therefore he chose to experiment with cutting the cause. This is the Second Noble Truth, the truth of the cause of suffering.

We know that to a certain extent, but we don’t acknowledge it enough yet. On the contrary, sometimes we think that although we did some negative actions we’ll get away with it. We even think that some negative actions help us to get away from suffering. But, when we hurt someone we get hurt back in return. We may refuse to acknowledge that, but more or less we know it. When I hurt you, I will be hurt myself later. We also know that the negative emotions deprive ourselves of the opportunity to be nice, sincere, pure and exciting people. We are deprived of those qualities by our anger, obsession and so on. But we don’t know exactly what kind of mechanism the emotions go through and how the suffering is materialized.

Knowledge of reality. When we talk about base, path and result, at the base level Buddha emphasizes one thing: the reality of the situation. This is divided into two categories:

1. *Direct knowledge.* That is all that we can directly understand, that we can feel, see, hear, smell and/or taste.
2. *Indirect knowledge.* That is all what we can only indirectly understand. This has two categories:
 - a. *Indirect knowledge.* Here we get knowledge through logic, or through [knowing something about] the cause and effect process. For example, we know that a seed can grow into a big tree but we don’t really see that happening with our eyes. We indirectly know that this is true.
 - b. *Very indirect knowledge.* That is all that due to our limitation of mental capacity is very difficult to understand at this moment but generally possible. In that case you either trust those who

say they know or you wait until you are able to see it yourself. Currently this category of knowledge is beyond our physical as well as our mental capacity. Unfortunately the understanding that negative actions cause negative results falls into that pocket. We don't see it. It is like when you are driving having a blind spot in the mirror. That is why we don't see it. And also, it is so difficult to prove. Other objects of knowledge in that category are reincarnation and cause and effect itself.⁸ For that reason we need purification and accumulation of merit.

Negativities are also called blocks; they block what we can see and get. The true reality is that there is nothing we experience that we did not create the cause for. That is one of the Buddha's most important principles. He put his foot down on that. Unfortunately we cannot really see it. Things cannot be so simple. That is why spiritual practice means a lot of hard work. Becoming free from the eight fears is becoming free from the cause of suffering. That is where Tara's mantra comes in and that is the meaning of *Tuttare*.

3. *The truth of the cessation of suffering*

The Third Noble Truth is the cessation of suffering and corresponds with the *Ture* in Tara's mantra. I don't have to talk much about cessation. The word itself tells you that this is the state where you are free of all the troubles.

4. *The truth of the path to the cessation of suffering*

The Fourth Noble Truth is the path to the cessation. The first truth is what we are doing. The second is about why we have that situation. The fourth is about how to [get free, how to] do it, and the third is about where you are free from worry and you can relax. So instead of *Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soba* you should say *What, Why, How* and *Relax - Soba!* Soha means establishing the foundation. There is more than that, but that is the basis.

Wisdom and method. The *how*, the last of the four truths has two things: wisdom and method. Method is love and compassion. There is a story of Ram Dass asking his teacher Nim Karoli Baba about how to become enlightened. Apparently he said, 'Help and feed'. That is part of the method. Helping others, developing love and

compassion for others and yourself is one of the two legs, the method leg. This compassion and love has to be for oneself and for others.

Love and compassion for all is the method, but in order to develop and understand and experience love and compassion we must first have love and compassion for ourselves. Otherwise we won't know how to help. We have no experience of even helping ourselves. So, first we have to help ourselves. Usually all Lamrim teachings, the steps in the *Odyssey to Freedom*, from beginning to end, fall into that. All my transcripts will talk the same old thing to you, again and again, in different ways. One of my old friends told me, 'I have read about compassion in the Lamrim transcript. There are two hundred pages on that. Now I am finding that there is another hundred pages in this other transcript.'

Why are we doing all this? What's in there for us? It is the joy that has never known suffering. That's what we are looking for. That's what nirvana [freedom] is all about.

From the mahayana point of view we call that total enlightenment. Its last level is no more learning, total knowledge. That is not something limited. If there is something to be known it is known to that person. That is what total knowledge means. It is not just what you need to know or what you are supposed to know. Total knowledge is total. There is nothing left to know. You also know everything simultaneously, all the time. And not only do you know the present, but also the past and even the future. You know what changes are going to take place, how things are going to finally unfold. If you know all that all together, that is enlightenment. Our mind has that capacity. But we are unable to use that capacity [right now], because we have blockages. These are our negative karmas. That is the reason why purification is necessary, why we need accumulation of merit. It is to make ourselves pure and perfect. This is the *path* level.

The *result* level is the buddha level. Actually, you don't have to be a buddhist to become a buddha. I am quite sure of that. Anybody who puts efforts in that direction can definitely become enlightened. 'Buddha' is a term referring to a particular person; buddhahood is something anybody has the potential to, can achieve. There is no way that anyone could say that Jesus was not fully enlightened. Fifteen to twenty years ago, in a seminar, Prof. Thurman said that Jesus was a bodhisattva and he asked me, 'Don't you think so, Rim-

poche?’ I said, ‘No, I don’t. I think he was a fully enlightened being.’ Then Thurman agreed with that.

Buddha nature. So we have the base, the path and the result. That is what we are trying to establish when we are working in the spiritual field. When we don’t have any of the foundations we are simply praying or repeating mantras. And that alone may not do the trick. It becomes substance-less and wouldn’t satisfy an intelligent mind such as yours. You shouldn’t be satisfied with simple, little things. We are all well educated and we all have the buddha nature. Buddha nature has two aspects:

1. the permanent, static buddha nature,
2. the impermanent, growing or decreasing buddha nature.

We all have that [two-fold] type of buddha nature. That’s why our mind wants something more than simply praying or sitting still, saying nothing and waiting. All that will not satisfy an intelligent mind. I am trying to present a little bit of the base, the path and the result, in order to establish the foundation for working in the spiritual field. In today’s language, as we said, it is about *What, Why, How,* and *Relax!*

Dharma practice. Through contemplating in this way we will find that our sufferings are not permanent. They do not have an intrinsic existence. If they were permanent, static and intrinsically existent, we could do nothing and would be doomed. We would have to live with that. Sometimes we act like that. We say, ‘That is my karma. I have to live with it.’ But if you assume that there is such a thing as karma, you have to make sure that you don’t have to live with bad karma. Karma also has no intrinsic reality. It temporarily came up because of times and conditions. The sufferings are not the sky, but only clouds in the sky. Clouds move, they are not fixed; you can therefore drive them away, push them out. The sky will remain.

Buddha is introduced as an object of refuge because he is one who can liberate you. [Dharma is introduced as an object of refuge because it is the path.] There is Dharma and there is dogma. Refuge has a little bit of dogma in it. But if you remove the dogma part, refuge tells you that buddhahood, the state of a buddha, is the result that you can get through your practice. Dharma is how you can get

that result. Sangha is our present situation. So, again, you have base, path and result. Without any dogma involved you can look at refuge as pure dharma. Even those of us who have taken refuge will know that when you take refuge to Buddha you might say, 'Make me enlightened', but Buddha will say, 'I am happy to help you, but you have to do the work.' Buddha doesn't say, 'Now you have taken refuge I guarantee you that you don't have to suffer.' We have to do the work, with or without dogma.

The fundamental part of the refuge is the dharma we have to generate individually. If somebody else does something can that effect me? Even if I do something for others, the resultant karmic effect comes back to me, to nobody else. Therefore we have to put in all the efforts ourselves. Nobody can eat our food for us. If I want nourishment in my body I have to eat by myself.

If others could liberate us, why aren't we liberated already? All buddhas have put all their efforts in on our behalf for eons, but we are still here. The simple reason is that we are the only ones that can make a real difference to ourselves. We have to provide the effort: we have to *remove the blocks and build the merit*. Just two simple, little activities.

Understanding. The Four Noble Truths as a base, and liberation and total enlightenment as result is something that we have to understand. It is an important point to be understood. How do I understand that? For that you need a reliable reasoning that will never cheat you. In Tibetan it is called *tse ma*, in Sanskrit *pramana*. With reliable reasons we will convince ourselves why and how we can improve our minds. Once you have understood the subject through reliable reasons you have found the point on which you concentrate. By meditating the result of total enlightenment is delivered to you. This is how we approach the spiritual path: knowing what the base is, using the functioning of a reliable mind and getting the result, enlightenment.

Just believing and hoping is not going to help much. Soon you will feel hopeless and doomed. You need the reliable, intelligent reasoning. If you go into detail, reliable reasoning has four categories. With that you will establish a strong foundation for spiritual practice and then, whenever somebody comes and tries to tell you something you will know what you are dealing with. That is what happens if

you study the Lamrim, the graduated path to enlightenment. Many people tell me that after they studied it, they had a foundation and framework and would know where any other spiritual information would fit in.⁹

Then later it works the same with the vajrayana path. At first that may not be so easy to understand. For example, somebody who has studied Lamrim for a while and then hears about vajrayana may say that the Lamrim makes sense and you can see how the teachings fit with the daily life and how the spiritual information is working. But they don't see that the same thing is happening with the vajrayana. However, after working with the vajrayana sadhanas for some time you will also get the understanding how much they have got to do with your daily life.

When you have the foundation of reliable reasoning, you are in a position to judge whether particular spiritual information you come across is right or wrong. Otherwise you have to rely on your feelings and these are unreliable. You may establish yourself as an authority on the subject and say, 'It doesn't feel good to me, so it is wrong'. Those are unreliable reasons, unless you are a fully enlightened being.

All existence. According to Buddha we have to divide all of existence into two: created and uncreated. All created phenomena are impermanent; all uncreated phenomena are permanent. Further, all created things are divided into two: form and formless phenomena. The mind for example falls under the formless phenomena and the body is form. Likewise you can say the walls, rocks and mountains, all physical aspects [belong to the category of form]; all others are formless. Forms are created by material substances, while the mind as a formless thing is empty¹⁰, clear and lucid. Such a mind has also two categories: the principal mind and the secondary minds or mental states.¹¹

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Let's have the questions that came out of today's morning session:

Audience: In what way could I be compassionate to myself, without being self-indulgent and self-cherishing?

Rimpoche: Let me ask a question back: When you talk about compassion, what are you thinking? Are you thinking in words or also in feelings? If you are only thinking in words, it doesn't carry that

much value. But if you are thinking in feelings, it can be different. If you are feeling something, you have to watch what kind of feeling. Is it a feeling that you want to go all out of your way to do something right, like helping a sick or dying person? If you have such a strong feeling, that is compassion. But then, instead of focusing on that other person, if you use that feeling and turn it on yourself, that would become compassion for yourself. That is what I can answer in one short sentence. That is what compassion is. When there is a terrible situation and you are willing to go all out of the way to help, then that feeling is a genuine feeling of compassion. You can have someone else or yourself as object of such a feeling. This will be heartfelt compassion. Otherwise it is just lip service.

Audience: How do you distinguish compassion for yourself from attachment? For example is it attachment to grieve at the loss of a loved one? Would enlightened beings grieve?

Rimpoche: There are a number of aspects to your question. It is indeed very difficult to figure out the difference between attachment and love. Really difficult. That's why in the mahayana path they sometimes use attachment in order to help develop compassion. Bodhisattvas have that skill, using attachment in order to develop compassion. But on the Theravadin path this is not used. They will recommend to totally stay away from objects of attachment and anything that could bring attachment. I can give you a simple answer, like: attachment gives you a sticky feeling, and love does not. But that doesn't give you a full answer yet. Look at the result of attachment and the result of love-compassion; you will see that attachment gives you pain, but compassion does not. Attachment is somehow unable to let go and then, when you are losing what you tried to hold, you feel pain. Compassion, on the other hand, also involves pain when you are losing someone close, but you understand where the pain is coming from and it is easier to let it go. Right this moment I can only say that much. You can go and study more and develop more and gain your own personal understanding.

You had another point, asking whether grief comes from compassion or attachment and whether enlightened beings would feel grief. Yes, if you were enlightened you would still feel grief. But it is a different way of grieving.

Audience: Could you explain how pervasive suffering is different from changing suffering and how can we eradicate it?

Rimpoche: We can have direct knowledge of changing suffering, but pervasive suffering we cannot directly see. Love, compassion and wisdom are the way to overcome all of them.

Audience: Is it better to get rid of or to transform negative thoughts?

Rimpoche: If you can transform them, you are great. If you can't, better get rid of them. Transforming negativities is quite a high level. It is a little dangerous too. When we don't know how to handle it we get into trouble ourselves. Transforming is actually the best and easiest way to deal with the negative emotions. But the individual needs the capacity to transform. When you don't have the capacity, but still you try to transform, then you get into danger. Some time ago I was asked, 'Is there a danger in doing a three-year retreat of getting ourselves into trouble?' The answer is, 'When you don't have the capacity to transform, the danger is that instead of you transforming the negativities, the negativities will transform you.' It is a battle that you go into. If you lose, the negativities will transform you. That is why vajrayana is said to be dangerous. If you don't have the capacity [to transform them], it is better to try to get rid of the negativities. That is a safer, though a less efficient, a less smart way; it's more the hard-working way.

Audience: Can you explain how mantras work on the mind?

Rimpoche: The word 'mantra' means 'mind protection'. There are a number of ways of working with this. Some mantras, but only very few, have the value that simply saying them fulfills their purpose. The majority of them are not only referring to the name of a particular deity, but to their very essence. By saying a deity's mantra over and over again, together with applying a prescribed visualization over and over again, one effects one's mind; there is an influence on the mind. It can change the mind, its way of thinking and functioning. In addition, mantra has its own power. It is kind of supernatural. It doesn't only effect us, but also the environment and even the air. The air travels everywhere; it is pervasive. That is why mantra is so important. It has a great effect, not only to the individual practitioner, but wherever the air blows. I have no idea about

the mechanics of the process. Mantra power is unlimited, because the power of enlightened beings cannot be measured.

There is something like collective power, the people's power. Then there is the material power, such as atomic bombs and any scientific innovation. The best power is the enlightened power. There is no equivalent to that. That includes mantra power anyway. But when some people, just through saying mantras, gain some limited power, that is the weakest power of all.

Audience: Does base, path and result correlate with the Three Principles, renunciation, bodhicitta and correct view?

Rimpoche: No, it does not correlate. By the way, I like to call the Three Principles: 1) love and compassion for ourselves, 2) love and compassion for others and 3) wisdom. I don't particularly like the [often used] term correct view. Here it is more than a view or theory. It is the understanding of reality. It is wisdom.

Audience: In the four Immeasurables, what is the difference between wishing others happiness and wishing them the joy that has never known suffering?

Rimpoche: Happiness is one thing. The joy that has never known suffering is a superior happiness.

Audience: Please explain the three methods that can help with depression.

Rimpoche: One is visualizing the mind going up into the sky like a cotton ball, another is standing on a mountain top and watching the sun set and thinking that all one's problems go down with it, and the third is lifting oneself up on to the toes, feeling taller.

Depression really comes from a lack of self-confidence, from underestimating oneself. Mostly it is blaming oneself. If things don't work the way we hope, there can be various reasons. One reason is that perhaps we don't have enough original karma to manifest the result we want. Or perhaps there are obstacle karmas in the way of getting what we want, or it is just a lack of luck. All that is changeable. Somehow you have to do the best you can, hope and pray and put efforts in. If a karma has set in already it is hard to change until its energy is exhausted. If a karma has started to give its result, until the process is through, we can't cut through it. All you can do is

push a little bit and pray and learn how to manage riding with it, and allow it to pass through as fast as possible.

Some people, when things don't work out well for them immediately, try to find something or someone to blame. They look back and try to find how they made a mistake. They begin to blame themselves and underestimate themselves. Perhaps your current misfortune has nothing to do with what you have been doing lately. It could have been something you did years ago or even life times ago. It is hard to understand. But we try to push so much, trying to find recent reasons that are responsible for it. If you can find the point where you have gone wrong and remedy that, it is fine. The result will come up a little later. It will still take time. But if you can't find anything that was responsible for it and that you could change, then there is no point to worry about. This additional torturing and underestimating ourselves will cause depression. If you let that take over, it is going to take a heavy toll.

Building self-confidence is really the key for this. The *Bodhisattva-charyavata*¹² says, 'Hey, you are children of the Buddha, confirmed to be enlightened and capable of handling anything.'

Three techniques that help against depression, and grow self-confidence.

These are little techniques you can use [on itself or in combination]:

Mountaintop idea. In old Tibet, my teachers would take us to holidays up on the mountain tops, where there is cool air, where you can get a nice meal, relax and enjoy. Through that your mind is taken away from what is worrying you and it gives you pleasure, joy and confidence.

Cotton ball. In addition, you can visualize that your consciousness is as light as a cotton ball or as a bird's feather. You imagine that it floats far above your crown and drifts up above the clouds. Remember that commercial where this guy sleeps on a cloud and relaxes? It is like that. This is another way of emotionally uplifting yourself.

Lifting. The physical exercise you can do is stand on the tip of your toes and watch the sun set, saying good bye to the sun along with your worries and depressions.

Thank you and I hope you have a good night's sleep.

II Mind

Capacity of the human mind. We briefly talked about base, path and result: the object to look at, how you can get an understanding of it, and how, through that, you can gain a result. This is spiritual 101.

We talked about omniscience. That means seeing all the events of past, present and future simultaneously, together. Not only what it looks like initially, but also how it changes, what zig zags it is going to take and where it is finally going to land. Enlightened beings know all of that immediately, without even looking at it. Total knowledge is available to them all the time, which is beyond our comprehension. We process information by looking at it, picking it up and sharing it. Then we close that book and pick up another one. We can comprehend that. But we cannot comprehend how you can be aware of everything without particularly and separately focusing on it, or rather how you can be completely focused on everything at all time. This is completely beyond our comprehension. If it were within our comprehension it wouldn't be a big surprise, we could imagine what enlightenment is like. But we can't imagine how we can know everything all of the time, without effort. That is the level of total enlightenment, which is a real capacity of the human mind. That tells us how much we have developed our own mind. Our mental capacity is only known to ourselves. How much we know, how much we have forgotten, and how much we haven't even dreamt of or heard about, is only known to us.

What does the mind look like? I have to talk to you on the basis of the knowledge that has come to us through Buddha and his disci-

ples. Usually I talk to you from the heart, but I don't see my mind, so I have to talk from the point of view how Buddha explained it.

Three baskets. The main source is the direct works ascribed to the Buddha, the *sutras*. Contemporary Buddhist scholars call that the Buddhist canon, because there is no direct writing of Buddha. Buddha didn't sit down and write a book nor were at that time his talks transcribed onto paper. The Buddhist tradition tells you that many years after Buddha passed away, his disciples got together and categorized all his sutrayana teachings into three baskets: Morality [Skt. *vinaya*; Tib. '*dul ba*], wisdom [Skt. *sutras*, Tib. *mdo*] and metaphysics [Skt. *abidharma*; Tib. *mngon chos*].

One of the disciples recollected all Buddha's teachings from the morality basket and then these were written down. This is interesting. Buddha actually never told people, 'These are the rules of the ethical conduct that I want you to observe.' All the rules came from particular incidents. One of the monks would do something mischievous and then a rule had to be made to take care of that kind of misconduct. One of the most notorious ones was Ananda, Buddha's personal attendant. He always got into all kinds of funny things. The teachings will tell you that these incidents were manifested purposely, but whether that is the case or not, that is what went on. For example, there might have already been a rule that if someone has a vow of celibacy, having sex between human beings breaks that vow. Then somebody would go to Buddha and say, 'What about sex between a human being and an animal?'

Another example: if a monk steals something of value from a person, he breaks his commitments and is no longer celibate. So somebody goes and steals half a penny and wonders whether that was an object of value. Or somebody might intend to steal a robe from another monk. By mistake he grabs two robes. So, does he get the non-virtue of stealing one robe or two robes? In this manner the *vinaya* rules have all come about through specific incidents. That is Buddha's system. Likewise, we won't tell you all the rules and vows in the beginning. You will gradually pick them up. When you are halfway in the water, then you'll begin to know. Maybe that was the system right from the beginning.

The second basket contains all the wisdom-related teachings and the third basket has all the metaphysical teachings. At that time there

were disciples who would recite all these teachings from memory and the other disciples would listen and agree whether the recollection was correct.

Three councils. There were three such gatherings or councils after Buddha's passing away where his followers recollected and organized all his teachings. [The first one took place not too long after Buddha's death]. The second council became necessary because certain kinds of corruption began to creep into the life style of Buddha's followers. This was already 110 years after Buddha's passing away and was done under the auspices of King Ashoka, in a place called Yanga Pachen. Seven hundred arhats were in attendance.

For example, there was a rule about the time of eating. Since some monks started to get fat, Buddha had made the rule that monks are not allowed to eat after midday. He said that the fatter you are the more negative emotions would arise. Then a rule came about that a monk shouldn't make noises while eating, like slurping their soup or something. So some monks later on interpreted the rules to mean that if you do slurp, it is not considered proper eating and if that is so, then you can take soup in the afternoon. Or if you scratch the loaves of bread, it is not proper bread or food and then you can eat it in the afternoon. All these corruptions began to appear and that is why they had to have another council. Wrong types of conduct were refuted in the council and the rules were straightened out. The most notorious monk who tried to get around the eating rules was somebody called Drakpa-la. Then eighteen different groups emerged further interpreting the rules of the *Vinaya* and all eighteen are said to be correct.

In the third assembly there were 1600 bodhisattvas and arhats who confirmed that, and only after the third council all the teachings and rules were written down. Until then it was passed on orally. So the teachings of the Buddha were only written down way over hundred years after Buddha had passed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MIND

In Tibetan that collection of teachings is called *Kangyur*, which means the 'Words of the Buddha as translated into Tibetan'. In there, there are a lot of subcategories, one of them being the tran-

scendental teachings, the *Prajnaparamita*. There is one version in twelve volumes, a shorter one in three volumes and the shortest one is one volume. Most of our practices are based on the one volume *Prajnaparamita*. We in Jewel Heart are fortunate. I found a *Prajnaparamita* text, hand written in gold, in Beijing in a flea market. Wangchuk-la was there with me; we counted the pages and it was completely intact. A Mongolian woman was selling it and she said, ‘A number of people came and offered to buy one or two pages and offered quite a bit of money, but my father told me not to sell it page by page.’ So it was left intact and nobody bought it until I came. I got it for a reasonable price and we have it. This is a good omen. When I left Beijing I said, ‘If the Chinese confiscate the text at the customs we will give it to a monastery in Tibet, if not, we will be fortunate to have it in the West.’ The customs people didn’t bother and let us go through.

According to the *Prajnaparamita sutra* Buddha said,

Mind is not existent; it is light.¹³

In the *Alamkara sutra*¹⁴ it says,

The nature of the mind is light. Therefore it doesn’t block anything.
But it is capable of creating karma, which can cause suffering.
It has no beginning. When negative emotions or blocks develop,
its nature of light is obscured by dirt.
This dirt can be washed off and you can become pure.

In other words, mind has no beginning and is light in nature. All our wrong doings and also our good works are temporary. Since there is no problem in its nature, any temporary problems can be washed out like when you wash a cloth in the laundry.

Buddha further said,

Mind
– consciousness, the person, the being, or whatever you may call it –
has no beginning and no end.
There is no increase or decrease.
It is always light in nature.
This can become the uncontaminated mind of an enlightened being.

After Buddha, the early Indian mahapandits made similar statements: Dharmakirti’s Logical Root Text [Skt. *Pramanavartika*] says some seven

hundred years later,

The nature of the mind is like light.
All obstacles and blocks are temporary.

Aryashila [Tib. *Paqpa Tsültrim*] says,

The mind is in nature light. The light is emptiness.

Because of this and similar statements some people claim that when you have encountered your mind you have seen emptiness. I purposely included this statement to highlight this problem.

The early Indian Sanskrit poems were written in a very formal style. Each line had to have a certain number of syllables and meter. Allen Ginsberg took a lot of interest in it and counted the syllables in the Sanskrit and when he translated a particular passage he matched the number of syllables of the English with the Sanskrit. That particular expression is: OM SVABHAVA SHUDDAH SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDOH 'HAM - *Nature empty, everything's pure, naturally pure. That's what I am.*

Dundi, an early Indian pandit, made that system and most scholars of his time followed it. Later it was not that strict. Seven, eight years ago, the University of Michigan invited Professor Thurman to give a lecture and Professor Louis Gomez congratulated Thurman for his translations, calling them 'readable'. That is important. Today there are a lot of people who translate little pieces. But Professor Gomez tried to translate a text by Nagarjuna very carefully, and he consulted the Japanese, Tibetan, Chinese, Pali and Sanskrit versions, conferring with scholars from the respective countries. He said, 'Every time I tried to decide on a translation it turned out that it is not readable in English.' That is why he congratulated Thurman on his translations.

Back to the subject. Buddha says,

Always meditate on that.
If you think it is not light, then you have dualistic feelings.
That brings self-grasping and due to that you circle in samsara.

Buddha further says,

Mind can see mountains, rivers, trees, wherever they are,
over millions of miles.
Some mind has a prior experience and remembers it.

In another sutra he says,

Listen, disciples.

Mind has no form, no basis, nor blocks or limitations.

Zhi ba tsho [Shantirakshita]¹⁵ says,

Mind is not a form (*pem bo*)¹⁶. Mind is the opposite of form.

Whatever is the opposite of form has the nature of the mind.

This quote is from the *Tangyur*. These are the commentaries written on the collected words of the Buddha, the *Kangyur*. There are some two hundred volumes of these commentaries.

Shantideva also says,

Mind is formless.

With that I like to show that from Buddha onwards all the scholars agree that mind has no form. We cannot see, smell, touch, hear or taste it. Because of that, it becomes so difficult for us to know what mind really is.

Milarepa and the shepherd. Milarepa once had an interesting conversation with a shepherd. Mila was always sitting in the mountains, meditating and he used to sing a lot. So a shepherd came and started talking with him. He said, ‘When I am in a room, I could be alone or there could be one or more other people there. So Lama-la, how does mind exist inside the people? Is it just one or many?’ Milarepa said, ‘Go down in the valley and check and then come back and tell me what you have found.’ So he did. After a while he came back and said,

Lama-la. Last night I looked for the mind.

I checked how many there were but I found only one.

This mind is impossible to kill.

I cannot chase it. I couldn’t catch it.

I tried to pack it up in boxes but I couldn’t.

I looked for it but I couldn’t see it.

I tried to understand it, but I couldn’t.

It seems that it is there, but when I really look it is not there.

However, when I think that it is not there, it certainly is there.

It is at times very vivid,

but the moment you go closer it disappears.

This is strange. I don’t understand. What is this, Lama-la?

This gives you quite a good description of the mind. This is not Milarepa talking but the shepherd. I don't remember what Mila's answer was, but probably he said, 'Go down and look again.'¹⁷ Anyway, one day that shepherd comes again and says,

I found out more. This mind is moving. It is clear and lucid,
but I cannot recognize it, because it has no color and no shape.
When I look, it is like my eyes.
When I walk it is like my legs. It goes with me.
It creates so much trouble for those in the mountains
and for those in the valleys. Our whole body is this thing's slave.

Milarepa just keeps telling him to go and look again and the shepherd keeps coming back with what he found. In essence, then the mind is something beyond what can be seen. It has no shape and no color. Yet this mind creates so much. Milarepa himself says,

What does this mind perceive? It is far more than sun rays.

Further Buddha himself also says,

Mind is very quickly moving.
It is very difficult to protect it and bring it into the nature of peace.
It is hard to catch. It is light and it goes wherever it likes.
Mind can travel easily.
You can draw its attention if you direct it to something it likes.

Dignaga¹⁸, a disciple of Nagarjuna, uses the analogy of the elephant,

The wild elephant roams everywhere,
but if you can catch its attention, bind it to the pillar of mindfulness,
and tie it with the rope of remembrance and the hook of wisdom,
you can train it.

You might have seen this drawing where a monk leads an elephant along a path.¹⁹ This drawing was made by Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche, according to these words. Now people print this in books and I don't think they have the copyright at all. They should get the permission from Dignaga and Kyabje Trijang Rimpoche.

Shantideva, in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, says, the drunken elephant of the mind has to be tied to the pillar of Dharma.

In this (world), unsubdued and crazed elephants
Are incapable of causing such harms
As the miseries of the deepest hell,

Which can be caused by the unleashed elephant of my mind
 But if the elephant of my mind is firmly bound
 On all sides by the ropes of mindfulness,
 All fears will cease to exist
 And all virtues will come into my hand.

Guide to the Bodhisattvas Way of Life, Ch. 5, vs. 2-3

Again, Buddha said,

Mind acts like a crazy monkey.
 When a monkey sees something it has to grab it immediately.
 When it sees something else it drops the first thing
 and jumps to the new object of interest.
 Our mind is similar.
 Because of our obsession with
 objects of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch,
 it keeps us busy all the time.
 There is not even a second of rest for the mind.

This is what I like to talk to you about, from the background from the traditional sources. Then I would like to quote from a very nice booklet written by Geshe Wangchen, who lives in Mundgod in India now. He is giving quite a good picture here too. Without quoting other sources he writes,

The mind is empty, like space.
 In absolute reality, the forms and physical beings
 and this empty nature are absolutely separate.

The definition of mind according to the study curriculum of the monasteries is,

*Sel zhin rig pa sbe pei lsen mye*²⁰ – clear, lucid and knowing,
 that is the definition of mind.

Clarity of the mind. What kind of clarity are we talking about here?

1. It is the clarity of something seen when you turn the light on? No, this is not the case here, because mind is formless; there is nothing to see.

2. Is it like a light reflection in the mirror? No, because this also depends on a form that can be reflected.

3. Here the clarity signifies a special quality of the mind. Ever since the existence of the mind, whenever it was born, this quality

has been together with the mind. It will continue until mind ends, if that ever happens. Mind has a capacity of perceiving without depending on any instrument or device. For example, the eye consciousness depends on the eye organ and the eye sense power to be able to perceive visual objects. The ear consciousness depends on the ears [and the ear sense power]. The same goes for the nose, tongue, *etc.* Mind does not depend on that. Ever since mind was established, it has the natural quality to perceive.

The moment the mind focuses it has the capacity to create an exact imprint, like a copy or duplicate. It is similar to memory. Let's say we see a person. Then our memory part of the mind keeps an imprint of what we have seen. Then when we see that person again, that picture comes up immediately, and overlaps with the new perception of that person. We will say, 'Yes, that is him or her. I was introduced earlier.' When some time has passed in between and we see that person again, the picture does not quite tally. But another mental faculty compares the records and checks and confirms, 'Yes it is still the same person I remember from earlier.' The picture still fits.

This capacity is made available to the memory because of the first imprint left on the consciousness. The mind has the capacity to generate this print directly. Even from a formless perception the mind will take an imprint and keep it. From anything the mind encounters it will generate an imprint, a mental picture that is stored in the mind itself.

These imprints are not like a slide show. They are not separate entities. The mind itself takes something onto itself. The perceiving mind creates this imprint which it makes into part of the mind itself. What happens is that a part of the mind itself has accepted this imprint as part of the mind itself. Whatever the mind perceives becomes part of it. That is one of the reasons why mind can become fully enlightened. That is why spiritual development really takes place when the knowledge becomes part of the person. Geshe Wangchen uses this example:

It is like a clean, white cloth,
which when you dip it into a dye becomes a yellow cloth.
The color becomes inseparable.
In the same way the imprint and the mind become inseparable.

I am not sure how far you can take that example, because if it were really inseparable, you couldn't wash or re-dye it. But it gives you an idea of how the mind becomes what it perceives. A yellow-orange T-shirt becomes a greenish T-shirt when you put blue colored clothes with it into the laundry machine. Like that the mind changes and takes on additional things which become part of it. This is an important point. That way you begin to establish why liberation and enlightenment are possible.

I described the mind as much as I could and I don't intend to talk about the mind in terms of the mental faculties. I cannot take all the time here, explaining all the mental faculties. Geshe Rabten, in his *Treasury of Dharma* gives a good explanation from that angle. He described all fifty-one mental factors in very simple words and very straight forwardly. So I am going to refer you to his book.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: If the mind is free from all obscurations, is it enlightened or is there something else that a mind which is free from dirt and obscurations, has to do?

Rimpoche: Very good question. You are right on the point. We always hear that everyone is a wonderful person, that we are by nature kind, compassionate, wonderful and great. We hear that from every spiritual person. At least, I hope so. I hope nobody will tell you that you are terrible and will go to jail and to hell. I don't think they will say that.

The nature of the mind is in fact pure. It is straightforward pure in nature, not influenced by hatred, attachment and all those negative emotions. There is no dirt or anything like that. It is pure. Negative emotions cannot become part of the mind because mind itself is pure. The pure cannot change its nature and become impure. That's why Buddha gives the example of pure silver, old fashioned 100 % silver. That silver collects a lot of tarnish, but that tarnish doesn't become part of the silver. It can be washed off and the silver can shine again. The tarnish can never become part of the silver. The pure is pure by nature and the impure cannot become part of that. The mind itself is right, and it cannot accept as part of its nature wrong things. They just don't work together; they clash. That

is why we get into trouble all the time; with push and pull we go up and down through the emotional drives we have inside.

Here we are talking about the mind itself, not the mental faculties, not the skandhas²¹, not the sense consciousnesses, like eye, ear, nose and so on consciousness, sometimes called marginal consciousnesses. (Also, besides the sense consciousnesses, there is, according to the *Abidharmakosha*²², supposed to be something called 'inner pure form' for all the senses like eye, ear, nose, and so on. They are located somewhere inside the back of the head. The retina picks up a picture, reflects it, puts it upside down, [and the] light gets reflected inside. That [physical part of it] is what we call *wangten kopa*, the external capsule for the internal pure form.²³)

These are all gross minds. Even what we talked about this morning is still the gross mind. There is a deeper, a subtle mind; that is what we call *nyug sem*²⁴, the *primordial mind*. It is the source of all gross consciousnesses; all of them are coming out of that primordial mind. The description of the primordial mind is not much different from the description of the general mind we gave you this morning. I gave a very good talk about the primordial mind in a Vajrayogini winter retreat. Although this explanation is a little restricted we made it possible for everyone to read. It should give you a pretty good idea. The transcription of it is available separately.²⁵

Coming back to the question: Is a mind free from dirt and obscurations already enlightened or is there something else that needs to be done? I believe when *all* the dirt and obscurations are finished, that is called enlightenment. I don't think anything else needs to be done. That is the measurement of enlightenment. Mind has the capacity to know everything simultaneously. When there is nothing blocking or obscuring it, it can function to full capacity, which is what we call enlightenment. It is as simple as that.

Let me add up one little thing. Enlightenment is difficult to get. If it wasn't difficult, then all of us should have been enlightened long ago. Enlightenment is something we have to earn. It doesn't just grow. In order to earn it we have to work. Working for enlightenment means meditation. Meditation for enlightenment is not just simply sitting and thinking positive. That doesn't do it. If that were enough, everybody would have been enlightened by now. It has to be more than that. You have to analyze. Analytical meditation is a

must. Simply concentrated meditation alone does not work at all. Tsongkhapa has said,

Analytical meditation is like a weapon that overcomes the obstacles and dirt and impurities.

Analytical meditation is the real weapon. Concentrated meditation is like a horse, stable and unshakeable. The real weapon however is wisdom. And without analytical meditation wisdom doesn't grow. Wisdom is not a mushroom that pops up. When you have some kind of half-rain, half fog on a high mountain over night, the next morning you see mushrooms popping up. Wisdom doesn't grow that way; not at all. Nor does wisdom develop if you keep on sitting and waiting. Just closing your eyes and thinking that everything is pure and wonderful and great is never going to get you wisdom. I can guarantee you that. Honestly, you can wait till the cows come home. Working is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, what do you expect?

Enlightenment is not a gift, neither is liberation, or nirvana. You earn it. If it were a gift that Buddha could give you, he would have made gift parcels for everybody. But it doesn't work that way. It is your work to clear the obstacles and dirt out of your mind. When that is done you become pure. Your natural purity will connect with that and that is called enlightenment. I believe that is what enlightenment is all about. It is simple and straight forward, but working on it is difficult.

Audience: If you do analytical meditation is that enough, since it is the one that really delivers the wisdom?

Rimpoche: I did say that analytical meditation is doing the major work, but I did not say it is the only thing you need. I keep on saying that there is always wisdom and method. Yesterday I introduced base, path and result. When I talked about the path I said it is like two legs to walk on or two wings to fly with. A bird with one wing cannot cross the ocean. It will go in circles. It will be like a boomerang that comes back. That's not my metaphor. It is Chandrakirti's. He said,

When the king of the birds wants to cross the ocean,
it must have two wings.

In order to cross over to liberation or nirvana or enlightenment
you must have the wing of method and the wing of wisdom.²⁶

Nagarjuna says,

By this merit may I attain
the two collections of merit and wisdom
and achieve the two enlightened holy bodies.

You have to be able to prove your statement. If Buddha is wrong and if all these great bodhisattvas and early great masters are wrong, then I am wrong too. They all speak the same language. If they are wrong, I am wrong too and it is worth for me to be wrong then. According to them enlightenment is not only the mind level but also the physical level. I said in many talks that if the mind doesn't get enlightened there will be a buddha without mind. If the body doesn't get enlightened, there would be a buddha without body, just a spirit. Body and mind exist in combination. You have to have both. Both have to be developed and built; they don't just pop up. On the other hand, I don't have to spell it out every time. Once I have said it, that should be enough for you to remember. If you mention one thing and therefore have to talk about the other thing too, it would be never ending. So when I say that you need this one thing, it doesn't mean that you don't need this other thing.

Audience: What is the difference between primordial mind and enlightened mind?

Rimpoche: Excellent question. There are a number of great teachers who say that the primordial mind itself is not exactly the enlightened mind but is a mind of emptiness, a mind of wisdom. In Buddhism emptiness is wisdom and wisdom is emptiness. There are a number of people who will say that if you encounter the primordial mind consciously, you have encountered emptiness. Many will say that. But there is a big logical problem with that. It is very simple. When we die, the dying mind is very, very subtle. The metaphor I am going to give you may not be perfectly correct, but the idea is this: we have all these huge gross minds and all of them start to diminish [at the time of death]. The eyes will no longer see, the ears will no longer hear, and gradually also the memory will fail. We won't even remember the name of the person close to us. Recognition, realization and conception will also fail. All the gross minds will shrink completely and the mind goes into a very, very subtle continuation, which probably is encountering the primordial mind.

That is more than seeing something. The mind's way of knowing is *becoming* what it knows. You have to give up the idea of encountering the primordial mind face to face [like one person meets another]. You may use the expression 'face to face', but it is really becoming oneness; it is touching the source. You are touching with the primordial mind. At the time of death the gross minds are completely gone, shrunk to the very subtle source, the primordial mind. From that you expand again. That is what happens.

If that were the same as encountering emptiness directly, we would have the logical problem of falling back. Because, when we grow again from the primordial mind we will be the same old person. We are not people who will see the emptiness directly. That is the problem.

But the question was not whether the primordial mind is a mind that recognizes emptiness, but whether it is an enlightened mind. That is very simple. No, it is not enlightened mind, because all the obstacles have not been cleared. But if the question was, whether this mind recognizes emptiness... that is difficult to answer for anyone. It is not easy to say yes or no. Some of the early teachings keep on saying yes and no together, saying things like 'It is not there, yet it is here.' That all comes from this problem.

Audience: You said earlier that mind is empty like space. In absolute reality, however emptiness and mind are separate. How are they separate?²⁷

Rimpoche: Emptiness is not mind and mind is not emptiness. But mind has its own emptiness. Emptiness has a mind that perceives it. What is the problem here?

Audience: Absolute reality is confusing to me in this respect. I understand the metaphor of mind being empty like space. That is a good visual representation for me. But when I think about absolute reality, I don't have a simple visual metaphor. When I hear that mind and emptiness are separate in absolute reality I get lost. It doesn't make sense to me.

Rimpoche: It is not only you. We all have tremendous difficulty of finding a visual image for absolute reality. If we could, we wouldn't be here. That's for sure. There is a reason why space is used as example in names like space-like meditative equipoise and illusion-like

aftermath activities. Why is it called ‘space-like’? Space has nothing that blocks. It is totally open. Like that, in the absolute reality there is nothing blocking. It is probably the best metaphor you can use. Space is empty, nothing can block. We talked about form and formless. Form is if there is something blocking and formless is if there is nothing blocking. That basic division Buddha put is for that reason. At the end of the *Lama Chöpa*, vs. 72, it says,

Inspire me to perfect transcendent wisdom,
Through practicing space yoga in equipoise on the ultimate,
Joining the bliss of subtle ecstasy
With the insight that discriminates what is.

Absolute space yoga, that’s what it is.

Audience: What is the difference between mind and consciousness and what is it that continues from life to life?

Rimpoche: The terms are synonymous: mind, consciousness, self, soul, the individual, and so on. Just now I talked about the primordial mind. That is the mind that comes from the previous life and stays here now and goes to the future life. Please don’t raise the question, ‘If that is so, is that primordial mind intrinsically existent?’ If you do that we get into more trouble and we will need another week to sort that out. The primordial mind is not labeled as consciousness. It is not conscious. It is very subtle. But it is mind. On the gross level they are all the same. Take the good old Christian terminology of ‘soul’. I know nothing about Christianity, but the moment I hear ‘soul’ I identify that with mind, self and so on. From that angle I have no problem with people calling it ‘soul’. But if you talk about an unchanging, un-developing kind of soul, I do have a problem with that. Otherwise, you may call it subtle mind or primordial mind or soul; I don’t have a problem with that.

Audience: Is karma like reflection, deflection or refraction of light or mind?

Rimpoche: Karma is definitely not like a reflection. A reflection is when you see yourself projected. Karma is: you create something and then it becomes like an invisible seed; and when it meets with terms and conditions, then without fail it will materialize whatever it is aimed for. So it is not a reflection. Now, what do you mean by deflection?

Audience: Deflection of light is e.g. when the light is blocked by something and goes the other way.

Rimpoche: Karma doesn't not block anything or anybody, but negativities do. We are not differentiating between negativity and negative karma. We have not talked about negativity separately, but negativity does block. Does negative karma block you? It probably does block you from achieving your result. Karma is not like refraction either. Rather it is like a seed that is sown and is waiting to come out and give you a result. It requires right terms and conditions to give the result. It is dependently arising.

Audience: If we have to do our own work to develop how can praying for another person help them?

Rimpoche: Ram Dass asked his guru Nim Karoli Baba, 'How do I become enlightened?' and he said, 'Feed others and help others.' Helping and benefiting others is the best way to benefit ourselves. Yes, we help others. We are doing it for the other person. But who is really gaining most in there? The individual who is putting in the effort, who is doing whatever he or she can. That is the spiritual work that is affecting ourselves. Whatever you do for others is depositing some amount of virtue [for you], like depositing some money in the bank.

Audience: What is the link between the mind and the brain? For example, someone may be kind and compassionate, have a spiritual practice, but then suffer a stroke or head injury which physically impacts on the brain, incapacitates them and leaves them with a different personality. They may become angry or mean. So when the brain is physically damaged, what then happens to the mind?

Rimpoche: I have no idea from the scientific point of view. From what I understand the nerves and cells in the brain are the medium for the mind. The mind is utilizing that. Certainly, when you have brain damage it will affect the mind's ability to operate. I am planning to talk about the relationship between mind and energy tomorrow. That may clarify this point a little more.

There is a subtle energy which is formless. Then there is a gross energy with form. These gross energies travel through the nadis and channels. There are gross physical and subtle psychic channels. They are interconnected. When you have a certain damage some-

where, particularly in a complicated area like the brain, then the air flow, which to me is energy, is disrupted. When that happens, the mind traveling on that air can't function. We always say that the mind is like a horse rider and the air is like a horse. Sometimes we see in movies how horse riders carry weapons and attack each other. One of them will be thrown off the horse because they get hit by the other's weapon. The horse may collapse too. Likewise, when the energy is blocked, the mind that travels on the air will have difficulty. Even a stupid person can see that. So there is effect on the individual.

However, a stroke or any other brain damage, in my opinion will not change a person from a good person to a bad person. A kind person will not become an angry person through that. We do have the seeds of anger and nuttiness and difficulty within us. When physical difficulties arise, that can cause the anger to rise more. You may say, 'I have been trying to do my best for a long time? Why is this happening to me now? This is too much.' In that way anger can rise. There will be only very few people who can say like Ram Dass, 'The stroke is my guru's blessing'. Most will get angry, but I don't think it will be such a strong effect that it can change the mind from positive to negative. Maybe I am wrong. Anger can come up because of the difficulty and because seeds of anger are there. Then at the time you are angry, you cannot see anything else. We all know that.

Audience: What is absolute buddha nature, do we all have it and is it permanent?

Rimpoche: We are all supposed to have it. I don't think it changes. I have been saying that the nature of the person is wonderful. So it is an excellent quality we all have. The reality is that there is a good, kind being. Although we show others the cold shoulder. That is just temporary. It doesn't tally with the nature of the mind itself, therefore it doesn't become part of it. Buddha nature doesn't change. You don't lose it. It remains until you become a buddha. That is why His Holiness had to say in Jerusalem that Hitler has buddha nature. The journalist who asked that question probably expected him to say no, because this was Jerusalem, but he said yes and gave a long explanation why.

Audience: What is the relationship between the permanent buddha nature and the decreasing, impermanent buddha nature?

Rimpoche: I don't know. It is interconnected, for sure. But I better say 'I don't know', because it requires a tremendous explanation.

Audience: Is speech form or formless?

Rimpoche: Sound is form. Form is empty, emptiness is form. Look at a description of the five skandhas. That will be good enough.²⁸

Audience: How does that relate to mantras and seed syllables and the sound of the bell?

Rimpoche: The idea comes from mantra being sound and sound being mantra, seed syllables as persons and persons as seed syllables and the idea that the sound of the bell is the sound of emptiness. If you look from that angle, the whole idea of what sound is changes. Yes, the seed syllables represent the primordial type of mind, the yidam, or meditational deity. The mantra itself is a yidam. That reminds me of Gungbar Rimpoche²⁹ who has already passed away. During his tenure as abbot of Gyuto, he was invited to J.W.'s house. At that time, he hung a mantra roll on a pillar or beam in his house and told JW that it was a yidam. That's why lamas also give you these red cords. All of these are interconnected. That is a yidam.

Audience: What are non-created phenomena?

Rimpoche: Space, for example, is not created. It always remains and is permanent. Every impermanent phenomenon is created, including the statue of liberty. We also saw that the World Trade Center was impermanent. Monuments are all impermanent, because they are created. Space is not created. The idea of a cup is also not created. The making of a clock for example, and a clock itself, is impermanent, but the idea 'clock' is permanent.

Audience: Is formlessness a non-created or a created phenomenon?

Rimpoche: Both. Formless beings are created phenomena and space is a non-created phenomenon.

Audience: If the mind is clear like the sky and the negative emotions are the clouds, how does that relate to the idea that when the mind perceives something, part of the mind accepts it as part of the mind?

Rimpoche: I already answered that today. Mind's reality is pure. When impurity comes in, it cannot become a part of it. We do have that struggle there.

Audience: It is said that you become enlightened in the mind of the guru. How does that happen?

Rimpoche: Let us find out about that later. That is a very important vajrayana question.

Audience: To what extent is the mind individual and to what extent is there commonality between the minds of all beings?

Rimpoche: Until we become fully enlightened our minds are very much individualized. When you are enlightened, then the question comes up whether your mind is merging with the pool of enlightened mind and whether or not you lose the individuality at that level.

There is a great difference of opinion among the great earlier teachers, even between Tsongkhapa's main disciples, Gyeltsab and Khedrup, who you see sitting to his right and left [in the *Ganden Lha Gyema* thangkas]. Gyeltsab Je accepts that all enlightened minds sort of become a pool of enlightened mind. He does not separate all-enlightened mind from individual mind. But you can manifest out from that individually and you can dissolve back into the pool. It is the idea of coming from the sky and dissolving into the ground - like rainfall. Khedrup Je doesn't agree with that. He says that the individual has been working and reached to the enlightened level and doesn't merge into a pool of enlightened mind. For me, I can't even say what happens then. I will only know that when I become enlightened.

Audience: Is the clear and lucid mind a description of an individual mind or is it mind in general?

Rimpoche: It is the qualification of mind in general. But if any individual mind is mind it should fit into that description. In other words, every individual mind has that quality.

Audience: Under formless, impermanent, created phenomena you said that mind is clear and lucid. Is this mind created?

Rimpoche: When Buddha was asked, 'Is there beginning and end?' Buddha kept silent. That is also my answer. Mind is a continuation.

We cannot figure out where the beginning is. We cannot find the first cause. Yet it is impermanent. So it is a *continuation of discontinuity*. That is Trungpa Rimpoche's expression. But every moment of that mind is the result of its cause as well as being itself the cause for its continuation. If you are looking for the cause before it began, I don't know. If you look from the continuation point of view, causes are there.

Audience: Regarding the perception or imprint that is imprinted and adjusted with memory, with proper understanding of Dharma, what should and what shouldn't arise?

Rimpoche: I am not sure if the imprint is left with the memory or not. The imprint should just be left on the consciousness. What should arise is all positive deeds. What shouldn't arise is all negative deeds. Whether that actually happens depends on the individual.

Audience: You said that there is no beginning to mind. Later you said that the lucid quality of the mind was born together with the mind and that it will continue if the mind ends.

Rimpoche: You caught me red-handed there. What I really meant was that whenever the mind has started it came with its own nature as it is, which is the lucid quality. That sounds like a contradiction; you are right. But it is no big deal. To say 'whenever the mind was born' is more an expression.

Audience: How do negative obstructions arise within the pure mind?

Rimpoche: *Within* the pure mind - that is the question. Negativities do arise because of conditions and terms. That is very clear. We can see the negativities like anger and obsession pop up all the time. But whether that arises *within* the pure mind I doubt. I have often given the example of the mind as clear lamp shade and the negativities as light bulbs coloring the lamp shade, without changing the clear nature of the lamp shade. Apparently, Geshe Rabten in his *Treasury of Dharma* says it exactly the same way.³⁰ Neither did I copy from Geshe Rabten, nor he from me. It must be coming from our teachers. So the negativities don't really rise *within* the pure mind. How the negative faculties pop up and how they influence the mind is another issue.

Negative thoughts are mental faculties. They are coming from mind. In Tibetan they are even called *sem jung*³¹, mind-arisen. They are not the principal mind but they are coming out of it. Whenever the mind is influenced by positive, negative or even neutral thoughts, certain mental faculties pop up. Whether you call that *within* the pure mind or not, is a question. I can't say. But they do rise within the framework of our mind. They just pop up like toast out of a toaster.

Audience: Where do you find the mind apart from the thoughts it is perceiving?

Rimpoche: Remember this morning's discussion between Milarepa and the shepherd? That's what it is.³²

Audience: Is thought formless?

Rimpoche: It's got to be.

Audience: When you said, 'Mind is opposite of form', did you say that mind is formless?

Rimpoche: Whatever I said, mind and thoughts are formless.

Audience: Which mind are you referring to when you speak of mind [as in body, speech and mind of refuge objects]?

Rimpoche: When you are praying, seeking blessings, asking for grace, you are not separating so much in detail. You are simply looking through the body, speech and mind combination of the object of refuge, rather than specifically addressing certain aspects of the refuge objects. But sometimes you are focusing on the mind, sometimes on the speech and sometimes you are focusing on the body too. When you are focusing on the mind you are probably focusing on the pure aspects of the mind of the object of refuge. I don't think you are dividing between mind and certain mental faculties.

Audience: I rather meant that from my own point of view.

Rimpoche: The primordial mind may or may not be present, but it is not at our disposal. So it is only the gross mind, not the mental faculties. Whenever we refer to mind in general, that mind has to be joined with the five constantly following mental faculties³³. That is not the primordial mind but the gross, big mind.

When we did our first summer retreat, we went to a place called 'heaven'. The first person to bless that place was Lochö Rimpoche

who gave the Yamantaka initiation there. Professor Thurman was the translator. Lochö Rimpoche said that sometimes we visualize too many hands. He gave the story of that one monk who visualized sixteen hands. He was on duty to serve tea to the monks. He went into the kitchen and asked the cook, 'Which hand of mind should carry the tea pot?' So the cook got a little stick and hit him on the right hand and said, 'This horrible hand of yours.' That's the answer.

We'll distribute a list of the mental factors, but you are not going to need the whole list of all the mental faculties. What you really need is the first ten. These are the five which follow absolutely every mind [called the five omnipresent mental faculties], and five which sustain the mind and make it function [called the five object-ascertaining mental factors]. The rest of them are things like the eleven virtuous ones; then there are twenty-six negative emotions and four changeable emotions. Together there should be fifty-two [*i.e.* the primary mind and 51] mental faculties. You know it's really, really simple. What I want you to read is those five plus five and also the statement about the consciousness itself.³⁴

Audience: Is mind actually light or light-like?

Rimpoche: Light-like.

Audience: What's the difference between bad luck and bad karma? Does the idea of luck imply a certain amount of random-ness?

Rimpoche: Bad luck is an expression we use. But it is a consequence of bad karma. It is random in the sense of not being permanent. Rather, it comes up occasionally.

We spent this whole session on questions and answers. These questions are very important. You people thought a lot about it. Thank you. I would like you to think about these points more often, not only during this retreat, but wherever you go. I am trying to establish here that we can get effects from the efforts we put in. The mind is something very important. We all have it, but we don't know so well how it functions. At least now you have a little better idea than what we normally think. We will next consider the relation between energy and mind and I may even go a little further than that. Thank you so much.

III

Mind and Energy

We have been talking about the mind. Last night we talked a little bit about the functioning of the mind, the energy and the relationship between energy and mind. We usually call that energy ‘air’ because the traditional Tibetan texts call it *lung*, which directly translated is air, but in fact it is energy.

Then you have the channels. Normally we don’t talk about the channels and energies; it belongs to the completion stage of vajrayana. But, I can simply bring the system out, without bringing in the vajrayana activities. That way, talking about the relationship between mind and energy, I would like to talk a little bit about the channels in our body.

Why do we need this? Because we are dealing with the mind. The mind is actually living on the basis of one of those energies that travel through our body system. Of course western scientists talk about things like neurons and protons and all of those. We do have a complete idea and knowledge from that point of view, but simultaneously, there is a sort of almost corresponding psychic side to it.

There’s a lot of things we could talk about here, but what I really want to give you is something very brief about the subtle mind, the subtle consciousness, the primordial mind [*nyug sem*]. It is the mind that has come from previous lives, that is staying here now and is going into future lives along with the subtle energy – as an inseparable combination. That subtle energy is the basis of all other energies within our body. The subtle energies remain in the subtle channels. That is why it is necessary to talk to you about the channels a little bit.

Channels, chakras and energies

Channels [Skt. *nadi*, Tib. *rtsa*]. According to the Buddha, the basis of the subtle consciousness and the subtle energies are the three channels: the central channel, the right channel and the left channel. And from those a lot of branches come out. Of course, many of you know, according to the Buddha's point of view, the central channel is supposed to be [at] the center of our body, slightly to the back-side of our body, [near to] the spine.

These three are straight channels that go [from the forehead] through our crown, to the sex organ. All three channels are supposed to be empty inside, like straws. According to the texts the central channel is red inside and blue outside, the right channel is red and the left channel is white.

But I had a funny experience. It was with a Nepalese business guy, who has been dealing with the Tibetans for a very long time and owns a lot of hotels. He invited me and the very famous Tibetan doctor, Dr. Tenzin Choedrak, the Dalai Lama's personal physician who had escaped from Tibet, and a couple of Indian ministers from the central government too, all to a breakfast. We had the breakfast, and in the middle of it he was making some funny jokes and suddenly he said, 'By the way, I have some blessings here, some *prasad*, so you all have to eat it.' These two ministers immediately understood, got up and ran out of the door. I did not know what was going on. *Prasad* in the Indian culture probably means sweets brought out from the temple or something like that, like for us *tsob* or that type of thing. He brought out those things and passed them around and gave me a lot. Then he served the doctor and said, 'I won't give too much to the doctor because he has to see patients.' By that time I had already eaten quite a lot. What was happening, you know, he had put *bhong*, which means hash, into the sweets!

The breakfast was about 8:30. Nothing happened to me for a while. But after 10:30 everything was so clear, you know. The whites were really white and the greens were extremely green and beautiful and everything was wonderful. And suddenly I could hear tremendously. People were talking in the next two rooms and to me it was almost like they were talking inside my ear. Then somebody went to a bathroom and flushed the toilet and it sounded like flushing inside my ear. Then somebody started talking to me, and I looked at him

and could see every detail of the hairs on his mustache. By that time I realized that it was the effect of those chemicals. So I thought, 'Well, I'm here already, I might as well start looking inside and see what these channels look like and how they are formed.' The moment I started focusing – it was hallucination I'm sure – I could really see the central channel, and the moment you see that, you think about the right channel and the left channel and you can see them there, too. And not only that; the moment you focus on the knots, it goes thwick, thwick, swirling around just like that, really quickly.

According to what I had been seeing at that level, the colors described in the books are slightly different. In the book it says the central channel has a bright red color on the inside and is blue on the outside, but what I kept seeing there was dark green on the outside and dark reddish inside. I even had that thought within myself at that time, because it was a very lucid level, so you really remember everything and you see everything and you can argue with yourself so well. Those of you who have experience, know what I'm talking about. So the color dark green might not be wrong. I don't know, maybe the books are trying to hide that. You never know. Or it may not be just blue as you normally think of blue, or it may not be just red like chinese red. That probably could be too. So, these are the three main channels.

Chakras [Skt.; Tib. *rtsa 'khor*]. Then you have five chakras: at the crown, throat, heart, navel, and sex organ level. There is a sort of 'knot' at those places, but not in the sense of putting a knot in a rope. What happens is, the right and left channel go around the central channel. As I said before: the moment you want to see the knot it goes, 'thwick'. The central channel doesn't move. Of the right and left channels one goes this way, the other goes that way and they hook around the central channel. The texts call it 'knot'. It's not that it's knitted, you know, that all three got together and somebody twisted and knitted them; what really happens is, when the energy is flowing really strongly in the right and left channels, it squishes or squeezes the central channel and that one gets completely choked.

Five major chakras. These ‘knots’ are normally known as chakras. The chakra at the crown has thirty-two branches [also called petals], the one at the throat sixteen; the one at heart level eight, the one at the navel level sixty-four and the one at the sex organ level thirty-two. These are normally known as the five chakras. *Chakra* literally means ‘wheel’. These chakras may not look like the wheels we see. They go out from the central channel and the two side channels, and form a sort of hook. And then they branch out. It’s almost like a spider web.³⁵

Three minor chakras. In addition to this, there is a six-petalled chakra between the crown and the throat level, at the height of the eyebrows, in between our two eyes; it is in the nature of air. Between the throat and the heart level there is an additional three-petalled chakra, which is in the nature of fire. In the center of the sex organ there is another eight-petalled chakra. These are called the three smaller chakras.

The five generally known chakras plus these additional three should make eight. All channels throughout our body have grown from those eight chakras. They cover the body completely. I don’t know whether these channels are observable for the scientists. Probably not. Maybe they will discover them later.

Energies. The energy, or air, is what we in Tibetan call *lung* [Skt. prana]. We have to talk about that a little bit because that is the basis of the mind. What does the energy do? Its major work is to provide the basis for the mind to remain. In addition to that, it supports all our movement – we have to sleep, speak, move around and do everything. The energies also support the circulation, the digestion, including the distribution of the proteins and so on, the essence of the food that needs to be distributed throughout the body wherever it is needed. (And whenever something doesn’t work well you become diabetic.) This [energy aspect] could be the reason why we cannot cure everything right now. People continuously die. This could be because there is not only the gross physical aspect, but the energy aspect as well. Maybe we’re not doing anything on that level right now scientifically. There are two points here. People will not live forever; people will die, that’s for sure. On the other hand, there should be some cure for everything, too.

Life has to come to the base, the combination of the many physical aspects we see. That is the very gross level. Then there are the subtle aspects [the channels and chakras we talked about], which you probably don't see, and then there are the energy aspects of it. Probably all of them combined together make it work. That's why life is so sophisticated; it's tremendously sophisticated.

The energies we basically talk about are the root energies and the branch energies.

There are *five roots energies*. The first one is labeled the *Energy that holds life* [Tib. *sog dzin*]. The second one is called *Energy that equalizes* [Tib. *nyam na*], so that is balancing energy. The third one is *Upwards traveling energy* [Tib. *kyen gyu*]. The fourth one is *Downwards traveling energy* [Tib. *tur se*]. And the fifth one is called *Pervasive energy* [Tib. *kyab je*].

Then there are *five branch energies*. These are the traveling *eye energy*, the traveling *ear energy*, the traveling *nose energy*, the traveling *tongue energy*, and the traveling *body energy*.

Thus, you have ten energies, out of which the five branch energies plus the first of the root energies, the life-holding energy, hold consciousness.

The energies do the distribution of the blood and so and forth. This tells us that as we see the physical aspects of the nerves and cells and proteins and so on, there are equivalent energy aspects going on within our body. That is quite clear.

No newborn. Where did we get the 'life-holding energy' from? That one is accompanying the mind. Yesterday there was a question – coming from the angle of reincarnation – about when life [or mind] has really begun. We never know when it started because according to the Buddha, one of the most important points is that there are no newborns. All beings are old beings. That's like saying all souls are old souls. No newborns; whatever lives are there, are there.

Of course, people raise a lot of questions, saying, 'If that's true why do we now see more population, not less and where do these beings come from?' These are good thoughts, but there's always a reasonable explanation for that. There is transit from tremendous, countless galaxies, they transfer from one to the other.

So, according to the Buddha, there's no newborn. That is the reason why Buddha says there is no beginning. Is there an ending? On that question Buddha didn't say anything, he kept quiet.

There is an ending of suffering but there's no ending of life. If there was an ending of life, then there would also an exhaustion of beings, right? But that is not the case, so life continues. Whatever the number of beings is it remains intact. The Buddha chose to keep silent on that, because he thought that people would misunderstand. His disciples explained it.

Continuation of discontinuity. So whenever it begins, consciousness comes with that subtle energy as a part of the consciousness itself. And I did tell you, they talk about this in terms of air [or energy] as the horse and consciousness as the horseman. According to the traditional texts, this [combination] is called 'base'.

I'd also like to mention here that you find channels and energies described in the Tibetan medical texts. The description of channels and energies in the medical texts differs quite a lot from the description in the Buddhist texts. I think I need to mention that, because you know, when you see the medical thing you say 'well, it is Tibetan, so it is Buddhist'. Yeah, yet it is different.

Having said that, the particular energy which is the basis of the mind has come from whenever mind started. The expression the Buddha uses is 'limitless beginning'. It is limitless because you cannot pick out where and when. The continuation of that energy has accompanied the continuation of the subtle consciousness from whenever it started. I have to say continuation, because if it's not a continuation, then the problem of permanence comes up. And it is not permanent, it's impermanent. Trungpa Rimpoche's explanation of that as '*continuation of discontinuity*' is beautiful. It is a continuation of discontinuity because it is impermanent. It discontinues. The discontinuation here is *changing*.

When we are in life, that particular subtle mind and that particular subtle energy are said to be remaining at the center of the central channel at the heart level. That's why most of the Eastern people say that life is at the heart level.

Then from that subtle energy, which then increases, like a duplicating process, almost like cloning, those a little grosser energies come. Those gross energies also remain at the heart level of the central channels, of both right and left channel. And from those we grow the skandhas we talked about, as well as [the sense consciousnesses and] the gross mental consciousness. Please note: gross men-

tal consciousness. There are five sense consciousnesses and an extra one called mental consciousness, which make six. That sixth one is a gross consciousness.

The subtle energy and subtle consciousness combined at the center of the central channel is called ‘indestructible drop’, which doesn’t open, doesn’t separate, and doesn’t get destroyed until we die.

Functions of the root energies. The gross/subtle *life-holding energy* remains at the heart level [and its function is maintaining the life]. The traditional example given is that from one candle-light come two, three, and more candle lights. So the energy goes into the right and left channels, and then it begins to move. In the Tibetan traditional texts it says ‘by way of the brain and then into all other senses’. [The courser form of it causes the movement of the breath through the nose.³⁶] That is how it functions.

The *equalizing* [or *equally-abiding*] *energy* remains at the navel level and does the digestion work. It travels through the left nostril.

The *upward pushing energy* mostly remains at the throat level and makes the ear, nose and throat work. It travels mostly through the right nostril.

The *downward pushing energy* remains at the sex organ level and its work is to hold and let go of the eggs and semen and all that. Also the normal toilet functions are done by that one. [It travels from both nostrils]. The yogis, at the yoga level, do their activities through these energies. It has a sort of supernatural quality³⁷; here and there you can see that these yogis work through these energies at those levels.

The *pervasive energy* remains at almost every part of the body, particularly at the joint levels. All our movements are done with the pervasive air, and I believe arthritis comes in here. I don’t think arthritis hurts the energy but it affects the channels and the passages through which these energies travel and that’s why we have these difficulties. The pervasive energy never leaves the nostrils. At the time of death, it comes out through both nostrils.

This January Daisy-la passed away. We were married for many years, but then we were separated for ten years. When she passed away I was there. She had an extraordinary way of going. When she was dying I stayed there three weeks and I did the *Lama Chöpa* every

day there. The day she died I had already said the *Lama Chöpa*. Then the death process started and I was going to say the *Lama Chöpa* again. When I started, instead of saying the *Lama Chöpa*, what came out of my mouth was the *Prayer of Seeing the Dakinis' Lovely Face*. Those words came out [spontaneously]. Once I started, I kept on saying it continuously. At the end of that prayer, when you say 'Your Holiness Vajrayogini, may all sentient beings be taken to your pure land', at that moment, she breathed her last [breaths]. And then I said that verse three times. At the end of the third time, a bigger air came out. It didn't come out from the nostrils, but from the mouth, and even her dentures moved. So it could have been the end of the *kyab je*, the pervasive air, or this central, life-holding energy coming out at the last moment. Whatever it is, this pervasive air never travels out of the body except at the last moment [of life]. Thus, it could be the mind-holding or basis-of-the-mind energy, because that never mixes with any outer fresh air at all. It is something completely intact by itself.

New life. Let me talk about how this grows within us in a new life. When our mind comes in, it comes in with that subtle energy. And according to the Buddhist teachings, it enters through where the center of the heart level is going to be. And at that time, there's no other consciousness. No senses [so no sense consciousness] at all. The gross consciousness is also not there. It is only subtle energy and subtle consciousness.

From that subtle consciousness, within two months the gross consciousness begins to grow. And from that energy, after two months the first energy developed is at the sex organ level, where the *thur sel* is, the downwards traveling energy. Then, in three months time, the balancing or equalizing energy develops and after four months time the upward pushing energy. After five months time the pervasive energy develops. Then the senses develop. It looks to me that for the first five months there is nothing in there except those very, very subtle things. Then gradually, the body consciousness develops and so maybe by six months the senses are growing.³⁸ (I'm trying to do a little bit of juggling here with this very old text.) That's what I would like to say about the base.

Qualities of the mind. Now again I'd like to go back to the mind level a little bit. The mind itself is formless. The definition of mind is 'that which is clear and lucid [or knowing]'. We talked earlier about the meaning of 'clear'. It won't hurt to remember these two Tibetan words – *sel zhin rig pa*. Just remember the 'sel' and the 'rig'. 'Sel' is clear and 'rig' means lucid.³⁹ So, 'clear' here, what kind of clear are we talking about it? I'm talking about three points.

1. Point number one is that the mind itself is not created by any atoms or anything that's mixed or anything. It is completely *formless*. So it is not atoms, not neutrons or any of those. Nothing has been created accumulatively; it is clear like space. It is without obstacles and without blocks. Why is it called space-like? Because space has no obstacles or limits. It is called clear, because it is clear of all obstacles and all limitations, like space is.
2. Point number two: not only it is free of any form, shape, color, etc, but it also has the capacity to *perceive everything clearly*, without distortion. I said it has the capacity. That doesn't mean you see everything without distortions. But there is the capacity to see everything without any distortion at all. That means mind is pure. There is a pure part of it, and that's why it's called 'clear'. It's not clear, but capable of being clear. It's clear that way.
3. Point number three: in its nature there is no fault, like obsession, attachment, hatred, jealousy, etc. In its nature it is *faultless*, pure.

Perception. I'd like to point out one more thing. How are things perceived by mind? There's a little bit of philosophy here. There are two points.

1. Perceiving in accordance with its nature; in other words, matching with its nature.
2. Perceiving not matching with mind's nature.

We perceive both. Whenever we perceive truth, the perception matches with the mind because mind's nature is pure. We also see things not in accordance with reality, but distorted. The mind also has distorted views, perceives things in a distorted way. That is because there's something stuck.

It's like wearing colored glasses. Colored eyeglasses will give you a colored object, no matter what you perceive. If you are wearing

green glasses, they let you see more green than is actually there. If you wear red colored glasses you see more red than what it is there. Even some of the whites you may see as pink. Likewise here, the mind holds those distorted views and confusions. We all have that. That's because we have those wrong views, those dualistic views. That is not wrong views in the sense of the Buddhist doctrine. Buddhist doctrine will say if you don't accept reincarnation, that's a wrong view or if you see no karmic functioning, that's a wrong view. These are dogmas, not dharma. When I say dualistic, wrong view, I don't mean that type of wrong view. I mean the particular condition that creates a distorted view.

The mind is capable of perceiving both. When you perceive things right, it fits with the nature of the mind. When you perceive things wrong, it doesn't fit with the nature of the mind and then we get all these struggles. That's obvious, right?

Those distorted views, since they are not the nature of the mind, are called *temporary*. The true perceptions are pure, so they are called *natural*. We have both temporary and natural views through the mind. Distorted views – now I don't know whether that is dharma or dogma – appear as self, as inherent existence, as self-grasping, as ego-projection. Because they are not in the nature of the mind, wisdom can clear them. They are like clouds, and wisdom can be used like wind in order to push them away.

That's why when we put in efforts, our qualities can grow bigger and better, and while the qualities are getting bigger and better, the wrong things are going down a lot. That is where the spiritual practice can make a difference to me and my mind. And that is me, the one who not only has come from a previous life, but is also going into the future life.

If the wrong perceptions would match with the nature of the mind, we would be in big trouble. We couldn't get rid of them. When we are very addicted to negativities it also looks like they're our nature. That's why they are so hard to get rid of.

Gross and subtle. I would like to draw a little conclusion here. When we are talking about mind, there is the gross, temporary mind and the primordial, subtle mind. I would love to call this last one a permanent mind, but I shouldn't. If I do so it's going very much against the Buddhist view. It almost becomes anti-Buddhist, so it

will be a big problem. It is not permanent. So let's call them: *subtle, primordial mind*, and *gross, temporary mind*. The subtle, primordial mind is the source from which all our gross minds, including our senses, skandhas, and all of them come. The basis of all this is the subtle, primordial mind.

That subtle, primordial mind is a continuation of the clear, lucid level right from the beginningless beginning until today, and it will continue into a future life. That's why this subtle, primordial mind is the mind that will become *dharmakaya*, the Buddha's enlightened mind.

Gross minds are temporary. At death all the gross minds go. That is why the subtle mind at death is absolutely pure, lucid. However, we cannot experience that. At the time of our death, we pack up everything, the skandhas, all gross minds and everything else. And then finally, the only thing left is the continuation of that subtle consciousness.

These little words that I am adding up, 'continuation', and all of those, come in because of my background. For anyone who debates you have to defend what you say. If I don't say 'continuation' you could immediately say, 'You are saying that the subtle primordial mind is permanent'. Using the word 'continuation' blocks that objection.

Functioning of the gross mind. Why do I use the name gross temporary mind? All these gross minds, like the eye consciousness, the ear-nose, - tongue- and body consciousness, come out of three conditions. [In the case of seeing]:

1. The external condition, like [visual] forms – [the sense object].
2. The immediate condition, the gross mind that will acknowledge the object – [the inner mind]
3. The inner lucid 'form' [or energy] we call eye sense power. This is not the outer physical thing, but some inner lucid kind of little 'ball'.⁴⁰

When these three conditions meet together, the eye consciousness grows. It is like the scientists who also explain to us that in the process of seeing some light hits on the retina, bounces back, then there is a reflection, and so on. I think they're probably talking from that angle.

Very similar to this the outer physical thing is one condition. The inner mind is another condition. Actually, when you are looking from the point of view of impermanence, the inner mind is the mind immediately *before* seeing the object. Why is it the mind immediately before that? When you see a form outside, the seeing mind of that will leave an imprint on the next mind, so the next mind is becoming the same mind. The mind immediately before has acknowledged and recognized. By the time when you are looking at the object, that mind is gone, it has only left its imprint. Therefore the mind immediately before that is the direct or immediate condition. Thirdly you have that inner, lucid 'ball'.

The same process of perception goes for the ear, nose, tongue and other sense perceptions.

Okay, I guess I should really stop here. Since we now basically know how the mind functions, and since we now basically know that the mind doesn't really accept the wrong information, but knows it as information not matching with its own nature, that gives us an opportunity to practice.

IV What to Practice – Tame your Mind

We have been talking about how the mind functions. Some people may doubt, ‘What has that got to do with Buddhism?’ But when you think about it, it’s the real essence of Buddhism.

We said the mind is like a monkey. A monkey will catch one thing, let it go and get another one. (Another explanation likens the mind to a wild elephant.) The question now is: what to do with it? Buddha said that the best thing you can do is tame your mind. If you could tame your mind it will open the doorway to happiness. If you tame your mind you also have the best protection. When the mind is not tamed we are not in control of it, so our mind will not be occupied by mental faculties such as faith, love, compassion, and so on. Normally, most of the time it is occupied by the addictions we have. A tamed mind is the best. It will bring joy.

When Tsongkhapa praised Buddha, he praised him as the one who can overcome all the forces of ego without holding weapons in hand. He is one who all by himself overpowered all the egos. Tsongkhapa says, ‘Who else, besides you knows? So I praise you.’ Tsongkhapa praises Buddha because he had the method of overpowering all negative forces that were attacking him.⁴¹

I’m sure many of you have seen the movie called *Little Buddha*. There’s a scene in there where Buddha is trying to meditate in order to get fully enlightened. And when he is sitting there, totally committed, the ego forces are equally determined that he should not succeed. First they try to seduce him through all kinds of things. And when they completely fail to seduce him, they attack him with all kinds of weapons, ready to kill him. They try to make sure that he doesn’t succeed. That is called ‘ego force’.

The movie shows that when Buddha was meditating under a tree and they were throwing all kinds of weapons at him, all the weapons changed into flowers, right? How did that happen? That was the result of meditation of compassion for self and compassion for others, and love. Actually love and compassion are the most important protection. Fearful vajras and weapons and so on are not necessarily the best protection; love and compassion are.

When Tsongkhapa praised the Buddha as one who could overpower all the evil forces single-handedly without holding any weapon at all, he was referring to the mind of the Buddha. The perfection of love-compassion has become a part of his mind.

So, when we have to overcome all the things that we don't want, and when we have to complete everything we do want, then the only method shown by Buddha's experience and recommended by him is to tame the mind.

The great Mahasiddha Saraha, one of those early great mahasiddhas, says,

The seat of everything is only the mind. It is the mind
that leads you to the suffering of samsara or the joy of nirvana.
And it is the mind that gives you every result that you hope for.
It is like a jewel. I bow to this mind.⁴²

Each and every one of us has this jewel-like mind. We're not mindless robots. But our minds are not in that level. Dharmakirti says,

Buddha managed to make his mind able to look equally at everybody –
enemy or friend.

The Buddha makes no distinction between enemy and friend. Buddha looks equally at someone who chops his body with an axe, and someone who gives him a massage with the oils of sandalwood. He makes no distinction between one who is cutting and chopping your flesh out and one who is giving you a massage and petting you. So the mind that can go to that level.

Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacharyavata* says that we get a lot of fears. If we came across face-to-face with tigers, lions, elephants, cobras and all other enemies as well as with the ghosts of the lower-realm, with the hell-realm devils, with evils and so on we would be very afraid. We have constant fears. Sometimes we are afraid of ourselves also.

If you have to train your mind not to be afraid of tigers, not to be afraid of lions, elephants and so on and work on those fears one by one, there will be no time, no chance to really do that. Shantideva says that the key is our mind. If you can tame that mind, all of these enemies will be tamed. If you cannot tame the mind, none of them will be tamed at all.

Tigers, lions, elephants, bears,
Snakes and all forms of enemies,
The guardians of the hell worlds,
Evil spirits and cannibals,

Will all be bound
By binding my mind alone,
And will all be subdued
By subduing my mind alone.

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Ch. 5; vs.4-5

There are all kinds of people. Not everybody loves you. Though people are wonderful, some however will hate you. And many would like you not to succeed. That is our life. If you try to challenge each and every one of them, you'll never have peace. But, if you can tame your mind, you will be happy with everybody.

We have an African-American friend in Jewel Heart. She came to me one day and thanked me, and I said why? She said, 'Whenever I go to this department store, I used to have to fight with those store people all the time.' It was quite difficult, because they probably thought that she stole things from the store. So, she said, 'Since I'm in contact with these teachings, and since I'm trying to think better, they treat me so much better in this store. They no longer suspect me. They say 'how are you', they say 'goodbye', and 'thank you' to me; their whole attitude has really changed tremendously'.

That's exactly what Shantideva says. If you can tame this hatred-filled, angry, suspicious, jealousy-oriented mind, all your enemies automatically get tamed. And that is true. Shantideva has another example.

Where would I possibly find enough leather
With which to cover the surface of the earth?
But (wearing) leather just on the soles of my shoes
Is equivalent to covering the earth with it.

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Ch. 5; vs.13

Likewise, if you have to challenge every single object of anger, hatred, jealousy, it is never going to work. But if you tame your mind it will be like having a very good pair of leather shoes with which you can walk in every rough area. If you tame the mind, that's exactly how it works. When we know the mind we know how to function. The purpose of all these teachings is to make the mind better.

On the first day I introduced you to the base, path and result. The base we talk about are two noble truths or the four noble truths. The path is method and wisdom. Method entails compassion, love and all other related aspects of the path. We are getting to that now.

Our biggest problems is fear. To overcome fear it is most important to tame our own mind. Aryadeva says,

Whenever we talk about killing,
Yama, the Lord of Death, makes everybody scared.
But when you are talking about becoming enlightened,
taming your mind, the Lord of Death will be scared of you.

Four Hundred Verses [Skt. Catuhsataka], vs. 102

Even the efforts of hearing about this is going to tame Yama's mind; by hearing that alone, all evil forces will be afraid of you. Rather than you being afraid of them, they will be afraid of you.

The most important taming of the mind is overpowering what we traditionally call ignorance, but in fact is the combination of ego, fear, and confusion. That is the wisdom part. Earlier we talked about the method part; now the wisdom part comes in. That mind [that has overpowered ignorance] is the eye of wisdom. Even though it is only one eye, it sees everything. Dignaga says,

Even if you have one thousand eyes, but you don't have wisdom, you don't see what is right and what is wrong and therefore you don't have eyes.

There are some Hindu-Buddhist mythological deities who have a thousand eyes. Even though they have a thousand eyes, they can't see the reality of the world. Aryadeva says,

Shiva has three eyes but cannot see the truth,
Indra has a thousand eyes but is spiritually blind;
Aryadeva only has one eye,
yet sees the total reality of every existence.⁴³

So, the most important taming of the mind is trying to develop wisdom. One aspect is love-compassion; the other one is wisdom. They have to go both side-by-side: practicing love-compassion and practicing wisdom. That really is the path.

We have already talked about the continuation of mind. The mind continuation is considered almost permanent. According to the Buddha, there is no beginning and no ending to the mind and to the person, the being. When they talk about beings not having a beginning or an end it really means the mind. That has no beginning and no ending, therefore it is quite stable, we should say. It is always there. That doesn't mean it cannot develop or it cannot degenerate. But the continuation remains. No one can cut the continuation of the mind. According to Buddha, even by an atomic bomb or whatever else is thrown, the continuation of the mind cannot be cut. Such a mind is not only with human beings, it is with every being, including little insects and mosquitoes. Dharmakirti said,

The mental aspect of love is stable,
because it is in the nature of mind itself.

Gyeltsab Je, Tsongkhapa's disciple, says:

Love can constantly increase, compassion can constantly increase and fully develop, because it is in the nature of mind.

When you have learnt well, there is not a single thing which is not easy for you. Compassion can be very easy for some people. Take Aryadeva; he had no hesitation to give away one eye of his. For him it was easy.

Another point I would like to make is that the mind is the most powerful one; the most bullying one too. There's no power or bully like the mind. Both body and speech are completely controlled by the mind. It is the bully-guy within us. Every living being, every person, is completely controlled by his or her mind. There is not a single person who is not controlled by the mind. Shantideva says,

Although enemies such as hatred and craving
have neither arms nor legs,
and are neither courageous nor wise,
how have I been used like a slave by them?

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Ch. 4, vs. 28

As long as you don't tame your mind you will be controlled and influenced by your addictions. 'Taming the mind' here means taking away from the addictions we have. If you cannot tame that mind you will never experience peace, you will not have joy or happiness. Worse, sometimes you can't even sleep. Nagarjuna advises us,

Even if there's fire on your hair or on your dress,
forget about putting that fire out,
but try not to have reincarnation.
You can achieve nothing better than that.

A Letter to a Friend [Subhrlekha], vs. 104-105

In other words, Nagarjuna says you cannot afford to take the time to put out the fire on your hair. The best thing to do is to try is not to have reincarnation. That is the great achievement.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: Rimpoche, how does addiction inhabit my mind so that I take illusion as reality?

Rimpoche: That is an interesting and good question. You know, I used to like sweets. Tremendously. I'm sure many of you heard that as a kid I used to chew rock candies all the time and even fell asleep with a big piece of rock candy in the mouth and it would drip; I would have my face stuck against the blanket and in the morning they had to pull it off because it was stuck so badly. And it didn't stop there. I also liked the chewy, doughy type of sweets. I almost lived on those when I was in India. Then I came to America in 1987 to Cleveland, when I worked with Dr. Goldstein on Tibetan history. From his office I used to go to Little Italy and have a cup of coffee after work, and buy Amy-Joy's doughnuts and ate twelve of them, And it didn't stop there. I bought twelve more and took them to Chunden-la's house and shared them with the late Mrs. Yutok. She probably ate one or two and the rest of them I had. So I couldn't get away from these sweets. I had a tremendous addiction. The consequence of that was that I became diabetic. Even today I have extremely strong addiction to sugar. And I know for sure I cannot have sugar or even natural sweets, because it all becomes sugar. I also know all carbohydrates become sugar. But while I can stop eating sugar itself I still continuously enjoy carbohydrates, and of course, thank you, there's Nutrasweet. So I cannot get rid of the

craving for the sweets, even though I can make up my mind strongly and say I don't want it. I can cut it. So I do; I manage to cut that. I don't eat sweet-sweet, sugar-sweet or even natural sweet. And I was also addicted to cigarette smoking for years, as I think many of you have heard. I did have a late teen-age rebellion against the sort of monastery-rule culture that brought me up. During that time I tried everything that can corrupt you, wine, women and intoxicants, including cigarettes and alcohol. I was a heavy chain-smoker for a decade. But when I tried to cut it, I just cut it in one moment. And I never had a problem of withdrawal. When I had to cut it I said to myself 'Right this moment'. A friend told me to finish that pack and then to stop. I said 'no' and because of him saying that I said, 'If I stop I have to stop now, I am not even going to finish this little cigarette I have in my hand. I stop now.' And so, in one stop I managed to quit smoking after thirteen years of smoking heavily, almost thirty cigarettes a day. The trick I applied was this. Whenever I wanted to smoke I said to myself, 'Oh this is not good for me', and I worked hard for two hours not to smoke. I just didn't want to blow that with one little puff. And then the hours got longer. Two became four, four became six, eight, four, ten, twenty-four hours, two days, three days, a week. So then it's not worth all the efforts you put for this time just to blow it in one little puff. That's how I managed. I did the same thing with alcohol too, though I drink wine again these days. That is after a long, long gap of not drinking at all. So that's okay. But the addiction to sweets is not that easy to cut.

With that I come back to your question: I have the illusion that sweets are something wonderful to experience, tasty, really sweet. That is how it affects my mind. And that is the example I am giving you. Everybody will have the same problem if they are addicted to something. It is the same problem. That is the external material. Now, the internal mental thoughts are even much harder to control. So you can figure out how much it's going to influence our minds.

Audience: What is the energy that flows in the left and right channels? Can you talk about what happens when they knot the central channel? What's that 'squeeze' concept?

Rimpoche: Squeeze is squeeze, okay, and I think this morning I talked about this. The upgoing air and the balancing air are the two

which really flow through the right and the left channels and the squeezing they do is nothing more than hooking around the central channel. One goes, makes a circle round, right and left, both ways, and that's why the air cannot travel through the central channel; it is blocked from going through. The subtle energy, which becomes the basis of the primordial type of mind or subtle mind is at the heart-chakra level of the central channel. However, all other energies cannot travel through the central channel. So the idea is that the passage has to be shifted. The airs that are passing through the right and left channels are going to be shifted into the central channel. You know, even some of the massage people may tell you, 'I'm now going to open your central channel or your throat chakra' or something. But the idea of opening the central channel and all those chakras is much deeper than that.

Audience: Rimpoche, what is the 'I' that is traveling from life to life?

Rimpoche: The primordial mind.

Audience: In what context are you referring to space as permanent, because doesn't permanent imply static?

Rimpoche: It is static, yes. Nobody created space. Space is there. Space is always there, it's not created. This morning I needed an example of something that is permanent, and as the normal examples used in the dialectical teachings cannot be explained in twenty minutes, I used space. Space is permanent.

Audience: Rimpoche, can you use different parts of different religions without losing their value? How do you know if Buddhism is the right path and at what point do we develop faith for what we cannot grasp?

Rimpoche: This depends how you look at what you are. If you are a very orthodox person, then everything is not right except your own view. And if you are an open-minded liberal, everything should be okay; particularly those great religious traditions, whether eastern or western, should all be able to deliver the goods. I don't know whether Buddhism is right for you or not, but I do know that Buddhism is right for me. The number one reason is that I see Buddha as a reliable person. The reasons why I see Buddha as a reliable person is not because he is Buddha, but because his statements, al-

though made 2600 years ago, are absolutely relevant and true in our life every day today. And the more we deal with our life, the more it is true. So because his statements are reliable, I see him as reliable. Not because he is Buddha his word must be right. I don't go for that. I go the other way around: the words are reliable. They have been proven to myself a number of times, almost every day. And it happens to so many others. Because the words are reliable, the person is reliable. That's how I see it.

Audience: At what point do we develop faith in what we cannot grasp?

Rimpoche: When you use the reasons that convince you that something is right, and even though you may deny it, or you try to ignore it, it pops up in front of you – when that is happening you are getting close to developing faith.

For me, I do not entertain blind faith. I made a statement earlier, I'm confident that people in Jewel Heart will not get into problems with people such as Jim Jones. That is because we just don't buy something because some big shot says so. We only buy something if it makes sense, if it does not contradict with the real things happening. In other words, there is no reliable mind which can really contradict these points; therefore they are reliable. The faith which is developed then is what I call intelligent faith. It's not just blind faith. So there is no time limit, there is no state limit, there is no age limit, there is not any limit. It is the individual who is really convinced, with a solid reason. Not just by thinking, 'I feel it', or 'I'm sure it's right.' Such judgments are just valueless. If you just simply 'feel good' then you maybe fine today, but you'll be shaky tomorrow. There really have to be solid reasons. That's why I have been quoting a lot of reasons here, and I have also given you the ideas and some kind of logical system of how to look.

Audience: How does karma travel with the subtle mind from death to birth?

Rimpoche: Karma doesn't travel. The imprint of karma travels. It is like a person carrying an I.O.U. note. When you carry an I.O.U. note you have nothing packaged to carry with you. Just like that. We call it imprint. Karma itself doesn't travel. Karma disconnects from the traveling person. Actually, the moment you created any individual

karma, it goes to sleep until it awakens, with the terms and conditions. It just pops up there. It doesn't travel.

Audience: Shortly after my mother took her last breath, a cloud-like element rose out of the top of her head. What might that be?

Rimpoche: Could be the transit of consciousness. Could be. If you have a transit of the consciousness from the crown it's considered a good sign. If you believe in reincarnation, that's one of the signs of having a good reincarnation.

Audience: In the past you have described gross, subtle and very subtle minds. Are the types of air or *lung* you described today subtle or gross body or mind?

Rimpoche: The subtle, primordial type of mind is the mind which will become the very subtle level called clear light⁴⁴.

Audience: Do the primordial mind and the gross mind communicate with each other?

Rimpoche: I don't think they are two separate things. One comes out of the other. They may be separate identities. We normally don't encounter the primordial mind much. Therefore, I don't know how much they communicate.

Audience: Does the primordial mind influence the gross mind?

Rimpoche: Yes, since it comes from there.

Audience: If one encounters with the primordial mind, is this the gross mind encountering the primordial mind, or is this the primordial mind perceiving itself? If it is primordial mind recognizing itself, how is it that that gross consciousness retains a memory of that encounter?

Rimpoche: Gross consciousness does not retain memory of that encounter. We use the word 'encounter', but maybe that is the wrong word. What happens is something like water dissolving in water, or milk into milk. Not water in the milk or milk in the water.

V Mind's capacity

Out of the fifty-one mental faculties the most important ones to remember are probably the first ten. Apart from that, the eleven virtuous mental faculties are virtuous, the six root non-virtuous ones and the twenty secondary non-virtuous ones are non-virtuous and the four changeable ones are changeable.⁴⁵

No limits. On the whole, mind has no limits for whatsoever. You can utilize the capacity of the mind for any purposes you want to. You can utilize it to build a know-how. Of course, that knowledge can be used to build more efficient nuclear weapons as well; no doubt about that. As a matter of fact, scientists and leaders are meeting today in order to discuss how to make more efficient nukes. I'm sure they can, because mind has no limits for whatsoever. That's why research is something absolutely important. The question is only whether we use it for good purposes or for bad purposes. Actually, we cannot blame the scientists. They are really good guys for the most part. They do worry about the results coming out of their research. As far as I remember, Einstein, when he discovered the nuclear power, wrote an open letter, warning about the possible consequences if they were used in a destructive way. So scientists do have our welfare at heart. It is other people that decide to use it for their own different purposes. If nuclear power would have been used for a peaceful development only, how wonderful it could be today! But we made bombs. That shows that mind has no limitations, neither materially nor spiritually. You see that especially

in a country like the United States, where so many minds are put together. It works in both ways, positive and negative.

One great thing in the West is that everything is properly recorded. Also people do not hesitate to change something if it is proved to be wrong. In the East there is also a tremendous amount of information, but it is not properly recorded. In the case of Tibetan Buddhism it was a little better. This came to be a living tradition. A lot of other information only made it into the Smithsonian Institute, where you can read and learn a little bit about it. But it is not well recorded. Also, if we have to change something in Buddhism we will hesitate tremendously. Hesitation is fine, but it doesn't have to be done so rigidly. You don't have to say, 'Only over my dead body!' That may be an attitude of faith, but it would be blind faith.

Valid knowing. As a kid I was taught two ways to make sure something is right. One method is by quoting reliable sources. The other way is through logical proof. If these two contradict each other, the one you have to give up is the scriptural sources. You don't give up logical reason. The one exception is the actual works of Buddha. And in the case of Drepung monastery, we will not give up the quotations by Panchen Sonam Drakpa. He is the author of the Drepung monastery viewpoint. We rely on his writings and we will not give that up, even if it goes against the works of Tsongkhapa. We have excuses, the main one being that it is a matter of interpretation. Apart from that, the logical proof is the most important. Whenever a view or a statement has been proved to be wrong logically, you have to accept that.

For example, in science for a long time it was believed that the atom was the smallest particle. Buddhists on the other hand do hold the view that no matter how small a particle may be it can still be divided. This is because [there is always this side and that side of it. We say]: East never touches west. If we had accepted that the atom was really an undividable smallest particle, that Buddhist view would have been in trouble. The Dalai Lama himself has said that if reincarnation were proved to be a wrong concept he would be willing to accept that. He would also accept if it were proved, that good actions have bad consequences and bad actions have good consequences. That should be our attitude. Proof is more important than belief. That does not mean that material things are more important than spiritual things.

The purpose of knowing the mind. The purpose of knowing the mind is to be able to tame it. Taming the mind is the only key we have to make ourselves happy and joyful. This is our desire, no matter whoever says what. We will all say that we are here for the benefit of all beings, but if you really asked everybody directly, 'You are sure it is not for yourself?', nobody who is honest, would be able to say no. The majority of people will admit it is for themselves. The projection and definition of joy however differs from one person to another.

Buddha introduced the goal of spiritual practice. In order to achieve that goal, you have to work with your mind. You have to tame your mind, otherwise it will behave like the monkey in the temple. If the monkey is tamed it can do all the nice monkey dances for you. Those of you who have been to India will know it. At every street corner there will always be somebody with a monkey, and the monkey will do everything the guy says. It is similar with elephants. A tamed elephant is one of the best means of transportation and the best transportation before trucks and roads were developed. You can see how very useful elephants are when they are tamed and how destructive they can be if not tamed.

To get the true joy of the mind, we need to attain the goal of liberation. The best method of liberation is the mahayana. The nirvana of the theravadins⁴⁶ is a true nirvana, it is free of pain, but it is mainly concerned with the individual only. It is willing to walk away from your friends, spouse and children and parents. There is sympathy, there is compassion, but there is no great compassion. Therefore the mahayana is considered most important.

In the theravada system you can attain the peace of nirvana. You can remain in it for eons. It is almost like going to sleep. You may like that, but if you're sitting there for very long time it is a big problem. Eventually, the buddhas and bodhisattvas will urge you to work for the benefit of others.

Love-compassion. When you have developed the bodhimind your love and compassion will be so powerful that you will be willing to do anything. Let me quote from the *Lama Chöpa*, vs. 68,

Inspire me to perfect transcendent joyous efforts,
by striving with tireless compassion for supreme enlightenment,
even if I must remain for many eons
in the deepest hellfire is for the sake of each being.

That much self-esteem is built by developing the bodhimind. It needs a tremendous amount of self-esteem to be able to say, ‘I am capable, I am willing, I can do it; for the benefit of one single being I am prepared to stay in the deepest hells for eons if necessary.’ If we want to follow the path of the bodhisattva we need that much self-esteem. Otherwise we are no different from the people that just follow their own self-interest. Chandrakirti has said,

The bodhisattvas have such a strong self-esteem that even if they have to cut their own flesh off they are happy to do so.

A bodhisattva is always willing to give away something. He is not only willing, but very happy to do it. You know the story of Aryadeva⁴⁷. Even if a bodhisattva just hears a request to give it will make him very happy. This joy far exceeds the joy of nirvana. That also shows you the capacity of the mind. This is not brainwashing, it is the reality. Shantideva says,

Body, mind and all the virtues of three times
I will be happy to give
without any hesitation
in order to help all living beings.

Bodhisattvacharyavatara, Ch. 3, vs. 11

The mind is able to develop to that level. It is not only knowledge, that can be developed but each and every point of mental capacity. Therefore, we can be free from all our negativity and suffering. But can we understand our mind just by looking at it? We can talk about it and get a good idea. But can we understand our mind that way? Can we really see it? Let me quote Milarepa. It is from one of his famous songs in which he was talking to a shepherd.

Come and listen to me, shepherd.
By merely hearing about its qualities
one doesn’t experience the taste of rock sugar.
[Though mind may understand what sweetness is],
it is only the tongue that can’t experience and know the taste.

Mind is like that.
[One cannot see in full the nature of the mind,
though through the pointing-out instruction
one may have a glimpse of it.
If one relies not on this one glimpse,
but continues searching for the nature of mind

one will see it fully in the end.

Dear shepherd, in this way you should observe your mind.^{48]}

We talked about wisdom, we talked about emptiness. We say that this is the most profound and difficult subject. We can talk about it and we can come to a level of understanding it by explaining the interdependent system, by explaining dependent relationships, by explaining how we exist dependently, but if you think that emptiness is like zero, just empty, then you are very wrong. This is hard to understand. But it is easier to understand than the deep mind. Aryadeva [Tib. *Pakpa-lha*] said about emptiness,

If you are not fortunate you will not even think about it.

You will not even raise a doubt about this dharma.

Developing just a doubt

will tear samsara to pieces.

Four Hundred Verses [Skt. *Catuhśataka*], vs. 180.

Emptiness is difficult to understand. That's why it is very important to check and find out what it exactly is. There is another reason why checking is important. Buddha said,

When we don't check our mind, it is very wild. We will fall under the influence of the addictions. When we follow the addictions we create a lot of negativity. It is like an underground fire covered up with something so that it looks like the ground. A child that is not paying attention can fall into it.

Actually that goes for everybody, not just for children. Buddha has a habit of calling ordinary people like us children.

We have to draw a conclusion here. Mind has no limits. It is completely at our disposal and allows us to do whatever we want to do. The suggestion from Buddha, based on his experience, is to tame our mind. Otherwise we will have to experience a lot of negative consequences. These don't just pop out like the milk of a tree when you cut into its branches. Rather, it is like an underground fire that is covered up. There is a danger of falling into it and burn.

Causes of and continuation of mind. Now the question comes: What causes the mind? Is it something that just pops up from nowhere? Even during Buddha's lifetime there were a number of different views about that. The great Indian pandit Chandrahi said,

Mind is based on the working of the four elements:
earth, water, fire and air.

When these four are not working, you die.

Your person gets completely dismantled.

When the candlelight is blown out there are no light rays any more.

Therefore a mind also stops completely. It is not going anywhere.

Your body stops, because the elements stopped functioning.

Therefore your mind also stops.

Therefore, there is no reincarnation.

There is no need for purification or accumulation of merit.

There is nothing called enlightenment.

There is nothing called spiritual path.

There is nothing called dharma.

There is nothing called sangha.

Therefore, while you're alive, enjoy yourself and have fun.

Have a lot of sex,

because once your body is destroyed it will not come back.

Enjoy whatever you can while you can.

That is his viewpoint. How close are we to that viewpoint?! Honestly, we are not that far away from it. This viewpoint also has a different explanation for the continuation.

If there is continuation, it is completely different from what it was previously, like a horse is totally different from a cow.

How can an elephant become a horse and a horse become an elephant? They are two completely different beings.

In the Buddhist tradition that I follow this is considered the worst possible view. That is what I was taught right from childhood. When I look at it now it seems that it is not that far from what is acceptable for us today. There is one more statement from this viewpoint,

Enjoy this life, because it only lasts as long as the body.

After that, there is no past and future.

You only pray and destroy evil because it helps to enjoy this life.

That points to a problem in perception. As we know, there is direct knowledge and indirect knowledge. It is certainly very difficult to have direct knowledge of the transition from one life to another. Even indirect knowledge is almost impossible. It is one of the most subtle subjects, and therefore traditionally we rely on Buddha's testimony. A traditional example on this is the peacock's feathers. There

are so many different colors in the feathers of the peacocks that only a buddha can know the individual causes for each different color.

Buddha went through a lot of tests, because he claimed to be a buddha. He had to prove what he was. (That's why I claim to be nobody, so I don't have to prove anything.) In one of those tests all the people from a variety of villages collected grains from their fields and made them into bundles. All the bundles looked the same. The owners made a mark on their bundle to be able to identify it. There were some 500,000 equally looking bundles. Buddha picked up each of those bundles and gave it directly to the owner.

In another test they cut woods into equal length pieces so they were not distinguishable from each other and secret marks were made on them. They asked Buddha to say which was the head and which was the tail. He told to them to throw all the pieces of wood in the river and which ever side was going down the river first was the head.

Then, they burned a huge number of trees in a certain area and asked Buddha to point out from the ashes each tree that had been burnt. Buddha managed to do that, but nobody could tell anyway which one was right and which one wrong!

After Buddha passed all those tests, the people asked him what happens when you die. There is an interesting dialogue about that between Buddha and one of kings of that era.

Life Transfer. Still we still haven't figured out where the mind has come from, whether it has causes or not. One sutra says that if there are results without causes, then both, causes and results are not real. But we do know for sure that causes and results are reality. We experience this ourselves. Without causes and results operating we either should have everything all the time or we should not have anything at all. In that case there should be no need of any condition or cause to produce any result. We know that that is not the case. We don't have things all the time, because we have not created the causes for it. For example, we don't wear all of our shirts all the time because we have not put them on. We do not own all the shirts in the world, because we have not bought them. Everything that is created depends on causes. Therefore mind also is not without causes. Otherwise, it should always remain the same, without any change. It should be static and permanent. But it is not. How do you get butter? It depends on having milk, an instrument to churn with

and the efforts of people to do this job. Likewise, our life depends on the person, the body [and] the continuation of mind.

In a sutra called the *Sutra of Life Transfer* there is a conversation between Buddha and a king. The king asks Buddha about how a transfer from one life to another happens. Buddha answers that neither Indra nor Brahma or any powerful being has created life. Life is created by every individual themselves through their own karma and delusions. Buddha says,

Great King, when you transfer from this life to the next
there is nothing permanent to be transferred,
nor are you transferring something that has completely stopped
functioning.
It is the right condition, ripened by karma and delusions that transfers.

I can give you eight examples [of transfer]:

1. The teacher gives information through his words and the disciple picks it up. What has been transferred in this situation is the teaching.
2. Transmitting light from one candle to another.
3. A reflection in a mirror.
4. Artistic effects from a drawing.
5. Creating a fire through focusing sun rays in a magnifying glass
6. Crops grown from seeds.
7. The tart taste of *chang* [Tibetan beer]. You only have to mention that taste to somebody who has experienced it before and their mouth will begin to water.
8. An echo.

There are a lot of explanations for each of those eight. I don't have time to go into them right now. These eight examples show you that it is not a whole intact life that goes from this life to the next. It is a very subtle continuation that goes.

1. The example of transmitting the teaching from one person to another may not apply to us, because our understanding of any teaching is different from Buddha's. He talked in terms of a living teaching. But even today we say that the Tibetan Buddhist teaching is alive. It does not just exist in the Smithsonian Institute as an exhibit. If it ends up there it will be the failure of this generation. If you think along those lines the idea of transmission makes sense.

The knowledge which the previous person had, has been transmitted intact to the next person.

2. Think about the example of the candlelight in terms of the Olympic torch. The continuation of the Olympic fire has been transmitted from one torch to another and has been kept alive since the first Olympic games. That gives you the idea of what continues. The old fire that was burning in the original venue is not the same fire that burns in this year's venue. But the continuation of that fire has been carried along by people from one place to another over a long period of time.

3. In the case of the reflection in the mirror there is also something happening between the actual object and what is reflected in the mirror. There is a continuation between my face and its reflection in the mirror. If there wasn't a connection, we should have seen the reflection in the mirror all the time. It would be like a drawing of a person rather than a reflection.

5. In the example of the magnifying glass it is the sun rays that are collected by the magnifying glass which causes a fire. The fire does not come out of the magnifying glass, but the magnifying glass provides the condition for the sun rays to effect the dry grass so it will burn. This effect is the continuation of the sun rays.

6. The example of seeds producing crops is obvious. We don't have to talk about it.

7. People who enjoy alcohol will know how the example of mentioning the taste of alcohol works, in that it makes the mouth water. When someone mentions beer or wine your tongue already moves and saliva builds up.

8. In the example with the echo we just create a sound and we hear the same sound coming back. The echo is the continuation of the sound that has been originally produced.

These eight examples should give you two ideas.

a) There is continuation.

b) It is not a solid entity that continues. If something completely separate continues, then whatever I do in this life has no value and no effect. In that case I might as well enjoy whatever I can now and there are no consequences.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Before I go to the questions, I would like to say one thing. Yesterday I brushed off some questions, saying that I had answered these questions already during the teachings several times before. I put them aside a little abruptly. That is my fault and I apologize. Whoever asked these questions worked hard and put sincere efforts in. It is not appropriate for me to brush them aside. I should have said politely, 'Please refer back to our conversation this morning', rather than saying, 'I already said that three times this morning'. So I would like to apologize if I have offended anybody and will try not to do that today. So let's hear some questions.

Audience: Is compassion created by mind or does it always exist in the nature of mind?

Rimpoche: Interesting question. We do say that the true nature of mind is wonderful, kind and compassionate. But to me, honestly speaking, as a human being, as a living being, we do have some compassion. Even absolutely crazy villains are moved to some degree when they see people getting tortured; this indicates that there is something. But again, compassion is something you learn and develop. There must be some kind of seed. To make it good and go beyond and become perfect you have to put in work and develop it.

Audience: Can you give some concrete examples how analytical meditation can tame the mind?

Rimpoche: Can somebody help me here?

Audience: Yes. I can recall various times in my life when my actions did not accord with what I had studied. Remembering that and holding it up against the mirror of the teachings I realized that certain actions coming from anger should be abandoned. So now, when I am getting into similar actions that tend to provoke more anger and violence, I see that and can influence my actions positively.

Rimpoche: You talked from your personal experience. That is very good. So, what does the analyzing do? By analyzing your actions you understand better the faults of negative actions and the advantages of positive actions. When you understand that better, it will still not become part of your life until you concentratedly meditate

on it. Analyzing will give you an irrefutable understanding. Then you focus and meditate on it and it will become part of your life, solid and wonderful. That is how it works. Tsongkhapa therefore emphasized both, analytical and concentrated meditation. If there is no analytical meditation, simply concentrating and sitting can certainly give you harmony, relaxation and some joy, no doubt, but it will not be able to deliver the goods of achieving liberation, forget about full enlightenment. Even simple liberation is very difficult without analysis; there is no sharpness, no true understanding. You just sit there and wait till the cows come home. That may not be that great. That's how you can see and understand the benefit of analytical thinking.

If you build up a visual image of Buddha in your mind, that is also partly analyzing. If you just look at a picture, you are training your eyes, not your mind. To train your mind you have to see it imaginatively. Doing that you will not see it very well at first. You will just see a lump; that's it. Then you zoom in and look at the details. You look at the nose, at the mouth and then zoom back and see the eyes, nose and mouth together; that gives you a better picture. That zooming in and finding the individual features is analytical meditation. Pulling back and focusing on the whole thing is concentrated meditation. Detailed work is one thing and keeping it is another thing. Further, finding out what is right and what is wrong, doing the best you can with the intellectual capacity you have, is also analytical meditation. Without that you will never find the facts.

Audience: Yesterday you said that you can get a glimpse of the primordial mind and be changed by that. You may not have a memory of that. How can you know that you have changed?

Rimpoche: I think I said yesterday that [encountering the primordial mind] is like water [dissolving] into water. You are not just looking at. Whether you call that a glimpse or not, I don't know. Whether you are changed by that, I am not sure. Of course, if you directly see the primordial mind and then its emptiness, you are certainly changed. When I was talking about encountering the primordial mind two things went through my mind. One is the traditional teachings and their explanations and then secondly the doubts whether encountering the primordial mind alone is already emptiness or not. Certain scholars and teachers say it is and others say it is

not. All these related matters were going on in my head. Simultaneously I had that picture in my head of the scene in this children's movie *The Never-Ending Story*. This kid was going through some kind of doorway. Bullets came and the kid still got through. A crazy scientist with tipped ears on the other side of the mountain was walking up and down and getting worried whether that kid was going to get killed there, but the kid counted and moved through without the bullets hitting him. The scientist's wife told him, 'The kid got through'. But the scientist said, 'He got through this place, but he could get killed if he sees his own reflection in the mirror.' The kid did come across this mirror and normally when somebody looked in it and saw their reflection they would bounce back, but this kid jumped into the mirror and then got pulled into it. That image was in my head at the same time as the other thoughts, all together. If the experience is really emptiness, sure, you will change. But if it is not emptiness, I don't know if you change or not.

Audience: Earlier this week you talked about how prayer can help another person. Can you explain that a little more in detail?

Rimpoche: There are two ways. 1) By praying you accumulate positive merit. 'By the power of prayer, by the power of the person who prays, by the power of the object to whom you are praying and by the power of truth, may that karma be connected and work itself out right that moment', [you pray]. 2) Sometimes there is divine intervention; you can't rule that out. For whatever we do, we are responsible. Without a cause that we create ourselves we cannot have a result. But, often we have a lot of causes yet the positive results are not materializing. This is a lack of fortune, a lack of good luck. In these cases, divine intervention can help to connect to that positive karma; it can happen. That is how prayer works.

Audience: Is the subtle mind the same as self-grasping mind?

Rimpoche: Oh no! Certainly not. There is a big difference. The self-grasping mind is a very gross mind, ego-oriented, the 'me, me, me' mind. The subtle mind doesn't have that.

Audience: How do you balance a successful career with a successful dharma practice?

Rimpoche: About ten years ago gave I a general dharma talk in Hong Kong. A gentleman at the back, who looked like a very

wealthy Chinese, raised a question, 'What do I do with my Rolls Royces?' He said it in the plural. My answer was, 'As long as you drive the Rolls Royces, you are absolute fine. But if your Rolls Royces drive you, you are in trouble.' I still think that is how we maintain the balance. I don't want to brush your question aside. A successful career is important, nor is it against dharma practice. You are also not taking anything away from somebody else. You earned it, you should have it. You have to enjoy life and you have to make best use of it. There is a variety of ways how to best use your life. Most importantly, you should not be under the control of your success. You should use your success, be happy, enjoy it, but let not the success drive you crazy. The teachings contained in my *Odyssey to Freedom* transcript should help you to maintain the balance.

Audience: What visualizations can I do within my Tara practice to benefit my lama?

Rimpoche: To benefit your own masters there a number of things. When you are visualizing yourself in the form of Tara and you do a recitation of mantras you can visualize your lama in the center of the circle above the letter TAM marked by HUM or the HUM marked by TAM. Let light and liquid come into that in the usual way that you also do the practice for yourself.

If you are not visualizing yourself in the form of a yidam⁴⁹ you can visualize your master in the front of a front-generated Tara and have light and liquid pour down to do purification, rejuvenation and protection and so forth. This is not only applicable to masters. You can do the same thing for your own spouses and children, parents and specifically for any particular people you think of.

Since Tara is generally kriya tantra⁵⁰, there are two bases, the self and the front-base. Even if you are yourself in the form of Tara, you can still generate Tara in front of you and the activities performed through that Tara will be very useful. If you want more details please read the Tara transcripts.⁵¹

Audience: What does it mean if the teacher has presented an idea multiple times, but even some of the smart students don't seem to get it?

Rimpoche: Sakya Pandita said,

Even if one is to die the next morning, today one must study.

Though one may not become a sage in this life
Knowledge is safely deposited for future lives,
Just as riches safely deposited can later be reclaimed.

Treasury of Good Advice, vs. 7

A knowledge which becomes a quality, that is what you really have to pick up, even if you are dying tomorrow morning. Even if you don't become very smart during this life time, then in the future life [you can]. It is like taking your wealth to someone and asking the person to take care of it, so that later you can come and pick it up.

Audience: Last night you said that karma doesn't travel with the subtle mind. You said it just pops up. How does that happen?

Rimpoche: Well, good question. I guess we have to ask the quantum physicists. It appears and disappears. That's about it. The moment karma is created, it sort of goes to sleep. It goes to a seed level where just its capacity is still there. It is not active, not vivid. It is almost not present. It is like an IOU note. When the time comes to pay, let's say after seven years, then it will pop up and you have to pay. Karma behaves like that. In between there is nothing, but when the seven years are over it will show up.

Audience: In mahayana, how does one obtain enlightenment without the three kaya practice?

Rimpoche: Vasubhandu's *Abidharmakshosha* says that according to sutrayana, enlightenment can only take place in the form realm. (That is one of the three realms: desire, form- and formless realm.) It says,

In the desire and formless realms, no buddhas obtain enlightenment.

The form realm has four main levels [consisting of] 17 sub-stages. The 17th is called *Ogmin* in Tibetan or *Akanishita* in Sanskrit. Here you are supposed to obtain enlightenment through the nine stages of the path of meditation. The last one is called vajra-like meditative stage. From there you transfer to the path of no more learning and then you come back to wherever you are, whether it is formless, form or desire realm and you function there. That is the sutrayana way of obtaining enlightenment.

In short, we often talk about the five paths: the paths of accumulation, action, seeing, meditation and no more learning. The path of accumulation itself is divided into small, medium and big. The path

of action is divided into four: heat, peak, patience and best of dharmas. The path of seeing is divided into three: preliminary, actual and aftermath. The path of meditation is divided into nine: small, medium and big and each of those is further divided into small, medium and big. At the end comes the vajra-like meditative stage and then you transfer to the path of no more learning. There is no ceremony, if you are looking for that. Nobody will beat the gong; there is no party.⁵²

This was the last question and I hope we will obtain that stage.

VI Basis for Liberation

Well, good morning, everybody. It is the sixth morning, so we're almost getting to the closing point. We spent a lot of time talking about the mind, about perception, about how the mind perceives and if that's reality, whether it tallies with the mind's reality [or nature] and how the mind accepts it, and if it doesn't tally with the reality [or nature] of the mind itself, how it has struggles.

The reasons why we are talking about the mind is that we can see how effective it potentially is and how it works. The purpose of knowing the nature of the mind is going towards taming and developing the mind. The mind will develop to the ultimate level of love and compassion. Not only that, it will develop through all the stages of either sutra or tantra. Ultimately, the purpose is to deliver ultimate enlightenment into your own hand.

I didn't have enough time to go over how the mind develops, where it comes from; whether it is coming from the same material, the same source, or a different one. The question that arises is, 'Can anything other than mind be the direct cause of mind?' I have to conclude. According to Dharmakirti, non-consciousness cannot be a cause of consciousness. There are a zillion different reasons why. But I did not have time to go over them with you. In other words, matter cannot be the cause of consciousness, consciousness cannot become matter.

I wanted to touch on whether [consciousness] is coming from similar causes or different causes. I will just give you the conclusion part. When you do that, sometimes it does a disservice. That's why I hesitated. When you go into great detail, it is a disservice to some people. For people who are using their intellectual capacity, it is

great. But for people who don't make much use of intellect, who are living their lives in an organized box, with statutes and forms, for them it will be a little too much. Here are two hundred people so we have two hundred different minds. Each one has its own characteristics. For certain people it's good, for certain people it's not. But every one of you, as far as I'm concerned, has gained something, whether you like it or not. Whether you feel it is worth it or not worth it, whether you feel you have wasted your time, or you feel it has been worthwhile, what really has happened, is that it has contributed tremendously to your spiritual journey. There will be a time when you will wake up and say, 'Oh yeah, I heard that, that's probably what it is.' For some people, it may be hitting directly right now.

Artificial intelligence. I concluded that matter does not become mind, mind does not become matter. But then, I must tell you one thing. You may say, 'Will there be artificial intelligence?' Yes. There will be artificial intelligence. Don't think there won't be because it is all matter. There will be artificial intelligence, for sure. Why? Because a consciousness can enter into matter or materials, once they've been conditioned in the right way. We may acknowledge that as artificial intelligence, but in reality it is a continuation of a consciousness in the right condition, wherever that may be – a computer, or whatever shape or form it may take. It may be like a living robot. We can already see that vacuum cleaner called *room-bot*. I saw the advertisement. You have a vacuum cleaner that you can charge, and it will run by itself and clean up anything. It won't fall from the steps, because it has some kind of sensor. But wherever there's dust within that area, it will go and clean it up. You don't have to push a button or do anything.

Now you may object, because I had Dharmakirti saying that non-consciousness cannot cause consciousness. There's one question in which there is a little bit of [room for] doubt: consciousness occupying the place, because the conditions are right. When the conditions are right, the result is bound to take place.

Towards Liberation. Some people say, 'If you know your mind, you are liberated.' It may be true. But knowing how the mind functions doesn't mean that we do know the mind. Some people say that if you just sit and meditate, look and wait, then green deities will come, blue and white deities will appear, and then you will see the

reality of your mind. This is hocus-pocus as far as I'm concerned. It never happens. *Whatever happens is bound to be conditional.* The mind has to be conditioned, and it has to be greatly developed. Even His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentioned something like that in his upcoming book, *The Art of Happiness at Work*. He says quite clearly that it never happens by itself. I want to tell you that, because a lot of people say, 'Hey, you just sit there and it will happen.' But then, you know, it may not happen. Buddha says, since we know this, we have to figure out what do about it, how to handle it.

Buddha says there is suffering. We know there is. We all know. Buddha says there is liberation. We don't know that. But when he says there is suffering, when he says, 'I discovered it' that happens to be true. So wouldn't it be equally true when he says that there is liberation? It should be true, but we cannot yet accept that it is absolutely true. So why not give it the benefit of doubt? Therefore, let us presume there is liberation.

What is liberation? What is freedom? Liberation here means nirvana, a word that is familiar to many people. What is nirvana? Nirvana or liberation, is nothing other than [liberation from] our physical, mental continuation of contaminated form. We have a physical form, an identity. I call this *identity*. Whether it is the identity of Miss Universe, or Prince Charming; whatever it is, it is the continuation of a contaminated form. Why is it contaminated? Because it is created by karma and delusion. When it is contaminated karma and delusion, we have no control. We can't control the existence of our body. We don't control what we look like. We can to a certain extent; we can do certain things with the help of spiritual, scientific and other means, but we don't really control it. It is controlled by our karma, and delusions. We also got our identity not by choice, but without choice, uncontrolled. Some people are angry with their parents, maybe for that reason. Who knows.

Such a continuation of the form is the real first noble truth: the truth of suffering. What is really the truth of suffering? That continuation. The continuation of identity. Whether it is a form, or even if is formless, the *continuation of contaminated identity* is the first noble truth. You can totally get rid of that. You can get free of that. Actually freedom here means exhaustion; you have completely finished it, you have managed to get rid of whatever is there. So, if it is a store,

it's emptied. It is exhaustion. The word I have to use here is *dbatu*. *Dhatu* means, 'a moment of that, within that situation'.⁵³ It gives you some kind of joy in that, too. It also gives you more than that. If you are addicted to joints, and if you don't get one for a couple of days, and then you do get one, you have that 'Ahhhh.' You get that kick. *Dhatu* gives you some kind of pleasurable state. Something like that you have to understand. That, actually, is nirvana.

The first noble truth is the direct opposite of nirvana. Nirvana is liberation. So, we are here in suffering, and how do we get over there, to liberation? In order to receive such a liberation, first you have to have an interest in it. If you don't have any interest, why should you bother? Then everything is a waste of time. The interest will be there when you know, 'This here is not good enough, this is not right.' Then you develop the desire to get rid of that suffering. That is actually the interest in liberation.

Continuation. Now the question rises, 'Where does the continuation come from?' We have given you the eight examples earlier⁵⁴, so you have to bring them together. What is the identity of the suffering we have? Where does it come from? Is it given by someone? To a certain extent, it is the gift of one's parents.

A lot of things that Buddha said are quite interesting. Not only interesting, but they turn out to be true. The continuation of the body is really true. Where do the genes come from? And who knows where it all begins? It is interesting. To a certain extent, yes, it is the gift of one's parents. Our parents gave us the base for our self to live in. Remember, I always refer to the physical body as a rented apartment. They gave us a double shelter. Not only a shelter for our mind, but also for our body, too. They gave us a home for the mind to live in. Otherwise, it was not made by anyone else. If that were the case then unconnected causes could give different results, which doesn't work.

Interest in Liberation. The person is simply a collection of different materials. It is caused by contaminated karma, delusions, and the continuation. Contaminated karma and delusions provide the base, and the continuation of the mind occupies it. To see this is the spiritual practitioners' job. This *is* spiritual practice. To be honest, to be straightforward, even in order to have an interest in freedom and

liberation, you've got to see the suffering. You've got to see the continuation of suffering. When you dislike suffering and pains and problems, then you want to remove it. Ask, 'Can I get rid of it?' You will find that you cannot fight the symptoms, but you can fight the causes, just as you can't fight the bursting of a dam, but you can lessen the flow of the water, by reducing the water pressure.

When you are looking at whether or not you can get rid of this suffering, you find that it depends on its causes: *karma and delusions*. Delusions or negative thoughts or actions make us do the wrong thing and that's where the sufferings are coming from. The delusions are coming from nowhere else than from our confusion/ignorance, combined with fear. I like to call that ego. Can you kill the ego? Yes, you can. Why? Because you're not killing yourself; you're just killing your ego. If we don't kill our ego, our ego will overpower us, so that we cannot grow at all.

I lost a lot of trees this year in my backyard. There were two reasons. The first one was the Dutch Elm disease, which took a couple of trees. Secondly, there were some good trees, but the old trees were choking them, not letting them grow. Now we've cut some of the old trees out and hopefully some oak trees will grow now. Exactly in that manner, we cannot develop, we cannot grow because all these bushes are choking us. These bushes are the ego. Unless you cut them, you are going to die and rot. The choice is our own: whether we are going to make ourselves grow, or let ourselves get strangled by other powerful identities that we carry within ourselves.

We can get rid of ego, because ego is not within the reality of our mind. It has come up temporarily like a cloud in the sky. It is not the sky itself; it is not our nature. It is temporary; therefore it is removable. When it is removed, we receive the peaceful, joyful nirvana. Very simple.

The Hinayana message. Now, the question is, how do we challenge and cut that ego and even get rid of it? What does ego perceive? What does ego want? And what do we want?

Actually, the wisdom, which is really directed against ego perception, is so powerful because it is true. We all know that truth prevails. Someone who is doing a lot of funny things may have success for a little time, but ultimately, truth prevails. The ego will have a little opportunity to fool around and do a couple of dances on the backs of

ourselves. However, ultimately truth will prevail, because that is the nature of our mind. (I'm not talking about emptiness, if you're looking for that.)

When we see this with our mind, when we are functioning well, when we are so lucky as to have perfect morality and the other method aspects, and we also do have wisdom – that together is capable of delivering *tharpa*⁵⁵, liberation in Buddha's message.

The Mahayana message. Now, we come to the mahayana message. Okay, it is fine that you can enjoy my life, that you have his dhatu. You can stay there, in nirvana. You can sleep in there for eons. It is fun, but before long, you will be bored. Not only will you be bored, you will become – I don't want to say 'a vegetable'; it is too extreme – but you're completely drunk with that joy for a long time. Not only that, you simply walk away from your loved ones, your near and dear ones and from those who put their hopes on you and rely on you. You simply walk away from them. Is this something good? Besides that, you're not going to be there forever. A relatively short holiday will be acceptable, but permanently living there is a cause of disgust to the enlightened ones.

What's important is love, care, concern for others. Yes, we have love, care and concern for ourselves, and we have achieved what we wanted to achieve for ourselves. But now, with love-compassion-bodhimind, it will become a very rich method rather than simply morality alone. It will become much richer when we have the activity of the ten paramitas. Not just six, but ten paramitas. Along with this, we have developed not only the wisdom on ourselves, but also the wisdom on everything. You may think, 'I have to put a tremendous amount of effort into developing the wisdom of everything.' No, you don't. If you develop the wisdom on self, then automatically, that wisdom sees the reality of every other thing, whether animate or inanimate. I don't think you develop those two simultaneously, but you develop the other one more easily.

With these two, bodhimind-love-compassion and the ten paramitas, generosity *etc.* in combination with wisdom, we are capable of clearing the first noble truth, which we said is the contaminated continuation of identity; not only capable of clearing that itself, but even of clearing the imprints of it as well. When you've done that, that's called enlightenment. That is because then all the obstacles have

been completely shrunk, and when the imprints are completely shrunk, the mind capacity has completely ripened. Then you will be at the fruit level; you're no longer at the level of the seed, but you have reached the fruit level. (Make sure nobody else eats you!)

Basis for Liberation. This should be established as the basis for liberation. It's put together in a simple way. We just introduced to you: this is what we want to achieve. And also: simply when you clear the obstacles, the capacity of mind becomes fully developed automatically. The mind has that capacity, but that capacity has been blocked by those temporary obstacles. When the temporary blocks are removed, then you do see everything absolutely clearly.

The Four Noble Truths. We made a statement saying that the contaminated continuation of the identity is the truth of suffering.

We also made a statement that karma and delusions are coming out of self-grasping or ego-service; they are mind-created. That is the cause of suffering, the second noble truth. It's very simple; the second noble truth is karma and delusions under ego's instructions. In particular it is a sort of a mixture of obsession and attachment. Attachment is a very powerful seed that at a certain level becomes obsession. Remember, anger and hatred are the most powerful and the most difficult negativities to get rid of. Attachment is samsara's glue. That is definitely true here, because out of all of the negative emotions, attachment will make sure the glue joins the suffering with the cause of suffering. It is the guaranteeing factor to make it actually happen. That is the second noble truth.

And at the end of that is the third noble truth. The tunnel ends. We see the light at the end of the tunnel. We have built the knowledge that these delusions and ego are removable. They are not permanent, they are temporary. They can be destroyed, they can be removed, so we can be free.

Knowing that all by your own effort – not by my telling you – is what matters. Of course you read it in a book, or somebody said so, the Dalai Lama said so, or Buddha said so, but that is not enough. Buddha says,

Don't buy it because I said so. If you're buying gold, get the gold, cut it, burn it, rub it. And when you're convinced it's gold, take it.

Something is true not because Buddha said so, not because the book said so, not because the Dalai Lama said so, not because the lineage masters said so, it is you who has to develop that knowledge. That is where you have to put in your efforts. That is why you have to have purification and accumulation of merit and practice, all together. You have to earn it. It is your spiritual path. And that is the fourth noble truth.

Continuation of mind. I don't know whether you've recognized it or not, but it also tells us a funny thing. This contaminated continuation of the identity is continuing. It continues not only from our birth to our death. If that were so, it would be simple. Then you could jump from the roof. Let's say you jump from the Empire State Building or from the Renaissance Center in Detroit into the Detroit River. You may think that way you can get rid of this continuation of contaminated identity. But no. It doesn't end. It continues. You have heard it, there is reincarnation.

How do I know logically that there is reincarnation? Let's look at the first mind, the mind of the moment we enter in this body. We say that it is a continuation from before, because it is mind. The real logical reason is that mind has a previous continuation, because it is mind. Mind cannot come from an unrelated or a wrong cause. When you see all of that, it will begin to make sense. It is a continuation because it is mind. This is Dharmakirti's best point: 'because it is mind'. I'll give you an example. Take today's mind. Today's mind is the continuation of yesterday's mind. When you wake up from sleep, that mind is the continuation of the same mind.

I am contradicting myself here. I said earlier that I'm not here to sell the reincarnation from my culture. But when you are in this Buddhist thing very strongly, somehow you have to know it by yourself. My telling you doesn't work. You have to meditate. You have to analyze. You have to think. The mind is the continuation of mind. The first mind we have, the very moment we enter in our body, that mind has a previous mind because it is mind. Then, vice versa. The last minute of the old man before he dies, that last minute will continue in the form of mind, because that is a mind with attachment. Because it is a mind combined with attachment, therefore it is bound to continue.

For these two reasons, if you can think carefully, analyze properly, you will begin to see that the clear, lucid mind has no beginning. You will also see that it will continue. That is the reason why Buddha kept quiet. That's the reason why there are no newborns.⁵⁶ That's the reason why all souls are old souls. And that's why this contaminated mind experiences birth to death, birth to death, birth to death. Uncontrolled, it continues. So we have to put a stop to that.

I'd like to share one more thing here. Why is it that this identity is suffering? Because it is coming from the contaminated continuation of karma and delusion. I've given you these little thoughts to show you this is the logical way of bringing us to this conclusion. I learned it as a kid, maybe at age 11 or 12, and then forgot it for a long time.

Reference to the Relic Tour

We are very fortunate to have the relics come to our summer retreat. Mind you, it is the relics of Buddha Shakyamuni, Shariputra, Maudgalputra as well as Atisha, Tsongkhapa and so forth. How many do we have altogether? 15 masters and 1000 relics. That is extremely fortunate. One way is to make a western style exhibit and look at them and pray. Another way is this: it is very auspicious, it is *tsob* day today and we had the Vajrayogini fire puja. So it is not just an exhibition of looking at them, but we received the relics with appropriate respect and made offerings and prayed.

There is an opportunity for us to go and receive the blessings of the relics. It's for you to see whether you touch your head to them or not. It doesn't matter. If you want to, then touch your forehead there. It's a great opportunity to see this, and you can use this as a basis of purification, and as a basis of accumulation of merit. You know what the old Tibetans used to do? In all these places they did circumambulations and prostrations; not length-wise, but moving horizontally all the way from Amdo, in eastern Tibet, to central Tibet.

We have the opportunity here to see them, so don't forget to go there and look again and again. We are very fortunate to be able to have them. There is another collection of relics, which is controlled by the Burmese government, and that has a lot of rules and regula-

tions to be observed. Now it's going to be taken over by the UN. It had become almost impossible to see it. So it is very fortunate to see this collection here today; take advantage of that.

Normally, when you think about relics, you see some left-over bones, or something, but when you look at the ones here, it's totally different. I'll share my story about seeing relics; completely unexpectedly.

I have a friend, a little wild Rimpoche. He is a little bit crazy, not crazy in the usual sense, but wild, even when we were in Tibet. His name is Lamda Rimpoche and he is from a very wealthy labrang, so he is wealthy. When we were young, he didn't study, he wore a wonderful dress, and had beautiful horses, a lot of attendants, and all that. And he was a really wild guy. You know, when he walked, he would not walk like a normal person; he was completely shaking his hips, even though he wore monks' robes. As a kid, I used to think he was so wild..., the way he was walking. Then I learned the reason why he was walking like that. One day he was riding a horse that ran very fast, and he was thrown off the horse and broke his leg. He refused to walk with a stick, so instead of that, he was limping, but he made the limp into some kind of style of walking, so you'd never know he was limping. He was like that.

After we became exiled, he moved to Switzerland. He worked in some kind of factory in Switzerland. I went and visited him in 1965 or '66 or something like that. He had a Yamantaka statue on his altar. Just an ordinary Yamantaka statue, bought out of the Indian market. He painted it and kept it. He kept a little cup as one of the hand implements of Yamantaka, which didn't quite fit – one of those tiny Chinese porcelain cups. I said, 'That's not part of the Yamantaka implements. What are you doing? Are you trying to feed the Yamantaka with something?' 'He said, 'Hey, didn't you notice anything?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Look carefully at Yamantaka's nose.' When I looked carefully, on the tip of the nose, there was some funny little white stuff. He said, 'A lot of relics are coming to this one.' So he had put the cup there to collect them. He said, 'For a while, there was nothing, then certain little lumps came up, and they became bigger, and then it dripped.' That's why he had put this cup there. And there were drips in the cup, three or four already. He kept them.

I stayed for about a week. In the beginning, there was a little drop, and by the time I was leaving, it was a big round one, almost ready to drop off. This is completely against the law of physics. These things happen. And we're very fortunate to have those great relics with us in this retreat. Somehow they happened to come by.

Every good thing ends. Everything is impermanent. I wish we had another week here. It would be really wonderful. But it always comes to a conclusion. Tomorrow morning, we do have this White Tara Longevity Ceremony. Those who are looking for an initiation, will become initiated. Those who are not looking for the initiation can receive the blessing.

Before I take questions, I would like to once again take the opportunity to thank you for being here, to benefit ourselves and to benefit others, to do whatever we can do. Everybody's been really wonderful. Talking is one thing. Hearing is another thing. Then, talking and hearing, both won't serve any purpose if you don't think about it. Even if you think about it, if you don't act, again it doesn't serve any purpose. Listening, thinking and making it part of your life, combined together with helping everybody, that works.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: Rimpoche, you referred to their being ten paramitas. Most of us are familiar with six.⁵⁷ Could you please tell us what the other four are.

Rimpoche: What I'd like to answer is, when the time comes, I'll share it. The four other paramitas are not really talked about when we are learning. That is the practice when you become masters. Let's not count them today, because there's no time to explain them. If you read those Lamrim books, they should have the four of them listed there. And that's not the Chinese way of counting ten paramitas, okay? Thank you.

Audience: I understand the Buddhas don't grieve the same way we do. When Buddhas grieve, do they suffer?

Rimpoche: Oh, by the way, did you read the article in *Tricycle* where Mark interviewed me? Everybody told me it was a great interview, so thank you, Mark. If you read that, you do have the an-

swers there. Do Buddhas have pain? Theoretically, I have to say Buddhas don't have pain because they are pain-free, they are problem-free, they are free of suffering. Human beings, gods, and ghosts behave the same way. When human beings have grief, they grieve. So do the gods, so do the ghosts. Human beings, gods and ghosts have the same characteristics of sadness, joy, all of them. Yes, sadness, feelings of losses, feelings of not achieving what you want to achieve, all of them should be there at the buddha level, too. Do those things frustrate a buddha? They should not. Do they make a buddha suffer? They should not.

Audience: What is it that carries over from one lifetime to the next, that allows someone to recognize objects from a previous life?

Rimpoche: The mind itself. Particularly, memory is probably ripped off completely. The continuation makes it easier to see that there is a connection to previous lives. Some of those incarnated lamas don't have to learn so much. They just need to be reminded, and then, they pick up the information. Some people, when they want to memorize something they don't have to make such an effort. Talking about myself, when I was young, I could memorize a lot, a lot. Really. If I read something three times, I had almost memorized it, page after page. It might have something to do with this. As I mentioned this morning, in quoting Sakya Pandita, 'Something you're learning, even if you're dying tomorrow morning, you should learn it today. Even though you may not become a learned person in this lifetime, in the next life you can simply collect your own goods, as if you have left them with someone to take care of.' That's exactly what happens. Then it depends on the individual. For people who are better developed spiritually, things are easier to pick up. For less developed persons, they are more difficult to pick up. Persons who are better developed spiritually may have clairvoyance; less developed persons have less clairvoyance. We can see that quite clearly.

Audience: The question is more about whether memory traveled with the subtle mind, or as a karmic imprint, or as something else.

Rimpoche: Memory does not travel with the subtle mind. Because if it would have memories, it would not be the subtle mind. Mem-

ory gets ripped off. When you pack, I think memory is one of the early things to go into the box. It doesn't travel through.

Then that brings another question. Since all consciousnesses are old consciousnesses, they all have had countless numbers of experiences. So how come some people can pick things up easily, while others pick things up with difficulty? When you look at the individual person's spiritual development, you will know the answer.

Audience: You said there were no new souls. Is there a finite number of souls, or mindstreams?

Rimpoche: No, unfortunately, they are countless. There are countless beings. When you talk about beings, it includes not only human beings but all the other beings too. How many beings are there in the ocean alone? Then think about all other parts of samsara. Then think of other galaxies. There's no end to it. You can never say there is a particular number. And Buddha doesn't say it either, as far as I know.

There are no newborns, that is what Buddha says. It's probably got to be true, because we talked to you this morning that the first mind, the mind of the minute you enter in this life, is the continuation of a previous mind, because it is mind. Non-mind does not become mind. Similar to this, the mind of an old man immediately before dying will definitely continue in future, because it is a mind with desire. That says a lot to me, honestly. I don't know how much it says to you. When you begin to get into it, it will say a lot to you as well. You need to see it. Non-mind does not become mind, and consciousness does not become non-consciousness. You're not convinced yet, you just heard it. But when you begin to be convinced, this all will make sense.

Audience: My question has two parts. How is it possible for me, as an ego, to practice dharma, since my ego is destroyed at death? Does this mean that a part of my mind other than ego, practices dharma?

Rimpoche: Wow. What makes you think your mind is ego? You did say that, right? What makes you think you are ego? I'd like to ask that question. But I don't see any hands here. If you think you are ego, you are in big trouble. I think our ego and we are two separate things. Ego is functioning, no doubt.

Mind you, I'm not talking about the ego the psychologists are talking about. So don't get confused. Psychologists created that name and labeled that for the purpose of building self-esteem, I believe. (There are a lot of psychologists here; they know better than I do.)

But when we are talking about ego here, it is as in general society, everybody says, 'Oh that's just your ego talking,' which seems to be looking down on the ego. I'm using the term 'ego' to identify the combination of confusion, fear and ignorance. That ego is definitely separate from our self. This ego may be the dominating ego force within our self, but I will be the last person to define myself as the dominating ego force within myself. Therefore, I like to separate my ego and me. I am not my ego, my ego is not me, I am separate from my ego, and my ego is separate from me. However, my ego has had the upper hand over me. My ego has abused me so much, that I can't even raise my head up. So I only get into the picture when I get into trouble. Only at that moment, my ego escapes, so 'I' pops up. Like when I've been accused of being a thief, in public, or when I am about to fall from a cliff, and I'm really scared. Like that, when I'm bound to get into some big trouble, then I suddenly realize [me]. Until then, my ego controls me completely. So I like to fight against that ego. That is my ego, my enemy within me. That's not me.

So the question whether your ego practices dharma does not arise, because you are not your ego. Actually we always have a struggle within ourselves to do something good, and we cannot do it. Who is struggling? The struggle is between the ego and me. I've always been the loser, always abused. So after a while, you don't even want to argue, you go along with it. So when you practice dharma, somewhere there has to be a challenge to the ego. Ego won't like it, for sure, because it feels threatened. So, it is a challenge.

Audience: Does this mean that a part of my mind other than ego practices Dharma?

Rimpoche: Well, obviously.

I'm glad the last question was about ego, because that is our target. It is the target of our refutation.

VII Wisdom

Welcome to the closing session of the retreat. We are doing the White Tara initiation today, so I am not going to talk very long. Please generate a pure mind, particularly on the lines we have been talking about here the whole week. Pure mind in this case refers to the bodhimind, the love and compassion-oriented mind.

Up to yesterday, we have concluded the method part of the teaching. This is about generating love and compassion, looking at all sentient beings as the closest, nearest and dearest, and caring for their well-being and benefit as much as for our own benefit and well-being. For the sake of all of them we would like to attain the fully enlightened level. For that we need long and healthy lives. That can be done in a variety of ways. In this tradition there is a way through the practice of deity yoga and in this case, White Tara. She is an absolutely special, wonderful, female enlightened being. She is almost the same as Mother Mary in the usual Christian understanding. You have heard all the stories a number of times. I am not going to talk to you much about this.

Today I would like to talk about the wisdom part, in a very short conclusion. If I make it too short, I may do a disservice to you. All this week we talked about what is mind, where does it come from, what does it look like, how do we know what it is, what can it do for us? The conclusion is that by understanding this we can make sure to make best use of our mind, which has unlimited scope. We can do anything.

One way to use this unlimited scope is to work for compassion and love. We touched on this briefly. But those who are in touch with me, who listen to me, either during teachings in Renaissance Unity or on Tuesdays in Ann Arbor or on Thursdays in New York or at any weekend talk here and there, will hear that from me every day. Also those, who are not physically there can get the teachings on the internet. They are being replayed there for 24 hours after the first live broadcast.

Usually compared to compassion teachings, I do fewer wisdom teachings, as perhaps by now you might have noticed. But since we are talking about the mind – how do we look at it, how do we handle it? There are a number of different ways.

Actually, concentration is extremely important. If you lose focus, you lose a lot. Traditionally, in India, during the Buddha's time, one of the arts was arrow shooting and another one was sword fighting. One day an outstanding master of sword throwing and an outstanding master of archery had a duel. The archer kept on shooting all his arrows. But no matter how many he shot, the sword man threw the sword - or maybe he had two swords - around like a wheel and cut the arrows before they could reach him. He never got hurt. Finally, the arrow shooter had only one arrow left. If that one missed too, the sword guy would come and cut his head off. He was at a loss. At that moment the archer's wife said, 'Don't use your last arrow yet. Hold it, until you think he has seen me. Until then, wait.' So she went out in the middle of those two fighters, with all kinds of seductive manner and sat somewhere near the sword man. He lost a little bit of his attention and looked at her. At that moment the last arrow got him. While he was dying, he said the following words,

I have not been killed by arrows, but I was killed by losing awareness.

Mindfulness, awareness, is very important for concentrating. How do we maintain mindfulness and awareness and alertness, while focusing on the mind? Remember, the definition of mind is: clear and lucid. We talked about what 'clear' really means from three different points of view⁵⁸.

SIX WAYS OF FOCUSING ON THE MIND

When you focusing on your mind, how do you do it? There are six different ways. They are mostly taken from the *dobas*, this Bengali poetry. You don't have to do all six, either of them will do. You are given a choice. This is the beauty of Tibetan Buddhism. It is really giving you tremendous choice. You don't have to have everything. If there is a lot of food, you don't have to eat vegetarian and non-vegetarian. If you eat all that food you will put on a lot of weight. (Yesterday people pledged money for me to lose weight. I may have to return your pledge money, if you start putting on weight.)

1. When you are looking at the mind, don't let it be under the influence of wandering and sinking, like clouds covering the sun shine. Let it be sun shine. Let it be without clouds.
2. When eagles fly in the sky, they don't have to put in as much effort as humming birds. They glide smoothly. They do it almost effortlessly, without flapping their wings. They just soar. In the analogy, if you put too much effort into focusing, you can't sit; if you don't put in any effort, you lose focus.
3. The waves of the ocean only have a little movement on the surface. In the depth there is not so much movement. The bigger the quantity of water is, the less the movement in its depth is.
4. If a small kid in a museum looks at a bright painting it will see the big picture, not much details. But even if you don't see much detail, it is fine.
5. When a bird flies in the air it doesn't leave any footprints in the sky. Likewise, you should observe the mind and there should be nothing left.
6. When you shake a cotton cushion or cloth and put it down, it will settle. It will softly land. It is not like a football or basket that will bounce back.

These are the six different ways.⁵⁹ So, it is good enough to see the general thing, like the kid in the museum; it is not necessary to see all the details. Hope and doubt will be a problem. It is important not to have so much hope and not to have so much doubt.

By doing that, you will get to the nature of the mind. You will see that it is clear, lucid and pure. A number of people will consider that wisdom. Gyelwa Ensapa and Tsongkhapa, however, insist that this is the *relative truth* of the mind, not the absolute truth of the mind. That doesn't mean that it is not a big deal. It *is* a big deal: we go home then, to our home. On the basis of this relative nature of the mind you focus on reality. There is nothing better.

Let us look into Tsongkhapa's *Three Principal Aspects of the Path*.

Interdependent appearance – infallible.
 Emptiness – inexpressible reality.
 As long as these two seem separate,
 Buddha's insight is not understood.

As long as the relative truth and absolute nature of truth itself are perceived as separate, you have not understood what Buddha was talking about.

Perceived simultaneously without alternation,
 Seeing infallible interdependence
 Destroys objective identity.
 With this, the analysis of wisdom is complete.

There will be a time when you don't have to alternate between seeing the relative part of mind and seeing the absolute part of the mind. You will be able to see them together, not contradicting each other. That way you don't have the fault of extreme nihilism, nor the fault of extreme existentialism. If free of these extremes, by seeing the relative existence you will see the empty nature and by seeing the empty nature you will see the relative existence. When these two get together you see that cause and effect is something you cannot destroy. At the same time you also see the true nature of the lack of intrinsic existence. When you see these two together you will begin to get the absolute truth.

Further, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence.
 Emptiness eliminates non-existence.
 Emptiness itself is cause and effect.
 Understanding this protects from these extremes.

This verse is extraordinarily good. Seeing [the infallible interdependence of] appearance destroys [the extreme of inherent or in-

trinsic] existence. Seeing the void destroys the nihilistic point of view. This is just opposite from the common way. Commonly you would say, 'He is there, because I saw him and he is not there because I didn't see him.' Here it is the total opposite. It is almost like counter culture. Here you say, 'It is not there because I saw it, and it is there because I didn't see it.'⁶⁰

This is an extremely important and difficult point of absolute reality. Even among the traditional Indian philosophical schools, Buddhapalita was the only one who really got this among all the followers of Nagarjuna. His followers split into two camps. Only Buddhapalita really got it, the rest of them had a so-so understanding. I mean, they are great, but not really on the point. For everybody existence was supposed to block nihilism and emptiness was supposed to block existentialism. But here it goes the other way round. I have no doubt that science is going to prove this one day. For sure.

Out of all that mind business, the conclusion will be to bring love and compassion to all and bring yourself to total enlightenment for the benefit of all others. That is the compassion part of it. What we have just been talking about is the wisdom aspect. The combination of these two will be able to deliver the goods of the body and mind union of enlightenment. If you like to have more mystical language, you call it the 'union of clear light and illusion body'. That is total enlightenment.

With that I would like to conclude talking about the mind at this level. Now let's do the White Tara longevity initiation. And with that we conclude this Summer Retreat.

VIII Continuation of Consciousness

It has been a while since I have been here in Cleveland, and I am happy to be here. Welcome everybody. Our subject today is the continuation of consciousness.

Five things to be known. Before we talk about the continuation of consciousness, we have to talk a little bit about consciousness itself. That is quite a difficult subject, but without talking about consciousness, talking about its continuation is a little difficult.

Before we talk about consciousness, we have to talk about what we normally call in Tibetan *shes cha* *zhi nga*⁶¹ – five points we have to understand. That is basically [our framework]. To talk about these five will be a little complicated. So out of those let us take just two; maybe that is easier.

Form. The first one of those two is form, in Tibetan, *zhu*, [Skt. *rupa*]. Form is the physical aspects, anything that came out of any material thing and has come collected together. That means, anything that we can see, hear, touch. The five objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, we put under the category of form, though not everything may have form [in a literal sense]. Sound e.g. may not have a physical form that you can catch, it might not be a collection of atoms, but it has form in the sense of something you share; it has its own form. This is the first category of what is to be known.

Consciousness. We say that Buddha has total knowledge, knows everything. So what is that: everything? One aspect of it is to know every *form*. The other aspect of it is [to know] the formless; that refers to the *mind*, or rather what in Tibetan we call *nam shes*, consciousness [Skt. *vijñana*].

1. WHAT IS MIND OR CONSCIOUSNESS?

The mind has no form. There is no physical thing to touch. There is no color, there is no shape. We call that *tong pa sel shes rig chak*. *Tong pa* means clear, void, empty; *sel rig* or *sel zhing rig pa* is the definition of mind. The definition of mind is: clear and understanding. In other words, clearly understanding. *Sel* means clear. Whether *shes*, *shes pa*, actually is really the translation of mind I am not very sure. But let us use it because we have to catch and hold something. So let us talk about mind as *shes pa*.

We are used to looking, hearing, smelling, tasting and physical feeling or touch. These are not difficult for us. I look at you, I see you; you look at me, you see a big fat guy. No problem. But when you go beyond that, there is nothing to catch, nothing to hold. Yet we all know there is mind. No one can say ‘I have no mind’. What happens with form? You can see, acknowledge and recognize, ‘Yeah, that is a form.’ We see, recognize and acknowledge [something]. But who is acknowledging? That is the question. When I look at you, I see, ‘Yeah, she is here.’ All right. The form does not say she is here. Somebody else says she is here. And who is that somebody? That is the mind, the mind aspect [of the situation]. When there is no mind aspect, no matter what, nothing happens. We have been talking this week about Ronald Reagan, who died. We had the 21 gun salute and all this, but when there is no consciousness or no mind in [that body], nobody will acknowledge it, right? Of course, it is getting acknowledged from somewhere else, but not in the coffin there. That is because there is no mind, no consciousness. When there is mind and body together, we call that life. When one of them is missing, we call it something else. Common sense clearly understands that.

No one can say, ‘I have no mind’. If you say so, we will give you a different title; your profession will change, you are no longer artist, you are no longer technician, no longer nurse, no longer teacher, you are no longer you. You are something else and somewhere else. That is what we all know. Therefore, we cannot deny mind.

Then you say, ‘What is mind?’ Where is it, how does it work? That question we raise very often. Many don’t. They just think it is something inside themselves. In the West you look for it up in the brain, in some brain cells. In the East we look down in the heart. But if you

think carefully, both cultures, east and west, will say, 'Look deep down inside you.' Yeah, but what and where is that something? Honestly, it doesn't matter, we know it is there.

So what is it that we are looking for? What is it that is in there? Since it is beyond form, naturally it is of some kind of void, or, more is specifically, some kind of open space. In open space we can move our hands up and down, we can move our body, walk and everything. Yet you cannot say the open space is not there; it is there. If there were no open space, how were you going to walk? Shape [or form] depends on whether there is open space.

I am not saying mind is open space. Don't misunderstand. But mind is *like* open space. It is something within us, part of us, maybe the most important part of us: it is *like* open space – empty, yet lucid, *sel zhing rig pa*⁶².

So, between the form aspect and that 'empty' aspect, [the mind], there is a big difference. They are very separate, very different, yet together.

Clarity. When you talk about clarity, what does 'clear' mean?⁶³

1. If you are in the dark room you don't see very well, and suddenly the sunlight comes in or you switch on the light, then it makes things clearly to be seen, right? When you look at the drawings over there on the wall, when there is no light, you don't really see them. But when there is light, then we see them. That is one type of clarity.

2. Then another type of clarity is this. When you look in the mirror – I am sure we all look in the mirror in the morning – you will clearly see your reflection in the mirror. That is different from the clarity that we just talked about. When you look in the mirror, you have to have the form, you have to have the reflection, plus light, plus the eye consciousness, plus getting the message, plus the acknowledgement, all of them.

3. Now, when we talk about mind clarity, it is neither the form nor the reflection [that we refer to]. It is a capacity, a capability in its own, a sort of an automatic nature, or power – if you like to call it that – of the mind: it is able to see, feel, and understand. That is this clarity. That is a completely different way of [talking about] clarity than what we are normally used to.

In other words, when you listen to a talk, when you hear the talk, you get the message within you and then you say it is clear [to you]

or it is not clear. Whether the speaker speaks clearly or not, the understanding person gets an understanding and acknowledges that it is clear or not clear. Likewise what we hear we hear through the media of form. The ear consciousness carries the message and passes it on to the mental consciousness.

Consciousness, soul, being. Let us clear up some misunderstanding here. When the buddhist tradition talks about the consciousness, the judeo-christian tradition talks about the soul. It is slightly different, of course, because the soul is [said to be] permanent and created and the consciousness is impermanent, not created. Actually, it is created but not created by something or someone. Those are theoretical points; let us cut them out.

In a practical sense, what does the soul do for the individual? The soul sits inside the body and functions and manages and does whatever you have to do. That is the same as what buddhists call consciousness; consciousness does that. So, for practical purposes, if you are wondering whether this guy is talking about the mind, the consciousness, the soul or whatever, if you can't clarify the difference between soul and consciousness in your mind, for the time being, keep soul as a point of reference when we refer consciousness or mind. So, let's talk and think about what we call the self, the deep down person, the soul, the consciousness. Let's think that way so that there will be no more confusion. Theoretically it is wrong but practically it is useful to do it this way.

Looking at the mind. Now, when you look at the mind, you try to find what it is. I gave you the definition of mind: *clear and lucid*. I talked to you about clearing the darkness and seeing, about clearly seeing in the mirror, and that the mind's clarity is different. When you listen to a lecture and you say it is clear, what do you mean by 'it is clear to me'? My mind understood and I have something to catch and hold, therefore it is clear. Now, who understood? Who said, 'I have something to catch'? Think; think within you.

What we have here is really important. It is what we call in Tibetan, *tsam sem tsam ngön tsam sel rig chak*. You just got the message, you are just informed, you just received it; whether it is joy or misery, you just felt it. Acknowledging the feeling, acknowledging the information, keeping just that much, that is mind. If you try to go beyond

that, you are not really going to find it. [If you think], ‘Who was it that got the information? Where did that go? Is it in my head? In my heart? Is it in my words?’ If you go and search in that way you are going to lose it. That is why in Tibetan [it says] *tsam* – just that, nothing more, nothing less. That is what we are talking about when we talk about mind. It is a reflection, an acknowledged, a receiver. That is what it is.

Understanding by mind and understanding by seeing or feeling are different, again. Very different. That may not be today’s subject. If I go into that it is going to be a hell of a thing to do. What I really want to talk to you about is: how do I look at the mind, and how am I going to find it. That is a very, very important subject. I told you, ‘just experience, just this, just that’. I gave you a lot of justs, but how do you begin to look at that in the mind?

Continuation of consciousness – an example. When you say that the mind is just lucidity and understanding, and empty, you might think the mind is something like when you fall asleep. When we fall asleep, something goes on working, but we don’t know anything about it. We may know some dreams, or something in the bed may bite you and wake you up, but otherwise we really don’t know what has happened. Also, when you fainted, you don’t know what has happened at that time. When you faint, the previous mind, the mind immediately before that, somehow continues into that fainting period and then when you wake up from that faint – I am sure some of you have experienced it – it is the previous mind that continues. The mind recognizing what is happening is somehow joined with [the previous mind]. So in the actual fainting period, whether it is two seconds or whatever, we don’t know what is happening.

I can tell you from my own experience. About two or three years ago Ribur Rimpoche was in my house in Michigan. Rimpoche always has great difficulty getting up, because he is very old, in his eighties, and he is big. Once he started to get up from his chair and I said, ‘I’ll pull you up.’ He said, ‘No No No...’. I said, ‘Yeah, I insist’. So I pulled him up, using all my force. He sort of moved his body out of the chair, and then I could not hold him any longer, but I thought that if I let go, he was going to get really hurt. So I put more efforts in and pulled him up, while he was talking to me.

He was telling me a story of another great teacher called Kyabje Kangsar Rinpoche who was to give a Kalachakra initiation in Tibet. He was talking about that Kangsar Rinpoche came and Purbu Jok was also there and Kangsar Rinpoche was so humble. His dress was not of very good quality or at least didn't look good, yet Purbu Jok came as a disciple and he was well dressed. Kangsar Rinpoche was sort of going behind him and Ribur Rinpoche said it looked like Purbu Jok was the real big Rinpoche and Kangsar Rinpoche his attendant.

That is what he was telling me. At that time I put in extra effort and pulled him up, and he got up all right, but the next moment I realized my glasses were touching the floor, which means I had fainted. Now during that period, maybe a couple of seconds, less than a minute, whatever he had talked about I saw with my eye consciousness. I actually saw it, that little old looking guy and this big guy, I saw it like a movie. Then I realized my eyeglasses touched the carpet, I noticed I am on the floor and Ribur Rinpoche thought I was making jokes. What he got was that I twisted around and then lay down on the floor. But what actually happened is, probably I lost consciousness and tumbled around and fell down; my elbow hit the drywall and there was a big hole in it. That is why I can tell you tell about what happens in the fainting period. If there was a conversation or thought occupying the mind immediately before, it is materializing, you literally see it as a movie, or as though you are participating in that actual thing. This really makes a lot of sense.

Now I am going to link this to the today's subject, the continuation of consciousness. Why this makes sense is because at the period of the death, at the end of the dying process, the mind level is neither positive nor negative. At that time it is so very subtle, that it cannot be positive or negative. However, the mind immediately before that will influence. That is what we always talk about, that is what we teach, that is how we understand it. But, this fainting business of mine and seeing the conversation before, is actually materializing in a physical form and eye witnesses tell me the dying mind can also be influenced by the mind immediately before. This is proves that what the teachings say is our physical experience. You get it?

Audience: Are you saying that [just] before death you are influenced by outside external influences?

Rimpoche: The internal message, whatever your mind has been focusing on the time before, influences the period in which you are fainting [in the example of my experience]. The words that I heard Ribur Rimpoche say came out as a physical movie, as something I witnessed during that period. What really had happened, I did not know, because I fainted. But during whatever the period that I fainted, my mind was occupied by whatever we were talking immediately before that, which I saw in forms [in images]. That tells us that is how mind works.

Take this beautiful glass of clean water here. If the glass had no decorations on it, we could see the water very clearly. But if the water is not clean, we will see the influence of the dirt, or whatever it is. The mind itself is absolutely pure, no dust or anything. So you can clearly get the message, understand it by the lucidness of the thing called mind. The lucidness is not referring to how you see it, it refers to the mind itself. That is why you have statements like ‘naturally pure’, ‘natural empty’, all of those. They are talking about the emptiness, I am talking about the mind. That is not apples and oranges, but it is apples and apples and oranges and oranges.

The definition of the mind is ‘clear and lucid’. Clear here means getting a clear message, clearly understanding. Lucid here means: its nature is luminance, maybe it is luminance nature. So, the nature of the mind itself, *sem kyi rang zhin*⁶⁴, is lucid luminance: pure, pure.

HOW TO LOOK AT THE MIND AND HOW TO MEDITATE ON IT

The question now arises, what are we really looking for when we are looking at the mind and how are we going to find it? These are the important points. For just a simple introduction of the mind, that much is enough.

How do we look at the mind? There are a number of different ways of looking. The First Panchen Lama says in his Mahamudra root text,

Meditate (...) on a profound path of guru-yoga
and after making hundreds of strong requests,
dissolve your visualized guru into yourself.

Absorb for a while unwaveringly in this state
in which all haphazard appearance-making
have been contracted until they have disappeared.

Do not contrive anything with thoughts
such as expectation or worries.⁶⁵

From our experience of knowing and understanding and mind, it is 'just knowing, just understanding, just getting the message'. But in the teaching, it comes out with a practice. Many of you do the *Six-session yoga* as an everyday practice, or the *Ganden Lha Gyema* or the *Lama Chöpa*. If you are doing the *Six-session yoga*, you say,

Now my lama, as requested, comes to the top of my head
and dissolves until we both are one.

When the Guru finally dissolves to you, he and you - as it says in the Tibetan original - become of one taste [Tib. *ro gcig*]. It means that when the lama dissolves, we become oneness.

At that time, it is easier to recognize the mind, because there is a tremendous amount of joy and excitement. It is like the reunion of a mother with her long-lost child. I am using this specific terminology with a purpose. You know, when you lost a friend for a long time, then when you see him or her again, there is always some joy and happiness in the mind. Even if you hated the person for a while, even then there is that joy and happiness of seeing the long-lost friend. And then, if you observe that joy of seeing your long-lost friend and you become oneness, fulfilling your purpose of spiritual work, a different state of mind comes in, which is not the mind on the normal level. That different stage is called *nangwa ben bun*, which we call in English the NBB state.

NBB state. This NBB state is the state that gives you the opportunity to see the mind itself a little better. And seeing just somebody acknowledging, just somebody understanding, that is a state we can hold. Though the state itself will go – it is impermanent, it changes, it goes, it doesn't stay – whatever we understood or experienced at that moment is what we hold as object of meditation. That is how we begin to look into the mind.

When we finally see the mind, encounter it, we call it the primordial mind⁶⁶. What we really get to is the primordial mind, the continuation. Whether that is emptiness or not is another point, a theoretical viewpoint.⁶⁷ It doesn't matter, the experienced yogis will understand it as oneness. When you hold that point – whether you call

it NBB state or mind – just get it, just understand it, just keep the feeling of hurt or joy.

Physical hurt is something hurting, physical joy is something else. Everybody has experienced that, since we don't have any monks and nuns here, we all know that. That joy, or whatever the experience may be, is gone the next minute. However, we relish or cherish a certain feeling that we got out of sexual experience, or whatever it is. We can hold that in our mind, right?

Likewise, here we hold the mental experience of whatever we got. We hold it and that now is becoming your point of meditation. Whether you call that subject or object depends how you look, so let's call it your point of meditation. When you have that as point of meditation, then what we are really looking at is the experience, the experience of the mind. (Not the sexual energy don't confuse them.) The experience of the mind you hold and observe. The Panchen Lama says,

Do not contrive anything with thoughts such as expectation or worries.

So, have neither hope nor doubt nor bring in any thoughts at all. Just try to hold that NBB-state and try to see what you see.

This does not mean, however, that you cease all attention as if you had fainted or fallen asleep.

During the time of fainting or sleep we have no awareness. There is an interesting word here: attention. The scientists call this mindfulness: 'the ability to sustain voluntary attention continuously upon a familiar object without forgetfulness or distractions.' If you go to sleep or faint, there is no awareness, there is no mindfulness, so there's no ability to sustain voluntary attention continuously upon the point of meditation. That is why this state is not like sleeping or that type of thing.

Rather, you must tie [your attention] to the post of mindfulness in order not to wander, and station alertness to be aware of any mental movement.

What you are really looking at is that clear, lucid nature. Look at that carefully, but don't push too hard. If you squeeze too much, then you'll lose it. If you have too much laxity, then you'll lose it. That is why you have to be sort of very carefully looking.

Firmly tighten the hold of your mindfulness
on that which has the nature of clarity and awareness and behold it
starkly.

When you are looking at that lucid mind, thoughts will appear, suddenly. This is because our mind is such that it is not going to sit there and wait till the cows come home. Thoughts are definitely going to pop up. The moment anything comes up, you have to recognize it. The mindfulness nature itself will recognize it. So you have to know how.

Should your mind give rise to any thoughts, simply recognize them.

I did a workshop with Ram Dass once, and he said that [observing the mind] is like the peeling of an orange skin. That is an interesting metaphor. You peel the skin of the orange. An orange skin is not an orange; a tangerine skin is not a tangerine, therefore you peel them. Likewise, the thoughts are not the mind itself; they are to be peeled off. But if you don't recognize what happens, the thoughts get mixed up with this clear, lucid nature and you lose your focal point.

Or, like your opponent in a duel,
cut thoughts immediately as soon as they occur.

In the early Indian culture, there is story about a duel between a sword man and an arrow man. The sword man wants to kill the arrow man, and the arrow man wants to kill the sword man. The arrow guy shoots arrows. He doesn't have to come close to the sword man. If he would have to come close, the sword would kill him. So he has a little advantage over the sword man. But the sword man is so focused that he really cuts out any arrow that comes. The sword man is so much focused, and the arrow man is likewise focused. The arrow man goes down to the end, until one last arrow is left. After that, the sword man will catch him, right? Now the arrow man's wife intervenes and tells the arrow man, 'Don't shoot.' The arrow man stops. She comes in the middle and starts a performance dance. The sword man loses his focus; he starts looking at her. The moment she realizes that the sword man lost his focus, she says 'Shoot!' and lays down flat. The arrow man shoots and the arrow hits the sword man. He dies. And before he dies, he says, 'I was not killed by the arrow man, I was killed by the arrow man's wife.'

That tells us, any thought that comes in, like a sword cut it. It also tells you what happens if you lose focus. So mindfulness is necessary. Just like that, there are six different ways [of doing]. We have them in the transcripts.⁶⁸

THE CONTINUATION OF THE MIND

I talked about the mind, how to look at it and how to meditate on that. Since we now recognize the mind that way, or are supposed to, let me at least briefly talk about the continuation of the mind. The continuation of the mind really is about reincarnation. It all comes in one little bundle.

This is talking about the consciousness. Now again, if I say that it is 'me' that is continuing, that is always there, then I become permanent. And that is wrong. I am impermanent. I am created, therefore I am impermanent. That is a Buddhist logo. Every created phenomenon, every created existence is impermanent. There are the four Buddhist logos, or seals, or principles:

- Anything created is impermanent.
- Anything contaminated is suffering.
- Every phenomenon by nature is empty.
- Nirvana is peace.

These four important points tell you that everything created is impermanent, therefore I am impermanent. I am created, my mind is created, my mind is impermanent. But, that does not mean I am created by a creator, as we might think⁶⁹. There is a difference between the buddhist and the judeo-christian tradition here. That is the creator business. Buddhism does accept all kinds of gods, but not a monotheistic God. Buddhism does not accept any creator other than yourself. The simple reason is: you are responsible for yourself. Bottom line. I am responsible for myself. I think I like it better if there is another creator; then I would not be responsible, because it is the creator's job. You know, always we blame General Motors, 'you created that problem, you fix it; it is under your warranty'. In Buddhism, you cannot do that, you are responsible for yourself.

What we really need is to be good, to be right, and to be doing the right thing. We almost become our own creator. I become my own creator; you become your own creator. Our future is made by

ourselves. I shape my tomorrow today. We all do. We all know what to do, but we can't do it. Like, you know, you have to be fit, have to be exercising, moving, lose weight, and blah, blah, blah. We all know that. But when you really practically have to do it, you can't. But if you don't do it, nobody else will do it for you, because you are responsible for yourself.

Reasoning on the continuation of mind. The early Indian mahapandit Dharmakirti talks about the continuation. The idea is this: let's pick up a child that is born at this very moment. The mind of that child is a continuation of mind. The reason why it should be like that, is because it is mind.

Likewise, when a person is dying, the mind of the person in that last minute will also continue, because it is mind. This sounds very strange. Normally we use a reason to prove something. For example, we say that sound is impermanent because it is created. According to fundamental principles in Buddhism it says: *if it is created it is impermanent.*

Likewise, here: the mind of the child that has just been born is the continuation of mind, *because it is mind.* That tells you: if it is mind it is necessarily a continuation. On the other hand, if it is form, it is not necessarily continuing. Forms will break, go to pieces or disappear. When you burn a candle the wax will burn down and the candle disappears. The mind does not do that. It is the principle of the mind that it is continuing.

There is another thing that used to be very controversial in the West. Nowadays we can say it a little easier. All the scientists are very much looking into, studying and having conference after conference on the subject of the mind. Physically, the physicists can show that depending on what activity of the mind is performed, there are physical changes in the brain cortex. This happens e.g. as a result of meditation practice.

Another change in western thinking has come through science as well. Buddha never accepted that there is a final particle. There is no 'This is it'. There is no final point beyond which you cannot go. Earlier, scientists had found the atom and thought that is the end of it. But then they found neutrons and even smaller particles and no matter how subtle you may go, way beyond the capacity of human eyes,

no matter how many new types of equipment you may develop, you still find something. There is no end to it. You can never find the point of 'this is it'. No matter how small the particles may become there is always east and west and east can never touch west. That is the principle of the *pratitya-samutpada*, [Tib. *tendrel*], the interdependent nature of existence. The scientists are finding that now. Also, by investigating the connection between brain and mind, they are very open to the insights of the spiritual path. It is not only the physicists who have reached that point, but also the neurologists and biochemists and nuclear physicists.

Looking into these fundamental principles, there is a statement by Buddha. He said,

Non-consciousness cannot become consciousness,
nor can consciousness become non-consciousness.

This is from the root text on logic by Dharmakirti. Don't tell me how to prove it, because I cannot at this moment. But I do think that the scientists will prove it, honestly. They are so keen to develop artificial intelligence. They are looking carefully and deeply. Now they are changing their terminology. They are no longer saying that they aim to 'produce' artificial intelligence. They still say that artificial intelligence is possible, but now they say that they will capture a consciousness, lock it into a machine and let it function. Ray Kurzweil is one of the major researchers in that field. He wrote a book about it. My guess is that this will indeed happen. But still, this is not that some non-conscious particles are assembled together mechanically and thereby you can produce artificial intelligence. Whether you try to capture a consciousness or whether it lands in there by itself, either way it has to be particles and consciousness combined together for this to function. Without consciousness it will not function. Consciousness also cannot become non-consciousness. Only consciousness can become consciousness. That is the limitation.

We talked about the division between form and mind, according to Buddhism. Now the difference between matter and mind is what the scientists are dealing with. It is the same thing. The combination of these will become a life, one alone does not. Matter has its own continuum and so does mind. Matter will never become mind and mind will never become matter. That is the limit of the mind.

Since mind cannot become non-mind, there logically cannot be any new consciousnesses. It is like the good old Christian saying, ‘All souls are old souls.’ That is a further limit of consciousness. Whenever there is consciousness, it is a continuation of consciousness, floating around. Our mind of today is the continuation of yesterday’s mind. There is no new person in between. We did go to sleep, and then we woke up. It is continuing. Yes, we did watch and listen; we did think. Today we are listening and watching something different, but it is the continuation of what we thought, watched and listened to yesterday.

Likewise, today’s ‘P’ is the continuation of this particular kid that was born in Tibet on Oct 26, 1939. Today’s ‘P’ in Cleveland, on June 12, 2004 is the continuation of the one from Oct 26, 1939. There is no different person in between.

It is not easy to establish the continuation. You have to consider and establish all these points in your mind. I am not brainwashing you, I am just giving you the information. You have to understand and convince yourself, without making a mistake. That is what is meant by ‘establishing’. It is not easy and may take years. I am afraid that before we get there on the spiritual path, the scientists may have got there first through their scientific research. It does not matter who gets there first. It is not a competition; it is the search for truth. We are focusing on the same thing. Whether we are going to ‘get it’ through spiritual practice or through scientific studies doesn’t really matter. What humankind needs is true information. So far it has been a mystery to us. It is not straightforward, not accessible to the senses. You can’t see, hear, touch or feel it. Whoever breaks through, scientifically or spiritually, doesn’t matter. We need that break through. Maybe we are better off if we get a scientific break through.

If such a break through happens by using the spiritual methods, only individual people will have the experience. They can try to share it and then it would be up to you whether you buy that or not. However, if some Caucasians did it, it still might work. People would believe it. Nowadays, if some Africans or Asians did it, nobody would buy it. That’s our society, nothing against anybody, but that’s how our society thinks.

If you look at Buddha’s statements today, it turns out that true spiritual discoveries are being matched by true scientific discoveries.

I am not necessarily thinking about string theory and so on, but basically of Einstein's theory of relativity. This and what quantum physics tells us is very much the same as what Buddha has been telling us for 2600 years, except that nobody would like to buy it, because it is labeled 'religion'. Forget about Buddha, with Jesus it is the same. If instead of a middle Eastern Jew he had been a Caucasian, today's outlook on religion might be different. We might have a universal acceptance, not based on faith only. Just look at the word 'faith-based'. It basically tells you: if you believe it, go ahead and follow. That is commonly accepted. To a certain extent I have to agree.

Look at the idea of continuation of consciousness. You could, if you wanted, take it on the basis of faith and leave it there for a while. That is fine. We can leave it there until science backs it up. That is why I am saying that if the scientists find this out in their way we would be better off. Then at least fifty per cent of the population will accept it, because it is science. It then has this remarkable seal called 'scientific discovery'.

When you really see that consciousness can only become consciousness and non-consciousness can only become non-consciousness, and then following from that, that there are new consciousnesses, that reduces the options tremendously. If there are no new consciousnesses, the question rises: we see new people and animals being born every day, so where are they coming from? Obviously then, they must be coming from previous lives? Where else?

There is a lot of evidence for this conclusion. Many kids do remember their past life. They remember specific conversations. They remember their school friends. They remember what they wrote in their school note books in their previous life and even what kind of bangles they used to wear. There are kids who recognize their parents of the previous life. That is not one or two cases, but hundreds of them. We can see it even today. From that angle, you can be convinced that previous and future lives are a reality. Not everybody is sitting down and making up stories. A few people maybe yes, but not everybody continuously lies.

These are some obvious reasons. Even in the judeo-christian tradition, although officially they don't talk about reincarnation, many practitioners have their own mystical experiences and if you look at those you get a different story. And then, even if you work

with the most simplified way of presentation, even there it says that after death you will go either to the right side of God or the wrong side of God, for eternity. But who is going there? The person we know has died and is gone, is no longer existent. So who is going there? We talk about hell, so somebody must be going there; who is that or who has been there and where do they come from? Even if you talk about eternity, where do the people who go there come from? Have they been created as eternal being from the beginning? They must be coming from somewhere. Reincarnation is actually nothing more than that, the continuation.

When the doctors declare you brain-dead you have not disappeared. You are changing your physical identity. In Michigan you get your driver's license from the Secretary of State. In Ohio it comes from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. They are actually giving you a new ID. When this body of ours dies, the question is simply whether our next identity will have horns or tails. We don't know yet.

This is a very important and difficult point. Perhaps for that reason a number of great traditions didn't go too much into it. For the people at that time, no matter what the idea of reincarnation [was], it was clear they needed to do good. Whether you really know about reincarnation or not, does not matter for what the best behavior should be. Today we are much more intelligent, more educated than most people 2500 ago. A lot of people will say that the ancient civilizations were great and ours is terrible, that those were the good times and now we have bad times, but from the point of view of capacity, understanding and knowledge, we are much more capable than the ancient people were. That is human development. So at that time, for a lot of people it was too hard to go beyond, so they left it there.

For them it really didn't matter how reincarnation works. What mattered is that they had to be good people. If you do good you will get good results. Doing bad gives bad results. So the most important was to encourage people to do good. And maybe that is why some of those traditions just left it there.

No matter how great religious traditions might be, they can't go over the peoples' head. If they do that, what is great about them? Great scholars may have great explanations and compositions, but

if no one understands them, what is the purpose? It has to be adjusted to the level that people can understand.

That is true for Buddhism as well. Certain disciples of Buddha at a certain level were told that the world is flat. To other disciples, at the same time, 2500 ago, Buddha taught that the world is round. Both explanations come from the same person's mouth.

Today we would question Buddha. Was he lying to some or to all people or which one of his statements was correct? At that time nobody questioned him in that way. Reality is a different thing to different people. If Buddha had told the first group that the world is round they would have thought that he was an absolutely crazy guy. The intelligent ones to whom he taught the world view of the Kalachakra was a different group. Due to their greater mind capacity they could adjust to Buddha telling them that the world was actually round. They didn't think he was crazy.

Today, of course, nobody doubts that the world is round, because science has proved it. You only have to fly in a plane and you directly see it. In the same way I am now waiting for science to discover that non-consciousness does not become consciousness and consciousness does not become non-consciousness. Even if they can prove the opposite, that consciousness does become non-consciousness, it will be a fantastic contribution to us, one way or another. But it has to be a real truth finding mission, not like stopping at the atom and only later finding there is something else below that.

Bringing all the points together we have to conclude that there are no new consciousnesses and those that are there, remain as consciousnesses.

When Buddha was asked, 'Is there a beginning and an end to existence?', he didn't answer but kept the biggest silence. The early Indian scholars said that this great silence shows that he really knew the mind of the people of his time. If he had said that there is an end, that would not have been true. If he had said there is no end that also would not have been true. There is in fact an end to the suffering existence. But there is no end to existence in general. Existence will continue. Particles may break apart, bottles will crack, but consciousness does not, because it is free of form.

You may say, ‘How come we don’t recognize each other then, since we are all old consciousnesses?’ The answer is: we don’t because we change identities. It is like changing your address. Someone goes and there is a new person and they can’t find you anymore. If they call your old phone number, someone else will answer. Change of identity causes us to not recognize each other.

This is very important. Without continuation there is no chance for us to become a buddha. We couldn’t get liberated. Yes, we do say that it is possible to become a buddha within the life time, but it is not likely. It is almost that there is no hope to do that in this life. So, if this life is all there is, why waste our energy for a goal that is impossible? The many generations of spiritual people would not have done all this if there was not a good reason. If one or two people get fooled, that is possible. But everybody does not get fooled. There are zillions of people who worked so hard for the spiritual path. So, if there was no possible achievement, why would they have done it? If the achievement is not possible in one life time, then probably we can get it in the next life time.

Since there is a continuum of consciousness, who is continuing? Who else besides us? Everybody. We all do continue. But that means we do have to change our identity. Our body just doesn’t last. It has in-built manufacturer’s defects. Honestly. My body is a 1939 model.

Audience: That was a very good year

Rimpoche: Yes, but do you still see any 1939 Chevrolets driving around in the streets of Ohio today? Even Rolls Royces there aren’t any around from that time.

Audience: There might still be a couple..

Rimpoche: Then they don’t have manufacturer’s defects. So, obviously our bodies do have manufacturer’s defects. Our bodies are form, made of five elements: earth, water, fire, air and space.

The warranty for a car will not be renewed after a little while. First you get three years, then another ten years, bumper to bumper, and after that, no longer any warranty. The car companies don’t want to be the losers. They will offer you all kinds of guarantees, but in the end they need to make money. If they guarantee beyond a certain limit they might be the losers. So they are not going to do that, as part of their policy. We buy the policy and then we can’t argue about it. That is how we condition our mind. If you look at the

things we outsource these days, the telephone services starting with 1800 numbers and so on, you will find out that the people who work there are conditioning their minds. They get told exactly what to say. Beyond that they cannot go. Then it is like talking to a machine. They will repeat the same thing three or four times. Beyond that they can do nothing. That is conditioning. Because this activity is easy to be conditioned it is easy to be outsourced. You are calling someone at Sony on a 1800 number and expect a Japanese person to take the call. But you get somebody in Bombay – if you are lucky. Otherwise, it could be someone in Beijing answering your call.

Mind is conditionable. Mind is conditionable and human beings accept that very easily. We call it ‘order’ and ‘rules and regulations’. It is nothing but mind-conditioning. If you want more conditioning, look at the ‘laws of the land’.

Mind can be conditioned because mind is basically lucid and empty and pure. You can condition it with anything, good and bad. You can make limitations on people’s mind. ‘You are supposed to know this much and nothing beyond’. Who makes that decision? Mind also. Mind is enforcing conditions on another mind. ‘You are supposed to know more beyond that, because you are an executive.’ ‘You are not supposed to know more than that because you are just a telephone operator.’

If mind were not lucid and empty, you could not impose conditions. They wouldn’t go in. It is politically incorrect what I am about to say, especially today. It is now one day after the 11th, so maybe I can say it.⁷⁰ When Ronald Reagan was president he functioned very well because you could put into his mind whatever you wanted him to communicate simply and easily. When George Bush senior was president, he was used to thinking things halfway through for himself, so it was not so easy to put things into his mind like with Ronald Reagan, the actor.

So when it is empty, it is easy to put something in. Anything can be done. When there is already something, it is not so easy. The mind is empty, for all of us, lucid and empty. Because of the power of lucidity you can project anything. If it is not true it will contradict. When you find contradiction you know it is not true.

That mind is what we condition and re-condition continuously, all the time, all the way. That is why, when we have some difficulties,

we are happy to say, ‘That was a good learning experience’. That is a great excuse for making mistakes. Why do we call that ‘learning experience?’ Because our mind is continuously reconditioned.

So what you have to do is almost like on the computer: emptying, catching the files with the mouse and pull them over and dump them in the garbage bin. Our major rebuilding, or reconditioning is done in that way. The mind is brought into more and more subtle levels until you don’t know anything any more. It is brought to the point where we don’t recognize, where we forget. It is actually not so much forgetting, but you come to the point where you don’t know how to swallow, you don’t know how to walk. The information how to do that is getting wiped off from your memory.

Mind at the time of death. The biggest such a process happens during death. At that time you reach the most basic level of the mind, which we call pure – blank and totally empty. The process is to reverse the individual to the original source, the primordial mind. The deepest subtle consciousness, the person that is really there deep down – which is different from ‘personality’ – is the primordial mind. We have a nice terminology for that: dissolving. We say that our earth element dissolves into our water element *etc.*. What is really happening though, is disconnecting the individual from the physical aspects of his or her body. The body consists mostly of bones, muscles and flesh, which is the earth element within the body. You can call it dissolving or withdrawing; after that you no longer have feelings. Somebody could chop off your hand and you wouldn’t feel it. If your body is cremated you don’t feel it. In Tibet they do have sky burials during which they cut up the bodies into pieces and feed them to the vultures. They even smash the bones. The mix them with dough and feed them to the birds. You can’t feel that because you have disconnected. You have withdrawn. The earth element in our body, the connection between consciousness and body has been cut out. There is nothing there, we don’t feel it. This is true even in our life. The anesthetists will numb certain parts of our body. Acupuncturists will block the nerves which connect certain physical parts to each other, with a needle. The connection is withdrawn. Who is withdrawing? My mind.

Eventually, at death, the mind withdraws from all the elements, earth, water, fire and air [successively]. Finally, beyond the air, you

withdraw to the consciousness itself. That indicates that the final conclusion of packing up is the consciousness. We come face to face with the primordial mind, which is absolutely pure and luminous. The question now comes: are you merging with the pure primordial mind or are you being rejected because something is faulty? If you merge with it you go right into it.

You might have watched the movie called 'Never-Ending Story'. There is a point where a kid tries to go through a boundary of bullets. Once he gets through there is the danger that he will be rejected by his own reflection. It is similar to being jerked back in a sling shot. In the story the kid was not freaked out by his reflection and then was transformed somehow and reached the other side.

The process at death is similar. If the primordial mind does not reject you, then you become pure and you may have a chance of going beyond. It is such a concentrated, quiet, deeply internal level. That gives you the chance of going beyond [ordinary, limited rebirth]. This is the process at death.

During sleep and during fainting, to a certain extent, there is a similar pattern. When you faint, your mind at that time is influenced by the activity you were engaged prior to fainting. The conversation you had before fainting may become a movie that you experience during fainting. You may also just feel complete darkness. Both are not the real thing. The real thing is the pure mind. Whether we know the pure is pure or not, that is our problem. We don't realize it, because we so used to wrong perceptions. Misinformation is almost our heritage. We have inherited it from the previous life. It is there, right from the beginning. Confusion is nothing new for us. We have been carrying it with us completely and we are addicted to functioning like that.

When you want to change it, make it right, you have to change it at the level where you are addicted. Therefore, a good death depends on a good life. Your death is easily influenced by the impressions of this life. At death we are in a situation where nobody can help us, nobody can provide the right conditions, nobody can do anything. We are totally dependent on ourselves. So it is better that we prepare ourselves and provide our own good conditions. To make sure good conditions are there for us at that time is to get ourselves *used* to good addictions right now.

When we are addicted we don't have to put in any new efforts. Take the example of smoking. Luckily not so many people smoke anymore. But if you are used to smoking you will pick up a cigarette automatically, for example after food. You don't have to remember anything. The desire, the craving for cigarettes, pops up without thinking. Likewise, when you are addicted to wine, the same thing happens. It doesn't matter whether you are addicted to red or white wine, chardonnay, merlot or cabernet sauvignon, whether it is Californian, French Bordeaux or Italian wine, whatever you are addicted to you don't even have to think about. The moment you sit down your mind is immediately connected with a glass of wine. It doesn't have to be wine, it could be pop or something else. You will automatically need it and try to get it.

Get addicted to positivity. So it is a good idea to get yourself addicted to positiveness, whatever you can manage. Do not try to bite something you cannot chew. For example, the mixing of the mother and child clear lights is probably the best way of going through death. But we have no idea how to do it. If you try to get it now, by the time you need it, it may be too late. Or you could try to mix the death process with the understanding of emptiness, if you have some idea about it. It is a little easier than trying to mix the mother-and child clear lights. And if you can't do that, at least you can try to think of compassion. But it is important to have real compassion, not attachment. It has to be pure love and pure compassion, not passive aggression, which we do have very often and do not even recognize. We don't have so many chances. So, we have to make sure with sincerity, that our mind is in a state of dedication, devotion and love.

Mind itself is clear and lucid. Because of that it takes anything you put in. It is like a blank negative. Any image you shoot, it will take. So we have to be careful what we put on it. Pure love, compassion or at least the attitude that thinks, 'I wish I could help'.

Even easier is to have intelligent faith. If you can't think that, then Buddha recommends to just think of Buddha. That is why refuge becomes so important. If we cannot do anything by ourselves we can still think about refuge. I had a friend in Holland, who told me once: 'I fainted and was close to dying and I couldn't think about anything else except refuge. That is not good enough.' On

the other hand, if when you faint you spontaneously think about refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, it *is* good enough. There is nothing to cry about.

This is how one should prepare for the process of changing identity at death. We should also help others to do the same. But you have to be careful. You might think of helping others to think about refuge and push Buddha on them. That is not right. It is okay, if you are Buddhist or you like Buddha or if at least you don't mind Buddha. But if somebody hates or dislikes Buddha, then pushing that is not right.

I once made that mistake when Timothy O'Leary was dying. Allen Ginsberg had called me during a late lunch to let me know and suddenly I was talking to Timothy himself. He had a very heavy voice. And I just had a glass of wine. I kept on saying *Om Muni Muni Maha Munaye Soha*. Then I suddenly heard him mumble, 'Why?' I realized that I was pushing Buddha on him. Then I suddenly remembered that a few days earlier I had seen a Henry Ford commercial on television. Some guy was driving a car through a beautiful area and the voice over said that anyone could have such a car and drive through this beautiful country without limit. When that popped up in my head I re-phrased what I was trying to tell him and talked about beautiful, unlimited space and suddenly I heard his voice saying, 'Why not?' Then I didn't hear anything any more. I kept on talking for a little while and finally hung up the phone. Later Allen told me that he was there and heard him say, 'Why?' and then, 'Why not?' and Allen thought I had done the right thing, because Timothy was always interested in unlimited space and even had wanted people to collect his ashes and throw them out in space. So somehow his consciousness managed to link up to beautiful open space, and whether that was God's creation or someone else's, doesn't matter.

We said that at death the mind becomes so subtle that you don't [acknowledge] anything any more, but you are influenced by the mind state immediately before that. So when the mind re-emerges from the neutral stage, it probably links up with that. In Timothy O'Leary's case, because his mind at the dying stage was probably a good one, thinking about the beautiful open space, the emerging mind probably linked with another positive karmic thing. You

know, good links with good, bad links with bad. So at least for one life time, there is a positive basis, or at least it will be not too bad.

This shows what we can do for ourselves and what we can do to help friends, loved ones and others go in that way.

The most important thing is first of all to help yourself, by getting yourself addicted to positivity and getting rid of negative addictions. Think about it: we are even addicted to calling ‘mom’ for help. If anything goes wrong, instinctively we cry ‘mom’. That is automatic. One of my great teachers, Kyabje Lhatsun Rinpoche used to fall asleep while saying prayers. But no matter what kind of prayers or mantras he was doing, while sleeping, he found himself switching to a particular mantra. So he was addicted to that mantra. Like that, we can get ourselves addicted to good things.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Audience: The example you have given us, how is that different from sleep?

Rinpoche: The mind itself has a luminance nature during the sleep as well, but the clear side is not working that well, because it is somehow overpowered by another thought, just like during the fainted period the mind was overpowered by the mind immediately before. The present mind at that moment did not really function. Or, even if it continued, the function has been overtaken by the more powerful vividness of something other than the present itself, which is immediately before that. A second or even one hundredth of a second, or whatever the period might be, it has not been itself, but influenced by the period immediately before. Likewise, in the sleep period, the lucidness is relaxed. That is why we feel rested when we wake up. The mind has not been so much actively used. And also, we have those dreams coming up. Dreams are influenced a lot by what we did during the daytime, the food we ate, what we talked, whether we took alcohol and how much, or non-alcohol drinks and how much. Both influence. Also coffee and tea influence. Consciousness or mind itself does not acknowledge what is happening at that time, because at that time it becomes more subtle than during the awakened state. Mind continues – in sleep, in being awake, and every time. However, the difference between being awake and sleep is that at the time of the sleep, the mind is more

subtle than at the awakened state, therefore it functions slightly differently. We all know that the awake daytime functioning influences the sleeping period at night time. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out. That gives us a very powerful message: what we do now matters to the mind.

Audience: My question was, when you said that you fainted and you did not realize that you had fainted so you had the movie playing in your head of the conversation you had just had, what if you had had a stroke and were dying and did not realize you were dying, at what point would your mind click into the proper way to die and to go where you want to go and not have that movie running in your head?

Rimpoche: I think that movie running in the head is a very good thing, and having a good one [running] is probably a proper way of dying. That is why I said there is a powerful message here: probably one of the best ways of dying is running a good movie.

Audience: What if you are dying a violent death, if somebody else is killing you?

Rimpoche: Violently dying at somebody's hand or dying with tremendous pain and agony is not necessarily good. It happens, it is reality in our life. Can we correct that? I don't know, probably not, that is what I should say. It depends on the situation, on how the person really is, on terms and conditions; it depends on tremendously on that.

Audience: When you are talking about apples and apples,⁷¹ are you saying that the nature of emptiness and the nature of mind are the same and they are both clear, lucid and naturally pure?

Rimpoche: This is a very important question. There are great Tibetan masters and Tibetan teachers who will tell you that mind itself is emptiness, that by knowing the mind you will know emptiness. Then there are great Tibetan masters, great Tibetan practitioners, great siddhas who tell you, 'No it is not'. It is not for me to judge. I can't say that the one is wrong and the other is right, nor can I say the other is right, and the first is wrong. The First Panchen Lama says in his Mahamudra root text:

From the point of view of individually ascribed names, there are

numerous traditions such as those of the Simultaneously arising as merged, the Amulet box, Possessing five, the Six spheres of equal taste, the Four syllables, the Pacifier, the Object to be cut off, Dzogchen, the discursive Madhyamaka view, and so on. Nevertheless, when scrutinized by a yogi, learned in scripture and logic and experienced, their definitive meanings are all seem to come to the same intended point.

People will give you different names, such as *chakechen* (Skt. Mahamudra) or *dzogchen*, or *uma*. All these different names give different ways of explaining, but, Panchen Losang Chögyen, says, ‘When as an experienced practitioner yogi, you look at what you experience, the essence message and the meaning [of all those] is the same.’

So, when we talk [about them] we follow that particular tradition. But in the practice, it [eventually] all becomes one. Otherwise everybody should have been confused and the earlier Tibetan Buddhist practitioners all completely confused and running around crazy, and that is not the case.

Whether by encountering our mind itself we really understand emptiness or not is a completely different thing. In New York I am teaching the shamatha meditation and in talking about the focusing point, [besides taking the usual option of focusing] on the Buddha image, we talked about focusing on the mind.⁷² The First Panchen Lama says [in his mahamudra root text], this is the introduction of the *relative* mind.

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APPENDIX 1: THE PRIMORDIAL MIND

EXCERPT VAJRAYOGINI TEACHING, WINTER RETREAT 2000

The ultimate yana of the maha anu yoga tantras introduces you to this subtle mind which functions together with the subtle energy. We talk about it as being basically two – one is the ultimate, indestructible and the other is the indestructible drop that is with you until you die. That indestructible drop when conceived, is the seed of the father, and the part of the egg of the mother, combined together. The combination of that, sort of holds together until you die, and when you die these two are separated. This is the reason why Eastern people say the mind is the heart. They're not talking about intellectual intelligent thought processing mechanisms – I don't think they're talking about that. In the West, we refer to the mind as up here, which is the thought processing through a physical mechanism of the brain; and then we map the nerves through which what the psychologists call 'emotional intelligence' is functioning. The reason why Eastern people say the individual or the person is at the heart level, is because of that indestructible drop, which goes up and down and occupies any different part of our body, but never separates. Mostly when we are awake, it probably remains near the heart level, or heart chakra level if you want to go that way. It does not separate until you die, so its called the indestructible drop. That is the relative part of it, the absolute part of the indestructible drop is the subtle energy and subtle consciousness.

Very often you hear this refer to the subtle energy or subtle air as the horse and subtle mind as the rider – the one who rides the horse. The understanding here is that there is a subtle consciousness, and there is a subtle energy which never separate; even if you change your body, these two don't separate, they travel together. We call this the very subtle air-mind. Air refers to energy, and mind refers to the consciousness part of the mind, not the knowledge part of it. Such a consciousness is extremely subtle and is the one that is traveling throughout our lives – this is the traveler. It may assume or occupy mental and physical identity. In that case, the mental becomes the understanding or knowing part of mind, rather than the stream of awareness.

In the Vajrayogini practice, where we talk about the great Mahamudra union of wisdom and emptiness – to be recognized as the

mind or the dharmakaya of the enlightened beings – we emphasize more the wisdom part rather than the part of creating the illusory body. So, when we talk about dharmakaya, we do not talk about it from the energy point of view, but from the consciousness point of view.

In other words, the body and mind union is the merging of energy and consciousness. The energy is the cause of creating the illusion body and the consciousness is the cause of creating the clear light. When they merge they will become one-ness and then you will become the union of body and mind.

In the context of Vajrayogini, a mother tantra, it's not called the union of body and mind but the union of bliss and void. This is telling you that the emphasis, rather than on the energy, is more on the side of the consciousness or mind, so that it can become the clear light. If you look into Guhyasamaja, the emphasis is on the energy, so that it can become the illusion body.

The two combined together are the ultimate pure body and the ultimate pure mind. The ultimate pure mind is called 'clear light', whereas the ultimate pure body is called 'illusion body'. The mahānu-yoga tantra practices are mainly divided into father and mother tantras. The father tantras try to achieve the ultimate body part. The main production of the father tantra is the ultimate body, the illusion body.

It is like General Motors have a section where they make the body of the car and a section where they make the engine. The ultimate production of a car is probably the Cadillac. They produce car bodies with all the push buttons and extras and the engine will be an eight cylinder automatic. These are produced separately and when they are assembled together, they put the engine into the body, stick the price on and drop it off, right?

Likewise here, on the enlightened level you have two workshops. The father tantra workshop is the body manufacturer and the mother tantra workshop makes the engine – in this case the mind. Since we are in the mother tantra workshop here, our aim is the production of the ultimate mind. What is the ultimate mind? It is the most subtle of the subtle minds. However, we cannot completely separate the energy from that, because it is after all an indestructible, inseparable drop. It comes as a package together; you have to deal

with it a little bit here and there. But our main concern, our main production, is the mind. So now, when we talk about the dharmakaya, the death and dying stage, we talk from the angle of the mind rather than from the angle of the energy.

Normally the teachings will talk to you in terms of ‘simultaneously-born wisdom’ ‘sameness with the inseparable bliss-void nature’ and terms like that. All these refer to the very subtle primordial mind itself. So what is that primordial mind? You cannot actually point it out. You cannot say, ‘this is it’. That is the difficulty. You can only base it on experience. For the time being you have to presume that you are experiencing. What are you experiencing? From that angle we can talk a little bit.

When you encounter the primordial mind of yours, you cannot talk much about its activities. It is indescribable. It has no activities, as though nothing is functioning. You cannot say it is really neutral. It is better to say that it has no movement. It is like the weather two days ago, just before the snow came. It was very still, there was no movement. It is a little like that. It is like encountering emptiness itself. There is stillness and there is also clarity. It is *like as if* you are encountering emptiness. It is like being in the middle of space. With that I don’t mean outer space where you see all the stars, but just open space. We cannot really describe what open space is. Only if there is something built into open space, then you can describe something. You can describe houses, people, monuments, but you cannot describe empty space itself. At the most you can say that it is empty, [that it] allows you to move without being blocked. The subtle mind is like that. This state of mind has the capability of achieving all the qualities of the enlightened level, yet it can also take you down to wherever. Each and every individual being has had that right from the beginning, continuously. I am not trying to select a word for that yet, I am trying to give you a picture. This mind is still, clear, capable and everybody possesses it. That is the base on which you work to achieve the dharmakaya.

Now a number of people will tell you *that* itself is emptiness. That is true bullshit. I can’t say it is complete bullshit, because even Gyüto, one of the two tantric colleges in Tsongkhapa’s tradition, the upper tantric college, to which I myself used to belong, also says that it is emptiness. At the same time, if this were really emptiness, there

would not be a single human being who did not encounter emptiness, because they died a number of times and at that time they encountered the primordial mind. I would like to leave it at that level because otherwise it is going to hurt a lot of viewpoints and a lot of people won't like that.

This is the base on which we work. We are unable to tap into it at this level, but we do have some understanding of it, because we went through this a number of times. We do encounter that when we die. We have changed lives so many times and we did go through with this a number of times. So when today people have certain experiences – when they are able to pull something, think that they have experienced something, reach somehow close to that level – it could be on the basis of intuition, on chemicals or through meditative power. The reason that we have been able to link with this is because of our personal experience which we had in a number of life times when we have encountered this. This primordial mind is the base, the training ground, the army boot camp.

On our ordinary level, if we don't do anything else, we still experience that during the death stage. Everybody does. That is why I emphasize this is not emptiness, although a lot of people will tell you that it is emptiness. They will even tell you that it is the introduction to the luminosity of mind. However, it is the ultimate ground of mind. You cannot go any subtler than that on the level of ordinary beings. So we encounter that when we die, like it or not. Is it possible to encounter it before death? Yes, provided you are capable of the right practice. You have to be able to collect the total movement of all your energies within the body. If you can bring them into the central channel, keep them in there and dissolve them in there, then even though you don't die you will encounter the primordial mind.

So, it works by meditating. Through meditation you can collect all energies into the central channel. That is why we make such a big deal about the central channel. A channel is a path through which you can go and function. The body is almost like a house and those channels are the wires through which the electricity travels, or through which your water is running, your heat is coming through or your cold air return. All of those are the channels in your body. In a building, at the points where the electrical wires come together, the electricians put a junction box. In the human body these are the

chakras. So all these channels are going through the body criss-crossing each other and the crossing points are the chakras. That is how we function on both, the physical and the psychic level.

There are three main channels. The two outer ones are functioning quite all right. They could be the electrical pathway and the water pipe or something. What is not functioning, however, is the really good one at the center. This is the one you want to have functioning. The reason why it is not functioning is the faulty wiring. The criss-crossing wires are going through too tight, so that the central one can't breathe. The central channel is totally choked because of faulty wiring. If this was functioning properly, the two side channels would not have much responsibility. They could relax, there would be no reason to go on overcompensating. Right now, the over-zealousness of the right and left channel is choking the central channel. When the real line is beginning to function, you will be able to encounter the primordial mind. Right now, we cannot see the ultimate nature of the mind or to say it straight forwardly, the primordial mind, because we are not looking through the right window. The middle window is blocked by the overzealousness of the left and right neighbors. When you are able to meditate, to build up the correct window, these exercises will make the central channel stronger. When the central channel becomes stronger, the choking power of the left, the attachment channel, and the right, the hatred channel, loses its grip. It is only through the energy exercises which strengthen the central channel, that the choking power of the side channels can be loosened. When that happens, the subtle and gross airs can function within the central channel. Not only do they enter and move around in there, but they can stay there. That is talking from the psychic-physical point of view. Through that the power of attachment and hatred is being reduced. The real, central one begins to prevail. You may not see the primordial mind but you can begin to experience it.

I'm going to mention now some of the qualities of that primordial mind.

The primordial mind has the capacity and capability of maintaining all qualities of the enlightened mind. That doesn't mean it has them; it has the capability, it is spacious enough to have those.

It is available with every sentient being, from the limitless beginning. There is never a single minute when we don't have it. It is continuously with us, even when we are furiously angry. The primordial mind is not touched by that.

It doesn't matter what kind of life you have had, a good human life or a life as a mean, terrible tiger, it cannot change the very nature of this mind.

The nature of the mind is pure. Why is that so? Normally we associate our life with our internal and external experiences. We have a bad life when we have bad experiences and a good life when we have good experiences. This very primordial mind cannot be influenced by good or bad life experiences, neither internal nor external. Whenever and wherever you are born, this primordial mind itself doesn't change, [doesn't get influenced by] the quality of your mind.

It is like sun rays: pure, clean, illuminating, natural. There's nothing impure about sun rays (unless there is a problem with the ozone layer)

When this mind encounters faulty emotions like hatred and attachment, what happens to it, since it is always pure? The example given here is that of gold. On the surface of the gold there can be some impurities, but the gold itself cannot be tarnished. It may pick up dust, *etc.* but that is easy to remove. Unlike silver, the tarnish doesn't stick to gold. Likewise, in appearance there might be a great deal of activity of hatred and attachment, but hatred and obsession do not really go into the nature of this mind. The nature of the primordial mind itself is not affected! Any kind of dust or rust may only cover the gold. Whatever the appearance may be, it is not stuck to the mind. It is only temporary and separable.

It is like pure water in which you mix a little dust. Then the water will look a little mushy-muddy. But if you leave it for a while the dust will settle and the water will again appear pure. Likewise when this mind is freed of dualistic perceptions, attachment, hatred *etc.*, it will show its pure, clean, clear wonderful nature. We cannot see that purity now. We don't function like that, because we have those faulty perceptions. Like the [muddy] water, there is the appearance of attachment and hatred, but it is all removable, it is temporary. Whatever delusions and dualistic feelings we may have, if you let it be quiet and pure, this mind is capable of letting the dust settle and

maintains its pure nature. It does not affect the nature of the primordial mind. However, due to our addictions we cannot see it, except at death or if we have the mental development. The example given is,

If you look in the water and it is not mixed with anything,
you can see the very clean, pure nature of the water itself.
Likewise the primordial mind.
If all these temporary faults are not there,
it is free of dualistic perception and there is quietness by nature.
It is clear and lucid.

This example is from a thousand years ago. Nowadays we could say that if the water is free from any pollution, it is very clean. You see, you don't have to go into a dark room to have quietness. That is the primordial mind. We, however, encounter hatred, attachment, jealousy, sadness, happiness. We zigzag from high to low and back. All that is not part of the primordial mind. These belong to what we refer to as negative emotions and their influence and effects.

That is very briefly the introduction of the base. Now you can see it: when you encounter that mind, you might not necessarily encounter with emptiness! A lot of people do think that. And that is why a lot of people do 'lizard'-meditation, hoping to encounter that state of mind. You don't have to do that however, because when you die, you will encounter with that, for sure, no question, unless you die in a car crash, plane crash or fall from a three-story building. If you die through some kind of tragic, strange accidents, then that primordial mind might not be noticeable.

So this is the base on which you work, the dharmakaya, and that is why we go and work with the death and dying stage. We are not training ourselves in how to die, but we are preparing for, when that time comes, how we can use it as an opportunity.

On the development level [of vajrayana practice] we imagine everything. It all happens on the imaginative level. We even imagine the primordial mind and we try to acknowledge that and then we try to acknowledge emptiness and the blissful nature of that mind and we call that 'dharmakaya'. All of that is totally imagined. Why do we do such a tricky, funny imagination? Because this imagination is going to become real [at the completion stage]. Right now you are imagin-

ing an uncharted territory. At some stage this will become real. Right now we are unable to encounter it, because of the blocking power of our negative emotions. Later we will be able to encounter it as directly as I am now looking at your faces and you at mine. This will be possible once we become free of these blocks, obstacles and points of confusion. Can we describe more than that? Probably not.

Basically, I introduced the ground, the base on which you work. Even if you want to paint something, the canvas on which you paint, the base on what you're going to work is the foundation. That base is nothing other than that of the primordial, subtle mind or primordial consciousness itself. [I hesitate on the word mind, because] I don't know what the word 'mind' gives you an understanding of, I don't know what difference you make between 'thought' and 'mind'. What is the difference between thought and mind?

Audience: Thought takes place within the mind.

Rimpoche: So the mind is general and thought is specific. So all thoughts are mind and not all minds are thoughts. Give me an example of something that is not thought but is mind.

Audience: Other kinds of perceptions, like sensations.

Rimpoche: So these perceptions are not done by mental stimulation? They are not thoughts, but there is understanding? Very interesting. In that case I can stick with 'primordial mind'. The primordial mind is the base you are working on. What is the work you are doing? You are trying to get what emptiness is on the basis of the primordial mind itself. This itself indicates that the primordial mind is not emptiness. But can we describe the primordial mind? The great Indian Mahasiddha Saraha, one of the earliest masters in the Heruka lineage, says, 'No one can talk about the nature of the primordial mind.' However, we can feel it. It is sort of almost no activity – for our perception at least. You cannot really say that the primordial mind has no activity, but in our perception it almost looks like that. It seems static. But that is not a good description. When you say 'static' you get the picture of something permanent, concrete, like a building.

Audience: It is stillness.

Rimpoche: Yes, maybe that is a better word. At the moment we are still experimenting with the language. This will probably go on for

another fifteen to twenty years. Then it might settle down – if Buddhism remains that long, who knows. For the primordial mind you don't want to get the idea of a concrete building or monument or something. It is tricky. This mind has no beginning and no end, it is still, yet you don't want to say that it is static. So there is no movement, yet there is movement. There is a problem there. When you encounter the primordial mind it is almost like encountering emptiness. The reason why it is said to be *like* encountering emptiness is that the individual person at that time may not be able to focus and function, no matter how brilliant they may be. Yet there is at that time the capacity to perceive. That is why the expression 'static' does not work. There is the capacity to perceive and there is lucidity. There is the capability to deliver enlightenment.

Audience: Stillness is actually a good word because it allows for subtle activity.

Audience: You could call it a state of awareness.

Rimpoche: I would not call the level of primordial mind awareness. It suggests too much understanding. In any case this mind is capable of developing the resultant enlightened level.

Audience: The way you have been talking about the primordial mind is always like what I would understand from the term 'soul'.

Rimpoche: Very good comment.

APPENDIX 2: HEART SUTRA – PRAJNAPARAMITA SUTRA

Thus I have heard:

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva practiced deep highest perfect wisdom when perceived the five fields of consciousness all empty, relieved every suffering.

‘Shariputra, form is not different from emptiness.

Emptiness not different from form.

Form is the emptiness; emptiness is the form.

Sensation, recognition, conceptualization, consciousness also like this.

Shariputra, this is the original character of everything:

not born, not annihilated, not tainted, not pure; does not increase, does not decrease. Therefore in emptiness no form, no sensation, no recognition, no conceptualisation, no consciousness.

No eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of touch;

no eye, no world of eyes,

until we come to also no world of consciousness.

No ignorance, also no ending of ignorance, all the way through to old age and death, also no ending of old age and death.

No suffering, no cause of suffering, no nirvana, no path, no wisdom; also no attainment because no non-attainment.

Every bodhisattva depends on highest perfect wisdom,

because mind meets no obstacle. Because of no obstacle no fear’s born.

Gone beyond all topsy-turvy absolutes attain nirvana.

Past, present and future every buddha depends on highest perfect wisdom, therefore attain supreme, perfect enlightenment.

Therefore I know, highest perfect wisdom is the great holy mantra, the great untainted mantra, the supreme mantra,

the incomparable mantra. Is capable of assuaging all suffering.

True because not false.

Therefore he proclaimed highest perfect wisdom mantra, and proclaimed mantra says:

TAYATHA GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SOHA

O Shariputra, this is how a bodhisattva-mahasattva comes to know the highest perfect wisdom.’

Then Buddha praised the noble Avalokiteshvara: ‘Excellent, excellent! Highest perfect wisdom is accomplished exactly like that!

translation: Allen Ginsberg

APPENDIX 3: EXPLANATION OF THE MANTRA OM

OM symbolizes the ability to express everything. And what you are able to express, you're able to establish. In normal judeo-christian terminology we say God is everywhere, don't we? I don't know the reason why they say that, but I do understand how from the Buddhist background you can say God is everywhere; it is because of this reason [the mind being the basis of everything]. We buddhists say that on our ordinary level the energy we use and the mind we have, function together. But the body we have and the mind we have can function separately. There is a very strong connection, but they can function separately.

However, when you reach a certain very high level, enlightenment, you have gone beyond the separation. That means that body and mind have become a union. Normally they talk about the problem of dualism, but when body and mind become a union, oneness, you go beyond dualism; there is no separation, they have become oneness. When they have become oneness, the frequency on which they function changes; not only the frequency changes, but on that level the body *is* mind and the mind *is* body. That is why whatever the mind knows the body knows and whatever the body knows the mind knows. The enlightened mind knows everything so the body is there too because it is perceiving. That is how that body and mind become pervasive, and that is why it is everywhere. That is from the Buddhist point of view saying God is everywhere. The OM expresses that; that is why it is called jewel-mantra.⁷³

OM consists of the letters A-U-M. The combination of A-U-M becomes OM. These three syllables A-U-M combined together represent body, mind, speech of total enlightened beings. The moment you say OM, you are calling on, or pulling forth, the essence of the body, speech, mind of all enlightened beings. That's why OM is always at the beginning of the mantra. That OM is like the jewel on the victory banner.

A is the essence or source of all sounds. It is the basic life of all language. No matter whoever makes whatever noise in any language, it has to be A. Even babies will say 'ahhh.' Even the cat will say A; it may say 'Meow', but it does have 'ah' in there. Every

sound is produced by A. A comes from the abdomen rather than from the throat. A has neither growth nor death. A cannot say or express anything by itself. You cannot say a word without A but A alone cannot express anything. On the other hand A makes everything clear: without 'a' you cannot say 'ma', without 'a' you cannot say 'o' or 'u' or 'e', so every single word is made clear by 'a'. That is the reason why A represents the sound. The activity of enlightened beings and of non-enlightened beings, communication, is based on sound.

If you read Tibetan and you try to explain A-O-M, the Tibetan letters will tell you A-U-M rather than A-O-M. That is because of a Tibetan-Sanskrit transferring system. If you follow that system, you first have A and then you have to produce U. Then you have to remove the U underneath and by removing the U underneath the O is produced. So bottom line, it will come down to O.

The M is MA, which means 'mother' and represents the source of being; therefore M is represented by a zero and is the symbol of reality.

In order to say OM, you need all three. In the English phonetics you can just write the letters O and M. But remember, even the letter O has the A in it.⁷⁴

Then there is another explanation. Out of the three, A-U-M or A-O-M, the A represents the *life-sustaining* energy. The *Vajramala Tantra* says, 'A remains at the dharma chakra lotus' Air is pervasive to all chakras. A-influenced air is called 'great air', meaning life-sustaining energy. That's what this tantra says. The dharma chakra is the heart chakra. It is really the traditional old thinking, the mind is at the heart level, the heart is at the center of the heart chakra. That's why it's called heart chakra even. So that's why it's called life-sustaining. From the dharma chakra, it goes up to the eyebrow level, where you have the six-petalled energy chakra. So from the heart to the eyebrow level it is air that really holds and sustains everything; it is called life-sustaining air.

Then the A goes [to] U. This U energy is upholding all the energies from the heart level to the crown level, making them go straight uphill and not drop down. It is called *upwards traveling* energy. That's why you have the U level first rather than immediately

going to O. The upwards traveling energy functions like fire, like the sun. It upholds the heat, especially the majestic look, the good look, the complexion of physical appearance. Then you have to wipe off the U, making two or three zigzags or transitions. I don't know how that really works. Kyabje Ling Rinpoche was the expert on it. He always had us write and do this and said, 'Ah, you don't know anything.' But there's some zigzag mark, there are reasons, there is something to say, like 'this will obtain that, that will obtain this...' and finally you get on the O level.

Then there's the M, represented by the zero. Where does it remain? About six inches above the crown somewhere. [It represents the *pervasive energy*].

So, the physical structure of the internal energy is OM – A-O-M. It actually has the whole energy of the heart chakra, the throat chakra, and the crown chakra⁷⁵, combined together. Three chakras, three level of energy [Tib. *lung*, air] combined working together, that is OM. That is why OM is so important. That is true to the body of the enlightenment beings, and that's true to ourselves. So, people who do breathing exercises, if you can think of them together, it gives you much more than just simply breathing.

OM begins the mantra, and then SOHA at the end makes it stable, solid. SOHA means 'lay the foundation'. So [these two words together mean]: May, by the power of the enlightened beings those three energies, the *upholding*, the *life-sustaining energy* and the *pervasive energy* be made stable within me, within sentient beings.

A-O-M represents body-speech-mind of the protector, Tara, as well as and body-speech-mind of ourselves. Then you have the name [or specific qualities of the deity] in between, and then you have the SOHA. Its meaning is, 'May you, Tara, put the foundation of your pure body, speech and mind in my body, speech and mind, so that my body will become a pure body like yours, my speech will become pure speech like yours, my mind will become a pure mind like yours'.

Explanations given in teachings on Tara and on the Perfection of Wisdom mantra.

APPENDIX 4: CLASSIFICATION OF ALL EXISTENCE
 FIVE CATEGORIES TO BE KNOWN [Tib. *shes bya gzhi lnga*]⁷⁶

All phenomenal existence	Of transitory nature and caused, created, impermanent or changing. Skt. <i>anitya</i> Tib. <i>mi rtag pa</i>	1. Forms Skt. <i>rūpa</i> Tib. <i>gzugs</i>	- the energy-forms or sense powers [Tib. <i>dbang-po lnga</i>]: eye sense power, ear-, nose-tongue and body sense power - the five objects of the senses [Tib. <i>don lnga</i>]: visible form, sound, odor, taste, tangible object, - the form for the mental consciousness	
	=	Consciousness	2. Mind Skt. <i>citta</i> Tib. <i>sems</i>	- the six consciousnesses eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue- body- and mental consciousness [Tib. <i>nam par shes pa</i>]
	actuality, things, products, or objective reality	Skt. <i>jnana</i> Tib. <i>nam shes</i>	3. Mental functions or events Skt. <i>caitta</i> Tib. <i>sems byung</i>	5 omnipresent factors 5 determining factors 11 wholesome factors 4 variable factors 6 root delusions 20 secondary delusions
	Skt. <i>bhava</i> Tib. <i>dnogs po</i>	4. Non-associated compositional factors (= what exists in a composite way and is not classified under the above ones) Skt. <i>viprayuktasamskara</i> Tib. <i>ldan-min 'du-byed</i>	-person [Skt. <i>pudgala</i> , Tib. <i>gang z'ag</i>] - non-person Designations to states, like time, area, impermanence, life, etc.	
	5. Not of transitory nature, non-created unpounded, permanent or unchanging Skt. <i>nitya</i> Tib. <i>rtag pa</i> or <i>'dus ma byas</i>	- space [Skt <i>akasha</i> , Tib. <i>nam mkeba</i>] - analytical cessation - non-analytical cessation - suchness [Skt. <i>tathata</i> , Tib. <i>de bzhin nyid</i>]		

APPENDIX 5: FIFTY-ONE MENTAL FACULTIES

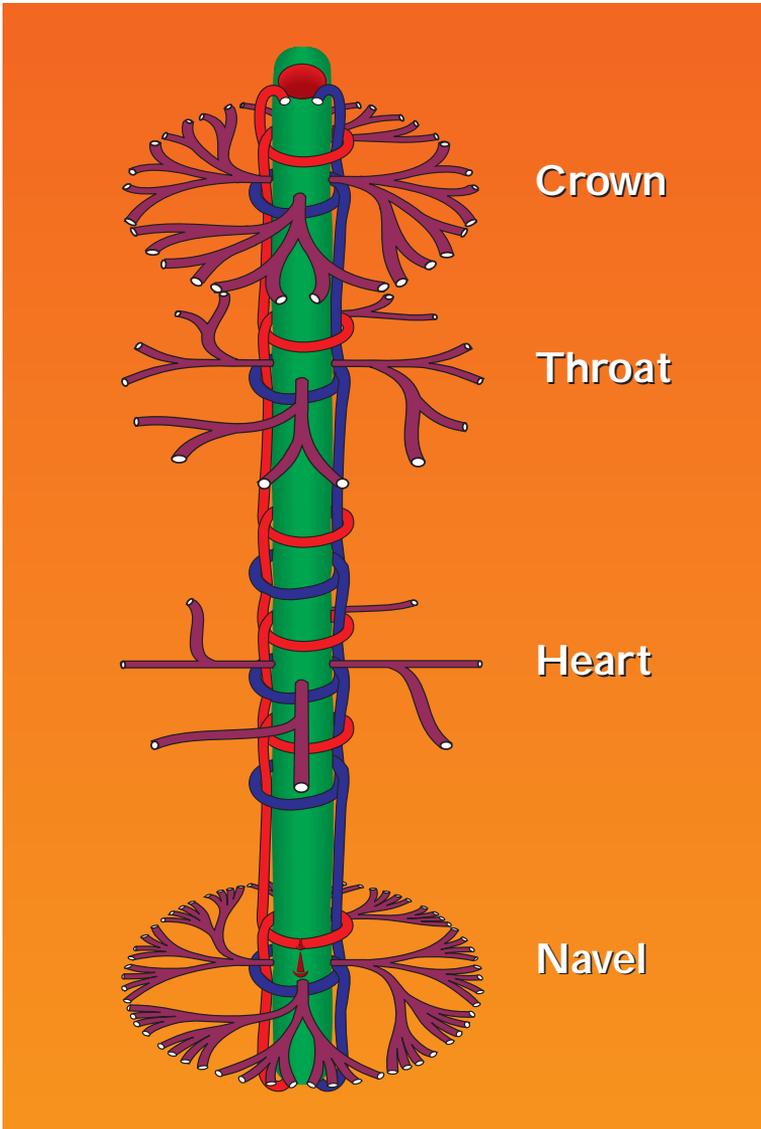
Category	Tibetan name	English
Five omnipresent mental faculties	<i>tshor ba</i> <i>'du shes</i> <i>sems pa</i> <i>reg pa</i> <i>yiḍ la byed pa</i>	feeling discernment, discrimination intention contact attention
Five object-ascertaining mental faculties	<i>'dun pa</i> <i>mos pa</i> <i>dran pa</i> <i>ting 'nge dzin</i> <i>shes-rab</i>	aspiration appreciation mindfulness concentration intelligence/wisdom
Four changeable mental faculties	<i>gnyid</i> <i>'gyod</i> <i>'rtog pa</i> <i>dpyod pa</i>	sleep regret general examination / investigation precise analysis
Eleven wholesome [or virtuous] mental faculties	<i>dad pa</i> <i>ngo tsha</i> <i>kbrel yod pa</i> <i>ma chags pa</i> <i>zhe sdang med pa</i> <i>gti mug med pa</i> <i>brston 'grus</i> <i>shin tu sbyangs pa</i> <i>bag yod</i> <i>btang snyoms</i> <i>rnam par mi 'tshes ba</i>	faith self respect / sense of shame consideration for others non-attachment non-hatred non-bewilderment / non-ignorance enthusiasm mental suppleness conscientiousness equanimity non-violence / non-harmfulness
Six root negative emotions or delusions	<i>'dod chags</i> <i>kbong kbro</i> <i>nga rgyal</i> <i>ma rig pa</i> <i>the tshoms</i> <i>lta ba</i>	attachment anger self-importance / deluded pride ignorance afflicted indecision / deluded doubt afflicted views / deluded view

<p>Twenty secondary negative emotions or delu- sions</p>	<p><i>kbro ba</i> <i>'kbon 'dzin</i> <i>tshig pa</i> <i>phrag dog</i> <i>nam par 'tshe</i> <i>ba</i></p> <p><i>ser sna</i> <i>rgyags pa</i> <i>rgod pa</i></p> <p><i>'chab pa</i> <i>rmugs pa</i> <i>ma dad pa</i> <i>le lo</i> <i>brijed ngas</i> <i>shes bz'hin ma yin</i> <i>pa</i></p> <p><i>gyu</i> <i>gyo</i></p> <p><i>ngo mtshar med pa</i> <i>kbrel med pa</i> <i>bag med</i> <i>nam gyeng</i></p>	<p><i>from anger</i> wrath vengeance / resentment spite envy / jealousy cruelty</p> <p><i>from attachment</i> avarice / miserliness self-satisfaction / pretension excitement</p> <p><i>from close-mindedness (gti mug)</i> concealment dullness faithlessness laziness forgetfulness inattentiveness</p> <p><i>from attachment / bewilderment</i> pretension dishonesty</p> <p><i>from all three</i> shamelessness inconsideration for others unconscientiousness distraction</p>
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The mind [or consciousness] is formless, colourless, intangible and is of the nature of clarity and cognition.

Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, p. 99

APPENDIX 6: CHANNELS AND CHAKRAS



The three main channels
and four of the five main chakras

Notes

- ¹ Gehlek Rimpoche, *The Practice of the Triumphant Ma*. Healing practices based on the Deity Tara, a manifestation of the active aspect of compassion of all enlightened beings.
- ² See Appendix 2 on p. 143.
- ³ Seven Limbs: see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Odyssey to Freedom*, Day III. For refuge and the Four Immeasurables see Gehlek Rimpoche, *The Practice of the Triumphant Ma*, Ch. II.
- ⁴ Vajrayana: advanced means to quickly achieve buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. Its method is bringing the result into the path. It is also called tantrayana. It is part of the Mahayana, which is divided into sutrayana and tantrayana.
- ⁵ See Appendix 3 on p. 144.
- ⁶ See note 1.
- ⁷ For the eight fears, see Gehlek Rimpoche, *The Triumphant Ma*, Chapter IV.
- ⁸ Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind*, pg. 53-60
- ⁹ Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.
- ¹⁰ Empty in the sense of open-space-like. Also see pg. 109.
- ¹¹ See Appendix 5 on p. 148.
- ¹² *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, by Shantideva. Commentary by Gehlek Rimpoche, *Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, in chapter volumes.
- ¹³ 'Regarding mind: mind does not exist; its expression is luminosity'. Ref. Nyoshul Khenpo, *Natural Great Perfection*, p. 74.
- ¹⁴ Name of the sutra not yet found. Understood 'alankara shi wa mdo'.
- ¹⁵ Also called Shantarakshita. Indian pandita and abbot of Vikramashila and Samye, first half of 8th century.
- ¹⁶ Rimpoche added: I never introduced that word to you. You can translate it with form; that's okay.
- ¹⁷ 'Try to find out the color of the mind. Is it white, red or what? What is its shape. Is it oblong, round or what. Also try to locate where in your body it dwells.' Reference and full story: Garma C.C. Chang, *The Hundred thousand Songs of Milarepa*, ch. 12.
- ¹⁸ 480-540 AD
- ¹⁹ See Gehlek Rimpoche, *GOM – a course in meditation*.
- ²⁰ *gsal zhing rig pa shes pa'i mtshan nyid*. *Gsal zhing rig pa* - being luminous and cognitive, clear and knowing. *shes pa'i* - of the mind; *mtshan nyid* - defining characteristics.
- ²¹ Skandhas [Skt.; Tib. *phungbo*] Aggregates. The literal meaning is 'pile' or 'heap', which has the connotation of an utter lack of internal structure. The body-mind organism is made up of innumerable elementary constituents, called 'dharma's',

which are grouped into five, the five basic constituents of psycho-physical existence, of great importance as a scheme for introspective meditation in the abhidharma. They are: 1) matter or form [Skt. *rūpa*; Tib. *gzugs*], 2) feeling or sensation [Skt. *vedana*; Tib. *tsbor ba*], 3) perception or discernment or discrimination or intellect (in the sense of verbal, conceptual intelligence) [Skt. *samjñā*; Tib. *'du sbebs*], 4) volition, motivation, habits, compositional factors, formative elements or conditioned activities [Skt. *samskāra*; Tib. *'du byed*] and 5) consciousness or primary mind or pure awareness [Skt. *vijñāna*; Tib. *rum sbebs*]. Associated together they make up most living beings.

- 22 A work on Buddhist metaphysics (Skt. *abidharma*), by Vasubandhu (4th century).
- 23 The five sense powers are not the coarse organs, which are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, nor are they consciousness. They are clear matter located in the coarse organs which cannot be seen with the eye but can be seen by certain clairvoyants. They give their respective consciousnesses dominance or power with respect to certain objects and are thus called 'powers' [Tib. *wang po*]. Ref. Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 221-222.
- 24 *gnyug sems*
- 25 See Appendix 1 on p. 134. Rinpoche continues, 'A lot of what I taught has been transcribed and edited, but I think still 80% of my teachings have not been transcribed at all, let alone edited. Since 1987 all kinds of tapes are available. Some of the older students have them, like Ruby and Chris. Whatever tapes have made it to Holland have been organized and have come out as transcripts. Apart from that there are a lot of pieces everywhere. I think it will be quite a job for somebody, even way after I have gone. It will be a life-long job to pick it up and sort it out. The transcripts that are readily available right now after all, are made through Holland's work, made even before I went there there. A lot of tapes have never been transcribed, such as the transcripts of the 70s and some even from the 60s. Lots of them are in some safe box deposit in an Ann Arbor bank. These were Gelong-la's hard copies that we saved from his laptop. In future, if you look, it is there.'
- 26 Chandrakirti, *Madhyamakavatara*, last verse of the Sixth Ground.
- 27 Referring to quotation on p. 34.
- 28 See Appendix 2, *Heart Sutra*, on p. 143. The five skandhas or aggregates of which a being consists, are: form, sensation or feeling, recognition or discrimination, conceptualization or formative elements, and consciousness. Also see note 21.
- 29 Gungbar Rinpoche was both the abbot of Gyuto and Drepung Loseling during his lifetime. He visited the US in 1991.
- 30 Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, p. 99-100.
- 31 *sems byung*
- 32 See page 32.
- 33 Also called the five omnipresent mental faculties. See Appendix 5 on p. 148.
- 34 See Appendix 5 on p. 148.
- 35 See Appendix 6 on p. 150. [It doesn't have everything Rinpoche explains, but gives you an idea.]
- 36 Ref. Lati Rinpoche & Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 66.

- 37 This refers to what yogis can do, as a side effect of their yogic practice, like walking on water or fire, walking through walls, flying in the air, reading minds *etc.*
- 38 Also see Lati Rinpoche & Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 65-66.
- 39 *gyal zhing rig pa* - being luminous and cognitive; clear and knowing; clear awareness.
- 40 Also see p. 37.
- 41 Most probably Rinpoche refers to the wonderful *Praise of Buddha Shakyamuni for his Teaching of Relativity*. In: R. Thurman, *Life and Teachings of Tsongkhapa*, p. 99-107.
- 42 *Treasury of Songs* v. 41. (source: internet)
- 43 As a bodhisattva Aryadeva sacrificed one eye, when a woman asked him for it. Part of a beautiful story about a debate, to be found in Gehlek Rinpoche, *GOM – a course in meditation*). For more on Aryadeva, also see Keith Downman, *Master of Mahamudra*.
- 44 Term referring to advanced vajrayana practice.
- 45 For the chart see Appendix 5 on p. 148.
- 46 Theravadins are the followers of the Theravada tradition, the ‘Tradition of the Elders’, another name for Hinayana.
- 47 See note 43
- 48 See note 17.
- 49 Visualizing oneself as Tara, is a vajrayana practice for which an initiation is needed.
- 50 The first of the four classes of tantra, the other three being charya, yoga and maha anu yoga tantra. (Note: the words tantra and vajrayana refer to the same.)
- 51 Gehlek Rinpoche, *The Practice of the Triumphant Ma*. The vajrayana version of it is *Healing and Self-healing through White Tara*.
- 52 Literature: Gehlek Rinpoche, *The Perfection of Wisdom Mantra*.
- 53 It is usually translated as realm, sphere, expanse or influence.
- 54 See p. 78.
- 55 Skt. nirvana.
- 56 See p. 53.
- 57 Six paramitas: giving, morality, patience, enthusiasm, concentration and wisdom. The first five belong to the method part.
- 58 See p. 34, p. 57 and p. 109.
- 59 Also see Gehlek Rinpoche, *GOM – a course in meditation*.
- 60 Meaning: It is not there *inherently existing* because I saw *the interdependence* of it. And: ‘it is there because I didn’t see it *existing on its own*..
- 61 See Appendix 4 on p. 147. Also see Tarab Tulku, *Nearness to Oneself and Openness to the World*, chapter 2 and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditations on Emptiness*, p. 213-274.
- 62 for *sel zhing rigpa* also see p. 34.
- 63 Also see p. 34.
- 64 *sems kyi rang bzhin*
- 65 Translation Alex Berzin, in: Dalai Lama, *The Gelug/Kargyu tradition of Mahamudra*.
- 66 Sometimes called the primordial state of being.
- 67 Also see p. 40.
- 68 Gehlek Rinpoche, *GOM – a course in meditation*, chapters III and VI. Also so p. 103 of this transcript.
- 69 See p. 110.

⁷⁰ Ronald Reagan had just passed away and the funeral was over.

⁷¹ See p. 113.

⁷² Gehlek Rimpoche, *GOM – a course in meditation*.

⁷³ This paragraph is taken from the Tara Transcript.

⁷⁴ In the Tibetan letters this is clearly seen: A = ཨ; O = ཨྱ

⁷⁵ Representing Akshobhya, Amitabha and Vairochana buddha respectively.

⁷⁶ The five categories to be known are numbered in bold. Ref. J. Hopkins, *Meditations on Emptiness*, p. 215-271.

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About Gehlek Rimpoche



Born in Lhasa, Tibet, Kyabje Gehlek Rimpoche was recognized as an incarnate lama at the age of four. Carefully tutored by Tibet's greatest living masters, he received specialized individual teaching at Drepung Monastery, the nation's largest monastery.

In 1959, Gehlek Rimpoche was among those forced into exile, fleeing the Communist Chinese who had occupied Tibet since 1951. While in India, Rimpoche as a member of a group of sixteen monks, was chosen to continue specific studies with the great masters who had escaped Tibet, including the Dalai Lama's personal tutors.

At the age of twenty-five, Rimpoche gave up monastic life. In the mid-70's, Gehlek Rimpoche was encouraged by his teachers to begin teaching in English. Since that time he has gained a large following throughout the world. Coming to the U.S. in the mid-80's, Rimpoche later moved to Ann Arbor, MI and in 1987 founded Jewel Heart, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture and Buddhism. Today, Jewel Heart has chapters throughout the U.S. and in Malaysia, Singapore and the Netherlands.

A member of the last generation of lamas to be born and fully educated in Tibet, Gehlek Rimpoche is particularly distinguished for his understanding of contemporary society and his skill as a teacher of Buddhism in the West. He is now an American citizen. Gehlek Rimpoche's first book, the national bestseller, *Good Life, Good Death*, was published in 2001.

About Jewel Heart

 *Jewel Heart is an educational and cultural center whose doors are open to all. Its purpose is to transmit the essence of Tibetan Buddhism in an authentic and accessible form. Jewel Heart provides guidance and practical methods to anyone interested in spiritual development, as well as to those who wish to follow the traditional Buddhist path.*



The name Jewel Heart was chosen to represent the organization because the heart is the essence of the human being, and the jewel something of great value – considered precious. Through embracing the preciousness of our life and developing our qualities, inner peace will grow, and our actions will be influenced by compassionate concern for others. It is to this end that Jewel Heart dedicated its efforts.

The Jewel Heart logo contains three graphic elements: the spinning jewel wheel, the lotus, and the flame. The central wheel symbolizes the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The Buddha represents our potential for enlightenment. The Dharma is the spiritual development within each individual. The Sangha is the community of those individuals, who have developed wisdom, act as guides.

In nature, the lotus rises from the mud, yet remains pure. Similarly, we are capable of rising above ordinary conceptions and putting love and compassion into action in daily life. The flame that surrounds the jewel wheel represents the fire of wisdom, consuming all obstacles and bringing insight.

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* Must have Highest Yoga Tantra Initiation to read. If you want to read the restricted transcripts and be able to understand them properly, it is important that you receive a Highest Yoga Tantra initiation from a qualified teacher.