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ACI Course 8: Death & The Realms of Existence
New York, 1996
Taught by Geshe Michael Roach

Course 8 Class 1

Note: two versions of class 1 here

We're gonna be reading mostly from the [b: Abhidharma]. [b: Abhidharma] is the oldest literature that we will study in this course. It is the very first of the four Buddhist books, the Vibachaka school. And that's a very great work called the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. Khen Rinpoche taught it for ten years in New Jersey. He went through the whole thing very carefully and he translated it from the commentary by the first Dalai Lama. The first of any kind of Lama is always the greatest, well I shouldn't say that... is always a great Lama, because that's the one that starts the lineage.

The first Dalai Lama was an incredible teacher, an incredible Lama, he was a student of Tsongkapa. And one of his most famous works is this commentary on the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. [b: Abhidharmakosha] is basically a very old book that's a collection of very older books that explain all of Buddhism in a nutshell. And it's very difficult, the book is very difficult, it goes, the first chapter covers the parts of a person and a person's mind, the second chapter goes on and discusses all the energies within yourself, the third chapter discusses the universe and, and time and space and where are the galaxies and how did the world start and where do genes come from and things like that. The fourth chapter is the best presentation on karma from anywhere.

The fifth chapter is the best presentation on mental afflictions, all your bad thoughts. And then it goes on to chapters that help you to understand meditation and how to liberate yourself, that's the [b: Abhidharmakosha]. In the monastery we study it for normally two years. We're going to be covering the third chapter. That's, the [b: Kosha] was written about sixteen hundred years ago. You have the dates here and it was written by Vasubandhu. So we'll start the class. Tonight we'll cover two of the three realms. According to Buddhism there are three realms in this world, the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. And we'll be covering two of those tonight.

It's sort of a short class because of all of this introductory stuff. The second class will be about the formless realm, the five different kinds of rebirths, how do you take rebirths and how, how it's possible to know what rebirth you're going to

take, does anyone take rebirth purposely, can anyone direct their rebirth? Class number three, we're going to cover what it's like to be two of the kinds of rebirths, you know there's a thing called a "craving spirit" sometimes it's called {nibok} or {preta} or "hungry ghost". You cannot see them. It's supposedly one way you can take births. So we're gonna discuss that kind of being, how do they live, and then animals, we're gonna talk about the world of animals from a Buddhist perspective. Class number four we're gonna cover the, oh by the way class number three will come from some of the oldest readings known it's a book called the [b: Tenrim Chenmo], it was written 800 years ago. It was lost. It was one of the most important books ever written in Tibet. And, and, His Holiness found one copy in Siberia about fifteen years ago, and then we found a copy, a better, a clearer copy in, in India about seven, six years ago so it's very great, it's a thousand pages long.

It was the basis for the greatest book ever written in Tibetan which is the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] and we're gonna study from that so, no one has ever studied from that, and in the West, except for a brief class out in California, but last summer, but I think it's a great opportunity to, to, to study that book. The fourth class is about the lives of human beings and then there's a certain kind of beings called "pleasure beings" sometimes they're called "deities" sometimes they're called "gods" sometimes they're called "{devas}". And we'll discuss what their world is like. That whole description will come from a book by the first Panchen Lama and he lived in seventeen, I'm sorry, 1570s to 1600s. A very great scholar, nowadays there's a big argument about the newest Panchen Lama, I think the twelfth or something, and he was a great scholar. We're also going to study a commentary which has never been taught in the west by Mochugamabadra who lived about two hundred years ago.

And he's a great master of a tantric lineage so that'll be a very beautiful commentary. Class five is all about the intermediate state, which is popularly, it's called in Tibetan the {bardo}. Okay, a lot of teachings about the {bardo} are from tantra and cannot be discussed in public or should not be discussed in public and the [b: Abhidharma] is the, is the classic source for all the teachings on the {bardo}. The [b: Abhidharma] explains the {bardo} thoroughly, tells you how they got there, what are they like, what's it going to be like, what do they look like, and, and then, the [b: Abhidharma] interestingly tries to prove that they exist. It tries to prove that the {bardo} exists and I thought you might like to hear those arguments, okay? Um it tells you how a {bardo} finds a rebirth. Okay, which is interesting. Okay, next page, the [b: Abhidharma] gets into the kinds of food or the kinds of energy that, that, that are like food.

Food is only one of the four ways of sustaining your body, the kind of food that we know and there're other kinds of ways of sustaining your body which are covered in the [b: Abhidharma], I think they're very interesting.

And then a general description of this world. What does this world look like according to the [b: Abhidharma] and where did it come from and how is it destroyed? Class seven is going to cover the, the hells, the Buddhist concept of the hells. What are the hells like? What are those beings like? How do you get there? How do you get out? Class number eight is a description of time and space itself. The [b: Abhidharma] describes time down to microseconds and up to trillions of light years. It's very beautiful, it's very interesting. And then the same with space. And then they go through the concept of an eon, or a {kalpa}, and you know you always hear {kalpa}a but you never know what it is.

We're going to discuss all the kinds of {kalpas}, and what is a {kalpa}, how long does it last? Like that, okay? How the world is destroyed, how the world comes into being, and how often do Buddhas come in the world and why and when and how many {kalpas} between and things like that. Class nine and ten are taken from a different book. This is the [b: Lam Rim Chenmo] of Je Tsongkapa. He is the main Lama of our lineage. He lived about five hundred years ago. And he described in great detail how to meditate on death. The reason for studying the realms is mainly to discuss the problem of suffering and, and where you're going to go after you die and Je Tsongkapa has a beautiful death meditation in his [b: Lam Rim Chenmo].

We're going to go through the death meditation very, in great detail, and try to get the details of, of how a person should meditate on death. Class number eleven as usual will be a review of everything we've done. You're required in this course, I didn't mention that, to do homework [laughter]. It's interesting, it's not like difficult homework, but I try to make it just very relevant to what, to what you need to know for your life and what you need to know to know Buddhism well. And, and it's interesting because I had my final exams in November, a lot of you came.

I had to debate a lot of monks for many, like, four or five days and, and that's the final exam after like eighteen years or something. And people ask me was it difficult and I say no because they didn't ask me almost anything that wasn't in these courses. So this really is a good survey of Buddhism. I mean if you were a monk in a Tibetan monastery and you studied for twenty years, these are the things you'd be expected to know at the end and... so I don't want to waste your

time. The homework is something that, that just concentrates on the things that you need to know for your practice and the things that are considered important for all Tibetan monks for example to study, to know by the time they get done with their studies. It really is a baby geshe course, okay? And then the final exam will be the next class after that. The final exam comes only from the quizzes. The quizzes are something that you get when you come to class. They're like four or five questions. They are all come from the homework that you just finished the night before.

And they are not difficult, but they're important. And I don't think I've ever had students fail, you know, in the sense of not being able to figure out the quiz, you know, people fail 'cause they get tired or they get other interests or something. But it's not difficult in that sense. It's something that I want you to, to bring to class with you and keep in your mind for your own benefit, for your own life. So I won't ask you any stupid questions, or useless questions. It's just things that you have to know. Part of the idea of this class is that you could pass on Buddhism to other people, you know, my teacher has passed Buddhism on to a small number of people and, and it has to, it has to multiply in the sense of, you know, each one of you has now some responsibility to pass this on to other people.

If we keep doing that then, then it will be spread to anyone who wants to know it very quickly. And so you have a big responsibility to study well. There's not any, a chance like this is very rare. First of all, to be healthy enough to come to class, not too old, not too young, not too senile, not too stupid [laughs]. You know, healthy, interested, and then someone willing to teach, it's very rare. And so take advantage of it, don't waste your time. It's a very rare time in a person's life when you have the interest and that can change, you can lose that. When you have the interest, when you have the good health to meditate for example, when you're smart enough to figure out what the person's saying, it's a very small window of opportunity, it will pass quickly. This is the first class we ever held in this place.

There will definitely be a last class. And we'll all be scattered again. And it will come and so you have to take advantage of, you know, all the things coming together briefly. Take advantage of it because then it's gonna melt again. And we'll all be separated again. So try to use the time, it's very precious time. All right, I write things on the board in Tibetan, ask you to repeat in Tibetan. This is not the Tibetan class, you didn't walk into the wrong class, okay [laughs]. It just puts a seed in your mind for the future and it helps you, in the future you'll be

able to read the texts better and things like that. So I'll write something on the board, I'll put the pronunciation in Tibetan and then I'll ask you to repeat. And don't be shy, a language class is supposed to be a little bit loud and make noise. And don't be, don't be embarrassed. We'll take a break in about, what time is it now?

[Student: Seven fifty two]

Okay, I'll just start briefly and we'll take a break in about ten minutes and then we'll come back and, yeah?

[Student: Do you have a list of the nights that the classes will be meeting?]

It won't be ready 'til next class.

[Student: Next Monday we don't have class.]

[Student: It's the fifteenth.]

[Student: Next Monday we don't, it's the night of...]

Alright so, we'll start. I'm sorry the board is here. We're building some kind of cute thing, or you can guess who's building some kind of cute thing. And, it'll be here in about a week, so I'm sorry you'll have to put up with it for now, okay,

[Student: Write big.]

Excuse me?

[Student: Write big!] [laughter]

Okay, I'll try not to shine too much. [laughter] First I'll tell you the book we're going to study and who wrote it, okay? [cut] Is that okay, can people see that?

[Student: Yes]

Alright. [silence] Ani-la, you want to sit here? Say: {chur} [repeat] {lenpa} [repeat] {der} [repeat]. {Chur} [repeat] {lenpa} [repeat] {der} [repeat]. Okay. {Chur} means dharma. The definition of dharma is "{lenbe wa zenba la chur}", it means "any object which has its own nature." And that's the meaning of dharma,

so it means any existing thing. Dharma means any existing thing. Sometimes it means Buddha's teachings. But more generally it means any existing thing, okay? {Lenpa} means high. And {der} means like a big treasure, I don't know what you call it but in India the kings have this special house...

[Student: Treasury.]

Treasury? Okay, not like the American Treasury, there's nothing there. [Laughter] But full of gold and jewels and... treasure house. In, in Sanskrit, which you don't, well you do have to know it, it's called [b: Abhidharmakosha]. Abhidharma means "higher knowledge" from the word {hyadharma} and {kosha} means "that treasure house". Okay so [b: Abhidharmakosha] is the original word, the Sanskrit word which in Tibetan was translated as {chur lenpa der}. So if someone says "what are you studying?" you say "{lenpa}," you say "{chur lenpa dur}," you can say [b: Abhidharma] it's easy enough, okay? [laughter] I often tell this embarrassing story when I met the Dalai Lama's tutor in a train station in India and he asked me what I was studying, I didn't know the word for it. So you shouldn't be like that okay? [b: Abhidharma], alright? You're studying the Abhidharma. The [b: Abhidharmakosha] is the, is the most often used book to study Abhidharma. There are many books of Abhidharma and the [b: Abhidharmakosha] is the most famous one. It was written by?

[Student: Vasubandhu]

I don't think this is gonna work...

[Student: your eraser doesn't work?]

What's that?

[Student: The eraser doesn't work?]

I don't think it's that kind of board. [laughs] [unclear] It was written by Vasubandhu. We're not allowed to call, in Buddhism, a Lama by just his name, like Lobsang Tharchin, you're supposed to put something in front of it, honorific, so you can say master for {acharya}. So I hope nobody in this class puts on their homework "Vasubandhu." That's like saying "Hey, Clinton." You know.

[Student: [unclear]] [laughter]

Yea, right. Anyway, put master or put {acharya}, something like that. It's honorific. Okay, you should do that. In Tibetan it's {nying nyen}. [silence] Say {nying nyen} [repeat] {nying nyen} [repeat]. Nobody'll ever remember that. You can say Vasubandhu.

[Student: What is the honorific title you'd like to be referred by, referred to by?]

[laughs] Dr. Sykes said "Big Roach" would be good. [laughter] Everybody got that?

[Student: How about Roach-la?]

[laughs] Master Vasubandhu lived about 350 AD. I mean, early Indian history, nobody knows anything. It's a guess. His half-brother was who?

[Student: Asanga.]

Asanga, okay, Master Asanga. Between them these two half-brothers wrote about half of the monastic curriculum, okay? Half of the books we always study in Buddhism were written by one of these two people. It was a great, two great brothers and the story of how they were born and everything is very beautiful and I won't go into it 'cause we don't have time. [silence] [cut] Okay? So don't, but I think it's important to know who wrote the book. [silence] [cut] {gelwa} [repeat] {ganden} [repeat] {drup} [repeat] By the way if you're new don't worry you don't have to know how to spell in Tibetan on the homework but you will have to spell this, okay, in the English letters, okay. Say {gyalwa} [repeat] {ganden} [repeat] {drup} [repeat]. {Gyalwa} is the Tibetan word for a Dalai Lama, it means "the Victorious One" and Tibetans don't call the Dalai Lama "Dalai Lama", they call him {Gyalwa}, or {Kundun} or {Gyalwa Rinpoche}, something like that so {gyalwa} means Dalai Lama. {Genden Drup} is the name of the first Dalai Lama. That was the name of the first Dalai Lama. His dates, which you should know, are 1391 to 1474. And he was a student of?

[Students: Tsongkapa.]

Je Tsongkapa. Je Tsongkapa. He was a student of Je Tsongkapa. He's not, he's actually not one of the two more famous students but he was a student. He was pretty, he was about thirty-five, thirty, forty years younger than Je Tsongkapa so he didn't study with him as extensively as the other two great students of Je Tsongkapa. [silence] [cut]

[Student: [sneezes]]

[Students: Bless you]

Say {tarlam} [repeat] {selje} [repeat]. {Tarlam} [repeat] {selje} [repeat]. This is the book that the first Dalai Lama wrote to explain what? The [b: Abhidharmakosha], okay? The [b: Abhidharmakosha]. And in English {tar} is {tarpay}, I think you know what that means, {tarpay}? In Sanskrit it's {moksha}. Freedom. {Lam} you know from {lam rim} I think. Path. {Selje} means "that which makes clear" and it's a word for a lamp, okay, the illuminator, illumination. What's the biggest {selje} in the world?

[Students: the sun.]

The sun. Okay, so that's a {selje}, I mean a source of light, okay? It lights up the path. You read Tibetan backwards normally so that the book that the first Dalai Lama wrote to explain the [b: Abhidharmakosha] is [b: Illumination of the Path to Freedom]. Okay? [b: Illumination of the Path to Freedom]. Sheds light on the path to freedom, shows you the way like a lantern, shows you the path, like a good flashlight. Okay? There are actually two famous {tarlam seljes} because Gyeltsup Je another student of Je Tsongkapa wrote a {tarlam selje} to explain Buddhist logic. So if you're gonna get fancy you would say "{gyupchik tarlam selje}" and that would, you'd say the {tarlam selje} if you want to show off, okay, we're studying the {tarlam selje} which explains the [b: Abhidharma], because there are two famous {tarlam seljes}. Those are the books we're going to study. Those are the main texts we're going to be reading from and we'll start the first of the two realms after we take a break. You're welcome to go downstairs. There's a little lounge there, and there's some hot water there and you can make some tea or something, and we'll come back in about ten minutes. [cut] [unclear] ... three realms. These are the three realms that you might have heard of. The first one is called {du kam}. Say {du kam} [repeat]. {Du kam} [repeat]. {Du} means desire. Okay? {Du} means desire. {Kam} means realm. Okay? {Kam} means realm. It happens to be the same word for Kam out in East Tibet because that's one area. {Kam} can also mean one specified area or piece of anything. {Kam}. So {du kam} means the, the desire realm. That's the realm we live in, we'll talk more about it okay? I don't know if you can see there. [silence] We'll have a better board next week, sorry.

[Student: I can't read [unclear].]

I'm sorry. You can cheat off of her [unclear]. Now say {suk kham} [repeat] {suk kham} [repeat]. {Suk} means... {suk} is a hard word to translate. People translate it as "form." Here it means physical matter, physical stuff, {suk}. {Suk kham} means the realm of form, the form realm, okay? I don't know what you think of when I say "form." I know, I don't... I'm not quite satisfied with the word, because form in English means "I saw his form through the window" you know, like the outline of something. Or a form that you fill out or something. But it really... in Buddhism it refers in this case to, to physical matter, to objects of the senses, okay? And then the third realm, realm number three[silence] [cut] Say {suk me kham} [repeat], {suk me kham} [repeat] Again {suk} means form, {me} means what?

[Students: not, none.]

Not or none. So it's formless. {Suk me} means formless. {Kham} means realm, okay? The beings in the formless realm don't have any physical body. They're just mental. They're just mental beings. You can't see them, and we'll talk about it next class, but actually there's no place for that realm. It's wherever they're thinking is the place, okay? So therefore that realm has no physical matter, the beings there are mental beings and they don't have physical bodies, okay? The {suk kham} is called the {suk kham} because physical matter there reaches its highest expression. All the beings in the {suk kham} basically are what we call [unclear] or {devas}. They are beings who are living in some kind of temporary paradises. I think maybe it's very similar to what you think of in Christianity when they say heaven. But, but what you think of in Christianity when they say heaven, like some place where, like, what's that island they used to go to on the Love Boat or something? [laughter]

[Student: Paradise Island.]

Paradise Island. Yeah, you think something like that. And it's kind of like that, their realm is like that. They live for millions of years, it's a very pleasant place, they they just enjoy themselves. All of those beings are in the {suk kham} are, are {devas}. They are, I, I call them pleasure beings so as not to confuse them with tantric deities which are enlightened beings and they are different. They're not living in the {suk kham}. {Suk kham} is a bad place to be because while you are there you burn up tremendous amounts of good karma and you don't make any new good karma and so there's a, if you do a flow chart like Tom Kiley can do a flow chart, but anyone who reaches the {suk kham} basically always falls

down to the hells after that. Because it takes a tremendous amount of good energy to keep you there, you're burning it up, you know, thousands and thousands of deeds every day, and then you must fall after that because you're not doing any new good deeds. So it's very, so it's most common for people to go from the {suk kham} down to the lower realms. So {suk kham} is sort of a place like that. It's not in this physical world, it's above this physical world. It's above the highest mountain in this world. According to [b: Abhidharma] and we'll get into that. It has, seventeen different levels, okay? It goes like this. [silence] Sorry, it still works, yea. There are four, there are four, different levels in the form realm. You can read about it in the reading, okay. But as you know there are four {samten}. {Samten} is a meditation level, okay? There are four meditation levels. Four deep meditation levels that you can reach. When you meditate. If you meditate in this life you can reach four different levels of meditation called {samten}. Okay? If you meditate on the first {samten}, if you get good at that, it's very hard to get there, okay, it takes very, very few people in this room maybe will ever reach the first {samten} It's very hard to get there, it requires being beyond your senses completely. In meditation you're not hearing anything, tasting anything, smelling anything, you're beyond the objects of the senses, you've, you've reached such a deep state of meditation that you're totally beyond the objects of the senses. That's called the first {samten} and if you, if you can reach that and you just stay there all the time, and you collect a lot of the karma of being there that kind of meditation will cause you to be born in the first section of the form realm. You'll be born as a very beautiful like pleasure being, you'll be born it'll be a very pleasant place, you will live millions of years there, you'll just enjoy yourself, and then the last day of life there, they get some premonition of what's going to happen to them and they say that the suffering of that last day is worse than all the millions of years before because they see where they're going and everyone starts to avoid them. For the first time they start to stink or for the first time they start to look old and, and then all the other pleasure beings start to avoid them and they know what's going on, they're about to die and they see where they're gonna go. So, so if you get hung up in that blissful meditation in this life with no other purpose, just you, it's like taking heroin or something, you, you get into staying in that kind of meditation and not using it for something higher, just staying there and enjoying it. And being there in, in Buddhism it's considered a big trap, it's considered a big mistake. If you, if you get good at that meditation, and spend a lot of time in that meditation you avoid a lot of bad deeds, why?

[Student: You're not doing anything.]

You just can't do that when you're in meditation, okay? You can't lie, steal, kill, commit sexual misconduct, you can't do it while you're in meditation. So automatically you collect a lot of, you avoid collecting a lot of bad deeds. It leads you to a, this kind of a birth, but it's not desirable because you don't get anything done. This whole three realms are suffering. And the reason that they come in the [b: Abhidharma] here is because they are explaining the truth of suffering. Every thing in these three realms is suffering: every being and every object in those three realms is suffering. So, they don't even distinguish between the people and the place where they're staying. This room is suffering, I'm suffering, the blackboard is a kind of suffering, and, and all of us are suffering. And, and all three realms are like that, all three of these realms are like that. So, the form realm, yeah?

[Student: when you say three realms are you talking about desire, form, and formless?]

Yeah.

[Student: What, what? Is that what this is, desire, form, and formless?]

These are called four levels of the form realm

[Student: Yeah, and I don't understand the three, three, eight?]

I'm gonna talk about it, okay? It has a total of seventeen sub, sub-realms, like that, you see?

[Student: Yeah...]

And which one you go to depends on how deep your meditation was. If you got into second level meditation, second {samten}, in this life and then died, if you stayed in that {samten}, if you stayed in that level of meditation for a long time and then died you could be born into the second one here, the second part of the form realms. The form realm has seventeen different sections. Different things are going on in each section, you can read about it. But the way you get there is by being in deep meditation in this life which is called causal form realm and then you go to the resulting form realm. Why do I have these numbers here? These are three sub-sections of meditation. You know deep, very deep, and extremely deep. Deep, very deep, and extremely deep. Deep, very deep, and extremely deep. Different kinds of meditation. So where you end up in the

form realm depends on what kind of meditation you did before you died. As a practice your whole life. You dedicated yourself to staying in this blissful state without doing anything else. Without understanding emptiness or anything. Just letting your mind, emptying your mind, thinking about nothing. It was the viewpoint that, that was called {chi ong me} and it was very popular in some parts of Asia. And it was considered a big mistake because it doesn't lead to nirvana. You cannot get out of the three realms by doing this. All you do is get into different levels of the form realm. Okay? And, and you can read more about it in the, in the reading. So there are seventeen levels of the form realm. Where you end up there, how you end up there depends on how deep your meditation was and what kind of meditation you were doing in this life. Those are physical places that you can be born in. And the beings there, for example in the first part of the form realm there's a being called Brahma and you can be born as one of his students and they just sit all day reading[b: the Vedas] in front of Brahma. They study [b: the Vedas], they read [b: the Vedas], they live very blissful lives. Brahma is there as the main figure and they are reciting [b: the Vedas], the ancient holy books of that Indian religion, Hindu, Hinduism. And, and you can be born there. You don't commit any bad deeds there. It's a very smooth life, blissful life and then finally you die and go to a lower realm, okay? So that's the form realm. And, and the main, what characterizes the form realm is that the form there is much more beautiful and also people who live in the form realm have a tendency which comes from their past life where they don't, they are not overly attracted to the objects of the senses: they are beyond desire. Desire as we know it, they don't have. They don't care about, they don't care about the kinds of desire that we care about. We'll talk more about the kinds of desire we like. Okay. Can you see this realm? No. Can you go there? Yes. Can you get your mind into the kind of meditation that would cause you to be there? Yes. Is it always a bad thing to meditate like that? No, because if you use it for the right thing you can perceive emptiness with that. If you actually in this life learn to put your mind into form realm meditation, on that platform and only on that platform you can see deep spiritual things. So the idea is to get there and then do something, with it. And you can learn that in this life, you can do that in this life. Then you can see the form realm and you can, you can use that mediation to see deep spiritual things like emptiness. In fact you have to. You can't see it in a desire realm frame of mind. Okay? Now what's a desire realm frame of mind? [silence] There are six kinds of beings in the desire realm, okay? In the form realm there are only what? Only these pleasure beings, okay, no animals, no humans, only these higher life forms, okay? Very blissed-out people who eventually die and go to hell. But in the, in the desire realm we have a bigger selection of beings, okay? Sometimes five, sometimes they say six. I'll

give you the, the basic kinds, okay? The first kind is, is hell beings. And, and here I'll say one thing that I want to say, I mean it's the only, it's the most important thing to say in this class tonight. And we don't have much time so I'm not going to go in much more detail than that. But the thing to know is, why teach a class like this? I mean I don't, I haven't heard of a class like this being taught in America yet. I haven't heard where somebody got up and took the third chapter of the [b: Abhidharma] which goes through all these different realms that you can't see, you can't prove. They sound, some of them sound ridiculous. Some of them sound like what you learned in Christianity that you didn't like in the objectives. You know, so why would somebody get up and try to teach these thoughts. You know, what's the point? The point is if you've been in these classes for the last year or two you studied, studied the [b: Diamond Cutter Sutra] for example, you studied emptiness. And you studied the role of projection of in, in, in the perception of reality. In other words according to the higher schools of Buddhism your own projections have a lot to do with your reality. In other words this room is empty in the sense that it doesn't have any nature of its own. We all experience it in a different way. There isn't any way that it really is. It's just how we are experiencing it. And there is nothing there, that "oh, you're seeing it good, I'm seeing it bad." There's just the one that you see good and the one that you see bad. There isn't something that's neither good nor bad that you're seeing. There's nothing there. You are seeing something good, I might be seeing something bad. There's nothing there which is good or bad by itself. Yeah?

[Student: [unclear] the thing is that nothing has an inherent existence on its own?]

Yeah, you mean nature of its own.

[Student: Um, is it about the definition of dharma which is the word [unclear]]

Yeah, yeah, everything has its own nature.

[Student: everything has its own nature, any existing thing, but according to emptiness nothing really exists on its own so how could it exist?]

It's a very good question. Redefine dharma as having its own nature which you perceive. How's that? As you perceive. It's a good question. So maybe I'm experiencing you, maybe I've done very good things in my past, and because of that I really do see you all as a group of angels. Okay? It's possible. And maybe

somebody's who's done good things and bad things sees all these people in this room, they like some of the people, they don't like some of the other people. And then maybe somebody who's been really bad in the last few years sees everybody in this room as a drag, you know, they they see some, everybody in the room strikes them as a little bit negative. That's the nature of this, that's the emptiness of the people in this room. Depending on my own past deeds I will experience the people in this room a certain way, okay? And what is the implication of that? What it means is, that means it's possible for there to be a thing called paradise or nirvana, okay? You could if you collected enough good energy, and we'll study that, how to do that, you could experience an object as total paradise. And then if you just kinda go on the way you were doing now which is half good and half bad the world will continue to seem like New York City, okay? [laughs] And if you happen to collect some very very negative things, if you hurt people in a very bad way then it's not out of the question to say that you could see something very terrible like you get in a car accident and your body covered with fire or, or something like that. It's, you know it's possible. It happens to people. People do get in car accidents, covered with gasoline and burning and they're aware of that as they're burning. You know it's possible. So they have some kind of energy to see this happening to them. After the threshold called death those perceptions become even more exaggerated. In other words if you had a perception to see yourself get burned on the finger, in after death the nature of the... that energy is that it multiplies after death. So it's possible that something in this realm that would only be burning your finger with a cigarette, the moment after this breathing stops you could see it as your body covered with fire. It's not out of the question, it's totally possible if you understand emptiness. You have to study emptiness. But what I'm trying to say is, that I don't, once you understand emptiness and you're an educated Buddhist you don't have to go around apologizing for the third chapter of the [b: Abhidharma], okay [laughs]? You don't have to go around apologizing for the fact that the Buddha described the hells. It's it's totally possible. I don't say that you can see it right now. But for example on the day that you first perceive emptiness you will see the other realms and you will know to a certainty that you are in a realm called the desire realm and that this realm is all suffering and that it's a very bad place to be. For the first time you will see there really are three realms and that you really are in a thing called the desire realm and that there really is nothing nice in this realm. You will see that someday. And and I don't know, I don't believe that before that that you could truly understand that. There is a thing called the desire realm and you are there. And if you had been a different person in the past you wouldn't have to be here. [laughter] If you're here it means something about you. And I'm talking about

me too. And these are all things you'll understand on the day you see emptiness. You see the three realms. They really do exist. I can prove it to you with logic if we take some time that because things are empty it's possible that there's a thing called a hot hell. But on that day you'll see it, and you'll know there's a desire realm and you'll know that there are these other beings. So, so it's important. The point is to not go to them okay? [laughs]. And if, and if you just think it's an old Christian superstition, or, or something like that it's a big mistake. Or as some Buddhist teachers have tried to say "oh these are just psychological states that you through in this life." It's not. There are places like that. And you have to learn about them. So emptiness proves that the realms I'm about to describe inside the desire realm are possible. Okay? And you have to consider it and act on it. Okay, we better go fast or we won't finish. {Hell Beings} [silence] Craving spirits, sometimes called {pretas}, sometimes called hungry ghosts. I don't like the word hungry ghost, it just sounds like Caspar to me, you know? [laughter] People don't take it seriously. These are spirits who because they have been, mainly because they have been so ungenerous and selfish in their life that they are born into some state where they can never be satisfied. They are constantly craving things. And and you cannot see them. We cannot see the hell beings [cut] they exist with certainty because you can't see them. It's in the logic books that you debate about the existence of craving spirits. They can be in this room. We cannot see them. They really are like spirits haunted out, they do exist here, you can't see them, and Buddhism says don't lie and say you can, 'cause you can't. Unless you're some extraordinary person. You cannot confirm this right now, okay? Put it on that category of things you're gonna confirm later. Animals you can see, okay, animals you can see. The, Buddhism says that the majority of animals, the great mass of animals, live in the oceans and that the ones on dry land are by, by population statistics are very few, like dogs and cats and, compared to the animals living in the ocean, almost nothing. Massive animals live in the ocean and they live a life of total paranoia and fear because your whole world, your whole gestalt as an animal is worrying about the one that's a little bigger than you, who's behind you and gonna eat you. And you know humans think animals are silly for being so afraid but but it's wise to be afraid if you're an animal 'cause there's always someone a little bigger than you who's looking to eat you. You are food for someone. And and they are there waiting for you and you have to spend your life in fear. You have to spend your life watching all the time and that's the life of an animal. Number four, number four humans and according to Buddhism, humans living on four great continents in a huge ocean and we'll talk about that, okay, we're supposedly on the southern continent, okay? And number five: pleasure beings, okay, pleasure beings. Usually they're called gods or deities, or {devas}, or, and then demigods.

Demigods are like pleasure beings who didn't have the karma to be quite as beautiful and strong and intelligent as a whole pleasure being so they spend their whole existence being what?

[Students: Jealous.]

Jealous, okay? Yeah?

[Student: but the ones in the formless realm are pleasure beings?]

Yeah.

[Student: Same thing?]

Yeah. There are six, good question, okay? There are six different kinds of pleasure beings in the desire realm. And then there are seventeen different kinds of pleasure beings in the form realm. So, so pleasure beings exist in our realm and they also exist in the form realm. But animals and the other four here they don't exist in the form realm, they only exist in the desire realm where we are, okay? So there's kinds of pleasure beings who, who exist in this realm. We cannot see them but they do exist in this realm. And then there are higher kinds of pleasure beings who live in the form realm. So the only kind of being that is shared by those two realms is the, is the pleasure being okay? With one other exception, can you guess?

[Student: Humans when they go to a higher realm, level of meditation?]

Well, that that too. {bardo} beings. {bardo} beings are outside of this breakdown. They don't, they're not counted anywhere here. And, and where you're going determines what kind of {bardo} being you are. So if you're gonna, if you die and you're headed for the form realm we call you a form realm {bardo} being. But you're not in the form realm yet, you're not in the desire realm anymore, you're, I shouldn't say that. Anyway, you're headed for the form realm but you're not counted as one of these five beings. A {bardo} being is out of the loop. Yeah?

[Student: Isn't it true that a human being in a state of deep meditation would also be in the form realm?]

His mind would be in, his or her mind would be in the form realm. The body

would be in the desire realm.

[Student: Is there a separation?]

You still count them as desire realm. There's a big debate about that. [b: Abhihdharma] loves to debate these things. It's a little bit, well anyway, those are the five types. I want to see if, oh, normally it's taught as what?

[Student: The sixth you're saying is that {bardo} being?]

Yeah, but they don't count it as number six. They say, they just say there is a thing called {bardo}, it's not included in the five, but it's there, okay? Now, sometimes they divide it into them into twenty, it's on your homework, okay? [laughs] This how I keep people interested at the end. How'd they get, there's ten and ten? Ten bad births and ten good ones. The way they get ten is that they break the hell beings out into eight different kinds of hot hell beings, okay? So there're eight different hot hells and we will study them, okay? There are eight different kinds of hells where the basic suffering is just burning. Eight different types of hot hells. There's also eight different what?

[Student: Cold hells.]

Cold hells. They are attached to the hot hells so they don't count them separately. There're also things called partial hells which can exist even on this, in this realm. Like in the middle of the Gobi desert if you have a plane crash in the middle of the Gobi desert or something. There are there are very wimpy hells, none of them really count. So they only count them as eight. So you get eight hells, craving spirits, and animals, you get ten bad kinds of births. Humans you can divide into four, which is what?

[Student: Male and female?]

Four different realms. I'm sorry. It's the four different continents. We happen to be on the Southern continent. We'll talk more about the continents, okay? You don't have to worry about falling off the edge of the earth tonight. [laughter] And we'll get into that, alright? Four different kinds of human. And then there are six different kinds of pleasure beings in this realm. Okay? And I'm not going to go through it. But basically those six kinds of pleasure beings, it's different kinds of pleasure. Some of them have the ability mentally to create objects which they can enjoy the use of. They can, they can think up an object

and then enjoy it. [laughter] And then there's the higher level where you can enjoy the things that other people have thought up. Those are different levels of the desire realm. There are kinds of pleasure beings who struggle with lesser pleasure beings. They fight, they have wars. And there are kinds of pleasure beings who are beyond that. So there are six different kinds of [cut] That way you get ten and ten. And so the classic [b: Abhidharma] presentation is twenty different ways of being born: eight hot hells, one craving spirit, one animals, that's ten. Four kinds of humans in different continents. Why don't they count the minor continents? When you do a mandala offering you do four continents, then you do two, you do two minor continents are attached to each major continent. They say "aahh... those don't really count, they're just attached to the major continents." So that's four. And then pleasure beings, six different kinds. You can read it in the reading, okay? But that adds up to twenty, basically twenty different places you can stay in the desire realm. The homework says "Why is it called the desire realm?" Okay. Do you remember, I think I told you before. The first Dalai Lama defined it. The basic motivations in this realm are food and sex, okay? We desire food, and we don't even desire the higher kind of food. There are kinds of food that don't look like the food we eat. There, there's like meditation kind of food. But people in our realm our lives are focused around food, digestible food, which is the worst kind, the heaviest kind, and then sex. Those are the two main interests of people in our realm. So that's why it's called the desire realm. The characteristic of this realm is that we can have bad thoughts which are bad deeds. We can have, we can have bad thoughts which are, which are also bad deeds. In form realm they don't have those necessarily but in this realm our bad thoughts are bad deeds. That's the characteristic of this realm. We we can have desire, a kind of desire which people in the form realm don't have, okay? When your mind is in the form realm in this life, which is called causal form realm, okay, you can't have desire because if you did you could never get your mind up to that. If you're still thinking about a hotdog or something to eat or sex or something like that you can't even put your mind in that realm, you can't do it. That's from the point of view of the cause. From the point of view of the result, meaning being born in that place in your next life, you naturally don't have those kinds of desire because you practiced so hard in your past life. So the characteristic of the desire realm is that we do have that kind of desire and and when we focus on an object our desire tends to get greater. They don't have that power in the form realm. So that's the quality of the desire realm. Last question on the homework I didn't do and then we'll stop. The highest realm of those seventeen in the form realm is called {okmin}, did you ever hear of {okmin}? {Okmin} is, {okmin} means below nothing. {Ok} means below and {min} means nothing. And it means it's the highest realm of its

kind. It happens to be the highest realm in the form realm, okay? And often times it says in the scriptures that when you or I become a Buddha we will do that in a paradise called {okmin}. When you or I reach final Buddhahood and we gain the body of an angel made of light it will be in a place called {okmin}. Okay? Excuse me?

[Student: [unclear]]

Uh...

[Student: but isn't {okmin} a generic term?]

We're gonna talk about it. [laughs] There's a big debate about whether or not my {okmin} is gonna be the same as your {okmin}, okay? Or whether there's big, one big {okmin} and we all get our buddhahood at this same {okmin}.

[Student: Could you spell that in English please?]

Yeah, it's O-K-M-I-N. Okay? {Okmin}. Okay? But that's not the point I want to make tonight. The point is the highest level of the form realm is called {okmin}. Is that, is that samsara, is that suffering or not? Is that a place where beings suffer or not?

[Students: Yeah. Yes.]

So why do people get enlightened there? Why is that the ultimate paradise where all people gain their final enlightenment?

[Student: You can step over to?]

[Student: 'cause {okmin}'s a place where nothingness can be best understood?]

That's a good guess. Actually there's two {okmins} okay? [laughter]. And I'll give you the clue okay. The homework is a trick question alright? There's two {okmins} so you should know. I mean you'll get confused. There's a {okmin} which you get from meditating very deep in this life and you reach the form realm and it's some kind of beautiful paradise, temporary. And then there's the {okmin} that you get to which is a Buddha's paradise. And it will be your personal {okmin}. And you will, you will be enlightened there. You will gain a body of a, of an angel there. And you will send a body down to plan... to

different planets to teach people and things like that. That's called the emanation body . That body always starts out in where? {Vajra asana}. {Vajra asana}. Which is the seat of the diamond. It's called the seat of the diamond. The place where the emanation body always shows up is in India in a place called diamond, the seat of the diamond, nowadays called Bodhgaya. Okay? So that's the, that's where the, your emanation body will show up. But the body which you are actually enjoying the use of and where you actually live will be in {okmin}. And that will look like one of these, you know deities, like Tara. Something like that. But much nicer. [laughter] Okay that's it, any questions involved? The last question on the homework says "What is the highest school of Buddhism?" You know, what ultimately causes each of the different realms or types of births? And, and you know what it is. It's really your own projections, okay. It's really your own projections. If you have been good enough in the earlier part of your life you could be seeing this room in a much different way that you are now, assuming that you're seeing it the way I'm seeing it. And I don't know, okay, but it's very possible that if you had been very good in your life before you would be experiencing this room in a very very interesting way. That no one else is experiencing. And that's completely possible. According to the highest schools of Buddhism this room is your own projection. The reality of this room comes from your own projection. And the older students, you know where do the projections come from. Can you change them at will? Can you decide that tonight I would like to see everybody in this room as an angel? You can't. I mean once you do a good deed or a bad deed you're locked in. And you're gonna, you're gonna experience life that way whether you like it or not. Whether you want to or not. It's true that this room is empty. But if you've been bad there's no force in the universe which is gonna make this room pleasant for you. You will be forced to see it in a, you'll be forced to project a lousy room. Okay, and if you've been very good you'll be forced to project in a very interesting way, a beautiful way. So that's, that's how, that's how the highest teachings of, of Buddhism on emptiness relate to these weird realms, you know like the hell realm and a, and a big mountain somewhere and there's four continents somewhere and there's a big ocean somewhere. They, because things are empty those realms can exist and you can be forced to go there. So you better find out about them, okay? [laughs] Alright. Alright we'll stop there. I'm gonna ask anyone who has been an older student here, anyone who has gone through an entire course here, and finished a course here and gotten the certificate here, I'd like you to stay. Cause we have, we have to talk about some projects. And then I'd like the other people to leave, okay? So we'll do a short prayer. Yeah?

[Student: I just wanted to say that if anybody is new here at class & plans on coming back to this course and doing this course and they have not met with Geshe-la would you please just give me your name and your phone number and we'll arrange a meeting [unclear].]

Okay, so we're gonna do a short prayer. It's in your, it's in your notebook. First we'll do the mandala. It's says {mandel} I think. It's in the very beginning, first page. And then we'll do the {ngowa} which is about the, what page is it, fourth page? So first we'll do the first page and then we'll do the fourth page. The mandala is, is a thank you to the teachers of this lineage who brought you this teaching. And then the {ngowa} is dedicating it that you can keep this understanding with you as you walk out the door and go through your next few days. Okay? And we'll meet again on Monday at seven. Okay.

[Prayer: short mandala]

[Prayer: dedication]

VERSION TWO OF CLASS ONE

Course 8 – Death and the Realms of Existence

Class One: Introduction to the Desire and Form Realms

January 4, 1996

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcriber: PR

Proof: SF/LV

Side A

[cut]

We are going to be reading mostly from the Abhidharma. Abhidharma is the oldest, next to the Vinaya, and the oldest Buddhist subject literature that we will study in these courses. It is ah, the very first of the four Buddhist schools, the {Vaibashika} school, and, that's a very great work called the [b:Abhidharmakosha]. Khen Rinpoche taught it for ten years in New Jersey and he went through the whole thing very carefully and, we translated it from the commentary by the first Dalai Lama. The first of any kind of Lama is always the greatest, well I shouldn't say that... is always a great lama, because that's the one that's caused the lineage. The first Dalai Lama was an incredible teacher, and incredible Lama; he was a student of Tsongkapa, and one of his most famous works is this commentary on the [b:Abhidharmakosha]. Abhidharmakosha is basically a very old book that's a collection of very older books, that explain all of Buddhism in a nutshell, and it is very difficult, the book is very difficult; it does...the first chapter covers the parts of a person and a person's mind. The second chapter goes on and discusses all the energies within yourself. The third chapter discusses the universe, and, and time and space and where are other galaxies, and how did the world start, and where did beings come from and things like that. Fourth chapter is the best presentation on karma, from anywhere. Fifth chapter is the best presentation on mental afflictions, all your bad thoughts, and then it goes on to chapters that help you to understand meditation and how to liberate yourself, that's the [b:Abhidharmakosha] In the monastery we study it for normally two years; we are going to be covering the third chapter, that's...the [b:kosha] was written about sixteen hundred years ago, you have the dates here, and it was written by Vasubandhu. So we'll start the class tonight, we'll cover two of the three realms, that's three...according to Buddhism there's three realms in this world, the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm, and we'll be covering two of those tonight, it's sort of short class because of all this introductory stuff. And the second class it will be

about the formless realm, the five different kinds of rebirth, how you take rebirth, and how, how it's possible to know what rebirth you are going to take, does anyone take rebirth perfectly, and can anyone direct their rebirth. Class number three we are going to cover what it's like to be two of the kinds of rebirths, you know, there is a thing called a craving spirit, sometimes it's called {yidak} or {preta} or hungry ghost, we cannot see them, it's supposedly one way you can take birth, so we are going to discuss that kind of being; how do they live, and then animals, we are going to talk about the world of animals, from a Buddhist perspective. Class number four, we are going to cover the...oh by the way, class number three will come from a... some of the older students know it; it's a book called the [b:Ten Rim Chen Mo], it was written eight hundred years ago. It was lost, it was one of the most important books ever written in Tibet, and His Holiness found one copy in Siberia about fifteen years ago, and then we found a copy, a better... a clearer copy in India about seven... six years ago, so it's very great, it's a thousand pages long, it... it was the basis for the greatest book ever written in Tibet which is the [b:Lam Rim Chen Mo] and we are going to study from that, so no-one has ever studied from that, in the...in the west, except for the big class out in California, but... last summer, but I think it's a great opportunity to study that book. The fourth class is about the life of human beings and then there is a certain kind of beings called treasure beings, sometimes they're called deities, sometimes they're called gods, sometimes they're called devas or, and we'll discuss what their world is like. That whole description will come from a book by the first Panchen Lama, and he lived the... seventeenth, I'm sorry, 1570s to 1600s, very great scholar, nowadays there's a big argument about the newest Panchen Lama, I think the twelfth or something, and he was a great scholar. We are also going to study a commentary which has never been taught in the west by {Munche Dalabadra} who lived about two hundred years ago, and he is a great master of our Tantric lineage, so that will be a very beautiful commentary. Class five is all about the intermediate state which is popularly ... it's called in Tibetan 'The Bardo'; a lot of teachings about the Bardo are from Tantra and cannot be discussed in public, or should not be discussed in public. And the Abhidharma is the classic source for all the teachings on the Bardo. The Abhidharma explains the Bardo thoroughly, it tells you how they got there, what are they like, what is it going to be like, what do they look like. And then the Abhidharma interestingly tries to prove that they exist, it tries to prove that the Bardo exists, and I thought you might like to hear those arguments, okay. It tells you how a Bardo finds a new birth. Okay next page. The Abhidharma gets into the kinds of food or the kinds of energy that are like food, food is only one of the four ways of sustaining the body, the kind of food that we know, and there are other kinds of ways of sustaining the body which

are covered in the Abhidharma, I think they are very interesting. And then, a general description of this world, what does this world look like, according to the Abhidharma, and where did it come from, and how is it destroyed. Class seven is going to cover the hells, the Buddhist concept of the hells, what are the hells like, what are those beings like, how do you get there, how do you get out. Class number eight, is a description of timeless space itself. The Abhidharma describes time down to microseconds and up to trillions of light years, it's very beautiful, it's very interesting, and then the same of space, and then it goes through the concept of an Eon or {kalpa}, and, you know, you always see a {kalpa} but you never know what it is, we are going to discuss all kinds of {kalpas}, and what is a {kalpa}, how long does it last like that, okay. How the world is destroyed, how the world comes into being, and how often do Buddhas come in the world, and why and when and how many kalpas between and things like that. Class nine and ten are taken from a different book; this is the [b:Lam Rim Chen Mo Lakpa] by Je Tsongkapa. He is the main Lama of our lineage, he lived about five hundred years ago, and he described in great detail how to meditate on that. And the reason for studying the realms is mainly to discuss the form of suffering and where are you going to go after you die. And Je Tsongkapa has a beautiful death meditation in his [b:Lam Rim Chen Mo], we are going to go through the death meditation very... in great detail, try to get the details of how a person should meditate on that. Class number eleven as usual, will be a review of everything we've done. You're required in this course ...I didn't mention it, to do homework [laughter]... it's interesting, it's not like, difficult homework, but I try to make it just very relevant to w... to what you need to know for your life and what you need to know to know Buddhism well. And it is interesting because I had like final exams in November, lot of you came. I had to debate a lot of monks for many, four or five days, and, that's the final exams, actually, like eighteen years or something, and people ask me "was it difficult", and I said no, because they didn't ask me almost anything that wasn't in these courses. So this really is a good survey of Buddhism, I mean, if you were a monk in a Tibetan monastery and you studied for twenty years, these are the things you'd be expected to know at the end, and...so I don't want to waste your time, the homework is something that... it just concentrates on the things that you need to know for your practice, and the things that are considered important for all Tibetan monks for example to study in it, to know by the time you get [unclear], this...it really is a baby Geshe's course, okay. And then the final exam will be the next five class after that. The final exam comes only from the quizzes. The quizzes are something that you get when you come to class, they are like four or five questions. They are... all come from the homework that you just finished the night before. And they are not difficult but they are

important. And I don't think I ever had students fail, you know, in the sense of not being able to figure a quiz, you know, people fail because they get tired or they get other interests or something like that. It's not difficult in that sense, it's something that I want you to...to bring with... to class with you, and keep in your mind, for your own benefit, for your own life, so I won't ask you any stupid questions or useless questions. It's just things that you have to know. And part of the idea of this class is that you could pass on Buddhism to other people, you know. My teacher has passed Buddhism on to a small number of people, and...it has to, it has to multiply, in a sense of, you know, each one of you has now some responsibility to pass this on to other people, if we keep doing that, then... then it will be spread to anyone who wants to know it very quickly, and so it's... you have a big responsibility to study well. There's not any...a chance like this is very rare, first of all, to be healthy enough to come to the class, not too old, not too young, not too senile, not too stupid [laugh] you know, healthy, interested and then someone willing to teach. It's very rare. So take advantage of it. Don't waste your time. It's a very rare time in a person's life when you have the interest. And that can change. You can lose that. When you have the interest and you have the good health, to meditate for example, when you're smart enough to figure out what the person is saying, it's a very small window of opportunity, it will pass quickly. This is the first class we've ever held in this place, there will definitely be a last class, and we will all be scattered, and it will come, and. So you have to take advantage of, you know, all the things coming together briefly, take advantage of it, because then it's going to [unclear] again... and we will all be separated again. So, try to use the time, and it's a very precious time. All right. I write things on the board in Tibetan, ask you to repeat in Tibetan, this is not the Tibetan track, you didn't walk into the wrong class [laughs]. It just puts a seal in your mind for the future, and it helps you ... in the future you'll be able to read the text clearly and things like that, so I'll write something on the board, I'll put the pronunciation in Tibetan, and then I'll ask you to repeat, and don't be shy, a language class is supposed to be a little bit loud and, and make noise, and don't be don't be embarrassed. We'll take a break in about, what time is it? Okay, I'll just start briefly, and then we'll take a break in about ten minutes, and then we'll come back in ... yeah? [student asking: unclear]...it won't be ready till next class [student: next Monday we don't have class...[unclear]] , oh yeah...[unclear]. All right, so next class. First I'll tell you the book we're going to study and who wrote it okay, {Cho [repeat] Numa [repeat] Dzo [repeat]}, {Cho} means 'Dharma', the definition of Dharma is {Haengin Wo... Numa Cho} it means any object which has its own nature, and that's the meaning of dharma, so it means any existing thing, Dharma means any existing thing, sometimes it means Buddhist teachings, but

more generally it means any existing thing; {Numa} means “high” and Dzo means “like a big treasure”, I don’t know what you call it, but in India the kings have this special house,[student: treasury], treasury, okay, not like the American Treasury, there’s nothing there, but ah, full of gold and jewels and..., -Treasure House-... in Sanskrit, which you don’t , well, yeah you do have to know, it’s called {Abhidharma Kosha}, Abhidharma means “higher knowledge”, from the word “high dharma”, and {kosha} means that, Treasure House, okay so [b:Abhidharma Kosha] is the original word, Sanskrit word, which in Tibetan was translated as, ‘{Chogyun Mo Sae}’, so if somebody says ‘what are you studying’ and you say ‘{Nunma}’ or you say ‘{Chen Mo}’[unclear], you can say Abhidharma, it’s easier, okay [laughter]. I always tell this embarrassing story about when I met the Dalai Lama’s tutor in a train station in India, and he asked me what I was studying, and I didn’t know the word for it, and it shouldn’t be like that okay; Abhidharma, all right. You’re studying the Abhidharma. The [b:Abhidharma Kosha] is the...is the most often used book to study Abhidharma, there are many books of Abhidharma, and the [b:Abhidharma Kosha] is the most famous one, it was written by...[student: Vasubandhu] it was written by Vasubandhu. We are not allowed to call in Buddhism a Lama by just his name like {Lobsang Taisu}, you know, you are supposed to put something in front of it, honorific, so, you can take ‘Master for Acharya [unclear], So I hope nobody in this class puts on their homework Vasubandhu, that’s like saying: ‘Hey Clinton, you know [student: bad example], yeah right [laughter], anyway, just put Master or Acharya [unclear]] or something like that, [unclear] okay, you should do that. In Tibetan it’s {Yingye}, say Yingye [repeat], Yingye [repeat]], nobody’ll ever remember that; you can say ‘Vasubandhu’. [student: What is the honorific title you’d like to be referred by?], [Laughs] [Dr Sykes said [unclear] would be good], [student:[unclear]], Master Vasubhandu lived about 350AD. I mean, early Indian history nobody knows anything, it’s a guess, his half brother was who?, [student: Asanga] Asanga, okay, Master Asanga. Between them these two half brothers wrote about half of the monastic curriculum okay, half of the books you’re going to study in Buddhism are written by the [unclear]of these two people, it was a great... two great brothers, and the story of how they were born and everything is very beautiful, and I won’t go into it because we don’t have time... {Gyalwa}[repeat], {Genden}[repeat], {Dru}[repeat], by the way, if you knew {Dunwar}you don’t have to know how to spell the Tibetan on the homework, but you will have to spell this, okay, in the, in the English letters okay. Say {Gyalwa}[repeat, {Genden}[repeat], {Dru}[repeat], {Gyalwa} is the Tibetan word for a Dalai Lama, it means “the Victorious One”, and Tibetans don’t call the Dalai Lama ‘Dalai Lama’, they call him ‘Gyalwa’, or ‘Kundun’, or ‘Gyalwa Rinpoche’, something like that, so {Gyalwa} means Dalai Lama.

{Genden Dru} is the name of the first Dalai Lama; that was the name of the first Dalai Lama. His dates, which you should know, are... 1391 to 1474, and he was a student of? [students: Tsongkhapa], Je Tsongkhapa, Je Tsongkhapa, [laughs], he was a student of Je Tsongkhapa, he is not, he is actually not one of the two more famous students, but he...he was a student, he was twenty... ah he was about thirty-five, thirty... forty years younger than Je Tsongkhapa, he didn't study since ... as extensively as the other two great students of Je Tsongkhapa. Say [b: {Tarlam}] [repeat], [b: {Selgye}] [repeat], [b: {Tarlam}] [repeat], [b: {Selgye}] [repeat], this is the book, that the first Dalai Lama wrote to explain what? [student: [unclear]], the [b: Abhidharma Kosha], okay, the [b: Abhidharma Kosha], and in English {Tar} is {Tarpa}, I think you know what that means, {Tarpa}?, we can... it's actually from {Moksha}, [student: freedom], "freedom", {La} you know from [b: Lam Rim] I think, [student: path] ah, {Selgye} means... that which makes clear, and it's a word for a lamp, okay, the... the illuminator, illumination, what's the biggest {Selgye} in the world? [student: the sun] the sun, okay so that's a {Selgye}, I mean, a source of light, okay, it lights up a path. You read Tibetan backwards normally, so there's the book that the first Dalai Lama wrote to explain the [b: Abhidharma Korsha] is [b: Illumination of the path to freedom], okay [b: Illumination of the path to freedom], sheds light on the path to freedom, shows you the way like a lantern, shows you the path, like a good flashlight, okay. There are actually two famous {Tarlam Selgyes} because Gyaltsab Je, another student of Je Tsongkhapa wrote a {Tarlam Selgye} to explain Buddhist logic, so if you're going to get fancy you would say the {Tib Tarlam Selgye}, and that would... you'd say the {Tarlam Selgye}, if you want to show off, okay, we are studying the {Tarlam Selgye} which explains the Abhidharma, cause there are two things that the [unclear]. Those are the books we are going to study, ah, those are the main texts we are gonna be reading from and we'll start the first of the two realms after we take a break. You are welcome to go downstairs, there's a little lounge there, and, there's some hot water there, and you can make some tea or something, and, we'll come back in about ten minutes. The first one is called {Durkam}, say {Durkam} [repeat], {Durkam} [repeat], {Du} means "desire"... {Du} means "desire", {Ka} means "realm"... {Ka} means "realm", it happens to be the same word for [unclear] in east Tibet, because that's one area, and {Ka} can also mean one specified area or piece of anything, {Ka}, so {Durka} means the desire realm, that's the realm we live in, we'll talk more about it, okay. [student: [unclear]] , I don't know if you can see this, we'll have a better board next week, sorry, [student: okay], [student: I can't read or understand Tibetan [unclear], I'm sorry [unclear], you can [unclear]. Now say {Sugka} [repeat], {Sugka} [repeat], {Sug} means, {Sug} is a hard word to translate, people translate it as "form", here it means "physical

matter", physical stuff, {Sug}, okay, {Sugka} means the realm of form, the form realm, okay. I don't know what you think of when I ... when I say form. I got ... I am not quite satisfied with the word, because form in English means 'I saw his form through the window, you know, like the outline of something, or a form that you fill out or something, but it really, it, it, in Buddhism it refers in this case to, to physical matter, to objects of the senses. And then on the third realm, realm number three, say {Sugmekan}[repeat], {Sugmekan}[repeat], again {Sug} means "form", {Me} means what?, [students: not or non], not or non, so it's form-less, {Sugme} means "formless", {Ka} means "realm", okay; the beings in the formless realms don't have any physical body, they are just mental, they are just mental beings, you can't see them, ah, it's...and we'll talk about it next class, but actually the...there's no place for that realm, is wherever they are thinking is the place, okay, so th...therefore that realm has no a physical manner, the beings there are mental beings, and they don't have physical bodies, t...the {Sugkam} is called the {Sugkam} because physical matter there reaches its highest expression, all the beings in the {Sugkam} basically are what we call lhas or devas, they are... beings who are living in some kind of temporary paradises. I think maybe, ah, it's very similar to what we think of in Christianity when they say heaven, but... but what you think of in Christianity when they say heaven, like some place where, like, what's that island they used to go to on the Love Boat or something [unclear] ... something like that, you know, and it's kind of like that, their realm is like that, they live for millions of years, they... it's a very pleasant place, they... they just enjoy themselves, all of those beings are... in the {Sugkam} are...are devas, they are, well I...I call them pleasure beings, so as not to confuse them with tantric deities which are enlightened beings, and they're different, they are not living in the {Sugkam}. {Sugkam} is a bad place to be because while you are there you burn out tremendous amounts of good karma, and you don't make any new good karma, and so there's a...if you do a flowchart, like Tom [unclear] could do a flowchart, but anyone who reaches the {Sugkam} basically, always falls down to the hells after that, because it takes a tremendous amount of good energy to keep you there, you are burning it up, you know, thousands and thousands of deeds every day, and, and then, you must fall after that, because you are not doing any new good deeds. So it's very, it's most common for people to go from the {Sugkam} down to the lower realms. So {Sugkam} is, is sort of a place like that, it's not in this physical world, it's above this physical world, it's above the highest mountain in this world, according to [b:Abhidharma], and we'll get into that. It has seventeen different levels, okay, it goes like this: there are four, there are four different levels in the form realm, you can read about it in the reading, okay, but as you know, there are four {Samtens}. {Samten} is a meditation level, there are four meditation levels, four deep meditation levels,

that you can reach when you meditate, if you meditate in this life, you can reach four different levels of meditation called {Samtens}, okay. If you meditate on the first {Samten}, if you get good at that, it's very hard to get there, okay, it takes very... very few people on this room will [unclear] ever reach the first {Samten}, it's very hard to get there, it requires being beyond your senses completely, in meditation, you're...you're not hearing anything, tasting anything, smelling anything, you're beyond the objects of the senses, you've reached such a deep state of meditation that you are totally beyond the levels of the senses, that's called the first {Samten}... and if you... if you can reach that, and you just stay there all the time, and you collect a lot of the karma being there, that kind of meditation will cause you to be born in the first section of the form realm, you'll be born as a very beautiful, like, pleasure being, you'll be born... it will be a very pleasant place, you'll live millions of years there, you'll just enjoy yourself, and in the last day of life there, they get some premonition of what's going to happen to them, and they say that the suffering of that last day is worst than all the millions of years before, because they see where they are going, and everyone starts to avoid them. For the first time they start to stink or for the first time they start to look old and then all the other pleasure beings start to avoid them, and they know what is going on, they are about to die, and they see where they are going to go. So, so if you get hung up in that blissful meditation, in this life, with no other purpose, just you, it's like taking heroin or something, you get into staying in that kind of meditation and not using it for something higher, just staying there and enjoying it, and being there. In, in Buddhism it's considered a big trap, it's considered a big mistake if you get good at that meditation and spend a lot of time in that meditation, you avoid a lot of bad deeds, why? [students: you can't do anything] You just can't do them when you are in meditation; you can't lie, steal, kill, commit sexual misconduct, you can't do it while you are in meditation, so automatically you collect a lot of [unclear], you, you avoid collecting a lot of bad deeds, it leads you to this kind of rebirth. But it's not desirable cause you don't get anything done. This whole three realms are suffering, and the reason they come in the [b:Abhidharma] here, is that they're explaining the truth of suffering. Every thing in these three realms is suffering, every being and every object in those three realms is suffering, so, they don't even distinguish between the people and the place where they're staying, this room is suffering, I'm suffering, the blackboard is a kind of suffering, and, and all of us are suffering, and all three realms are like that, all three of these realms are like that, so the form realm... yeah? [student: when you say three realms you're talking about the desire, form and formless [unclear]] yeah? [student:What, what... is that what this is? –desire, form and formless[unclear]], These are called four levels of the form realm, [student:yeah, and I don't understand, the three-

three-eight], ahh!, I'm gonna talk about it. It has a total of seventeen sub-sub realms -like that, you see?-[blackboard], and which one you go to depends on how deep your meditation was. If you got into second level meditation, second {Samten}, in this life, and then die, if you stayed in that {Samten} after {Samten} [unclear] if you stayed in that level of meditation for a long time, and then died, you could be born into the second form realm, the second heart of the form realms. The form realm has seventeen different sections; different things are going on in each section, you can read about it, but the way you get there is by being in deep meditation in this life which is called '{Karlo}' form realm, and then you go to the 'resulting' form realm. Why I have these numbers here?, These are three subsections of meditation, you know; 'deep, very deep and extremely deep'- 'deep, very deep and extremely deep' - 'deep, very deep and extremely deep', different kinds of meditation, so where you end up in the form realm depends on what kind of meditation you did before you died, as a practice your whole life. I mean, dedicating yourself to staying in this blissful state without doing anything else, without understanding emptiness or anything, just letting your mind, emptying your mind, thinking about nothing, it was the viewpoint that... it was called {Chiang me}it was very popular in some parts of Asia, and it was considered a big mistake, because it doesn't lead to nirvana, you cannot get out of the three realms, by doing this. All you do is to get into different levels of the form realm, and you can read more about it in the, in the readings. So there are seventeen levels on the form realm, where you end up there, how you end up there depends on how deep your meditation was and what kind of meditation you were doing in this life. Okay. Those are physical places that you can be going and the beings there; for example in the first part of the form realm, there is a being called Brahma, and... you can be born as one of his students and they just sit all day reading the Vedas, - [unclear]-, they study the Vedas, they read the Vedas, they live very blissful lives, Brahma is there as the main figure in and they are reciting the Vedas, the ancient holy books of the Indian religion, Hindu ... Hinduism, and, and you can be born there, you don't commit any bad deeds there. It's a very smooth life, blissful life, and then finally you're ... you die and you go to a ... lower realms, okay, so that's the form realm, and, in the main ... what characterizes the form realm is that the form there, is much more beautiful, and also people who live in the form realm, have a ... a tendency which comes from their past life, where they don't, they're not overly attracted to the objects of the senses, they are beyond desire; desire as we know it, they don't have, they don't care about, ah... they don't care about the kinds of desire that we care about. We'll talk more about the kinds of desires we like. Can you see this realm? No. Can you go there? Yes. Can you get your mind into the kind of meditation that would cause you to be there? Yes. Is it

always a bad thing to meditate like that? No, because if you use it for the right thing you can perceive emptiness for example. If you actually in this life learn to put your mind into the form realm meditation on that platform, and only on that platform you can see deep spiritual things. So the idea is to get there and then do something ...wait a minute ... and you can learn that in this life, you can do that in this life, then you can see the form realm, and then you can ... you can use that meditation to see deep spiritual things like emptiness, in fact you have to. You can't see it in a desire realm frame of mind. Okay, now what's a desire realm frame of mind? There are six kinds of beings in the desire realm, okay, in the form realm there are only what? Only these pleasure beings, okay; no animals, no humans, only these higher life forms, okay, very blissed out people, who's ... who'll eventually die and go to hell. But in the, in the desire realm we have a bigger selection of beings, okay; sometimes five, sometimes they say six. I'll give you the... the basic kinds, okay. The first kind is ... is hell beings, and, and here I'll say one thing that I want to say, I mean, it's the only ... it's the most important thing to say in this class tonight, andd we don't have much time so I'm not gonna go in much more detail tonight; but the thing to know is: why teach a class like this? I mean, I don't I haven't heard of a class like this being taught in America yet. I haven't heard where somebody got up and took the third chapter of the [b:Abhidharma] which goes through all these different realms, that you can't see, you can't prove, they sound ... some of them sound ridiculous, some of them sound like what you learned in Christianity that you didn't like and you rejected, you know, so why would somebody get up and try to teach these realms? You know, what's the point? The point is if you've been in these classes for the last year or two, you've studied the ... you've studied the [b:Diamond Cutter Sutra], for example, you've studied emptiness, and you've studied the role of projection, in the perception of reality. In other words, according to the highest schools of Buddhism, your own projections have a lot to do with your reality, in other words, this room, is empty in a sense that it doesn't have any nature of it's own, we all experience it in a different way. There isn't any way that it really is, it's just how we are experiencing it, and there is nothing there that: 'oh you're seeing it good, I'm seeing it bad', there's just the one that you see good and the one that we see bad. There isn't something that's neither good nor bad that you're seeing, there's nothing there, you are seeing something good, I might be seeing something bad, there is nothing there which is good or bad by itself ... Yeah? [student: ... Is it when ...when your definition of emptiness that nothing has an inherent existance it's own] Yeah, any nature of it's own. [I would say, I am confused about the definition of Dharma because or [unclear]] Yeah, [unclear] every object has it's own nature, any existing thing, but according to emptiness nothing really exists by it's own, so how can it? ...

it's ...] Yeah, it's a very good question. Redefine Dharma as having it's own nature which you perceive, as you perceive it, it's a good question. So maybe I'm experiencing you, maybe I've done very good things in my past and because of that I really do see you all as a room of angels, okay, it's possible. And maybe someone who has done good things and bad things sees all these people in this room, they like some of the people, they don't like some of the other people. And then maybe somebody who has been really bad in the last few years sees everybody in this room as a threat, you know, they, they see [unclear], everybody in the room strikes them as a little bit negative. That's the nature of this, that's the emptiness of the people in this room. Depending on my own past deeds I will experience the people in this room in a certain way, okay, and, and what is the implication of that? What it means is, that means it's possible for there to be a thing called paradise, or nirvana, okay. You could, if you collected enough good energy - and we'll study that, how to do that - you could experience an object as total paradise, and then if you just kind of go on the way you are doing now which is half good and half bad, the world will continue to seem like New York City [student:okay] [laughter], and if you happen to collect some very, very negative things, if you hurt people in a very bad way, then it's not out of the question to say that you could see something very terrible like you get in a car accident and your body covered with fire, or, or something like that, it's ... you know it's possible, it happens to people, people do get in car accidents, covered with gasoline, and burning, and they are aware of that as they are burning, we know it's possible. So they have some kind of energy that to see this happening to them. After the threshold called death, those perceptions become even more exaggerated. In other words, if you have a perception to see yourself get burned on a finger, then after death the nature of the ... that energy, is that it, it multiplies, -after death-, so it's possible that something that in this realm would only be burning your finger with a cigarette, the moment after you .. this breathing stops you could see it as your body covered with fire. It's not out of the question, it's totally possible if you understand emptiness, you have to study emptiness, and what I'm trying to say is that .. I don't ... once you understand emptiness and you're an educated Buddhist, you don't have to go around apologizing for the third chapter of the [b:Abhidharma], okay [laughs], you don't have to go around apologizing for the fact that the Buddha described the hells, it's, it's totally possible. I don't say that you can see it right now, but for example on the day that you first perceive emptiness you will see the other realms and you will know with certainty that you are in a realm called desire realm, and that this realm is all suffering, and that it's a very bad place to be. For the first time you'll see there really are three realms, and that you really are in a thing called the desire realm, and that there really is nothing nice in this world.

You .. you will see that someday, and ... and I don't know, I don't believe that before that you can truly understand that there is a thing called the desire realm, and you are there, and if you had been a different person in the past you wouldn't have to be here [laughter]. And while you are here, do something about it, and I'm talking about me too. These are all things you'll understand on the day you'll see the emptiness, you see the three realms, they really do exist. I can prove it to you with logic, that ... if we take some time, that because things are empty, it's possible that there's a thing called {Hakao}... but on that day you'll see it, and you'll know there's some desire realm, and you'll know that there are desireless realms. So ... so it's important for you, th... the point is to not go to them, [laughs] okay, and if ... and if you just think it's an old Christian superstition or something like that, it's a big mistake, or as some Buddhist teachers have tried to say, oh, these are just psychological states that you go through in this life, it's not, there are places like that, and, and you have to learn about them. So emptiness proves that the realms I'm about to describe inside the desire realm are possible, okay. And, and you have to consider it, and act on that. Okay, we better go faster [unclear] hell beings ... craving spirits, sometimes are called pretas, sometimes are called hungry ghosts; I don't like the word hungry ghosts, it just sounds like 'Casper' to me, you know [laughter]. People don't take it seriously. These are spirits who because they have been ... mainly because they have been so ungenerous and selfish in their life that they are born into some state where they can never be satisfied, they are constantly craving things, and ... and you cannot see them, we ... we cannot see the hell beings, that they exist with certainty, because you can't see them [unclear], it's ... it's in the logic books that we debate, about the existence of craving spirits. They can be in this room, we cannot see them. They really are like spirits haunted how ... they do exist here but you can't see them, and Buddhism says, don't lie and say that you can 'cause you can't, unless you are some extraordinary person, you cannot confirm this right now, okay, put it on that category of things you are going to confirm later. Animals you can see, okay, animals you can see. The Buddhism says that the majority of animals, the great mass of animals live in the oceans and that the ones on dry land are by, by population statistics very few, like dogs and cats and ... compared to the animals living in the ocean, almost nothing, okay; massive animals live in the ocean and they live a life of total paranoia and fear, because your whole world, your whole gestalt as an animal is worrying about the one that's a little bigger than you who's behind you and trying to eat you. And, you know, humans think animals are silly for being so afraid, but it's wise to be afraid if you're an animal, cause there's always someone a little bigger than you who's looking to eat you, you are food for someone, and, and they are there waiting for you, and you have to spend your life in fear, and you have to

spend your life watching, all the time. And that's the life of an animal. Number four... number four, humans, and according to Buddhism humans living on four great continents in a huge ocean, and we'll talk about that, okay. We're supposedly on the southern continent. And number five, pleasure beings, okay, pleasure beings. Usually they are called gods or deities or devas, or ... and then demi-gods, demi-gods are like pleasure beings who didn't have the karma to be quite as beautiful and strong and intelligent as a full pleasure being, so they spend their whole existence being what? [students:jealous] Jealous, okay, yeah? [student:but the ones in the form realm, pleasure beings] Yeah? [student: the same thing?] Yeah, there's ... there are six, - good question -, okay, there are six different kinds of pleasure beings in the desire realm, and then there are seventeen different kinds of pleasure beings in the form realm, so, so pleasure beings exist in our realm and they also exist in the form realm. But animals, and the other four here, they don't exist in the form realm, they only exist in the desire realm, where we are, okay. So there's kinds of pleasure beings who ... who exist in this realm, we cannot see them, they do exist in this world. And then there are higher kinds of pleasure beings who live in the form realm. So the only kind of being that is shared by those two realms is the ... is the pleasure being, okay, with one other exception, can you guess?, [student:humans when they go to their higher realm], [laughs] Well, that too, [unclear] bardo beings. Okay, bardo beings are outside of this breakdown, they don't ... they are not counted any more, and ... and where you are going determines what kind of bardo being you ... you are, so if you're gonna ... if you die, and you are headed for the form realm, we call you a form realm bardo being. But you are not in the form realm yet, and you are not in the desire realm any more, you're ... I shouldn't say that, anyway, you're headed for the form realm but you are not counted as one of these five beings. A bardo being is out of the loop. Yeah? [student:Wouldn't it be true that a human being in a state of deep meditation would also be in the form realm?] His mind would be in ... his or her mind would be in the form realm, the body would be in the desire realm, [student: [unclear] separation?] You still count them as desire realm, there's a big debate about it in the Abid...[b:Abhidharma] loves to debate these things, it's a little bit ... well, [unclear], anyway, those are the five types. I wanna see if I ... Oh, normally it's [unclear], what? [student: so, the sixth you're saying, is that bardo being?] Yeah, but they don't count it as number six. They say ... they just say there is a thing called bardo, it's not included in the five, but it's there, okay. Now, sometimes they divide them into twenty, it's on your homework okay [laughs]. This is how to keep you people interested at the end [laughter]. How they get, they ... here's ten and ten, ten bad births and ten good ones, the way they get ten is that they break the hell beings out into eight different kinds of hot

hell beings, okay. So there are eight different hot hells, and we will study them, okay. There are eight different kinds of hells, where the basic suffering is just burning. Eight different types of hot hells. There's also eight different what? [student: cold hells], cold hells, they are attached to the hot hells, but they don't count them separate. There are also things called partial hells which can exist even on ... in this realm, like in the middle of the Gobi desert. You could have a plane crash in the middle of the Gobi desert, or something, there are ... there are very whimpy hells, they ... they don't really count, so they only count them as eight. So if you get eight hells, craving spirits and animals, you get ten bad kinds of births. Humans you can divide into four which is what? [student:[unclear]], four different realms, okay. I'm sorry, four different continents. We happen to be on the southern continent. We'll talk more about the continents okay, you don't have to worry about falling off the edge of the earth, tonight, [laughter] ... and we'll get into that. Four different kinds of humans, and then there are six different kinds of pleasure beings in this realm, okay. And I'm not gonna go through it, but basically those six kinds of pleasure beings, it's different kinds of pleasures. Some of them have the ability, mentally, to create objects which they can enjoy the use of. They can, they can think of an object, and then enjoy it [laughter], and then there's a higher level where you can enjoy [unclear] of the things that other people have thought [laughter]. [student: [unclear]], and those are different levels of the desire realm. There are kinds of pleasure beings who struggle with lesser pleasure beings, they fight, they have wars, and there are kinds of pleasure beings who are beyond that. And so there are six different kinds of ... and that way you get ten and ten. And so the classic [b:Abhidharma] presentation is twenty different ways of being born; eight hot hells, one craving spirit, one animals, that's ten; four kinds of humans, in different continents, why don't they count the minor continents? When you do a mandala offering you do four continents, and then you do two ... you do two minor continents that are attached to each major continent. They say -ah!- those don't really count, they are just attached to the major continents. So that's four, and then pleasure beings, six different kinds. You can read it in the reading but that adds up to twenty, basically, twenty different places you can stay in the desire realm. The homework says, why is it called the desire realms? Okay, do you remember? I think I told you before, the first Dalai Lama defined it. The basic motivations in this realm are food and sex, okay [laughs]. We desire food and we don't even desire the higher kinds of food. There are kinds of food that don't look like the food we eat, there ... there's like meditation kind of food and people in our realm, our lives are focused around food, digestible food which is the worst kind, heaviest kind, and then sex, those are our two main interests of people in this realm. So that's why it's called the desire realm. The characteristic of this realm

is that we can have bad thoughts which are bad deeds. We can have ... we can have bad thoughts which are ... which are also bad deeds. In the form realm they don't have those necessarily, but in this realm, our bad thoughts are ... are bad deeds, that's the characteristic of this realm. We can have desire, a kind of desire which people in the form realm don't have, when your mind is in the form realm in this life, which is called {Kargo} form realm, okay ... like, we can't have desire because if you did you could never get your mind off of that. If you are still thinking about a hot-dog...or something to eat, or sex or something like that, you can't even put your mind in that realm. You can't do it, that's from the point of view of the cause. From the point of view of the result, meaning being born in that place in your next life, you naturally don't have those kinds of desires, because you practiced so hard in your past lives. So the characteristic of the desire realm is that we do have that kind of desire, and when we focus on an object, our desire tends to get greater. They don't have that problem in the form realm. So that's the quality of the desire realm. Last question on the homework I didn't do and then we'll stop. The highest realm of those seventeen in the form realm, is called {Okmin}, did you ever hear {Okmin}? [student:kind of], {Okmin} means below nothing, {ok} means 'below', and {min} means 'nothing', and it means it's the highest realm of it's kind. It has to be the highest realm in the form realm, and at often times it says in the scriptures that when you or I become a Buddha, we will do that in a paradise called {Okmin}. When you or I reach final Buddhahood and we gain the body of an angel made of light, it will be in a place called {Okmin}, okay. [student:[unclear]] Excuse me? [student:[unclear]] Ah ... [student: but isn't {Okmin} a generic term?] We are gonna talk about it [laughs], there's a big debate about whether or not my {Okmin} is gonna be the same as your {Okmin}, okay, or whether there's big ... one big {Okmin} and we all get our Buddhahood in this same {Okmin}. [student:could you spell Okmin please]. Yeah, O K M I N, okay, {Okmin}. But that's not the point I wanna make tonight, the point is, the highest level of the form realm is called {Okmin}. Is that ... is that samsara or not, is that suffering or not, is that a place for beings to suffer or not? [students:yes] So why do people get enlightened there, why is that the ultimate paradise for all people to gain their final enlightenment?, [students [unclear]] Ah, that's a good guess. Actually there's two Okmins, okay. [laughter] And I'll give you a clue, okay. In the homework there's a trick question, all right. [laughs] There's two {Okmins}, so you should know, I mean you get confused, there's an {Okmin} which you get from meditating very deep in this life, and you reach the form realm and it's some kind of beautiful paradise, temporary. And then there's the {Okmin} that you get to, which is a Buddhas' paradise, and it will be your personal {Okmin}, and you will be enlightened there, you will get the body of an angel there, and you

will send the body down to ... down to plan... different planets to teach people and things like that. That's called the emanation body, that body always starts out in where?, [student:Vajra... [unclear]] ... {Vajrasana}, {Vajrasana}, which is 'the seat of the diamond' it's called 'the seat of the diamond'; the place where the emanation body always shows up is in India in a place called 'diamond', 'the seat of the diamond', nowadays called Bodhgaya. So that's the ... that's where the ... your emanation body will show up, but the body which you actually enjoy in the new state and where you actually live, you'll be in {Okmin}, and that will look like one of these, you know, deities, like Tara, something like that, or most likely [laughter]. Okay, that ... any questions involved?, Ah, the last question the homework says is what is the highest school of Buddhism? Yeah, what ultimately causes each of the different realms and types of birth, and ... and you know what it is, it's really your own projections, okay, it's really your own projections. If you would had been good enough in the earlier part of your life you could be seeing this room in a much different way than you are now, assuming that you are seeing it the way I'm seeing it, okay, and I don't know, okay. But it's very possible that if you had been very good in your life before, you would be experiencing this room in a very, very interesting way, that no-one else is experiencing that, and that's completely possible. According to the highest schools of Buddhism this room is your own projection, the reality of this room comes from your own projection, and the older students, you know, where did the projections come from? Can you change them at will, can you decide that tonight I would like to see everybody in this room as an angel? You can't, I mean, once you do a good deed or a bad deed, you're locked in, and you're gonna, you're going to experience life that way whether you like it or not, whether you want to or not. It's true that ... that this room is empty, but if you've been bad there's no force in the universe which is gonna make this room pleasant for you. You'll be forced to see it in a ... you'll be forced to project a lousy room, okay, and if you've been very good you'll be forced to project it in a very interesting way, beautiful way ...so that's, that's how ... that's how the highest teachings of Buddhism on emptiness relate to these weird realms, you know like the hell realms, and a big mountain somewhere, and these four continents somewhere, and this big ocean somewhere, and they ... because things are empty those realms can exist and you can be forced to go there, so you better find out about them, okay [laughter], all right ... all right, we'll stop there. I'm gonna ask: anyone who has been an older student here, anyone who has gone through an entire course here, finished a course here, and gotten ... just to get [unclear] I'd like you to stay, 'cause we have ah ... cause we have to talk about some projects, and then I'd like the other people to leave, okay. So we'll do a short prayer ... yeah? [student:I just wanted to say that if anybody is

new here and just might, you know, likes it, and thinks he's coming back [unclear], and during this course you have not met with Geshe-La, would you please just give me your name, and your phone number, and I'll arrange you to [unclear]]. Okay, so we are gonna do a short prayer, it's in your ... it's in your notebook. First we'll do the mandala, it says mandala here, it's in the very beginning, first page, and then we'll do the {Moa}, which is about the ... what page it is, fourth page? So first we'll do the first page and then we'll do the fourth page. The mandala is a ... is a thankyou, to the teachers of this lineage who brought you these teachings, and then the {Moa} is a ... dedicating in that you can keep this understanding with you as you walk out the door and go through in the next few days, . and we'll meet again on Monday at seven.

[prayer:short mandala]

[prayer:dedication]

COURSE 8 CLASS 2

Notes from the codes:

[st] student

[sts] students

[ls] laughs- teacher

[lr] laughter- students

[lrs] laughters- both

[bd] board(writing on the board while teaching)

() [ur] unclear word left blank

(--) [ur] unclear with two words left blank

(---) [ur] unclear with two or more words left blank

[ur] unclear (guessed word)

(.) [ur] unclear with two guessed words

(...) [ur] unclear with two or more guessed words

(.-) [ur] unclear with one guessed word and one blank word

(.-.) [ur] unclear with two or more guessed words and blank words

...We are gonna do a very short prayer, it's in the beginning of your notebook... we'll do mandala offering first, and then we'll do the taking of refuge

[prayer: short mandala] {Yidam guru...tayami}

[prayer: refuge(3times)]

...The name of this course is...is 'Death and the realms of existence', we're gonna go through a text which describes in Buddhism what the world is like, the parts of the world that you and I can see, and the parts that we can't see, we are gonna go through that, and then we are gonna go through what happens to you when you die, and what happens to you after you die, and what are the possibilities, and that's'...that's the subject of this course, so the last part of the course will be a...a death meditation, how to do a death meditation, which is not so much of the scary thing of trying to replicate what's going to happen when you die, it's, thinking of all the reasons why it's certain that you are going to die, you don't know when you are going to die, and what kinds of things in the world can help you when you die, how many things are there in the world that can be any of use to you when you die, because basically the day you die, everything you'd have here becomes pretty meaningless to you, you know, you're no longer...I mean 30 seconds after you die, you don't care about the house or your job, or your kids or anything, you are in a totally different existence, you are totally on your own, pretty much your mind is...is wiped pretty clean, and your whole... your whole life would be totally different, you won't recognize yourself, at all, to

be what you are now , so that... the idea is that you should get ready for that, you should know what could happen, you have to understand what's going to happen, and then try to do the best we can to prepare for that, because it will come, so it's just a question of who goes first, and then who goes second, and then we'll all go, so, at some point of... try to study people who have been there, who can see those things, what's going to happen when you die, and...and what can you do about it, so really the...the last part of the course will be a death meditation by a great Tibetan Lama called Je Tsongkapa, and the first part of the course, we are going backwards actually, our horrible locations where you can end up, after you die, so we're gonna go through the whole realms of ...sentient life, you know, where...where are living beings, where do they live, what do they look like, what are the...what are the realms that we can see, what are the realms that we can't see, and then, after that, we'll do death meditation, which is how to get ready, and how to avoid certain realms, and how to steer yourselves towards other realms, and then, in between there there'll be what it's called the bardo which means 'In between' and we'll be studying that, we'll be studying what's the bardo, what is it like, there's a lot of books out nowadays without the bardo, according to {{unclear}} some of them are just totally... made up, and incorrect, and...so we are gonna go straight to the original source of these teaching which is called...org-one of the original sources called the [b:Abhidharma], Abhidharma means higher knowledge, {Abi} means 'higher', {Dharma} means, in this case 'knowledge', Abhidharma, and the classic text, the text that's used in all Tibetan Buddhist monasteries is [b:Abhidharma Kosha], {Kosha} means treasure, treasure house, and it's, it's explained as being...the [b:Abhidharma Kosha] is a book which includes a lot of the earlier teachings on Abhidharma, so it's like a treasure house that contains all of those, all of that Abhidharma () [ur], this is one of the five great book that this five year course is all about, in the mon...as a monk, in the monastery, you try to memorize this text, it's about a hundred and fifty pages long, and then you study the commentary of the first Dalai Lama, and you spend about, in the monastery you can spend two... two to ten years on this, in New Jersey we spend ten years on it, and...and it's a very great subject, this is a Hinayana text, it's according to the...to the lesser vehicle, and, but we study it and then we master it, it's like it's correct and it's important (...)[ur], most of it, it was written, when?, [sts:[ur]], yeah, we have to make 350-80, okay, about sixteen centuries ago, alright, and it was written by a master named [bd]{Vasubandru}... Vasubandru was the brother of [sts:[ur]], {Acalra}, whose... between them, they wrote like three of the great books that are studied in Tibetan monasteries, they wrote more than half, and they were half brothers, so Vasupandru is the author of this book, which is what we are going to be studying, we are going to be studying the third

chapter which is a presentation of the Universe, okay, the p...the physical universe, who lives in it, what does it look like, okay...why do we get into this chapter, I mean, it's not very popular to teach this chapter in...in the west, because people say –Ohh it, has all this weird ideas about the shape of the world and things like that, it must be worthless, you know, it must be just ahh...this old Indian wrong idea of what the Earth was like before Sputnik went up, [lr] and they discovered what the Earth was really like, you know, and you have to talk about that, you know, most people just disregard this chapter, they get to the skeptic part which is the bardo, you know, the...the state between birth and death, and-death and birth-, and then they...they don't like the explanation that maybe the world was flat or the ocean was... falling off the side of the earth or things like that, you know, that would have before format (...) [ur], so why we... why do we go through this, I mean, if you take the [b:Abhidharma Kosha], this book...Vasupandru...it's very hard to read because it's full of this...descriptions for example, of what happens when you see emptiness directly...there's a long long description of what's going on, every millisecond during that experience, and then it gets into level upon level of spiritual realizations that you and I would be lucky to get to, number one, because it's a hundred permutations you know, it's a very confusing book, I mean it's like describing some kind of country that you...you can't see, and maybe you'll never see in this life, and it's fighting you about, you know, what happens in this millisecond, what happens right after that, if you have this thought after that, and, can you emanate this, or, or maybe you can't emanate this or...it's very very deep, so obviously the book is written by an incredibly realized person, so why does this incredibly realized person has a chapter about this ridiculous presentation of the world, you know, what's wrong with this guy?, did somebody add this chapter later?, or what's going on, that (---) [ur] the emptiness of this world, I mean this world, we assume that our perception of this world is the correct one, you know, we just got to guide up [ur], on a spaceship, if he took a camera with him, and now we know what the world looks like, and you assume that the world really looks like that, that a hundred years from now, people will see the world the same way, like 1995 we decided the way the world looked, and we were...we can actually take pictures down to a few square feet with our satellites, to meter [ur] for the world must look like that, because that's all depending on...on your perceptions, and your perceptions can change, ah, you will find out the day after you die, that the world can radically change, you know, the world that you thought was so fixed, and so normal and you're a human being, and you are walking around the world, and the world must look like that...30 seconds after you die, you're in a totally different world that you never dreamed existed, and there...there's many many worlds like that, so I mean, the definition of the world is a very fluid

thing, and it depends greatly on your perceptions, where those perceptions come from, you have to study karma, but basically you are being forced by a past karma, to experience this world in a certain way, it didn't have to be like that, and what I'm saying is -when you are a highly realized Buddhist master in 350 AD, maybe you see the world in a certain way, and maybe you're correct, maybe you're...it's valid-, okay, does that mean our perception of the world is invalid-no-, you can have two valid perceptions with the same logic that () [ur], okay, that's...that's quite possible, you know that we meet people at work, -we always give this example-, right?[lr]...of the...the person that you truly feel that's a bad person, according to your perceptions, this person is truly bad, and everybody in the office should understand it the way you understand it, if anybody...if anybody had any brains, they would also see that this person is really bad, and then you run into somebody who thinks this person is really good, and they can give you good reasons why they think he's good, and then you a...you wanted to talk about the same object, or you hear, if you travel, you can, if you travel like to Asia, and you read Asian newspapers about something that happened, like I was in Thailand when Tiananmien [ur] square happened, and the Thais are very afraid of the Chinese, so the whole thing in the newspapers was quite different, you know, the whole perception of that event was completely different, some...it's quite possible that you have one event, called a person, and that two different people can have totally different perceptions, one person can be, one can see this being (...) [ur], as a...as a tantric deity, valuable, and another person can perceive this being, as a...as a teddy [ur], argumentative person, and...and they'll swear that that's what they are, and they...they'll struggle to...to...to say that that's the way the person () [ur], actually the person is just being forced by their past karma to see it that way, the person who is seeing that person as () [ur] is forced equally to see the person that way, a person is empty, that's one of the meanings of emptiness, the world is the same way, a person is a little microfied, the world is a macrofied, it's very possible that different beings have totally different perceptions of the same object called our world [ur], so we are gonna go through how Vasupandru sees the world, okay, it...it...

END OF COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 1

COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 2

...person (---)[ur] is being forced equally to see the person that way, a person is empty, that's one of the meanings of emptiness, the world is the same way, a person is a little microfied, the world is a macrofied[ur], it's very possible that different beings have totally different perceptions of the same object called our world [ur], so we are gonna go through how Vasupandru sees the world, okay, it's...it's...some of the parts of it...it's not important, I don't think, you know, whether there's nine mountains of iron, forty minutes from here to the north, I don't know, maybe not [lr], you know...is there a realm called hell, is there a realm called craving spirits?, you know, other realms you could go to, that's an important question because we are what?, [st: gonna to die], we are mortals, yeah, I mean, we have to be concerned about these questions, you know, if very...convincing arguments can be made, that it's very possible that you could have a perception called hell, right after the air stops moving through these two holes, then it's, we have to study, we have to check it out, so that's basically we are gonna go through that, it's an important subject, it's not just for...just for some Buddhist scholarship, or study some ancient text that sounds weird, you know, it's the...it's a very important question of: as we die, as each of us must, what will happen to us, where will we go, is this the only realm there is, does the mind stop we have a long cross about that[ur]. So we are gonna study the [b:Abhidharma Corcha]...there's another book, I'm gonna put in Tibetan, you don't have to learn it, someday you will, this won't be on your homework, I mean, I mean, you don't have to memorize the Tibetan on your homework, say...but you have to say the sounds, real loud, okay, say {Tarlam [rt] Salye [rt] (2 times)}, okay, {Ta} stands for {Tarpa}, which means what?, [st: freedom], 'freedom', okay, {Mulcha} was a type of publications from () [ur], {Tarpa} means...{Ta} is short for freedom, {Lam} is like [b:Lam Rim], what's Lam?, [st:path], 'path', so {Tarlam} is path to...[st:freedom] freedom, {Sal} means to lay clear or illuminate, {Sal-ye} is an

"illumina-tor", so you can say a 'realm', a realm is called a {Salye}, so it's as if we are blind people, let's say it's dark outside, we're trying to get down the street, and all Indian restaurants are closed[lr], and, you can't follow the current[ur] anymore, and you're going down the street, and someone says...they bring a flashlight, they bring a lamp, and they walk you down the street, and this is, by this book, is an illumination of the {b:Abhidharma Corcha}, the Abhidharma Corcha is incode: {Nabo Nami Yeshela Wangishila Nima Lo}, {Nabo Nami Yeshela} the five (---) [ur] the four, {Yeshela Wangishila Nima Lo}, and the two will lead number three, okay, so...and as a student I'm making you that you memorize that hundred and fifty pages of that, and then someone will come and explain it to me, and explain the meaning of it...by the time you get up to about...the fifteenth century, you have people writing books about the ()

[ur], because people can't memorize the way you (---) [ur], so {Tarlam Selye} was written by...[sts:[ur], [st: how would you translate the name, Michael?] I'd say illumination on the light to freedom, or path to freedom, illumination of the path to freedom, say {Gialwa Genden Dru [rt] (2 times)}, otherwise known as? [sts: first Dalai Lama], First Dalai Lama, okay, he wasn't the first Dalai Lama before he died, but he got bust...it was like () [ur] Douglas [lr], {Gialwa Genden Dru}, he was the first Dalai Lama, I mean the first of any of those lineages has to be extraordinary, like the first Panchen Lama, that's very extraordinary people, and he wrote this text, [b: the Illumination of the path to freedom] which is a commentary on the [b: Abhidharma Corcha], his dates are...I don't know, what are they?...[sts:[ur]], they're depending on...fourteen seventy four? [sts: yeah], they thought they were going to have a Christian name, [lr], so {Gialwa Genden Dru}, Gialwa means...Gialwa means Victor 'Victorious One', and it...and it refers to the Buddha, so Tibetans never call the Dalai Lama 'the Dalai Lama', they say {'Kundun'} which means 'the presence' or like Gialwa meaning the victorious one, meaning victorious Buddha...

{'Gialwa Rimpoche'} precious victorious one, or something like that, they never call him Dalai Lama, that's a Mongolian name, that was given later, so, he wrote the book that we are gonna study, we are gonna be studying selections from that, that's never been translated, and...and we're translating the readings, you have it in your readings I guess, it's a very nice commentary to the...to the Abhidharma. Universe is made out of three parts, according to Buddhism, okay, say {durkham [rt] (2 times)}, {du} means 'desire', {kham} means 'realm', {durkham} is the desire realm, okay, the desire realm, it's the lowest of the three realms, it's where we are presently caught, okay, we're in the desire realm, 'dukham', okay, (---) [ur] dukham, I think because of all the objects that are very desirable, [lr]; say {sugkham [rt] (2 times)}, {sug} means 'form', {kham} means 'realm', sug is defined as colors and shapes, basically, it can also be a more general () [ur] referring the objects of the senses, and here it's mostly, visible form, okay, {sukham}, [st: form realm], yeah, form realm, and then the {sugmekham}, say {sugme [repeat]}, {kham [rt]}, {sugmekham [repeat]}, okay, {sug} means 'form' again, {me} means what?, [sts: no] 'less', okay, formless realm, okay, {me} means 'not'; so formless realm, {sugmekham}, so those are the three realms, of...of samsara; samsara means...it's a general word for suffering existence, there are beings who live, but don't live in these three realms, they're out of samsara, they don't suffer the way we do, these three realms are...are defined by suffering, I mean, basically if you're in one of these realms you are suffering, if you're not in one of these realms, you're beyond suffering, you would be out of suffering, so this is...to be in this place, or to be a being who lives in th...to be either the place or the being who lives in the place is to suffer,

you know, [st: so samsara is synonym for universe cause it's said it's what it's causing the universe?], -not really-, when you say samsara, it means suffering like in the sense of...basically, it's defined as having () [ur] it all, to be in the nature of having () [ur] it all, when you escape samsara, or you reach nirvana, it's not like you have to run to someplace, it's actually a change in your being, and then you've escaped the cycle of life, so...but that's a long story, we won't get there, okay [lr], basically, these are the three, the three realms of existence, in the first class we had back in January, we described, the first two of these realms, so I'll go over them really quickly and review them, and you will go after the new realm...by the way, we also need to take a brake in the middle, cause it helps you concentrate, towards the end of the class, which usually drags on, okay. {du} means 'desire'...yeah, desire stands of...the first Dalai Lama explains it as... as a special kind of desire, desire meaning...what do you call it?, like a desire for food or sex basically, the two main concerns of a being in the desire realm, or specially ours; ...we live in a realm which is almost defined by the food and sex, very gross physical sensations, and the {du} here can also refer to all the objects of the senses, sometimes basic, those are called {du}, so we are in a very gross realm, where a lot of our life is spent looking, smelling, hearing, being attached to those objects, and we...we get attached to them, we struggle with other people in order to get them, we struggle with other people to get away from the ones we don't like, there's almost all defined by desire of the objects of the senses, very much of our existence in this realm is defined by some kind of desire for nice physical objects, and...and then wanting to get away from the objects we don't like, we are struggling in a sea of physical objects, and our lives, and our conscience in our lives, are mainly defined by those desires for those objects, and we have that, that's why we are in the {Dukham}, it's very interesting to...to say, why...why are they called realms?, you know, I mean, when I say realm, what do you think of?, would you think of the king's realm, like king Arthur, so I know, when I think of the three realms, it's like if I read a Buddhist book in English, and it says the three realms, well I always think: -well okay, I'm in this realm, and it's kind of round like a ball, and it's probably a border there, like a bubble, and if I break out I'd get into the other realm, and then that's probably like some kind of big bubble, and then if I could walk across that realm, I could get through the next door and I'd be in the next realm[ur], I mean you think of realm, I think that's what () [ur] your mind, when I...when I think of realm, it's like a big encasing thing, and then I could pop out and I'd be in another realm, and th...and mainly there's trillions of those realms, and how many?, okay, well Buddhism says there's three, but how you travel between realms, and what is the border [ur] between the realms, I mean, in your mind, when you're a kid, they said heaven or hell you thought of

something, maybe a big...a big wall like there's some fishing books that describe it as a big wall, (---)[ur] in another realm, I mean, how...what divides the realms, what's that point in (---)[ur], how can you travel to another realm you know?, [st: your perception of emptiness], HMM!, you are like, [lr], it's more like...these are all suffering, these are all

a bad place to be, and the way you travel between them, it's mental, and what it is, is that your mind enters a new level of subtlety, like if you reach the point where you became a very very, heavy duty deep meditator, and you were meditating most of your time, you would slowly loose...you've seen these (---) [ur] meditators, who actually they don't eat much, they don't engage in any of the normal sensual pleasures, their mind is on what they would call a higher plan, and they are existing in some kind of higher realm, and they don't have any real interest in food, they don't care what goes to (---)[ur], you know, it's not interesting for them, they are totally absorbed in this kind of meditation, where their...their mind is at a very very subtle fine point, and they take that as the important spiritual thing, you know, they spend their lives trying to reach this level, where their mind is at a very peaceful blissed out, subtle existence, and that's, that...their mind, at the highest of that kind of practice, a very () [ur] kind of practice like that, maybe one in a thousand people, one in ten thousand people can reach a level in this life called the form realm, that is the form realm, their mind is in the form realm, their body is in the desire realm, but they've just crossed the border, and it wasn't like going up a ladder, or getting into some kind of airplane and bursting through, you know, they went to a different realm, they are in a different realm, that's what the realm means, if they could define that further and get to an extremely subtle, a totally totally subtle realm, where they have no attachment, and no interest, even in any of the objects of the senses, nothing, they would reach a realm called the formless realm, mentally, their body is still in...in the desire realm, that's how it, that's what the three realms are, they're really just three different levels of caring about the objects of the senses or being attached to certain objects mentally, they are very very unattached by the time they get to the formless realm, their mind can be in that realm, does that...and they mistake that for nirvana, they mistake that for a goal, because it feels very good, you know, it feels very good...

End of course 8 class 2 part 2

COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 3

...Does that? ...and they mistake that for Nirvana, they mistake that for a goal, because it feels very good, you know, it feels very good, what's happening to your body and your mind that's in those realms? [sts: it's deteriorating], it's deteriorating, by nature, it's always deteriorating, at the moments like the moment that goes on, even while this person is sitting in his meditation, on this extremely subtle level, sooner or later they have to come down, they have to poo, they have to eat, they have to walk here and there, you're stuck in this realm, I mean they are stuck in suffering anyway, so from a causal point of view, meaning, no matter what kind of meditation if you get into, it wo...it's just like a mindless meditation, your body is still here, and you're still gonna suffer, and when the day comes to die, all that nice pretty, meditation stuff, doesn't mean anything, and even if handsome or smart, or intelligent, or good meditating people, they'll still get arthritis, and they'll still get stupid, and they'll still lose their hearing, and th... eventually, die, and then, and then where do we go from there is another thing, so it's not a... to travel between these three realms is no big deal, you mind as well staying around, where you can study, and think clearly, and try to get out of this three realms, it's a different story, so all three of these realms are suffering and you have to be careful not to get stocked into thinking, and it's just logical, you don't have to be a...a genius, you know, while you are in meditation, your body deteriorates, and sooner or later you'll start to () [ur] into your body, and you'll die, and, and it's all meaningless, so we take that as a dangerous...condition, yeah?, [st (---)[ur]], it's a great question, it's very relevant, it's very relevant[ur], we'll talk about it, we'll talk about it today, ahh, desire realm basically has, ahm...we are gonna s...cut through desire realm just for a second, so if you have a homework question it's a [lrs], what separates the...one realm from another, it's basically the subtlety of yo...of your consciousness, how subtle is your consciousness, you know, if your consciousness is now unattached, or disattached, unconnected from gross [ur] desire objects, you know, food, sex, job, stuff like that, and you cut yourself off, your mind (---)[ur], and then if you, if you can cut your mind off from desire, or for all physical objects, (---)[ur], in the desire...in the...in the formless realm, your mind...your mind would go to the formless plain, so...that's why there are () [ur], that what separates them is relative subtlety of your mind, and the way you move up each level -within there is many levels-, is that you get unattached to a new object, like suppose, at a very low level in the form realm, you become unattached to smells and tastes, like, if you are attached to food, you're pretty much stuck in the desire realm, okay, the minute you overcome that, and you're no longer much attached to food, your mind is pretty close to

reaching the fo...a form realm sort of attitude, is it a great goal?, no, and that's
wha...we'll talk about that later...is it a great goal to be a god[ur], not[lr], when
we yeah, and it's a... it's a modern problem that we don't (--)[ur]...but that's
another thing, so...{Dukham}, {Dukham} basically has...you can divide it into
twenty different sectors, okay, twenty...twenty different parts of it, of the
{Dukham}...starting from the bottom there are, they're eight different kinds of
hells, hells are basically divided into cold hells, hot hells, can I show them to you?,
no, did the Buddha ever take anybody there?, yes, the wheel of life is painted by
a student of his[ur] of the Bud...Buddha, he took him to the...to the hells, he
didn't live in hells, the Buddha...under certain conditions, a person can take you
there, much like () [ur], was taken by () [ur], it's very interesting, because the
descriptions are extremely similar...so we'll get into that, we'll discuss why it's
possible that they exist, we don't...in Buddhism, we're supposed to be rational,
we are not supposed to accept anything that someone says, just because they
said it, I think [ur] I can be here and say there's nine hells, you wouldn't know
the difference...just...I'm supposed to be able to prove it to you logically that
it's...that it's...that it's logical that such a place could exist, and we, we'll get into
that...you don't have to accept it at... otherwise...be aware that many, that all
great Buddhist...saints, or, or enlightened people have perceived this hell and
described it, but...but, we'll go farther there, we'll even try to... establish their
existence to some extent. There is a thing called a...a {Preta},[bd] in Sanskrit,
people call it hungry ghosts, I just don't like the w...the word ghost, it reminds
me of Casper, you know, [lrs]right, I like to call them craving spirits, they're not
just hungry, they're thirsty, they have other problems, okay... but their, their
main...the main quality of them is that they...they're craving something, they
have this thirst, this hunger, this dissatisfaction that drives them, can you see
them?, no, can I prove that they exi...and by the way, in Buddhist logic, the
existence of this is an example of something that a Buddhist can not get up and
assert, unless they can prove it...I can't get up and say -Pretas exist to you-
unless I can give you some proof for it, okay, cause you can't see this, they have
a physical form, they might exist in this room, we can't see them, okay, it's a...
it's a kind of very subtle physical form, we can't see them, we can, we can...we
can establish logically that they could exist, but I can't stand up here and tell you
that, you know, there's all this Pretas around, and you're just stupid, and you
didn't see them, you know [lr], it's like, you have to stay in a realm of proof in
Buddhism,[bd]...animals, this is the first realm that we can see, and...and we'll
go through that realm, I mean, we'll talk about this other realms, during this
course, and the specific sufferings in these realms...westerners have this sort of
ahh, what you call it?...glorified at the conception of animals, you know like:
animal funny rabbits getting along with each other[lr]...and, you know, nice

whales communicating each other under water, and, dolphins, you know, and, I mean that's their conception of...of animals, the Buddhist conception of animals, is a, horrifying realm of sheer terror, that animals are spending their entire existence, twenty-four hours a day, with no rest...of looking over their shoulder for the next animal up, you know, that their whole existence is defined...they exist only to be eaten by other animals, or to be destroyed by other animals, their whole existence is this horrible terror of...of trying to get away from the animal that is supposed to eat them, and everybody is in the food chain, you know somewhere in the food chain you're there, and you spend your whole mean, just in there, trying to escape, and trying to stay safe, and they can't, and...and normally they are eaten by some other animal, or...or killed by some animal, and then the ones who are...encounter human beings, are tortured on top of that, and...and made to do incredible work, and taken advantage of, and exploited and then finally killed, or else they are just raised and killed for their flesh or their skin or their horns, or whatever it is, so in Buddhism it's a very depressing realm of doggy dog, and...and nothing romantic at all. Next one up is humans, they divide humans into the four continents, and we'll talk more about that, we'll talk about the four realms of human beings, and next we have what they're called...sometimes they call them gods, the Sanskrit word is 'deva', the Tibetan word is '{Lha}' [bd], and the capital of Tibet is...[sts:Lhasa], -Lhasa- which some stupid British guy misspelled [lr],[bd], it's really supposed to be this...seriously, okay, it's -Los Angeles-, it's 'the City of Angels', okay, {sa} means 'city', or 'place', and {Lha} means 'Angels' and whatever, there's two kinds of {Lhas} in the world, two kinds of devas, the same word is used to describe beings who are totally enlightened like this...this big Tara or female Buddha here, totally in white and totally pure, totally (--)[ur], it used to be like us, studied nicely, meditated nicely, and became a...totally different...outside of all the realms, in a totally different place, that's one meaning of {Lha} and you can call it deity or god or angel, I don't...I don't know, I don't think we have a grading[ur] word in English, the other kind of {Lhas}, which are inside of suffering, and they're just another realm of suffering, so I prefer to give them a different name...they are distinguished by spending their whole existence in some kind of worldly pleasures, like a super Donald Trump or something, and...I prefer to call them pleasure beings, you can't see them, they exist in this world, but they exist in a...in a higher place, it's maybe like when you think of Greek gods, you know, the Greek gods sitting up there, sending down rain when they feel like it, you know, having these momentous struggles between each other, and then finally dying from horrible deaths, that's pretty much the existence of the pleasure being, the word is the same as the word for this enlightened beings, but they are totally different kind of beings, and they are worldly beings, so how

much does that come up to?...Oh! sorry, I have to tell you the six of them...six different types in their desire realm, the form and formless realm are also populated by plus[ur] and not by any of these other beings, okay, the form and formless realm, are occupied by plus-also, but in the desire realm, which is our subject right now, there are six different types of {sas}, so which is: six, ten, eleven, twelve, twenty, okay, [st:(---)[ur]?], we'll talk about it today, we'll get there...so those are basically...that's the desire realm, that's the structure of the desire realm, okay, we'll do, we'll do form realm real fast, and then we'll take a break, and then you come back for the formless realm. This four levels of the formless realm, as you go up, more and more subtle, so in th...what we call {Samyen Dampo} which is the first level, has within it three different sections, but {Samyen Gnyipa} has three different sections, {Samyen Sumpa} has three different sections, {Samyen Shipa} has eight different sections; so the form realm consists of how many...sections?, [st:seventeen], seventeen different sections, okay, what's the big deal, who cares?, okay [ls], intentionally because the form realm is called 'the result of meditation', it's called {Yigo Ngompie}, which means 'this is a result of meditation', which () [ur] occur that's the why there are seventeen different sections to the form realm, you know, what determines that you're gonna reach the form realm or not, it's...all depends on...if you're like one of those people in India, like a Hindu meditator, you spend much of your life in deep meditation, you overcame the desire for the objects of the senses, your mind is disengaged, and dis...and not attached anymore, and you've reached this ability, to almost simultaneously get into a state of deep meditation where you have no awareness of the objects of the senses, no interest in them, and you have no attachment, especially to food, or smells, or any kinds of...sensual things, and you've reached this kind of meditative purity, where you are free of that, your mind is in the form realm; then when that body dies, that mind in that person takes...takes birth in the form realm, okay, in the form realm they have a regular body of...but it's a...it's a very...like a wonderful kind of body and they...

END OF COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 3

Course 8 Class 2 Part 4

...okay, in the form realm they have a regular body of...but it's a...it's a very...like a wonderful kind of body and they live there for supposedly millions of years, in those bodies, and...and they just enjoy themselves, they have wonderful things going on, they have the ability to emanate objects, and then enjoy them, like I could emanate a girlfriend, and enjoy all this girlfriends, and

then they could be [--ur], and then, [lr]...and it's a mutual higher level, someone else can enjoy your emanations, you know, you can say: hey, what's your emanations, you emanate this, and then...yeah, this other person can...so there are all this levels of incredible ability to...to emanate things, and, and then enjoy them, and other people can emanate things with your emanations, and you can mix with him emanations, you can enjoy them with each other, and then, they have this incredible ability, and they're...that's like a physical body, and then in that realm, the whole place is defined by beauty, that's why it's the form realm, the form realm is characterized by just being incredibly beautiful...I sometimes think the Christian idea of heaven might have come from this realm, I don't know, you know, but hmm...unfortunately you don't stay there permanently, we'll talk about that, okay...

it's a, it's a kind of realm you get to by...by the power of meditating, because...the power of that meditation in the form realm in your life before, causes you to take birth in this realm, in the next life...by the way, you can only get to this realm by doing very good things in your life, by having not...almost not done any bad deeds in your whole life, and in fact, meditation at a certain level is called "{Samaya}", 'a vow', it protects you, it's like a monks vow, or a boddhisatva vow that you kept, and why, I mean, what is it about meditation that prevents you from doing killing, stealing, lies, like the harsh words

[---ur], [ls], [st: you can't do it], you get too busy, I mean, [lrs] if you are deep in meditation, you can't kill anybody, you can't lie, and so just by default, so, so actually in the [b:Abhidharma] the fact of being in deep meditation is called the ({})[ur] because it protects you from doing bad deeds, so this people, who in the...in this life, in the...in the life before, where in deep meditation much of their life, and died that way, you know, died with your mind in...with that kind of, imbued with that kind of a...of a peace, are...are born in this realm;...if they don't have...you know, if they were sort of disengaged from all those objects, they get born on the first level of the first form realm...section, and then if...it goes up up up up until you get up to here, okay, and those are all the...the different levels. The highest level up here is called ogmin, I just bring that out because there's another ogmin, which is the...which is the pure place, which is the Buddha paradise, and...so there's a worldly ogmin, which is like up here, which is the very high level on the form realm, and then there's a different ogmin, which is...which is a totally pure Buddha paradise; I don't want you to get confused, I used to get confused, I'm trying to anticipate that as you're studying more Buddhism, you'll hear somebody like the Dalai Lama say: "Well he came from ogmin paradise", and you'll say: "We'll what's the big deal, that's in the form realm", and he'd say: No no no, that's the other ogmin, okay, so there's two...there's two ogmins, that might be on your homework, okay [lrs],

the paradise is called... the paradise is...has an extra name attached to [-ur], {ogmin tug tongkopa}, okay, and that means something like -very force of the beauty-...[-ur]this refers to the beauty of the Buddha paradise, what's the difference between a Buddha paradise, and a regular or...form realm paradise? [st: you don't suffer], you don't die, you don't age, you don't have suffering, okay, this beings don't have the obvious suffering of -that we have-, I mean, they don't go through getting cancer, they don't go through a lot of the sufferings that we go through, but they definitely, the story here is that you live millions of years, a hundredth of thousands of years, and all you do is enjoy yourself, you know, you can imagine by...in this very very high plane of mental meditation, y...you enter that life with that same kind of mind that you had in your past life, so it's a very subtle state of mind, you're...it's like being in a really good computer program, where you're never coming out of it, you know, you stay all your time just out of space, and everything is[lr] beautiful, and you never have to come back to pii[ur], you know, or drink coffee[ur], [lr], you're just living there, and...and everything is very beautiful, and you are exchanging emanations with other devas, and you're just enjoying, [lr], and...and it...and it's like this really great existence. Now something happens to them; just before they die...like a few days before...for the first time, they start to age, it's like in the movies, when a guy ages, you know, in...in a few minutes, he ages like a hundred years, and then falls apart into dust, or something like that, and...that's supposedly likewise to happen; in the process you lose the karma, it wears out, the karma of having been so good in your past life wears out, and then you've only got bad karma left, and so within a very short period of time you start to get very ugly, and your face starts to change, your hair falls down, you start to stink for the first time, you have transpiration for the first time, and so the...the other devas what? [st:[ur]], they [-ur] you, you know, they're like...they don't wanna talk to you anymore, they don't wanna, you know, you're in...you're in this beautiful Club Med and now you're in ogmin, and all the [lr]...and, you know, you don't belong there anymore, and...and they just avoid you, and...and the mental suffering that comes from those last few days, is supposed to be much worse than the pleasure of all the...all the hundreds of thousands of years before, in...packed into a few short days, is the suffering of being rejected by all...everybody in that paradise, and...and you just sit there, and get old, and start to stink, and people annoy you, and run away from you, when they see you, and is...just some kind of suffering, since you've used up all your good deeds, and we'll talk about it some time, I mean, just to have a perception of this room, for the length of this class, requires an incredible amount of good karma, I mean, it requires trillions of events, happening at once, mentally, in your mind, to sustain, to maintain this appearance of a room on

sixth street [ur], that you are studying Dharma in...trillions and trillions of good karmas that're going off, for you to stay alive in this room in the next hour or so, and hear a Dharma teaching, and you've been using them up like that...they've used them up like that, and then, and then they have none left, and they...and there's this quote [ur] in the scriptures where they go...they go straight down to hell, [lr], and there's no other choice, there's never really, you know...ultimate path, just by the sage of using of all your good karma, you are using off tremendous amounts by being [-ur], hopefully if you dedicate it by the end you get back more than that, I think, yeah? [st: you said that you had to have very good karma...[--ur], yeah, right, cause there's three levels of maturated [ur] karma, one is in this life, one is in the next life, and one is in all lives beyond that, so you had to be in the bad karma of the third type, [st: so you referred to the life just before being reborn in the form realm-formless realm- form realm], yeah, ahh, no, that karma was probably very excellent, the karma of

[--ur], was definitely good, that's the...that's the form realm, I think I've [--ur], so you have a causal form realm, and you have a resulting form realm, what it means, is, the state of meditation that you engage in, in this life, is the cause of that realm, and then, because your mind is in that realm, as you die, you transfer over into that realm, and you take on a new physical body, but your mind is still in this beach state of

[--ur], of meditation, and you, and your existence is very subtle and very enjoyable, yeah? [st: what is...what is, where's the realm where you [--ur], and study Dharma, and everything is Dharma, is that... what paradise is that?, normally they say that the human realm, [ur] all desire realm, [--ur] because we have a very [ur] mix of suffering and happiness, like we have enough suf... happiness to imagine what it would be like to be in a real paradise, you know, we have some, we are allowed some glimpses, of what it would be to be truly blissful and those are some kind'a pre...like a pre-sight of what paradise would be like; we can imagine, in our realm, people like you and me can imagine paradise, we can imagine how it would be like, so we have, on the one hand, we have enough... of that part of our life, that we can imagine, and work to this paradise, but on the other hand, we have enough crap, you know, we have enough bad things happening to us, that we can definitely want to leave this kind of existence, so they say that the desire realm is an excellent realm to...to study Dharma, cause on one hand you can get some sense of what bliss would be like, and on the other hand, you definitely know what, what...how bad life is, and, how everything, eventually deteriorates in this life so you can [-ur]it

to the extent, two quick questions, and then we take a break, we've got two classes in one [-ur],[st1:isn't there enough suffering in the form realm in those final moments that other beings witness, that they could say, this is really awful I

don't wanna be suffering that] they don't get it, I mean, go to a football game, with fifty thousand people, [lr], go to a Dharma [-ur] I don't know how many have [---ur], it's just the fact that humans are blind to their own conditions, and they refuse to, I know it, and I want to cry[ur],you know,[---ur], [st2: isn't that possible that some great Buddhist meditator, meditate so hard, that he ends up in a form realm, and doesn't go to hell afterwards?, that's the...] A Buddha?, [st: no someone...] some great being?, possible, it's possible, [st2: someone who just spent most of his life in Buddhist meditation, that, and...so it is possible to not go to hell to someone that just...], remotely, they say that's pretty much...walked in [lr], one more, [st3: I want to restate my question, they said that this paradise is where you go when you're not fully enlightened, you... everything is Dharma, and you study that], when you become a...when you reach a...when you reach a certain boddhisatva level...you can reach a paradise like...you can go to a paradise like that, and study with the Buddha, is it like you get in a plane and you go to this place, and, you know... 'no' it's not like that, it's all taking place mentally, [st: at samsara [ur]], yeah, you are in the desire realm, he is in the Buddha paradise, how's that?, [lr],[st: what do you mean?] it's the emptiness of that paradise, you can not experience it as a Buddha paradise, you're not capable, you are experiencing it as a very cool place where this Buddha is talking to you, you know, but the Buddhas experience it as a totally different place, I mean it applies to the story of History, okay, different people could have totally different perceptions of this...of this room[st: it's not on [ur]the form realm, it's not], and, and you can be sitting in there with a Buddha, and he's experiencing it as a Buddha paradise, and you're experiencing it as this lousy little, you know, room, [st3: I just wanted where it was classified, that's all] Ohh!, definitely outside of samsara, but you, it's a big debate in the monastery, we debate this hours and hours, if you're a boddhisatva sitting in a Buddha paradise, you're not in a Buddha paradise, cause you can't experience it as a Buddha paradise, you don't, you're not enlightened there, so that's not a contradiction at all, that's what I started at saying tonight; two different people can have two valid perceptions of the same object which are totally contradictory, in fact, that's the way we live, because of a lot of concepts in the world, because of the different perceptions of one person, of an object...I have taken by ...

End of Course 8 class 2 part 4

COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 5

...I have to take a break, so we are going to do the formless realm very quickly, say {Namkataye[rt], Namshetaye [rt] Kianme [rt] Tite [rt]}, okay, those are the

four levels of the formless realm, okay, I think its boring the formless realm, [st: [ur]], yeah, even more subtle than the form realm, so in this life, you know, if a person who can regularly put their mind in the form realm, is rare, a person who can regularly put their mind in the formless realm, is extremely rare....[--ur], anyway, it'll be someone who can put their mind in that level of meditation where they are totally disengaged from all objects of the senses, and even from the very very subtle desirable objects, and their...their mind is at a very very very subtle level; and that subtle level, after you die, if you can maintain it, then you take birth in the formless realm; Where is the formles realm?...I mean basically, wherever you die is where you enter the formless realm, okay, there's no place, cause...because, as the books, as one book says in sanscrit [--ur], we can say that the form realm is at a certain level above this world,or something, but, in the formless realm, there's no place, wherever you die, you take birth in the formless realm, and that's where your formless realm is , and the beings there have no...bodies, okay, they have no bodies, they are just minds, and we'll talk about it. How do you think you can get to four different parts of the formless realm, if you wanted to get to formless realm number two, how would you get there?, [st: different levels of[-ur]], yeah!!, different levels of meditation in this life, so I mean if you've gone to the second level of formless realm [-ur] in this life, and then die, if you could maintain something of that state of mind, you would be...your mind would take birth in that second level of the formless realm. What are the names of these?...these are the resulting levels, okay, these are the levels where you go after you die, there's four levels of meditation before you die, we're not gonna worry about it, okay...{Nanga}, {Nanga} means "space", {Thaye} means "limitless", so this first level is called 'limitless space', and it gives you some idea of the...of the state of mind there, it describes the state of meditation there, it's a kind of samadhi, and it is called 'limitless space', {Nungshe Thaye}, here's the same word 'limitless', and {Nungshe} means "consciousness", or "awareness", so what's the difference between 'limitless space' and 'limitless awareness', I don't know, I suppose you'll know, if you ever get there okay... {Tianme}, {Tianme} means "nothing at all", okay, "nothing at all", but it describes a kind of...a kind of concentration, describes a kind of spaced out state of mind; by the way, this was also the name of the med...of a kind of meditation which was...what do you call it...it was a monk from China in the eighteenth century called 'Vashang', who came to Tibet, and tried to teach a meditation called 'Tianme', he was a proponent of a meditation called 'Tianme', and this is not for this class tonight, but just that you know, there's a word called 'Tianme', and that was the meditation that he said people should do, and it was to sit down and put your mind on nothing at all, and it, if you achieved it at some point, that was emptiness, and you had achieved nirvana, if you could thing of nothing at all...

there was an Indian master called 'Karma Siva', who debated him, in the court of the king of those days, and...that viewpoint, which is pretty much what would just get you to this realm, was banned in Tibet, and he was sent home, and he never came back to Tibet...that idea that you just sit in meditation...sit down and meditate on nothing, and that that'd be some kind of important spiritual goal, while your body clock is ticking away, and you're gonna...as you die, it's gonna drag you back down to the vinaya realm, and you've got to die on that, I mean, big deal, you know, so... it was rejected by the Tibetans, after hearing each viewpoint debated for a long...I think it took a couple of weeks tough...so don't do the {Tianme}okay?...

{Sitsey}, {Si} means "cyclic life", it's a synonym for samsara, {Si} means "suffering existence", {Sitsey} means the "peak", peak level, in other words, of all the levels in suffering existence, this is the highest; there's a very common phrase in the scriptures that says: 'All the way from being in hell, upside down on a chain, hung over a pot of boiling steel, and all the way up to this very very rarefied mental state, that's all the same', there's no difference, everybody's suffering, it's not a big deal whether you're...just got into a firing car accident, or you're sitting quietly in an ashram somewhere, and meditating on {Sitsey}, and your mind is at a very subtle level, your state is all the same, you're suffering, you're suffering equally...so don't get caught, don't get caught by that idea that, to put your mind into that level, and stay there while you are getting old and dying, it's...you might as well be in hell, it's the same thing...it's the same kind of suffering, of aging, and dying, we actually want to find some practice that can get us out of that, and it's not just putting your mind in, on...focusing on nothing, or watching your thoughts go by, or something like that, okay, [st:[---ur]], I don't know Zen, you know, I...my impression is that it's...it's really good to learn to concentrate, and then, as certain good students are doing, go get the theoretical bases behind...behind emptiness and everything else, and then use them together, you know, I think that's okay, I think, if it's only thinking about nothing, or if it's only watching your thoughts, then you can see the results, I mean, th...this is where you'd go, this is the result, and it's in all of the scriptures, it's described like that, in the...in the original scriptures, this is from, you can look it up in sutras, you know, and it's that state of mind, that just blocks anything out, so you try to think about nothing, it does not perform the desired function of bringing you to nirvana, of reaching the escape from suffering; it's just another...it's a very subtle form of suffering, -(name[ur])- , [st:yes I have a question, [---ur], yeah they are,[st:[---ur], excuse me?, Oh!, by the way, the only one you have to get to, is the first, is the incidentary, form of the first level of the form realm, and what I mean is, your goal, as a Buddhist practitioner, who needs to see emptiness directly, in order to free oneself from suffering which is the

only way, you can only see that, based on the platform of a certain part of the first [-ur], so yeah, you do have to learn to get up to that mental, you won't be...you'll be disengaged from objects of the senses, and you won't have much attachment to that, and you'll be able in meditation, you will be just like in our country, as an incredible ability to meditate, and you would...actually your mind, on the platform of the first form realm level, -introductory part of the first form realm level-, can be focused enough to see emptiness directly, if you can't get your mind up to that level, you will never see emptiness directly, if you don't practice daily, you'll never get up to that level, so, it's very simple, you never want to see emptiness directly, don't meditate daily, [lr], which is the date [ur] on most of us, you know, and you...and you say -we don't have time-, or...or some excuse, and the day you'd die will seem like ridiculous instead, you know, actually, the only activity that is very meaningful is to try to do that...if you have to dedicate some valuable time for doing nothing [ur], to get to that level in meditation to where you could see emptiness directly, you must do it at least, like an hour a day, if you don't, there is no chance, you'll never see emptiness directly, you're just locked by yourself...so very important to get in there, but more important is to do it as a practice, see, if what all you wanna do, is clear your mind out, and think about nothing, the result of this is {Tianme} or {Sitsey}, or some other name like that, [st:---ur]...the meditation that we have to do every day, is, {Tianme}}, no, it's way down to the form realm, first of all, it's form realm, subject [-ur],[st: but, but what would be the [-ur]]

no use to [-ur] to {Tianme}, not very at this point, I mean, sometimes people would do it, in order to just hold their concentration, with a practice called {Deate}, and I mean jump to one level, go to the next one, skip down to, go back to it, just to prove that in you, you have the ability to concentrate to those levels, [st:but then what[---ur]]... if the kind of a meditation where you bring your mind up to the first form realm, [---ur], [st:---ur]], oh!, long story, we have a long story, [---ur], there's a monk from this place [---ur]

[cut]

Hmm...We started last night, we are going through the whole lot[--ur], it's {Karmapa Siva's[ur]} presentation, [---ur], [st: do the correspondence courses... [---ur]], he says that we have it on the correspondence courses, if you'd like, if you want to take it between the classes or something, get the papers, and then go through it; correspondence courses, does not, absolutely not [-ur] as a human being, and our lineage says that, it could...it very much discourages that kind of thing, but I think in America if you don't, you know, there's no choice, and if no one is going to have that course in the next five years, and you might die in between, you know; you might as well. [st:Michael, what is the relationship in those, do you through steps from one to another, or...] Ahh!, these are four

results, four levels I wish you can take birth, your mind takes birth, in this same [ur] body, if you meditate on four kinds of meditations; I'll give you the name, I think this is all in the homework, okay, that's how you people pay attention towards the end of class [lr]; not conceptual, and not non conceptual, okay, [bd] it's called {dusheymin-dusheymingmey}, it's that first level formless realm meditation, in this life, your body is in the desire realm, and your mind is in an extremely subtle level called not conception, and not non conception either, yeah?, [st: so, this realm, if your body is in...your physical body is in the desire realm, so this going [---ur] all Buddhist practice, but you're not supposed to be exactly [ur], or you can just keep beyond it and...] there's no need in Buddhist practice to go, to get you out and into this realm [ur], [st: so you can actually I think put enlightenment without ever going to this realm] yeah! [st: within your practice] yeah! [st: and you're not...okay] yeah!, to get to the first of the form realm, {karlo} meditation, [st: so it's not like it's a...], no it's not a goal [...for living...I know not a goal, but like a stage to go through?no?] no!, there is some practices where you skip between in these two practices meditating, sort of build up your meditation muscle [lr], [st: so this...so this meditation this dogmas [ur] are not meant [ur] Buddhist meditations], they are, I mean, mostly they are practiced in India by deep meditators, [st: so what would be the Buddhist...] Buddhist describe it: if you want to get to this realm, and suffer there this is how you...[lr], well it can't be covered all in all [ur], you know, otherwise you might have take [-ur], you know, I heard the formless realm was really okay, you know, [lr]...if you meditate on this, this is a causal meditation, in this life, and this is the result, the state of mind, in the next life, if you...if you use this kind of meditation, you'll get born here, your mind will be there when you die, so you get from this meditation you go to limitless space; now fortunately...

END OF COURSE 8 CLASS 2 PART 5

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Geshe Michael Roach

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Three: The Lives of Craving Spirits and Animals

March 11, 1996

Ah, [Tem] means Teachings, [Rim] means steps and [Chenmo] means [b:The Great Book on the Steps of the Teachings]. We're gonna study about [Yddaks] from this book and also later in the class we're going to do [Dumdrums] which are animals. Okay? So we're gonna do, we're gonna cover those two realms based on this book [b:Tem Rim Chenmo]. [b:Tem Rim Chenmo] was written by {Geshe Drolumba}. Say {Geshe} [repeat], {Drolumba} [repeat], {Geshe} [repeat], {Drolumba} [repeat]. If you're new, I notice a lot of new people tonight, you don't have to learn Tibetan, just the English track, but I just want you to get a seed in your mind for Tibetan, and then someday you will learn it. I think about a quarter of the people in the Tibetan Class thought they were going to take the English Track. They ended up learning Tibetan so some day you probably will. {Geshe} means "spiritual friend." And, ah, in the early days of Tibetan Buddhism, it was really that, it was just your individual spiritual guide. Much later in Tibet it came to mean, it was a kind of degree given by monasteries. But early in the history of Buddhism, even in the Sanskrit it's called {Kayandeja} which means that "spiritual guide," "spiritual friend." {Drolumba} {Drolum} is a place like Kansas. {Drolumba} means like the guy from Kansas, so there was this Geshe from {Drolum}, and his name was {Geshe Drolumba}. He lived, we don't know his dates, we know the exact dates of his teacher, we know the exact dates of his students, and we guess that he lived around eleven hundred A.D. This book is a thousand pages long. The Geshe of those days, who are called {Kadampas}, they didn't write any books, really. They wrote very very little, they were mostly meditators, they were the first Buddhists in Tibet, ah, of our, of our tradition, so I like to whenever we can it's good to study something that they wrote but they didn't write much, they wrote mostly these two or three page things. Geshe Droluba, he wrote an in ... a huge presentation of all the steps of the Buddha's teachings all the way from the beginning to the end. He wrote this

huge text called {Tem Rim Chenmo}. Even in the days of {Tsongkapa} it was pretty rare. When did {Tsongkapa} live?

[Student: Eighteen fifty seven to [unclear]]

Ah, okay. [laughter] He's called {Je Tsongkapa}. And he lived ... [writing on board] {Je Tsongkapa} is generally considered the greatest master ever to be produced in Tibet. He wrote ten thousand pages of commentaries. If you ever try to read one of them you'll be lucky if you make it through the whole thing in a few years. Seriously. And he wrote ten thousand pages of these things. They say he was just a ... taking dictation from {Manjusri.} And and you believe it if you learn Tibetan and try to read his works. You believe it because they're just incredibly deep, packed, difficult to read, incredible, and you can't believe a human being could write them. {Je Tsongkapa's} probably the most, the greatest master ever produced out of Tibet, except for our root lama, but ah, [laughter] and ah, bad joke, but he wrote a book called the [b:Lam Rim Chenmo] which is [b: the Great Book on the Steps of the Path], ah, anything look similar? [laughs] I mean, basically he's just taking {Geshe Drolumba's} book and , you know, which is good writing in Tibet because basically the lama in front of you was probably, his lama his lama [unclear - one word] was omniscient, they knew everything, so you don't have to write a new book you can just rearrange the books from before and you're a great Buddhist author that's okay. The same with painting. You don't change the Buddha's face, you don't change his look it's not considered a virtue in spiritual things to change them, it's a virtue to take the same elements and present them to your culture in a certain way but you never change them. So basically, we've come to think {Je Tsongkapa,} we we know that he bumped into this book ah six years before he wrote the {Lam Rim Chenmo}, it's interesting, so he basically took that book and rearranged it and, and it ah, this is the greatest book ever written in Tibetan and probably no one will be able to write anything greater now, Tibetan language is degenerating it's it's ah being lost in the world, the Tibetans in Tibet who who are still living there can hardly speak Tibetan any more and the Tibetans in India don't speak Tibetan very well and can't read very well. Um. And the Tibetans in China can't read Tibetan at all but when they come to the monastery in India they have to relearn how to read. So probably I think this will be the, this will be the great, the masterwork of Tibetan literature. So, I think it's, I think it's really great to study this book. This book was lost for a long time. His Holiness found one copy in Siberia about fifteen years ago and it's a very bad copy, you couldn't read it very well. And then we located one about five years ago so now we have a beautiful copy. So I think it's cool that you get to read it. So, we took the reading from this book. And it's been put on [unclear, one word] CD ROM and is going to be given away all over the world. So I think it's cool that you get to read from the

{Tam Rim Chenmo} so you're reading this from this {Tam Rim Chenmo} which {Je Tsonkapa} used to write the greatest book ever written in Tibetan. So you're very honored to be the first people to read from this. And Geshe Drolumba gives a very good presentation of {Yddaks?} He says there are four main causes for {Yddaks}. One general cause, and three specific causes. I'll give you the general cause first.

[Student: unclear]

Yeah, and I'll talk about it. [writing on board] If you want to be born as a {Yddak} do the ten bad deeds to medium strength, okay? What does medium strength mean? I mean, this is just a general, what are the ten bad deeds, I mean, first of all? [unclear] stealing, three with your body, stealing, sexual misconduct [students reciting answers in background] sexual misconduct may be adultery but it could be other kinds of, kinds of, there's a long list of sexual misconduct, and four kinds of [unclear] speech which are, lying, slander, slander means talk that splits other people up, we don't have a good word in English [unclear], divisive speech, and then [students: harsh words] harsh words, harsh words can be sweet words said in a bad way, right? or with bad intentions, they hurt somebody. And then, the fourth one of speech? [students: idle talk] Idle talk, just wasting time talking. So that's, so far you've got seven. And then there's three in your mind, three that you do in your mind which are what? [students: coveting] Coveting which is basically an ignorant, you know, you basically want things that other people have you're jealous of them and you're trying to get the things that other people have. Number nine? [students: malice] [unclear] called malice or ill-will. It means being happy when other people screw up, basically. And, ah, last one? [students: wrong views] Wrong views, ah, mainly there's no future life, there's no such thing as karma, I mean, if I if no one sees me do something there will be no effects, you know, if I if I do something bad in the privacy of my own room and no one [unclear - ever saw it?] there won't be any bad effects from that. Those are the basic ten, the ten bad deeds. Those are an abbreviation of how many? [student: eight three four thousand (several talking simultaneously)] Eighty four thousand [laughter]. I mean, the Buddha said, I mean the [b:Abhidharma] says, ah, okay its eighty four thousand bad deeds then, ah, luckily you can group them into ten so that human beings can remember them at least. But, that many. We can do them to medium, medium strength means like very light strength would be if you do it if you for example you broke minor vows over and over again, it's something like that. Heavy strength would be if you premeditated, intentional, took a long time to prepare the weapon, in a great state of hatred over a long period of time and then went and killed somebody. And that person wasn't, was some kind of maybe holy person, you know, like the Dalai Lama or something. That would be a heavy

one. Medium means somewhere between there. Okay? So medium strength is like that. To do those ten bad deeds in medium strength is the general cause to be born as a {praeta}. That's a, just a whole general cause. Then there are like three very specific attitudes that can get you born as a {praeta}. [writing on board] You don't have to know the Tibetan, I'm just trying to plant it, okay? Say {Jimba} [repeat] {labsum} [repeat] {Lajimba} [repeat] {Jimba} [repeat] {labsum} [repeat] {Lajimba} [repeat]. {Jimba} what's {jimba} mean? [students: Jimmy?] [laughs] Yeah, that's his name. Giving, okay? {Jimba} is the first {paramita}, for example. Giving. The act of giving, {jimba}. {Nabsum} means, it's the same as {nab a nabsum} what's that? [voices - unclear] Yeah, it means the three types. The three, three types. {Majimba} means [Students: not giving] "not giving." [writing on board] So there it, the first cause to be born as a {praeta} is failing to give the three types of giving. Failing to give the three types of giving. What are the three types of giving? The [b:Tem Rim Chenmo] doesn't say but you can look it up in other books. And they are, [writing on board] say {sam sing gi} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat] {sam sing gi} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat]. {sam sing gi} means, ah, material wealth, you know, like houses, beds, food, drink, things like that, material stuff, physical things. The things that people need to live. {jimba} means the giving of those things. So the first kind of giving, and in fact, uh, the lowest kind of giving is to give people shelter food bed, things like that. That's called {sam sing gi jimba}. The second kind is, [writing on board] say {ming jipa} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat] {ming jipa} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat]. Okay. Who's {Jigjay}? {Yamantaka}. {Bahirava} okay?. But it means the fierce, the frightener. The frightener. So {ming jipa} means, {ming} (ming jipa) means what? {ming} Not [student: not to be frightened] Not to be frightened so {ming jipa} means not to be frightened. {jimba} means giving. "the giving of not to be frightened." [Student: protection] What's it mean? [laughs] It means protection. Okay? So [b:Lam Rim Chenmo] says protecting people from muggers, wars, other threats to their lives, that {unclear} b: The Liberation in the Palm of our Hands, by Pabonka Rinpoche says don't think that you have to be in the UN to give {ming jipa jimba}. It doesn't say UN, okay? But it it says ah you can give {ming jipa jimba} to a flea that's walking across your arm. You know, if you if you just pick it up carefully and put it on the side instead of smashing it, you just made the gift of {ming jipa}. You just you just gave the gift of of protecting somebody from harm, from fear. Okay? So {ming jipa jimba} is basically protecting people from from dangerous things things that harm them. That's the second kind of giving. The third kind of giving. [writing on board] Say {chu ke} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat] {chu ke} [repeat] {jimba} [repeat] What's {chu}? [students: dharma] Dharma. Okay? {Chu} is Dharma. Here meaning "dharma teachings." Okay. Dharma. Teachings. And {jimba} is giving. {chu ke jimba

(said to himself)) That's, ah, the gift of the dharma, teaching someone dharma. That's the highest kind of teaching. Highest kind of giving, um, because - let's say all this stuff that I'm saying today is true. Let's say that I can convince you what would make you be born as a {praeta}, in, in your next life, which could be ten minutes from now. You know. Let's say that somehow I can convince you that such a thing is possible and let's say that somehow I can show you what causes it and you avoid that and it saves you from being born as a as a {yddak}, as a {praeta}. Then that would be, that'd be a lot more important than these kinds of giving, that would be some kind of incredible kind of thing, so, you know, assuming that what we're going to say tonight is true, assuming it sinks in to you then it could protect you, even tonight, from not being born as a {praeta}, if you get hit by a car on the way home, okay? So that's the highest kind of giving. So the first cause of being born as a {praeta} is to fail to give these three kinds of, if someone needs them, you have to give them. Okay. You have to try. And there's a lot of ah, there's a lot of things to say about that, there's grey areas you know. Do you give a, a guy in the subway a dollar if he asks for it, for alcohol or something. We're not talking about that, we're talking about cases where mainly you know that it's right to give the thing, a person needs it very much, you have it, and maybe you even have it in excess, and, and you just don't give it because you're lazy or you're angry or you ignore the person or you don't care about the person, or something like that. Or worst of all, you have some kind of possessiveness about the thing. You don't want to see the things that you own get less, you want to protect what you own. And that's, that's a, that kind of possessiveness is the main cause of being born as a, as a {praeta}. Did you have a question? [Student: Is there a reason why giving protection is a higher type of giving than giving material things?] I, I, you know, that's why I hesitated when I said this is the lowest, because I, I don't remember any particular order between these two. I know that this one is higher, but I, I'm not sure if there's any, I, I'm not sure that number two is [unclear - coughing - a higher level?] Yeah. [student; When it comes to the animal cause, is it any of the ten things . . .] Yeah, down to a medium extent. We'll talk about it. [Student: There are there are four causes, the first cause is general and] yeah. Then there's three specific ones. [Student: Yeah, three specific ones within?] Naw, not within. This is only one general one. Okay? [student; okay] And now this is the first of the specific ones, I got two more to give to you. [student: okay] Okay. I got two more to give you. [students; unclear so then why is the specific one, so that is number two, right?] Yeah, or the first of the specifics. All right? Now I'm going to give you number two specific cause, all right? There you go. [Writing on board] Number, the second specific cause is called {Serna} say {Serna} [repeat] {Serna} [repeat] I don't know a good nice word in in English, but it

means being a cheapskate. It means being cheap. It's a very specific for a tightwad. Okay. Somebody who doesn't like to, somebody who's, you know, hangs onto what they own, doesn't want to share it with anybody. [Student: miserliness] You could say miserliness. You know. I don't know, cheapness is too colloquial and miserliness is too literary. And I don't know anything between. [Student - stingy] Stingy's pretty good. You know, stinginess, {serna} is stinginess. That's the classic cause that that that they often talk about in books, this {serna}. Okay. Again it's some kind of possessiveness, it's not wanting to see what you own get less. It's it's this misconception that protecting your wealth is the best way to keep it. [Writing on board] Say {trambo} [repeat] { trambo } [repeat] {Trambo} means jealousy. Okay.

Jealousy. It's a very sick attitude for a dharma person to have you know you're supposed to be a bodhisattva, your whole life is supposed to be aimed at seeing that other people get what they want and other people are happy, and {trambo} when it looks like someone else's happiness, wishes that they didn't have it. It's a very sick state of mind. I have it, a lot. So I understand it. [Laughs] But it's, you know, you're supposed to be on the lookout for all sentient beings. And then if somebody gets a little thing, like a promotion at work, or a little more money, or has more dharma students than you, or something like that you feel this {trackwa}. You know, you you feel bad about that, you wish they didn't have that. It's like the complete opposite of the whole Buddhist philosophy. And that's that we have it over all this, every little thing, we have {trackwa} all the time. [Student: So you wish that they don't have it like] Yeah, not wanting to possess it yourself, necessarily, it's just this, it's being irritated at other people having success, and wealth, and the good things that they want and and not enjoying that but the opposite being, being some kind of hatred about it. It's a it's a weird state of mind, a very sick state of mind. {Trackwa}. And those are the three main causes, specific causes, of being born as a {praeta}. I think here we have to talk about what's the process, I mean, it's it's almost like voodoo to say, hey, if you're jealous you're going to end up as this spirit being that you can't see anyway. You know. I mean it's very hard for Westerners and I think it's good that it's hard. You know. It's hard for us to see the connection between being, you know, failing to give something because we feel possessive, and in, after we die, being born into this spirit being, that we've never seen, no one's ever proven it, there's no pictures or videos of them, and and so I'm supposed to believe this guy standing up there that if I if I'm jealous of somebody at work and after I die I'm going to be born as this thing, it sounds like the thing I the religion I grew up with that I rejected, you know, that's threatening you with something that that there there's this guy up in Heaven who's going to punish you and and it sounds like the same spiel, I think. So I think you have to talk

about how could that happen? You know, is there any logical way to show that that could happen? I think, at this point, if you if you're talking about {ydaks}, you have to study you have to think about the four principles of karma, so I'm going to give you the four principles of karma. If you were in the karma course you already know them perfectly. But I'll give you the four, okay? [Writing on board]. Say {Leng niepa} [repeat] {Leng niepa} [repeat] Okay then. It's the first principle of karma. But but first of all I'll ask you, and we went through this a little bit on Friday I think but what's the most basic kind of karma? What is the essence of karma? [Student: The movement of the mind?] Yeah. He said, "The movement of the mind." [b:Abhidharmakosha], fourth chapter, opening lines {Recites: Ay lay de ki she na pa . . . unintelligible . . . kye} which means "If you want to know where the universe came from and all the planets in it it's from karma." What is karma? It's any time your mind twitches. Any time your mind goes from here to here, it's karma. That is the essence of karma. That's what karma really is. Action or deeds or karma it's any time your mind just shifts, that's a karma, you just just did a karma. Okay? And what you say, and what you do with your body are secondary. You know, first you think of something and then you open your mouth to say something, and then you move your arms and legs to do something good or bad. But but the essence of karma is is when the mind just shifts a little bit. How many times does the mind shift in the length of a finger snap? [Snaps fingers] {Semo kopa, semo kopa} in Tibetan. [Snaps fingers] Sixty-four times in that amount of time. Your mind is is lightening fast. [Snaps fingers] Your mind is going through sixty-four {sembas} [snaps fingers], sixty-four twitches, [snaps fingers] in that amount of time. That's called {jajoki ju jemba} [snaps fingers]. There are sixty-four of them going on. Yeah? [Student: Does that correspond to [unclear]] I don't know. I mean if [unclear - Sam?] were here he'd tell us. [Laughs] But I think, I think probably like that many electrons moving a certain distance probably. Electrons are pretty fast [unclear], right? And it and maybe it does I think, but basically you can think in terms of like [unclear] sixty-four karmas in that much time. That's the essence of karma. Where does karma stay, until you get the results? We had a long course about it but basically those movements of the mind are making impressions on your mind they're making imprints on your mind. And they stay with you, the imprint is made, and they stay with you. A lot has to do with your intentions and a lot has to do with how you perceive the event. In other words, when you perceive yourself doing something good or bad it makes an impression in your mind. And that, that is impressed in your mindstream. The mind does go on in a stream and certain things impress the mind. If the content of the impression was good you will always have a good result. If the content of the impression was bad, you will always have a bad result. There's never any

cross like that. It's always good makes good and bad makes bad. And that's the first principle of karma. [writing on board] But the content is fixed. The content is fixed. What does that mean? It means if you hurt somebody, you'll get a bad result. If you help somebody, you'll get a good result. Absolutely fixed. It never goes any other way. It never goes like do something good, get something bad, do something bad, get something good - it's impossible. So what happens ah, {jimba}? I make work, I work in the diamond business. I lie to some guy about what I can really pay. I can pay a hundred, I tell him ninety is all I can pay. And he, because of my skillful lie, which is what the diamond business is sometimes about, he gives it to me for a hundred, for ninety, so I made ten dollars. Is the ten dollars a good thing? Yeah, I mean, getting ten dollars more than you had before, for most people, is a pleasant experience. That's the definition of the result of good karma. The definition of the result of good karma is getting something that you like. That's the definition of good karma. Any deed, which has a karmic result, gives you something you like, that's good karma. So so I got a result of a good karma, right? But it came from lying. Right? [Student: yeah] It did? [Student: Oh no!] [laughter] [Student: He did good deed, in his past life.] Yeah, I mean, or or in the past sometime, it could be in this life could be in the past life. I mean the ten dollars, trust me, didn't come from the lie. It's impossible. If if if the ten dollars came from the lie, then the Buddha was lying [with laughter in his voice] when he gave this first principle of karma. It can't. Lying to somebody is a bad deed], it hurts people. Getting ten dollars is a nice result. they're not connected. They're just not connected. And therein lies the suffering of mankind. You know. We think that to get nice things we should do something like lie. And it's just not true. It's a big lie. It's a big coincidence that we get the ten dollars right after we lie. That's not where the ten dollars came from. It's absolutely not. The ten dollars came from being generous to someone in the past. And the lie is going to create a bad result. You know, in the future, you'll tell the truth and people won't believe you. Why? Why is it that some people tell the truth and no one believes them, then, and then sometimes politicians get up and lie their heads off and everybody's like impressed and votes for them? Why? [Laughter] You know, why? Why is that? Ah, it's a past karma. The result of past karma. But, and you have to see it like that, it's very interesting, here's the lie, and it's going to create a, a bad result, [unclear] like that, right? [Laughter] And here's the money that you got, [unclear] and that's caused by being generous over here. And then because these two things seem to happen in the same time frame, you think they're connected, but they're not. Okay. You do not get money from lying. Cannot. Never will. That's the first principle of karma. It's it's sometimes there's a coincidence and it looks like that. I mean, if all mankind understood this, there'd be no cheating, every body'd be

honest to each other, everybody'd be totally honest, everybody would be happy, everybody would be getting lots of money all the time, but the total economic level of the planet would be very high, I mean, it's not necessary that some people have to be poor and some people have to be rich. Everybody could be rich. It's, there's just the problem of not recognizing how this works. You know. That's {leng niepa}. Did you have a question? [Student: With, um, with regards to your illustration, if the person expected you to lie, is it [unclear] in the scales . . .] That's a different thing, I mean, if it's part of that culture, [Student: yeah.] I mean, in negotiation, I think it's a very very I mean, lying means giving the other person a mis, a a misconception, creating a misconception in the other person's mind. Most of the time in the diamond business, the guy doesn't believe you anyway. [Laughter] That's my impression, but but generally just it'd be pleasant if everyone just told the truth you know we wouldn't have to worry about lying [unclear ("that much?")].

[Student: Sometimes people's motivation well [unclear] and it turns out [unclear]] The main thing is intentions. Intention is ninety percent of the karmic result. I mean we don't have time tonight for a class in karma, but we did it for six or eight weeks before. You can get the page from Don Stillmore [laughs]. Okay. Second principle of karma. [writing on board] By the way, it's a very nice life, way to live your life, think about what that little drawing of the two the happy face and the sad face I mean just believe it and you'll be a lot happier. Things will start, you'll start getting money, people start to believe you, you know, really, seriously, it comes, it'll happen. Just try it, you know, just be totally honest and and [unclear - follow this?] you'll get the results. Say {tow chawa} [repeat] {tow chawa} [repeat] [Tow chawa] means "gets bigger." [writing on board] I always tell the story, and I apologize to the older students who already heard it twenty times. I live in a Mongolian temple, in New Jersey. It's surrounded by these huge oak trees. I mean, they must be a hundred feet high or something. Very very massive, very heavy and one day there was a big storm and one of them fell on top of our temple. And it was like, made a hole in the roof. And so the Mongolians all came to look at it and they said Michael, you get up there, [laughs]. And I, I was like twenty years old [unclear] and here's the chain saw and you go up and cut those branches off. You know. And I don't like heights and I'm not very brave. So I'm up there on the, on this tree, cutting off the limbs with this this heavy chain saw, its waving around, and and I start cursing this tree and thinking you know what if when it was an acorn like twenty, I don't know how long it takes, forty years ago, [unclear]. I see these acorns out on the road sometimes, it's asphalt, right? So what if forty years ago someone had taken that acorn and thrown it out on the asphalt. And it was sitting in the middle of the asphalt, and it never grew? You know. And it never

got planted and it never had a sprout and it never grew into this huge one hundred fifty foot tree? I wouldn't be up here. You know. And I get [laughter] [unclear] my mind, over and over again like that. And then when you think about, I mean, in the physical world, it's true and you can't deny it, the acorn's weight is what, I don't know, the weight of an acorn is maybe, I don't know, a few grams, I don't know, it's like, I don't know how many grams, ten grams or something, You know. An ounce. And then the weight of that tree is what? [Student: a ton] At least a ton, or two tons, I don't know what it is. Huge. Did one create the other? I mean, the seed, the acorn was the seed for the for the ton. The ounce was the seed for the ton. I mean, the nature of causes, the nature of seeds, in the physical world - you were made from the one cell of your father and the one cell of your mother. I mean, this forty, fifty, sixty years of cells running around New York was [laughter] was made by by just one cell of your mother and one cell of your father. Infinitely small. No weight at all. And and the physical world is like that, you can see that, you understand that. I mean things like the United States of America start with two people having a discussion one day, over a table somewhere, you know, and then it becomes this thing. And and the same thing happens with with with karma, I mean you have the slightest thought now, and it becomes a a huge entity later. That's the nature of karma. It's the nature of ideas. You know, a single idea becomes this huge motivating force throughout the world for millions and millions of people, you know, one person has one idea [unclear - gives?] to somebody and then eventually it's this huge idea throughout the world. Or or you yourself as you're, you know, you're ten years old you have one inkling of a bad habit and it, by the time you're thirty it's like controlling your whole life. You know, I mean, this starts very very tiny, mental things and physical things are the same. So [unclear - the other?] principle of karma is the slightest, slightest good deed or bad deed becomes huge, the results are huge. You can think of like one gene, there was a woman in this class whose not here tonight, because she's pregnant and and her and her baby is missing a gene, you know, a branch of a gene or something, you know, so so like they decided that this child might have some horrible disease or be mutated etcetera, because they're missing, they're just missing a little, one of thirteen genes, or something, you know, one little branch fell off of a [unclear (star?)] you know and that's [unclear] karma is. Karma is extremely volatile. Karma is extremely dangerous. The smallest tiny thought in your mind, one of those sixty-four instants, can become a huge result in the future. That's one of the principles of karma. Yes [Student: I've always wondered because in the physical world things also decay and get small and they never talk about that in karma.] We're gettin there, we're gettin there. If if I don't cover it by the next one, [inaudible] [writing on board] By the way

[unclear] don't feel bad. [laughs] I, I, apparently. She went, she had a big scare and it didn't, [writing on board] it came back, or something like that, [laughter] seriously, I mean, I mean, they figured out it was a bad sample [inaudible] [Student: what's the English for {pel fulla}?] Get's bigger. I mean infinitely bigger. Like the acorn and the tree. Say {ma chepa } [repeat] {dan} [repeat] {ma chepa} repeat{ma chepa } [repeat] {dan} [repeat] {ma chepa} repeat. [writing on board] Say {ma chepa dan} [repeat] {ma chepa} [repeat] {ma chepa dan} [repeat] {ma chepa} [repeat]. "If you don't do a karma, you'll never get any results from it." If you throw the acorn out on the asphalt, you don't have to go up with a chain saw. [laughs] Really. Seriously. Very simple. If you don't, if you can avoid a bad deed you'll never get the result, just won't get it. Okay? [Student: What if you do nothing to prevent suffering?] Excuse me? [Student: What if you did nothing to prevent suffering?] That's like the first specific cause of being born as a {praeta}. Right? [laughs] All right, ahh, [writing on board] Say {choepa} [repeat] {chu} [repeat] {netsha} [repeat] {choepa} [repeat] {chu} [repeat] {netsha} [repeat]. [writing on board] If you do it, it never just goes away. How is karma planted in your minds? I mean, karma doesn't stay out near Pluto or those other [unclear [big?]] planets and then come back to us. It stays very intimately with you. It's planted in your mind stream, and it can go on for for thousands of years in your mind state. We talked about it in the course on karma. That the process is that it replicates itself. It is destroyed by the instant like all changing things, like our body, or this house, or New York City, it's it's it's changing from instant to instant but the energy is being transferred to the next instant. So it doesn't just go away. That seed stays in your mind. The fact that it's destroyed by the instant doesn't mean that it doesn't continue, it does continue. And it stays in your mind. It stays in your mind until the day it gives a result. So, so just to put it briefly, it's like, you see somebody needs something really bad, like a friend of yours really needs something that you have. And it and there's nothing that would prevent you from giving it except that you're just too stingy. You know, they need it, you have it, it's not like it's your last one, you know, you're just lazy or you're stingy. And, and you perceive yourself not giving it to them, and you're aware of your own stinginess, like you have some, you have an intention, and you, and you think about it and you decide not to give this thing to them because you wanna have more. You know, you wanna you don't wanna see your own bank account go down. So you, you don't give it to them. But the whole process of being aware of yourself as you don't give it and as you think about protecting your own [inaudible] very horrible, I mean the way this planet is, it's just this far, we don't notice it. You know you notice the really bad deeds because they disturb your heart. But these are things that like just slip on day by day you keep doing them you're not even aware of

collecting the karma. You just didn't give it to them when they needed it. And that being aware of yourself at that moment is what plants it, it plants it in your mind stream and then later it it flowers in your mind stream. How it flowers we talked about a lot. But basically it flowers as a perception that you don't have enough money. You know, it it comes out as a perception that you yourself don't have it enough of what you need. And, and in extreme form, it it manifests itself as perceiving yourself as some kind of being who can't even get anything to eat or drink. You know, and and in and in extreme forms because karma gets more violent, you know, karma's like this virulent germ that starts off a little tiny thing and then eventually it it ruins you. And and then you you actually have a an awareness of of being this kind of being that can't even get anything to drink or eat. And and then on top of that you have some kind of a you have the secondary result of making you want more than you can ever get. So you have this craving for more and more on the one hand, and then on the other hand you can never satisfy it. You know, you you feel this extraordinary kind of desire for something that you [inaudible], then on the other hand, you, because of your own mind, and your own perceptions, you can't find it. And and then you have this horrible kind of creature,

called a {praeta}, and and they have these conflicting energies going on, on one side they want more and more and more [unclear - to eat?], they're more and more hungry and dissatisfied, and then on the other side, everywhere they go they can't find anything. And it, and it's just an extreme flowering of this perception that you planted long ago, when you didn't give somebody something they needed. And, and what I'm trying to say is, I'm trying to show you how the process works. It's not like this guilt trip, that there's a guy up there with this long scroll keeping track of your bad deeds. By perceiving yourself do something wrong regarding giving, you will have to perceive yourself be that kind of being. Period. And it's a psychological event, it's not a, it's not some sort of, you know, how does karma, were does it stay, how does it work? That's how it works. It works in your own mind. And when, and when the time comes, you will be this kind of being who's overwhelmed with desire, needs something, and can't find anything. And then then just spend it's life like that, in this horrible, this horrible feeling, wanting, wanting, wanting, and not being able to get anything. And they spend their whole life, they say that they run around. They just race from here to there looking for things and they can never find them. It's it's like these it's like this, I don't know how to say it, it's like this horrible result which is a million times heavier than the cause that caused it. And it's always perceptions. And and that's why it can happen, to us. That's that's why. And a, and a process of dying is the point at which, it's called {chupa seepa} it's the tenth [unclear - "blink" ? link?] of the wheel of life, that that that process of

dying and passing over that threshold makes those karmas more powerful and then they they come back to you as a birth. And and then you perceive yourself as this kind of being that can't get what it wants, it's crave all the time and running back and forth and never satisfied. That's how it works. Is it so, I don't know if you get some more feeling that it could happen to you. You know, it could happen to you if you can, perceive yourself doing one of those three specific causes. Then you will perceive yourself being that kind of being. It, that's why it's possible. It's not that, you know, you kind of grow into this gremlin, your arms fall off, and suddenly you become a tiny little gremlin, it's that your perceptions change. And they will, they can. Three quick questions, then we'll take a break. You were first I think. [Student: If I'm a very sick person, I think of myself as generous, say I'm in denial] Right [Laughter] [vs. I am stingy and I know I'm stingy] yeah [does this make this, does this make a difference or not?] It does, it makes a big difference, it's the intention. Take the example that you can quote, said the [b:Abhidharmakosha] fourth chapter, where someone perceives that it, that their their father or mother is is has cancer or something and is dy..., is is having this horrible time, you know, has terminal cancer, and out of, out of mercy, out of thoughts of mercy, they killed them, okay? It's a terrible bad deed, I mean, it's a really wrong deed, and you'll get a horrible result from it. But the motivation, the intention is good. It's like a [unclear] or something. So [unclear - usually?] the karmic result of that would be a mixture. The karmic result of the intention is some kind of incredible good result. The karmic result of the deed is some kind of incredibly bad result. [Student: Okay, you did everything intentionally. I mean, they you you] Oh, oh, you can be the person, [laughs] but the intention is to help them. Your intention, what defines a good intention, if you wish to help someone. That's a good intention. [Student: well, [unclear] help] That's what I'm saying, it's that, it's what we call a mixed white and black karmic deed. It's called {karnauf du jepa} mixed white and black. But you've gotta study karma - it's a long subject. We do a whole, couple of months on it, you know. [Student: An example you just said [unclear] brought it on yourself [unclear] Yeah. it almost sounds to me like, so it's karmically better to not even be aware that I'm angry because then] Laughs [I don't see myself being angry so] [unclear] perceive, it's just, ah, you do perceive yourself being angry you're not aware that you're perceiving yourself [unclear.] I mean, that this it is a bad deed to be angry, whether you, even if, I mean, they take the example in the, in the, [b:Abhidharma] [unclear] of a crazy person. I mean, is insanity a good defense in Buddhism? Yes. You don't know what you're doing. Is it still a bad deed? Yes. You know. There's a lot less than if you were fully aware of what you were doing is wrong. You know. But they say that's why Rimpoche hasn't taught us a lot of the other the higher vows.

[Laughter] [unclear] 'cause you would break them. [Student: Yeah, in order to be a good karma so] [end of side one]

[Student: Yeah, In order to be in good karma's spirit do you, is this a one time deal?] I don't, I don't like how you started the question. In order to perceive yourself through karma's spirit, which is what happens. [Student: OK] That's why it's possible. That's why it's totally plausible that this could happen to you. [Student: and is this a one time thing you could, you have to [unclear - happy to be engaged in?] or is it more or less continual behavior behavioral pattern, in other words is it] Yeah [a continual thing] the, the whole first chapter of the [b:Abhidharma] deal with this question. You know. Is it multiple karmas that leads to one rebirth, or could one karma lead to multiple rebirths? And the answer is both. [Laughs] There are cases, when you do something minor, continually, for example, it would make you be born as an animal. But one very powerful action of of, you know, someone's dying for a dollar, and you don't give it to them, well then, then you could take multiple births as a {praeta}. Take a break [laughs] have some iced tea and some other stuff. There's some tea downstairs and then come back in like ten minutes.

The first one is {gom - gong? - gone?}. [writing on board] Say {chi} repeat {dimpochen} repeat {chi} repeat {dimpochen} repeat {Chi} means "outside." "On the outside." {Dimpochen} means "obstacle." "Having an obstacle." So the first kind of {praeta} is the kind that has obstacles on the outside. Outside obstacles. What that means is that, that being is perceiving themselves as extremely hungry and thirsty. And that being has, on top of that, an added desire, I mean this incredible craving for for something to drink. And they can't find anything. And then they see from a distance, they see this beautiful lake, you know, from a distance and they're always running, I mean they spend their whole life running, and they see this lake of beautiful water and they run, you know, they put their head down and they run. And then they get up to the side of the lake and they look down and its its turned into blood, and puss and and excrement, I mean, its just turned into something horrible. And that's the story of their lives. And then they these these kind of {praetas} they have some kind of karma. Again the whole thing is just your mind shifting. Your mind has has not given the things to other people need so your mind shifts and as you approach that water, its its something else by the time you get up to it. It turns into something else. Is the water turning into something else? [Student: unclear] What's happening? [Student: Your mind is moving] Your mind is shifting. Your mind is shifting. By the way, every change in the world, from the movement of my hand, to the sun coming up, which we study in the Diamond Sutra, it's all just a shift in your

perceptions. So, I'm not moving my hand, okay, your mind is shifting. [laughs] But that explains how being can walk up to some water and suddenly they look down and it's just blood. They can't drink it anymore, it's just puss. [unclear] something disgusting. It's a shifting of their mind. Yeah [Student: So it's not necessarily the physical, like you said, the electric quartz [corpse? - unclear] that can have subtle physical form? that could mean that they are a certain group subtle physical realm for us.] We'll talk about it. We'll talk about it. We'll get there. It'll come. So those are those are the first kind of {praetas}. The next one is called {Maggi netta pe} [writing on board] Yeah. [Student: Would you say then a {praeta} has a a perception from afar, which is pleasing or somehow appealing to them?] Yeah, that's, appears to be a good karma, that's a result of a good karma. That they don't see this blood in the first place. You know. Say {maggi} repeat {dimpochen} repeat {maggi} repeat {dimpochen} repeat. The only difference here is {"naggi"}. {Maggi} means "on the inside." So instead of having obstacles on the outside, they have obstacles on the inside. And this is this, this is this thing where their where their mouth is is very small. They say as small as the hole on a needle. And that their intestines are very thin and they, I mean their gullet, their throat, and they say the size of guitar strings. And then their bellies are huge. So even if they could get something to eat or drink, they can't stuff it down fast enough to ever be satisfied. Even I'm, you see pictures of the little guy and you say, "that's cute, that looks like the gremlin movie I saw." Or something like that and you just think its its some kind of folk tradition in Tibet that these beings must have existed. It's not like that. It's the natural perception that a being would have if they spent this life being unsatisfiable. It's it's the natural karmic evolution, explosive growth of of of a of constant feelings of possessiveness in this life. Okay. And it's possible, because again it's a perception. Is it therefore not real? No way. It's totally real, because it's a perception. We'll talk about that, sometime. It's as real as anything in this world. [writing on board] [Student: So, are those beings actually able to consume things through that [unclear]] That's number three. [Student: [unclear] number two consuming?] Nope. I mean they can try. But they say that their their mouths are are flaming with fire. And if somehow they get a little bit down there's this karma that they're never satisfied. Doesn't matter how much they try to stuff in. They have this karma that they're never sat, they never find any happiness. You see human beings who have a touch of that. You know. I mean, most of us. You know. No matter how much you get, you still want something bigger or better or more. I used to be very happy with six dollars an hour in my work] then it was seven then it was eight then it was fifty and then a hundred, you know. You're you're never [unclear - filling? finished?]. [writing on board] Say {sekon gui} repeat {repon chen} repeat {sekon gui} repeat {repon chen} repeat.

Mmmm, {Sekon gui}, {sekon} means "food and drink." "food and drink." {repon chen} means "having obstacles for food and drink." So in the scripture or in the {chen rim} of {Geshe Drolumba} it says that these beings, they have a problem that even if they get some kind of food, like they finally get a glass of water that doesn't turn into puss or blood, okay, and they drink it but on the way it just burns them, they have this feeling of being burned. It's like drinking molten steel or something. And the minute it starts going down their throat it feels like acid. It feels like acid going down their throat. And then I I told you wrong, it's, and this is the category where where even if it gets down, it never satisfies them. It's like someone who could eat all day and still feel hungry. [Student: So what is number two then?] Number two is more like a physical impediment where their mouths are just too small, and their stomachs are just too big and they can never fill it up. They they couldn't get physically enough food down to ever fill it up. And then number three is more like it burns as it goes down. And then even if it gets down it never satisfies. They still feel hungry and thirsty all the time. [Student: What is the english description for this being?] These are all {praetas}. [Student: No, I mean the third being.] Those, it's it's, the wording is, "those with obstacles to food and drink." Meaning there's there's a a bad reaction to the food and drink that they can get. So I guess the third category is lucky that they can get something but it either hurts them or it doesn't satisfy them. The first two kinds can never get anything anyway or can't get enough. [Student: So why don't they die? I mean they [unclear] never get anything to eat or drink.] That's like in the hells. He say's why don't they die if they don't get enough. It's your karma. There's a hell called revive. {yung tse} it's called {yung tse} and and in that hell, you're born there, and somebody just stands there and beats you with a club until you die. And then and then there's this there's this sound from the sky called {yung tse} and you get back up and they beat the crap out of you again and you die. And then, and then this sound comes out of the sky the sky {yung tse} you get back up, you just revive. You know. You just keep coming back to life. It's like a zombie or something. And and it's your karma to keep to keep living. They say that the life span of these beings is, they say that a day, in a day in their lives passes in the time of a month on this, in our world. And that's typical. In the in the lower realms time passes more slowly. So like a day in the lower, a day in the in the life of a {praeta} is like a month for a human being. And they say that these these beings, I believe that, you can check the reading, but I believe it's five hundred days is the maximum life of a of a {praeta}, according to the [b:Chem rim]. [Student: Five hundred days?] Yeah, but their days. Yeah. It's times thirty, okay, I don't know what that is. Fifteen thousand days. [Student: unclear] Then they die again. So they, then they die. So that's the longest their lifespan is. How big are they, they say it's not fixed.

Their bodies are not fixed. Where they live, there's two main places. One is supposed to be below this planet, below the earth, and so many miles away from our from where we live, and then another and there's a certain category of {praeta} that's living among us and we can't see them. And the scriptures say that at night maybe you can sometimes catch a glimpse of them, or something. You know, but that's there are {ydaks} there are {praetas} according to scripture running around around us and we can't see them. That's why sometimes when you do a {puja} or an offering you put something out for them. And then they, if you do the right kind of prayer, they can actually partake of it. Something like that. So don't think it's some kind of, you know, this chapter is very unpopular, I mean, if if you're one of those lamas who came and gave a two day teaching in New York City, you wouldn't want to cover this. [Laughter] It's not very sexy, you know, it's not a good as like a [unclear] karma or something [laughter]. I shouldn't say that, it's probably just broke a Bodhisattva vow. Anyway, it's very, before [unclear] because it's a mental perception, it's it's very possible that it could happen. That's, I just want to say it's very plausible that it could happen. It's just the natural growth of a feeling of possessiveness that this life, that starts out the size of an acorn, could, if it had a genetic flaw, grow into some huge grotesque oak tree [unclear] a hundred years from now. If the mind is, if the mind is eternal, which it is, you know, if the mind will go on forever, which it does, and we can prove that, then if you

plant a tiny defective seed in it in 1996 then it makes good, it's possible that in 2030 even if you're not in this life or you are, it's going to come out some horrible result. It's very possible. That result won't be some little gremlin body that someone shoves you into that. It will be a perception of that seed flowering in your own mind and you look down and you have that body. And those things are happening to you, and it will happen. And that, you know, supposedly if you really understand all this you don't want to collect those karmas any more, you just absolutely don't want to be stingy anymore you don't want to be jealous anymore. You know. If you get very good at this, you'll feel seeds being planted in your mind as you do bad deeds at the office. Okay. You will be, you will actually sense, you'll get the sensation of planting a bad seed in your mind and being sorry about it because once they're in there, it's very hard to get them out. Like, so you'll if you get good at your practice, you'll have the sensation of a seed being planted in your mind then realizing that you can't go back five minutes and take it back. It's already planted in your mindstream. It's a very nasty thing. You've got to be very careful about collecting bad karma. Yeah. [Student: How do these beings acquire the karma [inaudible]] Ah, extremely unlikely. [Student: What was the question?] She wanted to know: how they ever come back up. You know, cause in that life

they're not being generous either. I mean, they're just being worse. You know. Like birds. Somebody says, "well, okay, to be an animal, if you're, if you're born as an animal, when do you get to come back up to the human realm. And it's just like dumb luck. Because an animal's life is spent in non-virtue. I mean, animals whole focus is to hurt other animals. You know, their whole life is spent in the activity of trying to destroy other animals which provide them food. So you know then people say, "oh Buddhism is very cruel, you know, at least in Christianity the birds are just ignorant so, you know, they can, they can still have a, their soul will still go to a nice place because they were just stupid." And and Buddhism says: no, I mean ignorance is is no it's no excuse you know it's it's exactly the kind of condition you never want to go through because you'll just get you'll get worse, things'll get worse. If you're born an animal and you spend your life seeking other animals to kill for your food, then then the future's really lousy for you and and only by some incredibly dumb luck will you ever get up to the human realm. [Student: Good luck?] Well, good deed. [Student laughs] But, you know, almost like like some kind of accident that you you undergo some kind of incredible suffering that wears out your bad karmas. You have some tiny little seed for good karma left and you could you go into a human realm. But they say that, that the beings going down, the Buddha taught this, he said the beings going down, he took a, he took a piece of dust and he and he showed it like this he said the beings going up are like this dust, this this mote of dust, and the beings going down are like the pieces of dust in a planet. You know, and he, he said that. It's in the sutras, you know. [Student: How do you classify something like a zombie. Is that a bardo being?] What's that? [Student: A zombie] [Laughs] I never met one. [Laughter] All right, hold on. I think they would be a {yuba}. [Student: A {jita?}] Yeah, a {praeta}. [Student: What is that?] It's like a, there's some kind of beings that like, like corpses that get back up and walk around. Supposed to be. There's a big debate about it. They say {Nagarjuna} wrote that book and then other people say he never wrote it. Like that. So. I think that covers {Yddaks}. Let me see. There's thirty-six types in the in the scriptures and they're in they're in your reading, okay? {Drolumba} missed one and I stuck it in from another book. [unclear] The beauties of the computer. We'll do a very quick on animals, then we'll stop. Animals don't take so much explanation because you can see them. The cause is, general cause, [writing on board] gimme any one of those ten bad deeds to to sort of a wimpy extent. All right? You did something like you like say you you killed an insect by accident or something like that or you or you lied but not with very strong intention not with very important object not about something pretty important and those are those would lead to an animal rebirth. They get {Drolumba, the Ten Rim} and other scriptures give two specific reasons. [writing on board] I ge

- I don't quite like the word "rules" but I don't know how else to put it but it's like if you constantly break small small things that are not very not very serious but if you do it over and over again, you know, like you tell little white lies over and over again then it would be a cause like that. [Student: So the rules of conduct -] Yeah or the rules of what, what you should do and what you shouldn't do but "should" is a bad word. "Should" just means if you do it you're going to end up like that. It's very interesting. Buddhist morality is pretty much, bad karma is defined as something that causes you to suffer. Bad karma is defined as something that brings you a result of suffering. And secondly, [writing on board] [Student: Are these subsets of the ten bad deeds?] These are two specific ones, these are the two specific causes and this is one general cause. So so the {ten rim} by the way, {Geshe Drolumba} was a big master of the defects of wisdom because his teacher, {Limpe Seraph} was one of the great translators in Tibet he translated many many of the great books of the perfection of wisdom so he he himself although we don't know much about him we know he he must have been affected by his teacher's thinking and and this is all based on a perfection of wisdom so these are the two specific specific causes for animal rebirth. Then he goes into the suffering. The suffering, it's interesting, because you and I tend to think of animals as something kinda cute you know like we have this dog in our temple who's very cute {doma} and we have this chicken, this rooster that walks outside he looks really cute and he does funny things and then you think of, what's that movie with the kid and the dolphin, Help Willie, or something like that, you know, and you think of little rabbits and deer walking through the woods and you know and {Geshe Drolumba} says the same thing it's very interesting. At the end of his presentation on animals he says, "What, well you think these peop - these animals are having a good time? You know, do you think they're they're just having some very romantic walk through the through the nice meadow and stopping to eat grass here and there or the or the bunny is is like communing with nature and somehow you know in the in the great harmony of living things. He says forget it! He says being an animal is is a lifetime of terror. And and you're constantly, why do animals run away when you approach them anyway? [laughs] I mean, why do birds fly away when you come near them? They're whole existence is based on watching over their shoulder for the animal that eats them. That's their their whole fixation in life. They're they're consumed with the task, twenty-four hours a day of avoiding the animal that eats them. And and they're just constantly on the run, constantly having to be alert and watchful and the minute they're not, then they get eaten by the by the animal on the food chain behind them. And and that's how they spend their lives don't think animals are these happy little creatures you know it's a it's a dog eat dog existence and and they're just they're it's it's an existence of

sheer terror from the moment they're born to the moment they die. And and they're just living like that. The general mass of animals are like that. Then there's this sub category of animals that are that are you know have the honor of being used by man, you know, and they have this special torture that humans are just they they are the property of humans. So humans are raising them for food to slaughter them the humans are trying to hunt them down to take their skins off and or the humans are putting saddles on them and beating them] and putting iron in their mouths and and riding them and and making them pull plows and then killing them when they get too old and and so they there's this specific subclass of animals that that have this added torture of being the property of human beings. So he says you know in general it's it's a just sheer terror to be an animal and then more specifically the one's that meet up with human beings get these special sufferings this special tortures of being the property of the human beings. Yeah. [Student: I thought about that and I'm wondering what those scriptures say about those that that don't some [unclear] have natural enemies like polar bears that don't get eaten by anybody else] Yeah. [or] Except humans. [Student: well okay and and also bugs like I can't imagine [each?] tiny bug [unclear] having terror I mean [I do like?] terror?] I don't know I I watch them get chased by a butterfly or a [unclear] bird right? [Student: right] [Student: o yeah] I mean, okay, the scripture, the [b:chenrin chemmo] in the verse you're gonna to read there it says they all have their different personalities. He says, he admits some of them are friendly, some of them are cruel, some of them are get along with each other, some of them I mean there are animals that have group instincts and they live in communities like like ants and they seem to get along with each other. This I mean speaking generally ninety-nine percent are engaged in the act

of watching out they don't get killed today. You know. And then maybe there's a one percent that somehow has a little a window of comfort you know but on the whole it's it's it's a realm that we don't recognize the terror of being an animal, we don't recognize the true nature of animals being the hunted and and spending their whole lives watching for the thing behind them that's going to kill them you know that's the scriptures talk about animals like that. The the scriptures says there's three hundred sixty million species of animals and they say on the human body alone, there are eighty thousand different species living. [laughs] [laughter] [Student: They said that then? before microscopes found them?] They said eighty thousand different species are inhabiting the body, inside or on the body. [Student: unclear] Yeah. Yeah. [Intruder: Ah, wrong side.] They [unclear - meet in?] in two places. We're almost finished okay? [Writing on board] If you're gonna be a translator, this is a nasty word, okay? I mean it's hard, it's very rare. Say {chingna} repeat {nyepa} repeat {chingna}

repeat [nyepa] repeat. This means "living in the ocean" okay, living in the warm waters of the ocean like the midst of the ocean. And what it means is that by in terms of population, the vast number of animals live in the ocean, okay? According to Buddhist scripture. If you count all the plankton and everything else, you know, little life forms that are living off of the salt water, that's where the vast majority of animals are living. [writing on board] [Student: There was just an article in the Times about a month ago that scientists estimate that ninety percent of the earth's population live in the middle zone of the earth's ocean.] Yeah? [Student: Not not not the bottom, but not the top but in the middle zone.] Yeah, yeah, this means "in the middle." Say {katola} repeat {katola} repeat. {Katola} means spread out all over the place, in the sky, in the water, on the land, under the dirt. I mean, {praetas} have their own little place, somewhere. Half of them, say. And you know, hell-beings have very specific place where they live. But this section of animals are just spread out all over the all over the planet. They don't have a, you can't say well this is where the animal realm is. It's it's spread out all over the planet. [Student: In other realms [unclear -do animals exist?]] Not the former formless realms. Only {unclear - thoughts?} only {unclear - devas?}. Yes. [Student: I was just curious [unclear]] Oh just the word. You never never never ever see this word used anywhere else. It's a very specific word that means "the middle of the, the depths of the sea." "The depths of the sea." That means if you try to find it in a dictionary or something you'll never, it just happens like one word in a million, you'll never find it. So there's arguments about what it means. But the scriptures are pretty clear. Yeah. (Student: [unclear] Yeah, in our in our world. Some believe. [Student: Will these six realms [unclear]] Yeah it's a very good question and I used to wonder. Yeah, apparently it's like a model that occurs, you know, every planet that has life has these six realms. That seem, I used to wonder that and and then sometimes you come across a scripture of plural (?) you know like every every world has this same basic structure. Every planet that has life has the same basic structure. You know. Seems to be like that. Because they explain galaxies then they explain universes and then they explain macro universes, in the b:Abhidharma], third chapter, towards the end [unclear]. And you know those are groups of millions of planets, inhabited planets and they all seem to be have the same structure. If they have life they have the same structure which is basically means that the possible, what do you call it, variations of karma are are limited. You know, the possible [Student: Permutations] permutations, there's only so many permutations of karma. You know. At the end of the animal section he says that actually maybe the the number of species is limitless because different kinds of karma are [unclear] I don't know. But I think the important thing is, you know, people read the [b:Abhidharma] and they say, "O this is just some weird

idea about how the world is." You know. But but but the point is this: the point of this whole class the point of this whole course is to realize that if the teachings on emptiness are true, if, if the teachings on emptiness are true, and if life is only a projection, then it's only plausible that we could become any of these things the minute we pass over that threshold. That within within twenty minutes from the moment we speak one of us could be one of those things. You know. Because it's a change in your perceptions and it's not a, you know, it's not like you have to go pull on a new body like a sock. It's it's that you will see yourself that way, the same way you see yourself now, with the same validity that you see yourself now. And it's totally possible because it just depends on what kind of states are in your mind. So the whole point is to try to avoid those things (states?). This is a death repetition, we already started it before we got to it. That's all. We'll do a short prayer. Oh I have to make a short announcement. On Sunday, March 17th, I'll repeat this, {Khen Rinpoche} who is our root Lama, very great Lama, who rarely teaches, he's going to teach out in New Jersey, two o'clock, it's a Sunday, and he'll continue to teach most Sundays. Starting on the 17th of March. If you don't know how to get there, ask ask ask either [Mona?] or some [Dharmas] or a lot of people have been there. It's a very great teaching he's gonna teach from the {Kadampas} like very early Buddhist [unclear] he's going to teach a text from that. On the 30th, which I think is a Saturday? he's just announced that he will be giving some layman's vows, and some other things, some other neat things, so if you wanna get in on that, let me know. [Student: [unclear]] Well, we'll cancel that. [Laughter] That's at two o'clock. I think we better cancel it. [Students: [unclear]] Again, he's gonna on the first of June, there'll be a general {sagwa} ceremony. Bodhisattva vows and tantric vows. You have to memorize the text. I have the text up here and somebody has been [unclear] a tape, a tape recording, and I have copies of the tape. And if anybody would like a copy of the tape let me know. I'll give you a copy, it makes it easier to memorize it. That's about it. [Student: The bodhisattva vows, did you, are you allowed to do that and yet [unclear] the vows?] No. Can't. Not allowed. [Student: Is there a class this week?] No. No class this Thursday. Next class is next Monday. Cause a, we have a ceremony here this Sunday. Okay. [Chanting: mandel and ngowa] Two volunteers to clean up. Would you do that stuff? Yeah. Jay? Would you do that too? Okay. Jay and [unclear]. Next time bring some snacks, okay? [laughs] [miscellaneous talk & laughter as the group breaks up]

960318-1

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Four: The Lives of Humans and Pleasure Beings

transcribed by: Adrienne Block Proofread by: Summer Moore

3/18/96

8/30/02

We finished craving spirits and animals [repeat]. Animals. So, working our way up what would come next? [students: Humans]

Humans and ... devas

[students: Devas]

Okay, so we're going to cover the sufferings... we're going to cover the world of humans and...

[silence]

I could go through the geography, you know, I could go through the four continents and Mount Meru and then the inner oceans and the outer oceans and the different... and the different mountains and, and all that stuff. I could go over that.

[student: [unclear]]

That's the... we don't have time. That's the physical world of human beings. But really, I'm going to follow...

[student: Could you give us the schematic thing? Like really...]

It's a very complicated but I'll give you the whole text if you want. [laughter] It's really complicated. It's the whole third chapter of the [b: Abidharma.] We can do it... actually I think that we do do it a little bit later. We're going to follow the presentation given by...

[student: Pabonka Rin...]

Excuse me?

[student: Pabonka Rinpoche?]

Yeah, we're going to do them together.

[student: Okay]

[silence]

Say {Panchen} [repeat], {Lobsang} [repeat], {Chukyi} [repeat], {Gyeltsen} [repeat]. Okay. Panchen stands for Pandita Chenbo, Maha Pandita. Which means what? The Mongolians call it pandito.

[student: Teacher?]

Yeah [laughs]

[same student: Wise teacher?]

Pandita means, yeah, like, Master. Buddhist Master. So, Pan... Panchen means great Buddhist Master. The great master. And his name was... Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen. Surely his first name, Lobsang is... was given to him because Tsongkapa's ordination name which was?

[student: Lobsang Drakpa]

Lobsang Drakpa. Okay, so...

Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen. Lobsang means "pure mind." Chukyi Gyeltsen means "banner of the Dharma"... like a big flag in front of a parade. Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen was the first Panchen Lama. Okay, the first of the Panchen Lama's. And his dates are:

[student: How do you spell Panchen?]

Uh...

[student: [unclear]]

Yeah. We don't know exactly when he was born, we believe it was this date:

[silence]

And, this was the date that he passed. What is the present Panchen Lama? {Dzu}

[laughs] [laughter]

[student: what is a Panchen Lama?]

[students: [unclear]]

I don't know what he is ten, or...

[student: eleven]

Eleven. And there's... you know China, has recognized one. And the Dalai Lama has recognized another one. China the atheists. [laughter] The communists. [laughter] Nonbelievers in future rebirths [laughs] [laughter] have appointed the rebirth of the Panchen Lama. And the choice of His Holiness has disappeared. We assume he has been arrested... or something.

[student: What's so special about him?

excuse me?

[student: What's so special about him besides being a teacher?]

Oh, what makes the Panchen Lama a Panchen Lama? Basically, these lineages tend to start when there is some extraordinary Lama. Like Khen Rinpoche by virtue of being the Abbot of Sera Mey is now eligible for a lineage. You know. He, he can... he'll be... now he'll be reborn... I mean people will look for his rebirth... if he passes away, I guess... so... It's, it's when there's some kind of extraordinary Lama. And then, and in modern days you achieve that by... I mean the Dalai Lama makes a certain decision and then you... so Rinpoche's already been granted that. So...

But the Panchen, he was just some very, very extraordinary Lama.

I would like to teach you... I hope we can study together... he wrote and Rinpoche taught us an extraordinary text in verse. He was a great poet. And it's an argument between ignorance and, and understanding of emptiness in one person's mind. And so you... it's like the Angel and the devil up here, you know, and they're, they're arguing with each other. And, and the, the devil starts out with, with very, very clever arguments about emptiness that are slightly wrong, and then the Angel, or, you know, the good side says "No, no, that's not quite right." And he corrects him and then he... then he corrects him then gets a more subtle wrong argument and then the wisdom corrects him again but what... in the course of that text, which I think is about sixty folios, he covers all the mistakes that you and I will ever make about emptiness. All the subtle mistakes, all the stupid mistakes, he covers all of them. Very, very beautiful. Extraordinary. It's never been translated. Somebody's been working on it for about five years. I don't think he's done with it. I hope... we could study it if we have time.

[student: That'd be great]

Would be wonderful. It'll be a classic. When it's translated, it'll be a classic. It'll be like [b: The Bodhisattva's], you know [b: The Guide to the Bodhisattvas' Way of Life] It'll become a classic. It's a great great book.

[student: What's the name of the book?]

Excuse me?

[student: What's the name of the book?]

[b: Dang Dzen Chang Teb] which means "the debate between wisdom and ignorance... in one person's mind." It's very beautiful. Wisdom goes... I mean ignorance goes into a long thing about saying how good selfishness is and how if you weren't selfish you could never look out for yourself and how defenseless you'd be without that. And then wisdom defeats him about that. And then, and then ignorance says "well selfishness is the same as grasping to a self" and then, and then wisdom defeats him on that too. So it's very subtle. It gets more and more subtle. We have to read it sometime. So, anyway, he wrote fantastic texts and then later he was recognized as the first Panchen Lama. The text we're going to study tonight.

[silence]

Say {De-lam} [repeat] {De-lam}. There's a whole string of great Lam Rim texts starting with Atisha's Lam Rim going up to Je Tsongkapa's [b: Lam Rim Chenmo ["unclear"]] the three Lam Rims.

And then you have a very famous one by the First Panchen Lama and it's called [b: De-Lam].

{De} generally means happiness but in this case it means {delak} which means "easy", okay. And {Lam}, I think you know

[students: Path]

Path. So it's the easy path. It means that he's presenting a very easy way to get to enlightenment. Very brief, very, very beautiful, in verse, and extraordinary. It's recently been published. I believe the name has been mistranslated [laughs] and it's called [b: Path to Bliss] or something like that. It's a mistranslation of this, of this. I mean... maybe... I don't know. Anyway. Probably is. We have to check it out. That's what Tsongkapa used to say. [laughs] [b: De-Lam]. So [b: De-Lam] is, is that book. And it's a Lam Rim text. It's a beautiful Lam Rim. That text is a little bit hard and we're going to use a commentary. There's a very beautiful commentary by...

[silence]

We love these commentaries.
[student: laughter [unclear]]

It's called "the onion theory" you know.
[silence]

If you get into Tibetan Buddhism deeply... I mean the first wave of writing or the first wave of literature that we have available is the sutras - from 500 bc - and then we have all the early Indian commentaries that range from like Nargarjuna in the third century up to Atisha in the tenth and eleventh century. And then you have a big wave of commentaries in the fourteenth, thirteenth, fourteenth hundreds. And then you have a big wave of commentaries in the sixteenth hundreds, seventeenth hundreds. And you actually can't study the early ones without the later ones. Like people like you and me, if you try to pick up a sutra or an early Indian commentary, forget it, you could never understand it. You, you have to go backwards. You can't really appreciate even the Panchen Lama in 1567 unless you can read this commentary. That's just because they knew a lot... when they said things briefly everyone knew that they were talking about and that's not the case anymore. Please repeat {Ngulchu} [repeat] {Dharma} [repeat] {Bhadra} [repeat] { Ngulchu} [repeat] {Dharma} [repeat] {Bhadra} [repeat]. Very important Lama in our Vajrayogini lineage. He's in the supplication. [unclear - and in Tibetan]

[student: So this is the name?]

[unclear recitation of text continues] {...yeshe tsog.} It's in the middle of the {dakkye} Yeah, this is a lamas name. Ngulchu means "Quick Silver". I believe that's a place in Tibet, I'm not sure. And Dharma Bhadra was his personal name. He had a Sanskrit personal name. Okay. His dates are...He wrote some great commentaries on Vajra Yogini. One is available and the other is sort of secret. And both of them have been input and we have them and they are very useful. He also... we have records of interviews with him and his students and his students asked him questions about Vajrayogini and he gave answers, beautiful answers. And those were carved into wood and we have those also. So there's, it's extraordinary he's an extraordinary Lama in our lineage. Very deeply related to Pabonka Rinpoche and Trijang Rinpoche, and Khen Rinpoche. Direct lineage. Okay. So we're going to read a book by him.

[student: Michael, all the writing's in Tibetan, right?]

[student: He was Tibetan.]

Excuse me?

[student: He was Tibetan.]

Yeah, his name was Sankrit but he was a Tibetan. He used a Sanskrit name.

[student: In the books you have it all in Tibetan, right?]

A yeah, nothing translated yet. You guy's 'll have... actually, the monks are translating one right now. Which is your next course. [laughter] They are, they really are.

[student: Yeah, I believe you.]

I mean the next class. I mean in summer, late summer.

Say {Rinchen} [repeat] {Bangdzu} [repeat] {Rinchen} [repeat] {Bangdzu} [repeat]. Rinchen means what? You guys know, I think.

[student: Jewels]

Jewels, any precious thing. Like gold is also a rinchen. Silver is also a rinchen. But normally, gemstones. Bangdsu means a big chest or a big box of like of, like if you can imagine like a big heavy chest full of diamonds or something. That's the name of his commentary. It's a, it's an extraordinary commentary, never been translated. You guys are going to study it tonight and he... it's really really beautiful.

[student: How was it translated?]

"Chest of Jewels." But I think it's just like an honor to be able to read something by him and that's your readings. It's taken from him. Because he's so important in our lineage. It's like, it's like a great grandfather for us. Okay.

Panchen Lama says, First Panchen Lama says if you want to study about humans and pleasure beings, if you want to study their world, if you want to understand their life then you have to understand {duk-ngel druk.} Say {duk-ngel} [repeat] {druk} [repeat] {duk-ngel} [repeat] {druk}. I promise you you'll never learn Tibetan, okay. [laughter] {duk-ngel} means suffering, {Druk} means six kinds. So if you want to understand what a human is all about, you have to understand the six kinds of suffering. You'll read in the, in Ngulchu's commentary, he'll say the way the Panchen Lama presented these is important because it's important to understand when I say the suffering of humans, you know, like if you're trying to explain to somebody why you're studying Buddhism, and they say "why" and you start out, you're going to start out and say "Well, because all life is suffering". And they'll say, "Oh I don't know what you're talking about, I had a good coffee tonight at Starbucks." And you'll say, "No, no, no it's all suffering,

really, it's all suffering." [laughter] And they'll say, "Like what?" And you'll say, "{kayga la chee}." You know, "Birth, dying, old age, sickness." And they'll say, "Yeah, well I get sick occasionally but that... I'm not sick all the time. And I'm not old yet, you know I still have some juice in me. And I'm obviously not dead yet. And being born I can't remember anyway, so, you know I'm not too worried about that. So I don't see the big deal. You know, I mean it's true that things are sort of screwy, life has it's bad times, but in general, you know, I have good days and I have bad days. But you... I don't see the big deal that you're obsessed with suffering thing, you know." And, and that's really true, I mean you... and the Panchen Lama says, "You have to look at the suffering of human beings." You know, "Is it like someone's beating you with a club all the time?" Or there was this old torture that was popular in China of this hot wax or hot lead and tying the guy down and dripping hot lead on him, you know, and letting it burn through his skin or something. They said, "Life is not like that," you know "it's not like, especially in the deva's realms, especially in the pleasure beings' realms. It's not like they're suffering all the time like that." It's... so why, why are Buddhists so obsessed with suffering? So... and, and when you think of helping other people, you know, you, sometimes you're kind of confused, you know? "Am I supposed to feed people, or am I supposed to get people a place to stay?" Or, "Who's suffering? You know if I have to go out and do social service, for my fellow man, you know, do I have to go to Africa like Albert Schweitzer and open a med... a, you know a facility and help people who have broken arms and skin diseases and things? Is that, is that suffering? What is suffering? What's the suffering that we're supposed to be so obsessed with? Why are Buddhists so, you know... and how can I help other people." And then the Panchen Lama says, "The real suffering is something that all realms have. All humans have it all the time. And all the pleasure beings have it all the time. And it's six sufferings that are always with us, and, and we have to know about them. That's the real suffering that people have. If you really want to do something for other people, treat those six sufferings," okay. The first one... [silence]

Say {ngepa} [repeat] {mepa} [repeat] {ngepa mepa} [repeat] {ngepa mepa} [repeat]. [silence]

The first one is, is a really nasty one, we have it all the time. What it means is that things are always shifting, especially with regard to friends and enemies, for example. You know, like nothing's fixed, you know you say... you can't say that someone's going to be your friend tomorrow who was your friend today. It's impossible. And one of the sufferings that we have is that people that we feel

very close to this week, next week we might have a big fight and then suddenly we're their best enemy, you know, I mean there's nothing fixed in relationships. You can have someone and you feel strongly that this is the person you most love in the world and then, you know, a year later you have this bitter divorce proceeding. And, it's very very common. It's very very common in the world. It's not fixed. You can't say that, "This person is... is someone I love" or "This person is someone I hate." It's always shifting, it's always moving around like water. And, and nothing is fixed. You can't say "I like this job," or "I hate this job." It's constantly moving, constantly shifting around. You can't say "I like this thing," or "I don't like this thing" because a week later or month later or a year later you think the opposite. And it's... in fact the people who insist the most that something is good for everybody, they usually change every week or so, you know? That's just the nature of life. People... I, I was talking in Tibetan class people ask me "When did you become a Buddhist?" You know, "What..." "How did you become a Buddhist?" And I say, if I didn't, if I don't know them very well I say, "I was in a class in college and they started talking about Buddhism and I got convinced about it." But it was really something else in college, and it was girlfriends and highschool. And it was very serious. And I noticed it in my parents who loved each other and then hated each other, you know, and had bitter divorce. And then I noticed it in myself, you know, like I would, I would, I would meet a lady and then after awhile I, I would be very attracted and I would, I would get to know them very well and, and be very close to them and then a month later you hate each other like it's the wo... it's... something changes and it was... and it bothered me a lot, you know? I wasn't joking about it. It really really hurt my feeling and I didn't understand why you would like somebody so much and then two months later you can't stand them, you know? And that this would continue over and over again. And I... I don't... I couldn't see why that happened. And I used, I used... it upset me and I used to wonder, "Is there something wrong with me or is this common?" And then, you know, you look out in the world and this is pretty common. And then you say, "Maybe there's something else going on. Maybe it's the nature of those objects," you know. Maybe it's the very nature of a desirable thing. That it shifts, that it changes. And, and here I ask the people who were in the Diamond Sutra class, you know, what shifts? I mean if, if your perception is... oh, I just told you. [laughter] If, if someone seems very nice to you this year and then next year you just can't stand them and you divorce them and you're trying to get half their property and something like that what, what is it? Why does the sun come up in the morning? It's, it's a perception. It's your projections. The person has not changed. The person is the same person, which makes sense, I mean if you, if you're, if they're the most loved person by you in January, and

then by March you hate their guts they probably haven't changed between January and March in any significant way. They, it's not something to do with them, it's something to do with, with your perceptions.

[Nina: But Michael, somebody could be, it's true, somebody can be nice to you one day the next day could be nasty.

No... [laughs]

[Nina: Well I know it's perception [unclear] you know what I mean?

No, but we're gonna ask why

[Nina: ...there can be actual tangible...]

We want to see why. I, I... first of all let's address Nina's questions. Is it real? I mean when you perceive them as being wonderful and then three months later you perceive them as being really ... stupid...

[student: Your perception changes though.]

But is it valid?

[Nina: Yes.]

[student: On a relative level]

Yes.

[same student: Yes]

Yes.

[Nina: Yes.]

Yes, yes they are. They are wonderful to you. And you buy them flowers and everything. And then three months later they are really terrible to you and you're trying to get them out of the house, you know. [laughter] And... and it's true. It's not a mis... it's valid. It's valid. They give all the information of being nasty. They're yelling at you. They have a red face. They're not beautiful anymore. Something changed. And that's valid perception. All the characteristics are there of an ugly person. And you say, "Ugly person." And that's, that's a [tsema], that's a pramana. They are an ugly person. And then three months earlier they were pretty and attractive and friendly and intelligent and caring and, and then something changed between then and then, you know, something changed. So both of them are valid perceptions. They were correct perceptions but what changed?

[student: Well their behavior patterns, the way you reacted to them.]

Why?

[John: Past Deeds.]

[Nina: Your karma.]

Your, your, your projections changed. Your perceptions changed. They can't change that quickly, I mean, honest, right. If they were self-existent. If they were really nice at the beginning, they're not going to change in three months. You know.

[student: Have their perceptions changed?]

That's another story. Somebody asked me in the last class. Absolutely, absolutely

[same student: They never change the way [unclear]]

But that's another story. We're talking about our perceptions, okay. Your perceptions change. But why do they, why do they change like that? I mean... one, one month, January, they seem very beautiful and caring and loving and attractive to you, and then three months later they seem like this haggard ... [unclear]

[Nina: Well they didn't show you what the whole sides of them were, to you.]
[laughter]

You could say that but why? See?

[student: That's also true...]

Why? That's true, but why? ... Where's it coming from?

[student: It's karma.]

It's your projections. It's your projections. If, if you find them pleasant in January what kind of karma is, is exhibiting itself. The result of what kind of karma?

[students: Good karma]

Good karma. That's the definition of good karma. A pleasant result over a period of time is something that produces that. An action which produces that is the definition of good karma. So, if this person seems wonderful to you, it's good karma ripening. It's ripening in a stream. What's the speed of ripening?

[student: Quick]

[student: Sixty-four fingersnaps per...]

[laughs] Sixty-four perceptions per fingersnap, okay, for you to keep seeing this person as wonderful, it requires basically sixty-four instants, microseconds of perceptual stuff ripening, popping up, every, every second. So maintaining that perception for a week is like... it's a hell of a lot of good karma. I mean you're burning an incredible, an extraordinary amount of good karma to continue to see one person as sweet for a week. That's an... that's an extraordinary amount of karma. It's, it's about as much as it would take to... if you know computers, that many bites to keep a video going for a week. I mean it would take the computing power of New York City or something to maintain that image three-dimensionally for a week. And you, your mind is doing the same thing. It's, it's, it's trillions of karmas ripening and, and you're seeing this thing move and talk and, and look sweet for a whole month. It's an extraordinary amount of good karma. What's the nature of that perception? I mean what's the inevitable result of that perception. It has to wear out. [laughs] It's an extraordinary amount of good karma and it must wear out, and it will wear out. And then what happens? What's left?

[students: Bad]

Bad karma. [laughs] So what happens to the person? Nothing, right? What happens to your perceptions? They start looking bad. It changes. It degenerates. That's also the process called old age because not only is it focusing outwards towards other people, but you yourself, as you look down, will start to see wrinkles and sagging and yellowing and falling out, and you'll start to see that because, because of the nature, that's the nature of those perceptions. They're changing, they're wearing out, like that, you know. And then the bad karma asserts itself and we call it getting old. But it's really just your projections again. That's the secret to old age if you want to know, okay. [laughs] [laughter] That's why it's happening. I mean, you can say how it's happening. I mean scientists can tell you how it's happening, "Oh this cell's not producing the way it used to. And this stomach is not generating juice like it used to. And this heart is not beating the way it used to." But you say "Why?" You know, "Why does it happen?". It's those karmas are exhausting themselves. We are doomed. I mean our projections are, the good karmas will wear out. Unless you find an extraordinary understanding called "The Perfection of Wisdom" and then use it to create some way out of that, and in this life it would take Tantra, you'll never get out of it in this life. You're doomed. You will see yourself get old and you

will see yourself die. And that's just the nature of those ripenings of karma. It, it is all just a mental projection, but it's real. That's why it's real. [phone ringing] Wake up. [laughs] [laughter]. That's where the {ngepa mepa}ness comes from. That's why nothing is fixed. It's a lot easier to understand now. You don't have to feel guilty about not liking this person anymore. [laughs] Okay. They really did shift. The perceptions did shift. And they always will. You know, I, I was very comforted by this first suffering because I thought I was a bad guy, you know? But it's the same with anything, anything you like, you'll start to, you'll start to, your perceptions will start to shift. Because they are being projected by karma and the karma is wearing out. And, and then you'll naturally not like the thing anymore, you know.

[John: So, so does it stand to reason, then that someone who could generate enough virtuous karma would be able to manifest the body which never ages or dies or something to that effect?]

Absolutely, that's the whole purpose of higher teachings.

[John: Then...]

That's the whole purpose of the secret teachings.

[John: I mean, I guess I know the answer to this question, but why don't you ever see it? I guess you don't have the karma.]

Say that again.

[John: Why doesn't one ever see something like that?]

You don't have the karma to see it. It might have happened to me already. You might think I'm a just a ...

[John: A guy.]

Whatever. And vice versa; I have no idea what level you're at. You know, you could be anything, but I can't see it. That's why... by the way, we can't see the Buddha in this world. We have extraordinary karma to see the Dalai Lama, you know, and our teachers, we have this extraordinary karma but that's wearing out too, and he looks like he's getting... old. And it will wear out, and we'll be in a world without them. So, we have to take advantage of it while it's here.

Okay, number... but it's just this thing of nothing is fixed, I mean good and bad just floats around like that over the objects in your life, you know. First they seem good, then they seem bad, then maybe they seem good again and it just keep going on like that. In general, your physical and mental condition is just degenerating, it's just... it's not fixed. If you're not smart or intelligent or handsome, or, or, or anything, fixed, because those projections are always degenerating, they're always losing their energy and you will see yourself get

old and stupid and senile and ugly, inevitably. So you don't have to think of the suffering of that you're trying to escape by coming to Buddhism class as, as you know cancer or AIDS or some... it's not, it's not like that. We have this all the time. We... we're under the control of it this. This is why you come to Buddhism class. Number two. [silence]

Say {ngom} [repeats] {mi shepa} [repeats] {ngom} [repeats] {mi shepa} [repeats]. Really nasty suffering. [silence]

[Nina: Ever or just can't?]

[laughs] We'll talk about it. [laughter][laughs] That's what attracted Nina [snap] in the first place, a lecture at some point she was in the front row what about... [laughs] [laughter]. {Nome mishapa} means this. And the Panchen Lama explains it very beautifully. He says, "You see something you want and then you go and obtain it. And then in a sense you bring it into your being." Right? I mean when you get something you're like an amoeba surrounding something and then bringing it in and then it... you digest it, you know? And that's obtaining something, whether it's a book that you wanted or, or an album that you wanted or, or a person that you wanted to have a relationship with or something you wanted to eat or you, you, you go and obtain it and then you digest it, you know? And that process is supposed to make you happy. I mean that's called, "fulfilling your hopes." You know you, you want something and you go and get it and then you devour it. And that's, that's called the "pursuit of happiness," you know, that's... and then as soon as you get it and devour it, it's supposed to bring some kind of contentment or satisfaction. Nothing has that. We don't have that reaction to anything. We, we are very messed up this way. As soon as we own it, we're unsatisfied again. Almost immediately. I mean sometimes it takes a week, sometimes it takes a month, sometimes it takes five minutes, sometimes you're sick of the thing before you even stand up again. [laughter] [laughs] You know? But you go through all this work to obtain things and then as soon as you get them they don't, they don't stop to itch, the itch keeps going on, and, and that's the nature of anything you can obtain. You go to get things, you make them yours and then suddenly you want something else, or, or it doesn't make you happy. And, and the Panchen Lama says... it's very strange, you know. It's almost is like when you obtain things they make you want more and you suffer from those things. So the pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of suffering, [laughs] you know? It's a very weird thing. And I, I can think of this... I think the most classic example is... I mean when I went to work and I remember I couldn't get a job and I, I wanted to work in the diamond business, I had to work in the diamond business. I went to thirty different

companies, they all threw me out. And then finally I met this guy and I begged him, "I'll do anything, I'll wash the windows, I'll, I'll clean the floor, I'll do anything, just teach me the diamonds." And so he said okay and he gave me like seven dollars an hour. I remember. And I had to carry things from thirty-third street to fourth-seventh street and that was my job. And then one day he gave me eight dollars, and then later on he gave me nine dollars, and then he gave me ten dollars, and then he gave me a salary and then I got a position and then it was fifty thousand, and sixty thousand and it kept going, escalating, you know and then finally it reached this point where I'm the vicepresident and I have to have all these things. You know, at the beginning I didn't know what to do with the money. I, I just put it in the bank account and I didn't know what to do with it, you know, I just collected it. And now it seems like I can't bear, I'm, I'm overspent usually [laughter] and I can't bear to live without it, you know, and... And, and my mind still wants more, you know your mind wants more. And that's the nature of all things you can obtain. Everything. You come to a class, the first time that you come, you're so grateful to be in a Buddhism class and it seems so cool, you know. And then after a couple of courses you're like kind of getting kind of tired of it and then after about a year you say "Oh, I didn't like the way he taught that one." [laughs] [laughter], you know. And it's, it's not your fault. It's, it's natural, it's the nature of our minds, you know? The people... I interviewed somebody today and they're all so fresh and happy and glad to be in class, and then, two years from now they'll be, "Oh yeah, another class" [laughter], you know. And it's not your fault, it's not you, it's this, it's {ngom mi shepa} it's the nature of, of our minds. And they always want more and everytime you get something you want more, something bigger. And it, it's just the nature of our minds and it's a, and it is the second suffering. And we have it how often?

[students: unclear]

It never stops. It never stops. So don't think of the suffering of humans and devas as being, you know, burning with lead and beating with a stick, these are sufferings we have in our hearts.

[student: But can't you do, before you get enlightened, start training yourself where you start understanding, I guess you were saying, the true nature of things so it isn't suffering, like, with, with the first one where you work on the equanimity where all the people you loved...]

Yeah.

[student: ...and that you want to treat you well and love the people who you don't like treated you in a kind way and you start more and more equanimity

towards everybody or this where you appreciate but would would that be an attached cling so...]

I'll, I'll say, I'll say. And that, all the Buddhist texts, like Shantideva's text, Nagarjuna's text the first seventy-five percent of the book is "dharma tricks to put up with the crap of life," you know. [laughter] You know, it's like, okay, things are, things are bad but let's, let's think about the good side, alright. You know, this person's yelling at you but think about they're your teacher and, you know... really, seriously. That's... And then they reach a point in their books, Nagarjuna reaches it's on page sixty-something, and he says, "But that's not ending suffering that's just learning how to put up with suffering" you know? "Why live in an existence where you have to put up with suffering" you know? There... everything is possible. Since things are empty, since things are empty, you don't have to live in a world like this. You don't have to live in a world where American's have to have all the wealth and other people have to be poor. You can live in a world where everybody has wealth. Because that's the nature of karma. In other words, you don't have to put up with crap. It, dharma and, and, and the... Somebody told me they... there's this great Korean mosochist who can sit in the snow for [laughs] six hours. I said "Yeah but I want to live in a world where I don't have to sit in the snow for six hours" you know. [laughter] You know, that's not the point, it's not to endure suffering, that's not it. You actually want to change reality. And you can, once you understand the dharma. Then you just change the world. You won't be able to perceive the suffering. You just won't have it. So, we're not learning psychological tricks, we're learning ultimate reality tricks. To change the actual nature of our world. Which requires an understanding of emptiness and, and, and compassion, and those two things, and then you can do it. So I, I really, strongly don't like the thing about put... you know learning to sit for four hours, and, and, live with the pain. So what, you know, you're getting old in the meantime. And there'll be a time when you can't sit for four hours and live with the pain. So what's the point, you know? I want to live in a world where my body doesn't have any pain. Cannot have pain. That's a different thing. Okay, that's number...two. They get your mind fertile for higher things, and that's why they're in Nagarjuna's book, in Tsongkapa's book. [silence]

Say {yang yang} [repeat] {lu ndorwa} [repeat] {yang yang} [repeat] {lu ndorwa } [repeat]. {Yang yang} means over and over again. [silence]

{Lu ndorwa} means to... shed your body. I had a lot of problems with this when I was studying Buddhism... I mean when I first started about twenty-five years ago. And I... the other two sufferings I understood. This one, I didn't believe in future lives, particularly. I, I didn't see it as a big problem of shedding bodies,

you know, it wasn't like I could remember having gone through a hundred bodies and there'd be this big **pile of, a**, skeletons outside that... and then remember how much it hurt to give up those bodies. I mean I didn't, it didn't impress me at all, 'cause it would take, it would take a great leap of faith for me to worry about all the bodies I've gotten rid of. You know, it didn't, it just didn't mean much to me, and I used to, you know, "Go on to the next one" because it didn't seem like an important problem to me. First of all I couldn't... didn't even know if I believed it. And then it, even if I believed it, you know, so "Okay if you die you gotta give up the body and then you get another one, you know, so what's the deal. And I... but the Panchen Lama gives a very beautiful explanation in [b: Ngulchu], they give a really beautiful explanation. They talk about it in terms like this: there's this contradiction - we had this contradiction with {Ngom mi shepa}, number two. The contradiction is you go to get things to make you happy and then when you get them they make you miserable, you know? I mean, that's a contradiction. It seems like when you obtain something you've been trying to get you should at least have some peace for awhile. I mean it should make you happy for awhile. And then not create more desire in you so that you're unhappier later than you were before you had it. That's a contradiction. And this one is also. And the point is this, we have this natural prejudice to take care of our own bodies more than other people's bodies. You know, like we're all just minds, right? And we all possess a body. But why is it you take more care of your body than someone else's body? What is that prejudice? I mean, what, what does it mean? I mean why should you be more concerned you're more well-fed than somebody else? You know, why should you care more about this flesh than somebody else's flesh? You have to give it up anyway. I mean nobody here in their right mind'll say, "Oh, I'm gonna keep this body for a thousand years," you know, it's not like that. You know it's a temporary situation. You know that, that someday it's gonna get cancer or AIDS or something, you know, it's gonna have some kind of disease invade it and you're gonna lose it. You know, one of the organs'll fail and they'll take that body and they'll throw it out. But still you have this incredible obsession with your body. You know, you want to make sure that it has the best coffee [laughter] and that it has most comfortable room and that it's driving the best car. And, and you're just concerned about your body. You have this unreasonable prejudice for your body as opposed to everybody else's body. That makes you do some kind there's a karma, what? Bad karma. I mean it's the nature of being so prejudiced in favor of your body, you know... is that you will withhold things from other people so you can take care of your body. It's the nature of having your body, I mean it's a part of our life. You know, you don't send ninety percent of your income to Africa for poor people because you

have a prejudice for your body. See, you want your body to have a new shirt today. When it could feed a monk in India for a month, you know, three months, actually [laughs]. But you just have this natural prejudice for your body. And then because of that you, you withhold things, you, you store wealth, you deny it from other people. And then the paradox is that by taking care of your body something happens. When you die can you take the body with you? Can you take any, any atom of anything you own with you? No. What's the only thing you take, I mean you take what?

[student: Your karma.]

And your m... you take your mind. And your mind it filled up with these karmas. Which are by the way going off right now and that's why you're having a Buddhism class, you know? And that's, that's more karma than to be pretty for a half-hour [laughter] is to be in a Bu ... a Buddhism class is like ten-thousand times more karma being used up. To stay, to stay in this class for half an hour is, is using up an extremely high amount, the highest amount of karma you can. We used to talk when I was in college about how could you spend money the fastest way. Somebody said fly around the world all the time or something [laughs]. But sitting in a dharma class, I mean you're using up [cut]

[unclear] of being prejudice you take with you. You take with you the karma. And then it makes you suffer. So it's weird. You're trying to watch out for yourself and the paradox is, is that, is that you're setting yourself up for more suffering. And so the Panchen Lama says, "Don't think about this. Don't get hung up in the words here. The point is you're shedding bodies but you're collecting these huge bad karmas by being so prejudiced in favor of your body, you know? And, and you have to recognize it. See, if you want to avoid this suffering you have to avoid that attitude. Very difficult, extremely difficult. Yeah.

[student: But don't you also generate a lot of good karma being in a Buddhist class or do you just shed it away?]

Depends a lot of your attitude. You know, if you're coming here 'cause you want to learn a new language you want to impress your friends, which is partly of why I, I come [laughs]. You know, if, if you have motivation like that then it's just sort of neutral. If your motivation is really well, "If I could sit in that class and learn how to change this existence into enlightenment in this life, you know, get out of this flesh in this life before I die..." if you have that motivation it's extraordinary. Then, then you're collecting good karma every minute you're here. Actually, just to hear these things is, is great karma. [laughter] So, I mean

there's an upward cycle, and there's a downward cycle, [laughs] you know? I think most of us are on an upward cycle, maybe slow but, [laughter] but just to be here is, is good karma. It is collecting new good karma. We'll take a break for a couple of minutes.

[student, John: Which out weighs is which?] [laughter]

What's that?

[John: Which out weighs which? If we're burning up mass amounts of karma being here and collecting karma...]

By the way that's how we dedicate "{gewa diyi kyewo kun}" at the end. It means supposedly you're putting in the bank by, by recalling that "I want it to be for, for those purposes."

[John: Could, could it be said you collect more virtuous karma by being here or use more virtuous karma by being here?]

[laughs] Again I think it's your attitude. If your attitude is that "I, I would like to help people by being here," then it's probably you're collecting more than you're burning up. But almost any other at... you tell me how many people lose their lamas and how many people gain lamas? You know, how many people get old and don't have any more dharma classes to go to and how many people get old and have even sweeter dharma experiences happening to them? You know, I mean, that's the answer, I guess.

[cut]

[laughter] {Nyingtsam Jorwa} is a difficult expression. Basically it means rebo..., reborn. And it's a very difficult word. It appears all over the [b:: Abidharma] and [b:: Ngulchu]... gives a beautiful explanation of it. Since you guys aren't in the Tibetan class I won't go through it. [laughter] Basically it means something like "going over the threshold again and again". The threshold between death and birth. And possibly going through that again and again. The energy that sends you across that threshold - in fact we're covering on Friday nights, we're doing the wheel of life and there's a certain kind of energy that projects you across that threshold. And then there are certain kinds of karmic energies ripening on that threshold. And... and the nature of the ones that throw you across that threshold into the next life, they're defective. I mean they, they, they have built-in sufferings. They are the karma that's now operating with us and that's why we're getting old and bald and ugly and forgetful and not as healthy as we used to be. I mean, again, you don't have to think of this so much as a big deal. You know, you go to your friends at work and you say "Last night I had a

really great class and I figured out how to be not to get reborn again and again.” And they’ll say “Yeah, well, so what,” you know? But the point is not to go through this again and again. Not to be caught in a situation where the energy which is actually driving your life is degen... is by is doomed to degenerate. Is doomed to wear out. And you, you must and you will get old and, and it’s just inevitable. And that’s, that’s the real essence of {Yang Yang Lu Ndorwa}. The energy which projects you into this life. The energy which made you young and healthy and strong and handsome is the same energy that’s gonna make you old and stupid and ugly. [laughs] And it’s inevitable. And we’ll all go through it. You know, and people have, you know, whadya you call it, anxiety attacks... well actually, that’s the correct reaction [laughs] [laughter]. Don’t get paralyzed, but, I mean, that’s actually based on a correct perception. We’re gonna study death meditation in the last two classes and he’s gonna talk, Je Tsongkapa’s, going to talk about how to use those anxiety attacks to get enlightened, actually. That’s the essence of death meditation, but we’ll talk about it. So that’s problem number four. Problem number five.
[students all at once [unclear]]

What’s that?

[student: What was the translation for that?]

“Being born again and again”. But you could say, “crossing the border again and again” [silence] It’s even a difficult...

[student: [unclear] see the difference between...]

Yeah, somebody asked me that in the other class. Think about the one of losing your body again and again. More, I mean, when you explain it to your students, okay, when you take this notebook number eight down off the shelf, because someone has asked you two years from now “How do you do death meditation?” You say, “Okay, well listen, first we have to go over the realms, you know?” And, and they say, “Well what, what’s the difference between number four... number three and number four?” And you say, “Well {lu Ndorwa}, you know, shedding your body again and again, mostly refers to the paradox that by taking care of your body, you collect karmas which you have to take with you and then the thing you were taking care of you can’t take with you and, and, and, and that’s causing you all these sufferings. You see that’s more of the point of number three.

[student: Oh, so it’s just different emphasis]

yeah, yeah

[student: on the same [unclear]]

Well really number three is the suffering that's created by this prejudice of taking care of your body as opposed to others. And then number four is more of the suffering that's inevitable

by the nature of the karma that's projecting every life you ever will have. And you'll be like that king... I don't know if you know the story of the king who, the ministers came to him and reported, this is an ancient Indian story, that the water was getting infected and it would make everybody crazy. And, so the king... they have to drink, you know, it's the only water in the kingdom, you have to drink. So he's like, holding out. Everybody around him is going crazy, flipping out, because they drink the water and then he holds out for two three four days as long as he can. Then he realizes he's going to have to drink the water. So he makes a big "X" on his forehead, you know, with some charcoal, you know, so he won't forget that he's crazy. [laughter] And then he, he drinks the water, you know [laughs]. And then he's looking in the mirror and he says, "What the hell is this "X", you know. [laughter][laughs] You know, and he can't remember, you know." And that's... it's the same I mean you won't remember this cla... I mean {Nyingtsam Jorwa} means when you pass that threshold everything is lost. I mean, you have this very short window of opportunity now. The energy that threw you into this life and into this building and into this room and into this lecture is by definition wearing out and you have a brief opportunity between the end and now to do something - hopefully practice very seriously. Do the retreats that you have to do. Perceive the things that you have to perceive. Meditate properly, everyday. Practice the higher teachings, keep your bodhisattva vows and your tantric vows, and then, and then change... get out before you forget why you're here, you know. You know, before you forget what the "X" was all about, you know. It's a very brief period; you have about ten years, five years? I don't know. It's a very brief window. Then after that, you'll be too old. And you, you won't really understand these things anymore. They..they'll fade. And then when you cross the threshold it's, forget it, you know. And then to get back into a place where they're talking about those things is very difficult; it's almost impossible. So it's a very short time. Number five. [silence] Say {yang yang} [repeat] {to-men du} [repeat] {gyurwa} [repeat]{yang yang} [repeat] {to-men du} [repeat] {gyurwa} [repeat] {Yang yang} means...

[students: over and over again]

Okay, {to} means high, {men} means low, {gyurwa} means to change. What it means is you keep cycling in your life, you know. You keep going up and down

and up and down, you know. One minute you're the boss at work, six months later everyone's calling you a stupid head. One minute you're double ton, the successful financier, six months later you're bankrupt and everyone's making fun of you in the newspapers, you know. One minute you're a beauty model and six months later you're a big failure and you're drug addict and, and people just constantly cycle like that. We all cycle. And, and if you've been alive for awhile you know that. I mean you you get a job where they think you're hot, hot stuff then six months later everybody thinks you're stupid. and you're the same person, [laughs] you know. Perceptions are shifting. But it's the nature of that same energy that's driving our own minds and our own perceptions. It, it, it comes and goes it goes in these huge waves and, and that energy goes through waves and then we perceive things getting better and then things getting worse, and then things getting better and then things getting worse, and there is... that's the very most basic meaning of this. I mean, and you... it'll just keep happening. As long as you're here it'll keep happening. You know, you get handsome, strong, then you get weak and ugly. Then you get a position at work and then the company closes and then everything just will keep cycling up and down. You feel like your life is finally straightened out, then you get cancer, [laughs] you, know and things like that [laughter] you know? It'll just keep going like this and that's its nature because it's not changing, its empty and your projections are changing and they must change because they are driven by karma which is fluctuating. When karma is fluctuating your perceptions will fluctuate and there's no way to get out of it. Even if you know it, it doesn't help because it's real. Even if you're aware of what's going on, it doesn't mean it's gonna be nice at work when they lay you off, you know. It doesn't help. In fact it hurts a little more that you know what's going on. [laughs] Okay. {Ngulchu} explains it three ways. He says there's that...anytime you get a high position you must fall. And you've seen that often enough in politics and, and if you've... in business, in the business world. You know these mighty companies, you know, Apple Computer, I think, is this week's victim, you know [laughs]. They go up and then they go down. Then he says any re... it's the same with any relationship, he says. He, he equates it on a second level to all relationships: personal relationships, interpersonal relationships... anyone you ever connect up with, the nature of our perceptions is that you split with them. You, you must. And if it's not a a nasty split before you die then it'll be death itself. So you will split. There's nobody, there's no relationship you can share with anyone that does, that will not end in, in, in a ... losing them. It's the nature of our perceptions and, and that's inevitable. On... and then on the third level he says that life itself is aimed at what?

[student: Death]

Death. I mean life itself is aimed at separation. You know, just to be alive is... the, the height of being alive is gonna lead to death. The only result of life is death. The only place where... the destination of life is death. He says, that, that's how {Ngulchu} explains... and you'll see in the readings its very beautiful. That's how he explains going from high to low. Last suffering [silence]
[student: Yeah. it's so hot.]

Yeah, it didn't work all winter and now it's... [laughs] [laughter] That must be suffering. Number seven.
[student: unclear]

Don't forget it. Say {drok} [repeat] {mepa} [repeat] {drok mepa} [repeat]. {Drok} means companion and mepa means...
[student: Fixed?]

There is none. Oh that was op...opposite [laughs] [silence] And what it basically means is that... I mean, people often ask me can you collect karma for somebody else, you know? Can you, can you take someone else's karma away? And in the Abhidharma system more than any other system, you are your karma. You are the flow of your karma. You, John McCane exist of the flow of your karma. I mean that's all that you are. So to, to ask me if, if Michael Roach's karma could be transferred to someone else is, is, is a ridiculous question in Buddhism. You, you are your own karma. You are what the result of what you did before. And you cannot share it with anyone else. And, and basically your, your path or your life is totally separate from other lives. Even buddhas, you know, they say that the buddhas all mix into one great brain, a universal brain. No, I mean a sentient continuum, continuum of a mind is and always will be separate. Buddhas are different personalities. They all share, especially their dharmakayas are very much the same nature but, but are they one being? No. We are and we always will be separate beings. What's the implication for us is that you'll always be alone, you cannot have any companions. You'll meet with people temporarily and then you lose them. And it will always be like that. You, you can't have anybody that you stay with. It won't be like that. It can't be like that. You will always lose any companion you ever have, you will lose. And no one can go with you especially when you die. No one can, can go with you. And Nagarjuna takes a... he takes the, the moment, he takes the opportunity at this moment... he has a very beautiful line here and he says, "Do not therefore do a bad deed for anyone." And he says, "Don't do it for your friend, don't do it for your parents, don't do it for your Lama," he says. He's very powerful here. He

says, "No one can experience karma for you if you do something it's, it's sticking in your mental continuum. It can't be shared by anyone else. Don't do bad things for anybody. Even spiritual teachers get up and says do this or do that if it's wrong don't do it because you... in the end your {drok mepa} your, your sentient... your continuum of your mind, the stream of your mind is totally separate from others. And you, anything that you put there is... the only person who's gonna suffer is you." He says, "Don't judge other people. Don't worry about other people. Concentrate on your mental continuum because that's the one you're stuck with. Don't, don't absolutely don't worry about, I mean help other people, be kind to other people, if you can correct other people correct 'em, but mainly... ninety-nine percent of your effort, focus on your mental stream because you're stuck with it and you're totally alone in this life, in the bardo, in the next life. No one's going with you. You know, your wife, your friends nobody, teacher, nobody. You're by yourself. Ultimately, you're on your own. And you have to... your practice has to reflect that, you know? You have to... especially about your own morality or your own... watching your attitude don't be so worried about other people. Watch your own mental stream. You can't judge... you don't know what other people are but you know what you are. And, and, and karma cannot jump from one continuum to another. Cannot. So take... concentrate on your mind and your practice and, and make it good and don't do evil for anyone. You, you... she had a question.

[student: Yeah. How does group karma or one's karmic connections to other people fit into all this?]

Oh, there's a thing where... first of all, because we're having a class together tonight and because we're talking sweet dharma we will meet again with... inevitably we will meet again. We will be together and the reason we're together tonight is that we were together before. We did some good thing together. We served some Lama before together or we did something good together. We helped people learn Dharma and so all from all over the world in all these weird childhoods we all are here together tonight. You know, I mean, we finally got together after all those years and so there's that, that's true. And, and that's... you can have a communal experience that's cre... a communal projection. And we talked about it in the [b:: Diamond Sutra] that the sun coming up in the morning is a communal projection. I mean, everyone who's enjoying the sun and there's beings who can't, are all making the same projections at the same time because we gave light to someone and we gave warmth to someone before. Therefore we all see... there is this communal experience of karma but each person is experiencing it separately and, and always will. Yeah?

[student: What about these spiritual practices that will supposedly take the karma of somebody else...]

It's uh...

[same student: ... purify it. I mean is that strictly to enhance your own [unclear] and it doesn't do anything?]

Technically, you can't. You know. And we asked this... Tom Kiley and I went to my Lama in Sera Mey, he's a great scholar and we asked him this question, you know. And he said maybe you could interpret it in some extraordinary cases where the Lama and the disciple are so close that some extraordinary blessing could be given because of the total, almost the oneness of them. But, but generally speaking, it's a contradiction. You can't. And, and the first Dalai Lama in this commentary to the [b: Abhidharma Kosha] says, at the beginning, "You cannot take another person's karma, and you cannot give them..." you know, he said, "You can't sprinkle water on someone's head and their bad deeds go away. It's impossible. You're responsible for your own mind. You are the result of your own mind." [laughs]

[student, Nina: So what he is referring to is [unclear] you become [unclear] compassion towards those beings]

Oh absolutely but, but then it says, "How does the Buddha remove suffering?" You know. "What is the method?" Is there any method that he could go into your mind stream and suck out some bad karma or something. He said, "Absolutely not." The, the main activity of a Buddha always was and always will be teaching dharma to people. You know. Coming to that planet and teaching. Cuz that's, that's the only way that people have... you have to teach people to help themselves. That's the only... You can't... if, if it were in any infinitely small way possible to help someone otherwise, the Buddha would have done it long ago or else he's not compassionate. What is he, a sadist that he wants us to go through it first [laughter] and then he'll fix it later? [laughs] You know he just wants to watch the bugs crawl, you know. That's the proof actually in a debate, you know. Why would the Buddha just sit and watch us suffer if there were any way, any, any slight way to suck a little bit of our bad karma out, you know, wouldn't he do it? He would have done it when he first saw our suffering which was thousands of years ago. Our present suffering. He can't. He's helpless. All he can do is communicate to us when we're ready. That's all. One more and then we'll stop.

[student: Yeah, if the Buddhas also are separate beings would they still be said to suffer in a certain way?]

Never.

[same student: But yet they ha .. they are all by themselves too and its suffering
[unclear] ...]

That's a {tsa}, oh yeah. You're a good debater. We'll say to have no companion in suffering, hows that? [laughs] [laughter] No, these are sufferings of realm number four and five.

[student: Okay]

In samsara. In the circle of life. And they're not in there.

[John: Are these, are these the sufferings of pleasure beings then?]

Yeah, that's the point you see. Cuz the people in those pleasure being realms... I mean like, do they have cancer?

[John: At the very end.]

Are they capable of even having pain?

[John: Only at the end.]

Yeah, only at the very, very end but generally speaking once you reach a certain level you don't even have pleasure any more. It's{tong yong}it's called the sensation there is like a deep novicane or something. And they're just buzzed out because of the meditation they did in their last life. They've even reached the point beyond sensation. Normal sensations. They're just like on heroin or something. They're just totally... nothing, you know. {Chiung may} Just buzzed out ... and. But, but these six sufferings are going on all the time. They have been.

[student: [unclear]...is that impermanence?]

They have that too, yeah. Okay, we'll do... [laughs] Don't feel too bad, I mean at least we got a dharma class. [laughs] [laughter]. Alright.

[prayer: short mandala offering]

[prayer: dedication]

Transcriptions

Course #8 - Death and the Realms of Existence

Class #5

Geshe-la: Say {bardo}.

[Class]: {bardo}.

Geshe-la: {bardo}.

[Class]: {bardo}.

Geshe-la: Um, {bar} means in Tibetan between, in-between. {Bardo}. So {bardo} means the being in-between. In-between what?

[Student]. Life and death.

Geshe-la: Death and death.

[Laughter].

Geshe-la: Ya. Definitely. We're between birth and death okay?

This is between death and birth okay? Death and rebirth. That's a {bardo}. Now sometimes in Tibetan they, the {bardo} is the state, the {bardo} is the, is the state that the being is in. The being itself is called a {bardowa}. Other names for {bardowa} are {bar si}. {Bar} means "in-between". {Si} means ah, "existence" or "life". So {bar si} means "the life in-between". Sometimes they're called {dri sa}. Say {dri sa}.

[Class]: {Dri sa}.

Geshe-la: {Dri sa}.

[Class]: {Dri sa}.

Geshe-la: {Dri} means smells. {Sa} means eats. Smell eater okay. And they, we'll talk about it later but it's a synonym for, all of these mean the same thing. A {bardowa}, a {bar si}, and a {dri sa} are all different names for the being between death and rebirth. Everything I say tonight is going to be from ah,

Abhidharmakosha. Who wrote that?

[Student]: Vasubandu.

Geshe-la: Vasubandu. About...

[Class]: 350.

Geshe-la: 350 AD. Okay. Um, we're going to study the commentary by First Dalai Lama. Okay. Gyalwa Gendun Drup. Lived about the time of Tsongkapa. He was a student of Tsongkapa. So that puts him early fourteen hundreds. Um... so the, your reading is from the First Dalai Lama and he's commenting directly. He's using the words of Vasubandu. And you can see in the readings how he, he uses the direct words, he explains it exactly as Vasubandu explained it. And that's a big point about the {bardo}. Um, there have been a lot of corruptions about the teachings on the {bardo}. And I thought it was important, one of the reasons to have this subject in this class is that you get the original text, you know, this is the real {bardo} teaching. This is Vasubabandhu sixteen centuries ago collecting the information from the sutras in the Abhidharma. And it's very very ah, accurate, and very much ah, the actual teaching. And then after that time especially in Tibet, ah, there were a lot of corruptions of the {bardo} teachings, and we believe in our tradition, in our lineage, that for example the book called the, ah, what's it called?

[Student]: {Bardo Te Dro}?

Geshe-la: Ya. The Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is {Bardo Te Dro} is a corruption. We, we believe that it's ah, erroneous. And ah, we don't study in our tradition and, and ah, it's not corroborated by any of the ah, other texts that you can study. So as your Tibetan gets better you can begin to distinguish between the, the accurate texts and the ones that aren't accurate. There's, there's just this time gap that we're in right now where you know, we're the first Americans to study Tibetan Buddhism, um, anything that's printed on one of these long wood blocks we think it must be okay, and we read it and we, somebody translates it and somebody else re-translates it, and somebody mistranslates it and then we study it and then it starts to spread and then somebody puts it in a best seller and then it spreads more and, and ah, and you have to be really careful so I thought it would be good to, to go to the original – this is the original text, the Abhidharma text, and, and you can study it from there. Um, and it's very important that you pass it on that way. I was in Russia a lot in the last few years because of, we're cataloging the manuscripts there

and... they have two hundred thousand Tibetan manuscripts. And they just got liberated and now they can have any religion they want and everybody is coming from India, you know. Every weird thing you can imagine is showing up from India, you know, ah, if you have a Oriental face you know, you can go to Russia and you can start teaching something and they can't distinguish between good or bad or, you know. And when I met the Russians I said 'You're just like us in the nineteen sixties' you know. Every type of Tibetan showed up in America and you know, a lot of them even showing up now, ah, there's one I can think of who's, he's, he's, he's from a village nearby the monastery and he's the father of one of the kids in my class and, and you know he just showed up in America and started teaching, you know and ah you know, he wears a nice thing and he's ah, looks Tibetan, and ah you gotta be careful. And I think Americans now are more, I mean if, if someone starts to teach something strange, or do something strange ah, or something improper, then Americans have reached a point of sophistication where they say 'well, you know that's not Buddhism, that's, there's, there's no Buddhism there. Where did you get that?' You know, and ah, you have to be able to go back to the original text. You have to find ah, it's very easy to – people are craving to know about death. In Russia, people are craving for any kind of religion. So people who are hungry for something, then they're more willing to eat anything you know [laughs]. So, people are very concerned about death, people are worried about their death and people tend to grasp – especially if they have some disease or something - that they're grasping on to anything they hear about death, ah, and then if you read some of those books you'll see that they even contradict each other so something must be incorrect there. So its good I think to get the real... this is Vasubandu sixteen centuries ago, quoting the Buddha directly and this is the First Dalai Lama explaining that. Ah, and I think you will be among the first really educated Buddhists and then hopefully you can help stamp out this ah, strange things that are, that are being taught and you can say you know, 'where did you get that?' You know, 'where, where's that come from?' And the person will say 'well, I heard it somewhere' you know. And you say well 'show me that text' you know. 'Did Vasubandu say that? Did the Buddha say that?' You know, where's that taught? 'Show me where that's taught'. And they'll, and they won't be able to show you because it's not taught. And, and as you get more sophisticated, you, you're the ones who have to try to help you know, keep the lineages pure. Keep the information pure. If it's corrupted five per cent in each generation then within, you know, a hundred years or so, which is nothing in the length of Buddhism, it gets totally strange and totally mixed up and totally wrong. I mean it's very important for you to keep the information clear, and, and pure, and, and not to add anything of you own ideas and not to leave out anything that's

not too popular in that generation. You have to teach it like it is, ah, and not corrupt it. Because if you corrupt it one per cent then, then two thousand years from now God knows what it would look like you know. It might get, be very strange. Ah, so you're going to get the {bardo} instructions from the Abhidharma. This is what the Abhidharma says, and that's all the Abhidharma says. Um, are there other teachings about the {bardo} that are not covered in this short verses? There are, and there are authentic ones, and they're secret. And we're not allowed to teach them in public. And ah, that's called tantra. And ah, if you study this properly and if you do the necessary preparation in the proper way, then ah, then someday ah, a lama will grant you those teachings. They're very secret. Ah, a Lama is not allowed to teach them publicly to a group ah, without each person being prepared. And so if you bump into somebody who is willing to teach it to a group its not tantra anymore [laughs]. It's not correct. It's not proper. Ah, the, there's, tantra means secret. And the word means secret and it's secret. And ah, it will be passed on to you when the time comes. And that's, that's the way tantra works. That's what the word tantra means. So, and the Lama who teaches it openly to people is breaking tantra and its, its not tantra anymore, so, ya.

[Stilwell]: Can you say what the title of the um, tantric teaching is? Are you allowed to say that?

Geshe-la: It comes in a... I, I can't say much about it. But it, it comes in a lot of texts. It's, it's, it's covered in a lot of texts and in very very wonderful ways. And you have to learn it. You know tantra is not something to be afraid of; it's something you have to learn. But you have to be prepared for it properly. And, and then when you learn it, it will be wonderful, and fantastic, and, and , and beautiful and pure. Um, and you must learn it some day but you have to learn it in the proper time and under the proper circumstances. So everything I'm going to talk about tonight is straight from Vasubandu. Ah, there are more details, and there are more things to say, but they're not public and you can't teach them publicly. Um, that's all. So we'll start out with the {bardo}. {Bardos}, {bardowas} are {dzu kye}. That's the first thing you can say. Say it. {dzu kye}.

[Class]: Dzu kye.

Geshe-la: Dzu kye.

[Class]: Dzu Kye.

Geshe-la: Dzu kye was one of the four kinds of, ah, births. Do you, I don't know if you remember.

[Student]: Moisture?

Geshe-la: Naa. That's {ku sherap dra}??? {Dzu, dzu kye} means you're born complete, and that's how a {bardowa} is born. Ah, a {bardowa} is a separate birth, and they, right after they die in this life, then they're, you're reborn as a, you take a very short, a brief rebirth as a, as a {bardowa}. As a {bardo} being. And you, you take birth there complete. In other words you, you don't have a {bardo} mommy and a {bardo} Poppy. Papa and [laughs] you know, you know, they don't have to change your {bardo} diapers and things like that.

[Laughter]

Geshe-la: You're just born there, complete. You know. Ah, you just take birth there as a {dzu kye}. Um, Vasubandu... ya?

[Stilwell]: What is {dzu kye}?

Geshe-la: {Dzu kye} means, literally it means ah, born miraculously. But what it, the meaning of it is born complete.

[Stilwell]: Which is which?

Geshe-la: Ah, {dzu} is miraculous and {kye} is born. {Dzu tru} refers to like when the Buddha shows miraculous feats or something, walks on water or something, that's a {dzu}. Um, people who teach fake {bardo} teachings are {sok dzu}. Meaning illusion. You know, so the word {dzu} means ah, has all these connotations of illusion or miracles and things like that. Uh, {dzu kye}. There are uh, Vasubandu goes through the exercise to prove the existence of a {bardowa}. And this is, these are the proofs from scripture. First he tries to prove it logically and then he tries to prove it with scripture. Ah, this is very common in Buddhism. In a debate, in a monastery, or when you're teaching somebody, you have to be able to show them good reasons why this things exists, and then you have to be able to show them that somebody who knew what they were talking about said that they exist. Ah, the first, the second kind of proof, which is scriptural proof, is called {lung} and second kind of proof is called {rik}. {Rik pa}. So if you're a very good monk you might be called {Jhampa Lu Rik}. Which is the name of the monk, that, the nice monk out in

New Jersey. Jhampa's last name is {Lung Rik}. {Lung rik} means scriptural proof and logical proof. So {lu} means scriptural proof and {rik} means, {rik pa} means logical proof. We're going to do the, the {rik pa} first. The word {rik pa} is this... this {rik pa} means logic. Reasoning. Then the, the a direct quotation from the Abhidharma is, say "{dru gyun}"

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Dang}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Chu tun chir}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Sipa}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Che le}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Chu wan yin}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Dru gyun dang}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Chu tun chir}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Dru gyun}. That's the, the beginning of Vasubandu's logical proof. He's talking about {dru}. Ah, a {dru} means ah, a grain, like a grain of corn or a grain of rice, or something like that. A grain... {Gyun}, {gyun} means a stream. Or a continuum. A stream or a continuum. An the example, a metaphor, an

example of {dru gyun}, {dru gyun} a steam of a, of, of, of grain. What that means is that ah, you have a seed here you know like, ah, I don't know, I like popcorn personally....

(Draws on board)

...that's a, a piece of grain okay. And then uh, much later (draws on board) there's going to be ah, you know one of these huge ah, this is a corn plant okay. And this has to get to there. Um, the piece of corn, the piece of popcorn or whatever, the grain, is going to be turning into a, a fully fledged plant. But, it can't do that without something else in-between. What's in-between?

[Class]: Inaudible

Geshe-la: Well there's a, a little sprout, okay? So ah, Vasubandu's text is, is hard to understand and you have to read some of the famous commentaries. The best commentary here is a Sakya commentary. And we, we use that commentary. It is a very famous commentary. But what he's saying is that you can't go from grain to plant without a sprout. There has to be something in-between the grain and the plant. And this is the meaning of Vasubandu's root text. Vasubandu's root text is very, it's very short. Because it was meant to be memorized and passed down by memory. You know, basically it was, it was, it was, it was invented before paper. So you know people passed it on by, by memory. And we had to memorize it in the monastery. Um, it's from the third chapter of the Abhidharma. So {dru gyun} and {chu ten gyun} means, it goes from a grain to a plant there must be something in-between called a sprout. What's that got to do with {bardo}, okay? Ah, {bardo} means that your going to die on Sixth Street okay, and you're going to show up, let's say in uh, I won't use Howell, let's say uh...

[Student]: Hong Kong.

Geshe-la: Kansas. And the point is that uh, the continuum of you, the continuum of your personality actually does have to go from Sixth Street to Kansas somehow. And that's in the {bardo}. In other words the {bardo} is a state where you pass from the location of your death to the location of your rebirth. So it's during the {bardo} that there has to be this sprout. So you know, if you study Vasubandu's proof, it's interesting, he's not trying to prove the next birth. I mean that's the first thing. He's assuming you believe in a next birth. He's assuming that you understand already that you're going to be born

somewhere else. And you have to get there. There has to be, you have to go from here to there. And that, that, the time and the place, the realm where you travel from Sixth Street in New York City to Kansas is called the {bardo}. And therefore he says the {bardo} must exist. And, and Westerners find this proof, they don't like this proof much because, remember, he's not trying to prove the existence of the rebirth. That's left to who?

[Stilwell]: Proof of logic, past and future lives.

Geshe-la: No. Who did that? Dharmakirti. Right? You guys studied it. Right? [laughs]. Dharmakirti undertook the proof of proving that, and we did it at the Explorer's Club. Right? I mean so, Dharmakirti, ah ah, we had a whole class about it. It takes about eight weeks to prove it. If you're in a rush you can do it at the Explorer's Club in an hour and a half. Ah but, he's not trying to prove the existence of the next life. If you want to know about that you have to come back later. Okay. That's in the sixth and seventh century. Ah, and he does prove it. And he proves it quite nicely. Ah, and it's good enough for foreigners. I mean if you study it, you'll, you'll understand it. And you'll be able to accept it, but it takes time. But remember, he's not doing that. He's just trying to prove that between dying on Sixth Street and being reborn in Kansas, there's got to be some intermediate step where you actually travel to Kansas. Where you get to Kansas. Ya...

[Stilwell]: Is he proving a {bardo} being or a {bardo} realm or what is he proving?

Geshe-la: Both. I mean he doesn't, I don't think he really distinguishes between the two. But the proof is of the {bardo} being. He's interested in proving the {bardo} being. But you have to have a, a form. You have to have some kind of existence. You have to have some kind of a body in which you travel from Sixth Street to Kansas to be reborn. Okay? Ya.

[Stilwell]: Could it not, could it not be an instantaneous rebirth without an intermediate {bardo}?

Geshe-la: Ah! That's what Kachikma??? says. Okay? He says why can't you just die here and take birth there. And just be there. Ah, this is called {chele jungwa} The two lines go like this {Dru gyun dunchun tun chir }??? He says it the same thing as the, as the piece of grain, the stream of the piece of grain. And in the next line he says '{Sipa chele jungwa nyin}. '{Sipa chele jungwa nyin}. means

“No, John Stilwell, it doesn’t just happen like that, ah

[Laughter]

[Stilwell]: Could you elaborate please?

Geshe-la: ‘{Sipa chele jungwa nyin}. He says it in the next line. In-between those two lines somebody says ‘well why can’t you just die on Sixth Street and then show up in Kansas, a few minutes later’? You know, why do you need to travel to Kansas? Why do you have to say that there is some kind of body or existence in which you, you go to Kansas and then ah, are reborn and, and Vasubandu says it doesn’t happen like that. You don’t just disappear here and show up there. He says the continuum is not like that. The continuum means that one personality has to continue physically from here over to there and there has to be a continuum. He says it cannot take place just {chepa}. {Che}, {che} means cut off. {Chele jungwa} means you can’t have a continuum where it just stops here and then continues in another location. And then the guy says,

[Student]: Inaudible

Geshe-la: Ah {chele}, {che}, {chepa} means cut off. Like Dorje Chepa is the same verb. {Chepa} means to cut. Diamond Cutter Sutra. So {che} means it’s not like you just stop here and show up over there. It’s impossible. He says, so {chele} means “just discontinue”. You stop here, you die. And then totally independently somebody shows up in Kansas at the, at the next instant. He says that’s not possible.

[Student]: So {jungwa} means...

Geshe-la: {Chele jungwa} means, {jungwa} means to, to show up somewhere else. And the root text says, “{sipa chele jungwa nyin}”. What’s {min}?

[Students]: Not.

Geshe-la: {Min} means it’s not that way. Okay, it’s not the way it works. Because in-between there somebody said ‘Hey Vasubandu, can’t you just show up in Kansas, I mean die here and show up in Kansas the next moment?’ He says ‘no’. A continuum of a personality, there has to be someone traveling from here to there. There has to do that. Ya...

[Student]: You taught us in the karma class that if you do one of the five misdeeds like killing your mother...

Geshe-la: Ah, that's a great question. We're going to cover it [laughs]. It's a, we're going to get there. Somebody attacks Vasubandu with that also. And he, he, he talks about it.

[Stilwell]: It, it seems almost like a question of semantics because if you say there is a continuum you could take any discreet (snaps) like that, you know? And you could continue to break it down into smaller and smaller parts, and you could continue to call those smaller parts you're breaking down, the {bardo}. You know, even if it's like a millisecond, you know. Call that millisecond the {bardo} because it was a millisecond it was a continuum and you went from one place to the other. You know what I mean?

Geshe-la: Ah, We'll talk about it. We'll, we'll get there. Ya?

[Student]: Geshe-la I'm confused about how that um, example of the grain to the sprout to the full plant constitutes a logical proof.

Geshe-la: Ya. He says, no, it's in, met... he's giving a logical example. It's like ah, {drak shen} ??? It's a logical, it's a syllogism. You say ah, sound is impermanent because it was produced. It's like a pot. And {bunba shin} is called a {pey tun}. {Pey tun} ??? in Buddhist logic and syllogisms means a, a totally equivalent example. So he's giving a {pey tun}??? {Dru gyun dan chu tun chir}??? So {tun}, {tun} means he's giving a, a totally analogous example. It's a total analogy, he says. No more can a fully developed tree pop out of an acorn than could a person show up in Kansas just after dying on Sixth Street. Impossible. There has to be this gradual continuum between the two. You have to travel from Sixth Street to Kansas. Ah, ya?

[Student]: But we're not talking about physical objects, but mental objects.

Geshe-la: We are talking about physical.

[Student]: Because when the ??? physical location....

Geshe-la: Um, well

[Student]: I mean or, or your mental...

Geshe-la: Ya. And we'll talk about it. Ah, you actually take on a new physical body. Ah, unless you are born in the...?

[Class]: Formless realm.

Geshe-la: Formless realm. And there are no {bardos} for the formless realm, okay. I mean that's one place where you don't have a {bardo}. Because there is no place to get to.

[Student]: But wouldn't there be...

Geshe-la: You just, you just become where you are. You know, you enter the formless realm wherever you die. So there is no {bardo} for a formless realm, for, the scriptures says there is no {bardo} for the formless realm. You don't have to enter a {bardo} existence to get to the formless realm because there is no location for the formless realm.

[Stilwell]: So, so what do you call that flash from when you die to when you show up in the...

Geshe-la. There's no flash, it's just... I mean, they debate this in the monastery, you'll, you'll never finish. That's a proof of emptiness actually, okay. [laughs]. It's a projection okay? If you want the...

[Student]: Which is? Which is the projection? What is?

Geshe-la: That, that, that one moment you're alive here and the next moment you're dead, you're alive in, in the formless realm. I mean, where do you become a formless realm being and where do you end being a human being? It's a, it's a moment of your own projection. Ultimately. It's the only way to explain it....

[Stilwell]: It's a continuum of your projection...

Geshe-la: If you keep splitting seconds which you can do, you'll never find a second when you do become a formless realm being and that is a kind of a proof for emptiness. But we, but that's another subject [laughs]. Ya?

[Student]: If you can have this continuum than why aren't you remember your

previous lives?

Geshe-la: We'll get into it. We'll talk about it. Um, it's a good question. It's a good question. So that's a {chele jungwa nyin}. He says it doesn't take place just cut off. You can't take off. And then somebody makes a cool ah, somebody debates Vasubhandhu, and he says it's like ah,... [pause] Say, "{che shin}".

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Suk ngen}

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Che shin}

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Suk ngen}

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: Um, {suk ngen} means a reflection in a mirror. And a {che shen} is the thing that's being reflected in the mirror. So we'll call it the image okay? So the {che shin} for example would be my, my color and my shape. Because I'm standing in front of a mirror. And the {suk ngen} would be my reflection in the mirror. So somebody comes up to Vasubandu and, and debates with him. He says, ah, 'an image can go on, can have a continuum in a mirror, but they could be separated by a great distance so that I can be continued in the mirror, my color and shape can continue in the mirror at a distance of a hundred feet. It's not like I have to, there has to be a {bardo} between there'. It can {chele jungwa nyin } you know. He's debating back to Vasubandu. You could have a continuum that stops here and continues twenty feet away. You don't have to have a, a {bardo}. You don't have to have some intermediate state between the two. Because when I stand in front of a mirror, I know my continuum comes up the stairs, walks over towards there behind Janet unclear and then suddenly I'm in front of the mirror and then twenty feet away my, my shape and colour continue. So he says 'You're wrong Vasubandu. It's not like, there's nothing going on between me and the mirror. You know. It's not like I had to walk up to the mirror and stand and touch the mirror in order to be reflected there. My image continues up the stairs, goes to the front of the mirror, and then suddenly

twenty feet away - there is no continuum between them, I appear in the mirror'. And then Vasubandu has to deal with this objection. First he says 'It's not like you're in the mirror', because according to, according to Buddhist theory, according to all physical theory, no two physical bodies can occupy the same space. That's the first problem. He says 'that's not ME in the mirror. That's just some shape and some - it's a reflection. It's not me'. You know, it's not like Michael Roach is inside the mirror, because Michael Roach can't fit in the mirror. Because the mirror is in the mirror. The mirror is occupying the mirror's space. And Michael Roach can't fit in the mirror's space. Two physical bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. That's a rule of all physics and it happens to be a rule of Buddhist physics. Um, this eraser and this pen cannot occupy the same exact space at the same time. It's impossible. Two, two discreet physical entities can't occupy the same physical space at the same time. Concrete entities. Ah, so first of all he says 'that's not me in the mirror That's not my continuum. That's just a, a reflection', and that, and secondly he says, 'it's not caused by the previous moment of me'. We talked about that at the Explorer's club, you know. It's not the continuation of Michael Roach. Michael Roach is continuing over there in front of the mirror. That's ah, some kind of circumstance where colors and shapes are showing up in certain glass. It's not the continuation of Michael Roach. That is caused by a good mirror, certain physical properties of the mirror, and me standing in front of the mirror. That's the cause of, of the reflection in the mirror. But the cause of me is the me of the moment before. And the cause of the mo... of me five minutes from now is going to be the me now. And that's the real continuum. That's, that's where Michael Roach is continuing. And Michael Roach at five o'clock is causing Michael Roach at six o'clock and he's causing Michael Roach at seven o'clock. That's the continuum. The thing in the mirror is just a reflection of, of some kind of color and shapes and things like that. It's not Michael Roach's continuum. 'So' Vasubandu says, 'You're example is...

[Student]: Invalid.

Geshe-la: It's invalid. It's not analogous. It's not, it's not, it's not the same thing. Ya?

[Student]: Is it, is it because time is not included and you're only talking space when you're taking there?

Geshe-la: Partly. Partly. I mean, you have to get there. That's not me in the mirror, you see. It's not my continuum.

[Student]: What about the redness of your, of your robe, what's that continuum?

Geshe-la: (wrong answer buzzer sound).. He'd say no. He'd say it's not, because the redness in my robe is caused by the redness of the robe of the moment before, and is the cause of the redness of the robe of the moment after. And what's appearing in the mirror, I'm still, the cause of the redness of my robe is the redness of my robe of the moment before. But the cause of the, of the redness of the robe in the mirror is, is a different kind of cause, it's not what we call a continuum cause. It's, it's a, it's, it's the condition – two conditions... of a, of a mirror that has certain reflective properties, and the presence of, of this redness in front of it. So those are like two conditions that by some kind of coincidence are causing an appearance of redness there. But the cause of the redness of, this redness of my robe is the redness of the robe of the moment before. And what it's causing is the redness of the robe of the moment after. In the same location.

[Student]: (Unclear) the same clothes, unless you were blind?

Geshe-la: Ah, the reason they appears red to you is because of the nature of light. But the reason there is a redness here is that there was a redness with the moment before. And those are different kinds of causes. You have to study second chapter, and ah, they're called {du tun gi kyen} This is {du tun gyi}. There is a cause for the, there's something which turns into the redness of my robe from the moment behind it. And that's different from what brought about the redness in the mirror. There's, because, what brought about the redness in the mirror was not dye imparted to a thing continuing on through time. It was the condition of the, of the clear mirror and something presented in front of it. Those two con... – two conditions as opposed to a single entity which turns into that in the next moment, and then in the next moment turns into it again, like that. It's, it's, it's two different kinds of causes. Ya?

[Student]: I accept this argument but I'm a little bit, I wonder, don't you also need in both cases to factor in the consciousness of the being that's perceiving all of that?

Geshe-la: Now you're talking ah, Madhyamika. We're in Abhidharma. You have to put on you're Abhidharma hat okay? [laughs]. You know, what is the ultimate cause? I mean, it's a different thing. The ultimate cause of each is maybe very similar. But its not, we're in Abhidharma school and we're

discussing whether a {bardo} can happen.

[Stilwell]: It sounds like semantical differences because if you, if you take that we're a, a, a mind stream, a mental continuum, eternally lasting and, and you know, and if you call these qualities the human and these qualities the {bardo} being, you know, essentially you just have this continuum happening and at some, some, conglomeration of conditions you call human and some other conglomeration of conditions you call {bardo}, and some other conglomeration of conditions you call pleasure beings. But it's all the same condition which you're calling different things.

Geshe-la: You're saying that ah, because it's ah, because it's all nominal its not real.

[Stilwell]: No, I'm not saying it's not real, I'm saying it's, it's real, but all this is primarily nominal, really We're just talking about how we're, how we're naming stuff. How we're naming the qualities of human, that's all. It seems to me.

Geshe-la: Ya, I mean you could say ah, the, the change from happiness to suffering as your perceptions change is just a, an appellation...

[Stilwell]: A what?

Geshe-la: It's just ah, naming it something different. It's just new data called by a different name.

[Stilwell]: Ya.

Geshe-la: That happens to be all it is. But it hurts.

[Laughter]

[Stilwell]: That's valid... I'm not trying to say...

Geshe-la: And that's the key, it hurts. And, and so what's, what's the use of, what's the use of looking at this continuum and saying this part is called human, and this called, this part is called {bardo}? Mainly, it's because if you understand it properly you can get out of it. If you divide it that way, if you think of it that way, and you study it that way, and you analyze why it occurs, you can escape

it. You can escape having to divide it that way. By being forced by your projections to divide it that way. Which hurts. You know, that's all.

[Fran]: You mentioned that, ah, these shrouds in the {bardo} is physical. But the body dies and disintegrates so where does this physicality come from um, before. What's it's contain of that gets to...

Geshe-la: You take on a new body. And we'll talk about it. The moment you enter the {bardo} you're taking on a new body.

[Student]: It seems that trying to avoid this ah, gap between one life and another we create {bardo} but then we have created by this effort two gaps – between life and {bardo} and between {bardo} and life. So you didn't solve the problem you just...

[Laughter]

Geshe-la: Ya, ya, ya. The fact is that your karma when you die in this life will force you to perceive yourself going into the {bardo} and will force you to perceive yourself coming out of the {bardo} into a new birth. It will force you. You won't have a choice. And, and, a, the experience of going through that and of coming into a new birth, and then being young, and then getting old, and then having disease and then dying again and having those six sufferings, is, it hurts. It, it hurts. And, and it has a cause and you can stop that cause if you understand it properly. And that's all. Ah, we want to avoid that pain. That's the purpose of studying really. And we want to help other people avoid that pain. And so it is artificial distinction but our mind is forced to make it and it hurts. And ah, we have to find a way to stop that. That's all. It is artificial. But it hurts. Okay. That's all. As much as life itself.

[Student]: Why would it even have to be in that order? I mean why would old age have to come after your...

Geshe-la: It doesn't have to. I mean if you have some kind of karma, you could age first and get younger later. Okay. Because things are empty. But that's a, don't get, don't get profound on us. In fact, that's maybe a, a goal. [pause] And it's an important question, I mean, she asked, you know, why do you have to get young before you get old. Why couldn't it just be the reverse? And um, I mean that is, I mean ultimately if you collected certain kinds of karma, very powerful karma, then in this same life, which is one of the three types of karma,

ah, you could force you to perceive yourself getting younger or healthier and entering a different kind of body. Like some kind of a...you know, a Tara body or something like that. And that is the whole point of the secret practice. That's the whole point of studying Buddhism. So ya, very possible [laughs]. Okay. But that's, that's a long story. Say "{Sipa}"

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Dun}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Tenpay}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Do}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Sipa}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Dun}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Tenpay}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: {Do}.

[Class]: {repeats}.

Geshe-la: Ah, Vasubandu now moves on to scriptural proof. He says, so I mean what is ah , Americans don't like logical proofs much. It doesn't, you know, it doesn't seem like you're going to be able to go to work tomorrow and say 'hey, you know what, {bardo} beings really exist, because last night I heard this logical

proof – just listen. You know, because seeds grow into plants well there has to be a {bardo} you know’. And ah, people are going to laugh at you and say ‘come on’, you know [Laughter] but you have to think about it. Ah a lot of your resistance to it is, is cultural you know, and you have to think about it you know. Ah, there does happen to be a {bardo} and this actually does prove it and actually you can’t disprove it. Ah, you, you will never will be able to disprove it. ‘Cause ah, ah, actually there is. And you can see that at a certain point in meditation. You will reach a point in your meditations when you see a {bardo}. And you will be, and you will see your future lives. Then you can work backwards later on. You can say ‘hey, you know what? No one can prove me wrong’. And go around, you know, New York and ask everybody, “Prove me wrong” you know. “Prove there’s no {bardo}’. And ah, they can’t do it. Because there happens to be. And it’s the same with future lives. I mean it’s, it’s interesting. And you will get to a point in your practice where that will occur. And you will, it will occur to you that you could walk up to people and say, you know “prove to me there’s not future lives”. And they’ll say ‘oh you stop moving when you die’ And say ‘well, what kind of proof is that’ you know. What does it mean when the mind goes or how does that prove that the mind is dead? Just because the body stops moving. I mean when the car stops is the driver dead? You know, I mean, you know, ah...

[Laughter]

You know, it doesn’t prove anything. Ah, but we’re just culturally, you know, we grew up thinking something else. But, but, it’ll take, it’ll, it’ll come in your mind. And then one day in meditation you’ll see it directly, you won’t have any doubts about it. But, it takes time to, to grow in your mind and has to cook in your mind. And it will. And there will come a day when it makes sense. And then later on there’ll come a day when you see your future lives, directly. With correct and accurate perception and then you’ll know. Um... in fact until that point in Buddhism you’re not allowed to get up and say ‘I know there’s a future life’. You can just say this, this proof makes sense and the Buddha said it and we have to think about it and meditate on it and then maybe we can perceive it directly. Ah, {sipa} means ah, existence or kind of being. Kind of being. {Dun} means seven. Seven types. {tenpay} means to teach. And {do} means a sutra. So there’s this sutra of the Buddha, the Buddha’s own speech, called ‘the Sutra Where the Buddha Taught the Seven Types of Beings’. And among those seven is {bardo}. Okay, so I mean, if, if you’re, if you’re among Buddhas, you know, if you’re sitting at the Three Jewels coffee shop, to open soon...

[Laughter]

ah, so somebody says I'm a Buddhist, and you say 'Do you believe in {bardo}?' and they say 'No', and you say 'well look, here, the Buddha said that a {bardo} exists'. I mean if you accept a Buddha you have to accept that he said that. I mean, Americans are not too cool on, I mean, we don't like to hear that. You know. The Buddha said so. You know. But it actually among Buddhists, it is, it is supposed to be, if you can find a, an authoritative sutra where the Buddha said '{bardo} exists' then that's one reason to accept it. And we, we studied, ah, why that's the case in the other class, in the Dharmakirti class. It boils down to, if you have a being who speaks for fifty years teachings, and they are recorded in fifteen hundred separate sutras, and there is not a single case in those fifteen hundred sutras where you can prove that he lied or that he spoke anything that was less than absolute truth, then with regard to the things that you cannot understand directly yourself, he's probably right. I mean that's, that's part of the proof but we don't have to get into it today. Then there's another sutra where the Buddha gives three conditions for a human to enter a womb. He gives three conditions that have to be present for a human being to enter a womb. And that is to Vasubandu and to Buddhists, is considered another proof that the Buddha believed in the {bardo}. {Bardo} beings, okay.

[Stilwell]: What is the connection between those two? The womb, birth, the womb and the {bardo}?

Geshe-la: Ah, we'll get there. It's coming right now. [pause] Say, {ma- rung}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Datsen den}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la. {Ma-rung}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Datsen den}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: These are the three conditions that must be present for a human being to enter a womb birth, okay? First condition is this one, {ma-rung datsen den}. {Ma-rung} means someone who is fit to be a mother, I mean like a female, okay. A woman human has to be there. Someone who's in, in a condition to be, is eligible to be a mother, okay. {Ma-rung}. Physically in a condition. And {datsen den} means, um, 'still menstruating'. {Da} means "a month" and {tsen} means "the mark of the month". And so she, she has to be a woman who, who's, who's still in menstruation. Who's still menstruating, okay.

[Student]: Does this include animals and um...

Geshe-la: Doesn't... I believe it's says human womb birth. Um, it gonna make sense when we get there.

[Student]: whispering to another student:

[Stilwell]: Michael, did you say what {den} was? What...

Geshe-la: {Den} means possesses. So literally it says possesses the sign of the month, meaning still menstruating, okay? Say {pama}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Chak shing}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Trepā}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Pama}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Chak shing}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Trepā}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Pama} means, ah, father and mother. Papa and Mama. It means the same in almost every language, I don't know. {Pama} means mother..., father and mother. {Chak} means "they have desire towards each other". {Shing} means "and". {Trepā} means "they make sexual contact". Okay. [pause] Say {orisa}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Nyewar}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Nepa}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Orisa}

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Nyewar}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Nepa}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Orisa} you've had before.

[Student]: Smell eater?

Geshe-la: Smell eater, okay. [laughs] {Orisa} meaning "a {bardo} being". A being in the {bardo}. A {bardo} being. {Nyewar nepa} means "must be in the, in the immediate vicinity". Must be in the immediate vicinity. Of the parents at that moment. So when the Buddha, when Lord Buddha described how a being is

born into a womb, a human being, he said there has to be these three things present. These three conditions must be present. There has to be a, a woman who's, who's fit physically to be a mother, who's menstruating, still menstruating. There has to be a man and a woman who have desire towards each other and have sexual contact, and then there must be a {bardo} being in the immediate vicinity to enter the womb. And, and that Vasubandu says proves by scripture the existence of, of a {bardo} being. Okay? Um, ya...

[Student]: Um, what are two... [unclear]

Geshe-la: I don't know, he doesn't get into it. I think ah, [Laughter] [unclear]...

[Students]: What was the question?

Geshe-la: She said what about in the case where, maybe, someone doesn't have desire. I dunno. Maybe there's a little bit.

[Students]: Ya, or artificial insemination. Test tube babies. [Laughter].

[Stilwell]: How does that prove the existence of a {bardo} being?

Geshe-la: Well, because...

[Laughter]

...scripturally. Scriptural proof. If you are a Buddhist. If you are already a Buddhist. Ah, then if the Buddha comes up, like if you...

[Student]: Same as point number one.

Geshe-la: ...if you have some kind of extraordinary faith in the Dalai Lama because of all the things he's ever taught, that you've ever heard were absolutely true, even the deep things. Everything he's ever said was absolutely true, then you go up to the Dalai Lama and then you say 'By the way, how does someone get born into a womb?' And he says 'Well, you need this and this and a {bardo} being'. And then you say 'well, you mean you believe in {bardo} beings? He says, 'Ya sure'. And then for a Buddhist, for someone who already believes in the Dalai Lama, that's, that's proof. What it, and, and this is a whole study when you get into the study of perceptual theory in Buddhism, which is a long long story, but basically, it's proving and that's the basis of scriptural proof. And

that's difficult for Westerners. And that's okay. You don't have to, you know, quit the class because you can't accept this scripture. You know, but the point is that as you study more and more Buddhism and become more and more amazed about the deep realities revealed by it, you will start to believe that if a Buddha said something existed, it's probably there. Ah, and that's the basis of scriptural proof. Um, and they're not very satisfying for a Westerner. I mean the proofs so far, the logical ones and the scriptural ones, are not normally very satisfying for a Westerner. They, they are not illogical. They are logical. But they are, they're difficult for Westerners and you just need to cook it. Maitreya says ah, if you can't accept it right now just shelve it for awhile. You know, don't deny it. Because that would also be an error. But be aware that these are the proofs that are given in scripture, put it there, think about it, and then consider it later when you know more. That's, that's the general advice. Two more points about {bardowas} and then we'll take a break. Um...[pause]

Geshe-la: Say {bardor}.

[Class]: Repeats

Geshe-la: {Davva}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Bardor}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Davva}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: {Davva} means to pass beyond. Pass beyond means to enter Nirvana. To enter Nirvana. {Bardor} with a {r} on it means in the {bardo} state. There are generally speaking five kinds of, five situations where you can enter Nirvana and one of them is called {bardor davva}. Which means you enter Nirvana while you are in the {bardo}. And that was taught by the Buddha also. So therefore the Buddha believed there was a ...{bardo} or he wouldn't go through talking about how you can reach Nirvana in a {bardo} stage. Is it common? Is it the way you and I want to do it? Should we wait and hope that it happens then when it doesn't happen now? Don't bet on it! Stupid, okay? You're healthy.

You're strong. You have all you need to eat. You have a nice place to meditate. You have teachings. You have dharma friends. Everything's perfect right now. The Dalai Lama is around in the world. Do it now, you know. The, the chances that you're going to be able to collect your thoughts together properly at that very scary moment, in that very scary place, falling off of a, a building or something, are, are, are remote. The chances that you could achieve Nirvana in this very life, in the next year or two are good. If you have the correct teachings, especially on emptiness, and if you perceive emptiness directly, and you practice well, and honestly, and purely, keep your vows, you, you can. And so do it now. I mean don't wait – there's all these teachings out nowadays about, you know, it's almost like uh, a shortcut, you know like 'just wait 'til you die and then (snaps his fingers) you know, do this and that and, and you'll be able to, you'll be enlightened there'. You know, why wait? Why wait until then? The, there's, there's nothing different about that time and this time accept in that time you're going to be so scared and so confused your body is going to be terribly in, in a ... there's this special kind of pain. In Tibetan there's no other word. It's a single word to describe the kind of pain that's going on at that moment. {Nye chu pay duk ngel}. And, and it's an extraordinary special kind of pain that you know, like an animal feels in the last moment that it crushed by something. And, and all beings have it at that point. So you, you don't want to wait until those conditions. You, you can achieve it, you have all the things you need right here and now. You can do it in this life. You can do it quite comfortably sitting on your bed, you know, in this next year or two if you want. If you really work hard and do everything properly with the right motivation, you could do it, so don't, don't wait, you know [laughs]. Ya?

[Student]: Do animals themselves also go through the {bardo} state?

Geshe-la: Ya. Uh, if they're not going to the formless realm, okay. That's another proof. One more proof, ah, he says, then he talks about the {Tsang me??} If you know {tsang me}, {tsang me} means this is something that Janet ?? asked about. {tsang me} means that there are five kinds of bad deeds that you can do which are called immediate. They are the ultimate bad deeds. What are, do you remember some of them?

[Class]: A whole bunch of answers...

Geshe-la: Killing your father. Killing your mother. Killing an arhat. Trying to hurt a Buddha and then splitting the Sangha. Splitting, splitting spiritual practitioners. Okay. Those five. Um, and actually the fifth one has to be the

direct followers of the Buddha, so you know...

[Student]: [Inaudible about splitting up the Sangha.]

Geshe-la: Ah, it means the direct, ah it means the direct, it only happened once in history. And it will only happen once in history. And only one person ever does it. And that, it's, so don't worry, you can't collect number five technically speaking. You can do very many things which are very close but it's not a real, it's not number five. It is not THE number five. THE number five can only be done by a direct disciple of the Buddha. While the Buddha is present. The historical Buddha. So you can't, you really can't do number five right now. You can do lots of things that are very very close and you'll get very similar results, but not THE number five, okay? Ah, so {tsang me}, {tsang me}, the words for those bad deeds is called ah, "uninterrupted". And, and, and what that means is that you don't take any other kind of birth between dying and being born in the lowest hell. Right after that, you know. So people say 'Where's the {bardo}' for, for someone who commits one of those five? The name of those five is "uninterrupted" meaning you don't have another rebirth between dying in this life and taking birth in the lowest hell. So people say, and the scripture says, and Jen and Dianne just asked 'Where's the {bardo} for that being?' Ah, the point is, and Vasubandu talks about it, and the Dalai Lama talks about it, the point is the word 'rebirth'. And, and as you knew, as you now know from, from I think it was in the, the first or second homework, there are only five kinds of rebirths, and where are {bardo} beings? They are not even in there. They are not even counted in there. So when they say {tsa me} meaning no other rebirth they're talking about the five types. So even that being has a {bardo}. Even, even a being who goes, who's committed one of those horrible five deeds and dies in this life, has to take a {bardo} to get to hell. And will. And does. It's not a separate rebirth. It's still un... uninterrupted. It's still uninterrupted, meaning there's no other kind of rebirth between dying in this life when you've committed it and going to the lowest hell. It's ah, not like you spend some time as an animal for a while and then go to the lowest hell. So, so that addresses that, that question. Um,

[Student]: Is it briefer than the normal {bardo}?

Geshe-la: Excuse me?

[Student]: Is it more brief?

Geshe-la: Ah, I don't remember it being mentioned but I think it is. I think it would be. Ah, but I ,I don't remember it being specifically mentioned. Why doesn't the, Vasubandu say "I saw it"? Vasubandu was an arya.

[Student]: He's not allowed?

Geshe-la: Why doesn't he say, "Look, the best proof to tell you the truth, is I saw it". And, and why doesn't, why don't they give forty ah, testaments from people who almost died and saw the light, and

[Stilwell]: It's been done already...

[Laughter]

Geshe-la: Or went there and jumped back, or you know, why, why don't they, why doesn't Vasubandu use that? Why doesn't, he's an arya. Why doesn't he say 'look, I mean, to tell you the truth, I, I saw it'. It's not a proof. I mean, we say that personal experience that you had, uh, is not a good reason to give to someone else. Personal experiences of this nature, like an extraordinary spiritual breakthrough, where you perceived emptiness directly, and shortly afterwards you saw your future lives. I mean, if I had done it myself. If I had gone through the experience of ah, seeing emptiness directly, and ah, seen that I, for example, I had seven future lives to live, and saw the details of those lives, um, suppose I had done it personally, and then, then, then I got up here and described what it was like to you, it's not, it's not a proof. I mean, I can't, I, you can't confirm that what I say is, is, is correct. So we don't rely on that kind of a presentation. You know, we don't, a person doesn't get up and give a testimony you know. Because ah, you can't confirm it. You know, you can confirm or disconfirm the things that I have said here. By the way, you can't disconfirm anything I have said. You can't disprove anything I've said. But, but if I got up here and tried to convince you on the basis of something I saw, and you believe me, then you'll believe the next guy who comes up here and says 'Also it's purple, and there's all these flying things around and there's aura you know, and all these things and ah, it's, it's not a good way. In Buddhism you're not allowed to really do that. You are supposed to communicate by things that people can confirm in there personal experience. Okay. Ya?

[Student]: But the Buddha always says that. Can a Buddha, or an Enlightened Being, or some...

Geshe-la: Ya. Ah. Under, under extraordinary circumstances. I mean, the Buddha, had disciples that he had an extraordinary relationship with and who already recognized that what he said, they could confirm so much of what he said that he would reveal those things to them. But in general, an arya, a person who has seen emptiness directly they never will directly say "I have seen that thing" to you. They never will. They just won't say it. Or, or, or any other similar experience. They, because it doesn't help. Unless you have some extraordinary relationship with them. Ah, but in general it, it doesn't help. You know, you, you, it has to be a process by which they teach you how to see it yourself. But they don't just go around saying "I saw it". It's, it's just the nature of that experience. If it ever happens to you, you'll know because you won't tell anybody [laughs]. Directly. Okay? Alright, let's take a break.

...I'm not going to write the Tibetan up here and we'll go over it kind of quickly. I'll give you some more details that Vasubandu states about the nature of {bardo} beings. Um, what do {bardo} beings look like? Ah, the physical appearance of them, their, their body is made of a kind of ah, very subtle physical matter. And outwardly the appearance is that of the being that you are going to be next. So for example if you are going to be born as a hell being, reborn as a hell being, then during the {bardo} you look like a hell being. Uh, and if you are going to be reborn as a human then during the {bardo} you look like a human. And the reason is that the karma which's projecting the rebirth, say for example as a human, is the same that is projecting the {bardo}. So it is considered one class of karma is projecting you into the {bardo} and then into your next rebirth, and it's the same karma. So you resemble what you're going to become. So if you wanted to know how someone is going to be reborn, and you had the proper facilities then you could check out their {bardo} appearance and you would know. Um, the scriptures give the color of the, of the {bardo} being. Um, someone who is headed for a hell realm is supposed look like a scorched piece of wood. Like some, like a burnt piece of wood. The color is the color of a burnt piece of wood. For animals it's this ah, it's sort of a grayish color like smoke. Smoke color. Um, for craving spirits it um, sort of a, a color like water, meaning ah, sort of, I don't know how you describe it...

[Student]: Kinda translucent?

Geshe-la: Kinda translucent, ya. Ah, pleasure being of the desire realm or a human; golden color. And that being looks like a, a five or six year old. I mean the appearance is of a very young human being. Ah, someone to be born as a pleasure being in the form realm; white. And adult. Looking, looking like an

adult human.

[Student]: In which realm?

Geshe-la: Who's going to be born in the form realm.

[Student]: Form realm.

Geshe-la: And clothed also. They have clothes on. Because you can't be born in that realm unless you have a high sense of ah, that, the karma of having had a high degree of ah, shame, or, or what do you call it? Conscience. Is that modesty, is that you, you have the karma to perceive yourself having clothes on. As you go through the {bardo}. So sort of a, a beautiful form. And for the, if you're going into the formless realm you look like ...

[Class]: You don't.

Geshe-la: You don't have one. [Laughter]. Trick question. Okay. How long do they live? There's a debate in the Abhidharma. Ah, Vasumitra who wrote the most famous commentary to Vasubandu's work, his viewpoint is pretty much accepted nowadays and by all the Lamas that I've met who taught me. And it's that a {bardo} being lives for seven days. The maximum lifespan of a {bardo} being is seven days. The shortest one is probably for like for a few seconds. Um, and you die and you are reborn again as a {bardo} being.

[Stilwell]: Say that again?

Geshe-la: Okay, if you, if you reach the end of your {bardo} seven days and you haven't taken a rebirth yet, you are reborn as another {bardo} being. Okay. You are reborn into a {bardo} being, again.

[Student]: Inaudible:

Geshe-la: There's a debate about it and we'll get to it. Ah, but basically that can go, that can repeat itself how many times?

[Fran]: Seven times. Seven.

Geshe-la: Seven times. So seven times seven is...

[Class]: Forty-nine.

Geshe-la. Forty-nine days. So you must according to Buddhism, ah, take a rebirth within forty-nine days. You will take a rebirth within forty-nine days. And that's why, by the way, if you take a rebirth in forty-nine days it means you've been through seven {bardo} existences, okay? Ah, that's why the, the, the rituals that we do to help a person in the {bardo}, you do one at seven days and then we do another one at forty-nine days. And the day of, the, the counting starts on the day of the death, so you don't count, you don't start counting from the next day, you start from the day of the death. That becomes day one. So if you have to calculate it for a relative or someone .. According to the secret teachings it is possible to aid them in some ways ah, through certain kinds of rituals. So, so it's not crazy and it, you don't have to think it's, it's being ah, superstitious to ask a Lama to try to do something. Ah, its possible, so you know, you can ask Rinpoche to do things like that and, and, and we sometimes in extraordinary cases, we can contact the monks in the, in Sera monastery, then you, it's, it is possible according to the secret teachings to help the person in the {bardo} with special kinds of rituals, so you know, if you know someone who dies and you, and you want to, it's, it's not, it's not stupid to, to ask, you know. Give me their name, and the date that they died, and then uh, uh, it's good to know the birth date if you know it, and year, and then ah, we'll ask Rinpoche. Ya?

[Student]: Inaudible.

Geshe-la: Ya, it doesn't matter.

[Student]: Inaudible.

Geshe-la: Ya, it doesn't matter. Um, can you, who can see another {bardo} being? Like could we ever get to the point where we could see {bardo} beings? And the scripture says, Vasubandu says, the Buddha says, 'yes it's possible'. Ah, you have to get what is called a {hlay chen}. Ah,

(writes on board).

Say, {hlay chen}.

[Class]: Repeats.

Geshe-la: Ah, {hlay}, {hlay} you know. It means 'pleasure being'. Ah, in this case it means like a God or some kind of powerful being. And {chen} means ah, 'eye', an eye. And there's all these kinds of {chens}, you know sometimes you see them, you know, painted on, we don't believe that ah you know, it pops up here and opens up and you need to change your glasses and add another [laughs] you know. We, we, it's not like that. What it, there are a number of kinds of special visions; eyes that you can develop that are not physical eyes. And this is one of them. And this, despite its strange name, you know, 'the eye of the God' or something like that, it refers to a, a, a deep state of meditation. Where you can see things that you wouldn't normally be able to see. Um, there are eleven different conditions that prevent you from getting this eye. And you can study them in the reading, but basically they are the classical obstacles to concentration or meditation. And, and if you could study those eleven, and if you could remove them in yourself, for example, being distracted by thinking about too many things is one of them, [Laughter] that eliminates me, ah, you could, you could reach this ability. I mean you have to study them and you have to learn them and then you have to eliminate them. If you eliminate those eleven obstacles then you gain a power to see those beings. You can see those beings. Um, the scriptures say also, the sutras say that ah, {bardo} beings of the same type can see each other. So like if you're going to be born, reborn as a human and you're in a human {bardo} they say that you, because of the similarity of your class that you can see the other human {bardos}. Ya?

[Student]: Are um, tru-kus in a different category?

Geshe-la: Ya, it's a good question. I mean, we kinda talked about it when we talked about who can choose a rebirth. Ah, what she asked are tru-kus, ah do they have to go through this {bardo} stuff? No. The real meaning of tulku is where there's a totally Enlightened presence, and that presence takes form in any place and time and planet and moment and on any bus or subway or next to you at work or anywhere where it would be extraordinarily useful for you, that it will just be there (snaps his fingers). That's the nature of the Buddha's virtue, and that's a tru-ku. That's what a tulku means. So, it could be anybody in this room. It could be all of you. I know it's not me okay [laughs]. But, it's quite possible that everyone in this room is a tulku, I don't know. Ah, but a tulku means it's a being who is an emanation of an Enlightened presence. And then they just are there when you need them. When it's useful they're there. And when it's not useful they get up and get off the bus. And then they, who knows what happens when the bus goes, you know. But they're there. They, they can

be there. So ah, classically the Dalai Lama for example is a tru-ku. If he's a real tru-ku then it's just totally like an emanation of an Enlightened being. And it's just ah, like a, a movie, you know. You had a question...

[Student]: Is there any explanation of near death experiences, like people claim that they see light and relatives who died recently. Those aren't {bardo} beings per se because they may have, they may have died like fifty years before that?

Geshe-la: Ah, there are some descriptions in the secret teachings. And since they're secret um, [laughter] can you, the question of can you be diverted to another birth... for example if you enter a, a, a human {bardo}, could you then be diverted to another rebirth. And the answer is no. Because again it's the same karma. It's one, the mo..., it's one projecting karma which is, there's many kinds of karma, but one is called projecting karma. The karma that is sending you to your rebirth is the same karma that's sending you into the {bardo}. So there's no, there's nothing like you could take the {bardo} of a hell being and then become a human or something like that. Be reborn as human. But, there is {bardo dowa} Which means you could enter Nirvana in the state of the {bardo} and not have to take any rebirth. Um, that, that according to Abhidharma takes place with people heading to a certain part of the form realm. Ya...

[Stilwell]: So is the idea that each, um, each what, realm, has its own {bardo}, is that the point, I'm sort of curious?

Geshe-la: Ah, it is not, that {bardo} doesn't belong to that realm but we call you a {bardo} for a human if you're headed to be a human.

[Stilwell]: So are they all kind of mixed together in the same {bardo}, all the different beings, or how is this?

Geshe-la: They can't see each other:

[Stilwell]: But they're in this, I mean not...

Geshe-la: Are they in the same place? Ya, they're around here, they're, they're with us, you know. Um, they're all in the same place.

[Stilwell]: I just don't see...

Geshe-la: How do we name them? We name them from what they're going to be. Okay. And if, if you're a translator you go crazy sometimes because, you know, I mean you finally figure out that it's a {bardo} to be a human. So it's called a human {bardo}. You get, you start to get confused if you're translating. Quick question because we're getting a little late.

[Student]: Um, {bardos} suffer? They're in their own suffering right?

Geshe-la: Ya. They suffer. Um, anyone who's still in samsara is suffering right? We saw that. Uh, by definition. They have certain, um, miraculous powers, okay. {Bardo} beings can, and this is straight from scripture; ah, they can fly. Um, they can travel extraordinary distances quickly. You know, like a {bardo} could get from here to Kansas without much trouble. Um, they can travel through solid, ah, walls, and mountains and things like that. They have the ability to, to pass through, and we have huge debates in the monastery. Like I remember a winter debate, a competition between us and, and Sera Jey, which are almost as good as us. And we were debating, and ah, and we were debating that the nature of, I mean how could a ... if two physical bodies can't exist in the same location at the same time how could a {bardo} being go through a wall? And, and there's a long argument about it. Ah, and there's a long explanation. But they can. And they say that there's only two kinds of physical matter that a {bardo} being can't pass through. One is the spot where the Buddha became Enlightened under the Bodhi tree in Vajra Asana, Seat of the Diamond, which we call Bodghaya nowadays. And ah, and they cannot pass through the, the tissue of their mother's womb. Once they get caught in there they cannot travel through that tissue anymore, and they, they have to stay there. Ya?

[Student]: Does this refer to the whole place in Bodghaya precisely to the small spot?

Geshe-la: I don't know exactly. They just say that. I believe it, I mean in my mind, but I don't have, it's not, I don't have any scriptural basis for that. But Vajra Asana means like the 'Diamond Seat' meaning that I'd imagine the place where the Buddha actually sat. But I, I don't know. Twenty feet from there I don't know. I'm not sure. Okay, I'm not, I, I, I haven't, I don't, I haven't seen any reference either way. Um, do they eat food? Yes, they live on, on very subtle forms of food like smells. And we'll get into that next class. Smells themselves can be a form of food. Ah, how do they travel? Some scriptures say that if you're headed for hell you're traveling upside down. You're walking upside down through the space. Ah, if you're headed for a pleasure beings'

existence you're, you're walking slightly upwards and, and things like that. Um, I think the last point, the last point I'll talk about is you know, what is the, the scriptures go through this very, it's kind of a pathetic or sad moment where they explain how a being is caught in the womb. And is sort of a, you know the Abidharma is very dry. I haven't given you the dry parts, but there's drier parts [laughs]. But this ah, is like some kind of pathos. You know you feel some sort of, of a sadness at reading it. And you can read it in the scripture but ah, basically, they be, due to their karma, they, they reach the vicinity of their parents, and their parents are making love. And, and they see it ah, from a distance. And they, and they, they get attracted to it. They think, ah, they have some, some emotion that these two beings are, are really enjoying themselves and that if they came closer and they could join in with that kind of ah, pleasure. You know and they, they, they get, it's called {chin chi lopa}?? {Chin chi lopa} means ah, they get some kind of ah... hallucination. Ah, where they don't see what's going on as it really is, ah, which is something painful. Ah, they see it as something very wonderful and very glorious, and they, and they get closer and closer and then they are attracted to that and then they get cap... they get caught in the mother's womb. They can't get out. And um, and that's the, the nature. Some kind of misperception that what's going on there is something very joyful, and they get, they, they, they enter into that and they get caught. And they, then they can't escape the womb from there. So that's the, you can read that at the end of, but it's basically a, a misperception of what's going on at that moment.

[Student]: Why can they get in there and not out?

Geshe-la: Karma. Just karma. At that moment, according to if you're going to go to Prasangika school, they, their, their projection is of a, of a, of a piece of tissue that they can no longer pass through. And they, and that's called getting stuck. And, and validly so. Because they can't get out. And, and then, then they have to start taking, they have to live in the womb from that point. That's, that's... ya?

[Student]: They're not choosing the parents...

Geshe-la: We talked about... were you in that class? I don't know. There are, there are three kinds of beings who can, who are sort of choosing. And we talked about that, but basically speaking no, you don't choose your parents. You, you have some attraction towards them, and there's a reason for that. You had a deep karmic relation in the past. You know, why are you, why do you

happen to be in the room where these particular parents are, are, are there. Ah, it's because of your karma. Your karma drives you to that spot. In Tibetan it's called {depa}. {Depa} means it beats you from the, behind. It drives you to that place and then you are particularly attracted to these two people. And, and because of some past relationship you had with them. And, and then you, you fi... you get caught in the womb.

[Student]: Are, are you going to talk about {bardo} beings in the next class?

Geshe-la: In what case?

[Student]: In the next class.

Geshe-la: Nope.

[Student]: Can you, can you just describe generally the whole process then of what it's like for the {bardo} being, the whole series of what happens?

Geshe-la: There's a lot of a, there's certain events that happen as you die. And they're related to the, it's called the 'domino collapse of the elements'. You know, one element starts to collapse it, it triggers the collapse of another element, it triggers the collapse of another element, and that collapse of certain physical constituents of your body ah, cause certain ah, mental perceptions. You, you go through a, a certain series of typical mental perceptions that are terrifying, and that are like hallucinations. Um, and ah I can't say more than that. I mean to say more than that you have to study, you have to be...

[Stilwell]: I was thinking just what the process the {bardo} being goes through. So you die, you become a {bardo} being, and then what happens? You just float around? I mean what's going on?

Geshe-la: Oh, you, you travel to your, you travel to your destination. In fact at the beginning, the opening lines of the {bardo} section say 'a {bardo} is a person who hasn't reached his destination yet', you know. So you're, basically the whole time you are working your way to the location of your next birth. Ah...

[Stilwell]: Kind of just floating around?

Geshe-la: You, you have the power to, to go very quickly. Almost at the speed of thought. Ah, and you pass to the, you pass to the location, and that, you do

get this feeling of searching and wandering and looking and there is some words, {sol che} ??? they're called seekers, wanderers, you know they're looking for the next birth and I don't think they're aware that they're looking but they, they are driven by their karma through this realm and sooner or later they reach a destination where they, they meet the conditions to be born.

Fran: Inaudible.

Geshe-la: Ah, Fran asked ah, on the thirtieth, oh by the way I remind you that Thursday night Rinpoche is teaching in New Jersey and you can catch it, its good and I won't count it as an absence. Ah, he's also teaching on Sundays at two o'clock. And on the thirtieth he's giving layman's vows. And your welcome to come, it's at two o'clock. Ah, because of that uh, ceremony, ah, we won't have the general meeting that we had planned. We'll have to reschedule. We'll reschedule it for a week or two later. Fran asked 'will we still have the combined class'? I'd still like to have the combined class next week. We were scheduling a combined class of Tibetan and English tracks on Saturday the thirtieth at ten o'clock. And we still will have a combined class. It just happens to work out that because of all the scheduling that we had to do.

[Students]: Inaudible.

Geshe-la: It's in your um, it's in your days to come sheet. In other words, there'll be one of your classes will be on a Saturday morning.

Prayer: Mandala.

Prayer: Dedication.

Geshe-la: We need two volunteers. And not the same ones as last time [laughs]. Okay. Ah, what was the other thing? Please be careful not to ring the other bells downstairs because the poor lady in those apartments is going crazy.

[Stilwell]: Is anybody making a sign so everybody knows which...

Geshe-la: There's a little blue tape...

[Stilwell]: You can't even read it.

Geshe-la: Who would like to make a real sign?

[Student]: I can make a sign. Where should it say?

[Stilwell]: Just to fit by the bell. Ya but it should like a little brass plaque or something that the rain isn't going to fade away or something right.

Geshe-la: Actually I like that little one you did for Sarah?

[Stilwell]: Bronze? How about brass? No, but if you only put a little paint of paper it's only going to last a short time, you know?

Geshe-la: What about on the inside of the door?

[Stilwell]: No it's outside.

[Student]: It's outside.

Geshe-la: Oh, oh, oh.

[Stilwell]: You need some like plastic... metal... something.

Geshe-la: Okay, well you and Wilma...

[Stilwell]: Oh no no no no. Not me. Not me. Did you want to work on it?

[Student]: Hmm?

[Stilwell]: Did you want to make one?

[Student]: Well I could maybe...

[Stilwell]: Do you want to work with Wilma?

[Student]: No, I got it, it's fine.

[Stilwell]: Okay.

Geshe Michael Roach

Course VIII Death and the Realms of Existence

Class 6

Transcribed by: Karen Becker

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Say {drowa} [repeat] {se kyi} [repeat] {nepa yin} [repeat] {Drowa [repeat] {se kyi} [repeat] {nepa yin} [repeat]. Okay, this is a line from the third chapter of the {b: Abhidharma}, okay we're back to {b: Abhidharma ... Abhidharmakosha}. By? [students: Vasubandu] Okay, and today I wanted to talk a little bit about two ideas in the third chapter. One is the idea of sustenance ... what keeps your body going, and the other one is general description of our planet, okay. We don't have time to go through the whole third chapter which is really beautiful ... some day you should, and I'm just going to be able to go through a short amount in a couple of hours, so first we're going to go through the kinds of sustenance, okay.

{Drowa} means ... do you guys know {drowa ... dro} ... {drowa} means "beings" okay, literally "those who go". Okay. [student: Go?] Living beings, yeah, {dro} means to go. [student: Oh.] Going ones. Creatures. {Drowa} {Se} means "sustenance". {Se} means "sustenance". {Se kyi} means "by sustenance". By ... b,y. {Nepa yin} means "they they stay or they live." In other words living beings remain here they continue to live because of sustenance ... sustenance keeps people alive, all right. I guess if you want to put it in plain English, which is always kind of nice.

There are four famous kinds of {se}, four kinds of sustenance. Say {kam gyi se} [repeat] {kam gyi se} [repeat]. Okay. What's {kam}? Do you know? {Kam}'s this place out in east Tibet, right? I mean, {kam} means a district sometimes. {Kam} also is the Tibetan word for {dhatu} like {dharma dhatu choeki kam}. In that case {dhatu} means one of the eighteen divisions of existence. This {kam} is spelled differently. But it's the same meaning. It means "portion" like a portion, okay. In other words {kam gyi se} which means "portionable sustenance", it means anything you ingest by taking in portions, so the kind of food that we eat, the physical food is {kam gyi se} because we bite it into portions and then we swallow, okay. That's {kam gyi se}. You need some {kam gyi se}, some water? laughter. {unclear}. {Kam gyi se} means any kind of food that you ingest like like we do in portions, generally, okay. There's a subtle kind and a rough kind. Or you can say subtle and gross, how's that? For subtle they give first of all the food that {bardowa's} eat, remember {bardowa's}? [student: No. Smells] Yeah.

Who said smells? That's right, okay. So {bardowas} they can live off smells. Smells also have to be chopped into sniffs to be ingested, seriously, okay. Then the food of desire realm pleasure beings and the food of, what was the other one ... humans of the first eon, the first humans to come to this planet. These two kinds of beings, these last two, they eat a thing called ... that's a, okay, say {dutsi} [repeat]. {Dutsi} means "a nectar or ambrosia or something like that", okay, sometimes it's translated as amritsar in Sanskrit, meaning the nectar of immortality. This is not anything that good, okay. There are different {dutsis}. Some of you heard of other kind {dutsi}. This is similar ... same name, different stuff. Humans of the first eon ... and there's a there's a Garden of Eden story in the third chapter of the {b:Abhidharma}, you know that the humans who first come to this planet, first of all they ... the first ones here are ... their bodies are made of light, there's no sun or moon, they just see their way around by shining and it's a beautiful story, it's really an extraordinary story, I don't think we're going to get to it, but basically when it when the day comes that they have to eat, they just they the ground is made of some kind of clay or some kind of goo and and when they when they're hungry they just take a fingerful and and lick it. And and they can just scoop it off ... it's it's it's the dirt of the earth is edible. And they just live off that, you know, they just pick it up and eat it, and that's all they need to live on. And that's {dutsi}, that's that's what humans of the first eon ... I mean I'm not going to go through it tonight and it's not part of the class, but then there's this story of the fall, you know, they ah I forget how it is ... oh and crops come up by themselves, and then somebody decides ... and in in the morning everybody goes to get their crops, you know, and they collect their crops. And then one day somebody says, I'm tired of getting up every morning to collect my crops, I'll just take double and then I'll sleep in tomorrow, you know. So he takes double and they ... somebody starts to store possessions, you know, somebody starts to say I I can have twice as much, you know, and then somebody else says, well I might as well store three days' worth, you know, somebody else ... the minute it starts you can guess, trouble, then people build the first house because they want to no one to see [laughter] what they're doing, and and then like that, and then things get worse and worse and worse until millions of years later there's a ... oh oh I don't know because of their desire people start, their bodies start to harden, and get like flesh instead of light and then and then in those days people lived for 80,000 years and people lifespans start to degenerate and then we're supposed to be near the end. And near the end people will blow themselves up with some weapon that destroys the whole earth in fire or things like that. It's very interesting. And that's in all in the third chapter, I don't have time for it tonight, you can read it when you learn Tibetan. [laughter] These are sometimes called subtle because sometimes called

subtle because they don't produce any poopoo or pee pee, okay. They they they say that the the food sinks into the body like melted butter poured on sand and it just it just it's digested by just what...it's absorbed by the body and there's no excrement or or anything. It's just dissolved into ... just dissolves into the body. It keeps the body alive. And then they say gross food is all the other kinds. [laughs] Which is what we live on. So you could say, human beings, the other, the other ... kind of food that we have, they and they in the scripture it says even the kind of food that we eat. Boy, everybody's sick tonight. You need some {se}. What was the other thing? They say that {kam gyi se} consists of a combination of three physical objects. They say that {kam gyi se} is a combination of these three. Tastes, smells and tangibles. And you eat something it it it smells, it tastes and it touches you. {Kam gyi se} doesn't exist outside of the form, I'm ... outside of the desire realm, why? Yeah, the whole point is to get to the other realms by losing your desire for desire realm objects and food is one of the grossest ones. So, the whole point of ... you can get to the form realm and the formless realm even in meditation only if you don't have desires for these things, you know. They don't they don't eat this kind of food. They don't have this kind of food there. They they have no desire for physical food and in fact in the form realm there is no smell or taste. There's no there's no they have no desire for food and there's no reason for smells or tastes to be there.[student: What if you have a need for it but no desire for it?]They don't even need it, and we'll get to that [laughs] okay. They live off something else, all right. Okay that's just about food number one.

Say {rek pa} [repeat] {rek pa} [repeat]. {Rek pa} means "contact". And in this case it means the con the convening of three things, especially in the wheel of life when they say link number six is is called {rek pa} also, but this is where the object, meaning let's say some nice looking food, and the sense power, which is your eye, the sense organ at the at which is located in the back of the eyeball and then the consciousness, the awareness of the food, seeing the food, the awareness of seeing the food. That that's contact. Those three bumping into each other, those three happening at the same time is called {rek pa} or contact. What it basically means is when you catch sight of some good looking food, you know, and you're hungry, it can bring you some kind of joy and that joy can also sustain you for a while, you know, like nobody dies three feet from a big meal, nobody ever did, you know, I mean if there was big meal right there [laughter] and you're you were starving, you're only two feet away, something keeps you going the last two feet, you know. [laughter] Seriously. You know, no no horse ever died a foot from water. It's just something keeps them going and it may not be physical, it may not being not being maybe no physical food or water left in

them that could sustain them, but it's the mind, the mind is sustaining them, and that's that's where hope for example can can sustain you. And they give a lot of examples of that. They give examples in scripture of people who in famines who ... they give an example of a father who had two sons and I think it was the father or the sons, I don't remember, but somebody wraps up a bag full of dust and tells everybody that this is a bag full of flour and as long as they believe that it's flour they they stay alive. And then one day they open it up and see dust and they die on the spot, you know. Or you see ... often times you see spouses die within a short time of their, the other spouse, it's something to do with the loss of hope, or something like that. And or when you ... somebody ... doctor comes and tells you, well it's terminal and then suddenly the person dies ... it's short ... this is where hope has kept the person alive, so that's a kind of {rek pa}. They say in that sense visible objects can also keep you ... can also sustain you. They don't sustain you themselves, but it's the it's the kind of the joy that you have by looking at the thing. It's the joy reaches out of the {rek pa} that's keeping you alive.

Say {sem pa} [repeat] {Sem pa} [repeat]. I think you know {sem pa} now. {Le le jikten natsok kye de ni sempa dang de je}, oh Friday nights' doing that. {sem pa} [laughs]. They got everything. {Sem} you know, means what? {Citta}.[student: Mind]Mind. {Sem pa} is something totally different. {Sem pa} is meaning "movement of the mind." A directing of the mind. When you guys studied karma, if you remember, this is the essence of karma. This is mental karma. Anytime you mind shifts, that's {sem pa}. How many {sem pa}'s are {finger snap} [student: Sixty four [laughter]]Something like that. Sixty four can go on in a in a finger snap, okay, that many {sem pas} can go on in a in a finger snap. It's basically the mind moving, the mind being directed to a new object. On it's way to a new object. I've seen, you know ... this is not explained clearly in the {b: Abhidharma} literature, why this is a kind of proof. Somebody says it's because, for example, this would always be linked with hope. As you hope your mind is moving, and they say therefore it's a kind of sustenance. Because then they they go through proving that hope can keep you alive. But about three minutes ago in the computer I saw another one [laughs], I kind of like that one and I see it alluded to other {b: Abhidharma} literature and that's that this particular {sem ... sempa} is what's sustains a new a new rebirth. {Sem pa} is the food that sustains a new rebirth. In other words, what the main thing that causes your next life is what?[student: Karma]It's karma. And the and the essence of karma, the karma behind all karmas is is {sem pa}, it's the movement of the mind. The movement of the mind instigates you to do actions of body and speech which are the karma that we are most familiar with, but the one behind it and the essence of all karma

is {sem pa}. That's the second line of the of the fourth chapter {de nyi sam pa dang dey che}. {Sem pa} is the essence of karma. So this is food in the sense that it sustains your next life. It's your next life is feeding off the the karmas that your mind is collecting now. Yeah.[student: When your mind isn't working, I mean isn't moving, is it the after death.]Alwa ... you mind never stops moving. [student: So but it doesn't sustain you then?]It sustains the bardo and the next life. Okay. It's the same karma. It's one projecting karma, which is why the the bardo being looks like the being that you're going to be. They're both projected by the same karma. Okay. That's number three.

And then the fourth one is ... [student: Michael, could a being take the second version?] Excuse me?[student: Is there some sort of being that being that takes, you know, the contact that they use ...]We all, we all, all of us. Oh. These last three kinds of food are contained in all three realms. All three realms have the last three kinds of food. Only the desire realm has the first kind of food. In other words, formless realm beings can have can have {rek pa} and {sem pa} and {namshe}. For food. To keep them alive.

Say {namshe} [repeat]. {Namshe} means "consciousness itself, awareness itself". Consciousness. It's the general state of awareness that we all have. It gets very much, it it never stops, it can be put to a low level like by a Mike Tyson punch,okay, but we we never say you become unconscious, The consciousness is always going. It may be reduced to a low level by a good punch, but it's still going, you're still alive. And the explanation ... the best explanation I've seen of why {namshe}, general awareness, is a kind of food is that it also keeps you alive and it's also partly what keeps you alive in your next life because by being here now and giving {sem pa} a place to work it contributes to your next life, but that's all I've seen. That's all I've seen. That somehow it contributes to to being as being the basis of {sem pa}. {Sem pa} is a mental function. {Namshe} is the general mind itself, and they're always different. The general awareness and all the ... they sometimes they say fifty two mental functions or fifty one, those are those are specific functions of your mind, but your general awareness is is where they reside. They reside together. They stay together. They are linked together.

If you're gonna talk about food I think it's good to talk about ... there's there's another kind of food mentioned in the first chapter of the {b:Abhidharma} ... second chapter. And I I think it's important to mention that. It's not on your homework or anything but you should still write it. So don't confuse these with the four kinds of sustenance. These are something different. Say {gye pay gyu shi} [repeat] {gye pay gyu shi} [repeat]. {Gye pa} means "to flourish", okay,

"flourish". Something like that. Flourish. Okay. {Gyu} means "to cause" and {shi} means "four". And what it means is that there are four kinds of things that cause your body to be healthy, or cause your body to ... what do you call that? ... I don't know.[student: Thrive?}Nourish ... they nourish your body. Okay. They nourish your your body. And in {b:Abhidharma} system in all Buddhism, when I say nourish your body it means two things. It means nourishes the the physical foundations for your senses, which means your your the faculty of your eye, the faculty of your tongue, the cells that reside on your tongue that allow you to taste, the cells that reside in the back of your eyeball, according to {B: Abhidharma} that allow you to see, the cells that reside in the ear that allow you to hear, the cells that reside around the front of the nose here that allow you to smell, and these four things help those, they nourish those those sense powers ... they're called sense powers ... and in particular they sustain the four elements which are behind those sense powers. Those four elements, the four ... the sense powers are composed of four different energies and in fact a lot of Tibetan medicine is is how to affect those four energies. And that's {sa chu mei lung } that's {sa} is earth, {chu} is wind, {mei} is fire, and {lung} is wind ... I'm sorry ... {sa} is earth, {chu} is water, {mei} is fire, {lung} is wind. And and they don't believe that there's little pieces of fire in your nose or something or something like that. These are just names for common things in the world like wind, which refer to specific types of energy which resemble them. They're they're metaphorical names, they are symbolic names. They don't believe that there's a little, you know, electric fan in your body making wind, you know, but there's an energy in your body whose function repre ...ah resembles the function of the wind outside, and and that's those are the four elements. They are behind, they are the foundational energy behind your sense powers. They underlie your sense powers. And these four kinds of ... these four things that I'm going to mention now they nourish those elements, they keep those elements going well and thereby keep your organs going well and therefore keep you alive [laughs], okay ... they nourish you. But specifically by affecting those four elements, meaning those four fundamental energies which are behind all physical matter, and and I'll go through those now. First one is [student: What do you need for the ele ... for the four elements to flourish?] I'll give you an example, like if the element of heat were to be damaged or diminished in any significant way, then the element of water would assert itself more strongly and the person in question would catch a cold. [laughter] [laughs]

Okay. Say {ka se} [repeat] {ka se} [repeat]. {Ka se} means "food", okay. When you connect the word {ka} which means mouth to the word {se} which means "sustenance", that's food. That's what we, you know ... that's a McDonald's

hamburger. It's {ka se}. That's food.

That's the first of the four causes which which make your physical faculties and their and the elements that underlie them flourish, or they sustain them, they nourish them, okay. So food is food is one. Food is the first one. Say {lek ja} [repeat] {lek ja} [repeat]. Generally {lek ja} means "doing good", okay, good things, so you know, if you don't study any commentaries you think it's like doing good deeds. But we've input like six or seven great {b: Abhidharma} commentaries and you can search it in a few minutes and you can see if you can read it that it that it examples are given ... I can think of three or four examples in the scriptures for for this {lek ja}.

The first one is {kun ye}. Say {kun ye} [repeat] which is sometimes mispronounced {kung ye} and that's a kind of massage, it's a kind of system of massage that came from ancient India, a system of massaging the body. That's one ... so {lek ja} you see doesn't mean good deeds ... in this case. It means it means physical ways of treating the body which are pleasant to the ... you know, they they sustain ... they help the body. The other is taking a nice bath, nice warm bath, medicinal bath ... you know any kind of a nice bath, another one is rubbing some ointments on your body, those are examples of {lek ja}. They they actually help the elements in your body. And they sustain ... they help nourish your body.

And the we had a masseuse, a famous masseuse come, and we tried to get Rinpoche to agree to it one day [laughter] and he finally agreed, and and we thought it'd help his bones, you know, and he he he said he felt ten years younger for about two days after that, and that's {lek ja}.

[student: Michael, could you say that's just generally taking care of your body or are these are these specific things only?]

They they they, I think you could say generally taking care of your body. Anything that takes care of your body like that ... exercise I guess would be {lek ja}, I would guess. In one scripture I've seen {lek ja} included in the subtle form of {kam gyi se}. You know. Included with smells for a a a bardo being, nectar for you know, humans of the first eon, and then they say massage and other kinds of {lek ja} are included as subtle forms because they don't create what? [students: Excrement][laughs] Yeah, they don't create excrement. Okay. You know. I mean they they sustain your body, but but they don't create create that kind, they're sort of a kind of a pure food, a subtle food. [student: Where does the light come

from?}What's that?[student: Where does light come in?}There's a big debate in the {b:Abhidharma} about light. You mean, this kind of light?[student: Like sunlight}Yeah, there's a big debate about it and some people ... the {b:Abhidharma} goes to great lengths to prove that it's not physical, it's not the vision of light, it's the it can be it's the either the happiness produced from seeing beautiful light that acts as {rek pa} and therefore is a kind of food for human beings, or it could be the tangible feeling of the warmth on the body. That's it. They have a big debate about it. They decide that it's not the color and the shape. It's the, if anything, it's the it's the enjoyment, and they say that they they say that certain parts of us, our body and mind, can live off feelings of joy as a kind of nourishment. And that would be {sem pa} or {rek pa}. Those are kinds of ... that's where joy actually sustains your body, makes you feel physically better, so there's a there is a scriptural basis for that, that if you're happy your body will actually be functioning better. I mean, it's something that's not very clear. I mean somebody has to study these things more carefully, I don't think anyone's really gone into it. It'd be nice if somebody did. And I don't think anyone's every gone into the {b: Abhidharma} looking for these things, studying them. Say {nyi} [repeat] {nyi} [repeat]. {Nyi} means "sleep" [laughs] and that also nourishes your body. And it it it puts the physical ... it puts those physical elements into proper order, keeps them running smoothly. You need a certain amount of {nyi}. Can't overdo it but shouldn't under do it [laughs] all right. [laughter] [students: {unclear} it's a pleasure}}I I've misspelled something here, Sorry.

Say {ting ngen dzin} [repeat] {ting ngen dzin} [repeat]. Somebody said meditation, yeah. Concentration. Concentration. Concentration is also a kind of sustenance. It's good for your body. If you meditate regularly like say an hour a day, I mean, first ... most importantly by far, you can see emptiness if you get used to that, but even in a worldly sense it sustains..it could make you healthier. Just not having your mind torn in many different places, is is a kind of healthy thing for a human being. And the definition of {ting ngen dzin} is what, do you know? {Sem che chik pa} [laughs]. That's the literal meaning {ting ngen}, {ting ngen dzin} means "vivid", but what's the definition, {sem che chu pa}[student: Focusing on one object}Yeah, one pointed mind, single-pointedness. And and I always used to wonder what single-pointed mind was, you know, like if I had a, I have kind of a a a peaked head, you know, does that means I have single pointed mind [laughter], when I used to wonder in in the scriptures ... I finally saw the scripture that really made me happy 'cause it says "single pointed mind means focusing on one object". That's all it means. It's just sticking to ... it's one pointedness. What do you call it in English? There's something else, there's one ... single-mindedness. Where you you you're focused on one thing at a time.

And and personally, I don't know about you, but if I'm have a bad day at work or I'm overwhelmed with too many things to do and my mind is on many objects, it actually physically affects me. And maybe stress comes from that, I don't know ... maybe physical stress comes from a lack of this kind of nourishment. Maybe that's possible that you're ... you know, people who get nervous or physically who start to have physical problems 'cause of stress, maybe it's because they don't have enough of this nourishment, you know, so those are all four. And you need, you need all four. Some some form of those. I think I think of my boss, you know, he's he's his concentration powers are extraordinary, and he doesn't have to eat much at all. I mean you see monks in the monastery who who don't eat almost at all, but they have some kind of extraordinary {ting ngen dzin} and they are healthy, I mean their bodies are strong and and they're not, they're really healthy and strong. And they're not eating practically anything. And that's from {ting ngen dzin}. So those are {gye pay gyu shi} and ... I just thought it was interesting, for me it's very interesting ... I never had time to explore it, somebody should explore it, but those are the four kinds of of food and I think it's good to know those and take care of them. What is the function of of food? It it keeps you alive and then the scriptures always say "here in samsara". [laughs] [laughter] In other words it's there's not ... these are not ultimate remedies, these are just to keep your your dirty fallible, degenerating body going for a while, you know, but basically all of the things I've listed up here, the four kinds of sustenance and the four kinds of ... the four things that are good for the the elements of your body.

The scriptures are careful to point out that these are just sustaining an entity which is by nature defective. And which you will lose, and which you will get sick and which will kill you. So don't get hung up in them. You know, you meet Buddhists who are ... they they're like ... they're more like nature freaks [laughter] or or something like that, I mean they're not really looking for the ultimate goals of Buddhism, they're looking to feel good, to feel better because they meditate or to you know, something like that ... it's it's that's not a goal.

These are all {sak che, sak che} in {b: Abhidharma} means "polluted" or "polluted". And and they are polluted and they will kill you. They they're all just temporary ways to stay alive while you get out of here, you know [laughs] okay. So don't don't get ... I mean it's I think it's important not to get hung up on these things as a goal in themselves. They you have to use them wisely and like snakes, you know, poisonous snakes. If you if you get too close to them and get too wrapped up in what you're eating and all that thing, then it's it's very damaging. It's very dangerous, you know. Eat eat well, live in a healthy way,

take care of yourself, but don't ... it's not a goal, your body's going to die anyway, just keep it healthy while while you use it to reach nirvana and Buddhahood, okay. Andy's not here, right? Andy's bringing your homework [laughter]. [student: I wonder who arranged that so nicely for us?] Who who paid off Andy?

Say {jik ten} [repeat] {jik ten} [repeat], I think the Sanskrit is loca. This is actually the name of the third chapter of the {b:Abhidharmakosha} and it means "the world, the world". {Jik} means "perishable", destructable and {ten} means "the foundation that we live on", so really the the very word for the world in Tibetan and in Sanskrit is emphasizing the fact that it's going to die, it's perishable ... it's in the word for the world, is that. I'm gonna talk a little bit about how the {b:Abhidharma} describes the world starting, and then the early the early eons of the of the world ... it's just kind of interesting and then we'll talk about if it has any relevance to to Buddhism [laughs], okay. Say {lung gi} [repeat] {kyilnkor} [repeat] {Lung gi} [repeat] {kyilnkor} [repeat]. According to Buddhists ... according to the third chapter of the {b: Abhidharma} there are two great presentations of how the world came to be. One is in the {Kalachakra} system of {tantra} and one is in the {b: Abhidharma}. We're gonna do the {b:Abhidharma} one, and according to the {b:Abhidharma} at the very beginning of of time ... no beginning of time, but anyway, the beginning of this planet, space was just empty. It was just empty space. And then they say there's this energy called {lung ... lung} means what?

[students: Wind]

Wind, okay, it's the energy called wind. They don't believe that there was some big fan, you know, blowing emptiness, all right, [laughs] [laughter] but there was this energy called wind. And and it started to cycle in very gently, like wafting, and then they say it picks up speed and it picks up velocity until it starts to congeal into a mass, and and after a while the element of wind is moving at such velocity that it becomes as hard as a diamond, they say, and so that's the basis of the of the world, supposed to be this big disc {kyilnkor} means "disc". Do you know the sanskrit word? [student: Chakra?] Close. And this is the one of the only places where you see the man ... word mandala used in it's real meaning which is "disc". It's a disc. It's a huge disc. So mandala ... when you offer a mandala {om vajra bhumi ah hung, wang chen ser gyi sa zhi} you are offering these these fundamental discs, okay. And the sanskrit word in the {b:Abhidharma} at this point is "mandala". That part is [student: Was the empty space where the earth was to be viewed or was empty space everywhere?] Not

every ... well no, never, never was because there have been planets forever. [student: So this empty space refers to the place for the earth] Yeah. The {b: Abhidharma} says at this point you couldn't describe all the planets in the universe even the inhabited ones, and and it goes through the number of inhabited ones, and it says, you know, how many galaxies there are and what universes they're in and where the beings are but but on this point it says, let's just talk about the one that's con ... and it's interesting, they've define this planet by being the one that is related to the paradise where Shakyamuni Buddha is living right now, [laughs] it's interesting ... they define this planet ... you know, they don't say third planet from the sun or something, they say the planet which is connected to that paradise, you know, which I'm not even sure is ... we have to talk about that some day but, anyway, everything at the beginning is empty, and then there's and then there's this big disc of wind [student: Empty in the traditional Buddhist empty or void of] Not emptiness at all, no way, I mean not not philosophical emptiness, but physically empty, okay, yeah, then on top of that form {unclear} [student: Then at one point it becomes a diamond?] Yeah, after that's already hard, okay, it's still is just a vortex of wind, but it's it's circling at such velocity that you couldn't you couldn't break it with a diamond, you couldn't ... a diamond ... if you smashed a diamond onto it nothing would happen. It's not exactly true, but anyway. [student: Then why did you give us this name? I'm sorry I didn't get it, disc mandala {lung gi}] This is the translation of {kyilnkor}. {Kyilnkor} is Tibetan and the Sanskrit word here is mandala. And mandala ... so we offer a mandala, what're you offering? [student: a disc] I mean you're starting with that disc. That's why you off ... start with a plate. And by the way, the ... I'll give you the dimensions of the of the disc of wind, all right. It's measured in in {yojinas}, okay? {Yojina} if you work it out ... you can work it out different ways, but there's so many {dongs} to a {yojina}, there are so many {trus} to a {dong} and there's so many {tsors} to a {tru} and there's [laughter] so many ... it goes on and on, but I I I'm saying if you say that a {tsor} is an inch, okay, like a knuckle, then there's so many {tsors} to a {tru} and there's four {trus} to a a a ... and then a {dong shi dong}, and then there's so many {dongs} to a {bak te} and like that, you can go on and on, and it goes down to mic ... submicroscopic particles, it goes down like thirty two levels into submic ... subatomic particles, then it goes up to light years. But just talking in our realm, okay, a {bak te} or {yojina} if you figured out, I I I'd guess it's about four and a half miles. According to that the this disc is about seven million miles wide in diameter. No sorry, seven million miles thick. [student: How many miles high? Thick?] Thick. This is seven million miles. [students: {unclear} disc like that?] It's not because the the width is [laughter] [student: Wow. [laughter]] That many ... miles. So so sorry, I mean if I really drew it on here you couldn't see the

thickness, I mean I'd have to use New York City and then maybe you could see the thickness, I don't know. But this is the ... yeah?[student: Is this just the basis of our planet] Yeah[student: or the cosmos?] No, our planet.[student: Our planet] Well, it gets into a little bit troublesome, we'll see [laughs]. It gets to be a bit of a question, you can call it all "our world", how's that? Okay, and and you'll see why. And then on top of that, let me get the ... I'll get you the measurements of the gold, okay, on top of this is a ... I haven't done this in twenty years, you know, I've..hard to ... I once figured it all out, when I had time for these things. This is a this is a a disc of water and gold. The inner part the inner part is gold and that's the gold disc and then there's a disc of water on top of that. So the gold disc the gold disc is contained in the water disc and that's about five million miles thick, okay.[student: Wai wai wait. On top of the wind?] So yeah. Here's this wind disc and then there's this huge rains ... this huge sort of a rainstorm, okay, anyway, water collects on top of the disc of wind, some kind of primeval water [student: And is that {ser ki}? {Ser kyilnkor} is is a disc of gold that forms here. In the in the disc of water.[student: Within?] Yeah, they seem to be connected. They seem to be] [student: Within or connected or] Seems to be part of the disc of water, like part, like like maybe the lower third I think it is, [student: The lower third?] Something like that, okay.[student: It sank to the bottom.] [student: It sank to the bottom] Okay, here we go. A great wind stirs up the water and the disc of water is only 3.6 million miles wide after that and then the disc of gold is 1.4 million miles wide, okay, so here's the disc of wind and then after some cosmic event this disc of gold forms and then on top of that is a disc of water. Okay. Make sense? So this whole thing is five million miles wide and after this cosmic event, the the lower third of the water or 1.4 million miles has turned to gold and above that it's water, 3.6 million miles wide and below the whole thing is seven million miles of wind. Okay.[student: Is it real gold? {unclear} [laughter] Pure gold. [laughter] Maybe we could find it. This is only 5.4 million miles wide, so I guess if you really put it on top of the wind disc it would look like that, you know, I mean, the wind disc is like a a a galaxy holding up ... some people say it's the it's that that spinning vortex, it's the it's the it's like a cyclone and it's keeping the water in and then other people say it's just the karma of the beings who live on that planet that's keeping the water there, but basically, you have to imagine that when you're offering a mandala, {om vajra bhumi ah hung, om vajra bhumi ah hung} means "the diamond the diamond floor" I guess referring to the wind {om vajra bhumi ah hung, wang chen ser gyi sa shi} and then you start building it up, and when you offer mandala that's ... this is what you're offering, you you are actually offering the world, and you have to understand that when you offer a mandala. Each part of the mandala has a symbolic meaning and we could have a whole class on that, but basically whe ...

when you're doing that mandala offering, you're offering the {b:Abhidharma} presentation of the world. It's like ... I guess we would walk in with a globe and offer that or something, you know, so you've got you've got the the disc of wind, the disc of gold and the disc of water. Then he goes into the the mountains of the world and in the center is a[student: Wait, wait a second, Michael, where are we?}We didn't get there yet. [laughs] The {students name}'s always ahead of me. Okay. Then there a mountain called, and I I haven't done this for twenty years so I don't remember everything, but anyway, this is called..this is Mt. Meru[student: Sitting on top of the water?}It's on top of the ... it's coming out of the water. Okay. It's coming out of the water. Is is Mt. Meru. This is the great central mountain of the world.[student: How many levels {unclear}.I think it's four, I don't remember, but it's shaped like that, I remember I worked that out, you can read it in the reading ... and by the way the reading is all that the {b:Abhidharma} says, so on top of that are ... around that are are six mountain ranges ... I don't have room for them. [laughter] But anyway, six six mountain ranges. [student: Is is Mt Meru supposed to have four stories or}I think it's four but I I can't swear to it ... I figured it out one time, you can you can figure it out yourself, it's possible or you can read one of the early commentaries, the the a ... his autocommentary, Vasubandu's auto autocommentary has a lot of it. I've seen actually some pictures of mandalas which are correct, and they have, you you know, Mt. Meru, the ... it does have steps, it does have terraces and on the terraces live different kinds of beings and the tops of the terraces are wider than the base of the terraces, like that. And then there's a there's one mountain range going around here, around the whole outside. These seven mountains ranges are made of gold supposedly, and the one around the edge is made of iron. I think it's one plus seven plus one, so nine nine nine galactic mountain ranges. [student: You said that there is six ranges and now you say seven ranges}Did I say six?[students: Yeah}You're right. Six. Eight eight great mountain ranges altogether. [student: Six and one is seven. How?}[student: Plus the mountain.}[student: Does that include Mt. Meru?}One, six and one. Count Mt. Meru as one, six mountain ranges concentrically circling it, and then one great range out at the edge. Now what's between here and the edge, we'll get into later, okay.[student: So Meru is supposedly made of what?}So Meru is made of the following elements, okay [laughs]. And there's a debate about it, but anyway, the eastern side is supposed to be silver ... where is the east? According to most {unclear} you should do it this way. Eastern side's silver, southern side is lapis, which is what color?[students: Blue}West side is ruby and north side is gold.[student: Are these the real thing?}We gotta talk about it, okay?[student: Or just color} I mean it's good to know ... well I'll tell you what. Anyway, we'll get into that before the end of tonight.[student: What are these directions {unclear} very similar

{unclear} ... south, east, north and west.)Eh ... that's a good question, anyway, we'll get into it. I think the directions are ... if you asked me, I mean, my own guts would be they're defined by ... well it's a long story, but anyway. The sun moves around [laughter] the sun moves around ... I didn't I didn't want to get into astrology or anything, the sun moves around Mt. Meru like this, okay, chased by the moon[students: {unclear}]And it's a long story, and the sun the sun comes over earth and then goes over the other continents ... but I'm not ... I'll get into it, okay. Don't get ahead of me. All right. [laughter] The the color of the sky in each of the four directions from Mt. Meru is determined by the color of the side of Mt. Meru.[student: Say it again]The su ... the color of the very sky around Mt. Meru is determined by the element on that quarter of Mt. Meru. So if the sky was blue, where would you be living?[students: South. Lapis. We live on the south side]The south side. Okay. [student: Lapis blue ... is that the blue?] Then ... this one this mountain is, let's see, three hundred and sixty thousand miles down into the water, three hundred and sixty thousand miles above the water, seven hundred and twenty thousand miles high, and then each of these mountain ranges decreases by half, out to the edge.[student: And you said those mountains were gold and the outer one was iron?]Yeah.[student: How much do they decrease?][student: Half.]Okay. Between each mountain range is an ocean. [student: [laughter] I can't draw that.]Yeah, I know. No kidding. It's a long story. [laughter] [laughs] I mean we'll go we'll go through this one. I think I've got a mountain left out but I'll check it while during the break, I think there's nine [laughter]. I think we have seven here but I gotta check it ... I'll check this text, okay. Let's see what else. These are called the inner oceans, and then out here is the outer ocean between this between this mountain range out here and the and the beginning of the inner ranges. So this is a this mount ... this ocean is huge and it measures, they say, one point five million miles.[student: That's between the outer mountains and the last of the inner range of mountains]Ah...let me check that, I I believe it's between this iron mountain and the last golden mountain. Now there are four great continents in that ocean. Okay. And tradition would say that you should start counting from the south, which would be here, in my excellent drawing, in the outer ocean, in that big outer ocean, there are four continents. Maybe I better blow this up. [laughs] You you know you got Mt Meru or something like that and then you got all these mountain ranges and then you have ... coming out here it's two thousand {yojina} on each side {unclear}, I'm not sure it's facing that way, but anyway it's shape is supposed to be like that, almost a triangle, two thousand {unclear} what size is that.. nine thousand miles to a to a side. This is the southern continent and it's called {Dzam bu ... dzam bu ling}. [student: South? {unclear}]Yeah if you count ... I'm counting that as south, which is tradition, I mean you count you you normally count these

towards the south. So to the south is {dzam bu ling}. Why is it called {dzam bu ling}? {Ling} means "island". In Sanskrit it's {drigpa}. {Pa} means "water" and {drig} means "divide". And that's a pun in Sanskrit, {drigpa} means the thing that divides water, which is an island. Or a continent. {Dzam bu} is the sound that a tree a a fruit falling from the dzam bu tree makes when it hits the water. [laughter] [laughs] {Dzam bu}.[laughs] So if you ever wondered where the name of your planet came from ... we live on {dzam bu ling}. This is where we live. Okay.[student: But Michael, this is a triangle, I know it's a sphere but]It's well they say three sides are two thousand yojina which is about nine thousand miles and the fourth side is three and a half, two thousand, two thousand, two thousand, two thousand and then the tip is only three and a half[student: Yeah but I mean how do you explain the shape with the shape the earth is]Say again. [student: It's a triangle.] No it's not. It's shaped like a wagon. What's a wagon shape?[students: {unclear}]Not in India. You got one bullock and then two sticks come up and they come to a point right over the bull, you know, so, shaped like ... it is four sided but the fourth side is this big and the other three sides are this big. Okay. Okay. Got it? [laughs] All right. You okay?[student: Yeah but, where is the world?] [laughter]Now you tell me.[student: {unclear} got a lot of pictures now, you know]This whole thing is the world. We're gonna talk about it, we're gonna talk about it. And we, supposedly we live here.[student: That's what I'm trying to say. I'm supposed to picture that in]Give Nina {unclear}, okay. [laughter] Okay. Okay. [laughter] Now we go east there's supposed to be like a half a yojina, and I don't know the orientation, but roughly like that. This is called "Great Body" {Lu pag po} and then there's a continent in the back there, {unclear} yeah, there's one in the back of called {unclear}, yeah that's west ... if you really drew them it would be like pin heads on on the pacific ocean, I mean, small. Compared to the circumference, I mean, of the ocean. So when you do your mandala offering, what do you say? {Om vajra bhumi ah hung}, here's the diamond the diamond floor {om vakra rekhe ah hung}, here's the great fence of iron {Chi chag ri kor gyu gi kor we u su, ri gyal po ri rab}, in the middle is the is Mt. Meru {shar lu pag po} in the east is {lu pag po} {lho dzam bu ling, nub ba lang cho, jang dra mi nyen lu dang lu pag, nga yab dang nga yab zhen, yo dang dang lam chog dro, dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da} okay, each continent has two subcontinents arranged like that and when you're doing your mandala offering you're supposed to be putting the rice there like that, so you go {lho dzam bu ling, nub ba lang cho, jang dra mi nyen, lu dang lu pag, nga yab dang nga yab zhen, yo dang dang lam chog dro, dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da} okay, and we have to learn it someday, but basically that's what you're doing when you do all that mishmash with the[student: And why are you doing mandala offering?]It, I mean, in one in one sense you have to imagine when you

do it, the whole planet. I mean you can visualize planet earth, okay, 'cause that's what you're used to, and the whole planet. Like I tend to think of all the all the jewelry shops in Hong Kong, you know, and [laughter] [laughs] no it means, you know, all the wheat in Kansas, all the flowers in, you know, I mean you're just[student: But why do you have to visualize the earth]You're you're visualizing the entire planet and offering it to your Lama. You know. You're asking for a Dharma class, you couldn't pay for this class. I had people accuse me of charging for class, you know, and me and Rinpoche were joking about it the other night, you know, what could I charge you for a class? You know, what is nirvana worth, how do you put a price on that, you know. It's priceless. It's absolutely totally priceless. I mean for one class you're supposed to offer the whole planet, you know, for for two hours for this kind of a class you're supposed to offer the planet, you know, so what good is like ten or twenty dollars, you know, I mean it's it's it's more valuable than all the money in America to be in this class for two hours, you know, you can't pay for it. And it's it's crazy to to charge anybody, you know. People are asking me, you should charge, we're losing money, you know, and it just feels funny, it feels ridiculous 'cause what do you what do you pay for the removal of your mental afflictions, you know what I mean [laughs] [laughter] What do we charge per hour, you know [laughter] What's what's it worth to you to lose your jealousy, you know. [laughter][student: You could scale the prices]Which you can only do by seeing emptiness, you know. Which you can only do by seeing emptiness. Someone has to teach you to do it. That's very precious, you know. You can't pay for that. And no one can teach you otherwise, you know. So anyway, what you're doing at the beginning of class is offering the universe, or you know, the known universe okay, you're offering the whole world. Incidentally, if you study mandala offering carefully, each each each object that you offer after that, the precious minister, the precious wheel, the precious vase ... they all have meaning. they all represent some spiritual quality and you have to study it someday, you know. But basically when you do your mandala offering now you know wha ... you know why you're sticking four gr ... piles of grain and then two on each four and then like that, you know, this is what you're doing. After ... we'll take a break but after that I'm going to talk about why the hell does this matter to us, you know. I mean [laughs] what's the use of standing up here ... I do I don't know any Buddhist teacher in America who goes through this whole thing, you know, and I know the Dalai Lama takes great pains to avoid it usually because it just sounds silly and we have a lot of people who don't understand and we have ... we'll talk about it, okay., so take a break.Yeah, there are seven concentric mountain ranges and then one eight ... if you count Meru as one and the concentric ranges are seven and then the what we call the encircling range is

nine. I mean, that's nine total. Nine total mountain ranges. Mt. Meru one, seven rings around that, then a huge ocean and then finally another mountain range, okay.[student: What's beyond this mountain? ... this, the end of the universe, this one, right? or there is no]What's that?[student: Beyond the iron mountain range that's the end of the universe of this one universe]I think you would hit the disc of wind, right?[student: Oh, okay, yeah]Yeah, something like that, okay. I gotta clarify one thing. The seven oceans between here ... one, two, three, four, five, six, seven ... those are called the Seas of Sport.[students: Huh? Sport?]Sport, meaning "having a good time".[student: Oh sport as {unclear}]Yeah, I mean, in the sense of a sporting, okay, having a good time. And the first of the seas of sport here is called the inner sea, so really it's just the ... I guess it's the ocean between Mt. Mero and the first ring that's called the inner sea and then the rest of these are ... they're all seas of sport, but the the innermost one is called the inner ocean. And this is called the the great outer ocean, the one between the last mountain range and then the circling range on the edge. Let me see if I ... then I I put in ... there's a part of a a reading about various characteristics of {dzam bu ling} about ... of our world. Now where's where are we ... I mean this whole thing would be considered like one world, this whole thing and then there's hells going down ... we'll talk about that later ... but that whole ... con construct is considered one planet and there are small galaxies made of a thousand of these, there are larger galaxies made of a million of these and then there are major galaxies made of a billion of these. And then there are many of those, in the in the universe. What's the point? Now why go through all these things? And why talk about such an obviously primitive perception of the world, okay. Yeah? [student: Are these {cut} anybody representing {unclear}]There's lots of ways to talk about them, I mean there's many many ways to talk about them but I mean I have this pet peeve, you know, of apologizing for Vasubandu, you know. Vasubandu, in his fifth and sixth chapters, for example, outlines what's going on in the fifteen milliseconds after the path of seeing, I mean, after seeing emptiness directly. This guy was not a fool, okay [laughs], I mean he saw extraordinary things, he had extraordinary visions. I mean translating the {b: Abhidharma} is like is like an aborigine studying an atom bomb, you know, I mean you have that feeling when you're trying to translate, it's like it's like you trying to divide between twenty different levels of something you had no ... you have not the slightest imagination of what it's like. And then and then you're wondering about this person who wrote it, you know, like he's he's describing things that he's very familiar with, you know, spiritually, these levels and and things that he's ... he, to him are quite natural, you know, he's got like, I don't know, thirty seven kinds of concentration, you know, forty seven kinds of selflessness, and and all these things, and all you can do is translate the words 'cause there's no

way you could ever imagine what he's talking about, so why has he got a chapter about, you know, a world that you could fall off the edge of. And then I think there's like three great explanations. And one, people say, oh Mt. Meru is like Mt. Everest and to the south is India, this big plain that's kind of triangular and probably, I don't know, Russian is {dra mi nyen} and, you know, that's one popular approach, you know. The other one is that, ah, he didn't believe in it, he knew it wasn't that way but he was talking to readers who thought it was that way so he had to present it that way. That's another approach. But there's a third possibility which people don't talk about, and I think, you know, it has to do with emptiness, and we talked about the guy at work that you don't like ... I mean people who've been here for a while know that example, and there there's this person at work, and I gave the example all the time ... sorry to bore you older people, but, you know, my boss ... this happened Friday, or Thursday ... she burst into the room, there's about fourteen people in the room [laughter], we're we're in this long room with diamonds on each side and people sitting there, you know, and she bursts into the door and she says to me, you know, why the hell isn't this order finished or something like that, you ... screaming at me that these diamonds aren't ready, you know, this is why I work because it's so good for my Buddhism and [laughter] she's screaming at me and she's got her face in my face and she's asking me why I couldn't do this impossible thing anyway, and and to me at that moment she looks very bad, you know. She looks very ugly and very bad. But but in the same room there are people ... you know, everyone turns you know, [laughs] to their right and they and they look at me, and they and it and some people are upset because they like me and they don't like her and they see her as being very bad. And then some people probably don't like me very much and they're thinking, well finally ... this guy who doesn't show up here very much and who's on the phone all the time with his students [laughter] is finally getting what he deserves for not finishing this order [laughs] [laughter]. You know, and so they're actually having a pleasant experience, and then there's all these neutral people who just immediately turn back to their work because they they don't care either way. The point is that she ... what is the nature of her being bad or good, you know. Bad and good are opposite qualities. They cannot adhere to one object at one time. Impossible. I mean, just logically impossible. So she cannot be what she appears to be, ri ... I mean that's obvious, she can not be good and bad at the same time ... impossible. And it's they they ... being bad and being good ca not be qualities of her. Because if they were she would blow up or something because they're just opposite qualities, they cannot adhere to one object at the same time. They are like all blue and all red. They cannot they can not be qualities of one object at the same time ... impossible. So what's going on, you know. Where's the bad and good coming from. If she ... she does not have

them as a quality of hers because if she did she'd be good and bad at the same time which is impossible, you know, so what's going on?[student: It's your self perception.]It's my projection.[student: Okay}Okay. It's ... perception is one thing, you know, I'm in a bad mood and people look bad. That's one thing. But but my brain is forcing me to see her a certain way ... that's a different thing. I call it projection state, you know, but what is she really.[student: She's blank}She's blank. I like the word blank. I prefer the word blank to emptiness, you know ... she's blank. She's blank. She doesn't have those qualities. Is there a woman in front of me with a red face?[students: Yes. Yeah}There is. Okay. But I'm the one who's seeing her as anger, as seeing her as bad. Because the other people see the red face and think what? Righteous. He finally got caught. This guy who doesn't do any work all day [laughs] you know, finally he got caught, you know, it's great. My, our boss is a great boss. She's finally understood what's going on. So, you know [laughter] but the two the two perceptions of the boss' being righteous and good and the boss' being ugly and mean and unfair ... those are opposite qualities. So they they cannot be qualities of one object at the same time. It's impossible. She's blank and I'm perceiving it one way ... I'm projecting onto her one way and other people are projecting onto her another way. Does that mean that tomorrow, when I go to work, and she's gonna come in and ask me about the D-seven pricing table that I didn't finish, okay [laughter] and [laughs] she's gonna yell at me, and ... does that mean that I can choose to project on her, oh, I'll just choose to project her as a nice boss today, I mean, when she yells at me, I'll decide that it's pleasant.[student: no}Can you do that?[student: No}Cannot. Can you ... does that mean you cannot choose your projection on her?[students: un huh}You can't. You don't. So what's ... where's it coming from if it's not will power?[students: Karma}Yeah, it, we studied karma ... it takes a long time to learn it but basically in my mindstream there are certain seeds, they are ripening and they are forcing me to see her as bad, okay. Is she bad? [students: No}She is bad, okay [laughs] [laughter] Is it valid, is it valid ... what we call karma, is it valid.[student: Her ears must be burning.}Yes, it's valid. All the conditions are there and I'm seeing that person, and she can fire me. And I won't have enough money to support this place [laughs], 'cause this can happen, you know, it would happen. That's functional, it functions ... it's an illusion but it functions, you know. It is my projection and I am creating it in a sense from my past karma, but it works and it can kill you, it can fire you, it can it can make your ears burn, you know, I mean it's functional. Wha ... it's not what we thought it was but it still works and that's what Nagarjuna keeps saying over and over again, Tsongkapa keeps saying over and over again, yeah yeah, it's artificial ... it's your projection, but it works, and in fact, if it weren't your projection it couldn't work. If she was bad out there on her own, from her side, if

she was good out there from her own on her side, then everyone would perceive her the same way, but they don't, which means ... which proves it's coming from somewhere else. If she was bad from her side she could never change. What's changing when she gets better is what? [students: Her karma is? Your projection.] My projections. [student: There's no, you ..] She's not changing. [student: You can choose at any situation how] Not at all. I mean, if you decide that you would like to be more calm in those situations and try to think of your enemy as your friend as the Dalai Lama's always saying ... that helps, I mean that's a psychological projection. I'm talking about a reality projection. There's a big difference. Okay. There's a big difference between recognizing this being as an enemy and trying to think of them as a friend because they're teaching you something and just them never being your enemy because you don't have a projection to think of them as your enemy. There's a big difference between those two. One is like a psychological decision to, okay, I'll try to remember how this pain in the ass is somehow helping me, you know, and the other one is that you never meet the pain in the butt. They just don't exist because you don't have the karma to see them. You know. So what does that tell you about the planet? And that's very important. I mean, I think Vasubandu put that in there for a reason. [student: He's dealing with our projections of {unclear}] Where's the planet come from? [student: Well, we don't have to] Why is the planet round to a satellite picture? [student: Collective conscious ... collective karma?] It's a collective karma. We all have the karma to see a picture ... I had Indians in in Bamnigar, India swearing to ... they have a they have a they have a mu, a Jain museum dedicated to proving that the world is not round. [laughter] You know. And [laughs] it's pretty interesting [laughs]. [student: {unclear} convince you] But but the point is this, I mean when a when you see a look at a satellite picture, and you see the world as something spherical, that's no more valid than this. I mean, the ... Vasubandu's trying to tell us something. He's not just some crazy guy who finishes this incredible chapter on the psychology of the human mind and then is moving into a chapter on the the subtleties of karma and in between there he sticks this stupid thing about water falling off the side of the earth and things like that [laughter], you know, it's not like that, I mean, don't think that. It'd be a bad deed, I think. He's trying to tell us something about our perceptions, you know. And and there's nothing to say that a hun ... and I will I will I will what do you call that... dare to guess that in a hundred years from now people will call us stupid. They say, oh they looked at those satellite pictures and thought the world was round, you know, a spherical, but we know different, you know, it's really a projection based on your mind and if you had ... boy if they didn't know how to keep their morality and their bodhisattva vows and their tantric vows because if they had they'd see the world like we see it. Which is really the way it is, you

know. I mean, they'll call us primitive, you know. The enlightened beings of the future will say, oh those poor people back in nineteen ninety five, all they could see of the world was this round thing with oceans on it and mountains and stuff, you know, they they had no idea it was a paradise. That it was a Buddha realm, you know. Po poor them. They couldn't keep their tantric vows or bodhisattva vows, you know. So they got stuck seeing these satellite pictures, you know. [laughter] They'll sa ... I mean they're..they're are there will be beings like that, and they'll say that about us. And it applies even to objects in your own world now, you know, if you do your practices well, if you take your bodhisattva vows and particularly if you take a {tantric} initiation and you keep it and you do like eight or nine strict {tantric} retreats in the right way, your your perception of things won't be at all what it is now. If it is they you're ... something's wrong, you know. I mean, there's gotta be a difference between us not having done those things and someone like five years after they've done those things. That their perceptions of the world are are totally different. Of the same planet that you're looking at. And they're not seeing that primitive thing called "satellite picture". You know, they're not seeing a a big flat piece of gold [laughs] with water hanging off the top, you know. They're seeing something totally different. So I think Vasubandu is pulling our legs or something. He's trying to say come on, you know, don't you get get the point? You know. This is a projection. The the way you think the planet is is also a primitive projection and if you were more advanced, not in the sense of computers and circuitry, but if you were more advanced spiritually, in the sense of having done your tantric retreats and kept your vows and done your tantric practices, you wouldn't be seeing the world like this at all, 'cause the world's not like that. So that's the point, that's that's actually why we're having a class about the world. All right. [laughter] Now the person who has your homework papers is in Brooklyn [laughter] [laughs] which is somewhere east of Manhattan. [laughter] [student: In whose perception?] [laughter] So I'm gonna write the questions for you, I'm sorry. They went on a mission yesterday and didn't come back. This is homework six, okay. By the way I wouldn't mind if you ... I I'm actually think the four causes of, what do you call it, flourishing are more interesting, but I'll leave it up to you, if you ... probably half the people will put one and half the people will put the other, and that's okay. But you know there's too sets of four. So, if you want an A+ put both of them. Here you could say, you know, what is their function overall and then what is their functions ... I don't want to answer it for you, but what is their function towards the the source of of your body. [student: Would you accept a schematic drawing for four and five?] Yeah, I think so. Here're your old homeworks.[student: What's the meditation?][student: Will you hand those back?] Oh the meditation is, got cut off, hum. [laughter] [student: Something

about your perception of the world}I'd say that, yeah, meditate on your perception of the world. I I I would say what's the most important is ... and I think it was what got cut off, is that whether or not your perception is the only one possible, you know, like a logical meditation on that and and I think, you know, that that that involves what we just talked about. And it's maybe the most important thing in the class. Why why is your perception ... is your perception the only one possible, why or why not? Okay we'll do a prayer and then you guys can stick around for {unclear} [laughs]. Okay you gotta offer this planet now okay [laughs].{prayer: mandala}{prayer: dedication}

Geshe Michael RoachPRIVATE
Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence
Class Seven: The Lives of Hellbeings
March 30, 1996

960330-1.TXT

Say {nyel-wa} [repeat]. High tone for the Tibetan people, okay? {Nyel-wa} [repeat], {nyel-wa} [repeat]. Okay. {Nyel-wa} means "hells" and today we're going to talk about the hells. We've reached the hells. I'll go through all the hells first, which I've been in many times, and then I'll talk about why they're possible and why it is important to study them because this is part of our upbringing, you know, in the West and especially Christianity and Judeo-Christian tradition that, um, you know, most of us rejected, most of us thought was weird or irrelevant or maybe didn't even exist and so I, I want to talk about that. But first we'll talk about what they are and then we'll get into whether or not they're possible, alright? Logically possible, alright? So, first we'll talk about...

[silence]

Say {tsa nyel gye} [repeat], {gye} [repeat], {tsa nyel} [repeat], {gye} [repeat]. {Tsa} means here "hot." Okay? Hot. {Tsawa} means hot. {Nyel} means "hell" and {gye} means "eight different kinds," the eight different kinds of hot hells, okay? Supposed to be that the hells are located directly under {Vajra Asana}, "The Diamond Seat", which is where the Buddha became enlightened. In, in Tibetan nowadays it's called {Dorjeden}, {Dorjeden}, Bodhgaya, and they are supposed to be...I don't remember the exact thing but like three-hundred and twenty thousand {yojanas} to the bottom of the hells. So the hells are like a huge chamber. I believe it's twenty-thousand {yojana} which would be like ninety thousand miles across and they are sha..they are shaped like that. They are stacked on top of each other and the lightest one starts up here and then it goes down to the heavier ones...to the, to the worse ones. So, we'll go from top to bottom. There is a big debate about how they fit under the earth and they say where those...the continents are bigger at the bottom then at the top where they come out of the ocean, so...alright?

[silence]

Say {yang-su} [repeat], {yang-su} [repeat]. {Yang} means "again" like the re in

English, okay? Like re-born, re-generate, re...it's like r-e. {Yang} means again. {So}, {su} comes from the verb {so}, and by the way sometimes it's spelled without the {gawo}, sometimes it's spelled like that for you Tibetan track people. But {so-wa} is the {so} in {sojong} for example. What's {sojong} mean? I mean, it's, it's, it's the monk's confession ceremony but the {so} part means "to fix something that was broken, to repair something, to renew something" and that is the meaning of, the basic meaning of {so}. Even in modern Tibetan you say {so chu gyap} means "What are you up to today?" You say "Oh, I'm fixi...I'm renovating my house or I'm fixing my house." So {so} means to renovate or to fix something. {Yang-su} is the...especially without the {ga} is the imperative which means regenerate or, or, get back up. It means...I don't know, what do you say? How do I translate it? "Revive," okay? You could say "Revive." This hell is called "Revive".

[student: Together Yang-Su means that?]

Yeah, "re-vive", okay? "Revive." So what it means is when you, when you get born in this hell...by the way, what kind of...do you have a hell mommy and daddy or you just show up there?

[students: Just show up.]

No, you show up complete, okay? After a bardo, after a bardo existence. You go there, you get there through the bardo and then you appear in that hell and, and, it's this experience where it's, it's very much like what Dante wrote so if you want to read a really good exam...I mean, read Dante, okay? [b.The Inferno.] It's very, very similar to what Dante wrote. But, anyway, it's this huge, huge chamber, ninety-thousand miles across and burning, hot, and this mass of confusion, you know, people just screaming and struggling and running and the...what happens when you get there is that you...because of your karma you feel this intense hatred for the other people there, the minute you're born there, the minute you show up there, you're part of them and you just, you just feel this tremendous hatred for everyone else there, so you take any type of thing you can get your hands on, like if there's a stick there or a piece or rock or a piece of metal or anything you can get your hands on and you start beating each other with it, even if...with your fingernails or something, anything you can, you can think of that can be a weapon you start to attack the other people there and they are attacking you and you just keep beating each other, ripping at each other, until you're, you just fall down senseless. I mean after this huge mass of beings is finished beating each other and smashing at each other then they, they

just fall down unconscious and then a voice comes from the sky and says {yang-su} and {yang-su} means "get back up". So you've been unconscious and this this voice that comes out of the roof of the place and it says "get back up" and the karma is that when you hear that voice, you, you, your life comes back and you get back up again and you start struggling again, you start fighting with the...each other again. There is a special kind of pain when you die in this life and, we talked about it before, it's called {nechu gi dugngel} but it's a special kind of pain like it's the pain of a bug that gets crushed or it's the pain of a person who's burning in a fire in a house, but it's that last final pain and it's supposed to be very, very extraordinary. I guess it's why...we've probably been through it countless times and it's probably why we fear death so much because it's some kind of extraordinary pain that people have as they die, as any being has as they die. So they say in this hell, everyday you're going through that many times. You reach that point of that kind of pain where you're dying, you, you, you feel the kind of pain of dying and you go through that special kind of agony and then that voice says {yang-su}, "get back up," and you have to get back up and you go through it again, and people start beating you, you start beating them and then...and it, and, and so they say in like, in this life you'll only feel that kind of pain once in fifty or sixty years but in {yang-su} you're going through it many times everyday and there is no end, you just keep going, like that. How long does it last? I have the calculation here. I didn't have time to figure it out but basically time in the hells moves hundreds of times slower than it does here so that a day in our, in our world would be years in a, in a hell...many years. And they, they live very, very long lives, they live millions of years and time is going extremely slow. You know it when you get a headache or something, time seems to slow down [laughs]. When you're having a good time, time speeds up and when you're suffering, if you have a back ache or your sick or something, it seems like the day will never end and in the hells it's, it's much, much worse. So that's the experience in, in {yang-su}, that's the lightest hell. They say that one moment there, one moment of pain there is more pain than a person could feel in a whole lifetime as a human. You know, they say you can't compare it to all the collected pain of a person in this existence in a lifetime.

[silence]

[student: What's the physical form that beings take in the hell realms?]

Um, tha...I don't know [laughs] you know, they show them as some kind of...they don't say much about it. When they get down to the lower hells they describe it. I mean, my impression is that you look pretty much like a human or

something but I don't know. If, if the bardo is supposed to resemble the person in the hell then maybe it's short and burnt and something like that but they don't really...I haven't...don't remember seeing it. When you get down to the lower hells, it does. Say {tik-nak} [repeat], {tik-nak} [repeat]. {Tik} means "a line," a line. For example when you're laying out a house, Andy knows [laughs] but somebody goes the day before you do the construction and they lay out the lines, they do {tik}, in Tibetan it's called {tik gyap}, and two people hold a string with chalk on it and somebody snaps it and it draws a line on the wood and that's called a {tik}. When you do a mandala, for example, for a fire offering, you, first you have to {tik gyap}, you have to lay out all the lines first, you have to calculate all the lines so it means "to lay out a line," {tik}. And then {nak} means "black," stands for {nakpo}, {nakpo}, which means "black." So in some of the hells there are hellguards or hell...like torture...people who torture you there...beings that torture you there. In {yang-su} there are no hellguards, you're, you're torturing each other. In {tiknak} there are these very powerful beings, they're much larger than humans, they are much stronger than humans and they, they have the abili...they, they come to you and they just grab you and the force you down on the ground, the ground is hot like steel anyways, hot steel, and then they take like chains and they heat them up red and then they set them down on your body, they force them down on your body, and then it, it produces this line across your body like a, a black line, where, where it burns your body. So they...you've seen those pictures of...in the butcher shops of how the cow is going to be cut up, you know, like this will be the loin and this will be the...so they do that, they do either four or eight or more, they quarter you up with these...they draw lines on your body and then other hell guards come and they either have saws or axes or weapons like that, knives, and they, and they split you up along the lines, they cut you up along the lines and so eventually you're just pieces of flesh lying around on this metal floor that's burning but you still have the...your consciousness is not destroyed, the karma of the place is that each part of your body is still experiencing the pain that it would feel when it was connected to you so your parts are, are thrown all over the hell burning but you, you still feel as though you're one being and you still feel the pain of each part and that's part of the karma to be there.

[student, John Stilwell: And do you revive again or something like that?]

The thing ...the problem with the hell is that you can never go unconscious, you can't...except {yang-su} temporarily, I mean before they tell you to get back up, but in the other hells you can't stop feeling the pain, you can't...there's no rest, you know, you can't get any, there's no point at which you just, it's so much pain

that you black out or something like that. You, you, there's...you have the karma to be aware all the time you're there.

[student, John: So what do you do, you just regenerate spontaneously in that hell?]

Yeah, at some point the pieces come back together just by nature and they, and then they draw the lines again and then someone comes and chops you up again.

[student: What's the karma of the beings who do that?]

It's very hard to find the specific ones but I did search through all those texts and they say especially whipping other people, like in some countries, like in Tibet also, it was a common punishment to horsewhip people who, you know, as a criminal would be tied down and lashed and they say that's for the lines and then just generally all of the hells a) killing is a very typical karma for creating that and then more specifically any extreme form of all ten non-virtues, so in general if you commit the ten non-virtues in, in a heavy form like killing a human being then it would take you to the hells and if you did it in a medium form, you know like hurting other people, you'd be born as a {preta}, and then as a light form, you know like causing minor injury to other people, that would be a...be born as an animal.

[student: What about the karma of the guards?]

We'll talk about it. Basically it's like this...well, we'll talk about it. That's a good question, it's often talked about. Say {dunjom} [repeat], {dunjom} [repeat]. {Dun} means "to collect together" or "gather together." {Jom} is related to the {jom} in {drachompa}, so it means what? "To destroy." So {dunjom} means "to collect together and destroy."

[student, John Stilwell: Was there a name for the last hell?]

Uh, "Blacklines" or "Lines of Black." This hell you could call "Gather and Smash" or something like that, "Gather and Smash." The idea is that there's...the...there are hell guards in this hell, they force you into like a canyon, like they drive you into a space between two big mountains and they say the mountains have the appearance of a animals head like sometimes they say a goat's head, sometimes a horse's head sometimes other kinds of animals' heads and then they force you

in-between those and then the two mountains collapse, the two sides of the canyon just close and they smash all the beings inside. Then they, they open again, then your body just regenerates, the karma is that your body just regenerates again and then they force you back in again and then the mountains take on a different look of a different kind of animal's head and then they, they close again and they smash you, so it's like that. That's the quality of this hell. Mmm.

[student: How is this worse than black lines?]

[laughter]

They say something like the pain doubles in each hell or something and the, the time, the time you're there increases, the life span is longer. They say the particular karma that gets you to this hell is killing and then I've seen scriptures when I was checking it that it relates to the kind of animal that you used to kill, so you'll see, if you used to kill sheep or cows, you'll see the...the mountains will be shaped like the head of the animal that you used to kill.

[silence]

Say {ngu mbu} [repeat], {ngu mbu} [repeat]. Mmm. The main thing here is that you're on a...the whole ground of the hell...they say the whole ground of the hells are steel anyway...steel, iron...and that they're like red-hot, they're like a black smith's...what do you call it? I don't know, but they're red hot.

[student: A forge.]

Like a forge, they're red-hot and you're...you are, you're just naked, you're just running across this red-hot steel, there's...and I think the characteristic here is there's nowhere to go. I mean it's ninety-thousand miles to the corner of hell and all you c...and you can't stand still cause you're in such pain that you can't bear it so you're just running and every time you put your foot down then more of your foot is burned and it just starts burning up your leg. I mean you...the, the, the bottoms of your feet start to actually burn away and then it reaches the bones of your feet and they start to burn away and then eventually you're just running on your knees, you're trying to run on your hands and knees and...across the steel and it's just burning, your flesh is just burning off and at some point you can't run anymore and the flesh regenerates, your feet...your legs regenerate and then you can get up and start running again but they're

nothing...I think the point is sort of this helplessness that you...there's nowhere to go, you're naked, there's nowhere to run, it's just a huge, ninety-thousand mile piece of...sheet of steel, and there's no place to go, all you can do is run and, and you just spend countless lives, basically, you keep regenerating and you can't, there's nowhere to go, there's nothing to do you just run, and scream, and the meaning of this word is "to scream", "to scream" {ngu mbu} means "to scream."

[student, John Stilwell: So, what is this one called?]

"Screaming" [laughs]

[student, John: Did you say all the hells were iron or just this one?]

Oh, they all are but this one in particular the...they're like f...they say that you're like a piece of fried meat on a...what do you call it?...frying pan.

[student, John: So, is it true that in the other hells you're burning your feet also?]

You're also...yeah, but not as severe. {Pu}, I mean linguistically {pu} related to the word for what? What's {pu} mean?

[student: Oh, oh, Tibet!]

Tibet, okay [laughs]. I mean they say, they debate why Tibet is called {Pu} and some people say because it's a stone's throw from India meaning you could...if you stood at the border of In...of the holy land, you could call to someone in Tibet and they would hear you, so it's {pu}, it's only a call away from the holy land, if you stood on the border of India you could, you could call to somebody in Tibet so therefore Tibet is called {Pu}. I mean that's one...nobody really knows why but they, sometimes they say that.

[silence]

Say {ngu mbu} [repeat], {chenpo} [repeat], {ngunbo} [repeat], {chenpo} [repeat]. That's number five. {Chenpo} just means "Great Screaming Hell", "The Great Screaming Hell" and the pain is just, is just, say double of the previous hell, just...everything hurts more.

[silence]

[student: And you say they're twice as long?]

Like the pain is twice as bad.

[student: And you stay there twice as long?]

Uh, much longer, I don't know if it's exactly twice, I believe it is, but I think it depends on each person's personal...typical life span is like that. Mmm.

[silence]

Say {tsa-wa} [repeat], {tsa-wa} [repeat]. {Tsa-wa} just means "heat" the hell is called "Heat" and the characteristic is that there's a...it's like a, a small hut made of metal, steel, and it has one door and they shove you inside and they close it and then they heat the steel, so the steel becomes red hot and you...there's no windows, there's no door, there's no nothing...you're locked in, the door's sealed and you can't do anything, there's no place to go, it's that feeling of nothing you can do, you just have to stand there and you...people are running, every time they touch the wall it's burning off their hands and there's nothing they can do, they can just run around in there and suffer and scream and that's the nature of that hell, that's all it is.

[silence]

Say {rabtu tsawa} [repeat], {rabtu tsa-wa} [repeat]. {Rab} means "extremely" {rabtu} means "extremely", like {rirab} is the highest mountain, Mt. Meru, that's the Sumeru, it's the "su" in Sumeru... "extremely." Lets see there's a better word, it just means "supremely", okay. "Supremely {tsa-wa}", {tsa-wa} means hot. I've heard it explained two ways, the one that I think is correct is...that there are like two rooms, like you're shoved into a chamber that has two rooms and it's hotter, it hurts more, and you run from one room to the other because you think there might be some way...it might help somehow or something, so you, you're just running back and forth, the whole hut that you're enclosed in is steel, there's no way to get out and you're running...it's hot, it's red-hot, and you're running back and forth, trying to do something and you can't even touch the walls 'cause your, your arms will burn and, and you're just running and your feet are slo...your feet and your legs are being burned up as you run and, and then regenerate and you get up and you run again.

[student, Ven. Puntsok-la: How many people stay in this room?]

Ha. I, I said it the other day and it, and it's...I mean, no, one person per room, it s...it sounds to me from the book, from the scriptures, but in general how many beings in the hells is uh...to be a human is like one in a million, okay? To be a human is, is, is one in a million, there are many more beings in the hells and then among humans to ever hear of Dharma is again one in a million and then among people who hear about Dharma to try to practice it is one in a million and then people who try to practice and keeps there vows pure and really keep their lives pure, also, again, extremely rare, it's in the [b: Vinaya], it talks about it.

[silence]

Say {nar me} [repeat], {nar me} [repeat]. {Nar} means "agony"... "torment," {me} means "none," so it's sort of a misnomer, "no torment," but what it means is the torment there, the suffering there, it has this quality that it never gets less, it's, it's, it is the greatest suffering that a being can experience, it is said to be...to be in {Nar me} is more painful than all the other pain going on in the other parts of the three realms at that moment. You know, all the other pain that all other beings are experiencing throughout the three realms at that moment is not equal to the pain that you feel and that never gets less, you never have like ninety-nine percent of that or ninety-eight percent of that or something like that. The...the degree of pain is, is always constant and it's never less than that. You never have a break, you never have a moment where the pain dips a bit, it's constant at that level. And they say that there's...you're born there and then a fire, like a jet of fire, comes at you from the...one direction, like from the east, and it hits you and it starts to burn you and then they say that you become incandescent, that you are...you're body starts to become like a filament in a bulb and, and all they can see...if you went there all you could see would be this indistinguishable, looks a little bit human, this incandescent figure and they say if you...if it weren't for the...they, they make some kind of whimpering scream or something, they can't quite express themselves in a scream so some kind of whining sound and they are just in fire, they're just fi...totally in fire, and otherwise you wouldn't be re...able to recognize that they were human, that they were a sentient being, it would just seem to be like a column of flame or something and it's only from the sounds coming out that you know it's a living thing. And then, then jets of fire come from the other directions and it, and it ma...it, it maintains that. And it's constant and it's the longest life that you can live is there in {nar me} and in Sanskrit it's called {Avici}.

[silence]

Next is {drang nyel gye}. Say {drang nyel} [repeat], {gye} [repeat], {drang nyel} [repeat], {gye} [repeat]. Mmm, {drang} means "cold," {drang nyel gye} means "the eight cold hells." It's another set of eight hells. It's supposed to be...I...as I understand it from reading the text it's parallel to the hot hells, it's in a different direction under {tisay} on this...under maybe the Himalayan range or something like that. Shaped the same...

[student: unclear]

I think one of them was {Tsa-wa} and {Tsa-wa chenpo} maybe you missed it...the jump between {Tsa-wa} and {Tsa-wa chenpo}. You can check the reading. Okay.

Um, cold hells. They have...I'm not gonna go through them name by name. They're in your reading and we don't have much time but basically the entire surface of the hell is ice, and again it, it's a huge expanse of ice and there's nowhere to go, there's no protection. You are naked, you are standing out no a huge surface of ice, the winds are blowing against your body and there is nothing to do, you can't protect yourself, there's...so people, I mean if you walk through the cold hells it's just like little shapes of people bent down trying to huddle and protect themselves. The...in the lower...in the easier, lighter hells your body is, is starting to blister and then as you go down in the deeper hole...hells, the, the blisters are opening and they have names like "Lotus" and "Utpala Lotus," different kinds of flowers to describe the color of these massive blisters on your body. As the cold gets worse they start to open up, to split, your body starts to split open like a flower and all, all over your body these start...the flesh starts to split open and then the different kinds of screams or the moans that people make in those hells, like they have different kinds of moaning in the different hells and that's...as you go down that's what distinguishes the beings in the cold hells. Mmm...

[silence]

Say {nye korway nyelwa} [repeat], {nyelwa} [repeat], {nye korway nyelwa} [repeat], {nyelwa} [repeat]. {Nye korwa} means...like the hot hells are here...and then there are these other hells around it, around the...they circle the hot hells. So like if you could go to the edge of the hot hell to this wall...of steel and if you could break through the wall you would enter one of these {nye korway}. {Nye korway} means "adjacent"... "Adjacent Hells" and there are four doors at, at

the...at the four quarters of each hell. And...if you could...if your karma to stay in that hell starts to diminish you're able to get out through the door so it's like, it's a change in your own karma, you're karma is changing and it allows you...it's slightly less...you've worn off the bad karma...slightly...and then you're able to escape through one of these doors and, and get out of the hot hells, but then you find yourself in another problem [laughs] and there are like four different zones in, in the adjacent hells...you go through four different zones and it's like some kind of a...it's some kind of a...progression that you always go through. So in the first, in the first zone you find yourself...it's like a big trench filled with embers, filled with burning embers and then you, you have a choice, you can back onto the steel...burning steel or you can jump into the trench there's only two choices, you know, you have to do one or the other. So the beings figure, you know, they, they, they, they figure there is nothing to lose, they jump into the trench and then it comes up to your knees and...and it starts to burn your flesh off...it burns off the flesh and, and you're running across the trench and trying to get across...the trench and every time you raise up your foot it regenerates the skin. So when your foot goes down it starts to get burned away and then when your foot comes up into the air it grows back, so each day you get the same pain of your feet burning off.

Then there are other sufferings that you can that you can read. The next one is, you're up to your neck in...it's called "the Swamp of Corpses" and it's like rotten corpses and excrement and you're up to your neck in it, you're trying to get across it. And then there are these kinds of creatures that live inside the...the swamp that are, that are biting at you and like piranhas or something but they're, they're ripping away at your skin. When you try to run out of that you run to the next zone which is called "The Razor Road" and, and there's just razors, laid out, face up, you know, blade up and there's no where to go. You can either go back to the...those piranhas or you can keep running and...it's just razors facing up and you're just running across razors, running across the blades or razors. And again, every time your foot comes up it regenerates. And then when you get to the end there's...you see some trees, you're running across these razors, you see some trees, you have some hope, you run over to the trees and they have these huge leaves that are shapes like knives and when you reach under there and then the leaves start to fall down and they start to cut you, they turn out to be steel...so...and then there are these dogs...these, huge...wild animals...dogs...chasing you and you, you try to climb up the tree, and the tree has a skin made of these long...daggers and when you try to climb up they turn down and so you're trying to climb over these daggers and you're just...you have a choice of going back to these dogs that have these fangs like steel or you

can try to climb the tree. If you get to the top of the tree you think you're safe and you're standing there and then these crows come that have like steel beaks and then they start to pluck at your eyeballs...plucking out your eyeballs and your face and then you decide maybe it's better if you get down and then the thorns turn around the other way and they start to face you again. So you're climbing down these knives, you're...you're holding on to knives to get away from them...to get away from the crows. Those are the basically the Adjacent Hells. I'll do really briefly then...there's one more kind of hell.

[silence]

Say {nyitseway} [repeat], {nyelwa} [repeat], {nyitseway} [repeat], {nyelwa} [repeat]. {Nyitseway} means "partial" but in the sense of only a tiny part. {Nyitse way}...so you could call them The Partial Hells.

[silence]

And the...it's a very interesting karma, it's very personal, it's not a...it's not a public karma where you collect it with other people it's like a karma that only one or two people share and then they are born in to a specific small area where there's some kind of very painful hell going on and they say that it could even be located in certain locations on earth, on the face of this planet, that in extraord...like, if you...if you're plane crashed in the middle of the Gobi Desert and there was no hope of getting any help and you just sat there while the sun baked you and killed you then it would be something like a {nyitseway nyelwa} and that's a very restricted little hell and it's restricted to your own experience and no one knows your there, your plane crashed there and there's no hope and you're just sitting there burning up...dying. And...there ar...they say there are places like that on the earth and also down near the hot hells.

[student, John Stilwell: Is this as a human or it as a hell being...?]

You're a hell being. So it's not like you're a human...I, I...that's like an example but you actually...you're in a location where you're having a birth like that.

[silence]

I'm supposed to be teaching a Dharma class, you know...it started out as a language class about fifteen years ago and then it developed into a Dharma class so, I mean I don't...I see partly I'm supposed to teach you all these facts and

you're supposed to regurgitate them on your homework and...and then you're supposed to learn a language but really the point of having this class is...I mean, if nothing else, my responsibility now is to...is to convince you that these could exist and to keep you out of them, you know, to try to...to try to describe some way that everyone in this room could stay out of those places. I mean that's a life or death thing. It looks like a nice Saturday morning class, I just had some nice cappuccino over at this place over there and...it's a nice day and the sun is nice and we're all going to go out in ten minutes and go to New Jersey and...and...but it's my responsibility to...to first of all make you feel that it really exists and that...and how you could get there. So...so, what is it? We talked about it the other night...I know...it was Friday night class or something...but how do you get to hell? Somebody says "Go to hell," how are you going to get there? [laughter] You know, how do you get to hell? How long does it take, first of all.

[student: 3 thoughts]

Huh? It could be as short as three thoughts from now. It could be as short as, as, as thirty seconds from now. I mean at any point in your life, you could be as short as a half a minute away, or one minute away. So first of all time-frame, you know, it could be as close as a minute away for any one of us. I mean, that's the first thing. Now how do you get there?

[student: [unclear]]

I mean, there's a very, very...Shantideva and there's a very powerful thing in...I think it's in the [b: Gyatsurupay Sutra]...they say "Who made the hells?" You know, Shantideva says, you know, what, did they send a construction crew down to [laughter]...under the ground, like the Lincoln Tunnel, and they worked all day and they constructed these hells, I mean, who makes...where do the hells come from?

[student: Your projections.]

It is your own projections, okay. It is your own projections. That's the first thing. You know, if it's empty...which is to say "if it exists..." okay? If it's empty, it doesn't have a quality of its own, it does not have any quality of its own, it's just a empty place, there's nobody there, it's some kind of cavity under the earth and...there's nobody there, there's nothing going on there.

[student: If you're projection creation creates the hells then your projection creates the karma to make the hells.]

Absolutely. And the text says that in the same verse, in the same poem. It says, "Who makes hell, who makes heaven" you know, who makes paradise, it's the same...it's all...it's all your projections. It's a shift in your projections. The projections shift from human projection, New York City projection, to bardo projection and then what? Hell projection. I mean, it's just three projections. It could be three {tse-ma}s in a row. How long does it take to do three {tse-ma}s? Sixty four just now [laughs]. So I mean, you can go to hell about twenty times in that much time. I mean, that's how long it takes to get to hell. That's how close we are to hell. You know, you feel like some kind of comfort that you're still breathing, you're still fairly young, you're healthy...you know...to get to hell you'd have to get old, then you'd have to die, they'd have to put you in a box, you'd have to have a funeral, there'd be a delay, you know, all this time [laughter] and then...and they would put the box under the ground and then eventually, maybe, you would end up in hell somehow. It's not like that. All it takes it three shifts in your own mind to get to hell. That's all it takes. Yeah.

[student, Leon: Does it take a human to get to hell?]

No, no [laughs]. The normal route from the {hla} realms...form and formless realms, ninety-nine point nine nine nine percent go to the hells directly, because they are wearing out good karma.

[student, Leon: What are they doing...what are they doing there to create bad karma?]

They're not doing any bad karma at all.

[student, Leon: I know, they're only burning good but, why does that...?]

Because when you burn off the good all that's left is the bad, you know. They have completely, totally....

[student, Leon: So nothing they did in that life.]

Nothing, no. They totally, purely, completely exhaust every good karma they have. There's nothing else..So all it takes is...is a change in your projections. Can you choose to have different projections? Can you, can you select projections?

Can you decide now...now having heard that these things might exist, I won't go there, I'll just decide, since it's only a projection I will choose not to have those projections. They are forced on you...as much as this one right now is being forced on. You'd like to see me as a tantric deity, you can't. Neither can I, you know. I just don't have the karma. I could! I mean, if I had the right karma, if I kept my vows absolutely purely, sincerely, knowing all these things, I wouldn't have to be here, I wouldn't have to be seeing these things like this...because they are empty. I mean that gives you the clue to how to stay out of the hells. You just, you just keep your vows and i..it becomes...You know, you and I, we think our vows light, we think of them in the morning before we go to work, we go to work, we come home, we eat, we go to Dharma class or we go see our friends and then late at night we think about our vows again because we're doing our, our practice at the end of the day. It's not enough. You know it's...even just time-wise it's not going to work...it won't work, you know. You have be {tundruk} I mean you have to examining your vows six times a say...I mean you have to go in the bathroom six times a day. I mean the Muslims are not crazy. I mean they stop a certain time...and, and...and other religions, where they just stop...at noon, they stop at nine o'clock, they stop at three o'clock and they review their mental continuum because you could stop breathing the next ten minutes, you know. Is...you have to...you have to really examine your vows and keep them carefully. It doesn't take a big bad deed to get to the hells, it's...it's not difficult to, to...to cause that. Why is that? Mmm. Wh...why is a small bad deed have t...why do you have to go through that?

[student: Because it multiplies.]

I mean, why...why would a small bad deed get you to millions of years of suffering? Why?

[student, John Stilwell: It expands.]

It expands. I mean karma expands exponentially. If you don't clean it out of your mindstream, if you...if you neglect it and leave it in your mindstream, it will create a result like that. And it's not out near Pluto as a boomerang, you know, it's in your own mindstream. And how is it ripening? In your own perceptions. In your own perceptions. Your karma is ripening now by the jillions, you know. To maintain this room with all these people in it and this guy standing up there, these are karmas ripening...in your own mind. I am ripening in your own mind, my words are ripening in your own mind, you know. That's...and it's ripening as much more powerful than what you did to, to, to...when you planted that

perception. So it's quite possible to go to hell. It's not problem. Philosophically, logically, psychologically, no problem. If you understand perceptual theory at all, if you understand the mind at all, it's no problem at all. There's no, there's no reason why these can't exist. It's just a...an exaggeration of a state of mind that you had long before that's ripening a...as a, as a great exaggeration. You had a perception when you hurt someone, it stays in your mindstream getting larger and larger and then it ripens as an experience in hell. It doesn't...if you explain it like that there's no problem, you don't have to think of hell as "out there," hell is not "out there." Hell isn't somewhere where you go. Hell is a perception that you start to have. And it takes about three seconds to go to hell and that's how you go to hell. You don't have to get on a...you know, on a train and go some...down underground. You...it is the process of three thoughts occurring in your mind and you can go there this afternoon. It makes sense, you can. So you really have to do...you really have to do what you can to avoid it. And taking refuge is a big one. I mean that's, that's supposed to be, when you take refuge, like if you're gonna take refuge this afternoon, yo...it's supposed to be the motivation behind it. You're supposed to be thinking, I need to learn to stay out of these places. How do you do it? You take vows. Does taking vows get you out of the hells?

[students: No]

[laughs] No. You have to keep them [laughs] okay? Can you keep them if you don't know them? You can't, you know. I mean we're...most of us are like, "What are your vows?" and they'll say "I have bodhisattva vows" and they'll say "Oh, did you keep number thirteen yesterday?" they'll say "I don't remember what's thirteen" you know. But you better be able to go like... I mean all the texts say one, two, three, four, five, six, seven...I, I'm keeping number thirteen today. It should be like that. This is life and death. You know, you should be able to rattle off your bodhi...I was in a...I won't name the city and I won't name the Dharma center...no one could tell me the ten non-virtues last weekend, you know.

[laughter]

You know...or very few people. Almost nobody. I mean, that...that's...then how are you going to keep them? You know, you have to know them. You have to learn them. Tantric vows especially. You have to know them. You have to study them because you have to keep them. If you keep them you stay out of...the

word, you know what the word Dharma means. {Dhir} it comes from the root {dhir}, {dhir} meaning "to hold back," from what? Mostly from the hot hells, okay [laughing]. The very word Dharma means to restrain someone from throwing themselves down into the hells. I mean the p...if you don't get anything out of this class at least be good. You have to be good, you know. Don't become one of these Dharma monsters that knows everything about Dharma and is still a bad person. You know, that's just really, really...a huge...it's a very potential for us because we're learning so much and we know so many Dharma facts and then if you say to somebody, "Did you meet anybody from that class on Sixth Street" and they say "Yeah, they're really obnoxious" you know, that means you didn't learn anything, you know. You have to apply it to your own mind and to your own life. You have to keep yourselves out of the hells. Yeah.

[Student, John Stillwell: So it seems to me that to keep yourself out of the hells it's a question of when you, when you're dying or at the moment of death to try to somehow bring all of your virtuous karmic seeds to ripen at that point, to flower at that point.]

It's one method, you know, it's one thing but much more efficient is just be good and achieve Nirvana in this life. If you reach a certain stage in the five paths you cannot take a lower birth anymore. Impossible. If you see emptiness directly you can never have anything less than extraordinary births for the next seven lives, and then that's over. You know, if you reach a certain understanding of emptiness intellectually, you can't ever take rebirth there again anyway. You just can't do it. If you reach a certain point in the second path you cannot take birth there...anymore. Two quick questions then we have to...she's been waiting. Yeah.

[Student: not clear]

It could be minimum. Minimum. I mean, one thought at the last moment of this life, one instant in the bardo and then one instant in the hells. You could be to the hell in three or four breaths, you know. You could go to...it doesn't take that long. We're not that far away. I mean we are...it's as if hell is some invisible door and we're always standing at the...in front of it and it just takes one step. We're that close. Don't think of yourself as a thousand miles from hell. It could happen in the next five minutes. At anytime. We are always in that position. And it's really true and I'm a Dharma teacher and I'm supposed to be teaching you and I would feel really bad if somebody went to hell [laughing] you know. It's serious.

It's very serious. I don't know how to...I don't know what to do to...it's just real. It's really there and you have to keep your vows. Anyway it's fun to keep your vows, it makes you happy. Even if you're not going to go to hell, even if there is no hell it's still the best way to live so you might as well keep the...it makes you quite happy, so, keep them. Yeah, what.

[Student: What are the beings that are hell guards?]

Oh, he asked about hell guards. There's big debates about it. On the highest level they are again projections of yours but some scriptures say they are actually beings and the karma of being a hell guard makes them born in the hell immediately after that. So, no fun to be a hell guard either. Did you have a q...no. Okay, we'll stop 'cause we have to...people who are going to New Jersey should really move it and get down there on time 'cause it's really bad to be late to Rinpoche's things. And then we'll do the quizzes next time. There's homework...there's homework here which I'll pass out and there's readings up here. You can just take 'em, okay? The Tibetan track, you'll get your sixth class after the seventh class, okay? Alright? [not clear] class? We'll have class six next.

[Student: This is seven?]

This is seven.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

[silence]

The Asian Classics Institute

Geshe Michael Roach

Course VIII Death and the Realms of Existence.

Class Eight; tape one.

Transcribed by Karen Becker

Proofread by Summer Moore

{cut} [laughter] [unclear] so, you know, I put this one into the curriculum, this is just sort of a break okay, and then the last two classes you should try to come because that's ah ... we'll do the death meditation from Tsongkapa's {b:Lam Rim Chenmo} which is one of the greatest presentations of our time. Today is just for fun. Okay, you still have to learn it [laughter]. Say {kalpa} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat]. You know what a {kalpa} is, right? [students: [laughter] yes] {Kalpa} is [laughter] ... people translate it as "eon", okay. And I just thought you'd like to know how long a {kalpa} is, because they're always mentioned in Buddhist scripture ... time is always reckoned by {kalpas} and nobody ever really figures out what a {kalpa} is ... you know ... {kalpa} seems like a long time. I don't know ... how long is an eon ... I don't know [unclear] [student: a million years] A million years or something ... I don't know. Okay. So in Buddhism we have four different kinds of {kalpas}. All right. Actually more. This is also from the third chapter of the {b:Abhidharma} and this is just a little piece of a long chapter on the measurement of time, down to micro-micro seconds, and up to light years and then the measure of space down to sub-atomic particles up to galaxies. It's really cool. Some day you should study the whole thing. We can't do it in this class ... we don't have time. Say {jikpay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat] {jikpay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat]. {Jikpa} means "destruction". So {jikpay kalpa}, the first kind of {kalpa} is the eon of destruction. This is a period of time which is marked by ... you can say four different things happen at the same time. At the beginning of the {jikpay kalpa}, at the beginning of the eon of destruction, it's marked by a certain karmic event ... no more beings take birth in Avichi ... what's Avichi ... Avichi is {nar me}. That's the lowest hell. That was that hell a ... hot hell number eight that we described on Saturday. So, all of a sudden beings stop taking birth in Avichi hell on this planet. Okay, if you were supposed to take birth in Avichi hell, when you die you take birth in the Avichi hell on another planet. So, anyway, this planet is getting ready to die. And there won't be time for it to die if someone take's birth in Avichi hell, because you [laughs] stay there for so long. So long before the world, the physical world

ends, that birth has to stop. People have to stop taking birth there. So we're talking millions and millions of years before the end of the world marks the opening of the eon of destruction. And the sign is that people stop taking birth in that hell on this planet. [student: Now does ... do people still have karma where they do get born into this hell on different planets?] Yeah, yeah [student: or is that where the collective karma of everyone is] No, no ... well in a way ... it is that also. But if the collective karma of everyone on this planet to be born in that hell is starting to finish [student: to be born on this planet where there no longer is this hell?] but, the Avichi hell on another planet is still going fine. How does he get there? [student: People had these [unclear]] No, how does the being get from the planet earth to [students: bardo] The bardo. Bardos have the ability to fly. They can move quickly. They can move at almost the speed of mind. And ... and they they can reach ... they can reach the other planet that way. Second event, people's life spans reaches eighty thousand years. People live for eighty thousand years. [student: People like us?] Yeah. Human beings. On Dzambuling. Okay. On the southern continent. It's the end of the eon of continuation. And we'll talk about that.. I mean ... we're gonna reach that eon. [student: [unclear] the end of the {kalpa}] Yeah, it's another kind of {kalpa}. Yeah. It's called the {kalpa} of continuation. We ... we didn't get to it yet. But anyway, that one's ending and which one is opening? Of ... eon of destruction. So these four events take place at the same time. This is the very beginning of the destruction {kalpa}, the eon of destruction. And then other events start to happen. All the animals and the pretas, all the animals and the craving spirits on this planet, people who are supposed to be born that way start taking birth in a ... in another place, in a different place, on a different planet. [student: What are these four?] These are four events that happen at the same time as the eon of destruction begins, as it opens. Okay. [Student: So they're happening in a previous eon?] Relative to us now, yeah. Okay, but they know it goes over and over and over and over again in many different galaxies. We're ... we're not ... our {jikapay kalpa} is already finished. The last one. [laughs] Okay. So the animals and hungry ghosts or whatever you want to call them, they die and take birth on other planets ... if you're supposed to take birth like that, and then human beings begin to reach the first concentration level. And we talked about that in the very first class. So, they start to gain ... they start to ... one human being automatically, by a karmic process, takes, gains the ability to enter into the first concentration level and then as a result of that he's born into the first level of the form realm. And, but before he's reborn, he tells other people about how to get into that meditation and all the humans on this planet begin moving into that kind of meditation and moving into the first form realm. So basically, the human realm is emptied out also. If people are going to hell,

they're born in hells on other planets. Otherwise they they die and move into the first part of the form realm. So the desire realm is emptying out. [student: They're going into the form realm aren't they also [unclear]] Aft.. after that, but they'll be on another planet. [laughs] [student: That's after the era of destruction is finished?] This is still while the eon of destruction is going on. All this, all the things I'm mentioning, all these things starting to happen like, beings aren't born in the hells on this planet any more, they're being in, they're being born in other planets now, and then animals and hungry ghosts, they die ... people who are supposed to be born that way are being born on other planets, and then the human realms are emptying out because people are attaining ... are attaining the first concentration level in this life and as a result taking rebirth in the form realm, and like that. Eventually the first form realm empties out. People learn how to do the second concentration level, meditation, and they and then the first form realm is emptied out also ... the first form realm level. So, the whole desire realm is empty now. And the whole first form realm is empty also. There's no more beings in the hells, no more beings of animals, no more pretas, no more humans, no more desire realm pleasure beings, they've all been ... they've all died and either died or did ... been born into the second or higher parts of the form realm. So basically think of the earth as an emptied out. [student: [unclear]] No yet. [laughs] That whole process of clearing the earth out of sentient beings, you know, sentient beings leaving earth, takes nineteen intermediate eons. {cut} It's the same {bar} as in {bardo} meaning what? [student: In between] In between, so this ... I call them intermediate eons. {Kal} is short for {kalpa} so {bar kal} means "an intermediate eon". This process of the desire realm emptying out takes nineteen {bar kals}, nineteen intermediate eons. How long is an intermediate eon? We'll talk about it later. Then comes the last {bar kal} that's twenty {bar kals}, the twenty intermediate eons in a destruction eon [student: I thought you said nineteen] Nineteen for all those being to go to other places. Okay, and after they're all safely in other places, you can guess what happens then. They say that the sun begins to super nova, and they describe the heat of the sun, and I ... there are ... I mean scientists have seen places where the suns divide and they form two suns and like that. So it's like the suns are supernova of our sun. So it's splitting into more than one sun. Like if you went out on the first time that it split, there'd be two suns up in the sky. Like a [unclear]. And they say first of all at the end of nineteen intermediate eons, as the twentieth intermediate eon is beginning, the rains stops on on this planet, on planet earth. Rain stops falling. All the rain stops. So that the vegetation and the forests of earth dry up. Then the second sun rises in the sky, the sun supernovas, and a second sun appears in the sky, and then all the smaller bodies of water dry up, then a third sun ... a a I mean, the appearances

between the suns is like millions of years. A third sun appears and that dries up all the rivers and streams on earth. Then a fourth sun appears and all the lakes ... like there's supposed to be something like the great lakes, like in Michigan, they all dry up. All the huge lakes on the earth dry up. Then a fifth sun rises, and the outer sea dries up ... that's that huge sea outside the last of the concentric mountain rings, dries up completely. Then the sixth sun rises and the four continents and Mt. Meru go up in a puff of smoke. Just one waft of smoke and they're all gone. And then the eighth the eighth sun, I'm sorry, the seventh sun shines and the whole world burns up ... the whole physical world burns up. That conflagration triggers a similar conflagration in the first level of the form realm, and that burns up. The first part of the form realm burns up. The beings are already in the second level, whatever ones are left are in the second level. There's other kinds of destruction {kalpas} where the whole process takes place through floods and water, and there's also destruction {kalpas} where the whole process takes place through wind. And then they get into minor destruction {kalpas} where the people on planet earth destroy each other with weapons, or they set the whole earth on fire with some special weapon and and things like that, or or famine, and they they talk about that. Yeah? [student: How can there be a form realm when there're no more beings left?] There's still a physical form realm above above the desire realm, there's a physical place, very subtle form, there are mansions there, you know, like divine mansions, there are parks, there are beautiful places like that ... you can't see them. [student: [unclear]] They've already learned to do the meditation on the second concentration level and because of that when they die, they've already been reborn into the second level of the form realm. The second and third levels don't get destroyed by fire. When there's water, that's another story. We'll talk about it some other time [laughs]. [student: There's no beings there at all ... there's no one to give any projections to them] Buddha? [laughs] That's a good point. Buddha sees them. Yeah? [student: Is this the only way you become reborn on another planet?] I I don't think so because Buddha before the end of this world went to visit his mother or his father, I don't remember which one, [students; Mother] Mother? on another planet and the day he came back is a Buddhist ... is one of our six major holidays in the religious year. It's called {Lha Bab Duchen} and, okay, so that's the eon of destruction. [student: In the eighty thousand years is the quality of life the same as our life?] We'll talk about it. Better. Same. [laughter] [student: nineteen.] So far we have twenty intermediate eons. We don't know what an intermediate eon is yet, but we have twenty so far. Say {chakpay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat] {chakpay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat]. {Chakpa} means "formation eon". Formation of the world. It's also goes on for twenty {bar kals}, for twenty intermediate eons. And in the first of those, in the very first one the

world forms, like there's that very gentle energy starts to swirl in empty space and then it gets stronger and stronger until the physical world appears. So Mt. Meru, the four continents, the and the basis of the world is created during the first {bar kal}, during the first intermediate eon inside the eon of formation. Then the first beings start to take birth in this planet and it's really ... they they sound really beautiful. I mean, in the in the {b:Abhidharmakosha} and later on in this chapter they describe it ... it sounds very much like the Garden of eon, Eden. [laughter] And people are taking birth there, and they they have ... their bodies have their own light, like the sun and the moon don't necessarily have to be there because their bodies produce their own light. They have the ability to fly in the sky. They're very gentle. The the whole planet is made of some kind of stuff that you can just lick it and you can, you know, feed you, and it's like a Garden of Eden. And then they slowly start to collect bad deeds and their bodies start to change and you know the rest of the story. [laughter] And at that point beings live ... human beings live {tse me} [student: How is it different from a form realm paradise? The first] I guess they still have desires for smells and tastes. If you have desire for food you you're stuck in the desire realm ... you can't get to the form realm. And that applies to meditation too. I mean if you if you're still attached to those things it's very hard to do a to put your mind into the form realm. You cannot actually during that time that you're thinking about food you still have desire for food, you can't do it. And that's one of the borders that separates the desire realm from the form realm. It's like a wall and you get over it by by overcoming that desire for that object. Say {tse me} [repeat] {tse me ... tse,tse} means "measure", {me} means "not" so {tse me} means "immeasurable". Like we have the four immeasurables, measureless love, immeasurable you know, that's the same word. But here it refers to a specific number. And I looked all over the scriptures and there is that number is written somewhere, but I cou..I didn't have time to figure out how many millions of years it is, but it's a lot, okay. It's probably something like over thirty zeros or something. Okay, I mean the {b:Abhidharma} has a whole numbering system and I didn't have time to to figure out which one this is, but it's a lot, okay, it's many many zeros. [unclear] So the first human beings on this planet live for that many years. They can live for that many years. They live for millions of years. Their lifespans. The formation eon ends when someone takes birth in Avichi. Okay. The the forming of the world is over when someone takes birth in Avichi hell. And lifespans, lifespans have dropped from {tse me} all the way down to a measley eighty thousand years, okay. So when people only live for eighty thousand years instead of millions of years we know that the formation of the world is over. And the first being has taken birth in the in the lowest hell, and that's the ending of the formation eon, that the eon of formation is finished. That

leads to the opening of the next eon [student: So Michael, do the beings of this first formation realm have a better life than the first level of the form realm?] They both have the six sufferings. You know, I mean, they're both mainly that's what makes this life unbearable, and they have it equally at the same that we do. [student: the form realm [unclear]] They that spreads to the form realm and the formless realm. So they all have the six sufferings. It's not much difference ... slightly more pleasant, I guess. Their bodies are not quite as wonderful as in the form realm and their minds are not quite as virtuous as buzzed out ... blissed out, as in the form realm. Say {repay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat]{repay} [repeat] {kalpa} [repeat] {repay} means to "continue" so this is the eon of continuation. This also goes on for twenty intermediate eons, and the way it works is like this. Lif lif lifespans start at a {tse me} and they they go down down down down down down down ... they drop because people have learned to do the ten bad deeds. People have start learning how to kill, how to steal, how to commit sexual misconduct, and all the other ten, and because of that, the lifespan's dropped down to ten years old, like the the average lifespan of a human being is ten years. The {b:Abhidharma} later it gives this very very sad discription of how that happens, and people are are killing and stealing more and more, lying more and more, and then it creates disturbances in the world, people start to create powerful weapons, there are people living in huge cities all over the world, and some people are out picking berries one day when the cities decide to unleash their weapons upon each other, and the whole world is destroyed in this big fire, and then there's there's a few beings who survive because they happen to be out in the for, what forests are left, they happen to be way out in the middle of nowhere when the when the weapons went off. And then they come back to the cities and find them totally destroyed, everyone dead, and they are overcome with some kind of grief, and they they they comfort each other ... it's a very sad picture, the story, you know, and they, you know, a few straggling left left people left over and they meet each other, and they like hug each other out of love because they're just so happy to see another human being alive, and they decide, they have these meetings and they begin to live in little settlements and they and they decide that they'll give up the ten bad deeds, because they recognize the relationship between that and what happened to the planet, and then they start to grow again ... life starts to grow again and lifespans ... because of their virtuous behavior ... they start to rise again. Like that. They they go up to eighty thousand and then people get non-virtuous again, and it goes through another cycle ... they start to build up weapons and they start to do that and then eventually they kill each other again and and the average lifespan in that in those days is ten years, and then they have those meetings again, they decide to be virtuous again, and and it goes on like that in big waves. Up to eighty thousand

years. Yeah. [student: So it's the idea that people are dying at the age ten, I mean is that] Average lifespan is ten. [student: So how do they have children and such if that's the case?] I don't know. [laughs] I think they don't, at the very end. Like people are just before that are living to twenty and they can have children but their children die at an average of ten years and maybe there's some people around that still live to twenties. But, and then there's four ways of being born and there can be three other ways of being born ... I don't know. They don't ... I mean this book is ancient. I mean the third chapter of the {b:Abhidharma} is is ancient, and there's not a lot of detail. Even in the autocommentary there's not a lot of detail, and that's that's about all the detail you're gonna get. There are other books on the {b:Abhidharma} that were lost. There were books that reached Tibet in the Sanskrit that were burned by the Chinese, and we'll never know. So, we'll just never know. All we can do is try to find what's left. Most of the great books on Abhidharma were lost even by Vasubandu's time, so, we don't know [laughs] what was in them. That's good to look for them. So this this goes on and this period between ... let me make sure ... from here to here ... this is what defines an intermediate eon. So the time it takes for lifespans to go from ten years up to eighty thousand years and then back down to ten is one intermediate eon. And that's how an intermediate eon is defined. So if somebody comes up to you and says, "how long is an intermediate eon?", what do you say? [student: a hundred and sixty] All you can do is explain this, because it's not like so many billions years or something. I mean, somebody's a mathematician could maybe figure it out. How often do lifespans change? I don't know. I would say in recorded history of our planet, they haven't changed. We are in what's called the time of the hundred. And basically people live to around a hundred years old. We're in the special period that Buddhism calls the time of the hundred. And and in the recorded history of our planet that hasn't changed much. You know, from forty up to sixty, to seventy, to sixty, to fifty but basically we're still in the range of a hundred. So so I don't know, lifespans haven't changed much. We've got a slight increase right now from thirty or forty to sixty or seventy, but in in this terms it's it's not even, it wouldn't even show. It's just an anomaly, you know, I I don't know how long it takes for lifespans to change. Dudjom Rinpoche who came just before Je Tsongkapa tried to calculate it, and I don't remember what he came up with, but it's billions of years, I mean it's a long time okay ... I don't know how long. And and you'll never be able to tell exactly how long an eon is, a {kalpa} but you could figure it out if you were good with a s ... math, if you could figure out roughly how long it had to, how that it had to be at least so long. So suppose that lifespans changed every ten thousand years or something, I don't know, from ten to fifteen, but you'd have to get up to eighty thousand and then come

back down. Anyway, that's one intermediate eon. The eon, the {kalpa} of formation takes twenty of those. Okay. So the eon of formation ... this cycle goes on twenty times ... people blow themselves up twenty times [laughs] okay, before the world ends. And I I you know the whole evidence that scientists have of carbon dating ... we don't know that carbon acted this way a hundred years ago, we don't know that carbon is going to act this way a hundred years from now. We find traces of ancient cities ... there's nothing to say that there weren't other cities that traces were destroyed ... we don't know, you know, you can't really say. According to this, I mean the whole planet has been civilized and then destroyed twenty times. This first intermediate eon happens in half a loop okay ... what do you call these things? I don't know. [student: wave] Yeah, the first, the first intermediate eon takes only half a wave, but the drop in lifespans is slower, so it takes the same amount of time. Okay. In other words, the time it takes to get from here to here is the same time it takes to get from here to here, and they're both in ... because this drop in lifespans takes less time, so it goes on more slowly than this increase in drop does. I mean, they're equal..the time is equal. [student: So the first drop is equal is is longer than the second drop.] Yeah, the first drop is some is somekind of millions of years down to ten years, and that takes the same amount of time it takes to go from ten years to eighty thousand years and back to ten years. So that this intermediate eon, which is only half a wave, but half of a big wave, takes the same amount of time as this intermediate eon that takes a full wave. There's eighteen eons like that and then there's a half a wave up, and that's number twenty. So there's one intermediate eon that goes from millions of years of life down to ten and then there's eighteen intermediate eons that go from ten to eighty thousand years to ten, and then at the end, at the very end, it takes another intermediate eon to get up to the last eighty thousand ... from ten up to the last eighty thousand. So that's the whole, the whole {kalpa} of formation, I'm sorry, continuation, takes twenty intermediate {kalpas} like that. Yeah. [student: So where do beings like dinosaurs fit into this [laughs] [laughter] and things like] I I have a feeling they're like ... I have a feeling they're like right about here, you know, and our world is right about here, [student: Right. But human beings are alive during dinosaurs I guess] I have a feeling it's no big deal. [student: Right. Now what about things ... obviously the idea of evolution is ... doesn't work] No, they wouldn't say that. [student: right, right] But given that things are empty, it's possible that things could happen like that. [student: Why doesn't evolution work with this?] Supposedly the first human beings takes place, [student: complete] occur yeah, through through {dzu kye}, they just born here complete. It it almost sounds from the description that they are beings who got left behind in the second form realm and then got reborn as humans, but that's kinda, it's

hard to tell from the {b: Abhidharma} it's not quite clear. [student: [unclear] the evolution of their karma?] Yeah, it'd be the same thing. So if you take ... there's a there's another {kalpa}, this is the last one I promise, say {kal chen} [repeat] {kal chen} [repeat]. What's {chen mo} mean? [student: big] Big, [laughs] okay. This is a great eon. A great eon consists of eighty of these intermediate eons. One great eon is eighty intermediate eons. Oh by the way, I'm sorry, I left out one thing. What's happening over here ... which eon is opening up, up here now. Yeah, eon of destruction is opening. Remember, this whole thing twenty eons long was the eon of continuation, and then at this point the eon of destruction opens, and before, what what what eon, what was right before here? [student: formation] Yeah, the eon of formation of the world. So the world forms, and then it forms for twenty intermediate eons, continues for twenty intermediate eons, and then takes twenty intermediate eons to get destroyed. [student: So then you have sixty?] That's sixty and it doesn't quite ... I mean you can't say that the great eon is one and a one and a half of those or something like that. Gre a great eon is described in the Abhidharma as eighty of these, and maybe I think it refers to ... but I'm not sure, okay, being around for four of these continuation eons. [student: [unclear]] For being around during four of those continuation eons. I don't think it refers to twenty twenty twenty and then I don't know where the other twenty comes from. [student: In the formation eon is it the same wave pattern for that also? This eighty thousand years going down to ten years] No. No. In formation it was just, what was it, it was going from, it was just the world forming [student: For twenty what?] and then the first human beings appear [student: But how do you define calling this an eon from this point to this point so in that formation how do you get] Oh those eons are defined by the length of these eons. [student: huh?] The length that it took the world to form is the same amount of time that it takes this to happen. Okay, just ... just in artificially calculated. This is the definition of an intermediate eon. That's why I didn't give it to you at the beginning. Because it's just the amount of time that it takes for people to go from ten years to eighty thousand years to ten years again. Now how long is that? No one's ever, to my satisfaction, I mean, I believe a couple of Tibetan Lamas in the 1300s tried to calculate it [laughs] you know, but it's ... it's billions of years, okay. So eighty of those is a great eon, and a great eon is very important for us, and I'll explain it to you ... I think you should take a break first, and then ... then we'll talk about ... this whole subject comes up in the subject of how often do Buddhas appear in the world ... how long does it take for a Buddha to get here, and you can wait a few more minutes [laughter] [laughs] take a break and then we'll do it. Robin, did you have a question? [student: I just wondered. Is this a model like the model that Vasubandu and that you proposed Vasubandu was composing as a model of the

universe, could this be taken] No, he's it's [student: as a model, or is this meant to be taken literally [unclear]] Oh, you know what I think. I think there's three different ways of ... people in, you know, there's three ways of explaining why ... why this is like this, you know. One, Vasubandu was didn't know anything and they were just talking about Mt. Everest and India and didn't know what was on the other side ... that's interpretation number one, you know. Interpretation number two is that, what was the second one, I don't remember, oh just that he didn't know anything and all ... all that this existed before the Buddhists, you know, that the Hindus thought this up from nothing and that the Buddhists just accepted it and kept recording it in their books, you know. And then and then the third way of explaining it is just that Vasubandu had the personally had the karma to see it this way, and it was this way. It it was his projection of this way, and that we just don't have that particular projection right now. And it doesn't mean that somebody a hundred years from now or five hundred years from now will see the world in any kind of way that we do. You know, we think ... every generation has thought that they are seeing the world the way it really is, and every generation has been wrong because the next generation always sees it a different way. And it's not a ... what is the world ... I mean, that's to say who are you, you know, are you a human, are you a deity, are you a demon, you know. It depends on who's looking, you know. That's your emptiness and it applies to the world as well. There's a big lesson in the third chapter of the {b:Abhidharma} ... you are empty, your world is empty. Why does your world have to be like this? Why does it have to be like New York City? Why couldn't you be in paradise right now, you know. What prevents New York from becoming a Buddha paradise? I there's a big lesson in the third chapter. You have to study emptiness. Okay. Take a break. [laughs] [student: Did you say how long the eon of destruction lasted?] Eighty - twenty and twenty [unclear] Say {de} [repeat] {drangme} [repeat] {sum la} [repeat] {sang gye} [repeat]. {De} [repeat] {drangme} [repeat] {sum la} [repeat] {sang gye} [repeat]. {De} means "that". That refers to a {bar kal}. What's that? {students: intermediate eon. Intermediate} Intermediate eon. Okay. Millions of years, okay. {De de} means "that", that means those...that {bar kal}. {Drangme} means "countless" and in the {b:Abhidharma} system that is a specific number. That number is called a "countless". Okay. So how many times have I told you ... countless times. So, ten to the sixtieth power. Okay. It's ... it's one followed by 59 zeros. Six, yeah sixty, fifty nine. Fifty nine, sixty, you figure it out. [student: ten [unclear]] Ten to the ... I once figured it out. Fifty nine or sixty zeros okay, you can [laughs] I'm not going to figure it that way [laughs] all right. {Sum} means what? Three. Here {la} means "after". You know what {sang gye} is? {students: Buddha} Yeah, Buddha. I'm sorry, I made a mistake. I made a big mistake. {De}

doesn't refer to {bar kal}. Scratch that out. What's a {kal chen}? [students: eon - great eon] Eighty {bar kal}, okay. So I don't know, four trillion years, five trillion years, I don't know. I I I can't even guess. Somebody's got to figured out something around there. Okay. This is like five trillion years, say, and then you multiply that times ten and you put sixty zeros after that. Okay. It's that many years ... five trillion times ten to the sixtieth power, at least, probably more. Multiply that times three. And that's how long you have to ... after you decide to become a Buddha, you know, after you decide to start trying, that's how many years it takes to collect the karma to sustain that perception forever.[student: Whoa [laughter] {Is this the sutra system or}]All the sutras say that. [student: What about tantra?]

There ... we'll talk about it. But but I guess the whole purpose of talking about {kalpas} tonight and the whole purpose why Vasubandu spends so much time on it is this. It's that, it's che, it has, it's supposed to strike your mind, you know, it's supposed to say you know this plan ... I've been on a planet like this ... it was, the the the civilizations built up all over the planet and then were destroyed, was it twenty times in each in each twenty times per continuation eon ... four of those is a great eon and then for ten to the sixtieth power of those I have been on this on a planet trying to be a good person, trying to become a good person. That's how long it took the Buddha, studying emptiness and studying Bodhisattva activities. For that amount of time in order to collect the virtue necessary to sustain the perception of being a Buddha ... and doing a Buddha paradise. That's the amount of energy it takes. [laughs] The Jains in India, they don't believe it's even possible. They say you can't ... they say you can't do it and they had a big fight with Buddhists because the Buddhists said we can do us but it takes this many years to do it.[student: So how do you know where you are?] [laughter]I believe that some sutras say after attaining bodhicitta ... I mean the {b:Abhidharma} doesn't talk about that because it's Hinayana, but, I believe that the Mahayana scriptures say that after you get bodhicitta ... after you develop a true compassion for all sentient beings such that you would do anything to save them, you know, like that many years after that. Actually it doesn't have to be that long ... it could be like seven lifetimes. And then the opening lines of the book of the Shantidevi when he talks about anger ... did you ever read those? Didn't we in Arizona, [unclear] yeah, yeah, they say one instance of anger destroys the amount of virtue you could collect in one of these eons okay [laughter] [laughs], and then the textbook writers at Sera Mey said, "come on, if it were that way, no one would ever become a Buddha". [laughs] [laughter] But it's specific kinds of anger destroy the the collected virtue of of huge amounts of time. You know, one one really good period of hot anger for five minutes ... you know how it can destroy a relationship, you know, in in in ten minutes you can destroy ten years of relationship with another person.

It's very similar with virtue ... it burns it very quick. Supposed to be very very dangerous.[student: What kind of anger can do that?]They say specifically towards a bodhisattva. Who's a bodhisattva in this room?[student: Don't know] [laughs]We don't know. We never know. So it doesn't help.[student: [unclear]] [laughs] [laughter][unclear] mother [unclear] [laughter]. Don't get angry. Okay. When do when do Buddhas appear in this world? Say {kalpa sangpo} [repeat] {kalpa sangpo} [repeat] {Kalpa sangpo} means {kalpa} is {kalpa} {sangpo} means, do you know what {sangpo} means ... like Lobsang? By the way, anyone who took their vows on Saturday, I have your Tibetan names. I didn't bring them. We're going to type them out on a piece of paper, you can have them on the weekend. But everybody's Lobsang, okay? [laughter] Especially what's your second name. Because you get your abbot's name, you your first name is always Lobsang.[student: What about the monk called Thubten?]That was Rinpoche's ordination name. His novice name.[student: Well, why did he call him Thubten?]He just did, I don't know, I guess he can give you his novice name also, I don't know, but that's an important name because that was granted to him by the twelfth, thirteenth Dalai Lama, by the ... he was ordained by the thirteenth Dalai Lama. So that was the thirteenth Dalai Lama's name, so it's very lucky if you can get that name too. Lobsang's better because it's Tsongkapa. [laughter] [laughs]. So {sangpo, sangpo} means {sangpo} means "good or fortunate; wonderful". So we are in {kalpa sangpo}. We happen to be in {kalpa sangpo}, And you can read about it in the reading, but basically there're gonna be a thousand Buddhas appear in this in this {kalpa}. In our {kalpa} ... the one that we're in right now. Where are we? Okay. That pretty much I can tell you. That's that's pretty clear in the scriptures. So if this is ten years, and this is eighty thousand, they ask in the scriptures do do Buddhas appear during this period up to this period ... you know, would a Buddha appear while things were getting better, you know, while people were getting more and more happy and things were moving along smoothly like at work, like you never get renunciation until you have a bad day. [laughter]. They never appear during this part of the curve. They they never appear in a planet during the first part of this ... while things are going well, they don't appear in a planet. This is ten years, and if this is a hundred, they appear somewhere in here, because things are getting worse. People can't practice Buddhism unless something disastrous is happening in their lives [unclear], people aren't interested in Buddhism unless something really bad is happening in their lives. I remember one day a guy came to class, he just, you know, well-dressed, wealthy, handsome, mov ... he's actually a movie actor, and and I was wondering, you know, how'd this person get into class, you know, did this person have a personal disaster ... what happened with this person ... why is this person here. You you gotta have some kind of [student: Michael, are you

saying then that people are just motivated by negative things ... what about people that are motivated by positive things?] It's okay, but mainly in Buddhism it's by some kind of disaster, and and it's either something in your life, I mean, very often the people who are most serious are the people who've had some very great tragedy, in their lives. It seems to motivate you properly. And renunciation is the, it is the main motivation, so anyway, the Buddhas only appear during the periods of renunciation, while things are bad. They don't appear during the upswing; they appear during a downswing. They don't appear so much during past this period. We don't have Buddhas appearing. I mean we are somewhere right around here, and we are close to this to this ... we are very close. I mean we are close to the destruction of the world according to {b: Abhidharma}. I mean it doesn't say two thousand and four it's going to happen, or something like that ... I mean you don't see that, if somebody says they see that, I've never heard of it in a scripture. But but you can calculate ... we are in the period called {se lo gyal po} which means we are in the, we are at the very very, very tail end of the, of this intermediate eon. We are at the very close to the closing days of this interme... intermediate eon. And there are five signs. So you can say pretty much that recorded history has big clumps of it, you know, what we know about scriptures, yeah [student: You said there are going to be a thousand Buddhas in this] No, in the whole [student: twenty, in the intermediate twenty intermediate] I don't know exactly, I think maybe more than one can appear during one lifetime. [student: Yeah, I just wondered because we've had three so far, right?] Yeah. Yeah. We have nine hundred and ninety seven to go. But maybe not before we reach here ... I don't think so. I think in this eon ... before this planet is destroyed. [student: the great eon?] Yeah, I think so. It's not too clear but I believe it's a great eon. I think ... it's very ancient text and it's ... you know ... hard to read and it's hard to say ... I can't get up here and say all this is how many years [unclear] ... I don't think anyone can. These are called the five degenerations. These are the signs that we're close to the end [laughs] of the eon. Okay. Of the end of this week, okay. By the way, this is ... the five degenerations are very common. I mean they're they often appear in Buddhist scripture. The explanation of them is very rare and I finally found it in the computer by somebody named Jym Yam Pi Yang who's from the thirteenth century in Tibet and he he knew them and he wrote them out. So, the first one is called time - life - {tse} means "life" like {tse way} means "long life". So {tse} means "life". And what it means is during these times human life is very fragile, there are many diseases, there are many ways to die, you know, it's very easy to die in these times. The human body is very weak in these times. Say {nyon mong} [repeat]. {Nyon mong} you know, I think, no? [student: [unclear]] Mental afflictions. Okay. Bad thoughts. [student: The same as kle-sha, no?] Kle-sha, yeah. Kle-sha is a Sanskrit

word, comes from a word "klish", root "klish", Klish means to bother somebody. And the definition of a kle-sha is a thought which disturbs the view the peace of mind. And the classic ones are desire, hatred, pride jealous, greed, you know, stinginess, those are the classic ones. In the five degenerations it has a different meaning, though. It means that people who are not ordained, non monks and nuns, will start to take no interest in virtuous deeds. [laughs] Okay, they won't be much attracted to to doing good things. To doing virtuous things. They'll lose their interest in in virtue. People who are [student: [unclear monks]] people who are not ordained. We're going to get to the monks and nuns later, just as just as bad, okay. [laughter] [laughs] {Sem chen} you know. {Sem chen} means what? {students: [unclear]} That's {shen} and not {chen}. {Sem chen} means "living beings". That's what they always translate as "sentient being". But here it has a totally different meaning ... it means ... what do you say ... it it refers specifically to our to our bodies. Our bodies are not [laughter] well porportioned, they're not physically strong, they're not well coordinated, they're not the the right pro..you know they're all ... our physical bodies are not are not in very good shape during these days. The body of the human being is just not what it used to be during these days. [laughter] [unclear] [laughter] {Du} means "time" like {dun kor} is Kalachakra, for example. {Du} means "time". But it's a code word for ... I don't know, you tell me a good word in English ... it's {lon chu}, {lon chu} means the things which you live off of. Like your house and your food and your crops ... mostly food ... mostly crops in the sense that they're losing their ability to sustain life. [unclear] Energy. Nutrition. [student: Commodity?] Like that, the nutritional power of of food is is becoming bad. You know you can eat all you want but you don't get healthy, you know. The food itself is losing it's health in these times. [student: Sustenance] Like the ability to keep you healthy. It doesn't matter what you eat, you know, it's all the food in the world in these days is has lost it's vitality or something, you know, it's ability to keep you alive in a healthy way. And the same with with medicines and things like that. So I don't know, you could say "food etc" and I don't know. [student: sustenance] You want to call it ... what's the adjective for lousy ... I don't like "lousy food" ... It's "diminished" I guess. [student: Insufficient?] The power the power has is getting less and less. And then {tawa} which means literally ... {tawa} means "philosophical view ... your world view". But when the {tawa} of the whole word gets degenerate then it means that ordained people are not acting in the right way either. And these are the five degenerations. They're called {ni ma nga}. And they are {go wa} ... {go wa} means "spreading" during this period. We're on the ... we're on the verge of that or we're already into it, and that's supposed to be a sign that the end of the {kalpa} is closed. They say that we're right on the borderline of people, you know, that we're very close to the days when people won't be interested in

Dharma any more ... when people won't be practicing ... people won't care about it, and the first thing that dies is not the study. It's the putting it into your heart, you know. That dies first, so there's still people going to classes and and learning all the words and the ideas and the concepts, but the putting it into your life has already died out. They say that will come, that will go first. So the there'll be a there'll be a period when people are just studying it. But are not putting it into their own lives, And and we're on the verge or we're into this time already, we're very close. So as soon as we go across that border from the point of people applying it to their own hearts and to where they just start studying it, that that'll be the end of that will be the beginning of the end. That that's when the period of the five degenerations is is already spread and then that's the that's the close of the eon. Then the eon is closing ... we're very close to that. And life spans will dip under a hundred years and people will start to ... and then we'll reach the the the part where the..for example, the eon of destruction by weapons. And and people will destroy the world with weapons. So we're we are defin ... we are here. [laughs] We're on the border of it. We're on the edge of it. Or or into it already. Something really close. Just the last thing I'll say, the the the thing about taking that many eons to reach Buddhahood, you know, and I mean, you don't you know you can read it in a scripture, but when you finally calculate it it's pretty depressing, you know, like I think most of us have hopes of in this life we could do something significant you know [laughter] but it turns out to be one fraction in quadrillions, you know, like the the amount of time we have in this life to try to be good is is is a moment in a in a billion years, you know, and it it's almost insignificant, but, in this world we do have {tantra} secret teachings, I mean, when I say {tantra} if you don't know much about it, you think of dirty things or weird things. If you know a little bit more, you think of a long thing you have to recite [laughter], if you know a little bit more you think about doing a few retreats, long retreats, and then there's a point beyond that where if you really do do all the things you're supposed to do, if you keep your tantric vows, if you do the retreats you're supposed to do and if your {lam rim} study, if your scripture study is really really good and you're meditating and practicing daily in a very serious way, then it means a totally different thing, you know. Then when I say {tantra} you it means something experiential, it's something that's happening to you, and something that's obviously the method now to becoming a Buddha in this life. And is does not relate to everything you ever heard about {tantra}. It's actually some kind of experiential thing where because you've done the right things..in a good steady slow way, like the rabbit, you know ... ohhh the tortoise ... [laughter] you know, that after a period of time, as a necessary result of karma in this same lifetime, you are forced to enter a certain realm and and you can do it, and and it's a choice, you know. You basically have a choice

between trillions of years or or entering that path, and when the time comes that you get a chance, you have to go for it. Like you have to really get up the courage ... it will take courage ... and there will be some hard times, and it takes some kind of extraordinary level of belief and faith, but you take that leap, and then you you actually can reach all those goals in this life, but it it takes a lot of hard work and a lot of just normal Buddhist practice at the office, and a lot of good meditation and study and service of you lama, very important, and then there'll come a time when there's a crucial time when you make a leap, and you when the time comes you have to go for it and don't don't doubt and don't be wimpy, you know, just go for it and and it that's ... it's either that or or those trillions of years, basically. But when the times comes you'll know. But but you have to do this study very very sweetly, and happily and joyfully and then it will come. Yeah.[student: Will there be a time this year when we can get][laughs] He's bringing up the subject ... Rinpoche's giving an initiation in August into the highest form of {tantra} ... the highest form of the highest form of {tantra} and if you haven't taken it, you can take it ... you need some classes, and then you need, you need to you need to have a prepa a prepa a preparatory initiation ... you need to have an initiation before that. So if anyone's interested I'd say talk to John, okay, because John is trying to organize the preliminary initiation which Rinpoche has not agreed to yet, he's agreed to give to re-give the full the full initiation, but he's not agreed yet to give the preliminary initiation that you need to to enter the full initiation. So so if you're interested, talk to John, and then if we get enough people we'll march down to Howell [laughter] and take flowers and fruits and things, and present our demands. [laughter] So, but I, it takes usually a good group of people for him to consider it, so I I don't believe, I mean in our lineage, you don't take an initiation lightly, and you cannot give an initiation lightly. And he did not do initiations for ten years, I think, I mean and he made us study for that long, and it's very bad to drop into New York and give twenty initiations and leave, you know. [student: What about blessings, Michael? What about when you hear the Lamas say you take these for a blessing?] As a blessing, maybe. But you have to take certain vows and then you have to keep those vows ... you have to know them and it takes a long time to study them, anyway. Bu, so I can't say that I know, you know [laughs] I'm not criticizing those people who do that 'cause I don't know why they do it and I I would break my first bodhisattva vow if I decided why they did it ... I don't know why. But there there's probably special reasons. Anyway, if you want to take it in our lineage, normally you have to study for a long time. Rinpoche is very old and I think it's wise to take it as soon as you can. So that's just my ... you know, normally I'd say you shouldn't take it unless you're very prepared, extremely prepared, but on the other hand to get it directly from him is

incomparable. You can't get it like that, so I would ... if you have any inclination I would encourage you to. When he first agreed to give us initiations, somebody raised their hand and said, "you know we'll never be able to keep this initiation. Why are you giving us this?", you know, and he said, "well, you're going to go to hell anyway [laughter] [laughs], so when you get to hell you can say ... you can stand up proud and say, I'm here because I broke my {tantric} vows [laughter] [laughs], I'm not like you other sluts here", you know. [laughter] [laughs]. You're just here 'cause you led a bad life. [laughter] I'm here because I broke my ... you can be proud, you know, or something like that. Any ... someone had a question? No. We'll we'll do a ... no but seriously it's very wonderful.[prayer: short mandala][prayer: dedication]

The Asian Classics Institute

Geshe Michael Roach

Course VIII Death and the Realms of Existence.

Class Nine. Tape one.

Transcribed by Karen Becker

Proofread by Summer Moore

Say {chiwa} [repeat] {mitakpa} [repeat] Boy you guys are sleepy tonight. [laughter] {Chiwa} [repeat] {mitakpa} [repeat] {chiwa} [repeat] {mitakpa} [repeat]. Okay. {Chiwa} means "death", okay, death, {mitakpa} means "impermanence" and this is a special subject in the lam rim text and it's basically a meditation on your death. Okay. Remembering the fact that you are ... you can say mortal or impermanent, and then death, so that's the impermanence that that death is. Another way you could say it would be, say {chiwa} [repeat] {gompa} [repeat] {chiwa} [repeat] {gompa} [repeat]. {Chiwa} means "death" again, and {gompa} means "meditation". Meditation. You could call it death meditation. But Tsongkapa which is who we're using tonight, his text {b:Lam Rim Chenmo}, the Great Lam Rim, greatest book ever written in the Tibetan language probably ... your reading is from that. He puts another word here. He says, say {chiwa} [repeat] {drenpa} [repeat] {gompa} [repeat]. {Chiwa} [repeat] {drenpa} [repeat] {gompa} [repeat]. He's put this extra word inside called {drenpa}. Do you know {dren, drenpa}? Do you remember? It means "to remember". [laughs] Okay [laughter] {Drenpa} means "to remember" or to recall something. So I mean if you don't know Tibetan very well you would say "meditating on remembering death". But you could you could translate {drenpa} here as an awareness of death, okay, death awareness, and then meditation remember in Tibetan doesn't have to be meditation. {Gompa} can mean "to get used to something". To get used to something. To habituate yourself. Okay. So maybe if you knew Tibetan a little better you could say, "habituating yourself to death awareness; getting used to death awareness". Because the point is that if you don't do if you don't do {chiwa gompa} in meditation, you don't have to be sitting down with you legs crossed and your hands like that and you're doing some kind of a meditation, that's not death meditation. Death meditation for Tsongkapa is {chiwa drenpa}. {Chiwa drenpa} means like an awareness of your death, the awareness of your death. And it doesn't have to be done in meditation, and in fact it should be done all day long. And and the root meaning of that is very very important, and if you don't get it you'll never ... then this

then this talk and this whole course won't do any good for you. You have to get this point. {Chiwa drenpa} means thinking you're going to die today. Okay. Keeping in mind all day ... how would I act if I knew I was going to die today, you know, what would I do if I knew I was going to die today. Would I act any different ... I mean ... my eighth grade teacher, no, senior in high school teacher asked me that, you know. She said "would you act the same if you were going to die today"? You know. If you knew you were going to die today, what would you act? You know. Think about it. Think about it for yourself. What ... if you knew you were going to die tonight would you be here? What would you be doing? If you knew you were going to die tonight. And that the thought that just went through your brain is the most important thing about this whole eight week class or whatever, I mean, that's it ... that's the whole point of the class. You know, and that has some effect on you on your behavior. You know, your behavior would change. If you could keep that feeling all the time, of what would I do be doing right now if I was going to die tonight. Then you've perfected the death meditation and I don't have anything more to teach you [laughs] you know, I mean I'm going through the whole outline and everything, but that's it, that's all, you know, and that's the point that Je Tsongkapa's saying, you know. at any given point in your life, you have to always be thinking, would I be doing this if I was going to die tonight. You know, how would I act if I was going to die tonight. Because that is the situation. I mean, that is the truth. And you shouldn't act any time any different than that. Everything you decide to do in your life, every time you do anything you should be thinking, is this what I would be doing if I knew I was going to die tonight. And that's ... it's a very simple ... that's death meditation. [laughs] We'll go through the whole outline, okay, 'cause you won't have gotten your money's worth if I don't do [laughs] something else tonight, right? [laughter]. So I'll give you some words and stuff...but that's all, that's it. And he he he does this death meditation in four parts, okay. It's very classic. Say {chiwa} [repeat] {magompy} [repeat] {nye mik} [repeat]. {Chiwa} {repeat, {magompy} [repeat] {nye mik} [repeat]. {Chiwa} means what? [students: death] Death, okay. {magompa} means "not meditating", okay, not meditating on death. Again it does not mean in meditation posture. It means throughout the day. {Magompay} {nye mik, nye mik} means "problem, disadvantages" Okay, so there're gonna be ... I mean Je Tsongkapa has a list and Pabonka Rinpoche follows them, of the problems that will come to you if you don't meditate on death. He has six of them and he gives examples to prove ... so that the first problem if if you don't meditate on death, if you don't know how to do death meditation, you'll start to concentrate on the small pleasures of this life, like food, clothes, things like that ... you will, that'll be the focus of your life. You'll start to concentrate on having a nice place

to stay, and and I don't mean going out and trying to buy a Cadillac, there's nobody in this room I don't think even could [laughs] [laughter] me included, but I I don't mean that, I and I don't mean trying to go get the biggest house that you can get, it doesn't mean that, it means that you're you're concentrating mainly, the main focus of your day, is on what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear, what kind of place you have this day, what kind of position you have at work, you know, wha how do people think of you, things like that, I mean, that'll be the main focus of your day and you and your day will not be focused around Dharma. It won't be the focus of your day. If you don't think about death, if you shut it out of your mind ... that kind of awareness ... then this will be the natural, the natural way your mind will go, and that's the way your mind goes. And I don't mean that you're trying to get rich, or you're trying to become President of City Corp or something like that, but it's not that. But but you know, subtly your whole life is is is focused around things, small things. This world's things, you know. I it doesn't matter what it is but you your life is focused on that. Your life is not focused on what'll happen to you if you die. This is this is the kind of death meditation which I ma ... if somebody talks to you about death and you think about death, it's always something later, in the back ... even when I said that you may die tonight, there was an immediate reaction in your own mind that said, he's saying that for effect, you know. I I'm really fairly young or middle aged and I'm not going to die tonight. Nobody in our class has died yet, you know [laughter] this doesn't really apply to me, what he said really doesn't apply to me, and you really do think that. Your heart believes that. So you, you know, if somebody says what about death, are you going to die, it's always something later. It's always something in the far future. It's always something very far away from us. There was a guy at Vajrapani ... I mean, you know all these stories, I don't ... I'll tell one, you know more. Vajrapani ... where's Ashley? this healthy guy a strong healthy guy, good Dharma student, very very good Dharma student, devoted, you know, devoted to his center and helped build his center, so he's up on the roof, he falls off, hits his jugular vein on a nail and he's bleeding to death, and his wife is just, all she can do is sit and with him, and they do some mantras together and he died, you know, and there's nothing you can do. And and it was weird you know, we were just there, we were just having a class and and he's dead, you know, and you know your own, you can tell me, you you know, have your own stories like that, but in the back of your mind you always think it'll happen later so you think it's okay to delay, and it's very common you know, like all your tantric retreats are in the future, right? [laughter] and that's four retreats you have to do, those are all in the future, right, and learning Tibetan is some time in the future, and you know everything is future, everything is, it'll be okay I can learn it next course, next

course I really will concentrate on it and you know, stuff like that. You have all these programs that you're thinking of that you will do, you know, sooner or later you will stop all your bad habits that you know that you have to confess every day. Eventually you will, you know. You have a plan, right? And I'm speaking [laughs] from experience [laughter] you know, I still do it, and and that's that's because you're not meditating on death. If you really were meditating on death you could remove those bad habits quickly. Shantideva says if somebody gave you a pot of water and said "walk across the room with it and don't spill any" you know, it's totally filled up to the brim, you would walk across the room and spill some, but he says if somebody stood behind you with a sword, behind your neck, you know, and said "walk across the room and if you spill any I'm going to cut your head off", anyone could walk across the room and not spill a drop, you know. So it's this kind of awareness that you ... if death is involved you can do a lot that you didn't think you could do. You know. If you have a good threat you can do a lot, that you didn't think you could do before. Number three is where you do practice but you do it for your reputation. And this is not like where you're obsessed by fame or something like that, but if you ever achieve the path of seeing, if you ever see emptiness directly, hence when you come down out of that and you see the four noble truths, one of them involves an understanding of ego which is not the self okay ... ego is not the self ... the self that doesn't exist is a nature that you have. That that would be a you know, being ... having ... that this is red by from it's own side ... it's not red from it's own side ... it is cloth from it's own side at that moment that you perceive it as as red, perhaps. but it's being red depends on your projection. So this this does not have what they call a "self". But there is a perception of ego that we have that's it's not the perception of self ... that's a different thing, but it but we all but we have it and it's related to our perception of self. Of a of a self that doesn't exist. What I mean to say is there is no action basically that you and I ever undertake which is not motivated by selfishness. Some kind of self gratification. There is none, you know. Even when you sit in a in a {tsechu}, if you sit in a very holy prayer, and you're doing your prayers, I mean, mainly your mind is distracted by ... how do I sound to other people tonight, how do I look, did they notice that I memorized the whole thing, you know, I don't think that person's doing it very well ... it's always infected with self interest, every single action we do, is infected with self interest. Everything, you know, there's nothing, I me standing up here teaching this class is infected by self interest and self gratification, it's just our nature ... we have that nature. If you don't do death meditation, it's even worse, I mean, that that pollution of your motivation is is exaggerated when you're not doing death meditation, we all have it, we all have it all the time. It's worse if you're not doing death

meditation. The fourth problem that they point out at this meditation is that if you're not thinking that you're going to die tonight, then you go through the you go through the motions of practicing ... we all do it ... you know, either we don't practice, which is normal, or we break it all the time, but even when we do do it, it's like rote, you know it's like we we sit up in the morning and we do a {sangye chudang tsokyi choknam la} [laughs] you know, you do your whole thing, you go through the whole thing, and then about twenty minutes before you finish you're already thinking about what you're going to do at work, and all the things you have to ... and what you're going to have for breakfast, and stuff like that ... I mean I'm talking from ex from personal experience, you know, [laughs] every morning, and then sooner or later you give it up. You dropped it. I I have to interview students for each of these classes, and many of them have {tantric} initiations, most of them who have initiations dropped their practice after a while, I mean, eventually they got tired of it and they dropped it. Something some problem there. And if you were meditating on death you would you would do a very sweet {tantric} meditation today, you know, if you knew you were going to die tonight you would really put a lot of enthusiasm into your practice, you know, and that's the difference. It's not artificial. It's not just pretending you're gonna to die tonight. You are going to die tonight. I mean that's that's a big leap to make. I'm not saying to pretend you're going to die tonight. I mean, know that you are going to die tonight. And act like that. See that that's there a resistance among all of us when I say "don't pretend you're going to die tonight; know that you're going to die tonight" And you your mind reaction is this, no he he should have said, think as though you were going to die tonight, or believe that you could die tonight. That's not the point. Know that you are going to die tonight and act like that. [student: Do you mean, have a feeling that you're going to die tonight, is that what you mean, like feel it in your heart] Just decide that you're going to die tonight. And then act like that, and and it's very simple, I do not mean act as though you are going to die tonight, or pretend you're going to die tonight ... just decide you're going to die tonight, and then decide what you want to do now. Maybe some people want to leave the class [laughs] I don't know [laughter] ... then I'll know somebody that really thought about it. [student: I mean, this may sound weird but if I really knew I was going to die tonight I would probably go on meditating until the very morning, and then the next morning [laughs]] [unclear] [student: well, I mean it's like your whole life is going to crumble completely.] Yeah. I mean that's the wa how you're supposed to practice. I mean that is ... I I don't even want to say supposed, I mean, that's how you must practice, and I don't really believe anyone's going to do it tonight, but I I think if you hear this enough times it will dawn on you, I mean I've I've heard it many times, I've gone for a month of

meditating on it, and and it it sinks in after a while, after a while you do start to act on it. There's a process of Buddhist education where it starts with just a lot of classroom time, and and you can't get around it. You understand what I'm saying, especially if I say it in English and not in Tibetan, but it does not sink in ... it doesn't become reality for a long time. If you don't hear it said, and you don't come to class, it never dawns on you [laughs] okay. So it'll dawn on you eventually. I can't say it'll dawn on you tonight, but it is it is what you must do. And I think if you try it just a little bit, there's this clarity of your life that immediately happens, you get this totally clear awareness and you get some kind of a good feeling inside that okay, now I'm doing the right thing. Because whenever you're delaying and crapping around, you know it. And you feel bad. And you you know you're wasting your life. And then when you have this real clarity of knowing that you've you're going to die tonight, and just acting exactly in response to that knowledge, you act totally correctly, and it happens very rarely in a human life ... we have to try to make it happen. [student: Is that what you mean by the "death awareness habituation" that you just have that feeling?] Yeah, habituation, and it comes, I mean I don't say it will come for an hour or something like that ... just five minute periods during the day when you say ... you get totally clear, I mean it physically feels like glass, you know, the whole world feels like glass, and you're saying, I know exactly what I have to do right now. You know. I'm I'm going to die tonight. I know exactly ... now it's very clear what I have to do, you know, and it's very comforting ... it feels really good ... you know you're doing the right thing ... you know, that's a very good feeling. [student: And what it is that you have to do when you get that feeling?] [laughs] [laughter] Pabongka used to hit people that asked him. [laughter] There's this famous story, some guy wrote to him and said, [unclear] he's been lecturing for two weeks on lam rim and the guy on the ... this is at the end of the mandala offering and he says, "you've convinced me. What should I do?" you know. I just spent two weeks telling you. [laughter] I don't know if I told you. There's a guy who used to be in this class who came to me two weekends ago and said my my grandmother died on Friday, my father died on Sunday. What should I do? What what should I do, you know, and I felt like strangling him, you know, like we sent you a postcard, you know, it's about death, you know, like what to do about death, you know, and and you didn't have time to come to class and now you want me to go through the whole class because your two relatives died this weekend, you know ... the guy still didn't come to class. So, [laughs] he just do one class. Okay. Number five is gets deeper into this life, which means, you know, if you go out on St. Mark's place where I walk home and you see all the twenty year old people, the sixteen year old people they're less attached to life than we are. It's very interesting. You know, they could care

less about a car and food and planning for the future and an IRA and everything else. And they're even more ... they're much more free of life than we are, and what it means is, if you don't meditate on death ... and as you get older ... you get more entrenched, and and you get more invested in this life, you know, the older you get, if you're not doing death meditation and you're not keeping your practice pure, the more you start to need all those things that you're collecting. Okay. Whether it's the salary level that you're at or or the possessions you have or the friends you have or the lifestyle you lead or the kind of food you have to have every day, but it starts to become a real web, you know, as you get older, it it becomes tighter and tighter and you get more and more invested in in this life and in and in concentrating on this life and things that when you were twenty didn't seem important at all now seem like absolute necessities. And and to get those things you do worse and worse things. I mean ... not I none of us killing people or stuff like that, but you do begin to have a certain kinds of lying and things like that to get the things you need or or protecting them from other people at the expense of other people and and those sorts those kinds of behavior that as a young person you didn't need so much you need more and more as you get older, and and then you start getting sucked in deeper. The the last problem of not meditating on death and not having death awareness is that as you die you experience intense regret and there's ... the scriptures are full of stories who as they die, you know, they start getting this intense feeling of terror, or this intense ... I think you see it a lot in older people, or people who are going through their mid life crisis, where they start to regret their whole life, and I've seen it in Dharma students also, I mean, now in America, after twenty five years we have people who have been trying to do Dharma for twenty five years and you meet some of the older ones, I met them say recently, and and there's they're starting to regret their life, they're starting to regret what they did, how they spent their time, what they concentrated on ... I mean that's a terrible feeling, I think, to get to a certain age and then regret everything before, you know, to get to forty or fifty and say I'm sorry for the way I spent my life. I think that's ... it's something to think about, you know. There are people ... even Dharma students ... who who will tell you, you know, I I didn't do this I didn't do that, I had plans to do that and I didn't really get any of it done and I and spiritually I'm not ... I haven't changed much since I was twenty, you know, I'm not much improved if anything from where I was before. I've just wasted my time. You know some of them became scholars of Tibetan, some of them didn't, some of them can dos ... know all of these practices and some of them don't, but you thing you hear is, I didn't change my life, and I didn't change my my character, you know, I didn't change my my heart in all those years, and they start to feel bad. They start to feel some kind of regret. And at death that's and

that's intensified. You really do review those events of your life [laughs], and and start to feel really bad about them ... the worst of them. That's ... and regret about having wasted your life. And like I think you get to the point where you can't meditate anymore. Your bones are hurting too much, you know when you get there, I tell you [laughs] I'm close, okay [laughter], and you feel and you feel bad and you feel stupid, you know, you feel I should have done it while I could because some bone hurts or some back hurts and you know it's not going to get better. You get to a point where you can't do what you used to do and then you regret it, you know. You regret that you wasted that time. If you're doing death meditation it doesn't happen. That's the bad news. [laughs] I hate these. Everybody in class looks grim. We'll go to [laughter] ... don't be one of those dharma you know, oh it's so sick, I mean not sick, it's just sad. And I start to meet some of these mid-life crisis Dharma students that say, I wasted my life. You know I think ... lamas kept telling me what to do and I didn't do it, and now I feel bad, I feel stupid, you know. We we're starting to produce these in America. Say {chiwa} [repeat] {gompay} [repeat] {pen yun} [repeat] {Chiwa} [repeat] {gompay} [repeat] {pen yun} [repeat]. {Chiwa}'s what? [students: death] death {Gompa} [student: meditating] Meditate. {Gompa} {Pen yun} means "benefit, good results". [student: In all cases tonight when you're talking about doing death meditation you're just talk ... you're not talking about sitting, you're just talking about] Right. I'm not. No I'm not. And that's important. I've shortened it. It's it's "meditation on the awareness of death and I wouldn't even say meditation, I'd say habituation, you know, 'cause it's just to get in the habit of of living that way all day, and it ... try it, it's really cool, I mean you get this real clarity, you know, like I've been trying it for the last few days because I had to talk about it so [laughter] [laughs] like yeah, well I may I just well do that, that that's not in the program, if I'm going to die today that not my program today. Your practice is pure. First one. It won't be infected by reputation or fame or other people's approval or anything like that ... it's really liberating. You know, and you might lose a few friends, but you'll gain something [laughs] more precious. You know, I mean, you you'll you'll alienate some people, if you really are acting as if you're going to die tonight. You know, like your boss will be upset that you didn't finish that paper that I was supposed to do today, but but in your heart you know you did the right thing. Your practice is really pure. You know. I'm doing it for the right right reason. And then in in the most common reaction is that you actually start to practice better, you actually spend more time practicing because you're not embarrassed to practice. 'Cause you don't you you don't mind if people think you're stupid that you didn't show up for such and such a ... like that, you say I was meditating, you know, you know. My boss asked me to come in early tomorrow and I'm not going to go 'cause I'm me ...

I'm going to be meditating. [laughs] [laughter] But I I when when I get yelled at, which I will be yelled at, at 9:00 am, I'll still feel right, you know, I'll feel like I did the right thing. That's purity of your practice. That's okay. I mean it gives you some kind of liberation. The second one is your practice gains power. And that's just it's it's very similar to the first one to me, you know, you get..if you believe in that you would only have one meditation session to get it all ready to die, it would be very powerful. It'd be extremely intense. And and I think in a pure way, you know, I think for example if you've been trying to meditate ... visualize your root lama for a month or years, you know, and then if somebody said you're going to die tonight and you you better well have your root lama in your mind as you die, I mean I think the clarity of the picture would become very good. You know, you would really ... I mean I can imagine you'd start crying, you'd start you'd start ... it's like when you're a kid and they say, I remember I was on a plane and they said the plane might crash, and and and you start thinking ... I was Christian, right, so you start thinking, oh Jesus, and you start visualizing ... for the first time you start visualizing this thing pretty clearly [laughs], you know, you start wondering, what is this thing, you know, and it's a reaction when you're when you're about to die. I mean, there's some gut thing that happens when you're about to die where something comes up in your mind, some kind of religious thought maybe, and and that and that's the the power I mean, that you if you knew you were about to die then the visualization of your root lama or tantric deity or whatever would become extremely clear, and it would be almost like you were willing them to be to be with you at that moment. And that's a good reaction ... that's a natural reaction, and and you should be able to get to that point now if you're meditating on death. [student: Michael. Are these death meditations where you actually sit down in meditation and meditate on something or no?] [laughs] You can do you can do a {shargom} on this, yeah, and then there are death meditations where you meditate on what happens during death ... we're going to talk about that. How you should get started is this. I mean, obviously, if you've been one of those lazys like me, or you know, if you have trouble ... you know that you're supposed to meditate every day but you just have trouble doing it, if you if you believe ... if you if you know you're going to die tonight then you you don't have trouble starting. You you can give up something else. Like the movie you were going to go see [laughs] you know. It's not a problem to give up what you were going to do and I think for Dharma people especially, and I'm talking from experience, Dharma work is gets to be a worse temptation than the world, you know, like useful Dharma work, you know, like like raising money for Dharma or or teaching Dharma [laughs] or you know, stuff like that can be almost a more of a distraction than non-Dharma. You know, it's more dangerous for us I think. You

must do your personal practice first. And your personal meditations must be done every day and that takes priority. You must do it. So I think I think if you're aware of death you ... the other things are good but this is essential, you must do that. Number four is keeps you going strong. This is in the interim and everyone's practice ... it doesn't matter who you are, I mean,, it can be St. Thomas or whatever, and it goes like this ... you know, your practice goes like this, you know, you have good days and bad days, you have weeks when you can meditate well and you have months when you can't meditate well, you have days when you you you're feeling real joy at having achieved something and then you and then you get angry at work for two days and it destroys everything, and you know, you go like this ... your practice your practice always goes like that, there's no there's nobody whose practice is just always sweet and intense and regular and always progressing, you know, there's no such thing. Practice is like ... it's going like this, it may be going up but it's always dips until you get up, you know. And death meditation is very good for the valleys, you know. When you're like when you're not you don't feel like practicing or you're depressed about your practice, or you don't think you're doing much and you can't get yourself to do much or you're kind of letting off on your practice ... you can't keep up the intensity, then death meditation is very good, you know. I'm going to die tonight. Like if you have a mild headache or something, or you're a little bit busy, or or you didn't eat a good lunch and you feel like eating, I think if you do death meditation it can get you over these ... you you will go ahead and practice. You will go ahead and do your practice even though you don't quite feel like it. And that's the use of death meditation at that point. And the fifth one that gets you to the end, I mean,, to those of us, if you've had any good practice ... like you've done some practice well, you know, some ... one of your practices has succeeded, like you're trying to remove your anger or your desire and you worked on it and you worked on it and you worked on it ... there's a point where sometimes you get like sixty percent of the way through ... if you've ever done a {le rung}, I don't know about Stilwell, I don't know about you, Becky, there's a point about seventy five percent of the way through when you feel like stopping, you know, you've been you've been at it for three weeks or something, you've got one more week to go and it seems like the hardest time. It's it's the last quarter, and ... or or you're just about got rid of a bad habit in your heart, you know, you're like ninety percent finished and then there's this tendency to slack off. Death meditation gets you to the end, the last ten percent. The last twenty five percent. It it keeps you going from that hard point about three quarters of the way through ... you're almost through overcoming some bad habit you have, and then it's pretty common to get a little bit tired and slack off and you go back to zero again, [laughs] you know. You go right back to the

habit you had before. Within a week or within a few days, you know, like you're working on it for months, and then and then right close to the end you slack off, and then ... I think death meditation takes you to the end and locks it in. And and makes sure that you've actually polished it off ... finished it, you know. It's like taking ... continuing to take antibiotics after the cold is gone. You know. They say like you have to keep going for another day or two. It's like that. It's like those medicines where you have to keep going even after the peak of the thing is finished, and death meditation has that effect. Death awareness. The sixth benefit is you die with satisfaction. And ah I mean, I I mean, if you've made some hard decisions in your life based on Dharma, you know, like you decided not to have such and such a position, I mean,, you've made a basic decision, or you've had a chance to to be such and such a professor and you decided not to, that you'd rather just practice, something like that, or you had a chance to have a great career and you turned it down 'cause you wanted to have time to practice ... or something like that. Then it's a little hard at the time ... and you kind of doubt ... you have doubts along the way, but as you die it's like it's like, oh man, I really did do the right thing. There's some kind of satisfact ... intense satisfaction at the last moment that you really did spend your life doing the right thing. And I think as you get older, if you choose a Dharma life you'll see that among the people you work with or your friends, like I have friends from college who who who are getting old ... we're all getting old now ... and they come to me and they say, "oh you were so smart, you know, you did ... you were so smart to give up all that stuff and do the Dharma thing". You know. And as you get older, more and more people will come to you and say oh that..you know ... you could have had this such and such career but you chose to do that instead, you were ... how did you think of that, you know, you're so smart. I mean, every year that you gain in your life that choice will look more and more intelligent. And and you'll feel more and more satisfaction. You don't have to die to feel the satisfaction. As you get older people will ... just the experiences of your friends who did not choose that way of life, gives you ... it's a kind of weird satisfaction ... but you you get some kind of justific ... I don't know ... what do they call that? [student: Fulfilment] It's like a confirmation that you [laughs] did the right thing, you know, and at the time it was a little hard, but to decide to do Dharma with your life, you won't ever regret it. You you'll the older you get the sweeter it gets and the smarter you look to everybody. You know [laughs] [laughter] it it's a ... what is that? There's a word for it ... anyway. [student: Vindication?] It's like a vindication, you know. It's like a choice you make ... the earlier you make it the harder it is. To to do to spend your life on Dharma, but then every year that passes you you start to look more brilliant, you know, and it really it really does, and then the Dharma

[unclear] is death, I mean, as you die I mean, death itself confirms that Dharma is the best way to spend a life, and you you just have a very sweet satisfaction, especially if you really tried hard, you know, if you really gave it your best, and that's the also applies for things that screw up in this life, I mean, if your motivation ... Tibetans call it {kum ro} ... you know if every activity you ever went into was motivated by a pure motivation you'd feel some intense satisfaction even if it fails, you know, at least you ... you have the satisfaction of knowing that you did the right thing, and that that's the best way you could have spent your life, and I don't mean it has to succeed. You know, 'cause it never succeeds. You always die. It's a screw up. [laughs] Death itself is a ... you feel like a failure as you die because you're dying, but there is this satisfaction that you did the best thing you could, you know, and and you only get it if you spend your life in Dharma. So meditating on death helps you get there. You know, if you believe that you're going to die tonight, you'll get there. And just check it out, you know, there's a guy coming tomorrow night ... very nice guy, he's named Don Brown, he has a Dharma center in North Carolina, and he gives he does this meditation and he hands out the wills [laughter] and people have to make out their wills. [laughter] They actually have to go to a lawyer and make out their wills. Just concentrate on this. And then they have to write their obituary and they actually submit it to the newspaper, you know [laughter], I mean, this is going to be this guy's obituary when he dies, so they actually ... I don't know, I think it's pretty cool, I think it's a pretty smart idea. He's a he's a a professional, you know, he's a doctor and he sees a lot of death, and he encourages his students to to actually write out their wills ... to actually go to a lawyer and as part of the course, and write out your will, because it just gets you in the mood of ... that's a death awareness, you know, you're thinking about your death. [student: I think it makes it real.] It makes it real. And it's cool. I think it's a good idea. We should do that. But I have no time. [laughs] Those are the first two broad categories of death meditation. See ... meditating or contemplating on the problems of not meditating about death and then meditating on the benefits of meditating on death. Or being aware of your death. Number three is ... say {chi lo} [repeat] {jitar} [repeat] {kyewa} [repeat]. {Chi lo} [repeat] {jitar} [repeat] {kyewa} [repeat]. {Chi} means {chi wa} "death", okay {lo} means "awareness" okay, it means mind, you can call it awareness, death awareness {jitar} means "what kind of", {jitar} means "what kind of". {Kyewa} means "to develop", okay and the and the third point in the death meditation is well ... sorry [laughs], what is what is death awareness? Okay. What kind of death awareness are you supposed to develop? And Je Tsongkapa he divides it into two. He says, first I'll give you the ki the kind of death awareness it's not. And then I'll tell you the kind of death awareness it is.

[student: Are these the third and fourth categories or are these subsets of this same category?] This is three. And this is three A. And you're going to get a three B. So these are sub-categories of number three. And here Je Tsongkapa say, look, when a person's on their death bed, and they're starting to get that pain that we talked about, this extraordinary special kind of pain that comes from dying, and they start to panic. And they start to look around the room ... they start to realize that they're going to lose everything, they're they are gonna lose contact with anyone who they ever cared about permanently. I mean,, it it dawns on them at some point ... and I don't know, I guess some people it's weeks before they die, some people it's up to the last minute, they don't, it doesn't dawn on them but they are going to be ripped apart or separated from everyone they ever cared about and they will not meet them again. You know, that they just it suddenly dawns on them that that that's going to happen. And then it ... depending on you know relatively how much you care about the physical objects you've collected, it dawns on you that you're going to lose every one of them, and I think there's even some kind of jealousy about who's going to get them [laughs] you know, and and the fact that you can't control them any more. It's gonna be someone else calling the shots. All the things you collected, other people will meet together and divide them up [laughs] within forty-eight hours of your death, or something. They'll they'll actually start thinking about it immediately, or even before you die. They'll they'll start deciding between them how they're gonna divide your possession, and and that dawns on you at a certain point, as you die or shortly before you die, this feeling that you're going to lose everything. And then it dawns on you, I think the last part, is that you're going to lose your body. You know, and this body which has struggled so hard and you've taken so such good care of to the with great prejudice and you start to realize that you don't know where you're going, you don't know what's going to happen next ... you get some kind of terror. You know. On top of that, the thinking processes are disrupting. As the and the Buddhism describes it ... and you can say the electricity in your mind, as the synapses start to short out, you know, as the as as the oxygen starts to lower, as the blood starts to clo clog and harden, you you lose your memory and you lose your rec normal thinking processes and and it becomes a hallucination, you begin to hallucinate, by nature, because the physical basis for the mind is is being disrupted, radically, so it's not just that you don't feel well, it's that you're you're no longer able to perceive reality the way you ... in any normal recognizable way. Reality becomes some terrible hallucination at that point. There are certain typical hallucinations ... and you can't even think clearly about the hallucinations ... you are part of the hallucinations. You know, you are in the hallucinations. And you you can't even remember what it was like before they started, and and that's just that's just

part ... yeah. [student: What are some of the typical hallucinations?] I can't go into them. But they're in the tantric texts. And you can study them ... and you must study them. But it's just like terror, mainly ... very terrible hallucinations. And then and then you have this extreme derangement ... you know, you your body is par dead by then. Nobody knows you're going through this except you, you know, and they're all standing around saying "he died", you know. But your mind is already in this terrible hallucinations and and things like that, before you enter the bardo. And so Je Tsongkapa says, "is that death meditation? Are we supposed to meditate on that? No." That's the one ... that terror or that fear, or that apprehension at the last moment of death ... the panic, okay [laughs] death panic [laughs] okay, Je Tsongkapa says, "that's not the death awareness I'm talking about". And he he has sort of a joke at the end, he says, you don't have to meditate on that, [laughter] you know, you don't have to practice that. That's natural [laughs] you know. If that was death awareness, then I wouldn't have to write a book about it. 'Cause everybody has that, you know. And he says, I'm not I'm not telling you to practice that; that would come by nature. Yeah. [student: So people I I I sort of vaguely hear about people who do this death meditation and they sit down and they, you know, try to simulate their death and go through that feeling of panic ... is that a no no, that's not the point?] There is a practice like that ... it comes much later. But as we talked about death meditation here ... I mean, this one is required to do that one. You have to become a master of this one before you can even think about that one. So it's not it's not that panic. You're not supposed to sit down and try to simulate the panic that you're going to feel as you die because [laughs] that will come naturally. That you don't need to meditate for that. Says Je Tsongkapa. And he says here, "the death awareness it really is" is people say, you know, I'm a Buddhist, you know, and you say, "well what's your practice?" And they say, "well I meditate". And you say "what do you meditate one?" And they say "my breath", you know, or "I watch my mind". And you say, "well what's your goal?", you know, and they say, "I would like to be calm at work, you know, and I would like to not feel so much stress and anxiety, and I'd like to be more friendly and and more more considerate of other people ... which are all noble, those are important things ... it does not qualify as a Buddhist practice. It is not Buddhism. Minimum attitude for Buddhism, the minimum activity for a Buddhist is to do something that helps you after you die ... you focusing on your death. That's the minimum motivation. That's called {ke drup chin wa}, minimum motivation, of a Buddhist. [student: Will you spell that?] {Ke drup chin wa}. Small capacity person. Small scope person. Minimum scope. I mean, the scope of your Buddhist practice must extend beyond your current life, in so far as it's focused on the current life it's not Buddhist practice. It doesn't qualify

as minimum Buddhist practice. It's not described in any Buddhist book as as as being Buddhism. And that's something people sometimes never grasp. I mean,, a lot of people never know. Taking refuge, minimum motivation is concern with your next life. You know, it it's it's if your practice is focused on this life, it's like New Age something ... I don't know what. You know, but it's not Buddhism. The minimum Buddhism is is concern with with what matters after you die ... focused on that. And it's selfish. And it's focused on your own death. And and that's a necessary foundation for all other Buddhist practice, including bodhisattva activities and things like that, you you have to have this first. This is the very lowest ... this is the first mediation of the lam rim. Yeah. [student: What do you mean to focus on what matters after you die?] I mean, focus on the the things in this life that are going to affect your experiences after the moment of your death. You know. Don't engage in anything in this life which is focused on anything less than the moment of your death and the moment beyond that. You know. Don't don't waste your time on things that are related to this life. I mean, it doesn't mean that you can't have a job, no it doesn't mean that. What should the job be? I mean, it doesn't matter. Find something that feeds you, something that doesn't leave you exhausted by the end of the day, and and something where you can turn it into a Buddhist practice, where there's lot of offensive people [laughter], you know, you know, find you you should have the practice ... you need it, you need that practice, you really do need that. But but that's all, you don't need more than that. And more than that is dangerous. You know, something that leaves you exhausted, something that leaves you with no time for retreat, you know, something which is dishonest, or or could create desire or you know something like beyond what you can handle. Don't do it. It doesn't, it's not going to help you when you die. And it's just dangerous for a person to engage in a thing like that, you know. It's more dangerous than walking through traffic, you know, to live the normal life is more dangerous [laughs] than a lot of things that are called dangerous for a Buddhist, you know, because you have to die. And you have to die when? [student: Today. Tonight.] Tonight [laughs]. Today, right. Take a break. Don't die during the break [laughs] okay [laughter]. Promise me, promise me. [laughter]. The death meditation is act ... everything ... how to do it, okay, so the first step is what? [students: Thinking of the disadvantages.] This was thinking thinking of the disadvantages of not meditating on death. The second one? [students: The benefits.] The benefits of thinking you're going to die tonight. Third one? [students: What is death meditation and what it's not.] You know, what is it? What is a death meditation and what it's not and then number four is how to actually do a death death meditation. How to get death awareness. I don't like too much to call it death meditation, it's more like death awareness, it's more like

something you have all the time. [student: {Mi tok shi wa}] We're con we're getting there. So there're gonna be three principles in the death meditation. This is how to actually do it. You have to know the three principles. Three principle steps. Say {ngepar chiwa} [repeat] {ngepar chiwa} [repeat] The whole structure of death meditation rests on the three principles. We're going to cover the first one briefly tonight and then the other two in the next class, okay, but but but the fact that you must die is the first one. Say {nam chi} [repeat] {ma-nge} [repeat] {Nam chi} [repeat] {ma nge} [repeat]. {Nam chi} means "when you're going to die", {nam} means "when" or "the time", {chi} means "death", the time of death, {ma nge, ma nge} means "not certain; totally uncertain". Okay. The third principle is when you die, when you die nothing helps but Dharma. [student: Which one is this?] {Chu} means "dharma". {ma tok} means "except for". {Mi pen} means "doesn't help". So what it means is, nothing except the Dharma helps. Basically the only thing you carry with you beyond death is your mind and whatever's planted in it. And what's planted in it is determined by what you do. So I mean, you don't have to worry about what you're going to wear in the bardo, [laughs] you don't have to worry about what you're going to look like ... I mean, are you going to be handsome or not, you know, 'cause your body's not going with you, your money's not going with you, your friends can't go with you, your job, your career, your name, your fame, your reputation, how other people think of you, nothing goes with you. The only thing that's carried over is whatever karmic seeds you put in your mind by the ... what you did or what you said or what you thought in this life. That's the onl ... those you must take, you have no choice. So only if ... the Dharma's really the only thing that's can affect you at that point. Nothing else can affect you past that point. It's whatever whatever Dharma you did can have a can help you and and that's the only thing that can help you past that point. We're only going to try to cover the first one tonight ... I'll do it pretty quick ... it's getting late. Each one of these...yeah. [student: I have a question. Is the way you die, how you die the way you die what is that dependent on?] Sorry, I lost ... what did you say? [students: [unclear]] There's there's nine reasons for the three principles. And three each. The first one is, nothing can stop it. Okay. And here they get into this thing where if the time comes to die, when the time comes to die, nothing can stop it. There's no power on the planet that could stop it. And you can hide anywhere you want, you know, I think of ... what was his name? The airplane guy? Howard Hughes. [student: Hughes] You know, he's in the..he rents a whole floor of a hospital, he has twenty doctors working on him, he's spending millions of dollars and there there's nothing to do, you just die, they say your family can be hanging on to your legs and hang holding your hands and nothing can stop, you just die, you just go. And the Shah, I mean, the Shah of Iran if you

were in to those times, I mean, I was in the I'm in the diamond business, when he came to New York and was tried to buy his life, these diamonds flooded onto the market and he was selling diamonds by the pocketful and it flooded the market, and he was trying to raise cash, and and he had the best specialists and the best doctors and just died, there's nothing that can stop it. And they they go into this long thing, there's actually nowhere you can go, you know, there is no corner on the planet that you can go to save yourself. There's no place you can go. It doesn't matter whether you lie on the sidewalk or lie in some expensive hospital bed, you've still got to go ... there's no place to hide. And no way to stop it. That's the first one. The second one is ... this is just, you know ... I had a big fight with somebody about this ... my boss said you can add time [laughs] you know. You know, you can eat well, and you can do what you have to do, but every time you take a breath you've lost one more breath of your life, and breaths are fixed ... the number is not infinite. Everytime you listen to a song, everytime you eat, a kind of meal, every time you drink a certain kind of juice, I mean, every action you take you are that much closer to death. I mean, it's one less than you can ever have again. And you tend to think that you could listen to a certain song as many times as you want and you tend to think that you can go to a certain restaurant as many times as you want or that you could meet people who you love as many times as you want, but it's finite, I mean,, there's so many times you're gonna meet them, maybe it's five left, maybe it's four left, maybe it's twenty left, but there will be a last time you meet them, and and every time you meet them it's one more time closer to the last time, and it's always like that. Every time you experience something you are one experience closer to death, and there will come a time when you cannot repeat that experience even if you want to. You know, like you have a favorite song that's two minutes long, you just want to hear it one more time, and there'll come a time when you can't. You know, there's a favorite place you like to go. There'll be a time when you can't get there, you know, you don't you won't be able to walk there and and people that you love, people someone that you know there's always a last time that you meet them, and and that they're always closer to death. Every time it's it's a weird thing that every time you experience something you're that much closer to death. Every time you meet someone you really care for it's it's one more meeting closer to death, to the time when you won't meet them again, and that's just the nature ... it's always leaking out. Every moment it's leaking out, you have to use it wisely. Yeah. [student: What about the white tara meditations [laughs] ... for longevity. Would that ...] It's mainly based on good deeds, you know, picturing a white ... figure in front of you doesn't extend your life. She cannot do anything to extend your life at all, you know. If she could she would and you wouldn't have to ask, and she can't. There's other things going on

during that meditation that that's based on your own virtue, you know, if you have an extraordinary medal of virtue, it that lengthens your life. But not just picturing a white person, you know, it can't do it and if that white person could extend your life, if they had any compassion at all they would do so equally to all sentient beings and not just because you're picturing her, you know, but she can't. Or she would. [laughs]. There's something else going on and and at a very very advanced level you wouldn't even have to die but that's something else we have to [unclear]. [student: So is what you just said contradictory to the fact that you can't add time? By having a lot of virtue you do add time?] Yeah. Yeah. That is contradictory. You can add time. I mean, let's say, normally, ninety nine point nine nine nine percent of the time, but you can, and also even in the Hinayana there are methods in the Abhidharma [student: Shall we say you can't conventionally] How about significant ... yeah, conventionally [student: conventionally add time] Actually you can. I mean you can stop the whole thing and that's the point of this class, but we won't get to that until later [laughs]. Hope nobody dies before we get there. Number three is this thing that know, any any way if you decide to practice now, you don't have time anyway, I mean, I go on these five six weeks retreat and it amazes me how little time I have. I have nothing else to do. All I have to do is eat poop sleep and meditate and I still don't have time, you know. Still still the day goes by and I wonder what I did, you know, and it's amazing, you know, you basically have about half an hour to practice every day, even if you decide, you know, most of us don't practice more than half an hour a day. The day is twenty-four hours long, you know, we devote two percent of it to our practice. That's about what most of us do. You know, if you're a special kind of person you spend forty-five minutes in the morning and maybe an hour in the evening, and that's it, that's all you do. So there's there's the the time it takes to feed yourself, clothe yourself, you know, keep yourself healthy, and do all the useless things you have to do, that you don't really have to do, it just eats up all your time. I mean, Tsongkapa is saying, and and it's in the scriptures, even if you finally decide, oh I'm just gonna do Dharma my whole life, you don't have any time anyway, you know. A normal person has has got almost no time at all. What's two weeks per year vacation. What is that, you know? What does it mean? What can you do in two weeks. I mean it takes about ... I can tell you, it takes about eight days to get over your exhaustion from working to start meditating. And if you decide to go into retreat for those two weeks you can't do anything for the first seven days anyway. You don't get into it for seven days, so that leaves you three days, and you've gotta get back on the third day that leaves you two days you gotta clean up the retreat house on the second day, so you've got one day [laughter], I'm serious, and I did it for a long time, I know, I can tell you. And that's just terrible.

That's that's some kind of horrible thing, you can't go like that ... it's too dangerous. You know, you need more time than that. Even if you decide to practice you won't have any time ... you don't have time, even if you really want to, you don't have time. And you gotta cut out the time that you're sick, the time that you're distracted, the time that you're upset, like I was this afternoon [laughs] my boss grilled me for three hours, and all I could think about was getting grilled, you know, and and then the time you have to take out the time that you don't feel right, and that you're depressed or and or the time you're out to dinner with somebody and then there's just no time left. If you really boil it down I think it's about a half hour a day if you're lucky, under normal American lifestyle. Circumstances. And that's it. And you probably will die before you have a chance to do more than a couple of days of retreat, and you have to, you have to change that. I'm not saying you shouldn't work, and Rinpoche is is a big proponent of having a ... part of the Buddhist path is is having the right livelihood, and it's a very important part. But but you have to take care of your spirit, you know, [laughs] you have to take care of that, and and I don't know if you can do it with two week vacation [laughs] frankly. I and I'm and I don't also like to promote you know, Dharma students who don't have any steady sustenance and bother other people, that's that's against the Dharma practice too, you have to have something that's responsible, and something that gives you a steady healthy income, and and something that leaves you not exhausted at the end of the day, and something that gives you time to do serious practice. So you have to find something like that. And it's not impossible in this country. Maybe India is hard or something like that, but in this country you can do it. It takes some it takes some working at it, you have to try hard to do it. I think most of the time when we say we can't do it it's just that we didn't try very hard. That's all to death meditation. [prayer: short mandala] [prayer: dedication]

The Asian Classics Institute

Geshe Michael Roach

Course VIII Death and the Realms of Existence.

Class 10

Transcribed by: Karen Becker

[cut] [student: seems to be saying something different] Yeah yeah yeah. [student: Can you can you clarify that?] Yeah. We got ... we get to the line that says {dakki jinsok gyipay sunam kyi} okay, you see where it says {dakki jinsok gyipay

sunam kyi)? The key is in the {jinsok}, okay. {Jinsok} means "giving and the other six per ... and the other five perfections" {jinsok}, so generally when you're doing this prayer by yourself and you're using it to take refuge and and prayers for bodhicitta, you say {jinsok}. Before a class students say {dakki chu nyen}, okay, {dakki chu nyen}, so you replace {jinsok} with {chu nyen} because you're praying that as a result of your listening {nyen} to Dharma {chu} in the class you you'll be able to gain bodhicitta. And and and ultimately attain Buddhahood, you're praying for that, that the virtue of your coming to class, and the teacher says {chu she} which is "upon virtue of mine" talking about Dharma, expressing that, so the the class at that point should say {dakki chu nyen gyipay sunam kyi} and the teacher should say {dakki chu she gyipay sunam kyi}. But when you're by yourself at home you say {dakki jinsok gyipay sunam kyi}. Okay.[student: Thank you] All right. We're gonna do ... continue with the death meditation. And ... let's see if there's any announcements first. [student: When is the final?] Oh that's a good question. Thursday will be a review. And if you've never been in a review before that's when you get all the answers to the final [laughs] [laughter], Good to come. Ac ... actually go over all the all the important points in the class [unclear] and we go over what's on the final. I don't care if the final's not a big surprise. I just want you to know what I think is the most important things to know. Because that's the ... that's, you know, the point is that by the end you know those those those tw ... last twenty-five most important things. So all the information in the class got boiled down to eight or nine homework questions every class and then all the homework questions got boiled down to four or five quiz questions every class and the final only comes from the quizzes. Because I think those are the most important things. So half the quiz questions get thrown out, and what's left is is the information that I expect you to remember a year from now. And, you know, people talk about these big Geshe, but two years after you finish your Geshe you don't remember, you know, it's like two years after you finish your PHD in al ... you know, math or something, you know, you you don't really remember everything ... you probably don't remember more than half after about two years, and so what I thought of the idea of the courses is that is that you give me the information that really counts, and that sticks in your brain and the final is that ... so the final boils down to twenty five points, twenty five pieces of information that would really help your life and that you really must try to remember. So that's the idea of the final. So we'll we'll do review on on Thursday ... then you tell me how long you need, I don't know, you want to do ten days ... or is that too long? You want to do a week? [student: A week]Is a week okay?[student: [unclear] longer than that]You take the final on the following Thursday, is that all right? No? Okay, we'll we'll take the final on the following Thursday, It'll be same time same place.

[student: Any alternative dates? Maybe when the Tibetan track does it or something?} Yeah, I'm not sure ... when's the Tibetan track [student: [unclear] Yeah, so they'll probably do it a week from Saturday. How's that? So it's either the following Thursday or the following Saturday at ten. We'll announce on Thursday ... we'll probably try to arrange some classes by Art and Carmen during the interim, see if you could do a weekend retreat, a two retreat, a very intensive one, so if you're interested in that, you know, tell me on Thursday. [laughter] I think we might have to restrict the amount [unclear], I'm not trying to be cute, but if you're really serious about it then let me know. It would be very intense in that regard ... it would go like from a Friday evening to a Sunday afternoon. No known location yet ... somewhere close. [student: [unclear]] Huh? [student: [unclear] I don't know yet. Maybe Doug. [laughs] We didn't get, we didn't get that far in planning. [student: Next next class?] Anything else ... oh next class around July 15th and it will be Vinaya. We've we've covered all five books of the great books of Buddhism plus Lam Rim, we've we've done something from all of them. We've done something from {b: Abhidharma}, we've done something from {b: Perfection of Wisdom}, we've done a lot from Madyamika and we've done Buddhist Logic and Perception, but we haven't done anything about Vinaya yet. Vinaya is the study of vowed morality and it's very important. We ... I can't teach Vinaya details to people who are not ordained, but I can teach the structure of the vinaya. And I think it's useful to know ... it's basically what is vinaya, how do you get vinaya vows, how many kinds of vinaya vows are there, you know roughly what are they, how do you how do you get them, how do you lose them, what do they do to you if you keep them, what do they do to you if you don't keep them, you know, and there's a lot of misinformation, I think, about vinaya, about monks vows nuns vows and other subjects like that. I think it ... I don't think ... I think without going into detail which I'm not allowed to do, it would be it'd be really good if you're educated Buddhists, if you understood what the vows are, how people get them, roughly what they are, and how they came to be, what they do to you ... things like that, you know, those subjects I think ... my dream is that you are a very education Buddhist, and and if you don't know them really, that that subject at all then it's a little strange. You know, so you know, this get ... this course has never been taught to non-monks so it wasn't a problem, but so all we can do is do the structure. So we're gonna use a short text by Je Tsongkapa, which some people are working on translating right now, and a commentary by Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra who is in our tantric lineage, very, you know, we had him ... a little bit of text with him, very great, wonderful explanation of the vinaya, really beautiful. So we're gonna do that. We'll start around mid July. [student: Is it gonna cover ... you said it covered vowed morality ... only monks and nuns vowed morality

or]There's eight kinds and three of them are for the lay people, so that I can cover in detail and I will cover in detail. So the lay peoples lifetime vows and one-day vows we'll cover in detail. And then we'll cover the monks and nuns vows and the novice vows and the semi-novice vows in in not detail, but as as much detail as I'm allowed to to teach you. But I think it'll be nice 'cause I think you'll be really the first Americans who really, aside from the ordained people, who who really understand what the vows are and how they're structured and and what they mean and what they don't mean and things like that. So I think it'll be nice for you. Then I imagine that after that I'd like to do the {b:Bodhisatvacharya Avatara} by Shantideva which we haven't started and we must do, you know ... sooner or later we have to do it, so we might as well [laughs] do it in the in the late fall or early winter. And I I imagine we would use a text by Gyaltsab Je which Rinpoche taught for ten or twelve years and it's never been translated, but it's a it's it's a incredible commentary to the {b: Bodhisatvacharya}, you know, and {b: Guide to the Bodhisattva's way of life} ... that's what I'd like to do if we don't die first. Okay. [laughter][student: Michael, can I just ask one question?]Go ahead.[student: The fundraising?]Go ahead.[student: Okay. There's gonna be a fundraising dinner]{cut}This is the second principle of death meditation is what? What is the second principle?[students: [unclear] Time of death ... die]You don't know when you're gonna ... the time of death is not certain and each principle has three backup reasonings behind it ... you know, three three facts behind it that that show why it's true. So I'll give you ... that's why I'm calling this number four, because they they call them the nine reasons ... you had the first three already[student: What're you calling number four?][I'm gonna give you the three reasons why this is true ... about the ... what the ... structure of this is that there's three reasons for the first principle of death, there's three reasons for the second principal of death and there's three reasons for the third principle of death, and those are called the nine reasons. [student: So how does four come into that?][We had the first three last week, and now we got ... we're gonna today we're gonna get four, five, six under this category and then there's gonna be seven, eight, nine under the third principle. I I think it's good because when you actually meditate on this you have to go through the nine reasons. You have to give ... they call it {bel gom}. {Bel gom} means "you get so fluent in it that you ah number five, ah number eight, ah two, six, you know, you can [laughter] you can ... you're supposed to get so good in your meditation that you can just float between them at will, you know, and know exactly what you're doing. If you don't get like that you probably haven't done the [unclear]. Say {dzamling} [repeat] {tse} [repeat] {ma nge} [repeat].{Dzamling} [repeat] {tse} [repeat] {ma nge} [repeat.] {Dzamling} means {dzam bu ling} I think you know now, right? [student: Huh uh]{Dzam bu}? Did we talk about {dzam bu}?[students:

Yeah.]Okay. So we're living on {Dzam bu}, you can say this planet, this world, okay, the world that we know is {dzam ling}, okay. You can say planet earth for now, okay. {Tse} means "life" - lifespan, lifetime. {Ma nge} is the same {ma nge} up here, which means what?[student: Uncertainty]It's uncertain. It's not fixed. That has a couple of meanings in Buddhism. There are realms, there are certain locations, where life is fixed, where lifespan is fixed. There are certain realms where beings are living where they always live to a certain length. No matter what. Their karma ... the karma to get there is the same karma to see yourself living for five hundred years for example. It's always like that. But we're not living in that [laughs] kind of realm. In the realm that we live in, {Dzam ling} which you don't have to picture it as a little round continent, you know, half way away from Mt. Meru or whatever, you don't have to think about that. In the realm that you and I know people do not have fixed life spans. It's just..it's kind of elementary. [laughs] Okay. Ask Ron Brown, okay [laughter] {Tse ma nge} lifespan is not fixed. We don't know how long you're gonna live. They say in two respects ... do you remember this thing? I mean in two respects, one is the nature of our karma is to fluctuate, and so the lifespans of beings on our planet fluctuate ... throughout history it will fluctuate ... it will always fluctuate. People, I mean, just the the normal, the average length of life will fluctuate. If there's an atomic war or something, the average length of life for the next few thousand years will be much shorter than it is now just because of the poison that's spreading on the planet. And and that's predicted ... I mean that's expected. And then it will drop. It won't be because of the poisonous fallout. The poisonous fallout is the direct ... is an expression of your karma from living in a world where people are corrupt and degenerated, so it could have been that, it could have been something else. It it will be something. Something will come to express that. And and that's not like ... that's just a fact of karma. If you live in a world where most people's ethical standard is dropping, then the lifespan on that planet will drop. And it, I don't care what it is, it could be a virus, it could be nuclear fallout, it could be something else that we don't know about yet, but something will come to express the karma ... to act out the karma that that is created by a whole planet of people's ethical standards dropping. Which they are. So it'll ... something will come. And and and lifespans will change again. Lifespans will get shorter and we'll be we'll be here. We'll be one of the people on the planet. And then Pabongka Rinpoche and and Je Tsongkapa point out another way is the ... this is in a in a global ... I don't know what you're gonna call it ... a kalpic level, right, okay, but on a on a day to day level it's random. Lifespan is random, meaning, meaning there's no proper order to people dying, you know. It should be that the people who get born first die first. And that the people who are born later die later. But on this part ... in this particular realm that we're in it's

random, and it's senseless, you know, it's, you know, people's kids die before they die, and people die out of the womb, people die in the womb, people die getting born, you know, I mean, other people that, you know, sometimes very bad people live a long time. There's there's no predicting what your past karma is dictating. You can be in this life a very good person, and it doesn't mean that you're gonna live longer in this life. This life is mostly projected by forces that happened a long time ago, you know. There's this thing in the {b: Bible} of why the wicked prosper [laughs] you know, I mean that explains it, but it's kind of hard if you're not a Buddhist to explain why really nasty people live these long happy lives and and you know, virtuous people die young and then the opposite happens and they die at the same time and ... there's no sense. It seems to be completely random. So there's no certainty ... you can't take any comfort in the fact that you are only so many years old 'cause it's random. There's no predicting that you won't go before someone whose much older than you. When I came to the temple in New Jersey we had about fifteen monks there, and one was Geshe Kamden from ... he got TB in the refugee camp in India, he had one monk and he was wheezing and couldn't walk for ... ever since I knew him, could barely talk and all these other monks were all healthy, and chubby and happy and and fourteen of them died, and you know which ones [laughs], you know. He was the last one. He survived them all. And then he died, so, you know. You can't tell. You just don't know. One died in a chair eating a roll and the roll was up to here and he died and he just died [unclear]. I had to take him to the hospital. I remember doing that. You know, you don't know. You you can't say [unclear]. So that's the first reason. Say {chi kyen} [repeat] {mang} [repeat] {sun kyen} [repeat] {nyung} [repeat]. {Chi kyen} [repeat] {mang} [repeat] {sun kyen} [repeat] {nyung} [repeat]. {Chi kyen} means "things that can kill you". Okay. Things that can kill you. {Mang} means "there's a lot", okay [laughs]. {Sun kyen} means "things that can keep you alive". And {nyung} means what?[students: Little. Few.] Not many. [laughter] All right. Tsongkapa divides the {chi kyens}, the things that can kill you into two. The living ones are like in in Tsongkapa's day more than now, wild animals, fire [unclear] and other humans [laughs] okay. The inanimate ones he divides into the ones that are outside of you like a car, like a car hitting you, and the ones that are inside of you which ultimately refers to ... what's the what are your whole physical body resting on, it's it's it's the four? The four elements. What are the four elements?[students: fire] Sa [students: earth]Chu [students: [unclear] Mei [student: [unclear] Lung. Sometimes say five say five, sometimes they say six, but these are the main ones, and again I repeat, and it's something you have to study ... it's very interesting ... it's in the first two chapters of the {b: Abhidharma} but earth is a name given to a certain kind of energy because of it's resemblance to the, to earth. They don't

think there's little bits of dirt in your body, okay? It means an energy that keeps things ... I don't know what you want to call it, but I can describe it to you. [student: Solid. Solid] You can say it keeps things ... solidity itself. [student: Right] It's solidity itself, meaning if the object has this energy in it, it stays in one piece and when it loses it, it falls apart. As long as it has this energy in it, it can stay up, for example, when this energy goes away, the thing just dissolves. Your body loses this energy in a gross way when it starts to rot in the coffin, you know, so you could say solidity itself. And then water is fluidity. And wetness. Those two ... they actually have two two functions. This is ... earth has the function of hardness and solidity. They each have two. Fire is the {sa chi se pa}, heat and heat and burningness ... or something like that, okay, and wind has the quality of dissipation, you could say. But what it means is, these really are at work in your body, and they are they are, what do you call it? They're at in conflict with each other all the time. They're in constant conflict with each other. They're always fighting each other. Like earth, solidity is fighting with dissipation. Wetness is fighting with heat, and they're al ... they're always struggling against each other. I translated to the Dalai Lama's doctor for a while and and he he said health is an accident. He says the medical tantras of ancient India describe health, which is the balance of these four, as an accidental condition, and that the normal state of a human being is when these four are out of whack, when these four are out of balance that's the normal condition of human beings. And then you're always sick with something, you know, almost every human being ... he gave a lecture to fifty people in Nancy Keran's loft in nineteen eighty three, eighty two? Something like that, and there were fifty or sixty people there, and he said, "anyone who's not well," you know, "come see me tomorrow". So they looked like a normal group of people like you guys, you know, the next day fifty people are line up [laughs] [laughter] outside, I mean everybody has something. These four are are struggling against each every ... each other in everybody's body and for anyone to have them all in perfect unison, which is really just equal amount fight each other, that's called health, and that's extremely rare. It's unnatural. And then ... so so Tsongkapa says if you want to talk about death, death being uncertain, the time being uncertain, and you you should really look into your own body ... your own body is going to kill you, sooner or later your own body will kill you, you know. Your body has four elements, four basic energies which are struggling against each other, and and one of them will overcome another one and that'll kill you, you know, you'll get eq ... an an imbalance in each proportion that leads to certain diseases, you know, and and it will come. Sooner or later it has to come. It's it's not that they think that there's ... it's not something that scientists didn't identify, it's just the basic physical ... it's the physics inside the body, and and certain energies are

working against other energies and sooner or later you'll have ... you have to die, one of them will destroy the rest. One of them will get so out of balance that the others shut down and they kill you. It kills you. So if you live long enough, your own body will kill you. You know, otherwise you'll get hit by a truck or something like that [laughs] or killed by somebody else, but more likely your own body will kill you. That's in the wheel of life. Who who is that? That's that monster holding the wheel, that is the that is the elements in your own body. It represents your your own physical body which is going to kill you sooner or later.[student: Is that, is that the Lord of Death in general represents?]Yeah, in general, that's not some guy who's ... somebod ... there is a guy when you get to hell who's standing there, you know, but that's a different thing. The it's the fact of the ... it's basically the fact that you're you're going to kill yourself somehow. You you will kill yourself. Your, yourself will kill yourself. It's very un ... op ... unoptimistic. Okay. The other thing that Tsongkapa points out is that you remember the kampa ... what do you call those things, I don't know,[students: waves, cycles] Kalpa cycles or waves. We are in the end of a a swing. We are approaching the nadir, nadir?[student: Nedir] Is that the lowest point?[students: yes] Okay. We are approaching that which means that because of our own tendencies of non-virtue, all the objects in our world become less supportive of life, meaning food becomes less nutritious, you know, and [laughs] you can see it ... I guess that's junk food, I don't know. But it's, it means that ... and you can see it in India. There's a weird thing in India, no matter how much you eat you, you can't ... I think India has that karma. [student: Un huh] You know, you can eat all day in India and just somehow it doesn't make you healthy. It's weird. You know, like when we go to the monastery they serve us huge meals and you still get sick after three days, you know. There's something about the food just doesn't have the energy there that it has here and that's no mistake. And there's a reason for everything. And the reason is the karma of the beings who are living there. Yeah?[student: We just ... it's too much of a digression, but another small example is someone's mother used to live like in the mountains back [unclear] all her own food and herself and she came here and she ate grocery store food ... violently ill, just from the food because we, you know, it's it's deteriorated and we haven't noticed it because we're acclimitized, some outside} Yeah, okay, this food isn't ... food isn't what it used to be. It doesn't give you the nutrition that it used to, and the same thing with vitamins and medicines and things like that. It's it's weird, you go ... in ... there's a kid in our monastery, he got a cut on his leg and they shoot it up with penecillin and the guy ... it still swelled up and he dies in two days. This is something about ... it's the karma of the medicines themselves. If if they if they depended on some inherent quality, if they were self existent, they would cure everybody in the world the same. But

somehow, and it really is true, you can make them the same as in Europe, they just don't work as well. There's something about the karma of that country and and we are collectively sharing the kind of karma where all the medical treatments ... I mean we call it ... we say ... what do they call it? That be ... the immune systems become [unclear] ... the viruses are becoming immune to our medicines. That's the expression of the fact that our karma is getting lousier. You know, I mean it could have been anything, and so, I mean it true that the medicines are are losing their the..that the viruses are becoming immune to the medicines. But why? I mean the Buddhist doesn't say "it's not true" ... it is true, but why? Why it happened now and why it didn't happen thirty years ago. Why is it happening now. And then they say, oh because AIDS appeared and it messes up the viruses and they get more resistable, but why? You know. I mean, it's an expression of our karma. Our karma is getting more degenerate and medicines are working less. In fact ... in general on a whole.[student: Why [unclear] that our lifestyles ...] Very very insignificant jog. Generally we're ... I mean, we're talking to the kids five thousand years ago ... it's anything. You know, we we're talking ... these these ... I I kind of hate these waves, because these waves should really be a couple miles high or something [laughter] [laughs] you know, okay. We're on the very insig ... human history as we know it, human civilization, is an insignificant, you know, micrometer on that on that wave. And there can be jogs. He said ... well, then he says there's another thing called ... nope, it's just more to support number five. And the whole thing goes like this. Say {sun kyen} [repeat] {chi kyen du} [repeat] {gyur} [repeat]. {Sun kyen} [repeat] {chi kyen du} [repeat] {gyur} [repeat] That means that anything that's in this category can become this category. Which means what? Anything that can keep you alive ... [students: Can kill you] Can kill you and will kill you. And I I ... we once had an exercise in class that said name me anything that keeps you alive that can't kill you, you know, I mean the things that you depend on for your, to keep you alive, which are not very many. Transportation, food, you know, money, a house, whatever but but you take like a house, you know, you you seek shelter in a house so you don't get cold and freeze but houses kill people, they fall on people, they find radon in them, you know, things like that. Houses kill people. You get into a car in order to further your goal, you know, you get into a plane to get somewhere so that you can live more happy and longer and then it it crashes and you get killed so the thing that was supposed to help you live longer kills you. And and food, people people abuse food and then it kills them, you know. And what was supposed to keep you alive ends up killing you, and then even if it's like these people who are very very careful about food and only eat what they're supposed to eat, which I don't know many like that [laughter] and I'm not one either, something goes wrong and it ends up killing you, you know.

We had this very very ... I don't know ... do you know Losang Gyatso in New Jersey, this tall blond, he's like sixty five, he looks ... he's got big muscles but he's really trim and healthy and he never eats anything he's not supposed to eat and he's extraordinary, and very virtuous and ... but you know, some piece of lettuce catches in his intestine and he almost died like a year ago, they took him to the hospital, they cut him open, he almost ... he came very close to dying, and then it happened again last week, and he just got out of the hospital. So it does ... you know, a nice little piece of healthy food can kill you too [laughs] you know. [laughter] You know, organically grown [laughter], you know, lettuce ... really, this guy's diet's very fastidious and healthy.[student: Is he the construction worker?] He does ... he's a janitor, basically. He works outside. He's sixty something and he carries these big logs and you know, he's very, he's incredible and he only eats good things and they it killed him ... almost killed him, very close. The doctor told me if we hadn't taken him in that night he'd be dead. So it ... you can't tell, you don't know, anything that's supposed to keep you alive [laughs] you can't trust that anyway. Okay. That's the nature of our life. The last thing Je Tsongkapa says about this point is that, and you can read it in the reading, he says "what do you think life is for?" Or "where do you think life is headed?" You know, what do you think life is directed at?, you know.[student: Very Tibetan] In death ... no it is ... the only way it can end up is dying, you know, I mean, he says that ... there's some expression in English ... I forget it ... born to die, you know. He says that. He gets into that. He says, you know, what do you think, I mean the ultimate goal of living is dying, you know. The end of all life is death. So, inherent in all things that keep you alive is death. Inherent in life itself is death. The end of all life is death. And he gets into that and gives it beautiful, he ... and quotes a lot of ancient scriptures, very beautiful.[student: How do you trans ... what is {du gyur}?] {Chi kyen du gyur} means "turn into" All the things that keep you alive turn into things that could kill you. They always they always flipflop. They were supposed to keep you alive and then they end up killing you. Like working. [laughter] [laughs] Speaking from personal [laughter]. Say {lu} [repeat] {shintu} [repeat] {nyam chung} [repeat] {Lu} [repeat] {shintu} [repeat] {nyam chung} [repeat]. Okay. {Lu} means, what?[students: Body] The body. {Shintu}[student: A lot] It even sounds like what it is ... yeah. Very much. {Shin tu}[students: What? What is it?] Extremely. {Shintu} means "extremely", and in ... when they speak colloquial Tibetan, they {Shin tu} [laughs] {Shin tu [unclear]} ... he's a really bad guy [laughter]. {Shin tu} {Nyam chung} means "fragile", is there another word like that? {Nyam chung} can also mean "shy", but here it means "like a bubble" ... I don't know how you'd say that.[student: Delicate?] Delicate's a good word. Delicate's a good word. [student: [unclear]] It's not ... it's more like delicate, it's

more like extremely delicate. {Shintu nyam chung} And Je Tsongkapa talks about a a thorn, you know, how how you know if you just get a small infection from a little prick on the arm of something that's not clean or something that it can end up killing you. You know, we tend to think of the body as this wonder ... I mean we're brainwashed by, you know, I don't know who, into thinking that the body is this wonderful mechanism and it's all working in perfect harmony and and you know ... there's this idea of the healthy volleyball player on the beach, you know [laughter] radiant [laughs] you know, nice skin and all ... everything's healthy and somehow very strong and firm and, and, but actually the body is like a bubble, and and all it takes to kill it is the slightest thing, you know, it doesn't matter how big and healthy you are, and how ... you know, how strong you look and how ... in the, you know, in the glow of of their twenties, you know, people just get ... they just die like that, you know. It doesn't help. And the difference between the sickest person in this planet and the healthiest person is not much, you know, all it takes is that and you're both dead, you know, so he ... Je Tsongkapa talks a lot about about that and then he says, I mean, compare your body to the planet, you know, I mean we had ... we kinda got a feeling for it when we talked about the end of the planet and he says, you know, I mean we ... there was the seventh sun rose ... was it sixth or [students: Seven] I I six impresses me [laughs]. Six impresses me. What happens in number six? [student: The continent] There's a poof. [laughter] and and Mt. Meru goes up in smoke with the rest of the major features of the whole planet, you know, I mean you can think of North America just go "poof", you know, just a poof and it's gone, you know. And he ... and Nagarjuna is the one who who points that out, you know, he said, I mean if the planet can be, what do they call it? [student: Vaporized] vaporized in a few minutes by anything, then what ... so big deal, a human body ... what do you think you are? [laughter] you know. It's really fragile. It's it's not ... you think of it as air coming through two holes, through these two holes, and by some miracle ... and Nagarjuna is is really, he's obsessed by this idea that it's a miracle that out of these two small holes they haven't got blocked yet for forty years, you know, that the air has passed through these two tiny, you know, half inch holes and continues to pass back and forth, is it's it's a miracle. You know, I mean, how many cars are left from forty years ago? [laughter]. No really [laughs] I mean, how many 19 ... I'm 52, okay, how many 1952 cars are out on the street? I mean, he says it's a miracle. The..it's some kind of karmic miracle that you're still alive and that the air is still moving through these two little holes. And if it stops for a minute, two minutes, three minutes, that's it, you're dead. If something, energy or any kind of blockage, if anything can stop that air for three or four minutes you're dead. That's all. If it stops passing through these tiny little holes, then you're called dead, you know,

that's ... and it's, it's a miracle that it happened yet. It will, it must happen, you know, he's very adamant, and Nagarjuna's he gets into this long thing in in in a book called {b: Shin te}. He says it's a miracle that you still wake up in the morning. We're still breathing. [laughter][student: What do you call number six?] Yeah.[student: What do you what do you call number six] Delicacy ... extreme delicacy of the body, I guess, fragility. Extreme. What's the third principle? [students all together: The only thing that can help you is the Dharma] I'll I'll do it in English. Yeah. When you do die ... this should be like maybe "c" I guess[student: Oh, "c"?] otherwise you're gonna get confused. Yeah, we have reasons seven, eight, and nine ... he goes through a list of things that don't help, okay. And there's this image in the in the scriptures of the family standing around the beloved father and actually physically grasping onto his arms and legs and begging him not to go and he goes, there's no choice, he can't stay and you you gotta I think, get this image in your mind of passing to a place where ... because the chemicals in the body are deteriorating ... because the synapses are stopping, the electricity of the body is stopping and because the physical components of the brain are sto ... are shutting down, they call it the domino effect ... it's the scriptures, it's called, you know, {sa} breaks down, it affects {chu}. {Chu} breaks down it affects {mei}. {Mei} breaks down it affects {lung}. They all start to ... each ... the breakdown of each one affects the ea..the next one and so they start to collapse sequentially, and and he, the power of those four elements in your body starts to collapse. What it means in western terms is that your brain is shutting down. And the brain is not the mind but the brain ... but the mind rests on the brain, so as the brain is thrown into some really incredible chaos as the as as everything starts to short circuit then the mind, which is resting on the brain, starts to reflect that chaos. What it means is, you it it's it's you start to hallucinate, you go into some deep hallucinations because the the brain is breaking down, the mind which rests on the brain but is not the brain, also gets it ... thrown into some chaos and you start to have these classic ... there's a classic sequence of hallucinations and and then you you you can't, you're not aware of anything. What I'm trying to say is that every living being in this world that we know as they die is reduced to zero as they die. The the they're back down to zero. You know, it doesn't matter if you were Einstein or a grasshopper, by that point your your mind levels off exactly the same. You know, you're going through the same hallucinations, there's no difference between those two beings ... essentially, I mean if you're some great great great great yogi, which we're not and which we probably won't be, it's different. But for normal people, you're basically reduced to zero. Your mind is in in ... your brain is chaotic and your mind is chaotic and that chaos is the same among all sentient beings. So you're basically reduced back to zero. And and and then nothing can help you at

point. He said ... he starts out with friends and relatives, I mean, it doesn't matter who you know. You can't recognize anybody anyway, you know, you've already gone past the point where you can't think of and you can't recall clearly any person in your life. Nobody who was your loved one, the one that you spent your life with, anything. There comes a point in that breakdown of the mind where you can't physically see them anymore and you can't hear them anymore and then your senses go first, and then your memory is starting to get dim and then that starts to get reduced, and and then you can't remember anybody either, so what's the good of ... I mean of just who you knew, you know, it doesn't matter what kind of contacts you had or any loved ones that you knew, it's all gone and they're gone in ... forever, I mean in a sense, they're ... you might meet them again karmically a thousand years later or something, but basically you came together and you got separated and there's nothing they can do for you. There's nothing ... they can't help you. There's ... you're reduced to some kind of primitive mind state and you're gonna be there for a while and when you come out of it in the bardo you won't recognize any of those things anymore, so it's over, you know, you can't, it can't help you. Yeah.[student: Do all sentient beings of different realms, of animals and pleasure beings have the same characteristic hallucinations, is it different] Basically. Basically. I mean formless realm may be different. They don't ... I don't remember them saying much about it to tell you the truth. This is a no brainer. I mean, if you [laughs] if you if your friends your relatives ... I mean if nothing ... there's obviously no physical object which can assist you at that time. It can't reach you. It can't touch you. Your physical senses shut down quite early in the process of death. They shut down in the very early on. It takes much longer for the mind to shut down but the physical senses are very crude and very gross and they shut down very fast. So, there's no way, I mean, it doesn't matter how many zeros on your bank account if you can't physically perceive them anymore, you know. You don't have eyes, ears, nose, tongue or or sensation anymore. So you are forever cut off from those things. It doesn't matter what they were. It doesn't matter if your house was the sidewalk or if your house was the White House because you don't physically have any more means by which to make contact with those things. 'cause your eyes and your ears and your nose are shut down so it doesn't matter what they were, because ... you're again you're used to zero, you're ... what do you call it, financially you're [laughs] reduced to zero, you know. I mean, totally. [student: You're broke.] Yeah. [laughs] and everyone's the same. You're equally broke at that moment, I mean, you all have absolutely ... it's not only that you don't own anything it's that even if you did own it you couldn't see it or hear it or taste it or ... you couldn't make any physical contact with it. So it doesn't matter

what you used to own. You can't make any contact with it. It might as well be on Mars because you can't contact it any more. It doesn't ... it cannot effect you anymore. It can't do anything to you anymore. And you can't you can't use it anymore. What's your most intimate material possession?[students: Your body] [laughs] Okay. I see it like a big shrinking process, you know. In the Madyamika Svatantrika school's there's this huge debate about who is you. Who is the you, you know, and they decide it's your mental consciousness ... it's your six consciousnesses, it's your awareness of your thoughts. They said "that must be you," because everything else is just an object for you. So what it means in this sense, if it was your possession and then life shrinks in more and then you lose what?[students: Your mind. Your body] [laughs] You lose your body, okay. And then you're not your ... you don't have a body anymore either, I mean, you're shrunk down to your mind basically. You're you have shrunk down to a mind, you know, there is no more bod ... I mean, if you think about it coming in from the outside, first you lose your loved ones, then you lose your things, then you lose your own body and the only thing left is your mind, and and that's the point at where western civilization makes the great mistake of thinking that because the body stops moving the mind must have stopped. It's an assumption and it's a wrong assumption. There's no proof for it. At all. It's only a a wild assumption. That because the physical body can't run anymore due to it's own problems that the mind, which is totally different stuff, must have shut down too. The mind must be dying also. It's a it's a gross mistaken assumption and it's not true [laughs]. Yeah.[student: Are there classic responses for someone who [unclear]Yeah, there's a ... we we studied it. We had a whole class. Takes about six weeks to cover the whole thing [laughs] Second chapter, Dharmakirti's {b: Pramana Varttika}. We debate [unclear] [laughs] Twice, I think. So the body ... you just think of yourself as shrinking down to to a mind, okay, and and and that's all that's left. And the imprints in the mind ... what's left in the mind. What are the imprints left in the mind, and here's where you get into the wheel of life {ge pa se pa gu pa lem pa}, it's two ... it's link number eight and link number nine. These are the thoughts you have as you die, and they do a thing called {tse depa}. {Tse depa} means "to make a selection". It's like that lady sticks her hand in the lottery thing and and pulls out something and and your mind at that point at a very specific point as you die makes a {tse depa}. It selects a karma and that karma becomes activated like an atomic bomb, you know, like {chu pa si pa, chu pa si pa} is link number ten. Somewhere between link number eight and nine and ten your mind activates one of the karmas, you know, you ... the ... and that that determines a lot of what you're going to be next. That that pretty much determines what's going to happen to you next. And that selection process which doesn't take more than a few seconds is made is based on your own lifetime of

behavior, you know. If your behavior was virtuous during your whole lifetime, basically the selection will most likely be virtuous. And you'll and you'll have a ... the karma that that's thrown ahead will be good. And if you've led a fifty-fifty life you've got a [laughs] fifty-fifty selection problem. [laughs] And if you've led basically a lousy life then the selection will be bad. So so that's why {b: Abhidharma} can help you. At ... you're talking about a few minutes of thinking as you die, something is activated by your by your character that's been formed throughout your whole life and if it's Dharma then you'll you'll have a good selection and if it's not Dharma, you won't. And that's that's why only Dharma can help you. Your mind is down to a very primitive level, you are not thinking clearly, it's instinctual, you know, if you've led a virtuous life, the virtuous instincts take over and if you've led a non-virtuous life, the non-virtuous instincts prevail. And whatever prevails throws you ahead ... at that moment. Yeah. [student: Does this process of picking of this karma happens after this separation of mind of probably consciousness of mind from the body or at the time would they still have some link?] They don't say but I think since, I I believe the bardo would happen after that, so it's happening before the bardo, and I think the bardo begins with the separation of your mind in your body, but your body's alr ... already ... basically shut down.[student: So actually the, yes, but the consciousness is still in the body.] Related to the body? Yeah.[student: In the moment that this selection] I I I think so. I mean, I've never seen it detailed like that. Yeah, you could say it's at the moment of ... it's at the final moment of death. At the mom ... at the as the mind leaves the bardo. But that gets into ... you have to study something higher than ... there's a ... that's a secret teaching. [student: Now, when you talk about virtue and contact, does that include wisdom?} Yeah, they're they're very little, I mean it includes wisdom in the sense that if you've seen emptiness for example[student: That's what I'm talking about] you can not select a bad karma. It's impossible. It's totally impossible. [student: But to be virtuous with [unclear] some sort of grasp to a Dharma contact, strong strong grasp.] Yeah. Well that ... an intellectual understanding of emptiness assures that you can not select a bad seed.[student: Why is that?] And and a direct understanding of emptiness assures that that you will only have incredibly cool seeds [laughter] and it's a comfort. I mean, when it happens to you as you see emptiness directly, you perceive this fact. You know this fact. You will never again take anything less then a Dharmically perfect circumstances. You'll be born in a country that's all Dharma, you will only have friends who are Dharmic, you'll have incredibly great lamas from early in your life, and you'll see emptiness again soon and and you won't have more than six or seven more lives like that and then you're out. Then you're a Buddha. And you'll see that. And you know that. And it's some kind of incredible feeling that you know, and there's

no ... there's, you can't, it's just some kind of ... wha ... I don't know, it's like a guarantee, and you can just look ahead and say "oh, that's gonna be nice" [laughs], that's cool, you know. But even an intellectual understanding prevents prevents a lower birth, you can not select a lower birth after that. After the certain stage in the second of the five paths you can not take a lower birth. Why? [laughs] Ignorance has a ... it's not that you don't collect the karma, it's that they can't be activated properly if you have a certain amount of wisdom. You have the karma, you have the {bak chak}, but they can't be activated. The difference between link number 2 in the wheel of life ... if you came Friday night you'd know all this [laughter] and link number ten is the ... I always tell people you gotta go see Broken Arrow, you know, with John Travolta and they gave me a kickback actually, no ... [laughter] it's a cool movie, it's a very gory, exciting movie about atomic bombs and they steal two atomic bombs and they keep activating them and unactivating them, you know, once they get activated you can't unactivate them, but they figure out how to activate them. There's this feeling that once it's activated you're in trouble, you know. There's, I mean there's bombs, atomic bombs laying around the whole movie but some of them get activated and then people have to run, you know [laughter] [laughs] there's nothing else to do, and it's exactly the same thing. The difference between link number two which is called {du che gu pa}, samsara, and link number ten which is called {chu pa si pa}, is activation, the question of activation. Does the karma [unclear] activated or not? And that's the whole difference. Karma number two is immature karma. Karma number ten is activated and it's gotta blow up. It's like that counter's counting down like in the movie ... it's just like that. It's been activated and nothing's gonna turn it off. If you go as far as activating it, you've screwed up big time, you know, bad not activating it ... has to do with with you your understanding of emptiness. Yeah[student: So if you're saying if you have an intellectual understanding of emptiness but you break your {tantric} vows, [unclear]I don't think ... they they say that you you don't break certain things after that. [student: Could could time actually slow down]There are certain behaviors that you ... you you may still do bad deeds but they never get activated and then basically, I mean, there's a basic things that you wouldn't do those things. In their full form ... if you studied the Bodhisattva vows you know how much the four attitudes play a part, you know, if you never knowingly, purposely, gladly, you know, break a vow, I mean, you might mess up and then feel bad or something like that, but you'll never again, you know, happily, knowingly, consciously, purposely, break a vow, which is all necessary for example to break a root a root bodhisattva vow. You just can't do it anymore 'cause you saw the truth, you know. We'll take a break and we'll get we have a little bit left, very short. Death meditation has it has, you know, Tibetans love the

three this and the four this, you know this by now. The three principles you've already had. There's nine reasons which you've already had ... three reasons for each principle. And then the the bottom line is that you're supposed to make three resolutions. The first resolution is in reaction to the first principle, which was what? It's that's it's certain that you're gonna[students together: [unclear] death.] Ha ha ha ha. I think for us very practically, study studying emptiness, and keeping your bodhisattva vows, those are the ... I mean you've got all that information ... people who are in their their bodhisattva vows class, you you know that. [unclear] study ... studying empty ... it's basically studying Lam Rim. Keep keep all your vows. I'm thinking, study and and keeping your vows and then trying to reach bodhicitta, trying to reach that compassion [unclear], I'd say those things ... and if I were going to say very briefly, [unclear], renunciation, bodhicitta and understanding of emptiness. Understand suffering, understand compassion and study emptiness. I mean those ... if you have to study three things, those are the three. Understand suffering. Study compassion and and learn to see emptiness. I mean it ... that's the whole thing. Everything else goes ... everything else fits into those three. Yeah.[student: I don't hear you mention the five precepts. Is that] That comes[student: you just assume that, or is that after the bodhisattva vows?] When I say bodhisattva vows they actually you you have to take some kind of precepts before you can have bodhisattva vows. I'm just considering them part of the bodhisattva vows. Or you either have to take some kind of layman's vows[student: Right. Well that that's what I thought, this is why I wondered ... you just sort of assumed the five] Or ... or you have to be ... you have to know and keep the ten virtues. If you even if you don't take vows. So I mean there's a there's ... what I'm trying to say is there's a there's a place there for people who have never taken any vows. That's just practicing ... that's just avoiding the ten non virtues. So that's a basis foundation and then based on that you can take bodhisattva vows. You have to have that before you can take bodhisattva vows. Yeah.[student: Why would you study compassion rather than practice it?] Oh I mean study in the sense of learn to develop it.[student: Okay] I mean study in the old sense of study to be, you know. What was the second principle?[student: The time of death is uncertain] Yeah. I think the key here is quit worldly work, you know, people want to know what's "quit worldly work". And there were students in New Jersey twenty five years ago when I was there who who immediately went out into the forest in Howell and tried to live there and they came back after three days all cold [laughs] [laughter] and hungry and and you know, obviously it doesn't work. There's other people who went to India and stayed there, you know, and got old there and be ... came back to America, you can, can't live there and, you know, there's no dentist there and stuff like that and, you know, I mean it didn't work. I think all those people came

back that I know of. Very few ever stayed there. What I mean is ... you have ... quitting worldly work doesn't mean quitting your job, all ... it's a very delicate balance, you know. You have to have a living that doesn't hurt other people and and and ultimately in the highest levels of Buddhism, which were designed for Indian kings, who were very busy, you you can be at work and ... but the point is that you have to be practicing ... work has to become practice. So pick a job that will remind you of your practice. And and that's about the only criteria I can think of for a job. I mean, if you have a problem with anger then work someplace like ... well go work at the angry [unclear] and I'm not and I'm not [laughter] kidding. I'm not kidding at all. Let your ... let the work that you do be something that you consciously decided upon to remind you of your own faults or something, you know, you know, if you have a problem with vanity then go work as a clothier or something, you know what I mean, or something like that, but but let your work be something that relates to your spiritual life. And let it only be that and choose it on that basis, because you'll never forget why you're there, you know. People will ask you, "why the hell are you a cook. You could have been a physics major", you know, you know you say, "well, I had a problem of where I didn't want to help other people", you know, "and I chose this for humility's sake", or something like that. Let your work be that. Seriously. It's very hard but it's very satisfying and ... because work is a joke, I mean the ... otherwise that you're collecting money, that's a that's by definition a lost cause, you know, you can't keep it, and it's just gonna kill you. You're just gonna pass the money on to someone else, so if you're working just for money it's meaningless. Let it ... choose something that will promote your Dharma practice. Atisha had many students. He only took one to Tibet with him. He took the most obnoxious student he had. And quite consciously so that ... and he be ... he made that student his close disciple, his closest disciple, because he wanted to constantly be tested, you know, and it's ... I mean ... let your work be symbolic. Do something which has a symbolic meaning for you, I mean, and make it into practice. On the other hand, because any other reason for working is, I mean, doesn't mean anything. Working is meaningless. Make it meaningful. And make an honest living, don't hurt other people, and make it something that reminds you of your spiritual life. And then and don't get caught up in it, you know. Keep this, keep this distance from it like a snake. I've seen so many Dharma students say "I'm just gonna go work for three years and then I'll have enough money to really practice" and they separated their work from their practice in the first place, and then they never came back to what they thought was practice anyway. And they're still working out there, you know ... I know where they are ... one's at Pennsylvania University, you know, and still saying, you know, "next year for sure", you know, and it never ... it won't happen. Don't fall into

that, but but it's your work can become your practice, and it must be. Ultimately in the highest teachings of Buddhism{cut}It's perfectly consistent to be working any kind of job from a janitor to a president of Warner Communications and and be a totally perfect practitioner. There's no problem with that. And then in practical terms I think you must have a job that doesn't leave you exhausted at the end of the day, and that leaves you time for your long retreats and things like that. You must have that time, you know, I I think any other job is dangerous.[student: That really narrows it down. [laughter]] I know. Your choice. See that's your choice. What's your choice?[student: What do you mean?] What's the choice? You don't have any choice. What's the option? There's no option ... there really is no option. [student: Well that that's what I'm saying. There's no options for work.] No, there are. [laughter][student: That's that's what I'm saying [unclear]] No there are. There are many. And as I'd ... and I also I would throw in another thing, that you have a serious career and it shouldn't be just Dharma bumming around, or so you ... it's a weird ... you have to have a serious career, parttime, doesn't leave you exhausted,[laughter] you know, it's hard to find. I think if you worked on it ... most people just stop and don't work on it, but he ... I think you need something like that, you know, I think you need to find something like that. And you shouldn't be in a job that that doesn't provide for your needs, you know. There's a lot of Dharma students that go ... they're getting this mid-life Dharma crisis where they didn't learn anything, they don't have a trade or a skill or a profession, they feel bad, and they they start to lose their vows ... fifteen western sanga have disrobed this last year, you know, they have been monks and nuns for twenty years or something. They reached this mid-life crisis where they ... you know, they haven't done anything, they haven't learned anything, they don't have a regular career ... you gotta have sus ... a ... you gotta have a sustenance, you have to have an honest living that doesn't hurt other people, and then you you absolutely must at all costs, carve out the time you need or you are fooling yourself and you're gonna die and you you'll be lost, you know, you you'll literally be lost. The whole meaning of your life will be lost. And it's a big challenge and it's a big stakes, you know, that your life is extraordinarily precious and every day is precious and you have to carve out the time you need, and it's not easy in our society ... our society's working against you, you know, but you you have to do it, and it's a personal thing that you have to do. You know, the class stops tonight, in a sense, and I can't do anything after that, you know, it's up to you. Can't ... you know, you have to design your life, but don't kid yourself, you know. You must have couple hours a day of practice ... must have ... minimum and then you need times when you can devote yourself only to practice and that ... and you have to worry about how to pull it off, okay, and if you don't, then you'll suffer, okay, and your life

won't have any meaning. You you'll come to the end and you'll be very sad that you wasted your time. You'll be sad that you didn't make the time. You'll realize you made a mistake. So that's just each person has to do themselves. [student: Could ... specifically the [unclear] antidote [unclear]] Well I think anything ... depending on your level and depending on what ... I don't say there's an antidote. But, and I don't say that you have to change careers at this point, but maybe stop looking at it the way ... don't look at it as a as an income or as a as a sustenance. Look it as as a labratory for your practice. I don't think there's any circumstance more beneficial for practice than an American office setting, you know, I found it to be very fruitful. And I'm not just kidding, I mean, I've had the chance to have every kind of ... my boss has encouraged me to do bad ... you know legal lies and and there's ladies all over the place and there's people screaming at me and there's people for me to be jealous of who have the position that's just a little higher than mine, and I think you have everything in a normal office, you've got everything. It's a very precious thing if you look at it the right way, and then as you get more and more far along in the teachings, it becomes a whole different thing for a higher level of practice and that, and you need it, you ... ultimately you need other people around to practice. And and we're actually going to do a text about that. I think when we do the vinaya, you need other people around to reach the highest levels of Buddhism, you need other people around. It's it's it's that relative to other people. You have to have other people around you to to get there. Without them you can't do it. So you need a setting where you have some people around you. What is all sentient beings, I mean it's the people around you right now 'cause you're not gonna meet all sentient beings, you don't have time. [laughs] It's the ones in in contact with you, who will push you up to enlightenment. Okay. What's the third resolution ... third principle?[students: Only the Dharma will help you when you die] Right. No one nothing else can help, practice only Dharma. We're opening a book store, you know, and I get all these people coming to me and saying, "oh, you should have this book", you know, and I start to get dizzy with all the views in the world, you know, all the world views, you know. They say "are you gonna carry this Pali thing, or this Sri Lankan thing, and this Thai thing is really good and this Korean thing is neat and and here's something by this American philosopher that's really cool and, you know, and I and I start to get ... I got a little dizzy, you know, I start to think, you know, oh, you know, but but there's a definition of a Dharma book in the scriptures. It says, if a book doesn't have the capacity to lead you to nirvana and enlightenment, don't even waste your time, you know. If the book doesn't deal with how to get to enlightenment or nirvana, for God's sake don't waste your precious human life by reading, and that applies to magazines ... I mean newspapers ... know what's going on, be informed, do

not spend Sunday for two hours three hours [laughs] with the New York Times, you know, it's just your your mind ... your healthy mind's space and time is extremely short and extremely precious and and expose the mirror of your mind only to things which can enlighten you, you know, and that means that those very holy books, Shantideva, you know, things by the Buddha, things by Nagarjuna, you know, seek out those things and only expose your mental real estate, that precious irreplaceable real estate, you know, fill it with those things, because you don't have time ... there's no time, and and you know, sometimes you get tired, go read a novel, it's okay, see a movie or something. Whe ... use it for when you get tired, but but otherwise only expose your mind to good things, and and things that can really purify, because you don't have the leisure to to expose it to every different interesting viewpoint in the world, and and they won't get you enlightened, if if you're at this stage, you've already come to this class, you've already reached a certain level, then don't waste that precious time on other things, you know, you don't have time, and and it ... everything you read gets imprinted on your mind stream, and everything you expose your mind to, meaning other people and and books and tv and music and everything, makes a certain imprint on your mind. And expose it to the great holy beings of history, you know. You have you have Nagarjuna, you have Tsongkapa, you have the Dalai Lama, you know, expose your mind to those things, because whatever you expose it to it's gonna be stuck there. It it all makes an imprint. And then there's times and you gotta take a break, you know, and Lama Yeshe, who's a very holy Lama, would say, you know, go home after work [laughs] if you can't sit down and read Tsongkapa, which you can't after work, you know, get a cool drink, go lay down in your bed and and think compassion thoughts for other beings. And there's a special thought that's useful here. And that's a good way to end death meditation. It's like ** {star star} [laughter], I mean, in the whole Lam Rim which contains the entire teachings of the Buddha I think this is the most important line. And it says ... it's talking about a thing called {nam dak}. Say {nam dak} [repeat] {nam dak} [repeat]. {Nam dak} is described in the Lam Rim and it's a practice where you see the whole world as something pure and something ... it's sort of this, what do you call that ... what do you call that thing where you think where everybody's out to get you?[students: Paranoi] Yeah, it's a reverse paranoia. It's a reverse paranoia. It's where you think the whole world is out to help you and the whole world has been planned around your enlightenment. Every event that happens to you during the day has been ... what do you call that ... orchestrated by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to get you enlightened, you know, and that's a very very powerful ... and it's actually true, okay, we're all ... [unclear] and we've all been waiting [laughs], we had to come to this stupid class every night, I mean, it's waiting for you [laughs] [laughter],

but I mean it's kind of a reverse paranoia where you think every person you meet is some kind of holy being who's been waiting for you to wake up, and they've all been waiting for you to purify your life and your heart and they're doing everything they can to get you there, even if it's screaming at you, or criticizing you, or or something, you know, and and there's a reason why there's this place on sixth street, and there's a reason why New York was put on the east coast, 'cause you were there, you know, and and it's it's this thing ... kind of sweet crazy mind that believes that the whole world is out to assure your enlightenment, and and it's and it's something that you have to develop, it's very important and it's actually true. So you you have to work on that. There's no one in your life who's there by accident. There's no place or thing in your life which is there by accident. It's all been orchestrated for certain ultimate spiritual goals, you know, for your benefit. Something like that ... yeah?[student: Is this the same thing as seeing the purity?} Yeah, that's it, yeah. [student: What was the question?] Same thing, same thing. So that's all ... that's death meditation. Now I can't ... we have like ... I like to take a month off or two and that's exactly what we're gonna be doing and I can not do death meditation for you. I I sometimes I feel bad 'cause I get up here and we go through the whole thing, I see it carefully recorded everywhere, I know where my notes are from Dharamsala ... I've never opened them [laughter] since that ... twenty years ago and I don't know how to make it part of your life. I think you have to ... when you do your morning meditations you have to think of these nine reasons and it's if you ... I I ... my own observation of practice is that you have to do something fresh every month or two, you know, you do your meditations in yo ... in the morning or evening, when ever is best for you and stay on one subject for like a month or two. And for example, death meditation ... now you have a nice death meditation, you, we did the whole realms, why? I mean, the point is, when the air stops moving through those two little holes you're gonna be in one of those realms, and we tried to prove on this ... if you understand emptiness, we tried to prove why those those realms are possible. If things are empty, then those realms are possible because all all it takes to get there is what? [students: Projections] It's a shift in your own projections, you know, it's not like a big trip to go on, you don't have to get a reservation on an airline, you know, it ... all it takes is for your mind to shift slightly and you are in those realms. Because they consist of your projections. So all it takes is a shift ... is a is a few moments of your mind shifting, as much as your mind shifting upstairs here to the downstairs when you put your shoes on. That takes more {tse pas} than than it takes to get to hell, you know. It takes a hell of a lot more {tse pas} [laughs] to go from [laughter] to go from this floor after class down to put your shoes on than it takes to go to hell. Than it takes to become a hell being. It it ... much more. So

they it ca ... it will happen and it does happen in a few seconds of thought and you're there. So, it's just a shift in your own mind and you're there. It doesn't ... it's as easy to get there as that. And that's very close, that gets a little nervous, you know, so you have to, you you have to meditate on on death. And the reason we went through all those realms it's not just, you know, to do this {b: Abhidharma} stuff, it's to realize that those realms are all possible and and Vasubandu's not an idiot, he would not describe those realms if they weren't something there. Which you can confirm by reading his ... the rest of his book, I mean, somebody who describes in details fifteen seconds of the perception of emptiness is not gonna be a fool about the hells, you know, he he knows something, he's trying to warn us about something, so you know, you have to do a death meditation, do it every day, you can not get this from a class, you have to meditate on it, you have to get it from getting used to it by doing it every single day, you have to do it every single day, you had the the death meditation ... it's up to you, I can't ... my job ends now, I can't do anything else, if you don't do it then this this class is totally useless, you know, hearing about it once is almost totally ineffective. It it can't do anything to your life ... it won't change your life at all, I promise you. You you have to meditate on it. It has to get infused in your mind through doing it ... now do it for two two months, you know, let's make a deal, okay [laughs], like try to do it for two months. Do that death meditation, you have the whole text and you'll get the second half now, and try to do it. It will not effect you otherwise and nothing will happen. The Kadampa Lamas said that if you don't have death meditation, you you you can't achieve anything. You won't achieve anything, so, but that's why we're doing it first. And it won't have any effect if you don't do it. And the test is if you change your mind, and if you don't find yourself changing from these classes then go ... quit, you go do something else [laughs] you know, really, I'm a little scared 'cause I'm not sure people feel they're changing, you know, if you're not changing then something's wrong ... you're not doing something. You know, you have the information ... you're probably not doing it every morning, you know, I would guess, you know. If you're not changing then change because then do something, 'cause if your lives are not getting sweeter and and and more holy then there's something wrong, and then you're not doing it, and there's no reason to come to class then, there's no reason to have class, 'cause it's not just to learn more information. That [laughs] doesn't help, it doesn't affect the brain at the moment of med ... death, you know, it's the it's the internalization that comes from frequent meditation every day and if if you skip two or three days a week it won't happen either, I guarantee you. You have to do it every day. Yeah? [student: When you say do this death meditation, are you talking about as you're walking around, developing your awareness, as your describe it are you

talking about sitting down?] I I'm talking about both, but but now I'm talking mainly about sitting in the morning, 'cause if you'd meditated on it in the morning it will start to effect your day. And and let it be your subject for the next two months, you know. And then we'll go to another subject, you know, but I I find that after two months, almost two or three months exactly, I I lose all progress on that subject and I have to move on. It's get a dry. I don't know about you, but they they last about two months for me. Yeah?[student: What you said at the beginning of this, as I understood it, was is the main point is to walk around, you know, thinking I'm gonna die today, develop that feeling and that was death meditation [unclear]] It is. It is the awareness, but you have to be doing it in the ... doing it in the morning is what triggers it during the day, and what it ... we said death meditation wasn't was just getting panicked about death and then not doing anything, it's supposed to be some kind of healthy fear [laughs] that motivates you to ... take, and if you ever get to a point during the day where you really believe this is your last day on earth, you'll do really good things and you'll do it every day. It's very interesting. It's a very interesting effect, you know. Every day that you really pull this off and think this is my last day on this planet with my friends, this is my last time I'm gonna see Fran Corella, you know, I'm gonna be nice to her, you know [laughs]. [laughter] That's a very intelligent way to live and it's it doesn't matter even if there's no Buddhism or no enlightenment, it's still the best way to live, you know, so. We're late. That's all, okay. We'll meditate a little bit afterwards, okay, so we'll do the prayer and then and then hold it for a while and dedicate it to all the sentient beings who, you know, there's all these jillions of sentient beings just dying and they don't know what's happening and they never went to a class, they have no ... they're just helplessly dying. And dedicate it for them, that they'd learn these things.{prayer: short mandala}{prayer: dedication}

Death and the Realms of Existence

Class Eleven: Course Review

Transcribed: Karen Becker

Today's review for the final. The final questions are all taken from the quiz questions; the quiz questions are all taken from the homework questions, and the idea of the final is it's it's not to trick you or anything like that. It's it's what I consider to be the most important items and that...these are the things that I think you should leave the class with, that should go beyond the front door. Aft after you finish your Geshe degree in the monastery, you you normally forget everything after about two years, all the root texts. But you may...you retain a certain amount of, always, and what I've tried to do was figure out what I think people retain, and and I think these are the things that are most important that that you should retain. So, I'm gonna go over some possible questions on the final, all right, and the way I do it is just go around the room and let people take a shot...I I know you're not prepared and don't feel embarrassed, we just, we it's more like a discussion than a than a trying to embarrass anybody okay...we we'll embarrass Kuntsog twice (laughter). What's the main text that we use for studying the realms of existence?

(students: (unclear) (laughter) (chu lam ba dze)

(b:Chu lam ba dze, Abhidharmakosha by?)

(student: Loppon Yik-nyen)

Loppon Yik-nyen, Vasubandu, 350 a.d., and it's lucky. I don't think (b: Abhidharma)'s much taught in this country. There's a couple of books called (b: Abhidharma) that don't have anything to do with (b:Abhidharma) (laughs) and that's another thing. Okay, number 2...I don't know, Emilio, let's see...try to divide the desire realm into twenty parts.

(student: There's...I'm not sure, I think there's (unclear)

Remember, ten good and ten bad. Ten and ten. Ten higher realms

and ten lower realms...that's how you get ten.

(student: Eight hells)

Yeah.

(student: Preta realm)

Yeah.

(student: Animal realm)

Yeah. that's ten. Ten lower realms.

(student: Then there's the human realm)

Yeah.

(student: So there's a total of twelve (unclear))

How many continents?

(students: Four)

Humans live on this one continent and then six god realms. So

(student: (Altogether unclear))

Ten better ones. And then the demi gods they just throw into the god (unclear), ten and ten, so that's the that's the more normal, and when you're doing Buddhist geography that the total...of, for the desire realm. Margie, why does the form realm have four levels and seventeen different sections? This is just a general answer, okay?

It's not...I mean I could try to...I, my Lama made me do all of them, seventeen and, you know, I, you forget those in about a week, so, you, how do you get that many?

(student, Margie: Three levels of three and four levels of eight)

Three levels of three and one level of eight. The fourth level has eight.

(student, Margie, okay)

But but why are there ten, that's the main thing. Why does the form realm have seventeen different sections and four different levels, what made it that way?

(student: The levels of meditation engaged in in the life)

Yeah, the, those are

(student: causal)

Yeah, the form realm is a result and then the causes for the form realm are the meditations in this life, and those meditations have four basic levels and seventeen different details, so there's basically seventeen different kinds of causal form realm meditation that you engage in in this life and then after you die you're born into the form realm in one of those corresponding seventeen sections.

(student: Four sumdens (unclear))

It's four sumdens, the first three have three each and the fourth one has eight, so that makes seventeen. The formless realm...I I messed up in one of the classes and I don't know if it was yours or not, but just to make sure you know the names, what, you know the four realms, I mean the four formless realms going up, right, what's the first one?

(students: (unclear) The formless realms?)

Yeah, I'm talking formless now.

(student: Okay)

And they were, (Namka taye, namshe taye), what's the third one?

(student: Chiyang me)

(Chiyang me). And what was the fourth one?

(students: Si-tse)

Yeah, peak of existence. These are the resulting formless realms, okay. The resulting formless realms. And the meditations that you do to get there...I think I messed it up on the notes, I'm not sure...so this is the result...these are the results and these are the causes, the causes. For (nam ka ta ye) it's what?

(student: Nam ke ta ye)

It's (nam ke ta ye) okay, (laughs) it's the same thing, okay, same. The name of the meditation is the same as the name of the realm you're gonna be born into, okay. How about (nam she ta ye)?

(student: Nam she ta ye.)

Same. Okay. I just think I messed up one (unclear). How about (chiyang me)?

(student: Chiyang me)

(Chiyang me), (laughter) Now who's gonna make a fool of themselves? (Se-tse)? Now this one changes. (laughter)

(student: So those are the names of meditations?)

Yeah, these are the causal meditations in this life, the names of the four meditations, (unclear) the four mental states that you get into, very very very subtle mental mental states and and if you stay in those a lot during this life, after you die you go to those four levels of the formless realm.

(student: How does that last meditation translate in English?)

Yeah, that's a good question, okay (laughs) it's tricky. (Du she) means what? (Du she) means to to...people mistranslate it a lot, people say "conceptions" and I don't know, it has that meaning in some cases, but as as a mental function it means "the ability to discriminate". (Du she) means "the ability to discriminate". This is good, this is bad, this is high, this is low, this is hot this is cold. (Du she mei) means what?

(students: nothing)

Nothing. And what it means is there is no mind in the universe which which can completely have no (du she). In other words, any mind in the universe from an amoeba up to a Buddha has (du she). All all living creatures including Buddhas are making distinctions. But at this point it's so so low, it's at such a low capacity, in other words, the person's like on LS...heroin or something, totally blissed out, almost incapable of saying "this is left, this is right, this is up, this is down, this is good, this is bad", just a totally totally buzzed out state and and you could say they almost reached...almost, you have to say, reached a state where they're no longer making any discriminations at all. But they're also (du she mei ne) which is means what?

(students: Not, non (unclear))

Yeah, they are almost mindless and they are almost not mindless, okay? I mean, it's a it's just a it's a trick word to to indicate how how spaced out they are, is...and and is it a good thing?

(student: No.)

No, I mean, the scriptures say this is the peak of cyclic existence. This is the peak. (Si tse) means "the peak" of suffering, and and many scriptures say it's the same thing whether you're here in this incredibly buzzed out, you know, equaniminous state like like some kind of a drugged out thing that lasts for millions of years, or or hung over a pot of molten steel in the lowest hell upside down on a chain, being dropped

in, you know, they say, same thing. They say it doesn't really matter. They're both the same. Essentially the same thing. They're both the same kind of suffering. So it's not...and this is what a lot of Buddhist tea...schools have been corrupted into I think. I think a lot of Buddhist schools have been corrupted into teaching, you know, just get into a mindless state and stay there and everything will be nice and, you know, that'll somehow help you reach something. And it's a big mistake. And it's not, it's not a mis...it's a mistake that Vasubandu realized, you know, two millenium ago (laughs) so it's not like the Tibetans made it up. This is...the Buddha himself described these states and Vasubandu took it from the sutras. So you could call it "the state of no discrimination and not-no discrimination". It's just means a very buzzed out state, all right, as a causal meditation leading in the next life to (si tse) which it means the "peak of cyclic existence". I I think I reversed it when I first taught it the first day. I think I put this down here. (unclear)

(student: The the cause for birth in the form realm, that's meditation also?)

Yeah.

(student: Oh (unclear) different meditation?)

It's the four (sumdens). It's called "the four (sumdens)". (Sumden dumbo, sumden nimo, sumden jinmo, sumden shimo)...they're just called number one, number two, number three, number four...they don't have separate names. The resulting ones have separate names.

(student: And these are practices that went on back then)

Yeah and you'd have to learn

(student: and they and they would know, all right, I'm gonna do this? with the intention to)

Well, they...these were taught in

maybe non-Buddhist schools in those days, and did they intend to get that, I don't think they understood where they would go, or maybe some of them thought that was nirvana, or heaven (unclear), you know, it sounds like heaven, it's a lot like heaven, but it doesn't last, you know. It wears out. So, but you do have to have the capacity, as we've said many times, to get up to the first (sumden) in this life, you know, in order to see emptiness directly. You can not see emptiness directly in a desire realm state of mind, it's impossible. Your mind, what we call shamata or ultimate level of of meditation that's required to see emptiness, your mind actually has to be in another realm. Your concentration has to be above the desire...out of the desire realm. Your body is still here, and it's not very far, it's...you don't even have to get into the the main part of the first (sumden) you just have to get into the preliminary first (sumden). Yeah

(student: So this information then would have been transmitted to somebody by a Buddha in that person in a meditational state?)

That that this was going to happen or something?

(student: yeah, that this does happen given these causes?)

They have these things called the "five eyes" and if you meditate to a certain level you can see these relationships. It's it's called five kinds of clairvoyance. And you can see them, that's...but also the Buddhas describes them in sutras. All right. Well, Sidney, this is a tough question, okay? Sorry (laughs). Basically why are all these realms possible, according to the highest school of Buddhism, you know, why why for example is hell possible, did...how how did hell get there, did somebody go down below the ground and with their construction company, and build these chambers and all these...they have gas lines going down there and (laughter) burning the places...and who made hell, where did it come from? What makes hell? Ul ultimately, yeah, ultimately it's a projection forced on you by your what?

(student: your past karma)

By your own past karma, okay. So it's in, you can say in a sense that it's not outside of your own mind, okay, in one very important sense it's not outside of your own mind, which means to get there it's not difficult. Is it a psychological thing like having a bad day? No. I mean, some some teachers have tried to say that...it's not correct. I mean it's not like just having a lousy day and everything looks bad. It's not a psychological coloring of your perceptions. It's a determination of your whole world by your projections and there's a big difference. It's not just things look bad because you're having a bad day. It's that what you see is determined by your mind's karma, and you and you have no choice to experience anything else, and you and you do. It's only a projection but it hurts. So that and that's how it can happen and that's how you can go there.

(student: So you're saying there's no physical hell? Is that what you said?)

It's a big debate, but (laughs). There is a...you will experience it as physical, but what makes you experience it is your own karma.

(student: So in other words, there's no physical hell.)

It it'll be as hard as that (knocks on something). Yeah, but doesn't exist outside of your own mind, independently. That's what inherent existence means. And it doesn't exist that way. It doesn't exist without your mind's participation. Cannot exist. If your mind wasn't projecting it it doesn't exist. Because your mind is projecting it, does it hurt any less? No. It hurts exactly the way it hurts because your mind is projecting it. So it...from the point of view whether it hurts or not, whether it's bad or not, it doesn't matter whether it's the way you always thought it was or whether my information to you is correct. It's still going to hurt exactly the same. And you will not be able to get out any sooner or easier by understanding that. But you'll understand how to stop collecting the karma to to make yourself see that, and that's, that's why understanding hell is not inherently existent is important. If hell depends on

your own past deeds, then you can change...you don't have to go there. If it was just there on its own, it...this class would be meaningless, 'cause you couldn't get out of it, (laughs) okay.

(student: Do you collect good good karma while you (unclear) or do you just wear off)

You're just wearing off bad karma. There is an incident in hell, like almost unprecedented where the Buddha was was a hell being. He was being...he was tied up to a wagon by a hell god with a like fifteen other people, beings and he was dragging this wagon through the hell and he was being whipped and beaten from the back, and he looked at, he looked to the side and he saw someone, he saw the person next to him suffering and he he had this moment's wish that he could take some of the suffering on himself and then he disa...he disappeared from the hell, like that, you know. There's some scriptures say that's his first moment of bodhicitta. Other scriptures say it was the compassion that comes just before Buddhahood.

(student: Created by long virtue, and you experience it, wow, (unclear) here, I guess)

No. I mean you can...

(student: Does it have to be)

Someone can take you there. And there have been human beings have been taken to the hell realm to see what it's like...if you have some extraordinary karma, some extraordinary connection. In fact, the wheel of life was painted twice and the second time it was painted it was the result of one of the disciples of the Buddha who who the Buddha took to hell, and and then when he came back he said "paint this and make sure everybody puts it at the door of their temple, for forever". You know, and that's that's why we put it at the door of the temple. So you can observe it now, you can't experience it now, because there's no pain in this realm that's even close to the moment's pain in the hells.

(student: (unclear))

There's no pain in the human realm which is, which would approximate one minute's pain in the in the hell realm. You can't experience it as a human. You can observe it, but you can't feel it. Okay. Let's see if there's anything cheery here. (laughter) (laughs) Gelee, you got a easy one. How is the location of the formless realm determined...where is the formless realm?

(student: Exactly where you'll die.)

Yeah. It's wherever you die. Wherever you die that your mind enters the formless realm 'cause there's no other boundaries. There's no form, so there's no place. Next, four ways of taking birth? I forgot (unclear) (laughs)

(student: (unclear))

Four way of taking four ways of taking birth.

(student: From a womb.)

Womb, taking birth from a womb.

(student: Warmth and moisture.)

Warmth and moisture.

(student: From an egg.)

Egg.

(student: Miraculously.)

Miraculously. Okay, cool. I don't know if you were in all the classes, but let's try this one. There's one general cause and three specific causes that can make you be born as a preta, as a craving spirit. You remember these?

(student: One is the ten misdeeds done to pretty large strength)

Yeah, medium.

(student: Medium, and)

I got the answers here so I'm better off than you (laughs).

(student: The other one is doing a lot of of disrespect for)

That was animal birth.

(student: That was animal birth? (unclear)

Well, think of, well think of what they're like. Think of what...see you can kind of guess. Think of what they're like. People ask me do you remember your past life, and I say no, but I know I can guess, you know.

(student: How about they're very craving (unclear)

Since they're since they're they're so driven by possessiveness and craving.

(student: Oh yeah, miser, miserly)

Yeah, yeah like possessiveness

(student: possessiveness)

(student: And another one, (unclear)

Jealousy.

(student: Jealousy)

Jealousy, and then failing to give the three kinds of giving, which are, Andy?

(student, Andy: The three kinds of giving are; giving material things, giving protection and giving Dharma.)

Yeah, cool. Okay. You guys must have learned something. (laughs) (unclear) One general cause and two specific causes for birth like an animal...you got one already, I think.

(student: Ten bad deeds, I mean committing the ten bad deeds in a lesser way.)

Yeah.

(student: Disrespecting and breaking minor rules continually.)

Yeah, on a regular basis. Good. Cool. Next is next is the six sufferings of a human realm and...a human or a god realm...and I'll just ask you to give me one each, and and to me this is...you know, they go through this thing of oh you have to get old, you have to get sick and and since I'm not real old right now and since I don't happen to be very ill right now, they, and since I don't remember being born and death is hasn't come yet, it's hard to for me personally to relate to those things, they all see to be four things that are not very close to me. Personally. But these six I can see are are are suffering for everyone and that they they make the people in this room as unhappy as the people in Bosnia or Lebanon or or wherever, Tibet,

you know, I I think if you think about these sufferings you will come to see that there is as much suffering here in New York as there is anywhere. And and that it's not an exaggeration, that we really do suffer from these six things and that they are very painful and that they ruin our lives, so we'll go through them one by one. Ora you have the first one or?

(student, Ora. No certainty?)

Yeah, no certainty in what sense?

(student, Ora: (unclear) no certainty, especially when you're gonna die (unclear))

Yeah, so so your interpersonal relationships, for example, are are completely changeable. And in this life and in the following life, so if you don't even have to accept the following life, in this life, the person you've been closest to for a long time can become your worst enemy. We see it very very often with divorces for example that that the person whom you've pledged lifetime cer...what was it...to love and to honor till life do us part, or something, that you actually hate them worse than anyone within a few years, you know, and and it's not uncommon, and then the opposite happens, you have somebody that you...I mean, normally when you go to a company to work or something or you join a class there's like two or three people that immediately repel you (laughs) and then after a while you get to know them and they turn out to be your best friend in the class, and or something like that, normally like if you're jealous of somebody then you don't like them for a while but then they make friends with you and then because they put you on their level you say, "oh this is a great person" and you end up liking them or something. Jade second one?

(student: How many changes? lung)

What was that...(ngepa mepa), then what...(ngom ngom mi shepa)
What was ngom mi she pa)?

(students: You're never satisfied.)

Never satisfied. Never satisfied. And there was a lesson there, and you'd better write the whole lesson. What was the whole lesson? There's like three steps to this logic, I mean, it's not just never satisfied, that's too easy.

(student: The fact that what you have you're no longer happy with it, or your attitude towards it changes, or it doesn't last as the (unclear) should.

It's more profound. He he he describes something much more nasty. Much more ironic. What was it?

(student: (unclear) satisfied.)

That's one, but but the trick...Tsongkapa goes like this, he says, "look. You desire an object, you want something, and then you go to get it and then if you're unlucky you get it (laughs) (laughter) you you acquire that object, and now something is supposed to happen at that point.

(student: You want more.)

But what's supposed to happen at that point?

(students: That it makes you happy.)

You're supposed to be happy. You're supposed to be contented. Contentment means "you went after something, you acquired it and it made you happy". And and if this whole chasing of objects were real, then you would chase chase chase chase chase, catch up, grab it, acquire it, take it home and then you'd just sit down and enjoy it. And that would stop your desire. That's how it's supposed to work. You're supposed to acquire it, and then that stops your desire for it, and then you get a thing called "contentment", but then he says the irony is the is that the opposite happens. Each time you acquire something then not only don't you get contented, it gives you more thirst, it makes you more thirsty, so you better write that on the final (laughs) okay? That's...Tsongkapa's noting that...I don't know what you

call that...there's a word in English, but it's the, it's just a horrible condition, it's a terrible thing, it supp...it's a it's a great irony...a paradox, that you're supposed to...when you acquire something it's supposed to give you contentment and then you don't have to want it any more, but instead you want something else worse, and that's the way we are, and we'll, we're always like that...with everything. What it means it's it looks like one way and it turns out to be a disaster. I don't know, anyway. Maria, number three.

(student, Maria: (Yang yang lu ndorwa)

Good, oh nice.

(student, Maria: Always discarding your body)

And there was a truth behind that one, there was an irony behind that one, there was a story behind that one.

(student, Maria: Yes, you acquire bad karma by doing things that you see aren't good for your body (unclear) which is what (unclear)

Yes, perfect. That's perfect answer (laughs) okay? She said this, she said, you know, the point of serving your body at the expense of other people's bodies for some kind of unexplained prejudice that we have for our own bodies, you do all these things to protect and cherish your body adding nor the hungry and unclothed people around you, and then, you're doing that to protect something which you have to lose anyway. But in order to do all that you have to commit bad deeds which are the only thing that you do take with you. So it's this irony. You you can't take with you what you've been fighting to protect and the fighting gives you something that you must take with you. It's a it's a it's a, it's a...I don't know, there's a word for that, anyway, disaster, or something (laughter). Elizabeth, number four? We're up to number four, I think. That's the easy one.

(student, Elizabeth: Yeah. After that one it's easy.)

Yeah.

(student, Elizabeth: You have to take rebirth again and again.)

Yeah, and I don't have much story for that. I mean, there...I don't remember much stuff. You have to be reborn again and again. For a westerner you can't accept it right away. You have

to study, and I don't think you can appreciate the repetitiveness of it until you've lived longer (laughs).

(student: Just the repetition or just the fact that you (unclear)?)

Well, I think here we go again through this same classic kind of suffering, you know, something like that.

(student: I mean, I I don't know whether, I mean, Je Tsongkapa meant that it (unclear) but, if I just look at the little kids growing up it's so hard just cutting teeth, and learning to walk and clunk your head a million times and it's not fun, it's very, I mean, I I look at them and I go like, "oh my God, I don't want to do that again". Don't know whether (unclear)

I think that and also

(student: There's no golden childhood.)

It's the other five sufferings too. I mean, just have...it's to go through the other five sufferings, being born again means you get the other five automatically.

(student: You have to be lucky to do that again, right?)

Yeah, yeah. (laughter) Very rare, very rare. (laughter) That's true. Nancy Kieran, number five. No? Guess any of them? I think it's one of the most striking ones, the number, the last one is most...do you remember the last one? It's one of the most striking sufferings that a human has.

(student: (unclear))

Yeah, (tol meipa)

(students: (unclear))

Yeah, number six is ultimately you have no companion. I mean we

(student: go alone)

we come in we come in alone, we have temporary liaisons with people, we we meet up with people for a while, and then we separate, we're ripped apart by karma, so we we enjoy each other's company for a while and then we have to leave each other...always. And then you're on your own again, and and you die alone. By definition you die alone. Somebody asked me and I have to admit that if you have a good root Lama and you have the proper relationship with your root Lama, I don't think you'd be alone, but that's another story. Okay. That's that's a that's that's a big exception, if you have the proper relationship I don't think you would ever be alone after that. Okay. Scott. What was number five the truth of being (unclear)?

(student, Scott: Some kind of high state of mind to a lower state)

And and Je Tsongkapa also glossed...he gave a short story to that, he said, "this number five"

(student: Something about the bardo being, something about the (unclear))

No, that was number one. Je Tsongkapa says very briefly, and I'll quote him directly. The point here is that any good thing that ever happens here in this here in this circle of suffering life eventually turns into some kind of problem. We did this exercise last Friday night in class. I gave the class about five minutes to think of any good thing in their lives, and then I called on five or six people to give me...and then we examined

whether or not you have to lose it, and and you have to lose all of them. There's no nice thing that ever happens to you in this life that you don't have to...you have to lose them all. You have no choice. You will lose every good things you have from your friends to all possessions that you own to your own body, your name, your face, your identity, you'll lose everything. Every friend you have you'll lose.

(student: What what about the Dharma?)

You keep, well, that's a (shi wa jin su lu ta drimpa shin)

(student: You know (unclear) what about the Dharma practice you did?)

(Shi way je su dumpa she karma lende chi she dun wa la, nyepa tenbo nyeye (unclear) That's Je Tsongkapa says the only thing that follows you is your your (bakchak) your karmic (bakchak) and they are like your shadow, he says, they follow you like your shadow, you can't run away from those. So those those you those you possess. Yeah, those good karmas. Deep seated good karmas. You possess. You you have them. But they also will wear out.

(student: (unclear)

Yeah

(student: something (unclear)

It's a long story, but in the me...yeah, you're right in the sense that it doesn't really matter since you have to lose those also. It's just saying that you get to take them past death.

(student: What (unclear)

It's a huge debate. Huge debate. Some people say you is only the continuation of yourself, but you... that would take about a year to discuss (laughs) (laughter), okay. But it's a good point. You have to lose everything. There's no good thing you can keep, period. So enjoy them while they last. There's no even small pleasure...we were discussing toast the other night

(laughter) we decided you have to lose toast also. (laughter)
Somebody said your eyeballs, I said, no then you have to lose
your eyeballs too. You can't keep anything. There's no nice
thing you have that you're going to be able to...that's not gonna
turn lousy. There's no nice thing you have at all that's not
gonna turn into some kind of pain for you. (unclear) isn't there
any good part in here? Thubten Kunsog, describe the examples of
seeds for crops of grain...the...Vasubandu gives...he quotes
sutras and he gives two explanations of why the bardo probably
exists. And one is sort of a logical explanation and one is a
scriptural explanation. What's the logical one? It has to do
with those seeds. Explain the example of the grain.

(student: The grain of seed is like their birth before and the
sprouting is like the bardo and becoming a tree is like the next
birth.)

Right.

(student: So the...for something to get to another state it
needs a conveyance or something.)

There has to be an intermediate state. You can't go from seed
to...you can't go from acorn to full grown oak tree without
something in between, it doesn't exist. You can't go to a fully
completed being from the being at death without some kind of
intermediate state. But he says specifically what? (Chim
jambyan chu) Loo...geographically speaking. So what's that mean?

(student: Oh, it takes time.)

Not just time but...something else going on. There has to be an
intermediate state for another

(student: (unclear)

You gotta get somewhere. Okay (laughs) except for formless realm.
Except for a formless realm reing, be, formless realm being who
never has a

(student: bardo)

bardo, there is no bardo for formless realm, okay. Why?

(students: They have no body)

They don't have to get anywhere. (laughs) okay. They don't need that time to get to where they're going. So so (Chim jampyan) is pointing out that the the example of the grain is referring specifically to the time it takes to get to your new location. See you there has to be some kind of being who is also some what ineffable and also very fast and can get to the next life...can get to the location of the next life. In between. So that's logical. You can't see it. It happens to be true. The belief that a bardo doesn't exist is as wrong as the belief that a future life doesn't exist, and there is not a shred of evidence for either one of those beliefs. There is none. We just grew up that way. There's not one shred of any kind of evidence that that a future life doesn't exist, I mean, you can say to me, the the responsibility is on you to prove it and I can say to you, try to disprove it. 'Cause you can't. 'Cause it ex...it does happen to exist and there's no evidence to the contrary. There isn't any. But but you we're just not used to thinking like that. Also if you study Pramanavartika you can get more understanding of why there should be a future life. At the opposite idea that just because the body stops moving the mind has stopped is foolish, I mean, it's it's no proof at all. So when a guy's get's knocked out, is he dead? When a person's sleeping nicely, are they dead? You know, it doesn't, it doesn't prove anything. Just because the body stops, it doesn't doesn't prove that the mind stops at all. It it's a false assumption. But we've always assumed it, so. Okay. The Buddha also...there's also scriptural proof for the existence of the bardo because the Buddha in one example gives three conditions that must be present for a child to enter the womb. So what...what are they, do you remember?

(student: It has to do ...woman who is menstrating or a fertile woman, and a mother and a father who desire to have (unclear)

Yeah.

(student: and she (unclear) and the third one)

That's the one that proves the bardo, by the way. (laughter)

(student: Oh there has to be a bardo life in your (unclear) life.)

Yeah, there has to be a a a smell-eater near by and then and then Vasubandu says a smell eater in this case refers to a bardo being. It's because they eat they eat smells. What about test tube babies? I think (laughter) Vasubandu would say "in the majority of cases". (laughs) (laughter) Norm...that how they often say that, that's often the caveat, you know, they say in the in the vast majority, ninety nine point nine nine percent. Also I I think a better answer actually maybe that they may see a mother and father having sex or something. They they may see it anyway because there's a big argument that comes in this point in some of the (b: Abhidharma) texts where they say, "why would any bardo ever choose a hell realm, you know, if they saw a hell realm and people being beaten and tortured and burning wouldn't they just turn around and run the other way" and and the key to this is not so much that these three elements have to take place. The key here is the misconception. It's the total misperception that goes on. In this case it's a it's a bardo being seeing some wonderful glorious thing going on and getting captured in the womb, but they say that the same thing happens with the hell, I mean, as they approach the hells the hells look like these parks and everyone's having a good time (laughter) and it's the karma to have a the the final moment of a bardo are always in some kind of a hallucination. And they accidentally go to some place really bad and they don't understand what's going on. It's it's a (chin ji lok, chin ji lok pa) means "they are under some gross hallucination, some gross misperception at that last moment and they they go there 'cause it looks nice to them, and then they

(student: (unclear))

Yea..the karma forces them to think it looks nice.

(student: And then to have that (unclear) the radical)

Yeah, which which takes no more than a few (sem pa), and you know...now you know why. Now you know how. It's just the nature of taking a rebirth that you have that misperception at that last moment. At at the last moment. Yeah.

(student: Can...why...I mean, you you sound like the bardowa is choice, that can sort of fly around)

Not really like that. But but they but they they would not approach...I mean there's this classic thing of a bardowa running to a beautiful river and it...I mean a preta, and it turns out to be a big stream of blood and pus and all kinds of (unclear), I mean what I'm saying is that that their (sem pas) are shifting more often than ours, that's all.

(student: No no what I mean is like couldn't it be that they perceive how horrible hell is but they they are still caught into it like a human being)

It it could be.

(student: like you just sit someplace and a war breaks out and when you see it you're completely terrified but you have no choice?)

It it could be like that but they...that's the scripture tends to say the other. (unclear) But you're also right. I mean if if they were gonna have to be born there they'd have to be born there. Okay. Have to perceive themselves being born there. I prefer to say. Function of the four types of sustenance. What this means is very simple. And the reason the question is there is this. You know, it was a very interesting class about the kinds of sustenance, you know, food is...sleep...food is a sustenance, sleep is a sustenance, hope is a sustenance concentration, keeping, keeping your mind on only a few things as you go through the day is a kind of sustenance, and the opposite is called stress and it's an anti-sustenance and it hurts your

body. And that those are all very interesting. But what this question is getting at is this. Suppose you are know all these things and you keep your activities and your mind...you keep yourself, you make sure the phone is turned off most of the time (laughter) you eat health, you eat organic food, you know, you get, you walk to work and back, you do a marathon now and again (laughter) (laughs) Suppose you do everything right, you know, I'm talking about doing everything right, and all your (dulwas) all those (sa chi mei lungs) are very very well oiled, you know, what is the function of all those kinds of sufferings, ultimately?

(student: To keep (unclear))

They perpetuate samsara, I mean, they they are, and that's the answer to the question. (laugh) They are perpetuating...the the Buddha says...this is a direct quotation from the Buddha, "the four types of sustenance are the very root of sickness, cancer, agony. They help bring about old age and death." They are just contributing to your death. I mean, does it mean that you should abuse your body? No, your vows, your bodhisattva vows and your and your (lam rim) instructions require you to take care of your body. (unclear) Which kind of vows? Anyway, it's one of your vows (laughter) (laughs).

(student: Would you repeat the quote again?)

He says, "the four types of sustenance are the very root of sickness, cancer and agony. They help bring about old age and death". Basically they perpetuate (unclear). The point I'm trying to make is, you must do all those right things for your body but don't get hung up on it, you know, I mean, you you we saw one of the facts of the meditation on death, number three of the certainty was what? The reason number three for the certainty of death.

(student: The bodhicharyavatara?)

That was for something else...that was for when you're going to die. That's number six.

(student: No time to practice Dharma?)

Yeah, I mean, even if you want to, even if you decide to, even if you have all the money in the world, you know, even if you've got this great Dharma teacher and then you go, okay, I really believe it. Now I'm only going to practice Dharma, you don't have any time anyway, you know. There's no time, I mean, we get so frustrated, you know if you've tried to do your Dharma practice, it's so frustrating. So what I'm trying to say is don't don't don't give it an excessive amount of time, you know, feeding yourself...a) a) overfeeding yourself; b) getting to be obsessed with how you look or, you know, are you quite up to the muscle tone, I translated for Yeshe Dundin on WEAI one day, and the guy was he was talking and the guy was saying, "and his muscle tone is not too good actually", you know (laughter) (laughs) (unclear) Rinpoche, he really (unclear) rikpa yi) Nagarjuna said: "eat food as if it was medicine, you know, and he just eats exactly what's needed to keep him going and when the doctor says do this or that he does exactly just that, and he totally totally disciplined, you know. He doesn't eat anything he doesn't have to eat. And he eats exactly what he should eat but he doesn't get hung up about his body, you know, he just does exactly what he's supposed to do to take care of it in a very disinterested way. It's it's kind of cool. Okay. Eight hot hells. We'll just go through...give me like, how about two? The classic way of counting is to go to number eight and then go to number one. That's classic way of listing them, okay? Just for your interest, information.

(student: (nar mei))

(Nar mei). Number eight. Okay. Which is what?

(student: Avichi hell).

Avichi hell. Basically at that point your whole physical form is indistinguishable from the fire, it looks like an incandescent filament. You are burning like an incandescent filament. And the only way they can tell that you are alive is that there's

some kind of whimpering coming out of that of that flame, and that's the only hu...you know, recognizable sentient thing about it, you know. And then the first hell?

(student: (Yang su))

(Yang su) which means what?

(student: Revive (unclear))

I I think you can all appreciate if you've been in an office setting (laughs) (laughter) this thing about, you know, you, you appear there and everyone's beating each other (laughs) you know, with whatever they can grab, you know. I mean immediately...the minute you're there, all your instincts tell you grab something and fight, you know. Grab whatever's in reach and and pick it up and hit the next person (laughter) and and they're...because they're hitting you and the minute you appear there it's just melee, you know, it...and it's deadly, it's a deadly fight from the minute you're there to the minute you end and you it's just you're just clawing at people, or pulling people's eyes or pulling up anything you can grab and smashing it onto other people, anything you can get to use for a weapon you're using it.

And and they live like that. They they just sit there, that's their existence, is to be like that. (unclear) give me two more. What's (tik nak)?

(student: gathering)

That's one. (dun jom) Which...where do they gather you? Between two great mountains and then they they they come together and smash you. And they they look like what, remember?

(student: The heads of animals)

Yeah, they look like the heads of animals that you've killed, you know, if you're a big meany or...by the way, that's a different story, but and then (tik nak)'s "black line". Remember that one? Anyone?

(students: cut you on the lines; burning chains (unclear)
(laughter) (laughs) You just reassemble yourself and (unclear)
some more.)

Yeah, the trick is to after you cut up the parts still feel like
they're together, they still...the finger's hurting, the toes
hurting, your arm is hurting, your leg is hurting. Next two
hells...Judy Heller? (laughter) (laughs)

(student: I take care of my body. (laughter) (laughs)

By the way I (laughs) I not saying you have to take care of your
body (laughter), I mean each to his own needs. I don't mean to
to say that you shouldn't run a marathon, I think it's probably
wise actually, but I think each person knows themselves what's
necessary for them, you know, and and you...the (lam rim) is
adamant that you must take care of yourself and many great Lamas
have told me that I should exercise as well. (laughter) So...
seriously, have, and told me that I should eat the way Serge
tells me I should eat (laughter)...I don't want to listen to him.
(ngu mbu, ngu mbu chenpo), Robert?

(student, Robert: screaming?)

Screaming and great screaming. I'm still never sure...there's a
translation problem there of whether it, the second chamber is a
double chamber or whether it's two little houses or...it's not
clear to me. I've read a couple commentaries and it's still not
clear to me. The word in the first Dalai Lama's commentary I've
not...I've never met anyone who could explain it to me.
Basically you are inside of a...it's like being inside a safe and
they

(students: (unclear))

Am I wrong. Sorry.

(students: (unclear))

Oh, sorry. These are just more like frying pans. (laughter) I

kid you not. I mean and endless, miles long and you can't ever get to the end. Just running. And then (tsa wa) and (rabtu tsawa) heat and super heat. (unclear)

(student: (unclear))

(unclear) I'm sorry. Four kinds of eons, kalpas.

(student: (unclear))

By the way there's six kinds and I messed it up so you're pretty much free on this question. (laughter) (laughs)

(student: You have bar kals (unclear))

Yeah.

(student: You have...the length it takes for a Buddha)

Yeah, kal chens.

(student: Kal chens)

Great kalpas. Great kalpas.

(student: And then (unclear))

Right

(student: (unclear))

Right, and then the one I left out which was

(students: (unclear))

An empty kalpa. Kalpa that's empty. So I guess if you were really going to answer this question well...I talked to Thubten how to grade it but...I'd say it's probably, destruction, continuation, formation and then empty. Making a great kalpa, you know, and that makes a lot more sense. (unclear)

(student: (unclear))

I would make it last, so it would be destruction, formation, continuation and empty, and then another formation.

(student: destruction and empty)

I'm sorry. Yeah, I'm sorry. Yeah it would come after that. Destruction, empty, formation and continuation. Destruction, empty, formation and continuation...the first Dalai Lama never explains the empty one...I guess there's nothing to explain. (laughter). All right.

(student: (unclear))

And all four, all four of those together makes one great because one great has how many bar kals?

(student: Eighty)

Eighty.

(student: And then (unclear) (bar kals) (unclear)?) You put, you want us to put great and (bar kals?)

You can leave out (bar kals). All right. Describe the events that open and close the eon of destruction. What what marks the opening of it and what marks the end of it?

(student: The opening is when no one is able to take birth in hell or no respite and the closing of it's when the planets destruction.)

When the world is up...goes up in smo...what do you call it?

(student: (unclear))

There's a cool word for that in English.

(student: Vaporizes)

Vaporizes, yeah, poof. (laughter) (laughs) (unclear). What is the length of time that a person must accumulate the collections of merit and wisdom to become a Buddha? How long do you have to work to get there?

(student: One countless eon which contains 80 kalpas times countless, which is ten to the sixtieth power times three)

Yeah, ex exactly. (laughter) (laughs) Dharma mathematics. (laughter) I don't think I mentioned (drang me) the word "countless". Yeah, yeah. (drang me sum) It's always says (drang me sum). Very famous. (drang me sum) is three countless.

(student: (unclear))

What is it? (Drang me sum de gyal way...drang me sum la sang gye) It goes like that. That's half of it. (laughs) That wouldn't get me through debate in the past. (drang me num la sum me sang gye) something like that...it goes two cross two verses actually. (Drang me sum la sang gye) means "it takes three countless eons for a (sang gye)." For a Buddha.

(student: So, how did you want us to answer?)

How does it go?

(student: (unclear))

No, that's another part...that's a different part.

(student: (unclear))

Yeah that...say, that's it...the last one, the last line

(student: (unclear))

Yeah that, that's just describing that they occur during those loops.

(student: (unclear))

Anyway, it's just (drang mei sum la sang gye) (laughs)

(student: (drang me) means "countless"?)

Yeah, the word (drang me) means "countless" but it refers to a specific number...called (drang me)

(student: (drang me..sung la, sum la sang gye) there's only one of them?)

Oh, I'm sorry. I have it here. (De drang me sum la sang gye) okay, (de drang me sum la sang gye). That's the verse. (De drang me sum la sang gye). Yeah that's what the that's what (unclear) okay, (de drang me sum la sang gye)

(student: Do you want the whole verse or just that line?)

Just that line. Okay. We got up to death meditation. Did you tell Art? Okay. The four broad steps in the whole outline of death meditation.

(student: Disadvantages of not cultivating death awareness (unclear))

Yeah, good, so the problems of thinking you're not going to die tonight, the advantages of...have you tried it, it's cool? Did you try it. (unclear) (laughter) (laughs) 'Cause I don't want to lie to Rinpoche (laughter) (laughs) Did you try it, I mean it changes, right, it changes your life a little bit...the more you do it the better, it's kind of cool, anyway. Disadvantages of not thinking you're going to die tonight. Advantages of knowing you're going to die tonight. Acting like that. And then what...identifying death meditation, I mean you know what it's not if it's what? or

(student: (unclear))

It's not it's not trying to train yourself in panic because?

(student: That's natural)

(laughs) That's natural. You don't have to train yourself. And then (laughs), so what is it?

(student: (unclear))

Yeah they'll help you especially after you've passed, but then when the time comes you're already...everything's taken care of, especially if you've used that as a stepping stone to to the higher practices, to the higher practices, and and you've achieved what you needed to. So then you you can die happily, there's no problem, you can die...die smooth, you know, you got what you had to do. (unclear) wait, I think I know (unclear) There were three reasons behind the second principle in death meditation. The second principle is was (nam chi mang nyepa) which means what?

(student: What is death meditation?)

Never sure when you're gonna die. Can't be sure when you're going to die. Then there were three meditation inside that. What were they? Remember.

(student: (unclear))

In in this realm, in this particular realm, lifespans are not fixed.

(student: Lifespans are (unclear))

In in our realms. I mean nobody on this planet can tell you when they're gonna die. Period. It may be people on other planets. Normally. Less they're (unclear) (laughs).

(student: (unclear) our bodies are fragile?)

Yeah, that was number three and then number two?

(student: And most things are not good...most things are bad for our own (unclear), help (unclear) up life)

Yeah. There's lot of things that can kill you and there's only a few things that keep you alive and they're hard to get anyway. If you don't believe me, go to work (laughs). (laughter) All right. Mia, three resolutions, that you should make, and they relate...by the way they relate to the three principles so if you don't remember the three decisions, you...try to remember the three principles and they give you a clue.

(student, Mia: Since death is definite (unclear) Dharma. Since you don't know when you're going to die, you need to practice now. And I think only Dharma can help (unclear).

Great, wonderful. Lek-so lek so. That's about it. Just that, don't...try...I mean, I said it before I'll say it again. If you go home and you...I don't know how much death meditation you did between last class and this class, personally I remembered it three or four times. Okay, and it's not good enough. That's not..it's not enough to make it do anything. I think you...I really encourage you to keep it up as a practice for the next couple of months. Try to do it formally

in the morning, you know, I have found personally that if I meditate on something formally in the morning, I do think about it throughout the day. It comes up maybe once every couple of hours or something, that I I'll actually start to do something bad and because I meditated in the morning about it, I remember and I and if I don't meditate in the morning then I don't remember and I I go ahead and do it, so try to do some mediation in the morning and and and about death and it it'll start to appear during your day, you know, at the at interesting times and and then you know, like this afternoon I was thinking is this what I really want to want to do, I went to a movie last night and I was debating, you know, it's like, let's see, if I'm gonna die after the movie is this really what I wanna (laughter) you

know, (unclear) the movie, so I'm like, I don't want to make them upset, but I is this really wanna do what I wanna do if I'm gonna die tonight, and you have to think about , you have to (unclear). It could be the right decision to go, but you'd have to examine it, you know. Yeah?

(student: (unclear))

Yeah, it'll come. It...renunciation is doesn't take a...I always say it doesn't take an Einstein, you know, it's just being fed up with the way things are and I think most of us are. It's just admitting it, you know, it doesn't take a genius to say that everything nice about your life is going to die, you know, you the people that you love you're gonna lose, the health you have you're gonna lose, you'll stop being able to read...I mean I love reading and I love reading Dharma and I know that my eyes are going and there'll be a time when I can't read it any more...I see Rinpoche he can't read things anymore and he can't hear anymore, and and it'll come, all the things you that are dear to you you'll lose. So it doesn't take a genius to get renunciation. I mean you have to do something about it. And we have...particularly we have those higher practices which are effective in this lifetime to stop to stop these things. So you have to learn them and then you have to really...and they're cool and they're fun, you know, and they're very much a pleasure to to do in a deep way. There's no reason not to do them. Like that. That's all. Rinpoche has not announced the date for the preliminary initiation but he did agree to it, so we'll see, you know, (unclear) is on and we'll we'll probably do a three day meditation here in May sometime, probably very late late probably the third week in May or something and we'll try to send out...we'll try to organize that, and Friday night class will go on through the end of April and then stop. Thubten (unclear) doesn't know but he's gonna it in May (laughs) if you're here.

(student, Thubten (unclear))

We'll talk about it (laughs) That's embarrassing for you. And then we're kind of taking a total break like June fifteenth to July fifteenth, you know, just totally off, to take a rest, and

then after that we'll start a class...we'll start a course around July 15 on Vinaya. I can't teach you the monks vows or the nuns vows,

(cut)

I'm not allowed to, but I...there is a text by Tsongkapa which has never been studied, I don't think, in this country and there's a commentary which I am sure has never been studied in this country, beautiful commentary and we'll be going over that commentary, the parts that I can teach you because it's just to know what the vows are, how you get them, how you lose them, what which ones can a person take, which should you take, which ones you have to be ordained to take, which ones don't even exist any more, things like that. All the details...there's a lot of Dharma... there's a thing I call Dharma rumors. Dharma misinformation. Everybody has this idea about what's vinaya. And mostly it's wrong. I think it'd be nice. If you're gonna be educated baby geshe then you should know at least some good clean pure information about vinaya, and Tsongkapa wrote a fantastic short piece which we'll study the whole thing, and we have a beautiful commentary by one of the lineage holders that of our of our of our secret tradition, so we'll be studying that. If that group translates it on time. That's about it. I can't think of anything else.

(student: (unclear))

Rinpoche will not teach this Sunday 'cause he'll be in Washington. He'll not teach the following Sunday because of

(students: (unclear))

oh he's having a special teaching, and then I believe after that he'll start on Sundays and then he continues to teach on Thursday nights. I don't believe...he's not teaching this Thursday night because he does a lot of (unclear)

(student: This Thursday is sojong)

Oh and this Thursday is sojong anyway (laughs). Okay.

(student: (unclear))

Oh your your exam is a week from Saturday at ten oclock.

(cut)

Course VIII: Death and the Realms of Existence, Jan-April 1996, NYC
RAW TRANSCRIPT