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Asian Classics Institute
Course 18: The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part 3
New York, 1999
Taught by Geshe Michael Roach

Note: class 1 – very poor sound quality; mostly unclear and therefore transcriptions incomplete.

[short mandala]

[refuge]

[cut]

Thank you for coming. Let me see. We're all still spaced out. We got back last night, very late. We didn't get any sleep [unclear]

[cut]

[student: unclear]

[retreat / godstow notices]

We're covering in this series of classes the last five courses of the ACI curriculum. [unclear], eleven and twelve were the second two thirds of the Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life. And thirteen was [unclear] Madhyamika, Logic. [laughter] [laughs]
And fourteen was Lojong.

And fifteen was very difficult on the Mind Only School.

So you're gonna get in this final course, this is the last of the eighteen courses. It's been seven years, okay. And you'll be getting notes from a review of those courses.

I believe you have three people qualified [unclear] to do a baby Geshe at the end.

Sera Mey monastery has offered to give them a Geshe degree. I said, I don't know [unclear] offered me some kind of degree status, but I [unclear] have to talk about it, after [unclear], okay.

It's traditional that even after you've finished all the work at the last minute everyone gets to take a shot at you. So I see the day we take a final, final final sometime around the end of the year. And then maybe February, early February- March, on Tibetan New Year eve, it's very auspicious to have a final examination of them publicly. [unclear] if you don't know it your friends tell you about it. [laughter] And it's a lot of fun. Just after midnight on New Year's [unclear] you get, you know, your hat [unclear] and then the next morning [unclear]
Okay. [unclear] And there's lots of people around the world who want teachers to come, okay.

We've had invitations from Singapore, Hong Kong, South Africa, Holland, England, another one from Ireland. Mongolia wants five or six of you. And all over the world, maybe Hawaii [unclear] many people talk about them.

So my dream is that, you know, we send out [unclear]

We're gonna be studying {chunjuk} [cut]

Say {chun juk}[repeat]; {chun} part means activity, the way of life of a bodhisattva, okay, a

person who has dedicated their whole life to the service of other people. And {juk} [unclear], to get into

We'll be studying the commentary by Gyaltseb Je [unclear] [cut] . {gyal} means, victor or victorious one and it refers to an enlightened being [unclear] This is, I think, the greatest commentary to Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life [unclear]

We're gonna be covering in the first two classes [unclear]. We covered patience, effort and meditation [unclear]

We taught in California a thing called {tob shi}. {tob shi} means four ways of restoring your old bad karma. Like, if you did something really stupid when you were young, knowing that you don't do those things anymore, you can get rid of the karma, okay.

That's a special teaching, a very special [unclear] help focus your mind on how to remove that karma.

And the principle that you can remove old karma is often derived from the section in the 'Bodhisattva's Way of Life' where it says you can wipe out your old good karma, okay, alright [laughs]. If you've worked very hard over the years to collect a lot of good karma, you can very effectively destroy it before giving the proper results, through anger, okay.

So anger is the ultimate method. Actually, there's two methods, but anger's the easiest one, okay. If you want to wipe out your old good karma, alright. And it's on that basis that they give you teachings on wiping out old bad karma also, okay.

We'd rather wipe out the old bad karma, okay.

The main danger in anger is the object. If you get angry at a bodhisattva, okay, a person who has reached a very high level where they don't do anything in their whole life that's not directed at getting people to enlightenment, okay.

They are constantly, ever since the day that they got bodhichitta, getting bodhichitta is this big difficult step, but once you get there, everything you do after that, every moment of your life, and you know it from the moment you get bodhichitta, that you will only be dedicating all your efforts to helping other people [unclear], helping them get enlightened and things like that, okay.

So, who around us is a bodhisattva, you know? What do you look like when you reach bodhichitta? When you have that experience of direct, when you have that direct experience that you will be spending the rest of your life helping other people all the time, constantly, all day, all night, okay. When you get that thing, does your face change or do you get an aura or [unclear] or something like that?

No. You don't, okay.

And so, really, you don't know who around you is a bodhisattva.

That was one of the first questions I ever asked Rinpoche when I went to study with him. I'm twenty, twenty-one years old. We're sitting in the kitchen which at that time was all the space he had and I asked him, how do you know who's a bodhisattva?

He said, you don't, you know. And, so it's dangerous. The point is that it's dangerous. It's better not be angry at anybody, okay, 'cos you don't know who's a bodhisattva.

If you get angry at a bodhisattva it destroys thousands of good karmas, okay.

The next question on your homework is the [cut] is a very famous quotation from Bodhisattvacharavavata. I had to sit there and cut down these famous quotations to, like, fourteen questions on the homework instead of fifty. Ora wouldn't let me do the [unclear], okay. [laughter] She kept saying [unclear] cut it, cut it, you know. And I can't cut Master Shantideva. Anyway this is {...}. You should memorise it, okay. I think a lot of students

have.

This is the idea that when you're studying the perfection of patience, which I prefer to call 'the art of not getting angry when the time comes to get angry' because [unclear]

There's a certain sequence of events which happen, okay. And if you know it you have a little bit more time to stop it, okay.

Anger is always preceded by being upset, okay. So the state that comes just before anger is called being upset, alright.

And there's a state just before being upset called getting off balance or losing your joy, okay. So it goes like this. Somebody says something like maybe they praise somebody you don't like. And then you get slightly bit off balance. Your mind goes a little bit off keels, right. Like, you're on a steady keel for about an hour and then somebody says something to you and it takes your mind, I don't know, maybe it takes your mind four, five seconds to evaluate what they said and [unclear] what they said. And they're saying something nice about someone you don't like and it gets kind of, tilts you one way. It's, like, rocks the boat a little bit. That's called getting off balance, okay. Then comes {...} meaning getting upset, okay. It means you have about, I don't know, must be about four or five seconds to reflect on how off balance you're getting and to start not like what the person said, see what I mean. So you go from being off balance to getting upset. And then directly from getting upset you get angry. You see what I mean.

If you're lucky you can have {...} after that. {...} means, holding that anger for minutes or hours or weeks, okay. That doesn't even come in [unclear]

So you got four steps here. You've got, actually, it's five. Somebody says something; it throws you off balance; you get enough off balance, you get upset; and then you get angry.

The point is, to intercept anger when you get upset, okay.

As you start to get upset to realise that you're upset. This gives you about five second head start on anger. And I'm not kidding, okay.

The other perfection takes years of effort, weeks of contemplation, meditation, application. The perfection of patience you either succeed or you fail within five seconds of [unclear] about all the time you have, you know.

And this perfection is practised throughout the day on [unclear] occasions and you only have about ten seconds maximum before you either do it or don't do it, okay.

And then you're practising it in retrospect, oh, I shouldn't have said that, you know what I mean, okay.

So these verses, the first two lines say, and His Holiness loves this opening verse. It says, if there's something you can do about [unclear] then why get upset? Just do it.

Okay, if there's something you can do about something you don't like, why get upset. Just do it, fix it, okay. [unclear] Okay.

If there's nothing you can do about it, why should you get upset? You know, just chill out, okay.

And Master Shantideva says, be like a bump on a log. Just freeze, you know, try and chill out, okay.

If you can do something, do it. There's no reason to get upset.

If you can't do anything, you won't be able to do it, so why worry about it, okay.

Very famous quotation.

If you can avoid getting upset you won't get to anger, okay. It's the concentric theory of morality, right, you know it.

Somebody in [unclear] came and asked me how. She said, we can't see the overhead projector on the tape and you keep talking about 'concentric circle' theory of morality, right. [unclear]

It's like this. Here's the anger which you want to avoid at all costs because you might lose [unclear] years of good deeds, okay, in ten seconds it's ruined.

And then over here is getting upset. And then out here is getting off balance. [cut] And the truth is, oh, and I wanted to show you one more. This is losing your joy.

And the concentric circle theory of morality, which I was taught two months after I started studying Buddhism in Dharamsala by [unclear].

He said that, you know, if you never lose your joy, if you never break this one you'll never get off balance. If you're never off balance, you're never upset.

If you never get upset, you'll never get angry.

So, try not to lose your joy. You know, all throughout the day try to remain in a state of, like, pretty happy about what's going on, okay, like that.

And then you'll never get off balance and get upset. The [unclear] of the mind from here to here takes about ten seconds. You only have about ten seconds to react.

If you're aware of these two steps here, or these three steps, you give yourself a little more time. You have a little more time.

And if this sounds like [unclear] it is, okay. They are trying to steal your good karma from your mind stream. It's a frontal assault on your good karma and they can break through in ten seconds, okay. And there is no enemy like anger.

The scriptures all say that, you know. AIDS, atomic bombs, the Russians or the Chinese; they're nothing compared to what anger can do to your mind and the karma.

The evil that happens physically can't hurt your karma. Anger can wipe out your happiness for weeks or months, okay, and you'll never know it. You'll just be miserable for the rest of your life, okay.

So you have about ten seconds to do something. And if you know that, if you know the danger signs [unclear]

Yeah. [cut]

[unclear] It doesn't seem reasonable that, you know, five minutes of anger can wipe [unclear] And there's a debate about it in the scriptures. But the point is the object, okay. We say [unclear] primarily that power of the object [unclear], okay.

I believe this person is a living being, probably a human, someone who has tantric [unclear] enlightened in one lifetime, okay, very holy object. [unclear] It's because of the powerful object.

[cut][unclear] If your virtue has the intensity of your anger [unclear] and I'm speaking quite frankly [unclear]

Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class two
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy.

Okay, we'll start.

We're on the second of three classes or three courses that we had on Master Shantideva's 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'.

We've finished the first half of the second course on it. Remember the second course was treating the three perfections of, what were they, patience, joyful effort and meditation.

Just a little touch more about joyful effort, okay. And there's a question that comes up here.

Last time we said it consists of having a good time doing good things. And I want to talk a little bit about {hlaksam namdak}. [cut]

Say {hlaksam}[repeat] {namdak}[repeat], {hlaksam namdak} is like the ultimate expression of joyful effort. And it comes just short of bodhichitta. It's the last step you reach just before you get to ultimate compassion, okay.

So it's a very special idea. It means, personal responsibility, taking personal responsibility.

And, mainly, it's manifested in the following: it's a kind of joyful effort where you're willing to continue your virtuous activities even if nobody else helps you, okay.

So this is the main feature of {hlaksam namdak}. I may be crazy, okay, but if I'm the only person in the world who cares about these things I'm still gonna do it, okay. And I think you'll find as you get higher and higher in the practice, by definition we're in the desire realm, in the desire realm everybody's crazy. You can't get here unless you're crazy, okay.

The mental afflictions to be born into the desire realm are the worst of all. You see what I mean. If you're here it's a badge of honour, okay. If you're in the desire realm, which you are if you are who you seem to be, which I don't know, okay, but if you made it to this realm as a normal person you got here by virtue of having a whole galaxy of mental afflictions that are the cause to be born here, you see what I mean.

So we're in a crazy realm. Sometimes I refer to it as a 'broken realm'; broken meaning it doesn't matter how much you try to adjust this realm. You can do a different exercise program, you can change your vitamins, you can use different cosmetics, you can wear different clothes, you can get more sleep or get less sleep, or get a better job or get a worse job, or have a bigger apartment or a smaller apartment, or move to New Jersey or stay in New York. It doesn't matter. Nothing works. Okay. It won't work. You always have in the back of your mind that you can make some kind of adjustment and then living in this realm would be okay. You know, like, if I just have a few more hours or if I just did a little more exercise or if I could just control my eating habits or something like that.

You always in the back of your mind you're thinking, one more adjustment in my wife or husband or house or job and then I would be happy.

Forget it, okay. It's a broken realm. Those things don't work.

And if you're here it's because, basically, your mind is crazy, okay, with certain mental

afflictions; twenty-six, you know, main ones, eighty-four thousand variations, alright. And that's how you got here.

So it's natural that in trying to, you know, do Dharma, do meditation, do practice, if you move one degree out of normal, you're gonna look weird to everybody else. You see what I mean.

And by the time you're ten degrees out of normal you're gonna look downright crazy or something to other people because you've gotten rid of one percent of your mental afflictions which, by the way, almost nobody can do.

To change your mind really by one percent, to remove one percent of your mental afflictions is extremely rare. And that shifting of one percent would make you seem strange to everybody else in the world, okay.

So you have to, by definition, be willing to do your virtues on your own. I think American Buddhists more than other Asian Buddhists are aware of that. You see, to be a Buddhist in America, to hold the worldview of a Buddhist, you're different.

And it's a little bit hard and there's some pressure on it.

And the ability and the decision and the willingness to stick to it even if it seems crazy to other people is part of your practice.

That's called {hlaksam namdak}. I personally take responsibility for the following things and if nobody helps me it's okay.

And if they attack me for it it's okay. And if they crucify me for it or something it's okay 'cos I know it's the right thing to do. That's {hlaksam namdak}.

{hlaksam namdak} means, and Master Shantideva says don't be upset if other people don't help you because they don't know how to help themselves so why do you think they should be helping you. You see what I mean. Ninety-nine percent of the people on this planet are striving like madmen for things that can't make them happy, you know; house, family, food, money, things like that. You need a moderate amount to practice, but to base your life on trying to get those things is innately crazy 'cos you can't. And you can't keep them even if you do get them.

A, you almost can't get them, B if you do get them you're gonna die anyway. So that's crazy, you see what I mean.

So if the vast majority of people in your country or your city or your neighbourhood are still trying to get those things and they don't feel any urge to help you with Dharma activities, Master Shantideva says just chill out, you know, don't worry about it. That's the way it is because they're in the desire realm.

They got here by thinking that way. So don't feel upset.

They don't even know how to take care of themselves so why do you think they're gonna help you in your Dharma activities? You see what I mean?

So they don't even know what to do for ten minutes to help themselves so why get upset if you can't raise support for your newest dharma activities, see what I mean?

So don't, you know, don't get upset, just keep going. Just keep doing it. That's {hlaksam namdak}, okay. The decision, final decision that I will get to the goals of this path by hook or crook whether anybody helps me or not.

In fact, towards the end they won't help you. They'll block you. And then you say, okay, I'll just go around, you know, to help you. You see what I mean. To help them, you see what I mean. That's {hlaksam namdak}.

Don't be surprised if people don't help you 'cos they don't even know how to help

themselves for five minutes, okay.

And then just be happy and do your joyful effort, okay. And don't say things. Don't be bitter. I mean, you see a lot of Dharma people who get bitter after ten years of trying to run a centre and nobody's helping them. And, you know, don't be like that.

Joyfully give your life and understand that you're doing the right thing and don't expect too much out of other people 'cos they wouldn't be in this realm if they weren't crazy, okay. They don't even know how to take care of themselves.

They're gonna die helplessly with no idea of what to do about it by that very behaviour that everyone is doing all day long.

So don't feel discouraged that they don't have enough sense to help you 'cos they don't have enough sense to even meditate for five minutes a day, you know. You have to twist their arm to get them to meditate for fifteen minutes a day. They can't take care of themselves so don't be surprised if they don't want to take care of anybody else either, alright.

That's part of {hlaksam namdak}.

I wanted to talk about meditation. And to me there are three types of meditation to be spoken about, okay.

One is the meditation you undertake in a meditation session.

The second subject is how you live the rest of your day, which affects your meditation.

And then, finally, what you should meditate about, okay.

So what order should we do them in? Okay. Let's see. So, I'm gonna do those three things.

What should you do during your meditation sessions? Why is it important to have deep meditation sessions?

Secondly, what kind of behaviour do you have to engage in the rest of the day to have good meditation?

And then, finally, what are you gonna meditate about? Alright.

Let's start with the sessions.

[cut]

Say {mi-chok me}[repeat]; {chok} is an ancient, ancient word. It doesn't come anywhere, okay. It means to have time to do something. In modern Tibetan we say {gomba/ gomba duwey} means you have time to do that. They say {gomba mindu}, I ain't got any time at all, alright. {mi-chok} means, don't have time; {mi-chok me} means it's not true that you don't have time, okay.

This is a name of a certain meditative state, okay. It's called {samten .. mi-chok me}. Say {samten ..} is a kind of deep meditation that you can get into, which if you succeeded in just following that meditation, you would be born in the form realm in your next life. Which is like a semi-paradise but the problem is it runs out. So it's not nirvana and it's not a Buddha paradise. It's called the form realm.

So if you did {samten ..} meditation, first level meditative meditation all the time in the lifetime but with no virtuous content, you see what I mean, no Buddhist content, like, if you just followed your breath for the rest of your life, you would be born into the form realm. And then you would stay there for a certain number of years and then you would die and go to the hell realms, okay.

It's a flowchart. It goes like that and then it goes like that 'cos you use up all your good karma being in that state, okay.

So it's considered a very serious mistake in Buddhism, okay. {mi-chok me} is like that. But if you want to see emptiness directly you have to be able to get into {mi-chok me} and then use

that meditative level to see emptiness directly, okay.

So what I'm saying is that if you just did {mi-chok me} meditation and followed your breath forever, you would be born into, like, a form realm paradise and then you would die from there and go to a hell realm, okay.

Why is it that it's so effective in getting to a mini paradise, Okay? Part of it is called {samten gyi tongpa}. Say {samten gyi}[repeat] {tongpa}[repeat]. This occurs in the Abhidharmakosha but the point is most of us throughout the day are having lousy thoughts about other people: jealousy, anger, pride, competitive thoughts about other people all day long. Every few minutes it bursts out in speech, some kind of lousy speech, you know, 'I don't like him, I don't like him, I don't like'. Complaining, whining, up to angry speech, things like that.

Then for every five minutes of speech there might be thirty seconds of actually hitting somebody, undergoing, you know, doing some kind of business deal to screw somebody or something like that, you know.

So most of us spend the day having maybe seventy percent negative thoughts, small ones, okay. It's not, they say it's not the killing and pulling a man off his horse in Tibetan. It's small irritations, small jealousies, small desires, small irritations at other people. And over the course of a day there are thousands and thousands of those kind of thoughts.

Then they manifest themselves in what you say and then occasionally in violent behaviour.

If you're sitting in meditation all day long or if you're sitting in meditation for five, six hours a day, what happens? It's like unbelievable refreshing state because by, what do you call it, by default, not by any great effort of your own, you don't have time to think about how much you hate other people. You see, you can't stay in meditation if you're thinking bad thoughts. You pop out. Like, the minute you feel jealous about somebody you pop out of meditation.

If you can learn to stay in meditation then at least you wouldn't have those five or six hours of bad thoughts that you usually have.

By virtue of that you could get yourself born into a form realm paradise. You see what I mean. It's just by default. It's not by any good effort that you're doing.

You just didn't have time to do all the bad deeds you usually do, okay.

So if you engage in that breathing meditation, for example, five or six hours a day, you would go to a form realm paradise. You would reach the first form realm level.

After that you go straight to a hell realm so we think it's a mistake.

You use up all that good karma and anyway, that's the principle on which you get there.

Still though, in a deep state of meditation, you have to be able to get into the first form realm level of meditation, okay.

Why?

Only from this particular slice of the meditative spectrum can you see emptiness directly.

You must be able to get into a state of meditation where you shut off all sense perception. Like, somebody puts a French fry, McDonald's French fry in front of your nose; you don't smell it. Somebody plays Neil Young; you don't hear it. You see what I mean?

Your meditation is so deep that you can't, you're withdrawn from sense perceptions, okay.

That's the goal of {samten .. mi-chok me}, okay.

And only from that basis can you see emptiness directly, alright.

By the way, most of you know there are five Buddhist paths or five levels of realisation.

What you may not know is that to move from one to the other the movement is always done in a deep state of meditation.

You cannot get up on the next rung of the spiritual ladder except in a state of deep meditation. All movement between {tsok, jor, tong, gom, milob} is done in a deep state of meditation, okay. You have to be able to meditate.

You have to be able to get into deep meditation otherwise it's impossible to see emptiness directly. It'll never happen to you.

So what happens if you don't see emptiness directly?

If you do see emptiness directly, I mean, I've told you many times. I tell you again. You see your future lives. You see the day of your enlightenment. You know that you have encountered the Dharmakaya of the Buddha. You know what thangkas are. You know what prostration is. You can read other people's minds for some period of time; things like that.

But imagine what it feels like to know and to have seen the day of your enlightenment and to know how long it's going to take. To know directly and to perceive it directly that all this life that you've been living is over.

You've understood the entire content of two hundred thousand Buddhist books in twenty minutes. And you've seen and you're on your way out. 'On your way out', means 'stream-enterer', okay.

You are irrevocably on your way out of this kind of life.

You will be Tara. You will be Manjushri in a certain number of years. And you see it directly.

So you wouldn't trade that experience for anything else.

You wouldn't trade it for a million lifetimes of other experiences. To have that one twenty minute experience is worth all the thoughts you've ever had in your life. It's worth everything you've ever done in your life.

And the only way you can get there is to be in a state of deep meditation, okay.

You must learn to get into that state of meditation. How long does it take to get there?

You've got to practise at least an hour or two a day. And I'm not counting the preliminaries, okay.

Preliminaries take some people ten minutes. They take other people fifty-nine minutes, okay. Not counting that. Not counting the sadhana. Not counting anything,{tundruk}, nothing else.

In deep state, one-pointed meditation at least an hour a day, preferably, maybe two hours, or you cannot see emptiness directly.

And you will continue to suffer. You will continue to die. You cannot get out of it.

It's impossible. You must meditate. You must be able to get into {samten ...me}.

And quite frankly, a place like Arizona is designed for that. The reason, you know, I had a big meeting with a sponsor tonight. They're, like, I helped you start your store, I helped you start Godstow, now you want another one, you know. And I'm, like, you need it.

And they're like, why, you know?

And I said, you sit there, I mean the people who went there, quite frankly, it's so quiet, it's so isolated and you have absolutely nothing else to do 'cos it's fifty miles to the nearest major grocery store, you have to meditate.

And your mind is suddenly, you have nothing else to think about. You have nothing else to do. There is nothing else to do there. Just meditate. Totally, perfectly silent, nobody else around. You know, you walk around naked for twenty miles no one else will see you. You know what I mean.

And that's the goal of that place. It forces you into a deep state of meditation. And you must

try it.

I'm not trying to advertise. I'm not trying to sell.

I'll be in retreat. I won't know where you are but you'd better be there, okay.[laughs]
[laughter]

No, 'cos there's something about that kind of solitude. Even in the ancient days in the Middle East they understood that, the desert fathers, you know, people like that.

You need a place like that. You must try in your life at some point. And now is the perfect time, right? To get into a place like that and give it a few months to reach this state of meditation. You must try. It's a life or death question.

When you get old it will be too late, okay. You'll be sitting there and saying, I wish I would have done it back when Geshe Michael did it, you know what I mean.

And that's all. Maybe you can get pretty good progress in New York City with an hour or two in the morning. Sooner or later, you're gonna have to go out, junk the other part of your life and concentrate on that one object.

You know, I'm not saying you give up your other commitments. There's rules against that. You must honour your family commitments and your other commitments but you must also fit in this somehow.

You must make arrangements to see emptiness directly. [laughs] Then you can come back and do your other stuff.

I'm not saying you don't do it but you must do it. You have to do it. You must learn to get into a deep state of meditation and I think it's extremely difficult in a normal life situation, okay. You got to have total silence. You go to have, {...} means, you're out in a place where you just can't get to any distractions even if you want to. You see what I mean.

They're not available. And you just do it. You see what I mean. You must try to do that, okay. You must try to do that. That's getting into a deep state of meditation.

And you cannot see emptiness directly and you cannot get out of this suffering if you don't. You'll die. You'll get old. All the stuff that you think is important now will be meaningless the day you die. You know, I'm fighting for your time and the rests of your life is fighting for your time. And when the day comes that you die you'll think it was very stupid that you spent any time on this one because there's nothing there that helps you when you die. You see what I mean.

Take care of emptiness first then you can come back and take care of that other stuff rather than vice versa. Just decide sooner or later you're gonna do it in the next few years, okay. Deal? Masal. Okay. [laughter]

In the diamond business it's important to say, masal, while the other party is, like, you know, [laughter] and then they've already agreed and they can't go back on it. Okay.

That's my sales pitch for deep meditation.

Now I'd like to go into a sales pitch for what you could call 'office samadhi', okay. [laughter]
And I'm not kidding.

Arya Nagarjuna was adamant that meditation is not a one or two hour thing a day. It's a twenty-four hour undertaking, okay.

In other words, if you allow yourself certain distractions for twenty-three hours a day and then try to meditate for an hour it cannot work.

You will not succeed. It's impossible. There's a certain state of mind that you have to maintain twenty-four hours a day to be able to meditate for I one a hour a day, you know.

You see, you cannot turn off the rest of the world for one hour a day and then for twenty-

three hours a day abuse your mind, okay.

You have to be kind to your mind all day long and then when you ask him to meditate, he'll say, oh, I'm fresh I can do that. Okay.

And I want to just go over there's five principles that arya Nagarjuna stated for keeping yourself basically in sort of a half samadhi all day long, okay.

And the opening verses to 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's way of Life' in the chapter on meditation say, whosoever cannot keep some kind of samadhi going all day has their head in the mouth of a monster with fangs and is about to get crushed. You see what I mean. {...} staying in the, [unclear] this vision of a lion's mouth open and your head is in there and the teeth are like that. Meaning, if you don't keep up basic samadhi twenty-four hours a day you're in a dangerous spot, okay.

What is the lion? What is the teeth?

It is the mental afflictions, okay.

You have to be in state of, like, fifty-percent samadhi all day long or you are vulnerable to klesha attacks, to mental affliction attacks, okay. If you're not in some kind of mellow state almost all day long you will have some mental afflictions, okay.

You see this. When we travel we get there when you're jet-lagged, when you're tired, when you didn't have enough to eat, you know, when your mind, when your meditative immune system is low, then you're totally at the mercy of your mental afflictions, you know. Like, it takes two minutes to get angry. You can't put up any kind of a fight. You can't put up any kind of resistance because your mind state is already weak. You see what I mean.

The point is don't just think of meditation as a deep session in which you try to see emptiness. Meditation has to be maintained all day long and arya Nagarjuna had five tricks for it, okay.

Here they are. I like them.

[cut]

Say {gu}[repeat] {gyu}[repeat] {gu gyu}[repeat], okay. He links these two together. He dumps these two together. It's really two separate states of mind okay.

{gurpa} you can define or translate as 'restless desire', okay. It's a restless state of mind. It destroys your meditation.

In a state of meditation it manifests itself as thinking about what you're gonna do this afternoon, okay. It's like so many people go into a month long retreat and come out and tell me about the new business they're gonna start, [laughter] you know, including me.

That's {gurpa}. {gurpa} means your mind jumps from desire object to desire object.

Now, when you read 'desire object' in a scripture you think of playboy magazine or something. It's not like that.

It means what are you going to do this afternoon. Who do you have to call, you know, what newspaper are you going to read, magazines, TV shows. And during the day for the other twenty-three hours it manifests itself as attention deficiency disorder or whatever, you know.

You can only stay on an object for about seven minutes, you know. You're surfing through the channels. You're surfing through the internet. You're picking up a novel and then you're picking up a magazine and then a newspaper.

Then you got to go outside and then you got to come back. Then you got to have a coffee and you got, it's this thing about, seven-minute attention span for anything. If you do that for twenty-three hours and then you try to sit down to meditate, forget it, okay.

So, {gurpa} is the constant skipping from something that attracts you to something else that

attracts you.

It is channel surfing all day long in your life, with your life, okay. You can't concentrate on something for more than seven minutes then you're onto something else. That's {gurpa}.

It's a restless kind of mind. It's the inability to keep your mind on one thing for more than a few minutes.

It's skipping from attractive object to attractive object. It's sitting at the bus station and looking at girl after girl after girl, you know what I mean, and there's just a point where it just destroys your concentration.

And the next morning when you try to meditate you can't figure out why nothing's happening, you see what I mean, 'cos you've abused your mind for twenty-three hours. Okay.

You got to take care of your mind the whole time you're out of meditation or you won't be able to meditate, okay.

Second one here, which is the second half of the first one right, is called {gyurpa}, okay, {gyurpa}.

{gyurpa} normally means 'regret' about having done something wrong or something like that. But in this context, in Nagarjuna's work, in arya Nagarjuna's work, it refers to thinking about the good old days and thinking about how nice things would be, in about a week, or next year, or something like that.

It's an inability to Baba Ram Dass, be here now, okay. It's an inability to live in the present, okay.

I think it gets worse as you get older. Like, when you meet people in a nursing home it's very common to, that they can only talk about the good old days, you know. I had this girlfriend. I had this wife. I had this job. I had this authority. My body wasn't always like this.

And their mind is constantly in the past. You see what I mean.

I think most of us get it for high school and first half of college, you know. Twenty years later, you're still thinking about how good it was when Janis Joplin was alive and Hendrix was still playing and hadn't gotten boring yet. And Jim Morrison hadn't died in the bathtub, you know.

And you're still remembering the good old days, see what I mean, and you have this inability to say, look that's all over and yesterday's also over. And you're faced with today and you have to live in today, okay. And not next week either; what you're gonna do, okay. You have to learn to live in the present. You are X years old. However healthy you were in the past that's over, you know. What's gonna happen next week isn't going to happen today.

And you have to deal with the current moment in your current mind and stop living in the past and future. You know, deal with the present. And that's an important part of meditation, okay.

It's important to deal with the present twenty- three hours a day so you're able to do it when you meditate. If your mind is wandering for sixteen, seventeen waking hours about the good old days, then when you sit down to meditate, that's all you're going to be able to think about. Forget it.

You know, deal with your body as it is now. Deal with your mind as it is now.

And get to paradise or get to heaven now, okay. Just like this, alright. That's the first one.

Second one. [cut] Say, {nger sem}[repeat]; {nger sem} means, thoughts of,{nger} means, to harm, {sem} means thought.

It means to think about how much you dislike somebody, alright, think about someone you dislike.

This is the other pole. There's a polarity: {gurpa} is one extreme, {ngerpa} is the other extreme. {gurpa} is much more common, okay. Ninety percent of your day is exerted in the pursuit of pleasure, of things that you like. And that's {gurpa}. That's channel surfing, okay. And then, maybe, ten percent of your day is spent in active irritation or dislike of other people, okay.

Now some people may be eighty-five, fifteen or ninety-two, eight. It doesn't matter, alright. We're all basically the same.

If you're in the desire realm, you have ninety-five percent of the same mental afflictions that I have, okay, just by virtue of being here.

You couldn't have got here unless you did, okay. The fact that you're here proves it. Unless you're a deity and I don't know who's a deity and who is not, okay.

So {nger sem} means, if you're in a state of meditation and you think of one person that you don't like, it destroys it like boom. Like, you could wander through your high school years and come back to your object of meditation ten minutes later. You can do that. But, you have {nger sem} for one minute, you might as well just get up and go to work. You might as well go early and get some overtime 'cos you won't be able to meditate, okay.

A few minutes of active dislike of another person, you know, I can't believe what they said to me yesterday. I really hate it, you know. Then you cannot get back into meditation within half an hour, forty-five minutes. It's impossible, okay.

So you have to avoid, the point of arya Nagarjuna and of Je Tsongkapa when he comments on arya Nagarjuna, why does he comment on arya Nagarjuna?

Why does Je Tsongkapa talk about these five? You guys know you just don't remember.

In the bodhisattva vows; you have a bodhisattva vow to avoid these five. You swore, remember all those little ceremonies, all those flowers and stuff? You know, you swore to give up these five, okay, the five obstacles to meditation. And then, Je Tsongkapa, when he wrote his commentary and we taught it in the bodhisattva vows course, he was adamant that they didn't just mean during meditation session. Twenty-four hours a day you bodhisattvas have sworn to give up these five and to watch your mind for these five for twenty-four hours a day. Mainly at work, okay, mainly with your family, okay.

So {nger sem}, if you don't avoid dislike of other people twenty-three hours a day don't think that one hour is gonna be some kind of vacation or something, okay.

You have to watch your mind all day long. You have to be in a semi meditation all day long.

And by the way, if you get there it's very, very cool. It's very, very cool and very good for {kye rim}, those of you who know {kye rim}.

It's easy to do {kye rim}, if all day long you're doing these five, you see.

If your mind is in a semi samadhi all day long then tantric practice during the day is a piece of cake. And it's fun, you know. It's like really sexy all day long. It's like really high all day long and amazing things happening to you.

You cannot have a good {kye rim} practice all day long if you don't have samadhi going on

all day long, okay.

That's why you have to maintain these five. That's why it's a bodhisattva vow.

In the lower schools of tantra, you don't take tantric vows. You take bodhisattva vows and they are the tantric vows, okay.

That's one of the things that distinguishes the four classes of tantra, okay.

The point is that if you maintain these five all day long then being in a state of {kye rim} and avoiding {...} is a piece of cake.

If you don't know what those words mean you need to have an initiation from Khen Rinpoche. Alright.

Number three. [cut]

Say {...}[repeat], {...} is a word in Tibetan. It also means 'fog' and it refers to a sort of a drowsy state of mind, okay. Not sleepy but sort of {...} is after you've had a big meal, like, three pieces of pizza and you try to meditate right after that, okay. Those of you who've tried it; I have. [laughs] That's {...}. So, it's sort of a dullness, you could say dullness, okay.

It comes after eating too much and things like that.

It's best to meditate in the morning when your stomach's been empty for maybe twelve hours, okay.

To try to eat and then meditate is crazy unless you got some kind of blood disorder where, you know, but a normal physiological condition. This is some kind of mental dullness and it's brought on mainly by eating and things like that, okay.

{nyi} is the extreme of it and that's not, {nyi} means to sleep or to get drowsy, okay.

So I had a great meditation teacher once. I said, you know, Lama, this was very formal interview, at the lotus feet of this very high being, you know.

And I'm, like, oh, holy being, you know, I have trouble.

What is your trouble son, you know?

And I said, I get sleepy during meditation.

And he says, sleep during the night. [laughs][laughter] And that's all he would say, you know.

It means you can't meditate without enough sleep. Forget it. Just forget it.

People think they're gonna be some big yogi. The first day I said to Khen Rinpoche, like, how can I not eat and not sleep? He said, forget it, you have to sleep, okay.

To not sleep properly, to not get the amount of sleep that you personally need, which is different for every person, you know, six, seven, eight hours. Some people need twelve I guess. But you must get enough sleep to meditate properly.

And if you don't get enough sleep you are dissing your bodhisattva vows and you are dissing the Buddha, okay. You must feed yourself a proper amount. Regulate your food like a vow. You know what I mean. Just the amount of food that you need and you must sleep enough.

And if you think you're gonna meditate with, by eating too much or not sleeping enough, just forget it. Okay. [unclear]

You must get enough sleep, okay. That's just one of the requirements for meditation, alright. You must be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. Don't sleep too much. Don't sleep too little. Don't eat too much. Don't eat too little.

This one is mainly referring to eating too much so that you have a dull-minded state. Also, physically, if your frame is too loaded down, if your frame is too heavy you can't meditate well, okay.

According to your own frame you have to keep your weight and keep your food intake to what fits your physiology, which is different for each person. Too little is bad. Too much is bad, okay. Too little sleep is bad. Too much sleep is bad, okay.

And you have to, you have sworn an oath to take care of these things. It's part of your bodhisattva vows.

Number four. By the way, I would throw in there exercising properly, okay.

When you get up to big, big, big, big, high-level tantra, they make you exercise. Okay. I wasn't supposed to tell you that, alright.

For your channels to work right and your chakras to be in good shape and everything else, you have to be physically fit, okay. And you can't practice {dzog rim} if you're not physically fit and if you don't get enough sleep and if you eat too much or too little, if you abuse your body, you won't be able to practise tantra properly. And there's a vow about not abusing your body. You have to take, it sucks, it's a bad body, it's gonna kill you, and you have to take good care of it 'cos you have to use it until you reach your goal. Then it will disappear actually and you will get a new body, okay.

{...}a very famous tantra line, you know, you ain't gonna have this kind of body when you get there but you have to take good care of it in the meantime, alright, or you can't reach the highest goals of tantra, alright.

So, in there you have to, you know, you have to get fresh air. You have to keep those channels straight, open, bright, okay.

Number four. [cut]

Say {dupa la}[repeat] {dunpa}[repeat]; {dupa} normally means, desire. In this case it means, objects of the senses, okay. You know, TV, CD, pizza and you know, whatever, okay, sex I guess, alright, but the five senses and the objects of those senses.

And this refers to being careful all day. Not to overload yourself in those areas, okay.

Be good, for example, to keep your eyes down as you walk around. They say, you know, keep it about ten feet ahead of you on the sidewalk. You don't need to see ninety percent of what you see in New York, okay. Seriously.

And what it does, it puts mental images into your mind that crowd it the next morning when you're trying to meditate, okay.

The more stuff you're in-taking, each one makes an impression on your mind, and then your mind is like a cartoon show in the morning, okay, and you won't be able to concentrate. You know, traditionally, keep your eyes down, don't, you know, look at everything that you could look at, forget TV. Just throw it out. It's worthless. I said that on TV in Mongolia and the guy was [laughter], okay. Anyway [laughs] Okay.

Second one, you know, music is beautiful. I love music. I was a musician, you know, it was one of the hardest things. But you cannot have a lot of music around and not be bothered by it the next morning, okay. So, during the day, limit, okay, listen to a few Neil Young CD's when you have to, but limit it. And then, because again, it comes back to you the next morning.

There's nothing more frustrating than to be in a one month tantric retreat and be hearing some pop song in your head, [laughter] okay.

And what was the one, oh, I don't even want to think about it. [laughter] We heard it in an elevator. It was attacking me during meditation.

Then as far as food, you know, keep it very down. When you're in tantric retreats or things like that, you'll find out you only need to eat once or maybe twice a day. Your poops go

down to this, I'm not kidding, every day. You just don't need it, you know.

So, I mean, eat enough. When you're in New York City and you're working a job and you have a family you need to eat more than that but control it and in-take what you need and what you can use, okay. That's a object of the senses.

As far as sex, if you can be celibate it's better. You'll find amazing, beautiful, incredible energy will come to you if you are.

And I'm not saying something where you're like ooh, you want to do it but you don't want to do it and you're making yourself crazy. I'm not talking about that. Happily, joyfully, healthily, eventually just give it up, okay. Go through a nice withdrawal. You know what I mean. Like, you know, just cut it down and don't do it so much. Don't think about it so much. And then eventually you'll find out you don't need it at all, okay. And then you have all this incredible energy comes to you. You can work like a madman. You can concentrate. It's not what people think. It's not a human need per se. It's something you're trained to do. Rinpoche used to sit with me. We would watch TV. He likes the Mets. And then during the commercials they would show, I remember this one advertisement, it was like a four year old girl in a bikini walking down a beach. And there were like twelve, four -year old boys in lawn chairs and they were all like that.

And he said, that's really sick, you know, that they would inculcate that kind of thinking from such a young age. It's just a sign in your society that they're inculcating you, they're brainwashing you, even in these little advertisements for something else, that you need this thing. And you don't.

And I'm not saying you're evil or you're bad or you have to control this evil in you or something. It's not like that.

It's a nice thing. It's a normal human urge. And slowly, reduce it in your life. And you get all this incredible energy, okay.

So that's a part of meditation, you know, at least don't go overboard on it. Make it, give it its place, do it as you have to, but free up the rest of your day and your mind, you know.

Just say, okay that's for that time on that day and I'm not gonna obsess on it. And then it'll increase your power of meditation. You'll be able to meditate really well. Just not to have all the sensory overload that you have in modern world. That's just one more thing you don't need.

And you slowly reduce it and your mind can meditate better. You can go inside better, okay.

So work on it gradually, okay. Don't do it in a frustrated way, okay, like, ooh, okay

Number five. [cut]

Especially if you do retreats or meditate, if you spend a week or a month, try and stay celibate totally, completely, okay, and it'll make it very powerful. And then I think, sort of, you'll see the benefit of it and you'll be attracted to trying it more often.

Say {tetsom}[repeat], {tetsom} means, I call it 'lazy doubts', okay.

Why? Why do I say lazy doubts?

Healthy doubts are important, okay. Thinking about Buddhism in a critical way is important. Lord Buddha said, and to me it's one of the most attractive things about Buddhism, he said question everything I say.

Ask me questions. Attack what I say. Rip it apart. If you're not satisfied don't follow it, don't accept it, okay.

So, this cannot be referring to that, you see what I mean. This is referring to lazy doubts,

okay. You are just too lazy to sit down for ten minutes and make a spiritual decision, okay. The classic one in Scripture is, is your lama a tantric Buddha or not? Make up your mind. Get off the fence. You know what I mean.

All the Scriptures say he or she is . And you choose to say he or she is when you feel like it and when you don't feel like it, they're just a normal schmuck, you know, make up your mind. I'm not asking you to do that one right now.

But with easier ones, you know what I mean, like are you gonna practice or not?

Are you really gonna meditate for a day or not? And you keep wimping out. You keep saying, oh, maybe forty-five minutes, maybe thirty minutes. Oh, I really should do an hour. And then you don't decide. You don't make up your mind.

You don't analyse the question of is an hour of meditation a day vital for my very existence and you go from day to day not meditating or meditating for forty-five minutes or thirty minutes or something like that. That's {tetsom}. You see what I mean.

You didn't make up your mind whether this is something vital for your very existence or not so you keep sitting on the fence, the meditation fence. Oh, next week, next month, next time I feel like it, not when I don't feel like it, not when it's too hot, too cold, I'm too tired, I had too much sleep, I had too much to eat, I didn't have enough to eat, I am busy or I'm not too busy. And they're all excuses not to meditate.

Make up your mind and get off the fence. You see what I mean.

And there's many spiritual decisions like that, okay. That's just an example.

So {tetsom} is to allow continued doubts in your mind that should have figured out ten years ago, okay.

And then you kind of figure it out and then you lose it and you doubt again and you waste your time again and then, it's the best way to waste your life.

Make up your mind, you know.

Is this guy a good teacher or not? If not, leave. If he is, stay and do what he says, you know what I mean? Stuff like that. Just make up your mind. Don't sit on the fence, okay.

Do a meditation on it, {che gom}, analytical meditation, you know. Is this the right thing for me to do or not? Should I meditate an hour a day or not?

If it is, then make up your mind and do it, okay.

To continue to waffle is {tetsom}, okay.

That completes my sales job on two points. Why you should do a daily meditation session; deep, 'cos you ain't gonna see emptiness otherwise.

Secondly, why you should maintain a meditative state of mind all day long. You're half in samadhi all day long. You might move a little slower than other people. You're kind of happy all day long.

By the way, that's a nice side effect. It is not the goal regardless of what Hari Krishna's say or whatever. It's not the goal to be sort of happy all day long but it's nice isn't it, you know?

It is nice to have a semi-samadhi state of mind all day long.

Incidentally, it helps your work. If you're a businessman or you're a writer or you're a painter or you're anything else, if you stay in this half samadhi all day long, everything goes better. Everything is incredible, okay.

Then, by the way, you don't get mental afflictions. It's the best safeguard to screwing up your day with an incident of jealousy or anger or something like that.

You are constantly in a state of samadhi all day long because you're watching food, music, sleep, thinking about too many things, not living in the present, disliking other people,

having unresolved doubts that you could have resolved, okay.

You keep your mind free of those and then you're in this kind of samadhi all day. And if you want to be a businessman you're gonna be the best. If you wanna be an artist you're gonna be the best. And it's just a better way to live, okay. Mainly for us it refers to cutting down on your sensory intake knowingly, purposely, okay.

Last thing. There's a beautiful line in chapter on meditation. I think it's halfway through the chapter. And Winston should put it in the Arizona thing.

But it says, I forget what it says exactly, but it's like, we are happy in the forest with no one around us but trees and wild animals. And we live our days in peace. Our house is a flat rock under which we dig a hole and, you know, meditate. And we don't have any other clothes. And we don't have any other family. And we don't have any other house. We're just happy and we meditate all day long, you know. And it's quiet out in the wilderness, you know.

And then there's this little jog and he says, hey, but what are we gonna meditate about? You know what I mean.

And then Shantideva, Master Shantideva uses that as an excuse to launch into the most profound teaching he ever gave, okay, which is {dak shen nyam je}, okay.

In the middle of the chapter on meditation, he launches into, purely artificially, right, hey, what are we gonna meditate about by the way?

Oh, how about {dak shen nyam je}, okay. Which happens to be the most powerful teaching maybe ever given. [cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

Say {dak shen}[repeat] {nyam je}[repeat]; {dak} means 'me, {shen} means 'other people', {nyamje} means 'reverse them', exchange them, exchanging self and others, exchanging self and others, okay.

I'm gonna teach you a very practical method culled from his teachings in three steps, okay.

Very simple, the sergeant is back there telling me I have to stop now, so won't be very long; and very, very simple, okay.

People ask me is there some kind of meditation I can do that will make me happy immediately?

Yeah, {dak shen nyamje}, okay. The karma ripens in about half a day or something, okay; instantaneous spiritual fast food, okay.

And I'm not kidding. It's just so profound that it works right away. If nothing else in, if you don't do nothing else in Buddhism, do {dak shen nyamje}. It's easy. It's cheap. It works right away. It makes you happy the rest of your life. Okay.

First part of the three, I call 'Jampa method'. Jampa Lougrik is this little round balding monk out in Howell, New Jersey, who you know, but he's been trained in Sera monastery by Geshe Lotar and other great holy beings {dak shen nyamje} on a very personal, immediate practical level. Meaning, when you walk in the kitchen at {...}, he's spying on you. He's watching you. He's seeing, what do you like? What do you want? And he follows your eyes. The eyes are the mirror of the soul. Okay.

You follow a person's eyes for three minutes, you know what they want, you see what I mean. And he's spying on you. You walk in, he's, like, hi, how are you, you know, and he's watching your eyes.

You look at the stove, you look at the kettle, you look at the tea instead of the coffee, you look at the refrigerator where the milk would be, you glance on the table where there's candies and chocolate chip cookies and you're looking at the cookies.

And then he says, oh, please sit down, you know. And then, suddenly, there's this hot tea with milk, with sugar and the cookies are in front of you.

And you think it's just coincidence. You see what I mean.

He's made it a goal of his life to master the art of finding out what you want and giving it to you without you being aware that he's doing it. You see what I mean.

And that's the first part of {dak shen nyamje}; observation of other people's likes and dislikes and then, supplying it to them without them even knowing it transparently. In software they call it transparent. You don't even know the software is there; it just does what you want, see what I mean.

You are just silently, quietly, transparently, giving other people what you know they like, because you've taken five minutes to think about it, which is rare. You see what I mean.

You're like, what does this guy like? What does he look at? What kind of clothes does he like? What kind of things does he like? What kind of food does he like? What kind of tea does he like? What does he want me to say right now? And things like that. And you take it as a goal of your life to, Sherlock Holmes, you know, about finding out what other people like and then supplying it to them and they never know you're doing it. Okay.

I read a 'Dear Abby' column one day. She said, do something nice for somebody that they don't know you're doing. You know what I mean. And the boy scouts say that too.

It's really {dak shen nyamje}. That's the first step of {dak shen nyamje}. By the way, is there still a distinction between you and them?

Yeah. You're here and they're there and you're watching them, okay.

That distinction is going to break down as we go through the three. Okay.

Second part is put your mind in their body. It's, like, second-level {dak shen nyamje}, okay, oh, and watch you. Okay.

So, it's like this. When we taught this in Mongolia the translator finally broke down [laughter] you know what I mean. Okay.

So, Elly's sitting here or Marie Placide. I put my mind in Marie Placide's body, okay.

So now I'm looking at what?

Geshe Michael is standing up there teaching.

Now, what is she thinking? You see, it's putting your mind in the other person's body.

So she's trying to pay attention now. [laughter] And she's like, I wonder if he's gonna stop or if I'm gonna make it home on time tonight, you know? I wonder if there's any good refreshments, you know? I wonder what's happening in Arizona? I wonder if he's ever gonna give me that apartment I'm asking about? I wonder if he's ever gonna talk to me about being a nun or not, you know? And stuff like that.

And you put yourself in their body. You put your mind in their body and you look at you and you ask, what do you want from you? You see what I mean? What does, what do I, Marie Placide, want from Geshe Michael? What do I want him to say? What do I want him to do? What do I want him to think? What do I want him to, and then you just practice that. This is a very holy meditation to do all day long, okay. It's really good in the morning when you do your meditations.

Pick somebody, anybody, and do {dak shen nyamje}. What do they want when they look at you, okay? It maybe that they want you to leave the room, and then that's okay, you can do that too. Okay. [laughs] They never have to know, alright.

Number three. I call it the 'robe thing', okay.

By the way, in step number two, the distinction between 'me' and 'her' is getting a little bit blurred, right.

You know, when I was doing it in Mongolia I was saying, okay look, I'm in Batboldt's body. I'm Batboldt looking at Michael and Batboldt wants from Michael, what do I want from me? And the guy's going, whoa, you know, how do I translate that? You try to translate that from Shantideva's work it's very confusing.

You know, me, you, him, okay.

Robe thing and then we'll stop, okay. Just go to somebody else, imagine you have this magical robe and you put it around both of you and you decide I am now one person with four legs, two hands, two heads, okay. Just decide. Choose anybody, okay. And just decide there is no 'me' and 'you'. Now it's just 'us', okay, or me but now I'm just twice as big. Okay. When I go shopping I have to buy two pairs of shoes, one man and one woman's pair, you know. I need a pants and a dress. You know what I mean. When I eat my food I have one fork and it goes into two mouths. And I am one body. You see what I mean. I am, we are one body. And just decide it with somebody. Break down the distinction between me and you hundred percent, flatly just break it down. Now I have to, my salary has to spread, my lack of salary has to spread to two people, okay. Now when I do anything, eat food, order clothes, do anything, go to the bathroom, anything, I have two minds to consider. I have four arms to consider. I have four legs to consider. I have to take care of those legs and those arms and that head as well as I take care of this head and this arms and those legs.

Then people object to Master Shantideva. And the Irish got all hot at me, you know. They said, yeah, but man, you're gonna run out of money pretty soon, you know.

Look, the human mind is unbelievable. If you really want to do it you can do it.

What you call 'myself' is a projection of your past karma. It's as artificial as everything else. It's just a decision, you know. When you have a baby, suddenly, you have to take care of this thing and you don't hesitate. No mother in the world, almost, hesitates. They just think well, now I'm just twice as big. Now I have to take care of both of us. You see what I mean. You suddenly just got bigger, okay.

And then the other example I give, there's this guy out in New Jersey called [unclear], he's Mongolian. He got gangrene on his foot because he had diabetes. He refused to have his leg cut off. The doctors told him he had to do it. I was the translator. I'm trying to convince him to cut his leg off. He would not do it. He said I'd rather die than have my leg cut off. Ten years later, he still didn't have it cut off and his foot was this big green mass, you know. And they kept giving him antibiotics.

One day he decides, okay, that's it, you can cut it off, you know.

Something in his mind changed. He divorced himself from that foot. You see what I mean. His 'me' got shorter by two feet or something, okay. I'm not kidding.

He just made a decision that 'me' would be less than it used to be. So the border between you and somebody else is artificial. It's just a decision.

And the one you got stuck with from your past karma sucks. It doesn't work. It's counter-productive. It causes all your suffering, okay.

Your past karma is forcing you to believe that your self ends at the end of your finger. That's just primitive. That's just really bad karma that you got stuck with that. People in the desire realm are stuck with this idea that 'me' ends at my fingers. And for some stupid reason I'm not supposed to take care of her as well as I take care of me. And I'm supposed to believe that that's nature 'cos my past karma is making me think that way. My past karma is making me think that I end here and she starts there. And my past karma has even created the words 'me' and 'her' in my language. You see what I mean.

They don't have those words in a Buddha field. They don't have the word 'me' and 'them'. You see what I mean. That's a kind of primitive idea and it hurts you. It's the stupidest idea you could have. It's the source of all your suffering. See what I mean. I am here, you start there, and so, there's a difference between me being cold, and you being cold. You see what I mean.

It's a mistake foisted on you by your past karma so just reject it. Just flatly reject it, okay, say I don't believe that anymore.

At the beginning start small. Start with something you can handle.

What does Master Shantideva say?

Your vegetables.

Like, my desert I wouldn't share like that, [laughter] but, okay, but the asparagus, especially that slimy stuff, what is that?

Lady's fingers, okra, my okra. Start with something you're not so attached to. [laughter] You know what I mean. Okay.

He said that. He said start with vegetables. Start with something small and say there is no distinction between me and this other person. And take one fork and feed both mouths and practise it for a while.

And that's {dak shen}, that's the ultimate one. Break, decide that the distinction between you and others is a mistake that was foisted on you by your past karma and reject it because it's the source of all your suffering.

Just reject it flatly. There is no difference between feeding this hole and that hole, you know, they both have to get fed. And share food with somebody for ten years or something. Buy a meal together, take a fork and practise putting it in two mouths until you get good at it. And just forget about 'me' and 'them', okay.

It'll be the source of all your happiness. The karma of thinking that way produces something as big as a Buddha paradise, you see.

You cannot maintain this sense of 'me' as being this discrete skin bag and collect the kind of karma you need to get to a Buddha paradise. It's impossible.

To collect that much karma, to get into a Buddha paradise, you have to actively practise breaking down the distinction between you and other people, okay.

That makes it a lot easier to be a bodhisattva.

The sergeant says I have to stop here, okay.

So we'll do a little bit more, I'll take, maybe, some questions next week, okay.

After your break, please get into your groups, okay, and then we'll do a short wrap up at the end, okay.

Okay, last, you know, at the end of this review course, at the end of the class I've been taking, like, five minutes to talk about the future of Buddhism in America.

We had a lot of talks with Lama Zopa when he came and it sort of dawned on all of us that

now you are one of the venerable Dharma groups in the country. You see what I mean. I mean, it occurred when Lama Zopa and I had talks together that now this is one of the larger groups in the country, you know, maybe the largest or second. But anyway, all of the students who are involved with our classes around the country and so what Buddhism becomes in the United State will be shaped by people like you whether you like it or not.

And so we've been talking about a lot of different issues. We've been talking about what is it you're going to teach; how do you certify a teacher; what kind of meditation should people do; what kind of retreats should people do; how should they keep their finances, should you charge people or not. And the answer is – not [laughs] okay. [laughter] You know, at all costs and anything else, you know.

And so we've been talking about issues like that.

The issue I'd like to talk about tonight is {hlaksam namdak}. It comes from the reading, right. We talked about it already. It's the willingness to take personal responsibility that people get Dharma, okay.

And I'll tell you how Pelma and I started this thing. On thirty-ninth street in this little basement. We went and brought six chairs at Ikeda, in New Jersey and it fit all the chairs and the table and the cabinet and her and me in one Honda Accord. And that was it. And we brought it back and we started.

I think the point of that exercise so far, up to now, has been that we were willing to go to work all day to make the money to make the rent for the place, and to pay for all the binders and to pay for all the printing.

And we kept the place going for free because we were even willing to work all day to pay for the other people who came.

I was in California and the FPMT monks and nuns were there and they were sitting, I remember, on Lama Yeshe's stupa platform. And I was teaching this class and here's three rows of monks and nuns. And one of them raises her hand and says, what do you think about the lack of support for western sanghas? You know, like, we don't get paid, nobody helps us, we don't even get a bowl of food, right.

And I said, I have an opinion on that question [laughter] which is that all of you should go to work and take the money and start Dharma centres and pay for the non-sangha to come to class. Is that okay? [laughs] And there was this [laughs] and I do believe that.

What do I mean by {hlaksam namdak}? At some point in your life you'll become a teacher. And I encourage you to have this attitude that if you are in a position to teach others, which means, you understand the Dharma more than others or you appreciate the Dharma more than others, then you should appreciate it to the extent that you would pay the expenses of the place until the other people caught up with you. You see what I mean.

So I think it has to be this attitude that it's your honour to support the Dharma and that it's your honour to pay for the notebooks and the printing and the rent and the overhead projector and the refreshments and everything else.

If you understand Dharma at all, if you want to be a teacher at all, {hlaksam namdak}, you know, this is my great honour to be able to support it. And if I have to go to work all day to make that money then, that's fine, and that's the way it'll be.

And that's just {hlaksam namdak}, okay. Later, you'll get complaints. The cookies aren't good enough. They're too cheap. [laughter] There's not enough room in this auditorium. I can't hear so well. I didn't get reading six. You know what I mean.

And no one will thank you. You know what I mean. It's not like they'll come and say, gee,

you worked for sixteen years in this cruddy corporate job just so we could have a place to have a class, you know.

People won't say that. They'll just come and complain. Then later they'll complain about what you teach, what you look like, who you hang out with and stuff like that.

{hlaksam namdak} means, I don't care. This is important to do.

I'm willing to do it at my expense, personal expense, time expense, financial expense, people will take pot shots at you. I don't mind. You know, it's some kind of {nying ru}. {nying ru} means, 'heart bone'. And there's supposed to be this little bone in the middle of your heart, the Tibetans say. And it just means, you know, I'm willing to do it even if no one else thinks it's important, okay.

And when you get into the Dharma business you'll be amazed. Like, we're trying to save Tibetan literature.

So we went to these monasteries and we said, how would you like us to teach you to type in your own textbooks, you know, your two hundred thousand books that are the essence of Tibetan culture? And they're, like, how much are you gonna pay us?

And we're, like, you need to get paid?

They said, sure, you're foreigner, right?

And I'm, like, okay. What I mean to say, and then you contact the Tibetan government, can we get some books to type in?

No. [laughs]

By the way, I'm not trying to break all my vows. [laughter] [laughs] I'm just saying [laughter] it's just an example. [laughter]

Like, you're trying to do something for somebody and they're just not interested. See what I mean. I mean, frankly, there's nobody in the world who cares about those books enough to pay for it and to have them input. There's almost nobody.

But you just do it 'cos you have to do it, okay. You see what I mean?

And if you have to go work or you have to go grub money or embarrass yourself in front of rich people all day to try to get the money, you do it, you know what I mean. And that's {hlaksam namdak}, okay. And what I mean is it's an important element of Dharma service, okay.

'Three Jewels' store, Pelma didn't get paid for the last four years or something, you know. Like, we're always, next month maybe, you know what I mean. And you just have to decide in your mind that it's important to do and you have to do it. You don't have a choice. It's totally improper for you to sit here and get the benefits of class after class after class after class and reading after reading.

Those readings take hundreds of hours of people's work. And then not pass it on to other people.

You're sort of under obligation now to be the next chain in the lineage and to be the chain effectively might mean that you have to support it yourself. And you have to go out and find the funding and you have to, it's important.

Things like the 'Three Jewels', things like ACI, things like the computer project, those are some of the most valuable things in the world and at some point you're gonna have to say, like the Moore's came from Colorado and just decided, it's our responsibility, we're gonna do correspondence courses. And they sit there and they do it; hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of notebooks. They sit there, in the dungeon, under 'Three Jewels' and they do it.

I didn't ask them to do it. They just did it, you know.

They just decided this is important. We're getting fed Dharma so we have to help other people get fed Dharma, you know,

So at some point, it's got to come into your mind that this thing is precious, that someone has worked very hard to give it to you and now you have to work hard and give it to other people.

And at some point you have to think, you know, what can I do now to feed the next person in the food chain, you know. Like, Dr Sykes has got a nice little class up at, what's that place called, caravan of dreams. [applause] I still didn't get any vegan deserts.

No, at some point, you've got to think, you know, and as I understood he popped the money for the course materials and stuff. Tried to steal some other ones but we caught him. [laughter] And, at some point, no, in your mind you have to make a decision, okay.

{hlaksam namdak} means I don't care if nobody helps me. I don't care if I have to pay for everything myself. I don't care if I have to spend my time and no one comes to the dungeon to help me. They just come to complain that course number three, tape number four is blank, you know. [laughter]

At some point, you just have to say, okay, that's now my responsibility and I've been the beneficiary of this attitude and now I'm going to be the next lineage holder of this attitude.

So think about it. Everybody applauds when you say 'free classes' but, when they see that little plastic box, they avoid it, you know.

At some point you have to take responsibility that other people get the Dharma. And, if Pelma goes away for three years, somebody has to say, okay, hey, we got to keep this thing open, you know. That's how I met the Dharma. I walked into that stupid 'Three Jewels', you know and there's this monk there. And then we started talking and, you know what I mean, and you guys have to take responsibility. Godstow: the same thing. These classes: the same thing, you know.

You have to think that somebody put out effort to make the place for you and then now you have to put out the same kind of effort for other people.

My concept is smaller groups, neighbourhood meetings where you do courses together and stuff like that.

But, you know, there's gonna have to be a certain idea among each of you that, okay, maybe in my apartment for a couple of months we could do that. Like, I could put up the apartment and Micheal [unclear] could come and teach and, you know, you have to think like that, okay.

That's all. {hlaksam namdak}.

We'll do a short prayer.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Okay, thank you

Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas in Buddhism
Class Three
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

[cut] class. [laughs] And where's Thomas? Yeah, Thomas of Mongolia, has returned. [applause]
[laughs]

Thomas came with us to Mongolia and he was charged with helping set up the cataloguing of the Buddhist books there, which is, a million and a half Buddhist books, the last copies in the world probably, before they get lost. And I think about three hundred Mongolians have asked us to start a Dharma centre there and teach English, computers and Dharma by Americans. They want it by Americans.

And also our first TV shows have aired. We're not quite sure but sounds like which Christina and Ian and Mercedes worked on and so it's pretty cool.

[announcements]

So we're gonna start the review of course twelve, I think it was. And that was the final, was it twelve or thirteen? Twelve. Final course of the Bodhisattvacharyavatara, the 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's way of Life' by Master Shantideva and that was the infamous chapter on Wisdom, okay. It's the famous chapter. It's called chapter nine. People have written commentaries on it ever since.

I don't know if you remember the story, but at this point, Master Shantideva was rising off the throne into the air. And there was even a debate about how many chapters there were towards the end because only a few people with clairvoyance could follow him as he continued to reach and fly away from the monastery.

So, the bottom line is, this chapter's a little difficult.

I don't think there've been a lot of, I mean, it's very hard to give a good commentary on chapter nine and I think what you'll hear in this class and the next class are a good summary of that information. I think as good as you'll find.

Hopefully, it's my dream that we could bring maybe bring His Holiness or beg His Holiness to, maybe, come to Arizona in three or four years and maybe teach the ninth chapter because the people in Tucson said that He agreed to come back. He taught the patience chapter there about three or four years ago, ninety-three. Doesn't seem that long. He did agree to come back and to teach some more so I think there's, like, resources there and between them and us, maybe, we can get Him there.

So, that's one of my dreams.

Anyway, in the meantime, I'm gonna mainly go through one of the questions on the homework.

This is Lord Maitreya's take on the ninth chapter. This is what Lord Maitreya's presentation relating to wisdom is.

Personally, I remember the days when I was sitting in Khen Rinpoche's class. He very kindly taught Gyaltsab Je's commentary for over ten years to us.

It was, like, the first class I ever went to I think and he was teaching it.

And I remember getting to the ninth chapter and reading that my misperception of the world was causing all my pain. And, you know, having gone there because I was in pain, I was very interested. You know what I mean.

I remember staring at the door. It used to be the back door. It's the door between the two buildings. That used to be the back door. There wasn't any door there.

And I remember staring at the door and trying to decide what I was doing wrong, you know. And I would sit there, in the kitchen, and stare at the door and try to figure out what I was doing wrong, okay, first of all.

And then secondly, why should this cause all my pain? You see what I mean.

If I'm looking at the door the wrong way and that's causing all my pain, then, if I just looked at the door a different way, things would change and, you know, I'd get younger and my hair would grow back and, I had hair then actually. But all these things would change. You see what I mean.

And I remember being very frustrated that I couldn't really figure it out. You know what I mean. It took me a while before I could. And I think Lord Maitreya's presentation is very sweet because it takes you across that bridge from, oh, you're looking at things the wrong way to well, how's that supposed to help me if I look at them differently? You see what I mean?

To me, it's the bridge that explains why the way I misperceive things is causing all my pain and then how I could fix it, you know.

And it's very practical and it's very for real. And to me the most frustrating thing about going to classes about emptiness or wisdom was that I never felt like it got tied down, you know. Like, I never felt like they were saying, look at it this way, look at it this way, look at this way and see, that's how you can get out of it. See what I mean.

And I'm, like, it was just always, you know, causes, effects, spots, no spots, holes, pieces and it never really got it down to my life, you know, like, well how am I supposed to use that. And what am I supposed to do with that? And how does that really get me out of my suffering? You see what I mean. And I think Lord Maitreya's presentation is awesome.

This was given in the Uttaratantra. It's one of the five great books of Maitreya. It's called 'The Higher Line' and I don't know why. It's not a tantra. Tantra can also mean 'stream' or 'line', okay.

So it's one of the five great books of Lord Maitreya that he dictated to Master Asanga. So Asanga gets the credit in universities in the United States and Lord Maitreya did all the work.

So this is the presentation of that.

And then the rest of the homework I'd like the assistant teachers to go through, okay.

So here we go. To me, it was one of the most precious teachings I've ever seen, because it tied together how emptiness is supposed to get me out, okay.

So here we go. They say you can't get out without understanding emptiness, so how, how's that work, okay.

Here you go. He outlines six steps to the process of suffering because of misunderstanding your world. And I'm gonna go through those six steps, okay. A lot of you have seen them before. [cut] Say {dak dzin}{repeat}{bakchak}[repeat], the trouble started before you were born, okay. {bakchak} means a seed in your mind from your past life, okay.

So how did it all start, okay.

If my suffering is a result of my misunderstanding this world, when did that misunderstanding start, and why does it start?

And it starts before you were born. There's a seed in your mind that was planted by continually, chronically, misunderstanding your world in your past life. And then that seed, you are born with that seed in your mind. {dak dzin, dak} means 'nature of its own', what they call a 'self'. You can think of it as a nature of its own. So {dak} means, a nature of its own; {dzin} means, 'to grasp' or to try to grab to that thing, okay. So {dak dzin} is grasping to a thing, which doesn't even what?

Exist. And you got to appreciate that.

The irony of our lives is that, the suffering we undergo, is triggered by trying to grasp to something, that never existed anyway. You see what I mean. It will be a little bit more comforting if it was like something we just had to overcome or something like that. But to be so stupid is frustrating. You see what I mean.

Your suffering is triggered, by believing in a santa claus that was never there, you see what I mean.

And, all you have to do is straighten that out, see what I mean.

So it's really, you just have to identify what it is that's not there, clearly, and then you're out of it, you see what I mean. Okay. So, that's {dak dzin bakchak}.

Why are we making this mistake? Why do we misunderstand our world?

You were born that way. Don't feel bad. Okay.

{bakchak} means, it came as a seed in your mind and you can't do anything. You're born with it.

If you're born in this realm, desire realm, you have it. Period. Okay.

Two kinds of beings in this desire realm, I mean, one are emanations of an enlightened being. Who it is we do not know. I don't know. The people around you, anybody could be. It could be that everyone in this room except me is or it could be that all of us are desire realm beings or I don't know.

But if you're here involuntarily it's because you had those seeds in your mind, okay.

Number two. [cut] Say dangdzin kye}{repeat} Because you have those seeds in your mind when you're born, then {dangdzin} which means the tendency of holding that things have their own nature, okay. {kye} means, it's born in your mind. It rises in your mind. It arises in your mind. Okay.

When? How long does it take?

One millisecond after you're born, okay. [laughs] Alright.

The first conscious thought you have, which is what?

It's hot in here, okay. It's wet in here or something like that. Okay.

The first conscious thought you have, is already infected by, a misunderstanding of your world. And this misunderstanding infects your mind twenty-four hours a day after that, okay.

You've never had a thought that wasn't infected {lepa} by {dangdzin}, by this tendency to see things as self-existent.

Does it mean that you are conscious, you know, I used to struggle with that. I used to around and stare at the door and say, you know, what am I doing wrong? I'm not even thinking about self-nature, you know what I mean. Like, Rinpoche would say, you're seeing the door self-existently and I'd get this guilt complex, you know. And I'm trying to look at the door not self-existently. And then, you know, I'm eating dinner, momo, and then suddenly, oh my god, I'm seeing the momo as self-existent, you know. What am I doing? And you get nervous, you know, like you're doing something wrong and you don't know what it is. And it drives you crazy you know what I mean. You're not quite clear what they're talking about.

And, you know, I feel normal. I thought it was a momo. It tastes like a momo. You know, spurts like a momo. [laughter] And I'm doing something wrong, you know, and I don't know what it is. You know, it makes you crazy, you know.

Anyway, {dangdzin kye} starts when you're born, starts as soon as you're conscious and possessed by every life form from amoebas up to elephants. You know what I mean. Every life form is making this mistake twenty-four hours a day as they perceive objects, you know.

Is there a pen here?

Yes.

Am I perceiving, a pen?

Yes.

Am I correct to say that I'm perceiving, a pen?

Yes.

But there's some kind of feeling or overlay or some kind of mode in which I'm perceiving a pen, which is wrong. The way I hold it to be, the way I assume it to be, the way I feel about it, is totally wrong all the time, okay.

And, that, we have to talk about, okay.

Is there a pen there?

Yes.

Are you mistaken that there's a pen there?

No.

Is that a mistaken perception?

No.

Is that {dangdzin}?

No.

Is it infected by {dangdzin}?

Yes.

Do you have {dangdzin} all the time?

Yes.

When you're thinking about {dangdzin} you have it. When you're not thinking about {dangdzin} you have it. Okay. All the time. You're always misperceiving this pen.

Not that seeing it as a pen is wrong but there's something inherent about the way you think about the pen that is wrong.

And you can bring up that thought consciously but it's always there subconsciously, okay. That's the distinction you have to make.

You can isolate how you feel about the pen, which is wrong, but even as you do that, you're doing it, okay. Like, I can explain to you what you're holding wrong about the pen, and even at the moment that you understand it, you're still doing it, about the new understanding, you're still doing it, okay.

It's very slippery. We'll talk about it, okay. It's very slippery. We'll talk about it. Don't worry.

Okay.

[cut]

Say {tsul min}[repeat] {yi-je}[repeat]; {tsul} means, way, {min} means, not, {tsul min} means, wrong way, the wrong way, okay. {yi-je} means, thinking about it the wrong way, okay, thinking of it the wrong way. {yi la jepa} means to turn your mind to an object, okay. It's one of the mental

functions. And it's thinking of the pen the wrong way. And this doesn't mean, this general thinking of the pen, it's thinking about do you like it or not? Is it pleasant or not? Okay. Is it pleasant or not? So you have to write that down in step number, which one are we on? Three, okay.

Thinking about whether the pen is pleasant or not in a wrong way, okay. Thinking about that specific part of the pen in a wrong way, okay.

What is there to say about that?

Do you like this pen or not? I mean, suppose it's your favourite ice cream, okay, or something like that. Do you like it or not?

Okay, you do. Okay.

So think of your favourite ice cream. It's hard for me because I like all of them except [unclear], okay. [laughs] Anyway, it's hard for me to distinguish, but anyway, think of your favourite ice cream and try to get in touch with the emotion or the feeling that its pleasantness is a quality of that ice cream, you see what I mean.

That the pleasantness belongs to the ice cream, okay, that, that ice cream has a quality of being pleasant, okay.

Now is the pleasant ice cream, sorry, is the ice cream pleasant?

Yes. Okay.

Is it pleasant from its own side, in and of, itself?

If you say, ah-ha, like [unclear] [laughs], just kidding, then what you're saying, in essence, is that of all the ice creams in the world, [unclear], not the non-fat kind, okay. [laughter] [laughs] And I'm not asking, okay, that's breaking a bodhisattva vow. But this particular kind, in and of itself, from its own side is pleasant; if that were true then what's the necessary consequence?

All the other brands would go out of business, you see. 'Cos if it were true that ice cream had a quality of being the best from its own side, then everybody who was not insane, would like it the best, you see what I mean. So that quality of being the tastiest ice cream or the best ice cream we say, it doesn't belong to that ice cream, okay, Ben and Jerry's cherry garcia ice cream. It doesn't belong to that.

That perception of it being that way, the feeling that it's that way, is coming from somewhere else. Where?

It's coming from your mind. I mean, you have, like, three choices, okay. You know, it's coming from outer space and hitting this ice cream carton, you know. It's inside the carton. Or, it's coming from me. You see what I mean. Like, there's three choices. It's obvious that it's probably coming from you, okay, 'cos everybody has their own favourite ice cream.

That's a very, very, very simple and very accurate description of emptiness.

You don't have to think of black holes. You don't have to think of cosmic dust. You don't have to think of auras. You don't have to watch your thoughts and watch them fade in or watch them fade out or watch them go black or anything like that.

That's the emptiness of Ben and Jerry's cherry garcia ice cream, of the pleasantness of that ice cream. It is not a quality of that ice cream. The quality has an emptiness or is devoid of that quality of pleasantness. That's all. That's all that emptiness means. It's all it's ever meant. Forget all the other stuff, okay. Seriously.

That's the emptiness of Ben and Jerry's cherry garcia ice cream, okay.

But number three says, your mind thinks of the pleasantness the wrong way. It doesn't realise that that pleasant thing, the pleasantness of the ice cream doesn't belong to the ice cream, okay.

Like, you could make a debate that the coldness belongs to the ice cream, right? Although we could debate it later, okay. But I mean, it's pretty easy to see that, most people touch it, it would feel cold, see what I mean. I mean, you could say more convincingly, although it's wrong, that the coldness is the quality of the ice cream but to say that being the best is a quality of that ice cream is not true; and that, you immediately understand that, okay. {tsul min yi-je} though, says that, being good belongs to cherry garcia ice cream. Being good is a quality of that ice cream. Being the tastiest ice cream is a quality of that ice cream, okay, not coming from me. Okay.

Number four. [cut]

Say {chak dang kye}[repeat] okay. By the way, where did the pleasantness of the ice cream come from?

Your mind. Okay.

And why do you like this ice cream and someone else doesn't?

Because, your perception of it as good, is forced on you by your past karma. That's how karma works. That's what karma means. Okay.

You fed somebody in the past. Somebody was cold, no, somebody was too hot you gave them something refreshing, you know, lemonade, a glass of lemonade with ice. You were careful to put the ice in it. And due to that you have cherry Garcia ice cream in your world and you like it and I'm not kidding. This is ultimate worldview.

There is no experience that you can experience that doesn't come from some event like having given one lousy lemonade in a paper cup, you were careful to throw in two dirty cubes of ice. And because of that for a whole lifetime you enjoy this kind of ice cream. That's exactly how things work. When people stop giggling when I say that, you'll be there. You'll be going out and serving people lemonade 'cos you want to keep your ice cream, okay.

Okay, that's all.

And you can imagine cases under which that karma wears out. You get tired of that kind of ice cream. Your students give it to you for three months and [laughter] then you're, like, no, I don't want to see it anymore, you know. Or you get diabetes or something and then you see it as something that's going to kill you or something like that, you see. The karma to enjoy anything wears out and then at some point the karma wears out and then it's not the best ice cream in the world anymore, okay.

That's an indication that the goodness of it is not one of its inherent qualities because if it were you'd never get tired of it. You could eat twenty bowls a day instead of just ten and get tired of it, okay.

And that's a sign that it doesn't have a nature of its own of being the best ice cream, okay.

So, really, when you think about this ice cream and why you enjoy it, and if you wanted to keep that enjoyment of that ice cream, you would have to serve others, you see. You would have to somehow help others have something tasty or something like that. That would be the karma that would keep you seeing this thing as pleasant would be to share something similar with other people constantly.

And that's the only way to get ice cream. And that's the only way to have Ben and Jerry's continue to be your favourite ice cream. You see what I mean. The only way. Otherwise, it will just wear out and you won't have it after awhile. They'll take it off the market. Your tastes will change, something like that. Your doctor will tell you, you can't have that anymore, okay, or your food police or somebody will say, you can't have that anymore or something like that, okay.

What I mean is, we talked about thinking about, number three was thinking about how good it tasted in the wrong way. In the right way is to see, oh, yeah, I have the karma to enjoy this ice cream because I was kind to others. I shared with others. I helped someone else get something like that.

And that karma is in my subconscious, it has come up to my conscious mind, it colours how I see my world and I like that kind of ice cream. And it's my sunglasses, my rose-coloured glasses, called karma, that are making me see that as such great ice cream. I understand it's not part of the ice cream. I understand the whole world is not, like, pink coloured. It's the glasses I'm wearing. Okay. It's the karma that I bring to the object, okay.

So if you don't understand that then you could get some kind of bad emotion about the ice cream. I want it and other people shouldn't have it. Okay. Right?

Like, then you could have the ignorant thought.

If you perceive the ice cream the wrong way, if the pleasantness of the ice cream is a god-given quality of the ice cream, then you can rightly say, I should have it and other people shouldn't have it, okay.

If the goodness of Ben and Jerry's cherry Garcia ice cream is something that I'm perceiving only because I shared ice cream in the past, then is it possible to not want to share it?

I mean, if you're crazy, maybe. Right? But if you want this ice cream to continue to be great, what's the only way?

Share it.

{chak dang} is the opposite, okay. {chak} is like the ignorant reaction to ice cream.

{chak} means, wanting it in a way that you don't want others to have it. It's like a stupid wanting, okay. And {dang} is the opposite for people you don't like or ice creams you don't like. Like, [unclear]. I have {dang} for [unclear], okay. And {dang} means you don't like it and you get, sort of, like this dislike for it in an ignorant way. Which means if someone, if you had a choice at a party between getting the chocolate chip ice cream and the [unclear] you'd make sure you got to the chocolate chip ice cream first and the other people had to eat the [unclear], you see. That would be {dang}. That would be, disliking [unclear] in a stupid way.

You see the stupidness of it? You see the difference?

One is like, oh, here share my cherry Garcia 'cos I want to have the karma to continue to see it. You see what I mean. That's intelligent liking and that's not what {chak} is about, okay.

In a lot of Buddhist teachings they fail to distinguish between stupid liking and smart liking, okay.

Does the Buddha like living beings?

I hope so, okay.

Would the Buddha like to see you reach nirvana?

Sure.

Does the Buddha like ice cream?

Of course, you know.

Does the Buddha dislike seeing people suffer? Does the Buddha dislike the fact that your suffering is caused by yourself 'cos you're just stupid?

Of course, he dislikes that, you know.

Does the Buddha dislike the fact that people send themselves to hell realms?

Of course, he'd stop it if he could. You see what I mean.

So there has to draw a distinction between good liking and stupid liking and good disliking and stupid disliking.

What's stupid disliking?

You take the [] Jay, 'cos I got the chocolate chip first. That's stupid disliking.

That's the best way to what?

To lose chocolate chip in the future and get inundated with [], okay. [laughter] No.

And I'm not kidding, okay, I'm not kidding. Okay. That's stupid disliking. So {chak dang} refers to stupid disliking.

In the picture of the Wheel of Life, in the middle, {chak} is the rooster or the pigeon, {dang} is the snake, and whose mouth is holding both their tails?

The pig, which represents stupid, okay.

It means, you don't get it that if you don't share the chocolate chip and if you dump the [] on Jay Hahn, you're gonna have to have [] forever. Well, not forever, 'cos that'll wear out too but very slowly, okay. Alright.

So {chak dang kye} means, you get, {kye} means, you get the emotions of stupid liking and stupid disliking. {chak} is stupid liking, {dang} is stupid disliking, okay.

By the way, if you want to have a barometer or a check on whether you're having stupid liking or smart liking, it's pretty much your natural reaction. Okay.

That's why you're in the desire realm. That's why you're here and not in a Buddha paradise if you're not; I don't know where you are, okay.

But if your natural reaction to something you like is to corner it, protect it, keep it away from others, don't share it, this is {chak}. That's natural and it's stupid, okay.

And then if your natural reaction to things you don't like, [] oh, I got a choice, let's see, let me make sure the [] goes down to the other side of the table and the chocolate chip comes up here. That's the natural reaction.

Somebody yells at you, what's the natural reaction?

You yell back.

What's the only thing that could make a person yell at you in the future?

Yelling back.

You see, the natural, you have to watch out for your natural reactions 'cos you are stuck in the desire realm and you're here because you've been doing that all along. And that's why you have to suffer.

Examine your natural reactions to the things you like and don't dislike and you can pretty much, as a rule of thumb, know that you should be doing the opposite, okay. [laughs] 'Cos you're stuck in the worst realm so you must have been doing the exact ass-backward thing all this time.

When somebody gets mad at you be pleasant to them. You have a choice between [] and chocolate chip, you eat the [], you give them the chocolate chip, okay.

You have to overcome your natural reaction which is ignorant and which is damaging to you, okay.

You can only have that natural reaction if you don't understand where this stuff comes from. Number three.

You can only have that problem if you have ignorance in your mind.

You can only have that problem if you had ignorance in your past lives. Okay.

You see how, when you meditate on this you can go one, two, three, four; four, three, two, one; one, two, three, four; four, three, two, one. You know what I mean.

We call {lung jung and lung ..}, okay.

I didn't understand stuff in my past life so I have these seeds.

Those grow into the same misunderstanding in this life.

I see things that are nice and bad the wrong way.
And due to that, I like some things stupidly and I dislike some things stupidly.
Why am I in trouble?
I like things stupidly or dislike things stupidly 'cos I don't understand pleasant and unpleasant things
'cos I have this defect in my mind called ignorance and I have that because I had that seed in my past
life. You see what I mean.
You can run it both ways.
Now, number five.
And I'm not talking theory. I'm talking you do this in the break, okay. You do this with the person
three seats down that you don't like so much, okay. Right now. Use it right now.
{le sak} [cut]

Say {le}[repeat] {sak}[repeat]; {le} means, karma, {sak} means, you collect it.
What's it mean?
Kill, steal, sexual misconduct, lying, harsh words, gossip, craving, ill will and wrong view come into
your mind and you do them.
You collect new karma. You collect new bad karma. Okay.
Why?
Oh, run the play back: because you like things and you dislike other things. By the way, you can put
for number five, 'my natural reaction'. That's all. I yelled back. That's number five. I took the
chocolate chip and left the [] for Jay Hahn, okay.
So, that's natural reaction is collecting karma. It's caused by the fact that I like some things with a
stupid state of mind and dislike other things with a stupid state of mind.
Does it mean it's wrong to like chocolate chip ice cream?
Not at all.
After you've shared it with as many people as you can find eat the whole carton. Okay. That's all.
It doesn't mean you have to, it's not this Buddhist thing that you have to scourge yourself all the time.
Get that out of your mind. That's your old Judeo-Christian thing. Dump it. It's stupid.
You can have your cake and eat it too. Okay.
You keep this code of behaviour up you'll live in a Buddha paradise, jerry garcia Buddha paradise,
you know.
You don't have to, you know, suffer so others can be happy or something like that. You can be happy
so others can be happy, how's that, okay. So, get over those emotions that are caused by
misunderstanding good things and bad things that comes as a natural thing in your mind because you
had a seed in your past life.
Because you had the seed in your past life, you have the seed in this life. You see good things and
bad things the wrong way. You feel this ignorant desire for them and ignorant disliking for them,
which means you don't share your ice cream, okay.
And you just keep running it back and forth, you know.
By the way, I [unclear] want you get this immense light going off in your head that this is what the
Buddha really meant. You know, oh, so emptiness does relate to getting out of it, you see what I
mean, there is a connection between karma and emptiness and getting free of all this. See what I
mean. It's like Lord Maitreya has finally put it down on paper, yeah, here is how it goes from step to
step.
Here's how not understanding your world causes all your problems, causes your {la sak}, okay.
What's the last step?
[cut]
Say {korwa}[repeat] {kor}[repeat], you've heard this word in Sanskrit. It used to frustrate me 'cos I'd
go to Buddhist teachings, you know, I've been studying for three weeks and you'd go into a class and
they'd say, samsara's caused by your samskaras [unclear] your alaya [unclear] due to your, you know.
And I'm, like, woa, you know. Okay. Samsara. It means vicious circle. Did I spell that right?
Okay, that's lucky.
Vicious circle. That's all. Vicious circle.
What's the only way to have to have [] ice cream for the rest of your life? Assuming you hate it,
okay.
Make other people eat it and get chocolate chip for yourself. Which is number five.
That's because you like things and dislike things stupidly. That's because you have this wrong way
of looking at good things and bad things.

That's caused by this habit in your mind that you were born with because you had it in your past life. You had it in your past life so you're born with it. You look at good things and bad things the wrong way. You feel like or dislike for them in a stupid way. The barometer there is, would you be selfish? Would you have a mental affliction about it? You see? If you could have a mental affliction about it you're thinking about it the wrong way. And then you refuse other people the chocolate chip and give them the []. And then {korwa kor} means you have just spun the wheel again, okay. {korwa} means wheel, vicious circle, {kor} means, you spun it again. Meaning, you've just made it perpetuate itself, okay. The classic example: the boss yells at you and your natural reaction, which I said is a good test for your stupid reaction, is what? You yell back. If this theory of Buddhism is true, and I don't say you have to buy it, but if it's true, what's the only way to get a stupid ugly yelling boss in your face in the future? Yell back. And that's samsara. That's a vicious circle. You see what I mean. Your natural reaction triggers the next occurrence of it, so that you can react that way again, so that you can react that way again, so that you can have it again, so you can react that way again, so you can have it again. People ask me, why am I still here after millions of years? Der, you know, okay. Because your natural reaction, by the way, we're the left overs, okay. I mean, everybody else is gone; they're out. No. I'm not kidding. We are the leftovers and we didn't get it, you know, we're still yelling back, we still refuse to share the things we love. You know what I mean. And so we keep setting up in the future for it to happen again. And that's what the word 'samsara' means. That's what {korwa} means; vicious cycle, right, where you react the wrong way. The cycle happens because you react the wrong way because you have this thing of liking and disliking things in a stupid way because you perceive nice things and good things the wrong way because you have a tendency to think that things have their own qualities from their own side because you've always thought that way in millions of past lives. And because you thought that way in millions of past lives you have this habit in your mind of seeing things as coming from their own side. And then you think the goodness and badness comes from its own side. And then you feel good or bad about it and want to protect it or fight off other people and then you hurt them in some way to get what you want or to avoid what you don't like. And then you've spun the wheel one more time. Okay. And you, you know, if you want to say you've been in these classes and you understand anything and I'm gonna have a Geshe degree from ACI whenever I finish that last final exam, you know, you'd better be able to spin this wheel up and down for people 'cos this is it. This is the thing that people have to know. Okay. This is the greatest kindness you can do for other people. Teach them how Maitreya's process works and then they can break it. They can break it. They can break the cycle. And then master Shantideva says, kiss those irritating people goodbye, you know, because, one by one they will drop out of your life because you didn't see the vicious circle. You refused to return violence to violence. You refused to return anger for anger. Okay. And you just stopped. By the way, it's unilateral, okay. Don't wait for the other person to stop. They're not going to. Why? 'Cos you didn't stop. You create those. Okay. Don't sit there and be, you know, the stupid, you know, you see it around the world. Oh, when the other side stops, I'll stop, you see what I mean. It has to be unilateral. Okay. They're not going to stop. Why? From their side, 'cos you didn't stop. You have to break it from your side. You stop getting angry and then there's no angry person in the future to bother you, you see. That's all. So it has to be, the breaking of the cycle has to be done by you, okay. Where? What number do you think is the first one that you kick the ass out, you know? Which one? I don't think so. If you get to {chak dang kye}, if you're already feeling this dislike or wanting

something selfishly, you're gonna collect karma.

I don't think you can break it between four and five. Give me another place.

Between one and what? How about between [students] Yeah, I don't think between three and four because once you perceive the goodness of ben and jerry's cherry garcia as being a quality of that ice cream, you're already in trouble, okay. No. Really. If you don't understand that that goodness is coming from your side, you're already in trouble. Three is too late.

Between one and what? Between two and three, that's where you break it, okay.

Right here. You stop thinking of things the wrong way. You stop thinking of things the wrong way, okay.

Yeah, it looks good, it tastes good, but only because I've been good. Okay. So I refuse to not share my ice cream 'cos that would be the stupidest thing I could do, okay.

We were joking at Godstow this weekend. Who was the first caveman who figured this out? And it's brilliant, right. I mean, you go out to your cave, you just, you know, you kill the deer, you dragged it back to your cave. And I think there was an earthquake and the deer body fell off and landed in the next guy's cave. And he came out and said, thanks a lot and he took it in and ate it.

And then the next day two deer came and the guy got two deer bodies. And then he figured it out, like, he's this genius Einstein caveman, and he said, how come two deer came today? I did give the other guy a deer yesterday. Let's try it. And he throws the other two deer down there and the next day he gets four deer. You see what I mean. No, I mean, somebody had to figure it out 'cos it's totally not human nature, right, to share something knowing that it's going to give you everything you dreamed of. You see what I mean. It's just not normal. It's just weird to think like that, okay.

It takes a lot of knowledge to implement it, okay. And that's it.

Those six steps of Maitreya, Lord Maitreya, absolutely connect karma to ignorance, to how you see things, to how you act. And you can start doing this at the break with the refreshments, okay.

We used to have a kid's class in New Jersey for the Mongolian kids. And there were about fifteen kids and we had this rule.

Janis was there eighteen years ago, she was about that high, she was King Uddyana 'cos we didn't have any boys, you see.

And anyway, it was 'last is first' and the kid at the back of the room got the cake first after class. You see what I mean.

And then everybody would run to the back of the room. [laughter] And I could cut the cakes up. See what I mean.

But what it means is to act this way you can do it right now. You can start doing it at the break. You see what I mean.

If you like some kind of drink there or your favourite cookie is sitting out there, make sure other people get it first. Okay.

You see something you like to drink, take one, that's good, and share it with everybody. Pass it around and then you'll have as much as you ever want.

And that's just the way it goes. You know what I mean.

Especially if you can break down this division between 'me' and 'you', okay.

It's just as important that you have the coke as that I have the coke because you are me and I just don't see that, okay. That's all.

I think I'd like to stop there because, to me, this is the essence. I don't want to say anything more about wisdom. It's all there. Okay. It's all there.

That's emptiness. That's the connection between karma and emptiness. That's how you can use karma and emptiness to be totally happy, okay.

If you reverse everything you create a Buddha field, okay, and your body starts to change. I call it 'living crystal'. It's called prasada in the {dzog rim}, in the high tantric Scriptures. Your body will just start to change and then, eventually, it will become a different kind of substance. And you don't get old and you don't die. And you can teach other people to do that and then everything is finished.

And then the last, you know, stupid people in the world graduate and, you know, then they can rent this school out. Though there probably won't be anybody around to rent it to actually so they can just stay here. You see what I mean?

And that's all. So you have all the information you need.

That's the essence of Master Shantideva's ninth chapter. Okay.

That's the connection between emptiness and your life and your happiness.

To get that teaching tied together is extremely rare so be happy and understand that and then you

have to start acting on it by sharing with other people. Okay.

Alright.

Oh, one thing, if you have, like, personal questions about the three years, like you want some personal advice .. [announcements]

Okay, we'll start. [laughs] Okay, we'll start again.

We've been reserving this last five, ten minutes, which is never just five or ten minutes, about how to, like, what would be the vision for Buddhism in the United States: what would it be like; how should our centres be like. We talked about finances; it should be free.

We talked about content; it should be the Geshe course.

This centre or this institute is built around the idea of {tsennyi pa}. {tsennyi pa} means, the tough way, meaning the logical way rather than Lam Rim, rather than even more general teachings.

This course, the core of it, is, and by the way, they're all valid and they all work, but our schtick is the Geshe schtick and you learn it. You learn it hard, you learn it in detail and then you have all this information that you're able to help other people with. That's what we do.

And then we talked about all those kinds of things. And, just in general, all these details of how we would like to see Buddhism, like Tantra spread in the United States.

What I'd like to talk about tonight is a vision of how we could do social service. You know what I mean. How we, as Buddhists, do social service.

The Tibetan tradition up til now has been very weak in this specific thing. And His Holiness is very adamant that it's one thing that we can learn from the Christian tradition and the Jewish traditions and even the Moslem traditions; that they're very strong on serving other people and in a very concrete way.

You have to say, very openly, very brazenly, that in Buddhism we believe that the ultimate service of any person is to teach them exactly the six steps that I taught you tonight, you know.

There's nothing kinder and there's nothing more compassionate and there's nothing more effective than to teach people how to create their own paradise in the future rather than just giving them a bed to sleep in tonight or just feeding them or just giving them an operation or something.

So, I mean, I want to start by saying the Dharma itself is the ultimate social work. Period. And there's no kinder or greater gift that you can give a person than to teach them the courses, okay.

At the same time I think, and His Holiness is very adamant about it, it would be clearly mistaken to say that therefore we should, you know, ignore the normal needs that people have for a place to sleep, something to eat, medical care, counselling and things like that. I think it would be clearly a violation of bodhisattva principles to espouse Dharma as the ultimate social work and then not do any other social work. You see what I mean. It'd be clearly, I mean, in plain English, I'm very suspicious of bodhisattva's who don't have time to help someone who's sick or, you know, who needs a place to stay or who's hungry or something like that.

It's just suspicious. You see what I mean. Oh, I'm working for the good of all living beings and don't hassle me about these homeless people, you know what I mean. Or I don't like crazy people or, you know, they don't even know the six steps, you know what I mean.

We shouldn't be like that.

And I think in the Tibetan community in India, like at Sera monastery, they're just becoming very sensitive to this fact. So rather than just living among the Indian community in Sera, Sera Me has now opened a hospital and it's free for everyone in the surrounding community, which has not been done in the last thirty years, forty years.

It has not been the policy of the Tibetans to help the people around them. And only just now they're starting to do that and I think we have to keep up with that, you know. We have to do the same thing.

So my model for this, or what we're doing in this regard is the 'Three Jewels'. When we first moved to the east village we started this, we thought it would be a store. We thought it would help pay for the nun's residence because they didn't have any place to stay. So, you know, I remember walking up and down, the coldest day of the year through the east village looking for a storefront.

And we found this place and we bought it. And we bought all these books and we had this fancy inventory system. And then, after about six months, we realised none of us wants to make money and people kept coming in and asking for books and we'd just give it to them. And the place was a mess. I mean, financially, it was a disaster because we just didn't want to make money off Dharma.

We can't sell tantric books. We're not supposed to sell images. And books we didn't feel comfortable with selling anyway. We wanted to give them away. And it quickly became clear that the place wasn't going to work like that.

We were gonna do the Starbucks thing there with, you know, mint lattes and stuff like that. And we got a restaurant license and everything and we bought tables and everything. And then we just cancelled it and said you make your own coffee and it's for free, you know. And you can't pay the rent with that, you see.

Anyway, after awhile it became clear that the place could be better used as a community centre.

And these classes here attract a certain kind of people. They attract a certain kind of person. You have to have a sort of psychological and you have to have a sort of intellectual bent. You have to be willing to sit here with the four divisions of this and the twelve divisions of that and the thirteen this and you have to be somebody who enjoys that and who appreciates that and who can sit there and struggle with those things.

But there's a whole section of our population, especially in New York City, that's just not interested in that stuff but wants to study Dharma. They want to meditate. They want to talk about the ideas of Dharma in a very normal way that they can immediately apply in their own lives.

And I think what we found is that the 'Three Jewels' has attracted, hundreds of people has come through the 'Three Jewels'.

Some of them have come here to these classes. Many of them are in their own community the 'Three Jewels' people. They go to 'Three Jewels'. They use the 'Three Jewels'.

I asked Pelma to give me some pictures about what they do there and then I wanted to talk to you guys. What I wanted to do is present it as sort of a fledgling idea of how to serve people in a city because a lot of our work will be there.

And then we have to talk about whether the 'Three Jewels' stays open or not [cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

We just have to talk about who can keep it open. What should it do? How can it continue to do what it does without ani Pelma there, which will be difficult 'cos she's very good at what she does. And that's sort of what I'd like to lead up to. [announcements about ACI project meeting: re the 'Three Jewels' / prison project / community teachings, etc]

I think one tradition we don't want to continue from old Tibet is not to do this kind of thing very much. And I think this is something that our Judeo-Christian background has been very admirable and something we should aspire to. And something that we shouldn't lose from our old religious tradition, which is, you know, the hands-on service of people who need us around us.

So I, you know, I think, that if we just have an institute where you learn a lot and meditate a lot, I don't personally think you can see emptiness directly, for example, unless you're doing something, some kind of service of other people in a hands-on way.

And I think, Pelma has brought that side up organically. That thing has grown and grown and it serves more and more people and it serves our community. And I think we should consciously make it part of our institute as the institute goes on.

I could also see that being one of the main classrooms for the next three years for those of you who haven't finished your eighteen courses. The tantric carrot is out there. And you know, it's a place where you'll be able to go and finish your courses.

And I hope that the basement will continue to function, sometimes called the dungeon, shipping out correspondence courses. [announcement]

I urge you not to make your bodhisattva life an intellectual thing only, okay.

I think there's a great defect in your Buddhism if you're not doing something like this for somebody, you know. Somewhere your Buddhism has to cover the people who didn't make it here, who aren't lucky enough or don't have the finances or don't have the time or don't have the, you, know, the intellect to be here right now.

And I think we have to serve everybody.

My theory for that is, that people like Khen Rinpoche are serving us. You see what I mean. They have agreed to come down to our level. I mean, we must look really crazy to them, right.

I mean, I see it as a food chain thing. We're somewhere here and if we don't take care of the people who are less capable of taking care of themselves, then, I don't see how we can expect the Khen Rinpoches, to take care of us. You see what I mean.

You're the beneficiary of this food chain and then you have to feed the next, the people who couldn't make it here. You know what I mean. The people who just need a, they need to get sane before they can go on and study, see what I mean.

So think about it and think about some ways of serving maybe at the 'Three Jewels' during the next three years, okay.

And that's a model really for all the other cities that it will spread to.

I told her she has to open a 'Six Jewels' in Tombstone, Arizona. [laughs] [laughter]

Every time I'm nice to her she's, like, what are you setting me up for? [laughs]

Okay, let's do a prayer. Okay.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Okay. Goodnight. Thankyou.

Asian Classics Institute

Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism

Class Four

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay. We'll start. Are you ready?

We'll start. Okay. First thing I'd like to do is embarrass three people. Let me see [announcements re Mongolian teachings]

We're on the final class of Master Shantideva's 'Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'.

And that's where Master Shantideva started flying off into the air and nobody knew where he was staying, okay. And there was even a debate about how many chapters there were because after the eighth chapter nobody was quite sure how many were spoken after that.

And they found him, like, a year later, down in South India and asked him how many chapters were there. And he said, I left the manuscript in the rafters in my room. You can find it. Which is a true story. That's how we got this book.

And it gets hard about this point. I like this final section because to me it explains emptiness and it explains a lot of questions that I had about emptiness. And I think the nicest part of the last section is that it explains how karma works itself out in emptiness. You see what I mean.

So I think, last class we went over Lord Maitreya's six steps of why if you don't understand emptiness you get in trouble and you create karma.

But now, I think, something that was not too clear in Master, in Lord Maitreya's presentation, was so how does that effect karma, you know. How does karma play itself out in emptiness. And what's the connection between emptiness and karma.

And this is where Master Shantideva is at his best I think.

You know, I don't think there's any more famous Buddhist book than his early chapters on patience and morality and meditation.

But when you get up to wisdom he's no slouch either, you know, and his presentation is probably one of the best.

I like it because it explains how karma works, you know. My idea of karma until I studied these subjects deeply was very, very simple. If you step on a bug you'll have backaches. And then I remember Nagarjuna, arya Nagarjuna saying don't forget the time lag. The time lag is the deadly thing.

Like, people ask me, I understand your lectures, I'm a good Buddhist, I appreciate everything but, can I kill the roach's in my apartment, you know?

And I'm, like, if when you stepped on them, even in Mongolia we asked them questions and they wrote on the thing, you know, what about [unclear], we can't kill roach's. So, if your own ribs started to break when you stepped on them, you wouldn't ask me, you see what I mean, there's be no questions.

The world would be perfectly moral. You see what I mean.

If the minute you lied, your bank account dropped by a hundred dollars, you know, and you got the statement at the end of the month, you lied twenty times. [laughter]

You owe us some money. You know what I mean. Then you'd be, the world would be totally moral. If karma ripened in the next moment we wouldn't be here. It'd all be over. Nobody would've killed anything. Nobody would've lied to anybody, you know. The whole thing would be over.

But it's also not, you also meet, frankly, Tibetans and I've lived with Tibetans for many years and I've known many Tibetans in India, and you ask them what is karma, how does karma work, you know.

And they say, well Mrs Melvin, right, my first grade teacher back in Mysore or Karnatak or something said that if you step on bugs you get hurt later, so I don't do it, you know.

And then you say, do you understand how it works because Americans don't believe that and my first grade teacher told me that's not true. And do you have any arguments or can you give me any convincing talk about it, you know.

And they say, no, I don't know why it works, you know. I just believe it 'cos my first grade teacher told me that. You now what I mean.

So, they're just as bad as Americans really and their level of non-violence reflects that. They're more non-violent than Americans because they grew up in Tibet or among the Tibetan people, but because they don't understand how it works they're not that non-violent, you see what I mean. Like, they're not that strict because they don't understand how it works.

So I think the most beautiful thing in, see what I want to talk about tonight, is how Master Shantideva demonstrates how karma plays itself out in emptiness, see what I mean.

If you understand the process of how emptiness allows karma to work then you, you know,

in my mind, you'd be a lot better person. You see, it'd be a lot easier to be moral or ethical if you understood how karma works. You see what I mean.

So it's one thing, we call {depay jedrang}. Say {depay}[repeat] {jedrang}[repeat].

I'll even write the word here. [cut]

You're gonna get it in your logic class which is coming up next but I won't tell you that 'cos everybody will get a cold that week. [cut]

Say {depay}[repeat] {jedrang}[repeat]; {depa} means, faith, okay, faith. {jedrang} means, follow, to follow. And it means, to follow the Dharma because you have faith, you know. Like, you like the person who is teaching it or your parents told you that. You don't understand it, okay. That's called {depay jedrang}.

Then the other kind is called {rikpay}. [cut] Say {rikpay}[repeat] {jedrang}[repeat]; {rikpa} means, reasoning. A person who, {jedrang} means, follower. It means, a person who follows the Dharma because it makes sense to them, okay, so big difference.

The first one follows the Dharma because they have faith in that person or faith in that first grade teacher or something like that. And a {rikpay jedrang} they follow the Dharma because it makes sense. Somebody explained it to them and it makes sense, okay.

I want to, tonight, present how emptiness works, how karma works with emptiness, so that you can understand how karma ripens.

Last week we talked about how karma is created or why you start doing karma 'cos you don't understand objects, okay.

Now we're gonna talk about how karma works, okay. And the you get a really deep appreciation of emptiness, okay. And you've heard this stuff about the analysis, you know, to prove emptiness. Is the pen its parts? I mean, the easy one is, is the pen one of its parts?

And you say, no. I mean try writing with it. It doesn't work, okay.

Is the pen divorced from its parts?

No. If you throw away all the parts you can't drive the car, okay.

What's the other choice? Is the pen, [students] that's easy one, all of its parts then?

They say, no. And that's the one that used to bother the hell out of me, you know.

Of course, it's the same as Janis Bradon's now, whatever the name is, question. [laughter]

You know, it's the famous question. I tell the story. I was studying Madhyamika with my teacher, maybe, fifteen years ago, I don't know, twenty years ago. So we finished this heavy class and I come out and Janis is in the kitchen. She's about this tall. She used to climb on her mother. This was when she was still climbing on her mother like a tree. Now she's this big executive. Anyway, no connection to her Dharma studies, alright.

But anyway, so I come out and say, Janis, you know, is this pen the top of the pen?

And she says, no.

And I say, is it something different from the parts?

And she says, no.

And I said, is it all the parts together?

And she says, yes.

And then I'm, like, stumped, you know, because Nagarjuna said, no and Janis said, yes. And looks like she's right, you know what I mean, and I'm like, what was that, you know?

Okay.

And it's frustrating when you read Madhyamika. It's frustrating.

Oh, by the way, the last choice is, all the above or something like that. Anyway, or neither or something like that; doesn't matter.

Anyway, the tough one is this one. Is it all its parts together, you know?

And the texts say, no. But if you put all the parts of a car together, by the way, some people try to explain it that, it's not all its parts unconnected. Like, if laid a radiator over there and a carburettor over there and four tyres over there but put one of the tyres over there, you know, would the car still work or something like that.

That's not the point at all, okay. Forget that one. That's not all the parts together, you see. That's all the parts spread around the room.

Is the pen all its parts together in one place?

We say, no. Okay. Why?

And again, got to be careful, okay. It's the same thing about the dog toy thing, okay. It's the same thing. When a dog looks at this object they see a white cylinder with a blue cylinder on top of it. And how do they compose the thing, you know? How do they organise it in their mind? What do they see?

They see just something to chew on, okay. They see something that makes their mouth water and they start wagging their tail 'cos they think maybe I can go and get it out of his hand, you know. They don't have the capacity to organise these colours and these shapes into what we call 'pen'. They automatically see something to chew on and they don't think of it in any other way. Okay.

And then, a human being who's {..kyebu} means, familiar with a pen, they look at it and they automatically see a pen.

In fact, your, I don't know how to say it, your first impression of it as a pen is so fast that you're fooled by your own mind and you believe that everybody would see it as a pen. You don't realise that you're identifying it as a pen. You see what I mean.

You don't realise. It happens so fast in your mind that you don't understand or you don't appreciate that it's, in itself, out there, by itself, raw data, right? Out there, by itself, is just a white and blue cylinder, okay. It's a neutral white and blue cylinder and then your mind is very quickly making a mental picture called 'pen' and then you call it the pen.

And if I say, what is this?

Everybody says, oh, it's a pen, automatically. It's so fast, that your mind lays 'pen' on it, that you think 'pen', automatically. You think 'pen', right away.

It's fast that you think everyone should see it as a pen, okay. That's why people and dogs get in trouble with each other. Why?

Those stupid people don't know that this is to chew on and so they're depriving the dogs of their chew toy, okay.

Oh, but you wanted me to say something else. Oh, the stupid dogs are chewing on our pens and ruining them. You see what I mean? That's just prejudice, okay. Really. They have their own perception and that's valid, okay, valid in their context.

They see it as something to chew on and it's not right that those humans are standing up and depriving dogs of these chew toys, okay.

And then humans being, they think automatically the thing is a pen from its own side. So why are these dogs chewing on pens for? You see, you don't say, why is the dog chewing on what it sees validly as something to chew on.

You're, like, why is the stupid dog chewing on my pen and ruining my pen. You know what I mean.

So it's so automatic that you don't catch it but what your mind is doing is, there are parts there, there's a blue cylinder, there's a white cylinder, they go together, you saw me write

with it, so your mind says 'pen', okay.

It's not a pen from its own side 'cos if it were the dog would be respectful and say, oh, I can't chew on that. You need that tonight. I'll wait until it's out of ink. You see what I mean.

They can't conceptualise it as a pen. They can't think of it as a pen.

Whatever it is in your mind, that is making you see it as a pen, they don't have in their mind.

Okay. What is that?

It's karma. We say karma. That's how karma works, okay.

So it's not enough to, you can't keep three hundred million Americans from killing animals by telling them, you know, you're gonna be reborn as an animal and you won't appreciate it then, you see what I mean.

You can't go around saying, the reason you get old and die, the reason you have bad health is that you're killing animals, you know. You can't do that. You can't, it's no proof. It's not convincing. It's not like an argument, which is very, what do you call it, [student] compelling or something, you know. It doesn't, like, everybody doesn't go out and give up meat the next day or something like that, you know what I mean.

You have to explain how karma works on an object. You see what I mean.

And that's how it works. You have a seed in your mind from helping someone in the past. And when you look at these two pieces called 'top and bottom', 'blue and white', which is all it is, from its own side it's just an innocent bystander, blue and white cylinder, it's you who's making a pen out of it. Okay.

If that wasn't the case, then the dog would see it as a pen, but they don't, okay.

So it's not, the pen-ness is not coming from the pen, okay.

You have the karma to make it a pen and it works so fast that you believe it's a pen automatically, okay. That's how karma works and you have to get used to that.

Karma works by coming up to your conscious mind and putting like rose-coloured glasses over your eyes and making you see this as a pen, okay.

And that's how karma works and never forget it.

Is this its parts? Altogether?

No. Because if it were then a dog would see the same thing, okay, but they don't.

There's something compelling you to see it as a pen and that's your own karma, okay.

This is profound. This is really how karma works.

This can bring you to a tantric paradise. Just understand that. Because this cylinder and this cylinder work the same, okay. This one and this one work exactly the same, okay.

You have the karma to see this cylinder as a arm, okay. And if you didn't, if you had a different karma, you'd see it as a paw and as a leg and a paw. Get used to it.

If you accept what I said about the pen and the chew toy then you have to accept what I say about this cylinder.

And by the way, that's why people get old and die. That's the secret of life.

It's the, what was that thing that [unclear] was looking for? It's a fountain of life, youth. It's permanent youth and happiness. You see what I mean?

That's the trick. That's the whole point. The reason you get old and die is not, this is not getting old and dying. You can't blame him for anything. He's just a plain old cylinder. Your karma is wearing out to see it this way. Your karma's wearing out.

He's not wearing out; you's wearing out. You got to get used to it. You got to remember that.

This is the key to not have to get old or die. This is what tantra is all about. This is why

tantra works. This is why we study for eighteen years in the monastery and then get to go to tantric college. You see what I mean.

The whole point is, once you understand this, you can call the shots. If you understand that your karma is forcing you to see it as an arm, and that karma is wearing out and that's why you see it get old, then you can stop it, you know. And you don't have to, this realm, don't forget, okay, the world you know is a mistake. It's a broken realm. It'll never work. It can't work.

It doesn't matter what kind of vitamins you take. It doesn't matter what kind of relationships you change.

It doesn't matter if you get a new job. It doesn't matter if you try different kind of exercise. It doesn't matter if you try less sleep, more sleep, more food, less food, different people, different job, different house, different family. It won't change.

In three weeks you'll be back to the same unhappiness you were before. You know that, okay.

This realm doesn't work. It just doesn't work, okay. You can't be happy here.

It won't work. You have to die here and you have to lose everything you ever worked for, for every hour you ever lived that you worked for. You have to lose it.

You don't want to stay here. You don't have to stay here.

The only people left here, we're like the leftovers. And I'm not kidding, you know.

Thousands and thousands of beings have gone to their own paradises and we're stuck here because we don't understand the thing about the arm. And that's all.

You just understand it and then you keep your book, you keep your karma, okay.

So, it's very important to realise that the reason you're seeing anything is that there's pieces of raw data out there. There's a flesh-coloured cylinder with five other flesh-coloured cylinders and my karma is making me see it as an arm.

And when that karma wears out it'll be called a dead arm. No. And then, maybe five minutes later, new karma comes up and I'll see a dog's leg.

So this rebirth thing is much more nasty and possible than you ever thought, okay.

It's very possible. If you can see an arm now, you can see a leg later, forget it, okay. The reason you're seeing the arm is the same reason you'll see a leg later. And that's 'cos something is forcing you to organise this. This is just colours and shapes. People who get Alzheimer's start to lose the ability to organise information. Their karma is wearing out so their cognitive ability, they're losing it.

That's just karma getting old, their karma getting old, okay.

So you don't, you can get out of this problem. You can change it. You see what I mean. There's raw data out there. There's a big cylinder and five small cylinders. That's all that's out there. And then my mind is making me see it as a hand and an arm, okay.

And that karma to enjoy seeing it that way is wearing out. Why?

Because I'm seeing it that way.

All energy expended is lost. For me to see it for five minutes cost me five times sixty times sixty-five karmas. I don't know. Michael more probably figured it out already; eighteen thousand karmas or something. Eighteen thousand good deeds, basically, for me to see this arm go on for five minutes, okay. And they wear out and that's why it's five minutes older at the end, okay.

They wear out by experiencing them. It's like driving a car. As you sit in it, it's wearing out. It's not like the car broke on the third year, fourth day, fifth hour. The car started breaking

when you sat in it at the dealer before you bought it, it was getting old, okay.

Yes, you have a question. [student]

Why does karma wear out instead of getting more?

It's like any other energy in the world. It wears out. It gives its effect and by giving its effect it wears out.

You hit a billiard ball, think of a billiard ball, and you impart a certain amount of energy and then the friction it has against the felt, the energy drains out there, and then the billiard ball stops. So the energy being transferred to the top of the table is like living and every moment you live you're using up that energy. And then the energy stops.

[student] Impressions work like seeds. Impressions work like oak seeds or, what do you call, acorns. And they give their fruit and then they die. You know what I mean.

And that's what's happening.

In Buddhism, it's very interesting, the seed is destroyed by the production of the result, you see what I mean. If you want to apply it to a human, you are destroyed by your birth, okay.

Yeah. [student]

Yeah great, it's a great question. It's a famous Buddhist debate. The lower three schools say we don't understand [student] yeah, yeah, that's a good question.

You have the karma to see it work. You see what I mean. That's all, you know.

I think what I want to say there just to use it as an excuse [student] yeah, oh some schools say that.

Let's say this. Let's talk about the mind for example, the functioning of the mind, okay.

How do you explain the thing with the parts about the mind?

And now, by the way, we're going the way I want to go, okay. We're going in the direction that this talk is supposed to go so you can do your homework and all that. [laughter]

There's raw data out there called 'blue cylinder' and 'white cylinder', right, part of cylinder. Two parts and you think of them as a 'pen'. Your past karma forces you to think of them as a pen, okay. And that's a static object. That's not a functioning thing yet, you know. It's not moving, it's not drawing. It's just as a static image, as a frozen image it's easy to see that, you know, I think of it as a pen.

What about things that move? Which is, functioning question. What about your own mind? Which is actually where Master Shantideva goes next.

Does your own mind work the same way as the pen?

The answer is yes because everything works the same way as the pen [laughs], okay.

How? What are the parts?

Yeah, moments of consciousness, okay.

The classic argument in Buddhism is that your mind is working the same way as this pen.

Well a pen is easy: you got a top and a bottom and I take that raw data and I see it as a pen.

But my mind? How does that work?

You have moments of feelings. Like, hook into your feelings right now. They're going like this, okay: I feel good, I feel bad, I'm happy, I'm sad, I'm pretty good, oh my knees hurt, my stomach's empty, oh I feel good, oh there's that person I like, there's that person I don't like, you know. [laughter]

And your mind is like, no, if you drew it, it would be like this and like that you know. And it's going through feelings: physical, mental, good, bad, physical good, physical bad, mental good, mental bad, physical good, physical bad. And you're having these momentary impressions. We say sixty-five per finger snap.

They are not discrete thoughts. They are impressions. And every time I snap my fingers you have sixty-five.

They run so fast that it looks like what is going on?

Time itself, okay.

They move so fast that it gives you, they're just like film squares, you know, what do you call, frames of film. And they're moving so fast that it looks like time is moving, okay.

So, take a piece of your mind, you know, take how you felt for the last three seconds. Little bit too warm, little bit too cool, felt neutral, you know. Just that. And you take that segment or that chunk and your mind says 'feelings'. Those are my feelings for the last three seconds.

It's a, three pieces, in the way that this is two pieces and your karma forces you to see those three pieces of mind stream, three moments in your mind stream, your karma forces you to have a certain impression of that.

Let's say it was three seconds of a bad feeling or something, okay. That's an object. That's a functioning object. It's a bad feeling that came and went, okay.

It lasted for three seconds.

Those three seconds of consciousness are the parts in the way that this is the parts of a static thing, okay.

So get used to it. Your mind is doing the same thing with your mind that it's doing with this pen, okay.

Your thoughts and your feelings are also a projection of your mind onto pieces of your mind, moments of your mind stream. It's very profound.

We're not just talking about, oh, do you like this pen, do you not like this pen, you know. Oh, that's due to your past karma forcing you to see it a certain way.

That's true.

Your own thought processes, your own feelings, your own emotions, your own intelligence or dumbness, is something forced on you by your past karma.

You are watching your mind and you are forced to see your mind in a certain way. You are laying an overlay on your mind in the same way you're doing this pen. Okay.

That's, by the way, the clue to {sum juk}. What's {sum juk}?

tantric Buddhahood, okay. Tell you a secret, tell you a secret, okay. {sum juk}, Okay. They don't call it 'bodhi'. They don't call it {sangye} in tantra.

They call it sum juk}. {sum juk} means, the union of the two, okay.

What's the union, I mean, tantra's big on union, what's the union of the two here?

{sak me gi lu}. Say {sak me gi lu}[repeat] {tok me gi sem}[repeat], which means, immaculate body and a mind free of all perceptions of self-existence, okay. So those two things together are Buddhahood.

If you get a mind that can't see things as self-existent anymore and you get a body which you've cleaned out the channels like a, what do you call that stuff, 'draino' or 'plumber's helper', okay. I'm not kidding.

And then you grow these liquid crystal parts. You see what I mean. Seriously. That's the process.

So that's the process of how you become a Buddha in this lifetime. Okay.

So, what I'm saying is, what makes your physical body is a projection onto the parts of the body.

What makes your mind perfect is also a projection onto moments of your mind. Okay. It's the same as the pen thing.

We're gonna cancel the word 'prajnaparamita'. We're changing it to 'the pen thing', okay. So, no, really, make a little connection in your mind.

Next time you hear 'prajnaparamita', think the pen thing, 'cos that's really what it's all about. And I'm not talking some BS theory, you know, oh, this is Madhyamika, this is Mind- Only, this is Sautrantika, this is Abhidharma. Who cares? You can use this, okay.

You can take this all the way to the bank. Okay.

You're being forced to see a pen because there's pieces of something, that your mind forces you to see as a pen. You're being forced to see an arm because there's pieces of an arm that, your mind is forcing you to think of as an arm.

And you were unhappy today because you had karma forcing you to perceive different moments of your mind as unhappy.

So if you just took care of your karma, if you kept your book six times a day, {tundruk}, where is that, {tundruk}. Don't miss {tundruk}, okay. Right. That's {tundruk}, okay. It's secret spelling. [laughter]

You, by the way, if you've had any kind of Vajrayogini initiation and even if you've had another Annutarayoga initiation, I bet Rinpoche would let you in but you can't miss these classes, okay, got to come to these classes.

This is all about six times a day, checking your mind, checking your vows, checking how you're thinking, checking how you're living; writing it down six times a day, okay.

If you continue to do that, then you're putting seeds in your mind to see things differently. You see what I mean.

Not just the world around you but what?

Your own mind, you see. We're talking emptiness of your mind and the emptiness of your body. We're talking two different emptinesses.

Your body is just a bunch of parts, therefore, if you had a different karma you could see those parts as a tantric deity, Vajrayogini. Okay.

All the guys have to throw out their suits and go buy some silk robes and stuff like that, okay. That's your body, okay.

And your mind, the same principle applies to your mind. Three moments of consciousness and those pieces are being organised into a thing called the Buddha's omniscience. Why?

Mr Karma is still calling the shots, okay. Karma is forcing you to see it that way, okay, and don't forget it. That's the whole reason to talk about parts and all this junk, okay.

What's dependent origination mean?

Things come from causes. Oh, come on, farmers know that, okay. That's the lowest school. Let's talk big time.

Dependent origination in the highest school of Buddhism means parts appear to you, raw data appears to you and your karma makes you see it in a certain way. And that's dependent origination. That's all. Okay.

And nothing is not that way; and that's emptiness.

I'll say it again. Nothing is not that way. And that's, emptiness. There's not anything, physical or mental or emotional or anything about your world which is not created by your karma forcing you to see pieces in a certain way.

Your karma is forcing you to organise pieces in a certain way.

By the way, those of you who are gonna ask this question, there are Godstow programs scheduled for this weekend. They'll be probably be held in New York on Saturday, shortened onto Saturday [announcements]

I'll take questions 'cos I think it's important. Go ahead. [student]

Oh, oh, he said, what's the cylinder in the mind part. It's the combination of the three moments of consciousness. It's the stream of consciousness.

It's the combination of the three moments, which we call, 'stream of consciousness', yeah. It's the continuation of consciousness over three moments.

That's what we call {dak shi}. {dak shi} means, the basis of description, meaning, the thing you're gonna call 'my mind', okay.

So all the parts together is what we call the thing to be named and then your mind thinks of it as your mind and therefore you have a mind.

I just point that out not because it's, oh, isn't it cool, you know, you're doing the same thing with your mind that you're doing with the pen.

That's not the point. This is the key to be happy.

You know, why is it that my mind goes from happiness to sadness two thousand, three thousand times every hour? It's driving me crazy. I'm tired of it.

You know, can't we just have a stream of happy?

Yeah. You got to fix the right karma. It is also a projection. It is also just a projection in the same way that the pen is.

It could have been better. You didn't have to be here. If you just would have kept your book, {tundruk}, okay.

If you keep your book and know the vows well it's very powerful. Rinpoche's the highest holder of this knowledge in the world, so, you know, don't miss those classes. Okay. Yeah. [student]

It's a good question, okay.

She said, I heard when you attained enlightenment you exhausted your karma.

It's just a semantic thing, okay, very frankly. No, and it's important to know. We don't say the Buddha's paradise is being forced on him, that perception is being forced on Lord Buddha because of his really good karma in the past.

We don't use that word. We use the 'two collections', {gewa di yi gewa kun sonam yeshe tsok sok shing, sonam yeshe lejung way..}. You pray every night when we finish this class. You use the words of arya Nagarjuna to say, may all beings collect the collection of merit and wisdom. You see what I mean.

And at the point where you are collecting karma intelligently, meaning you understand this process, and you can do it tonight, you see what I mean.

If you start doing good deeds tonight because you finally understood why karma works, oh, I plant something in my head by perceiving myself giving Pelma a pen because I know she is a pen addict. And, you know, I watch my hand go out, I watch the pen drop, I watch her hand grab it. I've just done an act of giving.

What's the difference between an act of giving and the perfection of giving?

Is it the quantity? Do you have to give five thousand pens? I mean, that's a common mistake. That's a common misperception.

Can I be a housewife and still achieve enlightenment or do I have to become Mother Theresa?

The perfection is done in your mind, okay. The difference is just in your mind.

You can be anything and get enlightened, okay. It doesn't matter.

I see myself give the pen but now I do it with perfect wisdom. The pen thing, you know.

Hey, I'm planting a thing in my mind because of that and in my Buddha paradise I'll always

have enough pens, you know what I mean, because my mind will make me see that. Then you're not collecting karma anymore. We call that the collection of merit. We don't call it karma anymore.

We don't say, good karma is stupid, you see. Good karma is done because your mom told you to or the government tells you to or the lae tells you to or you believe the guy so you do it.

And the perfection of giving is done with a knowledge of emptiness. If I give this thing to Pelma, you know, she's gonna get a big smile on her face, and I'll get this good karma and then I'll never have a shortage of pens. And I know that. I understand that. And I'm glad for that. And I dedicate it, you know, to all beings' happiness. And then you've just done the perfection of giving.

You see, what is it that distinguishes a bodhisattva's giving from other people's giving?

It's just that. It's just that.

I'm giving it to her. I see myself give it to her. That's the best pen I have. It's all the pens I have right now. It's not a big deal. It's the old woman's penny in the Bible.

You know, I gave her what I could and I understand I just planted a seed in my mind and I'll have lots of stuff later and I'll use it to help other living beings.

And, ultimately, it will get me enlightened and then I'll really be able to help other people.

And if those thoughts run through your mind with a piece of bread or half an old bagel, [laughs] it doesn't matter, okay.

You've just done the perfection of giving and we don't call that karma anymore. It's called consciously collecting merit and wisdom, okay.

Yeah. [student] Yeah. [student]

Oh, it's a great question, yeah. What about the billiard ball thing, right. So I only gave her one pen, you know.

So how's it gonna make a Buddha paradise? Buddha paradise has to go, (a) it has to go on forever, (b) it has to cover all things, you know.

Like, if I'm just perceiving half the people in this room as tantric angels and not all of them, what's the use? That's not a Buddha paradise. That's just like a good place. You see what I mean? Like, it has to cover everybody in this room.

That is accomplished by dedicating it to all living beings the moment you give it. Okay. That coverage to a hundred percent of my world in the future is accomplished by thinking I dedicate this to every living creature.

If it's dedicated to two or three you get that kind of result. If it's dedicated to everybody you get that kind of result.

So that's the thing. Now how do you make it go on forever?

You just keep re-investing, you see. It's just total reinvestment. Okay, I'm gonna get two pens back tomorrow, I'll give those away. Four pens the next day, I'll give those away. Sixteen the next day, I'll give those away. See what I mean.

You're just constantly reinvesting the, it never wears out. It can't wear out, you see. It's cool. 'Cos you're always, Buddhas' don't stop practising the perfection of giving when they hit their Buddha paradise. They keep doing it, perfectly and it just snowballs. It's a snowball effect. It's very cool. It's a snowball effect. They consciously reinvest it. [student]

Yeah, they have to or it would end, okay. Yeah. [student]

That cycle of samsara is a downward cycle. This is an upward cycle. Okay. It's still a cycle. It's still a self-perpetuating cycle. You can either go on a downward ride or an upward ride.

You know what I mean.

The important thing is the quantity of people you think about when you do it, okay.

Yeah [student] To what? [student] Yeah. [student] Yeah. Ah, sure, yeah, yeah, functioning thin we're gonna talk about next class, actually, two classes from now. It comes up in logic, okay. {..ngupa tsennyi} means the definition of a thing is something that does something. Okay.

Yeah. [student]

Yeah. Yeah. It sounds selfish. I mean, it very much strikes the Judaic-Christian background especially, if you say, hey give Pelma a pen, you're gonna get sixteen back in three days, you know what I mean.

And then it seems like ignoble. It doesn't seem very noble. Hey, in Buddhism, you can have your cake and eat it too.

And just forget that old thing, you know. You can have your cake and eat it too, meaning, you can't avoid being successful if you're a Dharma person. You can't avoid being happy all the time. You can't avoid being surrounded by beautiful people all the time. You can't avoid it, okay.

If you're practising well, you're gonna be physically prosperous, you're gonna be healthy, you're gonna be happy, you're gonna be emotionally stable, you're gonna be surrounded by beautiful people.

You can't avoid it if you're practising well. You see what I mean?

And the highest stages of Buddhist practice are quite pleasant. Period. Okay. [laughs] [laughter] No, it's not like you have to beat yourself or something like that.

It doesn't work that way, okay.

The better your practice gets the more blissful it is. And the highest practices are the most blissful practices. Period.

That's the way it works because you are purifying your world. You are purifying your life. And there's no contradiction.

Of course, in the back of your mind, you have to have, you know, I want to reach total happiness to help other people.

But there's no contradiction between reaching total happiness, the best thing you could do for other people is to reach total happiness. Got it?

You see, you are sworn, when you took your bodhisattva vows, you swore to reach total happiness to help other people, you know.

It's a blissful path to bliss. You know what I mean.

And don't get in this mood that you have to sacrifice your happiness so that other people can be happy. That's not true at all, you know.

[student] It's a good question. He says, I understand all that, but should I focus on helping other people or helping myself?

What's the definition of bodhichitta?

{...}, I forget the rest. {...}, something like that. Anyway, the long definition is, you focus on other beings and wish to help them and then your second focus, equal focus, is to reach total bliss for yourself so that you can help them. You see what I mean.

So it's actually, it's called {...lo}, which means the 'state of mind with two focuses' is the definition of bodhichitta, you know. So, yeah, it's both.

You're thinking, I want to perfect myself so I can help other people. You know what I mean. And, frankly, everyday that goes by that you're practising well, everything gets

increasingly blissful. You know what I mean. And there's a bodhisattva vow against what? It's called, thinking that you have to stay alone or something like that. Thinking that you have to stay in samsara. It's a myth and you break a bodhisattva vow if you think that the role of a bodhisattva is to suffer while other people get enlightened or something like that, to stay suffering while other people get enlightened.

That's not what the book meant. And it is so wrong that there's a bodhisattva vow against it, okay.

Thinking that, you know, what are you gonna delay your Buddhahood to help other people? Yeah, yeah, I can do better with one lousy Michael Roach than with ten million emanations of a holy angel. Yeah, I'd better wait. You know what I mean. Come on.

That's just a old Dharma myth, okay.

You have to get yourself enlightened then you can emanate about a billion bodies. Why would you want to delay that, you see what I mean? That's your job. That's what you're supposed to do, okay.

Yeah. [student] Oh, two bodhisattva's [unclear] fighting. [laughter] [laughs]

[student] Yeah, good, yeah, yeah, I'm glad you brought it up. This is what I'm really talking about and the sergeant's telling me you have to [unclear]

You should be asking what Brook's is asking. So, what about the raw data, you see? What about the cylinder? Okay. What about that?

You keep calling it raw data. You keep saying these two things are appearing to you. Now what about the cylinder? Does the same rule apply to the cylinder?

Absolutely. Everything's like that. Okay. Oh, one of the parts of the cylinder; let's talk about the top of the cylinder. You look at the top of the top and the bottom of the top, your mind puts them together, your karma makes you call it 'top', okay. It's infinite. It's an infinite regression, okay.

And you look at the bottom of the top and your mind looks at the top of the bottom of the top and the bottom of the bottom of the top and your mind puts those two together and calls it 'bottom of a top of a pen', okay.

It's one way to establish emptiness to keep going down, I call it onion layers, and you're looking for something which is not a product that your mind has made from a couple of pieces. And you never find an end. There is no end.

And that's one of the ways to see emptiness.

[student] Okay. [student] Yeah. [student] Yeah, I mean, it's a common question and it's, like, half your homework questions are like that.

The fact that, do you know how you use a microscope and you go down a level, like, you're grading diamonds with a microscope. You go down to the middle of the diamond and look for spots. Then you come back up to the top of the diamond and look for spots.

So when you're focussing on the pen, the two pieces together, the cylinder is the raw data. When you're focussing on the cylinder, the two pieces of the cylinder are the raw data.

That raw data, unexamined, exists out there and that's a principle of Madhyamika. You have to understand that. There is raw data. I am perceiving two pieces of a pen and my mind is organising them into a pen, okay.

And at that point that you say what is the emptiness of the pen, this is raw data and it's a priori and it's assumed and it exists there, okay.

Then when you go down another microscope level and look at the cylinder, it's just two pieces of a cylinder being organised into a cylinder by whose mind? Both the dog and the

human but not by a blind person 'cos they don't have the karma. You see what I mean. It's very interesting.

You're not blind because you don't have the karma. Sorry. You don't not have the karma because you're blind, you don't have the karma because you're blind. You don't have the [laughter] you know what I mean.

You're not a dog [laughter]. I'll say it. I got it now. You don't see this as a chewy toy because you're a dog, you're a dog because you see it as a chewy toy. And get used to that. That's profound.

You don't see this as a pen because you're a human. You're a human because you see it as a pen. You see what I mean. And that's very profound. You see what I mean.

That means everything is possible. Emptiness makes everything possible.

I'll take one more question and then I think you guys need to look into the pieces of the refreshments, okay.

Yeah. [student] Oh, man, I was afraid somebody would ask me that. [laughter]

Does even Buddha do that?

Yeah, even Buddha does that. But there's one big difference. They are in no way fooled by the process. They understand what they're doing as they're doing it, okay. They understand totally what's happening while it's happening, okay, big difference.

The benchmark of being an ignorant living being who's still suffering is that you're not aware of it.

It takes like a whole hour to get you to see it that way just for a second and then you lose it again. And then, the person who takes the refreshments before you do is like, [laughter] you see what I mean? You know, you forget all this projection stuff. [laughter] No, you forget that you're creating them.

They're totally your creation. How do you get rid of this person?

Share. Share with people. And you can't hold that for more than a few minutes and then you lose it. You see what I mean.

You'll lose it by the time you get back there. Okay.

Anyway, the goal is to keep it in mind all the time. And then, the real way to get rid of your problems, is not to shoot people or argue with them or try to convince them. It's to do the opposite kind of behaviour. That's all.

If you have a problem with people being stingy on you, it's because you're not sharing enough.

If you have a problem with irritating people around you, it's because you're irritating to others. Okay.

And it doesn't matter what you say to them or don't say to them, 'cos it won't fix it, okay. That's all.

Alright, have some refreshments. See you in awhile.

[cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

To repeat that, if you are, we're gonna start having interviews [announcement re plans during retreat]

I've agreed that to consider teaching the secret teachings to people who have finished the eighteen courses. I think it's very hard to get through the eighteen courses and not be a

worthy vessel for the secret teachings, okay. Although it's conceivable, so I'm saying, you know, but that's the general idea, that intellectually, I think you have to cover four areas. One is intellectual, so that's the courses. You have to try to work on those. [course arrangements]

So, that's to me, your intellectual life is covered like that. You need it, okay.

You hear about all these big mystics who went into deep meditation and saw emptiness, blah, blah, blah, you know. [unclear] Milarepa went up into a cave. Do you know how old he was when he went? I like it. [laughter] Forty-seven, which will be my age when I start my three year retreat. [laughter]

No, what I'm saying, he studied his ass off before that and that's why he had such a good retreat, okay.

And you have to have that. Your skull is like wood and it just penetrates slowly. You have to hear it again and again. You have to hear it year after year. And it doesn't matter if you understood what I said tonight about the emptiness of the pen or something. You have to hear it hundreds of times and then it just goes a little deeper and deeper.

There's an intellectual process and then there's a spiritual process. And the second one takes longer.

In the monastery we're encouraged to go sit in classes, like, when I was at the fifteen year old level, right, I was encouraged to sit in Madhyamika classes which were about nine years ahead of me. It's like being an eighth grader and going sitting in a Freshman college class. Oh, it's worse, like a graduate school class.

And you don't know what's going on.

And they say in the monastery you just sit there and absorb it, you know. And you just sit there and you listen. You hear the words flying around and you hear them arguing these concepts and you have no idea what they're talking about.

Eight years later, you go into that class and suddenly it all bursts on you. You see what I mean.

So the whole process of spiritual realisations requires study at the beginning and you can't get out of it. And don't say, the Buddha said it over and over again.

The Dalai Lama said it, where was that? Washington DC. Chee, where's Chee? Yeah, remember, He said, - he helped organise it.

It was like, He said, I'll tell you what you've got to do: study, study, study, study, study.

You know what I mean. And I was like that, you know. [laughter] So you have to. The first thing is that, okay.

That's the first thing you have to take care of during the three years.

Second thing is, yeah. [student]

Don't mind if you do them on your own, okay. I personally, the position of the lineage is that it's much more powerful to get it from a human being, okay.

So if there's any way you can be in New York to get it from a human being, or Perth, Australia, or where's the other places? I don't know.

West Coast of Australia, East coast, Melbourne. Anyway, there'll be different places in the world they'll be going on. But there's a blessing to the human being speaking it that can't be replaced by tapes and notebooks. Those are emergency measures for people in Iowa, okay.

[laughter]

The last three courses you must take from a human being or I won't consider teaching you tantra, okay. The last three review courses you have to take from a human being, okay.

Second thing you need is daily practice, obviously. You have to keep up at least an hour of meditation every day.

And you have to keep up your book.

And I will not consider teaching tantra subjects to a person who has not maintained their book for three years.

Now can you miss some days?

You know you're going to miss some days. I miss days.

Can you miss a month?

You probably will miss a month.

But if it's like what we call, what's it called? There's a word for it. I forgot. Anyway, dismissing the teaching, you know what I mean, like, if you're actively saying this is stupid and I refuse to do it or something like that. Then, I refuse to teach you tantra. Period. Okay. You have to respect that practice.

And it's also a requirement after you take tantric teachings. So it's especially, if you break it after you take the teachings you go to vajra hell instead of just normal hell, okay.

So it's up to you.

Yeah. [student]

Where do you keep all those books?

What I do is I collect, the students give them to me. I spread them around my room. [laughter] people sneak in and read them thinking it's mine. And I have the most interesting conversations with people. I write in Russian and Tibetan, so if it's not like that you're reading someone else's book. [laughs] Okay.

I usually, personally, I like to keep them. And then I go back, like, I started in eighty-six or something like that, and I go back and I see if I still have a problem or I don't have a problem. You know what I mean. So I think they are useful for that. You know what I mean. But, you know, if it looks like a problem or something, throw them away. Throw them in a river or an ocean or a lake is a custom or burn them is a custom, okay.

So that's a book and a daily practice, okay.

Then thirdly, you have to be doing some kind of retreat.

The students that have Vajrayogini I would like to request that you try to do two tantric retreats a year called {lerung}. And those take four, five weeks.

If you can't do that because of your work schedule or something like that then at least one good retreat a year of four to five weeks. And you work it out, okay. It's your life. And if you really want to you can work it out, okay, with a little work.

Once you've done one or two you realise that people don't miss you so much. [laughs] You know, you thought you were indispensable to your boss or your wife or your dog and turns out they do quite well without you. Kind of discouraging, actually. And then it turns out you really can accommodate it.

The first one I ever did when I was working in this big corporation was very difficult. It was an emotional struggle with all my workers and all my bosses.

The second one was a little less emotional. And then the third and fourth, you know, they just call me up. I remember getting out in [unclear], Arizona, and calling up to do the HMO plans, you know, and it was fine. And everyone was, like, oh, you did one of those retreats, that's cool, you know.

Because you come back a much better person, and you actually make much more money, you know. I made millions more dollars for my boss after those retreats that before because your mind is totally powerful after that.

So, they won't mind, okay. Will they share it with you? That depends on what you did in retreat.

The last thing, and I want to emphasise it, that I expect and I that I hope you will do, you have to do some kind of service of other people, okay.

People ask me, you know, I went to school with Khen Rinpoche with twenty, thirty, forty other people, you know. Now I can debate. I'm a geshe. I really can debate anyone in the monastery for five, six hours at a time in Tibetan. And I can read any text out of hundreds of thousands of texts. I can just pick it up and it's like a newspaper.

And that's greatly to do with the service of me lama, you know. And I think the difference is serving your lama and serving other people. And I count it as the same thing, you know.

So the fourth thing I really encourage you to do during the three years is find some way to serve other people, you know, and serve your lama if you have a lama, okay, if you have a person you consider your root lama. But there's nothing more powerful. And it's really, in my mind, the same thing, you know. When I was serving Khen Rinpoche, built his house, you know, taught him English, fixed his teeth, got his eye glasses, you know, things like that, did his taxes [laughs] and stuff like that. Just stuff that helps, cooked for him for eight years straight, every meal, okay.

And that's the kind of stuff. Also we had a program and still have a program where we helped all the old Mongolian people out in New Jersey.

So we were at Social Security once a week, we did all the doctors appointments, translated for them, did all the nursing home placements, you know. People would just come to the temple, we would place them in a nursing home. We would do all that work for people. Diabetics, we would go and shoot them up in the morning [laughs] you know. Really. I mean, that was my day and that was the kind of day, you know. Drive anybody who needs it to shop or something like that.

So I encourage you. I don't think that you can get really heavy spiritual results if you don't have number four also.

We don't have here a normal, a steady program of that kind of thing. It's mostly people doing it who have an urge to do it.

Like, Pelma is doing a lot of prison work and outreach work for people in mental institutions and stuff like that. And she's doing a lot of that work. And people are doing it out of instinct but I urge you. Your study and your meditation and your retreats will take off if you do some kind of service of other people, okay.

So I urge you to do that and maybe try to organise it better among our group, you know, so that, like, people are doing the prison work together. Like, the correspondence course or something like that.

Something to help other people, something, where you volunteer couple of hours a week to help somebody.

And that is to serve your lama. See what I mean. That is the service of your lama. So I count service of beings and service of your lama together, as number four.

That's the fourth thing you should be doing during the three years.

As far as Arizona, [announcement]

We'll do a prayer.

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas in Buddhism
Class Five
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start.

My attendants forgot to bring my robes to the meeting I was in, so you get me as dressed normal tonight. I think it's good once in a while so that especially, like, people who watch these classes by correspondence course in Iowa five years from now will see that. There's also a use for a bodhisattva I think to appear in different ways in different times. And I think, like Khen Rinpoche, when I, he sent me to New York and he sent me to go to work. And he said, you know, wear your hair longer, wear a suit, look normal on the outside and then run the company as a Buddhist on the inside. And there's a benefit to that sometimes.

So anyway, they forgot my robes. [laughter]

Tonight we start the study of {tsema}. [cut]

Say {tsema}[repeat] {tsema}[repeat]. The Geshe course and the studies in the monastery are divided into five great subjects. We spend first twelve years on {..}, Abhisamayamkara, which is Perfection of Wisdom. Then we do four years on Madhyamika Avatara, Chandrakirti {uma la drupa}, which is Middle Way philosophy, emptiness.

Then we spend two years on {dzu}, which is Abhidharmakosha, Vaibashika system. Then we spend two years on {dulwa}, Vinaya. And every winter for about four months we study {tsema}.

The Sanskrit for {tsema} is Pramana. Pramana means, valid perception, a normal perception, valid perception, okay.

You have them all day long, okay. All day long you have pramanas, okay. And, you know, they've been translated as 'valid cognisers' and stuff like that and, you know, very, very, sounds like, gee, I don't know if I've ever had a valid cogniser.

But all it means is a normal perception, okay. And you have them all throughout the day over and over again. Every minute you have like a few hundred valid perceptions, normal perceptions, okay.

What's not a {tsema}? What's a non-{tsema}? What's a non-pramana? What's an example of a non-pramana?

Non-pramana, the one I like to say the most, when I'd be driving in New Jersey down Fifth Street and it's dusk and it's in the autumn. And these leaves get blown across the road and you see a blur off your peripheral vision. And then you slam on the brakes because you think it's a squirrel. There's lots of squirrels there.

And then you see it's just a leaf being. That moment of false perception is called {tsemin gyi lo}. That's a non-pramana, you see. And those don't happen very often.

Another example would be, at work you are jealous of someone or you think someone is out after you. And then you come into work and there's something bad has happened. And then you get the whole thing in your mind that this person has done something to you. That they planned it, that they executed it and this problem is happening to you because of this

person. And then you find out they quit the company three days ago. They're not even there anymore. It's just your, it's just a non valid perception, you know, it's just your paranoia because you don't like this person.

And those are two very common examples. You're jealous of somebody so every move they make, everything they do seems to have meaning. You give it meaning, wrong meaning, you know, what I mean, and that's not a pramana either. Okay.

But ninety-nine point nine-nine percent of your perceptions are pramanas. And you go around all day having pramanas, okay.

Why is pramana important? Why do we study it for three, four months every year for eighteen years, you see what I mean? What's so important about it?

It's the science of learning how you know something. How do you know something is true? How do you decide if something is true or not? And in every religion you need to determine what is pramana, you know, how do you decide if something is true or false. What are the means at your disposal to decide whether something is true or false?

For that you need pramana. You have to study what are the different ways of perceiving something, okay.

So, really, pramana is the study of how you see things, how you perceive things, how do you confirm that something is true. Okay.

And that's the study of pramana. And we do it, it's a big deal in Tibetan monasteries. The first class that a young monk ever takes at age thirteen, in philosophy, is how to debate, how to reason, how to think. And you do it for two years with your house teacher and then you're allowed to go to the debate ground and start serious debating, logic. Okay.

In debate, you know, three, four, five hours a day, usually in the evening, every other day in the morning for a couple more hours, you go to a special garden with a wall around it and you sit on these beautiful flagstones.

And at night it's just so pleasant. In India the stars are out. We didn't used to have electricity at night.

And you walk into this walled courtyard and there'll be about three hundred people there. And it's like a high school dance. You walk around, you know, and you kind of, you go like that and the guy goes, [laughter] you know what I mean. And you around and try to catch somebody's eye that you'd like to debate with.

And the first hour or hour and a half is open one on one debating, meaning, you just walk around until, oftentimes you're just milling around and you just bump into a guy, you know. You just, you're standing there looking at each other and you might not even know him and you say, okay, you want to go at it, you know. He says, yeah.

So, one guy sits down, one guy stands up and you just start.

Usually they're not in the same class as you. There's about fifteen classes in the monastery that you move up through. It's like freshman, sophomore, junior, but they have their own name. Like, those who get to wear the wool tunics, you know, that's like year number sixteen or something.

And then you start. And one guy stands up; one guy sits down. You get a rosary. Do you have a rosary?

And you say, you go like this, you know, and you think of something real fast, okay. And the other guy's sitting down. I'll just show you a little bit. I don't want to disrupt you or anything. [laughter]

Ready, Pelma? [laughs]

This is how it really goes. You go up and the first move is very respectful. {dhi chitar chuchen}. And {dhi} there's two interpretations of {dhi}. {dhi} means either {dhi} meaning wisdom or knowledge in Sanskrit, {dhi}.

Some people say {dhi} means {di chitar chuchen}, what about this? In Tibetan {di} means 'this', you see.

{dhi chitar chuchen}. And then you say, {...}. Means, I guess that quotation at the beginning of the pramana book, the logic book, that says people like me, if you're not a person like me you shouldn't try to judge other people, doesn't have any meaning at all.

{...} [laughter] {...}

It's like, oh, you worthless thing, you know. Okay. [laughs] And it's so fun. [laughter] It's like the most fun thing, [laughter] you know.

And you do that for five, six hours. Your hand starts to split, blood is spraying in his face, you know. And it's really fun.

And, you know, you're a twenty year old guy and you're celibate and, you know [laughter]. You're like, and they've got these big muscles, you know and they love it. And it's really good for a monk, you know. It's really, really good for energy.

And everything is from memory. You cannot take a book in the debate ground. You'd be embarrassed forever, you know. Everything has to be, you have to memorise page after page after page.

And then you start. And you make a very subtle wrong statement, you know, just a little bit wrong.

And then they have to come back at you. And there's just this, you learn confidence, you know.

Guys, thirteen year old, fifteen year old guys go in there, you know, {...} [laughter]. And then their teacher grabs them and takes them back and shows them how to, [laughter] you know.

It's beautiful. And you can imagine three hundred guys, you know, a hundred and fifty screaming guys. [laughter]

And then the guy is, like, {du, ...}, you know, like, you idiot anyone can see that, you know.

No.

Yes.

No.

Yes.

Maybe.

No.

Yes.

And you got to be like that quick. And he's throwing logic at you, you know, thing after thing. And you go on for hours and hours.

It's, like, unbelievable. By the end of the night you know what you're studying perfectly.

And every morning you get about two or three hours of class and every night you're debating it. So then by the next day you're loaded, you know, like you've already, you know it backwards and forwards, okay.

And that's the whole goal of, that custom hasn't changed since the day of the Buddha.

In the Buddha's time was very serious. If you lost the debate you had to join the other guy's religion. Okay.

If the Baptists and the Catholics had a debate and the king and his cabinet would watch and they'd say we consider this guy has stopped speaking, you know. This guy has nowhere to

go and everyone in the whole courtyard can see it, you know. You don't have to be a Buddhist or a philosopher. This guy can't say anything else. He's checkmated. You have to join the other religion.

And they would take off their robes and they would join the other religion, you know. The stakes were very high in the old days.

And it was who could prove something, you see, how can you prove it.

It's also very good if you're going to be a teacher. You learn to take heat. You learn to be under pressure. You learn to, you know, you learn to think ahead. You're usually thinking four, five moves ahead of the other guy. It's like a chess game.

And there's a flowchart. You're at each of those five permutations and you're ready any way he goes, you know.

When you do your Geshe debate and your pre-Geshe debate you actually have to write out the flowchart of every possible answer for, like, an hour.

And you go into the cornfield. You get a huge roll of rice paper and you start writing tiny little flowcharts and then you pin it to your door and you memorise it for three, four months, you know. Like, and that's one of your Geshe debates, you know, and it's really beautiful. You hire a calligrapher to do the final thing, you know. And people keep them for the rest of the lives. It's like a college degree or something.

Anyway, pramana's for that.

The classic use of pramana in the beginning {...}. Buddha says, don't judge other people if you don't really know what they're thinking. If you can't tread their minds then don't judge them.

And it refers to an ancient story of a bodhisattva who left the monastery during the day to go teach lay people in the city. And then one other monk was jealous of him and started rumours about his behaviour.

And then, and then, you know, other monks started to judge this person and then, finally, they threw him out of the monastery or he had to leave the monastery.

And Lord Buddha is reciting this tale because he was the person who was the nasty monk who judged the other monk. And because of that he lost his robes in five hundred lifetimes. He was born as a dog for five hundred lifetimes.

And then he's giving advice, you know. Learn pramana because if you learn pramana you know what's true and you know what's not true. And especially you know that you can't judge other people 'cos you can't read anyone's mind around you so just forget it. Take care of your mental afflictions don't try to manage other people's mental afflictions.

There's this whole art of managing other people's bad deeds and mental afflictions, you know. It's like, I think the book is a good example. Would you go to somebody and say, you know, I know your bad deeds better than you. Can I do your book for you today? You know what I mean? [laughs] can I keep track of your bad deeds for you? I mean, you'd never do that. You'd never say that but you do it all day long. You know what I mean.

You're constantly judging other people. Constantly believing you that know what they think or why they're acting how they're acting, even what they're doing.

Especially as you practice more and more your whole perceptions change radically. If Buddhist practice works then, for example, my perception of my reality is much different than it was twenty-five years ago.

If Buddhist practice doesn't work then I'm seeing the world the same way I did twenty-five years ago, see what I mean.

Even if I've given it a little effort I'm seeing the world in a radically different way after twenty-five years of Buddhist practice.

So how do you know how people are thinking or perceiving things or seeing things?

You can't.

And the study of pramana is for that.

I want to talk a little bit about the logic side of pramana and then we'll talk a little bit about one of the most famous applications of pramana in perceiving emptiness, okay.

So, we're talking about what makes, what makes a pramana. What are the kinds of pramana?

Basically, two types of pramana, very simply. And we study hundreds and hundreds of pages but I'm just shortening it like that, okay.

One, the things you see with your eyes, and ears and nose and tongue; direct perceptions. Thoughts you have, directly, in your mind when you hear [unclear] talking in your mind. You know what I mean.

When you hear your mind talking. Those are direct perceptions, okay. And those are correct except for when the leaf is crossing the road or something like that.

Secondly, we have what we call deductive perceptions. Meaning, you know, can you see this pen?

Yeah.

Did you hear anything drop behind me?

No. I hope not.

What do I have behind my back?

A pen, okay.

Is that a pramana? Is your perception of that pen a pramana?

We say, yes, deductive perception, okay.

So in Buddhism, what you have to appreciate in Buddhism, is that seeing it with your eyes and seeing it with your mind, are equally valid, equally valid, okay.

And it's as good as seeing it with your eyes.

And there are many spiritual truths, there are many kinds of reality that you cannot see right now. You can only figure them out. Okay.

You can figure out that they're there. Later, you can see them directly. But, hey, don't deny yourself the benefits of understanding that it's there before you see it directly.

It's like certain types of physics or astronomy where you can't see the object itself but you see its traces so you know it's there. It's the same thing.

It's the study of perceiving objects with reasoning, okay. And you have to realise that in Buddhism that counts as good as your eyes, okay.

If you see emptiness with your reasoning it's as good as your eyes.

What's the point of all this, you see?

It'll be a long time before you can see, if you are whom you seem to be and I don't know, it'll be a long time before you can see emptiness or before you can, especially, see how karma works, directly, okay.

But if you figure out that karma makes sense, then you can do this thing of, the most difficult thing for a Buddhist to do, knowing that karma is true.

Like, if your boss says will you go out and lie to this supplier so that I can save a thousand dollars on the next bill, tell him this diamond is only worth so and so. And if it works, okay, we made a thousand bucks. I might even give you a dollar at your Christmas bonus, you

know. But the company will make more money and if it doesn't work we'll just pay him what it's worth, so it's okay.

So he tells you to lie. You go out. You lie. And it works. And he sells the thing to you for a thousand dollars under value, okay.

Did it work? See, that's the big thing in Buddhism. Did it really work? You know, according to Buddhism, it's impossible for a lie to produce a thousand dollars.

According to Buddhism the thousand dollars was created because you were generous in the past and the lie is gonna result in something like nobody believing you in the future.

And the fact that the lie came just before the thousand dollars, there's no connection at all; it's a total illusion, see what I mean.

You can understand that intellectually. At a certain point in your Buddhist practice you can live on that basis, you see what I mean. You can refuse to do negative actions because you know they can't help.

Even if they seem to help they don't help, you see what I mean. By the way, I'm not trying to prove that tonight, but what's the proof anyway that lies don't produce profits?

They don't always work, you see. They don't always work.

Are you telling me that generosity always works?

Yeah. Yeah. Every time you're generous to someone you get hundreds of times more back. Period. And it's the only thing that works.

And if you happen to get more money right after you told a lie, it's just happening next to each other and there's no cause and effect there, okay.

Now, once you've figured it out through hundreds of hours of Buddhist classes that this is probably correct, you know, once you're satisfied that this is correct, you've had a deductive pramana, a deductive perception of the truth of this thing. And then you start living by it even before you can directly see the future or your future lives. You start living by it now.

That's the use of pramana; that's the use of deduction, you see what I mean.

You start living a totally pure life now because you're convinced by deduction that it works but you can't perceive it, you know.

I can't see that if I give this pen away to Pelma, I gave it to her last class, I still didn't have any pens this week, you know. I don't believe it, you know, or something like that.

By deduction I believe it, you see. And the reason to study deduction in Buddhism, the reason to study logic, is for that, okay.

It's to get you acting on that basis and getting yourself into a tantric paradise because you've reasoned it out that this is correct before you can see directly that money leads to money and bad deeds lead to bad results, you know. On deduction you figured it out that it's probably true and act on that, you see what I mean.

That's the great benefit. And we're gonna talk about perceiving emptiness through deduction. You have to see it first by reasoning and then later you have this immense twenty minutes that stops your suffering forever, you know.

You become an enlightened being because of that twenty minutes, you see what I mean.

First you have to see it with reasoning, deduction. And then, later, you see it directly. But you have to go through this process. So you need pramana.

Yeah. [student]

Oh, those are kinds of pramana, yeah. Those are kind of deductions. There's three kinds of deduction and this is a whole lifetime of study. You could spend a lifetime on it, okay.

And it's beautiful. I only put one course in the syllabus for logic 'cos I was afraid most

people wouldn't like it. But I think in Arizona, after three years, we'll get really serious about it.

We'll have a English debating and go over the real, the real course in logic would take you five or six years to finish, you know what I mean.

And it's beautiful and it's intense and it's, you know, it's just incredible, okay.

I'm gonna give you a taste of it, okay. Ready?

It's something that I was not attracted to and I did not like and I thought was worthless. And, you know, Khen Rinpoche kindly convinced me to study it and now it's like the most precious thing.

Gyaltseb Je, I believe it was, said that the kindest think that Je Tsongkapa ever did for him was to teach him logic.

[cut]

Say {tak si kuppa}[repeat]. It's like a mantra in the debate ground, {tak si kuppa tak kyi tsennyi yinpa tel}. Okay. {tak si kuppa} means, anything which is put forth as a reason; anything which is posited by the opponent as a reason is a reason, okay.

The sky is blue because potatoes are twenty feet high.

What's the {tak}? What's the reason?

Potatoes are twenty feet high.

Is it a reason?

Yes.

Why? It's false.

It doesn't matter. {tak si kuppa tak kyi tsennyi}, anything that you put forward as the reason is the reason, okay.

I didn't say 'good reason' did I? Okay. {...} means, it doesn't matter if the thing exists or not, everything is a reason. Everything you can choose is a reason, okay. Choose anything. Because rabbit's horns are thirteen inches long except in the winter, okay, is a reason. Everything is a reason {...} anything existing or not existing can be used as a reason. Because somebody can say my reason for saying this is that rabbits have horns that are thirteen inches long. And that's enough to be a reason.

That's all you need to be a reason, okay. I didn't say 'good reason', okay.

Maybe we should go onto good reason. Okay.

[cut]

Say {tsul sum}[repeat] {yinpa}[repeat] {tak yangdak}[repeat], okay. {tsul sum} means, the three relationships; the three necessary relationships, okay. {tsul} means, relationship here, {sum} means three, {yinpa} means that reason with which the three relationships hold in which they are true, okay. That reason in which the three relationships hold is the definition of {tak yangdak}. {tak yangdak} means correct reason, okay, correct reason.

So a correct reason always has, enjoys three relationships with other parts of your statement and we're gonna go through them now. Because I would be embarrassed if somebody said, oh, this is a Geshe that graduated from ACI but they don't know {tsul sum}, okay.

Rinpoche had a sweet student from Washington DC named Susan Manheim. He christened her 'tsul sum' 'cos he heard 'Susan' as 'tsul sum'. So we call McKenna {tsul sum}, that's why McKenna, okay. Where are you? [laughter] Okay. So, don't worry about it. That's just a joke, okay. [laughs]

Okay, I'm gonna give you the three relationships. It takes in the monastery maybe two months to thrash out these three, right. We'll do it. [cut]

{... tsennyi}, you know. I haven't done it for like six, seven years, but it's like a mantra, okay. {chok chu} means the relationship between the reason and the subject holds, okay.

So, I'll tell you what the reason and the subject is.

The classical argument for all logic is {dra ...} which means, take sounds, it's a changing thing, because it's made. You can say, it's a made thing.

When they teach logic to baby monks it's always {dra ...}, you know, and they go around, you know. They're really good at all the hand stuff and then they don't remember what to say sometimes. [laughter] [laughs]

But it's really cute to see, like, two seven-year old monks, you know, going at it. Anyway. This is a response to non-Buddhist schools of ancient India that said that OM was eternal and that OM didn't change. You see what I mean.

But the sound OM lasted forever and didn't change. Okay. Which, according to Buddhism, is silly because you have to breathe to say it so it changes. You see what I mean?

Anything that has a cause changes which is a long story. I'm not going to get into it now. But {chok chu} means that the subject, which in this case is sound, and the reason, which in this case is a made thing, do have a relationship. Sound is a made thing. Okay.

This is a, so far, this is a good logical statement to give to someone as a proof for something because the subject and the reason have a relationship.

The reason applies to the subject, okay. It's true that sound is a made thing. That's {chok chu}, okay.

So you can define {chok chu} as the relationship between the subject and the reason, okay. It holds.

The first proof, the first test of a good proof holds, which is that sound is a made thing, okay. So the first one is okay. We're one third of the way of proving this logical statement.

Okay, number two. The first {tsul} holds. [cut]

Say {je kyap}[repeat], {je kyap} literally means 'reverse necessity', okay. Reverse necessity, wow. And by the way, logic is a whole separate language in Tibetan.

There's probably five hundred unique words in the study of logic and, you know, they're very, very, you need a good teacher and you need to study it for a long time.

What does 'reverse necessity' mean?

It's very simple. If something is a made thing it must be a changing thing. You see, you're just going backwards in the proof.

Now I'm going to use this mark, okay. If something is a made thing it must be a changing thing. Is that true? If something has been created by causes must it be changing all the time? Yeah, because the cause has a certain energy that it imparts to the result and the result varies as the cause has put energy into it, you see. You hit the white ball with pool cue and it hits the eight ball and then the energy is transferred to that. And because the energy of the white ball is not infinite what happens to the black ball?

Hopefully it stops short of the pocket. You see what I mean. The energy wears out.

Everything's like that. Everything's like that. All caused things are like that.

The cause imparts a certain energy to the result and because the cause's energy is finite, sooner or later, the result slows down. And it slows down incrementally all the time. So it's always changing.

Anything which has ever been produced is necessarily changing all the time 'cos its energy is getting lost. You know that if you're over forty, okay. Like, you're losing your energy 'cos the cause is wearing out.

What's the cause?

Your karma; your perception of health and vitality is wearing out. Okay.

So, anything that was ever made is always changing. That's the {je kyap}.

So, relationship number two holds. {tsul sum} number two holds, okay. Necessity means, 'must be', okay.

If it's number three it must be number two. [cut]

Sorry. [student] Ah, {drupte chu}. [laughs] The thing to be proven. The quality to be proven, okay. The changing thing part.

Say {dokyap}[repeat]; {do kyap} means, if something's not number two it can't be number three. And it's just another test of veracity. It's another truth test. If something cannot be number two, if something is not number two it cannot be number three. Which is just to say, if something is not a changing thing it cannot be a made thing. Okay. If it weren't changing it couldn't be made.

If you really think about {je kyap} and {do kyap}, if {je kyap} holds for something {do kyap} has to hold. And there's some exotic exceptions but anyway it's like a confirmation step. It's a verification step. okay.

If these three relationships hold, {chok chu} being, one is three, {je kyap} being, if something is two, I'm sorry, if something is three must be what? Two. And then, {do kyap} if something is not two cannot be three, okay.

If you've tested a statement and if those three relationships hold true then the statement must be true, okay. And that's the test of a correct reason.

So, we've gone from reason, which was what? Defined as what?

Anything you want to say as a reason, you know.

I don't like you because, you know, ice cream is too sweet, you know. It's a reason.

Doe sit have the three {tsuls}?

Is ice cream sweet?

Yes.

Is something being sweet the reason not to like somebody?

No.

If you like somebody are they always not sweet?

No.

So it's a bad reason?

Right. Okay. That's all. And these are the three tests of a good reason.

Now I'll tell you the neat punch line and then we'll go to an actual thing. A good opponent, a worthy opponent, a proper opponent in a debate must already accept that it has all three.

Okay. Not allowed to give an argument to somebody unless they already accept all three.

Okay.

You mean I can't give this argument sound is a changing thing because it's a made thing to anybody unless they have already seen that the three parts are true?

Right.

What do they have to see?

Sound is made thing. If something is made it has to be changing. If it's not changing it can't be made.

And if he doesn't say, I agree, I agree, I agree, to all three, you have given him a bad reason. It's very beautiful.

In Buddhist logic if your opponent doesn't already accept the truth of all three parts you've

given him a false reason.

You see, the test of falsity is not universally true or false. The test of falsity is have you chosen the right reason to give to this opponent, okay.

It's very beautiful.

Why do we have to talk about this? What's the point? You want me to put you asleep with the other details of logic, you know. [laughs] We can go on. And, by the way, the book is that thick. I just finished, like, eighty more pages of the readings, you know, 'cos I wanted to give you all the basics of logic in one notebook, okay.

But the point is, in America you are going to be teachers. Whether it's at your job, whether it's with people you talk with, whether it's your family, whether it's with a small group of people in the future, whether it's five hundred people in a hall somewhere in the future, you guys are gonna be the teachers in America.

You are the lineage holders. It's your job.

People ask me is it okay to teach. I'm like, no, it's not okay not to teach. Okay. 'Cos I'm, that's the way it works. You pass on the lineage, okay.

The interesting thing is that more than other people in history you will be called upon to prove what you believe, you know.

People will challenge you all the way from the beginning of the Lam Rim up to the highest tantric practices. People will question you. And they do.

Americans are, well- educated Americans are sceptical. Americans have mostly rejected whatever religions they grew up with. And they are not gonna believe it unless you can prove it. And you have to follow this, you have to know the rules of proving something and you have to honour them or you're not a good Buddhist teacher. You see what I mean.

What it means on the bottom line is you can only give someone an argument that they already accept but they haven't figured it out. Okay. That's the bottom line.

That's what I'm trying to say, you see?

You say, do you think that?

They say, yeah.

Do you think that?

Yeah, yeah, I believe that.

So, necessarily, you believe that?

Oh, god, I never thought of that. I guess I do.

You see what I mean. Very good with like creator god, you know.

You don't go up to somebody and say, do you believe god made the world?

They say, yeah, you know.

You say, well they didn't, you know. [laughter] And you know, that's not a Buddhist debate, okay.

You say something like, if you could make anything you wanted, would you make it nice? If you could make a person would you make him nice or would you make him with AIDS, you know?

They say, you know I'm not crazy, I'd make him nice, you know.

And then you'd say, well, you know, do normal people have AIDS?

And they say, yeah.

So, they weren't made by a nice person, right?

I never thought of that.

You see what I mean?

They say, okay so you can agree with me [unclear] making people who have AIDS. It's not like there's this sadistic guy with this long white beard who says, oh, half the people should have AIDS, two month old kids should inherit AIDS from their parents, you know.

But they just never thought of it that way. You see what I mean. So the trick is to provide the same information that they already know in a different package, so when you lower the boom, they have to go, oh yeah, I guess that's right. You see what I mean. But you set it up, okay, as a logical statement. You get them to agree to the three parts and then you sit back and let them have their conclusion, you know.

And you don't sit there and argue. If you're arguing you've gone too many steps ahead. If you're in an argument with another person to try to convince them of something, if it gets to an argument, you've broken the rules of Buddhist logic already, okay.

What I'm trying to say is you just cruise along on what they believe point after point after point. And you lead them to the conclusion and then you just step back, you know. And then if they say no, no, you know, then you say {...}, well I'm not gonna debate with crazy people, okay. [laughs]

No, I mean, you take them up to the point where you say, do you believe this?

Yeah.

Do you believe that?

Yeah.

Well, don't you think that?

You know, and it's at that point they say I still don't believe that, you know. And then you say, okay, I'll see you later. Okay. Like that.

Why are you trying to convince them, okay?

It's not that Buddhist church is going to get more contributions than other people. Because once you convince them of a Buddhist lifestyle they don't have any money anyway, okay.

[laughs] Okay. It's not like that.

It's that if you can get them to understand emptiness and karma they can reach a tantric paradise in this lifetime. And that's all.

You're just trying to give them something that will save their lives in a very non-missionary, I'm talking someone who's willing to engage with you on a happy, you know, not talking going to work and trying to, you know, fight with people like that.

Buddhists presentation is moving along at a very acceptable ides, acceptable idea, acceptable idea, acceptable idea and then, boom, you know what, then you must have to accept that.

Oh boy. I guess so. You see what I mean? And then you take them through a bunch of times like that.

I had a Baptist, a life long Baptist, a life long Catholic came up to my retreat cabin in Flagstaff one time, childhood friend. And after three days of, we hadn't seen each other since third grade or something. I mean, we met in third grade. We hadn't seen each other since twelfth grade. And then after three days they were both, like, yeah, I can accept everything you say. No problem. I believe in past, future lives. I believe in karma. I believe in emptiness. I'll keep that Buddhist vows and I'll stay a Catholic and a Baptist, you know. That's cool. Like that.

Sarge, I got one more thing, okay. Alright.

The application is in your life. You will be called upon from hour to hour to help people. Help that at a certain rate of speed at which you never use anything that they haven't already accepted to help show them.

All you're doing is just showing them what they already have to, would have accepted if they thought about it. You see what I mean?

That's the art of Buddhist logic, okay.

One more thing. [cut]

Say {chi}[repeat] {jedrak}[repeat]. There's this thing called {dura}. {Dura} is somebody went through the ancient books on logic and pramana and they collected together all the neat little arguments and they made a book called {dura}. {Dura} is baby logic. Every young monk does it for three, four years. You do it with your house teacher. House teacher's like your den mother. Your parents come, they drop you off at the monastery. You get a house teacher, you know. They teach you how to eat. They teach you how to put your robes on. They teach you stuff like that.

Then they teach you {dura}, you know, which is like collected topics of logic. And they start you on the baby stuff, you know. This is blue. This is yellow. If something's blue, all blue, it can't be yellow. Blue and yellow are contradictory. That's what contradiction means. And then you teach them from that, at age, like, thirteen they start. And then, you know, later they get to do formal logic and after that they get to do perceptual theory and then they're about sixteen, seventeen they start doing that.

So it's common in the monastery, in monastic circles, to say what are you working on now days.

And someone will say, {dura}.

And they say, oh boy, back to thirteen-year old stuff, you know what I mean.

I had a lama, a Mongolian lama, Geshe {...}. He was eighty something. He had tuberculosis. One lung was cut out. He was dying in Howell, in the back where lama lives now. And he's on his deathbed and he's propped up on the pillows and he's reading {dura}. He's reading elementary logic and perceptual theory.

I'm, like, Geshe la, are you sure you don't want to do some tantric ritual or anything? And he's like, are you kidding? {Dura's} the most important thing in the world, you know.

And I'm like, why, you know.

And he says, oh man, {dura} you can see emptiness if you know {dura}. You know, I want to set up my next life. You know, I'm setting up my next life, you know. And he gave me that book. I have it. It's at Michael [unclear] house I think.

He gave me his logic book and he died like that, you know, studying {dura}.

This is really the key for seeing emptiness, {chi jedrak}. This is one of the {dura} topics, okay. {chi} means, we're going to call it 'quality' and {jedrak} means 'characteristic'.

[cut]

And if you really want to see emptiness directly, twenty minutes in which you see your enlightenment, you see your future lives, you never need another thing in your whole life. Nothing. Your life is finished. Your enlightenment is certain. You know it. You see it. Nobody in the world can really give you a problem. You see what I mean. Anything can happen. Anyone can think anything of you. But you know what you saw and you saw it and you're on your way. And you know it.

You can do it if you understand {chi jedrak}, okay. You have to understand {chi jedrak}.

So, quality, you can say, "car-ness"; the quality called "car", car with quotation marks.

And, very importantly, you have to write this sentence, okay: thing which is characteristic of “car-ness”, sorry [laughter] of “cars” [cut] which equals ‘a car’, for example, a Chevy.

My father hated Fords for some reason and everything had to be a Chevy. It was a big thing when I was a kid, you know. I don’t know why [laughs] okay. Okay.

So, there’s this quality called “car-ness” or “car” and there are things in the world which are typical of that or characteristic of that. And that’s what I mean when I say, ‘characteristic’, and don’t forget it.

It’s one of the most important things I can ever teach you.

There’s a thing about this subject. Like so many things in Buddhism you cannot understand what I’m about to say unless you have {kelwa}. Say {kelwa}[repeat]; {kelwa} means ‘virtue power’ in your heart from helping other people, from serving your lama, from thinking kind thoughts, from doing good day after day, year after year. You collect this thing called {kelwa}.

If you have {kelwa} you get it. If you don’t have {kelwa} you don’t get it. And there’s no other way to get it, okay. And it goes all the way up to tantra.

You can stand there and tell somebody, look, look, this is a deity. I’m telling you this is a deity. And they look, you know, and they say, looks like a normal schmuck to me, you know. They don’t have {kelwa}, you see. Even if they thought it was polite to agree with you they don’t see it. They don’t have {kelwa}. You see what I mean?

And it causes a lot of problems in the world, you know. You go around saying things to people without {kelwa} and they’re, like, oh you’re crazy or you’re dirty or mad or you’re something because they don’t have {kelwa}, you see what I mean. You got to have {kelwa} to see this.

You have to have {kelwa} to see emptiness.

Rinpoche, before he went into Madhyamika class and traditionally in Sera Me, they went off for six months or a year or meditation to recite mantras or to do something to get good karma. Help the poor, raise money for the poor, stuff like that and then they were allowed to enter madhyamika class ‘cos you got to have {kelwa}, okay.

So here it goes. If it seems irrelevant then go and get some more {kelwa}, alright. [laughs] [laughter]

If you really understood it you would see emptiness directly. It goes like this. You understand subtle impermanence directly. You understand {chi jedrak} directly. Then you see dependent origination. And then, that same day, you see emptiness directly. Period. Okay.

You can’t do it without {kelwa}. You’ve got to have {kelwa}, okay.

So, there’s a thing called {chi}, which is, “car-ness” or I’ll just say it, ready?

“Car”.

Okay. Remember people like that? It’s quote “car”, the idea “car”, the concept “car”, the thing you see in your mind when you close your eyes “car”, when you hear the word “car”; “car-ness”, okay, “car-ity”.

It’s what allows you to recognise a thing as a car. You go out on the street, you look at this shape and this circles and you think, oh, it’s a car.

And the pramana schools were obsessed with this. How do people know it’s an ox when they look at those four sticks and this barrel? What is it, you know?

What makes people understand that? How come they see that, its “ox-ness”? Get it?

You know, you make something in your mind called "ox-ness". There's something in your mind that says "ox-ness", you know.

There's an idea of "ox-ness". There's a quality of "ox-ness".

And when you see this thing you say, oh, that's an ox. Okay. And that's {jedrak}.

A car. A car and "car" are different, right?

A car and "car" are different, okay. A car is characteristic of the quality "car-ness".

A car is characteristic of "car", okay.

So you got to sit there and practise it. You got to think about it. It's not something I can explain any further - especially with him waving his arms, okay.

Which means, no, from then on its {kelwa}. You go to meditate on it. You got to think.

Within this single page is contained the key to see emptiness directly and be out of here. You just have to cook it, okay. You have to meditate on it and you have to collect some good karma.

Go do some {kelwa}. Help somebody, do anything, okay, heavy-duty karma and then sit there and worry about this thing.

My god, he said this was important somehow. I don't get it, you know.

It's absolutely, you will see emptiness a few days after you really get this page, okay.

You have to think about it, okay.

You have a question. [student]

You can say archetype or whatever. [student]

Oh, I think everybody will have a different idea about it but herein lies the key.

It is the most precious teaching on logic. You have to figure it out. I can't do anything else than that.

Yeah. [student]

[laughs] You guys got to debate that, okay. [laughs]

Alright, take a break and we'll do some more logic next time. Okay.

[end side A]

[side B]

[student] [unclear] [student: on Mongolia]

So that's another thing you can do during the three years. And I think it's one of the four pillars of Tibetan Buddhism, was it, meditation, retreat, study, I'm sorry, meditation and retreat, daily practice, study and then serve somebody. Help 'somebody, you see what I mean.

I want to thank Thomas especially. He didn't know what he was getting into. [laughter] He broke his leg just before he got on the plane. He came anyway, on crutches.

[acknowledgement / discussion]

We'll do a prayer.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Six
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: refuge]

[cut]

[private conversation with student]

Okay, we'll start.

We're in the middle of {rik lam}, the least popular course. [laughs] {rik} means, reasoning or logic, {lam} means, path. {rik lam} is the path of logic, path of reasoning.

And I repeat that Je Tsongkapa's most important disciple, Gyaltseb Je, said that the kindest thing that Je Tsongkapa ever did for him was not to give him tantric initiations or {lam rim} teachings or anything else. It was to teach him {rik lam}, okay.

And I wanted to review a typical {rik lam}, okay. Here's a typical {rikpa}. You got to have a {...} which is the subject. Tibetan logic, Buddhist logic comes in three parts. Each logical statement has three parts. First one, you take an example, you point out something. Let's say, take me, take myself, okay, take an object, take anything that you want to prove something about, okay.

I should study and practice more seriously because, by the way, that's called {drup ja}, the thing to be proven, because I'm going to die tonight.

That's actually death meditation. This is the essence of death meditation. Death meditation doesn't mean in the {lam rim} you know, closing your eyes and seeing purple coloured lights and stuff like that. It's to do this reason to yourself over and over again, okay.

What I want to say is that the point of logic is to address places where we just have spiritual obstacles. You see what I mean.

Like, you know these here are true. You know this is a true statement, okay.

Why?

Does your opponent know what 'me' is? These are all the logical checks for a good proof.

Yeah, they know what it means. Okay.

Do they understand what it is to study and practice more seriously?

Yeah.

Do they know they're gonna die tonight?

Well somebody might go say, I'm not gonna die tonight.

You say, how can you say that? Prove it, you know. Okay. You can't prove that. You can't prove that. You can't say that, okay.

If you feel more comfortable you can say I might die tonight but, okay, I won't insist, alright.

But those are like three, the opponent has to understand the essence of the three statements. Meaning: me, practising more seriously and study and what it means to die tonight, that they will die tonight, okay.

The essence of death meditation is to say, 'I will die tonight'. Now, you might get the day wrong, okay, you might get the wrong day but someday you'll get it right. Okay. Really. So it's okay. Alright.

What are the three tests?

{tsul sum yinpa; tak yangdak kyi tsennyi, ...} What's the definition of a good reason, correct reason, correct logical proof?

Three relationships hold. Three relationships hold. {chok chu}, first one, {chok chu}. The relationship between number one and number three.

Is it true that you're going to die tonight?

Yeah, sooner or later, okay. I mean, when you get good at death meditation you'll just say yes, okay. When you get really good at death meditation, death meditation means you're laying in your bed in the morning, you open, I mean, sorry, your mind opens, right, you wake up. And before you open your eyes say, I'm going to die tonight, now what am I going to do? There's a new movie coming out. I look forward to it. It's called The End, I think, Last Day. It's called The Last Day, coming out this Friday. [laughter]

Anyway, so the guy's just read a review. The guy, long story, but [laughter] he's got six hours. He knows he's going to die in six hours. So, what is he going to do in six hours. And the whole planet, everybody knows they're gonna die in six hours. It's, like, everybody has these different reactions.

That's perfect death meditation, okay.

So, before you get up, before you open your eyes you sit there and you just lay there and you say I'm going to die tonight. Now what do I want to do in my life? Okay. That's a real death meditation. And it just works so beautifully.

Like, within about three months or six months of thinking like that your life is totally transformed, okay and you're totally happy, like, you're on the right track. Okay.

So, anyway, the first requirement of a correct logical statement is that one plus three is true.

And that's true, you are going to die tonight. Okay.

If you're going to die now, we check number, logical check number two. If three, two; true or false?

If you're going to die tonight should you practice and study more seriously?

Yeah. So test number two checks out. Okay. True.

If not two, not three. Okay. [laughter]

Is it true you shouldn't study and practice more seriously if you're not going to die tonight?

I don't know. Maybe you could say that. Okay. If you knew you had another day maybe you could lighten up. [laughter] [laughs]

Maybe it's if I don't study and practice more seriously I will die tonight. [laughs] Anyway, something like that. The point here is that the reason to learn logic, okay, is that there's two kinds of objects that you have trouble about. They're called {kokyur} and {shintu kokyur}, hidden and very hidden objects.

Emptiness is called a hidden object, okay.

This is called {ngun gyur}, evident reality, obvious reality; colours and shapes and things you can see and taste and touch, okay.

Then there's a thing called {kokyur} which is, like, hidden reality like emptiness.

Then there's {shintu kokyur} which means very hidden reality, which is like the subtle workings of karma and its consequences, you know. Like, what is it that made the lines on the ceiling or what made the scratches on the floor tiles, you know, each one. What's the karma for you to have to see that? You see what I mean. Only a Buddha can tell you that.

An Arya can see emptiness directly. And then normal people can see this. So really there's three levels of reality going on all the time.

And I had a beautiful debate in Ganden Shartse one night. Wiped them out. And they were trying to, you know it was very beautiful 'cos we came at it without knowing what we were doing. We all hadn't reached that subject yet but we decided that all those three realities shift for each person. You see what I mean.

Like, for a Buddha, everything is reality level number one, you see what I mean. And emptiness is no shakes for them so to them it's the same as colours and shapes. You see what I mean. We had this huge debate about it.

Really, what those three realities are depend on where you're at. And for one person this can be very deep or it could be obvious. You see what I mean. So, what's the point here?

There are certain things that at our level if you are who you seem to be that you can't see and you won't be able to see. You see what I mean.

And you need to use reasoning to see them. And one of the things is that you're going to die tonight, you know. Like, to see, actually the {drup ja} here is this one, to believe that you should really practice as if your hair was on fire they say. You know, that you should do your Dharma practice with the same kind of intensity that you would try to put out a fire if your head caught on fire.

The reason you can't do it and the reason you have, you know, you come to me and say I'm doing twenty-three minutes of meditation 'cos I, you know, the reason you think like that is that you can't see the truth of that, see what I mean. You can't see the truth that you should do it because you're going to die tonight.

You giggle when I say you're going to die tonight. You know what I mean. And you just don't believe it.

You have a spiritual obstacle towards perceiving that directly. It's true. It really is true and then you have this block about it, you don't feel comfortable about it. It sounds funny.

Come on, maybe, like, when I get as old as my grandfather [unclear]. Come on I got things to do, you know. I got a cheque coming in on Monday. [laughs] I can't die tonight. I won't die tonight. You know what I mean. And you believe it. You really believe it.

So logic is good for those things.

Prove things to yourself about your spiritual life that your normal mind doesn't want to admit, you know.

Learn the rules of logic. Learn the rules of how to prove things. And then, when you do your daily meditation, prove it to yourself. And then do it over and over again and then you can't deny it anymore, you know what I mean. You can't try to hide from it.

Things that you don't want to admit that prevent you from reaching your goals, okay.

That's what we're doing. That's what we're trying to do with logic, okay.

Second thing with logic is to really establish how many things there are that you don't know, okay, and that you think you know. Alright.

So, in the first case, it was more like trying to open your third eye to see things like the fact that you're going to die tonight, okay.

And the second value of logic is to prove to yourself how much you don't know, okay, and

how much you shouldn't assume that you know.

And the great example in logic scriptures is how much you don't know about what other people are thinking or doing. Okay. It's called {minowa ma ...}. We'll talk about it.

The whole subject tonight is gonna concentrate on negatives. Proving something negative, okay.

And there's two ways to prove something negative. We divide all negative things into those that you could see if they were here and those that you could not see if they were here.

And there's proofs for each one.

I'll say it again. There's proofs for proving that something's not here which you could have seen if it was here. And, there's proofs for proving that something's not here which you couldn't have seen anyway if it was here. Okay.

I'll give you an example, okay. [laughs]

{...}, what's that thing, {..}, okay. This is very famous.

We have to learn, like, hundreds of these things. Okay. {...} means, for number one, let's take the pacific ocean out in the middle where there's no lights, there's no fires at all. It's pure expanse of water in the middle of the night. It's a new moon. It's totally dark. And you're in an aeroplane and you're looking down and there's not a spot of light. There's no fire. There cannot be a fire. There's no ships. There's no islands. There's just water. And it's black, pure black. {...} Okay. {..}

There's no smoke there, {...} 'cos there's no fire. Okay.

Okay. And you have to say no smoke from present fire, okay, 'cos there could've been smoke from fire that just got put out. We're not talking about that, okay.

So anyway, that's a classical proof.

If smoke had been there and if it was daytime could you have seen it?

Yeah. Okay. That's what we call {...}; means you're proving something negative.

What are you proving?

That there's no smoke there. Okay.

If there had been smoke there could you have seen it? I mean, assuming it was daytime.

Yes. Okay. Smoke is normally visible to human beings, okay, under normal circumstances.

So, that's called a {...}, the proof that something's not there which you could have seen if it were there, okay, how's that.

The other kind of negative proof, proof for a negative is called {minowa ma mikpe tak}. Say, {minowa}[repeat] {ma mikpe tak} [repeat], which means a proof for the absence of something that you couldn't have seen anyway, okay, under normal circumstances.

Let me see. {...}, something like that, okay.

Which means, take anybody in this room who cannot see the pretas floating around in this room, the hungry spirits, okay.

Take anybody in this room who's incapable of seeing the spirits wandering around in this room, okay. They don't have a pramana or a direct perception in this case where they can see them because they're not at the level where they can see them, okay.

And that's a proof, alright.

What it means is to a normal person pretas are invisible anyway. You can't see them.

So that's what we call a {minowa ma mike tak}, a proof to prove the absence of something that they couldn't have seen anyway under normal circumstances at their level, okay.

Two kinds of proof of a negative, okay; two ways to prove a negative.

What's the definition of a negative and what does negative mean?

It means, an object, which you have to perceive by excluding something else, okay.

An object which in your mind, you perceive by excluding something, okay, by exclusion, okay. What's the point of talking about all this?

Two big lessons, alright, two big lessons.

The first one we already spoke about. Lord Buddha said one of the most important applications of logic is to prove to yourself that you don't know what the person sitting next to you is really thinking about and you can't judge other people.

{...}, you know, if you're not an enlightened being like me or someone like me then don't go around judging people next to you because you can't read their minds, okay.

And you don't know how many people sitting around you are already enlightened.

Oh, come on, that person can't be enlightened.

Why?

They act so weird, you know. [laughter] And they look funny and they don't talk so good and [unclear] they don't have any money and stuff like that.

How could they be enlightened you know?

Come on, if somebody is out to help you and if they've got enlightened a million years ago say, that's not much time for them and they looking a million years into the future to see how they could best serve you. And they decided that they should sit next to you and pick their nose or something so you could learn patience [laughter] or something like that.

Who are you to say? I mean there are millions of enlightened beings in the universe.

They can emanate countless numbers of bodies around the planet, you know, so who are you to, one very important application of logic is that you don't know. It's to prove to yourself that you don't know. You see what I mean.

To just sit there in meditation and say, take Michael Roach, he shouldn't judge others, because he can't read their minds right now. Okay. That's all.

And then you look it over.

Oh, does test number one work out? Is it true that Michael Roach can't read people's minds right now?

Yes.

If it's true that Michael Roach can't read other people's minds should he judge them?

Yes.

What's the other one? He could judge them if he could read their mind?

Yes.

So, is it a good proof?

Yes.

Are you going to stop judging people now?

No. [laughs] [laughter]

And no, I'm not kidding. You don't see your own mind going through this process, you know.

You say, let's do a proof. Okay. Michael Roach, shouldn't judge other people.

Why?

Can't see their minds right now.

Okay, let's do a check, okay. Yeah, let's do a check.

Michael Roach can't read other people's minds.

Right.

If he can't read other people's minds he shouldn't judge them.

Right.

You could judge them then if you could read their minds.

Right.

So, stop judging them, right.

No, you know. [laughter] And then just keep going through that.

And that's one of the most important functions of logic, especially {ma mikpe tak}, proof of the absence of something. Okay.

It's one of the, Lord Buddha said, this is one of the most important applications of Buddhist logic. So, again, we're into that field of proving how much you don't know to yourself, so you stop. And how many mental afflictions are posited on believing you know why other people are doing things or judging them or judging what they do?

Does that mean if you see some guy go up to a lady and hit her on the head and steal her purse you should say, I don't know, maybe she's a karate master and he's her student [laughter] and, you know, something like that.

Not like that, okay. Based on what you know, if you see violence being done to another person, you have to try to stop it, okay.

Are you objecting to the person's state of mind? To their apparent state of mind you can say, yes. To what they seem to be doing and seem to be thinking I object and I have to move. I have to do something.

Can you judge the person one hundred percent?

No. Okay. Maybe the timer to the atom bomb under the World Trade Centre is in that purse and he's an FBI agent and, you know, I don't know.

But, based on what I know, I have to help this woman. I can't be sure what he's thinking and I admit that. But, based on what I know, I have to act.

And that's okay. But you have to give yourself the space to say, I don't judge the person, I judge his action as I see it. You see what I mean.

I don't judge the person. Maybe they're some enlightened being. Maybe they're doing something special. I don't know. God bless them if they are. But, in the meantime, I have to stop them, you see. From what I can see the action is wrong, okay. And that's okay. You have to act like that, okay.

You'll find, use this method in morning meditation. When you're sitting there meditating, you know, even just the one I just did, you can use for the rest of your life every morning and half your problems will melt away, you know.

Assuming all the time that you know what other people are thinking, you know what they want, you can judge them from, you know, ten seconds of seeing something, you know what I mean.

You'll be much, much happier, totally happier. I'll be happier. I'll do it. Okay.

Something like that.

Second application of that reason is in proving emptiness, okay. To prove emptiness.

Emptiness is one of the most important negatives there is.

To really understand emptiness you have to understand what it is to be a negative. What it is to be a negative. There are two kinds of negatives, okay.

Negative, in general, is called a {gakpa}, okay. {gakpa} means, negatives.

By the way, this is just one of the logic subjects. There are hundreds. They're beautiful. They are fantastic. I chose on because, you know, the readings are three, four hundred pages long. I had to choose one, okay.

But I think it's maybe the most important one next to {chi jedrak}, but we did that last week.

{gakpas} are negatives, okay. Two kinds of negatives exist. [cut]

Say {mayin gak}[repeat] okay and {megak}[repeat]. I'll give you a classic example of each. But in general, you can think of the first one as saying that something is not something. Okay.

The first one is a negative in the sense of saying something is not something. Like, this is not permanent or this is not lasting, okay. That's like a qualitative description of something, okay. The classic example of a {mayin gak} in Tibetan monasteries, a funny one, is that, you know, Joe Schmoe is a monk, he's really fat and he doesn't eat during the daytime, okay. [laughs]

Okay, Joe Schmoe's a monk, he's really fat and he doesn't eat during the daytime. Which is to say what? He eats at night. He sneaks into the monastery kitchen at night and grabs cookies and stuff like that, after the noon meal has finished remember, okay. So, that's double problem there. He's got a cholesterol problem and a vow problem. [laughs] But the statement, it's either a positive or a negative, which suggests, by exclusion, another fact. You see what I mean.

Did you like dinner?

I really liked the desert. Okay. [laughs] Desert, you see what I mean. In English you hear it in the tone of your voice, you see. That's a {mayin gak}.

It means, in fact, that was a positive, you see what I mean, it wasn't a negative but it suggests another fact. You see what I mean.

And that's a classical {mayin gak}. Also, {mayin gak} can be simple, like not changing or something like that. It is not changing or it is not unchanging, see what I mean.

What's the difference between a {mayin gak} and a {megak}?

{megak} is the absence of something. It does not have X, you see what I mean, or X is not here, as opposed to it's not that. You see, it's not that it's not that. It's that that doesn't have that, you see, or that is not present here.

This is not a blue pen. That's a {mayin gak}.

The pen is gone. That's a {megak}. Okay. And you got to get used to the difference, okay.

One is a negation of a things characteristics or qualities. The other is a negation of its very presence or its existence. You see what I mean?

So, number two is always absences. And you got to get used to that. Okay.

What's the biggest absence of all time?

Emptiness. Emptiness. Okay. You got to get used to that.

That's why I brought it up. That's why we discuss negatives so much in the monastery. One is that they're adamant on us learning not to judge other people, okay. I really don't know what the person is thinking. Okay. Like, could be something else. I don't know. I have to leave him that, I have to suspend judgement of other people and work on whose Dharma practice?

Oftentimes we do other people's Dharma practice with more energy than our own, you know. Like, you should be more nice. You should, you know what I mean, and then we don't even spend that much time on our own Dharma practice, okay.

Then the second kind, {megak}, just the absence of something; something's not there. Okay. My pocket's empty, okay. That's a {megak}. There's nothing here.

Proof of an absence. Why?

'Cos I can hit the bottom and there's nothing there, okay, [laughs] something like that. That's a proof for a {megak}, okay.

When you talk about emptiness you get all these strange ideas, okay.

By the way, Buddha said every where, emptiness is a {megak}, okay. Emptiness is the absence of something. Emptiness is the fact that something is not there, okay.

In fact, what's the thing that's not there? We call it, what?

{gakja}.

Now you can appreciate the word {gakja} a little more. That thing, {ja} means 'that thing' which we {gak}, okay. That thing which we deny. That thing which we negate. That thing which we say is not here. Okay.

What is that?

A self-existing thing.

What?

Think of it, I always say, what do you call it? There's this fancy word: its ontological status. Okay. Its' how much does it exist, is zero, okay.

It's a two-headed, forty foot purple elephant rampaging through this auditorium at this moment crushing seats, smashing people, Roy's flying out the window, you know what I mean. It has as much existence as that, okay.

It always did, it always will, it does now. A self-existent object, okay, that thing which emptiness is empty of, okay, the absence of which we call emptiness. Okay.

And the irony is that holding onto that object is what causes you every single pain and even the fact that you're going to die, okay. Even the fact that your body is mortal; even the fact that it doesn't change tomorrow into a body of liquid crystal, [unclear] living crystal, yeah, is all due to grasping something that doesn't exist anyway.

So, it's like a double irony, okay. Your life's problems are caused by grasping to something and guess what, it doesn't even exist hah, hah, [laughs] you know. Okay.

It's like some cruel joke, you know.

Like, if it was ice cream or, you know, something you can't control yourself over that would be okay. We're talking that because you believe in something with your whole heart that never existed, will never exist and cannot exist now, all your sufferings come from that. That's just, like, blows you away, you know.

I mean, it's so powerful that you think, well just show me what's not there and I'll stop it, you know, and then I can be like Miss America daily. You know what I mean. Just tell me what I have to do.

It's the pen thing, okay. That's all. It's just the pen thing, okay.

Stop reacting to your world and trying to change things self-existently. It doesn't work. Okay.

Don't go and argue with this person about why they're so bad to you and they're mean to you and they're so, they bother you and they irritate you.

Come on. You made them. Wake up and stop doing it, you know. Stop doing it.

A rule of thumb when someone bothers you, check your old reaction and do the opposite, okay.

You're re-creating them every time you respond to them. Period. Okay.

So, just any problem you have. Think of your worst problem and figure out the real reason why it's happening to you. It's emptiness. Okay.

Nothing in the world has any nature of its own. Period. No object, no person, no ice cream, no house, no sky, no New York City, has a single quality or feature or any kind of adjective about it from its own side. Period.

Nothing has any quality of its own. Nothing has any nature of its own. It's all coming from your head.

It's all coming from your karma making it that way.

Because it doesn't have any nature of its own, everything is possible. You just have to figure out how to give it a different nature from your head. Which is, to keep your vows six times a day, okay. That's all.

And that's the biggest {megak} of all time, okay. So, {megak}'s the absence of a self-existent thing.

You can no longer blame a single other person or object for anything unpleasant in your life. Just forget it. And then you're out of here. You know what I mean. Just forget it.

Is it still right to go and stop a mugger?

Yes.

Who created them?

The person getting mugged, okay. But that's a different question altogether.

Why do you stop them?

'Cos it's the right thing to do.

Will you stop them?

Don't know. Okay. That's just a whole different question, okay.

Will they stop because you're trying to stop them?

Maybe yes, maybe no. That means you didn't stop them, okay.

Is it the right thing to try to stop them?

Of course, you have to try. Okay.

Why?

Oh, because it's going to make you a Buddha and then you can explain this stuff to people. How's that? Okay. That's all.

You got to get used to thinking like that, okay. You got to get used to thinking like that.

To continue to try to manipulate a world as if it were self-existent will only continue to bring you suffering. Period.

Your whole old way of reacting to every problem you ever had is wrong. Okay. It just won't work. And how old do you have to get before you're going to admit it? You know what I mean? Just face up to it, you know.

Some one bothers you, stop bothering other people and they'll go away. Okay.

In the meantime you can discuss, you can say, you know, hey, you know what, that really bothers me. And they can say I don't give a, you know.

And you can say, okay, well I just wanted to tell you, you know. [laughter] [laughs]

And calmly, happily, you know what I mean, no new bad karma, you know what I mean.

But is it going to stop them or not?

That's totally dependent on other factors, okay.

But the main thing to get rid of these irritants in your life is to stop treating them like a two-headed forty-foot purple elephant that you're trying to lasso your whole life. And you have a heart attack trying to chase this elephant, you know, and then just as you're getting old, they

say, guess what, it wasn't there in the first place, you know. [laughter] It's an irony. Whatever wrinkles, or grey hair, or lack of vitality you have in your body at this moment is caused by, chasing these elephants; they don't exist. You're just viewing it the wrong way. Just stop it. Yeah, just stop it. [laughs] [laughter]

I wish I could just stop it too. Okay.

What else have we got here? It helps a little bit, okay. Somebody told me today I think yoga's better than emptiness.

I said, why?

They said, every time I get mad I can't remember emptiness but if I just think 'yoga' I fell pretty good. I don't get mad. [laughs] [laughter]

I think okay for intermediate step. Okay.

I think that's nearly enough. Let me see.

Those are the main applications of that logic, okay. Just to repeat two things: one, to see spiritual truths that you can't see now. See them first with the eyes of logic, okay. My Lama, Khen Rinpoche used to joke a lot. When he first came to the United States somebody read him a Lobsang Rampa book about, he was learning English, you know. He read Thomas Jefferson. I tried to get him to read 'The Hobbit'. He wouldn't.

And then somebody read him Losbang Rampa. And they held the guy and they drilled a third eye in his skull, you know, and then he got a third eye.

And Rinpoche thought it was so funny, you know. [laughter] He said, oh, third eye, you know. Yeah, third eye is logic, you know. Third eye is just, you can see all these things with your third eye of reasoning that you can't normally see.

For example, the truth that you don't know, what the people around you are thinking. You really don't know.

So, work on it every day. Go home, work on it, you know, prove it to yourself over and over. That's called {che gom}, okay. {che gom} is analytical meditation.

Go home. Say Michael Roach {chuchin}, okay. {... gyur tare}, okay.

Take Michael Roach, he shouldn't judge other people because he can't read their minds. Right? Right. Check it out.

And then you do the three logic checks.

Is it true Michael Roach can't read other people's minds?

Yeah.

If you can read other people's minds should you stop trying to judge them?

Right.

If you could read their minds could you judge them?

Maybe.

So, you shouldn't, right?

And then, you know, there's this long silence while your mind is, like, deciding. [laughter] [laughs] Okay. I'm not kidding. It's a very uncomfortable silence. When you finally corner a guy in the debate ground, in front of a thousand other monks, you know, there's this long, just before the boos break out, [laughter] you know, just before the Bronx cheer breaks out, there's this very uncomfortable silence 'cos he just got it, you know what I mean.

You've been setting him up to trap him, like, twenty statements later, and suddenly he's there and there's this very uncomfortable few seconds of silence, you know. And your own mind will give it to you. Your own mind will say, ah, you know.

And then, you got to strike right there during that silence you have to strike, you know.

You say, it is true isn't it? {yinpa tel, du}, you know, and then, you know, you own mind has to and then you're going to get up from meditation and you'll judge the first person you see on the street. [laughter]

And then you have to, no, but you have to keep doing it in your mind everyday, over and over again using it to prove to prove that, okay.

Then you have to try to prove emptiness to your mind, okay. Then you have to try to prove it logically. Go over the pen thing over and over and over again, okay.

You know, why it's wrong to react to other people the way you used to. Why it's wrong to get upset at them or try to talk them out of it or try to struggle with them or have friction with them or, you know, this thing, conflict with them because that's not what's going, that's not what it came from.

That's not what made them come into your life this afternoon, you know.

They came into your life through totally other forces. And all the stuff you're trying to do to stop them has nothing to do with them and it won't work at all, you know. And to get your mind into a place where you can accept that is very hard. And you have to use reasoning, you know.

I think, in the heat of the moment, it's almost impossible. But I'd say at least a few hours later, just before you go to bed, when you're doing your book, you know, say, that really was stupid, you know. I created that person, you know. I'm not going to talk him out of being irritating by just standing there, you know, fighting with them.

I should try to be a nicer person and then I'll get rid of them, okay.

And that's all.

So, those are the two great uses of logic, especially for things you cannot see and you cannot see those things.

So, you either establish them, like emptiness, or give up on them in the case of judging other people, okay, 'cos you don't know.

Logic is for proving the things that you can't see and it's for proving to yourself that you don't know certain things. And, both of them get you out of trouble, okay.

Next class will be going onto Lojong, okay.

And take a break now and we'll go into groups.

[break discussion]

[announcements]

Okay, we'll start. This is like five, ten minutes where we going to talk about the future of Buddhism in America, right.

And something came up to me today, I was searching for a subject to talk about and someone came to me during the day today and said, I spoke to the mother of one of your students and she had the following concerns, you know what I mean, about her child, you know. And I'm, like, [laughter] and, you know, and I, you know, I have to draw this, I have to walk the line between, you know, really trying to convince you that you're going to die tonight and then trying to get you to act normally around other people. [laughter]

And there's this [laughter] no, there's this very natural, I don't know what you call it. There's this tension between those two things. You know what I mean. I'd like to talk about some guidelines and then I'd like to throw it out to discussion 'cos I have a problem with it. You know what I mean. I don't quite know what to do with it sometimes. I have very close friends, sponsors, things like that, they come to me and they say, you're just acting crazy, you know.

And I say, I don't know, I think the world is crazy. And then, I don't quite know what to do, you know what I mean.

And I see it like this, you know. There's a thing in the Lam Rim. You guys have studied it in the 'Three Principle Paths'. It's called 'The Three Diamonds' or something like that. But one is, what is it, {...} or something like that. Which means get to the point where people kick you out of society. Get to the point where, no, they kick you out of society and you reach the dogs. The only people who can put up with you are the dogs, stray dogs, {..}.

Get kicked out of the ranks of men, reach the ranks of dogs, and get to the ranks of gods that way, or something like that, you know what I mean.

So, you know, the Milarepa in you wants to say, unless people don't think I'm weird I'm not doing the right thing, you see what I mean. And you want to just blow everybody off and you want to be a good Buddhist and you think, well then that's just by nature what I'm going to be doing is going to be strange and other people are not going to like that. And, you know, I have students come to me and I say, did you call your mother?

And they say, no I didn't call my mother.

And I say, well you should call your mother.

And they say, well, my mom's crazy. They think I should get a job, you know, a career, and buy a washing machine and a car and you know what I mean.

I think the conclusion is, Khen Rinpoche was very wise on this point. He was very, very wise on this point.

I came to him at age twenty, you know. I could have gone to graduate school. I'm coming out of with a good degree from a good college and I'm, like, I want to stay with you. And he's, like, actually it was the Dalai Lama first. And I said, I'm gonna quit school. I got three months to go. I'm gonna quit school and live with you in Dharmasala. I'm not gonna leave. He says, go back to school, you know, go finish your degree, you know.

And, okay, so I did, you know.

But then I went to Khen Rinpoche and it was [unclear] in my mind, you know. I didn't tell my parents where I was. I didn't give them my phone number.

My brother died. They called the police in Howell. They searched for me. They found me, you know, to tell me and that was okay. That was the right thing to do at the time. You see what I mean? It upset a lot of people but I studied like hell and I'm here. You see what I mean.

So, I have a problem myself with this thing.

I'll give you my suggestions and then you tell me what you think and we'll just open it up for a few minutes, okay.

I think the following. To a certain extent, if you get very serious about your practice, I don't think you can avoid some kind of problem with other people.

People will always think there's something strange about you or something like that. Certain people will drop out of your life immediately. You know what I mean, the people you used to party with, stuff like that and they'll drop out of your life. That I don't have a problem with, you know. That's okay. I won't hear from them anymore, you know. They won't call me up on Thursday night to see if I have a bag of weed and, you know. Those people I think you can just say, you know, see you next life or something. That's okay.

Your family is not going to drop you, or probably doesn't want to drop you, and you don't want to drop them necessarily, so what do you do?

You know, on the one hand the Buddha said, "kill your father, kill your mother", meaning be willing to leave your family behind if that's what it takes to do your practice.

On the other hand, you have wise men like Khen Rinpoche who my stepmother's in love with. She comes once a year, spends a day or two with us, you know, and he's very kind to her. She sends him Christmas cookies and he sends her cupcakes for New Year's and they have this symbiotic relationship. And they like each other, you know what I mean. He was very careful to cultivate this relationship with her so that I could practice nicely, see what I mean.

So I think on one hand you have to really, what I'm saying is that, there's some kind of middle path there between ignoring them completely and moving back home and getting an eighty hour job. You know what I mean. There's some kind of compromise there, where I think, the first extreme to avoid is unnecessarily alienating the people who love you. You know what I mean.

And I think you can do your practice very well without hurting them. You see what I mean. So, I think if you really try hard, if you're really a bodhisattva and you're really exchanging yourself and your parents and yourself and your friends or whoever it is or your job, people at your job. I think there's a middle way.

I think my experience is that if you're really practicing well you're more considerate of other people. Like, the better your practice is, the more carefully you walk up steps so you don't wake anybody up, you see what I mean. The more careful you are to wipe the toilet seat. The more careful you are to not to bother or impinge or inconvenience other people.

I think it's a sign of your practice that you're not inconveniencing other people even in a little way, like, standing in the middle of a walkway when someone's trying to get by. You just automatically go to the side 'cos you're always thinking about other people.

That's a, I think that's just a, if your practice is good, I think that your natural relations with those people will be that you're very concerned about how they feel. And you're thinking about how they feel. And you want them to be comfortable. And you're doing the very best you can to make them comfortable within the absolute border of your practice. You know what I mean?

Like, I have my practice. I don't want to die like everyone's been dying around us. I don't want to get old and not be able to do the things I have to do. And here's my line. You know what I mean.

So, on the one hand, you're very strong. And that comes from good practice too where you have no doubts. You're willing to lose those things. You're willing to lose your family. You're willing to lose your friends. You're willing to lose your reputation in the eyes of other people.

If you know this is the right thing to do, and you know that this is the practice that you have to do, then you do it fearlessly, see what I mean.

But, coupled with that is this intense consideration and sensitivity to how other people feel and how they're taking you and whether or not alienating them is necessary, you see what I mean. And I think if your practice is going well you can have your cake and eat it too. I think the fearlessness to do what you know what you have to do and the inflexibility on that point, you know. Like, I used to go to my boss to ask for three or four weeks off for retreats, you know. And I went to him and I said, you can cut my pay twenty thousand dollars. You can lower my position from vice-president to supervisor of three people, you know. You can take away my benefits. But I'm going for four weeks. And I believe in it and if you want to

fire me do it now. You know what I mean.

And you're just fearless, you know what I mean, you have to go in with your mind ready to get fired. You know what I mean.

There's this thing about negotiation in the diamond business. They say draw your line, make up your mind and go in and be ready to lose the deal, you see what I mean. Be ready to be told, yeah, go home right now, see ya, see what I mean.

So, fearlessness on one hand but I don't think that on the other hand, with the same fearlessness and with the same knowledge and with the same beauty and successful practice, you are ten times more sensitive to how your parents feel or your brothers and sisters, you know what I mean. They go together.

Fearlessness, fearless practice, dedication, loyalty to your practice, willingness to die for your practice, willingness to lose everything you have, even your name, even your reputation, even how people see you. Willingness to lose that if it's necessary.

But on the other hand, extremely sensitive to how other people feel and happy to be sensitive and doing all these beautiful things to other people [unclear] obvious to them that you're not crazy. You see what I mean.

What I think happens is that people who are not very good at their practice, they get fearless okay and then they go and piss off everybody else, you see, and I add the word 'unnecessarily'. You see, unnecessarily.

They think to be a real yogi you have to alienate everybody. And that's not true. I don't believe that's true.

You draw your line, you're fearless, people can smell it, people can sense it, but on the other hand, every chance you have to do a small kindness to your parents, you know, a small good thing for your family, small kind things for people around you. You walk down the street in your red suit fearless, you know.

And if you see one of the guys making fun of you needs something, you give it to him, you see what I mean. That's the balance.

And I think most of the tension that's caused with families and stuff like that comes from not really doing exchange of self and others.

You're just a lousy bodhisattva. You got the dedication part right but you're not really thinking about how they feel. How's it feel to bring somebody up for twenty, thirty years; pay all their bills, take care of them with your whole heart and then, suddenly, they don't want to call you for six months, you know what I mean?

Come on. So give them a call. You know what I mean. That's just selfish.

That's not bodhisattva. That's not some dedicated Buddhist practitioner. That's just selfish. You don't want to. You see what I mean. It's not going to kill you to go call them once a week or something. That's not going to ruin your practice or something like that. You just don't want to do it 'cos you're lazy. You know what I mean.

And then you're hiding behind this oh, I'm a yogi, you know. I don't have to call them.

I think it comes from there. So check it out. A balance between fearless and totally, the better your practice gets, the more sensitive you are to other people and the more you're thinking how does my action effect them. Will they be comfortable? You know, a lot of Buddhists make other people really uncomfortable unnecessarily. You know what I mean.

The necessary stuff okay, you know. I don't call people until two o'clock. Period. So a lot of people get upset about that. Okay, so don't call me. I don't mind. I'm not going to answer anyway. [cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

[cut] you have to live like that, you have to draw the line. But then send them a Christmas card, you know, be nice to them, go take them some cookies. There's no, there's nothing wrong with both of those things. And I think if your practice is going well you are serious and totally sensitive and kind at the same time. And they sense it, you know.

And my boss, toughest boss in the universe, he gave me the three weeks off and he only took off ten thousand dollars. [laughter] You know what I mean. [laughs] [laughter]

No, but I mean, if they sense that you're very sincere [unclear] and I think that seventy-five percent of the pissing off of parents and friends and fellow workers is totally unnecessary. I think you're just being selfish or thoughtless and you can't do that. You're not being a good yogi if you're like that. You see what I mean.

Good yogis have to do both, okay.

So that's my shpiel. I want to ask people what are your experiences about how have you coped for the benefit of the rest of us with, like, people ostracising you or people saying you're weird now I don't want to call you or, you know, parents thinking that you're in a cult.

You know, I always say what's your blood type. You have to buy the blood to drink tonight at the cult ceremony [laughter]. Which kind do you prefer, you know what I mean, something like that.

I have continual, you know, I have these problems, you know. I still have these problems, you know.

I have people, like, sponsor some project and then they call me up and say, you know, looks like a cult nowadays.

And I'm, like, it is a cult, you know, sorry. [laughter] No, not like that. [laughter] [laughs]

Have your doubts between, you know, trying to follow your Buddhism with dedication and with your heart and not appearing weird to outside world. And what do you do when you have a little clash?

And now I'll just open it up and then we'll stop in ten minutes.

[student comments]

I think that's an important point that a lot of not alienating your family can be accomplished by attending three holidays a year or something which, I think, is worth it, you know. Be there for thanksgiving dinner. Be there for Christmas.

Rinpoche's always been very supportive of that. He never held classes on major western religious holidays. And he would say, go home, be with your family, you know what I mean. He's encouraged us to and I think it's just practical.

And, I think a lot of the tension can be relieved just by that, they know you'll be around for those family things.

[student]

Yeah. Michael.

[student]

Yeah.

[student] [laughs]

Yeah. I think the thing to be addressed maybe at the next time is how much do you want to try to defend what you do or how much do you want to try to convince them? How much

is appropriate?

I think when you first get into the Dharma there's a tendency to try to convince everybody else, which soon wears off, you know what I mean.

You have to have a great kind of wisdom, especially at the beginning to appreciate that they're not seeing the world at all like you are.

That's a logic thing where you're not allowed to give a proof which is beyond their personal experience. And even if it is within their personal experience but they're not ready to deal with it right now that you should just let it be for a while.

And then there's more spoken, like, the kindness of your own character, than by convincing them that kindness is good, you know what I mean.

I think sometimes we tend to do the second thing.

I think one more and then maybe we'll start next week.

[student]

I like that. The main point she said is that you speak, you tend to speak more truthfully and more calmly. If you're really watching your vows carefully, truth disarms many negativities. If you're just totally truthful, which is hard, people sense it and people take it. It convinces people. The tone of truth in your voice convinces people.

I think we'll stop there. We'll do it again next week 'cos [student]

Yeah. I think using music and things like that can, it can disarm people too [student]

Make some good movies.

Are you ready?

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

The Asian Classics Institute

Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Seven

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Lojong class presented by student

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Eight
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start. [announcements]

As Winston so eloquently started the Lojong I get to finish it. And thank you for that.
[applause]

I get to cover {shenpa shi drel}. [cut]

Say {shenpa}[repeat] {shi drel}[repeat].

[announcements]

{shenpa} means 'attachment', {shi} means 'four', {drel} means, some of my students can't pronounce this right, they say {drel}, which means 'connected'. {drel} means 'disconnected', so you have to be careful with this one. {shenpa shi drel} means 'free of the four attachments'. That works, right? [microphone]

{Shenpa shi drel}, freedom from the four attachments, okay.

I'm gonna read them to you in English.

A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner. That's number one. A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner.

Second one is, a person who is attached to the three worlds has no renunciation.

Three worlds are basically the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm, okay.

Meaning this realm, this broken realm that we're in.

Number three, a person who is still attached to getting what they want is no bodhisattva.

Number four, a person who still grasps to things has no worldview. Meaning, grasps to things self-existently, right, as existing.

A person who still grasps to things has no worldview, okay.

Those are called the four attachments. And then the purpose of this {lojong} is to get free of them.

I want to talk a little bit about the lineage of this {lojong}.

Fourth one again is a person who still grasps to things, meaning self-existently, has no worldview. [student]

Sorry? [student]

Number two, a person who is still attached to the three worlds has no renunciation. Your class leaders will give them to you.

Okay.

I like to tell people that it's important to do the {Sakya lojongs} because really the early teachers who came to Mongolia were the {Sakyas}.

You know the story, Godun Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, came to the edge of Tibet, eastern edge of Tibet to collect the tribute.

The Tibetans were not invaded by Genghis Khan, as everybody else was, you see. Korea, Vietnam, China, Moscow was taken by the Khan. That's why so many people in Russia look Mongolian. All of the Middle East like, Persia, Northern India. He got down into Vietnam. He took basically the entire world. Outside of Vienna, in one day, they killed four hundred thousand Viennese and were about to march into Vienna. And we'd all be speaking Mongolian. The Hungarians still speak a Mongolian dialect. But they turned back because they got a message, three-year message, sent three years before down the line, that the Khan had died, Genghis Khan.

And they turned around and went home. Okay.

Anyway the Tibetans stopped paying as soon as they heard that the Khan had died. And the Tibetans never got attacked because they just paid basically, what do you call it, tribute. What do they call it in grocery stores in New York? Protection money, okay. [laughs] Okay.

So, Godun Khan came to collect the protection money again, the grandson. And on the border he began to take an interest in Buddhism. He sent a message to what he heard was the greatest Buddhist teacher at the time, the Sakya Pandita. And sent a message to him. We still have the message. It's very beautiful.

It says, I'm taking an interest in Buddhism, I've heard that you are interested in liberating all living beings. I am a living being and I request you to teach me Buddhism. And if you don't come and teach me Buddhism I'll destroy all the monasteries in Eastern Tibet. [laughs] We still have his letter.

Sakya Pandita was already an old man. He was very old at the time. And he kept getting stopped on the way to teach which was very common, even with people like Lama Zopa and stuff like that.

So, he was afraid he'd be late so he sent ahead, as a good faith measure, his two nephews to meet the Khan as sort of, like, a ransom.

Then one nephew named Pakpa actually had converted the Khan before the Sakya Pandita even got there.

And this Pakpa went on to be the main lama of the Mongolians. He invented one of the Mongolian scripts that they used to write.

He became the court lama of Kublai Khan in the court in Beijing and met Marco Polo there. And Marco Polo wrote about him.

So he's a very illustrious, he also invented the mandala offering that we do, the long one. That's called Pakpa's mandala offering. Things like that.

The Sakya Pandita's nephew was Pakpa. And Sakya Pandita's uncle was called, let me get this straight, Sakya Pandita's uncle was named Drakpa Gyeltsen. Okay.

And Drakpa Gyeltsen's very important in our Vajrayogini lineage, okay.

One of the most important lamas for {dzog rim}; he is the source for teachings on one of the branches of the {dzog rim} tradition that we do in Vajrayogini. Okay.

So I thought it would be auspicious if you studied his commentary. So what you have in your reading is Drakpa Gyeltsen's commentary.

Drakpa Gyeltsen was, I believe, the nephew of Sachen, who had the vision of Manjushri who taught him these as a twelve-year old boy. Okay.

Anyway, that's your lineage. Pakpa went on, Buddhism stretched all the way to the front lines of the empire, the Mongolian empire.

As the empire shrank there was a certain number of Mongolians left behind. And in the

seventeen hundreds on Christmas eve, seventeen seventy-six or something, on Christmas eve they decided to go back home to [unclear] in Mongolia. And the river didn't freeze that night.

They got the word from the fifth Dalai Lama at that time, who said go on this night, you know. And that night the river didn't freeze and the Mongolians were separated on two sides of the river.

So, all the Mongolians on the east side of the river came back to Mongolia and actually were slaughtered on the way. There's a few pockets of them left in western China or something.

Then the ones on the western side of the river got stuck. And they say that the word in Mongolian for 'left behind' is kalmuk or kal. So they got left behind and they were called the kalmiks. And then they became the protectors of the southern border of the Russian empire when the Russian empire began to grow.

And then they were allowed to join this secret Christian society called the Cossacks, military society. They sided with the wrong side in the revolution to protect the Tsar. Tsar got killed. The Cossacks were disbanded and that's when the kalmiks began to run away. Carmen's father and [unclear] comes to class sometimes, father, were actually trained in the Cossacks and had scars. You had to scars on your face and stuff like that.

Anyway, that's how, then the great kalmik teacher was, what's his name, Dorje tried to convince the Tsar, convinced the Dalai Lama that, thirteenth Dalai Lama, that the Tsar was an emanation of Chenresig, I think, and Russia was ready to join Tibet and become one country. As a sign of unity they built a temple in St. Petersburg together named the Kalachakra temple.

And then, Dorje had a student named Wangyal, Geshe Wangyal, who came to the United States, taught Professor Thurman, Jeffery Hopkins, Christopher George and all those guys. And then, brought Rinpoche here in 1972 I think it was or something like that.

So, that's your lineage. You are in the lineage of the Sakya Mongol teachers. You see what I mean.

So that's just a short explanation of what lineage you are, okay. That's how you got here. Through the kindness of the Mongols, right. So it's nice to pay them back.

Anyway, I wanted to talk about the one {shenpa shi drel} where it says, the first one, 'whoever is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner'.

And in Drakpa Gyeltsen's commentary, Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen's commentary; by the way, Drakpa Gyeltsen was a layman and a great master of Buddhism. He was a layman with lifetime vows and also with celibacy vows. And then he, he's actually the source of some of the most secret teachings for Vajrayogini, okay.

He explains it very, very interestingly. He says that attachment to this life is already in the context of a Buddhist practitioner, meaning, a person who's already a good practitioner.

So, I like his explanation because I think it speaks to most of us.

Most of you have been through at least a couple of courses. Some of you have been up to ten or twenty years of classes with great lamas.

And Drakpa Gyeltsen is explaining this text, these simple four lines that were taught to a twelve-year old boy by an emanation, okay, Sachen Kunga Gyeltsen. He's explaining these in terms of great practitioners. And he says attachment to this life isn't at all what you think it is in this context.

Attachment to this life in this context means attachment to what you grew up with;

attachment to the worldviews that you grew up with, okay. Doing your practice for the wrong reasons, okay.

And then he starts to give a long list. And I'm gonna go through some of them, okay, what it means to be attached to this life in the sense of attached to what you grew up with, you see what I mean.

And what he's saying is, he goes through a whole list of worldviews, okay. First one, I would say would be your parents, right.

And you have to be free of attachment for the worldview of your parents. You see what I mean. That's one of the most dangerous attachments.

Does it mean that you should abandon your parents?

No.

Does it mean you should be unkind to your parents?

No.

I was preparing text for the database, the HIP database today 'cos John Brady's making me. Not really. And I got to a text by Kunchok {...} which is a whole text on how to repay your parent's kindness, you know. So he wrote a book on it in the seventeen hundreds.

And so, no, it doesn't mean to dis your parents or junk your parents or anything like that. It just means you have to examine the worldview that you inherited from your parents. And don't believe what you believe just because your parents told you. I can give some personal examples, you know.

My parents grew up in a time when it was considered very sophisticated to drink hard alcohol. You know what I mean. Like, you had to know, I mean, my father would brag about knowing twenty-five different ways to make vodka drinks, you know.

It had all these exotic names and he had to go out and search for exotic mixers and stuff like that. And it was considered very manly.

Like, he would read Hemingway. He would fish for Marlin. He'd drink, you know, special drinks. You know what I mean. That was considered very manly.

And then I remember, you know, taking me out, here's your first drink and everything like that. It was very, very important to get it right, you know, very important to smell the wine the right way and everything else. And very important to know what kind of whiskey is better than another kind of whiskey. They all taste the same, right. [laughs]

And that's just a wrong view. That's just a totally wasted, ridiculous, insane, crazy, wrong view. It costs a lot of money. It has absolutely no benefit to human beings. It's ruined the lives of countless people including my parents. Probably gave both my parents cancer, you know, ruined their whole lives. You know what I mean.

And so that, but if I had just bought into my parent's worldview, I would be doing that now. And I almost did, you know.

I can remember going to the bar for the first hard drinks, you know, and being very proud. My dad would be proud of it, you know.

When I was twelve years old my father sent me to NRA marksmanship school so I could learn to shoot deer. And I remember getting my first twenty-two rifle and he told me how to shoot squirrels and birds. And then I could move up to a two-seventy Remington the following, you know, three years later and shoot deer with him. And my high school would give us time off during hunting season.

And this is just a lousy terrible karma that I grew up with but, but, and those are two that are obviously wrong. But you have dozens that you are carrying from your parents that you just

believe because your parents taught you that. You see what I mean. No other reason than that, that your parents taught you that.

You have no better reason to be thinking the way you think except that your parents taught you that, see what I mean?

So {shenpa shi drel}, first of the four attachments examines the views that you've inherited from your parents and reject the ones that are harmful, okay. That's just first one.

It doesn't mean to disrespect your parents. If you go to their house for dinner you don't, like, throw the wine bottle down the toilet or something. You just say, no thankyou or, you know, I can't drink that. I have liver thing, you know. [laughs] [laughter] Okay [laughs] something like that. Okay. Parents.

School. You know, a lot of my worldviews came from, I think of her name okay. This is no joke. Mrs Bucks, okay, in the fifth grade. And she was just like that. And [laughter] okay. And just ridiculous viewpoints of the world, you know. Like, if Oprah had have been around it would have just been straight Oprah Winfrey. You see what I mean. Like, her whole worldview, her whole idea of what was right and wrong, important to do – chocolate, bridge, playing bridge, eating chocolate, watching TV, you know. Couldn't believe that I hadn't read Life magazine, you know, that week or something, you know, things like that.

And, you know, sometimes I remember going back and visiting them and they're just frightening, you know. Their whole worldview was culled from the Arizona Republic newspaper and TV. And what's that show? I forget. Anyway. TV shows [laughs] like Archie Bunker. Archie Bunker. All from that.

And the whole worldview was drawn from that. I remember one thing they told us, the Russians are evil, horrible, deadly people trying to kill us, you know.

They made us hide under the desk in case the atom bomb was, like, it's going to help you to hide under a desk, right? [laughter]

And years later I went to St. Petersburg. Started work on the catalogue there, spent a lot of time with the Russians. I remember being in a old ancient cab with a Mongolian driver, you know. And we're headed to the airport and they said, [Russian], you know. And I'm, like, I like it. It's fun. You guys are great, you know. And they said what do you really think about Russia, you know. And I said, well, you know, to tell you the truth, when I grew up they told me you were evil and that you drank blood. And you wanted to bomb us and we had to hide under the desks, there's a special drill on it. And they started laughing, you know. And they said our parents told us the same thing about you, you know.

This was serious when I was a kid and when I was a teenager. This was serious, you know. They were really evil, hateful, abnormal people, you know.

So just junk that worldview. They were pleasant, happy, caring, loving, wonderful, human, warm people, you know. They're just over there and we're over here.

So you can scratch the second worldview. What your school taught you, you know, you have to examine it.

And to be attached to it is the first kind of attachment, okay.

I think you can go next to your church. I think the main thing there is very obvious: that there's a god, that god created this world, you know. And the first time I openly, in New York City, talked about how it didn't make sense I felt like I was almost committing heresy or something. You know, I felt like, almost frightened to say it. But it's just ridiculous, you know what I mean, how could there be a creator being who cared about us, who makes

everything and then makes AIDS, makes cancer, makes my mother die of cancer after getting her breast chopped off and big holes put in her and, you know, radiated. What's the point, you know? What are you trying to teach her, you know? Okay. Maybe she had time to displease god but what about all these kids, you know, like little tiny kids, infants born with AIDS. What's the point?

Why make a being and then give it AIDS to die before it can even think a straight thought, you know? It's just doesn't make any sense at all.

To blame your world on some guy up in the sky, you know what I mean, is just primitive.

I remember talking with Tibetans the first time I went to Dharamsala. And they said, tell us about Christianity, you know. We heard that you drink your god's blood, you know. And I'm, like, no, no we wouldn't do that. And he said, well what's this communion thing, you know? It says you do transformations. That means it turns into the real blood and then you drink it, you know.

I said, no, no, it's not like that. Your, your, your religion sounds weird, you know.

They said, who made the world?

I said, god.

They said, come on, everybody knows it was a monkey mating with a deer [laughter] you know what I mean.

And we had this big debate, you know, and then we both realised that they're both equally silly. You know what I mean.

Like, when I say the world was invented, the first human came from the marriage of a monkey and a white deer or something, you just laugh. You just laugh.

But then you say, oh, some guy came. The guy was asleep. He broke a rib out of him. He made a lady. They got together, you know. They ate this apple. There's a snake, you know. And then you're like, come on, you know what I mean.

You have to examine that worldview. You know what I mean. You have to examine it.

Is it such an evil thing to believe that somebody created the world?

Yes.

Why?

You can't take responsibility for your own actions. There's a big hurdle you have to get over if you had the bad karma to be born in this society with that myth, okay, and I'm not saying that the teachings of Jesus or anything like that which are fantastic.

I'm saying that particular myth is harmful to you.

Why?

You think that everything bad that you encounter was put there as a test by some big guy, you know, or just he was negligent, you know, or something.

But it's not like that, okay, can't be like that. And that gets in your way of believing the laws of karma. Very simply that every bad thing that ever happened to you was created by something bad you did to someone else.

But you have trouble with that. You really don't believe it. In your guts you don't believe it. In Princeton they called it 'visceral presuppositions', you know, meaning what your parents put into your insides in the first ten years of your life. And you have trouble now. You have a, we called a {dupa} in Tibetan. You have a spiritual obstacle to the idea that every single aspect of your inner and outer life was created by you.

And you have to fix it. You see what I mean?

And you just have a block about that. And when I say the proof that karma is true is that

everything comes from something similar that came before, you think, oh that just sounds simplistic. You see what I mean.

It doesn't, like, send a big light off in your head. You see what I mean? You say, oh yeah, I get it. Every time, you know, I'm in a traffic jam it's because I blocked somebody. And you think that's just too simplistic.

And you have an actual spiritual blinder. You have worldview obstacles put there by your past karma and by your culture. Just wrong. Just flatly wrong.

And they're very hard to take off. It's like a horse taking off his own blinders. It's almost impossible. It's almost impossible.

You believe all those things deep down in your heart. The plane starts to go down, what are you doing? Oh, Jesus, oh Jesus [laughs], you do. I did. I remember, recently. Okay. [laughter] Okay.

By the way, I'm not saying that there aren't omniscient beings. There are.

And I'm not saying there are not circling around in this room watching you and trying to help you directly. There are.

Okay. I'm not saying that Jesus Christ was not the Buddha. He was. Okay.

I'm not saying that.

The worldview thing about the creation of the world, refusing to take responsibility for your own life and for your world, is just totally wrong.

And until you get over it you'll be stuck here, okay. You have to overcome that worldview, okay.

How about the culture?

Attachment to the views of your culture, okay. Whatever the New York Times says, is true. And whatever the New York Times has on the front page is important. You know what I mean. And the whole big bang, you can say, science in our case, okay.

Science is false. Science doesn't work at all. Okay.

Why does the atomic bomb go off?

If it hurts somebody it's due to the karma of the people who got hurt. Period. Okay.

How does the atomic bomb go off?

Oh, a neutron hits another atomic particle and they multiply too fast and the thing blows up. That's the how.

Why? Why didn't it go off until 1940? You see what I mean. That's karma. You got to get used to that.

'How' and 'why' are different. Okay. Science is describing how. Karma is describing why. And you've got to get that straight. Okay.

I'm not being simplistic. I'm saying something, if you think it's hard to get over the hurdle of believing the creator god, how about science?

That's really hard. Okay. That's really hard. Okay. I saw a National Geographic article at Don [] house in North Carolina. And it was on aging. And there was this beautiful description of aging process. And in the middle was a fold out, you know, not like a playboy fold out, like, it was like a body. And it had little arrows towards all the things that get old and fall apart in your body. Every piece had an arrow on it. You know, this is what happens to the liver when you get older. This is what happens to the muscles. This is what happens to the hair. This is what happens to the eyes. This is what happens to the ears.

And then, at the very bottom, was like an act of truth. It said, and we don't know why, you

see. It was very beautiful.

Like, this is how you get old but we don't know why you get old, you see. And we don't know why different people age at different rates. We just don't know why.

We don't know why a body should replenish itself every seven years magically and then just stop after a while. We don't know why.

We don't know why it was alive in the first place and we don't know why the life drains out of it. And we don't know why some life drains out faster than others. Okay.

That's karma. And you have to understand that worldview or you will never get anywhere. You can't.

And this is hard. This is really hard. Go round telling your friends at work science doesn't work. They say well why are you going to the doctor this afternoon. You know what I mean. It's hard. It's very, very hard.

As you get into the more important worldviews to overcome it's just more difficult, okay. It's much, much more difficult.

The reason medicine works is the karma of the people being treated. Period. Okay. That's all. If the person being treated doesn't have the karma to get better they can't get better and they won't get better no matter what treatment you use. And that's all. Same with investment strategies, okay, economic theories. All false. Every single one, false. Every one you ever heard of, every one you were ever taught in school, wrong. Totally wrong. Okay. Why?

You want to get rich? Just give away things. Period. Okay.

What's the implication? What would happen if every, they used to ask, tell us at Princeton religion department, the test of a good religion is what if everybody did it?

What would happen if everybody gave away with an understanding of emptiness their possessions? What would happen?

Everybody would get rich. Everybody.

What kind of economic theory is that? You see what I mean. What kind of economic theory ever said that everyone on the planet could be extremely wealthy at the same time?

Oh, no, no, no, resources are limited. Oh, yeah, right, and the web wasn't invented five years ago and a hundred and thirty billion dollars of commerce now taking place where there wasn't any before, you know, four or five years ago.

Oh, so, like amazing things can happen that, suddenly, create wealth for millions of people overnight?

Why do you think that happened? You see. It's karma. It's giving. You see what I mean.

It's not impossible at all that everyone in the world would have enough money and, in fact, that everyone in the world would enter a tantric paradise and have everything they ever wanted all the time. Period. Okay.

The idea, all these ideas about how to distribute wealth, how to share wealth, should it be capitalism, should it be communism, should it be socialism; they're all based on a fallacy. It's not true that there's a lack of wealth or that there's not enough wealth for everybody. That's not where wealth comes from.

Marx big idea, you know, everything comes from the dirt. Whosoever controls the dirt controls production. You know what I mean? It's just wrong.

Whosoever controls the first perfection [laughter] controls all the money in the world. Really. No cent of the economy of the world at this moment was not created by the personal generosity of the person who has got it. Period.

There is no other economics, you know. It doesn't exist but you have trouble with it you see. You still {shenpa shi drel}, you're not {shenpa shi drel}, you're {shenpa ma drel}. Okay. You're not disconnected yet from those attachments to your worldview, okay. It's the hardest thing in the world because what's the karma to have a worldview? What's the karma to have all these wrong views? Killing animals is good; we should give the kids a week off. Some big guy is responsible for cancer. He's a nice guy and he can do everything but, you know. [laughter]

And, you know, like, there's not enough money for everybody.

Where do these worldviews come from? What's the karma of having those worldviews? Why are you born in a society that holds those worldviews?

'Cos you had them in the past, okay. It makes them really nasty. It makes them chronic. You see what I mean?

To have them is to have them later. You see what I mean. To have them now is to have them later and they're the hardest thing to break out of.

Nagarjuna called it 'breaking out of the egg', you know, ripping out of the egg.

Trying to break the shell and get out is the hardest thing; is to break a worldview trap that you're in. You see what I mean? Very hard, extremely hard.

Who else can we pick on?

I had some more but I don't remember them. Let me see. Oh, how about the law? What's legal, you see? Right now it's legal to kill fetuses which, according to Lord Buddha, and you can forget the Tricycle article about it, Lord Buddha who states it no less than a thousand times in the sutras, killing a being after the moment of conception is murder, okay. Abortion is murder. Period.

But the law says it's okay but it wasn't okay before. Okay.

In my, where I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, it was called 'running numbers'. I was reading the newspaper. I used to read the newspaper every morning at breakfast and I asked my mom, what's running numbers?

She said, oh, only people in South Phoenix do that.

And I said, well what is it?

Oh, it's only those bad people down in South Phoenix, you know, the poor people.

And I said, exactly what is running numbers, you know?

She said, oh it's like heroin and boxing and drugs and all that stuff.

Come on, what's running numbers?

Well, everybody goes to this dark basement and they give this sinister man a number written on a piece of paper. And then he collects them and takes fifty dollars from everybody. And then, they put all the numbers in a hat and they pick out one of the numbers and that person wins all the money. And that's a felony in the state of Arizona and, you know, I don't know, fifteen years in jail. And the sinister guy gets a cut of the action. And that's running numbers. Now, the state of New Jersey, the state of New York, is running numbers. Now it's okay. Now it's legal you see what I mean. The government does it you see what I mean.

And, what I mean to say is, that the nation in which you live, the country in which you live, what is considered legal will just turn like that. It'll just shift like that.

It's just somebody's karma for this to be legal right now. You can forget running your life, half, I shouldn't say half, many of the things which are legal are immoral. Many things, which are immoral, are legal. And you can't run your life by that worldview and there will be times when you have to break it, okay, or that you shouldn't break [unclear] [laughs],

okay.

You can't look at that for your worldview. Your worldview has to be something that you come to through pure logic independent of what you grew up with, okay. Very hard. Extremely difficult, okay.

And then what your country says is right, okay.

Like, Americans have this, you meet arrogance, you know, about what's right for the rest of the world, you know.

I grew up. I was twenty travelling through India telling people how they should do things. That's not how you should sweep the floor; put a stick on that broom, you know. [unclear] up and sweep the floor. You can't sweep the floor like that. That's not how we do it, you know. You know what I mean? [laughs] You can't even speak English, [unclear] Hindi or whatever you talk, you know.

And it's just this thing, the worldview, it's just parochial worldview. C.S Lewis calls it the fish knife thing. At the age of six you go to your neighbour's house and there's a strange shapes knife there and you say, what's that?

And they say, that's a fish knife for cutting fish.

And you say, no it's not.

And they say, yes it is.

And you say, no it's not. It's not the one we have in our house. You see what I mean?

And a lot of your worldviews are that. You think that the rest of the world should run by our worldview, the American worldview. And, if they don't then you'll send troops or cut off their foreign aid, okay.

And that's just you believe that. It's not what's right or wrong, it's just what your country says, right.

So you have to examine to be attached, also even Buddhist worldviews, okay. There's a hierarchy. There's a hierarchy. Lord Buddha taught the four great schools of India and then he taught tantra.

And then people say, people get into Vaibashika, the lowest school, and they say, oh the Sautrantika's are wrong, you know what I mean, they're evil.

You know, the Sautrantika's say, no you're backwards, you know.

Then you get up to, you know, Mind Only and they say, oh you both are backwards. They say, no you're evil, you know. Then you get up to Madhyamika Svatantrika and they say, no, all three of you are {..}, that's lousy. You believe functional things are self-existent. They say, no, no, you're evil, you don't even believe in the self-existence of things, you know.

And then the Prasangika says to the Svatantrika's, no you're crazy. You think that the self is the consciousness, the awareness of your thoughts. Are you crazy?

They say, no, you're nihilists, you Prasangika's. Nagarjuna's a nihilist. He doesn't believe in anything. He thinks nothing's anything, right.

And then the non-tantric schools say to the tantric schools, you're really crazy. You think you're gonna become a god in this life, you know, what do you think? You know and then the lower tantric schools to the higher tantric schools, you're filthy. You're dirty. You're insane. The practices, I can't believe it, you know, dancing? All that other stuff, you know? And there's this hierarchy in your practice. And there's a hierarchy in the speed with which things work and the power of the practice. You know what I mean. You have to know all the Buddhist schools. You have to master all the Buddhist schools. You have to understand why Lord Buddha taught them all, which we're going to get into next class, okay.

And then, you have to move up the ladder as fast as you can. You cannot be attached to your current level of comfortable practice. Even that, you have to give up, okay.

Even that lower Buddhist worldviews, you have to be willing to chuck them or understand why you have to move up beyond them when the time comes.

You have, you are sworn by your bodhisattva vows to work up that ladder as fast as you can. And to understand, appreciate, embrace as the word of Lord Buddha, all the lower schools. Understand why Lord Buddha taught them and not practice them.

And then move up, okay. That's the, you're sworn to do that.

You know, how many people in this country are really practising {dzog rim}? How many practising {kye rim}? How many are just sitting reciting sadhanas? I don't know. You know what I mean.

But you're sworn by your vows to move up this ladder as fast as you can. But people get attached to what is comfortable and Drakpa Gyeltsen attacks it.

Drakpa Gyeltsen, you know, the biggest {dzog rimmer} of all time for Vajrayogini, is like, attacking that. He says, you can't get attached to your current level of practice.

You have to keep moving up.

In tennis, during seasons, they wouldn't let us play with girls. The coach had a rule. You always had to play with somebody better than you during season. You were not allowed to play with someone who wasn't better than you because that would force you to get higher.

I used to do rowing crew in college and we had to go weight lift. Every day you had to lift more than the last session, every single time you had to do five pounds more, three pounds more, one pound more, doesn't matter but you have to do more than last time. You have to run a little farther. You have to run up the stadium steps a little faster every time.

And your practice has to be the same. You can't get attached to what's comfortable. You have to, each day move on and move up to the higher practices 'cos you are sworn to do that by your bodhisattva vows. You are sworn to accomplish this goal as fast as you can.

And then, I personally, it seems that people get attached to a certain level and then they just freeze. Five years, ten years, twenty years, they just sort of freeze at a certain level. And they don't study more and they don't try to push themselves further and they don't take, I think you have to be with weight lifting or with yoga or with dance or with any kind of physical thing, you have to take a bit of a risk. You have to be willing, if you're really interested in saving humanity, you know, then sometimes you're gonna have to take a shot. Sometimes you'll fall down.

I had this teacher in college. They say you try to make a move, you have to try to make the move, and once in a while you'll fall down and you'll hurt yourself, but if you don't keep trying the new ones you don't get better.

And your whole goal of your life is to reach tantric enlightenment now as fast as you can. And you're fighting a war against time.

Your body is falling apart. Your personal world is falling apart. Your karma is wearing out. Your mind's getting duller by the year, [laughs] okay. No, after a certain age, you know, your senses, why don't they take air force pilots after twenty-three, you know? I saw the, who was it? The Vikings- largest amount of men over thirty in the whole NFL; thirty, fifteen guys over the age of thirty, three guys over the age of thirty-five. What do you think they're trying to tell you?

Your vitality drops. You won't be able to meditate so well. You won't be able to think so well. Your eyes and your ears and everything else will start to degenerate.

You don't have time to get stuck at a certain level. You see what I mean?

You have to keep pushing on and keep pushing on to get higher.

And at each point, as you release each of these worldviews, at each point you will take some heat for it, okay. And get used to it, it's part of the process, okay.

At each point in the Buddhist teaching as you go up the four schools each of the lower schools attack the higher schools.

The most bitter opponents of Nagarjuna, Je Tsongkapa, Khen Rinpoche, guess who?

The lower Madhyamika school, the Mind Only school.

You guys are stupid, you guys are crazy, you guys are nihilists. You don't believe in anything, you know.

Each time you move up slightly in that pecking order evolution, it'll be hard, especially with worldviews, okay, especially the worldviews.

And the only way to break out of a worldview is to get some infusion of new worldviews. That's why you have to study.

That's why you have to go to great lamas. That's why you have to keep pushing it, keep reading, keep studying, keep trying to meet as many holy lamas as you can. And then they break you out of your old worldviews.

That's the only thing that can really do it. Your own virtue, your own {gelwa}, your own willingness to do good deeds, good karmas 'cos that karma, boosts you above where you were before, okay.

It's very, very hard to break out of worldviews and it requires more karma than any other thing to break out of the worldview that you grew up with.

You know, you laugh at the ones I talked about tonight. You have thousands of worldviews that you wouldn't laugh about if I attacked them. You got a little quiet when I get to science, okay [laughs] alright.

No, and you have to move up and the only way to do it is {gelwa}, good deeds.

Keep your vows, keep your book, actively go out looking for good things to do for people, actively go out and think of good things to do for great people like Lama Zopa like helping him with fire offering stuff, stuff like that.

And then that just pushes you over your next threshold. And there are many thresholds to go over.

Don't be attached to your old worldviews.

That's the first of the four attachments, okay, and that's the holy teaching from Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen, okay.

Take a break, okay, it's a holy name.

Okay. I just thought of something to talk about. Okay. [discussion, student]

I get asked a lot, people come to me and say, so and so is giving an initiation this weekend, should I go, you know what I mean. Like, some lama is coming into town and should I go?

And then, people say I know such and such a lama could they come and teach at ACI?

I'll just draw out my thoughts about it and then you tell me what you think about it. My first thought is that I think in spiritual things in general there's already too much division between people you know what I mean. Like, there's my centre and your centre. And my gelugpa centre and your gelugpa centre and my drepung gelugpa centre and your drepung gelugpa centre and your gomang drepung gelugpa centre and your gomang drepung gelugpa centre. And I think there's too much of that.

I had a dream, I think I told you, one night, very strong in a vajrayogini retreat.

And I was sitting around a table with a bunch of newsmen and they're interviewing the Dalai Lama, His Holiness.

And I'm sitting next to the Dalai Lama, you know, and I get to translate something. And then they say, His Holiness, since things are empty, we don't have to practice morality any more, right?

So, I'm like, I go like this and I say, let me answer, I'll blow them away, you know. [laughter] And he looks at me like that and says, you know, sometimes Michael, it's more important to have harmony than to be right, you know.

And it was very powerful, very strong dream.

And so I think in general, my general feeling is that there's so much division. There's so much lack of harmony.

And I think the very first bodhisattva vow is a symbol or a sign that that's been going on for a few thousand years maybe. You know, the first bodhisattva vow is, it says {dak ...}, 'don't praise yourself, don't put down others'.

But it specifically means don't praise your group, your Mahayana group specifically, and put down another Mahayana group, you know, and that teacher, something like that out of feelings of, like, possessiveness, pride, whatever, out of some kind of negative feeling. Like, you feel attached to your group for the wrong reason.

And I think so in general just it feels to me like there's been so much division and even in the Tibetan tradition there's been so much division.

And in every tradition, I mean, American also.

The Tibetan's asked me, what did you grow up. And I said, I don't know, it's three hundred protestant sects in America.

They said, well how does your differ from the other two hundred and ninety-nine when you were growing up?

I said, I don't even know, you know. I used to go to my friend's church and they would recite something and they'd have a different word in the Lord's Prayer and we'd say it's no good, you know what I mean. [laughs]

It just feels to me like His Holiness is on the right track. You know, the only thing that His Holiness asked me when we gave Him the CD ROM was do you have the Bonpo text on this? It wasn't even the Buddhist text, you know. It was like, are there Bonpo texts on it, Bon texts on there?

And I said, I changed the subject [laughter] but anyway. [laughs]

Anyway, I think there's too much division already. I think that we should try to reach out to other groups. I think as far as possible we should try to have great lamas come if they can.

And I think we should try to reach out and to learn from other people.

And I really believe that and I think we should try to do that.

Now, I'll talk about the other side of it.

And by the way, like somebody asked me can Godstow be used by a certain person, a certain lama, certain group? And I said, yes, I think that's fine. I think it's good.

Even another group has asked us if they could use Godstow. And I said, as long as we don't have any programs that week. As long as there's no one who's going to be disturbed on a {..} retreat or something like that.

And if the place is there and if some one wants to use it for a nice spiritual retreat then I think

it's wonderful.

And then they said, should they pay?

And I said, well, I think it would be kind of cool to give it to them for free if we could and then tell them that if they want to pay for it this is how much it costs to open it for that weekend. But if you can't pay it's okay.

I think if there were more of that going on I think it would be very beautiful.

Then they said, could we sponsor it?

And I said, no, you know. And that's a different thing. You know, to say that we sponsor this thing or that we put our name behind a teaching that I have no idea what the content is going to be. I don't personally know this teacher.

They said, they're a Geshe, you don't have to worry about it. Okay. [laughter] [laughs] I'm not putting down geshe. I'm saying, geshe's not a ticket to being, you know, correct. Except in my case. But anyway [laughter] no, I just mean that you have to know the person, you have to check the person.

One time this geshe guy showed up. He says he's a geshe.

I said, really, where from?

He says, oh this college.

I said, oh really, when did you finish?

He says, well, I'm almost finished, you know.

And I said, oh, how much did you finish?

He says, I got through {parchin}.

{parchin} is first year, you see.

And then, you know, I'm like, yeah.

I mean, it doesn't, you see signs up says geshe so and so, ex-abbott of so and so, pretty good friends with the Dalai Lama [laughter]. The [unclear] group came to thirty-ninth street when Tom and I were there. These are the people who attacked people on the Tokyo subway with gas. They had a picture of their leader reaching out towards His Holiness as if they were shaking hands.

Later it turns out he just did that at the side of the road and they took a picture you know what I mean. But it didn't sound right to me. Everything sounded funny, you know.

What I'm saying is that I wouldn't have a person, I wouldn't sponsor a talk or a teaching by a person, unless I knew who they were, unless they were well recommended, unless I knew their personal background and unless I knew that their worldview was correct. Personally, I wouldn't support it.

It doesn't mean that they're bad person or something like that.

No, there's another extreme too. I told you the story many times. The guy calls me up says he's the leader of Mongolian Buddhism.

I say, oh, great, you know, what's your name?

He says Jetsun {..}.

I said, well what monastery are you from?

He says, I'm not from any monastery.

So, I'm like, yeah, right, you know. And I said, well are you from [unclear] or where?

He says, I've never been to Mongolia, you know. So, I'm like, well who are you, you know?

I'm the head of Mongolian Buddhism.

And I said, nice to talk to you, you know, maybe I'll catch you some time.

Then I go out to Khen Rinpoche. I said, I met this guy, he gave me this spiel on the phone. He says you made a big mistake, you know. [laughter] [laughs] he is, you know.

By the way, he's just been reinstated on his throne in Mongolia, he really is, you know. [laughter] And [laughs] you know, I went, his two sons are my classmates in the monastery. They never mentioned about their father, okay. [laughter]

Anyway, I'm saying you can make big mistakes. So I'm not judging that the person is not capable of teaching. I'm just saying I don't know them and I don't know their background.

And your mental real estate, your spiritual real estate is very impressionable, very valuable. So I wouldn't, I mean, if you check the person out, if you know them to be good, you know, like Lama Zopa. He's done such extraordinary things for people throughout the history of American Buddhism for year after year after year, twenty-four hours a day burning out his body to help people. Thousands and thousands of activities just to benefit people, you know, totally from his heart. Totally giving, you know, of course if you have a chance, I think during the coming year in 2000, I think you should try to have him give some talks here and things like that.

Art Engel I think should, you should try to get him here once a month or something.

Try and get Khen Rinpoche here a couple of times in 2000, things like that.

I think you have to grab the opportunity when it comes.

I sort of discourage the idea of quick weekend talks, you know, like come to town Friday night, leave Sunday morning, cover the {Lam Rim Chenmo} in between, you know. I discourage that.

I think it's, as you've seen at this Institute, the idea is you have at least eight to ten weeks course, you know. You have lots of time to think. And it's part of a larger program of study that could go on for years.

I go all around the United States on those two-night stands. I don't like them. I actually refuse them when I can. I say, four, five days, ten classes okay, but less than that I don't see how it can have much benefit.

And I don't like that. And that's all they get. And they get the same thing over and over again. People get crazy.

You know, the lama comes into town. He teaches the {lojong .. gyema}, does the short {lam rim}, gives a long life Tara initiation and then blows out of town by Sunday evening, you know what I mean. And it just frustrates people after a while.

So I think those are the considerations you have to have.

Now, what kind of teaching?

Khen Rinpoche used to always say that if you try to mix the four traditions of Tibet you will have a problem. Not that they are not each pure. They're all pure. They're all beneficial. They're like the four schools of ancient India;

they're beautiful, great, each one is perfect for a certain kind of disciple and you have to find the one that's perfect for you, you know what I mean.

Like, you have to decide and pick one but it's like, but then to go and try to do two of them at once or three of them at once it's like, when I grew up they told us that if you used ajax and chlorax at the same time you'd kill yourself. Of course, we tried it and nothing happened [laughs]

[end side A]

[side B]

Individually, they're great but Khen Rinpoche used to always tell us that. And I never

regretted that.

I got fed a pure, holy, sacred, Je Tsongkapa gelugpa diet and I'm not ashamed of it. It's fantastic. It's perfect.

You can get enlightened that way. You don't need anything else.

People ask me, how many tantric initiations you had?

One, you know.

And they said, gee, well I had fourteen, you know.

I said, I don't care, you know. Just do your thing. Do that one thing purely. You don't need more than that.

So I don't think, I'm not disrespecting the other traditions and I'm also not to the point of feeling apologetic where I think we have to have at least one Chinese master here a year or one Nyingma master here a year or one Kagyu master here, don't think like that, you know what I mean. If it's relevant to our immediate studies, you know, if it's for example, that you have some advanced students who are doing serious Vajrayogini studies and they've gotten back to the original Sakya works and if there's a holy, great master of the Sakya tradition who'd be willing to come and help us with those texts or help us with a certain part of our own tradition, I think it's beautiful.

I think it would be great. But again, great study of that person's character, their background, what they're doing, what they're teaching, how their worldview is, are they really a master of what they do.

You guys are spoiled because you grew upon Khen Rinpoche who is a true master. There's nobody left like him alive in Southern India.

In the great Gelugpa monasteries out of ten thousand monks there's nobody like that but you just take it for granted.

You don't realize that the kind of training he's had and just off-hand imparts to you stuff that you couldn't get anywhere else in the world, you just take it for granted 'cos you didn't know anything else.

So, I mean, there are lots of people less qualified, there are lots of people who didn't quite finish class number five through eighteen or something you see what I mean.

And you just don't even know about it.

Somebody comes, they have a red robe on, they have some kind of degree from somewhere, you can't, you have to check them out, you have to know what they know.

That's my feeling on it personally. I think you have to reach out to other traditions. I mean, you have to be, there's too much division going on and it's harmful.

If a lama has proven themselves to be a great teacher and a great person and a great servant of the disciples then I think we should work, like, I'm thinking of Lama Zopa or somebody like that. I think we should work very hard to try to get them to teach here when we can.

If it's someone who's supposed to be great but we don't know about them, I think we have to learn more about them or ask other, the great lamas that we know, we have to ask them is this lama qualified and do you want to have them teach here.

If they're from another Tibetan tradition, I think in general, it would confuse you if you got extensive teachings from more than one tradition.

I think you got a taste of it if you read the Kagyu lojong and then the Sakya lojong and then the Gelugpa lojongs, they're all beautiful. But if you don't have the right kind of teacher and the right explanation for the Kagyu lojong that you've had for example, you'd just plain get

confused, you know. 'The nature of the mind is nothing', you know. 'The path itself is gone beyond'. You know what I mean? And you need someone who's well trained to explain it. So I think you would get confused.

Again, if a person is a highly qualified master of one of our lineages that stretches beyond the Gelugpa beginning, for example, we're studying {...}in the Vinaya class. [] was born two hundred years before the Gelugpas started but we're studying that text in our Vinaya class 'cos it's the greatest. It's a Kagyu text you see what I mean.

People tell me, oh, you're Gelugpa, you don't like the Kagyu's. I said, yeah, I spent, you know, twelve years studying Vinaya with a Kagyu text. But it's not like that you see what I mean.

So if it's somebody, if it's a great lama who relates to your lineage, if you're strong in your lineage and you understand your lineage well and the teachings well, then naturally, reach out further to get more teachings from holy beings on those subjects, okay.

As far as interfaith dialogue, you know what I mean, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Moslem. I don't like it for the sake of political correctness, you know what I mean. If it's just for that, to be politically correct, you know, oh, every year we should have a rabbi here so we can say we had a rabbi here.

Rinpoche and I once got invited to Lakewood, New Jersey. The pope had just issued a, what do you call those things, a new [unclear] I don't know. What do you call those things?

Anyway, it was something he announced at, you had to have more people from other religions come and give talks at catholic churches, you know. So this church in Lakeland asked me and Rinpoche to go talk there not because they wanted to hear what was said but because they were required by these directions, instructions that we had to go, they had to have at least one per year. We were the representative Buddhists you know what I mean.

And it just felt very uncomfortable and actually the people were very beautiful and we ended up having a good time. But the motivation behind it, just for correctness, I don't think so.

If it's a true desire to learn more and to learn from those people about the holy teachings of their great teachers or something like that I think there's a place for it and I think that there'd be a sweet place for it. But not as just a gesture of, not as just a gesture. As a real taking the time to learn what they teach, to learn what they know, to benefit from what they know. Like, how the Christians run their charities, how the great Christian charities run, you know, like even Salvation Army type of thing. How those successful places work because the Buddhists are lousy at it. We don't do anything. There's no Tibetan Buddhist charities in India. They just started the first one at Sera. It's a free hospital. But the concept of a free hospital ten years ago would have been unheard of in the monastery. They would have said you're crazy you know what I mean.

And that kind of stuff, I think we have to be very open and frank about what we don't know, what we don't have in our tradition and what we can learn from other traditions. But not just this PC stuff you know what I mean.

Those are my thoughts on it. And as far as the course I'll repeat from an earlier talk, it's pure Buddha, Arya Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Dharmakirti, you know, Master Shantideva, pure one hundred percent original texts. There isn't anything in there that's, there's no major part of the eighteen courses which is not direct translations of the classics. That's why the place is called Asian Classics. There's nothing there that was made up by anybody or anything like that. And the information that you've been taught, every homework question, is a pure one hundred percent the great masters of Buddhism all the way back to Lord Buddha.

There's nothing else there.

And I think it should stay that way. And I think it should be that way. The instruction itself should be pure one hundred percent what the Buddha taught and what the great masters have taught since then.

I anticipate that in the coming decades there will be American commentaries on those things and I think that's wonderful. And you should write commentaries. Your students should write commentaries.

Within two hundred years of the move of Buddhism to Tibet the Sanskrit books were gone. By Je Tsongkapa's time nobody studied the originals in Sanskrit you see what I mean. It was all the Tibetan commentaries.

So I think the same thing might well happen in English but you goddamn well better be qualified [laughs] to write them. That's all.

That's my idea about it. Do you guys have anything to say about interfaith or any other traditions?

[student]

Mathew asked if you think it would be useful to have debates. I can see two things happening.

I can see marriages. Like, I had some great students who came from the Zen tradition and they are really good at meditating. And then I think they came here and learned more of content for the meditation.

I can see places where the lineages can marry you know what I mean. Like, you have a great Zen tradition, of how to sit and sitting discipline and how to concentrate well and then you get the content poured in.

I can see that. And yeah, I can see debates and I'm not, when I say reach out and have unity and stuff like that there should also be very frank open debate, public debates on certain points you see what I mean and they should be gloves off you know what I mean.

They say {senge ngaro}, say {senge}[repeat] {ngaro}[repeat], you know, be nice to that lineage, respect that lineage, speak well of them, appreciate them, learn from them, listen to them, but when they give that bullshit explanation of emptiness, {senge ngaro} means, attack them with the roar of a lion, you know, publicly. Or abortion, the Tricycle magazine drives me crazy, you know. What, did the Buddha outlaw abortion? Of course he did. I can show you four or five hundred places in the Scriptures where he did. You know, come on, you know what I mean and you have to be willing to stand up and say, come on that's obviously wrong. And then you have to be ready to debate it.

I think that would be wonderful. Like this idea that emptiness is some kind of coloured light or something like that, just something totally wrong, then yeah, should be willing to debate it. You show me.

Some guy came up to me and said, anger's a good thing for you, they said so in the Scriptures, you know, get it out, you feel better.

I said, show me, you know, just show me, come next week and show me the scripture.

In four thousand five hundred works in the Buddhist canon, the {kangyur} and {tengyur}, there's not a single line that says that. Come and show me next week.

He did. Next week he brought this book by this guy who made up this thing and, you know, oh this is my thoughts, you know.

So I said, you said it was in the Scriptures. This guy's still alive. He just made this up. So I said, show me a Scripture, you know.

He couldn't. He left. He never came back. He wrote me a nasty letter but [laughter] [laughs] no such thing you see. That's all.

Yeah, that'd be great. That'd be great. And under very controlled circumstances and with great respect for each other's traditions you know what I mean.

To say that the Vaibashikas are crazy or you know, it's to put down their teacher who is who? Lord Buddha, okay. [laughs] You got to be careful about that.

Lord Buddha might have taught hatha yoga. Lord Buddha might have taught, you know, certain kinds of baseball, I don't know. [laughter]

You got to be careful. You really have to be careful. You don't know. You really don't know.

I mean, the very first bodhisattva vow is not there by accident. It's you must have a deep respect for the other traditions and honour them.

Each one, if Buddha could teach Vaibashika, then Buddha could teach anything else to help people so you can't dis it but you have to, when there's a case when you have an opportunity to debate in a proper setting and with great respect for each other, I think we have to do it.

I think we have to stop tonight.

We'll do a prayer.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Thankyou.

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Nine
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

[prayer: short mandala]
[prayer: refuge and bodhichitta]

[cut]

Okay, we'll start.

[acknowledgements / announcements]

We are starting off on the last formal ACI course that there was. There was fifteen, okay.

And that was called "What the Buddha Really meant", okay.

And in Tibetan, that's called {tragne}. [cut]

Say {tragne} [repeat], {tragne} [tragne]. {tragne} is a very, very important subject. I think in every religion, okay. I think it is the most important question in almost any religion.

And it's the question of, when is the founder of the religion speaking literally, and when were they speaking figuratively see what I mean?

Like, Lord Buddha, there's a famous quotation by Lord Buddha, says 'kill your father, kill your mother'. Are we to take that literally [laughs] or figuratively you see what I mean?

And, obviously, you're meant to take it figuratively. It means if you are not able to practice well in the home atmosphere then leave it and get yourself to a monastery or go to another place where you can study seriously. But that's {tragne} is obviously important, you know. If you didn't have the study of {tragne} then people would go around killing their parents, which is one of the five great bad deeds, okay.

So, I think in every religion {tragne} is really important. The beauty, I think, of Buddhism as it's been passed down to us through our lineage is that it's a whole subject [sneezes], that was literal [laughter]. It's a whole subject of study. Like, there are rules set forth or there are guidelines on how to interpret the Buddha, okay.

When was the Buddha speaking literally? When did the Buddha mean what he said and when did the Buddha not mean what he said? Who gets to decide how do you decide? And it's extremely important in all kinds, in every religion, because of corruption, you know.

Like, the founder or the prophet's words can be taken any way that people want to take them to prove that it's okay to do what they want to do you see what I mean.

Benjamin Franklin was a printer. He used these lead rods to keep the type jammed together in the vices while they're printing newspapers for [unclear] Almanac and things like that.

And he once decided to become vegetarian. He has an extraordinary life story. He kept a book by the way, a very beautiful book of his personal virtues.

And then he got on a ship to go to England and off of Newfoundland they were what do you call it?

Becalmed, or something like that, no wind. And there wasn't anything to do so people

started fishing, you know, and they started pulling up these fish.

And, you know, he was a glutton basically and he really liked to eat. And he's watching them pull up these fish and then more and more fish coming up.

And they start making little fires on bricks on the deck and cooking the fish and he's getting really hungry and he really wants to eat them but he decided he'd be vegetarian.

Then he's watching them clean the fish and they cut up the fish and these little fish come out.

So he said, it's logical then, you know, the big fish eat the little fish so it's okay for me to eat the big fish.

And he started eating and he stuffed himself with fish. And then, finally, at the end he realised it was just his desire that made him break the rules of logic you see what I mean or misuse them.

He said it was like bending lead rules anyway you wanted to when you wanted to.

And so, there's this tendency for people to take the Dharma and bend it to their own personal desire you know what I mean?

And your personal afflictions that you came to Buddhism with you bend and twist the rules of Buddhism so it fits what you want to do see what I mean. And pretty much you often see people three years after their conversion to Tibetan Buddhism doing the same things they did before but now they have proof of why it's okay you know what I mean.

And that's why you have to study {tragne}. {tragne} is really important for deciding what did the Buddha really mean in each case, okay.

We study this subject in the monastery. We do, the classical course is twelve years of 'Perfection of Wisdom' and then following that is four years of Madhyamika, Middle Way and in between there we study {tragne} for maybe six months to a year, okay.

And it's a really beautiful thing.

We study the text by Je Tsongkapa. It's called {lekshe nyingpo}. [cut]

And Je Tsongkapa's dates you know, right.

{lekshe} means 'eloquence', well-spoken. Often in means, morally well spoken, but we'll call it eloquence. {nyingpo} means, 'essence', the essence of eloquence, okay.

And in this book Je Tsongkapa, the first half is basically devoted to the ideas of the Mind Only School on emptiness. And then the second half of the book is devoted to the ideas of the Middle Way school on emptiness.

So, basically, he's presenting a punch-out, a big fight, between the Mind Only school and the two halves of the Middle Way school on the subject of guess what?

What the Buddha meant when he talked about what subject though?

Emptiness. Okay.

So it's really cool. The whole book is, you know, the Buddha taught emptiness basically six different ways. Five of them are wrong, okay.

So why, you know, did Lord Buddha teach it five ways wrong and then finally get to the right way? And who's to say which is the right way? Okay.

How do you know what's the right way?

For example, when he taught the Mind Only version of emptiness he taught it and then he criticised the Middle Way version of emptiness taught by whom?

Himself. [laughs] Okay.

And he said, this time I'm really telling the truth, okay. I was wrong when I taught emptiness the Middle Way way, you know, now I'll tell you the truth. I was just kidding, you know, that's a nihilistic way to look at things. That kind of emptiness is too freaky. It's

not like that at all. It's much, much less than that.

It's much, much easier than that. And he taught it in a much mellower form, okay.

Actually, as you know, the ultimate version is Middle Way, which is also accepted by tantric schools, okay, it's the whole basis for tantra.

It is the highest way.

But, when Lord Buddha taught the Mind Only school he not only taught it differently but in the middle of his explanation he said, oh and by the way, that thing I said in the Middle Way school was wrong and I didn't mean it, okay.

Later, he said the opposite. He said, I did mean it when I taught it that way, okay.

What's that tell you about how to interpret Lord Buddha?

What's that tell you about the rules for interpreting Lord Buddha?

Can you take his own statements on interpretation to be literal?

Now, no. And that's a problem you see. Then it gets very difficult.

Okay, get this. When Lord Buddha discusses how to judge whether he was being serious or not you can't take him seriously. How's that? You see what I mean?

When Lord Buddha set forth his opinion on what he wanted us to take literally and figuratively he was being?

Figurative.

He didn't even mean that, okay. So Je Tsongkapa in his opening line of his book says we have a problem here you see what I mean.

We're trying to decide what the Buddha said that he really meant and what the Buddha said that he didn't really mean but when he said what he really meant, when he told us how to decide what he really meant and what he didn't really mean, he didn't really mean it. Okay.

So, now what do you do you see what I mean? He says you're stuck. You can't even trust it when the Buddha said that's what I really meant and I was kidding all the other times because he said that in the third turning of the Wheel when he was teaching Mind Only school, okay.

So, now, everything's out the window.

So Je Tsongkapa, I mean, this is the most beautiful and important part of this teaching, this final teaching okay, which is today and next Tuesday I think. Okay.

The conclusion that Je Tsongkapa draws in the first few pages is very earthshaking.

He says you can't even trust the word of the Buddha when the Buddha is saying that's what I really meant, okay, because he didn't really mean it.

So, so guess what you have to trust?

Your own reasoning. Okay. Your own reasoning.

This is very profound. This is something amazing. What you have is the most important Tibetan Buddhist who ever lived is saying, you don't accept the Buddha's words you accept what's logical to you that the Buddha said. Basically, that's what he's saying.

You don't accept what the Buddha said unless it makes sense to you.

That's very earthshaking.

What makes sense to a normal samsaric being is more valid than what an enlightened being said he really means.

This is getting very heavy. Get it?

Us little schmucks, what we think makes sense, is more important and has more validity than what the Buddha said, okay. And especially even when the Buddha said that's what I meant really, okay.

And the Buddha himself is adamant about this point. And I'm going to give you, this is called 'the three tests of a Dharma', okay.

Lord Buddha is saying, I'm going to give you three tests for Dharma to check whether a teaching is true or not. And, if anything I ever said doesn't fit that reject it, okay.

And that's one of the most attractive things to me about Buddhism is that the founder of Buddhism gets up in front of all the Buddhists of the world and says, you can't believe everything I say. You have to check it. And if you can't confirm it and you can't find that it's logical according to these three tests including your own experience then don't accept it. Don't do it.

I think that everybody who's in this room now is here because they did that to the religion they were in before you see what I mean.

Each person who is sitting here applied certain tests of personal experience and logic to whatever beliefs they grew up with and you're here because you questioned them you see what I mean.

And so, in a way, you're already {tragne}scholars. You're already practitioners of {tragne}. You're here because you applied certain tests of logic or common sense or what makes sense to you, the beliefs that you grew up with and you said, no it's not enough. And that's why you're here you see what I mean.

You found some fault with them. You didn't just take the authority of someone who said, oh, it's like that.

So these are called the three tests.

The Buddha said if a scripture or a teaching or a worldview or an opinion in the world doesn't fit these three tests then reject it. Even if I said it. Okay.

Here they are.

[cut]

Say {jepa sum}[repeat]. Lord Buddha said if you find a piece of, somebody's trying to sell you a piece of metal as gold. You know, you grew up in America or some country like that and we have all these standards. But, in ancient India and the whole rest of history, if some one came up to you with a yellow hunk of something and said that's gold, it's a problem you see what I mean.

You have to test it. You have to check it. You know, there is no standard. There is no king. There is no, you know, institute on national standards or something.

Somebody is offering to trade your cornfield for this little piece of metal, yellow metal and you have to figure out whether it's gold or not.

I mean, in the old days this was something important. You could trade your whole assets, your whole estate for these hunks of yellow metal. They could turn out to be useless you see what I mean.

Everybody has to know how to check gold in ancient times. This is important, right.

So he says, you check gold with three tests. You cut it. You check it out. You see if there's lead on the inside.

You melt it to see if it works right.

And you use a certain kind of file. In the gold business we still do that. There's a special file and it tells you what the caratage is, what percentage of it is gold, what percentage of it is alloy. And we still do it that way or we use certain acids and things like that.

He said, use three tests on what I teach you and if it doesn't pass it, reject it. Don't follow it, okay.

Here's the first one. [cut]

Buddha gets up and gives a teaching and the first test you have to use is, does it match my personal experience?

Now for me, people ask me why did you become a Buddhist?

One of the first events that made me a Buddhist was suffering, you know, death of my mother, death of my father, death of my brother, in one year you know.

And then I'd meet, I come across this really bad translation of a sutra, but it's clear that this guy is talking about suffering. And saying that if the world is really like this every event in the world is connected to your eventual dying and losing everything you had and losing every possession and every friend and every relative you ever had.

That's the manifest destiny of all mankind at all times in all histories in all countries of all economic levels, then what's it mean to be alive? What's the point of being alive you know? If you can't do something about that then what's the point to stay here?

If something got rather difficult you just shoot yourself you see what I mean.

Why try to be here if it's obvious from the beginning that nothing you ever work for will survive, you know, including yourself?

So that was the first, for me that matched my personal experience of that year so well that I was very attracted to Buddhism see what I mean.

So it passed my first test.

I was having trouble with those questions. They were not answered in my old belief system. It didn't make sense why people should die or suffer if there were somebody who made them and who was compassionate and who didn't have to make them with cancer.

It didn't make sense. It didn't pass.

But this one, oh yeah, that fits what I'm experiencing personally. That fits what I'm seeing happening in my own life, okay.

That's the first test. Okay.

Number two. [cut]

Does it make sense means, does it fit my logical perceptions, okay. These are direct perceptions. Okay.

Some things you can't see with your eyes but you can figure them out. Now, the things that I figured out that way, does what Lord Buddha taught make sense.

I haven't seen my death in this lifetime yet. I haven't perceived the loss of all my possessions and things like that. But based on deduction of what's happened to everybody else I ever heard of in this desire realm it's going to be pretty bad you know what I mean.

So, yeah, Lord Buddha says, you yourself are going to die, you yourself are going to lose all your possessions. Can I see that directly right now?

No.

But does it make sense given the New York Times obituary to know that?

I mean, it makes sense. Every person I've ever heard of, every person I've ever met, every person that I've ever had contact with says the same thing.

Everybody who comes into this life has to die. Everybody who comes into this life has to lose everything.

So, based on deduction, I know that's true.

I haven't seen my own death directly now 'cos I haven't died yet, okay. And I don't have the ability to see the future for that right now.

So, does it make sense that I probably am going to die? For example, when you do a death

meditation, does it make sense to do that?

You say, yeah, it does.

Oh, why, 'cos you died yesterday?

No, but logically I know it's going to happen. Okay. That's all.

It fits my, not only my direct experience, but it makes sense logically, what I understand with my own sense of reason, what lord Buddha said makes sense. Okay.

Even on the things I don't quite understand yet like emptiness or something like that. Even on those things, what I do understand makes sense, okay.

Number three. [cut]

Is it authoritative, meaning credible?

This is a third test, okay. And the test goes like this. A person gets up and says something that you're not sure about, okay, but you've known that person long enough that you believe them you see what I mean.

You've tested the person so exhaustively so that on the subject of something that you cannot perceive directly you believe them 'cos you believe the source, okay.

You know, there are certain people in your life that if they come and tell you I heard this is going to happen tomorrow, you say, yeah, yeah, okay you know.

And then there's other people who don't, who never say anything that's BS you know what I mean. Everything they ever told you in your life was true. And then they tell you something very important and, you know, you can't check it out yourself, but because they've spoken to you truly your whole life and because you believe in them then you take it, you know. That's the third test.

It passes the test of credibility. It's coming from a person who's credible, okay.

So even though I might not be able to check it out with my own personal eyes, which would be the first test, and even though I can't figure it out logically, which would be the second test, this person, this particular person, I've had many, many exchanges with them, I've talked to them countless times, they've told me countless things; every single time it was true. Now they've said something incredible I tend to want to take it, accept it. It passes my third test, okay.

And that's the whole thing where you have to, in Buddhism can you establish that the Buddha is credible you see what I mean?

Once you've figured out that this particular scripture was definitely written by Lord Buddha, spoken by Lord Buddha, then you just have to decide am I going to believe everything Lord Buddha said or not?

Can I believe what Lord Buddha said or not?

Is it important to check out or not see what I mean? How do you test if Lord Buddha is capable of lying or not, you know? Like, Tibetan Buddhists will tell you Lord Buddha is {tsema}. {tsema} means pramana. Pramana, in this case, means a person who cannot lie. Okay. They say, {tseme kyebu}, a person who cannot lie.

But how do you establish that? How do you establish that a person is a person who cannot lie?

You know, one way is to study a lot of Tibetan Buddhism or Buddhist scripture until you're satisfied to the point where if I know this scripture was truly spoken by Lord Buddha, since every other one I read was believable, credible, then I will accept this one now and I'll act on it. That's one way to do it.

But, it's very interesting, in the scriptures they say the main way to establish Lord Buddha is a

person who's credible, authoritative, this is really cool and it sold me, okay. It was credible to me. It said, he's the only one who can describe your suffering correctly you see what I mean?

He's the only person you've ever run into who could describe to you honestly how bad you're suffering, how bad things are, you see what I mean.

The first Noble Truth. The first thing Lord Buddha ever said, you know, everything {duche .. dukgnel wa}everything is suffering, you know.

And then, you know, other people will tell you, fifty percent is suffering, twenty-five percent is suffering, ten percent is suffering, but to come up and say everything is suffering. The face of a beautiful child is suffering. A beautiful sunset is suffering. A nice Mexican dinner is suffering. Okay. To be healthy is suffering. To have a nice relationship is suffering. To have a good position and money and health is suffering. You know, come on, you know what I mean.

And by the way, I don't think you've seen it anywhere else see what I mean.

But if you have one person who has the hutspa to stand up and say, everything is suffering, everything in your life is pain, you know. Everything is either pain or pain waiting to happen. Period. You have to lose everything. Every good thing you can give me on a list of what's going right in your life will be destroyed in a year you know what I mean. Period. And it's just, the main method of establishing that Lord Buddha is a credible person is that he said that, okay.

And to me, when I think about it, that matches my personal experience you know. In college I came across this Buddhist book and I'm like this guy knows what he's talking about. Why? Because he can describe the problem at least and no one else I ever met is see what I mean. And it was just, to me it was just like wow, you know.

I said the first thing was the death of my family. The second thing was my high school girlfriend, okay.

Meaning, why is it that these relationships always turn sour, you know? Why is it that the person you're most attracted to turns out to be the one you'd most like to get away from? It's just a matter of time you know what I mean. Why is it that there's always this curve like this, you know for most personal relationships? It was driving me crazy you know.

And then Lord Buddha has a very simple answer. It's destroyed because it's started, you know. It will end because it had a beginning you know what I mean.

And it's, like, profound, you know.

Things go wrong because they started, okay, and nothing else is necessary. They say {...} meaning, without any other outer factors necessary at all everything you live for will be destroyed. Okay.

It doesn't take a car accident or an atomic bomb or AIDS or anything else to ruin your life. What ruins your life is your birth you see what I mean.

And this is profound to me. Someone who can describe the condition so perfectly to me that's a big step towards being a person that I can believe, okay.

So that's a third test. Those are the big three tests.

I think you had a question.

[student]

[laughs] He said how can you consider the Buddha credible when he contradicts himself?

If a person could give compelling reasons why they must contradict themselves to help other people I think you can consider them credible see what I mean. But he better give some

good explanations why you know what I mean. That's all.

By the way, if you had to debate anything tonight would be the night 'cos there's so many debates here. Did he mean it when he said this for example you know what I mean?

Yeah. Oh, by the way, test it with the three to see, okay. [laughs]

Yeah.

[student]

Oh, yeah, definitely hard. You have to go up to number two. That takes number two.

Yeah, on things which are {kokyur}, meaning things which are for you hidden right now it's important to go straight to number two.

[student]

Yeah, but it's important with number two, even with something like emptiness you have to go straight to number two, it's still important to use number one to check if the way they explain it is contradicted by anything in your personal experience you see what I mean.

Even though you can't see emptiness directly is there anything you can see which would discount emptiness as Lord Buddha explained it you see what I mean. That might be something you can establish with your eyes you know. And that's okay. What I'm saying is you can use direct personal experience to come up with a no objection so far you see.

I can't confirm emptiness with my direct personal experience but I can't disconfirm it either.

I use this a lot about future lives. You know, I am one of the first American Buddhist teachers, right. So, people always asking me in our culture prove future lives to me you know.

And then one day it just dawned on me. I said, you prove to me there aren't any future lives, you know. I'm tired of proving it, you know. You give me one shred of evidence that the mind doesn't go on when the body dies, okay.

Ninety-nine percent of the arguments against future lives are 'the body stops moving'.

I didn't debate that the body stopped. I agreed that the body stops.

We're talking about the mind, okay. So, the driver dies because the truck breaks down?

You see what I mean? What kind of sense is that? What kind of argument is that?

That's the only argument. The brainwaves stop. Okay, the physical manifestation of the mind has stopped. Does that mean the mind has stopped? You see what I mean?

There's no proof at all.

By the way, I'll take you backwards okay. This is illegal logic. Your mind doesn't stop. Forget it. The mind does not stop. It just doesn't stop.

Now work backwards. Try to give me one shred of proof that indicates that it does stop. It doesn't, okay. There is no proof.

I mean, I'll tell you from the beginning. You can believe me if you have perception number three here, okay [laughs] those of you who I haven't robbed or cheated yet. [laughter]

But [laughs] okay. Let's say the mind doesn't stop. Think about it. Now, go backwards. Pull up all the proofs you ever had that the mind stops and they're just ridiculous. They're really ridiculous. They don't make any sense at all.

If you were really {su nyerpa}, which means, if you were really unbiased, if you weren't sitting in two thousand years of your own bias in the west, you would just say, oh yeah there is no proof. Come to think of it the body just stops but it doesn't prove anything about the mind. God knows what the mind, god knows what the guy's thinking. I don't know if the guy's thinking you know.

The body's sitting there all cold. Come to think of it, it doesn't prove a goddamn thing about where his mind is you see what I mean. And there isn't any proof that there's no future life at all.

So what I'm saying is, yeah, for emptiness there's nothing in your personal experience that could contradict the teachings on emptiness although you can't confirm them.

So there's a difference between not being able to contradict them and not yet being able to confirm them. Okay. Two different things.

So those are the three tests of whether something is literal or figurative.

Question two, nowadays some people say that a knowledge of emptiness, people come up to you and say, we experience emptiness through, this is a small wrong view of a small segment of American Buddhists, western Buddhists. We experience emptiness through some kind of, you know, lucky experience, satori or something, you know. We just have, we're just standing there chopping wood one day and it just happens to us.

No, no, you read that, you know. And we just know it you see what I mean. And you get this flash and it's just triggered and you don't have to study. This whole thing of Tibetan Buddhism you're so hung up on, oh, Michael Roach says you need three thousand hours of studying emptiness to get it through the original scriptures of Buddhism, come on, you can just have this flash and you get this insight into it. It's like [unclear] you just do it.

There's a very famous argument like that. Lord Buddha gave a, he said, 'beings must wander here', quote 'in suffering life' quote 'because they have no knowledge of the ways of emptiness' and those with compassion, meaning Buddhas and others, quote 'use skilful means and millions of different reasonings', arguments, logical arguments to bring them to a perception of emptiness. Okay.

That's from the Sutra Requested by Rashtapala, okay. In that sutra Lord Buddha mentions {tup-kepo}okay. [cut]

Say {tupke}[repeat]. I like this word. {tupke} means skilful means, okay. It's always a {mayin-gak} in Tibetan. {mayin-gak} means it's always more than meets the eye, okay. {tupke} means, skilful means, means 'unexpected means'. Okay.

Like what?

Oh, like punching a student in the head. Okay. Really. That's called {tupkyepo}. If the time is right and if it's the only way to get the student to wake up, and if you have compassion, and if your compassion outweighs your worries about how the person's going to see you, you punch them you see what I mean.

If you can be more compassionate than proud you see. You're more worried about their benefit than how they're going to think about you you punch them you see what I mean. That's {tupke}. {tupke} means, extraordinary means for extraordinary times for extraordinarily stubborn students, okay, or stuff like that.

Unexpected methods of getting them to see what they have to see okay. And that's called {tupkepo}.

And there's this whole realm of {tupkepos} where even Lord Buddha is doing weird things because those particular students can only learn it that way okay.

What are the weird things that we're talking about in this context?

How about five different schools on emptiness that are wrong? Okay. Why does Lord Buddha go through teach the Vaibashika school, the Sautrantika school, the Chittamatra school and the Svatantrika Madhyamika school and then two versions of that? Why? They're all wrong. Okay.

Four and a half of the classical, sorry, three and a half of the four classical schools of India are wrong in their presentation of emptiness.

That's {tupke}, okay, {tupke}.

You have a modern example in His Holiness the Dalai Lama. You know, He comes to New York City. You know, people ask Him hard questions: euthanasia, homosexuality, mercy killing, you know, questions like that.

And He's like, oh, you know, you have to reach out and talk about it, maybe in special cases that would be alright or something like that. You know, go to India, hear what He says in the monastery. You know, it's like, are you crazy, you know, of course not. Here's twenty-six scriptural references that say that's the wrong thing to do, you know.

So, is He lying?

We say, no, it's {tupkepo}. Okay. If His Holiness really stood up, I saw the front page in England after He spoke in London. You know, two hour beautiful talk but they only picked up on one sentence.

You can guess it was something about one of those subjects you see what I mean.

They missed the whole two hours because He touches on one thing like abortion that Buddhism says is wrong, okay, that the person is alive. If He talks for two hours on this subject when He reaches New York everyone's going to walk out. So He just skips it or says maybe it's okay or something like that.

And that's {tupke}. Okay. {tupkepo} means, given the minds of the students in that audience, that person can only teach it that way. Okay. And that's {tupkepo}.

What happens when you get a whole bunch of lamas doing this? You know, what happens when you get a lama in so and so city saying one thing and a lama in another city saying another thing? What's the implication here?

No, what I mean, what I'm saying is that to an untrained person, to a naïve student, to a student who doesn't have enough virtue, it will seem like these two lamas are contradicting each other. And then they will start to have, what do you call it, sectarianism, you know.

They'll say, my lama's right, your lama's wrong, you know. My lama says this way. Your lama says that way you know what I mean. My lama says that's totally wrong. Yeah, well my lama says you're totally wrong you know what I mean.

And what they don't get is that the lama might even be the same being, probably very likely would be the same being emanating in two different cities, teaching two different teachings for two different levels of disciples because they need it, okay.

And then, a lot of the conflict that people see, either conflict in what one lama has said, or conflict between what two lamas have said, if there are two lamas who are close to you the odds that they're one being are very high, okay. So, why are they not saying the same thing?

Well why do you think they had to emanate two lamas in the first place? [laughter] Okay. Don't you get it? Okay. That emanation is to take care of that part of your training and that emanation's to take care of that part of your training. And if they emanate as the same person and said the same things why would they have to emanate you see what I mean. You don't get it you see what I mean.

It's a very beautiful thing. That's why {tragne} is so important, okay.

If you really take it to its highest level you will get very careful about judging not only two lamas who seem to be disagreeing about something but also just normal people in your life, you know.

Who knows why this other person is doing something to you, you know.

Me and my brother lived in Hawaii 'cos we liked surfing, you know. And we surfed there for like six months. And he was studying aikido and I was studying taikwando or something like that. And we had this deal that when we woke up if the surf was small we would just make pancakes and then we would try to hit each other when the other person wasn't looking [laughs]

So you walk around the house all day like in a heightened sense of awareness you see 'cos the idea was the other person could hit you on the head and you wouldn't block them right you see what I mean. This is [unclear] twenty years old or something.

And you see that was a kindness. You see? That kind of constant test, the spectre of that kind of test hanging over you all day. If you want to be good at martial arts it's great, you know, it's instant reflexes all the time because this guy might be hitting you any time. [laughs]

So, it's the same thing in life, okay.

If there are enlightened beings around you, and if they're trying to help you get enlightened, you can have this new Buddhist mental illness. It'll be the opposite of paranoia. I don't know, you want to call it "benanoia", you know, some kind of beneficial paranoia where you begin to believe that everyone is out to get you enlightened. Everybody. Everybody around you is already enlightened and they're all made this, they get, every morning they get up before you do and they have a big meeting about who's going to see you, who's going to be waiting for you where, who's going to try to piss you off, who's going to try to cheat you, who's going to trip you, you know, who's going to say something bad about you, who's going to make you feel better later, you know what I mean.

And the whole thing is 'Truman's World', you know. The whole thing is planned out every morning. Everyone takes their positions. You wake up, you know, that's {tupkepo}.

If there are any enlightened beings in the universe, if you believe that it's possible there's one enlightened being, they can emanate a whole planet full of people. That's no problem for them, okay.

And half the people you ever meet could be emanations or all of them, okay. And {tupkepo}, they're doing things to you to try to help you, to try to move you along.

So you get in a total opposite worldview from thinking oh this person's bad, this person's fighting with that person, I believe, you know, this, you don't need to do that any more okay. That's {tupkepo}.

If the Buddha would take the trouble to teach five wrong kinds of emptiness would he stop there?

I mean, is there a restriction on Buddhas where they can't, a lot of people think that Buddhas can't emanate western faces, they can only do Tibetan faces you know what I mean. A lot of people think that. A lot of people think that, you know. They can only do eastern faces and they can't be under thirty, that's impossible. They can't be women especially see what I mean. That's totally, they'd never do that. They can't do that. They never do that. They always show up as Tibetans between fifty and sixty, you know. [laughter] And they're men, you know. They're always men you know what I mean. And no, people have this natural feeling that that's, what do you think, Buddha can't do more than that?

And do you think that if he taught five wrong kinds of emptiness then could he be running the local Hindu centre or the local Moslem mosque or anything like that. Or does he stop at Buddhist, he can only teach wrong Buddhist ideas you see what I mean? So we can judge these people but we can't judge our own side you see what I mean. Is that how it works?

Does he have a problem being a Christian minister in an American Protestant church or something? They can't emanate that? They can't give a lecture that you can learn something from if you go sit in a church you know? They have a problem with that?

They can do Sautrantikas and Chittamatras in ancient India but they can't do modern Protestant priest who might teach you something useful see what I mean?

That's a wrong view.

So the idea of {tragne}, the bottom line and I have to stop 'cos the sergeant is waving at me okay. The bottom line is this, don't trust anything, don't believe in anything just because somebody said it or didn't say it or what.

You have to check everything.

You have to check everything a lama tells you. You have to check everything your root lama tells you.

Anything they say might be {tupke}.

Anything they say might be something you're supposed to check and do the opposite if you use your brain. Okay.

And that's very uncomfortable for a lot of people.

You have sole responsibility to check the truthfulness of any teaching you ever get and only then put it into your life and practice.

And don't think that any particular lama's not going to test you. It's their job to test you okay. It's their job to push you and make sure that you do something because you figured it out and not because you like the way they look or something like that okay.

So it's very uncomfortable. I'm going to leave you like that, okay.

Ultimately, the only authority is what makes sense to you, you know, what seems right to you using logic and using your good sense about what's good or bad or what's right or wrong or what you should do or you shouldn't do.

And that's the study of {tragne}. Okay.

Next week we'll get into I'm going to give you a short survey of all the five kinds of emptiness, okay, which will make you appreciate number six.

Those people who did Mahamudra got a good dose of it and we'll go over that one more time especially for people who didn't get it, okay/.

So, see you after refreshments, okay.

[student comments]

[side B]

[student comments]

[unclear]

[cut]

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Ten
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start.

[announcement]

We are up to the ultimate philosophical question in Buddhism. And it's been, I don't know, eighteen hundred questions later on your homework.

We're going to cover tonight Je Tsongkapa's most important work. A lot of people in the monastery consider it much more important than his other great works. And this is called {tragne lekshe nyinpo}.

This is where Je Tsongkapa takes on the question of what did the Buddha really mean about emptiness, mainly about emptiness.

And this book is so important in the monastery that it's two hundred and fifty pages. They give you a special reward for memorising it. So you have to stand up in front of the whole fifteen hundred monks and recite it from memory you know. It's considered that important.

And then Rinpoche is one of the people who gives the awards out and for the last twenty years everyone who has memorised it has gotten a special, like, gift from Rinpoche.

Maybe about five people memorise it every year or something, pretty amazing.

I thought tonight the most important thing to do would be to give you in a nutshell all the different versions of emptiness, which Lord Buddha taught.

Those of you who were at the Mahamudra retreat got this already. It doesn't hurt to get it again seeing how you need three thousand hours of it.

I just want to say, you know, I go through the day, I meet amazing people, you know. People come to me and people call me.

I have occasion to meet many spiritually minded people and great spiritual people from all traditions: Hindu, Jewish, Moslem, Christian, Buddhist, different traditions of Buddhism. They all come sooner or later and we talk and stuff like that.

And it strikes me often how beautiful their teachings are. I often go to their services. I often sit in there and listen and everything strikes me how beautiful and this great unity there is in all the teachings in the world.

And then, I ask myself why am I a Buddhist then, you know what I mean.

And I am very clear on it. It's that despite the fact that compassion and good deeds and heaven and all these beautiful things are taught in almost all the traditions and meditation or prayer, but the thing about emptiness is, I think, not, it doesn't really appear in other traditions.

That's the, to me, tonight's knowledge, the knowledge that I'm going to talk about tonight is the unique and, I think, maybe most precious teaching of Buddhism. And maybe, the most precious teaching of all the religions, is emptiness and how that relates to morality or what you do.

And I think what I really think about it if you understand what goes down here tonight clearly and if you start to put it into practice then you can immediately start to see a reduction in your daily pain level you know what I mean. Ending in your own enlightenment in a specific amount of time.

And that's to me that someone could come along and explain that to me clearly in a way that I could start doing it that evening, then how to actually achieve the goals of every spiritual path on this planet, that's to me the ultimate teaching of Buddhism.

And to me, the most precious thing I ever learned in Buddhism.

So, we're going to go through five different ideas of emptiness. All of them were taught by Lord Buddha himself, okay, or herself depending on which emanation he or she was in at the time, okay, seriously.

And five of these six kinds of emptiness are wrong, okay, [laughs] or incomplete okay.

So this is Lord Buddha gradually taking you up the ladder, six rungs on the ladder, six steps up this stairway to heaven, right. They even call the book that sometimes. You know, how to get up. But you have to understand the elementary ones before you can get to the higher ones.

And by the end of this, this is going to be just a survey. I'm not going to keep you here to two

o'clock in the morning. We're going to finish on time.

This is the major difference between all Buddhist schools of ancient India you know. This is what distinguishes the schools. This is what distinguishes all the teachings of Lord Buddha. And this is what Je Tsongkapa was trying to get at, you know. This is where he put his heart into this one book where he explained how emptiness really works and how you can get it to work for you, okay.

So here's the first one.

The lowest school of ancient India is called Vaibashika, okay, the Abhidharma schools. And here's how they explain emptiness.

We're going to go through a list of six kinds of {gakjas}. Say {gakja}[repeat]; {gakja} means two-headed forty foot purple what? [students] Elephant, rampaging through this room at this moment, okay. How many of those are there here?

None. I mean, it sound silly, you know. Like, I say, how many two-headed forty foot rampaging crazy elephants are smashing the chairs, squashing people's heads, you know, trumpeting, you know, looking for peanuts or something through this room at this moment?

And you say, nobody looked around, you know. Everybody just laughed and said, you know, so this is obviously not here see what I mean.

Emptiness means the lack of something that your mind thinks is there which is not there, okay.

So, the suffering of humanity is not only has a correction but the irony, the great irony and the great sadness of our life is that what gives us pain and even what causes us to get old and die, what causes death itself is a belief in something that was never there. Okay. So we have to identify what's that thing that was never there.

And there are six versions, okay. So, basically, the study of emptiness is the study of six different things that never could have been there which because you believe in them this causes you all your pain and ultimately causes death itself.

If you can figure it out you wouldn't have to die.

We are the last remnants of millions of people that used to live in this particular realm. Many of them have left already. We are like at the back of the class, you know. We got left behind like four grades. And we didn't figure it out yet.

We're still trying to react to violence with violence.

We're still trying to fix things in a way that does not work and cannot work. And just the idea is that you just figure it out and then you know how to get out, okay.

So, here's the first two-headed, forty-foot purple elephant rampaging through this room, okay.

And I'm going to abbreviate them. Winston, I think, has made a very beautiful list, comprehensive list of these six and I don't know if it's passed out yet but if not you'll get it, okay.

I'm going to abbreviate them so we can get through them.

By the way, these were taught very eloquently to us by Geshe Thupten Rinchen in Sera last year and he'll be finishing the sixth one this year. That's what we're doing at Sera monastery so try not to miss it, okay.

[cut]

say {takpa}[repeat], this is really an abbreviation of {tak chik rawang chen kyi dak}. Say {tak chik}[repeat] {rawang chen}[repeat] {kyi}[repeat] {dak}[repeat], okay.

{tak chik rawang chen kyi dak} means, in fact, in the lower schools they don't even call it emptiness. They call it 'selflessness', okay. There is no 'self' which is {takpa}.

{takpa} means, 'unchanging'. Okay. Sometimes it's been translated as 'permanent', but it means unchanging. Something, which is not changing from moment to moment, okay, is what we don't believe in. Get it? Okay. It's what emptiness is empty of, okay. And the fact that that doesn't exist and if you understand the fact that that doesn't exist your life would be a lot happier, okay.

What does it refer to?

I mean, impermanence or changing quality on a macro level like if you understand that things don't have a quality of lasting then you get hurt a lot less, okay.

Is that nirvana? Is that enlightenment?

No.

Does it make you happier?

Yeah, better adjusted, yeah.

Is it one rung up the ladder to something higher?

Yeah.

So, if you are sensitive to the fact that things don't last, nothing lasts, then, your life is a lot more manageable. It's still not happiness but at least it's not so much suffering if you go into things

knowing that they don't last, okay.

So, we talk about 'gross impermanence,' which is marked by a car getting in an accident, and then it's obvious that the thing is impermanent, okay. The death of a person close to you, or other kinds of impermanence, that is what we call gross impermanence.

And then you become sensitive to another level of impermanence, which is moment- by-moment, okay, which you have to learn.

So there are two levels within this. One where you overcome your tendency to think things are going to last. You're sensitive constantly that things are not going to last. Nothing, okay, lasts. Like, I'm very attached to these classes you know. I spent the last seven years, we did thousands of pages of translations. It's just dawning on me that they're going to end. I always knew they were going to end.

And Lord Buddha was, one of the things that attracted me to Buddhism was that lord Buddha himself got up and one of the first teachings he gives is, hey, guess what, I'm going to die, my teachings are going to die, Buddhism will disappear from the world, you know.

And I thought, boy, any founder of a company or a family or a religion who could get up and say, guess what, this thing's going to collapse in so many years, it's kind of very honest you know what I mean.

This is stating that the fact of impermanence applies even to them and even to what they're doing, okay. So it doesn't last.

And that's the first kind of emptiness in a sense: is to realise that things don't have a quality of lasting. Not in a gross level, meaning they will die someday, you will have to lose them some day.

And not in a subtle level, meaning from moment-to-moment they get older, from moment-to-moment they start to leave you, and they're very, coming to you is the cause which brings their destruction.

You will lose anything for the simple reason that you got it. Okay.

That's very profound. To me that's one of the most amazing teachings of Buddhism. {...}, means without any outer factors, without the need for any outer factors your body will kill itself. Why?

Because it was born. Okay. And that's all it takes.

You don't have to have a car accident. It'll kill itself quite nicely, without a car accident, see what I mean.

And that's because it started. Everything that started will die, okay. And that's, to realise that then you don't have this subtle tendency to grasp the things as lasting, okay, which causes much of our suffering. Okay.

By the way, I take usually some problem I'm having and when I do this meditation I go through these six factors. I go through these six kinds of emptiness about that problem. Okay.

So, you know, one of the good things about a problem is they don't last, okay [laughs] you know what I mean.

I think Abraham Lincoln, in the middle of the civil war, was standing around his war table and said, you know, the only good thing I can think of about the way the war's going, this is right after he lost [unclear] or something like that, or I don't remember, anyway horrible defeat for the army. The confederates are outside of Washington and he's like, well the best thing it will all be over sooner or later, you know.

Okay. {takpa}.

Second one is {dze yu}. [cut]

What's the full one there Winston?

{ ..} Okay, say {rang kya tuppa}[repeat] {dzeye kyi druppa}[repeat] {dak}[repeat]

I'm going to make it easy, {dzeyu}, okay. [laughs]

{rang kya tuppa} means, 'self-standing'; {dzeyu} means, 'substantial'; {dak} means, 'person' or self or self-nature to things in general, okay, {dzeyu}.

There's about six different meanings of {dzeyu} in scripture. They all have very, very gross difference in meaning.

This {dzeyu}, 'substantial' has a very special meaning. It means there's an owner or a controller of your destiny, okay.

The idea that you can control your self, you can control what's happening to you in the present okay. They talk about it in scripture in terms of like, I watched this building go up recently, and there's this one little guy sitting in the crane and he's got a radio hooked up to somebody on the roof, and this little guy in the crane is moving this huge pieces of concrete up twenty stories and then over and then down. And guys are standing there and holding it twenty floors up. He can't see them. And they're

just standing there moving it. You know, if he let something go the wrong way they'd all be squashed but there's such good communication and everything. And he's down there very gently, in a very sophisticated way he's controlling how these tons of stuff come down on the roof. It was like really cool to watch. They did a cornice like twenty stories up over everybody's head coming out of the subway you know. I was just like you know. And he couldn't see it. It was on the other corner of the building.

And that would be {dzeyu}. See, the idea that there's a driver in your head, there's a 'you', there's a owner, there's a controller sitting in your head and, you know, moving the levers. Move your left hand Michael. Oh, thank you. Move your right arm. Good job you know what I mean. Put them down. Okay. You know, and there's some guy who can and you believe that.

In fact, the illusion is very strong because if I decide to point out with my left arm it looks like I can but I can't okay. You got to get used to the idea you don't have control okay in the present time. It's important to say in the present time. You don't have control. Why?

There'll come a time when you reach out for the last time and you will not have the control to reach out one more time, okay.

I always say appreciate the songs on the radio in the car because there will be a last song you see what I mean. You don't even have control over playing a song you see what I mean. You can't say that you can play a song on that radio tomorrow okay. You don't have control over the radio.

The idea that you can reach out, turn on the knob and there'll be a song there for you, good or bad, Neil Young or anything else okay, you don't have control over that.

You just don't have control over that.

There'll come a day when you cannot reach out and turn on the knob, okay. You physically won't be able to do it.

So, how can you claim to control these things you see what I mean? Will you own that blouse or shirt tomorrow? Will you be wearing this blouse or shirt again after tonight?

You can't say.

I'm cleaning out my room in New Jersey, you know, closing it up, setting the books out there, throwing out the rest. And it dawned, you know, many things I'm touching that were very precious to me, I'm thinking that's the last time I'm going to see this. This is the last time I'm going to see this you know what I mean.

You don't know if this is not the last time you're going to wear that shirt or blouse. You can't tell me that you'll have power over this piece of cloth in the morning.

Also your arm, also your face, also your mind, you can't tell me that. You don't really control it is what I'm saying. You don't own it. That's a lie. That's a illusion. Okay. Is that emptiness?

No.

Is it going to lead you directly to nirvana and enlightenment?

No.

Does it help you in your practice a lot if you realise that you don't really control the things around you, even your body?

Yeah, that helps a lot. Okay. That really is a big step towards getting enough virtue to get enlightened, okay.

That's power, { tsok .. }, you know, it's power of virtue to understand those things about your world, that you don't really control it, okay.

By the way, you do control it of course in the sense that you can do good deeds now and collect later, okay.

But, in the present, you can't tell me that you will have this blouse or shirt on your back tomorrow.

You can't tell me that tonight's not the last night you'll ever wear it, okay. We're driving, nice quiet drive home last night on the highway in New Jersey. I'm reading a manuscript and the driver slows down suddenly and I look up and there's a deer suspended in the air in front of the windshield, you know. Just a deer in the light and I'm like. And I just have time to look and then it hits the windshield and, you know, everything changes like that you know.

Like, I'm reading this pleasant little manuscript and I'm assuming that Doubleday's going to pay the second cheque to the monastery, you know, and then I just look up. There's this deer. We hit it you know. And the driver was very skilled and got us off the road and you know the deer died and we were like covered with glass. Just that fast you know what I mean. You just have time to think what the thing is and then, you know, how can you say you're going to get to New York tonight you see what I mean?

What right do you have to say you own your body for another hour or two you see what I mean?

You can't say that.

So, realise that you don't have that power brings you a little closer, okay.

It's not emptiness itself. It's not enlightenment itself, okay.

You are not the owner. You are not substantial in that way, okay.

Third one. What is this? Come on. {dze shen kyi druppa}, we'll say {dze shen}.

Who was that? Okay. [cut]

Say {dze shen}[repeat]. Here's another {dze} popped up, right. {dze} means, substance; {shen} means, other. This means, {...} and this is a kind of emptiness in the Mind Only school, okay.

The Mind Only school gives emptiness as this. This is what they believe is emptiness.

Who taught the Mind Only school?

Lord Buddha, okay.

He even said, when he taught it, what, about the higher schools, about the Middle Way?

I was just kidding you guys, okay. [laughs] Alright. That's not what I really believe, okay.

Was he telling the truth?

Well, he never lies but [laughs] he was not speaking what it was. How's that?

They say in the monastery, there's a huge debate, they say {...}.

Say {dzum}[repeat] {sangye kyi}[repeat] {ma sum}[repeat] {dzum}[repeat] {sangye kyi}[repeat] {sum}[repeat]. Did I say {...}? Sorry, we'll do that one more time. Ready?

{sangye kyi}[repeat] {dzum}[repeat] {ma dzum}[repeat] {dzu}[repeat] {sangye kyi}[repeat] {sum}[repeat]. The Buddha never lies, the Buddha never tells lies the Buddha talks lies. Talks about lying but in Tibetan it comes out better. [laughter]

Anyway, {dze} means substance, {shen} means other; meaning, separate karmic seeds, okay. In this case, substance means karmic seeds, separate karmic seeds, alright.

And, what it means is the subject and the object, in any event, do not come from separate karmic seeds. They are created by one karmic seed, okay.

{dze shen} means different karmic seeds and that's what we're denying in this case. Emptiness means, there's no such thing as a subject and an object, which came from something different.

They always came from the same thing. What?

From one karmic seed. From a specific karmic seed.

What's this got to do with us? What's the application in our lives?

Mostly with the bad things that happen to you, right. People don't pull out their hair and scream why did it happen to me when they get an extra refund cheque from the IRS, right? [laughter] they just take it and spend it. They don't work about it. You don't sit there and sit down and try to figure out why it happened you know. But, when you get an extra bill from the IRS, you know, big one, you're like, why me you know.

And what I mean to say is the human mind is really only interested in causation when you get into things that cause you a lot of problems you see. Then you really want to know why it happened, okay.

And what number three says and the Mind Only school says, there's no such thing as accidents. Nothing is an accident. Okay.

You have been brought into this room by a certain karma. That same karma has created Geshe Michael Roach's voice for you, okay.

The karma that brought you here as a subject and the karma that brought me here as the object of that subject, subject being you, object being me, is one event, one karmic seed, okay. And everything is created like that.

You're actually watching a karmic seed go off in your own {kunshi nampa shepa}, in your own foundation consciousness accepted by the Mind Only school. You are observing a karmic seed going off in a part of your own mind when you're watching me you see what I mean.

You brought yourself here to see it and you brought myself here to be seen by one karmic event, okay. And there's no separate substance. There's no {dze shen}, okay.

This just basically means that there's no accidents. And this is very close to worldview number six.

A lot of people ask me, when we got to number three they say, well I don't see much wrong with that. It seems like if you understood that you'd be pretty far along to stopping your own suffering.

If you understood that every lousy thing in your life is there because you brought yourself there and you brought it there by doing something in the past, that's true. Okay.

There's this famous event between me and Geshe Thupten Rinchen in Sera, was sitting in the class. I have never interrupted him then or since you know in I don't know twelve or fifteen years.

But he got to this one and he said this is the Mind Only school and I'm like, excuse me, [laughs]

sounds good to me. What's wrong with it? He says, nothing, we believe it. This is the ultimate truth you know. This is it.

And I said, why is it down in number three? Why can't it be number six?

He says, oh, it's just a technicality. Okay. What?

They think it stays in one special part of your mind called something like 'storehouse consciousness' or storing place consciousness and we just say it stays in your main mind, okay. That's all. It's just a technicality.

They say we believe the same thing and it's very close to the ultimate worldview, number six okay. It's just a technicality.

It is very profound and it is very close to the emptiness, which will liberate you, if you say that you and all your problems have been brought together by something you did in the past, by one thing you did in the past.

You came to this room to get old, to get a few hours older, and your old age and your body came to this room to be experienced through one karmic seed.

And that's okay. That's pretty close to number six okay.

So, that's {dze shen}.

In common English, to put it simply, there are no such things as accidents, okay.

You can say that {takpa} means nothing lasts.

You can say that {dze yu} means you can't own anything. And get used to it and stop trying. It causes you a lot of your pain, okay.

Number three: there are no accidents. [cut]

Number four {kyu kyur yinpa}. How's that? Something like that. Okay. [cut]

This is just an abbreviation, okay. [cut]

Say {tragne}[repeat] {rangtsen}[repeat] {mayin}[repeat], {...}, okay. {...} means, this is another Mind Only school version of emptiness, okay. And what it means is, technically what it means is that the fact that something is called what it is, is not automatic. The fact that, something is called what it is, is not automatic.

The fact that the word 'pen' refers to this thing that I'm holding up is not automatic. Okay. It's not necessarily, it's not necessary that it had to be that way, okay.

If you throw in a little bit of worldview number six, you could say, it's that way because I had the karma for it to be that way or something like that. But it doesn't mean it's that way by itself.

'A rose by any other name would smell the same' is exactly what it means, okay. It's not necessarily true that it had to be called a 'rose'. It would still function the same, okay.

Names are not applied to the objects to which they refer automatically. They are conventions. They're creations of your mind and of your karma. Okay.

This is mainly applied in judging other people, okay, and in judging what do you call it, in judging what is good or in judging what is your favourite thing. Okay.

Like, is Neil Young truly the best rock 'n roll musician that ever existed? Can you apply the 'world's best rock 'n roll music ever' to Neil Young, automatically?

You see what I mean? Can that word 'best rock 'n roll musician in the world' be applied to Neil Young {rang kyī ...} means, automatically. Yes or no?

Well, I think so. Okay. [laughter]

No, and that's where a lot of your trouble comes from, okay.

Would you get enlightened if you stopped thinking that way?

It'll help.

Is it emptiness?

No.

Is it nirvana?

No.

Do you get enlightened directly by thinking that way?

No.

But, does it make you a lot less judgemental in your life?

Yes. Okay.

If you realise that the things you apply the words 'best ice cream' to is not automatically the best ice cream, okay, maybe somebody else would apply 'best ice cream' to something else you see what I mean. To appreciate that fact that words are not applied to their referents, automatically, saves you a lot of pain.

Especially in judging other people and in deciding about differences in how you judge things. To put

it bluntly, nobody sees the world the way you do, so why are you fighting with everybody?

I mean, appreciate the fact that nobody sees the world you do, as you do, exactly. Nobody thinks that exactly like you. They can't because {...}, words and ideas don't apply to their objects automatically

Everyone else, the way every one else takes words and puts them on objects is something they're doing in their own reality in their own way. And it's not going to match yours so stop fighting with other people. That's the main thing.

This is one of the big sources of conflict.

'Best ice cream' must be applied to Ben and Jerry's 'Cherry Garcia', must be, okay. I can't believe you don't want to buy that. Why do you want to buy that other crap, you know? Why do you want to turn Neil Young off the radio and put on, what did Michael Week put on the other day? Bepop music, you know, drive me crazy and he skipped over the Neil Young song. And I'm like don't you realise?

You see, if you realise that nobody's seeing the world the same and nobody's applying words in exactly the same way, okay. Words are not self-existent.

Meaning is not self-existent. It's all coming from you and it's all been applied in your special karmic, what do you call it, set of circumstances, okay. Environment, and nobody else's exactly the same. And appreciate that fact and stop fighting with people. They just can't see that Neil Young is the best musician in the world because they don't have the same karma that you have. Okay. That's all. Okay, that's {rang kyi...}. That's, serge wants to stop but I'm not going to what do you call it, deprive you of number five and six. Okay.

Let's say {...}, right. How are we going to say that in a short way?

{...} is number five. Now, how to make that short? {...} Okay. Is that spelled right Winston? Do you have that sheet?

[cut]

Is there a vowel? Yeah, okay. Okay.

[cut]

This is a mantra in the debate ground. If you study Madhyamika, Middle Way, lower school, Svatantrika, you have to be able to do this one, okay.

So, I'll just put a {bakchak} in your mind. Ready?

Say {lo}[repeat] {...}[repeat]

Okay. That's emptiness according to the lower half of the Middle Way school. You're getting very close, okay. And they say, what doesn't exist is a pen that could exist solely from its own side without my active participation. Okay.

Does that pen exist from its own side?

Oh, you could say, fifty percent exists from its own side and then fifty percent's coming from me. Unless there's a {lo..} means, an unaffected state of consciousness. Meaning, I'm not on acid or having extreme jealousy attack right now, maybe a minor one, or anything like that okay that would totally blow my perceptions. Okay.

So, I don't have those problems right now. I'm not having a crazy state of mind.

So I have a normal state of mind, that's presenting itself to me in a pen-ish way. I interpret it as a pen, fifty-fifty, okay. Let's say it's a pen. Okay.

They say, anything that could exist solely from its own side, through its own unique way of being okay, that doesn't exist. Okay.

That cannot be a pen only from its own side, okay. It can be pen-ish. And then I can take it as a pen. And then there's a pen. Okay. Assuming I'm not crazy at the moment, okay.

What it boils down to is this. No object has any identity from its own side independent of the way you think of it. Okay.

No object has any identity from its own side independent of the way you think of it, okay.

It does have some identity but the identity doesn't mean anything until I think of it in a certain way.

Okay. They're getting very close to the truth, okay.

What's the practical application of this?

It's very, very important in the study of {lojong}. It's very, very important in the study of turning problems into opportunities.

It's the half a glass of water, half empty or half full? That's lower Madhyamika. Okay. Whether you see it as half empty or half full depends not on the glass of water but on your state of mind.

For it to be half full two things have to be there. What?

It has to be a glass of water filled up to here and you have to be thinking of it as half full, okay.

For it to be half empty what has to happen?

Oh, the water has to be up to here and you have to be thinking of it as half empty and then it's half empty. Okay.

The great application of this version of emptiness, okay, which is very close to the sixth one, is you can look at everything in your world, some great personal disaster right, as wow, freedom. I didn't have the strength to throw out all my stuff or get out of this relationship to go up to the next level and it's a godsend you know. Somebody came and stole everything, okay.

I mean, a Buddhist should say, okay we got a glass of water. The line is there. Half full. Okay. Big opportunity for the future you see what I mean. And a very big deal in {lojong}, very big thing in, you know, nothing is a problem. Forget it. Nothing. Okay. Nothing is a problem for a [unclear]. If you refuse to conceptualise it as a problem it's not a problem. Okay.

Everything, the worst things that happen to you, you know. I had a lady in California two years ago, three years ago, Pat Tr.... I can't pronounce her last name, you know, yeah.

So she comes to me and she says, my daughter just died. She's twenty years old, beautiful, fantastic, incredible and just boom, you know.

And so we had this long talk and I said, stop thinking of her as a normal person you know. Think of her as someone special. Some incredible being who has entered your life and is trying to teach you something now, consciously trying to push you to another level with this event you know. And stop, never again think of her as a normal person. Must stop thinking that way, you know, just stop thinking like that.

You know, and then she says, well am I supposed to make something up?

I said, no you can't, you don't have to make it up. How do you know? How the hell do you know either way you know what I mean?

There are schools of Buddhism, which say, that could very well be the truth. Probably likely is the truth. There are schools of Buddhism that say that.

So, I'm not saying pretend. I'm saying admit that you don't know either way and then see it in one way see what I mean.

And then, I saw her like two, three years later, she's incredible now. She's incredible. She's never lost that {...}. {...} means, holding the line. Keeping the line of how you perceive an event or a person as something sacred you see what I mean. And say, she's been holding this line of her daughter and now there's these incredible things happening to her spiritual life, you know, by holding, she refused to think of it as a bad thing or horrible event or something.

She started to think of it only in this pure way that something significant, I'm being pushed in a significant direction by this being who purposely appeared and purposely left to get me to go there.

And all the worst things in your life you can think of that way okay. And stop thinking of them any other way.

The fifth worldview, you know, to hold it is not enlightenment in itself but you can feel it's pretty damn close, okay. To be able to hold that is very {kye rim}y, okay, for those of you who know {kye rim}. Okay. It's very, very powerful, very beautiful.

Nothing has to be a problem.

Nothing exists solely from its own side, okay.

You always have fifty percent say in the matter how you name this thing, how you think of this thing.

And, to think of it in a holy way is a hell of a lot more functional and useful, okay.

You can turn it into a magical event.

Okay, last one. [cut]

Say {tokpay}[repeat] {tak tsam}[repeat]. This is the ultimate worldview, okay. Accepted by Madhyamika Prasangika, highest school of Buddhism, ancient India. Accepted by Lord Buddha. Accepted by Arya Nagarjuna. Accepted by Je Tsongkapa. Accepted by all the Dalai Lamas, khen Rinpoche. Accepted by all the tantric schools, okay, necessary for tantra okay to have this worldview.

What does it state?

Very simply, things aren't {tokpay tak tsam}. {tokpay} means, by projections, okay. {tokpa} means, through projections. {tak tsam} means, projected. Okay, simply a product of your projections forced on you by your past karma. You have to say that okay. You can't just say, oh, you're just having a projection, you know. You're a shoe salesman so everyone in the world is wearing shoes you know.

Shoe salesmen go on buses and all they see is shoes. I did sixteen years in the diamond business. We did thirty thousand diamonds a day on heavy days. I got onto a bus, what could I see?

I'm like leaning over women's hands you know [laughter] and they're like, you know. [laughs] That's not, not the projection I'm talking about.

It's not that the whole world is wearing diamonds today because you did diamonds all day okay.

It's not a psychological projection. That's not what I mean. And never think of it that way. It's a, you are perceiving things the way you do because your past karma is forcing you to see them that way. Okay.

If you're a dog you are forced to see this cylinder as something to chew on.

If you're a human you are forced to see this cylinder as a pen. Okay.

In fact, we can even go further. What?

Yeah. If you to start to salivate and wag your tail when you see this, you's a dog. Okay. You see what I mean?

If you're suddenly struck by the urge to chew on this make sure you didn't die and get reborn since last class okay. That's what I mean.

Get this. The way you perceive it makes you who you are. It's not that you perceive that way because you are who you are. get it?

You're not a dog because, I'm sorry, you don't see it as something to chew on because you're a dog. You're a dog because your mind has changed, your karma has shifted and you have this irresistible urge to chew on this thing. To run up here and chew on it. That is a dog. That is what makes you a dog you see what I mean.

Karma. The way you see things.

How your past acts force you to act in a certain, see things in a certain way.

In and of itself, this is just a white cylinder and a black cylinder stuck together into a white and black cylinder.

It's your mind that makes you see 'pen'. It's your mind that makes you see something to chew on.

Who's right, dogs or people?

Both. Okay. Don't be such a chauvinist, a human chauvinist when a dog grabs this and chews it up and puts ink all over the carpet. Okay. Why?

Because in their world it is only something to chew on; very validly, they are perceiving it that way, so they have to chew on it. It's right that they chew on it you see what I mean. And it's right that you try to write with it but don't go saying that the dog stole my pen. Okay. The dog stole a chewy toy.

The dog took a chewy toy that you weren't using properly, okay, 'cos their karma forces them to see it that way.

Okay. All things are that way.

I like number six. Okay. Why?

You finally got an explanation of emptiness that teaches you how not to die and how not to get old.

And if anybody [unclear] through all these classes for seven years and doesn't use this information to get enlightened and to overcome your own death in this lifetime and if you're too lazy to use this to turn into a tantric deity in this lifetime, well don't write me any letters from the {bardo}, okay. [laughter] [laughs] Alright. Really, okay.

This is all you need to know. This is the final statement in this class, in the official class, you know. All you need to know.

You will perceive this thing, every person here will perceive it slightly differently due to your set of karmas in your mind. You have a choice every minute of the day how you want to see your world in a year or two years or five years, you know.

You tired of being Joe Schmoe? You want to Manjushri or Tara?

Then, you know, get your act together. Keep your book. Keep your vows. Keep them sweetly understanding emptiness, okay.

If you keep your vows, if you keep your book, every two hours you check what you're doing, just check in a very honest, sincere way, then you'll start seeing things differently, okay, because they don't have nay nature of their own. Okay.

They are just blank screens all around you all day long.

You tired of being in a place where people die? You tired of getting old? You know, you tired of just ups and downs your whole life?

When are you going to wake up, you know? Is it six more times you got to lose your boy friend or girl friend, you know? You got to get breast cancer or not? Is it going to take that you see what I mean?

Decide and do something you see what I mean.

Keep your vows. Okay.

And then you just sit back and this thing turns into, you know, Manjushri's arm. And he's holding this thing, big sword, this could be Manjushri's sword. Okay.

Unfortunately, you don't have the karma to see it that way. Okay.

Does that mean it's not?

No.

Does Manjushri see it as a sword?

Yes. Okay.

Does the dog see it as a chew toy?

Yes. Okay. Very validly, okay.

Does that make it somehow not real?

You don't think it's real, come up here and let me draw a Hitler moustache on your face you know what I mean.

It is real because you have the karma to see it that way. Okay. You have all the information you need with worldview number six to become a tantric deity in this life.

It is the ultimate in meaning of emptiness.

You got everything you need so you just have to keep your vows. Okay. Keep the book.

If you don't keep the book sincerely, if you don't meditate, don't do your retreats, then it won't help anything. Okay.

The purpose of studying all these years is just to do that. And it's immediate, okay. I mean, we say it takes time for karma to ripen but especially in a tantric sense it can ripen in days, in hours, in weeks, and, you know, right away you can start doing this.

Stop trying to adjust the world through the normal means. They don't work. Okay.

Start using karma. Start being karma smart guy. Professional vow- keeper. Vow- keeping master.

Everyone wants to be a kung fu master or yoga master or business stock exchange master. You got to be a vow- keeping master. I keep my vows perfectly. And immediately your world will start to change. Immediately things, you own body, your own health will start to change. Over a period of time, immense, amazing, unbelievable, unimaginable changes in your being, you know, your body and your mind. Okay.

All headed towards an enlightened being, who's living in a body of living crystal okay. And that, you just have to do it, okay.

It's very, very doable. Many, many beings have done it. You have all the education. You have all the classes. You have all the great lamas, Khen Rinpoche, everything, Lama Zopa. Just have to do it. Okay. Okay.

Worldview number six. Okay.

We'll stop there. And we'll have a review class, which you shouldn't miss on next Tuesday.

[announcement]

See you after the break.

[announcement]

[Winston: Geshe Michael has very beautifully and very kindly given us seven years of teaching and I'd like to thank him [applause] [cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

[student]

I think we'll stop there. [acknowledgements] [applause]

In my mind that place will work if one thing is there you see. I see, by the way, New York as the intellectual centre, especially in this area of New York you get very talented people. You attract very talented people, intelligent people, spiritual people who are looking for the perfect thing, you know. And I think New York will always be that.

[godstow retreat centre / Arizona]

So, in my mind you've got all three levels. You've got the secret weapons down in Howell, New Jersey of Khen Rinpoche and Art Engel and stuff like that. You've got everything you need.

You've got a place to study, great lamas, place to do retreats and I encourage you, one final thing about those places. Put your heart in them not only thinking about your own goals but put your heart into helping them serve other people you see what I mean.

These places, New York ACI, Godstow, Howell and Diamond Mountain, can only be successful if your main motivation is to make sure that other people have a place to study and that other people have a place to do their retreats and other people have a place to go do their long term things you see

what I mean.

[instructions to students regarding this altruistic motivation]

[announcement re next class]

Thankyou. Phuntsok la.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Okay, thank you.

~ ~ ~

May all Geshe la's aspirations be fulfilled!

The Asian Classics Institute
Course XVIII: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Eleven: Review Class
Geshe Michael Roach
Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay. We have a microphone problem tonight so can you hear okay in the back? Oh [laughter] okay your karma changed.

Tonight is the review for the third review. My theory of examining a student is to give them all the answers ahead of time and the questions 'cos I want you to know it.

I'm not trying to trick you or fool you or anything like that.

So I'll go over some of them and your teacher's will go over some of them.

[student]

Yeah, you will have discussion groups, okay. [student] Alright, some teachers have them, alright.

Here we go.

I'm just going to go over the main ones. Like, I'd be embarrassed if you came out of this institute and didn't know the answer to these, okay.

First one is, basically, who made the world? And don't forget that this question has come up in conjunction with who made the lousy things in the world okay.

And the purpose of Buddhism is to address all the problems you have. I'm not talking, like, it's hard to get people worried about their {bardos}. It's hard to get people worried about their death. It's hard to get people worried about the suffering of mankind.

Who made your boss? You know, who made traffic? Who made the IRS? You know, who made all the things that irritate you from hour to hour? I mean, those are really, who made the grey hairs on your head or the no hairs on your head, you know? Why aren't you happy, you know, during the day?

And the question is where do those things come from?

You must address it. Now, in your culture they taught it the wrong way five hundred years ago, right. Somebody, big guy up in the sky made these things and we don't know exactly why and it's one of life's questions you know what I mean.

I saw 'Joan of Arc' the other day and there's a scene they try to figure out why did god do these things you know.

No one in modern America really believes those things but no one in modern America really thinks about where all the problems are coming from, right.

So, I don't think it's your duty to go out into the world and try to correct the idea that there's a big guy with a beard up there doing these things.

No one believes it anyway, okay.

You just have to try to supply some kind of information about where it's coming from, okay.

And again, there's three main choices, right.

Really, if you press an American about where's all this stuff coming from, they say, well science says it's just a big bang and particles bumped into each other. Other particles flew

out, hit other particles, other particles and that's why my nose is shaped like this. Okay.

And, okay, that's one theory. It doesn't hit you in the gut you know what I mean. It doesn't seem to be likely that just because a bunch of things are randomly bumping into each other you have led your particular life the way you did and you look the way you do and you're having all the experiences that you're having.

It doesn't really seem to be random you know. It doesn't, it almost defies logic that something could be random especially because part of the random theory is that there was no beginning and then something happened. Okay. Which is just totally unacceptable, even in science, which is telling you that's how it started you know.

Everything has a cause and that's why we can make atom bombs blow up but the very most important thing doesn't have a cause because we can't figure it out you know what I mean.

That's just illogical. That's like the Tibetans saying the second worldview, okay. Which is there is some big guy who made it. And then you try to explain that to a Tibetan and they say no, no, it was a monkey with a white deer. It wasn't the guy who broke this guy's rib and made a woman and then they got together and that's why we're here. It's not like, you know, that's theory number two.

Some big guy, be a deer or a monkey or a guy in a weird garden you know or something like that. It defies logic.

Who made the guy if the guy made everything? I mean, it's a children's question and it's irrefutable. It doesn't make sense that there could be a guy who didn't get made by some other guy. Or maybe there's two guys. Or maybe he had a godfather or something you know what I mean. It just doesn't make sense, okay.

It just clearly doesn't make sense. And then if this guy likes us why is he torturing people you know what I mean? If he can control everything then why are people hurt?

Oh, it's a test.

Okay, I understand it's a test but why test babies who die of AIDS? Why test children who get into fires you know? What's the point of this kind of test you know?

Test people who are mature and can understand the test [unclear] fail or pass the test. But why torture infants who haven't had time to say anything yet or do anything yet?

Those two are clearly unacceptable.

Third idea, things come from things like themselves. Watermelons come from watermelons. Oranges come from oranges. Good events come from good causes. Bad events come from bad causes. You hurt somebody you have a bad event. You help somebody you have a good event okay. That's all.

It's that simple. The content has to be similar and the thing must have happened before. And that's the rule for everything else and why not for your life and who made the bad things in your life? Okay.

So, really you face a huge task you know. We're going to have ten or fifteen courses going on here next year. It's not the point of those courses, it's not the point of whether the home works are going to be right or you're going to get better refreshments than you got here or anything like that. You know, the question is we've got a worldview to talk about you see what I mean.

There's a question of were they right five hundred years ago when they said it was a big guy? Were they right twenty years ago when they decided it was a big explosion at the beginning? Or is Buddhism right when it says if you don't like what's going on around you, if you don't like getting old, if you don't like dying, then you change your behaviour. And

you take responsibility for what's happening around you.

Don't blame other people and don't get angry at other people and don't whine and complain and also don't sit there and die quietly you know without complaining.

I like that thing, go not quietly, how's that go? [students] whatever, I don't know.

Don't just sit there and die quietly and say, oh, I can't figure it out you see what I mean.

You are charged in the next Buddhist generation of America to inform people of this third possibility: that their world is created by their actions and their thought and their words.

And, if you don't like it, then keep your book. Okay. That's all.

You know, it's a life or death question for those people, okay, and you have that responsibility now.

That is the most important thing about this course, about this whole institute, and about on your final. You know, where did things come from and how are you going to fix it, okay.

And really, you're up against those, you're up against three other worldviews. I didn't mention the third one which is what?

I didn't think about it, you know. I'm just trying to get by, you know. I'm just trying to make it to tomorrow. I don't think about where things came from or, you know, philosophy and stuff like that. I'm not interested or I don't care or I don't think about it you see what I mean. That's the hardest one. It's to even get people to think about that they're going to get old and die, okay. And, that all their activities that they are doing in their lives are meaningless, without understanding where things really came from because it's all going to be ripped away from you at some undetermined moment in the future; tonight or tomorrow or a week from now or a year from now you're going to lose everything that you think is important now.

So, how do you get people to wake up and think why are things happening and can they change them or not?

Do you have to die or not? Okay.

And some of the most frustrating opponents are the other Buddhist groups who say, meditate on your breath or be nice or work for peace in [unclear], you know, or something. Those are noble things. Those are good things but that's not what Buddha came here to teach.

Buddha came here to teach people how to get out of death and suffering of all kinds through a very radical transformation of your own behaviour, okay.

And that's the main thing. That's the worldview of Buddhism. You created your reality and you have to live with it. And, there's only one person responsible and there's only one major task that you have to do. It's to change yourself. And keep your vows and change your reality. Okay.

I'm not saying the other things aren't important. They're important but they pale next to can you overcome death itself and suffering, all kinds of suffering mental and physical.

How do you get rid of that? How do you wake people up in a realm where they're, like, insane and they think you're crazy when you tell them that? You know what I mean?

You're crazy.

No, you're crazy, you know. What are you working for?

I want a house. I want a family. I want a job. I'm not greedy. I just want a normal, comfortable- I don't need a mansion. I don't need a Cadillac. I'm not even talking about a Lexus. I can live with a Toyota or Honda, you know. [laughter] I just want a house in New Jersey. I don't need Donald Trump's house, you know. I just want to be happy some of the time, not get cancer too early. That's just all I'm trying to do, you know.

How do you wake up people like that? You know, how do you get them to see that they're crazy to want that because they can't keep it?

They can't get it anyway. And, if by some miracle they do get it, it won't make them happy. Even if it does make them happy, which is impossible, they'll lose it anyway so obviously. You know, there's not a debate. Nobody's jumping and raising their hand at this very moment in this class and saying, oh that's wrong, you know.

It's obvious but how do you get people to wake up?

The very most important questions on the final relate to where did this world come from and can you do anything about it?

And wake up and do something about it, okay, and take responsibility for your world.

You created it. You fix it. Okay.

And I think it's that old god thing in the, five hundred years ago. It's sort of paralysing people. Deep down inside western culture still has this tiny belief that some one else will take care of it. Someone else made it. Someone else did it, you know, I don't have to. Really, you are the only person who can fix the world, okay.

And you have to try, okay.

Okay. I like question number ten. How does Master Shantideva address the objection that, we could never learn to treat ourselves and others, exactly the same since their pain does not hurt us and our pain does not hurt them?

You stick a needle in my finger, it's not like Elizabeth Prather jumps up, you know.

It's not like that she goes 'ouch' you know what I mean.

So, this whole thing about me becoming somebody else in the room and we becoming one person is artificial, you know.

And then they're saying, don't forget Master Shantideva's answer, defining your self as ending at your own skin is artificial. Okay.

Whatever idea you have about who you are now it's a creation. It's a fiction.

You have written that book and you forgot you see what I mean.

You decide where you end, okay. There's nothing automatic about it. You have a kid and suddenly you decide that you're twice as big as you were before, you know. You get seriously ill and you have to take a piece of your body out. You've rejected it. That's not 'me' any more you see what I mean. You decide how big you are.

It's not your skin. It's a fiction. It's a convention. It's been that way all along. It's not true that you have to end at your fingers or at your community or at your country or at your race or at your sex or anything else.

That's all a fiction. Those are all creations. You decide whether people should be treated equally. You decide whether you're just limited to this skin or do you stretch a little further. You decide that.

Mothers make that decision when the children are born. Almost automatically they decide that the children deserve as much food as they deserve. Automatically.

That's just a fiction. That's just decision.

So, don't say you can't feel someone else's pain as much as you feel your own. That's a decision. You just decided not to do that, okay.

Watch a mother. Go stick a pin in some, walk up to a mother in the street who has a baby in a carriage. Take a big needle and say, can I stick this in your kid's hand, you know? And see what they say you know what I mean. And see if they think that pain is their pain or not you see what I mean. Because they've been able to achieve that.

And the resistance to doing that is why you're in this realm.
You entered this realm. You're suffering in this realm. And you will die in this realm as long as you resist the idea that you can expand yourself to other people.
That's the source of {gyurpa ..}, you know. All the troubles in the world come because you decided to keep this artificial distinction between you and other people.
And take care of this bag of skin more than you take care of that bag of skin, okay.
That's just a, it's a decision and it's dysfunctional. It causes all your problems.
And, every time you're unhappy it's because you're concentrating on yourself at the expense of other people.
I can say every case of unhappiness, every case of irritation, is based on selfishness. Okay. If you're really thinking about someone else, what they want, you can't be unhappy, okay. You can't be, you can't feel angry or upset or anything if you're really thinking about other people. Okay.
This question about the six-step process described by Maitreya for how all the trouble starts, okay.
How does Buddhism say all the trouble started?
To me, it's one of the most precious teachings. You have to know it. You have to understand it, okay.
Six steps. First one, you have a tendency from your past life. In your past life you thought of things as self-existent and therefore in this, you enter this life with this in-built problem.
It's almost like original sin, okay. You enter this life with a wrong way of looking at things, okay.
Put it in a nutshell. What's that wrong way of looking at things?
Especially when you strongly dislike something or when you strongly like something, you are forgetting that that's a neutral object and the reason you see it as good or bad is your own karma, okay. That's all.
It's this tendency to think that good things and bad things are that way from their own side and not because you're seeing them that way because of the seeds you put in your own mind. Okay. That's all.
And that tendency to believe that came from your past life. Okay. First one.
Second one. Those tendencies from your past life ripen and then you start misunderstanding things in this life. Ignorance begins in this life. Okay.
Every time something good happens you think it's coming from its own side. Every time something bad happens you think it comes from its own side, okay.
Number three. This causes you to focus on good things and bad things and believe they come from their own side.
So you have the, what are the first three?
You have the potential from your past life, the seed from your past life.
Then, you start to see things wrong.
And then, you start to focus on good things and bad things, and have these wrong ideas about them, okay, particularly bad things. Okay.
I didn't make that, somebody else's fault or that person's fault, okay. But, since somebody else finds them to be attractive or nice, it must be you. It must be your problem, okay.
Number four. Then you get, having focussed on good things and bad things the wrong way, number four comes which is to start liking and disliking, in an ignorant way please, okay.
Nobody should ever graduate from ACI, oh, I went through eighteen courses at ACI.

Oh, so you must know Buddhism?

Yeah.

So, is it bad to like things? Is it bad to dislike things?

You say, oh yes, the Buddha said, overcome all attraction and hatred you know.

And then you say, so Lord Buddha doesn't like it if someone reaches nirvana, right? And Lord Buddha doesn't dislike it when people suffer in the hell realms, right? 'Cos Lord Buddha's above liking and disliking, okay.

And then you have to say, come on, that's stupid. We mean liking and disliking in an ignorant way, in a wrong way. Okay.

What is it to like or dislike in a wrong way?

Oh, I like this thing so I have to protect it.

How?

Hurt other people.

Why?

So I can keep the thing.

Then a Buddhist should start laughing at that point, hah, ha, ha, ha you know. Yeah, yeah, you want to keep the things so you're hurting other people? Hah, ha, ha, ha, ha, you know. That's exactly the wrong thing to do, you know.

You want to keep the thing, share it with other people you see what I mean. That's how you keep things.

No, no, I got to keep people away from the thing that I want.

No, no stupid, you have to share it okay. Then you get it.

It's the opposite of the human reaction, okay. If you don't like something, what?

Be patient, love it, stop being angry. Okay. That's how you get rid of it.

You want to eliminate people?

Don't use a gun. Don't use hatred. Don't use poison. Just love them and they have to change. Okay. And they'll leave your life. Like that. The disturbing, irritating people will leave your life. Okay. That's how to get rid of them, okay.

And it's not some noble thing to sit there and put up with them for the rest of your life. That's not what Buddhism teaches.

Buddhism says, actively love them, help them, support them, as they're screwing you okay.

And then, sit there and watch them flip over and start sending you cheques you know what I mean. And that's the approach you know.

They hit you on this side; give them this side. Hit me on this side you know. I want to get rid of the karma, okay.

And you love them and you take care of them. Okay.

Does that mean you don't stop a mugger on the street?

Of course you stop a mugger on the street but not with any kind of hatred. Okay. That's a different thing. You do the right deed because of love for them, okay. The right deed might be punching them to stop them but you love them as you do it, okay. That's the difference, okay.

That's the difference between ignorant liking and intelligent liking and ignorant disliking and intelligent disliking.

Yeah. [student]

Not really. I mean [student] yeah, they might hurt themselves. When you're at a higher level. King Uddayana was an arhat. His son sent some assassins to kill him. He knew that

when that assassin killed him his own son would collect two of the five immediate bad deeds, you know, killing an arhat and killing a parent.

And so, out of compassion for his son he tried to fly in the air and couldn't. But yeah, that's possible. That's possible.

But the normal reaction is to fight them back or something like that. Not like that. In hatred. [student]

I don't know. How do you stop them? Where did they come from?

Okay. Then, because you like something, because you want to protect something or because you dislike something and you want to get rid of it, you do some kind of bad karma towards [unclear]. That's number five. That's where bad karma comes from.

Because you don't understand where they came from you do something violent back to them and you thereby assure that they will come back to you again, okay.

Mostly I put Maitreya's thing in here because I don't want people saying I made this up, this connection between emptiness and karma.

I didn't hear that at any other Buddhist lecture. It's that Geshe Michael who is always saying that, you know.

It's Maitreya. Okay.

Karma and emptiness got married a long time ago and they're still having, they must be on their ten billionth anniversary or something, okay.

Things are empty and that's why you have to be good. Okay.

And you've got to bring those two great wings of the teaching have to come together okay or you can't fly says master Shantideva.

Okay, number six. Perpetual circle. Okay. Because you got angry and acted back again, then you're going to have to see this angry person again in the future, okay.

By the way, one strong thing is this. You are allowed and maybe required under the laws of Buddhism, even from the lowest level of pratimoksha vow, to respond to violence perhaps with using one of the first seven bad deeds if you have to, okay, but never the last three. Okay.

You can never use the last three to help anybody. You can never dislike someone, what's it say, you can never be unhappy that someone got something. You can never be happy that someone had a problem. And you can never entertain stupid ideas about where the world came from. Those three things would never help another person.

So there's a lot of latitude about the first seven, you know, depending on the power of your motivation.

It's the priest who smacks the guy on, what was that movie? 'Point of No Return', 1954 or something, black and white. He's freaking out on the plane and upsetting the other passengers 'cos the plane's going to fall down. The priest, out of compassion, unloads him, knocks him out very quietly in the back of the plane. And says, oh this guy must have had too much to drink or something, [laughs] you know.

That kind of thing is okay. You can't hate though. You can't hate for the Dharma or hate for the sake of sentient beings or something like that.

You can't break the mental ones. That's the main thing, okay.

Alright. Those of you already got the answers [unclear] I think the class leaders. Answer number fifteen is the wrong answer for that question. It was a test to see if you ever read them. Okay. But you'll figure it out.

I think question number twenty is really cool.

The holy Lama Drakpa Gyeltsen describes, quote, “attachment to this life” unquote as attachment to one’s practice of the ethical life and to one’s learning and to one’s contemplation and to one’s meditation. Explain the real meaning of attachment to one’s ethical life.

Like, how could it ever be that it was wrong to be ethical or to love your ethics, you know? What does Drakpa Gyeltsen mean, the holy Lama Drakpa Gyeltsen?

Who is, I think, the most important Lama in the Vajrayogini tradition, okay. Here’s Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen and he says, it’s wrong to be attached to morality, to your ethical way of life.

What could he possibly have in mind?

Well, here’s what he has in mind. Don’t let your ethics be run by anything else except Buddhist logic, okay.

Which eliminates the following: instincts, okay. People are born with a lot of instincts like you don’t enjoy hurting other people or you don’t enjoy lying or you have this thing where you can’t stand to borrow money and not pay it back within a day you see what I mean.

And so you consider yourself a good person. This is just hard work that your former lives did to get you up to this semi-human level, okay. And you can lose it in two weeks of true need, you know.

I was so proud that Americans never did what those crazy Indians did when there was a kerosene shortage in Dharamsala and fought each other around the last kerosene shipment you know what I mean. I said, Americans would never do that. We’re too civilised, you know.

Then I get back and there’s this gas shortage during the Middle East crisis and people are shooting each other at the gas tanks, you know. And I’m, like, you know what, instinct, you see.

Being good because you have an instinct for it is very fragile. You can lose it easily, okay. If you don’t understand why, you know, you’re born into this life ‘cos your last life did a hell of a lot of hard work. And you think you’re moral just because you’re moral you know what I mean.

That’s not true. Whatever instinct you have to be a good person they’re fragile, they were built carefully over lifetimes of work by that last guy, okay, and don’t think they’re not changeable. You can lose the in a week if you really need, if you really have a bad friend or you run into some bad people or bad influences or you need something really bad. All this self-control will just melt away in about a week you know what I mean.

So don’t trust your, don’t lead yourself to your instincts, okay. They’re beautiful and try to keep them, try to grow them like a flower, okay.

Second one: to what feels good, okay. What feels good and what’s right is often quite different, okay. And that’s just the way things go, you know.

What feels physically good or mentally good is often not the right thing to do. You can’t be attached to your morality in that sense.

You can’t be following certain kinds of ethics because they feel good.

And, once you get higher up in Buddhism you can’t be lazy and do lesser virtues when you could have done bigger virtues. See, I’d say most of us have that problem you see what I mean.

It’s not like we’re all tempted to go out and rob people or something like that. It’s like what are you going to do with the income that you do have you know? Are you going to feed

monks at Sera, donate to Lama Zopa's Maitreya statue or print books that describe correct view? You see what I mean?

We're faced with other moral dilemmas, you know. Like, you've got three beautiful things to do now which one are you going to do you see what I mean?

And don't be lazy you see what I mean. Move up to the, keep moving up. Don't be attached to the level that you're at you know. Okay.

And don't be attached to what feels good. Oftentimes, the right decision will be unpopular with the people around you, it'll be, it won't feel good. It won't feel as good as eating three banana splits at once and stuff like that. [laughs] Okay.

Okay, number three: attachment to what your parents taught you. Okay.

I think ninety percent of the world is following what they follow spiritually only because it's what their parents did. No better cause than that.

And there's this incredible belief, ignorant belief that because my parents did it it's right, you know.

Whatever my parents said. I remember this with Democrats and Republicans. My parents supported Nixon and other kids' parents supported Kennedy. And I would fight with kids in eighth grade, you know. No, Nixon. They'd say, no, Kennedy.

I'd say, why? And they'd say, my mom said so. And I'd say, well my dad said Nixon was better, you know.

And then I had this crisis of faith when I got to High School, when I finally figured out what the Republicans were teaching you know what I mean. [laughs] And what the Democrats were teaching. And then I'm like, gee, this is harder than I thought.

My father liked Chevrolets. He said, never buy a Ford, you know. In those days it was Chevy or Ford and I would just go to school and say, Chevy, Chevy, you know. And they'd say, no, my dad said, Ford you know.

And you would violently fight with other kids, you know, and no idea.

But we're still doing that. You're still doing that. You know, a large amount of what you believe in you only believe because your parents said so.

You laugh about the Chevy and Ford thing. You have a thousand viewpoints that you're still holding that you're not laughing about, okay, just because your parents said so.

Teachers, particularly elementary school teachers; go back, visit them. It is frightening, okay. [laughs] Those who are still alive, you know. It's frightening you know.

In those days they were god you know. Whatever they said, you know, the Russians are bad.

And then you go to Russia at age forty-five and meet these beautiful, you know, sensual, poetic, literal, freak-out, romantic, brilliant people you know. You're like, where did you come from you know? Did they just import you, you know? And they said, no we lived here all along you know.

And you're like, wow, they told me you were evil.

And they said, yeah, they told us you were evil too you know. Okay.

You have to give up those. Okay.

What your early religious instruction was, okay. Can't be attached to it you know. You have to examine it, okay.

I remember I went to my friend's Baptist church. I was in the [unclear]. We were told the Baptists were naïve. They were told that we were cynical and too something.

And then I went to this church and, you know, they just had the Lord's Prayer with a

different sentence than we did so they were bad and we were right. And then you still carry those things.

You still have those {bakchaks} are still in you. To believe it just because they taught it at your church you know.

And it takes such a leap to grow out of that you know what I mean. Slowly you grow out of it, okay.

Next one: what your culture has ingrained you to think, okay, this American culture.

Watch R rated movies but don't watch X rated movies. Have romantic fantasies about adultery but never do it you know what I mean.

Like, all these weird things that your culture is teaching you. Drink and be sophisticated but don't become an alcoholic you know what I mean. Drink a lot and be funny as you drink, but don't drink too much, you know what I mean. And, all those things, you know what I mean.

It's okay to have an abortion, you know, things like that. Your culture says it's okay this year. And it might change next year.

You have to make your own decision otherwise you're attached to that, okay.

What your peers say, okay.

I mean, one of the most painful things about being a Buddhist, is that you slowly grow away from your peers and the people you grew up with and the people you value and the people you love, peers and family.

And they start viewing you as weirdo because you won't do certain things and that you have certain viewpoints. And that's one of the most difficult things. To give up that attachment of following certain ways of life just because the other people in your high school who are your same age are now doing that. And you will look weird after awhile, okay.

By the way, that doesn't mean you drop the lines of communication, okay. You can't say, I'm weird, so they're wrong, so go f. them you know what I mean. You can't do that.

I mean, as a Buddhist, be weird and keep the lines open, you know. Say I love you. Send them Christmas presents. Go home for Thanksgiving. You know, do those things and then say I'm going away for three years and I'm not going to talk to you, you know. [laughter] [laughs] Okay.

But don't reject them, you know, as people.

People mistake leading your own life, they mistake that with, you know, actively reject your old friends and your family. No. Love them. As far as you can be warm and love them and be with them as much as you can and things like that.

It doesn't mean you reject them or that you ignore them or that you selfishly don't write to them 'cos you're a Buddhist now and you're too busy you know or something like that. Okay.

To what's legal or not, okay.

That changes every few years, you know, like abortion.

There was a constitutional amendment that alcohol was evil and now everyone drinks, you know. So, don't let what's legal run your life. Sometimes what's legal is correct and sometimes it's wrong. Sometimes what's illegal is right and sometimes what is illegal is wrong. You cannot be attached to what's right and wrong by the definition of the law only, okay, in where you live.

By the way, although a lot of Buddhist morality is attached to local laws you see what I mean. One of the kinds of sexual misconduct, for example, is to, like, have sex with someone

who's too young in your country you see what I mean. It's tied to the customs of your country. So I'm not saying that. Like, you have to respect that kind of law. But, if the law is clearly immoral, you have to not follow it. And if there's clearly something that's immoral that's not against the law you can't do it, okay. That's all.

And then, the last thing, do things because it makes sense, karmically, okay.

Study karma, study scripture, understand emptiness and let that inform your decision about what you do and don't do.

And let that be why you practice your version of morality, okay.

And, as you get further up, it gets harder. Okay. The decisions become harder, you know.

And you become, you know, you'll have one big test that you have to get over, you know.

Like, you'll have to stand there and let your society or your culture or your family truly think you're crazy and you have to hold the line, you know.

There will come a test or a few tests of why do you hold that moral position and then you have to hold it. It's called {sin-tsam}. Say {sin-tsam}[repeat], hold your ground, you know.

There'll be a test. There'll come a time. Something will come and then you have to stand your ground and say that I cannot do. That I will not do.

And they're not, it would be almost easier if they said they were going to burn you at the stake, you know. That's almost, like, a recognition, you see what I mean - Joan of Arc thing.

But what's worse is if you get ostracised or people think you're a bad person, you know, that's much harder. Social rejection is much harder than being burned I think or some kind of moral rejection of you because you hold a certain viewpoint. And that people don't like you anymore but you have to hold that {sin-tsam}, you have to because it's correct.

Because you've figured it out. Not because of all those other things but because you, based on your understanding of scripture and logic, have figured out that this is the right thing to do. Okay.

I think I had one more here. Yeah. My favourite question. Last question and then I'll stop and then we'll break out, okay.

I heard that you were told that you're not breaking out but you are breaking out, okay.

Okay. Number twenty-five.

The Heart Sutra says, that the real goal of Buddhism is to, quote, "stop the process of aging and death" through, quote, "stopping our ignorance". {ma rikpa me, ma rikpa}

Say {ma rikpa me}[repeat] {ma rikpa sepa}[repeat] {mepa me}[repeat] {ga shi me}[repeat].

Direct quotation, okay. Direct quotation. I didn't make it up.

You can stop the process of aging and death if you figure out this ignorance thing, okay.

Is this a literal or a figurative statement? Okay.

It's literal. Okay. And it is the goal of Buddhism, okay. And you have to try, okay. You really have to try to do it.

The second part of that question says, well, if it's literal, how come we didn't see anybody reported in the New York Times that this person has suddenly become a sixteen-year old girl, okay. Little bit rosy complexion, [laughter] okay. Okay. Why?

Why didn't anyone report that?

They can't see it, okay. You just can't see it. Why?

It's empty. Okay.

What's that got to do with it?

You can see it if you have the virtue. You can't see it if you don't have the virtue. That's all.

In fact, it's created by that virtue, okay.

To them, the person looks like a sixty year old balding man with a big smile and a silly laugh. Okay. Called the Dalai Lama, okay. But to himself what does he look like you see what I mean? When He looks in the mirror what does he see?

So, don't say it's impossible 'cos you didn't see it.

{..mayin}, in the logic scriptures, you know. It's not true that something doesn't exist 'cos you didn't see it, okay. Forget it.

If the pen thing is true, okay, what did Geshe Michael teach for seven years? This thing about the pen, you know. Okay. Don't forget the pen thing; the most important thing, okay. The pen thing proves that you can become a tantric deity in your lifetime. You have to try. You really have to try.

If you keep the book you'll start getting there, okay.

Will other people see it?

No. They might even think you're a bad or a crazy person, okay. But do it. You have to try, okay.

What's the process?

Your inner winds and your thoughts are intimately connected. Every time you have a bad thought they choke a little bit, okay. That causes the process of aging and death. Okay. So what, I suddenly got older today?

No, you had small, irritated thoughts for twenty years and that's why you're aging, okay. Just the small irritations at the people around you, the small misunderstandings of your world.

Every time you have a little bit of insight into emptiness the channels cracked open. When you have a direct perception of emptiness they're wide open, throttle is wide open, okay.

Then, when you go back to normal perceptions they're choked again or they're choked because you went back to normal perceptions you see what I mean.

The goal is to open them wide open and then that causes a radical transformation of your physical body, okay, and you start getting younger and happier and incredible.

Things you couldn't do twenty years ago you can do now, okay. And it just gets better every day. And then, finally, the process is finished. You're in this internally different body. You have total compassion for other people. It's keeping your channels wide, channels change at that point. You don't have channels any more, okay. And you're just enlightened. Okay.

That's all I have to say. Alright. [laughs]

See you. Take a break and then I'll come back for a short talk at the end. Okay.

[cut]

Okay, we'll start. I'm not going to keep you long 'cos I know it's late.

I just wanted to go through, you know, it's been seven years. We finished the last reading yesterday, okay.

So, all the translations have been finished. That was like the last eighty pages or something from the logic course which kind of nobody wanted to do. But we did it.

So, eighteen courses are finished and all the readings and everything else totally finished yesterday. [applause]

And that's like four thousand pages of translations and the whole Geshe course is there and all the important parts of Buddhism.

So I think it's like an important transmission event, okay. It's there.

Now, whether it gets passed onto other people, your problem, okay. [laughs]

And a lot of people here are going to be teaching in different places. You'll get an announcement in January, February, but it's really amazing. I think there will be about forty courses going on throughout the world at any given time, ACI courses [unclear].

I wanted to, you know, that's all I have to say. You guys have to pass it on, okay. And you have no excuse. You have a package for you. Remember you always have a place in Arizona to come. This thing will continue here. Godstow will be there. You don't have any excuse not to practice. You have no excuse not to study. You have no excuse not to do long term retreats. You have no excuse [unclear]. Everything is there.

People have worked very, very hard to make sure there's a place here, to make sure there's a place in Connecticut, to make sure there's a place in Arizona. So you have everything you need. And you have Khen Rinpoche in Howell.

And unlike the first generation you can't blame it on the outside circumstances. You have everything you need so it's really just up to you.

I'm into this thing where one of my teachers called me recently, when you wake up, I said I'm getting grumpy you know. I think I'm getting older or something. I get more and more grumpy.

And they said, well when you wake up in the morning, think of five things that you're thankful for you know what I mean. And it's been like, and then I just told somebody that and they told me, oh that's what Oprah Winfrey said last week, [laughter] you know. [laughs] And she said it changed her life. [laughter]

I still think it's a good idea. [laughter] Okay. [laughs]

You know, you get five one day and then they said, you get ten the next day. Ten come to you. So try it, you know, in the morning, think of five things you're thankful for in the morning. And instead of being grumpy or instead of thinking about all the things that went wrong suddenly everything looks unbelievable.

I want to tell you some things to be thankful for about what's going on here.

I think, firstly, it's Khen Rinpoche. Okay, imagine that in 1954 out of ten thousand monks in Lhasa he graduated first among the Geshe as a Hlarumpa. First among the {...} and then first among all the {...} which means he's the number one Geshe in the whole of Tibet for that year. Goes to the Potala Palace. You know what you get in Tibet? You get a block of tea from China, but it's okay. [laughs] But the Dalai Lama gives it to you, you know.

So, you have access to the greatest master alive I think, you know, in my opinion, humble opinion, okay. You have direct access to this being. Graduated from Tantric College as the assistant Abbott when I was three years old, okay. I think there's only two people I know of who graduated from the Tantric College who are still alive, okay, in Lhasa. And would have been the Ganden Tripa, the Holder of Throne of Je Tsongkapa. Would have been the next teacher of the Dalai Lama, okay, on that track.

You have this person sitting there in Howell, New Jersey just waiting to give you classes you know what I mean. Begging you to come to classes you know what I mean. So you got that to be thankful about.

You have a whole lineage of Sera Mey monastery, okay. You have five hundred and eighty years of pure Dharma passes on from ancient India in totally pure, I once checked the Sanskrit against the Tibetan version of the Abhidharmakosha. There is one syllable difference in the whole thing. And that's 'cos they couldn't get it into the Tibetan so they added a syllable you know what I mean.

And you have this pure, pure Dharma. And you have access to that. You can't complain

about it. You have the original texts have been, you know, put on a platter and served to you, you know what I mean.

And all those great minds you see what I mean. It's not just the living Lamas. You have all these Lamas who are no longer here, no longer visible, you know.

You have hundreds of Lamas that you don't even know about because you went through these courses. And you have direct access to those beings, you know. They have taught you. They are with you. And they are around you now, okay. Those beings didn't die. They're around you. You have access to them and you just have to be aware of that. You have to connect into that.

You've had accurate teachings on the direct perception of emptiness and bodhichitta, direct experience of bodhichitta. You've had an accurate presentation of that in this package, things to be thankful for.

People to be thankful for, okay. I think Pelma to start with. When we started this first course we went in a Honda to Ikea. We put all the furniture for the Dharma centre and the classes and Pelma and me in a Honda Accord in one trip, okay. [laughs] And she's on the floor curled up in a foetal position under all this stuff. And has given her time and her life for the last seven years, okay. Free. Paid for a lot of things. Worked for the last years at Three Jewels free, okay.

We tried to find someone crazy enough to do it. We can't find them right now, okay. Started the whole thing.

People say, oh it's a great idea that you did the course. It was actually her idea, okay, but I don't like to admit it. [laughs]

There's Ora and Christie who assist me. People think they're having a good time all the time. People get jealous of them; oh you get to talk to Geshe la all the time. People think bad things about them sometimes. These people work seven days a week. No pay. They don't get any rest. We don't even get to eat sometimes, twenty-four hours a day. They don't get to talk to me. Ora made an appointment three months ago and just got half an hour you know what I mean and something like that. And they selflessly, without pay, all the courses, all the material, all the arrangements, everything for free. And they don't get, you know, everybody's jealous of nothing 'cos they don't get sleep; they don't get anything. They don't get to talk to me either and working, really working hard. And they break down and cry like every other day you don't know that, right.

I'll just go around the room [acknowledgements]

[end side A]

[side B]

[acknowledgements continued]

[announcements of upcoming events]

Okay, we'll do a short mandala.

No prostration tonight, okay. That means we have unfinished business later. You also have to finish the eighteen courses and get the tantric teachings, okay.

We'll do three short mandalas so it means you have to really think about it. A perfect world created by everyone doing their book, okay.

[3 short mandalas]

[cut]

[dedication]

Course 18: Great Ideas of Buddhism #3
RAW TRANSCRIPT

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