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ACI Course III: Applied Meditation.
New York, February - March 1994

Class One: Different Types of Meditation; Parts of Meditation
February 14, 1994

[prayer: refuge]

[prayer: short mandala]

[unclear] the first two classes were, were very technical, and they were. And I think in a good sense. I mean, you learned the real definition of nirvana, the real fine distinctions about bodhicitta, you did the logical proofs for emptiness, and, and things like that. And they were difficult. And they were sort of mental, mentally very difficult. And people did well, but they were very...it was a difficult course. And people were saying, "How about something a little bit more practice?" So, we're gonna ... we're gonna do meditation, how to meditate. And this will come from the classical sources. The first book we use will be...it's called [b: The Prayer of Samantabhadra]. And I'll spell it for you. [cut] ...this prayer in, in the Kangyur and in the Tengyur...it's actually in both. And it's...so it comes from very early Buddhism, maybe 500 B.C. And this prayer is the basis for all later presentations of how to prepare for a meditation session...not, not how to meditate, but how to get ready for a meditation session. What you have to do before a meditation session for it to be successful. And that's the first major subject of this study, which is the...how to prepare for a meditation session. There are certain things you have to do before you sit down, that make it more ... that make your meditation much more successful. If you don't do them, it's very difficult to have a good meditation session. And, and this is taught by the Buddha. This is 500 B.C. So those...we're going to go through those...[b: The Prayer of Samatabhadra]. In that prayer he presents the preliminaries: what you have to do before meditation. We're gonna do that according to Tsong Khapa. Tsong Khapa wrote a commentary to it...

[silence]

I think Tsong Khapa is...I have to check [unclear]. I think it's these dates. He was a Kagyu...who studied with a great Sakya teacher [Undawa]. And he's Ngingma also. Later, Gelugpas came from him. But he was a Gelugpa in that sense...he was the first. So his, his most famous students were three: the first Dalai Lama, and Gyaltsab Je and Kedrup Je. And you don't have to know that. But one day...these are all Gyaltsab Je's works, these are Kedrup Je's works and in the

middle are Tsong Khapa's works. It's about...Tsong Khapa's is about 10,000 pages and his two, two students are about 8,000 or 9,000 pages. It's incredible! You, you could never study them in a lifetime. They wrote them. And they're very deep...very difficult to, to get through. We spend in a monastery maybe five years doing half of one of them. Very deep. Very wonderful. So we're gonna study this prayer written 500 B.C. on the basis of his commentary. And that commentary is found in the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo].

[silence]

It's the most famous book ever written in Tibetan, period. It's a thousand pages long. {Lam rim} means: {rim} means "stages," {lam} "of the path." And {chenmo} means "big." {Lam} means "path," {rim} means "stages" or "steps" and {chenmo} means "big." {Mo} is a feminine ending. The great holy books of Tibet are...have feminine endings, okay? Wisdom is feminine. So this is a, this is a...the {mo} is just a female ending.

[student: Sorry, {chenmo} is?]

{Chen} means "big" and {mo} is actually a feminine ending. And that's his presentation of all the steps you have to do to become a Buddha. And it starts at the very baby steps and it goes up to the highest levels of tantra, all in one book. There is no other book that has all of those in it. He, he, he collated the great books of India. In the monastery we studied five great texts of Indian Buddhism that were written from 200 A.D. up to 900 A.D. But this book includes all of it in one book. So we're gonna take, we're gonna take our study of how to, how to prepare for a meditation session from that. And that's part of the reading you had in the back of your notebook. So we'll study that from the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo]. So if I, if I were to ask you, name like the five major parts of meditation, the first one would be getting ready, preparing for meditation. The second...and by the way that, that has two parts: there's what we call the six preliminaries, which is on your syllabus; and there's something we call the seven ingredients, it's also called the seven-limb practice. And those two are what you need to get ready for a meditation session. There are six activities that you do before a meditation...and part of one of them involves seven steps. So that's how you're gonna get ready for a meditation session. You have to do those to have a successful meditation. You can't just flop down and meditate. You have to gear yourself up. These are the things that get your mind...they disengage your mind from your office and get your mind to meditation. There has to be some gap there where you change gears. And these function to do that. Second

part of the practice of the study meditation will be the physical...a study of the physical circumstances you need...the physical environment you need to study...to, to do a successful meditation. And that's called the six conditions. We'll cover that in the second class...the second week, I'm sorry. So, so far you have two steps: one is pre-, preparing for meditation, and one is the physical circumstances you need to meditate. Third will be the posture, the bodily posture you need for meditation. And that's called the eight-point posture. It has eight steps. How to put your body into meditation...how to get your body in the right...physical...you know, the right physical...what do you call...posture. That'll be in the second half of the second week. That will also come from the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo]. And [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] is basically just a big patchwork of earlier works. It, it isn't considered in Buddhism a big deal to write your own book. It's considered very proper to plagiarize everybody else...who came before...because they're omniscient. So how can you improve it? You can change around the order for present-day people of your day, but you don't need to write anything new. They, they knew everything, literally. So, why? It's not a virtue to add to it or subtract from it. So he's basing his presentation on Kamalashila who lived in the ninth century, and he wrote a huge book on meditation. It's called [b: Gom Rim]. Kamalashila. You don't have to know that, but if you're curious... Kamalashila lived in ninth century. He's famous for...he was one of the Indian masters who came to Tibet. And when...he got to Tibet and then a Chinese master reached Tibet at the same time; his name was Huashang. And the Chinese master was teaching that meditation consisted of emptying your mind and thinking about nothing at all. And Kamalashila was teaching that, the opposite: he said meditation is an instrument or a tool, a microscope for focusing the mind and then you must have a, a meaningful object. It's not that you just try to empty your mind. We'll, we'll get into that. There are results of that meditation. And there...that is a specific non-Buddhist meditation. And it leads to certain apparently desirable results, but we'll talk about why it's not very desirable. So they had a debate. The way you settled a philosophical or a religious debate in the old days...and that's when debating was serious. I mean, you would have a contest in public, and other masters and the king of the country would attend. And whoever was...after like two or three weeks of public debate each day, the king and his board of advisors would select the winner. And if you lost, you'd have to join the school of the winner and all your followers had to change religion. So it was very serious, and Kamalashila won. And Huashang's...it's called Huashang {tawa}. The viewpoint that you should meditate on nothing was expelled from Tibet. That teaching was not allowed in Tibet. They had one other famous debate of the same kind about which monk's system, which monk's vow system should be followed. There

were different system's of vinaya. And the school that won out was a certain [Servastivadu] which is now prevalent in Thailand and other countries. So we follow the same rules. That's, that's the custom that was prescribed for Tibet. And that's the oldest system. So in meditation, we follow mahayana. As far as our monk's system we are pure hinayana. Our, our vows and everything are pure hinayana. So that's Kamashila.

[student: Michael?]

Yuh?

[student: Is, was a part of Huashang's...]

Belief?

[student: ...belief or doctrine that, that instant illumi-, that...]

I don't know. I haven't heard that he believed in satori or something. Is that what you mean?

[student: Yah...that he taught instant illumination.]

I have not heard that. I haven't heard that. I, I don't know it all.

[student: So that wasn't a part of that whole debate?]

I haven't seen it. There, there are western scholars who believe that they knew it took place. But we say it did, and it's always quoted. But I could check it for you...in the computer. No I can see if in thirty thousand pages it's mentioned. I doubt it. But I can check it. So that would be...what are we on now? The first was preparing. The second was the place, you know, the physical place where you're supposed to meditate. Third was how you arrange your body...how you get your body ready. And then you can guess what the fourth one is. How you get your mind [laughs] you know, what you actually meditate on. And then there we're gonna have three, three steps. The first step is called the five problems of meditation. These are five men-...typical mental states that come up in your mind while you're trying to meditate. And you have to learn to identify them. They are the classic...tricks that your mind plays on you when you're trying to meditate.

[student: The five what?]

They're like the five...we call them the five problems of meditation. They are five...you know, since two and a half thousand years ago, people who meditated have had the same five problems, come up, and they come up in a certain order. They're very predictable; people have spent their lives studying this, meditating. And they have made this list. And these are the five typical problems that you get while you're trying to meditate. Okay? Then there are what we call the eight, the eight corrections. And these are eight different actions that you take to stop the five problems...to block the five problems. So it's very useful. What you're doing is you're like reading the car repair manual before you try to fix the car, okay. It's very good; it's very useful. And while you're meditating, the problem comes, and you already know what you're supposed to do. So that's very useful. So that's again a part of the mental states. Then there are nine mental states that result. There are nine stages you go through as you improve, as your meditation gets better. It's still part of the mental process, which is number four, right? It's still part of the mental process, meaning you get five problems coming up, you use eight different methods to stop them, and by, and during that struggle, you're going through nine deeper stages of meditation. The ninth stage is the deepest stage. The first stage is where it's called...if, if you drew a picture of your meditation, you would be like this: distracted, distracted, distracted, distracted...one little block of concentration. [laughter] No, seriously. It's called {menba tabu}. And then you get...and then later on...one of the later stages it's more like this: you know, and, and the concentrated periods get thirty seconds long, one minute long...we're talking real concentration. You know, and it's literally that bad, at the beginning. You're lucky to have thirty seconds or a minute of pure concentration. And then your mind wanders and you come back to it. So we're gonna go through this process. So you'll be able to identify where you are, mentally as you meditate...as you get better at it. To get better at it, you must do it every day. It's exactly like exercise. And, and, and we'll talk about it. But it's not something you can ever get or ever will get if you don't do a little bit daily. And it doesn't mean like an hour. It means like twenty minutes or half hour of good meditation. Otherwise you'll never get it. If you don't get it, you'll never see emptiness. Impossible. You cannot progress through the five paths if you're not in a deep state of meditation. It's impossible. Progression through the five paths, going from one path to the other, always takes place during meditation. So if you're not meditating regularly, it's impossible. You will never...so, so you really have to do it. And I have to do it. I haven't been doing it for a while. So as part of my game plan I would like start again, too. I, I was good for many years. And then I got lazy. So I [unclear] it's a kind of excuse for

[unclear]. So you really have to...it's, meditation is a thing that if you're not doing it regularly...you can miss a day a week or something, but if you're not doing it like that, it's like weight-lifting or something...you'll never, you'll never do it. You'll never get, you'll never get the results of it. And you can't see emptiness unless you're on a very high level, you know. It's impossible. So, it's really very nice to see it. We'll talk more about it. Nine, nine resulting states that you get. Okay, by applying the...how many antidotes, corrections?

[student: The eight.]

To how many problems?

[student: Five.]

Okay. That's all right. Then the last part of the course in the last two weeks, we'll be discussing the object of meditation. Okay? I think it's important to say meditation is only a tool. Meditation is not by itself an end. It has no benefit, religiously, spiritually, by itself. It has to be focused on a meaningful object. Okay? By itself it has no...it has temporary side-effects that make you calm or something, but, but they have no meaning spiritually. They will not remove your suffering, they will not advance you in any way...meaningfully. It has to be focused on something very meaningful. So the last two weeks we'll cover, we'll cover meaningful objects for meditation. Okay? So we'll discuss the object of meditation. What are you gonna aim this powerful tool at? 'Cause if it's just a powerful tool that you're not aiming at anything, it's useless. It has no benefit. So you've got five steps. I'll pick on people. Robin, first one?

[student: Preparation.]

Yah. [Gates] second one?

[student: [giggles]]

Okay.

[student: Study the physical environment.]

Yah, you know, what, what should the place be like, where you're gonna meditate, right?

[Fran D.: The third one is the five-point position.]

Yah, how is your body gonna be when you get into meditation. Janet, fourth one?

[student: What you actually meditate on.]

No. Fourth one was the mental state. Okay? See, the first three are, are...the first is preparation, the second is the place...

[student: What to meditate on.]

I'm sorry. Did I say four?

[student: Yah, we have it.]

For four? [student: Yah.]

Awh, I'm sorry. I'll go over that again. First is the preliminary, the preparation: what do you do before you go into your meditation. Secondly is the environment. Right? Third is the physical posture. How do you sit? Fourth is the mental state's that are going on...the mental what do you call it? One is the physical...number three is the physical postures, and then number four is the mind state you go through.

[John: Mental activity.]

Yah.

[student: Is technique included in there?]

You could say it's the mental technique, yah. It's the problems that come up, how you stop them, and then what stages will you go through if you do this process well. And that's all the, the mental part of meditation...the mental aspect of meditation. What's going on in your mind...in the, in the meditation. And then number five is what are you gonna aim this meditation at? What do you think about? You know, okay you really gotta concentrate. My boss...I said it before...I mean he's incredible. His ability to concentrate is incredible. But the object is not meaningful. So he has...by the way a non-Buddhist can attain perfect meditation, according to Buddhist theory, and they do. You know, great

Hindu practitioners in India have, they've got perfect concentration. As a result, they clairvoyance, they have special powers, they can see the future, or whatever. But the...ultimately the object is not something that will remove their suffering. But we say that a non-Buddhist can obtain a high state of meditation. 'Cause it's only a tool; it's only a focusing of the mind...which brings me to the next subject. Tibetan Buddhism and Sanskrit Buddhism and Buddhism in general has a lot of words for meditation. And I thought I would go through a short list of them. This is on your homework, okay? 'Cause you're gonna hear lots of different kinds of words. Their words in English are not finalized yet. And you're gonna read books about Buddhism...they're gonna all...meditative equipoise...mental coalescence...there's a lot of six-syllable words. And what are the differences? You know, what are they? I thought I would just give you...these are not debate definitions. They're not monastic textbook definitions. But I'll give you the general gist of each different concept. 'Cause there are many ideas...there are many words in Buddhism for, for meditation. Like in Russian...Kay, Kay Merrick is good at that...it's like twenty words for foggy, dark, unpleasant, moody...I mean there's all these words for dark and, you know, I didn't like...I had to study in college and I, I didn't like the language. There are a hundred words for, for dim, dark, foggy, you know. And Buddhism is different. Buddhism has a hundred words for mind, a thousand words for compassion, many different words for meditation. So it's good if you know the difference between those words. You'll hear them thrown around. People throw around shamata, samadhi, you know, and...you know, you don't know what they're talking about, and I'm afraid they don't know what they're talking about. So...after you study it you'll be able...you'll be able to tell. You'll study the actual differences between them. So I'll start you out on some of them. [cut] {Gomba}.

[silence]

If you have any inkling to learn a little...some people in this class should be in the Tibetan class. They don't wanna fly. I hope some of you do. First word is {gomba}. Say {gomba} [repeat] {gomba} [repeat]. {Gomba} is a word that comes from {gom}, which is a different name, and it means to get used to something, to habituate yourself to something...to get used to something.

[student: [unclear] {gom}?]

{Gom}. This is {ga}, this is {kha}. You can't hear the difference.

[student: So how can you tell the difference?]

Same. I, I'll tell you just to make it different for you. Let's say {gomba}. This is the word I want you to learn. This one here: {gomba}.

[student: What does it mean?]

Verb. The verb is {gomgya}: to do {gomba}. This is the noun {gomba}: meditation. This is one of the five or six words for meditation I'm gonna teach you tonight.

[student: What does {gompa}, {gomba} mean?]

I wanted, I want you...this is what {gomba} means: {gomba} means to get used to something. By doing it over and over again. That's what {gomba} means. That's what the Tibetan word for meditation is.

[student: Do we say "habituation"?]

I like "habituation". If you don't remember that long word, I don't mind if you say getting used to something. 'Cause that's what it is. The Sanskrit word is [bavana]. You don't have to know that. It's, it's nice. You might see it in books, you know.

[student: [unclear]]

Yah, {gomba}...meditate.

[student: [unclear] habituation.]

This is the Sanskrit word...for this. This is Tibetan. This is Sanskrit. This is the Tibetan translation of this word.

[John: Do we need to know the Sanskrit?]

You don't need to know the Sanskrit. But I wanted you to know...we're gonna get into samadhi, shamata...people are using those in English now. So I thought I'd throw in the Sanskrit for those words, too. People aren't using [bavana]. Okay? This is the classic, this is the real...this is the overall word in Tibetan for meditation. And if I ask you on homework describe it's general sense, you

should say, "Bringing an object to your mind repeatedly until you get used to it." That's what it means. Mentally, you know, eyes closed, whatever...you are bringing an object to your mind until you get used to it. It's said in Buddhist, in Tibetan Buddhist texts that you do this a lot at work, with people you don't like, you know. And you, you know you go home and you do bring them to mind. You make yourself miserable. You know, say, God, I don't like that guy, you know, he bugged me again today, and that's {gomba}. You're bringing him to your mind; you're bringing his picture to your mind; you're bringing what he said to you to your mind, or what he didn't say to you, or whatever, and that's {gomba}. That is {gomba}. That is a kind of meditation. It means to bring an object to your mind repeatedly...until it becomes burned into your mind. They have this thing in computers: screen savers, right? Why? They're flying toasters. Because if the same image stays on the screen too long, it burns itself into the glass somehow...I don't know how.

[student: There's backing on the inside of the screen.]

That's medi-...meditation is, is exactly that. It really is that. You want to bring that image up so often that it burns itself into your consciousness. And, and that it comes back easily into your consciousness. That's {gomba}. So {gomba} means habituation and it means to bring an object to mind repeatedly until it gets fixed in your mind. And that's, that's one taste of meditation. That's one meaning of meditation. So the general sense is that: bringing the object to your mind again and again until it's burned into your mind or fixed in your mind. That's the most general word in Tibetan for meditation. Yuh? This is another word in Tibetan, which is the root of this word, and this word literally means to get used to something. Like {komsha} means, you know, I taught my puppy not to peepee on the floor. I have one nowadays in, in New Jersey...another one. And she's {gomba} now to not peepee on the floor. That...they'll say {da komsha}: now she's got used to it. She doesn't do it anymore. That's {komsha}. Or you can say {chibu yoenya komsha}: he has become accustomed to coming late. Did someone open the door?

[student: No.] [laughter]

Maybe Mel doesn't know how to do it. Does anybody here know how to open it? Make sure he has the right key for the second door, also.

[silence]

Say {samten} [repeat] {samten} [repeat]. The Sanskrit word is: [dhyana].

[silence]

{Samten} is the fifth of the six, six perfections. There are six perfections. What are they? Give me the first one. Anybody?

[student: Generosity.]

Giving.

[student: Patience.]

Nah, nah, nah.

[student: Morality.]

Those, those Americans, they don't need [unclear]. Morality. Okay, giving, morality...

[student: Patience.]

Patience: not getting angry. There is no English word for it. Number five? Four.

[student: Effort.]

Yah. Effort.

[student: Meditation.]

Yah, number five is meditation. Number six is wisdom. So this is the word for the fifth perfection, which is concentration or meditation. So see you're gonna get like five different words for the same thing. There are no English words for all these things. {Samten} means: first of all it refers to the fifth perfection...which is meditation. Okay?

[John: The ability to concentrate [unclear]?]

Well, you'll learn what it is and you tell me.

[student: Is [dhyana] like the five [Dhyani] Buddhas?

They are called the five [Dhyani] Buddhas.

[student: And does that mean five Buddhas [unclear]?]

Yah, why they're called that is a long story.

[student: Okay.]

Usually I say long story when I'm not too clear about it myself. [laughs]
[laughter] They know that. Okay, {samten} is...I've seen it somewhere; I don't remember what it says. There is an explanation. It's not very...it's not what it sounds like. There's some...I remember it's not.

[student: Usually followed by, I can look it up in the computer.]

Yah, yah.

[student: Or it'll be in the fourth year.]

Yah, yah.

[student: We'll guess it in the fourth year.]

[student: Fourth year, fifth class.]

{Samten}. There's also...there are also four levels of meditation called {samten}.

[John: Is this a subdivision of this, or something else?]

Well, it is the fifth perfection, but the same word is used to describe four levels of very deep meditation. Those four levels of deep meditation...the result of those four kinds of meditation are to, are to be reborn in one of the four levels of the form realm. Form realm. I'd better go over this. There are three realms. We can only see one. There are two that we can't see. We are in the realm called desire realm. The first Dalai Lama in his commentary on the [b: Abhidharma] says, "This is a desire realm because all we think about are food and sex." We are main-...one of our main interests is these two things. And that's why this is called

the desire realm. And you've heard desire realm many times. It's {duhkam} in Tibetan. We are in that realm.

[John: That's the earth.]

It's not...this earth is in that realm.

[John: What else is?]

Mount Meru and the top of Mount Meru...there are certain deities that we can't see. Certain deities in the desire that we can't see. The, the bardo people are in the desire realm. Hell people are in the desire realm. We can't see any of them. Buddhism doesn't say you can see them. Buddhism doesn't even say you should claim they exist until you can prove them pretty well, logically. So you don't have to believe in them right now. No, you shouldn't believe in them, until you have some good proof. The next level up is called the form realm.

[student: What?]

We cannot see that realm...form. Why is it called form realm? They have...it's, it's a place where they are, they are very beautiful...they are all some kind of pleasure beings. They live in a state of high pleasure their whole life. They have beautiful bodies, they have bodies like a rainbow, and they live in pleasure their whole life. After that they go to hell. That's another story.

[Fran D.: [unclear] the god realm?]

It is part of the...god realm extends to all three realms. The bottom of the god realm is in the desire realm. And then, like that. But I'm not...that's not the purpose of this class. Just to tell you that if you did those four kinds of {samten}, which is the second meaning of {samten}, what was the first meaning of {samten}? The fifth perfection, which is a Buddhist perfection. But if you did just {samten}, just this meditation, the result would be that you would get born in one of those four realms, which we can't see and I can't prove to you right now. If you're interested in the third realm, which I didn't get to, it's the formless realm. And those are mental beings: they have no bodies. They are purely mental being; they have no physical bodies. That realm is not located anywhere 'cause they are wherever they think. All right? You can be here and be in the f---a formless realm being could be in this room...if his mind is here...'cause that's the way they are. Yah.

[student: You have to be reborn, where?]

Wherever your mind is.

[student: No, in the f...four levels of, the four levels...]

Oh, the four levels of the form realm.

[student: Four levels of the form realm.]

Yah, by doing the four kinds of {samten}, those kinds of deep meditation, without any meaningful object, if it's just that you're hung up on those four, without any meaningful object, you will be reborn in one of those high deity realms. Can you guess why? What, what gets you into the high realms is, is great virtue...is great good deeds. Good deeds is defined as avoiding bad deeds. [laughs] [laughter] Why do you think that a person who's doing {samten} his whole life would be avoiding bad deeds? He's not, he's not moving. And it's famous, and there's a kind of morality called {sam-}, you know, morality that's hooked to this. You can't do any verbal bad deeds 'cause you can't talk and meditate at the same time, it's impossible. You can't do any physical bad deeds. You can't move in meditative at the same time. And you can't have any really bad mental bad deeds because your mind is single-pointedly fixed on a virtuous object. So they, they do have a great rebirth, but it doesn't last, and it's not desirable. But we'll get into that. Okay? That's called [dhyana].

[student: So...are you saying that's to be avoided then because as you said you go to hell right afterwards, or?]

Well, that brings me to the next subject. If you want to see emptiness, although your body is in this desire realm and although your basic mind state is a desire realm person's mind state, to see...when you see emptiness, and you will see emptiness one day, directly, which is actually what stops all your suffering...the day that you see emptiness directly your mind, your concentration is in the first {samten}...your mind is not even in this realm. Your, your base mind is in this realm, but your, your concentration is actually on a higher level. And on that higher level you have the ability to perceive emptiness.

[student: Which one would it be, then?]

The base mind, the supporting mental...the supporting brain is in this realm. The body is in this realm. But the concentration is in a higher realm. So as you go into that meditation on emptiness for the first time, which if you can achieve it in this life is, is the greatest achievement...it's incredible...you feel a sense of going up to that realm, mentally, and in that realm you see emptiness. And then you come down out of that realm. And then you see what?

[John: Four noble truths.]

Four noble truths. You see, you see the different parts of the four noble truths. This is the process. So your mind goes up to that level...first level...you see emptiness based on that level, and then you come down. Your mind comes down. You're sitting there, but you're not aware of your body. Okay? All right? So that's the general sense of {samten}. So if I ask you...you should really say three kinds of {samten}...three meanings of {samten}. The first one is as the fifth perfection of the six Buddhist perfections. The second meaning is as that kind of meditation, which if it's all you do, you'll be reborn into the form realm as a deity. Yah, [F-O-R-M], so-called because they have beautiful bodies. And if you're...the third sense of {samten} is the important one. On the first {samten} level, with your mind in that level, you can see emptiness directly. Seeing emptiness directly functions to stop your suffering permanently. You no longer will need to get old, etcetera.

[John: So really the third definition is a clarification of the second one?]

They're all {samten}. But I'm just giving you the important places where they come in Buddhist scripture, okay? All right.

[student: But some people bypass the seeing emptiness while experiencing these four levels.]

Yah, you can waste...if you're concentrating on a picture of Vishnu or something, mentally, you can reach a {samten}, and, and...

[student: Even maybe the second {samten}, say bypassing the...experiencing emptiness.]

Even the fourth...yah, no, right, you would not perceive emptiness.

[student: Can you say what the four noble truths are?]

Yah, first one is...well, you tell her, Stillwell. Find it...it was on their test. I hope to God that they remember.

[John: First noble truth is, is that life is dissatisfactory. And the second is that it has a, a cause.]

Yah, suffering has a cause.

[John: And that there's an end to suffering, and that it has a cause.]

Which is the path, so that's the four. So the first one's suffering. Second one is the end of suffering. Third one...yah? Third one is...the end of suffering. And the fourth one is the path that leads to that end.

[student: Second one is?]

Where the suffering comes from.

[student: Cause.]

The cause of suffering...which is mainly your bad emotions. Hatred, jealousy, desire, anger. And our other close friends. Okay.

[student: Would you please clarify one [unclear]?]

Yah, sure.

[student: When you said, "And that's diana."]

[Dhyana]. Do we have a Diana here?

[student: [Dhyana]. What? I missed...I heard everything else; I wrote it all down, but...]

Well, the Sanskrit word is [dhyana].

[student: Oh, it's Sanskrit!]

Yah, I'm trying to give you that Sanskrit words because you will hear them.

You'll hear...you've heard [dhyani] Buddhas; you've heard [shamata]; [unclear]; you've heard [samadhi]. I just want you to, you know, someone says, "What's [shamata]?" and "What's the difference between [shamata] and [samadhi]?" You say, "Oh, I studied that."

[student: So [dhyana] is the Sanskrit word for {samten}.]

{Samten}. At least in Tibetan...it's a Tibetan...it's a translation of [dhyana].

[student: Would you also clarify again the three formless realms?]

Oh no, there's, there's three realms. There's three realms of suffering beings. By the way the Buddhas don't live in these three realms. These are the three realms of suffering beings. One realm you can see. It's the desire realm. That's where we live. That's this world that you know. You've never seen the other two realms. They are stated in scripture. After you see emptiness directly you will understand that those realms really exist. You will experience them. Until that time you can say the Buddha said they exist, I have studied them in many authoritative scriptures, I can't tell you for sure if they exist. I haven't perceived them directly. The second realm is the form realm. You can't see it. The third realm is the formless realm. And you never will see it because there's no physical matter in that realm. It's a mental realm. And the beings there have no body. They're purely mental. {Nyomjuk}.

[silence]

{Nyomjuk} has three basic meanings. The Sanskrit word is not very common. You, you probably haven't seen it. And you don't need to know this. I'm just giving it to people who might wanna...when their friends ask them, "What's {shamata}?" They'll say, "Yah, I know that!" It's called [samapati].

[student: This is the word for {shamata}?]

No, this is the word for [samapati]. [laughter] We got two more to go...three, three more to go. By the way, in English, what do you use? You know, these translators pull their hair out. That's why I got this. {Nyomjuk}. {Nyomjuk}...you can think there are three basic kinds. This is a kind of meditative state, okay? The first one is a, is a meditation which is going to end you...which is going to make you reborn into the form realm. So in that sense it's very similar to {samten}. It's meditation, which if that's all you do...and

Hindu, you know, saints do it...they, they just meditate on this kind of meditation...it's very high...it's a virtue, it's a goodness, it's a good deed. Mainly 'cause you can't do any bad things if you're concentrating so strongly. You will be reborn in the form realm. That's one kind of {nyomjuk}.

[student: So this is like your boss?]

Yah, I think so...mostly, if he never did bad deeds to get his money. But in the moments that he's concentrating on money, yah, it's neutral. You know, he's not really hurting anybody. So that's...by the way, I don't really know...who? God knows. I, I don't know anyone's mind. He could be a Buddha. Sometimes I think he is. You know, we don't know. We have to be careful. I just use him as an example. I could use myself, but it's boring. Okay, form realm. The second kind is {nyomjuk} which lands you in the formless realm, okay. These two kinds of {nyomjuk}, we call causal {nyomjuk} because they are kinds of meditation which cause you to be reborn in, in one of those two realms.

[student: The second one...I'm sorry...the formless?]

Formless realm...where you don't have any body. You're a purely mental being, and you're in intense state of happiness. Some people mistake that for paradise. You see, it's a very dangerous thing. Some people mistake...and, and even the meditation is so pleasant that it's very attractive. And they mistake that result for what you would call heaven or paradise. It's not a permanent heaven; it's not a desirable thing. There's better ones.

[John: Is that the same as samadhi? [Samapati]?]

No, we didn't get to it yet. [laughs]

[John: It's not it.]

There's lots, okay? That's why I'm going through this.

[student: Is there a particular object with {nyomjuk}?]

They can pick objects, like the typical objects in Hinduism are, you know, Shiva's form, or Vishnu's form, or Indra's form...things like that. But the basic thing is that you don't create any bad deeds while you're doing it. No verbal, physical or mental bad deeds.

[John: Why are they in bliss when they're doing this meditation?]

One side effect of meditation, and not the object of meditation, not the goal of meditation is called {shinjan}. And {shinjan} means very, very pleasant physical sensations, and very, very pleasant mental sensations, which in, at some points are a distraction.

[John: What causes...]

They're not desirable. You could explain it in the higher teachings which I can't get into right now.

[John: Posture...]

We talked about it at the end of the last class, in the last class, if you remember. I, I, I have to distinguish between the common path and the uncommon path. Right?

[John: Right, right, right.]

Okay, but that is related to that. And that's why that practice involves a meditation.

[student: {Nyomjuk} is related to the {shinjan}?]

I didn't get into that...no, no. So, so far we have two kinds of {nyomjuk}. One is a kind of meditation that if you do it and you don't do anything better, you end up being born in the form realm. According to Buddhist scripture I can't prove it to you. I can't even prove to you that it exists. And that's part of Buddhism. You have to admit what we can't see. The second kind of {nyomjuk} is the one that makes you born in the formless realm. The third kind of {nyomjuk} is called cessation meditation. Cessation meditation. And this is a state in which you can put yourself where your mind is almost shut down. And, and in some schools it was believed that that was nirvana, that that was the end of suffering. And, and we'll discuss it. It's not really it. Your mind is still going on in a very, very subtle manner. But the gross mind is almost shut down. And, and you can stay that way for a long, long, long time.

[student: So when you say your mind, you're talking about...]

Fifty-two functions of your mind...which we'll study later. [laughs] Mainly, sensation and discrimination. The ability to feel things. And the ability to discriminate between different objects. Those are shut down to such a, a subtle level that it's close to nirvana. It is not nirvana. But it was taken to be nirvana, and it's, it's called cessation meditation.

[student: [unclear] perception?]

It, it actually shuts down all of your mental processes to a very, very, very subtle level. But mainly those two. Those are...that's the big deal because those are the two mental functions out of the fifty-two which get you in trouble. You like your friends; you don't like your enemies. You like what feels good; you don't like what feels bad.

[Nina: Is sensation another one?]

Sensation and discrimination. The ability to I like this person, I don't like this person. He's my friend; he's my enemy. This is warm; this is cold. Yuh?

[student: Are you saying that this was mistaken for nirvana because it resembles nirvana, or because the people who mistook it for nirvana didn't understand nirvana, and it doesn't resemble nirvana? Namely, if you're not discriminating and you don't have sensation, that's attributive nirvana?]

No, but it's, that, that...I guess that was...that's sort of close to being...there are Buddhist schools which we talked about when we studied nirvana last time which believe that when you achieve nirvana, your mind and your body are actually discontinued. The word is discontinued. That's not {rangrik}, that's not what the actual truth is. That's not what nirvana is. What is nirvana? Heyhey! Regina? Definition of nirvana...remember? How're you gonna get there if you don't know what it is? [laughter] Stopping...what? Stopping?

[Regina: Mental afflictions...]

Yah. What was the rest of it?

[student: [unclear]]

Yah, it's, it's stopping your bad thoughts...all of them...permanently, because you

saw emptiness directly. Through seeing emptiness directly; as a result of seeing emptiness directly. That's the definition of nirvana. So you can achieve nirvana this evening...you look the same to me; you look the same to everybody else. You don't disappear. You know, there is another kind of nirvana, right?, where you do dis-, I mean...you get rid of the suffering kind of body. But that's another story. Basically nirvana means permanently removing your bad emotions, which would mean you'd never suffer again. So they mistook that for that. There were schools of Buddhism that said nirvana was the discontinuation of your body and mind, which is not the case. They were lower schools that taught that. And that's what most Western people think when they hear nirvana.

[John: So the earlier two were causal meditation because they cause rebirth in those, in those two realms.]

And the third is a kind of deep, deep, deep, deep meditation...

[John: So it's cessation meditation, but does it cause...]

It's called cessation meditation, but it's not the true cessation meditation.

[John: You still have a rebirth; you still cause a rebirth.]

Yah, so it's not real cessation.

[John: So it's still a causal meditation.]

It's called cessation. It's a cause in a sense, but it's not the cause [unclear].]

[John: Not the same cause, yah.]

Those of the ideas, the three ideas of {nyomjuk}.

[John: Is, is there a rebirth associated with this meditation or not?]

You would be reborn if that's all you did. It's not a...it doesn't get you to nirvana. It's not nirvana. It's not even cessation. It's called cessation. You got two more, then we'll take a break.

[student: But there's nothing associated with that like, you know, you would call 'em causal? Is that what you said [unclear].]

I said there were three kinds of {nyomjuk}. The first two we called causal because they cause a high rebirth. The third one has nothing to do with the first two. The third one is a cessation. It's a Buddhist practice. You get so deep into meditation that your mind is almost shut down. It's not a...it's mostly lower school; it's mostly hinayana, abhidharma; it's not a desirable thing. In fact, in some scriptures it's described as a, as a distraction.

[student: Cessation meditation?]

Yah, 'cause it's not cessation. It's just that it's such a deep state of meditation. Supposedly you can stay in it for hundreds of years.

[student: Are you telling us that all of these different types of meditation, but these are not necessarily the ones that we're [unclear]?]

Nope. We'll get to the real ones. But these are things you will hear about, and what you should know about. And I want you to get a flavor for meditation...how deep it is. I mean there are so many kinds...so many...the [b: Abhidharma] has hundreds of pages of what goes on. They have an analysis of what kinds of thoughts control what kinds of other thoughts...every variation, every permutation. It takes page after page after page. If you're translating it you get dizzy, you know. You can't have a virtuous thought after this bad thought unless you're thinking this other thought. But what can follow that thought, you know, and...they go on, you know. This is {shine}...the Sanskrit word is...

[silence]

You always see this in relation, linked with this...

[silence]

[cut] [END OF SIDE ONE]

[SIDE TWO]

[John: Is that the Sanskrit?]

Yah, I'll check my computer. It looks like it [unclear] but I'll check it for you. You

almost always see [shamata] connected with [vipashyana]. In Thailand they call it [vipasana] or something. [Vipasana].

[student: [Vipasana].]

That's more from the Pali. So they're all related. Same, same thing.

[student: And they also use [bavana].]

[Bavana], yah, oh yah? 'Cause...so, if you wanna get the flavor for this word for meditation, think of it in terms of a union between [shamata] and [vipashyana]. These two are always married. Okay? {Shine} and {paktong} are Tibetan.

[John: In a sense if you're doing that kind of meditation you also are doing...]

We'll talk about it. [Shamata] is the very, very, most...it's the, it's the highest evolution of meditation, the most powerful state of meditation...the highest evolution of meditation, the highest form of meditation. There's many kinds of {gomba} or {samten}, {nyongjuk}, but, but {shine} is number one. {Shine} is really when you get very, very, very good. This is {shine}. This is [shamata]. It's a very, very powerful state of meditation, which is linked with [vipashyana], which means the perception of emptiness...wisdom. {Hlaktong}, which means exceptional insight...{hlak} means exceptional, {tong} means seeing...is focused on emptiness. It's a very high form of knowledge, which is seeing emptiness.

[John: So this is not [vipashyana] meditation?]

It is.

[John: It is.]

Well, that's a misnomer, you see? And you'll have to study it.

[John: Yah, I'm confused about that.]

You'll have to study it. You'll have to study it. That's why it's called {hlaktong}. And we will study this. But you always see these two linked together. Okay? When you hear [shamata], you should think [vipashyana]. 'Cause they are linked together. The goal...one of the highest goals is to have them linked together...is to have this incredibly powerful instrument focused on...emptiness,

wisdom.

[John: And that's all it means.]

Wisdom and...yah. I'll give you a definition sometime. But basically this is what you're aiming for. This is the goal of your meditation. You wanna reach [shamata]...in and of itself it's not such a big deal. You want it to be imbued with [vipashyana]. You wanna have wisdom that has this powerful ability to concentrate...on emptiness; and that's what [shamata] is...in its highest form. There are many other...many other forms, but this is the one you're...this is the one you're shooting for. Basically, these are the fifth and sixth perfections at their highest level.

[student: Fourth one right?]

Fifth and sixth.

[John: Perfections.]

[student: Oh, perfections.]

Meditation and wisdom. Those are the two highest forms of those two perfections. When you reach the two last perfections, that's what they will be.

[John: So when you said the perfection of a perfection of...]

Perfection is a difficult word. It doesn't mean the ultimate...form of that thing. It means something else. It's {paropa chenma}. You've had {sherab paropa chenma}. You know what it is. What is the perfection of wisdom? Does it mean the Buddha's wisdom? Does it mean the ultimate evolution of wisdom? What is the definition of perfection of wisdom?

[John: It's...]

Oh, you got in trouble. [laughter]

[John: It's, it's understanding emptiness joined with love or bodhicitta.]

Under the influence of compassion, to perceive emptiness. This is the perfection of wisdom. It can happen long before you become a Buddha. So perfection

doesn't mean...perfection is an attempt to translate the Sanskrit word [paramita]. It's the Tibetan word {paropa chenma}, which means to go beyond...to reach the farthest end. But it, it's a difficult translation. It doesn't mean the final evolution, 'cause it's not omniscience. You can have the perfection of wisdom long before you reach the Buddha's mind state. All right. Last one before you get [unclear].

[silence]

{Tingendzin} [repeat]. {Tingendzin} [repeat]. {Tingendzin} [repeat]. [Samadhi]...very famous, right? Very famous word. The definition...the broad definition, and I'm not giving you precise definitions, probably because I don't know them by heart...is {tsechu}, {sem tsechu}, which means one-pointed mind. One-pointed state of mind. I'm gonna tell you what one-pointed means, because I wondered about it for years.

[student: Pointed?]

One-pointed state of mind. Okay? And I, I finally found these classical references. One- pointed means one object. The meaning when they say in Buddhism one-pointed state of mind is one object. You're able to keep your mind on one object...tightly, strong. That's {tingendzin}. That's the definition of [samadhi]. It's just the ability to keep the mind on one object.

[student: But how does that differ from [shamata]?]

We'll talk about it. Okay?

[student: Are you gonna give us the Sanskrit for it?]

Yah, it's [samadhi]. [Samadhi]. [Dhi] means mind; [sama] means equal. [unclear] The San-...the Tibetan word is difficult to translate. {Tingen} means...like {wotingting} means vivid green. It's a green which is pulsating or...it's a very rare...it's a very special word in Tibetan. When you, you're driving in Switzerland and you're driving and you look over and there's one of these Swiss meadows, with this incredible vibrant green...this is called {woting}, {wotingye}. So {tingye} means like this incredible, vibrant color usually. And {dzin} means to glow. So all these Tibetan words are difficult to translate... {samten}...they, they don't...you know, translators who don't know Tibetan very well struggle with the meanings of the units of the word, but they don't have any...they have a nice flavor, but they don't describe one-pointed mind. You see

what I mean? So don't get too hung up on the...on the meaning of the words, themselves. You'll, you'll get lost. They don't mean...they don't have much to do with what the thing is. They came from the old tradition of translation...like {konchok}, which in, in ancient Tibet in which they translated the feeling of the word and not the meaning of the word. And most of those translations were later banned. Some of them have survived. So {tingendzin}, [samadhi]. [Samadhi] means the ability to keep the mind one-pointed. So what's the difference between [samadhi] and [shamata]? [Shamata] is the highest evolution of this. You can have {tingendzin} at work. You know, if you're...you can have especially {tingendzin} watching a movie or reading a good book. When you start to slobber...I mean if you've ever reached that, if you play music for example...if you really get into it, you know, you find yourself...you're so into it that, that you're drooling and you don't know it 'cause you're not thinking to close your mouth. That's {tingendzin}. And you can have it. Everyone gets it. Every mind has {tingendzin}. {Tingendzin} is the state of mind that every mind has. It's just either developed or not developed. A bug has {tingendzin}. {Tingendzin} is one of the states of mind that accompanies all other states of mind. Every being who's conscious has some ability to concentrate.

[John: The idea is that it's only for a split second perhaps?]

Yah.

[John: Whereas in, in the {shine} you can do it for...]

And then {shine} is the...you know, the highest evolution of this innate ability to concentrate. So everyone has {tingendzin}. Everyone has some part of [samadhi]. That's stated in the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. It's one of the ten states of...it's one of the ten mental functions that every conscious being has...all the time. Yuh?

[student: So what is it that different between [samadhi] and {samten}?]

Yah, [samadhi] is, is just your ability to concentrate, that you already have. [Shamata] is when you practice, practice, practice, practice until you are able to keep your mind in deep meditation...so deep that it goes to a higher realm and you see emptiness. So...

[student: It's more, more...]

...powerful. It's that, it's that, it's that ability to concentrate. It's the [samadhi] which you have, taken to it's highest level through practicing, and you can do it, because your mind is plastic. Your mind is moldable. Of all things in the world, your mind...if you expose it to the wrong things, it's gonna be coming out a month from now. Don't worry. It must. It will. Your mind is very influenceable. Your mind is like silly putty. You have to be very careful what you expose it to, you know. But the...on the good side, if you, you know, expose it to a good object repeatedly...which is, what?

[student: {Gom}.]

It, it must come out a good result later. You know, that's why it's, that's why it's proven in the [b: Pramanavartika], Dharmakirti's classic work, that you can reach the ultimate state of compassion. 'Cause your mind is influenceable. Your mind is not...your mind is fluid. If you keep exposing it to a holy object it must become holy. And if you keep exposing it to TV well, what do you expect? [laughs] [laughter] No, your mind is like a mirror. And whatever you put in that mirror, whatever appears in that mirror often enough, the mind must become that nature. So your mind is very... It's very dangerous. You don't want to infl-...to expose it to...to things which are not nice, you know. Yuh?

[John: So is that why they say, when you say you're doing calm-abiding meditation on the breath, for example, versus calm-abiding meditation with an object of concentration as a Buddha...that it's more virtuous to concentrate on the Buddha because by concentrating on the Buddha, your mind becomes holy...that's...is that the extra virtue they talk about?]

Yah, oh yah. There's a kind of [samadhi] you can do. There's a famous example in India of a man who stayed in a cave and he meditated that he had horns. You know, bull's horns. And he did so good that when tried to get out of the cave, he kept hitting his horns on the side and couldn't get out. You know, mentally he couldn't, couldn't get out. And he was..he couldn't get out of the entrance of the cave. And they say, "You know, great, great in the sense of meditating. Useless in the sense of the object. You know, why didn't you pick a better object?...to, to, to {gom}, to habituate your mind to. That's a classic example. Yuh?

[student: You just said, "Calm-abiding meditation, which we have not...which one would that be of this?"]

I'm not, I'm not gonna touch all these English translations. I, I give up. Calm-

abiding is a translation of {shine}, which is [shamata]. And {shi} means peace and {ne} means to stay. It does not mean to put your mind in a nice, pleasant, buzzed-out state. And that's why you gotta be careful about that. [Sham] does mean peace, but it's, it's a particular kind of peace. I would prefer that you think of [shamata] as a powerful gun than as a cotton candy, you know. It's a powerful weapon, aimed at the right object. It's not like, "Heh, man, you know." [laughs] [laughter] And I'm afraid that the word is...you see it's one of those old translations. It kinda tends to intimate that it's just a pleasant, peaceful, calm-abiding...no, if anything, it's a fierce experience. It's a very powerful telescope aimed at a, at a very holy object, and the result is an atom bomb, you know. It's, it's a different kind of thing. Okay? Have some tea. And there's some soup. If you didn't have any dinner before you came, you're welcome to have some soup. We'll start in ten minutes.

[cut]

I'm just gonna give you the names of the six preliminary practices, and then I'll explain them next week. But in the meantime, I'd like you to memorize them, okay? Not in Tibetan, just in English. {Chaksel} is number one. {Chaksel} means prostration, bowing down. I remember the first time I had to do it, I didn't want to do it, I didn't like to do it. I was brought up as a Christian, and in the Christian religion one of the things says you will not bow down to craven images... And I, I felt uncomfortable, I didn't do it for a while. And I don't regret that I didn't do it for a while because I didn't know what it meant and it didn't feel comfortable to me. {Sel} means to look for something. {Chak} means the hand. It's the, it's the honorific word for hand. It's used for a high lama's hand. And it means to look for something from the hand of somebody...to look for a gift from his hand. So it means really that you are...showing your respect. And we'll go through the whole thing. And it has a lot more meaning than just getting down on the floor. And if it's not comfortable for you, don't worry about it. We can't do it here anyway. [laughs] [laughter]

[student: One at a time.]

Yah, yah, yah, yah. [laughs]

[student: Is it good for your lower back, the prostrations?]

It has a lot...we'll talk about it. But I'll tell you this: when you perceive emptiness directly, when you come out of that, you'll understand the meaning of

prostrations for the first time. And you'll get down and you'll bow because you saw something incre-...you saw something that deserves a bow.

[John: Could you just tell us about it? [laughs]]

And it will be, it will be, a natural reaction to what you saw, and you will get up and start prostrating. And you'll...at that moment you'll know what it is. And I think before that you never really know what it is. You'll want to get down on your knees in front of those [unclear]. And that's just something that we'll talk about. {Chepa} means offering. This is a mistake. I mixed up the...the homework says don't mix up the seven and the six. I did. Scratch the first one.

[student: Oh no.]

Sorry.

[John: I ran out of paper!]

I learn one thing from [unclear] ...

[John: Hey, can I have a piece?]

You know that the...the homework says don't confuse the six and the seven.

[unclear]

Yah, right.

[student: Is that one the seven?]

It's one of the seven, but you're not going to do the seven tonight. I just want you to know the six.

[student: And what is this the one of the two of?]

The six things that you have to do before you start meditating. I messed up.

[silence]

I'm making it simple; it's a long sentence. {Mikam sama} means that you, you

get up and you, you tidy up the room. You make the room clean. Anila and me are not too good at this. [laughs] But you...it's, it's actually...we'll talk about it, but it's very important, actually. So, when you get up in the morning, you're ready to start your meditation, first thing is to tidy up everything. Make your bed, sweep the floor. In the monastery, you know, five o'clock you see all these monks out with these little brooms doing the floor of their house. And it's already spotless, but this is part of the meditation. And it has a specific purpose and I'll...we'll talk about it. It actually gets you ready for meditation, physically. So that's cleaning up your room...sweeping and making everything nice. Tidy.

[student: Where you meditate only...not the whole house.] [loud laughter]

Yah, yah.

[student: I know when I have to study...I don't want to study, I clean up the whole house!]

Yah, yah, that could be a distraction. {Chepa} is offering. Offering is a short word, but actually you, you set up an altar, and you put out certain images and things like that. And then you put out some pretty offerings. And we'll talk about it.

[silence]

[John: Awwh.]

Sorry.

[John: Quick draw.]

Which one was it? Which one did you need?

[student: {Chupa}.]

{Chupa}. [unclear] do you need it in Tibetan?

[student: Yah.]

Did you miss it?

[silence]

{Chabdul} means going for refuge. If you were in the last class you did, you know, you know it, well. And {semkye} which is trying to develop the wish to, to become a Buddha so that you can help all beings. It's what they call bodhicitta. It's the wish to become perfect so that you can help all beings. It's the wish to achieve your own paradise so that you can really help other people. That's sort of a pleasant task. You know, it's not as nasty as it's...achieve everything you ever wanted to help other people. [laughs] That's okay. [laughs]

[John: First part's pretty good.]

That's not so hard. All right. And, and implied here, and you should write it in your homework...implied here is that you take the proper posture, before you do that. Okay. So you...

[John: Meditation posture?]

Yah. You're setting down the right kind of seat. And you're placing yourself on that seat in the proper position. And then you, you try to think these two things. So I didn't write out the whole thing 'cause, you know, I didn't want to hold you up.

[John: Try to think two things?]

These two: taking refuge and bodhicitta. And that's expressed in the prayer we do every class, before every class. You have that in your notebook. It has the same title at the top: {kyabdro semkye}.

[student: What was that word you said, {bodhi}?]

{Bodhicitta}, which means {bodhi}...which means Buddha mind, {bodhi} mind, which does not refer, which the other students all know 'cause they studied the definition. {Semkye damche la mikshin rangyi do doshan dungye dungbe techen jukku riksum mepe yikkyi tsowa nogu chepa chen tekche summa sema}. We, we did the whole thing. All right? Definition of it. Basically, the wish to achieve paradise for yourself so that you can help other people. So you can really be of some help to other people, because when you do that you become omniscient. You know all the problems they're ever gonna face in the next fifty years. And then you can really help them. {Kyabdro semkye}.

[silence]

Okay, {tsokshin}. {Mikpa} means to visualize. {Tsokshin} means a, a big picture with all the lamas in it...all the lamas who have passed down the great two lineages since the beginning of Buddhism in this planet. What are the two lineages? Emptiness and compassion. So you're visualizing the ma-, major lamas who have passed this down to us. And we'll talk about it. To si...put it simply this. That's put very simply.

[silence]

[student: To visualize all the Buddhas in the lineage...that's what you mean?]

In the...of the two great lineages, which is emptiness and compassion. They've come down through different lineages. I mean the major...every lama had both. There were many main teachers of the...

[silence]

{Drup} you know, right? {Nyumdrup shedrup}? Do you remember from last? You didn't have the Tibetan. {Drup} means obstacle. Okay? Spiritual obstacle. Two different kinds. Fran? Come on...

[Fran: What was the question?]

Two kinds of obstacles...do you remember?

[student: Obstacles to omniscience?]

That's the second one.

[Fran: And bad thoughts.]

Yah, and bad thought obstacles. One describes the kind of obstacle; one describes what it's obstacle-ing. Okay? The first one which is bad thought obstacles, are what prevent you from reaching nirvana. Things like anger. And the second kind which are obstacles to reaching omniscience, prevent you from becoming a Buddha. They prevent you from knowing all things. Subtle kinds of ignorance. {Dripjang} means to purify those obstacles. To clean yourself of

those obstacles.

[student: So it's only to clean yourself of the spiritual kind?]

Yah, what else? You can take a bath. But you're already sitting down. [laughs]
[laughter] {Tsotsak} I wasn't gonna say it [unclear]. Okay, {tsoktsak}: {tsok}...
{tsok} means good deeds; {tsak} means to gather them...to gather power of
goodness...to gather together the power of goodness. So one is getting rid of
something negative, and one is building up positive power. These are, these are
conditions that are gonna make your meditation succeed. And it really works.
And if you don't do it, the meditation doesn't work. It's very interesting. And
we'll talk more about it. This...there are seven ingredients to this, to this
preparation. And we'll talk about it next class. These are also called the seven
limb practices. In this case the word limb should be translated as {gyer}. Limb,
like a limb of a tree, refers to the branches as opposed to the trunk. And it has
no meaning in this case like that. The Tibetan word is that, and a lot of people
translate it that way, but it has no meaning like that. It's a, it's in a way it's a
mistranslation. Because the Tibetan word and the Sanskrit word have many
other meanings than limb, you know. So {dripjang tsoktsak}. There are seven
steps to that...we'll talk about it next time.

[student: So it's number six now?]

Yah. [cut] The Tibetan word is the same...requesting. This is requesting
blessings, you could say. My lama doesn't like the word blessings because he
thinks it's too...it's a little too Christian and too vague. But this is a specific action
you can take that other beings in the universe who are already enlightened can
actually affect your mind state...and the way that your mind state improves...the
rate at which your mind state im-...improves.

[John: I thought it was impossible for any enlightened being to...]

If you...if you do it well it's...it can help your...it can help. They say the ring and
the hook. If you have the ring and the hook comes, okay. If you don't have the
virtue, it's impossible. Basically you're creating it by doing enough goodness to
have it happen.

[John: You had, you had said in the last class it's not possible for the Buddha or
an enlightened being to...from, as an external source to do something to you
other than provide you with...]

It's possible if you're in...it's possible for example for you to see a miracle happen. You have the virtue to see a miracle happen. And that's why I forget who it was...could walk on the water and the next guy to get out of the boat fell into the water, you know. [laughs] The first one had...I don't remember their names...but the first one actually had the virtue to see it happen. And the second one didn't have the virtue to see it happen. Because it's empty; because of emptiness. Emptiness makes it possible for this to occur also. But it's a long story. Basically it's impossible for any other being to change your karma or take your karma without teaching you and then you do the actions that make your karma change. If, if that weren't true we wouldn't be here.

[John: So they can only teach you; they can't do anything to you.]

Basically not. Basically not. But there are certain conditions under which if you have the proper attitude and the proper virtue...if you have the goodness basically for it to happen, they can assist you and help your mind state become more receptive...

[John: By teaching you.]

By you requesting...by, by an actual blessing. But it's...basically it's impossible, basically for someone else to take your karma is impossible. If they could, they would have and we wouldn't be here. The proof is that we're here. You know, the proof that they can't do it is that we're here.

[John: It sounds to me like you're saying that they can do it a little bit.]

They can do it if you have the virtue for it to happen. In the same way that... if you have... They can do it if...

[John: You just said they couldn't do it.]

If you're good enough to see them do it. How's that?

[student: There are stories of their teachers setting up situations for their student's enlightenment.]

But you see it couldn't happen unless you have the karma to see that there's a person setting up such a situation. So we had this debate in Arizona, you know,

we even wrote the Dalai Lama like three times. You know he, he talked about it twice and we still, you know, we still have the argument. Basically any miracle can happen if, if you have the goodness to make it happen...if you have the goodness to perceive it. And those who have studied emptiness understand that more than the people who haven't. You know, miracles are possible. They do occur. And it's possible for me to see a miracle and a person sitting next to me to see nothing happen. And that's...that is not contradictory and it's...both are seeing reality. Both have valid perceptions of reality. And so that...you'd know that if you studied emptiness. Okay, those are the six...I wanna go over them in English, and so let's make sure we all have the same words. I, I've never really worked too hard on translating it. The first one was...what are we gonna call it? Prostrating.

[student: No!] [unclear]

We'll say cleaning your room. All right? What your mother always wanted you to do. And it's a lot more than that, but we'll get into it.

[student: Where you meditate you say cleaning is...[laughter] It's very important it's like you're cleaning your whole house.]

Yah. You know, when I was translating it I came to...the word is the place you stay and I was wondering should I put room or house? Cleaning your room. What was the second one?

[student: Offering.]

That's easy. Third one?

[student: Refuge.]

Taking refuge and...

[John: Generating bodhicitta.]

Developing bodhicitta.

[John: With the proper posture.]

[student: Which one?]

You can say with...but no, it's really two separate things. Taking refuge and...

[student: Which one are we on?]

Number three has two parts. Taking refuge and...

[student: Generating...]

We'll call it generating; I like generating. Generating [bodhicitta], which means getting thoughts of...you'd like to become...you'd like to reach a paradise to help other people. And, and [bodhicitta] is a short word for that. Bodhicitta is the Sanskrit word for mind, and [bodhi] means that enlightened kind of wish to help other people. Okay? So we'll call it...what are we gonna call it? Taking refuge and generating [bodhicitta]. But I don't like generating too much.

[student: Developing?]

I won't pick on it.

[John: With proper meditation posture.]

Yah, and by the way, you have to write that in your homework, okay? Taking the proper pos-...taking...what are we gonna call it?

[student: [unclear]]

[John: Seven point...]

Taking the proper posture, and...

[student: Before meditating...before thinking...]

Number three has three parts. Taking the proper posture, comma, taking refuge, comma, and generating [bodhicitta], which is a Sanskrit word which means a wish to become a Buddha so you can really help other people. That was number three. Okay, what was number four?

[student: Visualizing [unclear].]

That's nice. Visualizing the lamas, visualizing the lamas of the two, of the two great lineages. That was number four. Visualizing the lamas...it's actually a lot more than two, but the two is minimum, okay? Of the two great lineages. And you know what they are. They're all the teachers through whom the emptiness teachings have come down to us from the Buddha; and all the teachers from whom the teachings on compassion have come down to us. And in the actual painting there's...sometimes you get somebody on both sides, you see? I mean this lama was involved in the, the chain of lamas through which the emptiness teachings came...have come down to us personally; and this lama was also happened to be in chain of the teachers through whom...the major teachers through whom compassion has been taught. Obviously they've all taught both, but there are, there are main lamas who, whose careers were...okay I'm gonna end emptiness. Yah.

[student: Is that [unclear] the merit field?]

Yah... That was number...

[student: Four.]

What's number five?

[student: Seven ingredients.]

What was it called before that though? Oh, cleaning ob-...purifying obstacles, and...

[student: Gathering good deeds.]

Gathering good deeds. I like that. Okay, so number five is it? Is, is purifying obstacles, and...gathering good deeds. Yah, that's five. And that process has seven steps which we will study next class.

[student: Doing good deeds.]

Yah, gathering the power of good deeds. And we'll talk more about each one. I just want you to know the names.

[student: We should know the Tibetan?]

You, you...no, you don't need to know the Tibetan. Just know the English. If you wanna know the Tibetan come to tomorrow night? Okay? [laughs] It's too much for you. Just learn those names. Just learn the six names. I need to learn them, too. Obviously I don't know them very well. Number six?

[student: Requesting blessings.]

Yah, we'll say requesting blessings. Okay, that's it. Sorry it went over, but you guys talk too much. Now you get your homework. You must do your homework. Don't do it, you know, the afternoon...[cut]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Two: Six Preliminaries to Meditation

Februaury 18, 1994

transcribed by: Stephanie Loebis

I didn't at first believe in these things. I use to just sit down and try to meditate and they really do work to prepare your mind. I don't know quite why they work. And I don't know how it is, but they really do work if you try. If you compare Coke and Pepsi. Try and do a meditation without them and then try to do a meditation with them. They really do make a big difference. They really do facilitate your meditation. You know I have all these theories why, but I am not quite sure, but it really does work. So we'll go through those six and through those seven. We have to go fairly briefly because of all that we have to finish in six weeks. There is a book (b: Liberation in our Hands, Liberation in the Palm of your Hands). We happen to have it here also. Downstairs, if you need one let me know. It's very long. It contains a very long description of each of these. You can have one of those or you can get it at the bookstore (unclear). It was written by Pabongka Rinpoche who is our root teacher's teacher. He is also the teacher of the Dalai Lama's teacher. And it is basically the Lam Rim Chen Mo. The Lam Rim Chen Mo doesn't have a lot on the Six Preliminaries. In fact what it has is in your notebooks. And you know that great textbook of Je Tsong Khapa doesn't have a lot. So when Pabongka Rinpoche wrote his Lam Rim he, I mean the first third basically is a couple hundred pages on it. And then Je Tsong Khapa spent a lot of his book on concentration, meditation, and emptiness/wisdom. And so Pabongka didn't write that much about it cause Je Tsong Khapa had pretty much covered it. So we're gonna study meditation from the person who wrote the smaller presentation. Then we're gonna study the six preliminaries from the person who wrote the longest presentation. Give or take about a year. So we will start with the Six Preliminaries.

The first one is what?

(Student: Cleaning up your room)

Yea, Cleaning up your room, which is {metok cheto} and it means this. My theory is not in the books that I read, but my theory is the it gets you out of bed and moving physically. In the monastery they are sweeping the floor with this

broom and it doesn't matter if the place is not dirty you still get up and do something. You know vacuum. I have a feeling its to get you awake and out of slapper disengaged from your office if you are doing it in the evening, morning is better if you can. But it gets you up and moving around the house. But also they say that the act of cleaning that places a cause for your paradise later. Cleaning up the place acts to create your paradise later. You would understand that better if you study emptiness. And also the (b: Abhidharma kosha) gives a very specific list of virtues connected to working physically around the holy place. Around the stupa, or temple, or your altar. It's called {Ze le chu le (unclear)}. So that really has some important meaning. And also as you get to meditating every day for a long time, say six months, your mind starts to get more orderly in a way. And you actually feel more comfortable meditating in a room that is sort of neat. I guess I am not one to talk. It does help. So that's the first preliminary. It is very important.

The second one is what?

(Student: offering

Offering. Okay. There are the traditional offering is the seven bowls. And ...

(Student: Seven what?)

Seven water bowls of things (unclear). And those represent an offering to the senses.

The five senses. And they also come from ancient India. And they are the traditional offering that you would give a king. Or a great person. Like if the Dalai Lama were to come to your house in ancient India there would be seven steps by which you would greet him. And that is what those seven bowls represent. So if you can get a hold of a set of those, somebody from your class said they know where to get them if you need them. I tried in Delhi the last time I was there and they are hard to get. Apparently people are selling them in the United States but they are expensive. More expensive than in India.

(Student: Snow Lion has them)

Yeah? I like the one, there is one made out of bell metal, it is a white metal, it's not silver, but it looks like silver. It doesn't get dirty. Those are kind of nice. These are brass or copper and they get are hard to keep clean.

(Student: you can get them made out of glass too, at a housewares store, it's real

simple)

That's nice if you can. You stack them up together and fill the top one up with water. It should be clean water. And then you pour all but a little into the next bowl. And set the first bowl on the left side. Okay. So you've got all seven bowls in your hand and fill up the first one with water, they're stacked, and you take out the first one and you pour most of it into the next bowl and then you set the first one down on the left side. And that first bowl represents water for drinking. It represents a beverage that you give to them, that person who is visiting you. In India if you been there, you know if you walk into a house after being outside it is very nice to get something to drink. That was probably very common, it was the first thing you would do - give someone a drink of water. Then you take the second bowl and pour most of it into the third bowl and put the second bowl down. And that represents {Pud Diem (in Sanskrit)} {Pud Diem} comes from the word {Pud} which came into Latin as {Ped} which means what? What is a pedestrian?

(Student: Foot.)

Yeah, "someone on foot". And it represents water for washing the feet. I think you see in the Bible people washing people's feet. It's considered a very big offering in a hot country, in the Middle East, and the Asia. Because someone else's foot if you have been in India you wear sandals and there is lots of dirty stuff on the all over on the ground and your feet get dirty and sometimes it is really bad stuff like cows walk around everywhere and it doesn't matter where you walk in India you are bound to walk into a cow pie somewhere. They are not prevented from walking around though the traffic. They walk through the city and you are not allowed to hurt them. It is very much an act of humility to wash someone's feet. I think in the Bible they do it in the same manner. So the second one is offering water to clean the person's feet. The third one is called {Dushpa} means "flower." You are offering a flower. So the first offering has been to the sense of taste. And the second offering has been to the sense of what?

(Silence)

Touch. Now the third one is an offering to the sense of smell and sight. It's a beautiful flower. So you put again you pour the contents of the third bowl most of it into the fourth bowl and set the bowl down. Working your way to the right-your right. And that represents the flower.. The next one the fourth bowl is {dhupe} which means "incense". And that's sweet to the sense of smell.

The next one is offering lamp. In India it would have been a wick put into oil and the best kind of oil is from clarified butter. Most expensive. It makes the nicest

light. So that is an offering of light. The next one is called {gandhe} in Sanskrit. It means some water mixed with holy perfumes that you are offering to the holy person's body. It's like a perfume. That again is to the sense of smell.

(Student: The lamp oil is for the sight?)

Yeah. And then the seventh one is {Newde or (unclear)} which means "fruit". An offering of fruit. And there is really an eighth one which is music. You offer music. And sometime another bowl is set out and sometime you just put your bell up on the altar. So those are the Seven Offerings. And the eighth is sort of optional. The Tibetans would offer water. You can also and in certain rituals you fill them up with the actual object. So the first one is actually clean water, the second one is some kind of perfumed water that you would wash someone's feet with, and the third one is you actually put a flower in the bowl, so you can do it either way. But the Tibetan Lamas the tradition of Tibet would just put water in the bowls and the idea is that no sane person who is offering water will feel any hesitation about spending too much. Because it is a very bad deed if you have to go out and buy incense and a flower, cookies, which are expensive. And they say that it is a very bad deed if you have any hesitation at all in making the offering, so water is considered-it's free. No one who offers water is going to think, Oh I overspent on water, you know, something like that.

The bowls should be in straight line. And they should be not touching and not too far apart. They say about the width of a piece of rice. And that's to ... it's to represent the way that the tradition should be should never be discontinued. Teachers and students should always be close enough so that the Dharma should be continued. And it doesn't mean that if you spread them out too far that you are not going to meet a lama. It is just that it's a nice thing to think about while you are arranging your altar. Again it is because things are empty the more symbolism you give it and the more you can concentrate while you do it as you are setting them out it occurs to you that it is very possible that you could live in world where there are no teachers. Where you never meet anyone who know enough to help you. That you should think about that in the morning. So that is a very good thing to think about while you are putting out the offerings. Then there should be on the altar somewhere a representation of the Buddha's body. And a representation of his speech. And a representation of his mind, which you can cover if you have an image of the Buddha and then some scripture. In fact the word for altar is a support for the body, speech and mind, for the holy body, speech and mind. That's the word for altar in Tibetan {Koos kun se ten}.

(Student: You said water bowls for the five senses, what are the other three

things?)

It doesn't relate to only five of them. Two of them are taste, you know

(Student: I heard it was consciousness)

Yeah, it could be.(unclear) Normally it's like that. So that's offering. Try to put something fresh out every morning. In the evening you take it down the same way. You start from the left. You pour out the one on the left and then you turn it over. Then you pour out the next one and lean it up on the first one. Like that. You don't stack them on each other you lean them up like this so they are leaning up on each other. And it was a {kadampa} tradition, the {kadampa}'s were the early Buddhist, they were like the early Christians, they were the early fanatic Buddhists in Tibet and they were like the first American Buddhist if you would. Maybe we can be like them. I think we could be like them. They were the converts. They were ones who had been something else and were now Buddhists. So they practiced very well and they were famous. They had a lot of hardships too because the country wasn't Buddhist at that time. And they had a lot of hard times. They were just learning everything and it was a very exciting time. I once tried to draw, I got confused about who was who's teacher. So I went through the (b; Blue Annals) which is like this big and I tried to chart who was who's teacher and it turned out like a tumbleweed. So it would be like someone would go to India and learn Abhidharma and come back and someone else would go and learn Madhyamika. So the guy who learned Abhidharma would teach his friend Abhidharma and that person would teach him Madhyamika. People were each others teachers. And it really was a beautiful time. And they would practice very hard. They concentrated a lot on meditation. Very few books left from those times., only a few. And they would say you should turn them over at night and put out the water and turn them over at night to represent that you are ready to die tonight. To die in your sleep, you know. And that's the purpose of turning them over. Which means okay I have finished all my work. If I die an hour from now in my sleep that's okay. Sort of to remember your impermanence. And then the water you should collect in a bowl and they say you should throw it in a place where...it is almost like holy water and you shouldn't throw it in a place where people might step on it, like on a roadway or where it's gonna go straight into the sewer or something like that. Try to put it in some plants or try to throw it into the ocean a very nice place to throw it.

(Student: But if you can't, you have no plants?)

(Laughter)

Out the window.

(Student: Out the window! It falls on the street!)

I use to pour it on the wall where it would drip down and not reach the sidewalk. I lived in place where there was no where else. You see, Improvise! Where there is a will, there is a way.

(Student: unclear)

I don't know. I think that's great. I don't remember reading that anywhere. We use to flower our plants (unclear).

(Student: Is it inappropriate to not change the water every day?)

You are suppose to change it every day.

(Student: Does it matter if you don't?)

It is like offering the Dalai Lama a hard donut.

(Laughter)

And I am the worst! I don't sleep enough. I don't want to mess around with that. It's not good. Your meditation won't be good. You have to take time with these things. It is sort of like, especially if you are on a retreat. If you do all the proper offerings for certain retreats it takes like an hour and a half or two hours in the morning and its correct to do it. You know it really works. I just say try it. What you do...what it means is kind of like making a commitment to the meditation. I think that this meditation is important enough to do it really powerfully. And I am an offender. I am not kidding you. You really should. Otherwise the meditation doesn't come out. Actually you pour out the water and wipe them and before you pour the water in you wipe them. Make them clean. Even if they don't look dirty.. It is just a ritual action that you do. I know that Westerners and myself too, don't like ritual. Ritual is synonym for something mindless. But it is not like that. It really does work. And the meaning you give it. If you do it mindlessly then I guess it will be mindless. If

you just do it because you have to do it (A.) You won't do it very well. (B.) It won't help your meditation very much. Unless you really imagine that you are setting these things out in front of beings you are really going to come. And if you don't think so. If you don't believe that they will come then don't bother. Why meditate? The idea is become like a being who is Buddha. And Buddha is omniscient. If he knows you are wish him to would come, then he is there. In fact, he can't even premeditate it, that is the nature of a Buddha. He's just there when you're ready and you would really like him to be there, he's there. Because his nature is mental mostly. And if you don't believe in all that then there is not much reason to. In one way logically you have to not believe in it. We don't get to the proof of the existence of a Buddha till about our fifteenth year in the monastery. You don't really know that they exists. But you have to some intention. At this point you have to sort of believe that is shy you are here. (A.) To explore the possibility of getting out of suffering permanently. (B.) Of becoming a being that could help all other beings perfectly. And you can't demonstrate that those exist. But you know something exists. So I would say work from that. Work from your knowledge that you are suffering. And this claims to be way out. And the description of suffering is so perfect that possibly these people have some antidote for it. No one else is even describing suffering.. Do you see what I mean? So you are going to the one people in the world who are saying: Life is very bad. And this is how you get out of that aging process. The process of everything ever succeeds in your life collapses , which it will. Your health, your looks, your strength, your mind. Will all deteriorate by their very nature. There is no other choice. So if someone tells you that truly and you can corroborate it . And then if they say that they know also the way to fix it you should at least take interest. So offer them and really do understand that if there is such a being that he can partake of that. The Buddha's don't drink the water. And we don't believe they drink the water. They don't need water! But it is the action of wishing they could. You try to imagine that they take from that water what they can get out of that water which is bliss. And which is all knowledge. And they can. Their experience of the water and you're experience of the water are a different thing. So there is no thing of you're trying to make them feel less thirsty or something. They're not. They don't get thirsty. It's from you're side. It is to help you. Not that they need seven little bowls of water. No Buddhist believes that. So that 's Offering. If you have some favorite things to offer, that is nice too. And the music. In general music can be a big distraction to your meditation.. Especially while you are meditating. In general it can be a real distraction. Like if you can mentally make it an offering and try to concentrate on that and not fool yourself that you are not just listening to your favorite song. Then it is a good thing.

What's the third one?

(Student: You are talking about the Buddha? Is the Buddha-Buddha? Is it Buddha that we are offering to, Buddhas, or (unclear) Bodhisattvas or what?)

In the text it is all enlightened beings, all beings who are pretty far along the path. And in the when we do our monks confession twice a month you are suppose to imagine the offering we do some form of (unclear) you are suppose to imagine that every being in the world can experience this offering. So I think you can say that. The text goes:

{Ga Cha num la tru a dum sen ta num la chub pa dum}

so it is both, enlightened beings and you wish that all normal people could also experience pleasure from (unclear) Each to his capacity.

Next one, next one-third?

(Student: Posture)

Yeah, get down properly on your seat. You can meditate on this right? E-e-e-e-e(e-laughter).

The text says, Tsong Khapa says, he quotes some text. If you read the reading in the back of the book which you should have done by next week, okay? You should have read everything in the back there.

(Student: The back of this one?)

Yeah, the back of the notebook. It describes the Six Preliminaries from Tsong Khapa (Unclear).

And he quotes some ancient text that say "Press the two together" by which he means do a full lotus. And we'll get into that later. I mean not into a full lotus but we'll get into the correct posture later. And then Je Tsong Khapa and the text say a half lotus is okay too. For those of you like me it I get into a full lotus I can't get out of it. And it doesn't help me meditate much because I am in such agony that I can't concentrate. So you should put the left foot up first, that's tradition. Put your left foot up first if you can only do a half lotus. A half lotus is left foot on top of your right thigh, then the other leg not in a full lotus which would be up on top of your left thigh but rather just straight just down on the ground. And we will get into all that. It is really important to have a totally, totally comfortable seat for you. Try different seats. Some people like these Japanese things. I don't. I tend to fall over on those. Your bottom, your back is suppose to be higher then your front. The back of the cushion is suppose to be higher then the front. And make sure under your legs that there is some cushion. Even under your legs you know you are sitting on those put another thin I use this one is good. Put a thin one under the front of your legs because the circulation will be a lot better. Then you can concentrate a lot better. And we'll talk about it later. Eventually when you get good at meditating your feet

will fall asleep, your legs will fall asleep, and just let it go. We'll talk about it more later. Get into some good position. We will talk about the proper position later. Do going for refuge. That was also part of the third preliminary. We will talk about refuge. So the third preliminary had three parts to it. Get into the right posture. Go for refuge. And try to think about bodhichitta. What is refuge? Anybody have a definition for refuge? Mmmm, who should I pick on? Regina. What's going for refuge? Remember the definition from the final? What is it? (Student: It's a looking for object to hold on. To put hope...)

Because?

(Student: Because you need help.)

That's all. Why a kid goes to Mommy. It has some...what are the two causes?

(Student: Fear and...)

Fear...

(Student: ...and hope)

The belief that this thing can help you. So there is actually two states of mind inside of refuge. And we studied it in great depth last course. But the first one is fear. If you are not afraid you don't know what is going on. (Laughter) Okay! Your condition is very serious. It's hopeless. I mean you can, we don't break down. Some people do. But I think that those people actually recognize what's really going on, but you have no...there is no object in your normal every day life which can give you any help. I told kids. I use to teach this to kids-Mongolian kids, you know somebody steals something from you who do you call? The police or somebody. If your house burns you call - you take refuge in the firemen. If you get sick you take refuge in the doctor. But I live in a temple and we have a thousand members or so. And everyone shows up sooner or later. And when they show up is when someone dies. You know, or when they get very old or sick. They go to other refuges first. They go to worldly refuges. They go through the gammed of worldly refuges. They go to the police, they go to the court, they go to the doctor, then they go to the specialist. Then they go to the most expensive place that they can find. And then they come to the temple. Because it is obvious that there is no the, nothing left. Last night we had like at eleven o'clock at night we had two people, two Tibetans came. Their father died. Haven't seen them for years. You know, they I mean this is refuge. Refuge means what you do, where you go when you have a fear of, the true fear which is death. And what will happen after death. So Buddhist refuge is the first part is fear. You are afraid of what is going to happen when you die. You could die any time. And the second one is to believe that you this teaching can help you. Those two components are necessary to help you take refuge. So really the state of mind of refuge is different then all the daily activity that you do. Because all the day long you are seeking something. The reason you move

body at any given time is to go look for something. To go get something that you think is going to give you some kind of happiness. That is why you move at all ever. You will get up from this class because you will want to go home and have a dream, and go to bed and watch some TV. That's what you seek for happiness. So that's why you move. Any time during the day. That's why you move your arm or your head. You think it will make you feel good. And refuge is that. You have to, all of those actions are useless. All of those worldly actions, those daily activities they are not relevant to refuge. They are not refuge. When you finally do something to help you at death. Then that is the first time you have ever taken refuge. And that is the first time you qualify as a Buddhist. That's a minimum requirement to be a Buddhist. Is that thought finally occurring to you that I should do something to prepare for my death. You are not a Buddhist until that happens. Technically you are not a Buddhist.

(Student: But what happens if you are suffering a lot and you want to get out of that suffering? Would you still be a Buddha?, I mean Buddhist?)

Actually, no. The minimum is to worry about your next life. That's the minimum. You know that was in the definition of a lower scope person.

(Student: Even if you have a fear of suffering for this life and next life would that be...)

And?

(Student: ...and next life. The suffering (unclear) not of death)

What makes it Buddhist refuge is fear of what will happen when you die. And that is why I object to some, there is Buddhist teachers that try to make Buddhism out to be something to make you calm in this life. It doesn't qualify as a Buddhist teaching. It'll be nice if we were calm. We will be calm when we take care of our death. We will be calm now when we know that we will die well. But the minimum is to prepare for that time. That's the object of Buddhist practice. Minimum object. You can't do much about this life to make yourself happy. You can't feed yourself so much that you will never have to eat again. You can't take enough vitamins that you will never get sick and die. It's too late. Minimum is for death. And the rest is just sort of psychological satisfaction. I don't know if it can even happen. I guess it can if you are a very high practitioner. Actually something will change. But that is a side effect. Anyway. So that's Refuge. Bodhichitta is called {Kun-no Chuno} which means to do this practice in order to help other people. To go into this meditation to with the intention that it should help other people.

(Student: What was that? What was the word?)

Bodhichitta. Bodhichitta means desire to become...desire to reach your own paradise so that you can finally help other people reach that. Something about that thought. Even if it is so flimsy as

we have it, you know what I mean. I really don't have any intention to go help all living beings, you know. Just to imagine it before you meditate. It makes something happen. Even if you just dryly think about it for thirty seconds which about all we do. It still makes the meditation really good. It has some tremendous power. And if you don't have that thought then you won't be able to achieve the final goal. That again relates to emptiness. If you understand emptiness well you have to get this intention. This motivation in order to achieve. So that is the third one.

What's the fourth one?

(Student: Unclear)

Yeah, It's called merit field. What does merit field mean?

(Student: To bring images of emptiness and compassion.)

Yeah. But the word merit field...field here, you say merit field and I think of gravitational field or something you know. I use to think I don't know what they mean by field. Field is better translated as garden, or something. It means by you bring into the room a being who is so holy that anything you do towards him has incredible effects. And this is like in the Abhidharma they explain that. If you give a piece of food to a dog you get a certain good result. If you give that same piece of food to a human being who has no spiritual goodness in him much, just a normal person you get a higher virtue then if you gave it to the dog. Because that person has the capacity to reach nirvana in this life. No matter who he is except for certain kinds of beings that person is a higher level of being then the dog because the dog no matter how much you teach him or instruct him under normal circumstances is it impossible for the dog to learn dharma. So it is much holier to give it to a normal person. And then if you give it to a bodhisattva then it is much more powerful then if you gave it to the normal person. Because this being has a high likelihood of reaching nirvana or Buddhahood in this life. And then if you give it to a Buddha then it is greater. And if you give it to your lama it is greater then that. And if you give it to your father and mother it's greater, it is somewhere between, before bodhisattvas...very high garden, a very high field. They discuss fields as a whole small section of the Abhidharma. Your parents because of all the energy they put into keeping you alive after you were born. And taking care of you. So as a result they are a very high field.

(Student: What happens if your parents not take care of you? And twenty years later they show up...)

I get this question from many westerners. Many westerners say that they were mistreated by their parents. Are they still a virtue field? I don't know your circumstance or the one you might be thinking of. But I think that most

westerners don't consider until they have been a parent, I guess, how many hours and how much thought goes into caring for the child even if you abuse him later. I mean the first three or four years if you paid the person by the hour. If you paid him for his mental agony of having to concentrate that this child shouldn't get into any kind of mortal danger any time of the twenty four hours of the day. If you paid him for that mental hassle, I mean it would be a big salary. I mean it is constant attention for that first few years. And I don't care how bad they were to you later. That's the great kindness. You can't match that. Teaching you to speak. Teaching you to move. Teaching you any kind of human civility is a great kindness. And they do it. Every parent does it. I can't imagine many that don't. Yeah?

(Student: As you so often point out, keeping emptiness in mind even if your parents were absolutely vile to you, you could still replace that with the mental ideal of what parents are like and use that couldn't you?)

You could. But what I am saying is that even what you call a bad parent, if there was a scorecard it would be a billion to one...

(Student: Michael, What about the show on TV where they show these parents who have eleven kids living in filth with sickness...I mean I wouldn't call those parents!)

Well, anyway what qualifies them, the main thing that qualifies them as kind according to the Abhidharma is that they give you a body and a mind which is capable of reaching nirvana. So once you are conceived or born, they have already done that. That the main kindness that they give you, which is the body and mind that enables you reach beyond death. That according to the Abhidharma that is the greatest kindness already.

(Student: Yeah but they do it for to give you life...they are not conscious of that! They do it for pleasure, they do it for to have sex, or they do it because they want to be taken care of when they are older. They don't want to be left alone. The motivation is not there!)

It's true, it's true. If your motivation is not one hundred per cent, but you still save a person's life you still get much of the virtue from that. Motivation is only a quarter of a good deed. Motivation could be lousy. But if you happen to save a person's life with a lousy motivation. I want to become a hero. Or I want to get into the newspaper or whatever. Still the virtue is incredible. The virtue of providing the causes for a being to physically and mentally to reach beyond death, beyond suffering, is limitless. So that's all.

(Student: Even if they're not conscious. Because obviously westerners are not (Unclear))

Yeah, yeah.

(Student: I want to know how this ties to the merit field?)

I am explaining the idea of relative merit fields. Every being has a merit field. So you take the highest one, which is a lama. Which is your root lama, whoever he is. And root lama is a very interesting thing. You will know the day that you meet your root lama. You will have some kind of a relation with him. And he may not be the one who teaches you the most. And it may not be, you know, the one that you expected. It may not be any kind of monk, lama, Buddhist, anything. There will be a being in your life that you will understand is your root lama. And the one who teaches you, who takes you to knowledge and you have to find this person. And when you know, you'll know. And then you have to imagine, if you have this root lama you have to imagine that being there. When you invite the beings there. Frankly, I have studied many, many years. I have studied most of the great books ever taught in the monastery. Edited them, translated them, debated them. I can't visualize all these lamas! I mean the idea of meditation is to start out with a minimum. It is better to start out with too little, then try to do five lamas at once. And then for years you don't get anywhere. Pick the one lama that you have the best connection with. The one that comes up in your heart the easiest. And they say make his outline first. Like a silhouette. You know on the news where at night and they don't want you to see the guy's face and they put a light behind him. And all you see is this dark. Just see the outline. When you are meditating on this lama in front of you, put him in space. Make him about this tall. Put him at the level of here. He is at the same level as here. And then get his outline right. Don't try to color him in. And when you get the outline pretty steady, then try to color in the features.

(Student: Michael, you mean the body also?)

Just his outline as he is sitting. Just how he normally sits. They say don't meditate on him...if he has some physical defects, you know a wart on his chin, or a bald head, or whatever. You are suppose to imagine him as perfect and as young. At the prime of his health. You are suppose to meditate him as that.

(Student: Whether you meet him as young or as old?)

Yeah right. Say I was meditating on Rinpoche I would picture him as, I have a picture of him when he was in his prime physically. You know you are suppose to meditate on the lama as (unclear).

(Student: Does it have to be...you said lama is, root lama is somebody you have a connection with. Does it have to be Buddhist. I mean do you have to experiences in life where a person teaches you. They don't even know that they are teaching you Buddhist principals. But they are! And they have all the qualities of a Buddhist. But they don't call themselves Buddhist. Would that be a lama?)

I won't answer direct. But I will say this. There a commentaries which say that your root lama is a Buddha. There are proofs that your root lama is a Buddha

And they are pretty long. And they are pretty interesting. And one of them is that he functions as a Buddha. In other words if he teaches you what? The Three Principal Paths. Or if he teaches you the Three Trainings, morality, concentration, wisdom. If it is person who teaches you that. If he is not the Buddha, he might as well be. He is the one who communicates it to you. That's the teaching. That's the why you are suppose to consider your root lama as holy as a Buddha. As to be kinder then the Buddhas and more holy then the Buddhas. Because he is your window to the Buddhas. Because if he didn't exist, you wouldn't have had any communication with the Buddhas. So he is better than the Buddhas.

(Student: Does that mean he has to be alive?)

That is a good question. I don't believe that he has to be. No.

(Student: It seems to me that you have to visualize the merit field before you go for refuge and generate bodhichitta. Maybe the order is backwards)

Yeah. That's the way it does though. That's the way it is presented.

(Student: Should you go for refuge...)

Yeah, Yeah. I think when you go for refuge you automatically already thinking of that image of that person. And I say minimum. If you have the mental ability, which frankly I don't. Visualize all of them is good. And you don't know who Nagarjuna was, you don't know who Asanga was, Shantideva, and over the time of your study this will become more clear to you. I didn't feel anything about Asanga. Nice name, you know. I could tell you two sentences about his life. And I don't know anything else about him. And I am suppose to visualize him and take refuge in him? But once you study The Perfection of Wisdom then you have a relationship with Asanga. And then you could put him up there and you can imagine all the things that he is doing for you. So It'll build up over time. And the same with the higher practices. You know I use to get confused with all the deities and stuff. And frankly I couldn't distinguish one from the other. They have different names. I don't know what is the difference. If you ask me to write a paragraph about them I can't. I don't know anything more about them then their names and what they look like. And it is very difficult at first. Later there will come a time when you start to distinguish them because of certain things that go on. But not because, not at the beginning. So as you study you add the lamas that you will study their works. And the same with Tsong Khapa, I mean when we start the Seven Ingredients you are suppose to invite Tsong Khapa. So who is Tsong Khapa? I remember when I couldn't say his name. And you don't have any knowledge of who he is. You don't have any knowledge of what he is. So start with your root lama. Whoever that is. If you don't have one, I think the Dalai Lama is easy. If you are learning from Rinpoche directly, he is very good. And the Buddha if that is

more comfortable for you. You might find Tara, a lady Buddha easier for you. You know that is up to you. So that is inviting them. Invite them and really believe that they are in front of you. Because if they are who they are suppose to be, they can come. If they are not who they are suppose to be, not much reason to do all this stuff.

(Student: Michael, first you said you have to some connection with these people. Now you say that they will come to you. Let's say you don't choose the Dalai Lama, you don't choose Khen Rinpoche. You don't choose Tara. And you choose You! You aren't even a lama. So are we, isn't that a contradiction, but I can not (unclear)...)

I am saying from personal experience, don't struggle with some being you don't have any feeling about. It won't come. Find the one that is very comfortable and natural for you and then exploit that natural feeling that you have for that teacher or that lama or whoever. Rather than struggling to picture some being that you don't know anything about, you have no feeling for, you have no idea what this being is or what his qualities are or anything. Work with your root lama.

(Student: When you put a photograph of the Dalai Lama. Is that to help you visualize or is that for him to mock up his own image or what?)

What other types of images in Buddhism. Some religions don't allow you make images of a being, right? Or they get very sticky about it. I think it is obvious that those pictures are not the beings. You know that the Buddha there is not the being. When you achieve the Path of Seeing. Which is when?

(Student: When you perceive emptiness directly.)

As you come out of that, by the way that is {Nam Shout}(Laughter) Sorry. No one gets that wrong. I get that one wrong. I didn't tell you what that was and it was on your homework. {Nam Shout} is specifically refers to the period in which you are meditating directly on emptiness. It is that meditative period in which you are meditating directly on emptiness. Normally, but not always. {Nam Shout} means that. Out of those six words for meditation. {Nam Shout} means that. And it is as opposed to {Je Toep}. {Je Toep} means after you come out of that meditation, you are no longer in deep meditation, you are not in meditation much at all. You be in some kind of contact. You are aware of things around you again. And then in the experience of emptiness, when you come out, you realize that these pictures really do relate to an enlightened being. You get a whole different feeling about {Tonkas}.

(Student: What do you mean relate?)

I mean when you see a {Tonka} after that, you realize that this picture was drawn , this picture was copied by an artist who saw an earlier picture of Tara; and that picture was copied by an artist who saw an earlier picture of Tara; and blah, blah, blah. Until you get back to the person who saw Tara and drew her. So when you actually meet a tonka of Tara and you, in-in after coming out of the direct perception of emptiness you meet Buddhas directly. You are directly aware of the existence of Buddha. Then you know that this is a very important thing. It is not just a piece of art anymore. And you can't really have that feeling before that. I don't know if you can really get that feeling before. Intellectually you understand what I am saying. Intellectually you know that at some point, someone saw Tara directly and painted one. And try to remember that when you think about images.

What is the next one?

(Students: (Unclear))

What time is it? I say this is a good place to stop here.

This book it does relate to number five. {b: Psalm bo chin po(unclear)}{Psalmbo Chen po} is a person's name. {Sa Monto Badrah} I don't know if I told you about that last night. Yeah, okay. {Sa Monto Badrah} Cycle of the Buddha and he is this prayer is being taught in an exchange between him another disciple. {(Unclear)} means prayer. It is a very famous prayer. And we recite it often during pujas, services. And inside this prayer is the Seven Limb Practice. The original, the very first one. The Seven Ingredients. Which relate to the fifth preliminary. Okay, so that's a little tricky. So you go one, two, three, four, five, six...and number five has seven steps. And those come from the Buddha. Those come from the time of the Buddha. Those seven steps. So what you have in the back of your notebook is Tsong Khapa explaining parts of this prayer. He is explaining the seven parts, the seven ingredients and he is using this prayer. He is using {Psalmbo (Prayer: Seven Limb)}to explain each part. So those seven steps in getting ready for meditation were taught by the Buddha. And they are very famous.

(Student: So the prayer is {(Unclear)}). So what is the {Psalmbo}?

{Psalmbo chinpo} is the name of the disciple who spoke most it under the influence of the Buddha.

(Student: I am confused, because in the order you gave us...)

I knew you might get confused.

(Student: Because I thought you said that number five was purifying obstacles.

And (unclear) power of good deeds...)

And that has seven parts.

(Student: Oh! That has seven parts)

And that is what I want you to get straight. It's confusing. There are six preliminaries. And the fifth one is how to get rid of all the negative things and get a lot of positive energy in you just before you meditate. It has seven parts. And we are going to do that tonight. And that is what you are going to meditate about next. You've finished the six preliminaries. You have been doing your meditation for the last few days. You've got it memorized hopefully. It's very natural to you now. All in the correct order it is suppose to go. Mentally you can do everything. That is the purpose of meditating on that. So now you've got to number five. And you are going to have seven steps to that.

The first step is called?

(Student: Steps or Ingredients?)

I call them Ingredients. It is a translation of (Unclear). {Chak Sa} We talked about it last time because I got it wrong. I thought it was the first preliminary. This is prostration. {Chak Sal}. Prostration. In Sanskrit it is {Numb Is} Still in India they say:{Numb is sky} I {Numb is }to you.

And when they say {Numb Bu daya...Numb mu (unclear)} Then the us changes to o {(Unclear)} that is what they chant in Sri Lanka or other countries. It is Sanskrit {Numb mu Bdaya}.

(Student: You are prostrating after you have done the visualization? Gone for refuge and taken your (Unclear)?)

This is where it comes. And you can imagine. Should you get up a reprostrate? No. You are prostrating actually before you sit down. So the order is a little tricky. But you will be reciting at this point a text. And it is important to recite the text verbally. And I am going to give you a text to recite. By the way if you already have your own morning practice, it should include these things. If it was designed properly. The person who gave it you . Like if you are doing {TunDruk} or you are doing a short {DaKay}. If you don't know what those are you shouldn't worry about them. Because you aren't suppose to know. Then these things are already in there. And you don't have to worry about them. If you don't have those things, I'll give you one today.

(Student: Does {Sis Session Gurray} incorporate them?)

Yeah it does. Okay so {Chak Sa}. {Chak Sa} is prostration. Before you sit down in your seat you give three prostrations to the image of the Buddha. And we talked about it last time. And I said when I first went to India that I had to do this. I didn't feel comfortable doing this. And I d didn't do it for awhile. And if

you want to and you feel uncomfortable do some kind of respect to the image. And later as you understand more you will feel more comfortable. I don't know if it is good to force it. If you don't feel comfortable then I don't know if it is good to force it. When you are ready then do prostrations.

(Student: You are saying that we should do three prostrations as a preliminary?)
Yeah, actually before you sit down. You shouldn't get back up again. It's like two and a half, really. Alright?

(Student: It should be in here, I guess.)

In reciting, you will say it again. But you won't have to get up again out of your position. But in the recitation, you say "I prostrate". The tradition, these are all traditions. You know you go down slowly. You are suppose to put your thumbs inside like that. The idea is that your hands are not empty. This is some kind of jewel that has meaning. So you bend your thumbs inside. It is tradition (unclear). In this tradition you go like that. And then you touch it here...here...and here. And it means body, speech, and mind of the Buddha. I wish I could get the way that the Buddha acts, the way that the Buddha talks, and the way that the Buddha thinks. And that's not. Again it is symbolic. You know if you touch here you are gonna start acting like a Buddha? Probably not. But it is to keep those things in mind. Everything has a meaning. And if you keep everything having a meaning. It's not a ritual anymore. It has meaning. So touch your head, your mouth, and your heart and go down. And when you go down, you're suppose to go down slowly. You are suppose to touch five points. Which are your two palms. And they are suppose to be flat on the ground. That's suppose to be important. You're two knees, and then your head. That's called a five point prostration.

(Student: Can you do it if we move so we can see it?)

Yeah it's like that. And then you go down on all fours. And then you touch your head.

(Student: And you still land on all fours?)

You are suppose to do down very slow. And you are suppose to think as you go down "I hope I don't go to hell." Then you get up real fast. And that's a tradition. If you really do a prostration properly, that's it. Does Hell exist? I can't prove it to you. When you study more a Karma, you will be able to imagine that it could easily exist.

(Student: Is the head - mind. Or is the heart - mind?)

This is Body, Speech and Mind. The Mind in Buddhist philosophy is related to the

heart, the area of the heart. The brain is here admissible. The real mind is here. So, Body, Speech and Mind.

(Student: When you do that do you think "Body, Speech and Mind"?)

Yeah. You know how you think, you know how you touch your head and you say: I wh... And you don't have to...if you don't feel comfortable with the Buddha. It's inconceivable how a Buddha thinks, you know. So you take the best person you know. I find that, personally I find that easier. I can't imagine how a Buddha thinks. But I know how really good people that I know at work for example. There are people at work you just very naturally very admirable. And they really don't dislike anybody. They are very naturally love the people around them. You I would like to be like that. So you just imagine that body, speech and mind. That you would like to be like that. You would like to not say anything bad. When you touch your mouth, you know. Don't say anything bad today. (Laughter) You are really suppose to think that. And think that. It is a good way to start your day. And it is very powerful. And then get down slowly, come back up quickly - three times.

(Student: And touching the head on the ground that means?)

I can't tell you exactly. I know it is called five points. And they are all suppose to be touching at the same time. There are many meanings. And you will find contradictory meanings. But it's not contradictory. Different lamas have different teachers and they will teach it differently.

(Student: I heard people, and I think that this is a bit far fetched. But I've heard people say that if you prostrate with your fingers spread you create causes for lower rebirths in the animal or some other...)

They say that. Books say that. I don't get into that. I don't get into that too deeply. I believe it. I believe that it's true probably. But I don't think that you should

(Student: You spread your hands!?)

Don't dwell on it I don't think it's . I don't think you have to think too much on it. If you do down with a good motivation, I have a feeling if you do everything wrong, it's probably quite good. (Laughter) I don't want you to do it wrong. I want you to do it right. I have a feeling that your motivation is ninety percent of it. Again when you perceive emptiness directly and you come out of that your natural reaction is to get up and get down on the ground.

(Student: Unclear)

Yeah ... no. When you touch there then you open them up and go down. And you know that every country has it's own way. And that's specific to that particular country. You're learning a Tibetan tradition. You're lineage lamas are Tibetan and Indian, and some Chinese. And you follow that tradition. Don't think, obviously don't go to a Burmese temple and say "Ah, that's all wrong! Only we know how to do it right." Also I don't suggest that you mix them, you know what I mean? Stick to one tradition that you are learning. They are all nice. They are all good. They are like good medicines. But if you get sick and you take three different medicines from three different doctors, it can kill you. Much less not help you. So stick to one tradition that you feel close to and follow it. Don't mix both ways. Don't criticize good things about them and don't mix up your own practice. You will get confused. So for the time being do it that way. Your whole life you've been doing it a certain way, then keep it that way. You know what I mean? Because you come from a Buddhist country and you have been doing it since you are a baby, so that is good. Keep it. Keep it that way. If you're American you don't have it yet. So that is prostrations.

(Student: And three times? And that meaning?)

You can reach three {ratnas}. Long story. Have some refreshments.

(Unclear chatter between a number of students and teacher)

We already had {chupa} number two in the preliminaries. It happens to be the second one of the seven also.

(Student: So you do it twice?)

This time you are doing it mentally. A lot more fun.

(Student: Are all of these seven mental?)

Yeah. You're down on your feet already. Now you have to think incredibly. I kind of like to think like this is a, this is a mousetrap for them. When you get them here, then you give them. You present another one, a {chupa} offering. And you should read the text about this. The first text. The text about the six Buddhas.

The third one is {shapa}. Anyone remember {Shapa}?

(Student: Declaring?)

No that's {Zumba}. {Shapa} is literally refers to if you have ever been in India again. Firewood is a big pain, a big hassle. You have to have firewood in India.

And you buy these big logs, and you spend like a couple hours every morning driving wedges into them with a sledge hammer. You see these terribly skinny guys swinging their sledge hammers.. Resting for minute and then swinging. And they spend like an hour or two like that. And finally the wood goes “Shak”. {Shak} means split open. And it means confession. It means to open your heart. You open yourself and say “Look I did some things wrong here”. I think Rinpoche doesn’t like the word Confession. He says it has too many bad connotations. What it really is a purification process. And we can’t go into it tonight. But there is a lot of steps to it. Basically this is the one of the seven ingredients that you use to clean yourself. And it is very, very important for a good meditation. You can not concentrate if you have something on your conscious. It won’t happen. And I think you will find that when you get better a {Shapa}. {Shapa} is an art. You get good at it. And then you can really improve yourself with {Shapa}. When you get good at it you see that your meditation gets really good. Mentally you confess to this being that you have this relationship with. Honestly, openly what you did wrong. Then you get good at it and then your life. I mean at work you get use to admitting what you did wrong. And people like it. You’ve protected it for so long. You thought it was the right thing to do to hide it. If you get into the habit of just admitting when you are wrong it is very healthy. It is very, very good for your meditation. I can’t emphasize it enough. It really, really helps your meditation. Before you start truly, honestly think of what you have done wrong, and try to get this sense that by admitting it mentally to this being you are pure of it and you finished it and you got rid of it. That’s very important. Also just before you die this is very important. So if you die by accident, quickly...try to remember that. Try to imagine there are all these processes, these practices for it. But at least try to think mentally, if you have been doing this every morning of your life, you will be able to do it when you die. The Catholic custom of having a priest there when you tell him the horrible things that you have done in your life is very good. And you try to clean yourself of it. Try to imagine that you’re pure of it. And that is {Shakpa}. It doesn’t mean that you feel guilty, or bad. You should feel guilty in the sense that they say having drunk a bottle of poison by accident. I made a big mistake. That’s really the feeling. It’s not so much like ‘Oh, I’m a bad person’ or ‘I’m no good’. It’s like I made a big mistake. I shouldn’t have done that. It’s like some kind of strong feeling like having done something stupid that is going to hurt you.

(Student): You never know when...That’s the problem I run into I always have people just kind of run over you, you know? I don’t know whether to stand up for myself and yell back or ...

When you study more you will know what to do. There are times when you have to be {Shingdo Whatgotten} in Tibetan. Being fierce is a religious reaction if you do it right. But it takes a lot of wisdom to do it. In the beginning to make sure that you are not angry. Better to be made a fool, and to be taken advantage of, then make the wrong reaction. You don't lose anything by being taken advantage of. You lose a lot if you react wrongly.

(Student): But we are taught to always bring out the best in us and you said to admit it in your job. Admit that you made a mistake. You don't want to emphasize that! You want to emphasize the good things!

But I think what you will find is that people will find that you are strong enough to admit your own faults. When if the time comes, you know you could blame it on the guy when no one would know the difference or you could say actually it was me and it works.

(Student): I am not suggesting that. That's no good. What I am saying is you want to emphasize that...

Well, try it maybe you will become a vice president or something.

(Student): So would this be something like doing a {vadzrasattva} visualization?

Yeah, that's a {shakpa}. That's a beautiful {Shakpa}.

(Student): Five prostrations (unclear).

Yeah. There is a whole thing about it. And we'll do it some day. We can go through it some day. But I have like six (unclear).

{Udawwa}. {Udawwa} means rejoicing. And I like that translation. You know I am always picking on translations. That is good one.

(Student): This is rejoicing other people, right?

There is two kinds. One is to...just, just being glad about the good things that other people do. A. And B. Being glad about the things, the right things that you have done yourself. Some kind of being very happy about the good things. It's taught in many scriptures and I have seen it many times. That if you truly take joy in other people's successes, in other people's good deeds. Which is

against our nature. We tend to be jealous. You can get ten percent of the virtue. Many scriptures that I have seen quoted the number ten percent. So it must be somewhere. Maybe nine or eleven. But that is incredible. If you just sit down, you are sitting there about to go into deep meditation hopefully and you say 'The Dalai Lama really does a good job! I am glad that he is around.' I heard that the man who died in New York yesterday was the financier of the private army that protected the Dalai Lama while he got out of Tibet. And he came very close to never getting out to Tibet. So no Nobel Prize. No Arizona teaching. No {College Shaktas}. Be glad that he got out. And be glad about everything he did. They say you can get ten percent of the power. If you are truly happy about it you can get a lot of the energy he collected by doing those things. And that's immense. The second way is to be glad about what you have done yourself. And they say that that is even more powerful. They say just to take joy in the amount of things that you are able to do good in a day. To do right has a multiplying effect. Everything else you do, if you do a good deed in the morning and you think about it all afternoon about, okay I finally did something good it multiplies it exponentially. There is something about reviewing it mentally and being glad about it that's very powerful. It's more powerful than rejoicing in someone else's

deeds. And so that is actually, sometime they even add this as a third part of this fifth practice, fifth preliminary. We are supposed to be cleaning ourselves out is what the confession does. We are supposed to be collecting good deeds which the other six do. And rejoicing, sometimes they even separate that out and this explodes your energy. You know if you are happy about the good things that you are doing, it just explodes. Good energy explodes. My lama is always saying that is very cheap, easy way. You know, not much work. You just be sitting there being happy about yourself. And it builds up. It expands the virtue you have done. So that's

(Student): Isn't there a danger in that, in thinking uh...

Thinking that you are good? Yeah, of course there is a danger. But you can take a true joy in the good. You know when you have done something good. They say in Tibetan: The way...when you know it is good is when you feel good. If you do something really good you know it. You really do know it. You almost have to be an animal not to know it. You know you do feel good. You'll know. There is a danger in getting conceited. But you will know the difference, hopefully. I'll make this short.

{Chuka Korwa} {Chuka} means dharma. And {Kor} means wheel. Dharma

wheel. And {Chuka Korwa} means to turn the wheel of dharma. And that means to teach. To teach.

(Student): Doesn't {korwa} mean {samsara}?

Yeah. Because it is a circle.

(Student): Oh, so it's just the circle part of it.
The wheel part of it. The wheel of life.

(Student): Is {korwa} another word for {Chukor}? Or is it two syllables?
It's the verb. I'm not going to write the whole thing out for you because. {Chuka Korwa} means to turn the wheel of the dharma. And it means to teach. This what I think the one that Rinpoche seems to emphasize the most of all of them. Is asking that being: 'Will you teach me. Please teach me.' They say that a teacher is as I said before is your window to the Buddhas. If there are no, if there is nobody in the world talking dharma, then you are lost. There is no hope. Because the Buddha himself says many times in scripture: 'I can't do anything for you except in rare circumstances, except teach you verbally what to do.' That's the big act of a Buddha. The big contribution of the Buddha. He comes and he talks. And he teaches. And this is to ask him to please come. Please teach me.

(Student): As the window to the dharma?

All other Buddhas. The person who teaches you dharma and it says in many great scriptures. Many very high scriptures. Therefore he's more important than all the other Buddhas. Because he is without him you can not contact him.

(Student): So is this requesting him to teach you?

Yeah, asking him to teach you - mentally. And that teaching can take many forms. I mean the Buddhas are capable of taking any form. So, that is one of their qualities. You don't know who is a Buddha. And you don't...and they are teaching you. You don't know. You have to be careful. And they can teach you any way. It is in the scriptures that the Buddha took the form of a tree. The Buddha took the form of a wave of the ocean. The Buddha took the form of a bridge.

(Student): How can he teach you as tree?

Maybe if you hit your head when you think you have got patience mastered.
(Laughter) Yeah? Possible, don't think it is impossible. But normally it is plain old dharma teaching. When you are ready for that. And before that it is a book.

A novel, or a movie or something that gives you up to.

{Sumga} means requesting. It's the same word as the last preliminary. Of the Six Preliminaries.

(Student): Is it spelled with an 'm' (unclear)

Yeah, yeah this is a better pronunciation. It's a little bit subtler. If you do it that way in Tibetan they will say "Ooo!". {Sumga} means to request. It specifically means to request your lama to stay. And not to leave you. Suppose if he is a Buddha or if he is a holy being, he has the power to stay. And not leave not break the relationship with you or not die. And a lot of students in the west have had lamas die. Lama Yeshe passed. Geshe Ruptan passed. Chugdan Rinpoche passed. So it happens. And you have to be very careful to request that they not die or pass on. The Buddha himself on this death bed. There's a tradition that one of his disciples neglected to ask him to stay and therefore he died. Therefore he passed. Pretended to die. So it's important. It's important. The relationship is so precious and so rare to run into a good teacher that it's important to ask that teacher not to

(Student): You mean, you don't mean literally. You mean the connection.

Well, in this prayer you are doing it mentally. But if you have a relationship with some lama you must ask him from time to time please keep the relationship okay. Don't leave me.

(Student): Until samsara ends.

(Student): Literally, you have to ask the person? Don't die!

Yeah. You know when I was learning Tibetan I met Khen Rinpoche who was the Dalai Lama's tutor. And I was his driver for a day. And I didn't know Tibetan very well. So I said something like "Hey! Don't die, Okay?" (Laughter) And everybody started laughing. Oh, don't worry, don't worry. People never let me forget it. Fifteen years later they still remind me of that. But I feel like I did the right thing. It's important. We take it for granted but there is many people who never meet a dharma teacher. There are many people who don't meet a dharma teacher who can lead them for very long. There is many people who...I remember when we were in Arizona and his Holiness was answering questions. You were there right? And somebody said if you meet your lama once a year is it okay? Many people live in places where the lama travels through once a year and gives a small teaching and leaves. It's rare. It's hard to find the real thing, I think. It's hard to get a long protracted relationship with a lama. Rinpoche stayed in the same place for twenty years. We soaked it up. We

were very fortunate. So it is very rare.

{Mowa} {mowa} is number seven.

(Student): Michael, please keep teaching. Don't die! Maybe you should move. Maybe we should put the Diamond Center in New Jersey. Mowa means dedication. And dedication means...This is more I should think after the meditation. It's one of the preliminaries. But uh, Dedication and there is a question on your homework. I am going to explain the difference between {Ludlum} and {Mowa}. {Ludlum} we had before and it meant prayer. It wasn't one the seven and it wasn't one of the six. It was the name of the book, the original book with the prayer of {Su Matra Badra}. And so there is two. And it Tibetan books and in Buddhist books in general it is very important to know the history of {Ludlum} and of {Mowa}. A Dedication and a prayer. Prayer means, you know I pray that these good things happen. That's a {Ludlum}. Okay? That's a prayer. A dedication is different. In a dedication, you, the main difference is you have some stuff to dedicate. You have something good that you did. And {Mowa} means I wrap it up and package it and I think to myself: I did a good thing and by this power may I become a Buddha. By this power may I reach paradise. Consciously after doing something right, like that meditation you just did. Think of it as one good thing that you did, one unit and send it into the future. And they say that if you do that. That virtue, that good deed is protected from all your angers, all your hatreds,. They say normally if you get angry during that day. Even if you had a great morning meditation, you just destroyed all of it's power. If you get angry for a short period during the day, truly angry at someone. Actually the book says many thousands of years, millions of years that's kind of scary. Think of it as that morning's good deeds that power is totally wasted. If you {Mowa} as you finish your practice you say: 'I really truly wish that this would bring me to a state of perfect knowledge where I could really help other people. I'd know what they were thinking, I'd know what they need, I'd know what their future is.' And that protects it. That motivation after you have done that good deed protects it.

(Student): How does that work?

(Student): Is that a one way street? I mean you suddenly get angry and you wipe out eons of virtue, or is it also: Gee, suddenly you rejoice the right way and you accumulate or you wipe out eons of non-virtue.

I have never seen it referred as wiping out eons of non-virtue. There's certain...yeah, no, maybe there isn't a way. The Buddha once met, before he became the Buddha he met another Buddha. Out of awe for him he hopped

around him on one leg, I don't know what- for a day or two days or something. It is some kind of reverential. It is very famous in scripture. And because of that one deed he shorten his samsara by thousands of eons. It depends. Yeah you can (unclear) according to scripture you can do it.

(Student): But once you dedicate it you can not destroy it right? Once the dedication...

Yeah right. It protects it. How does it protect it? I think the power of the motivation. It's no longer a worldly, it's no longer a normal (unclear). It's no longer going to produce the normal just simple reaction. How does it work? It has to do with the Mind Only school. And the perceptions you have as the seed is planted karmically in your mind. And it is explained. It takes about a month.

(Student): But it takes hatred, not just anger right? His Holiness explained it. When you just say anger wipes out all your virtue, it is actually hatred, right? Not anger.

I guess it is the hatred in anger. But the book says anger. Well, yeah there are virtuous kinds of indignation

(Student): I thought His Holiness explained it as more of a hatred.

Yeah, Shantideva explains it as the root is hatred. It is a form of hatred.

(Student): So if you get angry and you're not hateful then it doesn't wipe out eons of virtue is my understanding.

There's a lot of...it's a long story. It's in the {Mighty Mondonatara}.

(Student): Would you gratefully explain the difference between prayer and dedication.

Yeah the difference is that in dedication there is a thing that you are. It's called a substance in Tibetan. There is some substantial thing that you are using to do, to dedicate to your future enlightenment. And that substantial thing is the virtue of the deed you just did. That's why at the end of this class we always do {Gnowa}

{Gewa di gewa....} That's the classic {Gnowa}. That's number seven. That's the last thing. Sorry to keep you over. That finishes the Seven Ingredients. Now we have the Six Preliminaries. And that again is {Sumda}. The same word as before. Again it is requesting. Or sublimating.

(Student): So I don't get it. You do it twice in a row?

Ahh, it is a different kind of request. What was it number five? The last request

was asking them not to die. This request is asking them to...this is the Six Preliminaries. We finished the Seven Ingredients. Okay, everybody got that? We finished the Seven Ingredients. We finished the Seven Ingredients which are part of Preliminary number five. Now we are on the last preliminary. The last thing tonight. This is requesting that that holy being to give you {Gin Luck} {Gin Luck}.

{Gin Luck}

(Student): Requesting who?

That being that holy being or beings. Ideally you are seeing a lot of lamas in front of you. And your root lama at the center. {Gin Luck} is a very hard word to translate. It means, do you the difference between aptitude ... What are those two kinds of test? Aptitude and ??? There are two kinds of examinations. They sound similar. This is like western testing like the S.A.T. One is to measure your, what you actually know. I forget the word. And the other one is to measure your ability to change. Like the potential in you to knowing something.

[I BELIEVE MICHAEL IS SEARCHING FOR THE WORD COMPREHENSIVE]

(Student): Intelligence.

Intelligence as opposed to aptitude. Aptitude means what you are capable of learning. Your capability of learning. And the other is intelligence which is how much you know now. Like you can be unintelligent now, but if you have a high aptitude if you work hard. So {gin Luck} refers to aptitude. It's a prayer that they through their blessings that they change your aptitude.

(Student): Your potential to learn?

Your potential to be holy. Your potential to gain high spiritual goals. {Gin Luck} is that process. {Gin Luck} means you're requesting them to give you {Gin Luck}. {Gin Luck} is translated as blessings. But what it means is through the relationship you have with them they somehow affect your ability to become better. And the root, the book says: "I pray that you change my ability from the very first practice up to the very highest practice'. The very first practice is acting properly towards your teacher. Your lama. And the very highest practice is perceiving emptiness directly. So the prayer is, the {Sumda} is all the from that beginning practice, which is having a good relationship with your teacher. Because without that you are not going to learn anything. All the way up to perceiving emptiness directly. I pray that you change my ability to act right to all those things. All the {Lam Rim}. All the paths. All the steps of the Path. Now I have to do. There are a few things on the homework that I didn't cover. Of the Seven Ingredients, how many act to purify you and how many act to collect

goodness. There is only one that is solely purification. And that's the Confession. And that's in your reading. This is all in your reading. And the rest of the Seven act to collect virtue. Positive energy to make your meditation successful. The other Six.

(Student): Can you say that again?

(Student): One is...

The one ingredient, the one of the Seven Ingredients which is Confession acts to remove negative energy before your meditation. And the other six act to store up positive energy for your meditation.

(Student): When someone has {sadna} where they have visualizations of some kind of light passing through you .

That's...that's (unclear) And all good {sadnas} have all Seven Ingredients imbedded in them. And when you get better you can recognize them.

(Student): That's too accumulate uh...

Yeah, to store up, good power, good energy. I forgot to mention one thing in Confession. What you confess if you have been practicing for awhile. Is any time you have broke one of the three kinds of vows. And I just want to mention the three kinds of vows. The first kind of vows are vows of morality. Monk's vows are those. You can also take lifetime vows without becoming a monk. That's the first kind of thing you can confess. The second kind is things when you broke your bodhisattva vows. If you don't know what they are don't worry. You'll learn sometime. And the third kind of vows are your secret vows. Your tantric vows.

And the last, last, last thing. What book are we going to use when reciting the Seven Ingredients in the morning? And that's this: [b: Gan-dan lha gya ma]. Now here is the punch line. This is the last thing that I will say. I keep saying that don't I. Some one took Tsong Khapa's analysis of the Buddha's teaching on the Seven Ingredients. And made him the object of the prayer of the Seven Ingredients. So there is a prayer you do in the morning before your meditation and the one we use called: {Gan-dan lha gya ma}. And it is centered it is focused on Tsong Khapa himself. He was teaching the Seven Ingredients and then one hundred years later somebody wrote a Seven Ingredient focused on him. And that's the classic one. That's the one that we use. And that's in the back of your notebooks. So in the morning when it comes time to do your Seven Ingredients you can recite that one. It's there in English. But it is better if you can do it in the

Tibetan pronunciation, which is also there.

(Student): Why is that better?

You put a seed in yourself to learn it later. {Gandan} is the name of a heaven. It is the heaven of bliss. {Gandan} means heaven of bliss. {lha} means angel. Angel. {Gya} means one hundred. {Ma} is again that feminine ending for a very holy prayer.

(Student): Isn't it also for mother?

Yeah. In every language. It has been translated as [prayer: The Thousand Angels of the Heaven of Bliss]. Because the word hundred here just means a lot. Okay. You could have said million or billion it would have been alright. And in this prayer. In this visualization Tsong Khapa is coming out of the heart of Maitreya. And if you would like to see it downstairs there is a big tonka there, which Margie donated to this center. And that's a thangka of that process going on. Tsong Khapa is coming out of the heart of that main angel.

[(Student): So in this really, in the Six Preliminaries we are doing prostrations twice, once physically and once mentally. And we are doing offering twice. Once physically and once mentally. Any reason why we do it twice?]

It's better than once. Before you get up imagine that that holy being shrinks and goes and stays inside your heart. It's not good luck, it's not considered good to just get up and let him disappear. Shrink him down. He comes in through the top of your head. And comes down in and stays in your heart and you spend the day with him or her. Which ever it is. That's after requesting. And then they come and stay in your heart. And that's a very good sign. I requested Rinpoche to come. I didn't not teach you {Unclear}. You can recite it because now you know all the parts of it. Rinpoche has agreed to come and teach that. That will be after this course ends actually. It will be April 24th Sunday, here. Hopefully it will be warm enough it can be outside. If not we will have to see. We might have to find a bigger place. He has agreed to come. And I think it better to get it from him than from me. (Unclear) So your homework is to recite that this thing. Memorize the Seven Limbs. And I encourage you that if you don't have another practice, recite the {Gandan lha gya-ma} at the back of your notebook. And then do your meditation practice. How you sit. How you think. We don't know it yet. Do it as best you can. And then that's the next class. We will talk about the place. The characteristics of the place. Are you ready.

[prayer: dedication]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

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Everyone who didn't answer was right.

[laughter]

{Nyamshak} is the sixth kind of meditation. We talked about six different kinds of meditation...six diff...six different words for that, okay? And {nyamshak} means...it usually refers to meditation upon emptiness directly. And it's as opposed to {je top} which means, ah,...that's the meditation you...that's what's happening when you come outta meditation on emptiness directly. {[unclear]}

[cut]

{Dakki jinsok}, ah, you have to change that. Before a class you don't say {dakki jinsok}. In general, you say {dakki jinsok} but before a class you say {dakki chinyen...chinyen}. So the {dak} is the same but you replace the {jinsok} with {chinyen}.

[silence]

Instead instead of praying that all your general good deeds help before, its the reverse of the six perfections. You're praying that, by the act of your coming to this class, you should be able to help people. So that's {chinyen}. {Chinyen} means "to listen to the Dharma," okay? {Chin} means "Dharma," and {yen} means "listen." And I have to say {chershay} which means "the act of explaining Dharma." So, I say {chershay [unclear]}. You say {chinyen}, and {jinsok} is what you do, in general, in the...in your morning practice. Okay, so, we were talking about {nyamshak}. {Nyamshak} means the period when you're in direct meditation on emptiness. It happens for the first time when?

[student : When you experience {shiney [unclear]}]

Yeah, which is? Directly. Talking directly.

[student: Directly.]

[student: [unclear]]

The path of seeing. The path of seeing. Don't worry about it. These are for the old students, okay? There's a path called path of seeing, mental states. And at that time you enter {nyamshak} on emptiness directly. You enter this kind of meditation on emptiness directly.

[student: Path of seeing?]

Yeah. And when you come out of it, you enter a a state call {je tob}, and that's you're out of deep meditation, and you're having these realizations, including what?

[student: The four noble truths.]

The four noble truths. That's... the word noble is, as we said before, the the wrong translation of the word {koppa} which means "at that point you become an a realized type of being." And those are called realized truths, {arya}. So, {nyamshak} is opp...is as opposed to {jetob}. {Jetob} is when you are seeing the four noble truths, thinking about the four noble truths, "Oh, this is suffering. This is. . . this is this." You actually realized them directly for the first time in in ever. But {nyamshak} occurs right before that. And that's when you're actually in deep meditation on emptiness. And that's the classic example of {nyamshak}.

[student: How is that different than in other of these meditaions [unclear] emptiness?]

Well, they all overlap and they're all fuzzy and I'm giving you the major sense. You ... you notice I said "general sense" and I didn't say "definition" because they all overlap.

[student: So, really that could be like a part of {nyomjuk} like you said.]

It could. It's [unclear] a kind of {samten}. It is a kind of {gompa}. It is a {ting nge dzin}. It's also a {shi ne shamatha}, okay. [laughs]

[student: That's clear.]

[laughter]

It's not like {nyomjuk}. It's not one of the classic yogas, okay? So, I just wanted you to get a sense of these are the main places. It's used in another case in the [b: Heart Sutra]. It says, "{Dayza chung a day somma no wa sha ja so a ja [unclear] shok.}" The Buddha enters {nyamshak}. In the whole [b: Heart Sutra] the Buddha doesn't say anything, except at the end he says, "Oh, you guys did a good job." And the whole Sutra is one of his students speaking to another of his students because he's in {nyamshak}. And he's affecting their minds. He's...They're like puppets and he's making them ask each other questions. So that's {nyamshak}. Those are the two classic examples. So if I ask you what's {nyamshak}, you should say, "direct perception of emptiness" as opposed to {jetob} which is after you come out of that deep meditation and you start getting these popcorn, you know, ding ding ding, I understand that, I understand that, I understand that.

[student: Michael.]

Yeah.

[student: We only use {jetob} after the initial direct perception of emptiness]

{Jetob} is always after

[student: No, but you had made a distinction about the perception of the four noble truths]

Right.

[student: coming out of emptiness meditation]

Yeah.

[student: as being something that happens when you first see emptiness directly.]

Right.

[student: Then doesn't...this is not something]

All right.

[student: that repeats itself every time you do emptiness meditation?]

No, it does. No, I'm talking

[student: It does.]

any direct meditation on emptiness.

[student: No, no. I know. I said {jetob}.]

And so does {jetob}. Yeah, {jetob} is any time you come out.

[student: Come out. So it's not just the four noble.]

It's not just the first time you come out.

[student: Any kind of realizations.]

[student: Can you write {jetob}?]

Yeah, okay, you asked for it. [laughs]

[student: Is that a meditation? It's not a meditation. [unclear]]

It's actually a, ah, a state of contemplation perhaps something like that. It's ... it's ... it's ... it's no longer ..

[student: okay]

aconceptual. It's no longer non-discursive thought.

[student: It is discursive thought.]

It is. "Ah, oh, this is this. This is that. Oh, this is this. This is that." It's it's it's it's exactly that. It's not like when you're perceiving emptiness and it just, like they

call, water poured in butter.

[student: Discursive thought about what you've seen in emptiness?]

And you're thinking, "Oh, well, that's an idea." {Jetob.} Most of the paths have these two stages in them, the the higher paths. But we...don't worry about it if you haven't had it before. It's okay. It's not on the quiz and I think I just wan...I felt guilty because I left that out and everybody had trouble on the homework.

[student: After after you]

And I did that last time and then they called me up on the phone and [unclear].

[student: Is this after after you see the four arya truths, this {jetob}?]

This is...you are in {jetob} when you see

[student: When you see the four arya truths?]

when you see...are seeing the four arya truths. {Jetob} means "what you get afterwards." {Je} means "afterwards" and {tob} means "get." All right? Okay. Now, actually, we'll go on to the

[student: [unclear]]

lesson. All right? Who squeeked? All right?

[student: Someone over here.]

Which one didn't you get?

[student: The last one [unclear].]

All right. So tonight we're going to talk about...What was it? We ... we've had two classes the first two were about how to get ready for meditation.

[student: Preparation].

Preparing for meditation. And what did I promise you the second thing would be?

[student: Conditions in the environment.]

Yeah, the environment in which you meditate. But we didn't get yet to how to meditate. And we won't for a while. Because the reason most people fail is that they don't do the the stuff before the meditation to make the meditation go well, and ... and we're gonna see that tonight. He's gonna actually say that. So, the environment breaks down into six conditions. We call them the six conditions. As I said before Tibetan Buddhism, Buddhism in general, loves the three thises, the four thats, like that. It's actually a very good method. Mao tse Tung used it in his [b: Little Red Book], if you ever read it.

[laughter]

He was responsible for Tibet's loss. I read it, you know, know the person's mind and and he was very good at it. He's obviously a a great propagandist and, ah, so it's very helpful to mem...to remember things if you say, "the three thats" and "the four thats," "the five thats." So, we have six conditions, okay. The first condition is. Now we're talking environment, right?

[silence]

[student: Is all of this out of [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] still?]

Yeah, that's a good question because I'm gonna be telling you where all these things come from. In general, it's the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] of Tsong Khapa but as you know Tsong Khapa was a great plagiarist. And it's considered good Buddhist writing if you are a plagiarist because the people you are stealing from are Enlightened Beings. So why write anything new? You just cop things from all their sutras, and put them in a new order for the new generation, but you don't write anything new, and that's fine. In fact, it's considered a fault if try to stick in your own ideas. So this is Je Tsong Khapa relying on several of the books, and we'll talk about it, several classic books from ancient India. Okay? So {tunpay yul}. {Tunpay}...I think we talked about it last time...{tunpay} means "when two people get along, harmony." So {tunpay} means "conductive."

[silence]

[dog barking]

[laughter]

And {yul} means "place, place."

[dog barking]

[student: Mike, those two dogs are [unclear].]

[laughs] I don't know. We'll see.

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Can that also mean like land or country?]

Yeah, {yul} generally means "country" and and you don't have to know that. Generally, in philosophy, it's a very important word meaning "object of the mind," but but we won't we won't, ah [unclear]. Tsong Khapa takes his his description of a of a conducive place to meditate from the following book:

[silence]

Say [b: Dodey Gyen]. [repeat] [b: Dodey Gyen]. [repeat]

The Sanskrit name is [b: Sutralamkara]. [repeat]

And we talked about this before because we had the [b: Abhisamayalamkara]. {Alamkara} is the Sanskrit word that means "get ready for something." {Alam} means "get...ah, ready." And {kara} means "to get." And when a princess in India went to a ball she would {alamkara} her...she would put her jewelry on. So {alamkara} means "a jewel" in the sense of "jewelry." And {sutra} means "any open teaching of the Buddha spoken by the Buddha." So it's the [b: Jewel of the Sutras]. And it's written by...it's not a sutra. It's a commentary on sutras. And it's written by...who wrote the other one, the other [b: Alamkara]? Remember?

[student: Who was it? What was that one called?]

The [b: Abhisamayalamkara, [laughs], the Jewel of Realizations, Ornament of Realizations.]

[student: unclear]

Ah, he wrote the commentary. Good. Not bad. [laughs] Asanga. Okay. You have to know Asanga, all right? Asanga. Asanga lived when? You guys know.

[student: About 350.]

Yeah. [laughs] About 350 AD. Asanga. I told you this story before. His mother was a nun. She had a vision that if she...Buddhism was declining in her era. And she had a vision that if she gave up her vows and married a king that they would have a child, and then if she then married another, a Brahman, they would have a child, and then those two sons would become the two greatest scholars of of all time. So one of her sons was Asanga. And between him and his brother they wrote every single book that's used in the monastic curriculum, except for... I mean they wrote two of them, two of the great five books are by ... are by those two brothers. And they are responsible for just about...You study the first book for twelve years. You study the second book for about three years. So that's...they wrote the most important. So Asanga has written this book also [b: Sutralarmkara]. And in that book he explains what's a good place to meditate. So. Yes?

[student: [b: Jewel of Ornament of Realizations]?]

Ah, yeah.

[student: [b: Jewel of Ornament] [unclear]]

Yeah. You can call it [b: Jewel of Ornament]. Some people call it [b: Jewel of Ornament]. Some people call it [b: Ornament]. Some people call it [b: Jewel]. Some people call it [unclear].

[student: [unclear]]

[b: Of Realizations]. This is not that. This is the [b: Jewel of the Sutras]. So he wrote two [b: Jewels].

[student: [unclear] [b: Jewel of the Sutras].]

Yeah. We're not gonna talk about...Those guys studied the other [b: Jewel] last course for the whole course.

[student: How do you get jewel for one of those. I thought you said it was to get ready for a sutra.]

Yeah. Get ready means

[student: "Put on your jewels."]

"put on your jewels." So the word "get ready" became the word for "jewels" in in Sanskrit. {Alamkara} became the word for "jewel" because it's what you put on to get ready for a ball or something. So, [b: Dodey Gyen]. In there he says a good place to meditate should have five characteristics.

[student: Michael, I don't understand. What does {dodey gyen} mean?]

It ... it's the book from which Tsong Khapa has taken the description of a good place to meditate, a conducive place to meditate.

[student: when you say it's in the book just lists...you talking about both books or]

It's actually three or four books...it's a stream that I ...

[student: Well, what should we refer to it as [unclear].]

If I ask you who described...and I'm going to ask you [laughs]...the conducive place to meditate. You're gonna answer Asanga described it in 350 AD in his [b: Jewel of the Sutras.]

[student: Now, is this this a Je Tsong Khapa's commentary though, or is this Asanga?]

Yeah, Tsong Khapa is quoting him. Tsong Khapa is explaining what Asanga said. Because if you go and try to read Asanga, forget it.

[student: And this is this is Je Tsong Khapa in [b: Lam Rim Chenmo]]

Yeah.

[student: explaining]

Explaining.

[student: Asanga.]

Yeah.

[student: Okay.]

Which is like...Buddhism is like an onion. Buddhist learning is like an onion and you get deeper and deeper and you get closer and closer to the middle the longer you study. So, first, the first point is...and I...it's in your reading...is that you should have all the necessities you need. It should be easy to get food, clothing, everything you need physically should be there. Now, he's mainly talking about an extended retreat in which you are trying to develop {shamanta} purposely. Which you can do in like six months if you if you really ...

[student: {Shamatha}?]

Yeah, {shamatha} meaning what I've translated here as "quietitude." Which you had in your first homework as that very very high state of meditation with which you see emptiness. Quietude. Excuse me?

[student: "The king of {samadhi}," Khen Rinpoche translated it as [unclear]]

King of all king of all concentrations. So, anyway, this ... this's mostly referring to a a real heavy-duty retreat that you do. The place the...where you do it you should have everything you need.

[student: You mean you shouldn't ever have to leave to get things? Is that what you mean?]

Well, that's one meaning of it. But you shouldn't ... you shouldn't have to think about anything else.

[student: Like [unclear] electricity [unclear]?]

Food should be set up for you. People tend to think, you know,...when Buddhism first came to America...I don't know if you knew Alex Leinkoff. He heard about Milarepa. He went out in the forest in our...next to our house. And ah, he got cold and came back after two days. [laughs] I mean, it it doesn't

work. You have to be comfortable. It's it's very smart to go...to get a place...make sure it's nice. And it should be comfortable. Everything you need is there. You have someone cooking for you. It's very bad if you have to cook your own food. Someone else should be cooking. Because, otherwise, you're going to think, "What should I cook tonight?" You know, "I have to cut up the potatoes. Maybe I should put the"....you start meditating on what you'd like to eat tonight.

[laughter]

It's very bad, and someone else should be cooking. You should have no contact with him. In New Jersey, we've done a [unclear] meditation. They put it under your door or something. You don't know what you're gonna get, so don't worry about it. And that's better. And you should have enough clothes. Take enough clothes. And they should be clean. You don't have to be all dirty. Pabongka in his meditation manual says, "I don't like to [unclear] monks in retreat so they can have a beard after three weeks." You know you have to be clean and shave. Be normal. Be comfortable. That's the idea. You you're meditation is a lot better, because you're not meditating on how much of big a yogi you are. You're not meditating on trying to stay warm when it's cold. It's very important to be comfortable. So that was the first thing that Asanga said sixteen hundred years ago. The second thing is that it should be a safe place. And Tsong Khapa explains that to mean there shouldn't be any wild animals around that could hurt you. This refers to people in India or Tibet who go up in the mountains. Or, if you know Yeshe Tubten who was here last week, he he spends most of the year up in a cave above Dharamsala. And it's a problem. You get...I've had bears and stuff. [laughs] It's a little scary. It shouldn't happen. Very much interrupts you medita...I had a skunk one time. [laughs].

[laughter]

[student: Oh, man.]

[laughs] It's very bad. [laughs] So it should it be a place where you're not threatened in any way. And they also say bad people...that you shouldn't have any place where you have an enemy or someone who doesn't like you. Any kind of a threat to you [unclear]. It should be a comfortable place, a safe place.

[student: What's the word for that safe place?]

I can...I can give it to you if you like, but , ah, it's in your reading.

[student: Okay.]

And he, ah, the verse is very cryptic like all the ancient verses were. They were meant to be memorized by the student maybe ten years before he knew what it meant. And they still do that in the monastery.

[student: Okay.]

And then the function of...the role of the teacher is to tell you, "Hey, this is what that means." Then he says you should have a good environment. And he explains that as meaning it should be a place where you don't get sick. There's places like...The first monks that came out of Tibet in 1959 were meditating in a place called [unclear]. And it was in the jungle in West Bengal and and it was just a lousy place to be. Almost...I'd say maybe a third of them got tuberculosis there. It was very damp, very hot. They didn't have enough nutrition. Their lungs were expanded to in Tibet. And most of them got sick. So it should be a place where you're not going to get sick. It shouldn't be too cold. It shouldn't be too hot. It shouldn't...the temperature should be just right. When you're meditating it's very important that the temperature's just right. If it's too warm why

[student: Fall asleep.]

you start to nod out. If it's too cold you get distracted.

[student: So now, in the sense of a long retreat, you know you're gonna go through seasons for example. Would that mean try to find some place where you're not gonna]

Yeah.

[student: have like heavy snow or]

Yeah.

[student: hot [unclear]]

Well, where inside it's not gonna

[student: So, it's]

don't be shy to get a place with central heating or [unclear]

[student: or air or whatever.]

I did a retreat in Arizona one time and it was...the weather changed forty degrees, and and it was too hot in the afternoon, and by night I was snoring, and and...in the desert...and it was distracting. [laughing] You know it got very cold. So, ah, you know you you gotta find a place where the weather's...but you also have to make sure that the whatever that you use doesn't make noise.

[student: The heater and stuff?]

Yeah. Like if...a fire is very distracting. A heater that goes click, click. Any noise after you've been in retreat for about a month, hey, a mouse can be a disaster, you know?

[laughter]

And they they are, you know? So you have to find...just don't be shy to find a normal house in a normal place away from sound as much as you can. I think a refrigerator can be a disaster. I found it [unclear] if you've done a retreat for about a month it starts to sound like a truck.

[laughter]

And then you you go and you unplug everything in the house before you sit down [laughs], you know? It's very distracting. So it's very important that you don't have any noises. And and in your daily practice, we're talking fifteen minutes, half an hour, the the good thing about doing it as early in the morning or as you can, which I find better than late at night, but I I saw in your papers a lot of you maybe just don't have time till late at night. Late at night is good and you we'll see it later in that it's quiet. You know, at least in general it's more quiet in the early morning and late at night. 'Cause sound, it's it's very famous in all the scriptures it says that sound is the worst distraction. Sound is very bad when you're trying to meditate.

[student: We had squirrels digging into the roof.]

[laughs.] You had squirrels? [laughs] Very bad. Okay. Number four is, ah, he calls it good friends. And it's that, ah, whoever's assisting you in retreat should be a person who has faith in the Dharma, and he shares your values. He has good morality, and he believes in the Buddhist world view, which, you know, mostly emptiness. He should be a person like that. If you've ever had a person...if you're in retreat and because you don't have any choice you have someone coming to help you...you have to have a retreat assistant. You may never see him during retreat. It's better if you don't. But it should be a person who's mentally in tune with you. Because you'll sense it, and you'll feel it. And it's better if all the people around the retreat are into it. And the same way in a...wherever you're gonna meditate. If you try to meditate in a place where people don't appreciate it, or people don't like it, it's very hard to concentrate. And that's ah, that's just the way it is. And so it's all coming under...these are all [laughs] still under this. I'm not going to ask you to label all five. If you remember some, it's fine. The fifth one he gives is...he says, "it should have goodness." The verses...all the verse says is "have goodness." And it says in the day there should not be too many people around. And at night there should not be much sound. So it just means that there shouldn't be distractions, people or sounds. When you when you do a good meditation, a retreat, don't waste your time. It's hard to get the time in your whole life to do a one month retreat or a two week retreat. And don't waste your time. Set up everything very, very intelligently, you know, based on this. And talk to people who've done long retreats before. And they have...after you do one it's good to make a list of all the things that you did wrong, and then the next time you do it you know what you need. Like chapstick is very important. Incense is very important. You know you get a list of things that are very important. And you learn more about it every time you do it. So talk to people who've done long retreats before and don't screw up the first. . the opportunity because once you get into the retreat and close the door, you're not supposed to go out for a month or something. And if you figure out that you forgot something you have to start writing notes and then that's a distraction. Better if you don't see anyone. You know, close the windows, tape up, put something over the windows, don't look outside.

[student: How long should one go into a retreat?]

I think, in our tradition, I mean, there are three year retreats, there are three month retreats, three years, three months, three days, three days, three months. But I think, if you, for example, if you take that initiation this summer, or if

you've had that initiation, you will be required to do a certain number of retreats. And they last between four and five weeks. And they're very great, because once you take that initiation you swear to do it. And I know I didn't have...I worked for ten years...I didn't have time to do anything. And I was exhausted every day and I didn't do any retreats. And then then I got on a different schedule and I was able to do them again. And it's a very good...it's good to be forced to do one because otherwise you'll just go on and on and never do one. And it's very important to do them. They change you dramatically. So it's very...then especially those retreats which you have...there are books on how to do it, the training, everything. And it's...they're wonderful. They come out really good. And they're not what you expect. What you're supposed to do is not what you expect. And, ah, it works. It's very nice. I think Kylie did . . how many did you do [unclear]?

[student: Two.]

[unclear] and some other [unclear]. And other people here have done it. They're, ah, they're very good. If you do it right, it's it's very nice. And if you do it wrong, you can crack up. And people do that. So you have to study how to do it properly. And then you won't have any trouble. It will be quite pleasant.

[student: Do these pertain to group retreats, also?]

I...I....I haven't...I've been in group retreats. We don't emphasize that. But I think some people have said they might like to do a group retreat. I think it might be distracting, but then again they say that if [unclear] in a group sometimes the power of the unity of all the minds of all the people is very, very good. So I think, yeah, I think they would also apply. And obviously you're going to see other people in group retreats. Good not to talk...with anybody. You shouldn't see anybody. You shouldn't talk to anybody. Anybody. It's better if you don't.

[student: The fifth one again, Michael.]

Ah, he said, what was it?

[student: [unclear]]

Having goodness in the sense...and he lists only two things. During the day there shouldn't be a lot of...there shouldn't be a lot of people around in the day,

and there should be no sound, or sounds. So

[student: Ahm]

It has nothing to do with goodness, but

[student: It has nothin' to do with, like]

No.

[student: you know]

No.

[student: a Lama meditated]

No. [unclear] No.

[student: here before.]

No. No. It's a very difficult verse and Tsongkopa is explaining it.

[student: So...so when you say cover the windows you mean you shouldn't really be able to see what's outside the window. Is that what you mean?]

Well, I think, like where I used to go there was this...was it Mount something? It was a beautiful snow mountain out the back. [laughs] So I would be, you know, [laughs] strip across the top [laughs], you know. What I mean is you shouldn't be able to see any living beings

[student: But like]

squirrels, dogs, people

[student: no movement. No activity.]

Yeah, tape it up.

[student: Including]

You know to the top of the window if you can. Or you...I like to use dez white curtains...dez...what do you call them?

[student: Shades?]

They're the inside the inside of a curtain.

[student: Shears?]

Yeah. And the light, you can get the light, you know, to see the light. And then the light is very nice. It's very helpful sometimes when you meditate [unclear].

[student: So so looking at the scenery is okay, or not?]

It's okay. But but if you are on...if you're below six feet you're gonna see somebody if they walk by so, I mean

[student: Say, like if you're out in the middle of nowhere]

Yeah, that's all right.

[student: in the desert?]

It's all right. But in...I've been there and, ah, it's all sorts of things runnin' around.
[laughs]

[laughter]

It's hard to find a place

[student: Why not see an animal?]

It's very distracting. It's just very distracting. You you should be into complete solitude and it's better. It's really better. 'Cause what it does, it forces you...also, you should...we'll get to it, but you...and and don't write it down, but you should have no other activity. I used to try to memorize some text when I was in retreat, [unclear] do anything else, you should have nothing else. And then what happens is you you you get...what do you call it?

[student: Stir crazy.]

[laughter]

No, I mean you get...the isolation drives you into your mind. And you will get good results. And if you have anything else to do your mind will grasp on to it, and distract you, you know? If you have to do anything else, your mind will grab on to it because it's lonely, and it'll distract you and and it's important to drive yourself into this isolation when you're just forced to live in your mind, and then you can you can develop some some good meditation. And and it's it's it's it's new. You never you've never had a day or more than a few days when you weren't talking and that's hard. All that energy gets driven in. And you have good meditation.

[student: So if you're doing a month or a three month or six month retreat, you're not supposed to like go out and walk around [unclear]?]

Not at all. Not at all.

[student: Zippo? Oh, my God.]

Not at all. A true

[student: Six months and like not going out and not walking?]

I mean a true retreat, yeah. It's important to have enough place I've found to walk around inside. Because that's just in case you get...there's a thing called {lung} which is like psychic energy which builds up and if you start to have a problem it it can cause a big problem. You know you you won't sleep for a few days, and then you have to break the retreat and go to a hospital and they shoot you up. [laughs]

[laughter]

with something and you sleep. It's very common for people who don't know how to do a retreat properly to get {lung}. It's very common for people to experience that disorder like, you know, serious things when they can't sleep for a week, and then they then they have to break the retreat. So it's it's very important to do it right. And and food is very important, to eat to eat very well. I know Gahwingkah, who is a great meditation master from Burma, who the Dalai Lama sent to the monasteries to teach us, he would feed you well, you

know, royally and and support you eat well. If you don't eat well, if you eat a lot of sugar or starches or coffee and cocoa, it's almost make me crazy, you know, ice cream. You can't have any of that stuff 'cause it will hurt your winds and you you can go crazy. So you have to eat very oily foods, very heavy foods that keep you down that keep you down.

[student: Grounded?]

Yeah. [laughs]

[laughter]

[student: Michael, what about taking your offerings out at the end of the day? Is that something you should have your assistant]

Yes. Yeah.

[student: do for you. You shouldn't even go out to do that?]

No, the line...normally the line of the retreat is the door threshold. When you seal the door, that's it. You have someone else take them out...you...I would put them in a garbage bag and I had a neutral territory in my, like a foyer, you know, put 'em out there, I'd close my door and he comes in [laughs], you know? It's good. You shouldn't see anybody at all. It'll just drive you into yourself and the meditation will be great.

[student: Okay.]

[student: What about sleep?]

It's very important to sleep well. And and later I'll teach you. We can't do it in this class, but there are instructions about that, special instructions about that. So if you ever do a retreat, we'll talk about it but, in general, you shouldn't try to be a hero. You should sleep. There are periods for sleep that are different but, in general, you get a good sleep, a good eight hours. It's very nice when you're meditating. Enough sleep is very important when you're meditating. Any extreme action is going to make you nuts. You have to just be normal. Good eating. Good happy thinking. By the way, no music, that's a big disaster. No TV, obviously, you know. [laughs]

[laughter]

No books. No magazines. No newspapers. No personal letters. Those are all a disaster.

[student: No dharma books? No]

Dharma book? If you getting {lung}, and, you see, that also becomes a distraction, becomes an excuse to not think and not be inside your mind, and and you'll find that you're craving it, you know? And it's not because you want to study Dharma. It's because you want to have some stimulation. [laughs] You know? So

[student: Wheew.]

that's better.

[student: What about a book that's on the particular practice]

Well, that's

[student: that you're doing?]

good but it's better if you can read it before. You have to have some prayer books. You have to be doing some

[student: Practice.]

practice. And if you have a commentary...but even the commentary can become a distraction. It's better to learn it well before going, because you'll find yourself reading the commentary not because you want to understand the practice, but because you want some kind of stimulation [laughs] other than meditating, you know? And and it's better.

[student: Could you say a little bit more about {lung}?]

Yeah, {lung} is, you know, [unclear]. In the West you would call it what? Like frustration. Or anxiety. Or...it's this...it's explained as some kind of

[student: Called low blood sugar, hypoglycemia.]

It's...technically speaking, it's happening in the nervous system. It's it's it's...consists of energy in the nervous system, and it it starts to feel...it's called air, and its nuts. It's not air. It's not physical air. It's a it's a it a psychic air or mental air, and the symptoms of it...and you should know, because many people have a have a dangerous problem with it when they do long meditations and its...you start to feel bloated. You start to feel anxiety. You actually...you're stomach goes out a little bit, and you start to get short of breath. Your breath speeds up and you feel like you can't breathe very smoothly. You feel, you know, dizzy or light headed. You you break into giggling sometimes. You get silly, with nobody around. I mean, you know, I I was...I...one night I was gettin' in this tremendous laugh about doing a...thinking of a prank on my brother I haven't met for a long time. [laughs] You know, just starting to giggle. And what else, Kylie, you you know?

[student: I think, if if we start thinking a lot of interesting thoughts, and you start just fixing on them and then, you know, not sleeping, thinking]

Oh, not sleeping is the, I guess, the biggest one

[student: [unclear] That's the biggest one.]

The biggest...like if you're in deep meditation and you start not sleeping and it's very bad. One person who you're supposed to communicate with is your Lama. He should be close by. At least, in in in necessity you should be able to phone him if you can. Otherwise...by the way, no phone if you can take it out. Don't have it available to yourself. He should be available to help you. So it's very good if you can do your retreat near your Lama, or where you can at least contact him and get his advice. 'Cause sometimes it's better to just break it and start over again later. So...and I think the worst sign is that you'll start not sleeping.

[student: That's especially if you've having wonderful thoughts and realizations as a result of your meditation and you start staying up all night and thinking about those.]

[laughs] In a good meditation you feel like talking.

[student: And what about...what about like eating the right food to try and counteract that?]

Yeah. It's like heavy foods. You need oily food, oily foods.

[student: [unclear]]

If you're a vegetarian, it's very important to eat a lot of protein [unclear] like cheeses and nuts and sour things. But I think it that depends on each person.

[student: Yeah. I was going to say my experience was just the opposite.]

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[student: I was taken off oil completely because I had opposite from being too sweet.]

So it might, oh, yeah, I'm talking about when you have the opposite. And we'll talk about it more. We'll get to it later. Okay.

[student: So so those symptoms like shortness of breath, and can't breathe smoothly, dizzy all that...over what period of time?]

I would say if you're really having a lousy meditation [laughs] retreat that it could start happening in two or three days.

[student: No, but how long would they go on before [unclear]]

Oh, I'd say if you don't sleep more than two days, you should stop and seek some, you know...get out. And start, you know...and you say "Okay, it's a good deed, I tried and I'm not ready and next time I'll do better. I'll do better preliminaries." And, uh, there's a time when even great heroes run from the battle. [laughs] Wiser. Many people have been badly hurt by that. You know, like being hospitalized. You don't wanna do that. If you do it happy, everything just right, all preliminaries right, it's just smooth. And you hear all these stories and you say, "I don't know why these people do that," you know? I think they come from not...I know one case famous case in ours...where we grew up as Dharma students when a person...the Lama told him not to do a certain practice and he did it, and he went crazy, and he was in the, you know, mental hospital for a couple of days.

[student: Temporary insanity, eh?]

Yeah, very temporary. He came out of it after a couple of days. But he...there was nothing to do. We had we had to take him that place. So I think it's...you have to follow instructions. If you do, they go...I don't wanna scare you. Ninety per cent go very very smooth, very nice, very happy, blissful. I think [unclear] was telling about [unclear] retreat [unclear]. They don't always start very good. Your back hurts for a while. You gotta also tough it out sometimes.

[student: So what is it that would cause you to go to the hospital actually?]

Too much {lung}.

[student: I mean but how would that it cause you to go to the hospital?]

Ah, no the guy just got outta con...he he got wired.

[student: Not the mental hospital guy, but like at physical hospital.]

Oh, oh, I think not sleeping for a long time and then you get...you don't eat well and

[student: If anybody's deprived of sleep long enough takes on these symptoms of [unclear]. It's once they get sleep it ususally goes away right away. [unclear]]

Here's number two. {Dupa chungwa} It's the second condition. Now, this is not really part of your environment. It's more of an attitude. {Dupa chungwa} means "you you don't want many things." {Dupa} means "want." {Chungwa} means "little." And it's a kind of attitude where you don't need much. I call it few needs or something. You just don't need much to be happy or to be satisfied, okay. {Dupa chungwa.} It's cousin, it's brother [silence] is {chok shepa}. {Chok shepa} means...it's the Tibetan word to. . . for "to be satisfied, easily satisfied with whatever you get." So what are the diffence between the two? {Dupa chungwa} means "from the beginning you don't much." Then {chok shepa} means "whatever you get you don't. . . okay, that's enough." Those are two different mental functions, actually. This comes from a very very fantastic book called [silence] [b: Abhidharmakosa]. I remember when I was a student and I used to get frustrated by these Sanskrit words. They just went on and on, and I couldn't remember. And I couldn't see any difference between most of them. [laughs] Sanskrit is written without any spaces.

[student: Ooo.]

Because when one word gets close to another word they join. And they become at the joining...the two letters at the end form a new letter. So you can't

[student: Break 'em apart.]

And it's very hard to read Sanskrit for that reason. {Abhidharma} means "higher knowledge". {Kosa} means "a treasure."

[silence]

[student: This is the brother?]

Yeah, I'm gonna have to [unclear]. I misspelled this. I think there's an h in here, and I always forget [unclear]. I worked for ten years on his book. Put it here.

[student: So then the first one is from Asanga and these two are from Vasubandhu?]

I think I misspelled. I'll check it for you. Vasubandhu is the other brother. He's Asanga's half brother.

[silence]

[student: Were those books written in Tibet?]

No. This is in Sanskrit.

[student: It was written in Sanskrit? When?]

Yeah, about six hundred years before Buddhism came to Tibet. And so these are by the

[student: All of them were written in Sanskrit?]

All of the books we're gonna study in this five year course started in in ancient India. They are the original books of Sanskrit of Buddhism. So Vasubandhu wrote the [b: Abhidharmakosa]. When do you think he lived?

[student: At the same time as [unclear]]

[laughter]

Okay, he's

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, it's...I have it wrong.

[student: How is he the half-brother?]

Well, remember that he came...I don't remember which came from

[student: [unclear]]

the Brahman and which came from

[unclear]

[student: She got around [unclear]]

She had she had two. Be careful. She's a holy

[laughter]

[student: [unclear] holy lady]

Vasubandhu, okay. And he has a chapter...his book, the [b: Abhidharmakosa]...I spent ten years translating the first Dalai Lama's commentary to it, and it's incredible. It's just incredible. And we'll study it some day. In the monastery you study it just before your geshe exam. And these two principles he lists as important for meditation, okay? So, in general, your meditation can't succeed. Once you go into that room forget about everything else. You don't need anything else. Live without whatever you live without, you know? Be happy with whatever you have. If you're thinking that you need one more thing to build the meditation, or you need something else, or you have any desire for anything in general. And he's talking before the meditation, too. If you're a person who's hoping to get a new house, hoping for a new car, hoping for an air conditioner to work, not satisfied with what he has

which is a is a disaster. I think there's a...there was an ancient king called Lollinew. He was a buddha. He was the Buddha in his former life. And he said the greatest suffering in the world is that people are not happy with what they have. They always want more. And if you've seen that with you job or whatever...you know, I started my job at seven dollars an hour. I was very happy. And I remember every year I got...I always thought that that wasn't enough. You know, and every year they would raise you. And then if someone asked me now, "Would you work for seven dollars an hour?" I would, you know, I would I would say, "Are you crazy?" you know? But its...that's the result of not having {chok shepa}. {Chok shepa} means "whatever I can get, fine. It's enough. I don't need anymore than that." You can't have a good meditation unless you really have these two thoughts. And you can't have them...you can't not have them up to the time you walk into the meditation place, and then suddenly get them, you know?

[laughter]

You have to start from you life, from you daily life. And they're very useful. I mean, that monk that I spoke about, Yeshe [unclear]. I heard a story last night. And he lives in Dharmasala in a cave. And somebody gave...he always walks around with his robes up to here. And he looks like a dork.

[laughter]

And I saw him at 4:30 in the morning here last week. And he just looks goofy, you know? And and I found out he does it on pupose. He doesn't wanna be proud. So he he wears his robe like he just looks funny. And somebody gave him a...new robes. And he burned them. And because he...not...because he doesn't want to be tempted by it, you know? And he and he purposely doesn't give himself anything to be tempted about. So those...that's {dupa chungwa} and {chok shepa}. It doesn't mean to go to work sloppy, or purposely don't iron your shirt or something. If you're going to work and you have to ride, you need to have [unclear]. According to Buddhism, you need to support yourself and not grub off other people. And you gotta stand on your own two feet and not bother other people. So you should have a job. It should be a nice job. You don't have to do anything wrong. And you should look neat and nice and and you should do okay. That that doesn't mean that, but it means be satisfied with that. Don't go don't go to Macy's if you can go to, what's the other one?

[laughter]

Someplace [unclear]

[student: Salvation Army.]

[student: Could you just say what the differences between these two again, please?]

Yeah, again. They're they're kinda hard to distinguish. {Dupa chungwa} means "not wanting many wants". And {chok shepa} means "being satisfied with whatever you get." It's not quite the same. {Depa chungwa} means "from the beginning, you don't need much." And {chok shepa} means "whatever you get, no matter how lousy it is, well, okay that's enough, that's enough for me."

[student: Does does this apply only to wordly things, or what about your like hunger for the Dharma? Are you supposed to be satisfied with]

No.

[laughter]

No, you're supposed to be thirst-less.

[student: And also not attached. You gotta be willing to let go of what ever you get.]

It's dangerous to be attached. But I remember when I went to New Jersey twenty years ago, and there was this old monk [unclear], and there was this other student there named Art that's a great scholar. And he said, "It's very good you have Art." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, you'll be jealous of him. And you'll compete with each other in your Dharma studies and your [unclear]. And then later you'll give up the jealousy, okay?" [laughs] So...and he's joking but, I mean, you can use your, you know? It's not . . {Dupa} is a difficult word. {Tongda} means "a desire for freedom, desire for liberation." Westerners hear this idea of no desire, and they think you're not supposed to want anything, even nirvana or Buddhahood. That's not correct. That's totally wrong. {Dupa} is okay. It's supposed to for Buddhahood. What's the definition of bodhichitta?

[students: [unclear]]

[unclear] {Dupa.} Desire. To want Buddhahood for the sake of others. That's the definition, and by Asanga, of bodhichitta. And we have it. The other people memorized it. [unclear] some kind of desire, but it's a good desire. And we'll talk about it someday. There's a definition of just that desire. We'll take a break, I think. [unclear]

[student: It's about ten after eight.]

Okay. Do that. [laughs]

[laughter]

Listen, take a take a ten minute break. Actually, no. I'll do something else. [unclear] those two they take awhile. And you need to use a lighter. The gas thing is broke.

[silence]

And then let's let's do one more thing and it'll heat up in the meantime.

[silence]

[student: So, I I'm getting the impression if you go into retreat with sort of the idea of, "Well, I read some Dharma books while I'm there and I'll walk around outside [unclear]]

There are there are like study retreats.

[student: No, I'm talking like that single pointed concentration retreat.]

No. I mean, you're allowed to take books into retreat. And we'll see. We'll talk about it here. It'll be here. But in in Buddhism there are what are called the inner sciences and the outer sciences.

[student: Yeah.]

The outer sciences are like medicine, Buddhist medicine, and Buddhist astrology, Buddhist painting, Buddhist sculpture. The fine arts are considered lesser sciences. And then there are the Buddhist sciences, the religious sciences, spiritual sciences. And it's considered very bad in a retreat to do the lower sciences. You

see? And it's even considered bad to study them until you've finished

[cut]

but then if you...it's very good, you know, especially if you're a Westerner and you haven't studied these books a lot, it's very good to have the instructions with you because you run into problems and you wanna refer to something. That's fine. I...I'm just saying be...beware. I'm speaking from experience. Your mind will grasp on, you know, to this activity something it can do. [laughs]

[student: I was thinking, you know, if somebody who went into retreat, for whatever, you know, six months, or nine months, and they wanted to attain calm abiding.]

Yeah.

[student: And they, you know, had a wide perimeter and they walked around outside and looked at the creatures running around on the ground and [unclear].]

Ah, it's...I don't think they could do it, or it would be difficult. And I and I can say that the opposite works very well.

[student: What what do you mean?]

Total isolation.

[student: Michael, [unclear] {shamata} retreat. Almost everybody at that retreat did go outside, did go down to the dining hall for lunch and dinner, you know, didn't talk but availed themselves of the out of doors. And there was one person who really stayed in her room, didn't come out for mealtime, took her meals in her room, and she made lots of progress.]

[laughs] Yeah, I believe that. I've tried both.

[student: Is this the year-long? That the year-long retreat?]

[student: [unclear] she did that apparently. She [unclear].]

There's a lady's three year residence. Actually [unclear].]

[unclear]

[student: [unclear] did six months [unclear]]

[student: There are a lot of people who've done three year retreats

[unclear]

[student: [unclear] then they do [unclear].]

Some people do three three years in a row.

[student: What about {shamata}?]

Those are different, and those take a lot of preparation. So, this is the...I'll give you number four and by then the tea should be warm.

[student: [unclear]]

Is it all right?

[student: [unclear] I don't think the gas is on.]

[student: Under the teapot? No.]

[student: No, the others are off. It's okay.]

{Jar mong pach} {Ja} {Ja} means "activities." {Mong} means "many." {Pach} means "give 'em up."

[laughter]

Give up doing many things. You know, and I can speak from experience. I've done many now long retreats. And, ahm, I used to think that during this sessions I would walk and I would memorize a book, a holy book. Because that's...I'm required to. And, ah, even that became a distraction. Or translate a holy book, you know? And that became a distraction. And, ah, I think you just have to give up just about everything. It's better.

[student: That's for the retreat? Not]

During the

[student: your life?]

No. No. Ah, outside...by the way, money, activities, that's a function of your spiritual progress. You know, the Dali Lamas were traditionally the wealthiest people in Tibet. And some Panchen Lamas were traditionally, and the Dali Lamas, were traditionally the greatest politicians in the country. And they were rough politicians. They weren't like wimpy, Plato, like that. They they had difficult decisions to make. They they were...terrible things happen, invasions, you know, internal problems. They had the same problems that Clinton has. And they they were the they were great Buddhist practitioners. In other words...and the first Tantric practitioners were kings in India who went to the Buddha and said, "Look, we don't have time for this

[laughter]

all this studying, [laughs] you know? Can't you just give us something to do powerful?

[laughter]

And that was the original...some of the original Tantras were designed by the Buddha for them. So it doesn't mean to give up...you don't have to give up even a very high position in the company or you don't have to give up money even wealth, great wealth. It just means that like the, I think it was the Seventh Dali Lama said, "The only thing I consider that I own is my bell and my dorje...you know, my ritual my two little ritual instruments. And the rest, I own half the country, but I don't feel like it's mine, I I I...if someone took it, I could handle that. And the present Dali Lama, I mean, he...if you think about the power of a king or a Dali Lama, he can go to any person in the country and say he needs anything and you have to give it to him. It's not like America where, you know, there can be a scandal and you can kick him out, you know. He owns everything in the country, basically. And and he just left it and came to India and lived like a beggar. That's a good sign. That shows it. It means you can have it, and if you have it use it well. And many people do. Many wealthy people use it very well. But then have the right attitude about it. Be ready to give it up on an instant.

[student: It would be Pat Robinson without the urge to ask people for money.]

[laughter]

[laughs] {Jo mang pang} means "give up doing a lot of things." Don't...when you, when you...we're talking about a retreat in which you consciously try to indulge {shamata}. You go into that retreat thinking, "By the time I come out, I'm gonna have perfect meditation." And it and it takes time.

[student: Seems like that contradicts what you said earlier. Does it say give up a lot of things but not everything?]

No. It means...well, it means do the few things that you have to do which is set up your altar. You know. Clean the floor. [laughs] Even that you can get obsessed on, you see? Your your mind plays tricks on you. You have this, "Maybe I should spend a little more time preparing the altar, not quite sitting quite so long." Or "Maybe I should get up and change the incense right now." It's your mind doesn't want you to sit there. Okay, have some have some tea and we'll start in ten minutes.

[cut]

what we talked about before. If it's physical stick it out.

[student: unclear]

Especially when you get pains in your body, which you will. They go away after awhile.

[student: [unclear] no exercise, nothing at all. No stretch [unclear].

They...this, ah, some people do prostrations [unclear]. I I don't know. You can also do [unclear].

[student: Michael]

distraction. They become a distraction.

[student: Well, not having any exercise can become even more of a distraction.]

Right. You can do it [unclear]. If you can do it and get away with it, [unclear]. Okay, say {tsultrim dakpa}. [repeat] {tsultrim dakpa} [repeat] What's {tsultrim} mean, you know, the current Tibetan meaning? It means "morality."

[student: What?]

"Mor...Morality." Morality is defined in Buddhism as {"shiney suhudam [unclear] go ma} which means, ah, the basic thing is not harming anyone. Avoiding any harm to another living being. That's morality.

[student: What does harm mean?]

Causing them physical or mental pain. Physical or mental suffering.

[student: [unclear].]

To cause anyone else physical or mental suffering.

[student: That's {tsultrim}?]

That's the definition of morality. "Avoiding causing any physical or mental suffering," as well. That's what {tsultrim} is. {Dakpa} means "pure, pure morality."

[student: Is it all sentient beings or [unclear]?]

All sentient beings, and yourself. You're not allowed to commit suicide in Buddhism.

[student: But what about all those times you help someone [unclear]?]

That's not what I'm talking about. When a when a good teacher knows the time to [unclear].

[laughter]

It's it's good. It's very good.

[student: Not suffering. Okay.]

Ah, {tsultrim dakpa}. This means that if if you've been in a long retreat, you know,...can you hand me that paper [unclear]? [laughs] Now, we have it. You all right? I'm sorry. You look cold. Ah, you you wanna go? Go.

[student: No, I'm all right.]

Okay. She did her final. Okay, ah, {tsultrim dakpa}. When you do a deep meditation in a deep...a long retreat...if you've ever done it. If you go into the retreat with any bad deeds on you conscience, you will never you will never be able to develop good concentration. Forget it. Forget it. And it's just in general with concentration, if you have any activity which you which you're doing regularly which you know in your heart to be wrong or harmful, you won't be able to develop concentration. Most of us who who do bad deeds, even though we know they are well meaning...in my case, I...one of them is that I say harsh things to people at work because I I wanna joke, and I say the wrong thing and I hurt someone's feelings. Common. Very common with me. Ahm, you can't control yourself. You know, it's the idea you know it's wrong. You try to stop it. But you can't control yourself. Then you just have to to keep doing the proper confession up front and try to prevent yourself. I mean, if you're working on it, it's not that it's you can't have concentration. But if you are...it's particularly with monks if you're trying to hide something wrong that you're doing, you cannot reach...we say, if you hide...a monk can commit his worst...he can break almost any vow and not lose his vows. In fact, he can break any vow and not lose his vows as long as he doesn't hide it. You know, as long as he tells people. So it's very important that you not you not go into a retreat or you not try to develop good meditation with anything on you conscious that you know to be bad. And and, in general, leading up to a retreat you should try to be really good for a while [laughs] if you can. And most of those who you know is wrong and you can't stop it, then then make sure you have a good outlet for confession. The minimum is that you confess it in front of your image at at your in your in your altar, but much better if you can do it to your Lama because it's much more embarrassing.

[laughter]

[laughs] You probably won't do it if you...if there's anyway you can get out of telling your Lama, "I've done really bad things. And I"... Sometimes when I couldn't control myself, I'd set a goal for I'd say, "I'm gonna tell Rinpoche." And you know Rinpoche, he's tough. He knows. So I did not wanna tell him openly

what I did. So I I would I would rather restrain under any circumstances. If I hadn't promised myself I would tell Rinpoche then I would be pretty safe not to do that thing. So...although not always, but sometimes I would have to go to him and tell him and it's very embarrassing. So, I mean, it's, ah, once you get into that habit of revealing to people to your Lama what you've done along. It's very very healthy. It's very very good for you. And then your mind, your conscience will be clear. And then your meditation will go really nice. So, this again one of those things I've had many people come up to me and say, "Ah, I tried to develop {shamata} and nothing happened, and I went into retreat. I got a little happy for a few days. I got a little calm. I could hear my heart beating in my ears and stuff. And ah, and nothing happened," you know? It's 'cause they haven't prepared properly. They...one of these things they're not doing properly. And, ah, you you won't you won't feel [unclear].

[silence]

[student: The sixth?]

[student: Yeah.]

Yeah, finally.

[silence]

I wanna make sure I [unclear]. [laughs]

[laughter]

I wanna make sure you've heard everything I know already. [laughs] Say {namtok}. [repeat] {Pang.} [repeat] {Namtok pang.} [repeat] {Namtok pang.} [repeat]. Ah, {namtok} is a...{namtok} is a very hard word to translate from Tibetan. It can mean "fantasy." It can mean "imagination." It can mean "a wrong thought." I've translated it as "a stupid thought." [laughs] You're dead thinking about it. And it refers to, ah, in in this case it's desire but it can be anger and other negative thoughts. But we mainly mean desire. Desire means two things here. One is the object of the senses are sometimes called objects of desire in Tibet. It doesn't mean a pretty lady, or it doesn't mean a big pile of money or something like that. It just means sounds, any cars, tastes, sensations on your body, and when you get deep into meditation you will have to withdraw from those, also. That's why it's so important to get your body into the right position

because once you take that position you...you're gonna shut...you're gonna withdraw from your body. You know, you're not gonna be aware anymore of your body. So it should be in a position that when your mind withdraws from the body, it can keep breathing and going on without falling over, without the mouth drying out, without slobber coming down your [laughs] tongue. I mean, when you're in deep meditation the body should be so supported...in India sometimes they would put a...the method...the Hindu meditations which I I did meditate twenty years ago...they would...they had a special thing they put under their arms to keep the body up while while they were in meditation. So you wanna...you're gonna withdraw from all your senses and, ah, that means "to give up," {namtok}, "to give up those even those kinds of perceptions of the senses." It also means just "to give up wanting anything." Okay? And and that's the main sense in which Tsong Khapa in his commentary...that's how he writes it. He says, in his commentary and which you can read in the back, "This desire also means here any kind of desire for anything in your life, any normal worldly thing in your life." And he says, "Think about it. Trying to get them you do bad deeds, you cause other people pain, you cause yourself pain. Trying to get worldly objects. Secondly, they're doomed. [laughs] Even if you get it." You've been in a situation...I've had students come to me, "Will you give me some practice and if I do it I can get a good job."

[laughter]

And I and I did. And some of them did. But I knew what was gonna happen. After six weeks they said, "I hate this job."

[laughter]

It's so bad.

[laughter]

[student: I know. You're right.]

[laughter]

It always changes. Every desirable thing changes. Every good thing you lose. Every worldly good thing you will lose, period. And so Tsong Khapa in his commentary, which you can read, says, you know, "Think about it. You're crazy. It's crazy. Don't don't go and try to go into meditation wanting...you have

to go into meditation with an attitude of renunciation. Anything else in your life is gonna...you're gonna lose." Sometimes I think the worst thing at work is to get to be a vice-president. And then you find out there's nothing there. [laughs] And then you're stuck. [laughs] Very embarrassing to go from vice-president down to some'n else, [laughs] you know? So [laughs] why did you have to actually [laughs] [unclear].

[student: [unclear]]

Ah, so it's it's a...you you nothing can satisfy you. And whatever you get of all the things you struggle to get, you will lose. And you will have suffering as you lose it. So give it up. Give up those kinds of ideas. Give up those thoughts.

[student: [unclear] meditation and the senses and all those little things that you do as preliminaries that, ah, incense and all that sort of thing that's...it's distracting.]

It can be. It can be. I mean, if you, ah, I've found in in in long retreats that I had to put out the incense because the smoke would distract me and the smell

[student: Yes.]

would distract me and I would start opening my eyes, you know, and say, "Maybe I should [unclear], [laughs] you know what I mean, [laughs], anything except meditation. Yeah, it can be distracting. If if you're distracted by anything, chop it off. Jesus said, "If you're eye offend thee, pluck it out." [unclear] So, if it's bothering you, stop it. Get rid of it. [unclear] {Pang} means "to get rid of" [unclear]. We had it before.

Okay, one more point.

[student: So hopefully, it's get rid of sex desires.]

Yeah, or, and also, get rid of the desire for anything in your life that's not related to...that's impermanent, that's not related to your reaching nirvana. Because that's the only thing that really counts. It really is. Nothing else will help you. Nothing. Even the comfort that you achieve at this level, you know, right now. You're relatively young. You live in a comfortable house. You have enough food. You must lose all those things. You must lose any kind of attractiveness you have in your body. You must lose whatever health you have. And and I think what bothers me, and lot of other people here maybe, you must become

stupid. You know, you...I'll forget all my Tibetan. I'll forget most of what I studied. You know, if I live long enough. I mean that's...you're doomed to mental decrepitude, also, and that's frustrating if you...as you start to age, that's very frustrating. And whatever good deeds you do are gonna have to be so ingrained in you that as you get stupid they they're habitual because you're no longer gonna be able to conceive of those good ideas that you had. Everything fails. So so that...don't don't go after things that are gonna plant seeds that are worthless. You're gonna lose everything you have. I mean, and then I I I hear these I always hear these ladies they're so funny, "I'm not gonna get fat like my mother was." You know, I go, you know?

[laughter]

When I was a teenager I used to check out the mother first, you know? Because if the mother got fat, I'd go [unclear]. Did the mother look old or...the the daughters, they get the same, you know, come on [laughs]. Wha'da ya think? [laughs] You think you're different from the millions of [unclear] that gave you birth? We're all gonna be like that. It's no...it's silly. There's nothing you can keep, except very deep seeds of Dharma in your heart. They go on. Okay. Ah, Tsong Khapa then says, and this is the last thing that's on your homework.

[silence]

You had this last week, remember? [b: Gom Rim] [b: Gom Rim] is the book from which he took all six. Everything I've said tonight Tsong Khapa took from [b: Gom Rim].

[student: Tsong Khapa took it from [b: Gom Rim]?]

Yeah

[student: I though you said]

Yeah, he took the first step from Asanga.

[student: Oh.]

And so did [b: Gom Rim].

[student: Okay.]

Okay? [laughs] So so don't get confused. I'll repeat that.

[student: So, but two two and three were [unclear]]

Tonight we talked about six conditions. The first condition was staying in a conducive place. That had five parts but of which you don't have to remember. You're not responsible for [unclear]. Those five parts came from another book by Asanga. But all six of what we talked about tonight...the whole list that you have now...those came from [b: Gom Rim]...written when?

[silence]

And we talked about it. He was the one who defeated the Chinese master. Kamalashila. So, as usual, Tsong Khapa is saying, "I didn't make this up. This is not my idea. It comes from a very good source. It's from the [b: Gom Rim] of Kamalashila." [b: Gom Rim] means "[b: Stages of Meditation]." Remember you recognize the {rim} as in [b: Lam Rim], right. It's it's three huge books. It's beautiful. We have a sampler for it. So that was [unclear].

[student: So is the [b: Abhidharmakosha] also known as the [b: Gom Rim]?]

Now, what about [b: Abhidharmakosha]? [b: Abhidharmakosha] is the source for two of the six ideas I talked about. Two of the conditions I've talked about tonight. What were they?

[student: {Dupa chungwa.}]

Yeah.

[student: {Chok shepa.}]

Yeah. Not wanting a lot of things and being satisfied with whatever...with with whatever you get. The reason they came from the [b: Abhidharmakosha] and then Kamalashila used those. So if I asked you on the homework, "Who wrote the book for all six?" You'll say, "Kamalashila in [b: Gom Rim]." Then if I say, "Who wrote the book for those two concepts, being happy with whatever you get and not wanting much?" That's?

[student: Vasubandhu.]

Vasubandhu in the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. And then if I say, "Who wrote the five parts of the very first thing I talked about which is conducive place?" You're gonna say?

[student: Asanga.]

Asanga. So, I just want you to get it straight. You don't get confused. I have this very

[student: Could I have that very quick once more?]

Yeah, one more time. The source...by the way...whose...who wrote the whole book? It's not on you homework.

[laughter]

Tsong Khapa is talking. And Tsong Khapa is pulling his...what he is using for all six that I have talked about tonight...which are what? I I I I got every one of 'em erased off.

[student: Conditions.]

Equanimity.

[student: The conditions.]

Place. And then what?

[student: [unclear]]

Good place. Real good place. Not wanting many things.

[student: [unclear]]

Being satisfied with what you have. What's number four?

[student: Giving up doing too many things.]

Yeah, giving up a lot of activities. And then morality.

[student: Morality]

And then?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, getting rid of desires and similar stupid thoughts. All six of those come from [b: Gom Rim]. Who wrote [b: Gom Rim]?

[student: Kamalashila.]

When did he live? We don't know, in fact. Who who is Tsong Khapa using for the very first one of those things...the five parts of the six where stay in a place with no wild animals?

[student: Asanga.]

Yeah, Asanga wrote that in his in his [b: Sutralamkara]. Who who is the source that Kamalashila uses for the second and the third one, not wanting many things and being easily satisfied?

[student: [unclear]]

Vasubandhu's [b: Abhidharmakosha]. Yeah?

[student: So did the...there's a Sanskrit version of this?]

It it it would be...the Sanskrit is available. It was originally written in Sanskrit. Why don't we have the Sanskrit of ninety-nine percent of the other books?

[student: They were destroyed.]

They were burned by the Moslems when they came to India [unclear].

[student: Okay, but you also said that Kamalashila was the person who defeated the Chinese school of meditation in Tibet so we [unclear]]

Oh, he was a visiting scholar.

[student: He came from India]

Yeah, he came from India.

[student: to Tibet?]

He was one of the first carriers of Buddhism from from India.

[student: And he wasn't native to Tibet?]

No, he was Indian. I'm only studying the classics. It's the Asian Classics Institute.

[laughter]

Okay, what time is it?

[student: Nine [unclear].]

I'll say one more thing. Maybe I can make it [unclear] anyway. He says, "By the way you should be aware that there's another set of conditions which"...and this is not on your homework. It's just for your [unclear], okay?... "There's another set of conditions which help you develop concentration." And they are? Which which one of the perfections is concentration?

[student: Fifth]

[student: Fifth one.]

It's number five of six. And he says, "Remember the first four are also called. So the first four are supporting the fifth. And the first five support the sixth. They are like that. Not not only like that there's other relationships, also.

[student: The first supports the second. The]

Generally, yeah. Generally. And he quotes Asanga. He says he says that.

[student: Michael, isn't Lama Tsong Khapa quoting Kamalshila's [unclear]]

[laughs] Tsong Khapa. He's quoting Tsong Khapa. And what he's what he's say...what are the first four perfections for people who haven't read it?

[student: [unclear]]

Cha...Charity. Giving.

[student: Morality.]

Morality. Patience meaning, we don't have a word in English, "not getting angry when the time comes and you should get angry." You see, patience is also what you do when you're waiting for the bus. It doesn't mean that. You see, it means "not to get angry when the time comes." And there isn't a good word, and patience partly covers it, but it means when that guy at work...that thing that just hurts you a lot. And and I get it every day, and you get it everyday. If you work at a large office, somebody says something during the day that hurts you. You you cool. You chill out. Okay? You know, you don't get angry. This is a great great Buddhist practice, and [unclear] says it's the most beautiful Buddhist practice there is. At the moment of heat, not to react, not to give in. That's the third. What's the fourth?

[student: Effort or perseverance.]

Those are lousy words for {sunkan ghahla dzoroh}, Master Shantideva's description. {Sunkan ghahla dzoroh.} What is the definition of effort? Effort is a good translation. But what does it mean? It means "to enjoy doing good things." That's the definition of Buddhist effort, enjoying helping somebody, doing something right, doing something beautiful, and taking some kind of pleasure in it, getting off on doing good is the definition of the fourth perfection. And those are all conditions which help you reach the fifth perfection which is concentration. So I'll leave you with, ah, this is what Tsong Khapa puts at the end. He...sometimes after he's finishing quoting all the great Indian masters, including the Buddha, he'll quote some Kadampa. Who are the Kadampa?

[student: [unclear]]

These are the pioneer...I talked about it last time?

[student: Yeah.]

These are the pioneer Buddhist of Tibet. They are the...you are the Kadampas of the of the move of Buddhism to America. You know, you are the people who

were not Buddhist from birth. They were they were really great practitioners. They were wonderful. As they matured in their knowledge, they were they were very wonderful Buddhists. So Geshe Tubten was one of them. Geshe Tubten says...by the way, Geshe used to mean any "spiritual teacher." Now it's a degree in a Gelugpa monastery for a doctorate of [unclear] but it used to mean just any "spiritual teacher." And he says, I I'm translating from the Tibetan, "When we find ourselves unable to develop deep concentration, we blame it on the instructions that we got. And we go and we look for some different instructions. The real problem though is that we have failed to prepare ourselves as described by the Buddha," okay? In other words, if you've ever tried to do a retreat, or you've ever tried to do morning practice, and you didn't get much results from it, it could well be not only this, but it could very well be that you haven't done these preparations properly. So try them. Try them. So what you're meditating on this week is those six conditions. Just go over them in your mind, one, two, three, four, five, six. What are they? And use those six preparations that you have, which were what? Just just to go over...I mean, let's see if you could meditate. So what what was the first [unclear] for preparation.

[student: Cleaning up the room. [unclear]]

[student: [unclear] Taking refuge.]

And sitting down.

[unclear]

Actually imagining that they're coming into the room. That's even better. Five? Five?

[unclear]

[laughter]

[unclear] In the monastery if the students aren't ready to to debate Master [unclear] he wades through the place. [unclear] outside [unclear].

[unclear]

And then last?

[student: Requesting a blessing.]

Requesting a blessing. And the seven you know perfectly so I won't have to go over those. I have a couple of announcements. One is I don't know if you guys know Allen. Allen has AIDS. He's been in this class before. He's in the hospital now at New York Hospital. Room 1715.

[student: [unclear]]

He was in the Tibetan. But he also came before we started this class. And and he's a very good practitioner. And I think its even good for you if you see him. He he...I asked him the other day if he minded if people came. And he said, "No, I don't mind. In fact, I would like it 'cause sometimes I get lonely and I start crying [unclear]." He's a very strong-minded man. But...but so if you have the chance, I think he he would like that.

[student: What's the hospital?]

New York University. New York, I'm sorry, New York Hospital. Sixty-eighth and New York.

[student: What's his last name?]

Last name is Tune, T-U-N-E. And he'll be there for a while so.

[student: What's he look like?]

He he was an actor. He was a very handsome Chinese guy. Also, Mark, Mark has AIDS, also. And I want...we had a big discussion about whether I should tell you that sometime. But I think I should. Mark, here. And I wanted to tell you because if anyone has a problem then you should know. I don't have a problem with it, that happened, it happened, but I I'd I'd say I feel it's my responsibility to to tell if you've got a problem. Next thing, [unclear]

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Channel thirteen?]

Channel thirteen tomorrow

[student: [unclear]]

at nine o'clock there's a movie about

[student: Red Flag Over Tibet. Red Flag Over Tibet.]

There's a there's a movie about

[student: Twenty years of oppression and stuff.]

[student: [unclear]]

[unclear] documentary it's got some of the footage of [unclear]

[student: Who made it?]

[student: [unclear] a very good]

[student: Sad, huh?]

[student: [unclear] a lot of people in Tibet [unclear]]

Somebody [unclear]. If you're new and you haven't taken...this is your first night, you have to talk to me because you're only allowed to miss two and you missed it already.

[laughter]

So [laughs] you wanna [unclear] we have to talk.

[student: [unclear]]

The Israelis call it a kickback question.

[student: Can can I ask a question one question, please?]

Yeah. [unclear]

[laughter]

So, oh, good idea.

[student: So on the six perfections. So on the first, on charity, you have to do charity or you can't develop wisdom each supports the next is [unclear].]

He's saying that it's symbiotic actually. Each one supports each other one.

[student: So it's not linear that way?]

Yeah, it is and it is explained as linear, and also as non-linear. In other words, you do have to have good charity to get to morality. Good charity helps good morality. But it's not necessarily

[student: One not...you don't have one you can't get the other?]

You get good morality, normally, you're gonna end up doing charity, too. And espec...and they also say that they can't be called perfections unless they're done with wisdom. So it's a catch twenty-two. And it works out. They they support each other.

[student: Can you perfect a earlier one before you perfect the later ones?]

No.

[student: Or they're not really perfected until they're all [unclear]]

True perfection of them occurs in relation to the bodhisattva [unclear] and that's what defines the bodhisattva vows. Bodhisattva...the ten bodhisattva levels are defined by perfection of wisdom's perfection. So the first bodhisattva vow would be perfect [unclear], like that.

[student: So you can perfect an earlier ones]

You do.

[student: before you can only [unclear].]

But it's not called perfection. It's called obtained an incredible ability to practice it. You know, some kinda super ability.

[student: Are we gonna do chanting?]

Excuse me? Oh, you you don't know those prayers? Open your notebook
[unclear].

[silence]

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

[cut]

[student: During the preliminaries, you know, before going into meditation, is it
this kinda thing when you have like a much reduced chance of succeeding if
[unclear].]

[unclear]

[cut]

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ACI Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Four: Eight-Point Posture of Vairochana

February 24, 1994

transcribed by: Marsha Derynck

[cut]

And inside of that were [students: six preliminaries [unclear]]

and seven ingredients of the [unclear] ok? And then we finished the, what, second one?

[student: the sixth edition]

Yea, which were the environment [unclear] you know the environment that should be around the [unclear]

Finally, we're getting to [student: posture]

Posture. How do you sit, what, how should your body means be when you sit, and then after that, obviously, we're gonna have to do, what?

[students: meditate, [unclear]]

How should your mind be when you sit? [laughs] So first we cover how how should your body be when you sit.

Say {chu gay}[repeat]{duh chu} [repeat]{chu gay}[repeat]{duh chu} [repeat]

{Chu} you should know. {chu} Anybody? Dharma {laughs} ok. {Chu} means dharma.

{gay} means eight.

{duh} means body. {chu} means [student: number 8?] Yea, number eight. [unclear] not the eat dinner, just eight. Uh, and {duh} means body and {chu} means {chu} means, literally activity, but it means how you [unclear] This posture knows eight characteristics, you know, I got confused because I, I, in the back of my mind I was remembering that the seven, seven part posture, and

here we've got Tsong Khapa, Je Tsong Khapa talking about the eight part posture. So I used my computer and I asked, and, you see both, both of them occur. You see the seven part posture and you see the eight part posture. Their both called the posture of good {Vairochana}

{Vairochana} if you're not sure, that's a Buddha, his name is {Vairochana}. And the name means {nom nom} in Tibetan and that means someone who is able to emanate any different forms depending on what he needs. {laughs} If he has to emanate as a bridge, he emanates as a bridge. If he has to emanate as a tree, he emanates as a tree. [student: {num num}?] Yea, the Buddha {num num} which is {Vairochana}. And that's true of any Buddha, but, his name emphasizes, his name is called appearances. {Vairochana} means appearances. He can give you many different appearances. He can appear on the subway next to you and test your patience. {laughter}

[student: the Buddha appearances or the Buddha of appearances?]

The Buddha called Appearances. [student: the Buddha call] His name means appearances. It's a little bit of a hard name, actually. And finally I saw in a commentary that an explanation of it that he gives many appearances. They all do but, that's his name. And they say, we're gonna have eight parts to the posture, the eighth part, which we'll get to later, is you breathe, breathing, how you breathe. And they say that when they talk about the seven part posture, they, they're not counting the breathing. They count the breathing separately. When you count the breathing as part of the posture, then you get eight. OK. So it's eight, that's why there's a difference between seven and eight. And you'll see both in scriptures. And I always confuse them I checked in the computer, they both occur and their both called {Vairochana's} posture. Sometimes just the posture of the legs is called {Vairochana's} posture, so, anyway.

[silence]

[students: {whispering, unclear}]

{dorje num num sum a lay}

[student:ok]

[silence]

{kang-pa kyil-trung}

{kangpa} means the first, the first characteristic of the posture is what do you do with your legs. {kangpa} means legs. {kangpa} and {kyil-trung} means lotus posture. Lotus is where you put one leg up first and then you put the other leg over it. So it would be like, you can't see it very well {unclear}, put your left leg all the way up, up here, first, left leg first. And then you put your right leg all the way up there. (Unclear) That's a full lotus. That's called a {kyil trung}

Um, Tsong Khapa and every other scripture says if you can't do that or if you're not comfortable, which I'm not, uh, it's ok to just put, make a half lotus. A half lotus would be your left leg, up, up like that, so that your foot is on your right thigh. And try to get it as high as you can. You'll get better at it, uh, over many years time, uh, and it won't hurt much. [laughs and laughter] So that your legs will get, uh, we sit like this in the monastery for six seven hours at a time, during services and stuff. And you get [unclear and students:unclear] sometimes, not me but, in a half lotus. Half lotus is pretty comfortable. It's not much problem. You know if you can't. The main thing though, when you're meditating is, uh, not to do anything that would distract you. So if sitting like this distracts you, it's against the meaning of meditation and you shouldn't do it. If you truly have bad legs and uh it hurts you so much that you can't think about what you're doing, then it's stupid. So Tsong Khapa, ... Je Tsong Khapa says and you can read it in his commentary, if you can't do a full lotus, it's ok to do a half lotus. He doesn't say anything else, but in general, in monastic custom, if it's painful, you ... you're allowed to, it's called {mik sal} special case [laughter] and if a monk is in pain a lot of the rules of the monk are different, you know, if you're in pain or you're sick, you're not required to follow everything very strictly. But you have to truly be sick [laughter, laughs, unclear] Sometimes it's very comfortable just to set them down flat, you know, and not put one on top of another. But if you can, it's very important later in your practice, in the higher practices, you have to do some physical conditioning so it's good if you can at least do a half lotus, get in the habit.

[student: why is [unclear] some people can't?]

I think it relates to just how, not, it's how loose your legs get and if you do it for a long time you your legs start to get loose at your hips. And if you do a full lotus, if you can, if you can get used to it and you never will if you don't practice every day. You know, but if you can hold that for a while what it does is it forces your back up perfectly. It makes your back perfect. And you can, if you get used to it, you can stay like that for many hours, you know, if you can do a full lotus it's very good. But it's not like, uh, you know, you have a choice between getting

rid of your anger or getting rid of your ability, your inability of doing a full lotus, you know, chose the first [laughter] don't get hung up on, uh, don't get hung up, you know, looking like a great yogi, you know, better to be a great yogi.

[student: unclear]

We'll talk about it, we'll talk about it, so that's the, yes:

[student: does it make a difference if your left foot goes up first [unclear]]

Yeah, they say you should, then again, it's different in every country, every tradition, you know, you're learning Tibetan Buddhism so you should keep pure. You shouldn't mix it up with other traditions. Maybe you've learned something from a Hindu tradition or even from another Buddhist country, but if you're going to follow this path for five years or whatever, uh follow it pure. Don't mix it up with other things, because it, other things later will get messed up if you don't follow it now. You know, don't don't uh, I've said it before, I say it again, individually the medicines are very great. Mixed up together they can make poison. You get confused if you try to do everything you've heard about. So just follow one tradition well. Uh, if it doesn't work, then change and go follow another tradition well. But it might not work if you don't follow it the way it's taught. So anyway, left left leg up first, right leg over. Yeah?

[student: I've heard that women should put their left, if you're sitting in half lotus, that women should put their left foot up and like on their]

That that's what we do too Yea, I'm talking a full lotus, you put your left foot on your right thigh first

[student: unclear]

and then you put your right foot over your left thigh. That's a full lotus as far as I know, for everybody. Half lotus put your left leg up on your right thigh. And that's ok, so so that's the legs, ok? He'll talk later about why it's important to do it that way according to this tradition. Ah, {[unclear]}

[silence]

[student: does it say why the left should be up first? Is there any reason given?]

Uh, I, I can't talk about it. [laughs, laughter]

[silence]

The second characteristic is {mi} What's {mik}

[Student: eye?]

Your eye, ok, good, your eyes. {mi} is what in Tibetan, you know? Negative, all the negatives in Tibetan start with an 'M'. All the feminines do too. No, no joke intended.

{mi ye}? {Mi ye} means, uh, not open too wide,

and {mi sun} means not closed too far.

This is a little tricky, ok, you, when you're meditating let's suppose I'm sitting down, right, um, the classical posture is if you have your eyes wide open like that, you will see too many things and they will distract you. By the way, it's also good to meditate in front of a, if your altar has just a very plain color and surface, no no fancy texture like a, like a cloth with all one color or something, so that your eyes even though their not full open, even if their half open, you don't see a lot of things. You know, it's very distracting when you get into deep meditation if, even to see, like that screen, fireplace screen or you know just the pure white of the wall would be better. Better not to have anything in front of your eyes, especially letters or designs because your eye will start to catch them as you get into deeper meditation. So what the book says is don't keep your eyes open too wide because you'll get distracted, if they're full open. And don't close them completely because then you'll get, what?

[student: sleepy]

sleepy. [laughs] Uh, so the classic, classic posture, in the, in the scriptures is like that, like half, half open. And focus a little bit down. Your head is [unclear] your head is just perfectly straight and erect,; but your eyes are down and a little bit half closed like that. So you're not going like that, you know, your head is straight, but your eyes are focused down and so Je Tsong Khapa quotes, this is all from {Kamalashila} which is from the Buddha. He's saying focus around your nose. When I first heard that, when I was first studying 20 years ago, I used to sit cross-eyed in my meditation [laughs, laughter] because they miss translated it.

And it said focus on the tip of your nose so [laughter] it's very, it was very hard, it didn't work. And then I studied more and I read more and I asked my lamas and they just means focus, uh, focus your eyes about here. You see? About, if you drew a plane at the tip of your nose. It doesn't mean focus on your nose. It means focus about this far. If if you had a book that you were reading right here then you focus your eyes right about there. So so your not focusing on, uh, there's something in front of you like if I'm standing right there I'm not, my eyes are down and I'm just focusing on out here somewhere. It doesn't mean you're crossing your eyes, your eyes are straight but their just focused in mid air. It's like a camera that you've miss focused, so, perfect focus, if there were anything here it would be perfect. Does it have to be anything there

[student: down like about a 45 degree angle down:]

Yea, like that, so its very, uh, difficult problem in the begining that you you so your eyes are like this. And it helps, if you keep them wide open you're your eyes get, like the water runs out and they get dry and you can't stay very long. And if you close them all the way, you get the [unclear], you get this problem of uh sleepiness. So the classical posture is, is uh in all the Buddhist books its uh, its like that. Which is also the way you're suppose to walk down the street if you're a [unclear] I, I'm {unclear} [laughs] So, uh, I think in Thailand they do it pretty well, it's pretty strict. The good monk are always bumping into telephone poles and stuff [laughter] But, uh, its like that.

[student: can I ask another question about your [unclear] Sure [student: in, uh, in sitting uh does number one pertain to uh the thickness of the pad you sit on, I]

No, we'll talk about that later, but you keep your eyes focused down like that. They say in the scriptures if your having a problem if you have trouble concentrating with your eyes even half open, then just close them, for a while. If you have to, close them and a lot of meditations you do, a lot of good ones will say just close your eyes because they know that you're probably gonna start looking around. So it's good, but the very very best way you can stay that way a long long time is like half focused and its very good for your attention. The the light is enough to keep you from getting sleepy, and its not so wide that you see a lot of things. So its very good if you can, uh, put some kind of plain colors in front of you know what ever you're gonna meditate in front of, make sure its very bland, not bright colors, no bright textures or designs like that, just like that, yeah?

[student: isn't there something about tucking your chin in a little bit or...?]

We'll talk about it. We're getting there [laughs] [unclear]

[student: to keep your..]

No, you keep your head very very straight. And the tendency is when you hear that you have to keep your eyes down, you go like that [laughs] No, that's wrong. You, and it's unnatural, ;you don't sit this way normally. Normally, when you're looking at something its its straight its your eyes are like that. The trick here is to keep your head straight but to move your eyes down. Not all the way down you know, just somewhere focusing out here somewhere. Focusing on nothing at the at this kind of ... focusing on nothing. That's what it means at your, the level of your nose. Say you were focusing on your hands, you would see them. And then you, you take them away.

[student: so then you need like a point, you know 8 inches in front of you
[unclear] yea

[student: a point in space 8 inches in front of you] riight, yea. Or actually less. Do you have an eight inch nose? [laughter] [unclear, student and teacher talking while laughter]

It's about 6 inches there, something like that. It doesn't really matter, the point is your eyes are unfocused. You know, that's very important. Because it lets you [laughter]. It lets you withdraw from your eye sense. It let you withdraw from your visual sense, easier, because they're not picking up anything and that's very important. That's why it's very bad to have letters in front of you., cuz you, the human tendency is to focus in on the letter and see what it's saying.

[student: is it alright to dim the lights?]

Uh, it, they say dim them to a point in which its conducive to meditation but not so much that you get sleepy again. And and very bright lights are bad too. By the way, it's not a Buddhist meditation and never was to stare at an object. That's not correct. In many scriptures its said this is not meditation. You know, you don't stare at a picture of the Buddha, or stare at, uh, your lama's picture or something like that. They say if you want to do that, we'll talk about this later when we get to, what?

[student: the object]

The object. But it's not it's not a, the idea of it [unclear] with draw from your senses. The idea's that your eye's not focusing on anything. You're not in the realm of your senses, so to stare at an object is is not meditation. Part of the definition of meditation is that you're withdrawing from your five senses. So it it wouldn't be relevant.

[student: isn't that single pointed concentration?]

To stare at a picture, it is. It's also single pointed concentration to have a good dinner and fork it down [laughs] [laughter] So I mean you have to, it's not considered a good practice. You know, they say look at, look at the Buddha's image, you know, learn every thing about it. Study it. And then go to your meditation [unclear]. Somebody asked, uh, {Kabje Trijang Rinpoche}, our root lama's lama, and the Dalai Lama's lama, uh, there was a westerner that we knew he said could you draw a Buddha for me. He was about 80 years old, and he had this perfect, absolutely perfect, you know, and he wasn't a {thangka} painter, he just was meditating all the time on the Buddha and I have that, I have that drawing at home. [unclear] so I mean in his mind he had it very very perfect. Any other [silence]

[student: so really if you're meditating in front of your altar, it would almost be better to turn [unclear] and face the wall] [unclear]

It's very nice to meditate towards your altar but get it up high enough that you know make put some cloth in front of you.

[student: drop a cloth in front of your altar, you mean?]

Yeah, I mean have a a cloth that comes from your altar or something like that

student: so its above eye level?]

Yea, otherwise it will distract you. Uh, what number are we on?

[silence] I'm making these very short so that you know I want to do the whole thing with you [unclear] [silence]

Say [Lu} repeat {drang-po} repeat [Lu} repeat {drang-po} repeat This is no big deal, uh, when you're sitting, you, uh, they say, they say, keep the, keep the

chest, you know, in a in a vertical plane because if you lean back what happens? [laughs and laughter] you start to fuzz out and if you lean forward of course you're crunched up it's very common, I've seen western people, after a few minutes they start to, like this, and it's very bad for your, for some inner reasons that you'll learn later when you learn the secret teachings so very important that you don't uh start to bend your back. So it should be, you should be like absolutely straight, and you shouldn't be going back, and it's very bad to lean against something. If you're doing like a one month retreat and you're in extreme agony then its ok and I've done that and it works, you know, to lean against something but, but, uh, generally you shouldn't be touching anything else. You know you will be, and nothing else should be touching you, that will become a distraction to you. Obviously, your clothes should be very loose and comfortable. You know, robes are nice, pajamas are nice, something very very comfortable. Yea?

[student; what's the translation of {lu drang-po}?]

{lu} means body {drang-po} means up straight. Up right. Erect

[student: [unclear] upstraight?]

It means straight. Straight. Keep your body straight, and it's defined as don't let it go back too far and don't let it go up, up too far. What will happen is you'll meditate you'll find you start, keep, your body's human you know, and you start to, after about 20 minutes you find yourself like this and its ok very slowly go back up, you know, don't go, cuz that will ruin your breath and everything else, just very slowly. You catch yourself because your body is you can't keep your body up straight forever, you get tired and your body slowly starts to come down and then you gotta very very slowly bring it up, back up, without ruining your breath, without ruining the flow of your breath. Which we'll get to later. So you'll find yourself slowly, and then there's this [unclear] where you keep going like that and very very subtle, without, without changing the flow of your breath.

[student: you keep doing [unclear]]

You will ...as you meditate for a long time, you'll find yourself crunching down. Cuz your body just, gravity just pulls it down and when you catch yourself you just slowly bring it back up, Don't do it fast enough to to stop, don't do it fast enough that your breath has to change. Then you'll, you'll, we'll talk about that

later. Yes, that's number

[students: 3]

Ok [silence] Say {trak-pa} repeat {ngam} repeat {trak-pa} repeat {ngam} repeat. {trak-pa} means your shoulders. What do you guess {ngam} means?

[student: [straight]]

Yea, level. And that's that's pretty obvious. You know you don't want to be going like that and you don't want to be going like that. But you might catch yourself doing that sometime especially depending on how your arms are. And that he doesn't talk about the arms but the uh it's the Tibetan tradition that you set your ... if you don't do this your {trak-pas} won't be {nyam} ok? You set your ... you set your left hand out first. Ok like that. And then the right hand goes on top of that. So left hand down first and then right hand. And then the tradition is to join your thumbs like that. So left hand down first right hand down first and then you join your thumbs like that. I used to really get distracted by that because my thumbs would flop down. Now and I found myself trying to concentrate to keep my thumbs up, and it became a distraction for me, and i didn't like it, uh and I was wondering why they made me do it. But what happens if you if you just personal experience. I don't know how your hands are, but my hands are not that great I, I found that if I stuck my elbows out little just a touch then it would force the thumbs up against each other and they would stay up, without my thinking about my thumbs and ruining my meditation. You know, so they say they should be joined like that.

[student: could you show it again?]

Like this, But what I found is if, instead of putting your hands like straight, in which case my thumbs fall down, you force them up agai., you kind of put your elbows on a, and I believe that if you meditate a long time you'll find that your elbows can be a distraction. If they're in too tight uh some heat builds up here and it becomes uncomfortable so if they're a little bit like, I'm not that extreme, but if they're a little bit out, that forces your thumbs up against each other and maybe they say that's why to do that, I don't know. But if, it should keep your elbows up out away from you body otherwise you're going to get some heat building up and it'll distract you. And also this supports you, it helps support your body. If you're in a half lotus, then then one its in the in the pit of your uh ankle here and its very comfortable and it kind of keeps you up straight.. If I, I

would say if you find the thumb thing distracting, just let them down, ok, [laughs] If you find you know, you're worried about whether your thumbs are up, just forget it. But eventually, you can learn, it it'll [unclear]

[student: how, maybe I asked you before, when you put your legs on the [unclear] what happens if they fall asleep, should you ignore them?]

Yea [student:[unclear] by getting tingling feeling] When you get good you you realize just forget it. You know, it'll tingle for 7, 8 minutes and then they'll fall asleep and let them fall asleep, who cares? It's even good, you know, just be careful when you get up [unclear] broken ankle, I said what happened. He said I stood up right after [laughter and laughs] His foot went to sleep and he jumped up, you know the phone rang or something he jumped up and he broke his [unclear] You have to be careful about that, let it fall asleep, who cares. Also on personal advice, you get an itch, just watch it. I mean you get a itch just let it go, don't move and it just goes away, just fades away after 10 seconds [unclear] You've never let an itch itch for that long but it you know it goes away and [laughs]

[student: but when your, you have that sense of needles, I find it very distracting]

yea, it'll go away in about 5 minutes

[student: [unclear] it drives you crazy]

It'll drive you crazy for about 5 minutes

[student: just force yourself] [unclear]

If you're planning planning to sit for a long time. Your gonna have to let it do that, let it go

[student: you can't change your position for a few minutes and go back [unclear]] You can't Golinka who is a very good teacher of meditation. When he does a course, he says get into your position and no one in this room can move anything for the next two hours. And I remember in Darmsala we did it with Gelinka under the Dalai Lama's supervision, and one lady just broke into tears, you know, she was in such pain. But everybody else had a great meditation. [laughter] So, I mean if you just decide, there's, there's a Buddhist uh custom, in

fact it's what the Buddha did when he sat under the Bodhi tree and he said I'm gonna sit down on this cushion and I will not get up until I'm enlightened. And I don't care if I die on this cushion. You know I mean we don't have this uh resolution, resolve but uh decide, get down on your thing and decide you know, I'm just not going to move until I'm done. Period. And if you do move you lose your concentration. You won't be able to get {shamata}. I can tell you that. Sooner or later ...you might as well do it now. Just don't move. If you have to do a slight, like I said, that's about the most move you can make. Slowly gravity will push your body down and then you just have to slowly straighten up. But you have to do it very slowly. Otherwise just decide in your mind, I don't care if my legs hurt, I don't care if my back hurts, I don't care if my head hurts, I'm just gunna stay and concentrate. And as you get better you'll withdraw from your senses, you won't, you'll be able to just withdraw from those senses. So, it's not easy. If you're doing a long meditation, and it really hurts for a while. You have to stop and change your position. You should stop, because then it's just a distraction. The object is not to be a tough guy, uh and a lot of people think that, I mean, if, if you can stand it, stand it and take your mind off of it. If it's bothering you or distracting you, then move. But when we do meditation in here you're not going to be able to move. I'll just tell you it works, I've seen it. Yea [unclear student name]

[student: isn't two hours a little bit of a long meditation?]

Well I want to say one thing, uh, in the begining, you should restrict it to ten to fifteen minutes. Its like weight lifting, you know, when you first start they say weight lift for ten minutes then stop. And then, better to do it with long rests inbetween. Meditation is the same way, at the beginning, forget it, you can't keep your mind for 5 minutes 10 minutes. If you stay longer than that I predict you'll get one of the five problems that we're gunna talk about, which is called {chingwa}, which is this very dangerous buzzed out state where you think you're meditating well and you're just dulll. You know you're just duh duh duh and you get up and you say boy that was great [laughter] you know. Very dangerous. Je Tsong Khapa, he wrote many pages about it this state of mind that people get into where you're you're just sort of buzzed out and your mind is actually dull. Like after a big meal. And people sit there for many many hours, in that state very bad, useless. Real concentration is like is like when you're into a good movie and you don't know that three hours have gone by. That's real con..or a good book or good music. That's real concentration, that's what it would be like

[student: so you [unclear] eat too much] I

'll say that too I mean it just doesn't work after eating, you can't meditate after eating, forget it. It's like swimming, they tell you to wait a half an hour or something before you [unclear] I found that too, Really true. It's also not good to [unclear] when you're very hungry because your stomach [unclear] [laughs] You have to eat healthy, you have to eat well as you meditate, if you want to meditate seriously you have to eat well, uh, and you have to watch your body you have to be healthy. If you're not eating enough you won't be able to meditate. If you're eating too much and your body is heavy and physically too too much weight you you won't be able to sit up nice. You have to be just, it's not vanity to make your body healthy and the right weight for your frame cuz it helps you meditate right if that's your motivation. It's ta, it's to, be old but still look young. It won't last very long. [laughter and laughs]

[student: [unclear] have a special meaning why the right is over]

There is some meaning, is some meaning and I ...I ... I partly I ... I haven't read it in the last few days and partly I know there's some secret meaning but I cannot tell you that. So so just do it for now.

[student: Michael, a lot of, it seems to me some of the text talk about have your thumbs at the level of your navel and I find they're way below that unless I really, I mean I really have to hold my hands up to get them like that]

I think if you're doing a lotus it comes up to about your navel. Let me check it. [laughs] Yea, if you're doing a lotus its like this, No?

[student: no no way} Maybe you've got short thumbs. [student: [unclear] long arms unclear]

Yea, I went, they have to be on your legs, so that's [unclear]

[student: you, you've got your fairly close in tho right, your really]

And I like that because the elbows are out a way from the body and that helps.

[student: right]

It helps support you, it's a natural support. And you don't build up heat here.

And you'll find that that bothers you.

[students: what is [unclear]

Excuse me? Uh I wouldn't hold it up in the air because [unclear] you get tired, won't [unclear] [student: if you're using your mala beads or should you be doing that [unclear] When you do certain, uh, advanced meditations you're required to be using your mala beads at some point and and and I thought that would be distracting but it works ok. But but later when you're developing {shamata}, like when you see emptiness directly you can't have any bodily action going on. It won't work So you know if you're doing your mantras and a visualization then and you have to use your mala, but then stop the mantra and visualize. And when you get advanced you're allowed to do the mantra mentally, but it takes a lot of practice. I I haven't ... in my long retreat I didn't get to that [laughs].

[student: is there a special posture for doing the mala should it be down in your hands?] Um [student: cuz I see some people up like this doing it, some on their knees doing it]

I can't tell you that now [laughs] that's actually tantric you see mantras are [unclear] and uh this summer after you take that initiation, I can show you the text and it's [unclear] you know, you can read it, and there is a special method OK [unclear] yea, quick question

[student: you know when your legs falling asleep, isn't your body telling you something that you're going to be doing physical harm or some such thing? Is there some danger?] I don't know ... I have been doing it for 20 years and I think I've heard that it's not good for you. [laughter] I heard its not good for you but I never had any problem with it but I don't know

[student: I think its more than knees, you know you really can get to bad joint problems, doing trying to do the lotus or just sitting with your knees bent for [unclear]

I know I know

[student: I was lame for a week after a meditation [unclear]

I've known people, I've known one lady who came to my class in the beginning, Linda Jordan and she over did it, she tried to do the hundred thousand

prostrations and they began to hurt her legs and she did not stop and she's crippled by it. So don't ...don't ... don't do that but I a full, don't squish yourself into a full lotus if you're not ready for it, start with a half lotus. If you can't do a half lotus, it's very very fine to just put both legs down flat on the ground, like that, left leg inside first and then the right side out. And just flat down on the ground, that's all right. And when your left leg is in like that slowly this, it'll start to stretch out here, your tendons will start to stretch out. And then you'll be able to get it up here and that's that's a half lotus and then you're all right. I I haven't [laughter] [unclear] should sit up here.

[student:unclear] [student: can I say one] [student: are you demonstrating that:]

I can't do it in the air yet [laughter] It's ok to have the left foot in like that and the right foot in and then just flat down on the ground.

[student: Indian style]

Yea, but left one inside and right one outside But if and then if you get used to that these these tendons around your knees will loosen up and then put it up on the side like that. And then later say if you meditate an hour a day you'll be able to do a full lotus there but I I haven't found that and I've tried a long time. I found that it was mostly distracting, to me, the pain. But if you can do it, God bless, it's a good thing. It's a very good thing.

[student: can I say something about the knees in the full lotus? You know I know some people who have who have been trying to do full lotus for many decades. And when you do full lotus, this, you can really damage your knees because your knees are your shock absorbers when you walk and you're supposed to stretch your hips out and loosen your hips to be able to do full lotus. So if you try to do full lotus, you can really stretch the tendons in your knees which will cause you knee damage, you know, knee problems later in life.]

If you're not ready, yea, if your not ready, but build up to it and it's the best, you know but if you force yourself into it and try to be a tough guy and it hurts like hell and then you pop something, that's ridiculous, that's stupid, you're not supposed to hurt your body, this is a sacred body.

[student: Yoga Journal published a couple of years ago a set of exercises to build up the lotus posture if people are interested]

That's right, maybe you can find, can you bring it?

[student: yea]

OK, but I ... I ... I really wouldn't want to, I mean it's not, don't don't sit there saying oh my god I'm not doing lotus, half lotus is fine. If you can't do it, if you're not comfortable, put them down flat. If you, if you have a medical problem, sit in a chair. Sit up right, in a nice, in a nice uh chair, in a nice cushion. Don't lean back if you can help it. And you know, if you have serious problems with your legs or knees or back, you can find that you can do a very good meditation sitting up very straight in a , not in an easy chair, ok [laughter and laughs] but you know in a pretty straight backed chair with your feet flat down and it works.

[student: but Michael I have a problem with my lower back]

uh huh

[student: if I sit in that position and I don't feel any discomfort then it's ok, I'm not doing anything to my body, as long as I don't feel the pain, it's ok?]

Yea as long as when you get up you don't feel any bad effects, you're [unclear]. They'll be some pain and you gotta toughen up, you know, later on in the text, Tsong Khapa says you know come on this is something important. But you have to use good judgement. You know, a lot of Buddhist practice is good judgement and like my lama is always saying that Rinpoche is always saying that, just use your common sense, you know, don't hurt yourself. And then on the other hand, don't be a lazy, don't be gutless you know. Stick it out for a little bit. You'll find that if you stick out the pain for a few days or something, you won't have it after a while. When you start a long retreat, you always get some pain, somewhere, like some kind of sciatica or something. And it hurts a lot, but you just keep going, you've got to keep going, so

[student: It doesn't have to be anything, its going out and start to run without any practice or stretching or loosening up, you'll have pain. If you take it easy, you stretch, massage is very good for your legs, when I was in Thailand it got so I could sit in a full lotus with no trouble for as long as I wanted. I want to go back real soon. But there's ways of doing it, if anybody wants to talk to me about it.]

Yea sure

[student: what was five]

Am I on [students talking] I'm sorry [unclear] we got four right?

[students: yea]

[silence]

The one thing you can say about all of this stuff it that if you don't do it every day, you won't be good at it. You won't get any of this stuff if you don't do it every day. And if you do do it every day, you'll find the adjustments that you need to make yourself, after a while. You have to do it every day. It's like running or weightlifting or dance or whatever.

{Go, go} means head.

{mito} means, uh, not high up and {mima} means not bent down. Your head shouldn't be cocked back and it shouldn't be bent down. It should be just straight. The same section says, by the way, that it shouldn't be off to the left or off to the right either.

[silence]

[student: so this thing that I've always heard of the chin slightly tucked is not accurate]

I haven't seen that

[student: yea, it was in Nine Ways of Resting the Mind, was that the text? It's a classic meditation text] [student: I don't know about the meditation text but people tend to stick their head out a little to far forward so that gravity pulls your head down and if you slightly tuck your chin back then you're supporting it with your spinal cord. You're like resting it and then you don't have to hold it up, but I don't know about that]

Ah, wait, we'll get to something similar. We'll see if he covers it, it's gonna come maybe later on. So it used to say, it says over your navel in a line over your navel and I used to wonder what that meant.

[student noise in background]

They used to tell us in Dharmasala if water dripped off your nose it should hit your navel but that's too far back for me, I don't know about you, maybe they had a long nose, but uh, but I reading Tsong Khapa's text it seems pretty clear that, he's talking about the centering of the head vertically. It shouldn't be off to the left side. It shouldn't be off to the right side. It shouldn't be bent down. It should be up, it should be, it should be over the, if the navel is here, you could draw a straight line up to your head, and what what I've found, what I, what experientially I think you'll find, if you're just a little bit, if you're sitting up straight, it's its its that your head really is placed over your navel vertically. You know if you drew a straight line up 45 degrees from the ground, it would come out thru your head. So like that, but his main point is shouldn't be to the left shouldn't be to the right shouldn't be bent down, very distracting, some people end up meditating like that, you know, and that's very distracting. You'll hurt your body. That number?

[students: five]

Five.

[silence]

Say {so chu} [repeat] {rang luk} [repeat] Ok

{so} means your teeth and {chu} means your lips.

{rang luk} means in this case, although it has philosophical meanings in other cases, however they are naturally. What do you think it means? Their natural position for you.

This is something really really important and you wouldn't think it's important but the tendency is that you keep your mouth shut and tight and you can feel it here. You know you're meditating and you're going, like that, and you'll feel a little tightness here. That's very bad. It really is distracting. When you get good you your lips will be a little bit open, just the way you normally, if you're watching a really good movie, you know [laughter] and that's really the way it is, that's really the way your mouth should be, it should be totally unconscious, you know and and it's a little bit open. And they say that keeps you from getting thirsty along with the next one

[students talking unclear]

And by the way, you never breathe thru your mouth when you meditate. You never breathe thru your mouth, your throat will get dry and what will you do?

[student: swallow]

You'll swallow and as you get deeper into meditation that sounds like a truck going by. You know, you don't want to be swallowing. You will have to swallow from time to time but you don't want to cause anything that's gonna make you swallow all the time. So the the lips and the teeth are just natural, exactly like if you were in concentration on a movie or a book, it's like a little bit open and it's just loose. You know, the tendency when you meditate is like that. And that will distract you. And it doesn't mean to leave your mouth open like that cuz Rinpoche says you'll get flies in your mouth [laughter] and also your mouth will get dry. Then you'll swallow and then distract, then you'll hear it and then you'll break your concentration. We're up to number seven, right?

[silence]

{che} means tongue {ya soy} means upper teeth, these teeth here, the upper teeth as apposed to the lower teeth, these teeth here and not these teeth and {ya soy to} means keep it in that area, keep it up in that area, which is natural when you're concentrating your like, and your tongue is just tucked up in your palate. The way it is naturally, you know you don't want it sticking out [unclear], it's just natural, it's stuck up into your, into the palate, and that also keeps you from getting thirsty, and don't ... don't think about it you know, don't read this and try to do something with your tongue. It's the way your tongue normally is when you close your mouth, almost have your mouth closed.

[student: so you don't have to touch the top of your mouth with your tongue or anything like that?]

No, but the teeth, you are touching your teeth with the tip aren't you, or the base of the teeth right?

[student: that's supposed to be very good for your immune system, that position?]

Oh yea? [unclear] How come I got a cold then [laughs] Just kidding. {tjo} means in that area. {sha ka tung do} is the only other place it occurs and that means at

your lotus teeth, in the area of your lotus, so like that

[student: will you pronounce that whole thing [unclear]

Just this part here? {che ya tsu trung} [repeat] [repeat] [students: unclear] Yea, but itself, {so} and with this it's {soy} {che ya tsu tung} The main this is tho keep your mouth natural, slightly open, do not, like that, tight, it'll distract you, it'll actually hurt you.

[cut]

But in the Lam Rim Chomo, which is the greatest book ever written in Tibetan, he talks about the eight part posture, he includes it, and then later he, either he or Pabonka explains that it, some texts say seven some say eight and it's the [unclear] that's difficult. Yea. I'm just going to write one word because it's a long story. [students: {ook?}] [laughter]
[student; what does it mean?]

{Uk} means breath, and I can't make it short for your it's a whole sentence and I can't [unclear]. This is a whole story in itself. The source, and you don't have to write this down, the source for this is the {Abhidharmakosha by {Vasabandhu} 350 AD [laughter] You don't have to know that. Just so you know it, the brother of [laughter]

[students: Asanga]

The breath is a long story. The first thing to know is that, contrary to what you would expect, when you count your breath, which is also taught in the [Abhidharmakosha], you count the outward breath as the first half and the inward breath as the second half. But its not like [inhale. exhale] one [inhale, exhale] two it's the opposite of that, yea it does matter, its very important later.

[student: but when you start breathing you start also out and then in right? Or not]

I, you'll have to ask my mother. [laughter] I don't remember. I don't know, which one came first? Anyway, when you count your breath, you count the out, it's counted [exhale, inhale] one [exhale, inhale] two. Ok like that. Always breathe thru you nostrils. The purpose of the breathing, and we'll get in to it, we're not now talking technically about the ten, the count-to-ten breath

meditation. That's a different subject. There is a meditation where you watch your breath, and you count up to 10, we'll talk about that later, ok, it's to change gears between what and what? Between my office and my meditation [laughs] you have to do that. It's not a meditation in itself and nobody meant it to be. It was taught by [Vasabandhu] He didn't mean for people to sit there for 5 hours and watch their breath. It was meant and it's stated in the text that it's a go-between, because obviously your breath is not what?

[student: good object]

Not a Holy object. [laughs] it's a good object when you're changing gears. You use it to put your mind into neutral and then you focus your mind on a better object. But its very important and it might take you three hours to get up to 10. You're supposed to count 10 breaths with perfect concentration And if you're honest you might never get past five. And often times I found myself doing 14 [laughs] It's funny.

[student: out in is one?]

Yea, out in is one, it's not like, you know, when you are swimming if you [pants] It's very important, later it's very important.

[Silence]

[laughter] [unclear] So...Tsong khapa says a few characteristics of the breath should be very very slow. Very very slow. As you get better in meditation, you will be able to hear your breath whistling past your nose hair. It will sound loud and distracting. As you get deeper into meditation, you have to slow your breath down or else it distracts the hell out of you, drives you crazy. Ok, but as you get better at meditation, you'll start to hear the air going past the hairs in your nose. And the object is that you breathe slow enough that you don't hear that any more because they're not going by the hairs fast enough to make a noise. You can't do that right away and it's considered very bad to try to force your breath. You shouldn't try to force your breath, you shouldn't try to breathe slower than what your body wants you to breathe, you know, don't sit down and immediately try to breathe slow. You know, let the body calm down, let the heart slow down, and then you'll start breathing slower. If you have any thoughts about the guy at work that you don't like, if you have any thoughts of desire, if you have anything on your conscience, you might find that your breath will never slow down. It's kind of strange. You know, if you're not, if you haven't

done your preliminaries well, you might find that you can't keep your breath at a certain pace. So it's import, that's probably why the preliminaries are good. So you're breathing out first, in first, try to go slower and slower. When you get to a deeper point of mediation, you'll see, you'll be able to imagine the breath as like a big piece of silly putty and its like one unit that keeps moving up, I don't know how to describe it like oil, but its like a pint of oil that never leaves your body. It goes up and a little bit hangs here and it goes out and then it comes back in and you suck it back in, and it's the same, like the same air, you just keep moving it back and forth. You know, you get this motion or this feeling of the air going down as a piece and then coming up as a piece, like a big thick piece of jello or something. And it's just, it's the same air coming up and down like a piston you know its coming out and in, the same air's coming in and out. And that, the front part of that air starts to get longer and longer. You know, the tip of the air I think goes out when you're first getting fairly deep in meditation, it's going out about this far and then coming in. And then its going out about this far. If you put a red flag on the first part of the breath, you, you can feel it coming out about that far. And as you meditate better, and you get better and better in meditation, say 3, 4 heart beats between breaths, it starts stretching out. And it'll go a long way. Should you try to force that, no. If you meditate every day well, you'll start to experience that. So they say don't try to force it, into oh Michael said I should get it two feet out, you know. [laughter] Then it becomes a distraction and you shouldn't be forcing it. You should never be, that you're trying to force your breath into doing something. Then what happens is that when you're first meditating their not equal. Like you'll be, it won't be going out as far as it's coming in. Normally when you breathe, you're breathing too short. If you're going [he takes breaths] as you start to meditate better it'll be [silent breaths] and the breaths stop, breath stop [unclear] starting again. And it comes all the way down and they will become equal. The length it goes out and the length it feels like its going down become equal but you shouldn't try to force it, don't try to force it. And that'll be like, let me see like four heart beats on the way out, you know. [student: what if you're] Maybe 6 heart beats, some eight, nine, ten, you build up.

[student: is there a pause in between and when its all]

Slightly, slight pause,

[student: the way out]

very slight pause Like [makes noise], like a California stop, [laughs] exactly,

really you know like a brief stop and then go, not a full stop.

[student: if you're naturally a mouth breather should you just force yourself to]

Well there's certain cases where you can breathe thru your mouth, if you have some kind of a nose problem, people do, you know, I mean we have a lady out in New Jersey she has a nasal problem she can't do it. You have to breathe thru your, again it's common sense, you have to use your common sense. If you have any physical problem that you can't do one of these things exactly the way you have to, forget it. Buddhism is all, especially you guys who get to study the [vinaya] later when you become a monk or a nun [laughter] that's ... {vinaya} is the rules for monks and its full of exceptions based on common sense. Common sense says, you know, some way you're not supposed to touch a lady's hand. If some lady sticks her hand out to the Dalai Lama, he shakes her hand, you know I mean its common sense you have to use your common sense. So, so the breath is going out and then its coming in and you'll learn to make it to your heart beat, and the number of beats on the way out and the number of beats on the way in will become the same. And you won't get any of this happening if you don't practice. You have to keep practicing like that.

[student: just a reminder, last class didn't you say we would possible learn to become Buddhas with out becoming nuns and monks] [laughter]

You know when you take your vows, you go in a room and they say never tell laymen this but you have to become a monk to become a Buddha [laughter] No, I didn't

[student: yea we had this big discussion]

Drontompa, Atisha's greatest student, was, never became a monk, so don't worry.

[student: you mean never in that particular life that we know about]

[unclear] could have been a life that we gave [unclear] Anyway, person [unclear] monastery, in front of which Tsong Khapa taught the [unclear]. So anyway, that's a basic breath, and it's very very important, the breath becomes very very important for you and you focus on the breath. And you focus on the breath for a certain amount of breaths then you shift the line to the object of your meditation. And we'll talk about that when we get to the object. I think it's a

good point to take a break, and when you come back, we'll just try to sit for a while. I've always wanted to do this in this class and now it's time. Time came, you know.

[student: sit [unclear]] [student: and meditate]

[cut]

Other wise its very hard to get clean glasses. We used to have a lot of problem before [unclear] so that's what [unclear] The seat is extremely important. Meditation seat is extremely important. The back should be slightly higher than the front. That keeps your spine up straight.

[student: Michael, is this any part of the eight]

No its not, it in the [unclear] its in the [unclear]. And it's not in other books and it's not in the oral tradition in the monastery but the back of the seat should be up higher than the front and that forces your back to sit up. It forces you to sit up straight. If your, if your legs are in that posture are a little bit forced on a plane going slightly down, it forces your back up straight, it's very good [unclear] I like to keep a mat like that. I found for long [unclear] you keep something like that down first and then put your seat on top of that. And what this does is keep your legs warm cuz your legs aren't on the seat and uh if they touch the floor it also cuts off your circulation so if you don't like your legs falling asleep, you might try that. It's just a thin one that's big and it covers the full lotus, you know, it covers all the way up to your knees so in that way I found my legs don't fall asleep any more, because there's something under even the outside of my leg. And it also keeps them warm, if you just have, if you have your butt up on a seat and then you have your knees, your legs up against the linoleum or something it's very distracting, it doesn't work right. So its very good to have that, it's got to be perfectly smooth, I used to think about the story of the lady and the pea in the bed [laughs and laughter] You know when you meditate for a long time, and I'm not talking five hours I'm saying every day for 15-20 minutes or a half an hour, when you get good at it, the way you get good is that you do a little bit every day, its like exercise, its like dieting, its like weight lifting, its like anything that you want to get good at. It's not thru these 5 hour sessions once a week. It's thru 15 hours sessions every single day with never breaking it and even if you don't feel like getting up, get up, even if you don't feel like doing the preliminaries, do them and you'll get used to it and what will happen is it'll force a change in the priorities in your life which is also desirable you know you'll start thinking I'd better get to bed now or else I'm gunna have a lousy meditation

tomorrow, and and you'll start to change your priorities and that's fine and then when the phone rings you won't answer it cuz this is real important. And you have to do that, you have to carve out the time and make it sacred and you do it, you do it for eating you do it for pooping you know you set aside time every day. Don't tell me you don't have 15 minutes, it's a lie. Ok so don't eat that day, I don't mind, because it's more important to meditate. It really is. It really is. But we got our priorities messed up. No one ever, you can always tell em that when a client is calling I'm in the bathroom, you know, going to the bathroom. No one ever in the world says, your boss doesn't say you have, if you say you have to go to the bathroom they don't say sit down you can't go to the bathroom. Now meditate, and its weird, your priorities are, thats more priority than your meditation. [student: I don't get that, Michael, you imply that we should meditate in the bathroom?] [laughter] One other thing is that you have made parts sacred in your life, all your sacred times, your bathroom time, the shower time, and your uh, what was the third one?

[student: eating]

Your eating time, you make it sacred, you find time, don't you? Doesn't everybody? You know you do find time for those things. Don't tell me their not 15 minutes. You have 15 minutes to eat, or ½ an hour to eat twice or three times a day and you have time to go to the bathroom and meditation is more important. It really is.

[student: I'm not trying to find an excuse but for example you say the best time to meditate is the morning when your mind is fresh, but for me it takes me an hour or two sometimes to wake up and then I have to go to work]

You're not really [unclear] or do it at night. I mean some people meditate better at night. I, tradition is to meditate in the morning, but it's not, its not fixed, again, common sense. If you're a night person and its really nice and quite in your neighborhood at midnight and you can stay up tol midnight and you don't have to get up till late in the morning, just do it at night if it works better. There's nothing that says that you, it's common sense. Dharma is a lot of common sense. It think a lot of people miss that. You know that, ok, so here we can do a little meditation.

[student: could you tell me what the [cusha] grass]

Why it works?

[student: or [unclear] where is it?]

[laughter]

[student: I've got some of that but just one strand of it]

That's all you need. You need like two-three strands or one [unclear] and you put it down like if I've got this and I'm gunna put a cushion over it. Put it down and put the cushion over it.

[students: unclear]

yea, no, I'm talking to the cushion.

[student: somebody mentioned putting it under your mattress too when you sleep at night]

That's especially during certain special programs.

[student: initiations]

Ok, so we'll try to meditate a bit, so put your books away.

[student: so what'll I do?]

In Thailand if you're wearing a short skirt, they give you a blanket, right, when you go into a temple ... I don't know, you can sit like that maybe, it's ok.

[silence]

Next time you know if you want, you know sweat pants are really good. Robes are great. [laughter]. Loose jeans are good

[student laughter and talking]

Ok, so left foot up here, right foot down there. And you can get one of the, if you cannot get it up on your thigh, let them both down flat, that's fine. Then left hand down first, right hand on top of that, if you can join your thumbs like this, put your thumbs up like that joined.

[student: what was the second thing?] [student:eyes]

Janet, no cross eyes, ok? [laughs] [laughter] Ok they're loose. Body up straight. The third one?

[student: shoulder]

Yea, third was body up straight and keep it up straight. And this actually helps, this is like a support for your arms. And then, uh, what was the forth one, oh, shoulders straight across. And then your teeth should be, your mouth very very very slightly cracked open and your tongue up against your [unclear] just normal. Then we'll just count breaths ok, and that's how you get into your meditation, so count out as one, out and back as one. Try to get up to ten. The point is that your mind shouldn't be distracted to something else before you reach ten. If it does get distracted, stop, and go back to one again. All right? And you might find that in a whole hour you'll never get to ten, if you're honest.

[student: [unclear] open the door ever so slightly to increase the oxygen]

I think the window downstairs is cracked open.

[End of tape]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Five: The Five Problems of Meditation, Part One

Geshe Michael Roach

February 28, 1994

transcribed by: Matthew Remski

[cut]

...most people fail on that, most people fail because they don't prepare for meditation. Everybody knows how to sit down and close their eyes, but it's the preparation that either makes it go well or go bad. So the first one was preparation. Second one was what?

[Student: offering...(unclear)]

no I mean the whole syllabus, the whole structure.

[(Unclear)...student: the seven ingredients...]

No. It's the environment of the whole thing, right? Meaning the whole place where you should meditate - how your friends should be, how the food should be, how your mindset should be, everything. The environment - mostly the physical environment. And the third thing was what? We finished it last week.

[Unclear]

Posture. How to put your body, how to position your body. And now we're gonna do the mental part, and I'd like, Ann, I think, you know, we were searching for a word, and I think "technique" she wrote. I like that. Like the "mental technique". Like we have the bodily posture, and we have what the place should be like, and we have how to prepare, and now you have to track what's happening in your mind, during the meditation. And that's the main part of the meditation - the subject: mind, and later we're going to get into what?

[Students: the object]

yeah, the object - what the mind meditates on. So now we're on our fourth big category, which is: what's the mental technique. What does your mind do

during meditation. And that's gonna have three parts. The first two are these two.

Say {nye-pa} [repeat] {nga} [repeat]; {nyen-po} [repeat] {gye} [repeat]. Okay you can write those down.

{Nyepa} means "problem".

{Nga} means "five". Number five.

And there are five problems that come up during meditation. And these were... the Buddha taught them like two and a half thousand years ago, and they're very interesting. I mean apparently they come up in everyone's mind sooner or later if you try to meditate. And it's good to know them. The book says "It's good to know your enemy before you meet him." He will come. These five will come, in your mind. {Nyepa nga} And then to fight them you have {nyenpa gye}.

{Nyenpo} means, we call it "correction" {Nyenpo} also means like if you eat poison, if the snake bites you you have to take the {nyenpo}. So it can mean antidote, counteraction... and I like, in this case since it's a problem, this is the correction. It's what step you should take to stop that problem where?

[Stillwell: In your mind.]

Yeah. In your mind. [Laughs]

[student: Are there five?]

{Gye} means "eight"

[laughter. Student: eight? Number?]

Yeah, number eight. So you've got five problems, and eight corrections. After that, which we're not going to do tonight, you have the nine mental states that you go through. So how you know where you are. So there's the nine mental states. We're not going to talk about that tonight.

[Student: so are these mental problems during meditation?]

these come up...well when you hear them, you tell me. They're related to meditation. They come up in your mind as you're trying to meditate. First one

is very easy.

Say {le} [repeat] {lo} [repeat]. {Le lo} means "laziness".

[Student: ooooh]

And that's like the word lazy, because it sounds like {le-lo}, so you can remember the word for lazy easily, it's like one of the first words a Tibetan learns when he's learning English, 'cause it starts the same. "Laziness" is a little bit of a bad ... it's a good word, but it means not wanting to do it really. Not wanting to do what?

[Student: meditate.]

not really wanting to meditate, and there's four antidotes to it. So you use up four corrections on the first problem. [Laughter] All right, so {le-lo} has four corrections. I'll put the corrections in A, B, C, D, so you don't get them mixed up, okay?

[silence]

You only have to memorize that if you're in the Tibetan class. Say {Ting-ngen-dzin} [repeat] {la} [repeat] {depa} [repeat]. {Ting-ngen-dzin la} [repeat] {depa} [repeat]. {Ting-ngen-dzin} you know, maybe?

[Stillwell: yeah - one-pointed...]

Yeah, it was one of the six kind of meditation. We talked about there was six Tibetan words for meditation. There are six Sanskrit words for meditation. And this was the most general one you could say almost. It's "one-pointed state of mind".

[Student: that's the translation of it - one-pointed state of mind?]

The definition of it is {sem-tse chik-pa}, which means one-pointed state of mind. And I used to... as I said I used to wonder, what was one-pointed? What did one-pointed mean? What does it mean?

[Student: focused on one thing?]

one object, yeah, focused on one thing. So one-pointed, you know, you kind of

wonder - how can I make my mind into a point, you know? It's not like that. It's like - what's the "one object"? It's the ability to keep your mind on one object. Every sentient being has {ting-ngen-dzin}. It's a [unclear]; in the {b. Abhidharmakosha}, it's one of the ten mental functions that every mind has. A bug has {ting-ngen-dzin}. An amoeba has {ting-ngen-dzin}. Because it can keep its mind on some food for a few seconds. That's a baby {ting-ngen-dzin}. That is {ting-nge-dzin}. {Ting-ngen-dzin la} means "towards {ting-ngen-dzin}"; and {depa, depa} literally means "faith". Faith. Okay? That's what Kiley calls it, where is Kiley? Now, it doesn't quite mean faith here. Because faith in the Western world means, you know, oh, I have faith in God or something. It's not like that. Here, {depa} means {tung-wa}, and {tung-wa} means to to be attracted towards something, because you see its good qualities. It's like admiration. It's like attraction. Okay? And that comes when you see the good qualities of something. It means you're attracted to it. You see something nice in it. What are the qualities of {ting-ngen-dzin} you could be attracted to? The main one I told you at the beginning. Why are we doing this course? There's five Buddhist paths. The last one is Buddhahood. The first one is getting sick of life, and the three between are what you have to go through to get to Buddhahood. Which are {jor-lam}: intellectual understanding of emptiness; {tong-lam}: direct perception of emptiness; and then {gom-lam}: getting used to your perception of emptiness, and it helps you destroy your what?

[Student: obscurations...]

Your bad thoughts. Hatred, anger. And not-knowing. So those are the five stages you go through. You must, you don't even reach the first Buddhist path until you are truly sick of this life. You haven't reached the first Buddhist path if you're not completely disgusted with this life. And you want a change. You want something different than... up and down, up and down, up and down. Getting older, older, older. Boring boring, boring. And ending up in a hospital somewhere, or if you're lucky in a nursing home. That's the only two choices. There's only two choices. And the last place is the mortuary, if they find your body. Usually they do. But it's only the only choice. It's the way it can go. So you must go through those five paths. You must find a way to get through those five paths.

[student]

The third path is the direct perception of emptiness. The second path is the intellectual understanding of emptiness. Before you see emptiness directly, you

have to understand it intellectually. The fourth path, is called habituation. You're getting used to what you saw in the third path. Until it slowly helps you destroy all your bad emotions. If you went to the first two courses, you'd know all that. And you would have forgotten all that. [Laughter]

[student: what are the names here - accumulation...]

They are call preparation, no, I'm sorry, you're right, accumulation, preparation, seeing, habituation, and no more learning. The fifth path is Buddhahood, if you have bodhicitta. If you don't, then it's just nirvana, but don't worry about it. You don't have to know those five, but what I'm trying to tell you is this: to move up through those five, when you go from path one to two and when you go from two to three and when you go from three to four, you must be in deep meditation. You must be in deep meditation. You only move between the paths in deep meditation. You can only get deep meditation if you practise it every single day. Otherwise you'll never be able to get into that meditation.

[Student: in that case, the last path, habituation, right...]

Inside each path has periods where you're not in deep meditation, but to move from the fourth to the fifth, to go between, is what I'm saying, you have to be in deep meditation. It doesn't mean you're in deep meditation all the time. It could take thousands of millions of years. You're not in deep meditation all the time. But to go from path number four to path number five, to become a Buddha, when you, the process of losing your last {kleshas}, happens in deep meditation. It's called [unclear].

[Student: well then, uh, the path of seeing is arrived upon the first time one's perceived emptiness...]

Directly.

[Student: Directly. And then, one stays at that level, without becoming habituated to it, for some periods of time...]

Right, yeah, different schools have different presentations of it. The Abhidharma school says that the path of seeing lasts fifteen seconds.

[Student: So then you would be doing two at the same time...]

No. Not at the same time. You can't be on two at once. You can achieve two paths in one meditation period, yeah.

[Student: well it sounds like you'd have to, in that case.]

In that presentation, yeah, in the Abhidharma. So. To get that kind of meditation, to be able to get that kind of meditation, you have to be doing it every day. You can miss maybe one day a week. You see what I mean? You have to be doing it every day. You have to be practicing it every day. And you have to be doing it right. And if you don't, it's impossible to reach that kind of meditation. You never will. And then what? You'll never get up through those paths. It's impossible. It'll never happen.

[Student: You said something, I'm not sure [unclear] you said that once you are seeing emptiness, then you have habituation, which means you're starting to get rid of anger and all that. But can you do this before seeing emptiness? Because you can still see intellectually that anger causes...]

You cannot. That's the whole reason you want to see emptiness directly, 'cause there's no other method to remove anger permanently. You must see emptiness. Directly.

[Student: yeah but you start...]

oh before that you must start...

[Student: yeah, because you see that anger causes...]

oh yeah. To have enough goodness to reach the lower paths you have to get rid of a lot of anger. But you can't destroy it. There's no method to remove anger permanently from your mind except seeing emptiness directly. And that's what people struggle with other paths. That's why they have so much problems, that's why they're so frustrated. Because you can't. It takes that to remove anger from yourself permanently. And that's why it's frustrating. Anyway, you have to be in deep meditation to move up through these paths. It's the only way. That's the biggest sales point of deep meditation. There's other sales points. The [b. Lam Rim Chenmo], which the book we're studying, says you can't achieve almost any Buddhist quality without learning meditation well, because you have to learn, meditation allows you to learn to keep your mind on an object long enough to achieve it quickly. It gives you one-pointedness of

direction in your life, makes your mind, it gives your mind a quality of concentration that you're going to need for all the qualities of Buddhism. That's another selling point.

[Stillwell: you can't attain those qualities, you said?]

Very difficult, without one-pointed state of mind. Not meaning meditation necessarily. To be able to concentrate at work on myself, on keeping my mouth from saying silly things that hurt people's feelings, which I do all the time, you have to have some kind of one-pointedness. So really, to have good morality you're also going to have to have some kind of one-pointedness. So to get all of the Buddhist qualities, you need some kind of ability to concentrate. You'll never develop it without shamata. The other quality is, if you care, and it's not considered very important, is that if you get good at meditation, you can read other people's minds, you can do miracles. It's not a goal. It's no good if you can fly in the sky if you're still getting old and dying. It's not the main point. You can sit out in the snow, you can get heat - there's Buddhist masters who I've met who, the big deal was that he'd sat out in the snow for five hours or something. That's okay but he still got old and died. He's already dead actually. So, it's not the goal, it's nice, it's a side effect. So these are all the qualities that...Yuh?

[student: I really I like the one-word thing... what were the five words - seeing, habituation...in order please? Student: accumulation...]

Yeah, accumulation. You can call it "gathering" if you don't like that. Accumulation is okay. Number two is preparation. Sometimes the word doesn't describe what's going on though. Preparation is where you intellectually come to understand emptiness. Number three is called seeing, with your mind. Number four is habituation, and then number five is called no-more-learning, finished-learning. And that's equivalent to nirvana, and if you want to know why you'll have to go to the [unclear]

[student: there's so many questions to ask, and some of my, for me personally, some of mine I fear might be silly, but according to the posture, if you do a half-lotus, does that interfere with the speed of your progress in these five things? Like if you can't do a full-lotus?

I think what we said last time the text said you can do either. And no problem.

[Student: no interference?]

No, no. Generally speaking, you have to use common sense in meditation. If you're struggling, and many people do, for many months, to attain a certain posture, and your not meditating, that's a distraction. And we'll learn, we'll talk about it tonight. So {le-lo} -

[student: you can read other people's minds?]

yeah, you can learn to read other people's minds. You can see the future. You can see what's happening in a little town in Mexico right now. So the first opponent, the first weapon you use against not wanting to meditate - did that ever happen to you?

[Laughter]

It happened to me one day - I didn't get up. You just don't want to do it. You really don't want to do it. Why? Because you didn't understand what you were gonna get out of it. The reason you get up to go to work is that you get the paycheck every Friday or whatever. You know what you're gonna get. But {le-lo} is very subtle. {Le-lo} means: you don't really feel like doing it, and that happens a lot. And I tell you this: on the days when you don't feel like doing it, that's when you especially have to force yourself because that's when you make progress. The most progress is made on days when you don't really feel like doing it. If you force yourself to sit down and do it on those days, you'll be able to achieve shamata. And if you don't you never will. And Tsong Khapa says that in his text. You know, on the days that you don't feel like it, those are the crucial days. Those are the days when you make the most progress. Sitting down on those days is the best progress. So that's the first antidote. You just understand why you need it. You have some admiration, some attraction to this idea of getting to shamata. You should be attracted to it. You should think "oh that's really something wonderful". You should see its good qualities.

The second thing is easy. Say {dunpa} [repeat]. {Dunpa} means "you want it". Want what?

[Student: emptiness.]

Uh, no. Shamata. The ability of pure meditation. To meditate very deeply. You want it. By the way, these antidotes are all cause-and-effect, so where does the wanting it come from?

[Stillwell: understanding what it is.]

Seeing its nice qualities. Having attraction for it. {Depa} is when you check out the girl's face and everything, and {dunpa} is when you say okay, I like that... [laughs, laughter] - in the world.

[Student: unclear]

{Dunpa} is just one word that means "you want it". You want it. You don't want anything until you see the nice things about it. So (a) is seeing the nice things about developing shamata, and (b) is, because of seeing how nice it is, you want it.

[Student: would you characterize that as a sentence, a verb, a noun...]

It's a verb. It's a gerund if you want. Verbal noun. By seeing its good qualities, then you want it. Those are different mental functions.

[Student: can you explain how you see the good qualities?]

I just talked about it. And you have to meditate on it. They say in Buddhism, they often say: meditate on the good qualities of whatever you're supposed to be meditating on. I mean, sit down a couple times and think about it. If you never develop {ting-ngen-dzin}, if you never develop shamata, you will suffer, period. You'll go on like you are now. If you are who you seem to be, which I don't know. If you are who you seem to be, you're stuck. There is no future. Anything you're gonna get, you're gonna lose. Anything that makes you happy now - your face, your health, your job, your friends, your wife, your kids - anything, you will lose. You will lose it, period. That's a bad thing. Wouldn't it be nice to be in some position where you didn't have to do those things? That's the only selling point you need, I think. If you get tired of getting up at whatever time you're getting up, just think of the alternative. [Laughs] You know, a thousand more lifetimes with the same boss, probably. [Laughter]

[student: what is it concretely that you're examining the good qualities of?]

Meditation itself.

[Student: but if you haven't experienced it, is it based on what you've read?]

Right, right. Based on the Buddha's saying: "these are the qualities of meditation". Based on that presentation that you have to be in meditation to see emptiness, directly, and you already understand what you need to see emptiness directly. You've learned that already. You cannot see it unless you have this microscope, this ability to concentrate. You won't see it. You'll never be able to see it. If you never meditate for more than fifteen minutes or fourteen minutes or sixteen, or whatever you happen to be doing - you'll never see it, period. You'll never see it and you go on like this. And time is running out. You are getting older. There will come a day when you can't sit down and meditate nicely. We have one student who's dying right now. It's over, he doesn't have time to do that. And other people have died. And we're all getting old. And it's harder to sit when you're old, and it's harder to think, for a long time. So you have to do it now. That's like, qualities you should see about meditation. But it's true. Logically, you haven't experienced those good qualities yet. You've just heard someone describe them. But you know the alternative. That's what I'm saying. Like when they say in our logic debates in the winter, they say: "Does the Buddha tell the truth about emptiness?" I don't know, I didn't see emptiness directly (if you didn't), but he sure did describe suffering very well. [Laughs.] The four noble truths, you know, the one about suffering and its cause - those are nice; I can confirm those. I have experienced those, and no other person really took the time or cared or said anything about them. No one has described the problem so well. For example: that the beginning of a relationship is the cause of its destruction. That's interesting. That's the way it is. It does not need an external cause for it to turn lousy, or for it to end. The beginning of it is its destruction. The beginning of it is the cause of its destruction. That's a Buddhist theory. And if you live long enough you start to say "Oh yeah, that makes sense." Things like that. Okay. Number (c). Say: {Tsundru} [repeat] {tsundru} [repeat]. {Tsundru} means "effort". It's also the name of the fourth perfection. Effort. Trying hard. Trying hard for what?

[Students: to do it. To meditate.]

To meditate. Right. Like when I was a teenager, you see the lady, you like her, you see the good qualities, then you want, and then you go. You try to get it. That's {tsundru}. {Tsundru} means you're working to get something. Effort. So this is again a result of (b), of wanting it. First you see its good qualities, then you start to want, and then you go after it. That's {tsundru}. {Tsundru} means to make effort.

[Student: Does the effort need to be joyous?]

Well, in the Perfection of effort, it's defined as joy about doing something good. It will be joyous, but that's not the emphasis in this, this is just, what's effort here is to get up on the morning you don't feel like it. And you'd like to skip the sweeping part and just sit down. [Laughs, laughter] Didn't we? It's really pretty clean - the students cleaned it last night. [Laughter] That's not {tsundru}. You don't want it bad enough. And you won't get this unless you have "want it", and you won't have "want it" unless you understand why it's a good thing, why it's gonna help you. That's the whole point - you must have (a) to get to (b); you must have (b) to get to (c). And (c) leads to (d).

[Chatter, laughter]

Say: {shin-jang} [repeat]. {Shin-jang} [repeat]. {Shin-jang} I have translated as, I'm not sure I like the translation, but... I have to explain it, okay? Some people call it "agility". But what it means is that if you do something over and over and over again, like if you've ever played sports, you know, I used to play tennis in high school, and you know you hit the ball over and over and over again, and then finally at some point you reach this place where it's very very, if you're working hard at it every day then you reach this point where it's just a piece of cake. It feels so natural, and you get some really wonderful ability to do it like some kind of - the Tibetans are always saying that the example for {shin-jang} is people who can practice gymnastics until they can just do anything. They can make their body do anything. So {shin-jang} can be either mental or physical. {Shin-jang} is where you're body is so used to meditating - you've been in that position for so many hours, for so many days, and again I say - the goal is not to sit down one day for five hours and then take a month off. You know, like in dieting, or in jogging, or in weightlifting, or anything else you want to learn, it's much better to do a half an hour every day and never break it. Never never break. If you could just get up and do it each day, you'll get it, and you should really do it the same time each day, and then your clock will go off in your mind. At that moment you'll want to sit down and meditate. It's very powerful. It's very good. Same time every day, and it becomes like a habit. It becomes part of your life, and then you don't break it. And you must not break it. They say it specifically in the text. If you work hard for a couple of weeks and then lay off for a couple of days, it's very difficult. You must do it continually. So {shin-jang}, the first part is where you can make your body sit quietly for many hours, maybe 4/5/6 hours if you want to. Your body will do it, because it's so used to it. You don't do it the first year. You work up to it. And the second part is mental. You get {shin-jang} mentally. So mental {shin-jang} means you can

make your mind do whatever you want. You're like a gymnast of the mind. You can make your mind go through any loop you want it to go through. You can force it to stay on one object for as long as you want, you can force it to tackle a problem logically and work through it clearly, you can force it to concentrate on any object you want. That's {shin-jang}. That's where you get some very very, I don't know, it's like pleasant feeling from being very good at something. That's what {shin-jang} means. There's no good English word.

[Unclear. Laughter]

That's not bad. Serviceability. I try to keep them under six syllables. Some people say agility, it's not bad. That's like the acrobat. It's like, I don't know - it's a result of practicing all the time, and it's some really fine feeling, like you feel like...you'll get it, you will get it... [unclear]... it's like you just sit down and...

[Student: Dexterity?]

Yeah, dexterity is very good too. Some people translate it that way. {Shin-jang} is the actual correction for not wanting to meditate. For laziness. This is actual correction. They say, this is the actual correction. The other three are ways to reach this point. So it's when you're really good at meditating that you like to meditate, enough to do it every day. It's kind of a Catch-22. When you get good at it you'll have an investment in it. You'll wanna do it everyday. I notice this at work all the time. People do what they like to do and not what you need at that time. We have a guy in Bangkok and he buys the stones, the assistant to his brother. He's supposed to be buying stones but he likes computers, so he makes all these systems to buy the stones, but he doesn't buy the stones, he just works on the systems. When you like doing something you won't have a problem doing it. When you're good at something you won't have any problem to get yourself to do it. And that's what {shin-jang} means. {Shin-jang} is the actual correction for the problem of laziness, but you don't have that at the beginning, is what the book says, the {Lam Rim Chen-mo} says, you don't have that at the beginning, so first of all you have to think about why you should have it. Then you'll start to go after it. You'll want it, go after it, and then when you get really good at it, you'll enjoy doing it every day. You won't be lazy any more. So this correction is a little tricky. You actually don't have the correction when you start correcting. You build up to the correction. And when you get good at it you'll want to do it every day, and you won't think "Ah, I don't feel like doing it today." You'll be making excuses to get home and do it.

[Student: Michael, the other one is "pliancy"]

Pliancy's pretty good. That's pretty good. So first problem is what?

[Students: laziness.]

Laziness. I almost don't like the word "laziness". It's kind of like not wanting to do it. Not wanting to meditate. If I say laziness I don't think anyone in this room says Yeah I'm lazy. But if I said did it happen this week that you didn't really want to get up and do it? Yeah, just about every day.

[Student: procrastination]

It's kinda like procrastination. It's kinda like that. There's another word for that. It's like not really wanting to do it. Not feeling like it. And you get that. Why? Cause you didn't see - if you really truly believed in what it could do for you, you would do it every morning. But you don't. So then you don't get to want it much, and because you don't want it much, you don't work hard to get it, and because you don't work hard you don't get to that point where it's so pleasant that you want to do it.

[Student: but what about something else that is stronger at that moment than the desire to do it?]

Then contemplate that thing's impermanence. Whatever it is that you're thinking of, and I don't know what it is, but I'll bet you you're gonna lose within five years. [Laughter] You know, it's something you're gonna work for, and it's gonna cause you suffering to get it... the Tibetans have a nice phrase: [unclear] - means the suffering you get from not having something, like money; and [unclear] means the suffering you get after you get it, and you have to try to maintain it, hold onto it. [Laughter] It's like, the suffering of trying to hold on to your money after you get it. So whether you have it or don't have it there's suffering either way. You must ask this question. She's not afraid of asking it out loud. You all, all of us have this question in our minds now - you really don't want to get up in the morning. You really would rather do something else. Just think about that thing. Is it worth it? What are you gonna get from it?

Okay. Problem number two. Say {Dam-ngak} [repeat] {je-pa} [repeat]. {Dam-ngak} [repeat] {je-pa} [repeat]. {Dam-ngak} is an idiom in Tibetan, and it means like, private advice, instruction is better.

[Student: private?]

Normally private, normally it's a Lama teaching you something privately like instruction... it doesn't have to be. So let's say instruction: {dam-ngak}. {Je-pa} is to forget. [Laughter] There could be a homework question. Does this actually describe what this thing is? No. It's not forgetting the instructions, it means something different. This just happens to be the words that were used for hundreds of years. It's a code-word for losing the object.

[Student: losing focus on the object?]

Losing the object, period. [Laughs.] Like, you're supposed to be meditating on the Buddha image, mentally, right - never visually, right? - and you just find you forgot to do it and suddenly you're like wooooo, what was I doing? It's just when the object slips away. You lose... mentally, of course.

[Student: what do you mean, not visually? I mean, you are visualizing it.]

Yeah, but I wanna stress, you never meditate on a thing by staring at it with your eyeballs. Of course, if it's a picture you're visualizing, of course. It's visual.

[Student: so it's like you lose it completely. Cause there's a lot of (unclear)]

This happens a lot, and you know it if you try, and oh, by the way, Tsong Khapa says in the text: "A lot of these things I can't describe to you, really well, until it happens to you." Until you meditate a lot, these don't mean a lot. It's like reading a Volkswagen car manual on how to fix it without ever looking at the car. You won't run into the problem until you try, and I can only describe it to you roughly. But on the other hand if you try a lot, you will encounter these problems, so at least you'll know you've got some ammunition. But if you never went to this class and you've tried to meditate a lot, you're aware of these things already. I mean you just find you forgot what you were doing. You just lost the object completely. It's like your mind was just - it slips away from you. This is where the object slips away from you. [Laughter, unclear.] It's not that you forget to sit down and meditate. It's that you are meditating and that you've stopped meditating and you didn't realize it.

[Student: and then your mind wanders.]

It's like a wandering mind. But the stress here is not on the wandering, which

comes later. It's that you're just not meditating anymore. The object has slipped away already.

[Student: so you're already in meditating position.]

Yeah, all of these take place during meditating position...

[student: you mean you're not meditating any more, or you're meditating on a different object?]

It's not the stress in problem number two. The stress in problem number two is that you've lost the object.

[Stillwell: so this is not coarse...]

No. I'm not talking about that. Just that the object has slipped away.

[Stillwell: you're not meditating.]

[Student: does that stop occurring with lots of practice?]

Sure. That's the point. Yeah. And a lot of people never realize that. They go on, sitting there, and they get up and say "Boy I had a good meditation, I felt good, you know, and everything was smooth you know..." and you say "so what did you meditate on, and they say "oh..." [laughter] The antidote for that, we ran out of, now it's gonna be one to one, okay?

[Students: no. "E". It's "e".]

No what I mean is, the rest of the antidotes are gonna be like one antidote per problem. I forgot what it was, memory, I gotta be careful... I'll say remembering. It means that.

[Student: recall?]

You work with it. I remember that I didn't like a lot of the translations, but I don't remember why. Recall means to forget something and then remember it again. That's what recall means. That's not what it is. It's keeping your mind on it. It's not letting it slip away. I would say awareness but awareness is coming later.

[Student: Attentiveness?]

Attentiveness is pretty good.

[Student: Vigilance?]

There's another one that...

[Student: bringing your mind back to the object?]

It does not bring your mind back to the object. It keeps it from slipping away in the first place. So what are you gonna call that?

[Student: vigilant attentiveness. (Laughter)]

[stillwell: how's this an antidote if you're preventing this thing from occurring in the first place?]

Well, let me tell you.

[Stillwell: the antidote has to come after the event.]

Well let me see. I'll tell you what Tsong Khapa says. "When you lose the object from your attentive state of mind, the second problem has occurred, and that is given the name "forgetting the instructions". And he says, by the way, I couldn't translate this whole thing this weekend, because I took the kids, the Mongolian kids on a retreat, so I'll try to do it tomorrow, wednesday, and give it to you on Thursday. It's a lot to translate, but I like it a lot, and I think you should have the whole thing. It's really nice. So he says, "For example, if you are holding a rosary", 'cause that's all that monks are holding all day long "in your hand, it's like holding a rosary in your hand. If you have strong {dren-pa}, you must keep your mind on the object." He says "different people have different capacities of {dren-pa}, therefore for different people it may be harder or easier to develop shamata. The {b. Kun-tu}, which is the [b. Abhisamasummacaya] says 'what is {dren-pa}? It is that mental function which allows you not to forget and object of the mind, because you are used to it." You've become accustomed to it. And again, that's similar to the word, what?

[Stillwell: habituation?]

Gom. Meditation. Gom. So you have Asanga, or was it Vasubandhu here, defining memory, in this case remembering, as, that mental function which acts to keep you from forgetting an object of the mind, because you are familiar with it. You've become familiar with it. So it's almost more like what? Habituation in a way. Mental habituation.

[Stillwell: which is what you do before the meditation, not after you have the problem.]

The whole meditation is that. Burning it into the mind. But what he's saying is, the habit of keeping your mind on it is the antidote to losing it.

[Stillwell: is he essentially saying "start over and remember it again?"]

It doesn't say - oh, I know what you mean. Okay, yeah.

[Stillwell: okay you lost it's gone, okay so you'll remember it, start over, refocus]

Yeah, that's right.

[Student: it seems like what these antidotes in a way are saying is like get yourself ready, these things are coming.]

Well it's a good question, and if we were in a debate ground,

[...it's not like after it happens but before, like you know your mind is gonna go away, so you put extra attention on...

Stillwell: but that's contrary to the definition of antidote.'

But this would be a good debate, you see this is what we debate in the monastery. Two students take a different position. One person says, "The antidote should be applied before the problem, the antidote is what prevents the problem from occurring; and the other student says, well it wouldn't be a problem... you have to have the problem first, and then you apply the antidote. And it's a good question. The word for correction we're using here is {du je-pa} which means to take action. So it probably, I would say, if I were in a debate ground and I were debating it I would say probably it has to occur after the problem arises, but I don't think it's contradictory in a way. It's a good question.

[Student: well you can take action to prevent it from arising or you can take action to get yourself back to where you were.]

So I don't think it's contradictory.

[Stillwell: so remembering just means recalling.]

Recalling if you've lost it. Remembering not to lose it if you have. [Laughter]
How's that?

[Unclear]

...It's another word for {nyen-po}, but you don't need to worry about that. I'm just telling you that's another way of translating it.

[Student: michael, if this includes being distracted from the object by other thoughts, for example, I don't know how the antidote would work...]

By the way, he...

[...because no matter how familiar you are with the object of meditation...]

No. If you're used to it, it comes up more easily in your mind, more easily. You don't lose it as easily. Let me give you three characteristics, since we're on it. He says, and I didn't wanna get into this much detail, but I will, since you're interested.

[Stillwell: three characteristics of what?]

He's gonna give you three qualities of {dren-pa}. You don't need to know these, I wasn't gonna talk about them, but since you asked... The first one is the quality of the object. He says it's fixing your mind on an object which you have experienced before and you're very accustomed to. He says secondly there's a quality of how it holds its object. A quality of how it holds its object. We're talkin about memory now, right? It says: "It's a natural not-forgetting of the object that comes up in your mind very strongly. A natural not-forgetting of the object that comes up in your mind very strongly. And he says "for example, the way in which food comes to your mind when you get real hungry." [Laughter] How it just pops into your mind very naturally when your hungry. You know I had it at noon today; and you know a cheese sandwich you know came into my

mind very clearly. It was around 11:30. It was an hour and a half too early and I was going around looking for menus. But that's I was hungry, and it just comes into your mind very naturally and very clearly. The third quality is its function. It functions not to allow your mind to wander to another object. It functions not to allow your mind to wander to another object. Which again is really gonna come in the next one, more clearly.

[Student: what do you do when you're entertaining two objects at once?]

Nobody can.

[...but you can have an image, and thoughts are still...]

They're alternating. They're alternating. The {b. ____?____}, the main text by Chandrakirti on emptiness, describes that process. It says, and it's a beautiful image - you take rose petals, and you glue them onto a target, like an inch coming out of the target, and he says when you shoot an arrow into that pile of rose petals, it's like a bullet going through a book, have you ever seen that movie? He says it looks like THWAAK, and it went through all the rose petals at once, but what's really happening is, you know, you can't see it with your eye, but mentally you understand that it must be penetrating the first rose petal first. And then the next rose petal. And then the next rose petal. And then the next rose petal. So he says that when you get this illusion that you're keeping your mind on french fries and the Buddha's

[cut. End of side A]

[student: forward, no but...]

In the debate ground you'd say "Come on, now Kylie, you know we can't talk about that." I mean in the debate ground he can do things that nobody else can do, so in the debate ground, oftentimes when you start a debate, you say [slap! Followed by long Tibetan retort], which means: "I ain't talkin about Buddhas, right? Ya got it? Ya got it? I ain't talkin about Buddhas. Buddhas are different..."

[student: it seems to me that all of these definitions are of what we in English call "concentration"]

Ah, yeah you say that, I think. It must have something to do with memory and

it must not be memory itself. Because the word is the word for memory. But I don't think, it obviously doesn't mean simple memory in this case. It means, somehow keeping your mind on the object. Keeping the object from slipping away. And maybe you have to meditate to experience it and then you can come back and tell us, I don't know. What is it that keeps the object from fading away?

[Student: but you can look at the red and the white on that board, and you can perceive it at the same time, and it's not alternating thoughts; you perceive both at the same time.]

There's a big debate about it. I understand. You believe you're seeing red and white at the same time, simultaneously.

[Student: I know I am.]

It seems like that. I believe that with one sense-power, it might be possible, and different schools say different - it's a big debate. You know, visually, maybe. Two objects at once; red and white at once. French fries and the Buddha? I don't know. It's like, I'm thinking the smell of french fries, right?

[Unclear]

So we'll have some snack now and then we've got one more to go, one big one.

[Cut]

...keeping your mind on one object. He talks about not switching objects, and Tsong Khapa takes a whole couple of pages to talk about that. He says one of the greatest enemies that causes {dren-pa} to fail, is that, one of the biggest enemies that causes you to lose the object is that you keep switching objects. He says "Don't do that". And the example he gives is, I don't know if you ever boyscouted - didja ever try to start a fire with one of those things, those two sticks of wood? It's very hard. It's really hard. We used to try. And in Tibet I guess it was a pretty common way to start a fire, but you would sit there and you'd rub two sticks together, and it gets pretty hot, but it doesn't start a fire, and then you say, oh, let me try another stick. And it's gets pretty hot pretty hot pretty hot and then you say oh, it's not burning, lemme try another stick. And he says the greatest enemy is to keep changing the object. He says pick one

object, pick a virtuous object, he says, like the image of a Buddha in your mind, and stick to it, until you achieve shamata. My personal experience is that you know, keep the object for a long time. I think that at some point you get, it's good to have a change of pace sometime in your daily practice. I mean, I would say, personally, I can keep one thing for about six months. And then it gets, and then it's good to get something fresh. You know like I try to meditate on neutrality for six months or something, and then after six months, you know in my personal experience you start to get tired of it [laughs].

[Stillwell: is that a function of the mind, that the mind becomes bored, and that's not desirable?]

I don't know, it could be...

[student: wouldn't that just be analytical meditation, you know, thinking about a concept?]

They're all meditation.

[...But that's different from the single-pointed kind of thing...]

We'll talk about it, we'll talk about it next time. There's three kinds of meditation. Tsong Khapa says, "Don't switch around your objects. Pick an object, don't try to get..." I'll tell you one thing that really doesn't work: is to try to have two or three going on at one time you know, like today I'll try that one, tomorrow I'll try that one. The Tibetans say that you can't sew with a needle that has two points. It doesn't work. So pick an object, and stick to it. And therefore, since you're gonna be stuck with this object for months and months, pick a virtuous one.

[Student: did you also say you could choose you own Lama?]

Oh yeah, sure. That would be great.

[...But it doesn't have to be a Buddha?]

We'll study that, actually, this course. We'll give you the answer. Okay, so that's problem number two. By the way, we're not doing all eight tonight, so don't get scared. I'm not keeping you till midnight. Did somebody ask a question?

[Student: in the homework it says, do the preliminaries and then the six, whatever...]

It means review them, over and over.

[...But then we should also pick a virtuous object and practice on that, independently of the homework?]

I would say, right now, work on the homework, and don't pick a separate object. Work on those... otherwise you got how many objects? Two. If you know Rinpoche pretty well, you know he's always, through the years he's twenty years he's taught, in fact I was talking with Bernadette about it tonight, I mean, she used to work for the man who brought him here, who paid for him to come here. And for twenty years he sat in that house, he didn't go out much, and he didn't change the, his policy about this stuff was like "Hey, you go home and do it, okay?" We didn't have group meditations, you know, and it was all - "that's your problem. I'll teach you how to do it, you know, and then, but that's the end of my... that's all I can do, I mean really, you have to go do it, yourself."

So this is number three. These things again, they don't have good words in English. {Jing-wa} [repeat], and {gš-pa} [repeat] so it's {jing-gš} [repeat]. {Jing-wa} is very hard to translate. You could say dullness. I'm saying mental dullness, in your translation that's what you'll see. There are many many words people use, I don't know what's the best one - to me it feels like mental dullness when I get it. {Gš-pa} is the opposite, {gš-pa} is like when your mind is, the word for, {gš} means, actually the literal meaning for {gš} is "wild", like a {mir- gš} is a "gorilla". It literally means "wild man". But {gš-pa} means, I don't know what to say - excited or, stirred up. Agitated is great. Agitated is pretty good.

[Student: we're talking about {jing-gš}?]

Yeah. The {gš} part means agitated. The {jing} part means dull. They are opposites.

[Unclear]

Now I'm gonna read from Tsong Khapa. {Gš-pa} is pretty easy. {Jing-wa} you have to study. {Jing-wa} is the most dangerous enemy in meditation, period. Of all. I'll just read it to you: {quotation}: which means - {jing-wa} has two forms. One is the obvious form. And one is the subtle form. So you can get {jing }, and the full word is {jing-wa}, you can get this dullness, either in a very obvious way,

or in a very subtle way. And for me to explain this to you I have to teach you two more words, and you have to learn these words. I mean, in English. By the way, I'll tell you something - this presentation is coming from Pabongka's Lam Rim, which is modelled after Tsong Khapa's Lam Rim, and don't worry about that, I'm not gonna ask you about that, but he wrote the second great famous Lam Rim.

[Student: when?]

He died in 1941. He wrote the book in 1921. Born in 1878. He taught my Lama. He was very famous. He taught the Dalai Lama's teacher. {Ne-cha} and {sel-cha}. {Ne} means to stay. {Cha} here means aspect. The aspect of being fixed, and I translate it as "fixation". {Sel} means "clear". {Cha} means aspect. So I translate it as "clarity". [Unclear ... talking about Lama Yeshe's reincarnation]. So he says here, "If you wanna know the difference between subtle dullness and obvious dullness. Obvious dullness is where you've still got fixation on the object, but you lost its clarity. So what it means is, you've still got the object in your mind, your mind is still fixed on the object. But it's getting very dull, uuuungh. And you know that one. It's were you didn't forget the object. That was the last one. You didn't forget the object, which is called "forgetting the instruction", but doesn't have anything to do with that. You didn't lose the object, you still have the object in mind, but the clarity is gone. You have no clarity about it at all.

[Student: it's almost as if your mind becomes negative, rather than positive.]

Cloudy, dark, something like that, yeah. He says its like a veil drawn between you and the object.

[Stillwell: so there's no detail...]

No detail, no clarity. By the he says, "don't forget that these are qualities of the mind. It's not that you can't see the object very well. It's that your mind is fuzzy.

[Student: unclear...is this {ne-cha} you're defining?]

We're defining {jing}. The third problem of meditation has two parts. Either the mind is too slowed down, or the mind is too speeded up. And we're talking about the first part, the {jing} part. Where the mind is dull. And it's a very very nasty - this is the worst enemy of meditation that there is. Because the mind is

fixed on the object, and then you buzz out, and it's very unclear. So you - what happens? You think you're doing great.

[Student: but it feels awful...]

Yeah, you don't feel refreshed when you get up, you just feel kind of stupid. But anyway, you didn't lose the object. You have {ne-cha}, you have fixation on the object, but it's not clear, your mind is not clear.

[Student: do you mean to distinguish, do you mean that number three is the worst enemy, or the first part of number three?]

First part of number three. If you want to say 3.1, and 3.2. I'm talking about {jing}, which we call {jing-wa}, the full form is {jing-wa}. {Jing-wa} has two kinds. There's obvious {jing-wa} and there's tricky, subtle {jing-wa}. Obvious {jing-wa} is where you still have fixation but you lost clarity.

[Student: is this what [unclear] is sometimes translated as "sinking and scattering"]

Yeah. Some people translate it as "Sinking and scattering" and that's not bad. But you'll see many many translations, but that's not bad.

[Student: laxity, is that one?]

Yeah. Some people translate it that way.

[Stillwell: so this would be the sinking part.]

Yeah. So. This is the obvious sinking. You can catch this pretty easily. You didn't lose the object. The object is still in your mental grasp. But there's no clarity to it at all. None. That's what which one? {Jing} or {gš}? That's {jing-wa} in its obvious form. Now what about the subtle form? He says: Say {Ngar-me} [repeat]. We also call it "strength". {Ngar} is a very very unusual word in Tibetan and it means, "the quality that a steel knife gets when you -" What's what's that process?

[Student: temper it]

Temper it, yeah. After you temper a steel knife, it gets {ngar}. And I'd don't

know how you're gonna translate that. It's not sharp. It's...

[students: unclear.... it's tempered, trued, hardened]

It's hardened. Like they do it to sledgehammers and they do it to hammers and there's some process, and I don't know what it is, you heat it to a certain temperature, and it changes its quality. I mean steel is hard. But when you temper it, it gets I don't know how many times harder. It gets some kind of bite into it that it'll keep sharp for a long time. And they temper the blade part of the knife, and it won't lose its sharpness. That's called {ngar}. And there's no - I dunno what you're gonna call it in English. But it means there's no {ngar}. Now you gotta listen up, okay, 'cause this is important. In the subtle form of {jing}, in {jing-wa} (the full form of the word is {jing-wa}), in the subtle form of {jing-wa}, you do have fixation, and you do have clarity, but you don't have any intensity. You have not lost the object, and you have some clarity towards the object, but you don't have this extra - I don't know what you'd call it. He says you can compare it to holding a cup in your hand firmly, or holding it, you know when you kind of let go of it a bit on the round part? And it spills. Like the cup didn't fall out of your hand, like you still have the cup. You have clarity; you have fixation. But there's no strength, there's no firmness to it. And he compares it to that. There's no...

[student: like losing your grip?]

Yeah, like losing your grip. He says that. He uses the same word, he says you're about to lose it, you're about to drop it. {Hš} means "loose", shaky. And he says that the big danger is that you can continue this kind of dullness for many hours. And you can think that you're doing a good meditation. And again, he says I can't describe it to you very easily until you try it. But I'm afraid if you examine yourself well, I can tell you that I have this most of the time when I meditate. I've been doing it twenty years, I can stay on my butt for a long time. For hours. And I can not move and I can keep my mind on the object for a long time, but there's some kind of - he calls it "water running under the ice." Something going on under, where all these other shaky thoughts are always there, just about to happen, I'm just about to lose it, and I got no clar - I can keep my mind on it, but it's just buzzing out. It's basically - feeling good, feeling like I'm meditating, I do not lose the object; I wander, but I still generally the object is there most of the time, and I can even have some clarity towards it, but it's dull, it's low-level.

[Student: this seems more dangerous than {jing}]

This is {jing-wa}...

[...oh, I mean the obvious part...]

This is {jing-wa trang-mo}, and it's very very nasty.

[Student: but you don't know when it's happening -]

We have this debate going on between these two guys.

[Stilwell: why is it nasty?]

Because it can be easily mistaken for -

[stilwell: for the real thing?]

He says it's like a member of the family who's turned - how do you say that? It's an enemy getting into the inner circle. You know, a true traitor in the midst of family, you know, something like that. Somebody who really wants to murder their brother, you know. One person who's - he's inside. He's taken as part of the family. But he's a traitor - like Benedict Arnold. Like that CIA guy. He's in at the top, and he's working against it. And so the big problem is that you mistake him for your friend. It looks like what you're trying to get, and all that time he's working against you.

[Stilwell: is there any kind of benefit to doing this kind of meditation?]

He says - real good for getting an animal rebirth. [Laughter]

[stilwell: I mean in a practical sense, I mean you said you've been meditating that way for twenty years...(laughter)... I mean I don't mean in the case of you, but given that we're all gonna be practicing and experience this, are we pretty much all gonna be just spinning our wheels when we're just doing this kind of meditation, not really...]

No I'll give you something. He says: {jing-wa trang-mo...}: "if you mistake {jing-wa trang-mo} for true meditation, {dre-bu}: the result is {suk-su me...}: it won't even get you to a birth in the form or formless realm." You remember we said that some meditations can? Not only that but {tibetan, tibetan, tibetan}:

"you will become forgetful in this life, and {she-rab mi-tsel du tro-wa}: the powers of your intellect will start to diminish." It makes you stupid. It does make you kinda, you know like people who've been on marijuana for a long time. If you ever know somebody who's been smoking marijuana for twenty years or something, it kinda like that. I mean steadily. {Quoting in tibetan} He says it's nothing better than a meditation which is aimed at achieving an animal's birth in your next life." I wasn't making this up.

[Stilwell: so given that we're only gonna get this far, we're better off not to meditate.] [Student: noooooo]

Obviously not, you know, we gotta apply the antidote. [Unclear: laughter.]

The antidote - oh, first of all I have to tell you about {gš}, because the antidote is the same. {Gš-pa} means that agitated state of mind. And Tsong Khapa goes into this long section where he's trying to distinguish {gš-pa}, which is the long form of this word, from {tro-wa}. {Tro-wa} means: where your mind wander off to another object. {Tro-wa} means: where your mind runs to any other object than what you're meditating on.

[Student: can you write that down?]

The Tibetan? Yeah, but you don't have to know it on the other...[unclear, chatter] You don't have to write that down. {Tro-wa} is any wandering of your mind off to another object while you're trying to meditate. I'm gonna explain to the difference between {gš-pa} and {tro-wa}, but you have to understand {gš-pa} in terms of {tro-wa}. {Tro-wa} means any wandering of your mind off to another object during meditation. And it can be to a virtuous object. Like if you are supposed to be meditating on the Buddha's body, but your mind wanders to doing some charity for someone, that's {tro-wa}. It's a disturbance to your meditation. It's bad. It's a mistake. Another kind of {tro-wa} is where your mind wanders to someone you don't like. Like you start to think of somebody at work that said something to you yesterday. That's another kind of {tro-wa}. A third kind of {tro-wa} would be if your mind wandered to some object that was desirable to you, some desire object. Some object that you desire. The example he gives is if you saw one of those Tibetan operas at noon - that's a TV for a Tibetan in the 15th century, okay? There would be these religious operas called {nam-par}, and if you ever saw one, did anybody ever see one? They go on for like five hours, the Dalai Lama comes and sits in a tent, and you wander around and the lady gets up and goes RUUUALLLRSH...just like a real opera,

you know. And no one knows what's going on, you know, and you can't hear the words, and you know, people wander around and have a good time, and he says like "At night, when you sit down to meditate, if that lady who was in the opera comes into your mind, that's {tro-wa} towards a desirable object, towards a pretty object. Some kind of object of the senses, a desire object. That last one is the only one that is {gš}. So that's the difference between the general wandering of the mind, and {gš}. The big enemy is - what does your mind wander to ninety percent of the time when you're meditating? Something you like.

[Student: no, something bothering you...]

Well, you're a special case. [Laughter]

[...no I mean if you're preoccupied by something...]

Well yeah, if you had a fight at work in the last three days, that's what you're gonna think about. I know that, because it happened to me many times.

[...Why does it have to be just fights? I mean what if you're just worried about something?]

Yeah, it's something like that. But what I'm saying is that because the wandering of your mind is so often in the vast majority of cases it's towards something you want, something you like. It doesn't mean you know you're gonna go rob a bank. It means you start thinking about what's for breakfast, or you start thinking about what you're gonna do when you get up. That's all {gš-pa}, because its object is a desirable thing.

[Student: so it's {tro-wa} towards a desirable object rather than {tro-wa} towards the jerk at work.]

Or towards a virtuous object.

[Student: it doesn't matter...(unclear)]

Yeah, he says, in fact you don't want any of them, and actually you're enemy is {tro-wa}, but because ninety percent of the time it's towards something you like, something you want. This is the most common human tendency, is that when you try to meditate, you start thinking about something you like. And it's not

like [pant, pant, pant] I really want pancakes this morning, you know, which is what usually comes into my mind, but it's like you just start thinking about the next thing, you know, right? You just start thinking about the next thing you're gonna do after that, or, what the next big thing, or, which account I have to work on today...

[student: so if I'm sitting in meditation, and I'm getting {tro-wa} towards a holy object, or towards an object that I hate, I'm not suffering from number three.]

You are. The name of number three is that which is restricted to being distracted towards a desirable object. But, obviously, if you get distracted towards a virtuous object, or if you get distracted towards an object that you hate, that's obviously fault number three, problem number three.

[Stilwell: so any kind of distraction.]

Yeah, but the word for the problem is dullness and agitation. The full form, I'm trying to making them short so you can remember them easily, and that's what they do in Buddhism. It's actually {jing-wa}, and {gš-pa}, so I'm gonna give you an example. He says if you wanna know the difference between fixation, clarity, we're talking about this one now, all right? If you wanna know the difference between whether there's {nga,r} or not, whether there's intensity or not, it's where you're holding a cup or your rosary in your hand, and whether or not you're holding it with firmness or loosely, and he gives another example, which I like. He says, suppose you know a certain Lama, a certain teacher, and generally you have some faith towards him, but it's not a very intense faith, it's not like you, when you see him you start crying or something, you know, you like him, you respect him, but it's not like some kind of real intense faith. But he says, then you can sometimes get the experience that just suddenly when you're with him, just suddenly you get this like intense flash of faith towards him, this very intense feeling of 'oh, well this person is really something special' you know, 'this is really someone incredible. That's the difference between having fixation and clarity, and fixation and clarity with intensity. So he gives two examples. You've got fixation and clarity when you're holding the cup. Just by not dropping the cup you've got it. But whether or not it's tight or not. And then that second example is that Lama. Okay, generally you think he's a nice lama. But then you get to know him and he says something [tape cut] ... and you're trying to increase the intensity, turn up the intensity, hold the object tighter. Try to focus your mind more tightly, and I'll tell you, I mean I found a big enemy that's not listed in these, which is just plain being tired. You know I was meditating and it

was deedeedeedeede, and I couldn't do anything right and I was like wondering 'what's going on?' and I searched my mind, and I said: "you're tired. You had a long day." And I'll tell you, personal experience - you can't meditate very well when you're tired. Forget it. It's better to get up and do something virtuous. You can't concentrate if you're tired. To really get good shamata you have to really have to be sleeping well, you have to be eating well, it's very difficult. That's why some of you're putting 2 a.m. on your thing or 12 midnight. No. Some people prefer it, some people are better at it, and some people have a work that doesn't allow them to do anything else, but I really think that morning is better, if you can. And if you're gonna be responsible and you're gonna be serious about your meditation, part of it is getting enough rest, 'cause you never will. And again, for an American in New York, that's difficult. It's difficult for me. But if you wanna get shamata, you'd better count on getting enough rest, 'cause otherwise you won't get it. Who gets enough rest? I dunno. But it's part of the game, you're gonna have to decide what you want. You might have to give up something else to get enough rest to have a good meditation. It's a big part, actually. And if you don't do it you never will. And if you don't do it in this class probably you'll never have another reason to, really. There'll probably be nothing to inspire you to do it suddenly, you know, if you don't get in the habit in this six weeks. I'd say you probably will fail, so it's important. So that's that. I'll give you homework.

[Unclear... chatter about handouts...]

[end of tape]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Six: The Five Problems of Meditation, Part Two

Geshe Michael Roach

March 3, 1994

transcribed by: Matthew Remski

(stillwell: ...all of the five parts of meditation came from the Prayer of Samantabhadra and we're doing Tsong Khapa's commentary on that...)

Ah, we're reading, most of what we're reading was from {b: Lam Rim Chenmo}, which is Je Tsong Khapa's masterpiece. And then, ah, we used that for the preparation, we used it for the environment, we used it for, what was the third thing?

(Student: body)

oh. Body posture. So for those three things. Now he's quoting other people. So for the preparation, he's quoting mostly {b: Gom Rim}, but when he gets to the seven limbs, he's quoting, he's using the Prayer of Samantabhadra, and then when we got to the environment, he was quoting the {b: Sutralamkara}, and {b: Gom Rim}. {b: Gom Rim} was quoting {b: Sutralamkara}. There are 400-500 years between them. And then when we got to the posture, we used, uh, Je Tsong Khapa, and that again was from {b: Gom Rim}, and now we got to the mental technique, uh, we're using a different book now, because Je Tsong Khapa doesn't go into much detail, so we're using Pabongka's, Kyabje Pabongka's Lam Rim, which is {b: Liberation in Our Hands}. So, and you're still not gonna get a reading, okay, sorry, I'm just too busy. I have it in Tibetan, I didn't have time to translate it, but I will, because it's really useful, and I'd rather that you have the whole thing, of what I'm saying is in there, and I remember, you know when they taught me this in Dharamsala twenty years ago, you know I followed a lot of it for a long time, and misunderstanding a few points, and it was, you know, bad. So I think it's better if you have the original text, you know, and then anything you misheard from me or that I mispoke, you can check from the original text. So I will translate it, I didn't have enough time this week. My lama needed something, and whenever he needs something I'm not gonna do what you guys need (laughs). You know I had some struggles with it but this is the right thing to do. Yeah?

(Stillwell: the other question I had was when you're talking about doing all the preparations and having to do the preparatory practices first, you know, you'd said before, 'well, you can't just go into a room all of the sudden and start meditating.' So, in practical reality, you know, and you also said 'six months for shamata' or whatever...)

If you're doing a shamata retreat, yeah.

(Stillwell: so in reality, in practical reality, how long are we talking about, I mean, ya gotta do all your preliminaries, and do a strong daily meditation before you do a significant retreat, of like, all day for months, how long should you -)

I think an hour is enough, but I didn't want to -

(stillwell: no, no, but I mean like, years of that?)

Oh, if you do it an hour? A lot depends on your {tso-tsok drip-jang}, you know, your karmic situation at that time. If you're very good at your morality, confessing, cleaning yourself all the time... we're doing bad deeds every day. If you're really seriously trying to improve those every day, then I'd say in a year you can have some nice, you know, in six months I think you would develop some deep concentration, and I think even sooner, like three months, you'd start to notice a change in your ability to concentrate.

(Stillwell: if you're doing the confessions every day...)

Yeah, and I can't emphasize enough. If you don't do those, and you don't find yourself advancing, well that's the reason, you know. And you will advance if you do do those. And I, it's just a fact of life, you know. Just try it. Do it like that.

(Student: what if you confess like during the day, I mean you realize you did something, and you -)

Atisha carried a stupa around with him, and it wasn't easy, it was like that big, you know, and when, a stupa's like a little reliquary, that holds some lama's.... And he would ride from Lhasa to Shi-ga-tse on a horse, and when he had a bad thought, he would get off the horse and do a confession on the spot. And his disciples would be standing there (laughs), and so that's fine.

(Student: and would you really... I mean when you say confession, do you mean the catholic... I mean you think about what you did or what you thought...)

Those four things we talked about. The main thing is to get some kind of {dom-sem}. {Dom-sem} means "the wish to restrain yourself in the future". That's really the main function of... so it doesn't just mean you can do whatever you want, purify it then go do it again, you know, you have to have some kind of desire to restrain yourself, and have some logical, workable program for improving yourself. Don't just wish you could be a better person. You're logical about how you feed yourself three times a day, you're logical about how you find an apartment, you're logical at work, you know, be logical about, you know, just make a program that's gonna work for you. And go at it like any other activity you go at. Say, "I'd like to not... I'd like to do less of what I do wrong six months from now. How can I do that?" And make yourself a plan and follow through on it and do it.

(Stillwell: in addition to that hour a day of concentration for six months or whatever, in addition to that are the preliminaries also.)

I'm counting the preliminaries in the hour, because as you get used to doing them, they take less time, actually. I think you can, I'm talking about the preliminaries just before meditation.

(Stillwell: I'm talking about the {ngon-dro})

We're only talking about the {ngon-dro} for a tantric retreat. And when you're -

(stillwell: so when you're talking about shamata, so to be successful in shamata, you, it's not necessary to do those?)

No, you don't have to. We don't have a custom of doing those specifically, but we do have, it's optional, you can do them, or you can do some other virtuous deeds.

(Student: what's {ngon-dro})?

Like, there's a practice in some traditions and lineages to do a hundred thousand of this, a hundred thousand of this, you know, ten thousand prostrations, and then you're ready to do some other practice. There is that custom, that does exist, but there are other ways to fulfill that. In our tradition, in our lineage.

(Student: could you say something about doing practice, doing mantras when you're not at home? You know, the portable altar...)

I can't say much about mantras, you know, those are tantric. If you're committed to do some, then you have to do them, and they're very powerful. Why they work, what they mean, they, you know, when the time comes we can start in on that.

(Student: so doing it on...[unclear])

I dunno. (Laughs)

(student: well let's just say confession for instance, that's something we talked about, that's not a tantric -)

Well, I think it's a bad habit to even consider. That's like when you go to your boss and you say "Should I take an extra week on my vacation now, or should I take it six weeks from now?" And if he's smart, he'll say, "I don't think you should take an extra week at all." (laughs)

(student: [unclear])

What I mean is, don't get in the habit of thinking you have any option. Just don't do it. You feed yourself very well three times a day. It's a miracle. It's a lot of work. You know, if you think about it, all the effort that goes into getting three times a day food, how many times do you miss it? Very rarely, if you're like me. Put the same effort into your meditation practice. Just, that time is for meditation practice, period. I mean it should be extremely rare cases, like we were driving the kids up to the retreat, and we had to get up like at six to get there, so we'd have to do it before that... You know, don't even consider it, you know, human nature - if you give yourself an option, you'll take it.

(Student: Michael, are we mixing something up here, I don't think anyone's talking about meditating on the subway or meditating while they're walking to work.)

Well you mentioned confession right? As a preliminary to meditation, no, you can, if you've committed yourself to doing confession every day, do it well in your home. Take the time, find the time. Give up something else. If you have

to, give up on your job, take a lower job. Or control your job. Don't let your job run you. And if it does you know you have to find another one. It's hard. It's not easy. Easy to say, but, you know, hard to leave it, and go get another one. Alright. We're on the third problem, the fourth problem. We finished the preparation for meditation. We finished the environment for meditation. We finished the physical posture for meditation. And then we're on the mental technique, and we had, how many problems would come up?

(Students: three, three)

Wait a minute. Oh. So far we had three. There'll be five in total. And there'll be eight antidotes to them. So we're now onto number 4, okay, which is {du mi-je-pa}. By the way, I didn't have it, but there's a chart, I don't know if some of you have seen it - an elephant and a monkey?

(Students: [mumbling] I haven't)

it's a path up to these, through these mental stages, and it's a picture, it's a wood-block carving, an old one, it's very good, if we can try to find it sometime.

(Student: I have it if you want...)

You have one of those?

(Student: I have it from Namgyal Monastery)

Oh, fine. Maybe we can get it reproduced. If you can loan it to me, I'll get Marie to look at it. It's very nice. You have the whole chart, and the monkey is {gš-pa}, agitation, and the elephant is [unclear], and he changes colors from black to white as he goes up the path. Okay. {Du mi-je-pa}. {Du mi-je-pa} means "not taking action". Not taking action.

(Student: is this the first...)

This is the fourth problem, that can come up in your mind. What were the first three, since you asked?

(Students: [mumbles] laziness...)

Yeah, I don't know if I like the word laziness. It's not wanting to do it, really.

And that's our most insurmountable obstacle. You know, if you don't have shamata now, and you've been studying dharma for a couple of years, the fact is, you don't really want to do it. You know. To be honest. Because if you really wanted it, you would have had it by now. That's just a fact. We're not trying very hard. So I don't know if "laziness" is so good. I think it's like, "not really wanting it". Not really wanting to do it. That was the first one. What is the second one?

(Student: losing the object)

Yeah. Losing the object, which is called forgetting the instruction, so that's kind of a misnomer, and the third one is what?

(Students: dullness and agitation)

Yeah, those two extremes. Dullness and agitation. Whatever translation you want to use, I don't mind, I don't feel strongly about any of them. If you know what it is, that's the...

(student: Michael, I've seen it usually referred to as the non-identification of either of those...)

Ah, no, I haven't seen that.

(Student: ...and the antidote is their identification.)

you could say that, and we'll get into it tonight. But that's not what the Tibetan says. It just says {jing- gš nyi}, the two.

(Student: that's what, some of the other [unclear] I'm familiar with make that point.)

It's a good point, and we'll talk about it tonight, but the Tibetan doesn't say that. It's implied, but we'll talk about it. So {du mi-je-pa} means "not taking action", and this applies to her note. It means, what was the last problem we had, it was agitation and dullness. And what was the antidote?

(Students: Watchfulness.)

Watchfulness. So that doesn't imply anything about doing anything about it yet.

So watchfulness catches it. {Jing-gš nyi} occurs, and watchfulness catches it, but then it's a fault if you don't do anything. So in number 3, your mind either got distracted to an object of what?

(Students: desire)

normally a pleasant object. Which doesn't mean you're thinking about some sexy girl or something like that. It means any, most of the thoughts you have during the day are "what am I gonna do next? What should I do right now? Where am I gonna go tonight?" Those are all desire objects, thoughts, really, when you boil it down, the thought of what you're gonna do next is pretty much a desire thought, because it's motivated by "what will make me feel good next?" almost all your thoughts are. So that's {gš-pa}, agitation, if you wanna call it that, and what's {jing-wa}, the other one?

(Students: dullness...)

Dullness, which was what? It's where the object gets very dark, and you're not, you have some, you're still fixed on it but it's very dark, or else you've lost clarity completely, okay? So, awareness or mindfulness, or what did we call it?

(Students: watchfulness)

Watchfulness, catches it. That's the antidote for number three. Now, at number 4, it's the decision to do something about it. What that implies is that you can have those two mental states occur, and you notice them, and what? You don't do anything. And it takes some effort to do something. And that's a problem in meditation. If you try for a while you'll notice yourself doing that. You catch yourself starting to get buzzed out, and you notice it, and then you don't do anything. You don't think to do anything. And that's the fourth problem of meditation. It's not taking any action. It's antidote is guess what?

(Student: taking action.)

Yeah. What's {mi} mean?

(Students: "not")

"Not", right. So what do you guess? {Du je-pa}.

(Students: [unclear])

We're onto "h" I think, right?

(Students: f,f,g...)

"G", yeah.

(Student: no, "f". [Laughter])

Let's see. The first one had four, right?

[Unclear]

{Du je-pa} means "doing something". What you do about agitation, and what you do about dullness - are they the same thing? Would you do the same thing for both?

(Students: no, no.)

Obviously not. So first we're gonna talk about the nastiest one, which is, which is the worse of those two?

(Students: dullness)

Dullness. Why?

(Students: [unclear])

No, there was a better reason.

(Stilwell: because you think it's your friend and it's...)

Yeah, yeah, 'cause it looks like a family member, but it's a traitor. In other words, it can be mistaken for meditation. You can easily mistake it for successful meditation. Just, because you can sit there for a long time doing it, and many many people do, for many years, and they don't realize that they're not meditating.

(Student: Isn't that a fault of more, like, advanced practitioners, like, people who

are really good meditators?)

I think it's the fault of someone who can sit for more than a half-an-hour or an hour. But what they don't realize is that they're just in sort of a stupid state, a dull state. I do it a lot, I've done it a lot, and it takes, it's very subtle and very dangerous, so that's why they work on that more, they teach you more about that one, because it's so dangerous, it's so attractive. It looks so much like real meditation. And you can sit there for a long time. You know, and your breath is real nice and it's quiet, and you might be getting some good sensations in your body, but your mind is just blank or dull. Not blank but, it's dark.

(Stilwell: if I could say something... that's even a more pleasant state than our normal, discursive thought state... random thoughts.)

Possibly. Possibly. But also...

(stilwell: ... relative to how we normally are thinking and frantic...)

Oh, it is. I think it's sort of like if you've ever been stoned on marijuana or a little bit drunk, or... it's kinda like that, I think. It's kind of a dull, a stupid, kind of a stupid state. So that's the most dangerous one. And the antidotes are um, so, don't forget, we're talking about half of it now, half of the problem, which is {jing-wa}, and that's uh, the antidote of that is... {Drin-pa}, I can't think of one good English word, but it means tightening up your concentration. Tightening up your concentration.

(Student: Michael, is that the same as {jing-wa trang-mo}?)

We're talking about two different things now. And I'll answer that. I'll quote okay. He says, and I like this, I think this might help you. [Tibetan quotation]. Which means, {jing-wa trang-mo}, this is plain dullness, right, {jing-wa trang-mo}, is that subtle dullness. In plain dullness, you've lost something but you haven't lost something else. What is that?

(Student: fixation but no, no clar-)

No clarity. In plain dullness. You're fixed on the object but it's totally, it's not clear in your mind at all. And in the subtle form is more dangerous, because you have what?

(Students: [unclear])

You still have fixation, you do have clarity, but there's no strength to it, there's no intensity to it. There's no power to it.

(Student: that's called {jing-wa}?)

Plain {jing-wa} is where you lose the clarity completely. {Jing-wa trang-mo}, which is its brother, okay, actually it's {trang-mo}, okay, {jing-wa trang-mo} is the subtle form of dullness, okay? And that's the dangerous one. That's where you are fixed on the object, it is still apparent to your mind, you have some clarity, but the clarity is very feeble and the clarity has no power or strength to it, and you're satisfied with that, and you stay there for a long time. And it just leads you into a state of gross dullness. Eventually, it flips you back into losing the clarity.

(Stilwell: same antidote for the subtle dullness?)

We're gonna talk about it.

(Student: is {she-shin}, then, the antidote for both of those?)

Uh, yeah, it's not really the antidote, and that's the point that Ariel made, it's more the thing that yells "Hey".

(Student: it's the alarm.)

yeah, it's the watch, it's the, they call it {so-pa} in Tibet. {So-pa} means a guard or watchman, or a - who is that?

(Student: a gatekeeper?)

In India they have this guy, they still have this guy, who walks around all night long, and he has a staff, and he bangs it on the ground, you know, all the people in the neighbourhood hire this guy, and he walks around all night, and he bangs this stick on the ground, and you hear him. And it's so you know he's doing his job. And uh, thieves run away. They hear him coming and they run away. They keep the thieves out of the rich neighbourhoods in New Delhi. So that's just, his job is only to yell. And Ariel's right in that sense. He's not stopping, it's not an antidote for those states of mind. It's being aware that they've come up.

And then you do the next, then you have to watch out for the next problem, which is not doing anything about it.

(Student: [unclear])

So, she asked me to write the Tibetan for the subtle form, just this part. So, to answer Tim's question, the antidote for both of them coming up is the same, which is to yell. But the antidote that stops them when they come up is different. And that's what we're talking about now. We're talking about what do you do when you get dullness - you {drin-pa}, you tighten up on the object.

(Student: so that's a specific definition of {du je-pa}.)

It's half of {du je-pa}. It's the action you take when you get dull. But we didn't get yet to the action you take when you get agitated. So this is a general word for taking action. When you get dull you're gonna take one series of actions, and when you get, and I haven't written it yet, and when you get agitation which means your mind goes to a desirable object, you're gonna take a different action. So we're only talking about the action you take when you start to get dull.

(Student: which is which of these?)

{Drin-pa}.

(Student: have we discussed the action for the subtle...)

Maybe it'd be better if I did this. No, that wouldn't be better. This is 4(a), really, okay? This is one-half of taking action. I'm sorry, this is [unclear]... What action do you take? Well it depends on which of the two problems you noticed in the last step. If you noticed yourself... in the text he says, he doesn't say "being dull" he says, "catch yourself as you're sliding into dullness". {She-shin}, the watchfulness, is supposed to trigger, at the verge of sliding into dullness. But as you get dullness, or after you've had it for a half-hour, you {drin-pa}, you {drin-pa}, you tighten up on the object. Now how you do that, he's got a whole series of advice here, and it's good.

(Student: is that, {drin-pa}, is that the correction -)

For this problem. And it's half of this, which is "taking action". The problem is not doing anything when you notice those things coming up. The correction is

to start concentrating better. Yeah.

(Student: why isn't that g, b, something, instead of 4a?)

(student: well it has to be g-something)

I'm sorry, it should be g-1.

(Student: so the lineage is {jing-wa, du mi je-pa, du je-pa, drin-pa} that's the...)

Say again?

(Student: that's the order, right? First you get {jing-wa}...)

Yeah, let's suppose you got {jing-wa}, then you do {she-shin}, which is Hey! I got dullness. You notice it. Then you do...

(student: {du je-pa}

{Du je-pa}, in the form of {drin-pa}. You notice yourself getting dull, the notice is the {she-shin}, he yells "Hey, you're sliding into dullness". That was already last week. Now, what do you do? You concentrate. You tighten up your concentration.

(Student: so g, then also comes after 3, because when the guard sounds the alarm...)

Then the guys run out of their houses and beat up the thief. That's {du je-pa}. {Du je-pa} is the guys coming out to take action. The soldiers waking up after the watch - what do you call that, in the army?

(Stilwell: the sentry?)

The sentry yells.

(Student: so how do you tighten up your concentration?)

We're just about to talk about it. I wanna make sure everybody's got, still with me, okay, anyone confused? No?

(Student: but we're not talking about subtle yet, right?)

Uh... we're gonna talk about subtle. We'll talk about both, actually. Yeah?

(Student: in the monasteries, do the monks get to check with like, a mentor or an older monk, or are they just presented with this text, and they have to follow this process?)

No, when you enter the monastery, an older - you have two kinds of teachers, you have three kinds of teachers. One is your house teacher, and he's like your parent. And he can be a great scholar, or he can be like a cook at the monastery. But he becomes your father, and he teaches you reading and writing and manners, monkly manners; he tells you what to memorize, and he feeds you, at his expense. The monastery doesn't help. And then later on you meet your scripture teacher, and he becomes like your main scripture teacher, and then he may or may not be your house teacher, but usually not. And then he takes you through the scriptures. And then you've got like adjunct professors, like there'll be a specialist in Abhidharma, let's say your scripture teacher is not a specialist in Abhidharma, so he'll say, okay, for Abhidharma I want you to go to this other teacher and study with him. So, if you had a question about this, you'd normally go to your scripture teacher, and ask him. And it's a very close relationship. It's very very nice. It's a lifetime relationship, you never, it's permanent.

(Stilwell: you hope you get along...)

Yeah, yeah.

(Student: so Michael, do either or neither of those teachers become your root teacher?)

Well, I'd say, oftentimes it's your house teacher, in a way, um, but oftentimes it's your scripture teacher, but it may not be either one really.

(Student: so most of the time...)

I'd say most often it's your, if you asked them, it'd be a 50-50 split between your house teacher and your... Your house teacher is, might be in charge of 30 young men, so you might feel closer to your scripture teacher in that case. If you were in a small house, a college, when I say house it's a college, there's 12 colleges in our monastery, some of the colleges are very small, and your house teacher

might be only have two students, and then you sort of then you get to feel more close to him. I think it just depends on who it is, when they speak, it's a {jin-lap} for you. It's that sixth preliminary we talked about. When he teaches you something, it strikes you and changes you. And the person who has that ability to strike that chord in you I think becomes your root lama. So, {drin-pa}. {Drin-pa} means to tighten up your concentration. Now, the first question that Je Tsong Khapa, no, I'm sorry, now we're in Kyabje Pabongka. Pabongka says, "do you have to stop meditating? Do you have to give up the object to fix your {jing-wa}?" He says no. And that's the first level of {drin-pa}. So the first meaning of {drin-pa}, which could be on your homework, is to just not to give up the object, and to just try to tighten your concentration.

(Student: is this what you were talking about, the methods?)

Yeah. Now I'm gonna tell you all the kinds of {drin-pa}. The best one to do, if you can do it is don't give up on meditating on the object, keep it in mind, and just try to increase the clarity of it. Try to bring back the clarity of it. There, I'm sorry, the intensity of the clarity.

(Stilwell: but wait a minute. The intensity is the subtleness, and the clarity is the gross...)

Yeah, it's really the gross {jing-wa}, you've lost all the clarity.

(Stilwell: so when you tighten up on gross {jing-wa} you're trying to get back clarity.)

Yeah you're just bringing back plain clarity. So the first kind of {drin-pa}, the first kind of tightening your concentration, is just to try to bring back your concentration on the object until you have some good clarity. What's the distinction between this and the next level of {drin-pa}, you haven't given up on keeping the object in front of you, which implies what about the next kind of {drin-pa}? Yeah, okay. The second kind of {drin-pa} is where, okay, it's gone too far, you can't keep the object in mind, and when you try to increase the clarity, you're not successful.

(Student: is that subtle?)

It gets to be subtle, and he says that. If you try to increase, and it's not happening, he actually says, it's flipping towards gross {jing-wa}, which means

the {jing-wa} has got so serious that you're gonna have to give up the object for a few minutes.

(Student: the first one is don't give up the object and -)

Yeah, and just try to make it more -

(student: concentrate on the clarity of it.)

Try to get it more clear to your mind.

(Student: the second one is just start over again.)

Well, there's a lot of, no, it's to shift to another object, okay. And he says something nice, which I'll translate for you.

(Student: so the second one is shift to another object. Student: well sometimes they just go away from it for a while and then come back to it, but not specifying changing the object.)

That sounds like changing to me.

(Student: no, using the same object in meditation, but taking a break.)

And putting your mind where?

(Student: just, not meditating.)

Well, we'll talk about it. This is what it says here.

(Student: like, break the session.)

We'll talk about it. We'll talk about it. He says {Tibetan quote from Pabongka}, he says, the cause of subtle dullness is some kind of {shum-ba}. {Shum-ba} is a very interesting word. It means almost like a kind of depression.

(Student: could you write that down?)

Yeah, I don't wanna write too many things down on the board, but since you asked, you know, you don't have to write this, okay? People ask me, what do

you do for depression in Tibet. And this is one kind. {Shum-ba} means where you just kind of lost your confidence. Or you're not, or you have some kind of depression in your mind. And he says this and dullness are related. Therefore he says...

(student: I'm sorry, that sentence, the cause of what is depression?)

He says {shum-ba} contributes to {jing-wa}. {Shum-ba} meaning some kind of, what did I say, depression, loss of confidence really, and he says that really contributes to dullness. You don't have to know that, I didn't wanna write it down. And he says: what do you do then? You have to do something to restore your, your, I don't know what you'd call it. It's a real hard word in Tibetan. It's called {seng to-pa} And {seng to-pa} means to uplift yourself. We call it uplift. It means think about something that's gonna bring your mind back up. He says so the second kind of {drin-pa} is, move your mind to something else which is going to uplift your mind. Yeah?

(Student: so does that mean something that you have an easier time with?)

No, he's got several specific thoughts which will {seng to-pa} you. Which will uplift you.

(Student: so in Tibetan, it's...)

Oh that comes later.

(Student: discouraged and encouraged?)

Yeah, like that. {seng to-pa} is a... well you'll see some examples, okay. I'll give you his examples.

(Student: for number two, you just want us to concentrate on the clarity, without the intensity?)

Well, this problem, {jing-wa} which is dullness, is some kind of disease of your clarity, yeah.

(Student: so number two, we're only concentrating on the clarity, we're not concentrating on the intensity.)

Which number two do you mean? Oh. It's where it's where, you've really given up on meditating on that object now. He's saying that your mind is so far down -

(student: no, the one before shift to another object)

(stilwell: tighten concentration.)

(student: no, number two was keep object in mind, and concentrate on clarity...)

No, that was just number one. That wasn't the number two. So what do you do to uplift your mind? Okay, you've got {jing-wa}, the alarm sounded, {she-shin}, okay. Then you try to take action. {Du je-pa}. The action you took, because you were dull and not because you were agitated is {drin-pa}. You tried to tighten your concentration. But it didn't work. Maybe it got worse. So what you do now is, you take your mind off that object of meditation and move it to another object of meditation, which is one of the following objects of meditation. He says the best one is, and that could be on your homework, is just thinking how fortunate you are to have reached this kind of a birth, with your present dharma circumstances. And that's the most powerful one.

(Stilwell: so then you no longer doing single-pointed concentration?)

You are, but you changed the point.

(Stilwell: so you're not really doing any analytical thinking...)

You've lost your original point of concentration.

(Student: this is once you've tried to go to another object of concentration... [unclear])

This is where you've tried to tighten up on the object, you tried to make it clearer, and it failed. Now you get rid of that object, and you go to this object, in order to bring your mind back.

(Students: so this is d 2, right, so...[unclear])

It's a part of {drin-pa}, really, it's a kind of tightened on the mind, by trying to uplift the mind. There's all kinds of tightening.

(Student: it is the same topic.)

Yeah, same topic. This is a kind of {drin-pa}. It's under the category of {drin-pa}. Which means, tightening it up.

[Unclear]

No it's not. I told you I'd give you three or four different kinds of {drin-pa}. Three or four ways of tightening up.

(Student: but this isn't like an analytical meditation, this is more reminding yourself, bringing it to mind, you're still sort of stable, you're concentrating...)

Ah, no, I think it's gotta become an analytical meditation now, 'cause you're gonna have to count your {nyel-jor}'s, all eighteen of them. And we're not going to get into it, but what it means is, and by the way I'll say something about, this is a topic we're going to cover when? What's the last subject of...

(student: object of meditation?)

yeah, what to meditate about. Actually, by the time you finish this course, you're gonna be meditating on the subject, on the categories of the Lam Rim. You're gonna learn to meditate on the entire structure of your career in the dharma, up to the time when you become a tantric deity. You're gonna get all of the major categories that you have to work on up to that point. And then you're gonna meditate on those, and that's gonna be your object of meditation. I think what's his name, Alexander Berzin, who helped me come to meet my lama, he would do, he, he translated the whole Lam Rim, it wasn't Pabongka's but it was based on Pabongka's, Lam Rim, you know, it was like four volumes, and he gave it to Harvard for his dissertation. He would meditate on the whole thing the whole morning. Like up till noon he would go through all, every subject category. It was like four volumes, in his mind. And he had it down to where he could go through it. So he knew his road map. And that will be our object of meditation. So, when your {drin-pa} gets to that point, you gotta change your subject, you should change to the subject of how lucky you are in your dharma practice. You're lucky to be alive. Not lucky, but proud and happy. And what he's talking about is a kind of joy. What he's saying is, when it gets so bad that you can't keep your mind on the object any more. And you've tried to tighten it but it didn't work, and get some joy about being alive, having teachings, being

healthy enough to study, having the opportunity to study, being in a place where the books are, not being handicapped, etc. And he says a beautiful thing here, he says: you and I {tibetan quotation} haven't meditated on this much, and we're not used to this thinking, we're not used to thinking this way much, but, and in the first few times you try it, in the first few weeks you try it, you won't get any big light coming on. Okay so big deal I'm alive. You won't think, nothing will uplift you, you'll say, okay, it's supposed to thrill me that I'm alive. Nothing happens. He says {tibetan quotation} but he says once you have meditated on this subject long enough, and you understand the importance that you're alive and that you have dharma, it'll be just like throwing cold water on your face. He says it'll have the same effect as taking ice water and throwing it on your face. And you'll get some kind of, some kind of bliss will come in your heart, and then that {jing-wa} will be defeated. Then what should you do? Go back to your original object, which for a beginner is normally a Buddha, your lama, or some picture, go back to your original object.

(Student: how much time do you spend on this, thinking about how fortunate...)

We'll talk about it. Well, until the {jing-wa} goes away, right? Until, I mean like, until you feel bright again, and then you put the object back in your mind. Yeah.

(Student: [unclear]...)

yeah it is. It is for us.

(Student: it's difficult for me, it seems to be easier to understand the various problems and corrections when you're talking about visualizing an object, rather than analytical meditation.)

Yeah I understand. But it's not true if you think about it.

(Student: no, just in terms of what's... whether an image is clear versus an idea...)

Yeah, well maybe you're not, don't forget, he said, clarity doesn't refer to how clear the picture is, he said that very strongly, he said it refers to how clear your state of mind is, how bright your mind is...

(student: but usually the two things are related...)

how sharp your mind is. Oh yeah, if your mind is dull the object is dull, but not

vice-versa. See what I mean?

(Student: with dullness in an image, they talk about visualizing something, like turn on the lights, make it brighter, if you find yourself...)

No, it's not that you're, that's gonna come, but when I say your mind get clearer, I don't mean, and a lot of people mistake it for some kind of lightness, like that. It's not that. It's invisible. It's like water, and it's just like you're scuba diving in dirty water or you're scuba-diving in clean water, you know, if you've ever scuba-dived.

(Stilwell: [unclear])

Yeah, I'm talking about the state of your mind and not the state of, I think a lot of people when you say clarity they think brightness in sense of that light, it's not that, it's more like clarity in the sense of...

(students: details, of sharpness)

No. No, it's the ... of the mind, not the details, it's the mental state of bright and bushy-tailed. It's that. Not referring to the object. Because of your lack of bright and bushy-tailed, what happens to the object? It gets unclear.

(Stilwell: so you mean up, when you say bright and bushy-tailed, you mean sort of up.)

I mean alert, and powerfully concentrative.

(Stilwell: like an excited energy level almost.)

I don't mean to that because that can be close to losing your concentration, but I mean as I said before, when you're into a movie and you're like... you know, when you're at your best, mentally, when you're fresh, you're into a problem at work, or when you're in a computer, I mean computers can really do it to you. You see these programmer guys, you know, and you say come on, it's two o'clock, you wanna go home yet, and they go nononononono... That's like concentration.

(Student: I'm a little confused about, I thought shamata, especially later, when you're really into it, that discursive thought was not helpful.)

No, it's a error. The teaching of Kamalashila and Je Rinpoche is that to concentrate on a series of thoughts, on an analysis, is shamata. In the, when shamata is linked with {hlak-tong}, in the sense of the direct perception of emptiness, you will not have discursive thought. You cannot have discursive thought. Because discursive thought is what? Which one of the two truths?

(Student: it's relative)

It's relative truth. You cannot focus on a relative truth while you're perceiving emptiness directly. Only a Buddha can. A normal, any human being can't. So you can't have discursive thought, and as you get into yogic shamata, yogic direct perception, there's a kind of perception called yogic perception, which is neither, it's not discursive. And that you won't have discursive thought going on. But definitely up to that state you have to have, cause you have to be thinking of the reasons why something is empty, which we covered in the last class, for those of you who still didn't think about it. Yah, you will. And Je Rinpoche Je Tsong Khapa felt that, he emphasized it, because he felt that, too many people in Tibet thought that it wasn't a kind of meditation, and he states that several times, he states that a lot. Okay. So he says. That's one way to pep up your mind. [Unclear] The next one is to think about the benefits of...

(student: that's another object, right?)

Yeah, if you don't, let's say you want a different object than thinking about how lucky you are, he says you can meditate about the benefits of behaving correctly towards a lama. And that's something we haven't studied yet, and we'll study it later.

(Stilwell: Why that? Why's that good particularly versus something else?)

A lot of these, and you have to keep in mind, a lot of these are like, what's that kind of coffee, with the crystals? They're like freeze-dried {tsok-sok drip-jang}. [Laughter] They're like freeze-dried, concentrate virtue collectors. And there is no higher collector of virtue than to serve your lama correctly. There is no higher way to collect goodness than to serve your lama. So, so just meditating on it is already, it's almost like you're creating the karma on the spot to be able to go back to your object and be able to have clarity towards it.

(Student: so you're creating merit by meditating on a virtuous object and when

you take a break, you're still on a virtuous object.)

Well, in the first place you're trying to concentrate on his physical image, and now, you're concentrating on, it's a discursive thought, and you're thinking about all the reasons it's nice to, all the good things that can come out of being of having a proper relationship with him, because if you don't, you'll never get anywhere, period. And that's the first step in the Lam Rim. Of all the stages that you go through, that's number one. Because if you don't have a relationship with some lama like that, nothing will ever happen. It can't. And if you mess it up, your practice won't go well.

(Student: what if your lama is not a Buddha?)

Your lama is always a Buddha. We'll prove it, later. Right now you can't believe that. Right now you can't, ah, and it doesn't matter whether he is or not, I'm talking about what your perception is, which is actually what he is. That's another story.

(Student: what if you don't have a lama, or you consider the Dalai Lama your lama - how can you behave well to him when you never see him?)

They say, it's funny you know, what is the structure of the Lam Rim. The Lam Rim, the first division of the Lam Rim, which has thousands of divisions, is {unclear Tibetan}, which means, when you're in meditation, and when you're out of meditation. And actually, the principal way of this guru yoga, this behavior towards your lama, is during meditation. So if you're serving him mentally, if you're just meditating on the practice of serving him, this is one important way of, you're doing it. So it's not, you don't have to worry about that. Somebody asked him in Arizona if you meet your teacher once a year, is it still a relationship, and he said yeah.

(Student: he said but you shouldn't ask stupid questions.)

Yeah, he said don't bother him, but, I have a feeling that any question you asked him would be [unclear]

(student: does it have to be your root lama, or just your lama? When you say lama...)

The definition of a lama is anybody who has taught you a, b, and c. On up.

(Student: a,b,c meaning the letter a, b, and c)

Yeah, your first grade teacher should be treated as your lama, period. In Tibetan it's called {ka, kha, ga} anyone who's taught you so much as a, b, and, c. Any person who's giving you the kindness of teaching you the first three letters of the alphabet when you were a little kid, that you should treat with that code of behavior.

(Student: so it has nothing to do with a root lama.)

no. And I, this is a long subject. I didn't wanna get into it, it's not the subject tonight. But you have to study that, you have to study about that. It's very, ah...

(student: it's in the red book up there, very nicely...)

Yeah, it's in the red book. But I think you have to, it's one of those things that Buddhism says that's not natural for our culture, and you have to study it, and and you heard it once now, and you actually have to have it proven to you that it's useful, and then you'll want to do it, so right now just leave it like -

[end of side A]

- and, it's very hard to think of what that means. But I think that's where you actually try to imagine some kind of brightness.

(Stilwell: like white light?)

Yeah, but I hesitate to say it definitively. I'll ask Rinpoche. I, I don't feel comfortable about that. I remember me and Art struggling with this translation fifteen years ago and it's a difficult, it's a difficult... It means think brightness. Now, what that is - I think it is, you know there are many meditations where you imagine white light in your body and things like that, I believe that's what it refers to, but I'd like to check it. He says if you still have the problem, if none of the above works, now we're talking almost of a third level of {drin-pa}, alright. What was the first level of {drin-pa}, broadly speaking?

(Student: to bring back the clarity.)

yeah. You keep your mind on that object that you started with and you just try

to regenerate your clarity, you know, make it more clear to yourself, which means, try to bring your mind back up to a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed state. Doesn't mean try to see the Buddha's fingers a little bit better. You're working on your mind, not on the object. You're trying to uplift your state of mind. As you look at the object. So you don't give up the object but you try to tune up your mind. By the way, he says learning the art of tuning up your mind is much more important than learning the art of...what's gonna come next? Bringing down your mind. The next problem, we didn't even get to it yet, is gonna be how to tune your mind down [unclear], but he says the most common problem of meditation is dullness, is where your mind has gone, sunk, it's sunk too low. And now you're trying to bring it back up, you're trying to tune up your mind, and bring it back to an alert state. So the first level of concentration is to, is where you haven't gone too low and you can just tune it up a little bit and you're back to bright, you're back to alert. You wanna turn that on?

(Student: it's kinda like the flame went on the stove, the burner...)

Yeah, just turn it up a little bit, by the way, he quotes the Buddha for this process. He says think of yourself as a guitar string. You know, if you get too loose, you get flat. Tune it up a little bit. If you get too sharp, if you get too tight you get sharp. You just don't sound good. The Buddha said this, and he's talking about meditation. He says the process of meditation is like tuning an instrument. And it's constant tuning. You know when you drive a car and you notice, when you first drive, you keep your hands still, and slowly the car goes this way, or slowly... and then you learn to keep going like this, and meditation is just like that. It's like tuning the thing, then it gets a little flat, then you tune it up a little, you go too far, it gets a little sharp, I mean, it's this constant practice of tuning it. It's like those small adjustments - when you watch somebody drive, they don't hold their arms still, they're always going like this. Yeah.

(Student: do you mean to say that the development of shamata is like that, or that after you've developed shamata it's still a balancing act.?)

We'll talk about it, it's coming. I'm gonna talk about it. I'll talk about that question. If I don't answer it by the end of the night, ask me again. Okay, yeah.

(Stilwell: so how do you do that, I mean, I thought it meant trying to see things more...)

{drin-pa} means tightening it up.

(Stilwell: yeah, but, how do you do that?)

It's like, it's hard. It's like telling someone "oh, try to be fresh while you're tired." [Laughs]. It's exactly that. You know. It's when your mind has gone down, your alertness level has gone down, and sometimes you can return to your original alertness level just by trying to. Just by thinking to. And he says if that doesn't work, then think of something that's interesting to you. It's interesting you know when I try to read Madhyamika, I don't know why, it always puts me to sleep. [Laughter] For twenty years it's put me to sleep. But if I stay up late and watch a good movie, you know, I can watch three or four in a row, you know, and the alertness level is there. I think it's just, it's a will power or something. So he says if you haven't gone too far down, just tune it back up. If you drop too far down, think of something that makes you alert. You know bad objects, I can think of some bad objects that make my mind very alert. You know, desire objects, and my mind will go like that. I mean, but he's saying, think of some object that will return you to alertness, and he's suggesting... what's the most powerful?

(Student: how fortunate you are...)

To be alive. I also like that one because it applies to everybody who can read this book. If you got the book and you're alive, well, you can be happy about that. It's not like being happy about being smart because some of us aren't, you know, or, you know, like that. Just be happy that you're alive and that you can study dharma. And he says if you don't think that's such a big deal, you have a problem. So now, that was the second level of {drin-pa}. Now I'm gonna talk about the third level of {drin-pa}. The third level he says, stop the meditation. Get up and take some steps to stop being - excuse me? [Unclear] No I don't think, the second one had a lot of different ones inside of it.

[Students: unclear debate about numbering/lettering systems]

That's still one of the second types.

[Student: there was like three parts to the second one...]

yeah, there were many ways to get off the object and use some other kind of thoughts to raise your mind back up, to uplift your thoughts again. And they included thinking of how good it is to serve a lama, thinking about how lucky it

is to be alive, and some kind of brightness.

(Student: so those all were collectively g-2, and now we're on g-3.)

Yeah. By the way, another one that he mentions is thinking about the good qualities of a Buddha. And we have to study that someday...

(student: well all that was part of g-1, right?)

Yeah, it's g-1-b. [Laughter] you asked for it.

(Students:[unclear] so g-1 has three parts, now.... we're on g-1-c...)

When you think about it, you don't have to ask these questions if you think logically: okay the first attempt you make to tighten your mind back up is, don't give up on the object, keep the object and tune it up a little - your mind. Your alertness level. And the whole things I just talked about were all, okay, when it gets so bad that it's not enough to tune up your alertness level, and you have to think of something else to uplift your mind, and get you alert again. Now let's say it's gotten really bad, and none of those things work, he says: break the meditation. Get up. And he says, maybe these are good for Tibet. Go stand in a cold place. [Laughter]. I mean go get some fresh air.

(Student: what if you live in New York?)

(student: go stand outside, and the fear of getting mugged will brace you.)

[laughter]

He says, go to some place where you can see - this word is beautiful in Tibetan, and I can't think of an American, English - go see some wide-open places. Go look at some wide-open places. And in Tibet it would mean go to the Ga-mo valley, to the little mountain there and look twenty miles off into the... you know I guess you could go up to the Empire State building. Some people, some lamas say just go out and look at the sky. That's just a big - something big that gets you out of yourself. Something expansive. That was his second suggestion. There's the third one I really like, and I'm really upset that nobody taught me in the monastery, cause later I saw people doing it and I realized how good it was, and it's just pacing. Walking back and forth.

(Student: the third one?)

Yeah.

(Student: the fourth one... was this part of the stop meditation?)

Yeah, after you've given up on the meditation. After you've stood up. And in the monastery I started to notice that a lot of the good geshe, you know, we have to memorize for like three or four hours. I used to sit there with a book in front of me, and try to memorize, and I'd always doze off, and then I'd notice that they go, they walk like pretty far, you know, and then they're down like this, like Napoleon, and they're... [laughter], and they do that for hours. And it's a way to keep fresh, and to keep your attention on something, and it's good for studying. And now, I'm, I've always done that, when I'm memorizing, I go and I just find a long place to go back and forth, and it works.

(Student: it's better than sitting...)

To sit, and try to look, and get bored and doze off, this is great. It really works nice. I'm really upset that someone didn't teach me, 'cause I spent six seven eight years trying to do it the other way, and I did, but I always used to fall asleep. Now it's great. You're getting some fresh air, you're moving your body's moving and you can keep your alertness up.

(Student: so Michael, you're not supposed to do all these, but just one of them.)

Ah, pick the one that fits your situation. I mean that's true of all these things. Use common sense. Use common sense. If you live in an apartment like this, you can't pace very well. I tried it, it just doesn't work.

(Student: but pacing without an object doesn't seem, I can see...)

He's just saying

(student: if you're memorizing... but pacing as a way of refreshing yourself doesn't, is it really pacing?)

Yeah, it says here, or he says go wash off your face with some water, go, what do you call it, throw some?

(Stilwell: splash your face?)

Splash your face with some water.

(Students: [unclear])

It's Pabongka Rinpoche, but he's quoting a lot of people and mainly, he's still on Kamalashila, I believe. He's mentioned Kamalashila. It's not himself.

(Student: is splash water on face part of pacing?)

(student: not unless you pace to the sink.)

So you pick the one that fits you best. Is this hot yet, Lee?

(Student: yeah, I think it burned. [Laughter])

okay take a break. What're we gonna do next?

(Student: do the agitate.)

Yeah, what to do if you have the opposite problem, which is you catch your mind wandering off to what're you gonna do this afternoon, you know, whaddy you gotta do after you get up, alright.

[Unclear]

Yeah, g2.

(Student: what does that {gš-pa} mean?)

{gš-pa} is that what did we call it? Agitation. I dunno if that's such a good word, but I guess because the literal meaning of it is, o.k., 'cause it means like wild man. You know {gš} means [pant pant pant] [laughter] really, seriously. {Jing-wa} was dullness, right? Two "I"'s? That's the kind of thing I take a point off in your homework, didja notice?

(Student: Yeah, I've been noticing that, Michael...)

By the way, if you're about to get a hundred and I find any mis-spelling, I can't

call it perfect. I'm sorry. [Laughter]

(Student: when did you make that rule?) [laughter]

I mentioned it...[laughter, unclear] these things seem to be passed on through generations, you know, Laura Segal, homework number four, class two, you know, and it's not spelled right. Am I gonna say this is perfect? Nah. That's ... [unclear]...

(student: you mean the transliteration?)

Any spelling. [Unclear]

(student: I didn't even know what rules we were playing by.)

English spelling. Okay. {Hlu-pa} means, if we're still on the guitar string, example, what would {hlu-pa} be?

(Students: it sounds like loosen...)

Loosen it up. Yeah, and that's exactly what it means, {hlu-pa} means loosen it up. What's the problem? The problem occurred back in number three. You got agitated, which means that your mind went to a desire object.

(Stilwell: or virtuous one)

And {she-shin} did, {she-shin} did what? Alertness said heyheyhey. And then the troops come out and {hlu-pa}. The action that you take is {hlu-pa}. Loosen up.

[Unclear]

Yeah, agitation means you're too tight. So you, the antidote, the correction, is {hlu-pa}. By the way if I ask you what's the correction for problem number four, you're gonna say, taking action. If I say what actions do you take you say well it depends on what the problem is. If the problem is dullness, you tighten up. If the problem is agitation, you loosen up. And the Buddha himself taught it. He called it a {pi-wang}. A {pi-wang} is an Indian lute. By the, what was one of the antidotes, what was one of the ways to tighten up your mind, like if you wanted to uplift your mind. He said that being down was almost like some kind of

depression or discouragement. And the way to uplift it was to take some joy out of being alive and things like that, and so now he says, now, {gš-pa} is sorta like being too joyful, it's like being too happy, and your mind's goin' on like hey, what's for dinner? [Laughs] he says, by the way, this happened to King Tse-tsang, and that's the reason he never perceived emptiness directly. Who was Tse-tsang, do you know? Tse-tsang was the Buddha's father. He had the honor of being taught by his son, and according to this scripture, he never reached, in that life he never saw, 'cause he had that problem, as he meditated, he would think, he was little too up, okay?

(Student: what do you loosen up, your concentration?)

I'll say, he has it here very nice, let me...

[unclear]

He says it's where you're too tight on the object. And you're so tight on the object that you start to get, being too tight on the object, trying to concentrate too hard, he says that comes first, and then in the next few seconds, your mind is off to another object. By trying to concentrate too hard, you create a circumstance where your mind in the next few seconds has gone off to another object.

(Stilwell: so it's not really discursive thought...)

Then it's called {ku-su do-pa}. {Ku-su do-pa} means like when you get too busy at work, and someone says something to you and you're like no, no, you're narrowed-minded, and it means like, the mind got too squished. It's where you're concentrating so hard that it becomes a fault. And it's not good concentration. It's not good alertness. It's almost where you're obsessed with something.

(Stilwell: so this is we're not talking about in this case where you just have various discursive thoughts because of not paying attention or having thoughts drift in...)

No. But what he's saying is, that happens right after, normally if you're concentrating so hard that it that you that a few seconds later you're mind is off to another object. It gets tired, it's a fault. Yeah.

(Student: I'm not familiar with discursive thought and...)

Discursive means where you're talking to yourself in your mind.

(Student: and what about the analytical meditation? What is that opposed to?)

We're gonna talk, well I think it's maybe a good thing to talk about. There's different kinds of meditation, and I was gonna bring it up during the object. So don't write it down, just be aware. {Jok-gom} means one Buddha image, and you're fixed on it. {Che-gom} means you take a problem, a philosophical question, and you put it center stage in your mind and you investigate it. In meditation. That is a kind of meditation.

(Student: analytical.)

Yeah, and that's Je Tsong Khapa's big thing. He says don't think it's not a kind of meditation. It has all the qualities of a good meditation. {Che-gom}. And then there's {shar-gom}. {Shar-gom} means it's kind of like a review meditation, which is actually the meditation you're gonna end up with at the end of this course, which is where you, you're trying to take your mind along a certain train of thoughts, over and over and over, until it becomes natural for you. You know, what comes after that, this comes, what comes after that, that comes... you take your mind, they're doing this thing in linguistics and child development theory now, a child should learn another language, because it opens certain synapses that otherwise wouldn't get opened, and they learn that they have a certain series of thoughts that they never would have gone through. It's a series of thoughts that you go, like a racetrack which you know very well. Until it becomes natural. You see in the Olympics these skiers that, they mentioned that they memorize the gates, the position of the gates, they'd sit up there and they do a {shar-gom}, that's a {shar-gom}. They think I'll take three breaths, I'll turn left, I'll go another twenty feet I'll turn right, and they go through the course many times and memorize it.

(Student: mental obstacle course)

That's a {shar-gom}. That's called {shar-gom}. So really there's three kinds of. Later. I don't wanna get into it today. So {hlu-pa} means loosen up. So now I'm gonna tell you some ways to loosen it up. The way he got into joy was how? When he was talking about -

(student: by reflecting on his -)

Why did he come to joy? Why did he mention joy?

(Student: uplifting, right?)

Yeah, because he tied discouragement to the state of dullness. Interesting. He tied discouragement, and what was the other one? Depression, to a state of dullness. So now he's doing the opposite. He's tying over-joy to the state of agitation. I don't know, what would you call that? {Go-wa} means joy, but it means excessive.

(Stilwell: unrealistic joy?)

No, it's, you know when you're giggly, silly happy.

(Students: hilarity, hysterical...)

Not hysterical, but you know you're at work, you get a little bit hyper, and you start makin these crazy jokes, and it's really not appropriate, but you're like hyper, it's almost like hyper. Hyper, maybe. A little bit too happy. Kids do it just before they start crying, ten minutes before they start screaming. So, he says, what would be the antidote for that? You see, the antidote for depression as tied to dullness, was joy. The antidote for excessive joy, excessive giddiness, would be what?

(Students: think of something sad.)

Think of something sad. And he gives some examples. His first one is death. Death. Your coming death, your own coming death. That's the meditation called {chi-wa mi-tak-pa}, it's what we're doing on Friday night. It's what we'll be doing as of tomorrow night. We'll be doing it from {b. Lam Rim Chenmo}, Je Tsong Khapa. The meditation on your approaching death. And he says, that's the first way, like at work, that's when your boss walks in. Why's that report late? Suddenly all you're getting is like, just goes boom, you know. That's the first one he mentions. The second one he mentions is the suffering of life. The sufferings of this life. Which are three, you guys know. What are they?

(Student: aging...)

Not that easy. Well {ke na ga chi} is four, that's another set.

(Student: suffering of suffering?)

Yeah, the suffering of suffering. Which is raw suffering. The example in the scriptures is, do you remember? A back ache. Which you can meditate on.

(Student: and then the suffering of change.)

Suffering of change, and what was the example in scripture, do you remember? The taste of a good meal. Because it is necessarily connected to hunger. The second part of it is always suffering. And what's the third example? By the way, all the pleasures of life are that way, so they're not pleasures, according to Buddhism. Third one?

(Student: pervasive suffering?)

Yeah, pervasive suffering, which means, just to be alive in this kind of life, which was propelled by karma and your bad thoughts. The nature of your life, the nature of you. We're debating out in New Jersey the advanced texts on meditation, with all the monks there, and the nun there, and they're talking about how there are certain kinds of wrong meditation where you just get more and more blissed out, there's like seventeen stages, and this one, you actually can get to a point where you no longer even have any desire to be happy, mentally, and then you get to a higher state where you don't even want to be neutral anymore, to be neutral is to be neutral in this body is not desirable, even if you could reach a very high state of meditation where you didn't even want to be happy anymore, but you just wanna be stable, totally stable, if you didn't have the extra energy to not want to be in this kind of body and life, well then what would happen? You'd just meditate meditate meditate and then you'd get old and die, and there have been Buddhist people who've done that. The point is to get rid the last one also. We'll talk about it. He says if it still doesn't work, now we're getting to a more drastic antidote, right. It still doesn't work, you have to use drastic means, um, he says, count your breath, go to your breath, meditate on your breath. [Unclear].

(Student: why is this a drastic...)

Well you got the parallel to {drin-pa}, and I didn't mention, I didn't do a parallel, but now I'm gonna fix it, okay? What would be the parallel first step? What

would be the first step you would take? {Hlu-pa}. To loosen up? No, I made a mistake. That was the second one. What would be the first one? What would be the parallel to the first, what was the first kind of {drin-pa}?

(Student: tighten up...)

Yeah, so just don't let go of the object, but just back off a little bit. That would be the least drastic method to just back off of it a little bit. The word in Tibetan is very difficult, it's {tro-wa}, which means, it's what light does when you turn on a candle.

(Student: disperse...)

it means, loosen up a little.

(Stilwell: light loosens up?)

Well, it's the way it goes like, see you're like that and it's...

(Stilwell: like the gradations, you know the gradations become?)

It says, loosen up. Mentally loosen up on the object. If that doesn't work, then what? Change the object to what? Your death. If you can't bring your mind down by loosening up, think about your death, if that doesn't work, change to an external object, which is what? Your breath. Take your mind to your breath.

(Student: didn't we have the sufferings in between those two?)

Suffering was another kind of object you could use as, you could use death, or you could use the suffering of your life. As the medium drastic action.

(Student: oh. So both of those are g-2a.)

G2b, please.

(Student: no, G2a)

G2a was lighten up on the object, loosen up on the object, but don't lose it. G2 was loosen up, in general. All of these three are gonna be kinds of loosening up, as we had three kinds of G1's. Are you all right? There were three kinds of

tightening up, the first was what? Don't let go of the object, tighten up on it. The second one was what?

(Student: shift to another object)

Shift to another object, which, for example...

(Stilwell: the benefit of serving your Lama...)

The benefit of serving your Lama, etcetera. The third way of tightening up was what? Get up, splash water on your face, do whatever you want... Then, by the way, I forgot to say, after you splash water on your face, go back to sitting. [Laughter] By the way, I'll mention here a very very important instruction that I was always given and which is in this text and which I've seen in other texts. It's not related now, it's just a general instruction. Don't get up off your meditation seat in failure. Wait till it's going smooth, and then stop. They say, so you'll be happy to see it again. So otherwise you'll look at it and say, this thing beat me last night, and it's like I used to surf, you know, and if you got thrown down on a reef or something, you were supposed to go back out and stand up one more time, you know, just so you left it all right. Try to go back and leave it happily. Which also means, when your meditation time is just about over, and it's going pretty well, leave it. There's two characteristics then that happen. One is that you're happy about meditating. Secondly, the next meditation you have is almost like a flow from the last one. And it's true. If you meditate a lot, you'll start to notice that. If you meditate everyday, then the day you go to the office will seem to be almost like just a short break between your meditations, and not vice versa. It will seem to flow then, and when you sit down tomorrow, you're just picking up from today. Where you left off. It works. It works that way. If you do it, same time every day. And don't quit after this course is finished.

(Student: well then, how do you justify stopping the meditation and getting up, when you're having problems?)

Oh. But what I'm saying is, then, sit back down. Don't, I forgot to mention that. Sit back down.

(Student: so what is the parallel between {hlu-pa} and loosening up under the parallel to shift to another object?)

Shift to another object, either death, or your death, or the sufferings of life. Your

approaching death, or the general lousiness of your existence, okay. You can't win, right? Nothing can go well here. Those things which go well will end. These classes will end. Our relationship will end. There'll be a day when there's no longer any of these things. Pabongka Rinpoche, in his text, he had 10,000 people listening to him, and he got up and he said, you know, who'll be the last person to die in this room? And in fact, now that we're reading this book, they all are dead, I mean most of them are dead, you know, most of the people at the lecture are dead. So, you know. So that's the nature of our life. That's what we're trying to avoid.

(Student: but that's just the body.)

Yeah. Okay. That's all he says about that one. Okay, we'll finish now. Is everybody clear with that? So he asks, what are the parallelisms, I'll draw it, just to make sure we got it, okay? For dullness, what were you supposed to do, as the most basic kind of {drin-pa}? You were supposed to keep the object and do what? Tune up, right? Tune up alertness or something?

(Student: tighten up..)

These are all types of tightening up, I guess that's where Tom is getting confused, okay? These are all kinds of tightening. These three are all gonna be kinds of tightening, different levels of tightening, right? Hopefully, all you'll have to do is just be aware and tune up your alertness a little. If that doesn't work, what are you gonna do? Shift the object to... Uplift yourself with, best one is, you know, "I'm alive". In dharma. By the way, when you study the Lam Rim more carefully, you'll realize that you're about one in a billion. You know, sentient being-wise. You've achieved, you're at the peak. You know, you may not think you're the CEO of General Electric. You're actually in a better condition. You're actually more rare. You know you've reached a point which is infinitely more rare to reach than to be the President of the United States, or Miss America, or whatever. You're studying Dharma, on this planet, and you understand it, and you're able to use it. So your situation, you know, karmically, is infinitely more difficult to reach this point than any of those other ones. And what was to go outside.

(Student: go outside?)

[unclear] I prefer, pacing, you know? Pacing, go look at, you know, go out and look at the Hudson River or something...

(student: stop the meditation and get up.)

Yeah. So that's what I mean, to go outside. In this case, in the case of tightening, it means wash your face, whatever you have to do to get yourself out of that low alert state. Then, what?

(Stilwell: start over.)

Yeah. Go back.

(Stilwell: that's the important point.)

What are, this is what I meant, parallel. What are the parallels over here?

(Student: Loosen.)

Yeah. What are we gonna call it? It's not really alertness at that point, it's almost...

(student: fixation...)

...obsession or something, what's a good word for that? [Unclear] I dunno, I don't like any of these words. Too tight. What's the name for the problem of...

(students: you know, restricted... wound up... wound up.)

But it's some kind of word that means too concentrated on a point. [Unclear] Yeah, I guess you could say that, that's pretty good. Loosen up. By the way, all these kinds are kinds of loosening. I'll call it constriction. I like constriction, it sounds like a problem, right? Sounds like constipation. [Laughter] You have to loosen. These are all kinds of loosening, just as these were all kinds of...

(student: tightening.)

...tightening. Shift the object to what, what's a good one?

(Student: death or suffering.)

Yeah. Death, my death.

(Student: you're not gonna die, 'cause we asked you not to die.)

[laughs] if my karma will cooperate. Okay. Go to the outside, this is why I said go to the outside and not get up, because what does the outside mean here?

(Student: breaths)

Start counting your breaths, right. Go back to counting your breath.

(Stilwell: so when you're agitated you don't ever stop your meditation, is that the idea?)

Yeah, it sounds like that. He doesn't say anything... he doesn't say anything like get up or anything.

(Stilwell: because according to what you say...)

I'm sorry, he does say, uh, he says: even if you do that, and you're not able to get rid of your agitation, then, for the time being stop the meditation.

(Stilwell: so then you do stop on a down note.)

And he doesn't say anything else, but he, then he goes on to another subject. How do you count the breath, which is one?

[Unclear]

Yeah, that's not what we normally think in the west, you know. Out is one and in is two, I mean, out is half, out is first half, and in is second half.

(Stilwell: why does it matter?)

It's very important later. And I'll talk about it some day. It's the idea of bringing things into you. You never leave something by going out, okay?

(Student: ...this concept of constriction, is, it seems to me that what's happening is that you're tightness is not on the object. The tightness is kind of a general all-over tightness.)

Of your body?

(Student: ... of everything, that can lead to the, of the attention and everything else, that can lead to this sort of ping-ponging around, and being hyper.)

It's true in the sense that the result of being too constricted is that your mind wanders, and that's what, that's what gross {gš-pa} is, that's what gross agitation is. Yeah. It's the breeding ground for distraction. Or starting to think of what are you gonna have for lunch, or what are you gonna do when you get up? That's like the most common one for me, 'cause I'm always doing something.

(Student: [unclear] so you should go back to meditation?)

Yeah, he didn't state it, but when he says counting the breath he's implying you should go back.

[Unclear]

[Stilwell: so the way that this mentally feels, this constriction, this agitation, how does that mentally feel?]

By the way, he says again in the text, he says you know I can't really, you have to have it happen to know what it's like. I think it's when you, you know the feeling when you're concentrating too hard on a problem. And so that it becomes obsessive, and then you lose your ability to act on it properly. You get fixated rather than fixed.

(Student: I might offer a personal experience. When I was younger, I used to build model airplanes, and sometimes it required a great deal of steady hand to do this very fine detail, and there was no question that I wasn't concentrating on it, it was in my face and I was so tight that I couldn't do the fine work, and I'd get very frustrated like that, and I found if I backed off a little bit, it worked a lot better, but there was nothing else in my mind but doing this job the right way, it was in my face.)

Okay. Now, something real cute, alright, watch. [Laughter] [unclear] The fifth problem is the last solution.

(Student: it turns into a problem.)

We'll talk about it. Just write it down. Problem number five is {du-jepa}.

(Stilwell: taking action.)

Solution number eight is, leave it alone. Don't take action.

(Student: so when it's humming right along...)

Kenny, Kenny what was his name in the factory? Kenny [unclear] used to say "if it ain't broke don't fix it." What this means is, when you have taken action, you've tuned it up or you've loosened it up, and it's going smooth. For god's sake, leave it. Okay? This is called {tong nyom} sometimes. {Tong nyom} means "let it go. Just let it cruise." Okay? {Tong nyom}. Now we're on the final final problem. The final problem of meditation is...

(student: that's not a problem, letting it cruise, that's how to fix it...)

Yeah, no, what it says is, the final problem is doing something, taking action when you shouldn't. It's going smoothly, and you taking action. You're trying to tighten it up or loosen it up when it's already just where it should be.

(Student: or knowing when to stop applying the antidote when it's worked.)

Yeah, knowing when to just let it cruise. Let it fly. You took all the corrections you needed to take, let it fly for a while. It's like when you're driving, there are times when you just, a good driver is going like that all the time he drives, and then sometimes he's on a straight road, he's got a good car, the alignment is nice, and you just shouldn't be doing anything. Shouldn't be moving. Okay? This is when your meditation is gliding nice, just let it go. Don't mess around with it. So the problem is, taking action. The correction is, don't take action. Leave it alone. Don't take action. So we just flipped around the last two, okay? Is that alright, got it? The classical writers at this point always say the same thing, it's very interesting. They say there were these early scholars, these early masters who said, {hš-rab gom-ra}. {Hš-rab gom-ra} means perfect cruising is perfect meditation. Perfect loosening is perfect meditation. There was a saying in ancient Tibet, {hš-rab gom-ra}, and Je Rinpoche gets indignant about it, which he did all the time, you know, he's trying to correct people, he says, then what happened was, that word spread around Tibet, and people were always saying hey, just sit down and don't think about anything, just let your mind cruise. Watch your thoughts, label your thoughts, whatever. Just watch them go, you

know, that's, this is true meditation. Just leave it alone, let your mind do whatever it wants...

(student: is that the famous Tibetan log meditation where you just sit on the bank of a river and watch your thoughts go by?)

I haven't heard about that one. By the way, there is a meditation on your mind. There is a meditation on the nature of your mind. And that's mahamudra. And we won't go into that. There is such a meditation. But it's different from, that's a meditation in which you seek to see the emptiness of your mind. But just watching your mind, watching the thoughts go flying... don't try to control them, just let them go by, just loosen up and be natural, he says: mistake. That's not meditating. [Laughter] And it's interesting, and there are times when it seems to be useful, I mean it's not un-useful, completely, you can track your, your own tendencies. But what he's saying is in Tibet it happened that people who had already reached this high stage, they had already reached through the first four problems, that some master who had already reached this fifth stage said: best meditation is cruising. And somebody who hadn't reached the first stage heard it and said, hey, the best meditation is cruising. Everybody cruise. Don't do anything. And that's exactly what it says in the Tibetan. It says, unfortunately, people who hadn't reached even the first problem, thought: well it's time for me to stop doing anything. You know, they jumped to the fifth, the eighth solution, before they had the first problem. You see.

(Student: so you should experience the others before you...)

You will. [Laughter] And that's the purpose of studying meditation. You would think that in a meditation course we should just flop down and meditate.

(Student: ... because I've heard in some meditations, like in insight meditation, where you sit there and just see what comes up...)

There are countless meditations that people are teaching nowadays. I mean someone gave me this magazine, you know you can go through the back of one of these Dharma magazines and see all sorts of stuff. I can't vouch for the usefulness or non-usefulness. It's not classical Buddhism. It hasn't been taught in the original texts that I'm aware of, and I've read many.

(Stilwell: like vipassana meditation?)

I don't know what they do. But if it's sitting down and just watching your breath. Watching your breath has a function of this function: bringing your mind down after it's too excited, or, preparing your mind for a virtuous object. But by itself it's not a virtuous object. It's very useful, it's taught in the {b. Abhidharmakosha}. It's comes from the {b. Abhidharmakosha}. Vipassana meditation came from Burma, Ga-wing-ka gi, and he studied Abhidhamma in Burma, and it's good, but it's function is to, is a preliminary to deeper meditation. And Ga-wing-ka teaches it that way.

(Stilwell: so really, all meditations we're learning, where we've just gone through the five problems, before that, even, is meditation on the breath.)

Yeah, well yeah. Because then you're gonna turn to the real object. Breath is neutral, breath is, if you drive a car, breath is to get the car into neutral, like if you ever drove a car, like you back out of your garage and you jam it into forward... You have to stop first, put it into neutral and then put it in forward.

(Stilwell: so is the idea then to replace the discursive thoughts with one-pointed concentration on your breath to displace the discursive thoughts?)

No, your object of meditation could be discursive thoughts. Going through the outline of the Lam Rim is discursive thinking.

(Stilwell: no I mean just random thoughts coming into your head.)

No then distinguish between random and discursive.

(Stilwell: okay random thoughts then...)

Discursive means this is this, this is that, that's okay. Random means, what am I gonna do for breakfast, you know. Maybe pancakes, maybe not, that's random. Then you should bring it back to the breath.

(Stilwell: so then is that the object of the breath meditation, to replace those random thoughts...)

Yeah, bring it back down to neutral, and then shift it back, you're just shifting the object off, and then back to that. You can have one-pointed mind {ting-nge-dzin} on a train of thoughts. On a path that you're trying to burn into your mind. That's {gom}.

(Stilwell: and is the idea that it's more effective to start trying to have the breath as an object or trying to pick an object first?)

These are two different breath meditations. This one's when you're already in meditation and you run into you get into a serious problem.

(Stilwell: this is what I'm asking, which is more effective to start with? Which way should you begin? Begin with breath and then graduate to picking an object and working on it, pick an object, and when that doesn't work, go to the breath?)

There's two kinds of breath meditations. The one taught in the {b. Abhidharmakosha}, by Vasubhandu, which I can show you, which I translated, is to prepare yourself for meditation. It's before you start all this stuff. It's to get your mind out of your daily office mind, or out of your sleep mind, and get it prepared to put it onto a virtuous object. And this kind of breathing meditation, which is also counting your breath, is a drastic action to take when your mind is wandering too much, and it's not desirable. If you don't have to do it, that's better, because what it means is pretty much, it's the equivalent of getting up and throwing water on your face.

(Stilwell: so my understanding is you have to do both at different times.)

They are two different things.

(Stilwell: but they're the same mechanics.)

They're the same mechanics. Counting your breath for two different purposes. But I've never seen and I wouldn't logically think that it would be virtuous over a long period of time to focus your mind on your breath, for the purpose of focussing your mind on your breath, because your breath is impermanence, it's gonna stop some day. It's not a virtuous object per se. Better to focus it on emptiness. Better to focus it on your death, the virtues of the Buddha, the Buddha's body, your own breath is not a virtuous object. It won't have any lasting effect on your consciousness. It's good, it's very very wonderful, you should, you should get to where you can count to ten, or even Pabongka says to 21, perfectly, and then shift it to something meaningful. And it's a good thermometer of your mental state. Whether you can get to ten or not. If you can't get to ten, maybe you should, it's not gonna work too well to shift to

another object. Okay, uh, homework, six, right? Next week what?

(Student: don't we have nine states of)

Yeah, what are the states you go through if you're successful in like the first antidote, what point do you reach... there's no class on Monday, {tse-chu} is Monday...[unclear] yeah, Monday no class, okay, next class uh, a week from today. That might give me enough time to translate this...

(Stilwell: so you're in trouble once Friday classes start, you know.)

Yeah, so no class on Monday, okay?

(Student: [unclear]... the fifteen minutes of meditation...

You are doing uh,

(student: I mean you had the preliminaries, and counting to ten, and is that also going to be within the fifteen minutes?)

Well, frankly, it's gonna take you more than the fifteen minutes. By the way, I really urge you to do it at the same time every morning, I see, and I don't know personally I don't think 1 am would be good for me, maybe your life is different, generally morning is preferred. But some people just aren't morning people and they can't get quiet till evening and that's okay. I don't say it's wrong, but... [unclear]

[mandala offering; end of tape]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Seven: Nine Stages of Concentration

March 10, 1994

first part completed by: Leslie Inman

second part completed by: David Farrell

[student:... week stuff like that you know for like a {sam nan} Bill's doing one for {shamata} and you know like a weekend or a week long tantric retreat also. What's the you know you said you have to do a strong practice everyday and just these five hour sessions aren't gonna really make any difference, is there any real value in going and doing a weekend]

Oh, on top of your regular [laughs] it's great. It's fantastic. It's very useful.

[student: hum]

Very wonderful.

[student: Yeah, perhaps, we can organize something like that after people who wanna take their vows take there vows.]

Yeah.

[student: We could go away for a weekend or somewhere or something like that]

Well, [unclear] was talking about coming to Arizona, I don't know, he [unclear] [laughs]

[student: Pardon?]

[laughter]

[student: [unclear] during your retreat?]

[student: Right.]

[student: Yeah, I asked him bout that]

Someday [laughs].

[student: He said last thing you need is a bunch of your students in your hair when you're on retreat.]

I don't have any hair, so they can't be in it [laughs] [laughter], no just [unclear]

[student: Oh more than most monks like]

I would put them... I would put you in some other town probably

[student: On the other side of the mountain]

[laughter]

The last thing is Rinpoche had agreed to teach here, April twenty-fourth, which is a Sunday, but if his Holiness is teaching at Columbia the same [unclear], I don't know if he is

[student: Yeah.]

Is that the dates?

[student: No, he's not then.]

[student: It's Thursday and Friday. That was before that]

Oh, was it?

[student: Yeah.]

Good.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, Rinpoche can't teach when the Dalai Lama, when his teacher is teaching in that city, he can't teach.

[student: It's not teaching.]

That's fine.

[student: It's a conference.]

Well, I mean even then. He wouldn't be able, wouldn't be allowed. He wouldn't want to do it. So, is that sure? His Holiness, Thursday and Friday? Anybody know for sure?

[student: I couldn't tell from memory, but I have it at home.]

[student: I do.]

[student: I have it written down as the twenty-sixth and the twenty-seventh. That's what Snow Lion said.]

So that's the day after that.

[student: Tuesday and Wednesday.]

Tuesday and Wednesday.

[student: Tomorrow week.]

Okay. Well, if it doesn't conflict, [unclear] {Gelsang Khappa} will do it.

[student: What will he do?]

He'll do the text on the Thousand Angels text that you're, so that's why I didn't go through it. Cuz he's gonna go through it.

[student: unclear]

And that's what you base your daily practice on.

[student: When is that? [unclear] Sunday and what ..]

Sunday, the twenty-fourth of April here, unless we might take a bigger space.

We have some space we're looking at.

[student: What time?]

He... he was great, you know normally he would only teach like an hour in the afternoon. He said he'll teach all day. He'll do a session at ten. He'll do a session at two. And you guys get first, you guys get in first and then we might have to close and if there's enough space.

[student: You said that's what you do for your daily practice?]

Yeah. It's the thing... it's a very short thing you recite just before you do your practice. It's at the back of your notebook. It's basically a seven ingredients practice. [unclear]

[student: Which if you're already doing another practice which incorporates that, then you don't worry about it?]

Yeah. Like the six session has it in it. But... but it's not... in the monastery we always do it anyway before the six sessions [laughs]. It's good if you can do it. Okay, I think that's ... Is that all the announcements?

[prayer: refuge]

[prayer: short mandala]

[silence]

[student: Who translated this?]

[student: This [unclear]]

[silence]

{Sem ne gu} means "the nine states of meditation".

[student: [unclear]]

[unclear] Nine states of meditation. Meaning as you go through the five problems and as you apply them. How many are there? Eight....

[student: eight]

Eight corrections. You move up through nine different levels. So, we're... we're covering those nine different levels. What are we on, by the way, we finished... we have five big subjects to study. One was

[student: Preparation?]

Preparation. One... next was?

[students: Environment [unclear]]

Environment. Meaning mental and physical. Then it was?

[student: {Vairochana's} posture.]

{Vairochana's} posture. And now we're on to the mental technique.

[student: How to do it.]

And we're... we're in the third part of that and we've finished the problems and we've finished the corrections. Now we tie that into what is it like. What... what kind of states are you reaching as you go through those problems, okay, and they're nine different states.

[student: Michael, do you mean to say as you encounter each problem, that's considered a state or as... or what you achieve after you overcome the problem, [unclear] considered a state?]

You'll see. Okay. I think your question'll be answered as I describe them, okay.

[student: So what... what is {sem ne gu}?]

{Sem} means "mind". {Ne} means "state". {Gu} means "nine". I'm sorry. {Sem} means "mind". Right. {Ne} means "state". {Gu} means the number "nine".

[silence]

This is the first one and I'll... I'll read you what he says. {lama [unclear]} How do

you get to this? It's by studying with your teacher what to meditate on. So, how do you even get to the first state? It comes by hearing what you should be meditating on. Getting your object from your teacher, from your lama.

[student: The object of your meditation, you mean?]

Yeah. He... he teaches you some object that you should be meditating on. We're going to meditate on something called {yon ten shir gyurma}. And that will be the next few classes.

[student: I'm sorry. {Yon ten shir gyurma} and what?]

Learning from your lama what to stud... what to meditate on. We haven't reached that yet. What object to take for your meditation. That's what gets you to the first state. And the first state's name is? It's difficult. Putting the mind on the object. {Sem jok pa} means "putting the mind on the object".

[student: On the?]

On the object of meditation. Say you're... say you're going to meditate on the image of a Buddha, which is supposed to be the best object to start out... start with. You... you hear from... your lama says, "Okay, now go and sit and I want you to meditate on a buddha". And when you sit down and put your mind on that buddha you have reached already the first level.

[student: Neat.]

That's like a white belt in karate. You know you buy the costume, they give you one [laughs]. [laughter]

[student: You mentioned two different things. You mentioned learning about an... an object, a proper object of meditation from your lama...]

Yeah.

[student: And then putting your mind on it.]

This is the result.

This is the result.

[student: So...]

What is the... what is the force that boots you up to the first level? Just getting the instructions from your lama. "This is what you should meditate on". Then that boots you up to the first level.

[student: So it's learning about and receiving directions [Yeah.] to meditate?]

What... what object to take.

[student: So, receiving an object from your lama to meditate [Yeah.] on [Yeah.] instructions about that...]

Already that gets you up to the first... then you go and sit down and you put your mind on the object and I'll describe what it's like. He says, "{me pa la shok sem shok sem ne}". You're just able to put your mind on the object now... now and then [laughs]. You know you sit there for fifteen minutes and you know okay for that long you kept it. Then you were mostly wandering. Then again, a couple of seconds you're on the object. [unclear] like that. That's called, "putting your mind on the object". He says, "At this point you still don't have the ability to have any continuity in the meditation. There is no stream. It's just single points where you're able to put your mind on the object.

[student: This isn't this state?]

[unclear] Very... Obviously first state, lowest state

[student: So this parallels forgetting the instruction. The first..]

Well, that would be... no, well yeah, you... you'd supposedly you... you over... overcome laziness by now. At least you've sat down right?

[student: Yeah. Cuz you've put your mind on it but...]

Yeah. Yeah. He doesn't relate them, but he does relate them to the different {ching guh} and forgetting and we'll see that. In other words at the end of the nine, I think we'll be able to split 'em into the problems. So at this time... at this point it's characterized by not having the ability to have any continuity. It's just single moments of concentration on the object.

[student: I'm... I have a little clarification problem here. Is... is {sem jok pa} putting the mind on the objects or learning from your lama what to put your mind on?]

This is... this is the first state and it is putting your mind on the object in meditation. How do you get to this state? You... you go to a sch... some lama and you say, "What should I meditate on?" and he says, "Meditate on the Buddha". So medit... learning what to meditate on is what boots you up to this state. This is the result of... of your lama telling you what to meditate on. Just like that.

[student: Your lama's telling you and then you sitting to do it? [Yeah.] Right? [Right.] If he told you [Yeah, of course.] and you didn't do it for two weeks [Of course.] yet, you still haven't...]

Yeah. But what the energy that gets you to this point is knowing what to meditate on [laughs]. Okay. Having

[student: So if you don't go to a lama you'll never know]

To get an object of meditation...

[student: ...or can you pick one yourself.]

You can do anything yourself. It's discouraged in Buddhism. It's considered very dangerous.

[student: What? Even if it's the Buddha? I thought that was the one safe one.]

What that he can choose his own [unclear]

[student: No, that if you choose the figure of the Buddha that that's the one safe one.]

No, what I'm saying in in in Buddhist practice it's very much discouraged to do anything without learning about it from a la... in oral tradition. You can't pick up a book.... many, many scriptures say you can't pick up this book and read it thoroughly and understand everything and go practice it. It won't work. You need some kind of oral... they call it oral blessing like that the sound of the words

from your teacher's been passed on through... has some kind of effect. Can't just learn it from a book. So that's {sem jok pa}. Even if the book says the same thing that he says [laughs]. All right...

[student: What is {sem jok pa}?]

Putting your mind on the object. {Sem} means "mind". {Jok pa} means "putting it on the object". Object is not mentioned. He says something interesting here. He says, "By the way when you reach this point you'll think that you're worst than you were before" [laughter]. And he says he.. he thinks...he... you will think that your mind is more wild than it was before you started meditating and you know the answer to that. What do you think?

[student: You're just noticing.]

You're just starting to notice it [laughter]. He..he makes a point here. He says, "Don't be discouraged". He says, "You...you're just noticing what was going on all the time" [laughs]. So he says, "Don't...don't think that you're getting worst. You're just starting to notice what your mind is like". What do you think comes next?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah.

[silence]

{Gyun du jok pa}. {Jok pa} means again "putting your mind on the object". {Gyun du} means "in a stream". In a stream. In some kind of continuity.

[student: Can you repeat that?]

Yeah. {Gyun du} means "in a stream". So now for the first time you have more than just [snaps fingers] [snaps fingers] instants of focusing. You... you're able to keep your mind on the object for at least a few seconds [laughs] in a row. He says, "For example, if you were able to keep your mind on the object for the time and not los... and not be distracted for the time it takes you to do one rosary full of {om mani padme hums}. That's actually pretty long [laughs]. But you know 108 beats if you go {om mani padme hum}, {om mani padme hum}, {om mani padme hum}, {om mani padme hum}, {om mani padme hum}, {om

mani padme hum}, if you can keep your mind on the object for that long you've reached this state. So this is useful. You get some kind of...

[student: Doesn't keeping your mind on the object even if the object hasn't got terrific clarity or any of...]

Right.

[student: ...those other things. Just keeping in mind [unclear]]

Just not losing the object.

[student: For a short period of time?]

Well, he says, "If you can keep it as long as... as it... it takes to recite {om mani padme hum} one whole rosary full.

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Four or five minutes maybe?]

That's pretty long actually I think [laughs].

[student: [unclear] four or five minutes.]

[student: [unclear]]

[student: Oh, no. It doesn't take five minutes [unclear]]

[student: Four minutes. Three, four minutes.]

If you say it like you know like Tibetans [fast] {om mani padme hum},{om mani padme hum},{om mani padme hum}, [laughter]... anyway you're supposed to say it slower and more clearly.

[student: Right [unclear]]

[unclear]

[student: {Jok pa} is putting it.. putting the mind?]

To set the mind on the object.

[student: So how would you... how would we call this one?]

Aw, I was afraid you'd ask me that.

[student: Sorry.]

Now I have to compete with all these other translations. I... I didn't think about it. Putting the mind on the object and putting the mind on the object in a stream. Or in a... whatever you want to say.

[student: Continuum.]

In a continuum?

[student: Instead of two points.]

Yeah. Instead of [snaps fingers twice] like that. [unclear]

[student: Sparks.]

[student: Oh, so it's not a continuous stream. It's just making...]

It is continuous for the length of that. What I'm saying is...

[student: So beyond that one... one point. A series of connected points.]

Yeah. A series of connected points. That's all it is.

[student: Now at this stage you're not... you're not con... I mean you're not concentrating on the object for... you gave an example the... of the rosary as a good example of concentration, but you would not be at this stage would you?]

Well I mentioned the rosary last week as a different example. That was the difference between having clarity and fixation as holding the rosary but loosely and then having fixation and clarity with intensity is where you've got it firmly in your hand. So that was the diff... it was a bad question but, which all of you noticed, it said fixation, clarity, and clarity with intensity and it should have said

fixation and clarity comma and clarity with intensity so... Fixation and clarity meant holding the cup or holding the rosary with your hand but little bit loosely, like it could tip over, and then having intensity means you have a firm grip on it. And that was the example, but I... I didn't say the question very clearly. Okay. So he gets... he says at this point, remembering the last point he said, you get the impression, he talks about {gyun} you get the impression that you're starting to get worst, but actually you're just noticing what was always happening. He says at this point you get the impression that distractions are resurging. You see, cuz you... you're able to keep them away for awhile, but then... then what upsets you is that they come back with such force. A... you know they... you're able to keep your mind on the object for awhile and then you get this rush of... of distraction. So he says, "If you want to know what it feels like when you've reached this state it feels like that". You keep your mind on the object for maybe a minute and... and then you get this impression of resurgence of the... of all the thoughts booming back into your mind. So he says that the first one you get this impression that you... you're worst than you were before [laughs]. That's cuz you're starting to notice it. This one what you get set... upset by are the impressions you get as you're practicing is that they're just coming back with a vengeance because you've kept them down for awhile, so you have this impression. It's quiet for awhile, so it sounds louder when they come back. And that's the... that's the sort of impression you get while you're doing this point. He says at these first two stages {jing -pa} and {je-pa} are many which is dullness and getting excited. Those two diseases are frequent and the the fixation is infrequent. And he says the periods of distraction are longer than what?

[student: concentration]

Periods of fixation [laughs] okay. Periods on which your mind is off the object are longer than the periods on which your mind is on the object. So that's the gap between the times that you're able to keep your mind on the object are longer timewise than the than the periods when your mind is on the object. At least that's the whole quality of these first two states. Times your mind has wandered are longer than the times your mind is on the subject on the object.

[student: What about intense boredom? Is that wandering?]

[laughs]

[student: No I'm serious.]

He doesn't mention it.

[student: I've never seen it mentioned and yet]

You know boredom is an American you know boredom is a problem that you don't see mentioned in scripture much because I don't think agricultural society, or societies up til modern times had enough time to be bored the way we are. You know, we have so much leisure, I mean compared to people in the past and we live longer,

[student: No. I mean boredom when you're concentrating on an object and you've got relative clarity and relative stability and you're bored.]

I wouldn't say you have

[student: What is it? Is it dullness?]

clarity then. That's probably dullness. Yeah. I would say so. You know, no, you know what I'd say that is is a kind of laziness. A kind of laziness.

[student: Which would be a kind of dullness]

No.

[student: Do you mean to say that you've mastered it, so that you've got this concentration so perfectly that you're tired of looking at it that object.]

[student: No no no no. Just that it's not it's not]

It's not it's not stimulating. Then I'd say it's something else. Then I'd say you don't understand the quality of the object. You see, if you're thinking about a big raise at work or you're thinking about a very interesting movie it's cuz you see nice something attractive in the thing and it's it's a matter that we're not good enough to realize how sexy it is to look at a Buddha for a long time, you know, how stimulating and exciting it would be to see one for a long time. And if you have that feeling, I would say try to change the object to someone you really have intense faith in, you know. If you don't get off on on focusing on a Buddha. Frankly I don't. I always use my lama or Dalai Lama or something like that and then I get I'm so I get some kind of emotion about it that keeps me interested. So I I understand that. It's hard to relate to the Buddha's image, it's a very holy

image, and he really does look like that and and when you see him you'll know that and then you'll think that's the nicest one. But but it's just foreign to us. That's why they say that the Buddha appears as a Dalai Lama in this world because he's more because you're more attracted to him right now, in our present condition. Yeah.

[student: Well it seems to me though, if you truly understood the benefits of concentrating on an object like that, then it couldn't be boring. I mean how could you really truly grasp the benefits of it and be bored at the same time.]

I guess not but the fact is that we do, right? And it's probably because we don't grasp the benefits. So I'd say that's why I said I thought you might want to call it you might want to call that state laziness really, you know, cuz it's antidote would be seeing the good qualities of that Buddha. You see what I mean?

[student: Well, laziness because somebody [It is a kind of] they talk about laziness as a as a form of being attracted to this obj to, in the context of meditation or Dharma, undesirable unvirtue being attracted to unvirtue. It's stated that way in some of the texts.]

I haven't seen it. But I've seen [unclear]

[student: It's kind of interesting because in a way it makes sense.]

No, laziness is kind of not wanting to do it. Because of those four antidotes are pretty clear.

[student: But I see I think this is taking it one step further and saying why is it you don't want to do it? and it's because you're thinking you want pancakes for breakfast or you would like rather think about something different or you'd rather do something different.]

I guess you could say that.

[student: Well, you don't unde you'd think]

[laughs], But it's not

[student: that pancakes are better than the benefits of concentrating.]

Yeah, actually we do. [laughter] {Lente jokpa.} {Jokpa} means what?

[student: Putting your mind]

Put your mind on the object. {Lente} means, you've seen it in the books, "patch-like". This is a {lemba}. This is a patch, this is to patch something. Patch, like a patch on a tire, more like that.

[student: Putting your mind on a patch.]

He says when you get a hole in your clothes, you put a patch on it and the thing you're patching is what?

[student: The holes?]

The clothes. No, the thing the thing that needs patching is the clothes.

[student: Clothes?]

The cloth, the shirt. Okay. He's trying to make a parallel. This is called patch-like fixation, patch-like, putting your mind on the object because what is what is the thing being patched? He says it's the continuity. You see. And I I've always had, you know, until I studied it better, I I I I always had it wrong. So what you're patching is you've got some continuity and then it breaks and then you've got more continuity. So what, in effect, you're doing is, at this point, your mind wanders and you catch yourself and by picking it up again, in a sense, you're putting a patch on that hole. That's the way he explains it, you're not, I used to think it meant patch-like in the sense that it went on for awhile and then you had a patch, not like that. There's a gap there's there's a, what do you call it?, an interruption and by catching yourself and starting again, in a sense, you're patching up that hole.

[student: So your overall translation will be?]

Patch-like. Putting your mind on the object or, you know, that won't make in a book, but..

[student: Patch patch-like continuity?]

Well, if this word means putting your mind on the object. I didn't want to use

fixation because we used it for that other thing and this means patch, in patches patching.

[student: Patching continuity.]

[student: This is a lot like the correction of taking an action.]

Well, here's what he says..."The distinction that sets this apart from the two before is the length of the wandering. See, as you see here, it's really just gaps that you're filling in.

[student: You're patching the stream essentially.]

Yeah. Yeah, yes so the gaps here, remember the gaps here were, this was like this, I guess we should draw it, right?

[student: [unclear] Stretching the dots into a section]

And this is [unclear]

[student: [unclear]

[student: Yeah [unclear] Visual]

This means e d e e [laughter].

[student: Does that just mean a longer stream?]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, when you say he's not defining it, he's not comparing it to the other two by a longer stream, he's defining it by a shorter gap.

[student: Can you just repeat what you just said about what makes it different from the other two?]

He says what distinguishes the two is this

{??? missing here}

He says that the length of the wandering, the length of the gap here is shorter.

[Student: Wait a minute.]

This is number three. This is periods of good meditation. These are periods of distraction.

[Student: You're less and less distracted.]

Yeah, you're less... the length of the distracted period, the length of the gap is longer, is shorter, sorry.

[Student: The length of the gap that you are patching is shorter, plus your patching]

[Student: Number two]

Plus your patching, I don't know, yeah, you could say that. But I'd say when you're patching... patching means to start up again. You can't go back in time and fill up that hole. Patching means you started again.

[Student: But you're doing that in the other two also.]

But its so long. You don't patch, y'know, a shoelace...

[Student: You don't put a bandaid on a [unclear]... a hole in the road...]

He says at this point you have gained a pretty powerful [jenpa], a recollection. Remembering to come back to your object. Recall. You can guess what's going to happen next.

[Student: Is that first letter a [la] under the [unclear]?]

This one? [La] [snap, snap]

[Student: How do you spell [jenpa]?]

[jenpa]? I'll spell for you.

[laughter]

Oh, you mean...

This is memory, which at the.... You don't have to write that down. But its... This is the point at which memory is getting quite strong.

[Student: Michael, at that level number three, are you saying that the gaps, the breaks in concentration are shorter?]

Yeah. Then in the first two cases.

[Student: Than the concentration...]

Ah, yeah. He's probably gonna say that. He hasn't said that yet. And I'll tell you why after the next one. Number four.

[Silence]

[Student: Does that look like a [unclear] there?]

Ah now what you want, you can ... I didn't think much about how to translate that but you can talk about this thing all day and not decide. These are Sanskrit translations. (Nyewa) means closely . The mind is closely on the object, okay. It's a Sanskrit prefix that doesn't mean closely very often, ok, but people try to call it closely. And it doesn't work all the time. Close recollection, for example, it doesn't have anything to do with it. Ah, at least in English, so he says, at this point your recollection has gotten extremely strong, so, and as a result of that it is impossible from this point on to lose the object completely.

[Student: What do you mean completely?]

You will never just lose the object.

[Student: You can just...]

You can wander around it and wander away from it temporarily, you can come back to it.

[Student: So you lose clarity, you lose intensity, but you'll still have...]

You can lose clarity and ... you lose fixation, up to this point

[Student: At that point you don't lose fixation]

You can't. Yeah, yeah. You will never lose the object. Yeah?

[Student: How did you translate – keeping closely on the object?]

Ah, yeah, staying closely on the object, something like that, putting your mind closely on the object that's the, but you know what it is now.

[Student: What is it?]

Its where, because of what ...

Recollection has reached a very strong point, stronger than the last point, ah, its impossible, from this point on to have a gap where you lose the object completely.

[Student: [mmmm]]

He says, and therefore it really distinguishes itself from the other three... This is a big difference from the other three.

No gaps.

[laughter]

The line is different, right? The line looks quite different. So he says, but, but, two other things are going on quite, quite heavily here. What are they?

[Student: Subtle...]

[Student: Dullness, agitation]

Dullness, obvious dullness and obvious agitation, whatever you want to call it, ok.

[Student: Why is that?]

You haven't got yet to the... you just reached the third [unclear]. Ok. What were we up to? Up to now we were still using recollection which is the antidote to which problem...

[Student: Remembering.]

[Student: Not losing]

Not losing the object, ok? So we, the first four of the mental states are all contained in the second problem that's going on...you're losing the object completely. Maybe for shorter periods or longer periods but you're losing the object completely. When you get to the fourth one, you're no longer losing the object completely, but now you've reached the third problem which is ...

[Student: Dullness]

Dullness or agitation. With the object still sitting there in front of your mind, so now you're no longer struggling to keep the object in your mind, you're struggling to keep the quality of your meditation up.

[Student: Is it strong dullness and strong agitation or is it just...?]

Obvious. He says heavy.

[laughter]

Alright, obvious dullness and obvious agitation are going on at the fourth point but what's brought you to the fourth point is very strong [unclear]?

[Student: Recall]

Recall! You're ability to recall the object and bring it back into your mind has now reached a very fine point and he says – the lama, remember these are lectures being given in 1921, the lama mentioned that at this point, your ability to recall the object is like a grownup person, its an adult. Its .. what do you call it in English?

[Student: Grownup.]

[Student: Mature.]

[Student: Fully-grown.]

Its fully, its fully grown, its full grown. You're ability to recall the object now is full-grown.

[Student: Its complete.]

Yeah...mature...he says, by the way, he uses both words as a what do you call it?

[Student: A synonym]

...what do you call it? John , the president, is going today to... an appositive. Its where you put two words net to each other and they mean the same thing. [Tenba], recalling the object, and he uses that. He used [unclear] complete. And he was [unclear] complete. And he uses adult next to it and it's a word that only means an adult person, it doesn't ever mean anything else. So he does mean, full-blown and full-grown. Okay? Alright, number five. [Dulwa] is a very important word in Buddhism...[dog barking, laughter] in Sanskrit is [dam, damaya] and it means to tame something.
[laughter]

Ah, you went to the bathroom?

[Student: Oh, no, she tried to]

Downstairs... the active bathroom is downstairs. So [dulwa] means to tame something or to bring something under control. Alright. It's the... In Sanskrit is [dam] and the negative is [adam] and so the word for diamond cannot be overcome by anything. A diamond is the hardest thing in the universe. It can't be scratched by any object in the earth. So its adamas, and that came into Greek as adamas. And the word adamant comes from that and by the time it came to English, the A had gotten lost and it became diamond.... Anyway...

[Student: Ahhh.]

Okay, so [dulwa jepa] means to bring it under control. [jepa] means to do it. The word for vinaya also comes from this root. The monks vows are called, really, how to control yourself. [dulwa jepa]. He says, at the fourth stage, the tendency is for people to bring their mind inside too forcefully.

[Student: The fourth or the fifth stage?]

At the fourth stage. The tendency is for people to bring their minds in... inside too forcefully and therefore, subtle dullness becomes a great danger.

[Student: What do you mean bring the mind in?]

Your guess is as good as mine [laughter] I was afraid you would ask me that! You guys really do this all the time... It says [unclear]. Your withdrawing of the mind into yourself is too strong. Too introspective? Too focused inwards? Too...? Focused inside is too much...with excessive strength so that you get subtle dullness, trying.

[Student: Subtle or trying too hard?]

Subtle dullness.

[Student: Is it like trying too hard?]

I think it may be something we have to try to find out. I...I would say, normally that these words in Tibetan mean, they could also describe what happens during sleep, as you go to sleep the mind is brought into the inside. Okay. So its too excessive. It's like going into, its like bringing it in so far it gets dull, it gets dull. Bringing the mind in away from the sense objects, so, with such strength that you lose your strength, you become dull.

[Student: Wouldn't sleeping be a good analogy?]

[Student: Heading towards unconsciousness?]

I think so, yes, something like that. Sleep. These same words are used for what happens to your mind during sleep, so I'm saying, maybe he's trying to say that. In fact, at higher levels of concentration the act of sleeping becomes the act of meditation. And your sleep turns into concentration.

[Student: Wow...]

Ah, and that's one of the benefits of shamatha.

[Student: Couldn't this be like hypnosis?]

I don't think so, or maybe in that you could become kind of dull. Yeah, I imagine, I've never been hypnotized.

[Student: What is jepa?]

Which one?

[Student: [Jepa].]

[Jepa] means to do it, to control the mind, to bring it under control.

[Student: And then [dulwa] means to tame...]

Yeah, so to do the taming. In Tibetan sometimes you have to have a verbalizer. In English, you say, you don't say controlling sometimes, you say bring it under control, it's like that. It's the bring, in bringing it under control. He says at this point you need powerful, you tell me. What problem have we reached?

[Student: Watchfulness]

Yeah, you need watchfulness, you need [sheshin]. Now we're definitely into third problem, right? [jing ga] has occurred....dullness, agitation has occurred... and the, and what you need at this point is powerful watchfulness.

[Student: So what is this level called?]

Bringing it under control, bringing the mind under control. You can assume the word mind in all of these things, he doesn't repeat it, but it's always there. He says watchfulness is the spy that you send out ahead of you. And then, when you catch yourself, uplift your mind. So he's got now those two points in one point, doesn't he? He's saying catch yourself and then bring your mind up somehow.

[Student: Don't you need watchfulness in all those previous levels too?]

You really do.

[Student: So... so why do...]

If you were in a debate ground, y'know, they'd say, "Is watchfulness the third, the antidote to the third problem?" And if you were a smart debater you would say no. And then they'll try to attack you and say "What do you mean? Watchfulness is number three!" And you'd say, "Oh you mean number three in the eighth? Of course it is!" So then in Tibetan you'd have to say watchfulness which is the number three of the eighth is (clap) is the antidote for number three. I'm sorry, number five of the eighth. You see you have to use that qualifier. There's lots of watchfulnesses.

[Student: So how is this really distinct than the other steps since all of the steps...]

He is differentiating, I think its, don't forget you're on the object, so its not the act of recalling the object, its bringing your mind back to the object, catching your mind wandering from the object.

[Student: Prior, it was catching your mind wandering from the object, now its catching your mind not being clear, not being intense.]

Yeah, yeah. Catching your mind on the object, but some problem of the quality of your meditation. The other one was just catching yourself not being on the object at all as well, bringing you mind back.

[Student: So maybe you have to be more aware because it's a subtler catch. You know, its not as easy to catch, it's a subtler type of problem.]

Yeah, yeah.

[Student: These are, all the connections are functioning all along anyway, but, I mean, to be aware enough to start to apply the patch means that you're...]

That's true..

[Student: You're making the correction, right?]

Cause he does say here, your watchfulness reaches a mature level, a strong level...

[Student: And then you're taking action to apply the patch.]

Implying that it was there before... also that some kind of watchfulness was there before. We have this thing in the Perfections when we debate, [snap] {Madhyamika} there are six Perfections. The [Madhyamika] [unclear] has ten chapters relating to the Ten Perfections, and y'know, you debate you never [unclear] before that, how are you going to get to that? Yeah, he had it but this is the stage at which it turns on. You know, you can say that, its alright. So he says that, and then he says, the difference between this and the previous two, okay.

[Student: Previous meaning three and four?]

Yeah. Is whether or not the dullness and agitation are obvious.

[Student: What do you mean?]

You tell me.

[Student: You mean coarse, obvious, as in coarse?]

Yeah, no, gross. I like gross because [unclear] obvious. What differentiates five from the last two is that a distinction whether the, ah, what did you have here, by the way...what was your state of your dullness here?

[Student: Obvious]

Obvious. He's saying now the difference between this one and this one, let's say your dullness is like, you know, "Nyyngggrrrrgghh" [laughter] Here your dullness is like, y'know, its tricky, it looks like meditation, so he's implying that, if you drew it, what would be the difference between this one and this one? Here the dullness is not gross. He doesn't say its subtle, but he says there's a difference in whether the dullness is obvious or not. Yeah.

[Student: When you say the watchfulness is completely mature at this point, you mean...]

He doesn't say its mature in this case, he says powerful.

[Student: So its not like you always catch it every time...]

It doesn't seem to imply that, no, it just says powerful. We'll do one more than we'll take a break.

[Student: What is the difference? [unclear]]

What is the difference between five, and really, four and three, he says, its in the degree in which the dullness or the wandering is obvious. Or is gross. Which implies that its fairly subtle by this time.

[Student: Are you comparing, are you drawing the straight line to show the difference between four and five? Or is it because you have both. Both of them are straight lines because...

[Student: Recall.]

...there were no gaps. There are no gaps. You did not lose the object, right? You don't lose the object anymore. So that just represents whether or not there are gaps.

[Student: Oh okay.]

And this other little line represents whether or not you have obvious dullness or obvious agitation.

[Student: Ahhh.]

And in this case, its just gross. Its obvious and in this case its getting more tricky..

[Student: And subtle means...]

[Student: Can we call it subtle?]

He doesn't say that. He hesitates to say it. He says, in the other two cases, you have a difference in the obviousness.

[Student: Moving in that direction]

He seems to imply that its subtle by now, but he doesn't say that.

[Student: So in the subtle you're only lacking intensity. Is that true?]

Right.

[Student: And you have clarity...]

Ah, no, I'm sorry, you have clarity and intensity and – I'm sorry, clarity and fixation, but right, no intensity.

[Student: Lacking intensity.]

[Student: Michael, wouldn't the [unclear] have to do with the quality of watchfulness, more than the quality of the dullness or the agitation?]

You could say that.

[Student: What's the use of being able to get to the level where the dullness is only subtle? You need to have developed your watchfulness quite well, because]

Yeah.

[Student: You'd be catching the obvious one [unclear]]

You need to say if watchfulness stayed constant the first one would be obvious to it. And the second one would not be so obvious to it. What you want to say is that agitation or dullness is the same... the situation gets better or not.

[Student: But too much watchfulness is a distraction.]

Yeah, we said that. Yeah, it becomes a distraction to keep checking. So you check from time to time.

[Student: [ok.]]

Let's do one more.

[Silence]

What was the solution for [tchingwa]. What was the solution for dullness
This is dullness, right? You have obvious dullness here and...

[Student: Tightening up?]

Yeah, and what was the, if it got worse, what were you supposed to do?

[Student: Try to uplift your mind]

Uplift you mind. Uplift yourself. Like how... think of something good, like hey! I'm lucky to be alive, I'm one out of a million people even trying to do this meditation. The rest of the people are going like sheep to the slaughter. Its.. the books say it. All the scriptures say it. The mass of humanity is lemmings jumping off a cliff.

[Student: [unclear]

[laughter]

You know at least I got the brains to be trying. Y'know. I got the good luck, I got the good fortune to be here.

[laughter]

[Student: It could've been the other way...]

And its hard, but at least I'm on the right track, I'm in the right ballpark, okay, I'm proud of myself, happy. He says what happens with the six? What do you guess happens with the six? Here you've got your mind up. You tried to use something to bring your mind up.

[Student: You're way up now.]

Yeah, Yeah, you went up too high, okay It says that you overdo it. And that's like a pendulum. Good meditation is like a pendulum, and driving too. If you drive too far to the left you've got to do a big right. And so he says, at this point, the uplifting of your mind at number five got too far, went too far and you got agitation.

[Student: I thought five was to tame it, the taming, to do the taming]

Don't be too distracted by the words of the names, and you'll learn this in

Buddhism. It means to bring it under control. But what does that mean? Just to bring your obvious dullness under controls

[Student: So, this only applies to dullness and agitation?]

Now he's tending that way. But now you'll see. One of them is going to drop out, another one will come back.

[Student: No, that's a good point. I mean, number four is, apparently dullness is what you encounter as a problem first.]

He says at number four you have both. He said you have both.

[Student: And also number five?]

What he's saying here, he calls this [unclear]. What does [unclear] mean?

[Student: Subtle]

Subtle. So he's... now you've got a subtle... what?

[Student: Agitation]

Agitation. Which we didn't talk about before.

[Student: No]

Tim came in early. And we were looking in the computer to find, you know, I said, I haven't seen this word before – subtle agitation. And we checked at the computer, and it's not there. This is the only description of it. That's interesting. It's kind of nice. Ah, you get the subtle agitation by talking too much action to cut off...

[Student: Subtle dullness]

Subtle dullness.

[Student: That's the only place it ever comes from?]

It's the only place we could find it.

[Student: What is...]

And now I can search 3,000 pages in 30 seconds now, That's very useful. I don't think you'll find it anywhere. So this is where you get subtle agitation

[Student: So number five is only dullness?]

Yeah, I guess, let's put agitation above, how's that? Here, you've got both. You're the guinea pigs. You're the first class that I do this with actually

[Student: Well, that's good.]

[Student: What does [shiwa] mean?]

Oh, I'm sorry. Good point. [shiwa] means peace P-E-A. [unclear] means to make. To make it peaceful. Make it calm, make the mind calm.

[Student: And so what would you call it?]

Ah, making the mind calm, calming the mind? But you see, it doesn't, it has a specific technical meaning; you see it doesn't just mean, hey, you're calm after that. They're looking for words to describe states that have no words. When they get into [Abhidharma], in the third chapter, when they try to describe sub-atomic particles, which they describe down to about twenty, twenty....

[end of cassette side A]

[beginning of side B]

But you still have to use effort towards eliminating subtle dullness and subtle agitation completely.

[Student: So, could you...]

What it means, basically, at this point it is difficult for plain old dullness and agitation to occur. But you've still got to, at this point you're still trying to make some active effort to eliminate them completely. He says what distinguishes this

one, or I should say [unclear], from the ones before it are that whether or not you have to, the word in Tibetan is a little tricky, whether or not you have to have much fear that subtle forms of dullness are going to occur or not... whether or not you have to watch very, very carefully anymore.

[Student: [unclear] [laughter]]

[unclear] means whether or not you have to worry about it very much, how's that?

[Student: [unclear]]

And you're going to get subtle dullness or agitation.

[Student: So you don't have to worry about it?]

You don't. He's implying that. You still have to be concerned whether they are going to occur or not, but you don't have to be very concerned about it.

[Student: Its like they could happen.]

Its like they could happen but you don't have to go crazy watching out for them. At this point you're actually trying to clean up the last survivors of [unclear]. Mop up operation? [laughter]. He says, Even though there's no great danger of the subtle forms of dullness and agitation occurring at this point, it'd still be necessary for you to take, to make some efforts to wipe them out completely. [Silence]

[Student: So you want to do a drawing of this number seven?]

I wouldn't take a shot at it.
[laughter]

You could do it like this maybe...

[Student: Continue in a circle...]

[unclear] You know, they're getting wimpy now and you're getting stronger.

[Student: Or maybe they're getting further apart now and they...]

Yeah, like that. They're spotty now. And he says its no longer that you're attacking them, they're attacking you, that you're attacking them. Its just like that. They're like the last remnants of the German army or something. Now you're going after them.

[Student: Ahhh.]

[Student: So the definition is to be totally calm but it also refers to the dullness?]

Don't be, don't much think about the names. The names are not descriptive of this state, as I said before.

[Student: So it pertains to both dullness and agitation?]

Yeah, he mentions that, it is subtle dullness and subtle agitation. And you're just going in and wiping out the last survivors. But you've got to make some effort to do that. What does that imply the next one is going to be?

[Student: No more [unclear]

Something like that. Let's see, I don't know...

[Student: Almost none]

He's got a note here. He says, from the third stage, from the seventh stage [unclear], 3,4,5,6,7, ah, for the most part you are in the meditation, but you are being interrupted by dullness and agitation. So there, for the most part you're meditation is pretty good but you are still being bothered by dullness and agitation, in those 5 stages.

[Student: True, true, true]

In the three through seven, 3,4,5,6,7

[Student: One and two, you're not meditating at all.]

Yeah, yeah. That's the implication is that in one and two you're wandering was

more than the meditation. Now you've got pretty good meditation, but its being interrupted by dullness and agitation. Yeah?

[Student: The difference between [shiwa] and [dolwa]?]

You can't, don't get hung up on the names, one means control, one means to put them to rest, to make your mind calm [shiwa] means peace. Peace. Its related to the word [unclear] to [unclear]. Sometimes [unclear] means to stop something, put it to rest. Okay, number eight.

[Silence]

[Student: I wonder what its going to [unclear]]

Hah! Brief descriptions of all nine, and the names...

[Student: [unclear]]

[laughter]

Nah. You can put that. See what happens.

[laughter]

[Student: As long as we spell it that way, its okay.]

[Student: Its agitation.]

[unclear] agitation?

[Student: [unclear]]

[unclear for a while]

Okay, he says, what does [unclear] mean. [unclear] is the definition of [unclear]. Somebody, what is that [unclear]? [unclear]

[Unclear]

[Student: Concentration]

Single pointed mind. One pointedness. Single mindedness. I like the word single mindedness. Its really what it is. Ah, so [unclear] means one point. [unclear] means one-pointedly. [unclear] means, ah, bring the mind to onepointedness. Reaching one-pointedness, how's that? He says, at this point, at the beginning of your meditation, as your meditation period starts, you make a slight effort to bring your mind to the object. Okay, and then, during the whole meditation session, what?

[Student: [unclear]]

[Student: Cruise]

There's no [unclear]. You don't get dullness or agitation. But you have to apply some effort before you start. Before you start you have to check your mind, clear you mind, balance it, and then it just cruises for the whole meditation.

[Student: Wow]

He says, for example, you can compare these last few stages, he doesn't say which ones to having an enemy who is very powerful then on to having an enemy who has gotten weaker onto having an enemy who is totally, what do you call it,

[Student: The enemy, defanged, impotent]

Impotent. Defanged is good. Yeah. Now that the enemy starts out as a serious enemy, he's got some guns and then later you've taken most of his guns away and at the end he's just standing there, defenseless.

[Student: So would you say it's the effortless after you place it on the object?]

Well, that's going to come later. Because he says, yeah, after, because you're going to need some effort to kick off.

[Student: So after the initial effort, no effort.]

Yeah, yeah, so you can imagine what the ninth one is going to be, right?

[Student: No effort at all]

By the way, he says, from the eighth level on up, you don't need to turn on your [unclear] anymore. You don't need to use, actively, watchfulness anymore.

[Various Students: [unclear]]

[Silence]

[Student: [unclear] What's the difference?]

[unclear] means to do it, and [unclear] means to set the mind on the object. But again, I don't, I mean, you really should have the characteristics of each level and not be concerned about the names. I can imagine someone getting a list of the names and struggling with each piece and then after that they would try to be calm and trying after that to be... you know

[Student: Totally]

Totally. Yeah, its frustrating if you want to see a list like that, by the way, if you try to read a sutra, that's all you get. And that's why we don't read sutras. I mean, in monasteries they don't read the sutras. All these things are found in the sutras but to get this list of nine, you'll have to read a hundred sutras and there'll be this here, this that, this here and that that. The Buddha doesn't give definitions and distinctions and divisions and he just says, well, put your mind on these nine steps...

[laughter]

And you have no idea of what they refer to. You have to dig through the whole sutras. And that was what the great early commentators did, you know they... the [Abhidharma], for example is basically a big organization of the sutras, so you know, you can go and try to read the sutras if you want, but you'll get a list of nine things and there will be no description of what they are.

[Student: So is there a value in reading the sutras?]

I, its great, it's the word of the Buddha, we memorize a lot of the sutras in the monastery, just for the, to have them in your mind, it affects your mind. But for

study, much better to work with the Tibetan monastic textbooks. Because even these nine will be mentioned in a verse in the [Tangyur], which is the Indian commentaries, without any explanation of what they are, you know, like those not, those five conditions for the place, they were [unclear] and what was the last one? [unclear] Doesn't give any clue as to what it is. [unclear] means easy to find. What, he doesn't say. [unclear] means good place. [unclear] means good area. [unclear] means good friends, and everything you need. Now what do those mean actually?

[Student: Sounds like a great party]

[laughter]

Easy to find means comfortable place – [unclear], that one is not too bad. Good place means no wild animals or other fearful thing that endanger your... safe place. Good place means safe place. Good area means healthy place, it doesn't make you sick. Good friends means people who share your Buddhist morality and your Buddhist view of emptiness. And having all the things you need means not having too many crowds during the day, and not too many noises at night. So I mean, you know, you can go study the Tangyur if you want, but its much better to work from the monastic textbooks. Then you can go back and you know what they mean. Yeah?

[Student: Is this because when the Buddha taught things, everybody knew what all these were?]

Yeah, they are code words that were taught to students, and then the lama would reveal the oral tradition to him, you see. They teach you the code. The Abhidharma goes [unclear]. The five in the eighth, connected to the three in the four. Okay. Good luck.

[laughter]

[Student: Are we talking about a situation where the Buddha said okay, you can only write down the code part of it and I'm going to give you orally...]

No. He didn't say that.

[Student: the explanation...]

The early commentators restricted it to code, because then you could memorize it easier.

[Student: So the Buddha actually explained all that but they couldn't write the whole thing out, so they...]

And when, when the tradition of passing... some of it was hidden also. Some of it is meant to be hidden.

[Student: [unclear] at the end]

and its also like its to memorize. If you wrote it all out instead of memorizing fifty pages for the [unclear] you'd have to, the full commentary is about a thousand pages. [unclear] memorize.

[Student: so then you depend on the sutras and somebody who knows how to decode them because the code book really wasn't written or...]

Someone who had received the oral tradition. And for both purposes. Both for security and later on they start to write things out more, so its helpful. Okay so [unclear] is the verb form [unclear]. What's [unclear]. [unclear] is like deep meditation, a deep state of meditation, you can say deep state of meditation. Some people try, struggle to translate [unclear]. [unclear] means even. Remember in the posture. Your shoulders were [unclear]. When we discussed the posture meditation. So [unclear] does mean even. People struggle to give it some meaning. I don't know if there is any meaning to it. It just means deep meditation. You can say even meditation if you want. Okay. What are the qualities of this? You tell me.

[Student: So you would say place mind in deep state of meditation.]

Ah, yeah, I would, you could say equilibrium, stability or something, y'know, people struggle to get some meaning in there, but its, its artificial. You don't have to struggle. Its not the idea. When you learn Tibetan very well, you learn that there are Sanskrit suffixes and prefixes, y'know. When I say conscience, consciousness in English, and you're a Tibetan translator who doesn't know English very well, you'll say coming together knowingness, knowing, now, now coming together knowing. And most of the translations are like that. They just don't know that conscience is a single word meaning awareness. So a lot of times you get a very bad translation because they don't know that that whole

unit is one word and it doesn't have to be, you don't have to struggle to give each syllable a meaning. Its not meant that way, even in English. All the Latin suffixes and prefixes have, they don't have separate meanings anymore. Consciousness doesn't mean a together knowingness anymore. It just means to be aware. So you just have to learn it.

[Student: [unclear] is what you tell me?]

[Student: The mind is always in deep meditation.]

Naah, come on.

[Student: Easy to get there and not having to defend it?]

Define it by the last one.

[Student: Effortless.]

Effortless. Effortless entering into deep meditation.

[Student: Entering the [unclear]]

Yeah, and he says the ninth one is accomplished through [unclear] means doing it over and over and over and over.

[Student: Doing what? The five steps?]

Practicing your morning meditation.

[laughter]

Or yeah, evening with some guys.

[Student: How common is it for someone to be able to achieve this?]

They say that if you try hard you'll be able to do it in six months.

[Student: Can you do it?]

[Student: An hour a day even?]

[Student: [unclear]]

We're not allowed to say.

[Student: [unclear]]

If you never had, you could never see emptiness directly.

[Student: If you what?]

[laughter]

If you had never done it, you could never see emptiness directly.

[Student: So you have to have this to see [unclear]]

No, no, not at all. This comes way before.
[unclear]

[Student: At first I thought it said]

It doesn't say anything. What he does say is that. He says this sets the stage.
What is [unclear]? [unclear] means this is very, very...

[Student: shh, shhh.]

I don't know how to say it in English. [unclear] means fertile, this sets a fertile field for the growth of shamatha.

[Student: What does?]

[Student: This ninth one]

This ninth one. It's almost to say it is shamatha. You see, he doesn't clearly say it is or isn't. This is totally consistent with the state of shamatha, in the desire realm.

[Student: What's the definition of shamatha again?]

Ah, I didn't give you one. [laughter]. And I'll pass on it. I'll give you a good one next week.

It's something like the mind focused – having reached the highest state of... you know, there's three qualities I'm gonna... but what I've told you, how I've described it to you is, its most important function, you can achieve shamatha without perceiving emptiness. But the most important function of shamatha is a perfect meditation which is focused on emptiness. And shamatha and vipassana always come, they don't always come together but when you, the pair of those, is the goal of meditation.

Does shamatha investigate the nature of the object? No. But, so it must be joined with vipassana which is the wisdom which investigates the object. So it's almost like you've got the vice and the screwdriver or something. Shamatha is holding the object so that vipassana which is the highest state of wisdom, can, can analyze it. So, we, there are teachings on, I can take you through eight steps of objects. We did them in our debating the other day. The basic distinction, and I didn't want to bring it up, but since you brought it up, the distinction between shamatha and vipassana, which are very famous words and misused a lot. They are both focused on the nature of objects, and on all objects. They both have clarity and fixation and clarity with intensity. Okay? So the nature of how they concentrate is the same. And the object towards which they focus is the same. So what distinguishes them?

[Student: The object?]

No, the objects are the same. So what do you think distinguishes them? This is missed, this is a point that is missed by a lot of people.

[Student: Is it intensity?]

No, the intensity is totally the same.

[Student: Could you say that again, please?]

The difference between these very famous two words which are thrown around very lightly. shamatha and vipassana.

[Student: Can you spell that second word?]

I was afraid you'd ask me that.

[laughter]

[Student: Is it the same as vipassana meditation?]

Yeah, yeah. It's the same thing. I want to look it up for you. Let me look it up okay, because I don't want to misspell it for you. vipassana is the Pali or the Sanskrit, I believe.

[Student: Vipassana]

[Student: So that's what people do when they go and do this breath meditation for 10 days or so?

Yeah, but...

[Student: That's point nine, vipassana.]

No, we're just comparing, somebody asked, and [laughter] if I could compare point nine to these two very high states of wisdom and meditation.

[Student: So point nine is ...]

Which are very famous. I mean if you read the dharma books and all that stuff, they mention them all the time, and rarely very clearly. Shamatha is focused towards the totality of objects and their nature. Vipassana is focused toward the totality of objects and their nature. Shamatha...

[Student: You said...]

The totality of objects and their nature. What we call [unclear] and [unclear]. You weren't supposed to be getting to this. Oh you want it or not. [laughter] They're both focused on the real nature of existence, at their highest level. They both have perfect fixation, they both have perfect clarity, they both have clarity with ...

[Student: Intensity]

Intensity. So what makes them different?

[Student: One is ultimate reality]

No [unclear]

[Student: What about conventional?]

[Student: I would guess that from shamatha you could perceive emptiness directly and from vipassana you could not.]

No. Vipassana is the [unclear]. It's the higher form.

[Student: Did you say before, shamatha holds the object and vipassana can analyze the object.]

Well that's the difference. That's the difference, okay. Vipassana is examining the nature of the object. Vipassana is analyzing but shamatha is not. Shamatha is just grasping the object, keeping you on the object. So this is the point of meditation. The point of meditation is... we didn't talk about the content yet. It's just a microscope. It's just a tool. To keep the mind on the object fiercely, then you have to have another part of.. another mental function, which is wisdom, which understands the nature of this object, which is analyzing the nature of the object and coming up with the ultimate nature of the object. So they are different.

[Student: [unclear]]

And that's the difference between the two, and then there's a long mode, it's a, there's eight different stages you have to discuss and you don't have time to [unclear]. But they are called [list in Tibetan...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.] And you can study it...

[laughter]

[Student: Are you going to talk about the changes that occur in the body with the feelings and the sensations and all that is associated with this?]

He doesn't talk much about it. Your body... there are sense sensations, you

should... those are gross distractions.

[Student: Well purification, negative energies and things like that]

[Student: [unclear]]

Ah, the first time lama mentions, in his commentary [unclear] in the section on meditation, four stages of bliss. Its called [unclear], its in, its actually found in, in different, its found in much higher teachings also. So he does talk about that. Those are related to [unclear]. Agility. Agility means, that was the fourth antidote to the first problem, that does mean some kind of bliss you get from meditating, mental and physical.

[Student: Your body's pliancy changes.]

You feel very light and you feel very supple. But, if you really want to know, there are nine levels to causal meditation. [laughter]

[Student: In what meditation?]

Causal meditation in a division called [unclear], which you go up through different levels and basically what it is, is where each time you get a higher level, each time you get to a level, the level above you, the grass is greener concept, the level above you looks a little more subtle, so you get, you lose your desire to stay at this level and you go up to the higher level of concentration. As you go through those levels, you actually abandon any desire for any kind of sensation and the way in which you abandon them.. this is not the subject, ok, first you abandon, ah, mental unhappiness, then you abandon physical pain, and then you abandon, ah, mental happiness, and then you abandon physical happiness, so what are you left with? There are five feelings, five sensations you can have, what are they? Mental and physical pain, bodily, I'm sorry, mental happiness and mental unhappiness, physical pain and physical pleasure, and what's the one you have left? You're capable of having five sensations.

[Student: Awareness]

One is going on, one of them is going on all the time.

[Student: Discrimination]

No.

[Student: Perception]

No

[Student: Awareness]

What's that?

[Student: Awareness]

No. What's the fifth sensation you can have? If you're not feeling good and you're not feeling bad, what are you feeling?

[Student: Neutral.]

Neutral. Its neutral. So as you go, as you go up through the five, as you go up through four levels of high meditation, you give up any desire to [unclear] sensation. And each of those sensations becomes a distraction and at the very highest level, you're left with only neutral feeling. Its like you reached some great wisdom and some great height of meditation and the only thing you want to do is feel neutral.

[Student: So this is cutting the root of attachment and aversion, is that the...]

Its not. [laughter]. And this is not considered a good method. Its considered a worldly method. The Hindus do it. You get to a point where you don't even care about feeling good anymore, but then you've still got neutral feeling. Neutral feeling is still suffering, neutral feeling is still, ah, samsara.

[Student: So that doesn't tie off unclear]]

Well, you asked! [laughter]

[Student: I just wondered if it was related.]

To get to the very first of those stages, you have to get to here.

[Student: After you get to there then you...]

It comes after this.

This is the highest you can get in the desire realm.

[Student: [unclear]]

There are higher stages than this. But this, this is the basic state of mind you need to be in. That state of mind and those states of mind are the same. They are ... shamatha.

[Student: All those are shamatha?]

Yeah.

[Student: All those other ones?]

Yeah. But they, that method, which is to try and get more and more blissed, and to try and get more and more subtle states of mind, runs out, and what you reach is this very, very high state of mind, where you're just totally feeling neutral, and then, and then you can't go on beyond that. To go beyond that you have to do what?

[Student: [unclear]]

[Student: See emptiness directly.]

See emptiness directly. So it's a big danger. You can go higher than that. Go another four levels and get stuck.

[Student: And this is in regard to the formless realm?]

Because the, because the capacity to feel is samsara.

[Student: And so then if you go into a formless realm at that point would you rebirth in a formless realm?]

Yeah, you would be reborn into a formless realm. The capacity, the sensation of a neutral feeling is suffering.

[Student: They say in this book earlier, equanimity and awareness. What do they mean by awareness? Is it awareness and equanimity?]

That could be... there could be ten different contexts for that. You'd have to show me the context.

[Student: So Michael?]

[Student: Michael, I think they were talking about this.]

Excuse me.

[Student: I think they were talking about this.]

They were probably talking, no, its probably about the, sounds like the [unclear]

[Student: So Michael, is there ever a level that you would attain where the power of concentration, or power of focus doesn't degenerate when you stop meditating? You know...

Yeah, the Buddha. [laughter]

[Student: [unclear]]

There's a famous quotation. The Buddha's in deep state of meditation, oooh quiz! You know what it is... Even when he's eating, even when he's walking, even when he's talking, even when he's ...

[Student: So let's say you get to that level of shamatha meditation. If you stop meditating, do you lose it?]

Yeah, I think when you come out. [unclear]

[Student: Yeah, like you stop meditating. You get to this level, you stop

meditating for a couple of weeks, a couple of months, you...]

It just says that you, this just says that those two problems are going to occur during the period of your meditation.

[Student: So?]

If you meditate effortlessly after you sit down.

[Student: Yeah.]

So then you feel when you get up, you lose it.

[Student: Yeah, so, I'm not saying that you are in meditation all the time, I'm saying, let's say you don't meditate for a month or two, and then you go back and meditate, let's say, maybe you drop back down to where [unclear]]

Yeah, true.

[Student: You don't get to a level where you sort of stay there, your mind stays at that level of focal abilities?]

Yeah, yeah, that's true... you cannot... its like a diet, when you go off it for a while, [unclear]

[Student: You get fat.]

[unclear]

[Student: [unclear]]

Sorry to keep you late. You guys asked.

[Student: You asked for it.]

[Prayer]

[end of cassette Side B.]

940312-1

Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Eight: Object of Meditation

March 12, 1994

Transcribed by: Brian Smith

[cut] , environment, moral environment, physical environment, mental environment. Third one?

[students: unclear].

How to sit. You should reach that. Fourth one?

[students: Mental processes, mental problems, corrections].

Mental technique. What problems would come up, what corrections to take, what the levels you went up to [unclear]. So we finished all that. Now, interestingly enough, what to meditate about. Okay? [laughs]. So we're gonna cover today, we're gonna start three weeks, three nights, of how to, what to meditate about. To do that, you have to know that there's three kinds of meditation, okay? These are donated by Margie, if you guys know. She found them and you debate it with yourself, and that's called {chegom}. It means analytical meditation. You, you have a problem with a certain point of Buddhism, or you're not sure about a certain point, and you put it in front of your mind, you put it in center stage, and you start to rip it apart, you start to think of all the reasons of why or why not you can accept it or you can't accept it. And that's called {chegom}. It's supposed to be that as a result of a {chegom} you can come to some conclusion. And then you do a {jor gom} on that conclusion.

[student: You do what?]

A {jor gom}. You fix on that conclusion. Like we have the five classical proofs for emptiness in the last course. You know? So this might be your process: you might do a {shargom} on those five. What's the first one? Emptiness of one and emptiness of many, right? And then you go through them like that. You go through the five, and you keep going through the five. And you're just reviewing them. Then you do {chegom}. You say, "why is it true that if something is empty it must be either one thing which is empty or many things which is empty, which are empty." And you, you debate that in your mind until

you come to some conclusion. Like maybe you see emptiness intellectually, and then you fix your mind on that conclusion. So, that's a process you can do. You do {shargom} if you're just going through the outline of the thing. You might choose to stop on one of the parts of the outline and do {chegom}, okay, how do you prove that? How do you prove that there's a past life? And you stop and you start to try to prove it to yourself. And when you get to some conclusion, you fix your mind on that. That's called {jokgom}. Alright? Yeah.

[student: Isn't {jorgom} kind of dangerous then? What if you come to the wrong conclusion?]

[Laughs] There's a very interesting thing, and I'll tell you, it's, ah, very, very easy. You learn Buddhist logic. And that's what the next course is about, partly. You learn the rules for proving something. Then you, you pick an object to prove, or disprove. And you go through all the reasons for it. If that thing is true, and if your method is correct, you must come to the correct conclusion. That's what debating is all about. You cannot come to an incorrect conclusion if you follow the rules of logic. And, and the end is a true thing. Which is not, by the way, you don't start with that assumption. You start with the assumption that it could be true or false, and you, and you attack it with logic. It's against the rules of Buddhist logic to use a reason to prove something if the person doesn't already accept that that reason applies to, to the object under question. For example, I can't say to you, "The sky, take the sky, it's not green because it's blue." If you don't accept the fact that the sky is blue, I'm not allowed to give that proof to you. If you're a non-Buddhist and I'm trying to convince you of Buddhism, I'm not allowed to give you any proof, I'm not allowed to use any idea, that you don't already accept. So really, when you see a Buddhist trying to convince somebody of something and he fails, it's because he has not followed the rules of logic. In fact, he's broken the rules of logic. So, so when you've learned logic better, you'll be good at it. You can do a {chegom}. Yeah?

[student: Well, do you mean to say, something that someone accepts which is already true? I mean, how can you prove to somebody something which they accepted, what they accept. . .]

You're also not allowed in Buddhist logic, it's a fallacy, it's a mistake of logic, to try to prove something to someone when he already accepts it. Like to prove that your death is, is imminent. That your death is going to occur today. To prove it logically, I'm not allowed to do, to Dharmakirti, because he already knows that. That's, that's what you mean. I don't mean he accepts the

conclusion. I mean he accepts all the facts I give which force him to draw that conclusion. So I say in my case, I say, "Take the sky. It is not green, because it's blue." And you don't have to write this down. I'm just giving you an example. He doesn't believe that the sky is not green. That's why I'm trying to convince him. "The sky is not green because it's blue." But he must accept that the sky is blue. And he must accept that if something is blue it can't be green. And so he's forced to accept that the sky is not green. But he hasn't seen it yet. In other words, he has all the information in his own mind, he just didn't draw the right conclusion yet. He knows the sky is blue. He knows if something's blue it can't be green. But he has this mistaken belief that the sky is not, is not not green.

[student: So if you're, let's just say you're dealing with a Christian who believes in God. Okay?]

Yeah, you cannot start by jumping all the way up there. You have to start with some very low level things and work up to that. You have to work up to the point where he has to go, "Oh yeah, you're right," ya know?

[student: So you couldn't, you couldn't have a debate with that person about this subject in either, pro or con.]

No you can. You can absolutely. You can say, "Take the world. It was not made by a compassionate living being because it has suffering.

[student: But he disagrees with that, so that's it, you can't. . .]

Which part? Does he disagree that the world was . .

[student: That it was not made by a compassionate being.]

Oh no, we're trying to prove that to him. Take the world. . .

[student: No, you said you can't prove something to someone unless they already believe it.]

Well, I'll say it again. Take the world. It was not made by a living being, because if it were he'd have to be compassionate. Let's say that. The maker of the world should be compassionate. I'm sorry. Take the world, it was not made by a compassionate being because there's suffering.

[student: And I'll play the devil's advocate and say, "No, you're crazy, everyone knows God's compassionate, what are you talking about?"]

Then I'll say, no. I repeat it. Take the world, it was not made by a compassionate being because it has suffering, it's full of suffering. Now, now, don't say anything yet. Does he accept that the world is full of suffering?

[student: Yes.]

Does he accept that if the world is made of suffering the person who made it could not have been compassionate?

[student: Not at all, no.]

That we have to debate. Then I can't use that for that Christian. No I can't. I can't use that. I have to go lower than that. I have to go lower than that.

[student: But why don't you, when you say that it was made by suffering, I mean. . .]

By the way, this is a {jegom}, okay? [laughter] If you want to know the answer come to the next course. We're going to do it in the next course. So these are, these are, automatically you understand then the different objects for meditation.

[student: These are the three object for. . .]

No. These are the three kinds of meditation, and each have a different object. Okay? The classical object to start {jokgom}, the classical object when you're trying to develop {shamata} is a picture of a holy being, like a Buddha, or your root Lama, or the Dalai Lama, or whoever you want. Not looking at it with the eyes, but focussing on it with the mind. It's okay to go home and look at the picture for a few minutes to make sure you know what he looks like and then you go sit down, but {shamata} must be developed in the mental sense and not in the physical senses. It must be developed in conjunction with the consciousness of your thoughts and your mind and not in conjunction with the consciousness of your senses. It can't be. So the object, the object is in this case like a Buddha or something like that, or even a conclusion, if you understand emptiness you can meditate fixedly on emptiness. {Jokgom}, I'm sorry, {shargom} you should have an outline, you should have some kind of steps, like

the nine levels of the mind, the five problems, the eight corrections, the six qualities, the six preliminary practices, the seven ingredients that those practices should have, things like that. That's a {shargom}.

[student: That's the outline?]

Yeah, the outline itself is the object, and you're going through one, two, three, four, five. Let's go back again, one, two, three, four, five. Let's go backwards, five, four, three, two, one. Let's skip, five, three, one. And, and you get, you're just jumping. You're like a person going through his musical scales, if you've ever played. That's what make you a good improviser in music, is to do your scales for years and years. Then you're ready to do, then you're ready to do, then your're ready to improvise, okay? That's {shargom}. {Chegom} you take a problem, you take maybe past lives, or you take are things empty, or you take was the world created. Is it true that there is not any pleasant object in this life? Things like that. Is it true that my teacher is a Buddha? That my Lama is a Buddha? Those are objects of {chegom}.

[student: unclear]

Long story [laughs]. We'll talk about it. Okay. So, we're going to do, I'm gonna give you an object for your meditations. I suggest that you use it for about six months. I personally find that if I, I get tired in about six months of an object, and I like, a personal, personal taste, you know. I find that I'm not fresh on that object any more after six months. The books say pick an object and stick with one object until you acheive {shamata}. Okay? Like a picture of a Buddha or something like that. I'm saying the object I'm gonna give you is a very good object for a good {shargom} and the, and it's an outline of all the steps to get to Buddhahood, the basic, necessary components of any path which claims to end your suffering. It must have certain components. If one of the components missing, you cannot reach that goal.

[student, John Stillwell: And so are you saying that all three of these different kind of meditations can be {shamata}, or single-pointed concentration meditations?]

Yeah, oh yeah, you can get {shamata} on any of them. That's the point. That's the idea. But choose the most virtuous one you can. And why not the steps to Buddhahood. And it's the engine theory, right? It's possible, I say it's possible, that a spiritual path which doesn't contain certain essential components will

never work for you, cannot work for you. Like an engine, if it's missing one necessary component just doesn't work. It might sound great. It might look great. It might move around all over the place, but it won't move the car. It won't get you where you're going. I just say this as a possibility, okay? You can {chegom} on it. Okay? I contend that if you don't have all of the elements that are found in the basic structure of the {lam rim}, if you don't have those in your meditation, in your practice, you cannot attain the end of suffering. Impossible. Just as much as if one important part of an engine were gone, even though that spiritual path looks pretty nice, even though it seems to give some pleasant feelings in this life, even though many people are following it, if it's missing one of those components forget it. I say it's possible that you can't reach anywhere with it. Okay. Very possible. Yeah?

[student, John Stillwell: I thought you said the image of the Buddha was most virtuous, and then you said the stages of the path were the most virtuous.]

The image of the Buddha is the classical one. In a sense, the teachings are the Buddha. [laughter]

[student: So are they equal or what?]

But I'm giving you this also, the other selling point is, the lam rim outline I'm going to give you is necessary preparation for you to take the tantric initiations. You're not allowed to take a tantric initiation without this instruction. In other words, you have to perfectly understand the outline of the open teachings before you're allowed to take a secret initiation, okay? You're trying to take one in June, okay? You must have this background first, and then I can go to Rinpoche and say, "Okay, they all heard it." [Laughter] And then he can, they say it's best if you have some realization of each of these steps, you know personal experience, that you developed all of these steps. And if not, well okay, you grasped them all thoroughly. You know, if not, well okay, you have a pretty good idea of the outline, that's what they say. So I would like that for the next six months when you do your meditations, you're focussing on, you can do the steps of the lam rim like "boomboomboomboomboom." You can do a hundred, two hundred, three or four hundred. I'm picking the shortest lam rim in history, okay? [laughter] I'm picking a lam rim, okay, and I'll write it for you.

[student, John Stillwell: So are you saying it's equal then whether you pick an object like the Buddha or a lam rim?]

Ah, yep. Talking practically, in case you die this week or something. . . [silence].
Two different items, okay. [silence]

[student: inaudible]

Excuse me? I will explain.

[student: [unclear]]

No. Okay, lam rim, say lam rim [students: repeat]. Tibetan r's are rolled like ruffles, and not with your teeth up here, like rim. I can't do it very well, okay? Lam means path, rim means steps, and you see lots of different translations: graduated path, stages of the path, graduated stages of the path, graduated. . . you know, there's millions of translations. It just means the steps that you must go through to reach Buddhahood and nirvana. These are absolutely necessary steps. If one of them is left out you won't make it. Okay. And that's what disqualifies most of the spiritual paths that are being sold today, I believe, I would say that. But you can draw your own conclusions. You can do your {chegom}. You know. What's good is if you do it, if you try it, and you really do it correctly, it should give you some results after a while, a month, two months, three months. You should see some change in yourself, and in your happiness level. And if you don't, then it's a stupid path, give it up, do something else.

[student: what about if your karma's not. . .]

Even if you've got lousy, lousy, lousy karma, I would say that if you sincerely practice it correctly, and I emphasize correctly, I mean [inaudible], you don't mix it up with something else, if you're not noticing some change in your basic level of contentment or happiness, and happiness meaning knowledgeable happiness satisfaction level, I'd say you're either not practicing it right or that you should just quit it and go and find something else before you die.

[student, John Stillwell: Would the same thing apply if you're doing, say, a meditation retreat and you get, like, stalled out, something going wrong?]

No, it's very common in retreat to have a failed retreat. It's very common if you're a very serious practitioner to have serious problems. That doesn't mean, it does mean that you did something wrong, that you should have slowed down when you were speeding up, or that you shouldn't have meditated upon something too heavy, or, normally that's what's happening. You didn't get the

instructions to know when you were supposed to. But sometimes a snake bites you in the arm like, uh [inaudible] you know, there's not much you can do. Okay, she blew her meditation but she almost died.

[student, John Stillwell: So then what do you do in the case of your having blown meditation, just start again . . .]

It's very important to get up before you blow it out completely. They say you should leave your meditation seat with a good heart, you know, kinda happy with it. But if something goes wrong and the thing just degenerates, you know, get up, sing {tupa}, uplift your mind, you know, how? [laughter] No, you know, I mean, how many people in the world are even trying to do what you're doing, you know. I mean, how many? You know, it's one in a million. The others are what we called last time, sheep heading for the slaughter, you know, they're just heading for death. There's no possible happy resolution to their life, period. Impossible. I met Mr. Shen yesterday. Mr. Shen, he's a multi, multi, multimillionaire. He's eighty five years old. He's blessed by incredibly good health. He's had all the money he ever wanted in his whole life, and he's a good Buddhist. And he spent his life practicing. And what's his reward? His wife died last year of a horrible bone disease, and, uh, he's lonely, and he's alone, and he's in this house, and, I mean, it's the end of all, even if you have all these things working for you, the end is suffering, you know, unless you change the nature of your being, which is, you have to know how. So anyway. Lam rim. Steps to the path. It's roots are in the sutras of the Buddha, so if I ask you, "Who wrote the first lam rim?" you better say, "the Buddha." The Buddha wrote it in the [b: Prajnaparamita Sutras], and there's a quotation in the [b: Prajnaparamita Sutras] which is where the word lam rim came from. It's like {maga kama}, you know, steps to the path.

[student: Its roots are in . . .?]

In the sutras, in the original teachings of the Buddha, five hundred B.C.

[student, John Stillwell: Written by the Buddha?]

The Buddha described lam rims, he said there are {rimbas} of the lam, and there's a quotation that's always used to [inaudible]. The Buddha wrote all this.

[student: Did he write them down, or did someone else write them down?]

He spoke them and they were written down five hundred years later. In those days, according to Buddhism, the students were so advanced they memorized it while he spoke it. They say that we are in degenerate times. You know, we tend to think we're more advanced than people in India five hundred B.C. who didn't have cars. But according to Buddhism they were intellectually far ahead of us. They knew that they should be learning dharma and they, spiritually they were much more advanced than us, and intellectually they were much more advanced. They could follow what he said immediately and they could memorize it as he spoke.

[student: But everybody in those days could, whether they were Buddhists or not.]

No, obviously not. But we say that the majority of his students were. If things are empty, then you have to have a certain karma to meet the Buddha. You have to be some kind of incredible being just to meet him. Like, as if . . .

[student: It's interesting, you know, that one of the bodhisattva, you know, one of the downfalls of the bodhisattva vows is destroying towns, you know, indicates that there's a certain level of violence that individuals come in contact with and prone to. . .]

But the people who studied with the Buddha directly were blessed, and they had incredible faculties. Anyone who in this life who could study with the Dalai Lama directly, for example, for a long period of time, that's, he has to be some kind of incredible person himself. Okay. So that's lam rim. After the Buddha taught there were many great texts, there were many great commentaries, this whole Indian period, and then later Atisha, who lived in one thousand A.D., he wrote a lam rim called "The Light of the Path," you don't have to, I'm not gonna ask you that, okay? And then people wrote lam rims, and the most famous one is the lam rim of {Chendal}, {Chendal} means "big," okay, and that was written by Tsongkapa, Je Tsongkapa. It's a thousand pages long. It's probably the most famous book in Tibet.

[student: [unclear]]

I'll write it over here. What steps of the path means, I don't know about stages, stages would sorta mean to me like points that you reach, but that's not what lam rim means. Lam rim means the steps that you must take to get to that goal, okay. So I prefer the word steps. Steps in a method, okay. And each one is an

attitude you have to develop. It's a mental step. It's an inner attitude that you must develop. And that's what lam rim means. You wanna turn on the water for tea?

[student: I'm afraid to. No, I think there's a little mouse running around in here. I keep hearing him squeaking, and I don't want to burn him up or anything. He's behind? It's okay?]

I think it's alright.

[student: He's very close to all this food, and he can't get through.]

So that's, so we'll go on for about five minutes while he's heating up the tea. So that's what lam rim means. So there, so if I ask you a question, "How many lam rims are there?" There's many books called lam rims, but how many lam rims are there?

[student: One.]

No, each one is a lam rim, and most people don't understand that.

[student: Each step is a lam rim?]

Each step is a lam rim. {Lamka rimba} means any step of the path, so this is really plural. They should have called it "steps of the path." And each one is called a {lamki rimba}, and most people don't realize that.

[student, John Stillwell: Each step of the lam rim. . .]

Yeah, each step in the lam rim book is a {lamki rimba}, is a lam rim, {lamki rimba}. So how [unclear] is a {lamki rimba}, death meditation is a {lamki rimba}, meditating on karma is a {lamki rimba}, meditating on emptiness is a {lamki rimba}.

[student: Why are you saying it differently then. . .]

It's the full form. Steps of the path, {lam ki rimba}. Most people never catch that, most people never figure that out.

[student, John Stillwell: Because it has sub-steps, is that the idea?]

This is just for them, you don't have to know this, I'm just, some people ask for this. That's the full form. Most, uh. . . Tibetan loves to shorten things, Tibetan is very economic language and likes to shorten {lamki rimba}, {lamki rimba} becomes lam rim, steps of the path.

[student: Is ki the possessive?]

Yeah. So we're gonna study, the lam rim we're gonna study, is called. . . By the way, not just study but what?

[student: Meditate on.]

Use as the object of our meditation for, say, the next six months, okay? Every morning. Burn it into your head. If you see something that you can't accept, stop and do a {chegom} on it. It's called {yendun neshe djorma}. {Yendun} means "a good quality," like compassion or understanding of emptiness or disgust with this life --those are all {yenduns}, those are {yenduns}. If you could have those three you'd be, you'd have a, you'd be what we would call a talented person, or. . . You know.

[student: What are the three again?]

Let's say understanding emptiness, compassion, and disgust with this life. And we said it before, it's not like you have to have this, suddenly you wanna go stay in a cave, okay? It's just the normal vicissitudes of life, it's just the crappiness of this life, that just keeps coming up over and over and over again, that we try to ignore or else we get depressed about it, you know [laughs]. It doesn't have to be, oh, I'm gonna die in seventy years or something like that. It's this whole, every day is crappy. And it doesn't mean that you always fight with people at work and stuff like that, but the work is crappy. Where can you get? You can go up to the vice president and you die, or someone stabs you in the back and you lose the position, or things change and the company's out of business, or. . . You know, there's no, there's no happy ending. There cannot be a happy ending. That's just crappy. And your body's getting older and older, and you feel your energy getting worse, and there's no happy ending, there's no other conclusion, there's no place else to go. And that's the same with everything.

[student: Are you happy that you got fired?]

[Laughs] No, and then there comes a day when you're unemployed [unclear]. [Laughter] You try to turn bad situations into thinking nice about them, but basically the whole scheme [unclear] [Laughter]. . . car accidents, or cancer, or [unclear]. It's, uh, life is crappy, every day is lousy. [Laughter]

[student, John Stillwell: There is one possible scenario which is that you go through life and you do your dharma and it all works out well at the end.]

It will, it will. You can change it,

[Student: In eons, and eons, and eons. . .]

No, no. You can change it in this life. That's the whole point. You can cause the reality to change, and you'd better, cause you don't have any other choice.

[student: So what happens then, even though everything is still crappy it doesn't bother you any more?]

Not like that, not like that.

[student: No, remember, you're not supposed to aspire to neutrality.]

No, not like that. Okay. So {yendun} means a good quality, and I'm saying that, you know, a mild distaste for this life is intelligent and that's a good quality. {Shir djorma}, {shir}, {shir} is a difficult word to translate. {Shir} means "the basis". I've translated as "source," which is one of its meanings. {Djorma}, {djor} means "he who is," "the one who is," so that so far means "the one who is the source of all my good qualities." Where do I learn these good qualities, okay? {Ma} is a feminine ending and is used for great books, maybe because of the connection with wisdom. What's the greatest lam rim ever written?

[students: [unclear]]

{Chenmo} and {mo} is feminine, okay? So {djorma} is a feminine ending. So the lam rim we're gonna study, the lam rim you're gonna use for your meditation, the lam rim which only takes three and a half pages on a piece of paper, and you have it, that's what I handed out, is {yendun shir djorma}, okay?

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, there is a sutra called “om,” and the whole sutra is “om.” [Laughter] Okay. I’ll do the first, I’ll tell you who the author is, and then we’ll have our break.

[student: How would you say that whole sentence again?]

This title of our lam rim? “The source of all my good qualities,” “the source of all my good.” Okay? It refers to, we’ll talk about it. Where does all your good qualities come from?

[student: The Lama.]

[student, John Stillwell: Your saying that the lam rim is the source of all of your good qualities?]

The name of the lam rim that we’re gonna study, the name of the book on the path to Buddhahood that we are gonna study, is called “He who is the source of all my good qualities.”

[student: So the title is only [unclear], not lam rim [unclear]]

No. You could put a lam rim here and it would be perfectly acceptable. They would say “The lam rim called. . .” and it’s, you can call it that: you can say {lam rim yendun shir [unclear], that’s fine.

[student: Is it “good qualities,” or just “good”?]

I translate as “good,” but it means, meaning “good qualities.” I’m not sure you can have a good quality that’s not “goodness.” Here’s the author of the lam rim we’re going to study. Tsongkapa. Je Tsongkapa. Tsongka means “Onion County,” and it’s the place where he came from. And Tsongkapa means “the person from Onion County,” and Je means “lord,” Lord Tsongkapa. You don’t call a high lama, “hey Tsong,” you call him “Je,” Je Tsongkapa. “Je” means “lord.” It’s kinda funny to see people split it into Tsong-kapa. It’s like, man-[unclear]. [Laughter] It means “the one from Manhattan,” it’s like “Manhattanite,” “New Yorker.” It’s like “New-York-er.” Okay, anyway, that’s the person’s name. Where did he teach that?

[student: What’s the thing?]

This is an {asur}, which is rarely seen in Tibetan. I’ll teach it to you in April

[unclear].

[student: [unclear]]

No we're gonna. . . After these courses are finished this time, in April we'll have a, like, little alphabet class. If anyone's interested they can come. Some of the people who joined the Tibetan class didn't have enough alphabet from their past, whoever was their past teacher, so we're gonna do it over again. So if you want to start Tibetan, or if you just want to come and get abused for a while [laughs], you're welcome to come. I'm not sure what night yet, we'll talk about it. Okay, say {radeng}. [students: repeat] {Radeng} is a very holy monastery. It's north of Lhasa. It's about a hundred kilometers. I believe it was founded, I'm pretty sure it was founded by {Drongteje} who was the main disciple of Atisha, you don't have to know that, which means it was founded around one thousand A.D. He was the great disciple of Atisha, and he never became a monk. He was a layman with layman's vows, and he's very famous. He was one of the greatest lamas in Tibetan history. And he helped found this monastery.

[student: Is it still there?]

As I understand it, it's pretty badly damaged, but I don't know. I believe you can still visit it. Do you know?

[student: I don't know.]

And he taught, Je Tsongkapa taught this lam rim there. Now he would have taught it around fourteen hundred. I don't know the exact date. If I asked you, you could say fourteen hundred. Around fourteen hundred he taught it. We could figure out the exact date. We're working on his biography, but we're not finished yet. That's where he taught it.

[student: Michael, he was the source of all my good qualities. . .]

He or she. In case your root Lama's a woman.

[student: [unclear]]

No, he wrote the {lam rim chinro}. He wrote a lot of other lam rims. And he realized that the {lam rim chinro} was too long. The long lam rim was too long. So he wrote a middle, middle lam rim. That's about, I dunno, a hundred and

twenty pages. Then he wrote a short lam rim, that's about twenty pages. Then he wrote {b: yeneshe gumpa}, which is three pages. Then he wrote {b: lamsa namsa}, "Three Principal Paths," which is twelve verses, fourteen verses. So this is really the shortest real, shortest full-fledged lam rim.

[student: We don't have to memorize this, do we?]

You should memorize it.

[student: You gotta meditate on it.]

Yeah. When you get your, if and when you get your tantric initiation you're gonna have to recite it quite frequently, so you might as well memorize. You're asked to memorize it in your assignment. The thing about being a Buddhist is: have all this information in your brain, because if you die, you get into an accident, you're in the hospital, it's all available in your mind. It's very important. It's not good to depend on a book. It's better if it's all in your mind. It's much better. We're not used to it, but it's much better in case you get into some emergency, it's all available to you. When you do a deep retreat, a month-long retreat, you've got all that tool kit available in your own mind. You start to get into a problem, you know exactly, you go, "problem number three," you've got everything in your mind. It's much more efficient than paper and pencil.

[student: [unclear]].

It's half Tibetan, come on. And it's long, it's like three words per line. Not very long. Okay, have some refreshments.

[cut] [student: There's three different kinds of mediation? Where does [unclear] fit in?]

[student: [unclear]]

Okay. Let me see what's on your homework.

[cut] . . . great books of original Buddhism. These were the books that came out of early India. These are the books that all Buddhism came out of. It didn't reach every country. Not every book reached every country. These last two books. . . By the way, this is the order that we study them in the monastery, in eighteen years, and, the first three, I'm sorry the first two, are Mahayana, as is the last

one, and these two are Hinayana. So Vinaya and Abhidhamma reached to Thailand, for example, and they study, they have forty volumes in their canon, and they have these two subjects. Did Tibetan Buddhism reject them? No. The monks' vows are straight Hinayana. And I spent ten years studying Abhidharma, that was the first thing Rinpoche taught us, so I would say that we study it very, very seriously. Then we go on to study the Mahayana schools.

[student, John Stillwell: How do those countries which have received all the books feel about the books they didn't received?]

Different opinions. I think mostly don't know much about them. I mean, basically. If you go to Thailand and ask them, "What do you think about Madhyamika?" they [unclear] that they're not really sure about it. I don't think that there's a lot of knowledge in those places about the Madhyamika. Yeah?

[student: You mean only number three and number four is in Thailand?]

Yeah.

[student: And how about number one and number two?]

Uh, not, oh maybe it reached one Thai lady, I think. [Laughter.] I think she has to take it back. [Laughs.]

[student: That's only Mahayana?]

Yeah, yeah and this one is Mahayana also, but some Hinayana, this is a mixture, the [unclear] is a mixture.

[student: [unclear] the same.]

I think the more you study, if you study for a long time, they are all beautiful, they join together very, very nicely. In fact, Tsongkapa said if you understand the scriptures well you don't see any contradiction between them at all.

[student: That is how I feel.]

And he said if you do then you haven't studied enough. Yeah?

[student: He just ask me, what's the difference, because I'm from Thailand, and,

why I'm here, and I say that, it's like, in my country some of the Buddhist, whatever you teach us here, somehow it's spread in the culture.]

Yeah, I met many taxi drivers in, remember meeting a taxi driver in Thailand, and he's telling me about the [unclear] [laughs]. Yeah, they all know a lot.

[student: It's just something that you're born, and you learn the way it is, but they didn't say "This is Buddhist," it's just a way of life.]

So anyway, these are the five great books. If you study these five books, you have studied all the schools. And each school is divided up here. I'm not going to go through the whole thing. There are four great schools of Indian Buddhism. We study all of them. And if you finish these five books, you have studied all of the great schools of Indian Buddhism, which is Buddhism. And they all relate to the Buddhist Sutras. All of these came from the Sutras and you can find the places in the Sutras. These are all open teachings, not secret. Then there are the secret teachings.

[student: Michael, you said when you quoted Tsongkapa, Je Tsongkapa, that's talking about scripture.]

And the concepts as well.

[student: But that's, did he read Pali scripture?]

No.

[student: Well, then how can you say that he would accept Hinayana?]

No. I would say that the Abhidharma teachings and the Vinaya teachings would cover the subjects of the Pali Buddhism.

[student: Hinayana Buddhists reject. . .]

The Thai canon comes from the Pali canon.

[student: Right, I know that. No, I was just thinking, how could you say that they . . .]

There not contradictory, once you've studied. . .

[student: You've said that they're not contradictory, that one includes things that the other doesn't.]

Of course.

[student: So you can't, I mean, a Hinayana Buddhist doesn't accept what a Mahayana Buddhist. . .]

Well I would say more that he hasn't learned it, or he hasn't been exposed to it, see what I mean? I'm not, what I'm saying is, if you take a person [unclear], and you say, "Come in a room and let's talk about the concepts of Mahayana," I don't think he'd have any problem with it. Abhidharmakosha, which is THE ultimate Hinayana text, has roots of all the things we ever study, and I can show them to you. I memorized most of it. And it's fine. It's a lack of study and a lack of knowledge. And it's some early people writing in English who, who had a misconception. So once you've learned it, you know, five years from now let's talk about it. Okay. Secret teachings, okay. And we're gonna go through these five. You've already been through some of them. Secret teachings. What I'm trying to say, why did I draw all this up here? Not anyone of these books gives you the entire lam rim, none of them. And I can tell you because I've memorized some of them and I've studied all of them.

[student: You mean all five together?]

No, any one individually.

[student: But all five together would?]

We'll talk about it. What I'm saying is that, you could study any one of these five books, you could study any one of these four schools, and you can study secret Buddhism, but none of them contains all of the path. Not one of these books. And they wouldn't claim to. I mean, if you asked Chandrakirti, does it contain all of the Buddhism, he'd say "no, it doesn't contain secret Buddhism." And then these other authors also. They were writing one speciality of the five subjects that you have to study. But not one of those books covers all the points of Buddhism. The lam rim does. The lam rim covers the entire, all the way from the beginning up to, including secret teachings. The lam rim covers all of it.

[student: What I know is that in Thailand the monk doesn't debate, they don't

debate, and I don't know about secret at all]

Good! [laughs.] It works.

[student: [unclear]]

But what I'm saying is, you won't find, you can study in the monastery for eighteen years, and you can study, we spend twelve years on the first book, we spend four years on the second book, we do this all during our study for a few months a year, we do two years on this one and two years on this one. And there is no one book that contains the lam rim. Lam rim contains all of this.

[student: Is there overlap between these books?]

Yeah. There is some overlap.

[student: The lam rim, meaning the {lam rim sharma}?]

Meaning the lam rim tradition. Any lam rim, from [unclear] up to the [unclear], from three pages up to a thousand pages, contains the essence and all the subject matter of these five books.

[student: Thank you.]

And that's incredible. That's, that's, what I'm trying to say is if we were very intelligent, we studied lam rim, we wouldn't have to study [unclear].

[student, John Stillwell: Is that true of the approaches of the other traditions?]

I was gonna read you guys a quotation on the subject of, this is a quotation from {karma mikay doje}, the greatest Karmapa who ever lived. {long quotation in Tibetan}. It means, "I bow down and I praise the tip of the mountain of the {gandhambas}, who is Tsongkapa, who cleaned up Buddhism and made it faultless in this snowy land where the teaching had mostly become corrupted." That's the greatest Kagyu in history. See, um, and there's a generally a nice, I think the greatest leaders of all these sects, I mean, the greatest Sakya maybe was {Rendawa} and that was Tsongkapa's, one of his main lamas. So I think once you get up to a certain level of understanding they're all appreciating each other quite deeply. You know, I haven't studied the {lam [unclear] of [unclear]}, and I haven't studied the {[unclear]} of [unclear], I can't say, I don't know. I can

tell you what the lam rim says. [Laughs.] Okay. Yeah?

[student: What does, when you the word “secret,” that’s secret from whom, from non-Buddhists, non-monks, is it secret to the individual?]

Secret to anyone who hasn’t received permission to study them, and hasn’t received an initiation that allows him to study them.

[student: That’s what tantra means?]

[student: [unclear] and you haven’t got the information?]

They say your head cracks open. [Laughs.] No, I’ll tell you what happens. At the worst, it’s boring and you don’t read it very long. At the medium, you try something inside it, not knowing what you’re doing, and you go to hell. And then the very worst, I would say, you read it, you try it, and nothing happens, because you don’t really know what you’re doing. And then you just think it’s, you know, you take ten initiations and you fool around, you don’t do your [unclear] every day, slowly you stop doing it, and no one ever teaches you what you committed yourself to, you can’t tell me three of the vows of the twenty vows you took, or thirty vows you took, and it becomes a disaster. And then the worst thing, I think the most horrible thing that can happen, is that nothing happens, and you just lose your faith in those teachings, and you say, “oh, Joe Schmo’s giving another tantric initiation this weekend. Let’s fly over there and take another one,” you know, and nothing happens in your life. You don’t get any tantric results, and I think that would biggest karma of all, that would be the worst possible scenario, is that you fool around with it for a while, you don’t know what you’re doing, you never received any good teachings about it, you take an initiation, you don’t keep the commitments well, you get bored after a while and you stop doing it, and then in the back of your mind you’re thinking this doesn’t really do anything.

[student: What impact does the secret, like, can you become an accomplished Buddhist with no tantric . . .]

You can’t achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime without secret teachings. With tantra you can. That’s the idea of tantra, very powerful, very dangerous.

[student, John Stillwell: I thought you said you can’t attain Buddhahood without tantra.]

You can't attain, no, you can, you know, seventy six. . . seven hundred and sixty thousand great eons, something like that. [Laughs.] Okay, well anyway, what I'm trying to say is that having been through the whole great course, knowing the whole course, I believe what they say in the lam rim, which is that it contains all of them, and no one book contains them. What I'm saying is {yundrem samgyuma}, if you could understand these three pages, you don't have to go through that course. It's worth it to meditate on it. You still should go through the other books, but, what I'm saying is that it is that powerful. Okay.

[student: Michael, for instance, in Tibet would the lam rim be generally or universally used or recognized by all the different. . .]

[cut]. . . of history [unclear], they have spread it and praised it and, but each tradition has it's own, uh . . .

[student: So in other words, you'd be able to sort of recognize a Gelupa lam rim as opposed to a Kagyu lam rim if you were so skilled about it. It's a different flavor to it.]

It would be a lam rim if it had, if a {lam de}, for example, of the Sakyas, if it contains all the necessary parts, then it's a lam rim.

[student: I understand that, but I'm saying, would they be, then, take different angles of approach for the different points, for instance.]

Ah, the main elements would be the same. There might be a different order or a different [unclear].

[student: When you go to like say a, say, sort of, I don't know what you call it, lectures and initiations, usually what happens is that you get to know, especially as Westerners we don't know a lot of this stuff, they give you an introduction, what it is about, then everybody takes initiation. It's like, you feel like if you don't take it it's an insult to the Lama.]

I know. You're put in a bad, tough spot. No, it's true.

[student: I never seen anybody not sitting down and not taking an initiation.]

No, that's why you're going, usually. [Laughs]

[student: But what you're implying here is that you're supposed to know what you're doing first before you take the initiation, and how can you make a decision before you know it?]

You're supposed to get a lot of training, and then you get some description, rough descriptions of it. They're not allowed to describe it to you in detail before you take initiation. That's true. But they give you good training in the {tumole la}, what's that? No, it's the "in common," the path which is shared by tantric teachings. We'll talk about it, we'll talk about it. We have to, in fact. Okay. I'm going to switch to English. [silence]

[cut] These are the four parts to this lam rim. These are the four great divisions of this lam rim, of this three and a half page lam rim. You got eight pages because I put English after them, okay.

[student, John Stillwell: Only this lam rim, or all lam rims?]

This particular lam rim is divided into the, actually all of them are, basically, the first two are the normal great division of any lam rim.

[student: What are they again? The four great. . .]

The four big chapters. The four big parts that we're gonna study. All lam rims are divided into the first two. They give equal weight to two things. What are they? First two? Finding a teacher, a right teacher, and how to behave with him. And then all your other practice. Those are the two, two great divisions of any lam rim. [silence]

[student: [unclear]]

Finding a teacher and how to behave towards him. How to live with him. And then secondly, and this verb is very difficult, the word I call "taking Lama." You can call "relying on a Lama," you can call "[unclear] with a Lama," there's many ways to translate. It's very difficult. It's the verb for what you do with a medicine when you get sick. It's the verb for what you do with a shovel when you're digging. You use it, or you take yourself to that instrument to accomplish the goal you want to reach. It's a very difficult word to translate.

[student, John Stillwell: So the first one is taking, being with a Lama?]

It's your lifetime relationship with this Lama, really. How do you find him, what should he be like, how should you behave after you've decided, all those things. Who is he? Once you've found him, now how to practice? What to do. Okay. This one has, you alright? I'm sorry it's late and it's hot and you went to work today and so did I, but we'll try and finish this. Okay. We'll finish in four minutes. [Laughter]. No, we're almost there, we're almost, pretty close. This is going to have, let's say it will have "a" and "b."

[student: [unclear] part one? Division one?]

Yeah. Division one is gonna have two parts. [silence]

[cut]. . . Yeah. It says, what are the four steps to the, to taking your Lama, taking a Lama, finding your Lama, serving the Lama. And there are these four: one, two, three, four.

[student, John Stillwell: So how do you develop faith? What is it like?]

We'll talk about it. First I'm gonna give you a list of what makes a teacher qualified. We went through this. . . Yeah?

[student: The ten qualities?]

We went through ten before. I'm going to give you a different list, just for variety. I'll read the ten to you. You don't have to write them, okay. We had this in the first course. These are from the {tenyir}, these are the classical qualities that a good Lama should have, a person that you trust to fool around with your spirit and mind, okay? That's a grave responsibility, right? You're relying on that person to, your exposing your mind to this influence, and your mind is not a solid thing, your mind is a plastic thing. Whatever he says or does can affect your mind. So you have to be careful who you expose it to. He should have the following qualities which are written by Maitreya, okay? Pretty decent source.

[student: These are the ten we don't have to write down?]

You don't have to write these down, if you don't want to know what he should have. [Laughter] We've had these ten before. People who were in the mass course had these ten. He should be {dulwar}, {dulwar} means he should be practicing his morality, ten moralities: no killing, stealing, sexual misconduct,

lying, slander, harsh words, idle gossip, no craving, ill will, or wrong views. He shouldn't have those, okay? He should be {shiwa}, {shiwa} means he should have mastered concentration, meditation. {Nyershiwa}, he should have mastered wisdom, he should understand emptiness well, or perceived it directly.

[student: Still number two?]

We're on four now. Those are the first three, basically the first three trainings, three trainings: morality, concentration, and wisdom. {loma le yunten hlakpa}. He should, he should be, he should have qualities that are, he should be further along than the students he's trying to teach. {tsun che dong temba}. He should be willing to make great efforts on behalf of his students, okay? He should be willing to work hard for his students. {lung gi yen den kundan sampangawa}. He should understand the scriptures perfectly. {de nyi towkopa}. He should have perceived emptiness.

[student: You said that already. The first one was intellectual emptiness?]

Yeah, remember that?

[student: Perceived emptiness, or understand. . .]

Yeah, we talked about that.

[students: [unclear]]

No, it was the third, you're talking about the third training, which is wisdom. Wisdom can be also towards other subjects. You can have wisdom towards dependent origination and things like that.

[student: He should know the scriptures completely?]

It says {timpa sopa}, you know {timpa}, its that [unclear], it means, you know, total.

[student: [unclear] qualification, or at least, that he doesn't have to have perceived emptiness directly.]

This book says "perceived emptiness," now "directly" it doesn't say.

[student: You can't question somebody about that so you have to go on faith?]

I would say listen to his descriptions of emptiness and if they're totally internally consistent, a, b is they are consistent with what you've understood or heard about it, you know, b, c, if it leads you to some perception of emptiness, that's pretty good. You know, then you can say he probably understands emptiness, he probably has seen emptiness. Okay. {chimal ma kepal}, he should be a skillful teacher, good teacher. {loma la tsewa chimwa}, he should love his students, he should have some concern for his students. {chu jetsam cheka lungyam}, he shouldn't get tired no matter how many times he has to teach something. [Laughs] No, inexhaustible; doesn't get tired of teaching. {long Tibetan quotation}, "and because now, in the age of degeneration, it's extremely difficult to find anyone who has all these qualities, {je lame}," Tsongkapa said, "I'll give you five qualities." [Laughs] These could be on your homework.

[student: Five qualities they must have.]

[student: This is still under a, right Michael?]

[student: [unclear] he must have [unclear]]

Yeah, if he doesn't have all ten, Tsongkapa says, you know, who can you find in these days who has these ten qualities. This was in fourteen hundred, in Tibet. He says, at least it should be a person who is controlling himself with the three trainings, meaning morality, concentration, and wisdom. Morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom. It should be a person who has become, I dunno, kinder and gentler through his practice of [unclear]. He's somehow got control over his being with those three trainings.

[student: [unclear]].

Morality, meditation or concentration, and wisdom. So how many we got? We got three, okay. Those are the first three. The first three are the same, right? The first three are the same. Then, number four, he says {denye topa}, he's perceived emptiness. Remember it does not have to be directly. It could be intellectually. He doesn't say the word "directly."

[student: [unclear]].

When you say he's perceived emptiness, it could have been, it's best, I mean,

there's no substitute for a teacher who has perceived emptiness directly. He has seen truths that no one else can see. But if you can't find one, it's okay if he's just understands intellectually all the books about emptiness.

[student: So, excuse me, what is number three?]

The training of wisdom.

[student: And so isn't that intellectually understanding emptiness?]

We just answered that. We said, it doesn't have to be, wisdom can be focussed towards karma, you can have, you can be wise about how karma works, you can be wise about how dependent origination works.

[student: That's not how we defined the [unclear]]

Wisdom can be directed towards many other things.

[student: And so then the next one [unclear] is emptiness. . .]

It's specifically emptiness, yeah. And the fifth one, he says {tse won de dema}, he loves, he loves the students, he has concern for the students, love for the students. That's the five. {Matam matayam, matam matayam}: minimum, minimum. [Laughs.] He's gonna give another five. Okay?

[student: [unclear]]

No, I gave you so far I gave you ten qualities of a good teacher, and I said you don't have to know them. Then I gave you five qualities, which you do have to know. Now I'm gonna give you another five, because it's hard to find anyone who has the first five.

[student: So this is [unclear] bare. . .]

Bare, bare minimum. {Matayam matayam}. I would say. . .

[student: Five and five equals ten, and then you're back to where . . .]

[Laughs.] As far as memorizing for your quiz, right.

[student: [unclear]]

He doesn't say that.

[student: Who doesn't say that?]

It doesn't say, it doesn't, uh. . .

[student: This is all from {Prabaka's} commentary, so it could be {Prabaka}. . .]

Yeah. With Tibetan, you don't have quotation marks, and you're never quite sure where it's ending. It looks, feels to me, like {Prabaka's} talking again, but I'm not quite sure. It could be Tsongkapa. We could look it up on the computer. {Matayam matayam}: At the very, very, very least, okay? And I like this, I like the one that he says next. {Shodang che ten niye shootsol chepa}: "In the great division between worldly activities and dharma activities, he is mainly working with dharma." Remember {jeeta}, "worldly" in Buddhism is a tricky word. It doesn't refer to what you do for a living. We just had an example of {Gamdooje}, who never became a monk, okay? Worldly is an attitude.

[student, John Stillwell: Can you say that again, please?]

Worldliness is an attitude. I mean, you never know who's worldly and who's not, from what they're doing.

[student, John Stillwell: So the division between worldly attitude and dharma attitude. . .]

Is inner.

[student, John Stillwell: And it doesn't matter what they're doing [unclear]]

Absolutely doesn't matter what you're doing outside. Activity too. Being kind at work is a dharma activity.

[student: Right, but was the word that was used "activity" or "attitude"?]

He just says, "the world or the dharma."

[student: [unclear]]

Is he devoted to the world or is he devoted to the Dharma, how's that? Should be a person who is devoted, mainly, to the Dharma.

[student: Fifty one percent of his?]

Yeah, of his life. Of his mental life.

[student: [unclear] of his mind.]

Between this life and the future life, he's working mainly for the future life.

[student: Is this number two, or . . .]

Number two, this is number two. In the division between this life and the future life, he's devoted himself to the future life. He's working mainly for his future life. He's worried more about his death and his future life than about this life. By the way, that doesn't mean that you just ignore this life. It doesn't mean that. "This life" in Tibetan has a connotation of "worldly life." Okay? You should know that. Between watching out for himself and watching out for others, he mainly watches out for others. Mainly worried about taking care of others rather than himself. Or herself.

[student, John Stillwell: I don't quite follow the second point. Are you saying that, so you're saying it doesn't refer to the external in terms of him working towards future life versus this life. You're saying he is working towards this . . .]

What I'm saying is, his mind is focussed on his future life. It doesn't mean he goes up to see some suffering in this life and, for instance, "I don't need to help you, I'm focussing on my future life." It's not like that. Or he just gives up everything and goes to sit in a cave and try to collect some good for his future life. It's sentient beings, it's the beings around you that you need to make any progress. Without people around you, you can't make much progress.

[student: Could you repeat the last one?]

The last one was: if he has a choice between taking care of himself or taking care of others, he mainly takes care of others. He takes care of others first. {Gosung dagme mikor}: he's not careless in his physical, verbal, or mental actions.

[student: [unclear]]

Maybe they're more difficult than the ones [unclear] [laughs].

[student: What was that again?]

He's not careless in his physical, verbal, or mental, what did I say?, actions. He thinks before he talks, he thinks before he thinks, he thinks before he does anything. He's very careful about not to do anything wrong.

[student: What are the three things? Physical, mental. . .]

Physical, verbal, and mental. Body, speech, and mind.

[student: Actions.]

Actions. He doesn't teach his students a wrong path. Number five.

[student: [unclear] questions?]

Could be. Last thing I'll say, and then we'll quit. And we'll have to talk a little bit more about this next week, next class, but the main thing is, all throughout this text, if you read the English, it's saying "Bless me, bless me, bless me, bless me." What does it mean in Tibetan? {Chinlam} What does it mean? If someone asks you on the homework. Now you're supposed to sit there and go, "Bless me, bless me, bless me, please bless me." What does it mean, "bless you"?

[student: So you can develop that aptitude [unclear]?]

Change your dharma aptitude. Change my ability to practice dharma. Please change my ability to practice dharma. That's what blessing means.

[student: Michael, is that through providing the conditions for learning by being there to teach somebody?]

Partly. But what it's saying is, you know, you go into a dharma teaching and half the people are falling asleep and half the people are kinda interested, and maybe two or three people. . . In the Madhyamika it says that you get goosebumps when you hear somebody say. . . There's a beautiful quote in this one today, he says, what does it say? It says, "The sun doesn't feel like it's his

painful obligation to shine on the world, and the earth doesn't feel like it's his painful obligation to hold up everybody, and bodhisattva doesn't feel like it's his pain. . . " No, it's a different one, I'm sorry. "A hungry cow, when he runs into a big patch of grass. . . " [Laughter] No, there are two, two good ones. "Hungry cow when he. . . " Oh, the first one, if you want to know the ending, it was "a bodhisattva doesn't", no it was the other one. Anyway. "When a cow runs into a big clump of grass and he's really hungry, he goes for it. And when a thirsty person gets a big glass of ice water, he drinks it down. And when a bodhisattva gets a chance to do something for somebody else, even at his own expense, he goes for it. He's thrilled by it." So I think, uh, that's the last person in the dharma class. He thinks that it's the most amazing thing he ever heard and he just, immediately, he takes it home and he starts doing something about it. And immediately it makes its way into his heart and he changes. That very night, he goes home and starts doing something differently the next day. That's a {jinma}. And that's a difference in your sensitivity to dharma, to having someone say something and then you go home immediately and you start, you start to change, you start to actually change. And you start to actually do all those resolutions that you made, but have a . . . You know, what's the opposite? We know that state very well. It's to continue to have the same problems that you had last year. And continue to get as irritated as you did last year, and continue to be as jealous of people as you were last year, and, I have that. I watch, I read my confessions from five years ago. I found a letter to my mother before she died. I never mailed it because she died. It was unopened. I opened it up. It was from Dharamsala. And I had the same problems then as twenty years ago. You know, so, {chinlam} means don't make me like that, you know, let me at least find some ability to change.

[student: Michael, what's the difference between that and receiving inspiration? Or please inspire me. . .]

I guess those are the same translation. And I'm just saying, know what it really means.

[student: Well, I mean, are you saying . . .]

No, it means to inspire, to change your spirit.

[student: Hey, what is this?] [Laughter]

This chart explains all the five problems, it explains all the eight antidotes, and it

explains the nine levels in a picture. And we can over it sometime. We can make a night if you want to come and we'll sit around and have tea on the floor and do it, but basically here it says, the elephant is your mind. The fact that he's colored black is to represent dullness, {chiwan}. The monkey is that {chowa}, it's any distraction of the mind. Remember there were three, virtuous objects, pleasant objects, no, no. Did I give you the right thing? Yeah, okay. And the fact that he's black represents what? The monkey.

[student: Agitation.]

This is mental state number two, he's reached. Each curve represents a different one of the nine. The monk here has reached {ginya jopa}, the ability to put his mind on the object for a [unclear], okay? And here the elephant, his head is started to change white. That means the increasing of his {soja} and {neja}, of his fixation and his clarity, getting, starting to get clear. These five symbols, the mirror represents form, beautiful shapes and colors, the symbols represent music, this cloth represents silk, and these are the objects of the senses which are enemies to meditation. So they're hanging around the path. And like that. Up here is bodily agility. It's flying. [Laughs] This is mental agility. He's deep in meditation. This is the accomplishment of shamata, right there. Everything's white. And like that.

[student: You say each curve is a state, but there's [unclear] curve.]

You're right. There's a state between each curve. Here's seven, eight, nine, six, five, four, three, two, one. And I like, this is, you know, a lot of times I see materials that I don't like when they're not accurate, or they're not quite. . . This one is good. This one was well done. I don't know. This was done, this was an old, old system. I don't know who invented it. I think it's a very old custom.

[student: Do you have to buy an elephant or can you rent one?] [Laughter]

Yeah. We all have {chiwan}.

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Geshe Michael Roach

Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Nine: Object of meditation: Lesser Capacity

March 17, 1994

[cut] yeah what were the first two ... of the lam rim?

[student: [unclear]]

After you've found the lama. First step was to find a good teacher and ... and behave correctly towards the teacher. Yeah?

Student: Can I ask you a question, a little, slightly unrelated, Is it okay to mark up Dharma texts?

Preferred not to, not supposed to. I always tell people, you can write on the back of the next page, if you have this notebook open and you can write on the back of the page before, actually. That's a good way to get around it. I write on books that I know I am gonna reprint, shortly, or translate, cause I figure it's just , you know, but Rinpoche doesn't like it and it's not good, so don't do it. Also, these materials, you might also want to give to your students one day also, so try to keep it clean, ..[unclear], with white out. Anybody not get a shamata chart? Every body else got one? Maybe some day we'll go through that chart, it's got all the five problems, the eight corrections and the nine states of mind. That's what the chart is all about, that's all that's on it actually. We'll do that later. So it was what makes a good Lama and then how you should behave towards them and, and, the main way to please any Lama is supposed to be that you actually put into practice what he teaches you. So if he sees you doing what he described, then that's supposed to be the highest offering that you can give him. It's called, {drupe chupa}, "The offering of your practice. And, and I warn you, you know, you are new, mostly new students, you are mostly fresh, you are learning them for the first time, after you hear them the third time or the second time they won't make much impression on you. You'll say, "I heard that before". The normal reaction is that. And I have a few students who are like, they just want to know the next ten vocabulary words, you know, and I feel kind of bad sometimes and I think maybe it's not, I worry about teaching them too much, cause I don't, cause they are not really, I don't feel that they have any great intention to put it into practice. You know, it's more like collecting more knowledge, you know, and that's a very great danger. So while you are fresh,

put it into some kind of lifetime practice, as far as you can, as much as you can try to put it into some kind of practice immediately. If you don't, that phenomenon, psychologically is described in Buddhist literature, called {treptok}, {treptok}, means, it what the dog gets when you hit him all the time and after awhile, he doesn't care whether he's beaten or not, "Ill go ahead and bark." It's like inured or hardened or insensitive to Dharma anymore. There's a, there's a step like that. So try to put it into practice, I would, I would hate to be a party, or participate in making Dharma monsters, who know everything, and everybody around them thinks they are the most, not bad person, but just pain in the butt person. You know, " Okay, okay, I know, yeah." You know, they want to tell you everything. They are not happy and they make you unhappy. You know, I pray, we should be going the opposite way and the the best way to serve your Lama. If the Lama hears that you had a fight with the people at work or you're not getting along with people or ... I don't mean that everyone has to like you, but just in general, I think a Dharma person, who is improving, is getting along more with the people around him than he did before and he's happier. And because he's happier, people around him feel it and they respond to that. And normally that's what's happening when you meet those people who meet the Dharma and start trying to change themselves immediately, they, people around them notice, and not because they say, "Hey, I know about emptiness, listen to this, you know." It's more like you know, they just start being more considerate of other people and happy to help other people and that's, those are good signs. You know, if that's going on because of these classes, then you're, then you're, you're repaying the teacher what he wants. And it you are getting more insensitive or more knowledgeable and more cold, then it's a failure. You know, the teacher has failed and you have failed so, that's the sign. The main sign is that you are getting happier. If your happiness level is increasing, then, then, you are repaying the teacher properly and that's a pleasant payment to have to pay, right? [laughs]. okay. So we have, how to find a teacher and how to behave around the teacher, and then we had how to practice one you have a teacher, how to purify your mind. That second part has two parts. Gelugpas love outlines, as you may have noticed. It, it organizes your thinking and you can do a {shargom} on it, right? If you don't have an outline, you can't do a {shargom}, a review meditation. That's what outlines are for.

student: Random access review.

Yeah, yeah, [laughs]. That's what... So inside that second one, there's two parts and the first one is this.

student: This is how to practice, right?

Yeah, and the word, how to practice in Tibetan, means, how to practice and how to purify your mind, it's the same word. It's called {jang ba}. So {jang ba} can mean to practice, but it can also mean, "How to purify your mind. It's the same word, so I don't know, it's hard to translate it into English. {Len bar} means, "give or take" and {kurwar} means "urge". And {ur}, means to, the {re}, go backwards, the Tibetan word order is reversed, it's like Japanese. Urge to take the essence. This is the part in the text where the Lama Tsongkapa is urging us to take the essence out of this life that we have found. And we'll talk more about it, okay. [laughter] Take the essence. The first part is the Lama, Tsongkapa is telling you in his text, "look you, you have to get some essential meaning out of this life. You have to try to use this precious life to do something important before you die. So the second one is, well, how do you do that? And he is going to explain how to, how to take the essence out of this life, how to get the essence out of this life.

student: So like meaning, make the best out of this life?

Yeah, the Dharmic best, [laugh], alright? And the, the root text at this point says, {Lenchik nyepay dewey tensang di, shintu nye ka dun chen she gyur ne , nying tsen kuntu nying po lenbe lo, dunchin nyebar kyewar jing gyi lob}, which means, it's in your translation. But {dewey tensang}, {dewey tensang, dewey ten du shintu nyi ka} means, {lenchik nyepey}, means, you can only find it one time. {Dewey tensang}, means "this kind of life, this kind of body". {shintu nyekar}, means, " extremely difficult to find, this kind of life." {dun chen she gyur ne} means, "you should realize that, that it's very precious." So it means like that. {dewey ten du lenchik... lenchik nyepay dewey tensang di.} Is it true that you can only find this kind of life once? You know, as a human being, you know having a good brain, not being handicapped, meeting a teacher, having the interest to learn, having enough motivation to get up in the morning and meditate. Is it true that you only get this kind of life once?

student: We don't know.

[laughs] .Yeah.

student: We might get it and we might not.

Well let's put it this way, if it's true that you have one past life then, and if the proof of that is that this that life caused this life, then how many past lives do we have?

student: We don't know if we are gonna get another chance to be human again.

Well, infinite odds in the past and how many in the future if you don't get out in this life, infinite. SO out of infinite, so you know, if you picked up the lottery ticket every day for a trillion billion, million years, would you win? I mean, probably. I mean the odds are in your favor if, if you pick infinite numbers of lottery tickets that you'll win.

student: Eventually

You have to win eventually, actually. So is it true that you can only find this kind of life once? It's not technically true.

student: But it's rare.

But, but Tsongkapa, in his commentary, Pabonka in his commentary, "Well, why did Tsongkapa say, "You only find it once"?" I mean, the odds against it are so vast, are so incredible that it might as well be once, I mean the odds against it are vast.

student: So what are you saying Michael? [laughter]

I'm saying that the probability ...

student: We're not gonna come back to this life again at least?

No, the probability of your going up to this human state, the probability of you having enough good in you to be a human is, is infinitely small. Because in one five minute period, don't forget how many thoughts you are thinking in a five minute period. You are thinking, I don't know, a couple of hundred maybe, your mind goes through a few hundred thoughts, probably in ten minutes and the vast majority are some kind of nonvirtuous thoughts. You know it not that you're a you're not a Hitler, you know, you're not a Saddam Hessein or somebody, but the vast majority of your thoughts are motivated for your own gain and they are not motivated at helping other people and you're not a bad person, you know, you are a normal person and you're taking care of your

needs and most of those thoughts are non virtuous. And these small, these small unpleasant thoughts that come up towards other people all through the day, outnumber the virtuous, or the charitable thoughts by like thousands to one. And you're not a bad person and you're not like you are going out and killing people. Just all during the day, you are thinking, how am I going to get fed? How am I gonna get to feel good this afternoon. I better get this presentation done better than so and so and it's not evil, it's just the normal competition that human beings go through and that's non-virtuous. So the odds of, of ..

student: Would it be taking things sideways to ask why that's true? You know because I'm watching myself and I'm horribly shocked at myself.

[laughs] It's lack of knowledge and that's why wisdom is so important.

student: Lack of knowledge generates stupid thoughts about other people.

What I mean is that if you know better, you wouldn't do it and that's the whole idea of Buddhist education, you know, that's the whole idea of learning Buddhism.

student: Is it caused by past karma?

Yeah, partly, the habit of thinking that way is one of the four karmic results. So that's why wisdom is so important. Knowledge has to overcome your instincts and that's very difficult. It's very unlikely that you will be able to do that.

student: But is that what happens when you do, you know you do, you say prayers, you do purification practices, you do some good deeds, I mean, you sound like you know, that we only do bad things.

Well, very rare, but I

student: But it's not true...

But if you had told me, if you had not mentioned you practice, you had said, "Look I want to work today, during the whole day, my only motivation was to see that everyone else around me got ahead, you know, and the money, I intended to take as little as I could to live and I was going to donate the rest to

poor people." And, you know that would be a virtuous way to live and we don't, we can't right now, we don't have that ability.

student: Yeah, but you're talking like in totality, it like, "You're doing thins," you know, " you, you're thinking of yourself, okay, you're doing some things for other people, you admit that, but it's not going to be enough. You know, you have to give yourself to everybody.

What I'm saying is that the ones that you do for others and the ones that you do for yourself are just innumerable for yourself. Every moment of your waking day, you are trying to take care of yourself first, and get ahead. It's not like you're gonna hurt somebody at work or put poison in their tea or something or, but you have this natural desire that you become the star of the office and that you are happy all day. And if you see someone that's not happy, you are not as worried about that as you are then that if you have a headache, it's just human nature and that human nature will, will cause us, it makes it very unlikely that we'll be born in this kind of birth again, but what it also means by implication is that in your past life, was able to overcome those thoughts, so you have a nice powerful seed. You're last life was able to, to be pretty damn good.

student: But I'm talking about, you know, we're talking about karma, how much karma are you putting in these little things that are not so harmful to other people and what about the good karmic actions, I mean, aren't they supposed to be more powerful?

No, not necessarily.

student: You know than just being a little bit apathetic lets say.

Several things make karma more powerful. One is the object toward which you do it. If you hurt the Dalai Lama or if you hurt Joe Shmoe, it's a much more powerful deed to hurt the Dalai Lama. But, but if you repeat something constantly, that's also a second way to build up the strength of that karma. You do a small bad deed continually, is as strong as doing a single great bad deed once. It's the same power. So, ..

student: Are we gonna learn how karma, how to measure karma?

It's, it's coming, [laughs]. Okay, so it is sort of like a one time thing that we're in this opportunity. {Lenchik kyepay dewey tensang ni} What does it mean,

opportunity? You should write this down. We have what we call ten fortunes and eight opportunities. Sometimes they call it leisure. I can say. I think this guy translated it as, yeah, ten fortunes and eight leisures. I translated it differently. Leisures sort of means what? Leisure time means what?

student: Time to relax.

Time to relax, time to be idle, yeah, I don't much like that. The Tibetan word comes from the root "slow", but [laughter], but it's defined as a lack of opportunity, so I'll say lack of opportunity. Lack. Let's call it the "eight ways,"

students: Eight freedoms?

You could say that. Let's list them and then you tell me a better translation.

student: impediments.

No, no, because there's other, you see when you try to translate Buddhism, you have to know every other word. There's already a list of impediments and it's a different one. [laughter]. You know, you just have to know everything before you can translate one thing. You not only have to know what it is, you have to know what it is not. And, and that's very difficult.

student: Isn't this a negative? Yeah, it is defined as, as {micomba ge}, {mi comba ge}, {mi comba ge} means, what most people have in not having an opportunity. And, and this is a double negative actually. I'm sorry I should have put it's not, you're right.

students: Yeah, it's not.

So what they normally do is they list the eight ways of lacking opportunity and then they say the leisures are the opposite. I'm sorry.

student: Why don't you just call it the eight opportunities?

They define it as a double negative. It's not having those eight problems, what are those eight problems? wrong views, which of the non-virtues is that? Of the ten. It's the last one, and by the way, they get worse as you go up. Why is it the worst one? What's the biggest wrong view? What's the most terrible wrong view, karmically?

students: You don't believe in karma.

You don't believe in karma. You don't believe that something will come back to you, and then what will happen in reference to the other nine. You won't worry about it, [laughs]. It's pretty amazing if you think about the inner morality of mankind around the world. I mean, basically, it's recognized that around the world that it's bad to kill or to steal or to lie.

student: To a certain political point.

Yeah, yeah, [laughs] But why not? If you can get away with it. If there is some certainty that you could get away with it or if there is absolute certainty that you could get away with it, why don't people do it more often, then why don't people do it more often? It's a strange good thing. Logically speaking, I mean if someone bothered you, you could just find a way to meet him in a dark alley and kill him. And ..

student: There are certain societies in which that actually happens.

Yeah, I know, I'm sure there are , but the majority of mankind in our present day, it's felt that's not correct and there's nothing to hold you back, I mean, you would just be eliminated. I mean there is certain places in China where that just used to be the case. If the minister is not following the policies, you just arrange an airplane accident, an why not? It's logical. if you are not going to get caught, why do people stop? Why don't people do it? It's just, it's a nice thing and it's a good thing, they probably do it out of some habit or social habit.

student: Their mama told them to.

It's basically that , it's you didn't grow up that way, I mean there are countries where you do, I mean Gengis khan was a product of that. In his, where he grew up it was considered, his father was poisoned at a dinner that someone threw for him and they tried to kill him and he and his mother hid out in the woods and he became crazy. Crazy man, he became a warrior. So there are places like that, so what we don't, we don't have those wrong views, is blissful ignorance a wrong view? It's close, I would say, most people don't kill people who ignore them slightly, just out of habit or social custom. I would say that's it' not out of understand that if they killed the person, they would be killing many times. So you are saying, that's a wrong view. It's a correct action...

student: In the West we've kind of assumed...

....with the wrong reason, [laughter].

We've tended to assume that it's an unnatural and psychologically unhealthy attitude involved in wanting to harm others. Where in other cultures that's not true at all.

Yeah, it's a very wonderful thing about our culture, I mean our culture has allot of very good things that we don't notice because we're here.

student: Can I just interject one thing about doing negativities? I was recently at a thing where someone said they had done these logical studies where they study your bio chemistry. Like one big negative though, like watching someone being killed in a movie now they can measure the bloodstream that the chemical imbalance lasts for about thirty days.

Kids must get allot. Actually, I'm gonna change this, okay, this is the list an that's how they present it. That's how we are supposed to present it. And then at the end you say, you know, you don't have these things.

student: How could an animal incur allot of positive karma?

It's a great question, it's a very good question, and, and the perception of animals by Westerners and the reality of the animal realm are two different thing. I mean, we kind of see them as cute, you know, the mommy cows are liking their baby cows and dolphins have been knows to help people come up to shore, and you know it's a neat.... But the Buddhist description of how an animal lives, is in total constant terror and looking over their shoulder, because any moment they could be eaten be another animal. I mean, every moment of their life is spent in concern about danger and they have, they have no intellectual equipment to do much about it except react in an animal way. So they say, "The animal realm is one long bad dream, that, that you, pet dogs, okay, but the vast majority of animals, meaning insects also, creatures in the ocean. Their life revolve around not getting eaten by another animal. Not getting killed by another animal, and trying to kill the littler ones and it really is, it's a food chain. And, and that's the Buddhist description of the animal realm. And how you get out of it, total sheer accident, you know, maybe you get killed earlier on in your life span and you wear off the karma that you had of having hurt someone. You see there are

stories of flies that land on cowpies and get washed down hillsides and circle around a temple or something, laughter.

student: But why does that get them merit? Why is that a holy object, why is circumambulating..

Because the place is holy, just to be around the place, just to be near the place. A dog pleases a high Lama, the Dalai Lama has a lap dog. You know it's not any intention by the person or by the animal, it's by the, the vast power of the person that's he's pleasing. it's one way to create a powerful karma.

student: But what about karma?

And they say that you and I are probably here by the same reason, you know. Like for some reason we pleased a great Lama. Like it was not that in your past life we were do smart as to do so many great things to get here. But it was like, you know, we gas station attendant to a Dalai Lama car or something and we thought boy he looks great. Yeah it's like something very powerful reached us and we did something good by accident, towards them. But that's, the power of the object creates the karma. The object creates the karma.

student: But that's about karma, what about the fact that you have to leave your idle karma.

What do you mean, you have to leave your idle karma?

student: You know, you say by sheer accident, but what about the fact that you know, because you're in the animal realm, you have eaten other animals and you accumulate the karma. You know, it's like...

Yeah, So that's why Mark said, "Well, how the heck do you get out of the animal realm?" It's very rare , extremely rare. They say, "If you threw an inner tube in the ocean and there was a bind turtle living at the bottom and every five hundred years he came up for breath, and, he stuck his head up through the inter, inner tube, it would be about that frequent. [laughter], Something like that, that's the odds. That's why I believe that euthanasia is a stupid idea, the odds of going down are infinite, the odds of suffering badly the second after you die are, are extremely great.

students: So those are the odds of going down, what are the odds of going up

Michael, we're talking about infinity.'

But the ratio of good thought to bad thoughts in your present mind is, is...

student: But then you do exhaust bad karma.

If you didn't you wouldn't be here. Just by suffering, you exhaust it. You wear it out.

student: But Michael, what's to say that the person, you're saying that that's an argument about euthanasia, but what's to say that, what, how would their mind necessarily improve over...]

My father was dying and we had a meeting, and he was terminal, we'd tell him he was doing good and we'd go in a room and we'd say, "Well, should we kill him or not? No, I don't mean should we kill him, but , "Should we turn off everything and I said, but if you think about it, the odds are quite great that we will go down into worse suffering then the worse suffering that you can imagine here, that any given person would, i can't judge him, I mean I have no idea.

student: But the odds wouldn't change.

Yeah, but it would happen later instead of now, I mean if you had a choice between throwing your father into a fire pit now, or waiting a couple of hours to

student: There's carnage going on upstairs [banging]

You know what I mean, if you delay it for a month would you do that?

student: Not because it would change his odds.

No, we can't change his odds, but you have a choice between pushing him in now or pushing him in later, if you had a choice between that, let him have some time out of it.

student: But Michael what about the karma of...

It's a very, to me, and I don't expect you to except it, okay, but to me with my knowledge of the scriptures, it's crazy to talk about euthanasia, because that

person will most likely go to hell.

student: That person who does it to the person?

No, anyone, anyone who dies, the odds are supposed to be very, very great that we will go down to great suffering, so don't kill him, I mean, let him live a few months of this life, it's better.

student: Is that really true, I mean I have a problem with that.

No, the do, is it my present project to convince you of it? No.

student: I'm not even talking about that, I mean, this is really blood shedding.

student: What should we do? [dogs barking]

Yeah, I'll take care of that. [cut]

student: Okay, it's like okay these people are gonna die, are gonna go to hell and all of this...

Yeah, it's very depressing.

student: And I mean, you're talking about by chance happening to do something good for the Dalai Lama, Now, what about the people in the room who are going to classes or try to do something, I mean, what kind of karma, it seems like an imbalance, like what Nina was saying, like, you know, the smallest bad thought that you have is terrible because it's going to accumulate over time and well what about all the good thing that you're trying to do? Even though you're not a perfect practitioner, but at what point do you start to climb the ladder of getting out of hell in your next life, because it's always, you know, you're gonna go to hell, you practice this you're gonna go, you're gonna do it wrong, you're gonna go to hell, you know.

It's not like the Christian thing where "You gotta go to hell, you gotta go to hell", ..

students: It's seems like it, it seems like it, [laughter].

It's not meant to scare you, it's true, it really is true.

students: [laughter] I want to see some points, what kind of karma do you get out of sitting and listening.....

The Kadampa Geshe...

student: Listening and trying to absorb what you can? I mean what kind of karma do you get out of that?

The Kadampa Geshe... Oh no, wonderful karma.

students: [laughter]

student: But it's not enough.

The Kadampas used to sit with a bag of black rocks and white rocks and the Kadampas sat in caves and all they did was think about, then every time they had a black rock they would take it out and put it on the left side and then every time they'd take out a white rock and put it on the right side and they would spend their meditations like that. You know every time they had a good thought they would put it on the right side and they actually did that. And then at the end of the day, they would look you know, the two piles, and if the black pile is bigger you probably are gonna have a bad rebirth, you know.

student: You know, it's like the seeds, the [unclear] thing, the hand reaching over the back to pick out the black seeds and the white seeds for your next life, but is there anything that overcomes that? Is there any virtue that you get by just hearing it that you know what I mean?

Oh, what's the point at which you actually, knowledge.

student: I mean, is it only the result of these situations that you put yourself in is only how much you have absorbed all of this or that you've tried, I mean is there anything with the motivation that can be...

Oh, no, trying counts, but it's absolutely un, un godly in the sense that there is no sense of pity or mercy...

student: Redemption.

It's, you, whatever you do , you will get the result. It's just the, it's just a like gravity, it's a law..

student: It increases also.

You know, I suffer, I have a really bad times, I have chaotic times, and I feel like, well, I've been trying so hard and I've been trying to do everything right, you know, all these years and I feel like there's no justice or something, and then you can't, if you understand emptiness, you cannot deny that this is how I perceive things and when I commit a bad deed now, it's with the knowledge that I must perceive some suffering in the future because of that deed. And it's just when the knowledge gets heavier then the habit and that's, they say that, that comes from learning in a class or through a book. In a qualified situation, thinking about it, then trying to change, yeah. That is the process.

student: So it really is in the result then I mean it really depends on you in term of how you think and how you act.

Yeah, there's no way out of it.

student: But that's contradictory, because if you can circumambulate around a temple and get karma...

You can, you can.

student: No, that doesn't make sense, because that fly is not thinking at that moment.

No, there's four elements to karma, intention is only one of them. And karma is very similar to the laws of criminal court, you know, if you kill a man accidentally, you still create bad karma, terrible bad karma.

student: What are the four elements of karma?

We had a long class on it once in Kay Merrick's house.

student: Are we going to be talking in depth about karma?

Yeah, not in this class, but in the next one. Basically, you have to have intention to do it, then you have to prepare to do it, that means all the actions that you

take up to the point that you actually do it, which is number three. And then you have to, after you do it you have to perceive and recognize and not feel regret about doing it. So it's intention, preparation, commission and finalizing it. And all four of those have to be there, to complete what's called is a complete, {ley kyi lam}, which is in the fourth chapter of the [b: Abhidarmakosha]. You can have a complete, you can have a {ngushi} if you kill someone by accident but you don't have the other three, you don't want to, you didn't prepare to and you weren't glad that you did it and other things can go on, like that. For example, if you try to shot Reagan and you get Brady instead, part of the {ngushi} is not there. You didn't actually kill Reagan. No {ngushi} complete, and afterward you didn't, if you thought you killed him, you have finalization. So that's a long, we can't do it or we won't get home.

student: Michael...

Is it meant to scare you? Yes. It can free you, the truth of it can free you, you don't have to take it negatively, you can say, "The truth of it is, what ever I make myself, I will have to experience that result." So you don't have to take it as a negative thing, you can take it as, well that means, if I truly try to serve humanity, I cannot experience a bad result, even though at times that will fail because of my past karma. If I truly try to serve the people around me, if I truly try to care and love the people around me, there's no way I can have a bad result. Although I can have failures in the actual attempt to care for people, because of your past karma.

student: And also because maybe you won't know necessarily what's caring for them, because you might be thinking that you're doing something good for them, but you might really be doing do something bad for them.

That's where, you wouldn't have a {ngushi}.

student: Michael, I have a question...

You, you, that's the old argument that maybe the kid you're helping will be the Hitler twenty years from now, or whatever. You can't live like that, you' can't do that, I mean you have to do what is best according to your present knowledge.

student: Yeah, so you might be doing something bad.

You might be, but, but that's not a reason not to do it. that's illogical. What

should you do kill the person in case he's the next Hitler? [laughter]

student: Well, no, but should you go around giving money to every person on the street, because they need money.

What if the next beggar you met on the street was your mother and she had a disguise on what would you do? What if you found your mother on the street? What would you do?

student: Yeah, but that's what I mean, because sometimes I give money to beggars on the street and they are just complete lazy bums and they want to go buy alcohol and you are not helping them. Sometimes it might be your mother and she's really in distressed, what would you do for her?

student: Yeah, but sometimes it's really helping someone to make them go through a hard time, and sometimes it's helping them to get them over it to be...

Oh no, you've got to be common sense also, I mean if the guy looks like he's alcoholic, and he's asking for money and you give him a roll and he throws it in the garbage, which I've seen on this corner..

student: Yeah, but if you bought him a bottle of wine you would do him a favor.

[laughter] it's all four, it's all four. Okay we gotta go on or you'll be here all night. Oh, craving spirit, craving spirits you can't see. Buddhism says they exist, they are used as an example of something that you, that we can't prove.

student: Is that a hungry ghost.

Yeah, what you call a hungry ghost.

student: We can't prove, do you mean that through Buddhist logic we can't prove them.

Probably ultimately, we could, but I don't ask you to believe that these things exist because I can't show you one right now. They do, they are supposed to exist, but how we prove them is another story, but, you haven't that hasn't happened to you. There are supposed to be ghosts, ghost like spirit like beings, that we can't see with our normal vision that exist around us and because of their greed in their past life they are born in some kind of suffering state where even

if they see a nice cup of tea and they are dying of thirst, to them it looks like blood, or it looks like pus or something. And we studied it in emptiness, we studied it in Mahdyumika and, and it's a long story, why that's possible, I don't ask you to accept it, but if you don't, don't worry about it.

student: So what was most likely our past life then? If we are here?

Very virtuous, very, very, very virtuous.

student: Like as perhaps a human?

Possibly, the human realm is the best realm in which to do something good. The higher realms, if they exist and I can't show you them, they're, they're having such a good time that they're just using up their past good deeds. Normally when you're having too good of a time you're not worried about having too good of a time to fix it.

student: Saying that you're using your good karma and you're in one of those godly realms and you go to the hells, is it possible to use part of it and fall to the human birth.

Yeah, it is, it is possible, the Buddha does teach in those realms. Supposed to be. Born in hell, it's a very bad realm for teaching : Because every one is having such a good time so why care. Born in hell, the Buddha describes in his teaching describes a hot hell and a cold hell. Every single, there's no pain on earth which is, which is as painful as the slightest pain in those places. There are other minor hell around it where you are slashed or smashed or beaten. And time slows down in hell, so one day in hell could be equal to hundreds of years, thousands of years in the human realm, perceptually.

student: It's equivalent to a really long rebirth, is that what you are saying. Yeah, time wise, it feels like a very long time and it is a long time and it feels like a very long time. Okay, you perceive it as a very long time. Can't prove to you that they exist. They are extremely similar to the descriptions given by Dante and ... I mean almost the same. I can't prove to you that they exist, but if you study emptiness for a long time and then you study karma for a long time, you can't establish that they are actually there. Ninety percent of humans supposedly go there, or more and You know, I don't ask you to believe it. Study, you'll study, study for a long time And I'm not trying to say anything that's not a description. Is it true? Should you accept it now? Just consider it. You know, it's

in the scripture. Consider it a point that you'd like to do {chegom} about. {Chegom} means, "I'm going to analyze this and check out whether it's true or not as I gain more data.

student: Preferably not the first time.

No teachings, you are born in a place where nobody ever heard of Buddhism and no teachers, no books, no tradition, no nothing.

student: Detroit.

No, I would say, to be born in America is, I would say the teaching are here in a sense. It's interesting, it's in the eighth chapter of the [b: Abbhisamayalankara], for example, if someone is teaching that you shouldn't kill, that is the activity of the Buddha. You know, if a Christian minister gets up on the pulpit and says, "You shouldn't kill other people." That's the activity of the Buddha.

student: But it's not a Buddha though.

I'm not saying that.

student: It's Buddhas teaching.

That's Buddhist activity, that is the activity of the Buddha.

student: So it could be any teaching on morality.

Is it complete, No. Will it work by itself? No.

student: But Michael here you are referring to a..

I mean, non Buddhist teachings.

student: Like I mean, not, I mean we do have Christianity and Judaism, you're not referring to that though?

I'd say they are very, very close, technically speaking, they are not the teaching of the Buddha, technically speaking they are the activity of the Buddha, okay. They are virtuous, they are good. Is it Buddhism? Technically, if it doesn't have {Lam tso nam sum}, if it doesn't have those three ideas in it, disgust with this life,

bodhichitta or some kind of compassion and then lack of a self. But it's, I'd say that if you are born in a country where they are teaching the ten commandments, it's a it's a very good situation, it's a nice situation, very nice. Okay.

student: [unclear]

We say that, yeah.

student: [unclear]

[laughter] No, he's collecting bad karma from that, you are constantly collecting good karma and bad karma together, you see, you are never really clearly one or the other in your state of mind, everything we do is mixed. And there is that principle. Uncivilized, that's what they call it, [lalo], and it means, "nobody is keeping the eight types of vowed morality" That custom has not reached that country and it's not considered, it's not considered civilization. That's when, when the monks are holding their, confession ceremony every two weeks, when there is enough monks to hold that ceremony which can be four or five, then they say that Buddhism has reached that country. So it's very nice, We have the, I think it's the only, I'm not sure, but I think it's the only Sojong going on in this country is down in New Jersey every two weeks, So they say that's if it's, and Nyamgyal two, so two now. So if, if those vowed moralities, if those two types of vows are being kept by anyone in that area then they say Buddhism has reached that area.

student: What about the nuns Michael?

There are four of the eight.

student: What about the nuns

Same thing, Gelongma, Getstulma.

student: there's more than [unclear]

No they have to be doing g this special ceremony together. They can do it, a certain number of nuns can do it.

student: What are the eight moralities?

{Tibetan...} which means, one day vow, layman's vow, lifetime layman's vow for a woman, lifetime layman's vow for a man, novice man, novice woman, intermediate nun, full nun and full monk, is that it? You don't need to know that, later, that's one of the five books. Seven is, it means that you're born as a human, but you can't receive the teachings, you can't practice them. Something wrong with you physically or something wrong with you mentally. You don't have the, and you don't have to be a genius, but this is just referring to people who are too stupid that some one could explain to them why they shouldn't kill and why they shouldn't steal. [cut]

It's a sensual paradise, mostly, except if you were born in a formless realm.

student: Why if you karma was good and you were born as a pleasure being, you are born in a place where it's a dead end for moving into [unclear]. It seems like you would be able to be reborn in a situation where you could complete the path.

Yeah, they say that bodhisattvas, they say that, "To be born in that place, they might as well be born in hell." They say, they treat it as a very disastrous birth, if you are too happy.

student: So then once you exhaust your positive karma you go way down don't you?

It's the, the, the flow chart from those realms is to hell and there's a tiny little side port to the human realm, they, the vast, almost all people in the pleasure realms go to the hells because they totally use up all their good karma just by being there.

student: So it's not good just to have some good karma, you need to sort of go past the other.

If you do dedication, if you do dedication your karma doesn't get blown out on, you don't waste your poker chips on something useless. Okay, that's what dedication is for.

student: So you should be, it should be pleasure beings.

student: Yeah, why does it say, "not. "

I'm sorry, you're right, I've been messing you up, I had a hard day. [laughter]

student: [unclear]

Yeah, would you like to turn on that thing and, oh, there's soup in the refrigerator, can you put it on.

student: Sure.

student: Excuse me, Michael.

Yes.

student: [unclear]

I'm listening.

student: the one thing about karma, the one sort of objection that I can come up with is where does purification fit in? I mean we hear a great deal about purification or with purification practices you are supposed to be able to purify your negative karma. If that's the case and if you are doing purification practices on a regular basis, how are you accumulating so much bad karma that you're gonna end up in hell?

No, if you are doing purification properly, you won't.

student: That's an important qualification, especially in answer to Faiths', you know.

No, it is. But what does it mean to be doing purification properly, what is the result of that purification?

student: Theoretically the result is developing an entirely, , let's put it this way, taking another step at, [unclear], in terms of spiritual progress.

Yeah, like pretty much avoiding doing that thing again.

student: Well, it's a process.

Yeah, I mean in stages, but taking a big leap towards not doing that sort of

activity again. As a result of a single days purification ceremony or over a few months say, that you start to eradicate that behavior within yourself. And what I'm saying is that in the majority of people who do purification practices, do them without much fervor and without much result and they just cruise on and in that case you haven't completed the purification practice.

student: So what is the proper way to do purification?

I mean, we went through the four powers, right. That's a long story, that would be a whole class in itself, but basically, to understand why it's wrong and to clean it out, to make some, take some, make some battle plans, in business they have some nice..

student: Contingency.

Action plan., action plan not to do it again or at least to cut it down. So okay, it's four days until you do it again and not three days. And if you keep doing that, purification takes hold because that's, you're not doing it anymore tomorrow. After awhile, I don't say after the first purification. If you're doing a wimpy purification ceremony, the results will be wimpy and the purification will be wimpy, it's not just enough to sit down and recite Vajrasattva or something, it's not, that's not purification. It doesn't work.

student: The purification is a confession.

Four powers, yeah, I, my Lama prefers the word purification to confession, although if you understand what confession means in Buddhism, that, you know, you can use any word you want.

student: Could you explain what the eight ways of lacking opportunity, what does that mean?

Those are , those are eight, those are eight lousy situation that you could be in where you don't have any opportunity to practice Dharma. And you don't have those eight, you got out of those eight and that's the definition of what most people translate as leisure or opportunity.

student: So this doesn't go back to "Take the essence" or anything like that?

Yeah, where are we? What section are we in?

student: How to practice.

How to practice and inside of how to practice what section are we in?

student: Learning how to take the essence.

That's number, that's the second part, but we didn't get to the first part, what was the first part?

start: [unclear]

He's urging you, he says, "Do something."

student: This is part of the first part?

Yeah, yeah, that verse is part of the first part where he says, "Look, look, where you are, look at the rare window of opportunity that you have, do something." [laughs] Do something with it. Okay.

students: [unclear]

It's supposed to be very good to be born as a human because you've got just the right spice of suffering and type. Okay, just the right mix of suffering and times where you are not suffering. Excuse me? It means that enough screwy things happen during the day and you try to, you try to reach some spiritual state beyond this. But not so much pain as in the hell that you are incapable of framing a thought, a straight thought. People in hell can't practice Dharma because they can never frame a thought beyond the emotion of suffering and pain. They can't think a straight thought, they are incapable of framing a straight thought. So we have a we have a nice dose of suffering but we also have moments of lucidity to do something about it.

student: Is, "born as a human" part of "urge to take the essence"?

Yeah, we are still talking about that. We're explaining why, why it's such a precious opportunity. These are gonna be positive. This is the same as what we talked about before, the opposite of what we talked about before, you could say civilized land. What's that mean? What's that ?

student: [unclear]

No, most people, most books, I don't think they, I don't think there is a scripture that says it. It doesn't mean where teaching are, it means, where someone is keeping one of the eight kinds of vowed morality. Okay, it's a difference between not killing because you don't feel like it, and not killing because you took a lifetime vow not to do it.

student: You just need one person?

Technically, good question. According to tradition, you need enough monks or nuns to do a confession ceremony, in that country. Faculties intact means you can hear, you can see you can think. You know, you meet, I remember my younger brother, he was a very bad student for many years, in school, and then they figured out that he couldn't see the black board and then they gave him eye glasses and then he was okay. So it's like that, if you have on of those severe difficulties that prevents you from learning Buddhism, then it's okay. That's faculties not intact. We have out faculties intact, we will loose them, everyone does. [laughter] I mean, that's the window of opportunity, it opens and it shuts, you will loose your hearing and you will loose your sight, you won't be able to see straight you won't be able to think straight, so you have to do it now. You have to do something now. The big five are; killing your father, killing your mother, trying to hurt the Buddha, because you can't, killing an Arhat

student: And a bodhisattva.

I don't think so, killing an Arhat, {drachom sepa}, kill someone who has reached nirvana and try to split up the monks, actually split up the monks, succeed in splitting up the minks during the Buddhas time. While the Buddha is present on the earth.

student: What does that mean?

It means we can't do a full fledged number five of the big five, no, good luck, [laughter]. Okay, it's impossible for any of us to commit number five in nineteen ninety four.

student: How do you know?

No, I mean the traditional occurrence of the Buddha in His traditional form, who

collects together a bunch of monks and then someone comes in while the Buddha is away and manages to break them into two groups that don't get along anymore.

student: So this isn't the same.

That's number five, and you can't do it, in the present, you can only do four of these, in fact you can

student: You can't hurt the Buddha?

You can't hurt the Buddha either.

student: What is the formal name of these five? What is the title of these five.

{Tibetan}, which means, uninterrupted five. Uninterrupted? That's why I didn't write that. Uninterrupted means that there will be no, you won't take any other kind of birth between this life and a life in the lowest hell. Okay in other words, you could call it immediate bad deeds, immediate sin. I usually translate it as immediate. Immediate, meaning "no medium". Nothing in between, the moment you die you go to the lowest hell. And that's from killing your father, killing your mother or, or one of those other deeds. And then there's ...

student: What was the number five?

Trying to hurt a Buddha. And we can't commit two of them, right now, in nineteen ninety four.

student: Why?

The traditional Buddha in his normal {chokyi trulku} form. You know, in ancient, India, in five hundred BC . He's not here so we can't hurt him and we can't cause a division of his direct followers, during his lifetime. Only one person has ever done it and he collected that bad deed.

student: Who?

What's his name? Devadatta? Yeah I think so, {hle jin}, yeah. Didn't do the big five, and the last one is... Those are the five that relate to you and now there's the five that relate to the outside and you'll see why. Okay, got it?

student: Are these to be numbered five and five or five and then six to ten?

You should really treat then, you're right it should be the five and then six to ten.

student: And is that born in a world, or what?

Yeah, yeah, you see, the first five are kind of what you did right, and the second five are conditions of the world that you are in a sense. They kind of relate to the environment or the outside of you. So in general this world is a place where a Buddha has come.

student: So born into a world.

student: So, is there definitely no Buddha here now?

You could all be Buddhas, I know I'm not a Buddha, but as far as I know, you could all be Buddhas.

student: But you just said that we can't try to hurt the Buddha.

That's the traditional way of explaining it. And that's why I kept saying in His traditional form, five hundred BC. I mean, in, in logically speaking, anyone here could be a Buddha or you could all be Buddhas, I have no idea, I really have no idea, I'm not.

student: You could be just saying that.

I could be just saying that, but I'm really not. [laughter], and I wouldn't lie about it. [laughter] I think so.

student: unclear

student: Well I was told otherwise.

student: What would be the point of him coming to the world and not teaching?

Yeah, that's true, but remember the first few weeks of his career as a Buddha, he felt, traditionally, he felt that no one could understand what he had understood and he did not teach, for the first seven or so weeks of his career.

student But I thought it had something to do with actually, the, people having to experience the desire, to recognize his help...

Well that's also why it's explained that he pretended to die, according to Mahayana. No one asked him to stay. In fact that was one of the great sins of one of his disciples is that he neglected to ask him to stay and so he passed. But that's a long story and it would take me a long time to explain it. I'm really trying to be good about not keeping to the... Where what he has taught is practiced, okay, so they kind of flow from each other. Where people actually try to do it. As I mentioned in the last page of the [b: Abhidharmakosha], and it's fun, cause you've been studying for ten years and it's kind of neat. He says, "The sun of Buddhism is setting in this planet and the first thing to go is the understanding in people's hearts and then later the books themselves will disappear." So Buddhism within people's hearts will die first and then later Buddhism, the outer book end that, the temples will disappear and he gives a, you know, he says, it must happen it will happen, it will die in this world and it's just a matter of so many years.

student: And when it dies will something better be in its place?

No, no. there will just be a period of blackness.

student: And then?

[laughs] That's third chapter [b: Abhidharmakosha] year number five.

student: But there's gonna be a thousand Buddhas? No?

Month number six.

student: What does "this world" mean though? The earth or our solar system or what?

The earth, no the earth, this earth or this planet. The other planets are working on their own schedule and that's in the Abhidharma too.

student: So where will people who have good karma go to study?

Born on another planet, according to the Abhidharma which is correct, is

supposed to be correct.

student: Is Shambala mentioned in the Abhidharma?

No. I, I made a mistake here, scratch that.

student: Oh boy.

student: What's the difference between the two?

That would be I guess {lung dang topay chu mi lawa}, means Buddhism as it exists in people's minds and as it exists in the books has not been lost. So he spoke and what he spoke hasn't been lost yet. We've lost about ninety nine percent of what this current Buddha taught and we know it, we know it from, you can actually ask a computer and figure it out, it's very interesting. Surf around the computer and figure it out.

student: Yeah, but if you know it, then don't what the truth was.

Excuse me?

student: If you know what you lost then don't you know actually what you are supposed to use?

Like we actually know the names of the books that have been lost, like in the [b: Abhidharmakosha] there's I think seven great books. I think most of them were lost. Where what was taught is being practiced I should say.

student: [unclear]

Yeah that's true, or so much that you can't practice, where you don't have all of the Lam Rim s. As long as you've got all the Lam Rims things are okay, you've got all the steps. And where people who want to practice are in a condition to practice, that's not, that's pretty shaky right now, but I would say, I always say, "If you are in America and you can't make a living and if you can't do something to feed yourself on a minimal level, it's, mostly you can do it. It's not sure, if your karma is not that, you will have trouble. But Buddha said, "If a person who is truly practicing and he can't find anything to eat then I, I ", what did he say? "I reject the state of Buddhism, then Buddhism is not, then I reject my own reality."

student: Yeah, he also said that anybody wearing monks robes, they'd never, as long as there is anybody wearing robes, monks robes, he said, "They....

Yeah he said, this is about....

students: He said that they would never be without food, he said that they would just simply never, ever be without food.

Yeah, whoever is trying to practice.

student: Michael, if we've said that we've lost nine, ninety nine percent of the Buddhist teachings, how do we know that enough remains to work?

Nagarjuna said so, Chandrakirti said so.

student: Yeah, but we've lost a lot since then.

Guna Prabha said so and Je Tsongkapa said so.

student: Yeah, but that's five hundred years ago.

Yeah, but not so much that we can practice, not for the Lam rims. As long as the Lam rim is complete, then we have enough.

student: Yeah, but how do we know that it's complete?

Je Tsongkapa said so and...

student: Yeah, but my point is that that was five hundred years ago and it's five hundred years later.

Yeah, but he is writing based on Nagarjuna and that was two hundred AD. Nagarjuna said everything was okay. Between Nagarjuna and Je Tsongkapa, something lost, not enough.

student: No, I'm talking about between Je Tsongkapa and now.

No, I can, just physically they haven't been lost, pretty good. I can tell you what's been lost, We have a meeting with Dr. Shen tomorrow to give him a list. [laugh] Okay, have some...

[cut]

To the next division which is? What's the next one?

students: Practice? Asking for help? How to take the essence?

Yeah, how to get the most, how to make your life meaningful. How to get something, how to make use of the precious life that you've finally arranged. So but that first part he saying, "Look, get your act together, this is precious, make some use of it."

student: Could you repeat that? It was pretty noisy. [laughter]

It's before in the last verse, I should really tell you which verse, I don't know the English. {Lenchik kyepay dewey tensang di}, this life...

student: Bless me first to realize...

Yeah, "Bless me first to realize" great. That was the verse where he was urging you to, to do something with you life, to get the most out of this life. And then the next two verses, which are actually one verse, they are eight lines but one thought. They begin "How to get the essence out of this life, how to take the most out of this life. And getting, the actual learning how to take the essence out of this human life is these three steps. It goes in these three step, So when you're doing your {shargom}, you'll be going through these. Who's is that? Is that yours?

student: Thank you.

student: Is there a short word here that these are the subdivision of?

Yeah, how to, how take the essence. These are the divisions of how to take the essence.

student: This is not a division for request to help in practice?

That comes much, much later.

student: But we're still in how to practice and purify the mind.

Good question. If you didn't catch her question, you're lost. She said, "Are we in requesting how to get to do something?" No, we are still in how, how to practice, how to purify yourself, and those are the three divisions and we'll talk about, we're gonna cover the first one, because we don't have much time and we're gonna cover the first one in the next five minutes.

student: I'm still lost, I'm sorry.

Okay, like this. The whole Lam Rim divides into finding a teacher and then how to purify yourself after you've found your teacher. How to purify yourself after you find your teacher is divided into him urging you to get the most out of life and how to get the most of life.

student: [unclear]

Yeah, these are the divisions about how to get the most out of your life.

student: Okay, that clarifies it.

And there will be three sets of instructions, the first set is what we call for small capacity people and then medium capacity people and then great capacity people. Tonight all we're gonna cover is the first. It's very easy and there's only two parts.

student: Are we on the right side, wait, [laughter]

And what the text at this point says, is {Lu sok yowa chu yi chu bur shin, nyur du jikpay chi wa drenpa dang, shiwey jesu ludang dripma shin, karnak lendre ji shin drangwa la, nye pey tenpo nge nye nye pey tsok trashing trawa nyamkang pongwa dang. getstok tak tu bak dang denpar dang, dak tu bak dang denpar jing gyi lob} Which means, {Lu sok yowa chu yi chu bur shin}, "life is like a bubble in the ocean", it's in your text, you can read it. {Nyur du jikpay chi wa drenpa dang}, "Bless me to remember how quickly I'm going to die." {Shiwey jesu lu dang dripma shin} "And then after I die, like my shadow". {Karnak lendre jishin drangwa la}, "Good and bad karma will follow me." {Nye pey tenpo nge nye ne pey tsok}, "Let me really believe it, let me perceive that it's true". {Trashing trawa nyamkang pongwa dang} "Let me give up therefore any even minor bad deeds." Even minor thoughts of not liking someone else and let me try to collect even those minor good deeds, like being happy that someone at

work had a good day, and bless me to get those feelings. {Dak tu bak dang denpar jingyi lob}, "Let me be mindful of these things, Bless me to keep mindful of these things. That's the whole, small capacity persons meditation. And it's very good if you can memorize the text. This is the shortest Lam Rim in existence and it's not much to memorize it. Memorize it if you would like to do a good meditation for the next six months, take the time.

student: Can you also bring in the theory of rebirth in the lower realms?

It's coming. So we'll talk about two of his concepts tonight. One of them is death, death meditation. And we're doing it Friday night I'll just tell you briefly two things.

student: Not tomorrow?

Not tomorrow night, next week. I'll go over the schedule again after class. Death meditation, means I am going to die today. You get up in the morning and you say, "I am going to die today.

student: This is number one.

These are now I am not doing a formal outline anymore, just giving you some of the concepts that a small capacity person has to meditate on. And death meditation has four parts, which you should know, I'm sorry three parts, only three. Very simply the first one is, "I must die".

student: I thought you said it was we get up and we say we are going to die today?

That's actually how you do the death meditation but there is three parts to it. The first is that, "I must die". You must meditate on that, "I must die". No one has ever survived life, okay, you must die. Number two is, "I have no idea when."

student: When.

When, "I have no idea when." And third is when I die the only thing that can possibly help me is my practice. She's going to die after class, it's definite. [laughter]

student: Do a confession. [laughter]

No, I'm just kidding

student: By practice, you mean the good things you do every day?

Oh yeah, any good you do will help you when you die. And there's this thing in the Lam rim there's a beautiful meditation, you're relatives start lying to you, "Oh, you're gonna be alright, you know. And the doctors are saying to the relatives that you are going to die within the next few days and the Doctor is telling you, " Well, people have survived lung cancer, you know, it's not out of the question." And then the whole process when as you die, the, I, I think in the west you would call it the electricity in your mind but here we call it the four elements. And elements, they don't think that there is some chemical that no one has ever found with a microscope called, "earth." In the [b: Abhidharmakosha] when you get to study the four elements, they are quite scientifically correct. They are kinds of energy. Motility, the fact that things move is air. The fact that things have solidity, the energy which makes a body solid is earth. And they are not. They are defined by their functions and not by, "There's more dirt in this than water, it's not like that. They are not so stupid, they are actually quite sophisticated and then what happens as you die is that those four energies start to go wild and they start to collapse like dominoes and one triggers the dissolution of the next and then your mind goes through these hallucinations. They cause, the, the connection between the physical nerves and your mind, as the physical part starts to break down, your mind starts to have hallucinations, terror hallucinations, so at that point there is nothing else that can help you than ingrained attitudes, deeply ingrained practices that you've done through your life. The rest, anything that's on the surface, shallow.... Only the deeply ingrained parts of your practice can help you.

student: Well, what's the quality associated with fire and water?

Fire is the quality of heat and it functions to, [unclear], and water is wetness. [laughs]. Wetness and fluidity is water and fire is heat and the quality of burning, long story. So look what is the natural conclusion if I tell you look, you've got to die, secondly, it could be tonight, we didn't know. Thirdly, the only thing that can possibly help you is some Buddhist learning that you've had and practice. What would be the natural thing to conclude from that?

student: Practice, [laughter]

And that's exactly what death meditation is about, practice, if you do, it should be. If you do it, you should just naturally think, well, I better get off my ass and do something.

student: SO you get up and you say, "Well I'm gonna die today." And then what?

That's it, I don't know when and, and the only thing that can help me is my practice. They are within the three sections, three meditations, they are in the little yellow book if you want. I'm not gonna go through them. Okay, one more thing and then I'll stop. What happens after you die? Now you have to know the four principals of karma. The people from the first course already had them, they probably forgot them, as did I.

student: The four principals of karma?

How karma works. If you basically understand that and you understand how karma works you pretty much got the meditation of the small capacity person.

student: Is this the things that you mentioned before?

No, that's how to commit a full karma. Now we are gonna talk about the four principals of karma. What is it? Karma, [Ley pelchewa]. I'm sorry, {Ley ngepa}.

student: Is that , inevitable?

Yeah, and I don't like that translation. And I'll tell you why.

student: Immutable?

You can say anything you want, but what it means is this, what does it mean really?

student: That it's a law, it, it works invariably.

It doesn't mean that. Explain further and I'll accept.

student: It's invariable in the sense that, it's, it's a good action is bound always to produce good results and bad actions are always bound to produce bad results.

That's precisely the meaning of this first one, it is the only meaning of the first one. It's fixed in the sense that. In fact we have been debating down in New Jersey, the concept of unreality and reality. And this is actually one of the examples, the classic example of reality is that if you do something harmful you will have pain and I can explain it to you perfectly when we study emptiness a little bit. I don't know if I told you this story. I had a Baptist and a Catholic in a cabin with me for one whole day. And at the end of the, two days, and at the end of the two days, without mentioning the word Buddhism and without mentioning the word karma, they accepted these four and they started doing Sojaong, purification. So karma is fixed, in the sense that if you do something good you must get a good result and if you do something bad you must suffer, period. What's the second one?

students: The result grows, it gets bigger.

Okay, {ley pelchewa}.

student: Is that both for bad and good?

student: Karma gets bigger? Why?

What does it mean.

students: You do something... The result increases.

The meaning of a karma is a mental seed and all physical seeds have the quality of expanding exponentially. It's from one walnut that an oak tree grew, [laughter]. And I told this story, people know this story when I thought about it. The huge oak trees where I live, they fell down on the temple one. They sent me up on the roof in a storm with a chainsaw to cut off the top so it wouldn't smash into the temple and I was so scared that my legs were shaking and I was thinking, you know, when this was an acorn, I should have thrown it into the street. You know, when this tree was an acorn, if I had picked it up and thrown it into the street, I wouldn't be up here now and I had that real thought, you know, it's true. There's no reason to think that, that karmic seeds act any differently than karmic seeds. It's from one concept, I remember my boss, you know, we used to sit around and saw, you know, "What if we sold five pieces of jewelry to JC Penneys?" We were on this level, that was a cause. Now we're on, I don't know, thirty thousand pieces a week. And, but the cause comes from the first discussion that we ever had. That was a cause. The result is infinitely larger.

You know, New York City came from, you know, well, maybe this place would be a good place to dig. There's no reason to believe that spiritual things are any different. They are not. One small virtue has incredible results. The results come back. They build on each other and they come back strong.

student: So this is true for bad and good?

Yep, yep.

student; Related or unrelated, I've never heard this before, but do plants have any, life consequence in Buddhism.?

According to Classical Buddhism and not maybe to the ones that have reached Japan and stuff like that. According to Orthodox, Indian Buddhism, no they are not alive. They are building like a crystal builds and they don't have consciousness according to, they don't have a mind according to. And there were Hindu schools that believed they did and, and you can find the texts where they fight it out.

student: But animals do?

Yeah.

student: But plants don't.

No. So we don't have the idea that life is divided into plant and animal. Life is animals. Okay, what's the next one?

student: If you haven't done it you won't get the consequences.

Was that it?

student: I don't know.

student:Be defined, how do you start from a seed and then eliminate all the bad ones?

The root of it is not knowing these things, and that's why ignorance is the first link of the twelve links of the Wheel of Life.

student: [unclear]

You told me to teach you so, if you don't get any explanation then you just don't do anything.

student; Planting a seed.

student: Why do the Tibetans say, do things in the reverse, not, if you do it, you get it, instead of if you don't do it, you don't get it?

Now, you don't understand number one, what did we say about number one?

student: That good causes follow, good results follow....

Yeah, this is in terms of content. Let's say this is in terms of content, form. This just means good or bad, if you react you must get a reaction. If you don't act you can't get a reaction.

student: You're saying it's never lost.

Yeah, that's a better way to put it actually.

student: Yeah, it's consequences are never lost unless you do purification. An effective purification. It is, it is possible to purify it, no it is possible to purify it. And I repeat that the main purification involves not doing it much, anymore, I mean, getting better is the main purification, logically, of course.

student: Resolving not to do it again. So the main part of purification is the resolution.

It's not only the resolution, but it's carrying out that resolution.

student: So why do you call it purification? Why don't you say, I'm never gonna do this anymore and you just don't do it.

That is purification.

student: Why do you say the prayers and you do the rituals and you do the prostrations?

The purpose of the rituals is to formalize your pledge. Yeah, those are the two main? What's the implication of this? I mean you better clean up your karma. It's related to death. If you are thinking about death properly what's your next thought. If you believe you are gonna die tonight what's your next thought?

student: I better do lots of purification and virtue.

Well, not even that. I mean if I, if you're a normal person and you say, "Look, you're gonna die tonight."

student: You're going to hell.

Well, not even like that, I mean, what's gonna happen to me afterwards. I mean, "To be or not to be that is the question." That's Hamlet. "Whether it nobler in the mind to endure the throws of...[laughs]" You know, "Is it better to stick around or should I just put an end to it?" And what does he decide? He decides not to commit suicide, you know, "To be or not to be" He decides to be because he doesn't know what comes next. That's the argument. That's what he decides. He says, "I'd rather live this quiet life of [unclear], than to get thrown to somewhere where I don't know how bad it is."

student: So the point is that those are the two main thought of the small scope person and how they take the essence out of this life.

As expressed in this Lam Rim. She's pretty good, I think we should alternate.
[cut]

We should not accept all these ideas on their face without proof and you don't have all the proof yet and that's why the course is gonna take awhile. And, and it's not bad and you shouldn't feel bad if you cannot accept all of the things that we said tonight, just take it and consider it and then it's up to Buddhism to prove it and you should demand that. And that's fine. Don't feel like, "Oh, I'm, ..." Don't feel like lost or something, it will become proven, it just takes time and we don't have all night.

student: Well, don't die Michael.

There's also some kind of a kind of maturing process that your mind goes through. there's a mellowing process that can only take some time.

What about the Kalachakra Initiation? Don't you...[cut]

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Course III: Applied Meditation

Class Ten: Object of Meditation: Medium and Greater Capacity

Geshe Michael Roach

March 21, 1994

transcribed by: Ani Konchok Kyizom

[cut]

And then, just before that there was a section on... [laughter]

[student: His answer.]

[student: Well, there's subdivisions of how to take a Lama, I'm sure.]

Yeah, but after that? How to act after you take a Lama and how, how to purify yourself. There were three divisions, what were those?

[student: Three divisions of how to purify yourself?]

Yeah, how to practice.

[student: Small capacity.]

Yeah, small capacity.

[student: Yeah, I knew that answer because of the notes, but I, I didn't get what it meant.]

Yeah, I'm about to tell you, okay. [laughs] Basically it's this is this, a small capacity person, which means lesser capacity person, is practicing in order to avoid going to one of the three realms of suffering after he dies.

[student: Smaller scope.]

A person of small scope or capacity is trying to avoid going to the three realms of suffering after he dies, so those are what?

[student: Three lower realms.]

[student: Hells.]

Yeah.

[student: Hungry Ghosts]

[student: Animals.]

Can you see them?

[student: One.]

Only one. you can only see animals. Do you believe that you could be born as a animal? Probably not. Or you believe it or you have some kind of half, you have some kind of inclination to believe it. But do you have any logical proof which is so good that you could prove it to someone else?

[student: No.]

Unlikely, and we'll try to work on it next course, okay. But, but it takes allot of study just to reach the stage of a lesser person or a lesser scope. It starts with what? What were the two things in the lesser scope that we studied last week?

[student: Has a [unclear]]

Yeah, I mean as a preliminary, you saw how lucky we are to be alive. And then there were two meditations we had, there was, one was on death. Can you perceive that directly? Death. Yeah, I mean, you can perceive it directly in others and you can perceive it correctly with logic in yourself. So, so you can see your death, you cannot see your death with your eyes. You can see your death with your reasoning, with your capacity to think. In a fool proof airtight way, you can perceive your death, it's something that you can prove to yourself without any great leaps of faith. It's logical, it's, you perceive it in others, we have no evidence that anyone hasn't died, we're getting older, the people around you have started to die. You know three or four friends, or ten or twenty friends that have died. You have no reason to believe that you would be any different. If you do a {chegom} about death, this is a fact. Your own death is a fact. Definitely you will not resemble yourself after death. You will not be very similar to what you are now. That you can perceive as, as well as you can see with your eyes, someone else dying. So you can see that. How about this

second part. What was the second part? Death and..?

[students: Karma.]

In other words, once you know you're gonna die, and that's not a leap of faith, that's a fact. Then there's a question of what will happen. And then you have to study karma, and, and it's not enough to study karma by itself. Ultimately, to understand karma, you have to understand emptiness. And you have to understand the teachings of the Mind Only school, which we just, we, we won't go into right now. You'll get a good dose of it next course. In order to understand correctly, karma, you must understand emptiness and the teachings of the Mind Only school, on how karma is transmitted in your mind. So those are two things that are going to come. So, basically, a person of the small capacity is, he's, he's aware of how fortunate he is now, he's aware that he's going to die and he's considering what it would be like after he dies. And I told you this famous, this is why that Hamlet is so famous, "To be or not to be." The question is, should I kill myself or not? The to be or not to be means, should I exist or not? Should I die, or should I kill myself? And he, he goes through... it's beautiful, you should reread it sometime and he starts to do a {chegom} about it. And he starts to say, "Yeah, that would be nice, really, this life is just suffering and everything is pain, and, is it better for me to just stay here and suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune? You know, see my karma results go up and down like a roller coaster or should I just put an end to it and thereby dream. And then he says, "Dream, dream oh, wait a minute, what if something goes on? And then he says... he starts to worry, he says, "What will happen after I die? Maybe I will continue." So he decides in the end of that little section he decides not to kill himself because he doesn't know, he's not sure. He says, "Maybe the dream will go on, maybe I'll have to go through this after I die, so I'll just wait... I'll just wait." That's typical Hamlet, because he can't make up his mind on anything. [laughter] So that's a death meditation, he did a proper death meditation, and he came to the conclusion that maybe it wasn't good, because maybe there's something that will throw him somewhere that he doesn't want to be after he dies. And that's karma, in a way. So, those are the two natural concerns of a person of lower capacity, of lesser capacity. Have we reached that point?

[students: [unclear]]

I mean they're aware of how lucky they are, they're meditating on death, and they're wondering about what's gonna happen after they die and they're trying

to take care of it. Are we, do we have that? Have we mastered the Lam Rim of death meditation? No. So, I, I haven't, so I don't even qualify. My Buddhist practice doesn't even qualify as the minimum Buddhist practice. Because I'm not really doing it, thinking about my death. Motivated by my death and what's going to happen after that. So I don't even qualify as a Lam Rim practitioner. [laughs] I mean in the real sense. And there were ways of teaching Lam Rim where the teacher and students would go to a cave until they really has death awareness, you know. And they wouldn't go onto the next step for a year, or two years. There were ways of, there were traditions of doing it that way, but that would take us too long. [laughs]

[student: Michael, what were you saying death? I mean we could intellectually understand it, but you mean feel that we're gonna die.?)

I think to act every day, and every hour as if you truly believed that you had to die, and that it could happen in the next hour, and that only Dharma would help you. Do we act like that. Do we base our lives, do we behave, based on that? Because those three are true. Those three are, at least the first two are undeniable. It's undeniable that you must die, and it's undeniable that you have no idea that you have no idea... [unclear].

[student: Yeah, but allot of people, I think people accept that, but this, this, you see, I think feeling and the acting are upon every moment in the consciousness, that's the difference, not understanding it, wouldn't you say so?]

No, you have to understand it to, to, to act on it. But when I say understand, I, I don't understand it.

[student: Because, I know, I know I'm gonna die.]

Yeah, but you haven't internalized it, you're not behaving, every moment, as if you were going to die today. When you do, you've reached the first persons level, but we don't and I don't know if we ever will, unless you meditated on it. And then your behavior would change, if you truly believed that. Pabonka says you don't pack up big suitcases if you know you're leaving in five minutes. [laughs] You know what I mean? If you know you're leaving a, a place never to come back again, you don't paint the place and, you know, buy expensive curtains, and then put in a big carpet in, and then leave five minutes later. You, you don't waste the time or the money cause you know you're not coming back. And he said the monks in Lhasa, and they come to Lhasa from the eastern Tibet

to study, and the intention is to just go back home, so you know, a week before they're finished their Geshe and they've got their everything finished, they don't start painting their rooms, you know. They're never coming back, and they know it, so why waste much time on this? So that was the, that was the lesser persons meditation. Now we go to the middle persons meditations which are, it was up here before. You have middle person right?

[student: Yeah.]

So I don't, I'm not gonna write it. Medium capacity, okay, {kyebu dring}, medium capacity. Now we're gonna discuss some... some of the thoughts that he has.

[student: But you didn't write it in Tibetan, you only wrote it in English.]

[student: You wrote it in Tibetan last time]

It was up here on the, oh, it was from the other class maybe.

[student: Michael?]

Yes.

[student: Isn't this all under the [unclear] of renunciation? And why isn't there something specifically aimed at developing renunciation? That's set forth at this stage in the presentation?]

It's coming, right now.

[student: Okay, now as something as an aside to what you said about not being able to prove the existence of hell realms and hungry ghosts and other realities?]

Well, you can, but not, not, not right now.

[student: Well, aside from that.]

We can scientifically.

[student: Well, the aside I was going to make was that there was this article in the Times today that said physicists have proven that there is only between one

and ten percent of matter is visible, [unclear]]

Is locatable.

[student: Ninety to ninety-nine percent of what they can scientifically measure as matter is beyond our perception.]

Yeah, like beyond your wave length, gato length. {Thar} stands for {tharpa} which means moksha, which means "freedom".

[student: This is what?]

This is the first {Lam Rim} for the person of medium capacity. He, he knows he's gonna die. He already learned about karma. Now he's worried about something greater than that. So {thar} means freedom", {dun} means "want", {lo} means "mind", and {kye} means to "develop".

[student: Michael?]

Yeah.

[student: I've heard like Hindu philosophy and it seems to be, the same thing they call lokesha is a same thing nirvana. Is that true?]

The word lokesha, is a synonym in Buddhist Sanskrit for nirvana. But all Hindu religions have the word, or most of them have the word mokesha, meaning freedom. They all believe that there is a freedom from cyclic existence, you, know, they accept the idea. They don't claim that this is the method to reach that. They don't claim that this is the method to reach that, they don't agree that this, that what we're studying is the method to reach that. they each have their own unusual idea about how to reach that. Some of them said, "if you could meditate your whole life, jump off a cliff onto a three pointed spear and one went through here, and one went through here, and one went through here, with the right attitude you would reach nirvana", okay. [laughs] And they get a little bit better off then that. [laughter] So, {thardun lokye} first of all means to get the very wish to achieve freedom from this kind of suffering.

[student: Could you repeat that?]

To develop the wish to be free from suffering. Or to achieve freedom I should

say. To develop the wish to achieve freedom.

[student: From all of cyclic existence.]

Yeah, we'll get to that.

[student: {Lo} means again?]

{Lo} means to, the idea or mind of a, to develop the state of mind you could say in which you wish to achieve freedom. To develop the wish to get out of here, completely. And the text says here, "{Chepay mingong duknel gungyi go}. {Chepay mingong} mean, "no matter how much you experience the pleasures of this life, you can't be satisfied." And it's worse than that, and he goes on, he has a long commentary about it. I, I wish, I think we can translate this sometime. This is Pabonkas commentary to Tsongkhapas text, and he says, "the nature of any kind of happiness in this life is that it makes you more thirsty, and no one is ever satisfied." The nature of most, every worldly thing that goes right, is that it, it not only, it doesn't make you, it doesn't make you contented, it actually works against your contentment. Every time you get something good, eventually it makes you want more than that.

[student: Because you enjoy it, you want it again?]

Not only that you want it again, but you want more. And it's not just the nature of heroine, or alcohol, it's the nature of promotions at work. It's the nature of relationships that you have with other people, it's the nature of food, it's the nature of everything. Every time you get one thing, then it, it makes you want more.

[student: That's the description of pervasive suffering?]

It's part of it, it's part of it, yeah.

[student: Is that an argument against doing things that are especially pleasing unless they relate specifically to dharma study?]

I think the Dalai Lama has a nice... and I think in, in general good practitioners are sort of... they have good sense which is lacking in poor practitioners. You know, people who don't practice very well, don't have good sense and people who are practicing very well are also blessed with good sense. I don't think I've

seen anyone who can enjoy himself better than the Dalai Lama, you know. I mean, or not many people, you know. He really enjoys things, but he has the right att, he perceives them as suffering. He knows they're a suffering and that's the basic... you know, should you deny yourself things that you want, because they'll make you want more? I, it's not the point, I, you have to meditate, until you perceive that this thing is not desirable. It's not to try to stop yourself from enjoying something which you perceive as pleasant, it's to understand its nature and no longer see it as pleasant. And you, you just wont want that thing anymore. We were talking about, I met a Mongolian monk yesterday and he said that the big problem in Mongolia right now is that none of the monks wants to be celibate. They all would like to have a, a wife. And, and, and this was apparently some corruption on Mongolia that has started a long time ago, and now it's a problem. And, and then he said, "They just haven't seen, the thing is that they haven't seen that, that's not a desirable thing." you see what I mean, they just didn't see that yet or they're, they, that's why you become a monk, you know what I mean? That's so that's just, you have to, it's not just that you're trying to deny yourself something. It's that you see that see that it's not going to bring you happiness, or contentment over, in the long run. It's just not, it's not it's nature.

[student: So does that mean that we should become monks and nuns, is that what you're saying?]

[students: So that's it that not a contradiction to say oh, you parents, like they're so good to you because they give you life, what, what about that? Isn't that a little bit of a contradiction there? You're saying, "This life is precious, but let's become monks and nuns, and we won't have any kids anymore.]

Oh, they got these test tubes now, you know. [laughter]

[student: Yeah, you still have to do some work on that, you know.]

[student: You don't have to go into the details.] [laughter]

[student: Everything, everything is unhappiness, except for becoming a monk or a nun. Is that it?]

You debate it, You debate it, I mean, you find something. You tell me.

[student: Isn't it that it's got nothing to do with the person, the wife or the

husband or the glass of wonderful juice or something. Isn't it just something in the mind of that person, which makes them a samsaric person as opposed to a liberated person?]

In the long run, yes. In the wider scope.

[student: That's all there is to it.]

Who is the wealthiest person in Tibet? The Dalai Lama. No, it is a mental...

[student: It's samsara, it's a state of mind really. It's not got anything to do with those other [unclear]]

What is Samsara? You know the definition of samsara. It's not a state of mind, it's being afflicted.

[student: The five contaminants.]

No, you gotta know what you're trying to get out of before you can get out of it. Most people never learn, most people never learn what samsara is. [laughter]

[student: The five impure heaps. [unclear]]

[student: What is this, the definition then? [laughter]]

It's not a state of mind.

[student: Being forced to take on, over and over again, these five impure heaps, which you've, always done.]

[student: You took the words right out of my mouth.]

Meaning, your mind and your body, your dirty mind and body, which were created by karma. And, and it's okay to have your mind and body, but not one that was forced on you, by, by your past deeds, by your past perceptions, if you get deeply. Okay. {chepay miwong dungyel dunkyi go} it is the door of every suffering. {Yigten miru}, you can't trust them, [unclear] the good things of this life. Okay, so the, the first thing is that you have to recognize... the things that seem nice about this life, they are unstable, they cause you every pain you have and they have a peculiar quality of making you dissatisfied. and un...

discontented?

[student: Discontented.]

They're, it's they're nature.

[student: Can you tell me, how you can [unclear] the Dalai Lama how you can enjoy something, and at the same time, recognize it as suffering?]

Yeah, it's difficult, it's difficult.

[student: It's difficult to understand for us, maybe, is the answer.]

[students: It's what the Buddhas did.]

And I think you're right, and I think it is. and, well part of the definition of that kind of desire is a wish not to be separated from that object. So, so, that's actually a definition of one of the three poisons; desire. It's the definitions of the second of the three poisons, which is, hatred is, is the longing to be separated from something you don't like. It's the definition of those basic bad thoughts, that's their definition. So, I believe, that true enjoyment for the Dalai Lama would be, to answer your question, he, he, by the way, not only does he enjoy it, karmically, he can't avoid enjoying, enjoying it. He doesn't have a choice. It's true that you have no choice when you're suffering, but the opposite is true too. If you keep doing good deeds, I'm afraid... I'm sorry to tell you enjoyment will be forced upon you. [laughter] It's true, it's logical.

[student: Samsaric enjoyment or...]

There's always this guilt trip about the negative part, but you can't avoid... if you threw the food down and walked out there'd be more outside, there'd be more waiting for him. So I think you can enjoy it and be able to not develop desire, by being immediately willing to leave it, and that's a sign.

[student: There's no attachment. That's non-attachment.]

It's like, that's the definition of desire, being, desire, desire, is the craving, not to be, not to lose the object which you are enjoying. You can't eliminate all the enjoyable objects in the world because, if you're a good practitioner, they are,

they're loading themselves on you. More and more as you go through your life. If your better, if your a very kind person earlier on in your life, you are forced to meet good people later on in your life, and have nice things happen, basically. So there's not this thing where a good Buddhist has to avoid enjoying things, but, you, you also can't do anything immoral to, to keep it or you shouldn't, you know, if somebody's wife says, " Hey" you know, "here I am." You can't, you can't enjoy that, you know. It's actually a good karma that the, that the, the potential enjoyment is there. It's also a very evil karma that that would involve adultery and throw you to hell, you know. So, so you can't, I mean, you can't enjoy everything that presents itself, but if it's not immoral, it won't hurt anyone, it's, it's and you can't avoid it. It will come to you, somehow. That's Samsara, that's part of Buddhist practice.

[student: What are the five, did you say there were five poisons?]

Three.

[student: Three poisons. What are they?]

One is desire in the sense of not wanting to be separated from a desirable object. And the other is, what they translate as anger, which I don't... I think it's as simple as like and dislike. Because supposedly, you're having these almost...

[student: Aversion?]

Yeah, but how many times did you have aversion today? You see, you had this poison all day.

[student: Right, dislike.]

Yeah, I like like and dislike personally, because aversion, or dislike is defined as, I think hatred is a real bad translation... defined as simply wanting to be separated from an undesirable object. So it can be as minor as running through the rain.

[student: Being uncomfortable.]

You know, shifting in your chair, you know.

[student: So, so it is wanting to be separated from it.]

Yeah, you know, when you have a person at work who, who bothers you, you

want, you... that's the {nyomon}, that's the klesha, that's the bad thought that comes up in your mind. I'd like to get out of here.

[student: Can you think of going after something or getting away from something?]

Yeah, yeah just like that. And then ignorance, that doesn't understand the implication of those two. Ignorance.

[student; How's that?]

Ignorance, that's the third poison, which doesn't understand the implications of desire. Meaning, wisdom would say, as we said many times, "The nasty guy at work would present himself, you would see that he's empty, you would see that he's not nasty by his own nature, cause his wife looks at the same person and thinks he's great. He can't be nasty and great at the same time. Therefore those two qualities can't be naturally attached to him. And, and it's coming from somewhere else. The appearance of being nasty is coming from somewhere else. Then you study karma, you know that it's your perception, forced on you by your past karma. Does that allow you to see him the way his wife sees him? No. Would you like to see him as an angel? Yes. How can you do that? Be good. Live a...

[student: But you also said once that the person does, in reality if the person's nasty to you, the person's being nasty to you...]

He is nasty, I've never said he wasn't nasty. He is empty and he's nasty. He's not real, and he's really nasty.

[student: So it's not a...]

So it's not a contradiction, and, and any other teaching on it is wrong. And if you don't believe it, take the next person who teaches anything else about emptiness, and ask him if you can stick a needle in his arm. You, know, you know what I mean? It's just silly, of course it hurts.

[student: What was the second one? What was the second one, anger?]

Dislike, wanting to get away from suffering.

[student: Was that like suffering, you want to get away from suffering?]

Sure.

[student: So that's considered bad to want that we want to get away from suffering.]

Well, it's like this, ignorant wanting to get away is bad, enlightened wanting to get away is good. But how do you get away from a bad man at work? If a person at work is, is harming you, how do you get away from him?

[student: You, you give in to him.]

[student: You walk away.]

Not like that. He is, if you understand emptiness, and it takes allot of practice, and it takes logic you have to convince yourself of something that is not at all natural to think. But he's bad, because your seeing him as bad, because you have a problem, because your perceptions are forced on you by your past karma, he's not bad, he's empty, he's blank. He's blank you're filling it in with crappy crayons because you, you had perceptions of yourself harming someone in the past. So, what is the.... what is the method, ultimately to, to remove this warp? [laughter]

[student: The warp of existence.]

Well, this guy, what's the ultimate method? To, to see to remove this unpleasant person?

[student: You break that perceptual cycle.]

[student: Think that their wonderful.]

[student: You stop seeing him that way, you don't respond and you generate more karma.]

Much, much minimum, but what would be the best thing? Love him like your mother. [laughter] Love him like your wife. Have real, real, deep love for him. And then, in the future he must, that blank screen must become desirable.

[student: Is it good enough to be compassionate of the person? To understand?]

Is compassion which is the fourth in the seven steps in developing bodhichitta, the cause for bodhichitta? No, you have to go way up, past that, that's way down, number four, you gotta get to number six and seven. We went through that, we don't have time for that.

[students: Isn't compassion, a form of love though?]

Yeah, but it has to even go higher yeah,

[student: Does that include all sentient beings?]

If you want to go to a paradise, or would you rather have twenty percent be muggers and crack addicts.

[student: [unclear]]

You have a choice, if you're only nice to fifty percent of the people, I'd say you'll go to a place where only fifty percent of the people are good.

[student: Let's say cancer or H.I.V. virus? Are we supposed to be loving towards your virus?]

We don't say it's a living being.

[student: Why not? Oh, a virus.]

I don't know if a virus, I don't know what a virus is in Buddhist cosmology. An amoebae would be, yeah. An amoebae, and cancer...

[student: Bacteria.]

I did not say it's not a bad thing. I did not not say it doesn't hurt you, I will not say it will even kill you. What I'm saying is that your attitude towards it determines what it will be in the future. You can't change what it is now, easily. It's possible, but it takes a great Buddhist practice which you will learn sometime. But right now you, you can not change its nature, its apparent nature. You can understand that the dental drill is empty, but I'd never said it won't hurt you. If you practice properly, its nature will change, and it won't hurt you. But the will to have it not hurt you, will not change it. And it never did, did it? So anyway,

we gotta go, we have to go. Time to {lokye}, okay, okay. So he says, he says, " understand that everything in the world has these qualities, the good things in the world, the normal good things, they are not stable. They cause you all your suffering and they, they make you discontented, its their nature, it's their nature that any good thing you ever get, you want more.

[student: [unclear]]

They, they make you discontented, they make you want more. So, that supposed to get this in your mind, that's supposed to trigger this, where you say, okay, I don't want those things anymore, I want something better.

[student: When they say they make you want more, you mean more quantity of the same thing, not repeating the same experience.]

I'd say, my own, my own tendency, I can remember when I was paid seven dollars an hour, and I was quite happy to get the job, I was really happy to get the job, and then eight wasn't enough, and then nine wasn't enough, then ten wasn't enough, and then a hundred thousand a year wasn't enough. I mean whatever wasn't enough, it's human nature and you give some Cambodian refugee a job and they're so happy the first few weeks and then you know, after a year, they're saying this is really lousy, I need more pay, you know. And it's human nature, it's not that they're evil or bad, it's the nature of samsaric pleasures, they want more, and better.

[student: So like are you saying a person should not want more money?]
[laughter]

[student: Michael doesn't want any more money.]

No, I didn't say that, I, what I mean to say is...

[student: That's not what you're saying.]

that recognize that more money or less money, or medium money, or no money, or lots of money is the same state, it's suffering. It's all suffering.

[student: But you still can get more money though.]

It's if you can make good use of it to keep yourself healthy, to keep yourself in

dharma or to give away to other people, that's fine, that's great. But, is it in and of itself, by itself it is a samsaric thing, your body, your mind, everything about us now can only give us suffering. It's nature is to suffer. There's no, so you're telling me, should I like fifty thousand dollars worth of total suffering or ten thousand dollars worth of total suffering. It's the same thing, you know. You know, but obviously, you need some money to practice. And you should not grub off of other people and you should not, it's not a Buddhist practice to give up all your money and then bother people. [laughter] It's a Buddhist practice to take care of your livelihood, properly, honestly, without hurting anyone. And responsibly, that's your, that's your job. Okay, under {loke} so that was that verse that came then. Then what, what do you think would naturally happen after that? Once you got the desire to get out...

[student: You gotta act.]

Yeah, you could find some way to get out. So this is the second part of the meditation for... and I wanna make sure you get the proper name.

[student: We were just discussing the medium capacity person?]

Yeah and this is the second meditation for a medium capacity person. The first meditation is where he says, "Okay I understand that I'm gonna die. I understand that whatever I do determines where I go. But, hey wherever I go, it's a bummer. There's no... okay, so I get born in a better place next time. I'm Donald Trump instead of Michael Roach. But it's not a desirable thing, so I'd rather find some kind of pleasure, some kind of permanent. Therefore he, he gets he moves up one step in his understanding and in his motivation. Where is that?

[silence]

{Thar} means what? You had it before.

[students: Freedom. Freedom.]

Okay, freedom. {Lam} means what?

[students: Path.]

Path, good. {Tenap} you don't know, which means to "figure out what it is".

[student: The whole word?]

{Ten} will be short for {tenla apa} which means to determine or to figure out what it is. The root text says at this point, {Namda sempa deya trungpa yi} which means, use that pure thought to push you on to ... what is that pure thought?

[student: The wish to become enlightened.]

The wish to get outta here. What is it when you get outta here? I mean are you gonna go to a different place? Is, is that what is samsara? If samsara is defined as having these kind of body and mind, then getting out of samsara is does not involve a location change it, involves a reality change. Your own nature changes.

[student: Comprised of different aggregates.]

[student: Pure heaps.]

Yeah, the pure body and a pure mind. Totally bliss, and of body and mind, permanent.

[student: Did they say what a pure set of heaps are?]

Sure, that's the idea. You know, what's the definition of nirvana, you tell me.

[student: That doesn't say what the heaps are. What we're saying, you know, when we say this heap becomes like this and this heap becomes like this.]

What's the, but what's the definition of nirvana?

[student: Permanent cessation.]

[Ani la: You get rid of all your suffering, or something like that, it's something left over.]

Oh boy.

[Ani la: There's nothing left over.]

We had the definition of nirvana already, oy yo.

[Ani la: Yeah, you've gotten rid of all your suffering or something like that.]

[students: The cessation. The cessation, the mental cessation.]

First of all...

[student: Of the mental analysis...]

[Ani la: Of the four truths, of the four truths.]

Cessation of?

[student: Their mental obscurations in their entirety, consisting of the individual
[unclear]]

Yeah, yeah, okay, what, what does all of that mean? It means it's brought on by the perception of emptiness directly. Ultimately, it's triggered by the perception of emptiness directly and it is the permanent removal of your {nyundrups}. Which mainly means, your bad thoughts, your six bad thoughts. Anger and jealousy, desire hatred ignorance, like that. So it's the, it's the permanent stopping of those things.

[student: Once you do the then what does your format become, what does your consciousness become?]

You tell me, there's two kinds.

[student: Something left over.]

Yeah [laughter] before you die, you still have a body caused by things. So you still have a body which is impure. And then when you die the nature changes. Now that's the school that you guys studied.

[student: My question is when they are totally enlightened.]

What do they look like? What are they like? They don't have {nyundrubs}. [laughs] They don't have obstacles. They don't have, they don't have those six

thoughts ever again and the body is made of. The body's nature changes from blood and bone and flesh to a kind of rainbow body or diamond body.

[student: A light body.]

It's visible. It's, it's totally pleasant, it has no impermanent. It's not impermanent in the sense of ever growing old.

[student: Then you're saying it's an energetic form body, essentially.]

It's, it's, it's, visible, it has, it has, it has shape and color.

[student: [unclear] who.]

[student: Is it young or old?]

[student: Is it male or female?]

[student: Michael Jordan.]

Not, neither male nor female, unless you chose it to be one or the other, to look like one or the other. Does it, is it young or old? Actually, by that time you have the power to make it appear any way you want.

[student: So it's malleable, or is it like a one shot deal, it's gonna be like that.]

No.

[student: It could be anybody?]

You could appear as anybody.

[Ani la: You could appear as anybody.]

You have the power to, to emanate yourself. You could look like a bird or a dog or...

[student: Why would they want to look like an animal?]

[student: We should be nice...]

[student: Why would you want to go in the animal realm?]

[student: Just appear.]

Appear as a bird, peep to the hunter whose about to shoot a deer, distract him.
[laughter]

[student: If that's true, if that's true and the Dalai Lama wanted to get off of meat and he couldn't get off of meat because the doctors told him he couldn't, I don't understand why.]

In the Mahayana, and again, I can't prove it to you, and I admit that I can't prove it to you. I can tell you what the books say, that to make himself look more accessible to our level, he, he pretends to have these problems. Now can you accept that? No. Can I prove it to you? Slowly. You'll be able to digest it eventually. Can I prove that you'll be able to digest it eventually? Eventually, yes. [laughter]

[student: And for that matter, is he really eating meat or does he just appear to?]

[laughter] [student: Oh, no, come on let's get on with it.]

He's appearing to. Okay, let's move on.

[student: What are we using as the definition of {tarlam tonop...}? Like a one liner so I can memorize it.]

[student: Using pure thought to get out of here?]

No, this is wanting to get out and this is how to get out, figuring out how to get out.

[student: Figuring out what the path to freedom is?]

Yeah, establishing, literally it means to establish the the path. But, I don't care, as long as you understand the mental process that's going on. What's going on through your mind? And this is what your meditation should be for the next six months. It's very simple, it's a simple train of thought and you're gonna burn it into the computer screen. It's, it's actually it's some kind of satisfaction to start

with, then you decide, well I probably need a teacher to figure this whole thing out. I will get a teacher to figure it out, all out. I'll make sure he's qualified, and if he's qualified, I'll follow what he says. Then, then I, I would, I'm going to die, I'm very lucky to be here it's not very long. I have all these conditions working for me. I am going to die, what's going to happen after that? It depends on what I do. But even if I do something good and then this, I get this same kind of life again which is extremely, the odds are extremely low. I get a life like this, but then again I'm going to have to go through the same process of ups and downs. Ups and downs might be okay, if you weren't getting old the whole time time, but, but your energy level is dropping every month and eventually you end up without any energy. And you, there's no one who can live very long, and anyone who does must lose his hearing, must lose his sight, must lose his teeth, must lose all his energy, must get ugly, and then get stupid and then die. There's no other option, so why go through it again? If you have a chance now to stop it, and reach some really handsome level, you know, permanently useful level, much better. So then how can I do that? That's what we're gonna talk about right now. So the text says at this point, by the way there's only, this is a super compressed Lam Rim. Rinpoche took twelve years to teach it in New Jersey, okay. Okay, the book says, {Namdak tsewa trenpa yi}," Use this desire to get out in order to ..." {Drenpa sheshin}. What is {drenpa} and {sheshin}? Heard them before? {Drenpa} is recollection, and {sheshin} is watchfulness. We had them in the practice of shamata, of developing shamata. But what are they aimed at in this case? {Tempay tsawa soso tarpa la}, the very, the very core of Buddhist teachings, {soso tarpa}, the eight types of vows. The eight types of vowed morality. Number eight is monks vows, number one is a one day vow, number two and three is when a layman decides to take the five vows for his life. What are the five vows? Not killing, I will not kill in my life again, stealing, no sexual misconduct.

[student: Alcohol.]

No lying.

[students: Lying? Stealing?]

Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, alcohol.

[student: Lying and what?]

Alcohol, intoxicants, drugs or alcohol.

[student: All drugs?]

[student: Does that include doctored drugs?]

Ah, no, it doesn't include alcohol included in a cough syrup or something like that. No.

[student: Well how do they... caffeine?]

[laughs] That doesn't say caffeine or tea in the [unclear].

[student: Does it say specifically, specific things other than alcohol?]

[student: Does it say cocaine?]

The text, the text in the Abhidharma, [laughter], the text of the Abhidharma says, "Any, any substance which is refined from a natural juice, like wine, whiskey, alcohol basically, or which is out together through chemicals." So, they mention that, this is like three fifty AD. They say, "or...

[student: Put together through, like artificially.]

or which is a chemical, like LSD or heroine, or... yeah, which is artificially concocted, which, which has the function of lowering your inhibition level.

[student: Which is the first one? Fermented, anything fermented?]

Alcohol or drugs, and I mean, they say that. And then the Buddha in the [b: [b: Abhidharmakosha] lifts up a piece of grass, and says to his followers, "He, he, whosoever drinks the amount of alcohol that you could put on the tip of this grass, don't call yourself a Buddhist, and I am not your teacher."

[student: Why Michael? Why no alcohol?]

Because it lowers, it has, it, it's affect is to subtly lower your ability to keep your morality.

[student: So, then, then the alcohol, and this is the question I had the other day for you, Europeans use allot of wine in their food, and there's not really an effect

of alcohol when you eat the food, so does that mean no alcohol?]

If, if it didn't have the effect to lower, the function of an intoxicant which is prohibited is something which lowers your ability to protect your morality.

[student: I think there's a difference, you have to make a distinction between abusing things that are not necessarily designed for the specific purpose of becoming intoxicated, as for example wine or beer or what... things like that, and something like cocaine or heroine, which is designed specifically...]

Buddha said...

[student: One is a beverage and one is a {unclear}]

[student: It's about intention, isn't it?]

I will never [unclear] is what the Abhidharma says, is what the Buddha says.
[laughter] Period.

[student: So you don't have to really feel like high? You know what I mean.]

One teaspoon of wine according to the scriptures lowers your, it increases the odds of your breaking your morality, eventually, so don't do it.

[student: What about, what about if your addicted to chocolate?]

[student: [unclear] one less glass of wine. I mean if it can ruin your mind.]

If, if it can lower, obviously, in an extreme case, an addiction to anything might lower your ability to, to not do an action in which you might hurt someone to get it, even chocolate. And that's, yeah that's true. But that's [unclear] [laughter] You know is it, is it prohibited, you know, is it like prohibited cause the Buddha is mean, or the Buddha is too strict, or the Buddha is just like an old nun in the Catholic girls school or... [laughter]. It's not like that, if it has the function of possibly causing you to do something, which would have, according to the laws of karma, infinite, painful effects on you, so do it with pleasure, keep it with pleasure, you know, be happy about it.

[student: Is the idea that just taking a small amount plants the seed to do it again

in the future, and more in the future [unclear]?]

Partly, partly that and partly, it lowers the inhibition to take more, you see.

[student: But Michael, It's, it's like if you're supposed to be watching your mind every second of the day. And we talk about the black seeds and the white seeds I mean, every second, how can you monitor what your taking if you're taking it?]

If you lower your ability...

[student: If you're lowering your concentration...]

... to monitor by one percent, you've, you've just caused yourself a bad karma. So don't think of it as, just get, just forget it, it's useless poop. I almost said a bad word. [laughter] It's of no benefit to you. it costs money, it's useless, it has no benefit for you. If there's a chance in a thousand that it could make you less watchful, why bother? I mean, what's the big deal? Like what's so great about it?

[student: Well what if your more relaxed, and then you're more relaxed?]

[laughter] [students: What if you're overly agitated and a glass of wine makes you calm down?]

Work out, out or something. You said, you said, count you breath, I think it was. [laughter]

[student: What about tsok?]

[student: You can't speak and count your breath at the same time.]

Then go some place where you don't have to talk. [laughs] You know, I've always found that when I start to loose it, you know if I say I'd like to go to another room and recollect, and re... what do you call it?

[student: Think about death.]

[laughter] Recollect myself.

[student: Get my frame of mind.]

People don't like it. But if you say, I have to go to the bathroom, nobody stops you. You know, I can be in the worst meeting with my boss, he's about to say something important, and I say, "Look, I've really gotta go to the bathroom." [laughter] And I've never had anyone say, "No, don't go, sit down, you know." So go to the bathroom and sit down and med... collect yourself, collect yourself.

[student: So what are the, what could we say are the eight vows, the eight types of vows?]

I didn't get though them.

[students: [All talking], number eight, number twenty eight?]

What I'm trying to tell you is, is that the recollection and the watchfulness that he's mentioning here are not focused on the object of meditation. These are the same mental fountains, but they are focused on your morality. They, they are with you through out the day monitoring, I like that word that you chose. They are monitoring your behavior through out the day. Is it, should you feel guilty? Are you a bad person? You know, should you, you know, blah, blah, blah, go home. Should you give up all your friends and tell them you don't want to stay with them anymore? It's not the thing. Most of the immorality that we do are, are things that are quite acceptable in society. Talking bad about people at work. Subtly trying to split people up. You know, looking at another guys wife. This is, these are... [cut]

I've done it, but basically I'll say this, if I remember correctly. Wrong object, okay, your mother, your sister, a nun, et cetera, and another persons spouse. Wrong place, in a, in a, in a room where there's an altar, in a , near a temple. Around your Lama, within earshot of other people, et cetera. Wrong organ, anal, oral, masturbation, et cetera. Wrong, what was the last one?

[student: Time.]

Time, yeah, lady is, is having her period, she's a pregnant, anytime when it would hurt her, physically. To do it in open daylight.

[student: What happens if she... You cannot have it if you have your period or if ,

if it hurts?]

It's okay.

[student: What about daylight?]

Well, specifically if it would hurt, hurt the person. And that would be considered in a way shameless in a way, or you know, it would be considered sort of , and that's some Lamas say that, the book says that. And we went through, is there anything , I don't know? Homosexuality is considered sexual misconduct.

[students: That's not what the Dalai Lama said in the, I read an article. He's explicit, I just read it today.]

Scriptures are explicit as well. [laughs]

[student: But he said it. You know this is Avaloketishvara, he said it, he said it.]

Excuse me if I call you explicit.

[student: He said it's fine, it's not considered sexual misconduct if you haven't taken your monastic vows, that's what he says right out.]

It is, it is, it is considered sexual misconduct.

[student: Well, why would he say that?] [laughter]

[student: Same thing with the meat.]

Where did he say it?

[student: No, mean, he said it, unless they misquoted him. It's in a quotation, like I got, I have it.]

[student: Yeah.]

I know , I know that this came up, now, if he were pressed to, to substantiate that, or did he say it to reach a certain audience or for other reasons.

[student: One can always use those.]

Yeah, and this is, any teacher does that. The Buddha himself taught four schools of Buddhism. Three of them are flatly wrong, so why did he teach them? We will study this subject and we'll also study how to determine when he's doing it and when he's not doing it. There are rules for when he should do it. And we'll study that, and it's a whole subject called {trengye}. It's called the art of interpretation and we...

[student: But this is the, that has to do when you interpret a statement symbolically or ...]

Yeah, when the Buddha says, "Kill your father and your mother", I mean obviously that's metaphoric. Now when another, another circumstance is when is he saying what is really the case, ultimately, and when is he saying something to... which is not true, but which is meant to bring along someone who needs to be brought along a little farther. The Abhidharma is not true, the Mind Only school is not true, the Sautantrika school all the Buddhist logic and perceptual schools are not true. The lower Mahayana school is not true, and that's a fact.

[student: Which is the school that's true?]

I have no idea what's the school. [laughs] Now, are all parts of them wrong? No. Are central tenets of them wrong? Yes. So why did he teach them? Cause those people couldn't relate to him, he couldn't bring them along further if he didn't say certain things, which, technically speaking are not true. Now, is the Dalai Lama doing that here? We would have to sit down and thrash it out. You know, we'd have to apply those rules of interpretation to it.

[student: But if we, if you translate that into a level of personal action and you started out in talking about morality in terms of not wanting to create the situation where you ascetically clamp down on yourself, but rather attempt to root out the cause underlying the desire whether it's, ultimately it's ignorance rather than the desire itself. Then, it almost seems to me that the whole point is that you're not trying to establish an outward situation of rules that you must follow but rather set a, you know, certain overall directions you should be aiming in, so that the reason the Dalai Lama would say that is that he knows that to make, to be a hard ass, sorry, [laughter] at that point is to alienate this entire, reassure, so...]

Yeah, yeah.

[student: So he's going oh, no, no, come along come in and then somewhere along the line, perhaps you come to another conclusion.]

Somewhere along the line he might make them heterosexual, somewhere along the line further he might make them celibate. You see. [laughter]

[student: Say that again? What?]

[student: No one [unclear]]

I'm saying that somewhere along the line he'll make homosexual heterosexual, perhaps, this is the, and then somewhere along the line, it's celibacy, it really is. And, and it's just a matter of time. But, do you force it?

[student: That seems a rather monastic perspective.]

I'm not saying monastic.

[student: It is. Yeah. It is, Michael.]

[student: What's wrong with a monastic perspective?] [laughter]

Not true. No, not true, you could have all the sexual activity going on that you want, if no being had the karma to have to take another samsaric birth, you wouldn't be, you wouldn't get birth. It's not your doing, it's his karma.

[student: Do you think, could you finish this lesson? And maybe have another class about this another time?]

[laughs] Yeah, alright, one last question.

[student: Well I was just going to say, with the view of emptiness, nothing is inherently good or bad, right?]

No true.

[student: Pardon me?]

Not true. Not, not in morality.

[student; Not in morality? So, no matter who is was, anyone who did one of these things that you're talking about, the effect would be the same?]

I didn't say that. No, I didn't say that.

[student: Or is it that, to the vast majority of people who would be hearing this message, you're better off for the time being, in the state that you're in right now t avoid certain actions?]

People that are not, not yet reached nirvana, if they want to establish the path to reach nirvana, must keep, {sheshin} and {drenpa} on, on one of the eight types of vows. If you don't have one of the eight types of vows, you can, you can just consider the ten non-virtues. Avoid the ten non-virtues.

[student: Did you, did you just infer that you can't attain nirvana without one of the eight types of vows?]

No. But he's defined that the method of, of the path as watching your morality, and he happens to mention the eight types of vows. Is it impossible to attain nirvana without taking formal vows and keeping them? I'm not sure. I know that when you take a vow to keep something and you keep it, its nature completely changes. So, hey, those five are not so hard, you can keep them.

[student: Those five vows, are those the layman's vows?]

[student: Killing, no lying, stealing]

[laughter] Killing, lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and use of alcohol.

[student: And you said that, two and three's the layman vows and they all incorporate the five?]

Yeah, yeah, two and three. Two is for ladies, and three is for men. Five vows for your life. And then they go on, and you get into the realm of ordained people and there's female novice, male novice, female advanced novice, female nun, and a full monk and those are the eight.

[student: And if you don't keep your sexual morality, can you advance to higher states? [laughter].]

[student: Can you what?]

[student: If you don't, you know, follow that, but your not, sexually if you misconduct yourself, [laughs].]

I think, no, eventually you have to. To reach nirvana you eventually have to keep your morality, perfectly.

[student: Yeah, but I mean, can you at least...]

Can you make progress in other places? Sure, sure, absolutely. I, you know, you're supposed to work on the one which bothers you the most, but, obviously if you make advances in reducing your anger. By the way, I mean, any will also help you reduce your desire. I mean any advances that you make towards digging away at any of your problems, helps you to overcome your other problems. So work on, they say work on your worst one first, but even if you can't, work on any of them and it will help you work on your first one. Okay, we gotta move on. Can, do you wanna turn on the water.

[student: Excuse me.]

Yeah.

[student: Can you, I'm just not clear on what the eight are. The first one was the monks vow, then the next five?]

You know, it's not on your homework or anything, but if you want to know, there's three lay.. three kinds of layman's vows. The first one is male or female one day vow.

[students: [unclear] ... one two three four five six seven eight. You just said number one, or something different?]

[students: One day vow, one day vows.]

That's right. Set, set of vows number one consists of the male or female one day vow. Set of vows number two, is the female lifetime, layman's vow, which consists of five rules.

[student: Is the content different as between the one day vow and the lifetime vow. I mean, from each category?]

Not, not, no. The third vow, and why do they include them in one vow and they split the rest in to one day? Because it's only one day, it's not a big deal. Okay, set of vows number three, lifetime, man, layman, five rules. Set of vows... so number two was for ladies, number three was for men. Number two and number three are to keep the same vows.

[student: Can I switch the two?]

Want me to say it again?

[student: No, could it be men's two and ladies three?]

Under certain circumstances, but not in the, this is the way it's taught and I...

[students: {unclear}]

When we get to the higher teaching and the ladies come first, I'll complain too, alright.

Number four, ladies novice vows, ordained, okay. Number five, mans novice vows, ordained person. Number six, advanced ladies novice vows. Number seven, nuns vows, full nun. Number ten, full nun, number eight, full nun, sorry.

[student: Fully ordained?]

[student: There's a asymmetry in there.]

Yeah, there's no advanced males novice vow. But don't ask me why, it's not our subject today. Okay, anyway.

[student: What was number one again?]

One day vow for a man or a woman. [laughter]

[student: I thought nuns were never fully ordained.]

Yeah, the vow that exists in the world today, is for women, the one that Pelma has is number four.

[student: Isn't there something that Tibetan Buddhist nuns can only get in Theravadan and tradition?]

Yeah, it's being researched by a committee right now. Whether or not, whether or not the in our tradition we're going to accept it...

[student: Revive it. It would be reviving it though no?]

No. it would just be picking up on a continuum that we weren't aware of until now.

[student: Oh, I thought it had [unclear]]

If it can be established that it was never broken in the last eleven hundred years.

[student: Good luck.]

[laughs] Okay, now, why did he mention morality...why did he, there's three trainings, right? What are they?

[student: Concentration.]

[student: Morality, concentration and wisdom.]

Reaching nirvana is the practice of removing your bad thoughts, permanently. Why did he only mention morality? Doesn't it take all three things to remove your bad thoughts, permanently?

[student: Morality is the foundation.]

Yeah, morality is like, what he means when he mentions morality only, is that it's to imply the other two. You must have concentration, meditative concentration and you must have wisdom. But he mentions morality, why? What's the dis... what's the relationship between morality and concentration?

[student: you can't concentrate without morality.]

You can't concentrate with something on your conscience and you never will be able to, okay.

[student: Is that just the guilt thing, or?]

It's the nature of a bad deed. [laughs] okay. It interrupts the psychic being. He will, he will not be able to achieve very high shamanta, as long as he has some bad deed that he has not purified.

[student: So you've gotta do massive purification.]

That's the whole idea of the preparation for meditation. That's the whole point of, of med... of doing those preliminaries before you meditate.

[student: If you've got like ten thousand years of bad deeds and we're gonna do, you know, like five minutes of confession before each meditation session, what are we talking here?]

You know, they, you do as pure as you can, the purer you make yourself the better the meditation will go.

[student: So with that ration, would it be better to do, you know months and years of purification before you do a serious retreat.]

It, it might be useful. [laughter] They say, do as much as you can, but it's not practical. If you do a good {shakpa} a good purification, on your main problems, you'll be able to have a good meditation. Okay, and how does that lead you to concentration? You can't perceive emptiness directly if you're not in a state of shamanta, deep meditation. So he mentions morality, knowing that his intelligent listeners will say, " Oh yes, but I must have concentration and wisdom also." How does it apply to the guy at work?

[student: You keep your morality with the guy at work.]

You asked me what to do about, what was it? Something unpleasant, the, the question came from Mark, and it was a good question, you know, how does the Dalai Lama enjoy himself? What's the nature of the guy at work? You see, you see, the whole, the whole {tarlam} is contained in the situation with the guy at work. That's it, that's the whole answer right there. He hurts you, you know, what do you do back? What I'm saying is the reaction cannot be related to his action. The content of the reaction must be totally divorced from his action, if he had spoken to you nicely, if he had said to you the worst insult you've ever had,

if he hit you, or if he had caressed you, your reaction must be the same. Your reaction must be the same.

[student: So with that logic,]

Does it mean you don't punch the guy in the face? Absolutely not. With great motherly love, you would punch him in the face, [laughter], seriously.

[student: If you can.]

[student: So my point, my point was that in term of skillful response, skillful response.]

I would say the intelligent response, and what the Dalai Lama calls the, what did you call it?

[student: The enlightened self interest]

The enlightened self interested response, there's only one.

[student: Would be to always take harm.]

Well, that would be a side effect of loving him in response.

[student: So then that... assuming you not going to respond and hurt him in a compassionate way.]

Well you could have hurt him in a...

[student: Assuming you're not going to do that. Then the only other response then is to take harm that is given to you. And never give harm back, unless it's...]

Unless you're stupid, unless you don't understand emptiness. If you don't understand emptiness, hurt him back. Any other, that reaction is stupid. It will cause a perception which will be planted in your mindstream which must result in you perceiving a blank object in the future as unpleasant. And you don't want that.

[student: Yeah but... Let's say a Chinese soldier that cut's off the mala beads.]

And it's very difficult. it's very, very difficult, you can know all this stuff, you can teach it to people for years and then the guy at work yells at you, and it's all gone [laughs].

[student: Because you figure he deserves to get the response that you give him.]

But I, by the way, even in a worldly way, the opposite response is, is very constructive and it works very well. You usually get what you want, actually. That's not Buddhism, to do that. Have some, have something to eat.

[student: What about the Chinese soldier that cuts off the hands of monks? How, how is the monk supposed to react to it a Chinese soldier?]

What's the ultimate reaction? It's not the soldier that's hurting him, it's not the soldier that's...

[student: Yeah but he's praying on his mala beads, that's why he got his hands cut off.]

Should he be angry at the knife or should he be angry at the soldier?

[student: Neither. No, he shouldn't be angry at either, he should prevent that soldier from cutting off his hands.]

Oh, if it's out of compassion for the soldier for sure. He should do whatever he can to prevent the soldier from hurting him. But if the time comes that he can't anymore, which happens in scripture. If you meet such a guy, you say, sure cut my hands off, but I will not hate you for it.

[student: What if there's a person for example who is, for example, stealing, who has stolen and then, okay so you don't hate them or anything and you love them, and you, you just [unclear]]

If your child stole something you'd still love your... [cut]

{Kyebu chinbo}, okay we're on to the meditations for the persons of the great scope.

[student: Can you summarize the medium scope, it seems really brief?]

Yeah, medium scope, we just had two steps, you know find out what's...

[student: You want it and you get it.]

That's life.

[student: And how do you go about getting it?]

Get it, he said focus on your morality, with watchfulness, and with recollection. What he meant was, focus on your morality to develop a higher state of concentration which allows you to see emptiness directly, which will stop your bad thoughts forever. And that's nirvana, {tarpa} thats {moksha}, okay. By the way, given the example of the person at work, it a quite simple, that's the answer, that's the practical application of that, of that principle. He does something to harm you, and you stop reacting, forever. So there's nothing to throw this into being, or to throw the perception of this into being, which is the same as throwing it into being. And by the way, it's only because of that distinction, that it's possible. What you're actually stopping forever is the future perception of seeing yourself have such a thought in your mind. And that's the emptiness, that's the whole... if you want to achieve nirvana that's the whole thing.

[student: So you would have a body at that point?]

With, with knowledge, react to the person at work with knowledge. Where is your dharma going to take place? Where is, where are the causes for your nirvana going to be planted? You know, where is the battlefield on which you will fight this battle? It's, it's your office. Where did you think it was gonna be? [laughter] It's in your life, you know, and those are the places where you're gonna have to do it. It's the perfect place, a fertile field.

[student: Plenty of manure.]

Try to get into a busy office with lots of greedy people around and [laughter], great, okay. And if you don't have those people, your not gonna get much chance, sit in a monastery. It's much better to go and be around all these desire objects, and all these anger objects.

[student: It's hard. It's harder.]

No, but it's sooner or later you're gonna have to.

[student: But if it's harder that means it's better.]

Well, if you've got the strength not to fail. If you don't have the strength not to fail, get thee to a nunnery. [laughter]

[student: Shakespeare theme for awhile.]

[student: Back to Hamlet.]

Oh, we ran out, go home now. Two parts to, two parts to...

[student: Two parts to what?]

These are gonna be the two parts to the big persons practice, if I can find it.

[silence]

What does {changsem} mean?

[student: Renunciation?]

Nah, {chang} is bodhi, and {sem} is chitta.

[student: Buddhamind.]

Buddhamind which is not Buddhamind, it's the desire to become a Buddha. It has nothing to do with the Buddhas state of mind, right? Bodhichitta doesn't ever have anything to do with the Buddhas own state though. It's the wish to become a Buddha.

[student: So Buddhas never have bodhichitta, is that that you're saying?]

[students; No. No. [laughter]]

[student: They do don't they?]

{Getsul}, {ge} means...

[student: They just never have bodhichitta state of mind.]

{Getsul} means how to develop it.

[student: Was the other one renunciation? Number two]

[student: What?]

[student: High and medium capacity.]

It's, it's throughout. It's really throughout. It starts with not wanting to go to the lower realms, right? But true renunciation, you know. Okay, {changsem getsul} how to develop the wish to become a Buddha so that you can help all other living beings.

[students: The wish...]

To become a Buddha so that you can help all other living beings.

[student: How to become a Buddha. How to wish, to develop the wish to be...]

How to develop the wish to become a Buddha so that you can help all other living beings. I'll give it to you in thirty seconds or less.

[student: Don't you have to develop, don't you have to develop the urge, like in middle scope first? You know, in middle scope...]

These are all...

[student: In the middle scope you develop the urge and then act, here you don't have to develop the urge and then act.]

This is the urge, then you're gonna have the act. {Changsem} is only the urge.

[student: Oh, I thought you said act.]

No.

[student: It's the wish.]

This is the wish, so what it is, mainly this. It's quite coldly logical, if it's true that your present consciousness, moment of consciousness, must be produced by the moment of consciousness in the moment before, okay? If your consciousness here had to be the cause of your consciousness here, which is true, mind has to come from mind. Mind has to come from mind of the moment before. The fact that you were aware, has to come from the fact that you were aware a minute ago, if that's true, if it's true, don't say it's true, if it's true then you had a past life.

[student: That's right cause it also has to be the fact that you were aware ten minutes ago [unclear]]

The awareness you had at the moment of conception had to be preceded by a principal cause consisting of a state of consciousness. We'll, we'll talk about it later, I mean but, that's the proof of former lives, that's the only proof of former lives. If that's true, then you've had countless former lives and I can jump. If that's true then I have been everything to you before and you have been everything to me before. I've been your mother trillions of times I've been your worst enemy trillions of times, I've murdered you trillions of times, I've murdered you trillions of times, you've murdered me trillions of times. Okay, and we concentrate on the trillions of times that you have taken care of me like my mother did in this life. So then it's my duty to pay you back, and that's basically bodhichitta, you know. What have you done for me lately? [laughter] You know, is a person less kind to you because they were equally kind to you two years ago then they were last year? I mean, you see what I mean,. Does it really matter that time has gone by? Does kindness know the bounds of time? You know, are you less obligated to pay a person back who gave you a thousand dollars last year then one who gave you a thousand dollars this year, if you were dying without that thousand dollars? You know, it's, it's not at all. You are equally obligated to each person. It's simple, I just gave you all the push you need. Every person has been equally kind to you. There's a matter of now or a year ago or a thousand years ago and it's your duty to help them.

[student: But isn't there something you're forgetting about beginning? [unclear]]

We'll discuss it in the next course, I, promise, really.

[student: I just need you to repeat one sentence. The awareness that you had at the moment of conception had to be proceeded by and the word principle was

used.]

Had to be proceeded by a moment of awareness which was acting as its principal cause, okay. In other words, rock don't turn into mud.

[student: Mind produces mind]

Mind produces mind. Principle cause, not talking secondary causes, alright. And we'll prove it in the next course, okay. Where was that next one?

[silence]

{Choepa} means the activities, and meaning the activities of a bodhisattva. Bodhisattva activity.

[student: What does {unclear} mean?]

Oh, I'm sorry, how to train in the bodhisattva activities, ow to learn how to act like a bodhisattva.

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah, how to learn how to act like a bodhisattva. How to learn acting like a bodhisattva.

[student: Will you do English?]

Bodhisattvas activities have... no, this is Tibetan. Bodhisattva activities, there are two, two types, basically two types. {Do} means "non-secret", open, okay. Open bodhisattva activity.

[student: Meaning it is what it appears to be?]

No, it's not tantra, {ngak} means tantra. {Ngak} means tantra and tantra means secret. Secret, secret bodhisattva activities.

[student: So tantra, what is that? Sanskrit for secret?]

It literally means a thread.

[student: Tantra means thread?]

Yeah it was a... it comes from a thread that Brahmans used to wear on their... but there's a long story about it. So there's open bodhisattva activities and secret bodhisattva activities. We can't talk about this one. [laughs]

[student: But we can see it though]

Okay this goes in here.

[student: So it literally refers to tantra though.]

The literal, literal, literal is mantra, okay? {Ngak} means mantra.

[student: As distinct from say things, say doing things in such a way that your actual purpose in doing them must be hidden from the view of most people.]

I am not going to explain what secret means.

[laughter] [student: No, no.]

I'll tell you one thing, it's not what most people think. [laughter]

[student: No, no, no I'm talking..]

[student: It's even worse.]

I'll tell you one thing, these activities are such a nature that they are secret by their nature.

[student: No, I'm not talking about that category, I'm talking about the previous category, or a different category.]

This one, no?

[student: When you say open activities, do you mean right there in the open, everybody can interpret it as being bodhisattva activity? That why I said...]

That's not what I mean by open, no.

[student: Okay, that's what I was asking.]

I mean you don't need permission to practice them and you... it's a long story, okay. [laughs]

[student: What were you going to say about {ngak}?]

What I'm saying is that {ngak} is secret by nature. If you don't have the goodness to practice it, you can open all the books and someone can tell you everything that's in the books and you can hear everything that anyone ever done in {ngak} and nothing will happen, you won't see anything. If you don't have the proper permission, authorization and the proper practices, and the proper Lam Rim in your heart, you can be around all the {ngak} you want, you won't see anything, nothing will happen. It doesn't matter, it's secret by its nature, it's not that anyone has to hide it from you, you'll never see {ngak}, nothing will happen, you know. You can desecrate all those tantric books you want by opening them and reading them, and nothing will happen to you.

[student: So really, the meaning of tantra, and secrecy is that if you don't have the goodness and training..]

It's secret by its nature. It'll be hidden from you.

[student: It's an elite awareness then...]

Yeah, you need Lam Rim, you need those other things, what are they? Understanding how to take a teacher, how to follow him, understanding how lucky you are and why you should practice dharma, understanding that you will die. Understanding about the laws of karma that will throw you where they're gonna throw you, being fed up with this life, understanding how nothing can make you happy. Taking the steps that are necessary to get out of this life, which are the three trainings; morality, concentration and wisdom, seeing that everyone's been your mother, wanting to help them, and then undertaking the activities that are necessary to help them. If you don't have those as experiential attitudes and realizations in your heart, you will, it will always be secret towards you, by its nature, you will never see it. So really they don't, tantric, tantra doesn't need the protection of locks and keys, really, it's protected by, by its goodness...

[student: That's funny.]

... by it's nature, you will never see it.

[student: And how do you develop all those realizations in your heart? By meditation?]

Ahh, next weeks class. At least know that, at least run that, burn it through your brain hundreds and hundreds of times. And then, and then that's the purpose of having a class, is to...

[student: Is to get the information.]

Get the information, but I can't practice it. You must go home and practice it.

[student: That's what I was asking, is it purely meditation?]

Not at all, I told you about the office, right? [laughs]

[student: Right, sorry.]

Okay, okay, {do} two categories to that and we're done. [laughter]

[silence]

[cut]

940323-1

ACI Course 3: Applied Meditation

Class 11: Review

March 23, 1994

Transcribed by: Roy Yoshimoto

First I'd like you to look at the outline you just...

[John Stillwell: Is this the question before?]

Yuh.

[John: You know, I was trying to understand the insight--vipashyana--meditation. The definition is sort of like...I didn't really get it, you know, the way it was defined. I mean, the definition is, "that wisdom which is full of exceptional bliss of practiced ease, that comes from the analysis of its object and which is founded upon quietude." Is that saying, once you have quietude, you then focus that quietude upon wisdom and the result is exceptional bliss?]

No. When we debate this subject in the monastery it's on a different...it's with a different text. And they say what's the difference between insight and quietude. And the object is the same. They both look at {jinyepechu} and {jitawechu}, which means...{jinyepechu} means everything there is...the things that are. And {jitawechu} means the way things are. They both focus on the same object: the things that are and the way things are. And they both have the same essence. They're both...

[John: Same level of concentration.]

They're both {tingendzin}, they're both shamata...based on shamata, or shamata. And then the only difference between them is whether or not they're analyzing the object or not.

[John: So one of them is...]

They're both fixed on the object...they're both a kind of fixation on the object, but vipashyana is analyzing the object.

{John: So analytical versus single-pointed.]

Analytical versus non-analytical. And that's the way they say it.

[Student: Would that be like the {chokgom} and the {shargom} and the {chegom}? Would then the {chegom} be the vipashyana and the {shargom} be...or {chokgom} is the...]

No, it wouldn't be like that.

{Student: ...shamata.]

It would be...shamata is...yuh shamata is like {shar-}...{jokgom}, in the sense that it's just the condition of being fixed on the object perfectly. And having exceptional bliss, which is caused by...that's an interesting thing, and Ariel and I were talking about it today. The way it works is that you get focused on the object perfectly. Therefore, your mind is what we call {lesurung}, which means "fit to do its work perfectly." Based on that, the, the inner winds, the psychic winds on which the mind rides are...are, are all put into perfect order. All throughout your body, the inner winds are put into perfect order because your mind is in perfect order. Based on that you start to feel bliss in your body. And because of that you feel happy and you start to feel bliss mentally. So those are what the...bliss means. It means those four steps going on, in, in your body. Your mind starts to concentrate better; therefore, the winds start to straighten out; because the winds have straightened out, you feel bliss, and because you feel bliss physically, you...you're happy, you feel better mentally. So that's, that's what {dewa kyepa chen} means, of {shinjan}. That's what "exceptional bliss of practiced ease" means.

[John: The difference between both being...I don't understand the difference...]

So shamata is more the fixation on the object, and vipashyana is the, the analysis of the object sitting on the shamata.

[John: The analysis of the object is still single-pointed concentration from moment to moment for the analysis, right?]

Yuh.

[John: And the only difference is, so I'm in single-pointed concentration on the image of the Buddha and I'm not thinking about anything...]

Well there's this whole debate, you know. Is this whole {lamrim} outline...if you go through the whole thing and do a {shargom}, if you meditate on this outline, which is what I'd like you to do in the next six months...I mean it would be nice if you got to the point...this is the road map to Buddhahood. And if you know it--it's burned into your mind--you always know where you're at. You always know where you've reached, so can you get single-pointed concentration on these, you know, eleven pages of text? Yes. Is it...what does {tsechik} mean? What does single-pointed mean? What the single point?

[John: Focused on one object.]

One object. Single object. The word "point" is a code word for object. There's nothing single pointed about it except that it's focused on one object. Is this one object?

[Student: Yes.]

There was a big debate about it in, in Tibet. And they...the {rangruk}--our, our side--says it is. It's a single object. That whole meditation is a single object.

[Student: So you're not shifting the object of meditation even slightly, it's a move from one section to the other, to the other.]

You are. You are. But we call it one object. We consider it one, one object.

[John: Is that the difference between the two? The one you shift from object to object, and the other you stay with one object?]

We, we claim that this is staying with one object.

[John: Then what's the difference between...vipashyana and shamata?]

Shamata means...oh, shamata is the state of the meditation...of the concentra-...shamata is the concentration. Vipashyana is the...is the analysis based on that concentration. You can have shamata towards a worthless object.

[John: I'm trying to understand what analysis means.]

Oh, normally it means the emptiness of the object. But it can also mean the

dependent origination of the object.

[John: So it is single-pointed concentration focused on emptiness?]

Focused on the nature of a thing...

[John: And its emptiness.]

It's positive nature or it's negative nature, meaning its dependent origination or its emptiness...using the tool of shamata. That tool can be used by other people, too. Shamata can be used for other purposes. You're using this powerful concentration to analyze an object.

[John: So vipashyana always incorporates an element of emptiness or dependent origination...on whatever the object...]

Right. It's a kind of analysis of the way things are, or the things that are. "The way things are" is a code word for emptiness.

[John: So shamata is...]

"The things that are" is a code word for dependent origination.

[John: So shamata is sort of the first step, and you take the shamata and you apply it to the analysis of the object.]

There's a big debate about whether you get shamata first, or vipashyana first. But if you say that the vipashyana is seated on the shamata, it's based on the shamata, it's using the shamata to perceive its object, to concentrate on its object...then you've got to say that shamata comes first. Because...the ability, that, that incredible ability of shamata comes first. Remember, that's above the ninth level. The ninth level was kind of...okay, very, very close. And, and based on that ability to concentrate, you focus on the nature of an object, perceive its dependent origination or its emptiness.

[John: So, so let's see if I understand you correctly. Both are focused on one object, the only difference is that in vipashyana you're, you're perceiving emptiness and dependent...or dependent origination, and shamata you're not.]

Yuh.

[John: Okay.]

Shamata...

[Student: You could, no?]

You could be. Yuh. Shamata is just a tool. Could be focused as a microscope. Could be focused on the right thing; in that case, it's vipashyana. Could be focused on a horn and in that case, it's not.

[Student: Michael, the way you just spoke about {shargom}, according to the Geluk position, then {shargom} is really a subset of [unclear]]

Yuh, you could say that. You can say that. I mean that you could say that. You could say that they don't overlap...or that they overlap. But I...traditionally, both distinctions are made. Okay. This outline is...this is the outline, this is the way we would do a {lamrim} meditation, and I think it's a very appropriate object for your meditation in the morning. I, I can't, you know...this is the last active class, I can't force you to meditate every morning. I can't refuse to put a "99" on your homework if you don't meditate every morning. I can't check you, you know. All I can say is that, if you don't then the class is a failure, and there's no reason to have had it, really. The reason is to...is to give you a lifetime practice, by which if you keep it, I guarantee you would gain the ability to concentrate that you require to see emptiness directly. And if you don't, you won't, and, and you will not have used this life well. You will die without having used your life well...for what it was meant to be, you know. So, I, I can't do anything, now. I can't, you know, do anything to force you. But you, you can do that. You will get that result. It is possible. It's, it's quite coldly possible that can get exactly that result. And then, what else do you need? You know, if you see that you're gonna be a Buddha in seven lives or less. If you see your future lives. You know, if you see yourself as a Buddha, then what do you care about what else happens. What else can tempt you? And you can. You can see it. You can confirm everything you ever heard about Buddhism. You know, that there are Buddhas, that nirvana does exist, that you did have a past life and future...you can see all those things directly. But, but it's impossible if you don't meditate, and, and don't meditation is some thing you're gonna do some day in a retreat, you know. Meditation is what you do every morning. And don't that the sentient being...all sentient beings are different than the people around you in your office. That is all sentient beings for you. That's who you have to work with. Based on them

you'll achieve nirvana. Based on them you'll achieve Buddhahood. Don't think there's some sentient...all sentient beings is somewhere else, you know. That's where...those are the ones you're in contact with. Those are the ones you have to work with. And don't think of meditation as, oh, someday when I have time, I'll go to Woodstock up in New York State, and in the trees and meditate, you know. It will never come, you know. The meditation has to be done every morning, starting today, tomorrow morning. That's, that's...if you don't do it, then there's no meaning for this class. It's been interesting.

[End of Side One]

[Beginning of Side Two]

You know, the last course was so tough that I was pretty wimpy about the final exam questions.

[Student: We'll never know, will we? [laughter]

[Unclear]

[Student: I've given up asking.]

I did start to grade them today, 'cause today I had some free time. But I'm gonna do it on the plane. They told me I can't do my computer, so I have to do something.

[Student: Be kind.]

[John Stillwell: Just don't lose them when you get over there.]

You're actually quite good. I did a couple and Vicarri got like a 99.999.

[Student: Wow...]

So...

[Nina Vicari: That's me.]

[Student: Oh, now you know!]

So, I'll go over...it's obviously important that you know the whole structure of what we did.

[John: What do you mean, structure?]

You tell me...the whole structure of the whole course that we just did. What was the whole structure?

[Student: The preliminaries...]

That's not the structure. Yuh. Yuh?

[Student: The outline!]

Is that all?

[Student: The physical environment...]

[Student: Do you want number two or do you want?]

Yuh, there's the preliminaries and the physical environment.

[Student: Posture...]

By the way...and I'll make some clarifications to you. It's not just physical environment as you know, right? So I would say rather environment. I introduced it that way in the beginning and then I, I corrected myself. The first part was physical place, but the rest weren't were they? Some were...different kinds of environment, like your mental environment, morality, and stuff like that. So I wouldn't say physical environment. I'd say environment, okay?

[Student: "B" is environment, not just physical environment.

Right. So it was more like...so it was preliminaries...physical environment...environment.

[Student: Posture.]

Physical posture. Then what?

[Student: Mental process.]

Yuh, the mental...Dayan came up with the word "mental technique" which I kinda like. By the way, a lot of people came up with good words. Gustavo in the other class, for "patching" the meditation with "mending the holes," which I like; that's actually what it is, you know.

[Student: What was number three?]

[Student: Physical posture.]

Mental technique, physical...physical posture is number three. Mental technique: number four. And what was number five?

[Student: Object.]

Object, yuh. What, and what were the...what was inside of each one of those? Inside of preliminaries there was what?

[Fran Dayan: Seven ingredients.]

Before that?

[Student: Preparation.]

Six, six preliminaries.

[Student: Cleaning your room.]

Yuh, that was the first of the six preliminaries. There were the six preliminaries, and then inside the six preliminaries--inside of number five in fact...

[Student: That's the seven ingredients.]

There were the seven ingredients, yuh.

[John: Is there something else to preparation other than the six preliminaries?]

No.

[John: That's it.]

Well, yuh...there's seven ingredients inside of the fifth, which is a little confusing, right? And again, I asked Rinpoche to clarify...some people said to me, well, the last ingredient is what?

[Student: Dedication.]

Dedication, and the sixth preliminary which comes after the seventh ingredient...

[Student: Is blessing.]

...blessing. So some people said to me, well, seems to me like dedication should be the last thing you do. And I asked Rinpoche, and he said, exactly right. He said, really, dedicate...he said that's a good point and...in practice that's the way you should do it, and the last thing should be the dedication. Do I want you to change the order in the text? No. But, but in your practice, you know the last thing you're gonna do before you get up is, put all that virtue in the bank, right? So, so that was a good point someone made. That's about all I can think of other than...

[Student: Why do you need to...when the last step is requesting blessings, why would you...there's no...[unclear] dedicate merit before you request blessings?]

Well like requesting blessings is a great virtue also. So you you could break it down. So that was the...that was the preliminaries. The second was what?

[Student: Environment.]

Yuh, the environment. What were...what were those?

[Student: Water and air and not a lot of wild animals.]

The first was the place.

[Fran: Conducive place...and few wants.]

...was a good place. And that has five characteristics. But I wouldn't expect you to get such detail. Huh?

[Student: To have few needs.]

Yuh, few needs.

[Student: Easy to satisfy.]

Easy to satisfy.

[Student: Give up doing too many things.] [laughter]

[Student: Keeping your morality.]

Wasn't there another giving up?

[Student: Giving up harming other people.]

Giving up too many...yuh, yuh, yuh. There was giving up doing too many things, and then there was...

[Student: Giving up thinking too many things.]

And then there was a giving up of too many thoughts, or bad thoughts.

[Student: Getting rid of desires.]

Yuh.

[Student: Stupid desires.]

Yuh. And don't forget by the way...I mean it's a...I don't expect you to get in this kind of detail, but don't forget when I said then to get rid of desire, it includes the idea of the senses, you know. There are two kinds of desire objects in Buddhism. One is like chocolate, or girls, or whatever. The other one is...

[Student: Just girls?]

A guy, okay? The other was...the other is just the objects of the senses, without regard to, you know...it just means to withdraw from them. So this, this has both connotations in Tibetan. Ultimately when you're in deep meditation, forget withdrawing from chocolate, that's the gross one. But the subtle one is, you've got to withdraw from all your senses. All the...all the objects of the senses. What I mean is the objects of desires...objects of desire is sometimes a code word for the objects of the senses, period. You know, sights, sounds, smells, taste, and touches.

[John: What about, you said you also have to get rid of anything impermanent in your life?]

Anything impermanent?

[John: You said sense desires, desires for any impermanent...]

Oh well, the main point that he emphasized was that none of them last. They're just silly. Their nature is stupid. Career, or most relationships, or a good dinner, or looking pretty, or handsome or...all, all not desirable. Okay. What came after that? What was the third one?

[Student: Posture.]

Yuh, posture. So that was the...what, how many parts to that?

[Student: Eight.]

[Student: Seven.]

Yuh, eight; sometimes seven. You count, what?

[Students: Breath.]

Yuh, those are pretty easy. After that we got to mental technique. We discussed a number of problems and a number of corrections. What are the...how many problems?

[Students: Five.]

Which are? We graded these yesterday. [unclear] I'll sign this for you. It was such a nice day: We went out on the lawn outside...

[Student: Laziness.]

Laziness. Meaning, meaning what? I mean, I hope you know...

[Student: You don't want to meditate.]

I hope you never teach it to your students as dryly as "laziness." You know, I hope they never understand it as laziness. It's being tucked in bed warm and the alarm goes off and you say, "Maybe not today." [laughter] And I do it. I know it very well. So, it's really not wanting to do it. It's not having the heart to do it. You know, not feeling like it. So, the word is "laziness," but I don't like the word too much. And, and we debated it the other day...in, in our debate with the monks. And we came out with that. Okay, second problem?

[Student: Loosing the object.]

Let's talk about the antidotes for the first one. You don't really feel like...

[Student: Being attracted to wrong objects.]

Yuh, see what's nice about it. The main thing as I've said many times: you cannot get rid of this suffering if you don't perceive emptiness directly. If you do perceive emptiness directly, if you're able to pull that off, in this life, and there's reason why not...you're very, very...you're flirting with it, you know? You have proper teachings, you have accurate teachings, you're right in there close to Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti...there's no reason why in this life without the proper training, you shouldn't be able to see emptiness directly. If you do, you're on your way out, period. No more than seven lives. Impossible. It's even given as an example of impossibility in the scriptures. And you can do it. You can see Buddhas, you can see your future lives, you'll see it directly, and you can do it. So...but you can't do it if you're...if you're not practicing meditation daily. And it doesn't mean like three, four hours. It just means a good half hour, a good forty-five minutes, but so, so often and so well looking out for...{chinwa}. Okay? That subtle dullness, which is the opium which ruins your life's meditation. You know? If you get into a {chinwa} track, you can keep that up for years and you'll never know what happened, afterwards. Big danger, so watch out for that one. So anyway, you cannot...it won't happen to you and cannot happen to you if you're not meditating every day. You cannot perceive emptiness directly. It will never happen. If you are meditating daily it will happen some day. So, that's the selling point. That's...that's attraction. Second one?

[Student: You don't want to.]

Yuh, and by the way, we're only [cerns]. If all you care about career or blah, blah, blah...still shamata is a...is a great way to get out of here. [laughs] [laughter] You can focus it on anything and do it pretty damn well. Okay? So, what was the second question?

[Student: We already answered that one.]

Just kidding. [laughter] [laughs] What was the third one?

[Student: Joyful effort.]

Meaning, working, working to get it. And number four?

[Student: Practiced ease.]

Practiced ease, meaning that untranslatable, pliancy, agility...Rinpoche calls it gymnastics...gymnastic ability. Anyway, okay. That's obviously not, by the way, the exceptional practiced ease that is...comes with the definition of [shamata] and [vipashyana]. It's not the one mentioned there obviously. It's obviously a lower level than that. Okay? Alright. Number two? Problem number two?

[Student: You loose the object.]

Which is known...which is called?

[Student: Forgetting the instructions.]

Forgetting the instructions. And I hope when you teach your students, you don't just repeat "forgetting the instructions" and they...and then the lineage breaks. They never figure out that it meant loosing the object. It means loosing the object. And then what happens?

[Student: Recollection.]

Yuh, recollection. A lot of people had good questions. I've studied it more...is it, is it to recollect what you were doing when you find out you lost the object? Or is it an awareness that you don't loose the object in the first place? I, I explained it the first way. The scriptures I've read since then are emphasizing more the second way.

[Student: Does it depend on which state you are...stage you are, as to the level...and as to how it functions?]

It would. It could have both functions, but mainly it's watching out to see whether or not you are loosing the object. And when we debated yesterday we just came out with...it has to be all three really. It's functioning to...as a kind of awareness, that you don't loose the object; it's functioning as you begin to loose the object; and it functions after you loose the object to bring you back to the object. So it really has three functions. The main one is described as...as not loosing the object in the first place. So how then does it differ from {sheshin}--

from "watchfulness," which comes later?

[Student: It catches you.]

Watchfulness is catching dullness or agitation. Recollection is catching whether or not you've lost the object completely, alright? That's the distinction between the two. And you need both. Both have to be going on. Okay, problem number three?

[Student: Agitation and dullness.]

Yuh, and correction?

[Student: Watchfulness.]

Watchfulness, catching it. Does that stop agitation and dullness? No. That's, that's why the next step is called...the next problem is not taking action. And the fix for that is taking action. And the fix for taking too much action is not taking action, and leaving it alone. But I didn't tell you the last fault there, the last problem, which we called "taking action," right? The antidote for that we called...

[Student: Not taking action.]

...not taking action. And the text sometimes say {tamyang su sharpa} which means "leave it alone." Okay, that's easy. And then you move up to the, let me see...[unclear].

[Student: Do we have to do all that stuff about fixation without clar-...I mean, fixation without clarity?]

[Dayan: The nine mental states.]

[Student: I just know it's on the quizzes.]

Well, if somebody asked you what was the difference between subtle and gross dullness, you'd say gross dullness has...fixation but no clarity.

[Student: Fixation.]

Subtle dullness has...

[Student: Fixation and clarity...]

But no intensity. And if somebody says to you, if your students say to you, "What does clarity mean?" And if you say, "The object is real clear..."

[Student: [makes sound of a game show buzzer indicating wrong answer]]

Yuh. [laughter]

[Student: Wrong answer.]

Yuh, [unclear] it means the alertness mind is bright. It's a quality of the subject and not the object. And that difficult to remember. Clarity seems so often to imply...the object. But this is like...yuh, I'm real clear on that.

[Vilma: Is intensity a degree, a greater degree of clarity? Is that what is meant?]

Yuh, it's always described as {sel treng nga}, which means the intensity of the clarity. Good question. Okay. There was a bad question on one of the quizzes. It said, "How do you know that the fourth problem has occurred?" Some people got it wrong. What is the fourth problem?

[Student: How not doing it...]

Not taking action. How do you know when it's occurred? That question wasn't very good. It should be, "How do you when something's occurred that you should be taking action about?" And you can answer, "Watchfulness." Okay? 'Cause watchfulness actually occurred before, you didn't do that. Okay. I would say that the nine states of meditation are pretty important to know. And everyone got them very good on the...on the quiz. I was amazed. It made me feel bad. I should have asked you more questions on the earlier quizzes. [Laughs] 'Cause everybody did it really good. You know, I could never recite those.

[John: Is that why like after that we started getting so many more questions on the homework? [laughter]]

Yuh, yuh. Name three different types of meditation. Uh no. [Laughter] You have to know the outline pretty well, okay? And that's another reason why I, I

printed it out. Anything on, on the outline that came in the quizzes, you should review. And that's why I did that whole handout. So now it's real clear to you, how it works on the outline. So, I won't give you anything on the outline that you didn't have on your quizzes.

[Student: You mean you won't give us anything from our exams?]

This, this final exam comes only from the quizzes. If you know...if you know all the parts of the outline that have ever appeared in any of the quizzes, you're okay, but you better know.

[John: You mean like your prelims [unclear]]

Yuh, here's the whole outline and you can even, you can even, you know, put a mark on the ones that come in the quizzes and concentrate on those. Okay. If someone were to ask you the four laws of karma, don't blindly put "karma is certain" as the first one. Try to explain them more. Because it ain't what it sounds like, is it? It doesn't mean that you definitely get a result. It means what?

[Student: Actions result in consequences.]

The content is certain. The certainty is in the content. Good leads to good and bad leads to bad. That's what it means to be certain. Sometimes I think they should never have called it that anyway in the first place.

[Student: So then what's the meaning of two and three?]

Are you [unclear]? This reminds me of a Tibetan story where all the ministers of the king got together and said they...one of bet that he could make the king bark like a dog and they all saw it different ways so the guy who won was the guy who said, "I have a dog and he goes 'meow, meow'." That's not what a dog does. And he says what does your dog do? "Woof, woof." [laughter] Are you trying to get me to state the other thing? Check your quiz. I think the...since the whole class was about [shamata] and since so many people missed on the exam that question, I would say it's very useful to know the correct description.

[Student: That definition is twisted.]

Well, a technically correct definition is normally pretty twisted because it has to cover every possible debate that ever came up in the last thousand years.

[Vilma: It's very clumsy, though.]

It is clumsy. It is clumsy in Tibetan, also. But it has to be that way to be precise. Probably we could've worded it better, 'cause I didn't translate it before I got here.

[John: Michael, why do you...why do you have adjectives like exceptional bliss rather than just bliss?]

Someone, Ariel asked me that today, and I looked it up in the computer and the point about exceptional bliss is that your mind is...your mind and your body is totally capable of doing whatever you demand of them. In meditation it means, that you're able to order your body to sit there for four or five hours without moving, and, and it feels great. And then the mental part is that you can stay fixed on the object for about three hours, without a single distraction. And that, that...and as I said, there's this process where that ability straightens out the psychic winds, and that, that straightening of the psychic winds causes bodily...a sensation of bodily bliss. And then, that becomes something that makes you happy, and then you end up with...that's, that's the definition and the description of how exceptional bliss occurs.

[John: Exceptional...]

[Laughs] That's all I have.

[Student: I don't understand some of the material.]

No, that's it. That's all the review.

[Student: What is...what is lack of winds? What exactly does that mean?]

I think it's what, you know, generally Buddhism discourages...real Buddhism, as you've been getting a good taste of it...discourages these vague, mystical things, you know?

[Student: You mean, like channeling, man?]

[Laughs] 'Cause they're vague, mystical things, you know. But inside...it, it has to do with the energy on which thoughts travel. And you could maybe compare

it to nerves, but they're not...they're not the physical nerves in your body.

[Student: Are they more refined than nerves?]

They're like, you can't see them.

[Student: Like meridians?]

[Student: Yuh, I was gonna say isn't the closest...]

I don't know what a meridian is.

[Student: It's like the meridians in acupuncture, sort of, I think.]

But I think it's more...it's much more...I don't think it's that. I actually don't think it's that.

[Student: Is it like the central channel?]

I don't think it's the central channel.

[Student: How could it compare to the current in electricity? It's not the actual channels that the current travels on, but it's the energy that's sort of patterned...]

You can study it. There are books about it. And, and Rinpoche has taught those books, and translated them. And when you've had the proper initiations, I think you can go into it. Seriously, I'm not kidding. There are good descriptions of it. And very detailed descriptions of it. But right now you can say it's a kind of energy or force in the body on which the...related to your physical body, which is sort of where the thoughts and physical body meet. And the, and the thoughts are carried along those...along, along by those winds. And that's all I can say. But when you're ready to study the whole subject, there's whole books written about it, you know. Very precise, and very clear and you can try to do the practices that are required and you'll get some result. It's very, very bad to try to do any of that before you get the formal teachings. And many people have had terrible experiences because of that.

[Student: Is it like kundalini?]

I don't know what kundalini is much, you know? But, you'll know, when the time comes. Any other questions? No.

[John: Thank you for teaching.]

Oh, my pleasure. My good luck. Otherwise, I'd be watching TV. [laughter] But I say, be happy. You know, be glad. Very rare opportunity, that...you know, there's a joke in Tibetan that when there's a teacher out, there ain't no students, and when the students are ready the teacher is gone. So it's very, very good virtue. Remember, doing this is very, very excellent. And I'm very also happy to see how everyone is helping each other, except on the homework. [laughter] No but I, I love to see...it's a pleasure to see, I mean dharma...the result of dharma should be at least that we should be good to each other, and I think...I like...I see it, you know, I see that everyone is being good to each other. That's a nice...that's a good sign. They call it the stink of dharma. [laughter] It's the...it's the fragrance of dharma. Where people are getting warm with each other and people go...come out and then they're better people. 'Cause just to know everything and not be a better person is a pretty miserable state. And it's all it's very...we are in danger of becoming like that. The more you learn, the more you better be getting dharma sweet. Because if you're not, then nothing can change you later. You've used up all the things that could possibly have changed you. So you gotta be careful later. He just asked me...Tim asked me to give you Rinpoche's name, and...that's his...he's a...Khen...Rinpoche is a very overused word...basically it means a lama who's reached a state where he will be re-...reincarnated, as a lama, in his next life. And Khen means...short for {khenbo}, which means an abbot. And sometimes people nowadays are giving the word Khenbo to somebody with three monks in their monastery. I guess it is...but in, in our tradition it's reserved for someone who's been a head of one of the six major monasteries. And {geshe} is someone who's finished, I mean nowadays it means someone who has finished the entire 18- or 20-year course, and passed in the monastery, although there's a lot of people using the word geshe now who are not real geshe...in, in our tradition. Lobsang is his ordination name: Lobsang Tharchin. {Lobsang} means "pure mind" and it comes from the...Tsongkapa's first name. And {Tharchin} means gone to the end--reached the end. His root lama was Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche who was the teacher of the present Dalai Lama...one of the two teachers, two tutors, and he was the main disciple of Pabongka. And Rinpoche also studied under Pabongka directly for many years, as a young man. Pabongka passed away in the Forties. He's from Sera Mey Monastery. [Cut] ...couldn't be admitted to the tantric college unless you were a {hlampa geshe}, which means one of the top two or three in your, in your class, so there would only be about a handful of those each year.

[Student: Why were they so much more strict when we have such a difference now and...]

It's still a tradition that you don't get into the tantric colleges even now unless you're a {hlarampa geshe}. You're not considered an automatic enterer unless you are a {hlarampa geshe}, but you can apply and you might be accepted if you have other reasons to be there. And there are monks who never go...who just go and learn the rituals and never go to their geshe studies also. There's a certain class of monk who can do that. Like Namgyal Monastery: much of their students are like that. And they become ritual masters. Yuh?

[Student: The Buddha didn't want it to be...originally, like you said there were many people who didn't want to learn tantra who were students of the Buddha. What was the, you know, reason for that? Why, even I'm saying...was it fear or people not being ready or what was the?]

If you don't follow it properly...if you follow it properly you can achieve Buddhahood in this life. If you don't follow it properly, at the worst, you can have some terrible results, some big disasters. But you don't have to worry about that. I mean, I really...you really don't have to worry. You have Rinpoche, you have...you are in a lineage which is pure. And it's being followed nicely, properly, correctly, without corruptions, and, and you're...you're getting the proper training. You don't have to worry about it. You just have to worry about trying to put it into practice. But you don't have to worry about the thing being dirty, or, or you can't do it or something like that. It won't be like that. But you have to use good sense and follow it properly. And you will get the right results. And that's great. [laughs] There's no problem. And then he asked me...Tim asked me where Rinpoche is right now. It's a Mongolian temple in New Jersey.

[Student: I have a question. Rinpoche I always thought that meant "were reincarnated."]

It can mean that also.

[Student: I [unclear] "precious gem."]

It does mean...it means a precious thing, and it can mean gem. There's seven kinds of {rinpoche}s: gold, silver, and then gem stones.

[Student: Well, how do you tell if it's this or that, if they have been reincarnated from?]

If they say Rinpoche it either means, normally it means they are already a reincarnated lama. And in some rare cases someone has just qualified now and he'll be reincarnated in the future. The Dalai Lama gives a {chakta}. It's some kind of...

[Student: Is there some way to tell that?]

I...and they're not supposed to say sometimes.

[Student: Is this lineage involved with the FPMT group?]

We're of the same lineage. They're from the second best monastery. [Laughter] According to us. I'll tell you. Sera Jey is really...they have great debaters...great, great tradition of studies. In, among all the great monasteries they're studying very well. Okay, [unclear].

[Student: I have a question.]

Okay, one more, last question.

[Student: Rinpoche chooses who's to be initiated? Or do you choose to be initiated by him by virtue [unclear]]

First you have to request. He's not allowed to give it to you unless you ask. And I think what I'll do I'll ask Margie to call up people and see if they want...if they want me to put their name down. And I have to go to him and request, and maybe a group of us should go. Normally we present some flowers and very respectfully ask. It's kind of gotten convoluted in the West because we don't know enough to ask at the right time. And so certain teachers will say, well, I think it's time for you to ask me. [laughter] And we need it. I, I didn't know when to ask him. I told him that, so, we please let me know when to ask you, you know. So...it'll turn out very well though. You're very well...you're in a good, pure tradition, and you will get the right results. And that's, that's all. That's the way it goes. Alright.

{Short mandala offering.}

{Dedication prayer.}

[John: Michael, please return and teach.]

Oh, yuh.

[Nina: Do not die.]

What is...what date is, what date is the teaching?

[Student: The twenty-fourth.]

[Fran Dayan: And that's a Sunday.]

At some point in the next few weeks I'd like to get a team and go out and paint Rinpoche's garage for him. He likes that kind of stuff. So, I'll let you know.

[Student: When is the next class gonna be?]

The next course will be on [b: Pramana vartika], which is the root text on the study of perception and logic; you know, how do you know what you see is true? You know, what...what is, what is truth? How do you know when something is true? Meaning, perception or fact. And that's the importance of the Mind-Only School. Very important. And we're gonna study the chapter which is not taught in the West much, because no one gets to it unless you go to the winter debates for about six years. And almost nobody gets through six years of winter debates. In my class two people through to the fifth year, so...so it's hard. And that chapter is devoted to proving that there's past lives and future lives, and proving how the world was made and what creates human life. And then proving that it's possible to bring the mind to a state of perfection. And that's devoted to those things. And that came from an ancient dispute between the Buddhist and the Hindu School called the [Gyampembas] who said that it was impossible. And that they said that there was no path to enlightenment. And that your mind starts when you're conceived, and your mind dies when your body dies, and the world was made by this great guy, who has all the power to make the world, and that...and ideas like that. And so this ancient debate that...it sounds so familiar, you know, so it's very, very good, very useful. And they said that you could not perfect the human mind, that the human mind was basically defective, and could never become pure. So then the Buddhists try to prove it. And they're very good debates. We had...we did this debate in front of a

Catholic girl's school last week. [laughter] Yesterday, this big group called me up and said, "We'd like to come for Buddhist classes." [laughs] [laughter] So it's nice! I mean if you do it properly, it's...we didn't convince anybody or ourselves, but we proved that it's possible.

[John: So what did you do? You just decided to walk onto their lawn and do this debate?]

No, they came to the temple for a visit...to a lecture, and so I just called the other monks and said, "Let's debate; let's debate whether or not there's a past life. Can you prove it to me?" And they tried, and they tried for like two hours, and I...yuh, they did it in Tibetan and I translated. And I said that's not a proof, you know. You gotta find us a good proof. And we went on and on and on and finally we got to the point where everyone in the room agreed that, well, it's probable that there are past lives. And that's enough, you know? So it's great, you know. So that's my...that's what we'll do, next course. Probably, late June to early August. Start in late June.

[Student: Alphabet class [unclear]?]

Yuh, I think we'll still be in alphabet class in late June. Light class, just to learn how to draw the letters and stuff. And I wanna teach it to a few people like Thupten Earnst and Serge, and then they'll teach it from then on. After that they'll be the teacher of the class, so if you wanna come to that, that's good. It's a way to learn in two nights how to pronounce Tibetan perfectly. And, and most people never do, so...

[John: How will we find out when the class is?]

I, I think I'll ask Margie to call around or something. [laughter]

[Student: Which is great if you're on her list.]

If, if you think you're not...if you suspect you're not on her list, meaning, if you didn't get that thing from Washington D.C. about the classes...about the initiations...then put your name...come up and put your name on the list. Okay, good night. Thank you.

[Students: Good night. Thank you.]

[End of Side Two.]

Course III: Applied Meditation, RAW TRANSCRIPT

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