

These are raw transcripts that have not been edited in any way, and may contain errors introduced by the volunteer transcribers. Please refer to the audio on The Knowledge Base website (<http://www.theknowledgebase.com>) for the original teachings.

ACI COURSE 16: The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part 1

New York, 1999

Taught by Geshe Michael Roach

Classes 3-5: no transcripts

Class 8: incomplete recording

Class 10: incomplete taping – only have last part of recording.

Asian Classics Institute
Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Geshe Michael Roach

Class One

Okay, we'll start. Welcome to the ninety-nine classes. I want to talk to you a little bit about the class and then we'll start.

In nineteen ninety-nine the goal is to review the last five or six years of classes that we've had. My goal when I started, you know, when I started six years ago was to take American people for the first time through the whole Geshe course. This is the course that a Tibetan monk does for eighteen years and I thought, maybe, we could do it in five or six years. I called it the 'Five Year Course' for a while and then it became clear that it wasn't gonna finish. Anyway, so people in this class have been through all the major subjects of Buddhism, the five great books. Which is the Perfection of Wisdom, the Middle Way, Madhyamika, Pramana or Logic and Perceptual Theory. They've been through Vinaya and they've been through Abhidharma. And those are the five great subjects. Then we threw in Lam Rim for free so there were six great subjects. And people have been through those. The goal in ninety-nine is to review all of those courses. That's about three or four thousand pages of material that was translated for those courses. You'll be going through a three month course at the rate of one every two nights, okay [laughs], all right, so necessarily, it's gonna be packed and I tried to select the most important things but I hate to leave things out. I'd rather overwhelm you then leave things out. So it's a lot, okay. Some people told me they felt very relaxed because it was a review class [laughter] and then Ora was trying to print out the reading which was too long to print out tonight so you won't get it tonight. It'll be Tuesday. But it was too long and anyway I think the first reading is seventy pages or something, okay. And this is gonna be a kick-butt class, okay. The homework is the longest homework ever done, the first one, okay. Seriously. [laughter] All right. And you're gonna have to work hard.

I wanna make one thing clear at the outset. I consider any person who makes it through ninety-nine would make a pretty good teacher eventually of Buddhism. So I want you to be, I want to go into my retreat feeling that you're qualified and

that's gonna mean feeding you a lot of stuff. You're gonna have to work really hard, okay. We had a rule in this class that was abused for several years that if you missed two classes, two classes okay. If you miss three you can't come back until the next session which is in, I don't know, June or something, okay. Something like that. So, we're going back to that rule very strictly. And I want to make a pledge, okay. You cannot get into this class at seven o'clock if you don't have your homework from the last class, okay. So don't even try, okay. Stilwell's gonna be there with a gun or something. [laughter] [laughs] And you can't get in. You won't be able to get in, okay. Period. If you missed a class you can bring last homework, right. See what I mean? But you can't get in to this class after tonight without your homework, all right. And you will have to take a quiz. You'll be breaking out into discussion groups at a certain point and if you don't have your quiz you'll have to leave, okay. So, period. And I don't care if we lose thirty-five, I mean, seventy-five percent of the people. It's okay. I'd rather have ten people who really know their stuff and at least I know who they are than have, you know, a hundred and fifty people, and I thought a lot about it 'cos I'm gonna miss you guys [laughter] [laughs] you know. I feel better when there's a big group. I feel like I'm a success but I, on this one, I'm gonna do it that way, okay. You must do the homework and it's hard. It's gonna be a lot, okay, and you don't get into class next Tuesday without this homework in your hot little hand, okay. And, very clear about it, okay, from the beginning. And I'll lose, maybe, half of you. That's okay. But the half that stay will be really great. I encourage you to do it, okay. You'll never get a chance like this again. In nineteen ninety-nine you'll be able to go through the whole Geshe course and I don't think you'll get a chance like this again. I'm going on three-year retreat after that. You will miss the classes and you'll regret if you miss ninety-nine I think. Ninety-nine will equip you to have a really good future in your life. And if you miss it I think you'll be sorry after about a year, you know. It'll occur to you that you really blew it, okay. So, I encourage you to try really hard.

[discussion of retreat / monastic university plans]

And I encourage you to do the work, okay. You'll feel very good and you will know Buddhism backwards and forwards. You will know everything about Buddhism in this, in nineteen ninety-nine, if you really work hard. You'll have a very, very beautiful foundation for when you do your long retreat out in Arizona, okay. All right.

This is auspicious: the emptiness of the light bulb. [laughter] Got one? All right. Anyway, he'll fix it. The first of the fifteen courses that we taught here in the last six years was called 'The Principal Teachings of Buddhism'. And this comes from a very famous book. It's actually only about three, four pages that were written to one of his students by Je Tsongkapa. Je Tsongkapa is the teacher to the first

Dalai Lama. He wrote ten thousand pages of amazing Buddhist books. People say he was taking dictation for Manjushri, which seems probable because no human being could do that in sixty years, like he did. So, we're gonna go through, the first two sessions are gonna be the whole commentary to Je Tsongkapa's book. The book is called the 'Three Principal Paths' and I'll write it for you. Say {lam tso}[repeat] {nam sum}[repeat], {lam tso}[repeat] {nam sum}[repeat], okay. The basic goal in this lifetime for you and, and the whole process I'm trying to drag you through, is to see emptiness directly. On the day that you see emptiness directly you directly perceive your own enlightenment. You directly perceive the day that you will become a Buddha and you will be. You directly perceive how long it will take. You directly perceive the Buddha, okay. And after that night all questions are a moot point. After that moment, it takes twenty minutes or so in deep meditation, that you see emptiness directly, everything's over with. You're on your way out. Everything is totally different. Your whole life is totally changed. You met an enlightened being. You know they exist for the first time. You see your own enlightenment. You see how many lifetimes it will take. You know everything that's contained in the Scriptures within twenty minutes, you know. Hundreds of thousands of pages become totally transparent to you in, in twenty minutes. The whole point of these courses and the whole point of retreats and, and, and meditating, practicing, is to have that twenty minutes happen to you, okay. It can only be triggered by intense study, okay. That's just a Buddhist principle and anyone who tells you different is not correct, okay. It can only be triggered by, studying very intensely, deeply, the principles of emptiness and the things we're going to talk about tonight. So the purpose of studying what we're going to study this year is to get you ready to trigger that experience later when you get into deep meditational states. Which is much better in Arizona. It's quieter, okay. I don't think it's easy to do in New York City. Possible, I think, but it's very difficult, okay. So the book we're going to be studying the first two nights is a summary of all the steps you have to take. {lam} means path. I said that in Brisbane and everyone looked up at me. I said 'path' and they go and said 'parth' and I said, oh [laughs], okay, path. {lam tso, tso} means principal or main, primary. People mistranslate this word and call it 'principle', p-l-e. It doesn't mean that, p-a-l, means 'primary' path, okay, {lam tso}. {nam sum} means, the three, the three different main paths, okay, the three main paths. In Buddhist philosophy a path means a stage of realisation. For example, the day that you finally get true disgust with this suffering of your life you will have reached the first of the five stages of Buddhism. And that's a {lam}. You see what I mean? In other words, it's a mental condition. It's not, it's not like the, the path that lays ahead of you or something like that. It's a thought. It's an attitude, okay. And when you

achieve it, it's achieved in your mind. So the Three Principle Paths', okay. This book was written by, by the way, those of you who are new, you don't have to write the Tibetan on your homework, okay. You can do English. That's fine. Sooner or later you should learn the Tibetan. Say {Je}[repeat] {Tsongkapa}[repeat], {Je Tsongkapa}[repeat]. Je Tsongkapa is the teacher of the first Dalai Lama. Do we have another one? No. You're so lucky.

The teacher of the first Dalai Lama, and again, sort of a sidekick of Manjushri. And some people say he was Manjushri. But anyway, he wrote an amazing amount of things and he basically, he or his students, founded all of the great monasteries of Lhasa. All the great monasteries of Central Tibet: Sera, Drepung and Ganden. Also, Tashi Lhunpo. And his dates are 1357 to 1419, okay. You're gonna be getting a reading, hopefully, which is a commentary on this book. By the way, this book is so popular that, almost every time the Dalai Lama comes to teach somewhere, He'll choose this book, okay. This book is about four pages long. It was a letter of instruction written to one of his disciples who he said, could you go out to East Tibet and found a hundred monasteries and come back when you finish, you know. Like, and he did, okay. His name was Tsako Wonpo. I'll spell it for you, okay. T-s-a-k-o W-o-n-p-o, okay, Tsako Wonpo. Tsako Wonpo means, the priest or the friar from Tsako. And he was a disciple of Je Tsongkapa. You're gonna be studying a commentary to that book by Pabongka Rinpoche, okay. It's P-a-b-o-n-g-k-a, p-a, Pabongka, I'm sorry, just leave it Pabongka. P-a-b-o-n-g-k-a, okay. Pabongka Rinpoche. He's famous for writing a book that's very popular in the west right now called 'Liberation in the Palm of your Hands' or something like that, okay. And he was a teacher of our root Lama, okay. He was a teacher of Khen Rinpoche, all right. Okay. His dates are 1878 to 1941. He's also the main teacher of the teacher of this Dalai Lama, okay. So he's your grandfather and he's the Dalai Lama's grandfather. All right. So there's one lama between us and Pabongka Rinpoche and there's one lama between His Holiness and Pabongka Rinpoche, okay. So, he taught the teacher of the current Dalai Lama. And you're studying this commentary. [student] Trijang Rinpoche, yeah. Okay. I'm gonna talk a little bit about the three principle paths and what they are. So the three ideas you have to get straight in your mind if you're gonna get enlightened. What does enlightened mean? Yeah. [student] Oh, no, the commentary's name is, we've translated it as "The Principle Teachings of Buddhism", okay. And that's the contents of this little book that we've, that you've seen. But we're gonna give you the Tibetan and the English put together. Okay. You're gonna get selections from the whole thing. We didn't have time to do it for tonight. We're gonna get it out on Tuesday. But this is a book on the three principle paths and I wanted to go over the three principle paths, okay. These are three spiritual states that you have to

get through in this lifetime if you want to get out of suffering, okay, if you want to become a Buddha, all right. What does suffering mean? Very simply, if you count up all the good things that have happened to you in this life, you know, if I say, count your blessings, you know. And you say, oh, life's not so bad. I had a guy today arguing with me that life's not so bad, you know. He's the president of this big company and we had this long debate. And, he invited me to come and have a debate with him. And, and he said, life's not so bad, you know. I got money. I'm still healthy, you know, I'm not so old yet, you know. Not so bad, you know. So, he's counting the good things in his life., And this is: he's the head of a big company, he's still pretty healthy, he has a good mind, he has a good wife, his mother's still alive although she's senile, you know what I mean. But he's counting these things as the good things of his life. This is what he lives for. This is why his life is not so bad. And, and it's amazing that here's an intelligent man, sixty years old, fifty-five years old, intelligent, not stupid, owns a big company, sensitive, spiritual, spiritually-minded and it doesn't occur to him that, that his fate inevitably is to get old, die, lose all the money he's worked for every single day, lose all that property. Do you know how long it takes for your kids to sell your house? [laughter] [laughs] You know. It's amazing, you know. It's incredible. All that equity that you've built up in so many years of work, you know. It doesn't usually take more than, like, a month, you know, and then all those years of work are just cancelled. They blow the money usually. You know that. And, it's all over. You will lose your health inevitably. You will lose your intelligence. I have people say, I don't care if I get sick as long as I can think straight. Well you lose that just after that, you know what I mean? Like, if you live long enough, you will be some mindless person in a nursing home. And, if you don't think so, go to a nursing home. That's why nobody wants to go to a nursing home. Nobody, nobody, nobody goes to nursing homes unless grandma's still there and she still has some money to inherit, you know what I mean. But nobody likes to go 'cos it's so depressing 'cos that's what you're future is if you live long enough, you know. So, everything you'll lose. Your body, your mind, your money, your friends. Shortly after that you lose your name. People don't remember what you looked like. People come with your picture, they're cleaning out the house, second generation, and they're, like, whose picture is this? You say, I don't know, throw it out, you know. And they throw it out. And they don't even remember your name anymore. And that's it. You won't remember your name either. You won't stop. Your mind will go on and, and you won't recall what your name was. And you won't be able to remember what you looked like. And you'll be in some other realm. And that's, that's what you have to look forward to and nothing else. That's the, that's the, it's your career, that's the way it's going, you know. Where did you think? I

mean, it's gonna stop after the vice presidency, you know? Is it gonna stop after ten years and just stop there and you'll stay the same age or something like that? I mean, you have to look ahead a little bit. So the first of the three paths is to admit that. It's called {nyenjung}, okay, renunciation. Okay. The, the knowledge, that this is what your life is going to be, okay. And by the way, there's a principle behind it, which is karma, okay. All things wear out. Why? Because all things are produced by karma, okay. So, like, I used to get upset when my girlfriends started to change, in high school, you know. At first they seemed so nice. After six months they seemed like monsters, you know. And I thought it was me, you know. Luckily, I found out. It's just your karma. Any good thing you get wears out because your karma wears out. And you can't keep anything, okay. The things that have produced your life, the things that has produced your face and your money and your job and your family, is wearing out as we speak. And it just wears out. Okay. And then you lose them. And it happens with everything. So to get that idea in your mind, when you really get that idea in your mind, you are on the first path. I think everyone in this room has some kind of level of renunciation. Everybody here in this room is here for some kind of reason, you know. The best Buddhists I know, they had some kind of terrible death in the family or something like that. Someone they know got sick, they were in a terrible accident, they lost somebody else. Almost all the great Buddhists I know are, are working off of that. And oftentimes I don't think it's conscious. It's subconscious, you know. Like, they start to get interested in spiritual things early because of some disaster in their life. Lots of old people get interested in spiritual things and you see old people in churches and synagogues because they know the score, you know. They're not fooling themselves any more. But usually, for a young person to do it, is hard. And, and I think you have it to some extent. You have to try to cultivate it more and get it stronger to the point where you're not fooling yourself anymore and you go after the big time stuff, you know. You go after becoming enlightened. And then your body changes. And we don't call it karma anymore. Things that are producing your body and your mind and your face and your identity are something different. And they don't wear out. And your body, your whole life changes. You can become a being who doesn't have to go through all those things I said. But first you have to know that not to put your effort into this, this worldly thing that's not going to work. It just doesn't work. The best you can do is die rich, okay. It just doesn't work, okay. And to admit it. I mean it's very logical. It's very hard to do. And I'm not saying you shouldn't have a job. You should have an honest living. That's part of Buddhism. I'm not saying you shouldn't have money. If you have lots of money you can help more people. It's a good thing, okay. I'm just saying, this is not the main things you want to

work for. You want to use your resources, your life, your health, your money, your intelligence, put them into something useful like, like getting enlightened. Which, you can do, okay. A certain number of people in this room will do it in this lifetime. And you can. Lots of American people, I had some guy arguing with me today, you know, oh, Americans can't do it, you know. Only Milarepa and Moses and people like that. We're just normal American people. Forget it. You know, the beauty of Tibetan Buddhism is it's an instruction book. If you follow the instructions you get enlightened. Any normal American can do it. Seriously. Conversely, if you don't do it you won't get enlightened. And you'll be in the obituaries, you know. So, it's your choice, you know, really. Okay.

I'm gonna write the word for renunciation in Tibetan. And this is the first of the principle paths. Say {nyenjung}[repeat] {nyenjung}[repeat]. {nyenjung} is the Tibetan word for 'renunciation'. I don't know if renunciation is such a good word. When I hear of renunciation I think of, you know, Christian monks in the Middle Ages in a little cell or something like that. It's not like that. You can be a businessman in a big company and working a normal job and still have very good renunciation. Renunciation means I recognise that it's` only the spiritual things that are important, you know. I recognise that although I can have a good job and a good family and everything else, I have to find the solution for those problems in this lifetime. I have to find that out before I die. And I can. And that's renunciation. {nyenjung} means, the day that you think, day and night, about getting out of suffering and you don't worry anymore about good things in this life so much, then you've got renunciation, okay. So, can you want money? Of course. Bodhisattvas want lots of money. They can do more things for people and they use every penny for other people. That's fine. Should you want money for yourself to save and to store up, to have and to use it for yourself or something like that? No, stupid. You'll die. And, and the kids'll spend it, okay. Don't kid yourself, you know what I mean. So that's renunciation, okay. The Dalai Lama was the richest person in Tibet. His house had four hundred rooms in it, you know. Did He have renunciation? Yeah. Okay. Because he didn't, he used to say, the last Dalai Lama said, I only own two things. I own my bell and my dorje, you know. I own these two things. I don't own anything else. I don't have anything else. The rest belongs to other people. It's not mine, okay. And that's like your attitude. Okay. All right. The second path. Say {jangchub}[repeat] {kye}[repeat] {sem}[repeat], {jangchub kye}[repeat] {sem}[repeat]. {jangchub} means 'bodhi', okay, Buddha, bodhi, okay. It means enlightenment, okay, {jangchub}; {sem} means mind, okay. Some people translate this as 'bodhi mind'. The Sanskrit is 'bodhichitta', okay. Not 'bodhicitta', okay, bodhichitta. What does bodhichitta mean? Very simply, the wish to get enlightened yourself so that you can really help other people, okay.

It's much easier to help other people when you can see the next three thousand years clearly in your mind. This is what a Buddha can do. It's much easier to help other people if you can read their minds and see their future for the next zillion years, okay. Very efficient. Much better than us struggling. It's much easier to help people if you can emanate trillions of bodies on trillions of planets at the same time to help people, okay. So the idea is get thee first and then help other people, okay. The job that you swear to do when they swear you in as a bodhisattva is, I will to the best of my ability reach total ecstasy and paradise as quickly as possible so I can help other people, okay. That's your promise, you know. This whole idea that bodhisattvas wander around life and, and wait to get enlightened so they can help other people is a, is a Dharma rumour. It's not true, okay. No such thing. I mean, are you gonna wait to get enlightened so you, are you gonna wait to have a trillion bodies to help other people and wander around in one and try to help people like that? It doesn't make sense. You see what I mean? The day you become a Buddha you're able to show yourself as thousands of different people in New York City, you know. Half of the people on the subway today could've been enlightened beings trying to teach you something. No problem at all. It could've been one enlightened being emanating that many bodies, okay. So a bodhisattva's job is to get to that point as fast as possible. That point happens to be total bliss and ecstasy. So, you know, why not cover two things at once. You help everybody else and you become total, you reach a state of permanent, total ecstasy. I had a big debate with some people today. They said, oh, that sounds very selfish. I say, come on, what are you thinking? What are you thinking, you know, you should, this Christian thing where you beat yourself with a stick or something like that? I mean, the best thing you can do for other people is to get enlightened and to get to a Buddha paradise. It happens to be the best thing you can do for yourself, okay. Now, just because it happens to be the best thing you can do for yourself doesn't make it ignoble. It's a very noble thing. In Buddhism the best thing you can do for other people is to become totally happy yourself and then teach other people to do it, okay. And don't think any, don't get that baggage from the Middle Eastern religions, okay. It's not like that. You don't have to suffer to help other people, okay. You can go to pure, perfect enlightenment in your Buddha paradise and be very, very, more capable of helping other people. So bodhichitta is that; {jangchub kyi sem} is that. People translate it as 'bodhi mind' and then some people think, oh, it means, the mind of a Buddha. Is it or not? No, it's the wish to get enlightened, okay. It's the intention to get enlightened. It's not the mind of a Buddha, okay. It's about a, it's about a zillion years before that, okay [laughs] if you don't use Tantra, okay. I mean it's a long time before that. Seriously, okay. So it's not a Buddha's mind, okay. That comes later. This

is the thought, I want to become a Buddha so I can really help other people, okay. That's, that's what bodhichitta means. That's what bodhi mind means, okay.

The third of the three principle paths. Say {yangdak pe}[repeat]{tawa}[repeat], {yangdak pe}[repeat]{tawa}[repeat]. {yangdakpa} means, 'pure', okay, correct; {tawa} means, your worldview, the way you view the world, okay. The way you think about the world. And this is the third principle path, okay. The third path, the third level of realisation that you must get to in this life, is to understand emptiness. And that's what correct view means. You have to understand emptiness, okay. {yangdak pe tawa} means, a worldview based on an understanding of emptiness, okay; a way of seeing things based on emptiness, okay. We'll talk a lot about emptiness in the next class, okay. I'm going to try to cover it now. Had a big fight with this guy today, you know. [laughter] No, we had a, this guy purposely came to one of my classes. He's very wealthy and he's very interested in Buddhism. And he says, I'm gonna argue with you. I'm gonna fight with you. I'm gonna debate with you. And brought a Tibetan scholar from Virginia just to back him up, you know. [laughter] And I said, okay, we'll take him on, you know. This is the old Buddhist way of ancient India, you know. We'll kick arse. We'll see who can out-debate the other, you know. He got on one side of the table, I got on the other side of the table. And he starts asking questions. He said, something like, I said, what do you think are the causes for an airplane crash, you know. He's talking about airplane crashes. I said, what do you think are the causes? He said, oh, the, the wing gets weak or the, or you know, the tyre blows out or the engine stops or something like that. I said, are there any other causes there? He says, no. Then I said, so, so some people get in a plane and it falls down and some people don't get in a plane and it doesn't fall down, okay. Is there a reason for that? Is that an event? And he says, yes it's an event; some people got in and some people didn't get in. Some people's plane fell down and some people's plane didn't fall down. So I said, is that an event? He said, yes, it's an event. I said, does it have a cause? He said, yes it has a cause. All events, all things have a cause. So then I said, why did some people go down and other people didn't go down? Oh, their wing fell off and their engine stopped. I said, no, no, no, we finished that already, you see what I mean? We already talked about how the plane fell down. You didn't tell me why the plane fell down. Get it? You see what I mean? The, the, the, that that plane falls down is due to a bad engine or, or bad wing or something like that. But why are these people in the plane and those people are not in the plane? You see it's a different question. You're not saying why did the plane fall down you're saying why were these people on the plane and other people weren't on the plane. And you don't ask that question

anymore. People don't ask that question anymore. They just say, oh, it was bad luck, you know. It's just random, you know. They, they bought tickets on Icelandic Air and they bought tickets on Kuwati Air and, you know, they had a problem. You say, but why did they go to that travel agent? They say, come on, you can't answer those things. You say, is it an event? They say, yes. Then you say, so it has a cause, right? They say, yes. So, it's not random, right? Oh, oh, no, no, some things are random and some things have causes, you know. And, and it's like that, you know. Worldview of emptiness is different, you know. The worldview of emptiness is explaining all of the events. And then you have to study it. And you can't be a Buddhist if you don't study worldview, if you don't study emptiness. Why do things happen? Why are you here? How did you get here? What, what's going on here? Can you become a Buddha or not? Is there future life or not? Or are you just gonna live here and die in New York City? You know what I mean? Is that, how's it gonna go? And, and are there reasons for that and can you change them? Okay. So that's worldview, okay. Those are the three principle paths.

These three principle paths turn you into an enlightened being. They make you change. And anybody in this room can change, you know. This guy that I'm talking about today, it's still fresh in my mind. It was, like, a four hour, five hour debate. He owns, like, six hundred rare Tibetan paintings all over his house. They're hanging up all over the house. So I said, what are those paintings of? And he said, oh, this is Manjushri, this is Chenresig, this is Vajrapani, you know, this is so and so, you know. So I said, so are they, are they real people or are they just pictures, you know? He said, they're just pictures, you know. So I said, yeah, so there's nobody like that, right? There's no person that was Manjushri and there's no person who was Avalokiteshvara. He said, no, no, no they're just pictures, you know. So I said, why do you keep them here, you know, what's the point? Why do you put up these pictures and you don't put up other pictures, you know. And he says, well they're so beautiful, you know, they're just so nice. They're so special, you know. I said, look, get it, these are real people, you know. They exist. They lived. They still live. You can be like that. That's the whole point of painting them, you know. You don't have to live like this president of an insurance company and die somewhere and have more expensive coffin than other people. You know what I mean? You can, you can be those people in the paintings all over your house, you know. That's, why did people paint them, you know. And he's, like, wow, I didn't think of that, you know. And, so how do you connect those people to the three principle paths? What's the connection between an enlightened being like Manjushri and the three principle paths? I'm gonna get into that, okay. To get into that you have to break down an enlightened being into two parts. What? Physical part and

mental part. Okay, we're gonna talk about the mental part and the physical part of a Buddha. They call them the two bodies of a Buddha. It's a misnomer. Okay. It's not like they have to buy four pairs of socks or [laughter], okay. 'Body' in this case, means part, okay. So when they talk about two bodies or three bodies or four bodies of a Buddha, they mean the two parts or the three parts or the four parts of a Buddha. So we're gonna talk, we're gonna reduce it to the two parts of a Buddha: a physical part and a mental part. And we're gonna try to connect the three paths to that. Here's the first one. Say {suk ku}[repeat] {suk ku}[repeat]. By the way, in Sanskrit, and I don't wanna load you up with a lot of Sanskrit, I don't care if it's English, Sanskrit, Tibetan. To me it doesn't matter at all. Okay. If you know what it is who cares what you call it. You can call it boogaloo, okay. It happens to be, but I wanna put it 'cos you might hear it a lot, it's called rupakaya. What will you look like when you get enlightened? How is it different from your body now? This body is born to die, okay. This body is, is a bunch of flesh, bones, blood. Looks pretty solid until you get cancer and then you start looking at it in a different way, okay. It's a big bag of time bombs waiting to happen. If one thing doesn't kill you something else will and you're already carrying it around with you. The seeds for your death are already parked in your body underneath your skin. It's no beautiful machine of nature, okay. It's an accident waiting to happen. And, and someday, if something outside you doesn't kill you, it will kill you, okay. One of the organs will stop. The organs, in Tibetan medicine, are working against each other. The heart is doing one function that works against the lung. The lungs are doing a function that works against the stomach. And, anytime one of them gets the upper hand, if, if, if you go out of balance, you'll die, okay. If the heart gets too strong, if the lungs fill up with water, if the stomach does something, they'll actually kill you. If you don't get killed from the outside you'll get killed from the inside. That's a human body. That's the miracle of the human body, okay. An enlightened being's body is different, okay. Your human body has a very subtle core in it which is made up of what we call, you know, chakras, winds and drops, okay. Tantric system. You have an inner, invisible, physical body going on with your body now, okay. You can't, if you cut a person open, you don't see it, okay. In the process of Tantric practice you actually transform your body and this body starts to change into a Tantric deity's body, okay. So it's not like you're just sitting there trying to picture Manjushri or, I mean, the practice is not to sit there and try to, try to imagine a guy with four heads and six arms and purple and green and red and all that. It's not the point. At some point in your spiritual career, due to your good karma, due to keeping your vows, due to acting kindly towards other people, due to compassion, your own body will start to change. And it just goes through a transformation. It's very gradual. Rome wasn't built

in a day. And it's very noticeable, okay. It starts to come in, kick in, and then you get excited 'cos you see it happening. You start to get younger, you become more strong and then the body actually changes into, into a body which is, you can see it and you can touch it but it's like light. It's, like, made of light. And that's, you can call it Angel's body or Tantric Angel's body, it doesn't matter. At some point your body will change. And that's and you can do it in one lifetime if you practice Tantra properly, okay. And that's a {suk ku}, okay. That's the physical body of a Buddha. One millisecond after you reach that you reach the ability to emanate other bodies in other worlds and all over the place, okay. Every person you've ever met in New York City could have been a Buddha's emanation. Could have been the emanation of one single Buddha. The family you grew up with, all the kids at high school that used to pick on you and your girlfriends or boyfriends, could all be the same person, okay. Buddhas have this ability to do that and they do that kind of stuff. They're very patient, all right. So when we talk about the physical part of a Buddha there's two parts. There's this body that's made of light and, and, and you can reach it and you will reach it. And then there's this other bodies that they're emanating out like movies and different people are seeing them, okay. And they have that ability. That's the rupakaya.

Second part of a Buddha. Say {chu ku}[repeat], {chu ku}[repeat]. In Sanskrit {chu} means 'dharma' and {ku} means 'kaya'. So you may have heard 'dharmakaya' in the Sanskrit, okay. {chu} is a general dharma means 'thing', okay, stuff, thing, phenomenon, {chu} dharma means, let's call it dharma, okay. It's easier. Okay. Dharmakaya means dharma body, your dharma body. Now, what's your dharma body made of? Two things, all right, two things. What's left of a Buddha after we've covered their body by the way? There's their mind, very simply, omniscient, okay. You can see everything in the universe that ever is, will be, or was, everywhere in the universe, in one moment, okay. So the idea that bodhisattvas wait to get to enlightenment 'cos they're compassionate is crazy. Okay. Once you get enlightened you know the problems for the next fifty thousand years for every person on this planet directly. So you can help them. You can really help them. Okay. That's the dharmakaya. Is there any other part of this person that we left out? Their emptiness, okay, part number three. Yeah, they usually lump that in with the dharmakaya, okay. The emptiness of the Buddha's what? Body and mind. Okay. Once you got the Buddha's body and then you glue on the Buddha's mind and then you throw in the emptiness of the Buddha's mind and the emptiness of the Buddha's body, you got the whole Buddha, okay. So, add dharmakaya and rupakaya and you come out with a Buddha. And that's all a Buddha is, okay. What's the emptiness of the Buddha's body for example, okay. What's the, very briefly, what, what do

you see here? I mean, it's a hand, okay. Like, you're on a karmic level, as am I, to see a hand when I hold this cylinder up, you see a hand, okay. If you had worse karma and if I had worse karma what would you see? A dog's leg, okay and some, some cloth, okay. If you had much better karma what would you see? Like a deity's arm, like golden light and can't be cut or hurt or won't get old, won't have freckles or hair, okay. And, and {.. backchak me pa dang}, it's said in the Abhisamkara, you don't have to have any more freckles, okay. [laughter] [laughs] So, so you'll have it, okay. The emptiness of my arm is that it doesn't have any nature of its own. If your karma was better you'd be seeing Manjushri up here. If your karma was worse, you know, I'd be up here playing some music for you or something, okay. And your karma is somewhere in between. All right. And that's all. I don't have an arm. I have a cylinder. How you see it is up to your karma, okay. That's the, that's the emptiness of a Buddha's body. Yeah. [student] See a what as a dog? [student] [laughter] [laughs] [student] Yeah, you see it's kinda tricky 'cos the minute you say 'see a dog as a dog' the first dog doesn't exist. Yeah. So, yeah, it would be your bad karma on the assumption that a dog can't teach as much as I can, okay. [laughs] [laughter] It may not be true. All right. Okay, so those are the two parts of a Buddha. Now, what have those got to do with the three principle paths? This physical body of a Buddha you can get if you get really good at path number one and path number two, okay, one and two. Which, if you remember, were what? Path number one? Think of path as spiritual level. You have to get to renunciation. Sooner or later you have to figure out that your whole life up 'til now has been meaningless. And all the stuff you've ever worked to do, everything you ever got up for in the morning, was something that you're gonna lose in a few weeks or months or years anyway. What's the point, you know? I admire those people that sit in bed all day depressed, you know. They, they understood. They got it, you know. They're not crazy. They got it. Now they should get up and do something about it. That's another thing. Number two is, is bodhichitta, okay, is, is, is ultimate compassion for other people. Hey, if this is gonna happen to me, it's gonna happen to every single person I bumped into today on the street. It's a bunch of skeletons walking around New York City. They're just skeletons waiting to lay down, you know. I mean, start to go out and see that, you know, on the street. You, you get irritated when somebody bumps up against you. But look down Fifth Avenue, you know, and see thousands of heads bobbing up and down and realise that every one of them is going to die shortly and you won't feel like that. Every one of them is in your same position. We're all gonna die. I was on an airplane one time. They told us it was going to crash. We took off all our jewellery. We had to take our shoes off so we could run faster. They flew around in a circle for an hour and a half so

the fuel would be used up because they said the landing gear don't work, you know, and a certain number of you are gonna get hurt, you know. And you had an hour and a half of good death meditation, you know, like. And, I'll tell you, the sweetest thing was that every one started to bond together, like, it was the weirdest thing. Like, we didn't know if we were gonna live for another half hour or what and everyone was helping each other and people were hugging each other and weeping and, and, and loving, truly loving each other. It was the most extraordinary thing, you know. And, but it's like that all the time. Your life is like that. The whole thing is like, every one in this room is gonna die if they don't practice well they're all gonna die. So why worry about somebody bumping you on the arm, you know? This guy's a walking skeleton, you know. This guy's dead in a few years or a few weeks or maybe tomorrow, so what's the point? And then there's some kind of empathy, okay. Those two thoughts in your mind create your physical Buddha's body, okay. Get used to that idea. Okay. And if you study Tantra, which you must eventually, you must, the process is very beautiful. Because the winds, the inner winds and the mind are linked together, then the more good thoughts you have, the more your body starts to change. It's very interesting, okay. If you have true compassion and true renunciation it affects the winds running through your channels and that can trigger an enlightened being's body. And that's the whole point of Tantra, okay. That's the whole, the whole point of it is to do that. The more you can fight {..} in Tantra. Every time you have a victory over some kind of normal thought and start to think of everyone as being sweet fellow human sufferers, you know, your own body will start to change, okay. Every time you have that kind of thought something happens within your channels. And if you keep it up over a long period of time you actually change into an enlightened being. So you wanna know how to cure your health problems, you know, these are the two things. And they really work, okay. I mean, even if you just get a little bit your body will be much lighter, much stronger. And if you get really good at it, it'll transform into, into a Tantric deity's body. And that's the whole point of practising Tantra, okay. {chu ku} is brought about by the third principle path, which is what? Correct view. Like, get it, you know. Why do, why do planes fall down? Oh, the bolt fell off the number three engine. Don't give me a stupid answer. Why did the bolt fall off the number three engine? The guy forgot to check it. Yeah, yeah. Why did he forget to check it? You know what I mean? I mean, what is the real reason why things happen? Okay. And you gotta study that, all right. If you study that long enough your brain will transform into an enlightened being's mind, okay. And it will. And even as you get closer to it it's very cool. You start to see things. You start to understand things. It's unbelievable. It's unbelievable. Like, things you never dreamed of. All the

things you read about in the Bible when you were a kid really happen to people, okay. It's just nobody's tried it lately, all right [laughter] and it works. All those things work. All those things happen, okay. They will happen to you, you know, all the miracles, things like that. Being able to see deep things, being able to see, there's a whole world that you can't see right now 'cos your mind is not used to it yet. If you practice you can, this is about, you know, two percent of the world, what you see so far. There's ninety-eight percent there you never saw. And if you start to study emptiness you can see those things. It is easy to see your future lives, you know. It's easy to see the day of your enlightenment. You can, everyone in this room, can do it. You just have to study emptiness seriously and you have to meditate seriously, okay. So, that's the connection between the three principle paths and the two bodies of a Buddha, okay. Oh, we got time for one more. Let me see. So there's a question here. Is there any relationship between these three principle paths and Tantric practice, you know? I had a lady come up to me and say, you know, Geshe Michael, take me in a room, give me a secret practice, you know. I said, okay, you know. I took her in a room and said, here it is, you know, the book you started out with six years ago on the three principle paths. And she got angry, you know. She actually got angry and she said, don't teach me this off the shelf Dharma stuff, you know. I want a deeper practice, you know. I want something like Mahamudra or something sexy like that, you know. And I said, you didn't get it, you know. You don't get it. Practice these three things well and you don't need a Tantric initiation. Get it? I mean, you'll be seeing Vajrayogini in the flesh, sitting next to you, know what I mean. You'll meet her one night walking down Second Avenue and Sixth Street, okay. [laughs] You know what I mean? And she [unclear] good to see a Vajrayogini practitioner, you know, in the East Village, all right and thankyou. And you're, like, wow, you know. If you keep these three principle paths, you know, Buddhism 101, Lam Rim, study it well, keep it well, you will be in a Tantric realm before you can say, I don't know, Vajrayogini, okay. [laughs] I'm not kidding. And, conversely, impossible to get there without these three things, you know, impossible, totally impossible. You can go to, you know, open up a New Age magazine, you know, twenty-four Lamas, highest lineage from z-z-z, you know, teaching sixteen tantric initiations today; bring forty-eight dollars, you know. And you go there and they're all wearing these special hats and the only one who can ring the bell in that way and everything else and you get this initiation. If you don't have these three things absolutely nothing will happen. I promise you. I've met Americans who have been trying to do that for twenty years and they didn't get anywhere and they know it, you know. It doesn't work like that, you know. You have to develop an insight [unclear]. You have to develop this insight. If you do then, then those

things can happen. Then those tantric initiations can have their affect, okay. If you take a tantric initiation, you don't have these three trainings in your heart, and in particular, you don't have the tantric vows. I met very few Americans who when they got their tantric initiations were even taught the vows. If you don't know the vows and you don't know the morality of tantra it's impossible for it to work. It can't work. It's impossible. If you don't have these three principle paths, these dumb off the shelf Buddhism 101 Lam Rim, you can't, won't, nothing will ever work. Impossible. Okay.

So that's the connection, which to state it again is this: if you practice these three basic attitudes properly you can almost automatically enter a Tantric realm. If you don't practice these three, you can forget entering a Tantric realm no matter how many holy initiations you have and stuff like that. Got to have these three, okay. It's what drives enlightenment. It's what drives the tantric process. Yeah. [student] Yeah. [student] Yeah, yeah. [student] Yeah, he said, Mahamudra really consists of the second and third paths and that's exactly true, okay. Roughly. Okay.

Number nine. Should we take a break or not? What time you got? [students] Hang on. Let me see. [laughs] We'll do half of the next question, okay.

I think, one of the most important things from the first course was the ten qualities of a real lama, you know. People are always coming to me and saying, you know, I wanna have my own Lama. And I say, well you gotta find them. And they say, well what am I supposed to look for? And I say, well all the Scriptures have ten, what do you call, qualifications of a Lama, okay. They gotta have these ten things. So if you're wondering if you should take a person as your Lama and you're thinking of going out and finding your own Lama, which you must do, okay. One of the things about tantric practice also is that you must have your own Lama. You must have a Lama that you are in close contact with and that, and that, who can bring you to that place. You must have a human being to bring you there, okay. A book is not enough, never was. Quotation from the current class, you can read it in the reading, you know. Never happened before, never will happen. You must have a being who possess ten qualities and you must make an intimate relationship with them, okay. So I'm gonna give you the ten, ten qualities. And I think, if you're gonna teach Americans, this is one of the most important things you can teach them. How do you recognise an authentic lama, okay? You go find an unauthentic Lama and you have a lot of suffering, okay. I have a friend now who's in jail due to the blessings of an unauthentic lama, okay, for the next three years, all right, very bad. You have to be very careful with your spiritual real estate, who you let walk on it, you know what I mean. Check them out and make them pass certain tests in your mind. And here are ten qualities that they have to have.

Say {dulwa}[repeat]; {dulwa} means they are very good at practising the first of the three trainings, extraordinary trainings. This is morality, okay, an ethical way of life. [cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

Are they sensitive not to kill things? Are they sensitive about stealing things? Do they avoid sexual misconduct? Do they avoid lying, other bad parts of speech? Are they people who need a lot of physical wealth or money or things like that? Or are they people who've learned simplicity and can keep their morality? Do they keep their bodhisattva morality? You know, is their whole life dedicated to helping other people? Do they keep their tantric morality? You know, are they using special methods to reach enlightenment quickly so they can help other people, you know? Are, is this person keeping those kinds of morality or not? Check them out, okay.

Second one. Say {shiwa}[repeat], {shiwa}[repeat]; {shiwa} means, oh by the way, {dulwa} means, 'controlled', but now you know what it really means: keeping their morality. All the way from what we call Pratimoksha morality up to Tantric morality, okay. {shiwa} means 'at peace', peace. They have found peace. This is a code word for a person who can really meditate well, okay. That's the second quality that you're looking for. Do they have the extraordinary training of meditative concentration? Are they able to meditate deeply? Are they able, do they know how to meditate? Do they know how to teach meditation? Do they meditate? Do they go into deep meditation? Okay. You wanna find a person like that. Second quality.

People ask me, how do you know, you know? Hey, your life's at stake, okay. I mean, a barber, the worst they can do is mess up your hair a little bit, right. Doctor can cut the wrong blood vessel and kill you. A bad guru can wipe out your happiness for several thousand years, okay, if you believe in future lives. So, you, you have to check them out as much as your able, okay.

Say {nye shiwa}[repeat], {nye shiwa}[repeat]; have they attained the extraordinary training of wisdom? Meaning, do they understand emptiness and karma? Okay. Or do they think that aeroplanes fall down because the guy forgot to tighten a screw, okay? All right.

Say {yunden}[repeat] {hlagpa}[repeat]; {yunden} means 'spiritual qualities', {hlagpa} means 'better than'. Better than whom? Their students, all right. You gotta find a person who's at a higher level. When I was in high school I played tennis, okay. And my coach had a rule, during the season, we could never play with someone who was worse than us. It was very interesting. He would never let us play with girls, okay, not that they weren't better. But anyway, we, you know, we were always supposed to play against someone who was better than

us. And, and it's the same thing with spiritual things. The teacher should be someone who's obviously got a lot more experience, a lot more knowledge, a lot more spiritual savvy, then you have so far. And you have to seek out people like that, okay, who are very, very highly qualified compared to you. Don't put yourselves in the hands of a person who's just starting out or something like that, okay. This has to be a person who has an extraordinary amount of the qualities that you're looking for and much more than you have, okay.

Okay, number five. Say {tsun che}[repeat]; {tsun che} means, {tsun} means 'effort', okay. What does effort mean in Buddhism? Joy about doing good things. Like, you've gotta find a teacher who they can't think of anything better they liked to do than teach you, you know. They just love to do it, you know. They get excited about it, they spend all their money to do it, you see what I mean. Someone who really, really enjoys teaching, really, really enjoys helping you. And someone who takes joy in it, okay. They want to work for you, okay, free. I would stick that in there, okay. I mean, I've never had a teacher, there are no teachers at Sera Monastery who get paid. Dig that? Okay. They're all doing it for free. And they support their students. When you take a student in the major monasteries, Gelugpa monasteries, you're required to feed them and to house them yourself, okay. That's the contract that you make with a student, okay. And that's the beauty of our lineage I think. Dharma should be free and, and a teacher should just be really thrilled to teach it to you and happy to give it to you, okay. Like that, you have to try to find someone like that, okay.

Number six. You will get cookies, [laughter] after ten, okay, after number ten. Someone has to bring me some, okay. [student] Sorry? [student] Yeah, sugar-free.

Say {lung kyi}[repeat] {..}[repeat]; {lung kyi} means 'scriptural knowledge', {..} means 'rich', big bucks. This person has to be, have a big toolbox. They have to be very, very rich in Scriptural knowledge. They have to know the Scriptures well. They have to know the holy books well, okay. They have to have a very wide variety of knowledge in all the great subjects of Buddhism, okay. They have to have really studied intensely for a long time, okay, so they have all this stuff ready to help you with, okay.

Say {..} [repeat] {..}[repeat]; {den nyi} means shunyata or emptiness, okay, emptiness. {den nyi} means, emptiness. {rab ..} means they must have perceived it. This, I think, is the most important qualification of all, okay. If you can find a Lama who has seen emptiness directly it's about ten thousand times better, ten thousand times better than someone who has not, okay. There's no substitute for it. It's like trying to learn swimming from someone who hasn't swum. You see what I mean? You want to see emptiness directly in this life. Everything's over the moment you go through that twenty minutes. You are forever

changed. You see your own enlightenment directly. You know how long it will take. You see your future lives. You see Buddhas. You, all your efforts should be directed towards this one goal. You need someone who's done it before to explain it to you, okay. Much better if you can find someone who has gone through it and who has done all the steps to explain to you how you can do it, okay. Those people are extremely rare, okay, extremely rare. If there are a handful on the planet at any time it's good times, okay. Extremely rare to find someone like that, okay. So the text says, if you can't find one, then someone who has good Scriptural knowledge or, or good intellectual knowledge of emptiness. But, but no comparison, okay. It's on the order of a million to one if they have seen emptiness directly themselves. Which means, they are shortly going to become enlightened anyway. You should try to find a person like that. You must try to find a person like that, okay.

Did you have a question? [student] [laughs] How do you know how to recognise it, okay. Couple of things, okay. A person who has seen emptiness directly will not admit it directly. Period. It's part of etiquette, the protocol of Aryas that they will not admit it directly. Okay. It's just part of the experience, okay. So, all you can really do is base it on their description of what it would be like to see emptiness directly, okay. How well do they explain emptiness to you? And, in particular, how well do they explain that twenty minute experience and what happens directly after it, the next twenty four hours? How, how accurately can they describe it? Then you can go back in the old books, Abhidharma, Madhyamika, Prajnaparamita, you can find the old descriptions of people who saw it. And does this person's explanation coincide directly with what those books say? Perfectly. And does their explanation of how karma and emptiness work together and how if you understand emptiness you must be a moral person, you must keep your vows; do they explain that whole thing very well? And you start, you know, I always say on this question that, dogs can smell people who like dogs. You know what I mean? Like, you walk into a room and you don't like a dog they start growling. If a dog lover walks in the same room they start wagging their tail, you know. They know somehow. If you're vegetarian they get in [unclear], you know. There's something, or cows, you know, like, they can sense it, you know. They have this sixth sense about it, you know. And I think you also have to trust that. I mean, there's a whole way that a person talks about it when they've seen it. And there's a whole sense, there's an instinct that you get that this person has seen it. You know what I mean. And, and, and you have to work on that. Does what they say correspond to everything you heard from authoritative Scriptures? Does what they say correspond to your own experience, you know? Does what they say make sense in light of morality and vow keeping and other arts like that, you know?

And you have to judge it on that. And I repeat that an authentic Arya will not admit it directly. Okay. It's part of their, it's part of the experience that you learn not, not to say it to people. Okay.

Number eight. But if a person seems fixated on this event, you know, of seeing emptiness directly, it's a very good sign. You know what I mean. It's like, this is the most important thing you have to do and these things do happen to you when you see it. You really do see your future lives. You really do see the day of your enlightenment. And you can do it. And you must study properly to do it. Okay. And every normal American person can do it, okay.

Say {..den}[repeat]; {..den} means 'good teacher', okay. Can express themselves well, can communicate to students at their own level. They're not throwing around thousands of Sanskrit words. They are not requiring you to learn the Tibetan. [laughs] [laughter] Okay. I mean, they're talking, I mean one of the qualities of a good teacher, one of the qualities of a Buddha, is to speak the language of the people who are listening, you know what I mean. And they can express the deepest contents of Buddhism in a way that you can easily understand, okay. And that's, that's not a sign of stupidity or naivety, it's a sign of skill that they can, they thought about your level carefully, they know the way to present it to you and they present it to you in your vernacular, in, in your language that you can understand. And you can practice yourself. And this is the sign of a {ma kyī den} all right.

Number nine. Say {tsewe ..}[repeat]; {tsewa} means 'love', {..} means 'the very image of love', okay. It means the, this person has to be a person who is teaching you Dharma only because they love you, okay. They're not interested in the money. They're not interested in the fame. They don't care whether you abuse them or not. Okay. They don't care whether you respect them or not. You know, they don't care about all that stuff. They just care about you and they wanna help you, okay. And they have no other motivation for teaching. They're not into it for any other goal but to get you enlightened. And they care about you for that, okay, and you have to find a person like that. The sign is, generally, they won't be hitting you up for all kinds of stuff [laughs]. And, and, and they will be very patient with their students. I mean, the students, by definition, a student is misbehaving at the beginning and saying improper things and doing improper things and having weird thoughts about all kinds of things. The person just loves you enough to put up with that and get you over that into a very nice place. But it takes a lot of patience and, and love on the part of the teacher to, to go through that process. It's a long process with each person and it's, and it's no fun sometimes. But they love you and they want to do it and they like to do it and they're happy to do it. Okay. Like that.

Last one, then you can have some cookies. Me too. Number ten. Say {..wa}

[repeat] {pang}[repeat]; {..wa} means 'got tired', okay, fed up, {pang} means 'they don't', okay. [laughs] And it means, specifically it means, they don't care how many times they have to repeat something to you, okay. Like, you don't get it the first time, you don't get it the second time, you don't get it the tenth time. The twentieth time you're still asking the same dumb questions, okay, and not doing your homework, you know, and not doing what they asked you to do. And they don't give up on you, okay. They don't get tired of you. They say, okay, come on we'll do, we'll go over it again, you know what I mean. And they're willing to keep coming back to you and they don't get, like, fed up with your slow progress, okay. They're willing to stick it out with you. That's called {.. pang}, okay.

These are ten qualities that you should search for in a lama. Everybody needs their own lama. You have to try to find a Lama, okay. You have to try to find a lama that you can get close to and be around constantly. It's like, seeing emptiness is very similar to learning to play concert piano. It takes about the same amount of time and effort, okay. That's totally impossible without a qualified piano teacher, okay. I mean, you becoming a concert pianist without meeting a qualified piano teacher is about the same as you seeing emptiness without meeting a qualified Lama and being in close contact with them, okay. That's, that's just the way it is. So you have to, the odds of you getting [unclear] are hard. If you're close to a person who has these ten qualities your odds improve by about a million percent, okay. So it's a matter of survival. You have to find this person, you know. And if you're living in California, surfing, and they live in New Jersey, the armpit of the nation, you, you sell your surfboard and you go to New Jersey, you know. You find them, okay. You have to go find them and you have to stay close to them, okay. And they're hard to find. And you should invest the time to find them. And when you find them you should sink your claws into them, you know, and don't let them go, okay, very important. And every person in this room has a different personality. Everyone has a different aptitude. Everyone has a different outlook on life. You have to find the Lama that fits you. There are four Tibetan sects, you know. There are thousands of sub-sects. Why do they exist? Because they help somebody, you know. Somebody's attracted to that. Somebody's attracted to that. And god bless, you know. Find the one that fits you but then devote yourself to it and commit yourself to it. And you have to find it. You have to go on an active search to find this person, okay. And then, you gotta stick like glue to them, okay. Or you can't, you won't make it. You have to find this person, okay. And forget where you're living and what job you have and everything else. Once you find them, move, attach yourself to them, you know. Don't, it's the primary thing to think about.

Last thing before you have your cookies, right, I always say that. Pabongka Rinpoche says, look you might not find a person like that or you might find a person who has six of these qualities, go for it, okay. I mean, holding out for ten is a little hard, all right. I mean, the main thing is find the person who has the first three, okay. Do they keep their morality well? And we're talking all three kinds of morality, meaning, are they moral, are they compassionate, and are they committed to the secret teachings? Okay. Second quality, do they meditate well? Third quality, do they really understand emptiness? Okay. At minimum try to find somebody like that, okay. Should have, at least, those three qualities, all right. Okay. Have a refreshments. Come back in about ten minutes.

Somebody asked me to write the name of Pabongka Rinpoche in Tibetan, okay, 'cos that's when the projector went out. Say Pabongka [repeat] Rinpoche [repeat], okay. Just for your knowledge, there's a place called Pabong, near Lhasa. It's a big rock and there was a small monastery there. And an Abbot there, he died and Pabongka Rinpoche was recognised as his reincarnation. And you can read about it in your reading if you ever get it, okay.

We've gone through the qualifications of a good teacher. Unfortunately, they also list the qualifications of a good student. [laughter] And there's three, okay. And these come from Aryadeva. Aryadeva was about, he was after Nagarjuna. So, about, you know, three hundred AD, four hundred AD, something like that; very, very early. And he wrote the qualifications in a book called the "Four Hundred Verses", {..}. And I'm just gonna give them to you in English, okay. The first one is they have to free of preconceptions. In other words, they have to be willing to reconsider their entire worldview, okay. They have to be people who are not attached to the New York Times worldview, okay. They're willing to think about giving it up. They're willing to think about the possibility that the reasons planes fall down is not whether somebody tightened the screw or not but may have to do with the past actions of the people on the plane, okay. They have to at least be able, willing to think about it, okay. They don't have to buy everything. In fact, they say you're a bad student if you buy everything the teacher says. You have to examine it. You have to be a critically thinking person but you have to be open for possibilities, okay. First quality.

Second quality. They have to be intelligent, okay, and intelligent in a spiritual sense. I call it spiritual IQ, is a little bit different from normal intelligence, okay. Like, they have to be, they have to be people who, who are wondering where they came from. You see what I mean. They have to be people are wondering why planes fall down. They have to be people who are wondering why penicillin stopped working last year. Okay. They have to be people who are curious about higher things and not necessarily geniuses, okay. That's not the point. Spiritually intellectual people, okay.

Third one. They have to have some high aspirations in life. In other words, the really good Buddhists I know, are people who are very concerned about death. They are very concerned about the possibility of, of being able to do miracles or what's going to happen to them after death. In other words, their whole viewpoint on life is much bigger. And their aspirations are not to get a house and a washing machine and a better car. You can have those and there's no problem with those but they also want to know how can I stop the suffering in the world, you know. I mean, they're the kind of people that, that when they were kids they were wondering why people suffer and why animals suffer or they're, like, interested in bigger questions of life, okay. Those are the three qualities. {..} in Tibetan means, you are willing to consider new options, okay. You're unbiased. You don't have preconceptions so strong you say it's impossible that I had a future life or gonna have a future life, okay. And then, secondly, you're just intelligent. You have the brains to think clearly, okay, about spiritual things. And then, thirdly, you have bigger things in mind than the next promotion at work, okay. You wanna know why there's suffering in the world. You wanna know if people can do anything about it. And you've been that kind of person since you were young, okay. And I don't think you'd sit through this whole thing if you're not. Okay. They say, in Buddhism, that your goal, one of your goals is to escape from samsara, you know. People say samsara, the cycle of rebirth, you know, and they talk about that. What would it be like if you achieved nirvana tonight? Would you look different than other people? You know, would you go some place out of Manhattan? You know, what is samsara? Where is samsara? People tend to say, my life is samsara or they tend to think, they equate samsara with Manhattan or something like that, you know what I mean. And, and you have to understand what, or, or, or they hear people say, oh, samsara is continual rebirth and what a drag. And it doesn't click with you, because you don't believe in rebirth anyway, you see what I mean. So, what is real samsara? Samsara is the condition, okay, of having to die, of having to get old, of having to undergo change, hopelessly, helplessly. Okay. That's all. Forced upon you. It's a lack of control. And when you escape from samsara what will it be? You'll, you'll escape from the condition of having things fall apart around you by the nature of things. Your karma will be different. Okay. You won't have to get old necessarily, okay. The relationships you make won't necessarily fall apart. The money you get doesn't have to all be spent and then you get more automatic, you see what I mean? Things don't have to work the old way. They can work a new way, okay. It's not a question of is there enough money in the world for everybody. We can make as much as everybody wants. You just have to do it the right way. There can be plenty of water and resources for everybody because they come from karma they're

not dug out of the earth, okay. The question says, give the word for samsara in Tibetan. [cut] Say {korwa}[repeat], {korwa}[repeat];{korwa} in Tibetan comes from a root that means 'to go in a circle'. That's the word for samsara in Tibetan, okay. What does a circle mean very, very, very simple? You don't understand your boss's emptiness. So your boss comes in and yells at you and then you yell back at them. That's the only way you can create in the future a yelling boss. They come and yell at you again in the future. You yell back. You create the karma again to see them yelling at you. And that's like a self-perpetuating circle. Okay. That's what {korwa} means, okay. Your response to your world because you don't understand emptiness is asking for the thing to happen again, okay. When someone yells at you, you yell back. When someone treats you bad, you treat them bad back. When someone's jealous, you get jealous. You know, like this. And, and it's the only way according to Buddhism to get it to happen again. So, it's like perpetuating itself, okay. It's spinning itself and it keeps going like that. That's {korwa}. If you understood the emptiness of your boss, the next time he or she yelled at you, you would shut up and break the cycle, break the wheel of life. The picture of the wheel of life, break it at number one, one o'clock, {.. marigpa} and then it doesn't happen any more. You just stop it. Unilateral truce. Okay. I choose to stop my {korwa} so I'm gonna be kind to the person who's bad to me. That's all, okay.

There's a question here that says, list the eight worldly thoughts. They're called the eight worldly dharmas or something like that. And it says, list them in Tibetan and you don't have to, okay. Quote me on that, all right. Here they are. Number one: being happy when you get something. Being happy when you get something. Number two. What's the converse? Being unhappy when you don't get something. Number three: being happy when you feel well. Number four: being unhappy when you don't feel well. There's a joke in Tibetan, {nga ...}, ever since I've been ill I haven't felt well at all. [laughs] [laughter] Okay. Where did that other one go? Number five: being happy when you become well known, you know. Number six. Guess. Being unhappy when no one knows who you are, okay, [laughs], all right. Number seven: being happy when people say nice things to you. Or speaks well about you. Number eight: being unhappy when they speak badly about you, okay.

These are the eight worldly dharmas. They say if you want to commit spiritual suicide, suicide? If you want to ruin your spiritual practice, then worry about these eight things, okay. By the way, it doesn't refer to whether or not you get things, okay. Like, getting things is not a bad thing. And not getting things is not a good thing, okay. It's not a good thing but don't get upset about it. You see what I mean? There's one thing about having good things or bad things happen which is good or bad. It is good or bad. But then, you get upset and

make it worse, see what I mean. Or you get proud that you got this thing, you see what I mean? So don't make things worse. You will get some things because you did collect a little bit of good karma and you will not get other things because you didn't collect enough karma to get them. But the point here is don't get too high about it and don't get too upset about it, okay, 'cos then you just collect more problems. That's the eight worldly dharmas. Can you avoid getting things? No. Can you avoid not getting things? No. So, it's not the point, you don't give up the eight worldly dharmas by refusing to take anything from somebody. You give it up by getting too happy about getting stuff and being too worried when you don't get stuff. It's pretty much out of your control now, all right. You set those karmas in motion a long time ago. Don't get too excited when you get something. It'll be taken away soon enough. Don't get too sad when you can't get something 'cos you can't. {...}, you know, Shantideva, you know, if you can fix it don't worry about it, {...}, if you can't fix it you also can't do anything about it, so why get upset about it, [laughs], okay, all right. So it's just like that. Those are the eight worldly dharmas.

Two more questions, very short. This one I think you should write. And this whole class is gonna be like this. If you can't take it stay home next time, okay. Really. Okay. We're covering eighteen years in one year, okay. I'd rather have a bunch of hard asses than worry about going over, okay.

In the course of the three principle paths they talk about the laws of karma, okay. And you should know them and you should teach them to the people you teach. When I say that you're gonna be a teacher, you might become a teacher tomorrow at work and, you know, I still have people from work and I left that place five years ago essentially. They're still calling me up. What should I do about this? What should I do about that? You know, you don't have to be a guru, you, you just help people and then people will call you and [unclear]. You can be a guru to somebody in a coffee shop, okay. But you must know the four laws of karma. And this, this is the four laws of karma.

Say {le nyepa}[repeat], {le nyepa}[repeat]; {le} means 'karma', {nyepa} means 'definite'. Okay. What does karma's definite mean? It's very simple. If you do a good thing, if you do something to help somebody, if you do something out of kindness, you can never, ever get a bad result. Period. It's impossible, okay. If you do something with a crappy motivation, if you do something with a bad motivation, you can't get anything good out of it. It will be bad, okay. Period. Jesus said it over and over and over again. You can't get lemons from apple seeds. Forget it, you know. Same thing, very, very same thing, okay. So people say, well, I, I, I, I decided I'd be totally honest at work, you know, and I told my boss what I really thought and he made me work overtime for six weeks, you know. So your laws of karma don't work. You have to get it, okay. Being

truthful means that in the future everyone will believe you. That's the karmic result. And you will live in a society where truth is valued. If the boss gets mad at you right after you tell the truth there is no connection, get used to it; Buddhist worldview, okay. The fact that the boss got angry comes from something you did negative in the past. A negative result called anger can not happen from speaking the truth. It's impossible. Get used to it. We talk a lot about my boss sending me out to buy diamonds from somebody and lie about the value and try and get a hundred dollars off or a thousand dollars off. And sometimes it seems to work but it's not, it's an illusion. Okay. If you lie the only result that can happen is that people won't believe you in the future. If they happen to give you a thousand dollars off on this diamond deal because you told a lie it has nothing to do with the lie. Get used to it. It has to do with what? Being generous in my past. And there's no connection between the lie and the money. Get used to it, okay. That's the first law of karma. And the whole appearance of things is not like that and therefore the world suffers, okay. If you were totally honest the whole time you'd be enlightened, okay. Period. People ask me, should I cheat on my green card, you know, should I lie? I say, does it work every time? And they say, no. So I say, that's not the cause, see what I mean? If you lie to get a green card the only result that can ever happen is that people won't believe you in the future. But what if I get the green card? That's because you helped someone find a home in the past. It has nothing to do with the lie. Get used to that. The bottom line is there's no reason to lie anymore. If you believe this first law of karma you have no need to lie anymore 'cos it doesn't work. Get it? Prove it. It doesn't work all the time, okay. Sometimes you tell a lie and it helps. Sometimes you tell a lie and it doesn't help. That's proof that lying doesn't work. Get it? I mean, it's so simple that you don't get it. Okay, anyway. [laughter]

If a lie caused a desirable result it should work every time and it doesn't. Therefore, the lie is not causing the thing that you thought it was causing. That's all. Get used to it. Bad deed, negative action, negative thought, can never have a good result. And everything, every good that came to you had nothing to do with something bad you did. Cannot happen. Impossible. Technically impossible. Totally impossible. One atom impossible, okay. Get used to it. What if everybody lived that way? Oh, that would be weird. Okay.

Say {le}[repeat] {pel}[repeat] {che-wa}[repeat], second law of karma: karmic energy always increases. {le} means karma, {pel che-wa} means it always gets bigger, okay. And think of a walnut or somebody gave me in California a Redwood seed. They're smaller than the tip of your little finger. The seeds that grow those trees are smaller, we handed them out in class when I taught karma. Everybody got, like, three of them, you know. These are the trees that crush

houses when they fall over and they come from this little tiny seed. Don't think that karmic things aren't the same. They are, okay. People tell me it's okay to have, to tell white lies, you know. Is it okay to dislike my friend at work a little bit? Oh, yeah, instead of going to a hell realm you'll just die ten, ten years earlier. You know what I mean? Things get bigger with karma. I mean, it's scary. It's the same as physical stuff, okay. Your whole body replicating itself for seventy years came from one sperm and one cell, one egg. And don't think that karmic things don't work the same. They work the same. One small slip in karma has its affects for years. And get used to that idea. That's a law of karma. Okay. One small lie, one small irritation at somebody, and, and, and you will have things happening to you for years, okay. You gotta get used to that.

Okay, this is the last line, okay. I just realised I told you the other question so you've covered everything. Say {le}[repeat] {ma je pa}[repeat] {mi-tre-pa}[repeat]. I'm sorry, there are four. You got one more tonight. {le ma-je-pa dang mi-tre pa} means if you don't do a karma you will never have anything happen, okay. So, in a negative way, this is comforting. I mean, if you go to work tomorrow and because of this lecture you don't tell one lie that you would have told your future will be much happier, okay. I mean, avoiding even small negative deeds is very powerful, okay. If you can avoid just one a day it's very powerful, okay. You will never have any karma from that, okay. If you could just keep this skin on top of this skin, you know [laughter] when, when your boss says something, just, just once, tremendous karmic results; tremendous saving in karmic pain. Okay. And you gotta think of that. One missed opportunity for a slight bad deed is very, very big step for mankind, okay. It's a great achievement. Nothing will happen from nothing. Okay. And that's good news, all right. It also means, don't go round expecting a big change in your life if you don't make any effort, okay. If you don't learn your vows, if you don't check them every few hours, don't expect a big change. Don't go to some Tantric initiation and think that something's gonna change. It's not. Okay. If you don't do the karma, nothing's gonna happen. Okay. Period. Okay. If you don't become a vow master, a vow keeping expert, forget it, nothing will change in your life. You can just forget it now, you know. Better, better not to even take them. I'm talking bodhisattva vows and tantric vows, okay. Don't expect anything to happen if you don't know them and you don't keep them, okay.

Last one. Say {le je-pa chu}[repeat] {mi-sa-wa}[repeat]; {le che} means, but if you do do some karma, okay. By the way, three ways to do karma, I'm sure you know. I don't have to talk about it. You do something with your body. You say something with your words. But, most importantly, you think something, okay. That's the most powerful one. {...}, fourth chapter, Abhidharmakosha, raw karma is thinking. Okay. You don't have to say something to someone or hit

them. Just to think about it, just to be angry at them in your mind is much more powerful, okay. That makes the whole karmic game very difficult. Okay. I mean, it's kind of comforting, the idea that if you don't punch him or say anything, everything's okay. It's not like that. You actually have to control your thoughts 'cos they are raw karma, karma in the raw. They are ultimately, they are the most important karma. {...}, means ultimate karma is thought. It's just having a thought, okay. { le je-pa chu mi-sa-wa} means, once you've done a karma they don't ever go away by themselves, okay. Impossible. Okay. Karma is, your mind is a perfect video-cam recorder. Okay. It registers every single thought and every half thought is registered on your karma meter perfectly. You never get away with anything, okay. Never. Once a thought crosses your mind the karma is recorded in your consciousness and it will come back to you, okay. That's, that's the fourth principle of karma, you know. It doesn't, people, it's weird, it's funny, once you know karma well, it's a joke when you think that someone's hiding their bad deeds. You know what I mean. Oh, I go in my room and make sure that nobody's there, you know. I close the curtains and then I do my bad deeds, you know. Or, you know, I stole that money, but it's totally okay 'cos there were a hundred people in that room and nobody saw it drop on the floor and I got away with it. Forget it. You know, karma is collected by the act of perceiving yourself do something. Karma is collected by the act of being aware that you're thinking. And you're doing that all the time. So, you're collecting karma all the time. You can't get away. There ain't no place to, you can run but you can't hide. Karma is, is merciless, okay. Once you have the thought you've collected the karma. Okay. It's worse if you say something but it's still bad if you think it, okay.

Last thing to say is, in the Mahayana system, okay, taught by Lord Buddha, you can short-circuit that karma. Okay. Otherwise it's impossible to get, to be a Buddha. It'd be impossible to get enlightened. Everyday we have thousands and thousands of bad thoughts, even little bad thoughts. And then very few strong, firm, noble thoughts, you know. So if there wasn't some way to deal with old karmas we'd be in trouble. And we'll talk about that on another night. It's the principle of short-circuiting karmic energies in your mind so they don't come back to you. And you can do that. There is a practice for that. It's called the Four Powers, okay. And we'll talk about that some time. So, there's a, there's an exception to the fourth rule. If you undertake proper purification you can remove almost all the energy of a karma. And the Diamond Cutter says that. And when we get to the Diamond Cutter in about July we'll cover that. Okay. We'll do some prayers and then you can go. You'll get a homework tonight. That's due Thursday. I made a mistake. I said Tuesday. It's due a week from now. Okay. So I guess you can still get in on Tuesday without homework,

all right. But I'm gonna be very strict, no jokes, okay.

[discusses meeting]

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Okay, see you next time. Don't get scared just 'cos it went on a little bit. There's a lot of stuff, okay. Don't get nervous. Don't get scared. Just do it. Okay. And it's very valuable. You'll appreciate it later. Okay. All right.

Asian Classics Institute
Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism

Class Two
Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

.... start. Just to bring you back to where we were. By the way, I'd like to welcome [unclear], long time; one of the first students who ever studied there. To bring you back to where we were, we were halfway through the very first class we ever had. We were talking about the three principle paths. First one being when someone close to you dies and you finally decide that maybe you should check something out, okay. Renunciation. And, again, the best Buddhists I know are people who had some personal disaster and then they went looking for something, okay. So I had this lady come up to me the other night and say, I've been praying that I can have this personal disaster [laughter] and I'm happy to report my prayers were answered. [laughs] Some terrible thing happened to us. Anyway, hopefully you can do it intellectually.

Secondly, is bodhichitta, okay, ultimate compassion. And we'll talk about that tonight.

And then, finally, correct view; the view of emptiness. To understand emptiness and karma, okay.

We've covered, already, renunciation and now we're gonna go onto bodhichitta or ultimate compassion. And then, finally, we'll go onto correct view, all tonight, okay. Because next class you start the second course we have which is Refuge, Perfection of Wisdom, okay. So we're gonna cover a month and a half of stuff today, alright.

Bodhichitta is a very famous word. People sometimes spell it without the 'h' because when you transcribe Sanskrit you don't use an 'h' and then people go around saying 'bodhicitta', okay. That's a mistake, alright. Bodhichitta is the Sanskrit word. I'll give you the Tibetan word. Say {jang}[repeat] {chub}[repeat] {kyi}[repeat] {sem}[repeat], {jang chub kyi}[repeat] {sem}[repeat]. By the way,

there's also another word for bodhichitta called {sem kye}. And I'm not gonna write that here but you might see that sometime; {sem kye}. Okay. The {jang chub} part means, 'bodhi' and the {sem} part means 'chitta'. Bodhi means Buddha and chitta means mind, so in the early days, people were translating as 'bodhi mind' or 'buddha mind' and then people thought that meant the mind of a Buddha. Like, an enlightened being's mind. And that's wrong. That's not what bodhichitta means. You can get bodhichitta thousands of years before you get enlightened, okay. So it doesn't mean the mind of a Buddha. It means the wish to become a Buddha, okay, wish to become a Buddha. So you can really help others. So then you see, this is a very important point, this is how bodhichitta is defined, okay: {sem kye ...}, very famous. Maitreya defined it that way, okay. {sem kye ..} means, bodhichitta is {..} for the sake of others, {yangdak ..} means to want to get to be a complete Buddha. So, the definition of bodhichitta is, the desire to become or the wish to become a fully enlightened Buddha so you can really help other people, okay. And usually people say, by the way, once you get bodhichitta you're automatically a bodhisattva. Okay. That's the difference between a person who's not a bodhisattva and a person who is a bodhisattva. As soon as you have real bodhicitta, you are a bodhisattva. On the first instance that you have real bodhicitta you become a bodhisattva, okay. And then you hear people saying, he's a really nice guy so I think he's a bodhisattva. Or I heard this lama say this guy must be a bodhisattva, you know. You say, why. And they say, he's just so nice, you know. He's nice to everybody. And he's always giving money away to poor people and stuff like that. Those are good things and that's, those are good indicators that the person is a good person or holy person. It's not what bodhicitta is about at all, okay. Bodhicitta's a much different thing. A person with bodhicitta, by the way, to experience bodhicitta really, okay, to have the real experience of total compassion for all living beings is extremely rare. Okay. Like, in a room of typical people you might find one or less. To really get pure bodhicitta in your mind is a spiritual breakthrough that very few people reach, okay. Extremely difficult to get true bodhicitta. And, and it's not like some vague desire to get to enlightenment, okay. It's not some idea that I'd like to get enlightened some day. It's a mystical experience that occurs to you. It's a specific, visions are connected with it and, and then you truly see yourself for the rest of your lives doing every single activity of the day and night to aid other beings by becoming a Buddha yourself, okay. And that's big difference, okay. A typical bodhisattva might be, rather than being sweet and nice to everybody and going out and helping everybody all the time, they might be doing intense meditation or they might be trying to see emptiness directly because they realise this is the way they can really help other people. And that's a little bit difficult for American people, you know. I had a big debate with

somebody the other day, you know. They said, oh, bodhisattvas should go out and feed poor people and stuff like that. That's a very important activity and if you are a bodhisattva you probably will be doing that activity. But the real state of mind of a bodhisattva, the bodhisattva state of mind is very specific and there's no doubt about it. They have one thing in mind. They can see what it's like to be totally enlightened and they're spending all their energy to get there with, with other people in mind. And they have, you know, there's a big debate in the Scripture, can they see every single being. You say, no they can't. But when you get bodhicitta directly, when you have the direct first experience of bodhicitta, you have a what we call, a {neljor gunsum}, a yogic or a mystical experience of actually being able to serve every living being. You don't see every living being but you have this experience of covering every other living being and being able to treat them well, okay. I'll give you an example, okay. Some people talk about bodhisattvas being willing to hold off from their enlightenment, you know. They're, like, so compassionate that just before they get enlightened they say, no, you know what, I'll wait a few years and I'll hang out in this suffering world with other people just to be with them and guide them. I will even delay my own enlightenment for others, okay. This is like a typical dharma rumour, okay. Remember what happens the minute they get enlightened. The minute you get enlightened you pick up an extra trillion bodies or so, okay. And then you help, you can emanate trillions of bodies on trillions of planets. You can read the minds of every person on this planet. You can see their future for millions of years, every detail of it. I mean, would you rather be a person like that or one single guy walking around planet earth trying to help a few people? You see what I mean? The point is get to enlightenment as fast as you can yourself and then, and then, learn how to bring other people there well because you can read a million people's minds. You can tell them, you can tell what's going to happen to them in the next thousand years or so every day in one moment. You want to pick up this capacity. You want to reach this capacity and you can. Every normal American person sitting here has the capacity, mentally, to reach this before you die. And, and you gotta put your mind on that and that's, that's real bodhicitta. A bodhisattva might not look like a bodhisattva. A bodhisattva might not be a nice guy or a smiley guy or something like that. They are intent on one goal and, and that's to become enlightened so they can really help other people. Everything they do from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep, every action they undertake is aimed at becoming an enlightened being. They're fanatical about it. They know what they have to do and they're, they're concentrating on only that. That's, that's bodhisattva, okay, that's bodhicitta, okay. Does it mean you can just sit around all day and study books and ignore the suffering people around us?

That's an indication that, the person didn't get it, you see what I mean? It's unlikely that a person would be wanting to save all living beings and not be willing to help a homeless person, okay. They don't quite jive. You'd have to be someone who is (a) studying Scripture intensely, (b) meditating for long periods of time, (c) going on retreats a lot and (d) organising some kind of projects to help poor people who are needy and stuff like that. You see what I mean? It's not like when you become a bodhisattva you don't do those normal good things but you're concentrating very heavily on meditation and study that you need to do and uncontrollably you're spending time helping other people in a physical way. And, and I doubt it that you could find a bodhisattva that wasn't doing both, okay. That's what I'm trying to say, alright. So that's {jang chub kyi sem}, that's bodhicitta, alright. And you have to, that's the second of the three principle paths and you must try to reach that, okay. You must try to reach that experience; very, very difficult. If you had it happen to you once in this life you'd be very, very fortunate, okay. It lasts about two minutes. And to really have it happen to you would be worth a lifetime of study and effort. Very rare to reach that, okay.

How do you reach it? There are several famous instructions and I'm gonna give you one of them, okay. This is called the Seven Step Instruction for Developing Bodhicitta. You can ignore, well, you can read this. This one over here, by the way, is the other spelling of bodhicitta, okay. This is the other Tibetan word for bodhicitta. You can use either one on your homework, okay. Say, {mar she} [repeat] {mar-she}[repeat], this is the first of the seven steps for developing bodhicitta. {mar-she} means, recognise that all other beings have been your mother, okay. Recognise that all other beings have been your mother. Now, I get a lot of people telling me, Americans especially, my mother was not very nice and it's no big deal to recognise other people as my mother, okay. I'd rather not [laughs][laughter] you know what I mean. Scripture says, no matter what you think of your current mother, if you had to do what she did for you, just by having you, you'd probably change your mind. You see what I mean. Just to carry somebody around for nine months, to go through some kind of body-splitting torture. I remember Bill Cosby saying it was something like wrapping your upper lip over your head [laughs], something like that. That even just that. And you don't know anything or you can't learn anything without your mother. You assume that all people talk and you assume that all people walk and you assume that people know how to do basic things, basic ways of behaving in society. Your mother has equipped you with these things from the beginning and you don't even remember it and you take it for granted. But actually, what, the first five, ten years it's constant trouble for them. Every single minute of the day they either have to be taking care of you or worrying

about taking care of you, responsible for taking care of you. And not to somehow think that they did a, and to worry about the fights you had with your mother when you got to twenty or something, is to ignore the fact that they didn't invest one hour in you or two hours in you. They invested, they invested their entire mind's energy for five to ten years, fifteen years. Some people fifty years. They, they, they couldn't stop thinking about taking care of you. Whether it was them or some kind of babysitter they had to arrange it. Every hour of the day they had to be wondering where you were, if you were alright, how to take care of you, how to feed you. And to ignore it is crazy. So we're talking about the ideal mother, okay. If your mother was a bad person and she left you or something like that, don't think of that. Think of an ideal mother, okay. That's what we're talking about here. Every other being in the world has been your ideal mother countless times, okay, countless times. Your mind has no beginning. You have had every relationship with every other person countless times. You've been Miss America countless times, okay. I'm not kidding, okay. You've been President of the United States countless times, alright. You've been everything countless times 'cos the odds are infinite and you've been through it countless times. This involves proving that your mind didn't have a beginning and you have to work on that. You have to study it. You have a prejudice that comes from a western background that says that your mind started when your brain started. And that's not correct. That's not true, okay. But it takes time to prove it to somebody [unclear]. You have to work on it. But, there hasn't been a time in history when your mind wasn't somewhere in this universe. Your mind has been here forever. There's no beginning to your mind and there will be no end to your mind, okay. Meaning, you've been everything to everybody else, you know. Logically, how do you prove it? I think, for an American, you can just say statistics, you know. If time is infinite, I mean, I'll give you just a high school, that's all the statistics I ever did, I'll give you high school statistics. If time is infinite, if the time before this is infinitely long, and, and if you could happen once, which you did because you're sitting here, is it impossible, isn't it likely that you happened before? I mean that's, to me, that's all the statistics you need, okay. If time is infinite and if you were born once then can't the same thing happen again? Maybe you can say it's just a bunch of accidental chemicals coming together on the shore of the [unclear] ocean or something but can't that happen countless times if time is infinite? You see what I mean. If you can be here once why can't you be here again, you see? If the odds are one in a zillion that you can happen then you'll happen countless times because the odds are infinite, you know. The zillions have no end. You will come again and you were here before and everybody around you has been everything to you. So then, some Americans come up to me and say, well then,

I should hate everyone 'cos everyone's murdered me countless times, [laughter] you know. You know, Ann Lindsay has eaten me countless times, [laughter] you know. And I say, come on that's not a positive attitude. [laughs] [laughter] Okay. It's true [laughs], it's true but we choose to focus on the fact that she has served me countless lifetimes. She has cared for me in thousands and thousands and thousands of lifetimes. I remember this was one of the first teachings I ever got. I was in Dharamsala, India, up on the mountain in [...] and I got out of class and I determined that the first person I met I was gonna meditate on them as my mother. And I met this grubby Indian chappati seller, you know, [laughs] on the side and I'm, like, this is my mother, [laughter] you know. And so I'm, like, trying to concentrate on this guy as my mother and then I'm like, and if you try then it's a very good exercise. You know, we can talk about it. We can talk about it theoretically but tonight when you go home, you know, don't count people in this class, but when you go home you go out, first person you meet, you know, first person you have a few minutes to be around them, wonder about the possibility that they were your mother and that they took care of you like that. Okay. That's the very first step in developing bodhicitta. It's a very, very beautiful exercise. It's a good way when you're walking around the streets of New York and you don't want to waste your time, think about it. When your eyes catch on somebody think this, this could have been my mother, okay. I say, statistically, they have been, okay.

Say {drin dren}[repeat] {drin dren}[repeat]; {drin} means kindness, {dren} means think about it, recall, recall their kindness, okay. Think about their kindness. And again, you know, in this life I haven't been a mother, okay. I can remember one time I made a deal with some friends in Arizona. I said, if you cook for me during retreat I'll baby-sit your kids for two days afterwards, you know. This is fair right? Thirty days of cooking for two days of babysitting. And I was, like, thirty something years old and I thought this is gonna be a cinch, you know. This is, like, all day and all night. There's two kids. I don't know, they must have been about oh, four and six, or something like that. Two boys, alright. And so I came out of this blissful retreat, silent [laughter] for forty days. And then I said, you guys go on your second honeymoon and give me the kids. And they left the kids at my house and I've never gone through such torture, you know. [laughter] the worst thing, I mean, the worst thing was that I couldn't get to sleep at night 'cos I had to think about them. You know, I mean, I had to worry that one of them might get up or wander out of the house. And it was, like, completely, I mean, the fact that every single minute of the day I had to be engaged with them was, was unbearable to me, you know. [laughter] I mean, I like to play with people's children and then I like to send them home, you know. [laughter] But to be there every single moment of the whole day, and I

remember going into the bathroom 'cos I had to poop, you know, and they wouldn't let me. They were banging on the door, you know, and I was thinking, how do people do this, you know. And that's the way it is. I mean, you, you can think of your mother as a good person or a bad person, it doesn't matter. They did that for you, okay, for years, you know. They gave up everything to, whether they were immediately taking care of you or somebody else was, it was their responsibility. And every moment of the day they were thinking of it, okay. And {drin-dren} means, think about that, you know, think about that. The ultimate kindness, by the way, that your mother has given you, according to Buddhism, is that they gave you a body, okay. Good, bad or indifferent, your mother provided the physical material to produce you, okay. I mean, according to Buddhism, once conception has occurred their greatest kindness has already been delivered, you know. Which is, just to give you a human body. 'Cos once you have a human body, if you study properly, practice properly, meditate properly and then study tantra properly, you can get enlightened in this body. You can become an enlightened being with the material, with the raw material they provided you. No one has ever paid anyone a greater kindness than that, you see. And that's the big deal. They talk about the five greatest sins of Buddhism, one is to kill your mother. And the reason is only that they have provided you with the greatest gift that a person can give another one which is the opportunity or the chance to become an enlightened, to get out of suffering; to become an enlightened being in one lifetime. So, just based on that, you owe them a lot. And as you walk around and the first person you see on the street tonight, I think the subway's really good if you sit across from somebody, then look at them and think, maybe this person did that for me. And that was really nice. I remember that. And thank them for that, okay.

By the way, each step is built on the one before. And your homework asks you about it, okay. Meaning, you can't appreciate their kindness if you don't believe they could have been your mother, okay. So you gotta have the first one first and then you have the second one. And the, and the Lam Rim and the other books say, meditate on each one in order. Think about the first one a lot and then think about the second one, okay, based on the first one. If you jump ahead to the second one without going through the first one you won't, it won't work so well, okay.

Say {drin-so}[repeat] {drin-so}[repeat]; {drin-so} means the next step is to think about paying back their kindnesses. {so} means 'to pay back', {drin} means 'kindness', okay; {drin-so} means pay them back. And, in Buddhism, gratitude is like a high spiritual level, okay. Gratitude is a, I think in our society it's a very weak point. I think in our society we're almost handicapped or retarded about the concept of gratitude. But it's a very fulfilling concept, it's a very wonderful

emotion to have, is to think of what someone has done for you and then do something to help them in return, you know, do something to pay them back. Those of you who have taken bodhisattva vows this is one of your vows, okay. If someone has paid you some kind of kindness you must repay them. You must go out of your way to pay them back, okay. And all throughout Buddhist Scripture it says, you are some kind of monster if you don't think this way, you see what I mean. You have a mental illness, you have a defect in your head if you don't, if it doesn't occur to you that you should help that person back who's been giving you something; who's been serving you, helping you, giving you something. That, that it's one of the greatest human emotions spiritually to think, oh, this person's spent a lot of time trying to help me, maybe I should do something back to help them, okay. That's called {drin-so}. Okay. By the way, that can't happen unless what? [students] Yeah, unless you think about what they did for you. I mean, Americans, I am very good at ignoring both, you know. Like, I don't think about how much time someone's spent to train me, for example, and then it never occurs to me to give anything back to them, okay. That's a real typical cycle, alright.

Say {yi-ong}[repeat] {jampa}[repeat], {yi-ong}[repeat] {jampa}[repeat], okay. {jampa} is Tibetan word for 'maitri' in Sanskrit, meaning love, okay, love; {yi-ong} means, pretty, okay, pretty love. And this is a special kind of love. In Tibetan philosophy when you're studying bodhichitta this is a special kind of love. The 'pretty' part means, if a mother had only one child and they weren't able to have any other children and they spent all their energy on this one child, how does that child look to them? {Yi-ong}, you see, {yi-ong} means, pretty or beautiful, you know. It's not a joke, okay, I have a certain number of students with children, each of them invariably comes to me and confides in me that they have the most intelligent child they have ever seen, you know. Even the modest ones, you know, they come up and say, well I'm not bragging or anything, but today he, like, waved his arm, you know [laughter] [laughs]. You now, you're like, wow, you know. That's {yi-ong}. {yi-ong} means, you look at this kid and you just can't, they just look like the most beautiful thing you ever saw, you know. That's called {yi-ong}. So, {yi-ong jampa} is a state of love where when you look at other people no matter how ugly their mug is you, you still are struck with this impression that they're the most beautiful, precious little thing you've ever seen. And you think that about everybody, okay. That's, like, very hard, okay, and that's a high spiritual achievement. That's, that's the next step in developing bodhichitta, okay, the wish for enlightenment. It's to get to where you could reach that state where anytime you saw somebody, no matter how good they were or bad to you, you would think, oh this is the most lovely little thing I ever saw. Now, how could I help this thing? Okay. Tsultrim makes

these sounds when he sees a cute dog, you know. Suppose you made this everytime you saw somebody, you know. Doesn't matter if they're tall or fat or short, you just see them and you're like , oh, you're the most beautiful little thing I ever saw. And then you wanna help them. You wanna do something for them. {jampa} by the way, there's two versions of want t love in Buddhism; {jampa} means you want to give them something, you see what I mean. You want to provide them with something, okay, with every kind of happiness you can, alright. You can see how it comes out of wanting to pay them back, okay. Natural progression from wanting to pay them back which was the step before. Here's number five. Say {nying je}[repeat] {chenpo}[repeat], {nying je}[repeat] {chenpo}[repeat]; {nying je} means compassion; {chenpo} means big, okay. In Sanskrit, mahakaruna. By the way, {nying} means 'heart' and {je} means 'king' – king of hearts, okay, compassion, alright. And this is how it differs from love. See, love wants to give people things. Love wants to supply everybody with everything they ever hoped for. Real bodhichitta says I want everyone around me to get enlightened during my lifetime. I want to watch it happen. And by the way, I also want to feed them a nice Indian dinner. You know what I mean. It's what we call common attainments and ultimate attainments. But, but {jampa}, love, wants to do both, okay. {nying je} is different. {nying je} looks at people and says, I want to remove from them all the problems they have, okay. I want to identify everything about the lives of the people around me that is bad and I want to help them get rid of that thing, okay. I want to help each person get rid of everything bad about their lives, okay. So in a short time it would be teach them how to make a living, you see what I mean. Teach them how to cook something. Like that. In the ultimate it would be teach this person how not to have a mental affliction, you know. Teach this person how to get away from the tyranny of their own bad thoughts, you see what I mean. That's like a real gift that you could give somebody. Your bad thoughts push you around all day. You make yourself miserable all day. If someone could come and teach you how to stop doing that, that would be {nying je}, you see what I mean. {nying je} is like, teach somebody how to stop shooting themselves in the foot, okay. And that's you're ultimate {nying je}. Teach them how to stop the impure part of their own mind, is the ultimate kind of compassion, okay.

I wanna point out something about these two. The first one was love. The second one was compassion. And there's a debate in the text, you know, maybe we should have put compassion before love. Maybe it would be more logical to put the compassion before love. Why? Suppose you have a child who's very sick, who has a very high fever. And you had a choice between giving them an ice pack on their head, my mom used to do that, okay, or giving them a nice new bicycle? You see what I mean? I mean, first you have to deal with people's

pain. First you have to remove their pain and then you give them the nice stuff that they want, okay. So, theoretically say people, compassion should come before love. First you have to remove all of people's problems and then you can give them all the nice stuff. So why is it this order? The {yi-ong} part is very important. {yi-ong} means you have to learn to look at them as being ... , you know, the most beautiful thing you ever saw and then you'll want to take their pain away, you see what I mean. And that's the reason for the order this way. Sometimes they do it this way, okay.

Now we're onto number six. Say {hlaksam}[repeat] {namdak}[repeat], {hlaksam}[repeat] {namdak}[repeat]; {hlaksam namdak} I really like this, means, ultimate personal responsibility. Okay.

{hlaksam namdak} means ultimate personal responsibility; {hlaksam} means, like, super personal willingness to take responsibility, {namdak} means pure. But the whole thing together means something like, ultimate personal responsibility. Meaning this: I will take it upon myself to do the best I can to remove other people's suffering and to give them all the things that they need and I don't care if anyone else helps me or not. Okay. I don't care if anyone else helps me or not. I don't care if they think I'm crazy. I don't care if they attack me. I don't care if they don't help me. I don't care if I spend all my own money on it. I'm gonna do it. Okay. It's just that personal decision that I'm not waiting for other people to show up and pitch in because, guess what, they won't, okay. Alright. [laughs] This is like, you just decide, you know, no matter what people say about me, no matter what I have to do, no matter how much of my personal resources I have to spend, no matter how much of my time I have to spend, I will take care of as many people as I can. Period, you know. And I won't wait for other people to help me, okay. That's just a decision, a resolution in your mind and, and that's very close to bodhichitta, okay. You're like, you're flirting with bodhichitta now, okay. When you get to that stage you're getting very close to bodhichitta.

Then you flop over into bodhichitta. And that's, that was up here. That was number seven.

{sem} this is the other word for bodhichitta. {sem} means mind or 'chitta' meaning the wish to get enlightened and {kye} means, you get it, you achieve it. Rinpoche's new book, 'Achieving Bodhichitta', {sem kye}, okay. That's the meaning of it. And that's the result of the other six steps. This is like this final decision, I want, by the way, it comes naturally out of number six. How? In number six, you decided if no one else in the world helps me and, in fact, if every single person I know attacks me, I don't care. I'm still going to do it. I'm going to do the fastest way I know how to get myself enlightened to take care of other people, okay. And then, number seven is, okay, what's the fastest way for me to

do it? What's the best way for me to help other people? I gotta get enlightened. I gotta get those other trillion bodies going, okay. I have to get the ability to see other people's minds. So what's the most important thing, you know, you should be thinking, if you have ultimate compassion, it's a very simple thought. I want to reach paradise, I want to reach total ecstasy as fast as I can and then I can show other people how to do it, you see what I mean. The rest is all BS, okay. I mean, to stand up there and say, everyone should get enlightened, here's how to do it and you guys try, okay. That's not the way it works. If you were really compassionate, if you really cared about other people and if you understood a little bit about Buddhism, you would see that it's possible to become an enlightened being, especially if you practised tantra, in this lifetime. You would see that this is a real possibility. And so the most compassionate thing that you can do for other people is to get enlightened yourself first, okay. In the Lam Rim it's called, 'eating the meat first'. There's a story in the Lam Rim. This family's in a famine; and there's three kids, a wife and a husband and there's no food. They're down to, it's called, it's called a 'popcorn kernel famine'. They're going through the cupboards and trying to find old popcorn kernels that fell out of the box because that's all there is to eat in the house. And there's nothing in the whole country. This is at the end of the third chapter, Abhidharmakosha, okay. It's called 'the famine year', you know. And then, suddenly, by good luck, they come across a hamburger, okay. Like, a big hunk of meat. In the Scriptures it's a hunk of dried meat or something like that, okay. But suddenly they come across this freeze dried hamburger or something.

So, they're making a decision, you know, should we cut it into five parts or what should we do? What's the best thing to do? And the father, out of compassion, eats the whole thing himself, so that he can be strong enough to go out and look for food for the family, see what I mean. And then he'll be strong enough to bring back more food. And that's the most compassionate thing you can do. It's very interesting concept. It means sometimes the most compassionate thing you can do is to get enlightened so that you can help other people. So it becomes a very interesting commandment of Buddhist practice: you are required by all of Buddhism, all Buddhist Scripture, all Buddhist knowledge, all Buddhist masters who have ever lived, require of you personally that you reach total ecstasy as quickly as possible so that you can help other people, okay. And you have to think of that. And I have a lot of students, Americans, who say they don't feel comfortable with that, you know. It seems selfish, you know. I got total ecstasy and that's the best thing I can do for other people? Get it. Right. Okay. That's right. And, and don't feel uncomfortable with it, okay. It's not selfish and it's not unspiritual. It's your duty, okay. You can sit there and explain emptiness, for example, all night because you read about it in some book, but if you've seen it

directly and you're explaining it to other people, they can smell it. Okay. You don't have to say, I saw emptiness directly. You just say, here's what it's like. Here's what happens to you, you know. Here's exactly what happens to you. And they smell it, you know. They, you don't have to get up and make wild claims or, or say one thing or another. They smell that you've seen it. They know that you've seen it. And that's the same difference. If you're gonna really help other people then you've got to enlightened yourself first. It's the only way, it's the only position from which you can honestly describe to other people how to do it is if you do it yourself. And that's the best thing you can do for other people, okay. You gotta get used to that. Did I, I was saying these words a couple of days ago to this guy and he started shaking and he got angry. And he said, so that means you shouldn't help starving people? That means you shouldn't help homeless, hopeless people? Homeless people? You shouldn't do all these things? I said, no, it means you should because that's how you get enlightened. And he said, that's even worse, you know. So are you telling me you're only gonna do these things for other people because they'll get you enlightened? I said, right. Because that's the only way you can help them, okay. That's the only real way you can help them, okay. You become a Dalai Lama you can help tens, hundreds of thousands of people, okay. You gotta think like that, alright. Does it mean you shouldn't help other people? No, you should. I don't know a single bodhisattva who doesn't help other people; homeless, hungry people, all kinds of people, okay. You will. You don't have to worry about it. That's a by-product, okay. But the mind has to be, the definition, {...} it's focussed on all other people and wants to get enlightened, you see what I mean. So you gotta be in that mood, okay. That's ultimate compassion. It's not just being friendly to other people, okay. That's not gonna save them. You can feed other people. You can clothe them. You can comfort them. And while you're doing it they're getting older and dying, okay. You get into enlightenment you can teach them how not to die, teach them how not to get old. You can teach them how not to need food or beds or houses, okay. And, and that's the point. It's very difficult in our realm, you know, our neighbourhood here, our hood, you know. The hood that you're in called the 'desire realm'; this kind of talk sounds crazy. I had a woman the other day, a big, famous writer who's doing an interview with me, you know. She says, you're talking like Walt Disney on acid, you know. [laughter] I don't know what you're talking about, you know.

And I said, you're in the desire realm. You haven't seen the enlightened realm. You haven't seen the other hoods that are around, you see what I mean, and you assume that this is the only realm there is. It's not like that. There are other

realms. There's a form realm. There's a formless realm. They exist. They're not just some Buddhist fantasy. And enlightened realms exist and if you saw one for five minutes you'd stop all this other stuff and try to get there and try to get other people there, you see what I mean. Don't think that this is the only place there is. It's not. And, and you can see those other realms and you can get there and then you can teach other people to get there. This realm is an accident, you know. You don't get into this realm unless you have some karmic accident. Unless you have ignorance you can't get into this realm. This realm is full of misfits. If you're in the desire realm that's proof that you're a misfit, okay. It's proof that you didn't do things right, actually, you screwed up big time. And you're in this realm that doesn't work, okay. It's a dysfunctional realm. Seriously. The world, as you know it, is dysfunctional. The only thing you can get here is death, okay. You can work your, I mean, you can work your whole life, collect money, try to go to the gym, use all the makeup you want, buy the best high-heel shoes you can locate, doesn't matter. It's all doomed. It's a crazy man's activity to live in this world. And, and this is just one of many, many realms and you don't have to live here. And you don't have to be here. And you can teach other people to get out. And that would be the kindest thing to do. You have to think that, it's true, it's really true, okay.

Alright, that's bodhicitta. Okay, we're gonna go, like, another ten minutes. You're gonna learn all about emptiness in ten minutes, okay. [laughter]

Say {tendrel}[repeat] {tendrel}[repeat]; {tendrel} has been translated, clumsily, as dependent origination: de-pen-dent-or-ig-in-a-tion, eight syllables. I think you can't be an American Buddhist unless you can say 'dependent origination' quickly, like, five times in a row, okay. [laughter] I like to call it 'dependence' or 'interdependence', I don't know. I think 'dependence' is probably easier. It does mean dependent origination. {...} means, things happen because of dependence, okay. Things happen because of its dependence. Everything around you and you has occurred through some kind of dependence on other things, okay. That's all. If you want to understand emptiness you've got to understand dependent origination first, okay. It's the flip-side of emptiness, okay. Dependent origination is the positive side. It's why things happen. Emptiness is the negative side. It's why things don't happen. Okay. And we'll get to it, okay. But without understanding dependent origination or why things happen, how things happen around you, you can never get to emptiness. So we're gonna go to dependent origination first alright. The book that you're studying, which you'll finally get tonight, in your notebook, okay, is 'The Three Principle Paths'. And the commentary by the holy, glorious Pabongka Rinpoche, translated by the holy, glorious Khen Rinpoche, okay. And in there is the most beautiful explanation of dependent origination I have ever seen, okay. So you gotta know

it and you're gonna have it on your homework, okay. He goes through explaining three different versions of dependent origination, okay. There are three different explanations of what it means to be dependent, okay. And we're gonna go through all three because you can't understand emptiness unless you understand those three, okay.

Here's number one. The first version of dependent origination is the one that's accepted by these three schools. Remember, there are four great schools of ancient India. We're not talking about the four Tibetan schools, okay.

We're talking about the four great schools of ancient India. The Vaibashika, which is Abhidharma; the Sautrantika which is Sutrists, those who put a lot of faith in Sutra and they teach a lot of logic; and then thirdly, the Mind Only school, Cittamatra or {sem tsampa}, okay. And these are the three, the three lower schools of ancient India. And they all made a consortium and said, we're all gonna sell dependent origination this way, okay. What? Very simple, things depend on their causes and conditions to occur. That's what dependent origination means. Things occur in dependence on their causes and conditions, okay. Causes, in the case of a fruit tree, being, like, a apple seed. Conditions being: the water, the soil, the sunlight, the fertiliser, okay. But, dependent on those, all things occur. Now I'm gonna teach you something about emptiness, okay. Supposedly, the only way to be happy, according to Buddhism the only way to remove all your bad thoughts forever, is to see emptiness directly. There is no other method to be happy, okay. Get it? If you don't see emptiness directly in this lifetime it's physically impossible for you to be happy. It will never occur. You cannot remove anger, jealousy, hatred, desire; impossible to remove them unless you see emptiness directly, okay. So something about this explanation has to be able to overcome your anger, your desire, your jealousy, okay. Let's investigate. Is this a good explanation of dependent origination or not? Okay. And I saw this in, I don't know where it was, anyway. So suppose I get mad at my boss or something, okay. Suppose I'm mad at my boss when they come in the office because they're criticising me for something, okay. And then I'm looking at them, does it help to say, you know what, this guy came from his mother. If his father hadn't have been there as a condition he wouldn't have been here either, you know. Now my anger has gone away, you know. [laughter] Okay. Okay, anyone who goes and tries to sell the meaning of dependent origination, the ultimate meaning of dependent origination as being, oh those things which depend on their causes and conditions, I mean, maybe it helps a little bit, okay. To know, okay, he may be yelling at me 'cos he had a backache in the morning and had a fight with his wife and he ate at an Indian restaurant on sixth street last night and got sick, okay. So I understand where he's coming from, does that remove your mental afflictions forever? No. It

helps you appreciate his problems. It makes you a little more compassionate towards him but it doesn't remove your mental afflictions. This is not the ultimate explanation of dependent origination, okay. It's not. And, and, you know, unfortunately I think, many presentations of Buddhism never go beyond this, you see. They say, look, don't worry, realise everything comes from causes and conditions, see you later, you know. And you're, like, that's it, you know? That's not it. There are two more versions which are even more helpful, okay. Is this one dumb or retarded or something we should forget? No, it's very helpful. That's why Lord Buddha taught it. But it's not the ultimate, okay.

Here's number two. Okay, the next best explanation is by the Independent; Independent is the translation of the word Svatantrika. The 'tantrika' here has nothing to do with tantra, okay. It's a wholly different meaning of the word. Here it means a kind of logic. They accept that there's a kind of logic which works to explain emptiness and that logic itself is self-existent in a way. You don't have to worry about why they're called Independents, okay. Enough to know that they are the lower half of the highest of the four schools. What's the highest of the four schools? Middle Way or Madhyamika, okay. The highest of the four schools of ancient India was called Madhyamika. This is the lower half of that school. And they have their own idea about dependent origination, okay.

They say the following: something is dependently originating when it depends on its parts. Something is dependent origination if it depends on its parts. Instead of saying what the lower group said, what did the lower group say? It has to depend on causes and conditions, that's what makes it dependent origination. This school says, no, no, no. You have to say something is dependent when it depends on its parts, okay. And our explanation is better than those Functionalists because, as everybody knows, there's stuff in the world, which has causes and there's stuff in the world that doesn't have any causes, okay. And their explanation only covers half, okay. Our explanation covers everything, okay. By the way, uncaused things are not too numerous, there's only a few. Emptiness is one. It doesn't have a cause, okay. It exists but it doesn't have a cause. Another one is empty space, okay. Space can come and go, planets can come and go, milky ways can melt or not melt, empty space remains. After all is said and done empty space is there, never had a beginning, never had a cause, okay. It's there. Its parts are direction. Okay. The parts of empty space are direction. The emptiness of emptiness you can say the emptiness of four o'clock, the emptiness of five o'clock, stuff like that, okay. Really. The emptiness of the object as the object changes, okay. The emptiness refers to different bases as the object change. And those are different. Those are parts, okay. So, like that. They like this explanation. They say it's better. Now remember the text that I, you know, I went through years of trying to find this

explanation and, and I went through years. I remember being in Dharamsala, I'm twenty-one or twenty-two years old, I'm starting to study Buddhism, this Harvard post-graduate has a, his, what do you call it, his thesis, you know, that he's been doing there with some Lama for the last four years, you know. And he says, here, read this, it'll give you everything you need to know. So I open it up and start reading. And then he's got this part, it says, those of you who have trouble with desire, which includes me, okay, for girls, alright. He says, check this out. Read this. All you have to do is realise that they're composed of parts and everything will change, you know. So I'm, like, wow, okay, this is the emptiness of girls, you know. So I'm, like, just realise that they're made up of left eye, right eye, left ear, right ear. I'm, like, concentrating, left ear, right ear, you know, and nothing changed. It didn't fix anything. Okay, so they're made of atoms. Okay, so they're made of parts. It didn't seem to remove my negative emotions, okay. It didn't seem to remove my negative thoughts. Doesn't seem to relate to emptiness which is supposed to fix all your problems, okay. Doesn't seem to directly relate to that, okay. I can try to think of them, you know, as being Mattell parts, you know, but it doesn't really remove it, you know, my desire, my improper desire, okay. So I was very happy to find out when Pabongka Rinpoche says that's not the ultimate explanation, okay. So what is? Here's number three. We'll say Consequence Group. In Sanskrit it's called Prasangika. This is the higher half of the fourth school, okay. This is the ultimate explanation. This is the school of Lord Buddha, Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti, Shantideva, the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, Khen Rinpoche. Everybody. Okay. All tantric schools accept this explanation. Okay. This is the ultimate explanation of dependent origination, okay. By the way, they're called Consequence because they believe in the power of consequential logic used for some one to prove something. For example, they believe you can prove emptiness to somebody just be showing them the consequences of their wrong ideas about emptiness, okay. And that's why they're called the, that school. You don't have to worry about that. You don't have to know that. That's just why they have a weird name, okay.

What do they think dependent origination means? What do they think it is to be dependent origination? They think that everything is dependent because they exist on the projections that are coming from your mind to be there. And those projections are forced on you by your past karma, okay. You gotta get all that in your answer. They believe that the very existence of everything around you comes from projections of your own mind and that those projections are forced on you by your past karma.

Does it mean that they think everything is just the mind only? No, okay. Do they accept the existence of outside objects? Yes. If you don't think so go and

stand in front of a car, okay, and report to us whether it's outside of your mind. You see what I mean? That's not the point, okay. The point is, is, is this, okay. You can, you can apply it to my arm, okay. Prasangika Madhyamika says, ultimately speaking, this is only a flesh colored cylinder, okay. This is a flesh colored cylinder. Okay. So if you're going to be a real scientist, this is a flesh colored cylinder, okay. There is something in my mind that's making me see it as a human arm, okay. There's something coming from me, from my side, that's making me see it as a human arm. There is no human arm-ness in that cylinder, okay. And, if I happen to have different karma, lousier karma, I would be seeing that cylinder as a dog's leg, okay. You gotta get used to that. And that's what it is to be a dog. And that's what it is to be a human. You gotta get used to that. Technically speaking, this is just a neutral cylinder. Emptiness means 'blank' or 'neutral'. This is just a plain old innocent, neutral cylinder. Whether I see it as an arm, human arm, or whether I see it as a dog's leg, depends only on my state of mind, what's coming out of my mind. Okay. Madhyamika Prasangika says, there's no 'arm-ness' about this cylinder. There's nothing 'armie' about it, okay. Whatever arm-ness it has is coming from my mind and being imputed or labelled or attached to that cylinder, okay. And it could have just as well being a dog's leg, okay. If I had different karma I would have been, so what is the dependent origination of this arm? This arm has originated through there being a reasonable basis, meaning a flesh colored cylinder, and a reasonable state of mind forced on me by my past karma, that turns it into an arm. And there is no arm other than that, okay. There is no other arm that exists in the universe that exists from its own side without my mind forcing me to see it as an arm. And if I had just a little bit different karma, and it don't take much, get it, okay. Slight shift in my karma I could see it stop. I could see this stop breathing. Very slight shift in my karma. People don't stop breathing. Their karma shifts slightly and they see themselves stop breathing. That's called 'death'. And it takes a tiny shift more to see it as a dog's leg. It's very easy to get reborn as a dog if what I just said is true. It takes about two minutes of mental shift. It takes about two minutes of changes of your karma. And that's a scary thing. If what I'm telling you is true then that whole rebirth stuff is true and anyone in this room could be a dog five minutes from now, okay. You have to think about it. If Madhyamika Prasangika is true, this whole stuff about rebirth is no, like, there's no dog factories in Kansas turning out dog bodies and they stuff your spirit into it or something like that. If your karma shifted slightly, if your perceptions shifted slightly this blank, empty, neutral cylinder, you, you would be seeing it as a dog's leg. And, you would be a dog, because you're seeing it that way, you see what I mean? Very frightening, it makes everything very serious. Are we're getting close to the real Buddhism,

you see what I mean? Is this what dependent origination really means? Yeah. Okay. Then it becomes very important. What are the practical applications of thinking like this? You know, next time your boss comes in and yells at you, you focus on that boss. You say, is this a neutral, is this neutral decibels going up and down with changes of coloration on an oval, with another oval.

And some kind of changes of, you know, I mean, technically is that what, if you're a physicist you'd say, oh, look, here comes an oval. And there's another oval in the middle and there's some red cylinders moving like that and there's changes in the decibels around me. You see, that's all really that's there. That's all the raw data there is. And something about you is making it sound like a boss who's screaming at you, okay. That's very important to understand. That's the emptiness of your screaming boss, okay.

[end side A]

[side B]

How do you prove it in an easy way? Is that boss an unpleasant screaming boss to everyone in that room? No. The guy sitting across you, that hates your guts, it's music to his ears, you see what I mean? He thinks this is the best thing that's happened all day. He truly, honestly perceives this as a pleasant experience, okay. So that proves the emptiness of the boss, okay. The boss is just decibels and changes in shape and color then your mind is making you see it as an unpleasant experience.

Why? Because of some kind of imprint you put in your mind before. When? When you've done something unkind to someone. So, what's the stupidest thing that you could do back to your boss? Scream back. What's the most natural thing to do back to your boss? Scream back. What's the Tibetan word for this? Suffering world, {korwa}, self-perpetuating stupidity. Okay. You scream back, that's the most natural thing you can think to do. Then you have to see it again. You have to see the decibels and colors and shapes as a ugly yelling boss, again. The stupidest thing a Buddhist can do is react with violence to violence. You are assuring what? That you'll have violence again. In fact, it's the only way to have violence happen to you again, you know. If you really were, like, trying to design your future suffering carefully, that would be the ideal thing to do, you know. I would really like to suffer next year, I'll scream back, you know. I want to make sure he's still around next year, okay.

By the way, I've always said that this is the method by which you can eliminate people at work that you don't like. Be kind to them. Don't respond to them with violence. When they're bad to you, when they hit this cheek say, hey would you like to hit this one? Okay. Then you're guaranteeing their elimination. They'll be transferred to Iowa, they'll get a heart attack, something will happen. They'll be out of your life in a year. I swear to god it works. I was

in corporate life for sixteen long years, twelve hours a day. It works. By the time I got out of there it was like heaven. I'm not kidding, you know. I had a department of a hundred and fifty people and it was, like, everybody wanted to go to work, you know. It was really weird. Okay. [laughs] So that's the ultimate meaning of dependent origination, okay.

So what's emptiness? Emptiness is very simple. It's the fact that nothing's any other way, okay. Double negative: nothing is not that. That's all. Nothing is not that. What? Your projections forced on you by your past karma, okay. Very simple. What do you mean when you say 'emptiness'? Everything is not not dependent origination. Got it? Is that the same as dependent origination? No. It's a negative. You're stating what things are not. Okay. And there's another cool thing about this. Once you understand it intellectually, if you can learn in deep meditation to put your mind on this particular fact, that nothing is not dependent origination in the ultimate way of describing it, if you can put your mind for twenty minutes on that fact, when you come out of it you see your future lives directly. You see your own enlightenment directly. You know how many lifetimes it's going to take and you see them directly. You know that you have just seen a Buddha directly, okay.

All this stuff happens to you if you can practice thinking like I just described and if you meditate. It's very cool. That's the big selling point of emptiness, okay.

First of all it helps you at work. Secondly, you can see all this stuff. You can pinpoint your own enlightenment and you can make it happen. It's very cool, okay. But you have to understand emptiness, okay. And that's the third of the three principle paths.

You have some burning question, what is that? [student] Say it loud. [student] Yeah. [student] Oh, right. He said, yeah, he said, basically, do you reject the Sutrists' view? Do you throw it out? But doesn't it give a good explanation of why the, why the, why the cylinder's there in the first place 'cos it comes from its own causes and conditions? That's true. You know, all the explanations of emptiness that Lord Buddha gave, those first two versions are not stupid. The guy who proposed them was? Lord Buddha, okay. Because he knew people could relate to that more easily. In fact, when you study emptiness in detail, there are basically six different flavours of emptiness that Lord Buddha taught. The first five are wrong. The first five are not ultimate but they lead you up very beautifully to number six, yeah. So of course it's important to think of, to think that this hand has come from its causes and conditions, but that's not ultimately what's gonna liberate you, you see. You must see the highest one. You must come to see the highest one but you work this out through the lower explanations. So they're beautiful. They're exquisite. They're important. You have to know them. That's one of the Mahamudra meditations that we've been

doing, people went to California. You go through the six versions of emptiness that Lord Buddha taught. The first five are not true. The last one is true. But Lord Buddha taught them because for that particular audience, on that particular night, that was the best one that they could relate to and that's how he did it. So, yeah, that's true. The Sutrist's position is basically true but it's not the ultimate one, see what I mean.

One more question then we've got to stop. [student] Debbie said this, if you've gone through seventy years of practice seeing this particular cylinder as a human, how is it possible that you can switch in a minute, you know, how could that really happen? You've built up such a habit of seeing it that way. I'm saying this, come on, everybody dies, in a minute. Everybody dies in a minute. Get used to it. The shift, that radical shift in your karma, in your projections, in your perceptions, from seeing this body as breathing to seeing this body as not breathing happens to everyone, okay, if you don't practice tantra. Okay. It happens to everyone. You will see that. That's just an explanation, you know, people worry about getting cut on their finger, people worrying about losing their jobs, people worry about having a fight with their wife or their husband. Get this. Your karma to own everything wears out in one minute. That's called death, you know. Like, you have this really crappy karma. Every year or so it makes a very bad change in your life, okay. That's how karma works. Every year or so you lose something that you loved, okay. But get this, on the last hour, it all gangs up on you and you lose everything. All of the projections change in about a minute, okay. One minute you're sitting there with your nice happy family around your bed grasping your arm and crying and in the next minute you're in a very weird psychedelic horrible experience called the bardo, okay. And it happens to everybody. Karma is relentless. Karma is ruthless, you know. And that particular karma to be alive all wears out, all the karmas wear out to own everything you ever owned, to look like anything you ever looked like, to have the kind of mind that you ever had, to have the name that you had, all that wears out in five minutes. And, suddenly, you're this nameless person in the bardo, you know. Alone and terrorised.

People say, oh, I can't wait to die, it'll be so interesting. Forget it, you know. It's terrible. And, and yeah, that wears out in a minute. It doesn't matter how, it doesn't matter if you had seventy years getting used to your body and your mind, you lose them. You can't think at all like you used to five minutes later because your mind is a projection, okay. Your mind is a projection. You'll stop projecting a reasonable intellectual sensitive New York mind and you'll, you'll be a beast in five minutes. And, and you won't know the difference. You won't remember what you were. Why do you think people can't remember former lives? Buddhists aren't making it up, okay. You did have former lives. You can't

remember them. Your mind is totally different now. And in that space between living and dying all of those changes, all those projections of your own mind come down, the changes all come down in five minutes. And you, you couldn't recognise yourself for anything five minutes later. You have no, you can hardly remember what you were. You have a new projection of your mind. That's why death is so serious. That's why we have to learn all this stuff and get enlightened fast, okay.

Alright, we're gonna take a break, then we're gonna make some kind of sound and then you're gonna get into, I don't know what we're gonna do. John Stilwell's gonna do it. And that means you're gonna get into certain groups with certain teachers who are gonna go over the rest of the homework with you. I repeat that you cannot get into this class this Thursday if you don't have a homework in your hot little hand, okay. That's our contract. I don't charge you any money but you gotta have that homework, okay, or you don't get in. It has to be filled out too [laughter] [laughs]

In each of these review classes I'd like to go over the mission statements for this thing that's happening here. These classes, these translations, this whole thing, what's going on here and its implications and the methods we're using to teach Buddhism. I want to do that in the last year that I'm here. So I want you to know the logic behind how we build the classes and stuff like that because I expect each one of you to be teaching other people if not now then shortly. So I'd like to expound my viewpoint on how Buddhism is taught in the United States and what are good ways to teach it. What are effective ways to teach it. So, so we'll have a break, five, ten minutes ...[instructions for group discussion]

Okay, we'll start. This is very brief, a two-minute thing and then you can go home, okay. Seriously. Every class during the coming year I wanna give a few comments about my approach on teaching Buddhism and how I think Buddhism can spread in America. And how it can help people in America. And I think the first, I call it the ACI manifesto, okay, and you'll get pieces of it every night, okay, whenever I finish them. So the very first part, which I'm doing from memory, okay, is the mission statement, okay. What are we trying to do. Why should we have classes like this? Okay. What is the purpose of a class like this? If you're gonna be a teacher of Buddhism in the United States, what are you supposed to teach? Why are you teaching, okay? I had a Geshe [unclear], he's a Geshe from this minor College called Sera Je [laughter] that called me from Boston. I was in Boston and he called me and he says, I have to see you, you know. And I got scared. I thought he was gonna get mad at me for some teaching or something like that. I don't even know him. I've never met him. So, he's this big Geshe in Boston, so, like, I'm kinda nervous. I went to his house and he was sitting on this throne and he says, sit down, you know. And I sat

down and he says, I gotta tell you something. So he says, listen, Buddhism has to spread in America. There's two hundred and fifty, three hundred million people here, they have to learn Buddhism.

And you've gotta stop thinking that us Tibetans are gonna come over here and teach it. You have to learn. You have to spread it. Americans have to learn it. Americans have to teach Americans. And that's up to you. You have to help do that. That's all, you know. [laughter] And then he says, [laughs] you know, and then he keeps smiling and says now I'm taking you out for a Chinese lunch, you know. [laughter] But it made me think, you know. And, you know, we are like the first Tibetan Buddhists, you know. Indian gurus came to Tibet for about a hundred years, you know, and they, and I'm sure that the Tibetans thought at first that they could never be teachers, you know. They probably said, what do you think you're teaching? You gotta call a real Indian guru here, you know, Tibetans don't count. Tibetans don't know Buddhism you gotta have an Indian here, you know. We gotta get some gold and go down to Calcutta or West Bengal and find another Lord Atisha, you know. Tibetans can't teach Buddhism, you know what I mean. And then, obviously, after a few years they were and now they're the best, okay. So it will naturally come to our country. The manifesto, the very first statement in the ACI mission statement says, that the reason to teach Buddhism, is nothing less than stopping the death and old age of the people whom you are teaching, okay. It's not to make them calm. It's not to make them friendly. It's not that they learn to cope with the problems of their life better. It's not even that they become compassionate citizens of the world. Those are all covered also but the goal of having these teachings is nothing less than each person here seeing emptiness directly and becoming enlightened. And that's it. You know, when you become enlightened, in this lifetime if you practice tantra, okay. If you go on to practice tantra, that you yourself don't have to die and that you can move out of this realm. By the way, the nature of the way you move out is that it's not very obvious to the people who are in, okay. That accounts for the fact that you haven't seen thousands of Tibetan Lamas disappearing from the face of the earth, okay. There's a thing about being in the desire realm that you cannot even recognise it when a person moves out of the desire realm but they have. And thousands of people have.

And the goal of this institution, the goal of these classes is, nothing less than, that each person in this room is assured to reach enlightenment in this lifetime if you can pull it off. And I want you to have that as the mission statement. There's no other goal here than that. No lesser goal than that. And sometimes I think that in a lot of Buddhist classes around the country they don't talk about that. That's actually when the lady said I was Walt Disney on acid is when we started to get to this part, you know. But that's really what the Buddha said: {ma rikpa me

marikpa sepa pa mepa me ga she me ga shi ..), Heart Sutra. The heart of the Heart Sutra. The middle of the Heart Sutra. You don't have to die. You don't have to get old. Just stop your ignorance, learn how to do it and that's what I want you to think. When you think of this Dharma Centre if you want to call it, or Institute if you want to call it or group of people who are gonna teach other people, that has to be your mission statement in your own mind. You're trying to get yourself and other people to see emptiness directly, to experience your own enlightenment, to know what day it's gonna be, to know how many lifetimes you have to go, to know what a Buddha looks like, to meet a Buddha directly and all of those experiences. That's why we have this Institute. So that's the, that's all I have to say tonight. That will be the first paragraph of the mission statement. If you're a teacher from ACI you gotta keep that, that's what your goal is, okay, by hook or crook, by sutra or tantra [laughter] I'm gonna get these people enlightened, you know, and they don't have to die. And we're gonna do it before people get too old to do it. And that's the treason to have these classes, okay. That's the mission statement.

Yeah. [student] Oh, yeah, Bill says, you can't get up in the first class, you know, and start telling people, you know, I'm gonna make it so you don't die. And they say, I want to die, you know, and [unclear] [laughter], you know what I mean. So it's not like that, yeah.

Even Lord Buddha, as you studied it in the last course, oftentimes didn't present the ultimate goals in the beginning knowing that it would freak out his audience. But I'm being very frank with you. These are the only goals of this class is that at least one or two people see emptiness directly and don't have to die and don't have to get old. And that is the goal of Buddhism. Buddha said it in the Heart Sutra, okay.

We'll do a prayer and then we'll stop, okay.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

CLASSES 3-5 missing here

Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism

Class Six

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start. We just got back from India last night. So, still a little groggy, okay. [laughs] So excuse that, okay. I was called away suddenly. There was a Xerox corporation wanted to make a film about our computer work with the monks so and they had to do it in three days or something. So we did it and that's all.

There's a chart here, and I want to thank John for doing the class and I heard he did a good job. This chart is, was made by our grandfather, meaning, Khen Rinpoche's teacher, Trijang Rinpoche who is the teacher of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Junior Tutor and it summarises all the steps to meditation. So just about all of class three, course three, is in here. And I'm sorry it's so small. There'll be a reading that will contain all the parts here in English and Tibetan. So we took it all off the chart and turned it into a reading. I think next class, yeah, at the next session of this class, okay. That's about as small as we could make it. I mean, as big as we could make it [laughter] at a local print shop. So if anybody has the, you know, effort, we could redo it on bigger paper. We just didn't have time. We just got back and did it. Originally, we did it on a larger sheet of paper so you can see that. But this summarises all the steps to meditation. The main thing to this chart is that it gives you all the potential problems that you can expect. So I think that's the most useful thing about it. It alerts you to all the problems you can expect during your meditation. And then each, each one of the turns represents a different problem that you overcome during your meditation. So I think it's very useful before you meditate if you know what problems might come up and then you're forewarned. And then you can recognise them as they come up and then you can stop them. I think most Americans who try to meditate end up never getting past the first or second problem 'cos they don't know that they're problems. And some of the problems are sneaky and they, they are imposters. They pretend to be, they look like you're doing well and actually you're in the middle of a problem. Like what they call subtle dullness is some kind of spacing out during meditation and that's actually a serious problem to meditation. And I'm afraid that many Americans

see it as a benefit, you know, and they get into it. And it's relaxing and it feels good and then they space out. And this chart will help you understand that's really a problem and that once you get past it you can get even higher in your meditation. So that's the benefit of the chart. It's nice to have everything in one piece, okay.

If anyone has the, you know, energy they can make it, we have a larger one, and if they can find a place that could do the copying maybe we could all chip in and make one, okay.

There was a debate, which I think I've mentioned before, in ancient Tibet where the Tibetan people were trying to decide what kind of meditation they were going to do. They were like Americans. They were trying to figure out how to meditate. And they had differing influences. They had people coming from the East, from China, very good monks, a very good monastic tradition, a very good Buddhist tradition older than Tibet and coming into Tibet and people trying to teach meditation. And then, they had the Indian influence from the South; great Indian teachers coming across the Himalayas and teaching meditation. And at a certain point, although it wasn't typical, there was a clash between the two viewpoints. There was a teacher who came up from India named Kamilashila who got to a certain part of Southern Tibet and said that meditation should be done a certain way. And then there was a Chinese monk named Hsang who came from China, in the same area, and said meditation should be done a different way. And they settled it the old way, which is, they had a public debate in front of the whole King and his court and all the people. And I think the debate went on for weeks and they argued about the differing kinds of meditation and what's a useful meditation.

And Hsang's view was, which you sometimes hear echoed in the United States nowadays, is that you should just sit down and try to empty your mind and not think about anything. And that's called {... me} meditation, which means, nothing at all. Just sit and try to think about nothing at all. And then you hear emptiness being taught that way too, like, seeing emptiness is the art of trying to think about nothing or watching your thoughts flow through your mind or something like that. This was Hsang's, this is a derivative of Hsang's viewpoint. Kamilashila said, come on, the nature of the mind is what we call {yul chen}. {yul chen} means, 'that which holds an object in it' and you can't have a state of mind without a {yul}. There can't be a state of mind without something that it's focussing on. If you try to focus on not thinking then you're focussing on not thinking and that becomes an object. And you always have an object before the mind. Mind is like a mirror and what ever you put in front of it is what the mind will concentrate on. But to imagine a mirror with nothing in front of it is not the point. That's not how the mind works. The mind is not stimulated to act until

there's an object. It's called a {mikyen}. In ancient philosophy they accept that, you know, the mind itself, awareness itself is created by an object which triggers the consciousness of the object. So it's impossible to have a state of mind that's not thinking of anything. You can have a state of mind that's trying not to think of anything but then you're thinking of something. You see what I mean? And, and this is the debate that they had. And Kamilashila said, and anyway, suppose you could think about nothing, what's the point? You know what I mean? You might as well just take heroin or something or knock yourself on the head with a rock or something, you know what I mean. What's the point of trying to think about nothing? You know, no content.

I do this online thing every Sunday night [laughter] and answer questions. You know, people log on from around the world and then they ask questions. I've been doing this a couple of weeks. And somebody said, I went to a really good retreat up at, I won't name the place, okay. And I said, well, you know, what was it like, you know. And they said, the food was great. And then I said, okay, what else? [laughter] And I say, and they said, well, we had this really strict schedule. We got up really early, you know. We worked really hard. We sat for a long time and then we did walking meditation and then we did this and this and this. And then I said, you know, sounds great, what did you meditate on? And then there's this long pause, you know, and there's nothing going on the screen and I, you know, I typed it again, you know.

And then there's this long pause and then there's this they didn't tell us to meditate on anything, you know. This is, like, a four-day thing, you know. And I said, well what did you meditate on? And they said, well, just anything you want, you know, it doesn't matter. The main thing is to be calm and happy and not think about anything and this Hsang coming to the United States, you know. So you gotta have a content to your meditation, alright. And, and there's three types of meditation and people don't understand that so I'm gonna give you the three types.

First, you gotta have something that you're gonna meditate on. Say {jok gom} [repeat] {jok gom}[repeat]; {gom} means meditation. It comes from an ancient Tibetan word {ghom}, which means, to get used to something. Like, to do something over and over again until you get used to it, {ghom}. So, {gom} means to meditate. {jok} means to set your mind on an object one-pointedly, like, to set an object in front of your mind. This could be a picture, a visualisation or this could be some idea that you've had, for example, a deep emptiness meditation would be a {jok gom}. So {jok gom} just means to put your mind [unclear] on a single object, okay. Single-pointed meditation. I used to think that if you did it a lot your head would get pointy because mine used to be a little bit. And I didn't know what single-pointed meant, you know. You keep hearing

single-pointed. And then I saw an explanation in a text that said, single object meditation. Single-pointed means single object. In English we say, single minded, you know. And baseball players, businessmen, you know, successful, are single minded. They have only one thing in mind. It's either money or baseball or whatever, food, but that's a single mindedness, okay. Single mindedness means, one-pointed meditation means you just have one object of your meditation. {jok gom} is that. {jok gom} is fixing the mind on one object, okay. And that's what you're normally thinking about when you hear the word meditation. And that's a good kind of meditation and you can do it. People ask me, what should be my first meditation? In the Scriptures they say, try to picture something, you know. Start with a silhouette, you know, like a Buddha with a light behind him or her and you see just the outline. You meditate on the outline. And then you fill in the eyes, the color of the eyes. And then you fill in the nose and then you start filling in the face. Then you fill in the hair. Then you fill in the rest of the body. And then you fill in the breath and the warmth and the smell of the body, you see what I mean, until it's a total thing. And it's not like a visualising a thangka, okay. A lot of people when you say try to visualise a lama, they close their eyes and they try to picture somebody flat on a piece of paper, okay. It's not like that. You have to try to get in the mood of sitting with this person. They're breathing slightly, their eyes are moving slightly, you can smell their body, you can feel them rustling, you can feel the warmth from their body. You know, make the meditation all sensory, all the senses should be there. And that's a real {jok gom}, okay. I'm afraid that many Americans even if they find out what they're supposed to meditate on they just meditate on a flat picture of somebody. And that's not the point, okay. I mean, eventually it should get to where you really feel the person is there, okay.

Next one is {shar gom}. Say {shar gom}[repeat]; {shar} means, it's the word for 'east' in Tibetan, because it means for something to rise or something to appear because that's where the sun appears in the morning, okay. So {shar gom} means, like, holding pictures up to your mind in a certain order, okay. Like, like, like you're going through a bunch of paper. You know how they go look at this picture, look at this picture, look at this picture, look at this picture, and that's called {shar}. One by one you make them appear to the mind, okay.

And this is what we call review meditation, review meditation, okay. You go into a certain series of steps one by one over and over again, okay. I've heard this thing where they say that little kids who learn foreign languages get smarter later in their lives 'cos they're making new neural bridges in their mind, like, they're making new mental habits in their mind or pathways that other people don't. So it's like a new connection between this point and this point that if you keep doing it and you learn a new language then you have a new connection

between two points or something like that. This is very similar. {shar gom} means you keep doing the same steps in a meditation over and over again until there's a new, like, bridge, made in your mind; and it just, a new mental habit, a new way of thinking, we call it a {bakchak}, until you're used to that. For example, a good death meditation would be this way. There's nine steps to a good death meditation. And if you keep doing it over and over and over and over and over again, then finally, the bridge is constructed in your mind and you start to think that way, you know. You start to think, well maybe I will die today and maybe I should do exactly what I want to do if I was going to die today, you know. Maybe I should lead my life that way everyday and do exactly what's the most important thing every hour of my day 'cos I will die today, someday. Okay. Like that. And that's a {shar gom}, okay.

Last one is called {che gom}; say {che gom}[repeat] {che gom}[repeat]. {che} means to examine a problem. You can call this problem-solving meditation. And it's defined in the Scriptures. It says, take a certain question that you're not sure about in Buddhism and they say set it at the centre stage of your mind. And then, examine it from all different kinds of viewpoints, you know. Like, take this question, put it at the centre of your mind, and think about it from fifty, sixty different ways, you see what I mean. And that's called {che gom}. So, for me personally, when I do {che gom} it's most often on what's the most important Buddhist thing I can do, you see. 'Cos I live in a world of Buddhist things to do, you know. I can do one of a hundred different Buddhist things. I have all day to do Buddhist things, you know, so I can, you know, for me it's not a question of whether I'm gonna do a Buddhist thing or not. It's what's the most important Buddhist thing to do of all the Buddhist things I can do today. And that becomes a struggle for me, you know. Like, 'cos I have Buddhist things to do which are more comfortable for me. And then I have Buddhist things to do which are less comfortable for me. But sometimes the less comfortable ones are more important so I have to fight with my own mind, you know. My own mind wants to do the more comfortable ones 'cos it's used to it and then, but I know intellectually that I should be doing the more difficult ones or the more challenging ones that'll get me to Buddha-hood faster for other people. So I have this constant struggle in my own mind about prioritising my practice, you know. What's more important than other things. And that's a {che gom}. So what you do is you sit down and you say, okay, today I have, I'm faced with this choice between, you know, doing this virtue or doing this virtue. So which is more important? You know, 'cos I only have one day to work with and it's two days of stuff. And then I sit down at my meditation and I, and I, and I struggle, you know. I punch it out. It's like an intellectual questioning about this thing. Which is more important to do? And then, this side will say this is more

comfortable and this side'll say, yeah, but you're gonna get to buddhahood slower if you do that. And then this side'll say, yeah, but you know, everybody else is doing this. And I'll say, no, no, but this is more important, all the books say that. You say, I don't know, you know. And then it's, you know, and then you, that's a debate in your mind. That's called a {che gom}, okay.

And then you resolve the question and then you slide into a {jok gom}, okay. It's like, I decided that this is more important than that, now let's hold that for a while. Okay. Then you move over to {jok gom}, you see what I mean. So from a {che gom} you go to a {jok gom}. You gotta get used to that.

What I wanted to do tonight was, the original course number three was about meditation and I think the first six or seven classes were about all the ways to meditate, how to sit in meditation, all the different problems, all the different fixes for the problems, all the conditions you need, very importantly, how to prepare for a good meditation. And then, as I was getting toward the end of the course, I realised that a lot of people were coming up to me and asking, well, what am I supposed to meditate about, okay. And the most important thing that you can meditate about is Lam Rim, okay. So, we're gonna talk about a Lam Rim. And your reading is kinda long. Did it get printed? I don't know. Yeah. We were up all night and, Ora was up, and we, it's a long reading, okay. It's a Lam Rim text. But what it's meant to be is a meditation that you can do for the rest of your life, okay. It's about, I don't know, a hundred and something pages. But it's a complete meditation that you can do indefinitely, okay. Let me see which one [cut]

Say {Lam Rim} [repeat] {Lam Rim}[repeat]; {lam}, means path, 'parth' [laughs]. I always remember getting corrected in Brisbane. I said path, they said, huh? Path. They said, huh, parth. Oh, [laughs] [laughter], okay. {lam} means path, {rim} means steps, steps to the path, okay, steps to the path. Path's the way to enlightenment, alright, steps to the path to enlightenment. Whenever I hear of Lam Rim I think of this instruction manual that we got with our lawnmower we got in New Jersey when we bought it. It was how to put it together. This was from Sears Roebuck lawnmower. And it comes in this box 'cos they don't want to have it be too big when they ship it, you know what I mean. And you have to follow these instructions to put it together. And, you know, it's really hard for some people. [laughter] And it's, like, big letters and it says don't forget this screw, you know, number one. And number two it says don't ever tighten it past that, you know, number three. And if you do them one by one correctly it has to come out right, you now what I mean. Like, if you could figure out the illustration, which screw is which, [laughter] you know. And, and you just don't get impatient, you know. If you go through, it's like your income tax, you know what I mean. If you just sit down and calmly go through one by one each step

then, theoretically, you can't screw up. By the time you finish, your taxes are figured out or the lawn mower's sitting there complete. One time I had all these screws left over. I didn't know where they went, you know. But, but it's a certain order which you have to go through and you have to think Lam Rim is like that, okay. And I've had all these debates with some people. They say, it's not necessarily true that, that there's a certain number of steps to enlightenment and it's also not true that you can't skip some of them or, or jump around, or go out of order or something like that. And then I get into this debate with them about is it the same as the lawn mower or not? See what I mean? Is it possible that Spiritual things are just like the lawn mower? You know, is it possible that you have to do it in a certain order and you have to have certain parts or the thing won't work? And then they say, yeah, yeah, but I read this book, you know, about this guy. He wrote a new book and it looks really good and a lot of it is very similar to Buddhism, you know. Look, it's got a death meditation in it and it's got this in it and it's got, like, half the stuff is there, you know. And then you say, well, if you used half the parts that were in the box for the lawn mower, would it work?

You know, Sears Roebuck are not going to put in parts that they don't have to pay for, you know. You know what I mean? If it wasn't necessary it wouldn't be in the box. And then I get into this debate with people. And they say, no spiritual things are not like that, you know, it's kind of variable, you know. It just depends on where you are or what century you're living in or stuff like, you can leave out some stuff. As long as it has, you know, this has, definitely it has a death meditation very similar to your Buddhist thing and it has this other thing. And then you say, but does it have emptiness? Do they teach karma? And they say, well, not, not directly, not like you guy's say, but it's kinda there, you know. That's like saying, well, you know, it's got a couple of wheels [laughter] and it's got a thing that looks a lot like a carburettor, you know what I mean. And then people say, no, no, you're being sectarian, you know. And I say, no. What I'm trying to say is it's possible, I'm not, I claim it's true but I won't, okay, that you must have certain parts there or it cannot work, okay. That you must have certain elements in your spiritual career in the same way that you need certain parts of a car or a lawn mower for it to work or it just won't work, you see what I mean. It can look like a lawn mower. It can make some noises like a lawn mower. But it won't cut the grass, you know what I mean. And, and it's very possible that it's the same in spiritual things. The trick is with spiritual things, because they're so slippery, you know, it's so hard to judge whether or not you have the parts. It's so hard to tell if you're making progress. It's so hard to know which parts you need and which parts you don't need 'cos the thing you're fixing, is trying to talk you out of fixing it, you know what I mean. So, it's

extremely difficult in spiritual things to know if the lawn mower's complete or if it's working or things like that, you see what I mean? Like, they're invisible. Half the things that you ever have to get through to reach enlightenment, especially tantric enlightenment, are invisible, you know what I mean. Like, you can't tell if you're making it well or not. And it's very difficult for another person to look at you and say, yeah, you're doing okay on step number four but step number six is not so great. You know, it's almost impossible to judge whether a person is doing well in those things, you know. And it's very difficult for you. It's like trying to teach yourself piano. It's like trying to teach yourself to play concert piano and, and maybe you've never heard a concert piano or something like that. I mean, what you're trying to do and what we're trying to do to reach enlightenment, especially in one lifetime, involves so many invisible processes and so many unmeasurable things that it's almost impossible unless you follow a certain directions well, you know, and that you have someone to help you. Otherwise, it's just totally, forget it, you see what I mean. It's just impossible. Half the things we're talking about are very, very subtle internal attitudes or worldviews or ideas that you can't judge if a person has them very easily, you know what I mean. You can't tell if you have them very easily. And then, they have to come in the right order and they all have to be there. And then you've got to come up with some guy who's gonna watch you and say, you need more of part four or you're not gonna make it before you die, you know. And, and they have to be able to judge all this just from external, the way you act, the way you seem to talk, you know. So the Lam Rim is very delicate and, and what I'm trying to say is an omniscient being named the Buddha, you know, has put together an outline called Lam Rim. Lam Rim, wasn't invented by Tibetans. It comes from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras. The name comes from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras and Lord Buddha has designed this specific instruction manual, like a lawnmower manual, that goes through a certain order and you must have all the parts there or it won't work.

And the thing is, you'll never know it until you're, you like, you just die and you won't know, you know what I mean. Like, you'll die and you won't know that you left out part number fourteen and if you'd had it you wouldn't have had to die.

And so it's very, very delicate. You have to learn the Lam Rim thoroughly. The good side is that if you just do the Lam Rim in order, without leaving out anything, you must get enlightened, you see. It's very cool. It's like you must come up with a lawnmower that works. And they're exactly the same. Never think they're not the same. Never think you can just leave out a piston here and there or, you know, three wheels is okay or something like that. Or, it looks like

Buddhism or some of the things are very similar so it must be good, you know. It looks like a carburettor, you know. It doesn't mean it works, see what I mean. You got to have all the parts there and you have to go through them one by one in order. And the good news is if you do it that way, you've got to get, you will get enlightened, okay. But as you get towards the end it becomes very, very, very subtle, you know. The spiritual things that happen inside you are invisible and very subtle and it takes a really great master to help you, you know what I mean. You have to have someone close by to help you. They need to be watching you and saying, okay you need a little bit more of that, you can slow down on that. And they have to be doing, the final adjustments have to be done by a master who you're close to, okay.

That's why this famous lam Rim that we're gonna study is called {yon-ten shir gyurma}, okay. Say {yon-ten}[repeat] {shir gyurma}[repeat]; {yon-ten} means, it's a very difficult word in Tibetan, it means good spiritual qualities, good qualities, okay. Like, compassion is a {yon-ten}. I modern Tibetan {yon-ten} means education. {...} means he is well educated. But in spiritual Tibetan, in Scriptural Tibetan, {yon-ten} means high spiritual qualities, inner qualities. {shir} means the basis or the foundation. In many philosophical texts it can mean the source of something as opposed to the foundation of something. And then {gyurma} means the book about the source of all your good qualities, okay. {ma} is a feminine ending and it's used to denote a book, especially about wisdom, okay. So, like, the Heart Sutra's real name is {chomden de ma}, baghavati, which is the feminine ending; means the conquering lady or something like that, okay.

So this is a book about, the {ma} is implying wisdom, and it's a book about the source of all these very subtle invisible good qualities that you want to develop inside of you, okay. Like, it's one thing to learn, like, dance, you know. They'll teach you how to move your left foot, then they teach you how to move your right foot. Then they teach you left, a left move and then teach you a right twist. Then they teach you how to move your arm. And then, by the time you're done with, like, ten years of, then you've moved all the possible parts and anyone can stand there and say, okay, they can do a left turn and a right turn and they can do this move and that move. But, but spiritual things are much more subtle, you see. The person who teaches you has to be able to say, oh yeah, they know how to find a good Lama, oh, they learned that already. Oh, they have renunciation. Oh, yeah, they have renunciation. Oh, they know how to get yelled at by their Lama and still come out alright, you know. Oh, oh, and they figured out that the Lama doesn't always say what they mean. They figured out {tragne}, you know, like, they got over that part. They figured out that they have to make the decisions on their own and, and do the right thing regardless, you know. And

then there's certain, like, very subtle stages, okay.

Oh, they figured out that, you know, taking care of all sentient beings means doing the right thing with the people that are sitting next to them, you know, and not all sentient beings in the universe, you know what I mean. And then there's just certain stages or signs that a person has matured to certain spiritual levels and they're very subtle. They're really very subtle. So {yon-ten shir gyurma} means, who's gonna be the source for all those qualities for you? You see, who's gonna guide you through those stages and, and make sure you get up to the next one before you die because it's a race against death, you see what I mean? It's life and death question. They have to be pushing you at just the right speed over certain spiritual obstacles that you have. And, and that's your Lama. Okay. So {yon-ten shir gyurma}, the text Lam Rim, this Lam Rim or this book, the name of it is the 'Source Of All My Goodness', meaning, Lama. Okay. The person who can guide you.

And that's the first lam rim. I mean, you have to go out and find this person, okay.

It's the first step of the Lam Rim. It's the first step of every spiritual path. You have to go out and find this person, okay. And I can't overestimate the, what it means. It doesn't mean a person giving lectures in New York City in front of a hundred people, okay. You have to find your Lama, you know. You have to find the one that fits you, firstly, and then you have to seek out with them a very personal relationship, you know. You have to find a person who's qualified and then you have to find, you have to have a relationship with them that's very tight, very close. They have to be monitoring invisible subtle things in you from day to day. That's very difficult, okay, and you have to find a person who can do that, alright. That's {...}, first line of the text, you have to go find this person, okay. That's your first job, alright.

What's this got to do with meditation? This is gonna be the first step of the meditation, you see. When you do your meditation now don't ask me what to meditate on. Should it be a green blob? You know, should I just let thoughts go through my head? Should I just try to be calm, watch my breath and try to be a nicer person this afternoon? No. Do a Lam Rim. Do a {shar gom}, okay, do a {shar gom}. What's a {shar gom}? You're gonna go through these steps one by one in your mind. Okay, what's the first thing I need? I have to go find a teacher. Then you can switch over to a {che gom}. Why? Why do I need that? There's lots of books been translated now. I can call up Snow Lion and, you

know [laughter] get any book I need. Who needs a teacher, you know? And then you have to debate with your own mind, you see. You need someone who can take you through these invisible subtle stages of spiritual development and know where you're at everyday and know how to help you onto the next stage. Or else what? I'll die. Okay. And then you have to debate your own mind, you know. Your own mind says, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's cool but you can just go to class once in a while, that's enough, you know. And then, and then you have to say, well wait a minute, I don't know, I might die before the next class. You say, no, no, average expectancy just went up to seventy-seven, you still have time, you know. And then you do a, you have to debate your own mind, okay. That's a {shar gom} and a {che gom}, okay. So that's the first step in the Lam Rim meditation, you think about finding a Lama, okay. And finding them means establishing a relationship with them where they are monitoring you closely and you have that relationship, okay. And you have to. I mean, all the great musicians, all the great artists, all the great dancers, all the great baseball players, they had, they had a close relationship with someone. Sooner or later you have to, okay. Who's that guy that just broke the most games in a row thing, couple of years ago? Yeah, Rivkin. There's two of them, right? Why? 'Cos their father. No, who's that guy? Anyway. [student] Yeah, Carl Rivkin and his brother, right? They're great baseball players 'cos their father's a great baseball player and they grew up with him. [students] Really? How? The father? [students] Oo, okay. Didn't, okay, not the right kind of lama. Alright. [laughter] Anyway, you see, it's not just an accident, 'cos he's so close to them, you see what I mean. You have to have somebody like that. Okay. Next thing. I'm gonna take you through four steps of a Lama meditation, okay.

Say, {depa ...}[repeat]; {depa} means faith, {..} means develop faith or develop, develop faith.

And this means, you have to try to think clearly of what you want, you see. Like, if you're gonna study, I don't know, any subject, say, mathematics, you know, you have to come to some kind of belief that this person knows what they're talking about. And that's {depa ..}, okay. So, like, you're checking out this person and you're watching them and you're trying to decide do they know what they're talking about or not, you know. Is this person qualified or not. And this has to be a very important step for any person. It's one thing to learn how to play piano badly, it won't kill you, okay. And you know, I mean, you've had teachers who they either were incompetent from the beginning, you know, like, I had one in seventh grade, [laughs] okay. I mean, the sixth grade teacher was incredible, like, a star at everything and a great compassionate holy being. And the seventh grade teacher didn't want to teach, didn't know anything, didn't like to teach, didn't like the kids, didn't learn anything from them. {depa ..} is

you have to check this person out. You have to see if they know what they're talking about, okay. Then there's other ones that you get all excited about at first then later you find out they don't know as much as you thought, you know what I mean, something like that. Okay. But, bit your mental real estate, your spiritual real estate is very subtle. It can be impressed very easily, you know. If you get in with a person who's not qualified they can subtly affect you so that for years you don't make any progress. You have to find, you have to be very careful about your choice of who you open up that real estate to, you see what I mean, because those decisions about who you're gonna try to think like can affect you for decades, you see what I mean. They can, someone can take you off on the wrong direction. That can affect you for many, many years. According to Buddhism it can ruin you for lifetimes, okay. So you have to be very careful about who you expose your mind to, okay. It's one thing to have someone teach you to play piano wrong or someone teach you to dance wrong but if someone teaches you to think wrong, then you're in trouble. So very important to check them out. {depa ..} means, come to a point where you have a certain faith in this person because you've checked them out carefully, okay.

Say {.. tenpa}[repeat]; {tenpa's} a very difficult word in Tibetan, {tenpa}, the spelling of {tenpa} means to take yourself to someone, like a doctor or it can mean to rely on a medicine. It can mean to go to a Lama and learn from them, okay. {...} means, in your thoughts, okay. So it means how you're gonna relate to this person emotionally. How you're gonna think about this person, okay. And that's a whole stage in the Lam Rim. Once you make this connection with this person, once you have a relationship with this person then how do you commit yourself to them mentally, okay. And there's some kind of mental connection that you make, okay. And this is very important, okay. At the last step, which was {depa ..}, you checked them out, right. You decided whether or not this person's going to be your Lama and, and you have to do that process carefully. I mean, in Scripture some people took twelve years to check out their teacher, you know. For twelve years they didn't say will you be my teacher, you know what I mean.

They took their time, checked them out, talked to their students, find out their background, find out about their personal lives, everything, check them out carefully. And once you're decided on them then how do you think about them? You see what I mean? And in America I think we don't quite have this attitude towards teachers, you know what I mean. And I'm talking about your high school teacher or your college teachers or things like that. I mean, if you become like an Olympic skater or something, you see them come off, they skate around for the competition and then they're back in the back. And the camera comes up and they're going [breathing sounds] and their coach comes up and you can see

this relationship with somebody who's been teaching them for ten years every hour of the day, you know. And there's this look in their eyes, you know, and that's what we're talking about, okay. There's this connection that you have with them and, and {..} means don't break that connection, samaya. You don't break it after that. You think of your teacher in a certain way, you know. It's like getting married a hundred times over and, and it's that kind of commitment that you make at that point, okay. Once you've, after you've checked them out. And this could take a year or two years or five years. Take your time. It's your life at stake, you know. Check them out carefully and then, and then, {..} means, once you've checked them out and made the commitment, make it, you know. And then just decide this person is gonna be the one, you know. And, and then you think of them a certain way. Never change your thought about them, okay. You think about them as being the person who's going to save your life and, and you never stoop thinking about them that way, okay. That's called {..}. This person is gonna save my life. Out of all the people I've met in the world I believe this person has the capacity. If you don't think they do then don't, don't make them your Lama. You can still go to classes of a person or something like that. That's fine. Especially if there's nobody else around, okay. But I'm talking about a different commitment. This is like, okay, this person's the one who is gonna save my life and I commit myself to this person. That's {..}, okay.

Now, there's a thing about your mind, okay. It's called the 'high school girlfriend effect', alright. [laughs][laughter] You know, you see her in a class, I still remember, right. And, and you're like, wow, she's really cool, you know. And then you, like, make excuses to go by her window all the time or bump into her next to her locker or stuff like that. And then, you know, finally you get up the courage to sit at the same table in the lunchroom, you know. And then you slowly start, and this is called {depa ..}, right, you're checking out the qualities of this person. And then you decide, okay, I really want to go out with this person and you ask them. And during this whole time they look glorious, shining, not like your last girlfriend, you know. [laughter] And they're, like, unbelievable and really cool and different, you know. This is gonna be different. And they're all special and everything and you meet them and this is the one, you know. And then you actually go out with them and then you get to know them and you get familiar with each other. And then you have your first fight, then you have your second fight, then you have your third fight and then, finally, you meet the other girl in the other lunchroom. And that's the one, you see what I mean. And this whole process that goes like this, you know, which you've been through, right? It goes like this, this, this, this and then it goes like this and then it goes like that. That's not a change in the other person. I mean, that's the big thing that Buddhism did for me, you know. It made me

understand something. The other person is not changing, okay. They're the same person they were before you sat down next to them at the lunch table. They didn't change during the six months that you knew them. Okay. Something else changed. What's that? Your own mind changed, okay.

Like, they didn't change dramatically. They didn't become, they didn't go from most cool girl in the high school to horrible monster in the high school in six months, you know. Something else changed. Your mind changed. You see what I mean? What it means is your karma to see this person as beautiful is used up when? While you see them as beautiful, you see what I mean. For as long as you see them as beautiful your karma to see them as beautiful is wearing out. And sooner or later it wears out and then they start to look worse and worse and worse and then you have your last fight with them. This is always this curve like this. And this is, this is not their fault and they're not changing. You're changing, okay. Your karma is wearing out.

Now the same thing happens with Lamas. Okay. That's the point. You know, you go to a lecture, this guy looks wonderful, you know. Not like my last Lama [laughter] you know. And, you know, you get all excited and, and they look really cool and they teach you, teach you, teach you. And you're, like, getting really excited. And then you peek out and your karma starts to change. You start to see faults. You say, like, oh, oh, I never knew they would act like that. I never knew they would do that. I can't believe it, you know, six months ago I thought they were perfect, you know. And you start to see all these things. And you think that those things were there six months ago but you didn't see them. And you believe that and that's a wrong worldview. {..} means you have to try to stop that worldview. You can go on skipping from Lama to Lama and what you'll find out sooner or later is that it's just like your high school girlfriend, okay. It's something else changing. It's your own perceptions. And it's not that you are seeing something that was there before. You're creating something that wasn't there before, okay, because your karma's wearing out. So you have to be aware of this effect and you have to deal with this effect, okay. And you have to try to handle it. You have to be aware that it's your karma shifting and you have to fight it, okay. And that's very important otherwise you'll just skip from Lama to Lama, you know, like that, 'cos your own karma's wearing out. What I mean is at a certain point in {..} you have to decide that this person is challenging you in some way. They're trying to reach you something, okay. Once you make the karmic connection with this person {..}, once you say this is my Lama, now everything changes. Everything they do after that is a challenge for you. If they decide you need to have your faith tested they'll test your faith. If they decide you have to have your anger tested they'll test your anger, you know. If they decide you have to have your patience tested they'll slap you around a little

bit, you see what I mean. And you have to say, oh, this guy's helping me. Thankyou, you know what I mean. And your whole attitude, once you make the connection, that's why it's so important to be careful before you make the connection. But once you make the connection you now have to have a whole different way of looking at this person unlike any other person you ever met, you see what I mean. And this will be your first tantric practice. Okay. Very heavy; very, very heavy. And, if you succeed, you'll get enlightened in this lifetime, very subtle, okay. What I mean is, you are deciding that there's one person in the world who can read your mind, who knows your future and who's challenging you, knowingly, every moment of the day. And then you don't give up. You say, I know this person's trying to get me enlightened, you know. Every time they tell you to go wash the dishes, every time they yell at you, every time they say the opposite of what they said yesterday, you know, now your whole perception of this one person is changed, see what I mean. This person is out to get me enlightened and I'm gonna pass every test they can give me. Then what happens? It wouldn't be a test if it wasn't difficult, okay. Every time you get over one they come out with a new one, okay.

And this is a sign of a successful relationship with a Lama, okay. This is a dynamic that's working. Why? Your faults are coming up and they're smashing them one by one. If you feel comfortable around your lama for more than twenty-four hours something's not working, [laughs] okay. Alright. That's their job, okay. I mean, they have to be constantly shoving you up to the next level. It's like when I used to weight lift, you know, in high school something. And the coach would come up and say, you know, you gotta put five more pounds on that. You say, why. He says, 'cos you lifted it, you know. And, you know, you can't, I mean a good Lama's doing that. They have to keep pushing you forward but not too hard, you know. Add twenty pounds and the person's, something breaks, something rips and you don't want to do that. But they have to be constantly shoving you up to the next step. What I'm trying to say is, once you get to number two, once you decide that this person is the one, then you have to shift into this other mode of seeing whatever they do with you as being the next challenge. They are designing challenges for you, okay, and you have to think like that.

Yeah. [student] Well, when you said, he said, do you want to believe that they're doing it from their own side? You know, ultimately, it doesn't matter, you see. It doesn't matter if it's intentional or not. If your {...} is perfect the right challenge will be produced from them, by whom? By you, okay. It's very interesting. You know, I've seen this relationship, there was this one lama that, I mean, I knew that he was, like, abusing his students and it was disturbing to watch, you know. Like, always trying to get money out of them. They never had any time

to study. They had to work all day long on building these buildings and then he's sell them and then get another one. Then they'd be working. We'd sit there and watch them and say, these people are crazy, you know. How can they, and then they'd swear, you know, that this is the most wonderful lama they'd ever met, you know. And you'd say, come on, wake up man, this guy's just after your money. And then the lama eventually died, you know, and all these students came out wonderful, you see what I mean. That's the way it works. It's a very strange thing. The dynamic is that, you know. If you, if your virtue is enough, the tests will come to you and you will pass them and you'll become enlightened. The other guy, could be could be a schmuck, you see what I mean. It doesn't, it's not the point. It's very interesting, you know. But I don't say to do it lightly. I mean, you check the person out. Tradition, in Scripture, sometimes for ten, twelve years you check them out, then, you make the commitment. But after you've made the commitment, you know, if they, if they tell you to build a nine-story building and then rip it down, you know, this is a challenge. They're designing a challenge for you. After you make the commitment, okay.

And it may be that they challenge you with some extraordinary behaviour that's, that's immoral and then they're trying to see if you have the brains to leave them. Which you should, you see what I mean, and that's another, you know what I mean. It always has to be that you do the right thing. That's what they want. I mean, there's a very famous story of a lama who had five students. They've already made the karmic connection. He says, I need money; I want you guys to go out and rob this village, you know. And four of them go out and rob the village. One of them stays behind and says, with all respect I can't do that, you know. I'm your lama, I'm telling you to steal something. He says, you're my lama and I know you'd never tell me to steal something and that's why I'm not going. And then he gets everybody back, comes back. The other four guys got lots of money for him. The other one guy's got nothing. He says, you know, I've only got one good student. That's the guy who didn't go. You see what I mean?

So it always boils down to you having to do the right thing. So I'm not just saying blindly do whatever they say because that's a test also. They could be challenging you that way also, you see what I mean. And, ultimately, you must do what you know to be right, you know what I mean.

Yeah. [student] That's true, yeah.

Okay. Say {jorwey tenpa}[repeat] Write it first. {jorwey}[repeat] {tenpa}[repeat]. See, {.. tenpa} is how do you think about them or watching your thoughts about them. {jorwey tenpa} means, how do you act towards them, what do you do with them, okay. The point here is that to for you to succeed in

your spiritual life. People ask me, what's the best way to see emptiness directly, you know? Should I study Kamilashila or should I study Je Tsongkapa or you think Nagarjuna or Chandrakirti? I say, {jorwey tenpa}, you know, which means help your lama, okay. And there's all these levels, you know. People think, and I'm not criticising, but to bring a flower to your lama is, I mean, there's certain levels of relationship with your lama. First level is where you're kind of just sitting in class and soaking it in, you know. And this is the relationship you have. They put out all the effort, the room is here by its own self, all the expenses pay themselves, the heat comes in by itself, you know, the guy got here by himself, he lives by himself, he doesn't eat or spend anything. He just shows up and we have a class and I just sit there and take it in. He makes me do homeworks but that's okay [laughter], you know. That's one level one, you know. Then level two is where you start to say, okay, maybe I'd better help out a little bit, you know. I'll take a flower over there once in a while. I'll stay five minutes but not ten minutes to fix the altar up afterwards. And you start to feel like maybe I'm supposed to help out a little bit here.

And then, third level, is like, okay, maybe I'll go over there on a Saturday and help out in the afternoon a little bit or something like that.

And then, fourth level is something like, you know, I'll help with a major project, you know, like, I'll grade these papers for this course, you know. And it goes up by levels, you see. And it goes up to the point where you cannot distinguish your needs from your lama's needs. In other words, Lama needs a house, you build a house. Lama needs to get to California, you, you, the ticket's in his hand and he doesn't have to think about it, you know what I mean. Lamas shouldn't have to worry about whether we've rented a place or who's paying for it or anything else, you know. I'm just grateful that Lama is there, you see what I mean. Lama never asked us for any money. I've never been asked for money in my life from a lama. Never, ever in twenty-five years but, but it's my, at a certain point my money is their money, you know. I mean, I've showered lamas with money and have them throw it back at me. We've had these fights, you know. Take it. No, no, I don't want it, you take it. No. You know, at a certain point it has to become where you're just one person with them and you're one family with them. And everything you do is in the service of this lama. You have to get to that point. And I'm not saying with me, okay. I'm saying with any, the lama that you find that fits you, you have to go up through these stages if you want to get enlightened in this lifetime. Sooner or later you'll have to make that relationship with them. Start out and I'm not saying do it before you're ready. What I'm saying, go find a lama that fits you, make this commitment mentally, which is {...} and then {...} means slowly, in your actions you become to them their helpmate, you know. You become to them the one

who, who helps them in a serious way, in a major way with what they're doing. You know what I mean. And they, you're trying to take load off them. You're trying to help them in a, in a serious way to do what they do, which is, to get people enlightened in one lifetime.

You see what I mean. So sooner or later the relationship has to go up through, you know, helping out once in a while to making little offerings and then, finally, it becomes, like, I'm here. I'll work eighteen, twenty-four hours a day for you, whatever you need I'll do 'cos what you're doing is the most important thing. And sooner or later it has to reach that point. I'm not saying with me. I'm saying you go, you have to find the one that fits you and different people need different lamas, you know. People have this sick attitude that my lama's better than their lama or this lama's better than that lama. That lama's stupid and that lama's good, you know. That's all stupid. Each lama exists because they help somebody, you know, and you have to go find the one that fits your personality. And you're never going to have one lama that fits everybody's personality. It's impossible, you know. You have to go find the one who, who fits you and the way that fits you. And then you have to go up in these stages. First, you have to think about them in a certain way. Well, first you have to check them out. But after you're through checking them out you have to start thinking about them in a certain way and after that you have to start acting towards them in a certain way. And then, towards the end, if you really want to get enlightened in this lifetime, it has to be total commitment. You know, like, anything they need, you're trying to supply it for them. They don't have to ask. They don't have to push you. They don't have to beg you. They don't have to whine about it. It's just there, you know. And you take all the load off their head, you know. You say, you know, whatever you need, I'll do. You know what I mean. And that has to be the relationship, okay.

For them? They don't need it. This person, for example, has seen emptiness directly, they don't need anything you can do for them. Seriously. Okay. They don't need you. Until you reach the highest point of your development you're just a drain on them. You're just trouble for them, you know. They don't need anything. They could go sit somewhere and be happy [laughs] you know what I mean. It's one more problem in their life [laughs], you know, to take care of, is having one more kid, you know.

It's not for them, okay. Never think like that. I mean, it's, it's, it's for you, really, it's for you. Okay. And it's an honour to be asked to do something for your lama. And it's an honour to be spending your money for other sentient beings, you know. And it's an honour to spend your time and your life and to stay up late to help other people. And, and you're, you're one of the fortunate few who has the opportunity and, and really you have to see it like that 'cos it's true.

Okay. To have the opportunity to, to, you know, to spend all your time, to overwork yourself for your lama.

The word 'shramana', 'shramanara', one of the ordination vows is, means, the person who tires themselves out helping their lama, okay. [laughs] This ancient Sanskrit word for a student is the one who tires themselves out, you know, trying to help their lama. Never think of it as a burden or something, hassle or something like that. It's an honour. And once you get into it there's a dynamic, I mean, there's some kind a snowball starts rolling. Once you're able to commit yourself that way then everything starts happening for you. And, if you want to see emptiness, that's the best way. I mean, out of all the things we can do is to get into that kind of relationship with, with, with the lama who fits you. And then, don't hold back anything and then you'll get everything. You see what I mean. It's a dynamic like that. And you have to get to that point. That's the first of the lam rims, okay.

[end side A]

[side B]

That's the first step of the path. Okay, last one.

Say {gurpa}[repeat] {kyepa}[repeat]; {...} means like some kind of love or affection, reverence, devotion. And {kyepa} means to generate that or to start to feel that.

And if you reach that with a person that you're serving them to that degree or you have that relationship with them then you start to feel this devotion for them, okay. And it's a very important sign of your spiritual progress, you know.

You start to feel like this is the most precious being in the world and they've been giving up their whole lives for me and they've been watching over me and they've been, you know, this is a real lama. They've been setting this up for hundreds of years, you know. And this person's been out taking care of me, watching me, watching over me, protecting me, guiding me, trying to make sure that I don't suffer, you know. And they've been doing that for many, many, many years, you know. It's not just, I mean, any lama that you meet has been watching you for many years before that and, and waiting and setting things up for you and preparing for you, waiting for you to get here. And this has been going on for longer than you can imagine and then you have to think like that. Okay. And that's {...}, okay.

Take a break, okay, and then do your thing. We'll talk after that, okay.

I'll give you, like, a five minute shpiel about how did I chose what to teach in these classes, okay, and what's the approach of the content of this last five, six

years courses, okay. And to me it boils down between two things. What we call, {lam rim pa}, say {lam rim pa}[repeat], {tsennyi pa}[repeat]. These are two approaches to learning Buddhism that were popular in Tibet, okay. {lam rim pa} means that you go through the Lam Rim, okay. You go through one of the presentations of a Lam Rim. There are maybe eight major Lam Rims in Tibet. There are dozens of lesser Lam Rims. Not lesser by content but shorter. And that's one way of learning Buddhism, you know. You can learn the theoretical part of Buddhism through the Lam Rim. And that's a tradition that's been especially strong in Tibet especially among the non- monks, okay, like, among lay people. When big Lamas, like Pabongka Rinpoche, went to teach lay people in Tibet, it was always Lam Rim. When His Holiness comes to America to teach it's usually the 'Three Principle Paths' or, or some kind of variation on a Lam Rim. And this has been the tradition for lay people to learn Buddhism. Lam Rim includes all of Buddhism in a brief, easy to practice way that anyone can do. And this is one tradition. It's been a tradition when lamas got to the United States or other western countries that they concentrated on Lam Rim teachings because they were more simple and they were briefer and they were complete. And this is an easy way to present Buddhism to a western audience especially when you have a language barrier. So it was easier to do it that way. And that's been the way a lot of Buddhism has been taught in the United States. What the Asian Classics Institute's theory was, as that if you could find students who would commit enough time they could do it the monk's way, you know, the {tsennyi pa}, called {tsennyi pa}, okay. {tsennyi} means definition, {tsennyi pa} means a logician or someone who works on reasoning. And this is the presentation in the great monasteries, okay. We call {den sa sum}, the big three monasteries of Tibet, which is, Drepung, Ganden – two lesser Colleges [laughter] and Sera, okay, [laughter] which is the greatest of the three. And this has been the tradition in the {den sa sum} means the great three monasteries: Sera, Drepung, Ganden. And you would study {tsennyi pa}.

The {tsennyi pa} system consists of five subjects and I'm gonna just write them down. And this is what the course, here at Asian Classics, was designed around. I felt, I was brought up through the {tsennyi pa} system, you know, my Lama, we had time. We had twenty years, so he brought me up through the {tsennyi pa} system. {tsennyi pa} means, you cover the same material as the Lam Rim, but you rip it apart and you go very, very great detail through the five great subjects of ancient Indian Buddhism, okay. Sooner or later, if you do Lam Rim, they're all there and you can get them and you can learn them all that way. But,

if you go the {tsennyi pa} way, it's much, much more detailed. And to me, I think that Americans, if you can find Americans who are willing to make the effort, that it's a much greater result, you know. If you can find people who are attracted to working hard and having to really study hard and to try to understand the details of Buddhism, that to me, my goal in this Institute is that people study the {tsennyi pa} way. That you go through the details and the hard work of doing the detailed presentation of the great classics of ancient Buddhism. Going through each one of the four great Schools of ancient India in detail and learning the main points of the whole Geshe course. So the Geshe course is a {tsennyi pa} course and that was my dream for this place and for these courses and for the five, six year course. And what I would like this institute to be known for and what I would like to see people teaching is the five great subjects in detail in the heavy presentation. And I would like us to attract that kind of student. I don't think it's for everybody. You know, there's a lot of people who are attracted to, for example, just meditation. And there are people who are attracted to just social work or just social action or things like that. But the, the core of this Institute's presentation is the Geshe course and that's a {tsennyi pa}. {tsennyi pa} means, you take the five great subjects and you study them really hard and then, in conjunction with, meditation and deep retreats which we'll talk about another night. But as far as the content of what we learn here and what my dream is, is that, I think any normal American is well educated enough to do the whole Geshe course. I don't, you know, having been through the Geshe course, I don't see any reason why a normal American who's persistent can't excel at that course. And I don't think, I think it's a, I don't know how to say it, I think you are underestimating westerners or Americans if you think they can't do the Geshe course. Of course you can do the Geshe course. You've been through the major points of the Geshe course. Frankly, you know most of the material as well as most Geshe's ever learn it even if you're not, you may not believe that, okay. You, you can believe it, okay. I did my Geshe exams in ninety-five after teaching here for five years. It was a breeze. I mean, it was fun. People came there said, why are laughing, you're being examined by every monk in the monastery. It was a good time because I'd been through it all again with this, with these courses. So you don't have to think that you're somehow don't, aren't getting the whole thing, or you're not learning it as well, or you're not qualified to teach it, or you have to go the {lam rim pa} way because American's can't learn {tsennyi pa} way. It's not true. And, and you've learned the major points of the Geshe course and that's the goal of this Institute. In other words, I don't ever want the most serious courses of this Institute to be watered down to something which is, you know, easy for people who can't come regularly, you know what I mean or something like that. I'd rather weed out

those students. Let them come on Friday night which we call a 'cookie class' and, even though you get cookies, and I think the core, my dream of the core of the teachers that we produce should be {tsennyi pas}. In other words, they've covered the subjects in detail, they're not afraid to answer tough questions about it. When a tough question comes up they can say, oh, that comes in Abhidharma chapter three, check it out. You know what I mean. And, and I'd like to see that kind of thing. And not, it's not my goal in this Institute to do the lam Rim way, okay.

The Lam Rim is a, is a masterpiece because it incorporates all the five great books but in a much briefer way and in a much less comprehensive way. So I'd say I'd like the concentration of you people as teachers to be {tsennyi pa} way, which means, you're gonna have to learn all fifteen courses. Period. You know, my goal is that, you know, by the time I get out of the stupid three year retreat that everybody has finished the fifteen courses. If you're not, if you haven't done like the first five or ten or something like that, we're gonna design, during the three years there'll be a rotation of the courses so you'll be able to finish the ones you didn't do. Okay. And my goal is that each person go through the whole {tsennyi pa} course, you know. I could just get up and do a six month Lam Rim and then repeat it every six months and that's not the goal. If you want that, you know, go find a {lam rim pa} centre, okay. This is not. You earn it here, okay. And that's my goal. That's what I would like, okay. You've got fifteen courses, finished, packaged, waiting for you and your job to get through them. There will be people teaching them in a rotation during the three years and you can probably finish them if you work hard, okay.

I'm gonna just put up the names of the five great subjects because it's auspicious, you know, for people who are gonna be {tsennyi pas}. Okay.

And I'm not putting down {lam rim pa} centres, you know. That's good. {tsennyi pa's} better, okay. [laughs] [laughter] Alright.

Say {parchin}[repeat]. By the way, never say that, I don't want to hear anybody say that Michael Roach said Lam Rim was bad or something like that. That's incredibly ignorant, okay. Lam Rim is fantastic. This is even better. Okay. That's all.

{parchin} means Perfection of Wisdom, okay. The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras. It's the lower Madhyamika School. In the monastery, Perfection of Wisdom means the study of the lower School of Madhyamika, the lower Middle Way School. What we call the 'Independence School'. In the monastery this is twelve years.

Say {uma}[repeat] {uma}[repeat], Thurman, [laughter] no; {uma} means Middle Way, okay, Madhyamika. In the monastery this means the higher half of the Middle Way School, okay, the Prasangika or the Consequence School. The

highest teachings on emptiness, {uma}. We do four years in the monastery. Say {dulwa}[repeat] {dulwa}[repeat]; {dulwa} means Vinaya. This is Vowed Morality, okay. It could be, some people call it 'monk's rules' or something like that. It's not just monks; lay people also, okay. Vinaya, okay, the study of Ethics, vowed ethics, taking vows to live an ethical life is {dulwa}, okay. We do for two years in the monastery. This is the presentation of the Abhidharma Schools on ethics. This is the first of the four Schools of ancient India, okay.

When I met His Holiness and we showed Him the courses He was very excited. And I said, we're doing all five great books. He says, wait a minute, how are you doing Vinaya with, you know, big groups of people. They're not monks and nuns. I said, oh, we're using Je Tsongkapa's outline of Vinaya. He says, oh, that's great, you know. He was very excited about it, okay.

Say {dzu}[repeat], {..} means Abhidharmakosha, okay, the Abhidharma. We spend two years on it. The subject of the Abhidharma is hard to say. I mean, the first chapter, two chapters discuss the parts of your personality, your mind, all the parts of your mind; breaks down the whole universe into different categories, things like that.

The, the third chapter goes onto, where did the world come from, how was the universe formed, what are atomic particles, you know, how do you measure time, you know, how will the world end, things like that. Cosmology.

Fourth chapter is on Karma. And in the latter chapter is on how to meditate, how to defeat your mental afflictions, things like that. So, it's like a huge encyclopaedia of, of Buddhist philosophy.

Again, this is from the point of view of the first of the four great Schools, the Abhidharma Schools, okay.

Say {tsema}[repeat] {tsema}[repeat]; {tsema} in Sanskrit is Pramana. It means the study of Logic and Perception, okay, Buddhist logic and perception. In here, you get the second of the four great Schools. This is called the Sutrast Schools. Sometimes I just call it the Logic schools. When you say 'logic' to westerners and Americans they, they freak out, you know. They say, what's it got to do with me overcoming suffering and becoming a tantric deity, you know. What's logic, you know, who wants to study Aristotle? I just want to get enlightened, you know, and they freak out.

And I tell you this, okay, catch this. The second most important thing for seeing emptiness directly is logic. Okay. Is to study Buddhist Logic Schools. To study the theories of how you perceive things. How does perception work? You know, why does perception work? Why do you recognise things? How do you recognise things? How, how do your perceptions work? I mean, after serving

your lama, I'd say it's the most important thing for seeing emptiness directly. It's not in a, it's not irrelevant at all. It's one of the most important things you can do.

Je Tsongkapa's student said the greatest kindness he ever paid them was to reach them logic, how to think straight. And it's very, very deeply and intimately connected with seeing emptiness directly. Okay. And you have to learn it. They call it the {ume go}, it's like the, the doorway to Madhyamika, the doorway to emptiness, okay.

Yeah. [student] She said, where does debating fit into this? We'll talk about it in a second, okay.

We study {tsema} or Pramana every year. We stop, everyone stops wherever they are in the course, everyone stops and we go to Logic for three or four months. It culminates in the winter debates, which are big competitions, between the great three monasteries. Sometimes we let the {tashi hlunpo's} come and if the {ratu's} are nice we let them come [laughter] and the namgyal sherab once, but they never came back, alright. [laughs][laughter] Anyway, I think some of them did come back. Anyway, but it's a very intense debating between all the great three monasteries for, like, ten hours a day for an entire month. And, and this is every year. Logic is considered so important that whether you're just starting out at fifteen years of age or whether you're about to do your Geshe degree you're still, every year you're stopping and doing it for three or four months, okay.

When I say Logic, I'm also talking about how you perceive things, you know, that whole thing about mental images and how that plays a role in the perception of emptiness, okay.

How does all this relate to debating? We debate all of it. Debate is a tool to debate anything. And after we build the university in Arizona we'll be debating art or dance or tai chi or chi gong, whatever. You know, everything can be a subject of debate. Debate is just a tool for, for arguing logically about things and learning them fast and efficiently. So you can debate, we debate all of these subjects, okay, all four subjects.

Yeah. All five subjects, sorry. [student] Yeah. It's exclusive. You do them, yeah. You do only {parchin} for twelve years and then you do only {uma}.

And then people having trouble shifting between them because you learn a whole belief system and then they tell you, now forget that one and go to the next one. And, and you say, you have to switch hats. They call it switching hats. So people who just graduated from {parchin} to {uma} for example, are still stuck in their thinking in the lower School and the teacher has to shock them out of it, you know. Like, the teacher, after teaching them lower Madhyamika for twelve years says, by the way, that's wrong. Now you have to learn this one for four

years, you know. And they freak out, very common for them to freak out, okay. So this is the system in the monastery.

Now, where does the Lam Rim fit in here? Lam Rim is an abbreviation of all these five, see what I mean, Lam Rim contains all five in a brief way. In the monastery there is no Lam Rim formal course. And I asked Rinpoche one time, why don't we do the Lam Rim or why do we do {drupta}, which is comparative philosophy, 'cos you don't need it 'cos when you do the other four, I mean, the other five, you cover it but in greater detail. Okay. So you have to get used to that idea.

Yeah. [student] Oh, that's a good question. He said, where does Mind Only School fit in? Alright. Which is the third of the four great Schools. It's studied during {parchin}, okay. It's, as you get towards the end of your course in the Perfection of Wisdom you start learning {tragne}. {tragne} means how to interpret the Buddha and that's where Mind Only School comes up. Was the Buddha literal or figurative when he taught that everything is the mind or something like that? Okay. So, it's covered in {parchin}. And then, later, when you get to Madhyamika, the Mind Only School comes as the bad guys and you learn all the arguments against the Mind Only School. So that's, that's where you study the third of the four great Schools.

So, by the time you finish this course at ACI, the point is that you've covered all the great Schools of ancient India, you've covered everything that the Lam Rims have in them and, but in very, very great detail.

What's the use of spending so much time in all this detail? Okay. Why is it necessary? Can't we just meditate all the time? You know what I mean? It seems like you're hung up on all these fine points of philosophy. It's not just philosophy. Sooner or later, you'll see that every single point that comes up is one that will come up in your own mind as you meditate and you have to be equipped to deal with those questions for yourself. Secondly, as you get older, you will attract students, okay. Each person in this room has a personal responsibility to start teaching in accordance with their ability and their own personality to other people. And they will come up, they are westerners, they are American, they will come up with the craziest questions, you know. And they will think of all the angles that Je Tsongkapa didn't cover or something like that. You know what I mean. And the idea of learning all the Schools is that you can, you can handle every different question. And the idea of studying in depth is that you can satisfy the needs of each person, each student that you ever have. You will have, at your fingertips, exactly what they need. You see what I mean. And you'll be, like, totally equipped to help any kind of personality that comes to you because you're going to get all kinds of students and each one is gonna be obsessed with a different part of Buddhism and you have to be equipped to

answer them immediately and to satisfy them and to lead them, okay. So that's the idea of being a {tsennyi pa} and, and having all this stuff in your, at your fingertips. And you should. And you shouldn't think it's a waste of time or too much detail or something like that. If someone's gonna come to you and ask you that question and if you have it right there and you can help them or it's gonna come up in your, in the second year of your three year retreat, you can't talk to anybody, right.

And you'll have it all in your mind, you know. Sooner or later, everything we ever cover was taught by Lord Buddha because he saw with an omniscient mind that somebody would need it and, and never think of it as anything less than that, okay.

We'll do some prayers.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Thankyou.

Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Seven

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start. Sorry we had a little late start, it's 'cos we had some foul up with stuff.

Clarification about talking tome during the break: during the break it's first come first served and you can line up there and we can talk. But what I found was that during the discussion groups, people were starting to line up over here and, then you won't learn anything. So, during the discussion groups we're gonna limit it to one or two people up here and then, you know, they'll, you tell Ora that you want to talk and we'll just make sure there's no more than two people out of their discussion groups at the same time. Otherwise you won't learn something and you won't be able to pass it on to your students, okay.

Tonight we move on to the fourth of the fifteen courses that the ACI program is all about. We finished, so far, the Three Principle Paths, the principle teachings of Buddhism. That was the first two classes. And that's the first ACI course. Basic Lam Rim.

And then we finished basic Perfection of Wisdom, which is mostly Refuge and Nirvana. And the, you graduated last week from the Meditation course, which was number three, based on Kamilashila, about 800 AD.

So, this time, you're moving on to class number four. Class number four was called the, 'The Proof of Future Lives'. And by the way, once you've proved future lives you've proved past lives, okay. It was just too long to make a name out of it. And this is an interesting, how this course came about is interesting. In the monastery you study logic every winter for two to three months and if you're good at it you get selected on your monastery's team and you get sent to the, like, the Olympics or the, it's called {...} and it's a inter-monastic debates which rotate every year between the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden.

And you study the four chapters of a book by Dharmakirti, who's about 700 AD, something like that and you study logic. The first of the four chapters concerns

logic and formal logic. And Tibetan logic, Buddhist logic is exactly the same as Aristotelian logic. The logic is the same because the human mind works the same. It doesn't matter what country you live in. You know, if A then B; if B then C then A then C, it doesn't matter where you live. And all language is based on that same logic. So it doesn't really matter where you're from logic is the same.

There's a distinction between Buddhist logic and non-Buddhist logic in the goals of Buddhist logic are totally different, you know. What you're trying to achieve with logic is totally different. And we'll talk about that tonight.

But anyway, if you're really good you get to go to two winter debates. If you're really good you go to three. Some people go to four. And very few people ever get to five. But in the fourth one they start to move into the second chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, which is the great logic text of Dharmakirti.

Not to be confused with Chandrakirti, okay. The first six months that you learn Tibetan or Buddhism you mix up Chandrakirti and Dharmakirti all the time. Chandrakirti is the great madhyamika emptiness scholar, the different thing. Dharmakirti is the great logician.

So, we're talking Dharmakirti, okay.

In the second chapter Dharmakirti starts to prove the existence of past and future lives, okay. And it's interesting, when you debate this in the monastery, and I did in the winter debates, is that Tibetan's are not very good at it. Why? 'Cos they grew up in a country where they said, you're gonna have a future life and you did have a past life and no one questions it. And, they, they were bad at this chapter. They weren't very good at it. And, and Kedrup Je noticed the same thing. Great student of Je Tsongkapa's back five hundred years ago said, everybody in Tibet believes in a past life and a future life because their mom said so and their first grade teacher said so. And I haven't found a Tibetan, who could explain to me, why there is a future life or a past life, you know what I mean. And, and then he went about trying to prove it.

And his proof is very beautiful and it's part of the course and you can find it in there.

Dharmakirti's proofs are very wonderful, Master Dharmakirti, and we went over a lot of those proofs during the course.

There's a sort of a very basic principle of the proofs of past and future lives and we'll be talking about that, okay. There's also a {ngunsum tsema}, a direct perception of past and future lives that you can have during deep meditation and you don't have to debate it. You can, you can do that, okay. You have two choices of how to establish future lives and one is, just to see them and two is, to debate them or do it logically.

When you're teaching a course you do it logically because not everybody's been

meditating every day and you can't take them that way, alright. So you do it logically. So we'll be doing that in this class and in the next class.

The beginning of this class is to give you a little bit of a background in Buddhist logic. And Buddhist logic and perceptual theory: How do you perceive things? How do you know something? How do you recognise something? Are very closely tied together. Those two are a very important foundation for emptiness, for understanding emptiness.

If you don't understand how to reason and then you don't understand, for example, how you perceive an object and why you can recognise an object, like, why do you, why do you look at a chair and look at a car and see different things if they're both rectangles? You see what I mean? What is it in your mind that, that happens, that you can recognise a car as a car and things like that?

So, these are questions of Buddhist logic, the logicians of Buddhism. The first logician of Buddhism was who? Lord Buddha, okay. [laughs] Very famous, okay, very famous Scriptures where Lord Buddha taught logic, okay. But the point of logic is to get into the question of how you can recognise things. That gets into the question of emptiness. And if you get deep enough into the logic Scriptures it's a very, very powerful tool and I would say, a necessary tool, for seeing emptiness directly. Okay. So, I've heard even Tibetan Lamas say, oh, the logic stuff is too hard or the logic stuff is boring or the logic stuff is irrelevant to modern life; is totally not the case. Gyaltsab Je said the kindest thing that Je Tsongkapa ever did for him was to teach him logic. Because by teaching someone logic you teach them perception. And by teaching someone perception you teach them, you must start talking about emptiness and, and then you can perceive emptiness directly.

And, and in experience, in practice, if you want to see emptiness directly, you must study the Buddhist ideas on perception just before that, called {chi jedrak}, okay, the idea of 'qualities and characteristics', okay. And mental images, how do you make a mental, how do you use a mental image to see something? Okay. So this is the study of logic is very much tied into the study of perception and we're gonna talk about that.

All this comes from the second of the four great Schools of India called the Sutrists School, Sautrantika, okay, sorry, Sautrantika, yeah. Okay.

In the monastery the whole study of logic, when you get to this subject, which is one of the five great subjects, it's called {tsema}. Say {tsema}[repeat] {tsema}[repeat]; {tsema} in Sanskrit is Pramana. And pramana just means, a valid perception of something, a normal perception of something. Okay. I'll give you

an example of a {tsema} and the I'll give you an example of a non-{tsema}, okay.

By the way, how many {tsemas} do you have during the day? How many correct perceptions or valid perceptions of things do you have during the day? Depends on what school you're in. [laughter] Okay. Don't, don't forget whose hat we have on. We're Sutrists School, okay. Sutrists School, I mean, valid, if you say, 'valid perceptions', not accurate but valid, you have millions and millions of those perceptions every day all day long, okay. You're having thousands of them while we said the last few sentences, okay. You had, these are all correct perceptions.

People have translated Pramana as 'valid cogniser' and other weird words like that. I mean, I used to go home and worried if I'd ever had a valid cogniser or not, you know. You have valid perceptions all day long. You have correct perceptions all day long. You're having them all the time, okay. And I'll give you an example of a non-valid perception and you'll know the difference, okay. If you're totally jealous of someone and then out of complete, under the influence of that emotion, you, you think they're trying to do something to you that they had no intention to do to you at all. That's a non-{tsema}. If you're driving down the road in Howell, New Jersey, Fifth Street, you know, and it's the fall and there's all these leaves. And a windstorm comes up and the leaves are going across the road at dusk and it looks like a squirrel, 'cos there's lots of squirrels down there, and you slam on the brakes. That's a non-{tsema}, okay, that's a non direct. If you're on LSD, alcohol, something like that, you see a pink elephant or something, that's a non-{tsema}, okay. Very common example in the Scriptures is, you're rowing a boat at a certain angle along a line of trees and it looks like the trees are moving and not the boat. Or you're in a subway car and the other one's moving this way and you're not moving yet but it looks like you're moving. Those are all examples of non-{tsemas}, okay. So, non-{tsemas} are relatively rare. You have a non-{tsema} once every thousand {tsemas} or something like that. And you have a {tsema} every, you have a few {tsemas} every second, you know what I mean, many actually.

So that's the thing. I mean, I used to read in these bad translations these weird words and I was thinking, boy, I wonder if, I wonder if I'll ever get to where I get to have a valid cogniser, you know. And it doesn't mean that at all, okay. You have valid perceptions constantly. You are living in valid perceptions, according to this school and, and only those rare examples of where you're very angry and you have a total miss take on something or, or something like that. You're drunk and you see something or something like that. That's a non-{tsema}, okay.

{tsema} has a lot of other meanings which we'll explore tonight. But if somebody says, what are you studying, you're gonna say {tsema}. What does it

mean? Valid perception, how you have a correct perception, what does it mean to have a correct perception, okay.

And correct perceptions are tied up with mental images. And he who understands mental images can see emptiness directly. So it's important to study {tsema},okay.

Here's one example of the use of the word {tsema}.

Say, {tseme} [repeat] {mikpa} [repeat] {yurpay} [repeat] {tsennyi} [repeat], {tseme} [repeat]{mikpa} [repeat] {yurpay} [repeat] {tsennyi} [repeat],okay. {tseme} means, 'by a valid perception', okay, by a valid perception; {mikpa} means, 'that which is perceived' by a valid perception, okay. {mikpa} here is a verb, that which is perceived is the {tsennyi}. {tsennyi} means, 'definition', {tsennyi} means definition. Definition of what? {yurpa}. {yurpa} means, 'to exist',okay. I perceive therefore it is, okay.

The definition of existence in Buddhism is, 'anything which is perceived with a valid perception'. If you can see it with a valid perception then it exists, okay.

There's a little bit of a trick between 'valid' and 'correct', okay and I'll give you an example. In my glory days in the diamond business I had to try to predict the market sometimes, you know. So, I would have the option, without asking the boss, to buy, maybe, half a million dollars of extra diamonds above the orders on the idea that in a month they might go up in value because in my idea it was a good, judging the market conditions, this was going to happen, you know. Knowing that the electricity was going to go out in Gudjarat State in India next month a lot then these diamonds would increase in value, you know, and stuff like that, you know. So, then sometimes based on all my information, which was extensive, you know. I'd have spies in Poland doing stuff about the Russian production and I had people in Gudjarat State calling me every day and Belgium calling reports and people in the jungles in Brazil calling me. And then we'd figure these diamonds are gonna go up next month so I would buy an extra, you know, so many hundred thousand dollars worth. And then the market would collapse [laughs] and then there'd be an inventory the next fifteenth of the month and I'd go to the boss and say, you know, guess what, we lost a lot of money. He'd say, that's impossible, we don't have that much stock. I'd say, guess what, I [laughs] [laughter], you know, I cornered the market and then the market fell through. And he'd get very angry, you know. And then he'd say, that was a wrong decision, you know. And I said, no, no, it was a right decision because based on what I knew at the time it was the best decision, so it was valid although it wasn't correct, you see. You see what I mean? So valid means, valid means based on what you know this is the wisest course of action. I mean, logically, the boss can't deny that. I should have done it. I should have made that decision. It was valid. Now, was it correct? No. Okay. So that's the

difference between valid and correct, okay.

What's that got to do with perception? You could say valid when, given all the information at hand for your screwed up state of mind, this seems to be the way things are. That's valid. Is it correct? No. Okay. I mean, according to the highest school, Madhyamika, you never are correct in your perceptions until you see emptiness directly, okay. So that's a distinction you have to live with. You have to think about it, okay.

Generally speaking, valid means correct and you can leave it like that. But if you're wondering why I keep saying valid, it's from my old diamond days, okay.

What's the, I said that the distinction, I said, first of all, that Buddhist logic, like in the first chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, which is the great book by Dharmakirti, okay, which is a defence of Dignaga's book, Master Dignaga's book on logic, is, is presenting the same kind of logic that you studied in high school, you know. There's a major premise, a minor premise, there's a conclusion, blah, blah, blah.

It's all the same. The words are slightly different, the processes are slightly different, but the whole formal logic is the same. And then I said, but there's a big difference between the goals of Buddhist logic and non-Buddhist logic.

The goal of Buddhist logic is to get you enlightened. The goal of Buddhist logic is to help you to see things which you cannot see with your direct senses, okay.

Every human mind in our realm, and there are many other realms, but every human mind in our realm has very, very subtle, invisible defects or blocks in your mind. You could picture them like little marbles in your brain that are transparent and you can't see them but you have plenty of them, okay. They are small very subtle, mostly invisible, blinders that you have in your mind. If your mind was free of those you would see some extraordinary things, you know. All around you, at this moment, you would see things that you never imagined existed. You could see past and future time. You could see all kinds of creatures living in this room that you can't see right now, you know. You would become aware of, of, of enlightened beings hovering around you all the time. I mean, there are all these things going on around you all the time that you can't see due to certain very subtle blockages in your own mind. And you're born with them. You see what I mean. And, and the practice of meditation and studying Buddhism and doing long retreats and things like that, tends to break them down. First, it makes them more and more, less and less powerful so that you get glimpses of things and then you lose it, you see what I mean. You pass in and out of these glimpses of higher things. And then, as you study more, as you meditate more, as you do more retreats, you break down those obstacles and you start to see things that you never dreamed of, okay.

And that's the idea of Buddhism. To break down those subtle, they're called {drupas}, okay, those subtle obstacles, to break them down the first tool we always use is study and based on study we logically work through those blinders, okay. So it's almost like a horse with these things on their, you know, and the horse says, no, no, there's no such thing as a side of the road. I can't see it. And you sit down with the horse and say, no, you know, you got these black things on your eyes and there's trees on the side of the road that you can't see. And they say, no, no, I've never seen them, I don't believe you, you know. And you say, no, no, really, you got these things. You don't know. And then you start to reason with them, you see what I mean. And, and then after a while they say, okay, I believe that it's possible that there could be trees there or yeah, I believe you, there probably are trees there. In a sense then, they are seeing through the blinders, you see what I mean. We say that logic helps you see through the obstacles to these higher objects, okay.

For example, if I had enough time, I could prove to you the probable existence in this room of some tantric deities. And then, you'd have to say yeah, intellectually, I think you could be right and then, in a sense, you would be seeing through the obstacles. You'd be, you'd be penetrating those obstacles. Later on, after you remove them completely, you'd see them sitting next to you and you'd say, oh, you're sitting next to me, you know. But we always begin with intellect. We always begin with reasoning. We always begin with piercing through the obstacles with your mind and with your own rational sense that okay, given all this, given A, B and C, I understand that D must be true even though I can't see it directly yet, okay. So that's the idea of Buddhist logic. The process is always like that. It's not like some satori thing where you don't see them one minute and you do see them the next minute.

There's no such thing. You go through a learning process and then you slowly break down the obstacles and the first time you see the deities in this room will be logically. And then, after you've done that a lot you'll start to see them directly.

You see what I mean. But the first goal is always, the first method is always ration, rationality, rational sense. Logic. Reasoning. Okay. And Buddhism is based on that. And you can say all the 'what's the sound of one hand clappings', that you want, you know, but the Buddha based his whole teachings on logic and, and on reasoning, you know. And the more you study Buddhism, the more you study the great books of Buddhism, you know, and tonight we're wrapping up the CD ROM, I think, at four am. Right, Genevieve? [laughs] If we're lucky. You know, hundred and fifty thousand pages of the original books, there's not one that doesn't say you have to do it rationally first, you know. You have to understand things clearly, logically, first. Then you have other

breakthroughs that follow after that, that may not be so rational or logical, but you must reach those through a process of clear reasoning, okay, and learning, alright.

So here's the goal of, the very first goal of Buddhist logic is very interesting. This is a direct quotation from Lord Buddha, the printer didn't print out the second half of it but I'll fill it in, okay.

Forget all this stuff. [cut] And it's kind of long but to me it's one of the most beautiful statements in Buddhism. And in the monastery when you step into the debate ground for the first time you better have this on your lips 'cos they will ask you, okay.

First thing you ever learn in Buddhist logic, very, very, very first thing and just repeat it. I'm gonna give you the debate ground version, okay. Say, {gangsak kyi}[repeat], I'm sorry. I blew that.

{nga'am}[repeat] {dang}[repeat] { nang drawe}[repeat] {gangsak gi}[repeat] {tsu}[repeat] {zung gi}[repeat] {gangsak gyi}[repeat] {gangsak gi tsu}[repeat] {tsur}[repeat] {micha te}[repeat] {nyampar gyur tare}[repeat], [laughs] okay, okay.

{...} means, 'a person like me', me or a person like me, okay, {nga'am dang drawe} means, me or a person like me; {gangsak gi tsu zung gi} means, we can judge other people. 'Me' meaning the Buddha or a person like me, meaning a person who can read other people's minds easily, clearly; {gangsak gi tsur zung gi}, we can judge other people. The {gi} means, but, okay, you know what's gonna come. {..} but normal people shouldn't try to judge other normal people, {nyampar gyur tare} because you will fail, okay. And sometimes the 'fail' is translated as you will 'fall to the lower realms', okay, {nyampar gyur tare}.

And, you know, you always go into the debate ground and the first thing they say in the winter debates is, hey, what's the purpose of Buddhist logic, you know. You say, you're not supposed to judge other people. They say, give me the quotation. You say, {..}. They say, okay, good, you know. And then they go onto the next subject, you know.

And then I kept asking around, where's this from? They said, it's Lord Buddha, you know. I said, but where? What's he talking about? Where did it come from? They said, I don't know. We never asked that, you know. So I asked the computer. I looked in the computer and it took me awhile and I finally found it. It's in a book by Lord Atisha called {do kum du}, which means, a compendium of stories from the Sutras, okay. And he excerpts a story from a Sutra and it's a beautiful story.

And I'll just tell you very briefly, okay.

There is one monk who is staying in a monastery out in the countryside and he studies really well and he gets bodhicitta.

And he starts to think that it would be very useful to go into town and teach the

laypeople a little bit about Buddhism. Out of compassion he decides it would be good to visit the town and teach people about Buddhism. And so he starts to go to town.

And then this other monk is jealous of him and he starts to spread a rumour that he's going to town to mess around and to do bad things and things like that. And, and he starts this rumour in the monastery. And it gets so bad that the first monk finally has to leave and go to a different monastery, start a whole different place and move to a different place and, and that's how this whole thing comes up. Like that. In actuality, he's going to the town and out of compassion he's teaching the laypeople about Buddhism and it's not true that he's messing around at all. And also out of a desire not to have bad things happen at the monastery he, he voluntarily leaves and goes to a different place and starts his own thing there. Then the Buddha says the monk who was jealous and accused him of all these things that he didn't do ended up living, you know, five hundred lives as a dog and then five hundred lives he lost his robes. Like, he became a monk and then disrobed and terrible things like that. And that was all this karmic result of, of being jealous and of saying untrue things about this other monk or judging the other monk without knowing what he was really doing.

And then Lord Buddha says, and you know who that was? You know, [laughter] he says, that was me. I was the jealous monk, you see. This is most of the Vinaya stories are like that. At the end the punch line is always I was the jealous monk. I went through five hundred births as a dog. I went through five hundred births losing my robes, you know. And I'm telling you out of compassion don't do it, okay. {...},you know, if you're like me, if you're omniscient, you can judge other people but {...}other people shouldn't try it, you'll mess up, you'll be a dog [laughs] for five hundred lives, something like that, okay.

So this is actually instruction from Lord Buddha saying, don't judge other people, okay, unless you can clearly read their mind don't judge other people.

Can you judge their actions? You see what I mean? I mean, are you supposed to stand around while somebody mugs another person and say, you know, I can't judge you so just go ahead, you know. No, you can't do that.

If you see a monk who seems to be doing something bad should you speak up and say something? Yes, you should. You have to, okay.

But do you judge the person indubitably, are you sure that that's what's going on? You have to say, no, I'm not sure. So you have to stand up against the action and you have to stand up against something wrong but not to judge the person. Not to be sure that you know why they're doing it, okay.

And, and there are many different levels of many different people's actions and they are inscrutable to us. I mean, you can't be sure what a person around you

is doing and why they're doing it.

Based on your best knowledge, based on your own level, you have to resist evil. If they seem to be doing something wrong you have to actively resist it but in the back of your mind you have to leave some room there that says this person could be doing something important and, and I'll keep my eyes out, you know. If I see any evidence that this might be something important or holy or something good for people, you know, I'll keep my eyes out. In the meantime, given what I know, to the best of my knowledge, this is something wrong and I have to resist what they're doing. You know what I mean. That's not contradictory. But, but mentally, reserve some judgement. You see what I mean. Then you're not, you don't get in trouble.

And that's the purpose of Buddhist logic. It's to know the limits of your direct perceptions. Okay. It's to know the limits of your direct perception.

And, and normally we, we judge. I personally, have done long retreats where I got out and I was in this really good state of mind for about three days, very aware that I judged constantly all day long, all day long judging other people. Deciding that they must be this or that or this, you know. Not talking about what they do but I'm talking about judging the person, you know what I mean. And, and I would say that we probably do it all day long and you have to be careful. It is the source of much bad karma, okay.

There's two kinds of {tsema}. There's two kinds of correct perception, valid perceptions and you should know the difference, okay.

[cut]

Say, {ngunsum}[repeat] {tsema}[repeat]. This is the first of two basic types of {tsema}, okay. There are more types but basic types are two. {ngunsum tsema} means, direct perception, okay. For example, awareness of colours and shapes that I'm holding up here, okay; awareness of the sound that I'm speaking.

You don't have to use logic to perceive those things. To you they are what we call 'obvious reality'. They're reality on an obvious level. We give that reality a name. It's called {ngun gyur} and that's right here.

Say, {ngun gyur}[repeat]; {ngun gyur} means the obvious level of reality, the obvious levels of reality, okay. You don't have to be Einstein to see blue, okay. You don't have to use logic to see blue, okay. You don't have to use logic to hear what I'm saying. You don't have to use logic to hear your own thoughts. These are all {ngun gyur} to you, okay. These are all what we call obvious reality, an obvious level of reality. And those could be perceived with your direct senses or your direct mental sense, okay. Which are called, {ngunsum

tsema}, direct valid perceptions, okay.

Now what about stuff which is a little harder? Okay. Like what? There are two classic examples in Scripture: emptiness, which is called, pretty hard to see and then, the subtle workings of karma, which are called, very hard to see. Okay. So they are even more difficult to see than emptiness, okay. You know, why, why are there certain scratches on the plastic here on the, that I can see here, you know? What's responsible for the fuzz on the floor? And each one of the fuzzes on the floor? You know, why does your eyebrow go like that and what's responsible for each angle of each hair on your eyebrow?

I mean, you gotta be a Buddha basically to see those things, okay. To know what karma you did that's responsible for the fuzz, the configuration of the fuzz on the floor tonight, okay, that takes a Buddha. Okay.

Emptiness, as well, for most people is hidden, hard to see. And you need different faculties to perceive it. That's called, {jepak tsema}. [cut]

Say, {jepak}[repeat], {tsema}[repeat]. {tsema} means? Valid perception, correct perception. {jepak} means, deductive, okay, things that you figure out with your logic, with logic.

How many times a day do you use logic? Here, what's this? This is a, yeah, cylinder, okay. [laughs] This is a pen, okay. It's a pen. Okay.

Now, listen carefully, okay. [drops pen] Do I have a pen in my hand? Yeah, you see you can't perceive it directly and you just used {jepak tsema}, okay, to perceive something which has just moved to a deeper level of reality. It's hidden now to you. Whether I have a pen in my hand is, to you, now a hidden object. And you've had to move to a different level of {tsema} to figure out if I have a pen in my hand, okay.

You moved from {ngunsum tsema} to {jepak tsema}.

You know, when I was holding the pen up in front of you, you were utilising what we call direct perception and then after I put the pen behind my head and you heard a bang on the floor you were using, you moved up to {jepak tsema}, a deductive perception to perceive that my hand is empty right now. But you can't see that directly.

Is it as valid as the direct perception? Can you see as clearly that I don't have anything in my hand as you did that I do have something in my hand before? I mean, does it have the same validity to you? Is it as correct as the first perception? I'd say, yes, okay. I'd say, yes. I mean, there's a little bit more room for doubt, you know. Maybe I'm very good with my feet or something and I didn't drop the thing. There is a little room for doubt you can say that. But, generally speaking, the correctness of this second mode of perception which means, deduction, is just as, just as strong, if the logic is fool proof. If the logic is

waterproof, what do they call it? Airtight. Okay. Then, that perception is as correct and as valid as seeing with your own eyes. So 'seeing is believing' is false, okay. Seeing or deducing is believing, okay. Like that. By the way, technically, if you're really good {jepak tsemian}, you know, if you're a really good person about deduction, you'd have to say, the odds are quite likely that you don't have a pen in your hand because I heard a bang. Okay. I mean, if you're gonna be perfect airtight you have to say something like that. Unless you're really good with tapping your feet in a clever way or something or you had a tape, you know, Seamus had a tape recorder set up back there with a bang sound on it then I can say that you, I can say with certainty that, if that's not the case then you don't have a pen in your hand.

And, and Buddhism says, whether you see something with your direct perception, valid perception, or whether you see something with your deductive valid perception, the results are just as valid, just as correct. And get used to it, okay. Why? Because, for example, when you see emptiness, you're gonna have to start with deductive perception of emptiness because you can't see it directly until you have seen it logically. Okay. There has to be a process like that.

So you have to get used to believing and understanding that all day long you use your deduction as a perfectly valid substitute for direct perception. It's just as correct. It's just as accurate. Okay.

Did you have a question? And I see you were right. [laughs] Huh? [student]

Oh, Jay says, well, then it wouldn't matter if you saw emptiness directly or if you saw it deductively, right. All I can say is that there's a certain power to seeing it directly, okay.

When you see emptiness directly certain events happen to you on that same day called the 'Four Arya Truths'. You see your future lives directly. You see the dharmakaya, you know you have seen the dharmakaya directly. You know the day of your enlightenment. I mean, those things you see directly and it only happens to people who have seen emptiness directly. So there's a certain power, you know, to seeing it directly.

It's just as valid that, you know, I mean, just as true that you know emptiness exists but the effect on your mind stream is not the same, okay. Alright. Like, that's a long story. Okay.

{kok-gyur} is level number two of reality. {kok-gyur} means, 'hidden things', okay. This is {ngun-gyur}. This is {kok-gyur}. Okay. {kok-gyur} means a sort of hidden level of reality.

The classical example of a, of a {kok-gyur} object, an object which is number two level of reality hard to see, is emptiness itself, okay. Emptiness itself is called {kok-gyur}.

Now I'll ask you a question. This is a very beautiful debate I had at Ganden

during one of the winter debates. It was beautiful. It was really one of the most beautiful times in my life.

And we debated it like this. I mean, it was a two-hour debate but, is the blue {gnun-gyur} or {kok-gyur}? Is it, is it the obvious level of reality or is it the hidden level of reality, which you have to perceive with logic? It's {ngun-gyur}, okay.

But, what about to a blind man? You see, the same object becomes {kok-gyur}, okay.

So this is a very profound thing. Every object in the world can be {ngun-gyur} or {kok-gyur} depending on who's looking, okay.

How many {kok-gyurs} are there to an enlightened being? None. Okay. The subtle workings of karma, why the fuzz on the floor has the particular set up it has tonight, you know, the emptiness of every object in this room and the blue are equally {ngun-gyur} to an enlightened being. Okay. They're equally obvious to an enlightened being. They don't need any more logic at all to see anything, okay.

To a person who's blind all the colors in this room have suddenly become {kok-gyur}. They are a deeper level of reality, more hard to see. They can only see that level of reality based on logic. Someone says to me, to them, do you ever walk down the street and you have trouble crossing sometimes and you don't have trouble crossing at other times? They say, yeah, yeah, I've noticed that, you know. And then you say, are you aware that the cars stop in New York at certain places and then they go after a while? They say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I understand that. Then you say, well the reason is there's this electrical thing up above and it changes from this thing called red color to this thing called green color and then they go, you know, and that's why they know how to go. And they say, okay, that's logical. I believe in red and green, okay. I perceive red and green. Okay. Or that there's such a thing as a red and green. You see what I mean. But for them it has to be logical. You have to say, now it makes sense why my seeing eye dog always pulls up short and then lets me go after thirty seconds, you know, now it makes sense.

Then they've perceived, in a way, the red and the green, okay. That's {kok-gyur}.

{shintu kok-gyur}. [cut] Oh, sorry. [cut]

Say, {shintu kok-gyur}[repeat] {shintu kok-gyur}[repeat]; {shintu} means, really. When Tibetans get mad you hear a lot of {shintu...} [laughs] means, he's really bad guy [laughs] {shintu ..}. {shintu} means, really {kok-gyur}. And, and this is like a deeper, deeper level of reality like the subtle workings of karma, okay, very subtle workings of karma; difficult to see even with normal deduction.

Probably you'll have to rely on some kind of deduction mixed in with some kind

of statement by a person who cannot lie, okay. And this is an interesting thing in Buddhism. There's a exercise in Buddhist logic where you try to establish that Lord Buddha is a person who cannot lie, okay. And, and you go through that exercise first logically and then you take the other statements that he's made as probably being true, okay. But the exercise of proving that the Buddha is a person who cannot lie or who is unlikely to lie is the basis for {shintu kok-gyur}. {shintu kok-gyur} means things that you probably couldn't work out even deductively for a long time.

So you, you base your actions on what lord Buddha said having established him logically as a person who cannot lie, okay.

And, and in the Scriptures they'll say, what's the biggest indication that the Buddha is a person who cannot lie? What's the, what's the biggest indication that the person, that the Buddha might be someone who always tells the truth? And the answer's very interesting. And people ask me, why did you become a Buddhist? I say, my parents died and my brother died all in one year, you know. And then I came across this book, very badly translated sutra, that I didn't know was badly translated in college, from eighteen something, but Lord Buddha was saying over and over again, everything is suffering. Everything is impermanent, you know. And then I said, this is for me, you know. I don't know who this guy is. I never heard of this thing. I don't want to read the rest of this book particularly. It's very boring. But this one statement, you know, everything is suffering, everything is subject to change and therefore everything dies, you know, this is absolutely true. You know, especially when three people in your family have just died and you're twenty years old and you're, like, this guy's brilliant, you know. This guy's got something. I have never heard another person in my whole life say something so true, you know. Everyone avoids it. Nobody in my family wanted to talk about death. Now they're all dead. You know what I mean. And, and here's this guy, comes along says, everything's gonna die. Wake up. Do something about it, you know. And, and the fact that, out of the whole world, you know, out of the whole magazines and newspapers and TV shows and radio shows and all the people I know in the world, not one of them ever came to me and said, you're gonna die just like everybody else. You better do something about it, you know. Try this. Try this. Do this. You know, you gotta, you got more time after you die than before you die so don't waste your time on what's gonna happen before you die.

Get ready for what happens after you die, you know, or something like that.

Nobody says that in the New York Times, you know. Nobody says that. Time Magazine never ran a cover story that said, get ready, you know, everything dies, you're gonna lose everything. Everything described by our advertisers, you will have to lose, even if you can get it, you know what I mean. [laughter]

Nobody ever [laughs] I don't think the advertisers would let them write that, you know. Every attractive object for sale in our magazine is worthless because you have to lose it. You know what I mean. And just open your eyes and see that that's happened to all the millions and millions of people who ever lived before you. Do you think you're gonna be different? You know what I mean?

No one ever said that except one person. Lord Buddha. Open up a sutra, you know, I don't know what's the first Buddhist book you saw, but you open it up and it says, every thing is suffering, everything dies, you have to lose everything, do something about it. You know what I mean.

And the basis in Buddhism for accepting the Buddha as being a person who might be telling the truth all the time is that he told the truth about that. And nobody else does. You see what I mean.

So you already give him more credit than you give anybody else and that's the basis of {tseme kyebu}. {tseme kyebu} means, a person of pramana, okay, a pramana being; meaning, a person who is valid, meaning correct, you know. How do we decide, how do we establish that the stuff that Lord Buddha said about hell realms and hungry ghosts and all that other stuff that you can't see might be correct? Well, because he's the only person that I've ever met in my life that even attempted to describe the suffering that I'm experiencing. The only person I ever heard of who admitted it outright, you know.

His Holiness talks about suffering and all the interviewers say, that's so depressing, you know, that's so, what do they call it? There's a word. Pessimistic. You know. And he says, but it's true [laughter] and when you admit it you feel a lot better, you know. [laughs]

And it's so true, you see, and no one's talking about that. Nobody wants to say anything about it, you see.

And then you get one person comes along and says, this is the way things are. Then you can say, ah, this might be a person who can't tell a lie because they described my condition so perfectly and everyone else is afraid to talk about it, okay.

That's the basis of what we call a person of pramana.

All of this comes from a very famous quotation which you'll study in your discussion groups called, {tsema gyurpa drola penchir pa chak tsel lo}, opening lines of Dignaga's book on logic.

Dignaga was a few generations before Dharmakirti. Some people say he was his direct teacher. And he wrote a book about logic but the book starts out and says, {tsema ...}, means, there's one person who's valid, {drola penchir pa} means, there's one person who cares about other people in the ultimate way. Who's that? {tenpa}, the Teacher, the Buddha, {deche}, the One who has already Gone to total bliss. {deche kyob}, the One who can protect you, okay. {la chak

tsel lo}, I bow down to this person, okay. And this is a very famous line.

That line sounds like one of those plain old Buddhist exaggeration lines, you know. Oh, the Buddha, the glorious One, above all others, you know, most wonderful in the universe, blah, blah, blah. It's not like that. I mean, there's a statement in there. It says, {tsema gyurpa drola penchir pa}. {tsema gyurpa} means, a person of pramana, a person who cannot lie. And then it says, {drola penchir pa}, a person who cares more for other people than himself, you know. A person of ultimate compassion.

And then the non-Buddhists came up to Dignaga and said, prove it, you know. Prove, prove this person's, got ultimate compassion. How could you have ultimate compassion? How could you care more for other people than for yourself? How could you spend the rest of your life, every single moment, working for the benefit of people around you even at your own expense and even as they resist you or attack you, you know? How. Who would do that? Who's crazy enough to do that, you know?

And Dignaga says, Lord Buddha is.

And he says, people say, well, how do you get to be that compassionate? I mean, you don't run into people like that every day, you know. You meet nice people but you don't meet people who give up everything in their lives to help other people. You know what I mean.

And you say, yeah, it's possible, you can do it, people can do it. You can get this thing called bodhicitta and you can learn to be like that.

And they say, right, right, how long does it take to learn to be that way?

And you say, oh, about a million lifetimes, you know. I mean, that's the answer, okay. Oh, a couple of thousand years maybe, you know, of trying, of practising, you know. 'Cos you can't do it right away. It's so unnatural. It's so inhuman to care more for other people than you do yourself and, and to give up everything in your life to help other people, you know. It's so weird that it would take a long time to get that way.

And so Dignaga just naturally says, oh, it takes lifetimes, you know.

And then, these guys come along, called the shravakas, okay.

These are certain kind of Hindu group in ancient India and they say, hah, hah, hah, yeah, yeah, yeah, right, yeah, many lifetimes right, right, you know. There's no such thing as many lifetimes, you know.

And Dignaga says, whoa, wait a minute, you're the first people I've met who ever said that, right, 'cos this is ancient India. Almost everybody's a Hindu. Almost everybody believes in future lives and past lives but here was one Hindu school who says no, there is no future lives.

What's that Budweiser thing? It's like, one life to live, you know. Do it. Do it

now. Drink as much as you can, you know. [laughter] Just one life to live, you know. It's on their advertisements all the time, one life to live, you know.

And the shravakas come up to Dignaga and say, come on, one life to live.

And Dignaga says, what makes you say that, you know, everybody knows there's a future life. Mrs. Melvin taught it in the first grade, you know. My mom and dad said so.

And then the shravakas say, come on, you can see there's no future life because the mind stops when the body stops.

And Dignaga says, what makes you think that?

And they say, come on, go talk to a corpse, you know, go, go, go try to commune with a corpse, you know. When the body stops they stop talking, stop talking so they stop thinking. The mind is dead, you know, the guy's not moving any more.

Why?

There's no mind to make him move. Okay. There's no mind. There's no driver any more in the skull going turn left, turn right, say something now, you know. The guy's not moving at all. You can stand here all day and try to talk to him he won't say anything. Therefore, the mind must be dead. Okay. And since you say future life is really mind going into a future life, there's no such thing as a future life.

Okay. And that's how the battle is, what do you call it? There's a nice word in English. The battle is joined. Yeah. That's how the fight starts. That's why we get to future lives which we'll do next class, okay.

The reason we get to future lives is Master Dignaga is praising Lord Buddha, {drola penchir pa}, ultimately compassionate.

And they say, well how long does that take?

And he says, lifetimes.

They say, hah, hah, lifetimes, you only have one lifetime.

How do you know that?

The mind stops.

How do you know the mind stops?

Hey, listen, try to talk to a corpse, it don't move anymore. The mind must be stopped.

Okay. That's all.

Who believes this kind of stuff? We do. Alright. Like, when I was in the monastery they always picked me to be the shravaka, you know. Why? 'Cos you're American and you guys think that when the body stops the mind stops. You always say that.

And I was the perfect shravaka. I was a really good one. It was hard to beat me because I used all the arguments that my society taught me for twenty-five,

thirty years about why there is no future life, you know.

And it was very compelling. It was a really nice debate. It was a hard debate 'cos they weren't used to having anyone who really believed it, you know, and [laughter] no, it was good. It was really good, you know. So I didn't just roll over and say, okay, yeah, you beat me, you know. Okay.

[cut] [end side A]

[side B]

That's how you go from logic to the study of future lives, okay.

I'm gonna let you do the rest with your leaders. I have one more comment about, I think, it's the next to last question on the homework.

{tsema gyurpa drola penchir pa}, {tsema gyurpa} I mean, there's an implication here that it's also possible to become an omniscient being, okay. Like, when you go to most Buddhist lectures they're not, like, saying hey, if you meditate really well, you could become Mr Know-it-all, you know. You could become omniscient, okay.

And we distinguish between omniscient and omnipotent, okay.

The Christians believe that god is omniscient and omnipotent, okay. Omniscient means, knows everything in the universe. The bible says, you know, every time a sparrow falls god is aware and thinks about it. You know what I mean. Like, god knows all things. All things that ever were, are, and will be, god knows. Directly. Okay. He's aware of all those things for all time. That's omniscient.

Omnipotent means god can do anything. Okay. God can make cancer stop, AIDS stop. God can make the sky turn green. God can make a woman out of a guy's rib. Okay. Stuff like that. That's called omnipotent.

Buddhists believe that there's no such thing as an omnipotent being. And a Buddhist would say the proof of it is quite depressingly simple.

What?

Cancer does exist. AIDS does exist. Babies being burned in car accidents do exist. There's probably babies being burned right now by American bombs, okay, as we speak, you know. What did they do to deserve that? Did they disobey god at such a young age? You know, were they not listening to the divine father before they could even think? You know what I mean? What's the point to torture them, to burn them? You see what I mean?

We say, no such thing as a, as, as a divine being who can stop those things. There's no such thing as an omnipotent being, okay.

Is there such a thing as an omniscient being?

Yes. Okay. A Buddha.

And then they say, you know, it comes up, they're asking Dignaga, well what do you got to do to be omniscient, you know.

He says, do you have to know everything? Does Buddha go around all day long

classifying all the genres of plants and animals, you know? [laughter] I mean, does a Buddha sit there all day long and say, oh, locusts maximus, you know, [laughter] and over here we got a zinc oxide, you know. Which is called all the, in Tibetan it's called {...} which means, all the various divisions of existence. Is that what it means to be omnipotent, I'm sorry, omniscient. You see.

Is it that you can classify everything? I mean, because that's the goal almost, you know, it's almost they're taking a jibe at science, you see. Science is almost of the [unclear] if you could classify everything you would know everything. If you could name everything you could know everything.

And to be omniscient is to be able to name and perceive and to categorise all things. And omniscient beings are really busy 'cos every single moment of their life they must perceive all the chemical structures and all the biological names of every object in the universe. You see what I mean.

Is that what it means to be omniscient? You see what I mean.

And then the logic texts say, no. Okay. The guts of omniscience, is very beautiful. It's to know what's right and what's wrong. Okay. And that's enough, you see.

If you knew what kinds of actions would bring total happiness to all living beings and if you knew what kinds of actions are hurting all living beings, that's, omniscience. That's the guts of omniscience.

Do they also see all the chemical names of everything? Yes.

Do they, are they into taxonomical whatever? Yes.

But that's not what it means to be omniscient. Omniscient means they understand the way to get out of suffering.

They understand if you do these things you will be ultimately happy forever. If you do these things you will continue to suffer.

And because they understand that division, that one division perfectly, they're omniscient. And that's the point of omniscience. Okay.

I think that's kind of cool. I really like that. It's kinda, you know, you can feel it's true that that's what you'd want an omniscient being to be worrying about, okay, in reality. Okay.

We'll stop there and take a break and then we'll get in our groups. There's a lot more stuff on the homework to cover.

Next week, I'm sorry, next class we'll cover future lives and the proofs for future lives. Okay.

[break]

[cut] ... give them away for free. We've given away about ten thousand disks in about fifty countries. And now they're all on the web. You can take any book that you want as of a couple of weeks ago. [celebration / acknowledgements]

Last week we talked about the core curriculum of the ACI and we talked about

the distinction between Lam Rim, {lam rim pa} and the {tsennyi pa}, okay.

{lam rim pa} is an approach based on the Lam Rim teachings. Lam Rim is an abbreviation of all the steps of the path. And that's mainly what has reached this country so far. I mean, most teachers who've come here, Tibetan, knowing the special circumstances here: there's a language barrier, Americans are always busy, they don't have time to come to class. If they do come to class they're gonna skip a lot of classes. They're probably not going to be willing to memorise anything, or like that. So, based on all that, you know, these Geshees who've spent their whole lives studying {tsennyi pa}, the five great books, start teaching Lam Rim. And that's a good thing and it's very lucky for Americans that the Lam Rim exists and many people learned it.

But also it means that Americans haven't been able or had the opportunity to go through the five great books. And so ACI is supposed to be something different.

ACI is supposed to be where we don't concentrate so much on {lam rim pa}, we study more the {tsennyi pa}, the five great books.

It takes more time. It takes more commitment. And fewer people will come, you know. Not so many people can spend that much time. Not so many people are attracted to that much work.

And, and the idea is that we'd rather have fewer people who are willing to go through that kind of work and, and produce teachers of high quality, you know, who really know their stuff.

So that's been the theory behind the structure of the courses.

I'd like to talk, not very long, maybe about five minutes, about how they're presented, okay. And I think this is very important. I think there's been this tendency to present the ancient books as too difficult for Americans, you know. Like, every teacher who comes to America says, we better water this down or we'd better make this easier or we can't give American people can't read the original books.

And, and I'd like to say that ACI doesn't accept that, you know. All of the courses that were ever taught here were based on the original Scriptures. Like, there haven't been any readings until this year that were written by anybody than some Tibetan or Indian master from the ancient days, you know. You studied the original Abhidharmakosha. You studied the original Madhyamika text. You went through, you're going through the original Pramana text.

And I think that should be a principle of ACI that the texts that are studied as the core are the original texts. You see what I mean. That I don't think that Americans are too stupid or, or they're not interested enough or they don't have the patience or the, or the willpower to get through the original books. I don't believe that. I don't think it's true. And I think, I would like to see those texts be

the core of, of what we do. I think the problem is in the presentation of them, you see what I mean.

If you sit down and try to read the Abhidharmakosha, it's impossible. You can't. Okay. It's not something that you can read like His Holiness has 'The Art of Happiness', you know, you can't sit down and read the Abhidharmakosha like that. You can't. It requires a commitment of some time in your life. And you have to sit down and be willing to learn it thoroughly and then you need an oral explanation of it. And here's the punch line for tonight: in plain English. Okay. In plain English.

So, I think you have to have that combination, okay. The original ancient Scriptures as they were written and you must have that as the core of your course and as your Institute. But I think at the same time, you must have an oral tradition, an oral explanation about it which is given in ordinary English, in normal English without the gibberish, without weird English words, without Sanskrit words that you don't know, without requiring that you learn Tibetan. I think it's good to have Tibetan if you want to learn it. But in normal English that, the ancient original texts, are explained in a way that a normal American person can relate to. And then, relate it to people's lives.

That's the theory of ACI. That's the theory of the core, okay.

So, you know, when we send out the readings to, like, people, we always send them tapes because the readings by themselves are hard. And, they were not, meant to be books that you read by yourself. They were meant to be guides that you used with a teacher and, and with an oral explanation, the oral tradition and the blessings of the oral lineage.

Khen Rinpoche gets very upset. People say, I heard you're gonna start teaching, which he is, by the way, and you should know. I think on Sundays, very soon, so keep in touch and find out. So people say, I can't make it, my brother's getting married, you know, or something like that. I'll send Joe with a tape recorder, you know. And Rinpoche gets furious and says, you don't get the oral blessing from a tape recorder, okay. You have to be there, you know. You have to listen. There's something that happens between a living being and another living being that you can't put on a tape recorder. And, and so I say that, that the theory behind these courses has been threefold. Okay.

One, you use the original Scriptures. They have been either written by or written down from a being who is omniscient. You can present them in a modern way but you can't improve on that information. It's, it's, it's infallible. It has been written by an omniscient being. You don't need to correct Lord Buddha's statements or fix them or anything else. They're fine. He knew you were gonna think like that a million years ago. And if you don't think so then why study it. You see what I mean.

So, so you must have as the core the original statements by Lord Buddha and you must study them.

Secondly, they must be interpreted and presented in your language, in your vernacular. They should be presented in normal English without a lot of weird philosophical terms or foreign languages or things like that.

They must be passed on in the language that normal people can relate to. And they can be. And there's no reason to make them unintelligible. That's just a problem of people not knowing the language of the original very well.

If a translation sounds weird to you, you can bet it's been badly done because you can bet the original sounds fine. You see what I mean.

So, if a translation sounds weird or odd or, you know, unintelligible, it's a reflection of the translator, okay. The originals are amazing. The originals are fantastic and beautiful and wonderful. And they sound great in the Tibetan, okay.

So those are two principles. You have the original texts and you present the information in normal language of the people that you're speaking to.

And Lord Buddha does that. That's one of the qualities of a Buddha; sixty qualities of a Buddha's speech. Number one of the sixty is, speaks the language of the common man of that place.

And that's the first quality of a Buddha's enlightened speech, okay.

And then, the third quality, is to continue to recognise the blessing of the oral tradition. You know what I mean. The importance of a living being, transmitting some kind of blessing, to another living being through the class.

So you will never be able to do ACI courses only from the books or from the tapes, you know. Sooner or later you must have direct contact with a living teacher and, and, and the information can only be spread that way.

There's factual information that can be spread through tapes and books but there's an oral tradition, unbroken, back to the time of the Buddha, of some kind of special synergy that takes place between a student and a teacher that cannot be replaced. It must be direct contact with a human teacher. And the blessing of the oral tradition must continue unbroken. Okay.

And that's where you guys come in because, (a) I'm going on retreat, (b) even if I wasn't I can't talk to everybody who wants to know this stuff. And you must start taking the role of the next generation of teachers.

It's not something, how you say, presumptuous. It's something you have to do. It's something you are bound to do. It's something you are obliged to do. You see what I mean?

Once you have taken teachings and once you have become the next link in the oral tradition, it's your responsibility to pass it on or it will die. You see what I mean.

The oral, the books will be around and the ACI tapes you'll be able to order from Ani Pelma for the next fifty, sixty years, but it's your responsibility to take the oral tradition and pass it onto other living beings, okay.

And you can and you should. And that's the way it's always been done.

And don't think that you're not smart enough or good enough to do it because that's the way it's always worked, okay.

Each generation thought they weren't as good as the last generation. Maybe true but we're all you have right now. Okay. So you have to think like that and don't, don't get like some feeling that you're not good enough or you're not smart enough.

Learn it well and then fearlessly pass it on to other people. It's not only your, it's not only possible or desirable it's your responsibility or else it will stop, after two and a half thousand years, with you. Do you want to do that? You know, if you want to be the first dead end street in two and a half thousand years,[laughs] okay. No, you have to not think like that, okay.

And the way I see the teacher's doing it here is very sweet. The twelve teachers that we have here are doing very, very well and I hear good Dharma going down, okay.

Okay, we'll stop there and take a break. No, see you next week. [laughter]

Okay.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Goodnight

The Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Eight

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

[laughter] and we talked a little bit about what it means to have a correct perception and then we talked about direct perception and deductive perception. And that's where you get into logic, okay.

You need logic to see through blind spots in your own mind, okay. There are many places in your mind that you can't see. And there are many objects around you, for example: emptiness, subtle workings of karma, hungry ghosts, past and future lives. They're around you, you exist in them, you can't see them. And these things you have to see with initially with logic and then as your meditation gets stronger you see them directly in meditation. But think of your mind as a, as, as having many, many blank spots, okay. Like, there are many more things in the world to see than you can imagine. And your mind is not seeing all of them because you have certain obstacles. And you can drill through those obstacles by using logic. And that's why we study reasoning and, and the art of reasoning, it's figuring out things. Okay.

We're gonna experiment with one of the most important of them tonight. Which is, the reasonings that can help you drill through the block you have. You have a mental block for not seeing that you had a past life and you have a future life, you know.

We, in the west, and Tibetans also and people in India, have a mental block for seeing those things. And you have to use logic to start to chip away at that block. And then, at some point, you can see future lives directly in your meditation.

But in the meantime you have to prove it with logic, okay.

Where does this come up in the Scriptures? Why are we talking about future lives in the Pramanavartikka, in the logic texts?

It's because somebody has said that if you spent long enough that the evolution of all human minds is ultimate compassion and omniscience. Every living person

will become a Buddha, you know.

Every living creature will become a Buddha. The evolution of all minds that are alive today is that, eventually, they will become a Buddha.

To do that, you need ultimate compassion. Okay.

And so the text is going to be talking about three different kinds of compassion, okay.

And I'll talk a little bit about that. [cut]

Say, {nying je}[repeat] {nying je}[repeat]; {nying} means, heart, {je} means, lord or king, like Je Tsongkapa or {dorje}, okay.

So {nying je} means, 'lord of hearts'. And that's the word in Tibetan for compassion, okay. So {nying je} means compassion, alright, king of all hearts, alright. In Sanskrit, karuna.

We're gonna discuss three different kinds of {nying je}, three different levels of {nying je}.

First level {nying je} what we call ordinary {nying je} is simply the desire that other people be free of suffering. Like, you see someone who's having a hard time and you say, I wish they didn't have that suffering. I wish that they could be free from that suffering. That attitude or that state of mind is called {nying je}. That's compassion, okay.

Now, the second level. [cut] Say {nying je chenpo}[repeat] {nying je chenpo}[repeat]. In Tibetan, I'm sorry, Sanskrit, mahakaruna. This is called, great compassion, okay, and it's distinguished from regular old compassion.

Great compassion means that I wish that people could be free of suffering and I take responsibility to make it happen. And I don't care if nobody helps me. I don't care if, what, okay. But I will make sure it gets done, {nying je chenpo}. So that's the difference between ordinary compassion and great compassion, okay.

That's a, I will become a Buddha so I can help them do that, okay, {nying je chenpo}, great compassion.

[cut]

Say {tuk je}[repeat] {chenpo}[repeat] {tuk je}[repeat] {chenpo}; {tuk} means, mind or heart in the same way that {nying} does but this is the honorific form, you see. This is the high form of the word. Like, if you're gonna talk about the Dalai Lama's mind, you don't say {sem}, you say {tuk}, okay. And {tuk} means, your holy, excellency's mind. You see what I mean. It's the high word for mind. So {tuk je chenpo} is used to describe the compassion of an enlightened being, okay.

So this is compassion in the mind stream of an enlightened being. And these are three different stages in the evolution of what you can call compassion in a normal person, okay.

So it's, it's not too unusual to meet someone who would like that other people

around them don't suffer. That's {nying je}, okay. And then, to meet a person who says, specifically, I understand that if I became an enlightened being and then I could emanate thousands upon thousands of other bodies to help people all over the world and other planets as well in one millisecond, that that would be cool. And I want to do that. I've decided that I'm going to do that. That's {nying je chenpo}. Now, how many people on this planet, at this current moment, you know, from appearances, are actually sitting there obsessed with the idea of, of reaching this state so that they can help other people? You know what I mean. Very rare, okay; very rare to find somebody thinking like that. Okay. Somebody who's willing to spend every single waking moment of their day trying to get people enlightened, you know, specifically.

And that would be {nying je chenpo}, okay.

Then {tuk je chenpo} would be a person who's already enlightened and they're going about doing what they have to do to help people remove their suffering, okay. And this is what we call {..}. You might know Tibetans whose name is {..}. {..} means, it's automatic. It's a reflex. They don't think about it. It just happens, okay. The minute you reach enlightenment, {tuk je chenpo} is automatic. You have great compassion for everybody and you are sending out your emanating bodies wherever someone needs it, without any thought process. It's automatic, okay. It's result of your extraordinary karma, okay, that it's happening automatically. Okay.

How long does it take to go through those three stages of compassion? Master Dharmakirti has been trying to prove that it's possible for every single mind stream on this planet, meaning, every person in this room, will become enlightened.

It's not a question of whether or not you'll become enlightened. It's just a question of how fast, okay.

So Dharmakirti, Master Dharmakirti is trying to prove that every being in this room will become an enlightened being.

How do you do it?

You have to go through these three stages. And, normally, it takes more than one lifetime. Okay. To develop all three in one lifetime would be extraordinary. And Master Dharmakirti is saying, look, we have to talk about multiple lifetimes. You have to start working on it now.

If we study Vinaya, in the opening lines of the Vinaya sutras, there are lots of descriptions of how many years it took Lord Buddha to get to this. It's something like seventy-five and seventy-six plus seventy-seven times ten to the sixtieth power years, kalpas. Okay. Meaning each of those, being millions and millions of years.

So, I mean, to go through this process normally it takes more than one lifetime.

And you have to practise.

I mean, Master Shantideva said, anyone can do it with practice but you have to practise it a lot. To try to get to a state, I mean, even to have number two you would pretty much have to see that enlightenment was possible. You see what I mean. Because number two is like, deciding to get enlightened and to work your whole life, every hour of your life, every single moment of your life, trying to get other people enlightened, okay.

And that's the, that in itself is an extraordinary state. Okay. So this is where future lives comes in. Master Dharmakirti is not trying to prove future lives to a bunch of people who don't believe in future lives to try to get them to do A or B or C.

He's bumped into some non-Buddhists in ancient India who said, you cannot develop these kinds of compassion because it would take too long and you're gonna die before you can. So just forget it. Okay.

And he says, no, no, no, we're talking multiple lifetimes here.

And they say, you're crazy. And they give three arguments against future lives. Okay.

They come up to Master Dharmakirti, these are the chravakas, okay. I'll spell it for you in Sanskrit. [cut]

And they're saying it's impossible that there's a future life.

And, and Master Dharmakirti says, no it's not possible, because after the body dies the mind goes on. Okay. That's Master Dharmakirti's big schtick.

After the body dies the mind goes on, okay.

Then they come back with, impossible, okay, no such thing.

And Master Dharmakirti says, why do you think that?

And they say, three reasons, okay. [cut]

And I'll just put them in plain English. [cut] I mean, they're gonna give three arguments. You see if they sound familiar, okay.

The first argument is this: we think the mind is actually a physical thing. You see, you cut open the head, you look inside, there's this stuff in there. And that's the mind, okay. See, they're not only saying that's where the mind stays, they're saying, that is the mind. Okay. Your brain is your mind. Okay. And that's their first argument, okay. So that if the body dies then the mind cannot go on because the mind is part of the body, okay. And you gotta think like that, okay. If the brain, was to die, then the mind would die and stop. And it wouldn't go on to a next life.

You can't get ultimate compassion. You don't have time. And there's no such thing as a Buddha. Okay. That's their first argument. Okay. So, the mind is part of the body. It belongs in the brain. It is the brain, okay. It is the brain.

[cut]

And they say that even if that wasn't the case, oh by the way, well, the example they gave in the first part is like, beer and the ability to get you drunk. You see what I mean. Or alcohol, the substance called alcohol and the characteristic of alcohol, which is, that it can get you drunk. Okay. It's almost like saying the redness of apples or something. Okay. They say it's part of the apple. It's not like it's a separate thing. Redness is a part of apple, red apples, okay. And something like that. So they say, you can't take away the beer and take away the, and not take away the ability to get you drunk. They are one and the same, okay.

That's important later. They are setting up Master Dharmakirti, okay. If he agrees to that, he's already in trouble. But we'll see why later, okay.

But that's their first argument.

Second argument is that the mind depends on the body the way a picture hangs on a wall. Okay. The way a picture hangs on a wall. Meaning, even if we agree that the mind is separate from the body somehow, that always rests on the body, okay. The mind is always depending on the body.

If you take away the wall what happens to the picture?

It falls down, okay.

So first of all, they say the mind is part of the body: the brain. Even if it wasn't, even if it was some separate thing, it's always resting on the body. You take away the body the mind is gonna fall down and die okay. So they are depending on each other like a relationship like that.

So, even if the mind isn't the body, the mind must at least be resting on the body. And, in such a way that, if you pull out the body, the mind dies, okay.

That's their second argument.

[cut]

And then their third argument is, well even if that's not the case, at least the mind grows from the body. Okay. Like, the embryo starts to form and the cells start to get together and there's more and more cells. And at some point there's enough cells that the brain forms and then you can think, okay. And then the mind starts to function. Okay. If you take away the cause, which is the body, then the mind will be stopping shortly afterwards. Okay.

So, they say body and mind are like a lamp and the light that comes out of a lamp. Okay. Which is the result of a lamp, see what I mean.

These are their three arguments for why the mind does not go on after you die. And they don't, they say, we don't care which one you accept. You can think of it any one of those three ways: like the alcohol, like the picture on the wall, or like the light, the lamp and its light. But in either case, in any one of these cases, you take away the body the mind cannot survive. Okay. Sound familiar? Right. First one's saying that the mind is the brain or is some physical part of your

body, okay.

Second one's saying the mind is floating on your body and when the body collapses and dies the mind dies, always dies, okay.

Third one's saying when the body reaches a certain point of development then you can start having a mind. And when the body's development stops and dies then the mind stops also. Okay.

And this is, this is the western viewpoint. It boils down in the chravaka's argument to something very simple. They say, Master Dharmakirti, how do you know the mind goes on?

And he says, well how do you know it doesn't go on?

And they say, look when somebody dies the body just lays there. It doesn't move anymore.

So he says, does that prove that the mind is gone?

They say, yeah, talk to the guy, shake him, try to poke him with a pin, he won't complain at all. You know what I mean. They don't, they don't twitch anymore. The fact that the body stops and doesn't twitch anymore proves that the mind has died also, okay. And that's their argument.

And by the way, that's about the only argument that a westerner can give you also.

I mean, that's the most obvious argument for believing that the mind stops when the body stops. It's just that the body doesn't move anymore, okay. And that's like saying, or if the guy can't talk to me anymore then the mind is not there anymore.

That's like saying because the truck broke down on the New Jersey turnpike that the driver's dead. Okay. It's exactly the same argument. The truck's not moving. The guy must be dead. Okay. It's actually just an equivalent to it, okay. He can't talk to you, I mean, it doesn't have any bearing on whether the mind is there or not. The fact that the body is incapable now of functioning, even if there was a mind there the tongue can't move, right. It's broken. It's dead. Then what does that prove about the mind? It doesn't prove anything.

You can't say that the mind is definitely not there because the body's broken anymore than you can say the driver of the truck has died because the truck's not moving anymore. Okay.

There's something wrong with the truck so the driver died, some thing like that. That's same kind of argument.

Deep down in your own mind you believe that argument. Somewhere, culturally, you have a blind spot and, and you have this real belief that when your body dies the mind will die. And you think that. And, and you've been inculcated to think that. And your culture has taught you to think that way. And you believe it. And you believe it unreasonably. And you believe it for

wrong reasons. And there's no proof for that.

You know, people used to come up to me and say, prove future lives exist. And then I'd give them all these arguments. Dharmakirti, second chapter, Pramanavartikka, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And then, finally, I got tired and said, you prove to me that the mind dies, you know. Let's switch, let's reverse the tape, you know. Let's reverse the thing. I'm exhausted. I'm tired of trying to prove to you that future lives exist.

You prove to me they don't. You prove to me the mind doesn't go on.

By the way, Buddhism doesn't say that there's some soul or spirit. We don't have to have a {pung tsumpa}. {..} in logic means something beyond mind and body that goes on. You don't have to worry about that. You don't have to think like that.

We're not saying that there's some eternal spirit blah, blah, blah.

It's not that difficult. Your mind goes on. Okay. The mind goes on. The body and the mind are separate things and the mind goes on, okay.

You prove to me that I'm wrong. Okay.

Yeah. [student] Absolutely. Not to be able to prove that I'm wrong doesn't mean that I'm right. But let's start like that. We say, {dun gyur kyi te-tsom}. Say {dun gyur}[repeat] {kyi}[repeat] {te-tsom}[repeat]; {dun gyur kyi te-tsom} means, reasonable doubt. Okay. Don't go telling me the mind doesn't go on because you haven't proved it either. You cannot disprove what I say about the mind so at least have {dun gyur kyi te-tsom}. At least entertain the possibility that the mind goes on, okay.

I mean, people used to ask me my personal argument for future lives, okay. This is not from Scripture, okay. Anything that can happen once can happen twice. Given infinite odds, given infinite time, given infinite interactions between all the objects in the universe, why can't it happen again? You know what I mean. If it's only, if you only have five minutes of time then, maybe, it wouldn't happen again. You have eternity. Whatever made me happen once can make me happen again. I don't see any reason why not, you know. It seems perfectly reasonable to me.

You can tell me, it takes a jillion years of chemicals running around, but if it happens again, I mean, it would happen again. Why not?

Why can't something that happens once happen again if the possibilities are infinite, you know, if time is infinite.

But that's not, that's my own argument, okay.

Yeah. [student] Sorry? [student] Oh, we don't accept an idea of a soul, you see, when [cut]

[no further recording on side A]

[side B]

And frankly, when you get into tantra, the relationship becomes quite intimate. {...} means the mind and the inner winds ride in tandem, okay.

And that explains a lot of why you can get enlightened by doing tantra, okay.

But that's another story. Okay.

So {chi suk} that's the argument against {shi suk}. I like to go on quickly so people don't give me all the objections that are here. [laughter] Okay. [laughs]

You will not accept these arguments in a day. They are pretty good arguments and you have to get used to them because you're fighting twenty, thirty, forty years of brainwashing from your culture. Okay.

Say {shen gyi gyu}[repeat], {...}[repeat]; {shen} means, 'other', {shen gyi gyu} means, 'mindstream', okay.

The chravakas say, okay, you did pretty good on the living tissue thing. I believe that a mind cannot, an ineffable, uncuttable, unweighable, crystalline, knowing thing cannot be created from living physical tissue. And I also think your argument against sulphur and oxygen and iron is pretty good. So, what says that the cause of your mind has to have the mind from the moment before? Has to have been something mental? Okay. I agree that it could not have been something physical that turned into your consciousness, which is a totally different stuff, okay, but can you prove to me that the cause wasn't somebody else's mind? Meaning, your parents mind, okay. Your parents at the moment of your conception are so intimate and this thing meets this other thing and their mind creates a new mind. Okay.

And then, a lot of these arguments seem silly because they're so obvious.

He says, listen, I heard your father was a carpenter.

Yeah, my father's a carpenter.

He says, so he's good at wood, right? I mean, he knows everything about wood and nails and tools?

He says, yeah, perfect.

He says, well, do you?

He says, no, I'm a clutz with a hammer. I can't do anything, you know.

He says, so you got your answer, okay; that there should be some similarity between the mind stream that causes the other mind stream.

If the one mind stream had any kind of characteristics, tendencies: tendency to anger, tendency to peacefulness, tendency towards, has a specific skill, which has been imbued, through that mind stream for decades.

And tell me that the child exhibits none of those skills or none of those abilities or none of those tendencies towards those kinds of emotions? It doesn't make sense. Okay.

Yeah. [student] Axel says, the mind stream's changing. Yeah, but so is the father's mind stream. It's not like you forget how to do carpentry five years

later or something.

There should be some kind of, the child should exhibit some kind of, of the tendencies, emotional tendencies and the abilities. Okay, the child's not developed enough to hold a hammer yet but they should at least show some kind of tendencies even five, ten years later.

You know, I haven't done piles of diamonds now for three years, but you put a pile of diamonds in front of me, and it's, like, that, you know what I mean. It's, like, there should be some tendency towards that, some kind of ability towards that thing. Not that they'd totally forget it in a year or two years or something like that. And especially emotional.

The father, we used to make fun of all the minister's kids in our school because they were always the worst ones, you know what I mean. Like, the daughter or son of the rabbi or priest or minister was always, like, the worst kid in the school.

There didn't seem to be much emotional or contentual similarity to the mind stream of their parent, okay.

Yes. [student] yeah [student] I forget when I did it before. How did I do before? [student] No, I think we have to talk about content. I don't remember, I think I did say something like that but I don't remember about what though. I don't remember about what. [student] Yeah. Yeah. [student]

I don't think, you see, you're talking about the difference between, in Buddhism we distinguish between awareness and mental function. Okay.

So the raw consciousness, the fact that you are aware is called {..sem} which means, 'main mind' or main awareness. And then you have {sem chung} which are called, which are mental functions like anger, attention, doubt, you know, sleepiness, you know, all kinds of, jealousy, all kinds of things, honesty, you know, traits like that.

But they are said to be, I don't think you can divide, it's difficult to divide those from main mind, you know.

You can't say, like, you could shake them out of the main mind and then later they'd still be there or something that, you see what I mean.

You can't, there are, like, at least five in one school, ten in another school mental functions that are always concomitant with mind; that you couldn't have a mind that doesn't have attention, you couldn't have a mind that didn't have any intelligence at all although you might have met some people like that [laughter] or things like that, you know.

Certain qualities, certain parts of the content are, are what we call {sem ..} which means they always come with mind.

[student] Yeah. [student] By the way, when you get into Madhyamika, all of this stuff becomes different. I mean, we're in the second of the four schools and

don't forget it.

When you go up to Madhyamika it's much more subtle. The mind is the projection of the mind. Your awareness is a projection of your mind.

That's the ultimate truth about the nature of the mind. But that's a whole other, we're not going there or we'll never finish, okay. [laughter]

Yeah. [student] I bet you could put a big dent in them from the Prasangika point of view because, ultimately, it's not the mind that goes on.

It's the projection of a going on. Okay. And that is the gong on. And it's just as real as going on. Okay. And that's a long story.

Yeah. [student] Yeah. [student] Oh yeah, you could say that. [student] Right, okay, you could say that. We're talking about {nyer-len gyi gyur}, yeah, yeah.

[student]

Yeah. I mean, it's basically asking, I have heard His Holiness was asked this question, you know, can a computer become so sophisticated that it's a mind?

And I use computers all day long, you know. I use them, like, eight hours a day and I appreciate them. I think there's some kind of extraordinary karma that I can have at my fingertips two or three thousand Tibetan Buddhist books for anything I want. But I understand exactly how they work. You know what I mean. And I understand their limitations. No, there's no, I mean, they can be mind-like in a sense. They can make so many calculations a minute and things like that but there's nothing conscious about it. I'm totally aware of that.

I love my laptop more than anything. I was in Japan. There was an earthquake. I ran to get my laptop, you know, at the risk of my life, you know, as a reflex.

But I understand completely that it will never be a conscious thing. It's not, it's totally different thing. It's a, it's a series of operations caused by another series of operations. It's not the same thing as awareness at all. The computer is not aware, you know.

[student] Yeah. It's very similar to that but it's in no way conscious. The computer's not aware of me at all, you see what I mean.

[student] [laughs] Yeah. No. I think they'll be faster and they'll be so fast they'll look mind-like and it won't be mind at all. Okay.

Let me see if there's one more thing here.

The only thing to cover, and you'll do it in your break-out groups, is so why do some minds have to get reborn and some minds don't. Okay. Why, what's the difference, okay?

If we're talking about where life comes from, if we're arguing about how the mind evolves over the course of thousands or millions of years, then at what point does the mind no longer have to come back to this kind of world where you can die and where there's pain and suffering and things like that?

What's the difference between the mind of what we call a non-returner and the

mind of a once-returner? What is it that makes you come back? You know, what is it at the moment of death that makes you have to come back to this kind of suffering, you know.

And then they go into that. Basically, it relates to are you perceiving things as self-existent or not, okay. Which is to say, do you have the desire or the negative emotions that are forced on you by seeing things as not being emptiness, not being empty. Okay.

If you misunderstand reality at the moment of death and therefore have some negative emotions you must be reborn. That's the schtick. That's the argument. Okay. You will be reborn. Until you can perceive emptiness directly and until you can use that understanding to stop your negative emotions permanently, which is, nirvana, you must be reborn. You will be reborn.

The mind must perceive another existence in this kind of suffering. Okay.

So that's the difference. And there's a list of things that can trigger a rebirth and there's a list of thoughts that don't trigger rebirth.

We'll do that in the [unclear].

We're running a little late so please have a short break and then we'll come back and do your groups.

By the way, I'm gonna project up here the Tibetan for all the homework to save the group leaders [cut]

We'll start again.

[announcement re CD ROM launch]

Vert short thing about, we've been talking about ACI structure at ACI. What ACI teaches; serious spreading of Buddhism in the United States.

And I wanted to talk tonight about the governance of such an organisation, okay.

We have a very good sponsor who came up to me and said one day, how are you gonna guarantee that a hundred years from now, this baby, this cool baby Buddhism in the United States doesn't become some corrupt church organisation that ends up being, you know, the dogma ends up bringing more suffering to people than the, than the teachings do help people, you see what I mean.

Like, how are you gonna prevent that from happening in your organisation, you know? How can you say that three hundred years from now or two hundred years from now, the people who study Buddhism in your classes or the people who come after them, won't be just as dogmatic or just as causing as much pain as some of the other traditions have caused?

And even the Tibetan traditions in Tibet, where people were killed or tortured or enslaved or harmed, or arguments fought, broke out between sects.

How are you gonna, what are you gonna do about that Michael Roach?

And I'm, like, [laughs] you know. What am I supposed to do? Two hundred

years from now, you know.

And I think it's a fair question because right now because we are so new everything is fresh. We haven't had time to have any inquisitions yet or burn anybody or have fights between the American – we're starting, we have a good start [unclear] something.

But we don't really have [unclear] hassles and arguments or [cut]

How you gonna, what should you do to instil that?

And I say two things. One is, the oral tradition of Buddhism, okay.

So, I think in Buddhism, very strong idea that Buddhism doesn't spread except for oral tradition. Meaning, it goes from mouth to mouth, you know. You teach it. You have to be near a living teacher to get it. And to teach it you should be around a teacher intimately for many years. You know what I mean.

And there's something that passes on, through the oral tradition, which has never been broken in Buddhism. I mean, we can say, we spend all day long sometimes doing lineage trees, you know. I can tell you the lineage trees back to the Buddha, you know. We know who they are. A lot of the CD ROM is filled up with lineage trees, you know.

And it's a very strong tradition that the teachings are passed on from a living being to a living being and with such familiarity that there can't be any major corruption. You know what I mean.

That, that if you go through fifteen ACI courses and three review courses you probably won't make any major corruptions of the teachings. You see what I mean.

And if you've been close to a person who's explained them to you orally, you know, and that you've seen and that you've lived around them and been near them and all the subtleties of behaviour that are carried on from people when they have contact.

That's one way to prevent corruption or, or to prevent things from turning into something which is harmful to people, okay.

The second way, and to me, the main way. People say how are you gonna administer this thing? Is there gonna be a president? Is there gonna be a council? Is there gonna be a rule book? You know, is there gonna be, how's that gonna work, you know.

And I thought about it a lot, you know. How are you gonna prevent there from being a group of people who actually end up making it a dogma and kicking out people who don't do what they like? And on the other hand, how do you prevent it from getting corrupted by being too loose? And there is no structure and there is no guidelines and it gets corrupted a different way.

How do you guarantee a middle path, you now, between those two extremes?

I'm very clear about that. And it's {tundruk}. It's the practice of checking your

vows six times a day, every two and a half hours that, that is the governing principle. That is the governing board. That is the failsafe against corruption of the teachings and of behaviour. And it's also the way to prevent disharmony.

In my mind, it's are you checking your vows every two and a half hours, you know.

If you get into the practice of knowing your vows intimately and then examining your own heart every two hours, you can't have a major screw up. You see what I mean.

And if you get into the habit of sincerely checking your vows every two hours, every two and a half hours of your waking life for the rest of your life, I don't think you can have those kinds of corruptions happening in this path, you see.

So I think, I think that's the answer to what would the administration be like, how do you prevent certain problems, you know. How do you run that? It's the old way.

It's the Lord Buddha's way. You check your vows every two hours. You cannot have a major problem.

And I think since that custom began strongly in our own group I've seen a noticeable increase in the harmony and a noticeable increase in people's own happiness. And that's really what it's all about, right.

And I think since it's become pretty much a custom among ACIers to check their vows, keep that book every few hours, that I, it almost prevents any major problems from happening.

You will have minor problems. You will have, you know, minor problems between students. You will have things like that. But major kinds of corruptions in the Dharma or major kinds of schisms or problems between students, I haven't, I don't think it can happen. Or it will happen much less if everyone knows their vows. And I'm talking your layman's vows, your bodhisattva vows and your tantric vows, you know; those three sets of vows. You know them well, you check them every two hours and then you could pretty much have whatever governing council you want or any structure you want or, doesn't really matter to me.

I don't think it's, I don't think that's the question.

If you have a group of people who are all watching their vows every two hours you will have a sweet, pure religion going for a long time.

And if that ever stops then you won't. We have had problems in this organisation and we have had individuals who were very unhappy and other kinds of problems.

And it's amazing thing I've noticed. It's always the people who did not want to keep their vows or who weren't interested in their vows or thought it was stupid to watch their vows or said that's naïve or I'm okay, I don't need to check my

vows or I don't want to learn my vows or that reminds me too much of Sunday school or I don't want to do that.

And those were the people who ended up being unhappy or having a problem. And they just naturally go away because they're unhappy.

So I think, check it out. I think that's my personal feeling about how the governing or the assurance that the thing doesn't get corrupt.

I'm not saying, that could become a corruption itself, right. You say, anyone who doesn't have a book and doesn't do it every two hours, we hate them and they can't be in our club, you know. And you gotta make sure you do it. And if you don't we're gonna cut off your fingers or something, you know what I mean. And it shouldn't become like that either. You shouldn't be judgemental about people like that.

What I'm saying is that if enough people do it frequently enough there'll be a certain kind of sweetness and beauty to the organisation that you could run it through a democracy or some people have suggested a 'guru-ocracy', [laughs] or whatever you want to call it. It doesn't really matter I don't think.

If everybody in the organisation is making a honest attempt to review their own heart every two hours I don't think you, then I think whatever else happens is alright.

The karma will be that whatever you choose to use will be successful. And that's my idea for governing, okay.

If you don't keep your book and you don't know what they're about, talk to somebody else.

It's a very, very sweet practice. It is the essence of tantric practice.

If you want to know the one single tantric vow which is the most powerful one, it's to every two and a half hours, two hours, {tundruk} means six times a day: stop, look at one of your vows, look into your heart, see if you're keeping it well, you know, rejoice about how well you may be keeping it, decide what you might need to correct about it. And you can't go too far wrong.

And you will succeed in your tantric practice. Okay. You will see all these amazing deities and become one yourself.

And that is the only way to do it. Okay.

It's also a cool way to run an organisation. Okay.

We'll do a prayer and [cut]

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Okay. Thankyou. Sorry to keep you late. See you Tuesday.

The Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Nine

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay. We'll start then.

First order of business, I'd like to welcome Geshe Lobsang [unclear]. [applause]
[laughs]

It's hard for me to talk about him. But anyway, I'll try. He's Khen Rinpoche's nephew. He entered Sera monastery in Lhasa when he was seven years old; moved in with Khen Rinpoche when Rinpoche was twenty-four or something; served him his whole life. When Sera was attacked, was bombarded, he took Rinpoche to safety in the mountains. He came back to the monastery when it was burning. Risked his life to get the food and money together and ran and got Rinpoche out of Tibet. [cut]

And then lived twelve years in a refugee camp, fifteen hundred monks. About a quarter of them died from TB. Came down and helped one of the hundred monks to start Sera monastery, helped build it and save it.

Served on the board of directors to feed the monks for many years.

When I first came to the monastery, taught me to wear my robes, got me ordained, set me up with my first debating teacher, fed me all the time, all the way to the Geshe degree. Okay. Then taught me how to wear my hat [laughs] and everything. [laughter]

So, taught me to speak Tibetan, okay. So, you owe him a lot. So, we want to give him a {khata} and small offering, okay.

[cut]

[Geshe Lobsang: I'm sorry I'm not speaking good English. I need translator.]
{...}

I was seven years old when I entered the monastery and Khen Rinpoche took me under his care. And I stayed there and studied for ten years. And then the Chinese attacked. We talked what should we do and Rinpoche said got to run to India. I had absolutely no other hope in the world but Rinpoche so I ran with him and tried to help him. And we made it over the mountains into India.

Okay.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

Then we ran and we had no time to get extra clothes. Our shoes wore out halfway over the mountains. We walked the last part through the snow without shoes and reached India.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

The Tibetan refugee government after we reached India tried to help Rinpoche by finding him a position as a school teacher in a Tibetan schools. And I had to go to the refugee camp. So we were separated. But in my mind I always wanted to be with him and in my mind I was with him all the time.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

The Khen Rinpoche was asked to come to the United States and he came. And I was happy that he had so many good students here.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

And I'm very happy to be here, see so many people studying Dharma, happy that I could come, happy to see all of you here and welcome your study and your devotion to Buddhism. Yeah

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

When you undertake your studies now don't just swallow it like a dog swallows whatever food they can get. Examine what's taught like gold, as if you were buying some gold jewellery, very expensive jewellery. In the books they say, cut it, check it, burn it, file it, make sure it's the real thing.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

Even if Dharma were just something that we were only going to use for one lifetime until you die, you should examine it carefully. But that's not the case. Dharma will effect you for many lifetimes so it's important to examine and try to get a good Dharma, pure Dharma because it's going to effect you for many lifetimes.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

Then the fact that you were able to study with a Hilarumpa Geshe, from Tibet, who completed all his studies in Tibet, and then got to America. And the fact that you've had the opportunity with Khen Rinpoche is a great good fortune for all of you.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

Then you're lucky to have classes from me too. [laughs] [laughter] [applause]

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

Then even though you haven't been able to stay in the monastery, still you're learning perfect Dharma. And everything you're learning is so pure. And especially important for you is to know how to take refuge and what it means to take refuge.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

My dearest hope of my heart is that you study karma, you study the results of karma. And then you go further and higher and think about helping other beings with compassion. This is my fondest hope.

[Geshe Lobsang: {...}]

[laughs] Then all I have to say is, work your butts off. [laughs] [laughter] [applause]

We have a little presentation to make [to students]

When I was first learning Buddhism books came out called 'Abhidharma', you know. And I didn't know what Abhidharma was. And I kept asking people, you know, and nobody could really tell me what Abhidharma is. And everybody has their own version of what Abhidharma is.

And I remember reading one book about Abhidharma that never mentioned anything about Abhidharma. [laughter].

So I thought, we're gonna be studying tonight and next week, next class, karma. The ultimate book on it is the Abhidharmakosha. And especially the name of the fifth course which is what we're gonna be studying in the next two classes was, 'How Karma Works'. To me, that's, even more important, you see.

So you're gonna be studying the original text about karma and then I think what's most important is, we're gonna attempt to answer the question of how does karma work. Because it's one thing, you know, in a country like Thailand or Shri Lanka that have your mommy come and say, don't squash bugs you'll be born as a bug and it'll come back to you, you know. And you hear that.

At some point in your life as a westerner you heard it. You heard people say oh, there's people in China who say if you squish bugs you're gonna become a bug later. And you say, yeah, yeah, that's nice.

I even remember books in college that said Buddhists made up the theory of karma to keep people in line and there's no such thing. No, I remember reading that, you know. And it seems like that. It just seems like all of these people in Asia believe this thing and there's no real good reason for it. And you can chose to believe or not to believe but there's no real proof for it either way, you know what I mean. And it seemed like that. It seemed karma was like that.

So I think, when we got to the fifth course, in the monastery we study Abhidharmakosha. It's the root text on Abhidharma and very, very, very, beautiful presentation of karma.

Then when we get onto Madhyamika, Middle Way, and Mind-Only School we find out how karma works, you see what I mean. And then, when we get to the Lam Rim, we find out if you do this you'll get this. And if you have a bad back this is what you did a thousand years ago, you see what I mean.

And for me that was very interesting, you know what I mean, 'cos you can fix it

by fixing the karma. So it was very interesting to see what I call the correlations. Do this get that. You want to know why crime went down in New York in the last two years? It's because of you. You're doing something. You see what I mean.

You wanna know why you're getting old? It's you. Your karma's changing.

You wanna know where that person in your life came from that showed up six months ago that's driving you crazy? [laughter] [laughs] They came from you. Everybody laughs. Everybody has one. [laughter] [laughs] You know, they came from you.

And, and to know exactly what you did even if you don't remember, you see, if you study what I call the correlations. And so we copped that from the Lam Rim. We copped how karma works from the Mind-Only School and Madhyamika School. And then we copped the basic principles of karma from the fourth chapter of the Abhidharmakosha. And that's what this is going to be about: how karma works, okay.

Abhidharmakosha, first I want to talk about the name of the book. Say {chu} [repeat] {ngunpay}[repeat] {dzu}[repeat].

Okay. {chu} means, 'dharma', okay. {ngunpay} means, 'abhi', okay and {dzu} means 'treasure', 'treasure house', okay. Like, a big treasure chest or something like that, kosha. Kosha means that, alright.

'Abhi' literally means, 'up to something', to approach something, approaching something; 'abhi' means approaching something. {chu} means, dharma, okay. The word dharma means thing, existing thing, okay. Dharma can mean Buddhist religion but it also means any existing thing, okay. And dharma comes, this is the word, dharma in Sanskrit, and then it comes from a root 'dhr', you see. And 'dhr' means 'to hold something', 'dhr' means holding anything. So dharma means 'that which holds'. And it can be explained as 'that which holds its own nature', which means any existing thing has its own nature, not by itself of course.

But it's also taught that Dharma is called Dharma because it holds you back from falling into the lower realms, you see what I mean. If you do Dharma it'll keep, it'll, I imagine a guy with suspenders and the guy's holding him. He's about to fall in the lower realms and the function of Dharma is to 'dhr', which means to hold you back, okay.

So that's the literal meaning of the title.

More relevant here is that the highest dharma of all is what? Enlightenment. Nirvana and enlightenment. And this takes you up to that, you see. And that's why it's called abhi-dharma; takes you to the highest thing, you see. Abhidharma, takes you to the highest thing, alright. And that's what abhidharma means.

What is Abhidharma? What would take you to enlightenment? What's the most, I'll give you a clue, okay. What's the most efficient, effective, powerful, fantastic twenty minutes [laughter] that you could ever do to get you to the highest dharma, you see, enlightenment? It's {tong lam}; it's seeing emptiness directly.

You know, it's almost the case that you can, any time somebody asks a question in the debate ground, you say, oh, that relates to seeing emptiness directly, you know. Because everything relates to seeing emptiness directly 'cos once you do you're outta here, you see what I mean. That's big difference, okay. So the real {chu ngunpay} is {tong lam / gom lam / milob lam}. It means, path of seeing, path of habituation and then what we call the path of no more learning. And those are abhidharma, you see what I mean. Those are the ultimate abhidharma. The wisdom of those three paths which understands emptiness directly, okay, and you can do it on all three paths, is abhidharma, okay.

So in the text it says {..} abhidharma means, 'immaculate wisdom'. Meaning the wisdom which perceives emptiness directly. In this school they might call it selflessness, okay. {jedang che},{jedang} means, along with what you need to see emptiness directly, okay. In other words study, you need to understand karma, you need to understand other things first: dependent origination. Okay. So abhidharma means, the wisdom which perceives emptiness directly at the three higher of the five paths - everything after seeing emptiness directly, let's put it that way, is abhidharma, is real abhidharma. And then anything that helps you get there like studying, meditating, contemplating, going to class, okay. That's all abhidharma. That becomes abhidharma.

By extension, all the books about that become abhidharma, okay. So all the books about those subjects are called abhidharma. Okay.

So now you know what real abhidharma is.

{dzu} means kosha, means treasure house. It's called, this is the main book on abhidharma. This is used in all Tibetan monasteries to study abhidharma. There are other books about abhidharma. There were books written by direct disciples of the Buddha about abhidharma. There are seven great books about abhidharma. And they're all included in the kosha. So that's why it's called the kosha.

The kosha meaning the treasure house of wisdom, of abhidharma, includes all of those books, all the contents of those books.

That's why it's called Abhidharmakosha.

And it's studied in all Tibetan monasteries for this subject abhidharma. It was written about 350 AD by {loppon nyin..}; {loppon} means 'master', and {nyin..} means Vasubandhu.

[cut]

Who is the half brother of master, huh? Master Asanga, arya Asanga, okay. You never call a Lama by their naked, we call {..} naked name , okay. You always say, your holy, excellent, wonderful, glorious Geshe Lobsang {unclear} or something like that, okay. You never say {..}, okay. [laughter]. Not good. So master Vasubandhu, okay. Okay. Half brother of master Asanga. Between them they wrote most of the curriculum used at all Tibetan monasteries. Not bad, okay.

You're gonna be studying a commentary, say {dzu tik}[repeat] {tar lam}[repeat] {selje}[repeat]; {dzu} here means kosha, means treasure house, means the Abhidharmakosha, okay. So it's referring to the original book written by master Vasubandhu written sixteen centuries ago, okay, {dzu}. {tik} means, tikka is Sanskrit for commentary and the Tibetans sometimes use this as a lone word and they corrupt it and misspell it. That's a different spelling, okay. So {dzu tik} means, commentary to the Abhidharmakosha. {tar} means, {tarpa} means what? Freedom, moksha in Sanskrit, freedom. {lam} means the path to freedom and {selje} means illumination. Like, the sun is sometimes called {selje}, okay. 'Illumination or a Lamp upon the Path to Freedom', okay, which is a commentary to the Abhidharmakosha. You're gonna be studying this commentary.

This is your main book for studying Abhidharmakosha. You try to study the Abhidharmakosha, forget it. {...} 'The five act towards the four', {...} 'Three assert power; four are connected', you know what I mean. It's code. The whole Abhidharmakosha is in code. It was written in code. It was meant to be memorised and then, your teacher would explain it to you, okay.

So you need to have a commentary, okay. It's impossible to study Abhidharma without a good commentary.

You're gonna be studying the commentary by Gyalwa Gendun Drup.

Before each of the Dalai Lama's names in Tibetan, in written Tibetan, usually say {gyalwa}. {Gyalwa} means the 'victorious one' meaning a Buddha, an enlightened being. Jnana in Sanskrit.

So {gyalwa} means the victorious one and it's a, when you see {gyalwa} in front of someone's name you know they're a Dalai Lama, okay. This happens to be the first - His Holiness the first Dalai Lama, Gendun Drup. His teacher was Je Tsongkapa, okay. He was one of Je Tsongkapa's, like, later students, okay. He was pretty young when Je Tsongkapa was pretty old, alright, but he did study with Je Tsongkapa, alright.

He wrote a very famous commentary. For those of you who care there's two {tar lam seljes}. One is a very famous book on logic by Gyaltsab Je. And so, we always say {dzu tik} in front of this one, to distinguish between them. This is the {tar lam selje} that's the commentary to Abhidharma because there's a different

{tar lam selje}.

And then in the monastery you have to say which one you're talking about, okay.

We're gonna talk about, a little bit about a thing called {...}, okay. Let me spell it for you. Say {...}[repeat] {...}[repeat].

We used the 'How does karma work' class as an excuse to study some other subjects also, okay. And here's one of them.

In Buddhism, things being impermanent and your death coming so quickly upon you and also unpredictably, you don't want to waste your time, okay.

So in Buddhism we don't waste time. You try to find a teaching which is powerful, which can get you enlightened quickly and you go after it. You study it and you devote yourself to it and you get there before you die. And you outsmart the lord of death, okay. That's the game, name of the game. Which means that you have to be able to determine what's a good book to study and what's a waste of time, okay.

So we try to distinguish between what's a good book and what's a waste of time. Four tests for a good book. {gur} means, goal, in this case; {gurpa} sometimes means necessity, here it means goal, okay. {sok} means etcetera; {sher} means characteristics, {shi} means four. So these are the four characteristics of a good Buddhist book, an authentic book, okay.

Like, if you went to Tibet and said, you know, I've been thinking about reading a book. It's on the best seller list, New York Times, you know, fiction, which is unknown practically in Tibet, you know. There's almost no thing called 'fiction' you see. And they'd say, well what's it about?

And you'd say, oh it's a story, you know.

Well, does it have {gur so sher shi}? You know, does it have those four qualities of a book that won't waste your life, you know.

And they say, no.

So you say, well why are you reading it? You gonna live forever or what? You know, you're gonna die. And why are you putting those seeds in your mind? The mind is like a sponge, you know, anything you expose it to it sucks up karmic seeds and mental seeds, you know. Whatever you see in that movie, whatever you read in that book, whatever you read in that newspaper is gonna be planted in your mind. It will affect you for decades, you know. Just a half hour of reading the New York Times is putting thousands of seeds in your mind, you know, ideas that will float back to you later, you know. Why are you reading that? You see what I mean?

They'll say if it doesn't have those four qualities why are you endangering your mind, you see what I mean, 'cos you don't have time.

And everything you read affects you. Your mind soaks it in. Karmically it

comes back, okay.

So here are the four qualities of an authentic Buddhist book. You should know it and you should try not to spend your time on anything else.

People ask me did you read such-and-such a book? I say, no, you know. And then they say, well what are you reading? I just read Scriptures since 1974, you know. I didn't see any point to reading anything else. I do have my bathroom reading. [laughter] That's another thing [laughter], okay. That's why I can keep up on English, you know [laughter] [unclear]

Anyway. First quality is {...}. {...} means subject matter. A book should have some content, okay, serious content, {...}.

What's the content of the Abhidharmakosha? {...}, this is the content. {...} means, the Abhidharmakosha subject matter is to divide all objects in the universe into pure and impure, okay. Every object in the universe is either pure or impure. If you learn that, if you learn which is which, you're outta here, you see what I mean.

So that's the subject matter of the Abhidharmakosha. Okay. What's pure and what's impure.

Next, a good Buddhist book better have {gurpa}; {gurpa} means, goal, okay, the goal. The book should have a goal. Okay. What's the goal of the Abhidharmakosha for example? Okay. And you can put in small letters there, short term goal, alright.

What's the short-term goal of the Abhidharmakosha?

Is to give you wisdom, okay.

It's to teach you wisdom. Buddhist wisdom means can you distinguish between what's pure and what's impure. You know, can you distinguish between self-existent and not self-existent? Can you distinguish between selfishness and compassion? Okay. That's wisdom, okay.

So the short-term goal of this book is to give you wisdom, okay, especially, the wisdom that understands selflessness. In this school you wouldn't say so much emptiness, okay, you'd say selflessness. Alright. What school are we in by the way? We're in the Detailist School, the Vaibashika.

The Abhidharma is written from the first of the four great schools, from the lowest of the four great schools, okay.

In the monastery they don't spend a lot of time on the Abhidharma. Rinpoche taught it to us for, like, ten years. But in the monastery it's only about two years and it's at the end of the course, okay.

These are the beliefs of the lowest of the four schools, okay.

A lot of them, by the way, are not correct. Does that mean they aren't useful or maybe not spoken by the Buddha? They're very useful ideas, some very useful ideas for getting enlightened and reaching nirvana.

Were they spoken by Lord Buddha though if they're wrong?

What was your last course? [laughs] [laughter] {tragne}

Yeah, they were spoken by Lord Buddha. Are they wrong?

Yes.

So why did Lord Buddha speak something wrong?

It brings people up from the lower level. Okay. I mean, it brings up baby students.

By the way, the whole monastic system, monk's vows, everything, is Vaibashika. Okay. It's all like that. It's all to help people get up to the next level.

Okay. Purpose of Abhidharma.

Here's quality number three of a good book. Say {...}[repeat]{...}[repeat]. Okay.

You see both spellings in Scripture and they're both interesting to me. {nyi} means, the very; {gur} means, goal, meaning ultimate goal, {nying} means, essence, or the root means, essence. It's probably a misspelling but we don't know. You see, you cut this off and what's it look like? See what I mean. But I've checked the computer, you know. I've gone back through the centuries, you see both, okay. And they both mean ultimate goal. So you might say it's spelt either way, okay.

They both mean the ultimate goal, okay, which in this case is called, in abhidharma system, the two kinds of nirvana, the two kinds of nirvana.

What's first kind of nirvana?

You personally don't have to come back and live in a world of ups and downs any more. Okay. You personally don't have to come back and live in a world where you're on a roller coaster you're whole life. Okay.

What's the second kind of nirvana?

We call {...nyangde}, the ultimate nirvana of a Buddha. It means enlightenment. Okay. And that's the ultimate goal of this book, okay.

Here's the last of the four qualities.

Say {drelwa}[repeat]; {drelwa} means, connection. Okay. {drelwa} means connection. It means this: suppose this book that you're thinking about studying, suppose this book that you're thinking about exposing your precious mental real estate to, suppose it has a subject matter, content. But is that content connected to getting wisdom? You see what I mean? Does this lead to that? Does this come from that? You see what I mean? Is there a connection between one and two for this book?

Like, there maybe the goal of the book to give you wisdom, but it maybe a stupid book and have a crummy content. In that case, there is a content, there is a wisdom goal, but there's no connection. You can't get to one from the last. You see what I mean.

There has to be a connection between them.

And if you get wisdom is it gonna lead you to your ultimate goal?

Yes. In the case of the Abhidharma it has it. It has that connection.

Ultimate goals comes from getting wisdom and wisdom leads to ultimate goal.

Okay. So there's a connection between the two, okay. Like, it may be, there's this famous book in ancient India called the shastra or the {..}, the 'Scripture on Crow's Teeth', you know, which don't exist, alright. And there's no connection between anything, okay. [laughs] It can say I'll give you wisdom but even if it does it's not going to lead you to any ultimate goal or anything. You see what I mean. There's no connection, no connection between them.

So there has to be a connection between the first, the second, and the third. And that is the fourth quality. The connection, having the connection, is the fourth quality.

And people tell me, I like this book, you know. What do you think about this book about nature spirits in the American Indians? What do you think about this book about this new guy came out with these prophecies? It looks pretty cool, you know. What do you think about this book this person is channelling so and so, connected with the such and such? You know, look at this page because this page is almost like something in Buddhism. This is exciting, you know.

And I say, don't waste your time on it. You know what I mean. You have two hundred thousand books on Buddhism in the world, you know. No need to go look at something that has a few pages that are almost like something meaningful. You see what I mean. It's not an authentic book. It's not a useful book, okay. And you don't have time to spend time on the books that have interesting pieces in them that might relate to something important.

Why not go to a book that has hundred percent relates to something important, you see what I mean? You don't have time to fool around with these, and this book will be off the best seller list in six months.

I went to Arizona recently. We got bored one day and we went to, what's that little town? Willcox, Arizona. We went to see a movie. And there was a sign up, movie starts at eight o'clock, seven o'clock. And the there was this other sign below it that said, if less than five people show up for the movie we reserve the right to cancel it, you know. [laughter] [laughs] I'm not kidding. So next door there's this bookstore. We go to the bookstore to hang out and it's all books that were thrown out and collected in the bookstore. So they're all over five years old. These were the most important books five years ago and they're so silly. Every single book there looked so silly now, you know.

You go to the Godstow, to the library and there's all these, these people were high intellectuals. This lady was a president of a university and the silliest books. You open them up now and they look so silly, you know. I mean, they're just passing thing, you know, a passing fad. There's such and such prophecy book,

you know. And then you, just see if it's gonna survive the five year test, okay, before you read it. These books have survived the two and a half thousand year test, okay. Really. Okay. And you go read these books a thousand years from now they'll still be extraordinary. You see what I mean. So check a book. Don't waste your time, okay. Unless it's bathroom reading, I don't care. That's alright. That's where I read those books.

How does the Abhidharmakosha get into karma? We're supposed to be talking about karma, okay.

Now we get onto karma. That's in the fourth chapter.

The third chapter of the Abhidharmakosha talks about where did the world come from. How many planets are there in the universe? Are there people living on other planets? How many realms are there? What happens to you after you die? You know, what's the bardo like, and things like that.

Where did we come from? And where are we going?

And it's a whole description of the world.

How's the world gonna end? And there's a beautiful description of a supernova of the sun and the sun splitting into different, different stars called the sun, supernoving and then other stars rising from that and vaporising the planet eventually, okay, very interesting. And this is the third chapter of the Abhidharmakosha.

Then, in the fourth chapter, they teach karma, okay. Karma is called {le} and I love the first few lines. I quote them often, okay.

Here's the first line of the fourth chapter: {le le jikten natsok kye}, okay. You want to know where all these planets come from all over the world? You think some god made them from dirt clods on the sixth day or something? Forget it. {le le jikten natsok kye}, means, the worlds of the universe and the beings who live on them were, every atom of them, was created by karma and only karma, okay. {le le jikten natsok kye}

Then he says, what is karma? Say {de ni sempa}[repeat]. You want to know what karma is? It's {le le jikten natsok kye de ni sempa}; {de ni sempa} means, karma is anytime your mind moves, okay, movement of the mind.

Anytime your mind shifts a microsecond, a micro-millimetre, anytime you have the slightest passing piece of a thought, you have just created karma. That is karma. Okay. I like to call it 'karma concentrate', like coke concentrate, like the stuff you use in the fountains, when you go to the fountains, you know. What do you call it? Fountain drinks, fountain soda, yeah. Like, it's the stuff in the bottle that's this very concentrated black stuff and then they mix it with soda water and then they give you coke.

Raw karma, raw karma, concentrated karma, is the act of thinking. Okay. The movement of the mind, sixty-five in a finger snap, okay {..}. That's how many

karmas you're committing in the time it takes to snap my fingers, okay. You have sixty-five pieces if a thought in the time it takes me to snap my fingers. And that's karma, that's raw karma, {de ni sempa}.

And then the next line says, ran out of room here. How about we do it here.

Say {dang}[repeat] {de}[repeat] {je}[repeat], {dang de je}[repeat]; {dang} means, and, okay. And what? So far he's said, what's karma? Anytime your mind moves, okay. Oh, and by the way, there's a little bit more about karma. {dang} means and, {de je} means, whatever those movements of the mind cause you to do with your speech or with your body, okay.

So now we got three kinds of karma. Karma is thinking, oh and by the way, anything that that thinking motivates you to say or to do. So we got three kinds of karma, okay.

Then they go onto a really cool kind of karmic, this is a cool idea from the Abhidharmakosha, from the abhidharma schools, which nobody else accepts, okay, no other school accepts. It's a thing called 'non-communicating form', sorry, okay, non-communicating form. And your class leaders can struggle through it with you.

But the basic idea is this. In the Abhidharmakosha they say, when you do something really good, or when you do something really bad, then a karmic photograph is taken, okay. A karmic photograph is taken and some kind of physical halo actually envelops your body and stays with you and that's karma, you know. That's the result of karma.

So, like, when a person goes and gets ordained and gets down on their knee and says, I do, you know, that the moment they say, 'ou', there forms this thing on them called their vows, their monk's vows or their nun's vows. And they believe it's actually a physical envelope. Some of the texts say, it also permeates your body like oil permeates a sesame seed or something like that. But at that moment some kind of, you know, glowy, ephemeral, light thing envelops you. And every time you do some heavy good deed or some really heavy bad deed then this thing envelops you, okay.

So they divide karma into two types. They say, there's this karma that other people can't see on you but is on you. So, like, if I dress up in pants and shirt and I walk down Second Avenue and people look at me, do they see that envelope? Do they see my monk's vows? You see what I mean. We say, no. That's what we call non-communicating form. You can't see it anymore, okay.

'Communicating form' means, when that guy gets down on his knee and when he takes his two hands and puts them to his chest and says, I do, then it communicates something to you about his or her motivation, you know.

Oh, this person must be having renunciation. Why? They said, I do, in an ordination ceremony, okay. The only reason to become a monk or nun is

because you're so disgusted with life that you're forced into it, okay. Seriously. And the vows don't form unless you have that.

So you're thinking, you're watching this person and they're down, they're got their knee down there, they're got their, and they're, like, I do. And when you hear the 'do' you say, I can guess something about this person's motivation. They must have pretty good renunciation, okay. That's what we call 'communicating form'.

In the abhidharma there's two kinds of karma, you know. One, you can deduce the person's state of mind from it. One of them, then becomes invisible, like, five minutes later this karma or these vows have become something invisible that they have on them but you can't see it unless you're some kind of extraordinary being, okay.

Now, the higher schools say that's not true and there's no such halo around you but you gotta study it anyway 'cos it's a useful idea isn't it. It's one of those things that Lord Buddha taught that's not technically true and it's very useful to think that you're walking around with some kind of glow around you called your vows.

Yeah. [student] Yeah, it sounds a lot like auras, it does. Exactly. Lord Buddha said auras exist and they don't, okay. [laughter] Alright.

We're gonna talk about good karma, bad karma, neutral karma; you can do that in your break out sessions, okay. But I'll give you just one clue, okay.

Is karma bad karma because Lord Buddha said so? No.

Is karma bad karma because you feel bad when you do it? No.

Is karma bad karma because god said it's a bad thing? You see what I mean. No.

Is bad karma bad karma just because anybody said it was a bad thing? No. Okay.

Is karma bad karma because it hurts other people? [students: no] It's very interesting. If it does hurt other people it probably is bad karma, okay. Except when the teacher hits their student, that's okay. [laughs] [laughter] Just kidding. So when is a bad karma a bad karma? In Buddhism what's the whole lynchpin of ethics in Buddhism? It hurts you. Get it straight, okay.

If an action ripens into an unpleasant experience for you, bluntly, it's a bad karma. Okay. And you want to avoid it. Alright. So that's the test. It's a big jump for people who grew up in a western society 'cos your whole idea of ethics is something else: god said so, mom said so, the law says so, my teachers said so, you know. That's why we do it in my society.

And in Buddhism the most primary thing about good karma is that it's gonna bring you happiness and nirvana and enlightenment.

And the most basic thing about bad karma is it's gonna screw you up, alright.

Now there are books that say {..}, okay. And that's, of course, it's bad karma to hurt other people. So I'm not saying it's not bad karma. And I'm not saying you shouldn't think about other people when you think about bad karma.

But if you want to know how the abhidharmakosha defines bad karma it's, 'those actions which if you do them, then by a law as strong as the laws of gravity, you will suffer.' Okay. You gotta get that in mind. You gotta keep that in mind.

And trying to out fox karma is as likely as out foxing gravity, okay. It doesn't work. You know, please don't fall down, please don't fall down. I pray don't fall down. It falls down. Okay. And karma's the same. Doesn't matter what you want, doesn't matter what you think, it doesn't matter what book you read last week from the New York Times. There are certain actions that if you do them you will suffer. Period. It's the law of nature. And those are the rules of karma. You have to study karma and learn what kinds of actions are gonna make you put yourself in trouble. That's all. Okay.

That's the laws of karma.

Yeah. [student] Yeah. [student] She said, are those absolute rules that apply to everyone? Yeah, the list applies to everyone. If a Buddha were to do the ten non-virtues they would suffer. How's that. Okay. Alright.

Then you're gonna have the ten main bad deeds, okay.

People ask me when does karma come back to you.

Yeah. [student] Can't. I said, if they could, {..}. If they could, okay.

[student] he said, what if a Buddha broke one of the ten non-virtues [unclear]. We wouldn't say he broke the ten non-virtues. We'd say, they have removed the wealthy person's property, [laughter] to assist a poor person [laughs]. You see.

And Je Tsongkapa says, it's not only not breaking a vow, it is creating a tremendous good deed, okay. But those are very tricky, very slippery, very touchy. Years of study before you talk about them. So we won't. Okay.

Oh, that's a good question. Feel bad in the present is what I'm talking about. Like, a lot of us feel bad when we have to go and do our two hours {dakye}. That doesn't mean it's a bad karma, okay. [laughs] Alright. Like that.

Okay. People ask me how long does it take karma to ripen. You see what I mean. And this I think is important to know, okay.

So there are three kinds of ripening of karma. Karma can come back to you in one of three periods.

First kind is called karma that you see in this life. It's called {.. gyur gi le}, karma that you see in this life. It means, you do something especially powerful in this life and you will see the results before you die, okay.

Then there is karma which gives you result in the very next life, okay. Like, it's

particularly like, you could say a karma that was going to determine your next life, okay. That would be what we call a next life karma.

And then, number three karma, is anything later than that. Okay. Second life, on. Okay. Those are the three kinds of karma.

I like this teaching because it's very interesting; this teaching is accepted by all schools. And I saw some really cool things that made me very happy. This is Ngulchu Dharmabadra, great Lama of our lineage about two hundred years ago. And he says, by the way, number one is the basis for tantra. Okay.

Number one is the basis for tantra. Meaning, we have hope, you know. We have hope only because if you do extremely powerful karma in the earlier part of your life then later you can become enlightened in this lifetime, okay, as a result of that karma.

And that's exactly the principle behind tantric practice, okay.

You're trying to go for the big time and create certain kinds of karma, which are so powerful, that before you die you become Tara or you become Manjushri. Okay.

This is from the abhidharmakosha, the most humble of the four schools. Here it is. The key to tantra, you see, is that, if you undertake certain practices with total devotion, total understanding, total training, total commitment, then those results will mature in this lifetime. And that's the principle of, the principle of karma is the foundation of tantric practice, okay.

Yeah. [student] He asked, what is it about a certain deed that determines if it's gonna be ripening in this life or the next life or the next one?

I call it the 'queuing question' and I always think of New York airport. Khen Rinpoche used to drive past New York airport sometimes. He'd say, It's amazing, you westerners have figured out how to get metal to fly in the sky. Like, amazing.

I can't believe you can't get enlightened. You know what I mean. [laughs] [laughter]

And I remember, so I remember looking over there and there's these planes lined up in queue and then, every once in awhile, the control tower will say, okay you can cut in front. You see what I mean. And this plane can go before the four planes that have been waiting.

And this is the question of karmic queuing, you know. How do the karma queue up?

And what could put your tantric karma in front and out fox all those other karmas? You see, that's what you want. You want tantric karma plane, you want the control tower to say you get to go first, you know. All these thousands and millions of karmas are waiting to take off, you go to the front of the queue and take off. And then, to hell with the rest, they'll never ripen. You see what I

mean. They will never ripen. They'll die in the womb, you see. That's the whole theory of tantric practice.

What is it that gets a plane up to the front of the queue? What is it about this karma that's gonna put it in front of all the other karmas you've done for the last five thousand years or so?

We'll talk about it, okay.

Yeah. [student] She said, if a person were to perform sort of a mediocre karma or, you know, not a very strong karma but if that person happens to be a high being already, okay. Like, they blow their nose or something but they're already an arya and a bodhisattva, then does that become powerful karma? You can say that.

Actually, I'll tell you what it is now, in case I die in the next five minutes, okay.

Let me see if it's in here. It's not in here but I'll tell you. It's on your, it was on your homework. Maybe I didn't put it on your homework. No it's not here. So I'll just tell you.

It's called {..} or like that. And these are the factors that effect. One, you could say your motivation, okay. So if your motivation is extraordinary then that karma will move up in queue. That karma will be sent up to the front of the line.

[cut]

[end side A]

[side B]

So, for example, tantra has to be done with a really extraordinary motivation, okay.

One can be the type of person involved. Like, is this a powerful being towards whom you're doing this karma or not? So, like, they say if you only have one hamburger and you have a choice between giving it to a homeless person or a dog, give it to the human. Not because dogs are bad or they're not real people or anything like that but the human has a better chance in this lifetime to get enlightened. So better to give it to someone who's got a better chance. You see what I mean.

So that would be the example of that.

One would be particularly powerful karmic object would someone who has been of great help to you. And this is the principle for treating your parents well. Okay. Whether you like them, whether they were good to you, whether they dissed you after a certain time, doesn't matter. They gave you the equipment that you can reach tantric enlightenment with. And in so doing have paid one of the greatest kindnesses that anyone can give you.

They gave you a body complete with seventy-two thousand channels and minor channels and all the charkas that you need to get tantrically enlightened. Thankyou. You see what I mean? And very powerful; you have to be kind to

them.

You have to act properly towards them, because they have done you such benefit, you see what I mean.

So those are some of the factors involved in trying to get a karma to move up. And there's some other factors, so you'll read it in your reading.

Yeah. [student] [laughs] John said, two questions. One is, what would distinguish a non- tantric bodhisattva motivation from, for example, a tantric bodhisattva motivation. Is there any difference, you see. I mean, bodhisattva motivation is already really heavy. So what's the difference between a non- tantric bodhisattva motivation and a tantric bodhisattva motivation.

The non- tantric bodhisattva motivation differs from the tantric bodhisattva's motivation, in that, the tantric bodhisattva motivation is obsessed with getting enlightened immediately and willing to take the risk involved with that. You see what I mean. It's some kind of courage. It's some kind of commitment. And it's some kind of very clear decision in that person's mind that whatever the cost, whatever the potential cost, whatever people think of me, I will get enlightened immediately.

I will do whatever, the most powerful things that scriptures teach and that lamas teach. I will to the best of my ability immediately get as far as I can. I will not waste a moment to get enlightened. And I will do those things that the heaviest things I can do to get enlightened quickly. I won't be satisfied with a month from now or a year from now or three years from now or something like that.

I will do, I will undertake to study and practice properly to the best of my ability and within my capacity the highest teachings possible. Okay. That's all.

Because I want it to happen now. Okay. That's the main distinction. Okay.

Second question, what was the second question? Huh? Oh, timing, yeah. Karma can ripen even within a minute, forget it. Yeah. Karma can ripen within a minute.

There are karmas, especially related to tantra, that can ripen immediately. Very, very fast, okay.

Yeah [student] Jennifer said, you know, unless you're enlightened you don't really know if a good thing that happens to you is coming from something you just did or something you did a thousand years ago, alright, or a million years ago.

As you get better with your practice you'll be able to distinguish, okay. Because of the content, like, your good deeds have a certain extraordinary and new content. And then you have certain extraordinary and new experiences happening to you regularly that weren't happening for the last forty or fifty years.

And that's an indication that, you see what I mean, that's an indication that the

extraordinary actions you're undertaking now are having some extraordinary immediate results. And that's about all I can say on that.

Yeah. [student] She said, if you hang out with your lama does the karma speed up? Yes, definitely.

There's a lot that happens between a student and a teacher by osmosis if they're close that can never happen in a class, okay. Alright.

I'm gonna let you in your break out sessions go through the, there's this real cool thing about the four kinds of ripenings of karma, you know.

Karma ripens in four different ways. And it's very, very, very, important to know this, okay.

Karma determines where you're gonna go in your next life and future lives, okay. First thing.

Secondly, karma decides what's gonna happen to you if you happen to get born as a human in the future, okay, which could be a long time from now. Alright. But if you do happen to get born as a future, well let's just take killing for example. And I'll go very quickly through it.

If you kill and it's bad enough you will go to a lower realm in your next rebirth. Period. Okay. That's the first effect or consequence of karma.

Second one, if you kill and then suppose you work up to a human later at some time, you will always be unhealthy. You will always have backaches. People will threaten you all the time. You'll live in a dangerous city. Okay. These are what we call personal consequences. So you see the first one is going to a lower realm. The next one is even if you go to a human realm it's a dangerous place to live and you're always feeling sick, unhealthy. Okay.

Yeah. [student] We can say that no one who is in this desire realm plane right now had a karma at the end of their last life from killing someone in a very bad way. Let's say that way. Yeah, that's true. You know, what His Holiness says, I kinda giggle sometimes. He says, basically everyone's a good person, right. It's actually true. Anyone who's got up to the desire realm to a human rebirth you are one in many billions of creatures. You are already that.

Pabongka Rinpoche says, whenever you're feeling low self-esteem, reflect on the fact if you haven't done anything else right in your life, you're still one in many trillions of beings. You would not be in this realm, especially having heard Dharma, if you weren't one in trillions and trillions and trillions of beings.

You are the one who worked up to this place. Yeah.

Does it mean you don't have karma in your pocket to die tomorrow in a horrible way because you killed somebody? No. Okay.

Yeah. [student] This is the third karmic result, okay. [laughter] Is that you're attracted to doing that thing more.

Even if you're born as a human, the third one is that you're attracted to that kind

of behaviour, okay.

Fourth one, what is the fourth one? Oh, environmental results, okay. Your city is a dangerous place to live. There's lots of wars, where you live, you know. You're in a country, which is constantly under attack or something like that. People mug people a lot where you live, something like that. It's a violent place to live and a dangerous place to live. Okay. The food's not good, the water's not good, crops don't happen, you know, things don't work right, okay.

It's amazing, you know, frankly, you go to India, there's so much poverty, so much suffering and by the way, and so much happiness. I mean, the people, a lot of the people are very much more mentally healthy than in New York City. I'd say the mental health in India is markedly better than New York. Seriously.

But physically it's a very impoverished place. Then you go to Bangkok. It's on the same parallel. It gets the same basic weather, you know. It's the same dirt. But, you know, it's just like booming place, everybody's got Mercedes. You know, and what is it that creates that difference, you see? And that's karma, okay

[student] She said, does that mean that anyone who's starving or lives in a war torn country has any bad karma? The answer is, if starving or living in a war torn country is hurting you personally, it's a result of your bad karma.

If you live in a war torn country and you're making great profits off the suffering of other people it's a good karma. You see what I mean. It's very interesting. Or if you enjoy being hungry, some people fast, you see. Seriously. I mean, if being hungry somehow makes you feel uplifted then that's a good karma, that's the result of a good karma.

The only question is does it make you feel good or bad? Does it make you feel happy or sad?

Then I can tell you if it's a good karma or a bad karma.

He wants me to stop. I'm not going to. Alright.

Last question. I don't think you can understand how karma works if you don't go to the Mind Only School. And when I heard the Mind Only School's presentation on karma I rejoiced. I celebrated. I interrupted my teacher for the first time, maybe the last time.

I said, he's presenting how karma works according to the Mind Only and I said, I blurted out, which is totally illegal in the monastery, especially with this teacher, Geshe Thubten Rinchen, is to say, wait a minute, that sounds great. Why are we attacking that idea?

He says, this idea we accept, you know. This idea of the Mind Only School we accept. And I said, wow, you know what I mean. It was, like, you know. Anyway, the basic thing is this. [laughter]

Okay. By the way, and it's not that things are mind only, okay. That's not

what's so cool about it.

It's this. And I'm very, very frustrated that it's not presented more often. Okay. It's frustrating to me that in Buddhist lectures or Buddhist teachings they don't draw the connection more often, okay. I think it's a very sad thing, okay. And that's the pen thing, okay.

This is a cylinder. It's a blue and white cylinder. Okay. It's empty. It's blank. It doesn't have any identity of its own. If you were an Eskimo from the twelfth century and you came I here, you'd say, wow, white and blue stick, very smooth, you know. And for you that's what it would be, you see. That's what it would be for you.

And then if you're a, you know, a human in the twentieth century and you'd been to these classes, you come in and you say, oh, a pen, a blue pen. Wow, a blue pen, okay, you see the cylinder as a blue pen. He sees it as a smooth stick.

If you're a dog, you come in here, I'm waving this thing around, and you'd say, oh something to chew on. Looks very chewable, you know, just the right size. I like stuff like that. Let me seem if I can chew on it, you see.

Now, who's right? Who's having a pramana? You learned pramana last week. Who's having a {tsema}?

All three are having a {tsema}, a valid perception. Okay, I got out of it, right? I didn't say 'correct'. See? Get the point? It's valid for their circumstances. Okay. Given their background and what they are and who they are, everyone's right, okay.

Now, one of the proofs of the emptiness of this pen is nothing can be those three at once, you see. It can't be something to chew on and something to write with and a smooth stick. I mean, [unclear], you know, but you can't, literally, be all three at the same time, okay.

That's a proof that those qualities or that nature is not emanating from this cylinder. You're putting that on it. You have to think about it carefully. You're projecting onto it some kind of identity.

It does not have any identity. That's the meaning of emptiness.

Ultimately, this is Mrs Ribush's question in Melbourne, it doesn't even have its own 'cylinderness'. But that's another story, okay. Let's not get confused. And don't space out on me, okay. Get it, okay. It doesn't have its own identity.

These three beings from these three backgrounds are putting their own identity on it, projecting their own identity on it.

And what frustrates me, that's so rarely brought up in Buddhist talks, is where is that coming from? Where is that projection coming from?

Karma. And that's why Lord Buddha spent half the time of his eighty years on this planet teaching you what was good to do, what was bad to do, good karma,

bad karma; and half his time talking about emptiness. There's a connection. Okay. This is empty and your karma is forcing you, compelling you to see it in a certain way.

You can't choose to see this as a chocolate bar. You can't choose to see this as a rod of pure diamond shining with gold in the way a Buddha sees it, okay.

Is it possible to see it that way? Yes.

Can you do it by just wanting to do it? No. Your karma is forcing you to see it in a certain way. Okay.

And it frustrates me that the connection is not drawn more frequently, okay.

This is empty. It's like a movie screen and your karma is forcing you to project something onto it and see something.

And how you relate to that fake movie on the screen decides whether you get enlightened or not, you see.

If you get angry because it's not what you wanted it to be then you'll keep suffering.

And if you finally wake up and say, oh, oh, I see it as a pen because of my karma. Well in the future I'll just try to collect better karma. I don't like pens like that. The guy keeps going on all night, you know. Alright.

So that's the deal. That's how karma works in a nutshell.

Take a break and then we'll break out into our classes, okay.

Okay, we'll start.

[announcements]

Okay, very short, you know. We've been covering the theory of ACI. What are the principles, what does the course study. Last time I forgot what we talked about. Anyway. What was it last time? How do you administer it? How do you keep it from getting corrupted in a hundred years or two hundred years? And that was keep your book; very simple, okay.

I think tonight I'd like to talk about management as far as financial management of the place, okay. And about our lineage. What we believe about that.

I mainly chose this because it's a short subject and I have to go to a movie.

[laughs]

It's very important. [laughs][laughter]

But it's like this, very simply, okay. It's a tradition of our lineage that all teachings must always be free. Period. Okay. Teachings should be free.

In the monastery, as Geshe {} knows, when you take on a student you take on their expenses. Geshe {} himself has probably had two or three hundred students in the time I've known him. He's paid all their expenses, okay. And that's the system in the Gelugpa tradition, you know.

When you take on a student it's your responsibility to take care of them and not vice versa, see what I mean. So I think it should stay that way. I think it's a

brilliant system and it's beautiful. And we don't charge for teachings, okay.

And I tell you frankly, you know, the first few years that you have your own students, they'll drive you crazy 'cos you'll be going broke all the time. And you may have to go get a job to pay for the hall and to pay for the notebook and to pay for the paper. And that's fine and you should do it because it's an honour to be a teacher. And it's an honour to be in our lineage.

And if you have to go to work and, I said this in California and everybody went [laughs] [laughter].

Really, it should be like that, okay. It's your honour. It's an honour to have the opportunity to pay for the student's needs. And it's a bodhisattva vow that you're required to do that.

Forget the requirement. It's just the way that it should be. Okay.

So forget charging. You should be taking care of the needs of your students. And if that means you have to go work in a restaurant or something you should go do it.

And I know that's not an easy thing to think about, okay. [laughs] But think like that. That's the way Dharma should work, okay, much less not charging, okay.

So that's the way the financial part should work. And you know work up from what you can afford. The first books that this organisation ever produced were done on a [unclear] machine in the basement of Kehn Rinpoche's house. We bound them ourselves. We made the tools from thrown out lumber. We did all the stamping with this hand made stamping thing. And that was MSTP, you know, press started that way.

And it should be like that, okay. You should struggle. The finances should be raised largely internally, you know.

You shouldn't go wandering around looking for some big sponsor who's going to prop up your organisation when the people in the organisation aren't propping it up. You see what I mean. It should come from the people that you're working with. And you should never hassle the students for money, okay. So never say you can't come if you don't give money. And you shouldn't, you know, every week tell them you need this or that. Once in awhile, okay if it's for something that everyone's gonna use or something.

But, in general, shouldn't be any financial thing connected with the Dharma. It should just be clean from that.

And a lot of people have come to me in New York City and said the reason we come to your classes is that you don't ask for money, you see what I mean. And it should be like that.

And that's the way the money part should go. And it's your honour to go to work and support the Dharma even if it means that you pay for the books and you pay for the materials and you pay for the place. Should be like that, okay.

That's the first thing about money.

Second is, whatever money you do get, internally, organically, what comes naturally, you know, because the students are learning more and more and understand more, they're more devoted to the purpose of the thing, then naturally, there should grow some finances. And they should start supporting the place but totally voluntarily and from their own hearts, okay.

Then your big responsibility is to take care of the money properly, you know. And that means, in my mind, for example, if a monk gets a room, if I get a room from Leon, I'm required to pay, that's income. And the current American law is that I have to report that as income. And when I go some place like Vajrapani and they offer me money, I'm required to report that. And I should report that, you see what I mean? Like, all the money of this organisation and every Dharma organisation should be totally clean.

What's required to be reported should be reported. All the money should go through books, you know. All the money that comes into the organisation should come in through a proper accounting system, you know, on a computer. It should be properly recorded and properly paid out. And that's the way Dharma, down to the penny.

The karma of misusing Dharma money is extremely powerful.

I was once complaining to my lama at Sera Mey about that I had to keep books and that every time I came to the monastery I had to sit through endless hours of accounting. I learned all these Tibetan numbers so well.

And he said, you should be proud that they chose you to do it because the only person in ancient India in Nalanda monastery that was trusted to do the books was Nagarjuna.

Because the karma of missing a dollar is extraordinary, you know. The karma of misusing one dollar of the money of the sangha community is so powerful that only Nagarjuna was allowed to keep their books, you see what I mean. So you should keep, ever thing should be totally spotless and in the spirit of the law especially. Not just minimum what you have to do to get away with it.

It should be that, everything that goes through, is clearly recorded, every penny is accounted for. And I think a computer is a good way to do that, okay.

And I believe that those books should be open to the public, okay. I believe that any person in a Dharma organisation should be able to come to the directors or whoever and say, I want to see the books. I want to see where the money came from and I want to see how you spent the money. And except in the case where the sponsors asked to be anonymous. So, you know, you can cover that page up with something. But I think that Dharma organisations finances should be public knowledge. And that anyone in the organisation should be able to come and look at the books and say I don't agree with that. And they should have

that right. And that's the responsibility of a Dharma organisation.

That's about all I can think of about money. Money is the root of all evil. A lot of Dharma organisations have collapsed through the finances.

And I think one more thing that I would say is that a Dharma organisation should never make so many obligations that raising money becomes the main focus of that organisation, you see. I know some Dharma centres who have rented some fancy place and they've put all this money into it and they've signed off on this huge mortgage. And then all the activities of the centre is, you know, selling bake sales and fairs and desperate attempts to make the rent. And then finally they fail because the people aren't studying, they're raising money.

I think, much better than building big temples or blah, blah, blah, have your Dharma classes in a small apartment that somebody has. Get somebody to rent a space to you for cheap or get it for free. I can't believe, I don't believe that most of the big expensive Dharma buildings that are built are necessary.

I don't think they are. I think Dharma can be done as well in a living room as in a big temple.

I think it should be a principle of this organisation that financial obligations are not created that are going to distract people from what we're doing, you know.

There shouldn't be a burden of mortgage or debt passed on from one Dharma generation to the next, you know.

I think you don't need much space to have true Dharma teachings. Living rooms seem to work quite well. That's just my theory of Dharma finance, okay. That's about all I can think of.

I don't think teachers should make money off of what they do and if they do they should give it away or they should reinvest it in some other Dharma thing. Like that. Okay.

And then it's very, very beautiful when a teacher's living simply. When the teacher has one shirt or two shirts and one pants or two pants.

And they're obviously not wasting money and they're living simply and quietly. And that's, I think that helps the student's faith a lot.

And I'm telling you because you will be teachers some day and I think that's important.

Does that mean you shouldn't use large sums of money if get into them?

No. I mean, we had a million dollar grant a few years ago and we used it. And we support thousands of Tibetan monks. And we support saving hundred and fifty thousand pages of books. We use the money.

So it doesn't mean you can't have money.

You get it in the proper way and you use it in the proper way. And your personal expenses should be very low. And you should never mix Dharma and money. Never require a student to ever feel obligated to pay anything. That's a

very bad karma, okay.

Alright, we'll do a prayer, alright

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Goodnight. Thankyou

The Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Ten

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

[cut] you know in his former life. And collected the karma because he killed an insect; cut an insect in two. And then, later, he was beheaded. That's how he died. So, was he aware that that particular bug had got cut in half? No.

Did he collect the karma? Yes.

Why? You can call it, like, peripheral awareness that you might be killing them. You see what I mean,

When you go out with a lawnmower and cover half an acre of grass and see all these jumping around, although you don't see anybody get hit with the blade, you have a peripheral awareness that, that you are killing, okay.

Alright.

Third one, motivation. [student] Hang on one sec, one sec, okay. Let me finish this one and then I'll take one or two questions.

I got conflicting hands here.

Premeditation, okay, did you intend to kill this being? You know, were you planning it? What was your motivation, you see what I mean?

Did you sit down and plan it out? This is recognised even in the law, right? Like, a lengthy premeditation is more serious than a sudden burst of passion or something like that, okay.

To sit there for days and think about how you're gonna shoot them and where you're gonna shoot them. Maybe they'll bleed a little bit first and, you know. To think like that is total premeditation.

Those are the three elements of what we call thought. Unless all three elements are there you do not collect the full karma.

Do you collect any karma? Yes you do, okay.

But for a big juicy what we call [unclear] full karma called 'karmic path', these all have to be satisfied, okay.

So what if you go into a room and you want to stab the guy and he's put pillows

under a blanket and you go like that and then you run away and you believe you've killed somebody, okay. How many are there? Is there a {shi}?

That's a touchy one, okay. Is there a guy which you thought you were killing? [students] Yeah. Okay. Is, I'll say now, but I don't remember the answer in the scripture.

Did you recognise it for what it was? No. You see what I mean.

So the karma's a little bit less.

Did you have a mental affliction? Yes.

What was the other one? Did you have a premeditation? Yes.

Did you undertake to kill? Yes.

Did you complete the killing? No. Hopefully not, unless there was a roach under the pillow. [laughter]

Okay, that's all. Those are examples and you can play around with your own examples.

But this is the study of karma. People ask me how do you make a big karma, how do you make a little karma? This is one of the main things.

Why should it be interesting to you? The principles of karma are how tantra works, okay. I'm gonna tie it right up to tantra, okay.

Tantra works because of karma. You can turn this body, is like the glass of water, never forget it.

This is the same as the glass of water. If you could fix your karma you would see this body as a tantric deity's body. And you can do it, okay.

And you have to do it. And you gotta collect these big juicy karmas. [unclear] like saving life. See that this person is [unclear], okay, {shi ..}.

Recognise that they are a human being who needs help: Yes.

Have a mental happy thought: I want to save this person.

Have a premeditation: I'm gonna give them this medicine, this medicine.

You know, undertake to do it: go to their house, serve them, help them.

[unclear] they get better, you know and you own it. You say, I did that and I'm proud of it. That's a big fat juicy karma.

Keep that up long enough and you will see the glass of water different, you see.

That's your hope to become a tantric deity in this life. That's why it can work.

Those principles can be twisted around to serve our purposes and that's {...}, okay. You just have to pull it off. And you have to pull it off before you perceive this thing stopping breathing, okay. Alright. And you can. But it takes extraordinary attention to the most powerful good deeds you can find.

Lord Buddha has made a list called the three types of vows. Check them every hour and a half or so. This is the way to get to a tantric body. Really, okay, {tundruk}.

One or two questions. Yeah. [student] Yeah, his head was cut off with a blade

of grass, okay.

Yeah. [student] Yeah, if you're a medical doctor and you're saving lives all day it does help your karma. Will it necessarily help your karma in this lifetime? Maybe not because there's three ripenings, right. It could come in the next or the one after.

What would make it speed up? An understanding of karma and emptiness, okay.

By the way, that would differentiate normal act of charity of giving medicine from the perfection of giving, you see.

The difference between a bodhisattva's perfection of giving, perfection of morality, perfection of patience, you see.

The difference between plain old patience and the perfection of patience is exactly what I talked about with the boss.

If you understand emptiness, if you understand that this irritating guy is your projection and then you're patient, you see, that's a totally different action. That's gonna get you enlightened in no time. You see. That's a perfection. That becomes a perfection. Big difference between that and plain old oh I won't get mad it's not so nice. Okay. Alright.

We'll stop there. Ask your break out teachers, alright.

Okay, we'll wrap up. [announcements]

The thing I'd like to talk about tonight that relates to ACI is how the classes are conducted, meaning, yeah [student] I don't remember the exact dates..

I'd like to talk about a little strategy, you know. My dream is that you guys start your own little operations going, you know.

I saw this movie about [unclear] and I was really impressed by how they split up the territory. [laughter] And, you know, we don't have any operation in Brooklyn. [laughter] Think about it, you know. As far as I'm concerned the purpose of these classes is that you become a teacher.

We have a guy named Skye and his wife from Yonkers or something and they started a little centre and they put up flyers and three people came and they taught them how to meditate. And now it's about thirty-five, forty people and they have a very strong group now. And it's going really well. And they had the same classes that you had. There's a group in Australia, a man and a wife, who have already done a Diamond Cutter Sutra course and now they're on another course. I forget which one. Principle Teachings course. And they're doing great. And it's about fifteen students in a little tiny town on the ocean in Australia.

And a lady came up to me the other day and said, I'm from your Brooklyn centre. And I said, I don't have a centre in Brooklyn.

And she said, yes you do, but you didn't know about it, you know. [laughter]

I like it, you know. I think it's great.

I just want to talk about some ideas about how to do it, okay.

One is, don't worry about how many people come. Don't judge your success by how many people there are. It doesn't matter, okay.

To save one person's mental continuum from a hell realm or something like that, that's okay. That's worth some of your time. You know what I mean. Okay. And it's worth losing some money on too, you know, 'cos that's another thing about starting a Dharma centre. The funder is gonna be you. And it's gonna be your living room and your cookies and tae and your bathroom that you have to clean up afterwards, okay. And accept it, that's a fact of life. That's the Dharma business, you know. The reason students come to you is they want to learn about correct behaviour. So, by definition, they don't have correct behaviour. And you'll be washing the bathroom for sometime. And they won't contribute for a while.

And you'll be financing everything for sometime. You know what I mean, And then you'll even have a few students who'll criticise you and say bad things about you and blah, blah, blah.

And you have to say, that's okay. That goes with the territory, okay.

But be happy to start with two or three people. When we started these class on Thirty-ninth street we brought enough furniture to fit in a Honda with two people. And that was six chairs and one little table. And that was the first class furniture.

And don't think it has to be some grand thing, okay.

Je Tsongkapa started with one student, you know. And that's the way it goes.

So, something modest.

And what I've learned teaching in New York for, like, I don't know, twenty years, is make it a distinct start and a distinct end. Don't let a class go on forever, okay.

Say, we're gonna have six classes or we're gonna have eight classes or we're gonna have ten classes and then you're all gonna go home and rest for a month or something like that. You know, human beings need a beginning and human beings need an end. And don't let a Dharma class go on interminably until everybody gets exhausted or stops coming, okay.

At the beginning you can't make the attendance too strict or no one will come. So loosen it up at the beginning and after they're hooked then crack down on them, okay. Alright.

As soon as you can institute some kind of feedback, you see, like homework or something like that. You see, there are hundreds of Dharma events going on in the city every year and classes. But it's my experience, until I required people to do quizzes or homeworks, nobody learned anything, nobody retained anything.

The day after they left they couldn't tell you what the lecture was about. You know what I mean. And I think it's very important to have those, to have some kind of structure like that where the person has to give back something, has to show that they know the material. And people want to. You see what I mean. Don't think that you're torturing them. People want to progress, people want to know that they are making progress. People want a sense of knowing that they're learning something. You see what I mean. And in the monastery you're tested constantly. Every night you go to debate and you're tested.

And everyday you're asked by your teacher. They don't just teach, they yell questions at the students. And they have to respond like marines in boot camp, you know. And you hear this, you walk down the street in the monastery and you hear this {..}, you know, you hear this. And, you know, students are yelling back at teachers all over the monastery. It's a very weird experience, like, you walk down and it sounds like people fighting in each room, you know.

And it's the daily classes going on in the teacher's room.

So, don't be afraid to test them. People don't like quizzes. People will fight you about it. People won't bring them. People won't do them. But they really do want them because they want a feeling of making real progress.

So give them a chance to make real progress. My boss at work used to call it bowling theory. And he said, if you don't give people feedback about how they're doing, then it's like telling someone to roll balls but covering the thing with a sheet so they can't tell how many pins they're hitting. And then they get depressed. They feel like they're not making any progress.

And don't be afraid to challenge Americans. Don't think you have to teach the same old thing every time and keep rehashing the same old thing. I've seen Dharma centres where they just kept doing the same basic stuff over and over again. People get bored and people stop coming.

The other extreme is to throw in so much foreign language stuff that no one can, no one really understands what's going on.

I mean, it's good to reference it to the original text. It's good to have the foreign language available for those who wish to study it. But make sure you speak in common, in plain English or you'll lose half the people. And you'll never know it. They'll come once and they won't come back, you know.

And Dharma itself is so difficult that it's like jumping over hurdles to get to an understanding of emptiness. And when you throw in foreign words and foreign expressions and weird English words you're putting additional obstacles for them to jump over. And some people won't make it. You know what I mean. Some people will leave.

The third time you say the [unclear] of the dhatus in the karmadhatu in the abhidharmakosha, you know, then they'll say this is too much. There'll be one

more obstacle in the way that was not necessary, you know.

It's hard enough to reach an understanding of Dharma without having to jump over fourteen Sanskrit words and thirty-five Tibetan words, you know.

Use the Tibetan to impress them and then they'll believe you that you're authentic, you see, but don't make it an obstacle for them. See what I mean.

Don't require that they have to spell back all this stuff.

In fifty years from now nobody'll use those things. It'll all be in English. And the commentaries a hundred years from now will all be in English. And they won't study Tibetan commentaries.

How many Sanskrit commentaries are studied in Tibet now in Sanskrit? None.

How many were studied in Je Tsongkapa's time? None. Okay.

And, you know, it'll come here too.

So don't put these obstacles in their way. It's not necessary, okay.

Make things spelled like the way an American pronounce them. Not bodicitta, okay. It's bodhichitta, [laughs] you know what I mean, stuff like that.

If you have to use a foreign word at least give them, give people some help, you know. Don't assume that all the people in your class are gonna know the words samsara, bodhisattva, Buddha, Tara. Assume they don't know anything, you know.

I see a lot of teachers they just don't remember the day they started and they didn't know any of those words.

I remember when I went to Dharamsala. I got off the bus. I went straight into class and it was bodhichitta, arya, arhat, bodhisattvas, you know, all these words I had no idea what they meant. Don't torture them.

Remember what you were like before you came into class. Remember what it was like to come into a class and don't trip them up with all these things. Try to be sensitive to how it is for them, okay.

Have some authentic readings ready for them. Have something they can take home. Have something that's a package, you know. Don't just teach a class and let them go home and forget it all.

There should be some kind of notebook or something that they can take home because they need to pass it on to the next generation.

So you don't just teach a class and go through it and say good luck, see you later. Give them something to take home that they can use to help the next generation of students.

Couple of things happen when you do that. The authentic lineage gets passed down. Unauthentic lineages don't get inserted 'cos you didn't give them anything. You see what I mean.

So these are the benefits. The true lineage keeps going on like that.

So take the time to prepare the class beforehand. I think a lot of people who get

into trying to teach something don't enough time to prepare for things that the students are going to need. And they think they don't have to because it's free, you know.

Now if I was getting a sixty thousand dollar salary for being a professor here, you know, and if I had a board of [unclear] was going to check me to see if I gave out materials, then I would take the time. But this is hey, this is just a Dharma class. I'm not charging these guys anything. Why should I work that hard. You know what I mean. That's a bad attitude, you see. You have a bigger responsibility than all those college professors who work their butts off. You see what I mean.

You have a much bigger responsibility. And the fact that it's not a degree or that they're not getting grades which are going to be sent home to mom or dad, you know, or the fact that they're not paying you. It should have no relevance on how hard you try, you know.

You should treat it professionally and the classes should be done professionally. And you should take the time to prepare them well even if only two people show up, okay. And it always starts like that and then as you gain more experience and like that, then it'll start to grow, okay.

But treat it seriously and treat it professionally. And make it ready for the people. When they walk in they get something very authentic and something pure. And then as we said last week forget the money, okay. Take the loss yourself, {...}, you know, take the loss yourself, okay. [laughs]

Financially. For a while when you start your centre it's gonna be like that. Okay. And I encourage you to do it, okay. I encourage you to think about the process of eventually starting something.

Don't get into big debts. Don't rent, you know, don't go buy a place and put up signs and stuff like that. Run it organically. Run it from the inside. Run it on the cheap, you know, at the beginning. Do it in your living room, okay.

And make it regular but give them breaks. You see what I mean.

Do it for a specific amount of time and then stop and give people time to digest, okay. That's important too, okay. That's something I've noticed about the classes, okay.

We'll stop there and do some prayers.

[prayer: short mandala]

[prayer: dedication]

Goodnight. thankyou

The Asian Classics Institute

Course XVI: Great Ideas of Buddhism
Class Eleven

Geshe Michael Roach

Transcribed by Angie Overy

Okay, we'll start.

We're gonna do a quick review of the final. And I'm only gonna do parts of it and then you're gonna break out do the other parts with your class leaders.

I was looking at, you know, when I was compiling the final. The final is made of all the, the final is derived from all the quiz questions. And the quiz questions are derived from the homework questions. And the homework questions are derived from the quiz questions in the original courses. And the quiz questions in the original course are derived from the homework questions in the original courses.

So what you have is the crème de, crème de, crème de, crème, you know what I mean. You have now, it was really hard to do the final. The first time I wrote the final I came out with, like, eighty-five questions. [laughter] [laughs] And then, I couldn't bear to leave out those things and then I got them down to thirty-five, okay.

But is' just, it's just the most important things of all. And you must know them. If you're going to be a good teacher you really must know them.

And I felt very proud doing the final 'cos it makes me very aware that you are learning the cream of everything. The cream of everything in Buddhism is on here, you know.

So, if you go through this course and the other two, you've done everything, really, okay. So, it's really, I think, you know, John was thinking about putting out the classes as more formal books and I think this one would make the first one, this review course. Because what you have, it was designed for westerners. You have, first, Lam Rim, which everybody needs, Three Principle Paths.

And then you have Refuge, which everybody should take, and a little bit about Perfection of Wisdom.

And then you have how to meditate because you can't just study, you have to

meditate also, and you have to have your daily practice and that's in there. And then number four is what, proving future lives. Think in the Tibetan presentation in Lam Rim it's not necessary to prove future lives so early, but in an American presentation I think you have to prove future lives early on.

And then you get to the fifth course, which I don't even remember what it was. What was that? Karma, yeah, meaning that we don't believe in karma either. So you have to pay special attention. Four and five come earlier than in the normal course in the monastery because we don't believe in either one. We don't believe in past and future lives and we don't believe in karma.

So the whole first five courses there's an order to them and there's a logic behind them. And the idea is to introduce people to Dharma who are not, who have not grown up in a culture, which is Buddhist, you know.

So I think this foundation of the first five courses is really strong. And I think you'll see it from the final. If your students, eventually when you teach, meaning, next year, [laughter] your students, and you know, I have little groups. I went to [unclear] course, her class in New Jersey, it's, like, fifteen really good students. And they were really sharp and they've studied well with her. And she taught them the first course and they knew everything really well. They clearly understood the concepts. And, you know, I can't see why anybody can't do that.

It's really [unclear] are a little faster usually but you guys can do it, okay. [laughter] Alright.

Okay, I'm gonna skip some of the questions so maybe the leaders should follow their thing, you were supposed to get it last week. No? Didn't get the final? Oh, okay. [students]

Okay. I'll tell you the numbers I'm covering, okay, or you'll remember it, okay.

Question number one I won't tell you.

Question number two. Question number two is important to me. It's about the relationship between the three principle paths and tantric practice. And, you know, I made a big deal about that in the first course because it's a popular, I call the 'Dharma rumour' or 'American Dharma misconception', that tantra is some kind of advanced thing and then, the three principle paths is just lam rim. I mean, I've heard people say that, I don't have to go to that course, it's just lam rim, you know.

And that's just a basic, they say in Tibetan {kuk tak ten}, say {...}[repeat]; {kuk} means, stupid head or fool, {tak} is a sign or a reason, and then {ten} means to display; it means to broadcast your stupidity publicly, to show what a fool you are if you say, oh it's just lam rim. You see what I mean.

Lam Rim is a ticket to tantra and people have to understand that. Your students should understand that.

Successful practice of the three principle paths, I'm not only saying prepares you for tantra, I'm saying it turns into tantra. It's a {nyer len gyi gyu} for tantra. You see what I mean. If you do the three principle paths well you will start having tantric realisations, you see.

And to me that's proof that it's a beautiful flow into tantra, you know, and that's the way it should go.

So, it's not like you get up to tantra and you reject the lam Rim and especially morality and things like that. That's a very, very stupid idea that one might get from reading the Annexe, what's that thing, the new age thing? It's like tantric sex workshop in, you know, number four, bring your whatever, you know what I mean. And very, very dirty and very bad, okay, nothing like that, alright. Question number three is the ten characteristics of a qualified lama.

And I think that's important for every beginning student to know, you know. That's something that all your students should know right away, you know. And it puts pressure on you to be a good lama because they know immediately what Asanga said or whoever it was, Ashvagoshia said was a good lama, you know. So, you know, you gotta clean out number four or number seven or whatever, okay.

So I like that question. Okay.

I think the next question is about the four principles of karma and those are very necessary for people.

I think it's skilful to mention to your students how much the first one is like what the bible teaches. You see what I mean. Because Jesus talked a lot about that you don't get good results from bad deeds and you don't get bad results from good deeds although it seems to be that way in normal life.

And I think it's good to play on that {bakchak} which is in a western person's mind. You know, a western person already knows about that but doesn't really believe it. You know, they think that if they lie and they get some money, the lie caused the money. And then your job in the first principle of karma is to prove that that's impossible, okay.

And, that they should just be honest all the time. And then, sooner or later, it pays off, okay.

Second one, 'consequences are greater than the actions'. I think that's important to teach to westerners because they tend to think that a small bad deed is okay, that if they do something, like, they call, a white lie, or something like that; that a small bad deed is somehow okay.

And even just jostling someone on the subway in a very irate state of mind could cause you years of back problems or something. You see what I mean. And they have to think about that, you know. They have to be aware of that otherwise you're, like, sending them out into a reality that they're gonna get

killed in if they're not aware. See what I mean? If they're not aware that it's the case that if they do a small bad deed it could cause them years of problems you're, like, making them defenceless. You're, like, cheating them. And they're gonna go out and do little bad deeds and think it's okay. And they're gonna have a miserable life and not know why. You know what I mean. So I think it's very important to stress that to people, the second law.

Law number three is cool because, 'if you don't do something you're not gonna get any result'. And people are always hoping for something for nothing, right. They don't do good deeds, they don't keep their book or they keep their book half the time. And then they get halfway results and they're, like, complaining and keetching, you know, that I didn't get my results. You know, and you say, did you keep your book?

They say, well, you know, pretty well. You know what I mean. 'Pretty well' either means half the time or half-heartedly and both get you the same result which is mixed, you know. Not much, and no noticeable progress that way. You see what I mean.

And then I think when you teach number four, 'once an action is committed the consequence cannot be lost, you always have to talk about the exception of the four powers.

So first you teach that it can't ever just go away. And then you have to say, by itself. Okay. And then you say, by the way, the 'by itself' means that if you use the four powers you can get rid of some of this stuff, the power. And then you have to teach them the four powers, okay. 'Cos it's kind of cruel to teach somebody karma and not teach them how to get out of it if there's a way to get out of it, okay.

Yeah. [student] Yeah, Axel has had a philosophical problem with the idea that karma grows, that karma multiples, they say, exponentially every twenty-four hours for example in the Vinaya.

So why is that, you see. And all I can say is that, there's parallels in the physical world, you know. When there's a seed and it grows the mass of the thing often doubles every twenty-four hours or something. And then I would say, you know, I like to think of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and Washington, sitting around a coffee table in Philadelphia and having a small idea about a thing called democracy. I remember reading Franklin's biography, autobiography, and he would, everyday he would get home it was hot, he was chubby, he liked to drink, you know

And he would come home and he would be kind of cranky and the landlady would say, well what is it Mr Franklin, a monarchy or that other thing you guys are thinking about? And he'd say, we don't know yet, you know.

So it means that during that time they were just sitting around talking about the concept of having the majority rule, you know. And that was, for those times, a very strange concept and it was something very radical and experimental.

And you have to imagine that that started out as an idea in his mind. It was Franklin, I think. And it was just an idea. And now it's become the way that hundreds of millions of people live by that.

And I think that even in an observable historical sense you can see how a single thought can turn into a huge construct called the federal tax-eating government, you know. [laughter] [student] He said, it always collapses when it reaches a peak. Yeah, it does. It will reach a peak and collapse.

Oh, when people ask that you have to get into the transfer of energy, the billiard ball thing. And that's a big debate in Buddhism. It's a very big debate in the books about how can a karmic seed go on year after year if everything lasts only a second?

And the answer is that the energy is transferred to the next seed like a billiard ball, like a line of billiard balls.

I mean, that's the, what do you call, pramanavartikka explanation.

And then there's the madhyamika prasangika explanation, okay.

Yeah. [student] I don't think it's in this course actually. It comes in the sixth course, the Diamond Cutter. And that's a long story. That's a long story. You can get it in the Diamond Cutter.

Yeah. [student] I'm sorry? [student] The dhyanis Buddhas? [student] Between karma and that? [student] Oh, not that I'm aware of, not that I'm aware of. But Rinpoche always says, that doesn't prove anything. [laughter] Okay. [laughs]

I'll leave the next couple.

Number seven is my favourite question, one of my favourite questions. Can the idea of karma, that is ethics or morality, coexist with the idea of emptiness, or do they contradict each other? You see what I mean.

And it was common even in Tibet but also in ancient India for Buddhists who were not well trained to say that, because things are empty, then karma doesn't matter. And this is the famous story of the lady at the Buddhist conference in California. Who I, I read this in Joanna, what's her name, something's book. Anyway, and she wrote that they were at a Buddhist conference on the west coast and this lady, they were checking out. They'd had a nice conference about emptiness and everything and she's checking out and she drops her suitcase and it pops open. And all the hotel's towels fall out, you know. And they're, like, what are you doing, you know?

And she says, well everything's empty anyway, it doesn't matter, you see.

And that's like important wrong view, you see. That's like very major wrong view.

And it just reflects that you don't understand what emptiness is.

The world is a big blank screen. Every object is only shapes and colours, visible objects. And then what you see depends totally on your past karma, because all those things are a projection or a creation of your past karma.

So emptiness gives karma a place to act out its projections. Emptiness is like the empty screen and then karma is like the projector; very similar.

So to think that emptiness has any meaning without karma is ridiculous. The events of your life are caused by your karma projecting images on to emptiness, you see what I mean, in the same way that a projector projects images onto a screen.

So to say that somehow emptiness means that karma doesn't matter is stupid. And what you should, and then at the end of your explanation to your students you should say, in fact, emptiness proves karma.

You gotta have emptiness to have karma. You see what I mean. Not only does emptiness not cancel karma, emptiness is necessary for karma to work, okay.

Karma wouldn't have a place to project things if things weren't empty. You see what I mean?

And karma could never work if things weren't empty. In fact, nothing could work if things weren't empty, okay.

You gotta get them from 'emptiness means karma doesn't work' to 'emptiness and karma work together' to the next step, the final step, 'you need emptiness for karma to work'. You see what I mean, you gotta go through that process with people.

I'll say it again. It's not true that emptiness means that karma doesn't matter, that's A.

B, karma and emptiness have to work together. The karma projects onto blank objects and that's how you get objects, okay.

And then, finally, you say, by the way, did you notice you couldn't have karma without emptiness.

So, not only are they not contradictory, and not only are they mutually compatible, emptiness is necessary for karma to do its schtick, okay. And you gotta take them through that stage, okay, those steps.

Let's see what else.

Number ten is the short definition of Mahayana bodhichitta, okay. And, as you know, anybody who gets bodhichitta in its true form becomes a bodhisattva at the same moment, okay. So really you're talking about what is a bodhisattva.

And I think there's new kind of Dharma rumour, I mean, and it's a little bit hard one to talk about. Which is, that anybody's who really nice is a bodhisattva, you see what I mean. Like, you often hear, so and so's a real bodhisattva.

You say, why?

They say, he gives money to anybody who asks, you know.

Or, so and so's a bodhisattva.

Why?

Oh, they built a hospital in Calcutta and they're taking care of everybody who needs help, something like that. They are bodhisattvas by virtue of being extremely kind to people, okay.

And that's not technically true. It's not true at all actually, okay. And it's hard to tell people that. It's hard to say that. I had couple of people got upset last time I went through this. But what a real bodhisattva is doing, is recognising that this world is extremely painful and they are trying to teach people the real method to stop this level of reality and move to a different level of reality. And those are kind people, you know, those are really kind people. You see, they are, if a person were a real bodhisattva they would most likely spend a lot of their time trying to teach people how to move to a higher level of reality like nirvana or enlightenment.

They would probably devote most if not every moment of their time to doing that and preserving the books that help teach that, you know what I mean, things like that.

They would be obsessed by those things.

Would they also ignore people who need help, who don't have enough food, you know? Of course not, they would also spend time doing that. But the main task of a bodhisattva is to teach people how to reach enlightenment and also to reach enlightenment themselves by the quickest means possible.

So they would be somebody who was trying very hard to focus on the most powerful means of reaching enlightenment because they love other people, you see. Because they care about others they would be struggling to keep their book and struggling to keep their practice and struggling to learn tantra and to practice it because they know that's the best way to help other people.

So their idea of what helps other people would be much different. Of course it doesn't, I always say, conversely, it doesn't mean that they would be uncaring people. They'd probably be very caring people. If there were refugees they'd be helping refugees. If there were people who needed a place to stay they'd be helping them find a place to stay, etcetera. But their main focus would be that, okay.

I think it's important to know the definition of nirvana for two reasons. One is to dispel the old Dharma rumour in the United States that nirvana means some kind of buzzed out state, okay. That nirvana means being able to sit there and not care about anything, okay, or that you disappear or you go on a permanent heroin trip or something like that, okay.

There is still, less, but there is still this idea in the United States. The truth is {..}

means, you yourself would eliminate all negative thoughts. You would never have again a negative thought.

Would you necessarily look different to us next morning? No. Okay.

I mean, your face would be kinda, [laughter] you know. There wouldn't be so many wrinkles, you know, like that. But basically, you wouldn't look physically a lot different than the night before.

And you could achieve nirvana at 8.05 on Friday and then go out to dinner with your family, you know what I mean, it's all possible.

And then the second thing about nirvana, I think, the very, very, very important thing is the second part of the definition, {...} what? {so so tango}. Meaning, you can only achieve it if you've seen emptiness directly. You must see emptiness directly. There's nothing else. There is no other path to removing your mental afflictions forever. Impossible. You cannot remove your anger. You cannot get rid of jealousy. You cannot even much reduce them without seeing emptiness directly, okay. And that's {so so tango} means, due to the realisations you had when you saw emptiness directly, okay. And that's, you gotta push that with your students, okay, 'cos otherwise, again, if you water Buddhism down and present it as something less, they'll never get there.

It's cheating other people. It's actually murder, you know, it's a kind of murder to not teach them what they need to know because they'll die many lifetimes after that.

You have a big responsibility as a Dharma teacher. A surgeon can cut the wrong vein and kill somebody, one life. But a Dharma teacher who leaves out the second part of the definition of nirvana, seriously, gives them a much greater chance of dying over and over again. [laughs] Okay. I mean, it's very touchy, okay.

And don't fool around with Dharma. Don't try to edit it, you know, don't try to simplify it to where important elements are lost, okay, 'cos you could kill somebody.

I like number twelve, which is, the eighth century master Dharmakirti in his root text on Buddhist logic, says that two elements must be present for tantra to work. Name them. Okay.

First one, is that the power who spoke the tantra, and this also applies to mantras, okay. Tantra being books about secret practice and mantras being special formulas that you recite, special strings of words, holy words that you recite. So it applies to both, okay. The maker of a mantra and the writer of a tantra or the person who develops a tantric system for people to follow, must first be, the first requirement is that they should be a person of extraordinary spiritual power, okay, like Lord Buddha, okay.

The second part is the interesting part. The person who practices it or recites that

mantra must be very, very pure. Okay. And it doesn't work otherwise, okay. So a person who's not pure could go sneak into the ACI database, break the code, get into those one thousand and three tantric books, get their Tibetan dictionary out and figure out four or five paragraphs about these secret practices, you know. But then if they tried to do them and their heart wasn't pure, which is not pure already 'cos they just broke the first rule of tantra which is that it's secret and you have to get it from a qualified lama, it wouldn't work anyway. It couldn't work, okay. They would just collect bad deeds, okay, if they tried to do this.

So the person who practices it has to be pure, okay. And mantras don't have much effectiveness if you're not pure, okay.

So if you're not watching your morality, if you're not keeping your vows, if you're not checking your book, you know, if you don't even know your vows, tantric vows especially, mantras can't, they won't do anything for you. They don't have any self-existent power.

And in fact, the Buddhists went to great lengths to demonstrate that the word OM doesn't have any self-existent power. It cannot, by itself, have any holy power.

The person who recites it has to be living a clean act and then the OM works, like, amazing, you see what I mean.

So those are the two things you need for tantra to work, okay.

And that's interesting 'cos it's from a logic book and it's true, okay.

Let's see here. I like to teach people the three different types of meditation just because of the, again, a lot of this course, a lot of the questions that I think are most important, are coming from misconceptions from the early days of American Buddhism. You know, stupid ideas or misinformed ideas that we would like to root out of our Buddhism before it gets settled. You know, get rid of those dumb ideas early on before they become a tradition, okay.

And the idea that the only kind of meditation you can do is {jok gom}, fixed meditation; and the idea that the only object you can take is your breath, which has no virtuous content normally, okay, it's neutral. The idea that just focussing on your breath for a long time would lead you to enlightenment is wrong. It was meant, it was designed by Master Vasubhandu in a certain chapter of the abhidharmakosha, {..} is a practice, and it's meant as a preliminary to meditation. It's not meant to be the meditation. So I think there's this misconception about meditation. Or that meditation necessarily means thinking about a blank screen or a black hole or especially, the bad idea that meditation means watching your thoughts float by and not owning them or not following them. And that that's some kind of gonna enlighten you to, you know, rabbits watch their thoughts and they watch them go by.

You know, my lama used to say it all the time, you know, you know what I mean. I mean, that's no big thing, and just to not identify with them or to say, they're not me, you know. Of course they're you. I mean, if a thought comes by your, the screen saver, right, and says, I wish I could kill so and so at work. You just, like, oh I don't identify with it. It's already karma, {sempa ..}, fourth chapter abhidharmakosha, you know. That's already a karma. It's less karma if you don't identify with it but it is your mind and you do have to take care of it. And it's not a meditation to sit there and watch it float away.

So you have all these mental afflictions and you're watching them float away and that's going to help you? You know what I mean, that's a bad idea.

I'm not aware of any scripture where that's taught, okay.

Let's see another one. Lama practice, there's a sort of a basic question about lama practice. I think some day we should put a more substantial question in lama practice.

This is mostly about different steps in lama practice. And I've been hesitant to teach it properly because it seems self-serving, especially to Americans, you know.

If I got up here and said what you really should do, the first day that you meet your lama is give them all your money, you know, sell all your things. Follow them around all day long, you know. And cook and clean for them and fix their clothes. And whatever they say, do it, you know.

Which is really what you have to do.

It would seem self interested, right. So I don't say it and I don't teach it but you should get a good lama teaching from somebody, okay.

And it is the source of all your happiness. {...}, you know, and you have to understand that. And that's the opening line of the Lam Rim. You know what I mean.

And you have to see that serving your lama is the source of all your spiritual attainments.

But because we're teaching in an American environment and because of the abuses of spiritual teachers who have come to the west, I think it's incumbent on us as teachers to do the opposite.

I think we should, if it comes time to pay for the class, we should pay for the class.

If there's a bathroom to clean we should clean the bathroom. You know what I mean.

If there's some trouble with a student, you know, and they're being bad to you, you should smile and talk to them and gently and say, yeah, okay, maybe you're right, you know.

And I don't think in our country, at the beginning of Buddhism, it doesn't seem

appropriate time or place to tell somebody, you know, if you say one inappropriate word to your lama, you know, you should just leave or something like that.

It's not the time to do that. I think this is the time, in these times, a good lama should probably have to pay most of the expenses and do most of the work and do all the readings and correct them all, you know what I mean, and do all the dirty work just because Americans will respect that more.

But once you know the scene and once you're well trained, I think your own attitude, if you want to get enlightened fast, should shift, okay.

But I think you have to be very careful about how you teach it in America and especially be careful about money and things like that. And just not take any for a long time. Especially, I warn you one thing with students, you know, there's this honeymoon effect, you know.

They meet the Dharma, they get all excited, they offer you their house or all their savings. And I did when I met Rinpoche. I gave him my bankbook. And he said, he looks at it, he says, that's nice and he said, here, you keep it. [laughs]

And it should be like that. I mean, don't, wait til a student is more mature before you allow them to make a major offering because they'll regret it later and they'll see you as abusing them or something like that.

And I think for Buddhism to be pure we have to sort of stick to that. Once you feel the student understands clearly what's going on and they still want to do it, Leon when he first came to me said, the first class or second class he took me out to lunch and said I have this place in the east village. You can use it for free. And I said, come back to me in six months, you know. And he did. So we took it.

You what I mean. And it should be like that.

Don't let people do wild things before they know what's going on, okay.

Yeah. [student] that was number sixteen, paraphrased, okay.

I think death meditation is important. The next question's about the three basic steps of death meditation. That's number seventeen.

For the following reasons, again, you see, it's a reaction to teachings that have been given in the United States. All the, or many of the death meditations teachings that have been going on in this country have concentrated on the highly esoteric, secret, unusual practices that can be done during the moment of death by a very highly trained person, you see what I mean. Who's trained themselves for many years in tantra, you know. And what colour lights are gonna happen and all that stuff and things like that.

And I think that's a disservice to people. I don't think, people are not well trained, people are not going to follow it, people are not going to be doing the right thing when they die; they're gonna spend their whole life thinking they can do {powa} in the last half hour and everything will be okay. And that they can

pretty much live the same life they've always led and that's not true at all, okay. Real death meditation is those three steps of leading your life, the goal of a death meditation is, that at some point, you begin to act as if you were going to die tonight. And that every single day of your life and every action you undertake you evaluate in the light of you're gonna die tonight.

So at any given moment, you're not doing any action that you wouldn't do if you were going to die tonight.

Now, that would lead to a lot of people quitting their jobs, okay, and that's fine, you see, 'cos you will die tonight.

And much better to be a little poor than not be ready. You see what I mean?

And I'm not suggesting that everybody quit their job, okay. You can do all this at work. We're going to get into that later.

But evaluate all your activities: is this what I would be doing if I knew I was going to die tonight? Okay.

And then even the people in here who are practising pretty well would make different choices about the priority of their practice, see what I mean. You would say, okay, you know what, if I only had one practice to do today before I died, I guess I'd be doing that other thing, see what I mean.

And that's also very helpful for people who are practising well already to prioritise their practice, okay.

So that's the goal of a death meditation not what colour light's gonna come to you, not can you trick karma and boost your mind to another realm. Come on, if that was possible the Buddhas would have taught it and we wouldn't be here. Okay.

Lord Buddha would have done it instead of spending 75 and 76 and 77 thousand times ten to the 60th power eons, okay.

He would have just waited until he died and popped his mind up to another place. You know what I mean?

So a real death meditation, the goal of real death meditation is that at any moment in your life you can honestly say I'm doing the most important thing that I could do even if I was going to die tonight.

At every moment in your life you can honestly say that. That's the test of a good death meditation, okay.

I see nobody left class, okay, good. [laughter]

Number nineteen, do you really think everything in this life is suffering. And we talked about it, I forget where it was, in [unclear].

And the common American perception of the, you know, Lord Buddha said, everything's suffering. And then your mind comes back and says, it's true, my boss at work is suffering. It's true, my spouse is suffering from time to time.

It's true, I get headaches every three weeks.

But it's not true that everything in between is suffering. I mean, I saw a pretty good movie the other night. I went to a good jazz show. I had a good Chinese dinner. You know, it's not true that everything is suffering.

There's suffering from time to time, which sometimes is bad enough that you'd want to go to class, but it's not all the time. I mean, it's not constant, you know.

Life's not so bad.

Then you have to be able to prove to a student, and particularly to an American, that even the spaces in between are suffering. And that's hard.

It boils down to explaining how, first of all how those, according to Buddhism, Buddhism perceives it this way: if the end of an event is disaster, then we can say that, that event is a disaster, you see what I mean.

When the Titanic was built and when it was the most noble, glorious, biggest, most fast, great ocean liner in the world, was it suffering, you see, was it a disaster?

And Buddhism says, yes because it ended in disaster. You can't talk about the first ten days on the Titanic as having been pleasant. Okay. And it's a true example. It's exactly like that. You can't meet people who were in the Titanic when it went down and say, but wasn't the first two weeks really nice? Why don't you ever talk about what a great ship it was? [laughter] You see what I mean.

And they say, no, are you crazy, it ended in disaster, thousands of people died. It was a disaster from the beginning, you see.

And that's how life is, you see. If it ends, if every relationship ends in divorce or death, you know. If every possession ends in losing this possession or having it taken away from you by somebody else or the possession breaking. You know, if everybody's ultimate goal was to become wrinkled and ugly and old, you know. Then is the body nice? You see what I mean? And the answer has to be no.

Or you can bring up the Titanic thing. It seems like not a very good example but it's perfect. It's exactly the same thing. And you don't think so until it sinks. You see what I mean.

You're still defending the Titanic until it hits the iceberg. But it's a great ship, you know. Until the disaster, until you get close to death, you don't see the rest is like, when you get close to dying the rest seems very, very silly that you worked so hard to do so many stupid things. Okay.

I mean, you have to try to think of these sufferings in the way that you would in the last few days of it because that's the real viewpoint, you know. That's the real place from where you have to check.

The last point to mention there, I think, is, you know, to me a natural American reaction should be, well how can what you're selling be any different? People

lose their lama. People forget what they read and studied. You forget your Tibetan grammar and you start forgetting words. You become as senile as anybody else.

Why study? You know, doesn't that have the same problem?

And you say no, there's two kinds of karma.

You have to get into pure karma and impure karma, okay. Impure karma always wears out; pure karma always perpetuates itself. And that's the big difference, okay.

Karma done with a knowledge of emptiness can be perpetuated. It's like money that you keep reinvesting and get richer and richer.

And then, impure karma is like money that you spend and you lose it, and then the thing that you bought wears out. And it's over, okay. Big difference, so you have to get into that difference.

We say there is a kind of karma, which you can collect, which will only lead to pleasure permanently, eternally, okay, by reinvestment process. Okay.

Number twenty, what did Lord Buddha say himself was the purpose of logic? Okay. People are always coming up to me and saying how boring logic is. And it is.

But the point of this logic is very profound: that you don't judge other people.

You learn to prove to your own stupid mind that you don't know what other people are thinking like you always thought you did. You see what I mean.

You learn to prove it to yourself that you have to go through the world in a state of, what do you call it, suspended [student] yeah, something like, suspended disbelief.

You can't evaluate other people's intentions, you know, you really can't.

Can you evaluate their actions? Yes. Someone's hurting someone you evaluate it and you stop them. You know, someone's on the street hitting a guy with a metal pipe, you're required by your bodhisattva vows to stop them because the action is wrong and it's hurting someone.

But do you really know that the guy with the pipe is not a bodhisattva and that the guy his hitting is the next Hitler and that he can see the future? You see, you really don't know.

So you keep in this suspended state about other people's motivations and other people's reasons for doing things and you fight their actions, okay.

And then you're okay. But, to believe sincerely, that you really know what they're thinking is a grave error and has been the cause of much suffering of Buddhists; Lord Buddha himself. Remember the story it came from, okay, and not to judge the person.

Also there are different levels of practice, you know, distinctly different levels of practice.

I mean, a person, for example, who has kept monk's vows well for a long time, who's done other activities very sincerely, could be seeing the world in a much different way than you are. Okay.

A person who's gone even to a higher level, through collecting good karma their whole life, you know, through devoting their life to spiritual things, could be seeing the world on a totally thirds level. And acting or engaged in practices you can't even understand. So you have to understand that there are distinct barriers between people of different spiritual levels, you know.

You can't understand everything about what Khen Rinpoche is doing, for example, you know. Khen Rinpoche spends time watching TV. He's, like, talking about the Mets and the Yankees, you know.

And what is he really doing? I mean, I sat up there many nights with him and there'd be a movie on and I'd be watching intently and he'd say, he'd turn it off right at the most important part. [laughter] Like, you're just about to get to the most important part and then he'd turn around like that. What are you doing Rinpoche, you don't understand, this is the most important part.

And he'd be going like this, you know, [laughter] and he'd say, huh?

And I say, the movie, the most important part.

He'd say, oh, oh, oh, sorry, you know. What's he thinking? What's he doing? You don't know, you know. [laughter] You know, who knows? Who knows?

I mean, be very careful with those things. It's the first bodhisattva vow isn't it, you see? Be very careful. People are at distinctly different levels from years or decades of practice and they might be doing something totally beyond us.

So does that mean watching TV is okay for us? No. Okay. See? Get it?

That's all. The activity is dumb, okay. And we shouldn't do it. You shouldn't waste your time. If you did it at Sera they would punish you in the assembly, okay. Alright.

I like twenty-two: what does a person have to be to be omniscient, you know.

And the normal answer that pops up in your mind is they know the Latin names for every single plant and animal, you know what I mean. You think that. Or they know how advanced computers work or, you know what I mean. Or they, you know, they understand what Einstein saw. They can explain what Einstein saw perfectly or something like that.

I mean, your mind goes to, oh they can see what's on Pluto, the backside of Pluto.

When 'omniscient' comes up in my mind that's what comes, you know. Or they can really tell if the boss is gonna give them a raise before or they know the lottery numbers for next week or stuff. I mean, when you think of Mr Know-it-all, a person who knows everything, everything in the universe, the possibilities are quite interesting, you know what I mean.

That's not what makes you omniscient.

What makes you omniscient, mainly, is understanding perfectly the laws of this is something you should do because it will make you enlightened and this is something you shouldn't do because you won't get enlightened. And that's all, you know. If you understand that perfectly that's what's the essence of omniscience, you know.

They understand, they are dwelling in that truth all the time.

They're constantly dwelling in a total awareness of what's right and what's wrong to get you enlightened. And that's all.

Do they also know all that other stuff? Yes.

So how come we still need money for Arizona? That's another question. Okay. [laughs] Did I just break a vow? No. Okay. [laughter]

I mean, the question comes up, why don't they just play all the winning lottery numbers and Buddhas will have the best temples around, you know. There seems to be some karmic thing about the maturation of karma in there. Okay.

What's the basic principle underlying the arguments in favour of a future life and a past life? Okay.

And that's a {nyer len gyi gyu}, okay, that's a material cause, you know. And again, this question is a reaction, and the emphasis in these classes on that question is a reaction to, the American culture's, the western culture's ingrained belief, wrong belief, that past and future lives don't exist. You see what I mean.

So the only reason to spend so much trouble and time on this question is the prejudice of our culture against future and past lives, okay.

Is it a founded prejudice? No. You just believe it 'cos your mom taught you and Mrs Melvin in the first grade. You have no more logical reason to believe that than all the Tibetans to believe in a future life 'cos their first grade teacher told them that. And they haven't examined it either. And they can't explain to you why there's a future life either, okay.

So you shouldn't be either one. You shouldn't be a person who believes in future lives and doesn't know how to explain it. And you shouldn't be a person who doesn't believe in future lives and doesn't know how to explain it, okay.

You should be a person who does know how to explain it and therefore does believe in future lives, okay.

And that all comes down to two things: you have to prove that mind and body are separate, okay. And a very difficult karmic obstacle, obscuration of all Americans, drilled into their minds from their past lives is that the brain is the mind.

You gotta overcome that. You're gonna have to work on that.

With your students you have to first approach the question of the difference between the brain and the mind. And you could do it by getting into the feeling

of things or demonstrating that the senses don't stop at the edge of the skin.

There's a misperception that the edge of the skin is the edge of the person. Which seems very, I mean, to a Buddhist this is a very primitive way of thinking, that the edge of your mind is the edge of your skin. What about the hairs and the freckles, you know, they bump up, you know.

I mean, really the mind is easily going to the back of the room 'cos the visual consciousness is going to the back of the room, okay.

Where is your mind?

I mean, there's this perception that your mind is restrained by the skin and momentarily popping out and coming back. See what I mean? That's how you visualise your mind, you know. You're thinking, like, no, my mind's under my skin and that stuff's coming up here to my mind, you know. There's all these books that you read in high school, the light coming into the eye and going to the nerve and going to the brain. And you gotta get people over that. They have to get into, this is why the first chapter of the abhidharma is about the {...}, the presentation of the five skandhas and the eighteen dhatus. It's to get you in the habit of seeing that the eye extends easily to the back of the room. I'm not limited by my skin, you know. My consciousness is not something that, at all, my visual consciousness for example, easily goes beyond me skin. That's just a silly idea. And my visual consciousness is my mind. It's one sixth of my mind, okay, you gotta get people used to that.

They gotta stop thinking of the 'me' or the consciousness as being restrained by the bag of the skin. And that, really, it extends to whatever you can reasonably think of, and that your mind is there, okay.

So you got to separate, learn to separate the body, the meat, from the mind, which has nothing in common with the body. Nothing. Okay, nothing in common with physical stuff.

You have to be able to get people into that mode or mood where they see the difference.

The mind is ineffable. The mind is unweighable, uncuttable, unburnable, undestroyable and easily passes beyond physical matter.

There's no connection at all, you see.

There's nothing similar about the stuff the mind is made of and the stuff the skin is made of. There's just no similarity at all.

And you have to get people, they have to be able to make that distinction. And to do that you have to overcome a lot of unreasonable cultural prejudices. And you'll have to work on that.

The first few times you explain future lives people won't believe you. They'll go out thinking he didn't really do a very good job, okay, because of this prejudice, you see.

Unfounded prejudice but deep prejudice, okay.

And then you have to get into could the body cause the mind, you know. Could this kind of stuff cause that kind of stuff, you know? And the answer is, no they're not similar at all, okay.

And that's the basic argument, okay.

Now you gotta get more refined than that. There'll be a lot of counter-arguments to that.

And you have to be ready and equipped to handle them; have to read the second chapter of the Pramanavartikka.

Okay. How are we doing on time? Not too well. Okay.

I like the question about what makes something good karma, what makes something bad karma? Yeah, very simple: self-interested pain and pleasure, okay. [laughs]

It's not 'cos god says so. It's not 'cos Moses says so, you know. It's not 'cos anyone says so. It's because if you do this it will hurt you and if you do this you'll get what you want. Okay. That's all. Okay.

This is a good deed because it leads you to pleasure and to nirvana and to enlightenment.

This is bad deed because it causes you pain. That's all, you know.

No one had to say anything because that's the way they work, okay.

It's like gravity works a certain way. It's not like gravity works that way because somebody said it should.

And karma's the same. You do certain deeds it will hurt you. You do other deeds you'll be happy and you'll reach nirvana and enlightenment.

And that's what makes them good and bad, okay, not 'cos somebody says so. Okay.

Not the courts, not your parents, not your school, not any god, okay, because it's just that's the way they work. Okay.

Let's see. We're getting close.

I think it's interesting to know when karma ripens. You know, people tend to think, that's twenty-nine okay, people tend to think, oh it always ripens in the next life. You can't prove anything. Okay.

That would deny the effectiveness of a certain Buddhist practice which is what?

Tantra. Okay.

If it's true that karma only ripens in your next life then forget practising tantra, whose efficacy depends on, the fact that you can commit powerful karmas in this life and reap the rewards in this life. Okay. The whole theory of tantra is to become a tantric deity in this life.

And that's the power of one of the three types of karmic maturation or karmic ripening. Okay. That's all.

I like it because of tantra, you see. I'm interested in that question because of tantra.

We're Americans, we don't want to wait for our hamburgers. You drive through, you order it, pick it up without rolling up the window again, okay.

Yeah. [student] It does for sure. Does tantra purify powerful bad karma? Yes. Yeah, it does.

It would have to, you see what I mean, 'cos otherwise you couldn't turn into a tantric deity. So that would have to be one of the mechanisms or dynamics of tantra, is that it must not only have a very powerful effect on {...}, you know, of getting new good karma but it must have a very powerful effect on {...}, which is purifying your old bad karma. Okay. Or you couldn't become a tantric deity in this life.

Okay. I really like what I call the correlations. I think it's an important part of teachings on karma, okay.

Four different things that happen when you, for example, kill something because, again, there's these Dharma rumours or Dharma misinformation in America.

You see what I mean. You step on a bug, you become a bug or something like that.

There's four different, distinct karmic maturations.

Number one: the realm you're gonna be born in. Okay. If you commit really bad karmas you go to a totally different realm.

Who made that realm? Acme realm construction company? [laughter] Who made those realms? Who made the realms? Your karma.

Do they exist now? Does a hell realm that you might be going to exist now? Yours?

No. Get it?

It's not like somebody made it a long time ago and you're moving there. It's not like that. It's not like they make dog bodies somewhere and they stuff spirits in them, you know, in some bardo factory or something. It's not like that.

Your perceptions shift due to a shifting of your karma and you begin to perceive that realm and that is the creation of that realm. And that's why you can become a dog by tonight, okay. It's too easy. It's frighteningly easy. It's just a shift in your perceptions like the last time you got cut. First you had a perception of a normal finger and then you had a perception of a finger with a hole in it.

And dying's the same thing; it's just a shift. It takes thirty seconds something. It's just a simple shift in your perceptions, and you are dead, and you are a dog. And it can happen to anybody tonight.

Now if there was dog factories and if it took time, the same delays that it takes to build a building in New York, there'd be some hope, you know. You could say it

takes a while to make hell, a hell realm.

It's not the way it is.

To get to a hell realm, to create a hell realm, takes thirty seconds of shifting of your karma in your mind and you will be there. And it's that easy. And it's that scary. And it's true. Okay.

Yeah. [student] Okay. [laughs] [student] Oh, she asked why is it that I have to see a dog embryo? You know what I mean? If what you said is true, [student] right, then why would you have to go through it like a gestation period or something that? Why don't you just close your eyes, die, open your eyes, and you see paws, fully grown paws?

There are four types of birth, {kye ne shi}. And one of them is called, {..} and it is exactly that. You don't have to go through the gestation process. There are people who are born in other realms who just look down and see a finished being. {..kyewa} means a finished being. And certain kinds of beings are born that way. And all four are present in the human realm for example, okay.

We just haven't had, you haven't seen anybody do it around you recently, okay, but it happens. Okay.

Second kind of result: even if you are born as a human, you have a short life, you know, you're sick a lot. Okay. Like, we call it some kind of personal ripening, personal result.

[cut] [end side A]

[side B]

By the way, this includes, you know, the thing that you get killed by other people a lot, okay. [laughs] Alright.

Number three, which is grouped with number two, you see what I mean, two and three are usually grouped together. And so some people only teach three kinds of karmic results but it's really four. Je Tsongkapa says it's really four.

I left it as three in the answer key because that's the way it's often presented, more often presented.

And that's the habit of doing that thing again. You are attracted to that kind of activity in your future life.

Even if you're born as a human, or even if you eventually work off the karma of being in a hell realm and make it up to a human realm, you're still attracted to that kind of behaviour.

That explains why some little kids are cruel from the beginning and some little kids are very peaceful from the beginning. [baby] And some giggle all the time from the beginning, [laughter] okay.

Last one: environmental result. I mean, this explains your external world.

Why is there pollution? Why is there war? You know, why are there muggers in New York City? Why are some areas of the earth, like, hard to get over and

some areas are easy to get over? Why do some city's have nice parks? Rio de Janeiro, you know, unbelievable. And the some city's just don't have any, you know. Why is that?

And that's all karma. Okay. The whole external world is created by karma.

Why does the sun come up in the morning? Why do five billion people see the sun come up in the morning?

It's a perception. It's a joint hallucination of your karma. Yeah. And some people don't get to see the sun come up in the morning. They're in prison, in a basement, they worked at my old office, you know, they're blind, things like that. Okay.

But the sun itself is a projection of five billion people's karma. Okay. And you gotta get used to that.

[student] Yeah, dogs too.

Yeah, it's interesting that they're cross-realms shared projections, yeah.

Number thirty-one. That's that thing about Maitreya, about the six steps. How you get in trouble. And to me it's one of the most beautiful teachings in Buddhism, you know.

You have ignorance in your past life.

That makes you have ignorance in this life.

That makes you see things the wrong way.

That makes you like things and dislike other things the wrong way.

That makes you do karma.

And that makes you stay here.

And I love that, you know. It connects emptiness and my condition. And it explains it clearly, okay.

That's where the whole shtick of Michael Roach about the boss at work comes from. Right there. Okay. Maitreya.

You should understand the glass of water thing, you know. That's important.

That's a, to me it's a lynchpin of Buddhism. And that's the boss thing also, okay.

You have to be able to tie those two questions to a normal person's life, okay.

You must be able to do that. If you're gonna be an effective teacher of Buddhism in America you better be able to use those two questions in normal people's lives to explain to them why bad things are happening to them and to explain to them how they should react to them 'cos that's their salvation.

And if you can't do that, then you're not a Buddhist teacher. In my mind, you're not teaching Buddhism.

If you can't connect emptiness to karma to a person's everyday life and teach them what to do when bad things happen and break the 'wheel of life' at the first link, then you're not teaching them Buddhism. You know what I mean?

You may be teaching them to be a little calm. You may be teaching them to

breathe right. But you ain't getting them out of this suffering, you know. You've got to be able to do that.

I repeat, question number thirty-one and thirty-two, you know, you gotta be able to teach those to people clearly so that they react to the boss properly by understanding the boss's emptiness. And how that boss is a projection of their karma, okay. Must- or else you're not serving them.

You're not really teaching them unless you tie it to the suffering of their lives, okay.

That's it. Those are the important ones.

Yeah. [student] Tantra? Yeah. [student] Oh, he said, you said if you practice the three principle paths sweetly you slide into tantra like a greased pig, you know what I mean. [laughter] You just, it just starts happening, you see what I mean. And I'd say, initiation in this life or no initiation in this life, tantric things start happening to you.

Now, what is 'tantric things'? What does that mean?

Two levels: {kye rim} and {dzog rim}, okay. {kye rim}, stage of creation level. Without revealing secrets, okay, you start to have experiences of encountering deities and things like that, okay.

Then {dzog rim} experiences, you start to have definite and clear experiences of you yourself becoming a deity, actually becoming a deity. So, basically, those two things, okay.

And those start happening, you can make those things happen by keeping your book well. And that's so cool. And it makes it so crazy not to keep your book well. You see what I mean?

I mean, if you know that if you just do ten, fifteen minutes, six times a day, {tundruk}, you know, if you had any clear indication that these things could start happening to you if you just followed those vows, you'd do it, you know.

It's not such a big investment. The return is so much greater than the effort required that even if I'm wrong you should try it. You know what I mean.

What have you got to lose? You know, I'm only asking ten, fifteen minutes every two hours or something, you know. What have you got to lose if that could take you to a higher level and start having all these experiences. And then you'd be sure that this was working. Then what have you got to lose? Why not try it, you know?

The worst that can happen is that you'll act very sweetly to everybody else, you know, and I'm just lying to get you to do it, you know. But I'm not, [laughs] okay.

And that's not {tragnye}. That's {..}, okay. That's not {tragnye}. I'm speaking literally, okay.

Course the Buddha says, what? [laughter] Buddha said you can't believe a

teacher when they say I'm speaking literally because they might be figurative about that.

But I'm not being figurative. [laughter] [laughs] Okay.

And then what are you supposed to use? When you get up to that fine point what's supposed to take you over the top? Logic.

Okay. It makes sense that you could start seeing deities because everything's empty, you see.

And my karma's creating my world.

Ah, he's being literal. You see what I mean? That pushes you over the top.

It's not figurative. It's literal. Okay.

You sure? We gotta stop now. Sal's gonna knock you out. Okay, one question.

[student] what's the difference between Buddhists seeing deities and? [student]

Seeing Jesus Christ? [student] Oh, oh, oh, oh. [student] What's the difference between a mental patient thinking he sees Jesus Christ and a Buddhist who's seeing deities?

I'd say the stability of it [laughs] you know what I mean. I mean, if you know how to do it, it goes on forever.

And I'd say, most patients I've met usually go in and out of it, and then go crazy.

You know what I mean. I think that's, my basic answer would be that, it becomes permanent.

And it's replicable, meaning you can make it happen again and again just by being good.

And then it's confirmable. And I like that, you know.

You don't have to believe me about any of this stuff. You go try it and see if people immediately around you start to look different, you know.

They transfer that guy you don't like. And then this new girl gets hired and you're, like, wow. Okay. [laughs] [laughter] You know what I mean.

Okay. Alright. Sal says have a break. And then the rest of the questions will be covered in the group, okay.

[break]

Very quickly; lots of people asking me, what should I do for the next two months?

[announcements of teachings/projects/etc]

[acknowledgements]

Last thing. Every time we do a class I try to bring up and talk about a little about the theory behind ACI, okay.

And now, tonight, very briefly, two minutes, which usually runs into five, I'd like to talk about the kind of students we have, you see what I mean.

And, I think, in America, it's gonna be a totally different trip than it's been in the other countries. It is not, I don't think it's gonna be, it's obvious it's not gonna be

only ordained males who study these subjects in America.

As teachers you have to get into the mode of the way Buddhism is gonna spread in this country is, in my mind, is gonna people just like you. And there will be ordained people and that's very precious but there's gonna be more family people.

This courses and this whole institute has been designed, primarily, for normal working people, normal Americans who have a daytime job, who may have a family, who have lots of other commitments. And the idea is that, for the first time in history really, a large percentage of the population could learn the details and the deep philosophy of Buddhism and still live a normal life, you see what I mean.

And it won't be one percent of the population, you know, in a cave or in a monastery or something like that.

It won't be like that. I don't think so.

I think it's gonna be, my dream is well educated, practising, serious Buddhists who go through the five pillars or four, I don't know what it is: study, daily practice, meditation, retreats, and keeping your book, you know, your morality, your vows. Those five things as normal people, you know.

I think this will be the first, my hope, my dream, first country, men and women, taught the Geshe course, living a normal life and actually using their life as their proving ground for their Buddhism, you see what I mean.

So you have a normal life but you know the details of Madhyamika philosophy, you see what I mean, and you're using it at your office. I mean, that's my dream, you know.

You're not sitting somewhere doing theoretical things or something like that. You're, you've got your daily practice, you're a good meditator, you're careful to do, like, two long retreats a year, you keep your book {tundruk} six times a day you're checking your vows, and you study like crazy. And then you, I think that the advantage of being a normal American is that you get to go try it out not in a nice monastery where everybody is so holy, okay. You get to do it in normal life, you know. You get to do it the office. You get to do it with your family.

And it's such a rich goldmine of mental afflictions, you see. [laughter]

It's the perfect, people used to ask me, how could you do Buddhism and work in the diamond business?

I'd say, this is the perfect place to do Buddhism, you know. You got greed, you got fashion models with desire, you got jealousy among the top executives, you got, you know, all sorts of wonderful, you know, situations to try your Buddhism out 'cos you have to be tested in the crucible.

You can't sit in a monastery or sit in a cave and expect to work on your mental

afflictions, you know. It's a, Rinpoche forced me to go to work. I had an inheritance. I didn't have to go to work, you know.

He said, you gotta go to work.

I said, Rinpoche, I don't want to go to work. I resisted for years, you know. Then he gave this holy lecture in [unclear] university. I'll never forget it. I drove him home and I said, I'll do anything you want.

He said, go to work, you know. [laughs] [laughter]

And god bless him, you know, it was the most wonderful experience, you know. It taught me everything.

To be in a normal office, nobody knew I was a Buddhist and people yelling at me and cursing me and telling me to lie for them. And then I'm faced with all these moral dilemmas and that's perfect, you see. So I think America will be the first country, my dream, well educated, normal people, who can spout Buddhist philosophy like that, and do their retreats twice a year. It'll be a national law I'm sure shortly where everyone gets two months off a year for retreats, you know. [laughter]

Why not? In Thailand they do. So, you know, it can happen. It will happen.

And then you're doing your meditations every morning and you're keeping your book. You go into the bathroom, you sneak into that stall, you lock it, pull out the book. So you got a little diarrhea sometimes and you gotta go every two hours [laughter] or something. And nobody will say anything. I mean, they might think you're a little weird but you'll get to tantric heaven. You know, it's worth it. You know, so I think we have to think about who's gonna be the Buddhists of this country. And it's gonna be those people.

And I think it's perfect. I think these are the golden times, you know, to have that opportunity. You're well fed, you're well housed, you can read. You know, you had twelve or eighteen years of free education and now you get Buddhism put into your lap, you know. And then you get, this perfect lousy circumstances, to try it out, and I think it's perfect.

I couldn't wish for anything more in my life, you know.

And I think those are the kind of people who will be the Buddhists of America and the teachers also.

And I think that's the way it should spread.

I think you have two extremes that I don't want to go through. One is where you have this aristocracy, priestly caste who owns all the information and only they get to study and only they get to do the prayers and only they get to do the rituals, only they have altars, you know.

And then, the other extreme is you go to church on holidays and you don't know anything and you spout a few prayers and you don't learn anything. And you don't care about anything. And you go 'cos other people go and because

your mother went. And you don't have any idea what's going on. And you are not allowed to look at the liturgy or be involved in it at all.

I don't want to see those two extremes. I think it's gonna be something very cool among normal people becoming Buddhist scholars, philosophers and deep meditators and master retreat people. Just normal people like that. And, I think that'll be the coolest Buddhist country yet, okay.

Sal's telling me to, okay [laughter]

[prayer: mandala]

[prayer: short mandala]

Course 16: Great Ideas of Buddhism #1. NYC
RAW TRANSCRIPT

PAGE

PAGE 126